



an URBAN FRINGE ACTION PLAN for Southern Swindon



Prepared on behalf of the North Wessex Downs Council of Partners by Land Use Consultants under the guidance of the Steering Group:

AONB team
Countryside Agency
Defra RDS
English Nature
Great Western Community Forest
Kennet District Council
North Wiltshire District Council
Swindon Borough Council
Swindon Strategic Partnership
Wiltshire Community First
Wiltshire County Council
Wroughton Parish Council

Funded by:



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1. THE URBAN FRINGE – A FORGOTTEN AREA

A forgotten area of huge potential

1.1. In England, for decades the urban fringe has been a policy and land management Cinderella. As the area of countryside closest to large urban populations, the urban fringe has been under elevated pressures, both positive (such as for recreation) and negative (such as fly tipping and other misuse) for at least three generations.

1.2. Yet policy and programmes have rarely seen it as different from the rest of the countryside – “*a black hole in need of its own policy focus*” (the Royal Town Planning Institute). Not only has this resulted in problems for land owners and managers in seeking to reconcile the pressures the urban fringe is under, without additional support it has also meant that the important opportunity to make the urban fringe much more significant and valuable to its urban neighbours has been missed.

1.3. Arguably there are wide sustainability benefits when an urban fringe can fulfil its potential. The urban fringe has the potential to meet many of the recreation needs of nearby urban populations; to provide a diverse and biodiversity-rich landscape close to where people live; to provide fresh foods for urban markets; to develop new business opportunities based on sustainability opportunities (such as green composting); and to give urban and rural populations the opportunities to understand each other and the countryside better.

In short the urban fringe can step away from being a problem area, disregarded and often seen as expendable

in the face of urban pressure to being a key area of solutions to rural and urban problems.

Problems typically facing the urban fringe

- € **Development pressure** and the uncertainty it creates and the encouragement it gives for land abandonment
- € **Disturbance and disruption** for the land uses of the urban fringe (primarily agriculture) caused by conflict between different land uses and recreational pressures, trespass, vandalism and flytipping
- € **Uncertainty** which militates against long term investment and which can result in high grade agricultural land being used for marginal activities
- € **Land fragmentation** and the loss of a critical mass of farm holdings caused both by development and the lotting up of holdings at sale, leading to holdings passing out of agricultural use (and therefore productive land management)
- € **Market forces** which encourage farm diversification activities unrelated to the land-based economy, favouring activities such as haulage and storage and the re-use of buildings for office and retail development, extending urban pressures outward
- € **Socio-economic characteristics** with the majority of residents working in nearby urban areas and with farmed land being sold to those outside agriculture. This reflects national trends in rural areas, but will be most acutely felt in the urban fringe, leading to the loss of a distinct sense of place ‘owned by its community
- € **Uncertainty** over the implications of recent CAP reforms

1.4. So why has this not happened already? The simple answer is that the urban fringe has fallen across an urban / rural policy divide which has failed adequately to address the links between town and countryside.

An ongoing problem

“to some extent the zone exists around all urban areas, like the pale fringe round an ink-spot on blotting paper.” Nan Fairbrother 1972

1.5. Concern about the urban fringe is not new. Since its formation in 1968 the Countryside Commission, and latterly the Countryside Agency, has had an ongoing commitment to resolving the issues of the urban fringe through a series of programmes and initiatives: from the establishment of urban fringe Countryside Management Projects and Country Parks in the 1970s, through the establishment of Community Forests in partnership with the Forestry Commission, to the present-day re-examination of the role of the urban fringe. This re-examination is receiving renewed emphasis in response to the imperative for more sustainable development.

The urban fringe in national policy

1.6. National policy now recognises both the problems and opportunities of the urban fringe. The Rural White Paper (2000)¹ sets out the particular challenges of farming in the urban fringe, and emphasises the importance of such areas for recreation:

¹ Our Countryside: The Future – A Fair Deal for Rural England, 2000, Defra

“8.6.1. Farming on the urban fringe has its own special attributes and problems. Its landscape is vitally important in its own right and as a bridge to the wider countryside. Demand for access and amenity is high. Crime and vandalism can be problems. The Urban White Paper recognises the importance of agricultural and horticultural businesses in and around cities and towns and sets out our policies for dealing with problems such as crime and antisocial behaviour.”

“11.3.1. The countryside around towns has a particular importance as a source of recreation for city dwellers. It also creates the environmental setting for a city which will encourage inward investment - as increasingly firms want to locate in places where they know their employees will have easy access to attractive and good quality green areas. Our aim is to improve its amenity value.”

1.7. These themes are picked up in national planning policy for rural areas - Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004), which notes that:

“26. While the policies in PPG2 continue to apply in green belts, local planning authorities should ensure that planning policies in LDDs address the particular land use issues and opportunities to be found in the countryside around all urban areas, recognising its importance to those who live or work there, and also in providing the nearest and most accessible countryside to urban residents. Planning authorities should aim to secure environmental improvements and maximise a range of beneficial uses of this land, whilst reducing potential conflicts between neighbouring land uses. This should include improvement of public access (e.g.

through support for country parks and community forests) and facilitating the provision of appropriate sport and recreation facilities.”

1.8. **Thus current national policy is clearly supportive of multi-purpose use of the urban fringe, both for the benefit of its communities and those of neighbouring urban areas.**

An area with great potential to contribute to sustainable development

1.9. The above themes are picked up and expanded in the recent vision document for the urban fringe produced by the Countryside Agency and Groundwork – *The Countryside in and Around Towns* 2005. This notes that the urban fringe:

“provides towns and cities with their immediate landscape setting. It also represents a dynamic and complex set of environments and a wonderfully eclectic mix of land uses and habitats. It is this dynamism and variety, plus its pivotal role in linking town with country, that makes the countryside in and around towns ideally suited to demonstrating sustainable development.”

1.10. This vision sees the urban fringe as performing a MULTI-FUNCTIONAL role with the potential to provide:

1. A bridge to the countryside
2. A gateway to the town
3. A health centre
4. A classroom
5. A recycling and renewable energy centre
6. A productive landscape
7. A cultural legacy
8. A place for sustainable living

9. An engine for regeneration
10. A nature reserve.

1.11. Thus the urban fringe represents an area of unique and untapped opportunity. It can:

- “- be made readily accessible to most people*
- contribute to the health, wealth and well-being of urban and rural communities*
- underpin more sustainable living*
- strengthen biodiversity in both town and country”*

An Action Plan for the Southern Urban Fringe of Swindon

1.12. It is both the specific problems experienced by the urban fringe and the opportunities that the area represent that have led to the development of an Urban Fringe Action Plan (UFAP) for the southern urban fringe of Swindon. This area is of strategic significance, providing the southern gateway to Swindon from the M4 and the bridge between Swindon and the nationally protected landscape of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the south – the third largest AONB in England.

1.13. The Urban Fringe Action Plan (UFAP) for the southern urban fringe of Swindon is a non-statutory plan but the need for such action had been agreed through the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan process as set out in Policy SLM3 and Action 61:

AONB Management Plan² “Policy SLM3: Managing the impact of surrounding urban areas: development

² North Wessex Downs Management Plan - Policies for Delivery January 2004

of multi-disciplinary partnerships to develop strategies and integrated projects to manage the pressures and opportunities presented by the AONB's close proximity to its surrounding urban centres"

*AONB Management Plan³ "**Action 61: An urban fringe project:** development of an urban fringe project tackling some of the pressures and opportunities presented by the close proximity of the AONB to its surrounding towns. This project to demonstrate the value of an integrated (cross-sectoral), cross boundary approach to tackling these issues"*

1.14. In addition, the UFAP represents the views of a wide range of stakeholders. It is a shared document, to be taken forward by all of the partners engaged in its production and delivery.

1.15. The UFAP focuses on ACTIONS that will achieve a more sustainable and multi-functional future for the area. It also identifies those changes and additions to POLICY required to ensure that the full potential of the urban fringe is realised over the longer term. Without firm policy support any early achievements are likely to be short-lived, failing to ensure the long-term sustainable development of this vitally important area.

1.16. **The Action Plan itself forms the second part to this report, while the first part sets the context to the Action Plan: outlining the character of the area; the particular issues facing it; the policy context in which it sits and the means of delivering the Action Plan.**

³ North Wessex Downs Management Plan – Action Plan. January 2004

2. THE SWINDON URBAN FRINGE: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The character of the Action Plan Area

2.1. The Plan Area is contiguous with the Great Western Community Forest boundary (though the Forest wraps around the north of Swindon), and is heavily overlapped by the North Wessex Downs AONB which encompasses the scarp slopes and downland to the south (**Figures 1 and 2**). The Plan Area is bisected from east to west by the M4.

2.2. The Plan area falls largely within Swindon Borough, but includes an area of Kennet District Council in the south and North Wiltshire District Council in the west

2.3. Swindon is one of the fastest growing urban areas in the country. It has expanded into the countryside surrounding it for a number of decades. It is this trend of strong growth close up against the North Wessex Downs AONB which creates particular tensions (but also opportunities), and suggests the need for an Action Plan to manage the future of the area for the benefit of both Swindon and the AONB.

2.4. **Landscape:** The landscape of the Plan area falls into two main Countryside Character Areas with their own distinct landscape as recognised by the Countryside Agency's Countryside Character Programme (**Figure 3**). These are:

- € The Upper Thames Clay Vales, and
- € The Berkshire and Marlborough Downs

2.5. There is also a small area of the Avon Vales along the western boundary of the Plan area (the area of the Midvale Ridge is taken up by the urban area of Swindon). The

dramatic change from the lowland Vales landscape to the rising scarp of the Marlborough Downs is a key characteristic of this area⁴, with the foot of the scarp slope roughly marking the northern boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB.



The landscape of the Vales close to Swindon

⁴ More detail is provided by the landscape character assessments of North Wiltshire and Kennet Districts and the North Wessex Downs

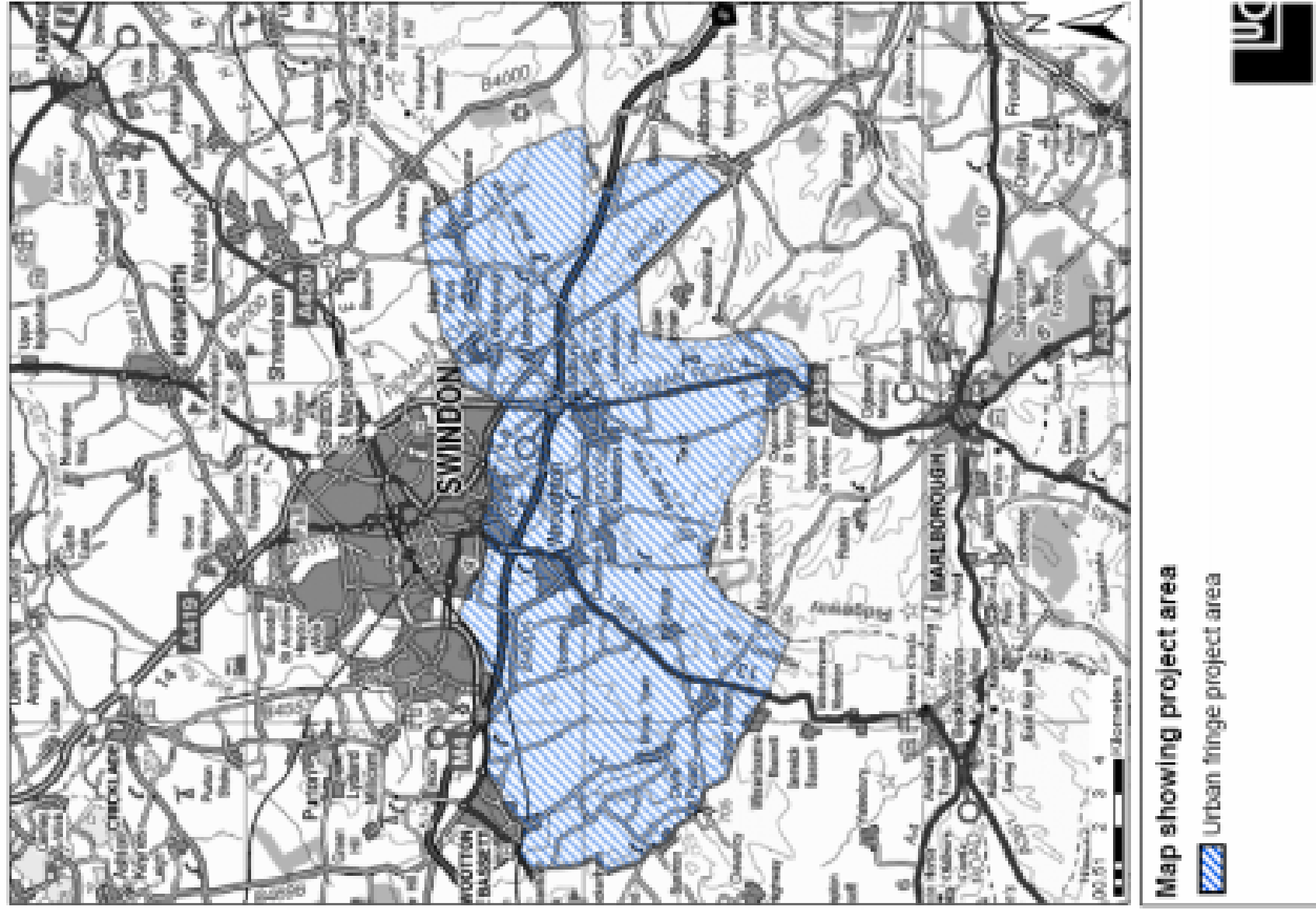


Figure 1: The Plan Area

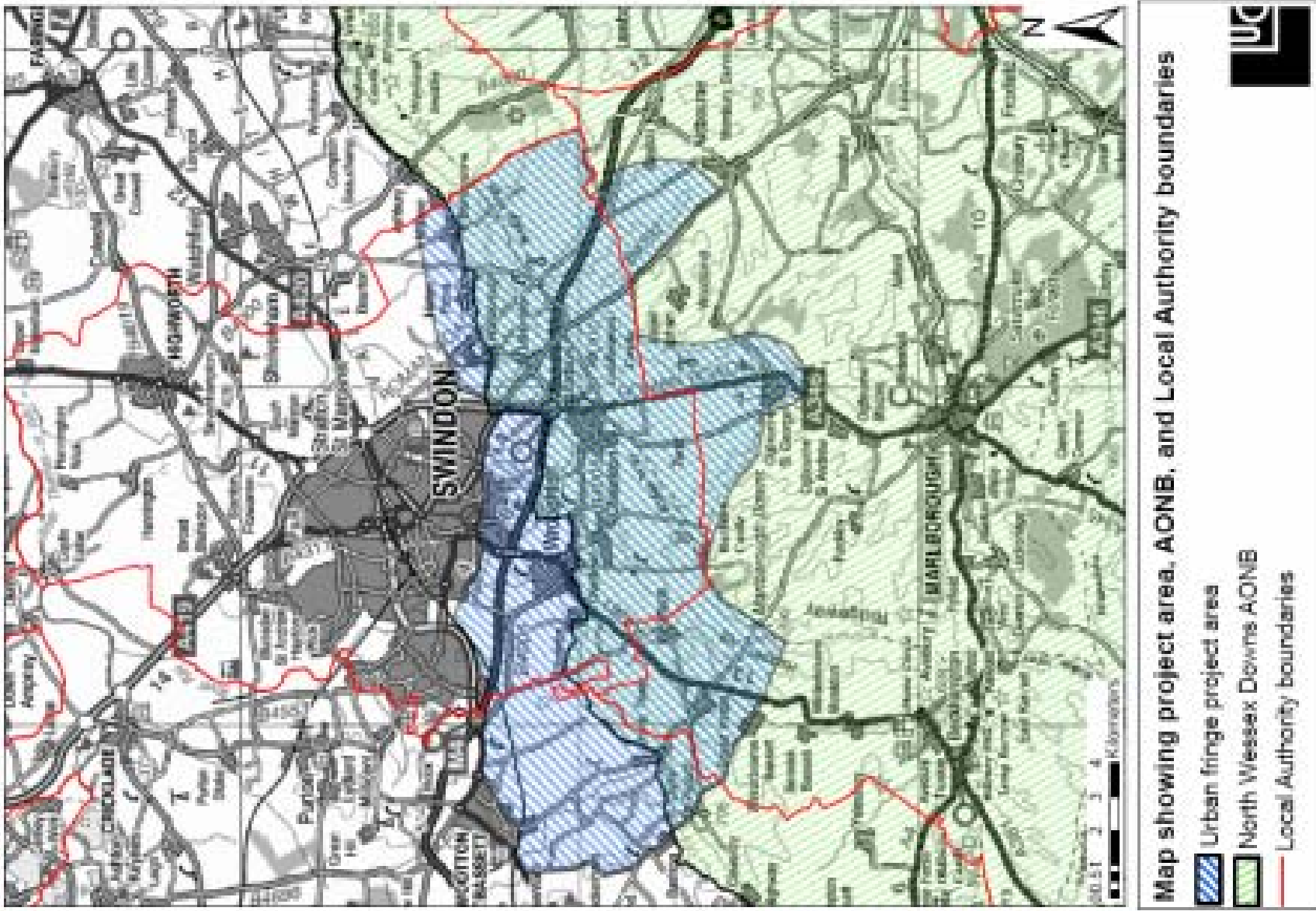


Figure 2: Study Area in Context

2.6. Closest to Swindon is the traditional predominantly pastoral lowland landscape of the Vales, with rectilinear hedge-bound fields with hedgerow trees primarily under grass, reflecting a strong history of dairy farming, although considerable areas are now under horse grazing / pony paddocks.

2.7. Moving south, the land rises abruptly as a double north-facing scarp formed by the Lower and Upper Chalk of the Marlborough Downs, like a giant double step, with the intervening narrow plateau of the eroded surface of the Lower Chalk forming the 'tread' between the two scarps. These dramatic scarps are punctuated by coombes adding further articulation to the landform. These steep slopes are covered in a mixture of remnant chalk grassland and scattered woodland (largely ancient). The intervening plateau and upper plateau above the second scarp, by contrast, are largely under arable production with small amounts of grazing. This is a large-scale chalkland landscape where its predominant character rests on its openness and grandeur – a majestic landscape of national importance, forming part of the third largest AONB in England.

2.8. From Swindon the dramatic scarp landform creates a recognisable horizon – it is Swindon's 'view'.

2.9. **Cultural Heritage:** The antiquity of the Chalk landscape is accentuated by Iron Age hillforts and Bronze Age barrows clustered along the skyline, not least Barbury Castle and Liddington Castle (Iron Age hillforts lying on the crest of the upper scarp) and no less than 33 other Scheduled Monuments within the Action Plan area, largely concentrated on the chalk and including 17 barrow sites, and a range of other antiquities such as strip lynchets, ancient field systems, a Roman villa and the remains of a Medieval village,

2.10. **Wildlife:** This, like many areas of urban fringe, is an area rich in wildlife, with the range of different habitats reflecting the underlying geology and different histories of land management. There are no less than seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) receiving national protection (**Figure 4**) within the area, of which the largest is Coate Park, a designated Local Nature Reserve, lying directly adjacent to the southern urban edge of Swindon and forming part of a Country Park managed by Swindon Borough Council.

Table 2.1: SSSIs within the Plan area

Name	Size	Interest
Coate Water	49 ha	Two lakes (one constructed as a canal feeder reservoir in the 18 th Century and the other formed through flooding of low lying land in the 1970s) with associated semi-natural habitat. Key features of interest: open water, semi-natural broadleaved woodland, neutral grassland, dragonfly assemblage and breeding bird assemblage
Burderop Wood	48 ha	Semi-natural broadleaved woodland and associated ground flora. Numerous mature oak, wet flushes and small ponds
Coombes, Hinton Parva	16 ha	Chalk grassland with rich invertebrate fauna
Clouts Wood	13.5 ha	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve. Broadleaved woodland, predominantly ancient in origin. Boundary stream and small pond.
Goldsborough Farm meadow	10 ha	Hay meadow
Bicknoll Dip Woods	5.5 ha	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland containing national and internationally rare mosses.
Wootton Bassett Mudsprings		A geological SSSI, with the springs bringing Jurassic ammonites to the surface

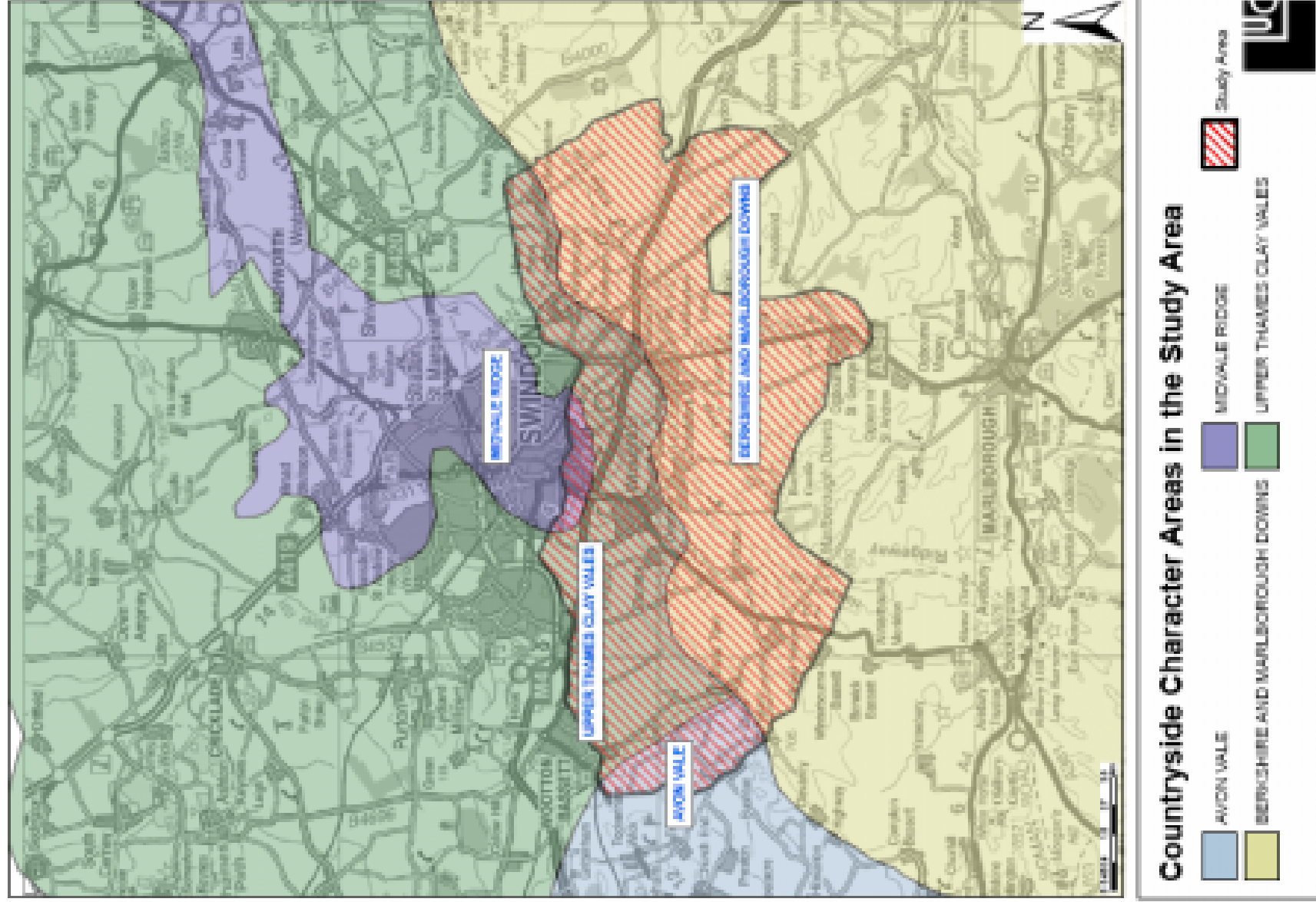


Figure 3: Countryside Character Areas

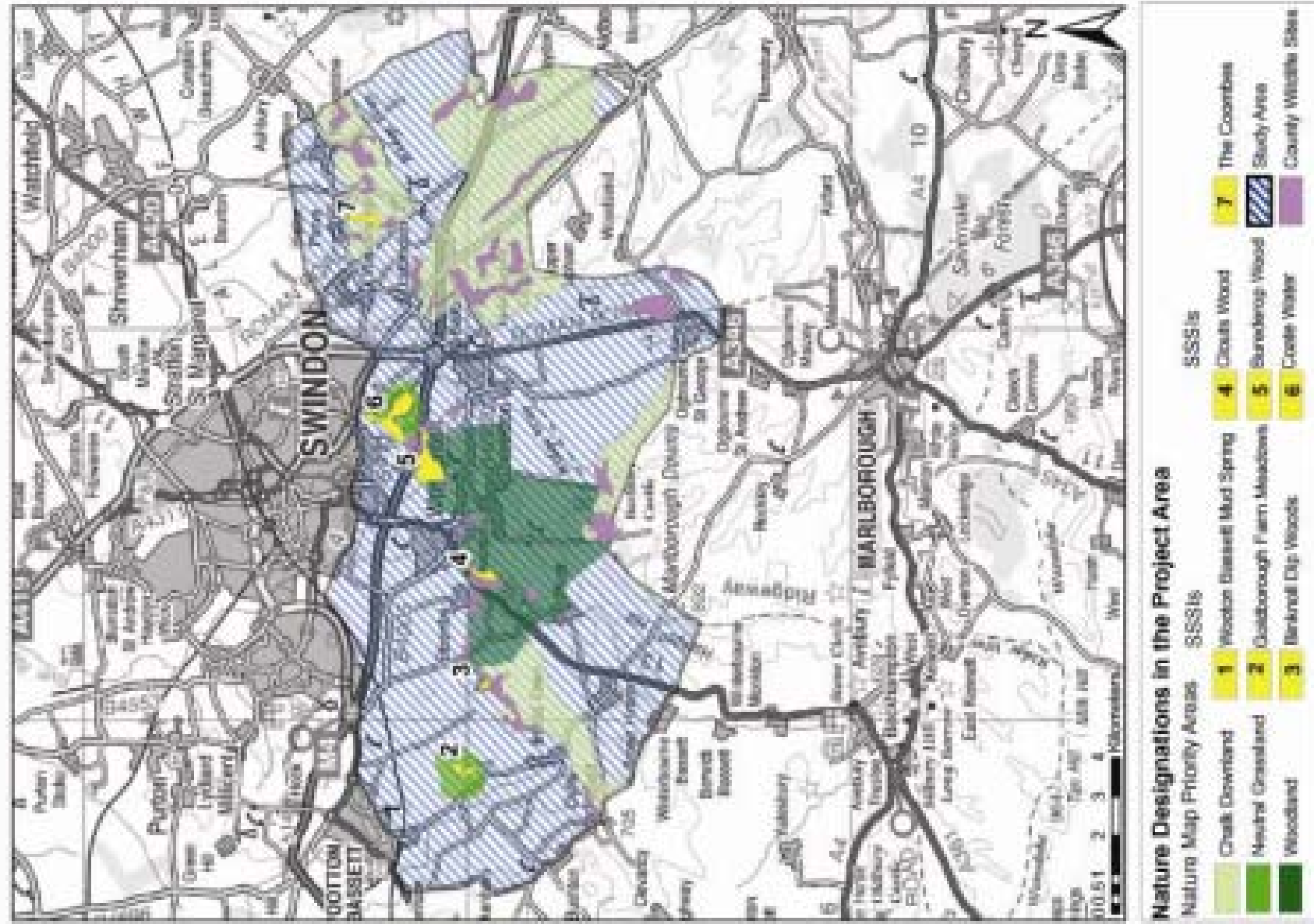


Figure 4: Location of SSSIs in the Study Area

2.11. In addition, the area supports 60 County Wildlife Sites, all of which are within the North Wessex Downs AONB. These include 33 chalk grassland sites and 12 ancient woodland sites (mainly associated with the scarp slopes).

2.12. **Agriculture:** As an area of countryside the urban fringe is, of course, heavily influenced by agriculture, with dairying the traditional farm type in the Vale, and the downland of the AONB largely given over to large arable units. This division is reflected in the agricultural land classification, with the heavy clay soils of the Vales being Grades 3 and 4 and the lighter soils of the Chalk largely being Grade 2 (**Figure 5**).

2.13. Reflecting the history of dairy farming and urban fringe location, farm size is generally small. Over a third of registered holdings within the Plan area are under 5 hectares in size, and in total some 52% of holdings are less than 70 hectares in size. These smaller holdings are largely concentrated in the Vale and adjacent to the main settlements of the area. Conversely, within the North Wessex Downs farm size typically exceeds 100 hectares, with 20% of all farms within the study area falling within this size category.

2.14. Over the whole of the Plan area, the most common farm types are cereals (20%), cattle/sheep (19%) and dairy (36 farms, 11%). However, a large proportion of farms, some 41%, fall into the 'other' category, typically supporting pony paddocks and reflecting the small and mixed nature of many holdings in the area.

2.15. The area closest to Swindon is mostly owned by Swindon Borough Council (**Figure 6**). The Council's landholding has traditionally been used for dairy farming. Whilst the number of active dairy units is declining, there remain six dairy units where investment is being made by both

landlords and tenants. Therefore dairy production is likely to remain a key feature of the area closest to the M4.

2.16. In common with national trends, within the Plan area the number of full-time farmers and directors has decreased gradually over the last four years, with a shift to part-time farmers. The full-time employed workforce has fallen sharply, by 40% in four years, and the number of part-time employers has halved over the same period.

2.17. However, in the view of the farming community and the Borough Council as landlord, the majority of the Plan area is likely to remain in agricultural production. Over the next 10 years it is anticipated that:

- € the Council's farms will remain under similar land uses, with about half as dairy farms and the remaining land perhaps amalgamated on retirement but run for cattle and sheep
- € there will, over the whole area, be a gradual increase in small holdings, hobby farms and pony paddocks, Numerically these may increase significantly, but will not involve a significant proportion of the land area the larger mixed and arable units will continue, but with an increased emphasis on environmental management in parallel with production, reflecting the current reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- € diversification of land uses will inevitably occur in places, perhaps for recreational uses where opportunities are identified and planning permission is granted
- € farmers will continue to seek alternative sources of income from farm and building diversification, although it is anticipated that these changes will mostly be centred on the farmsteads rather than affecting land use significantly

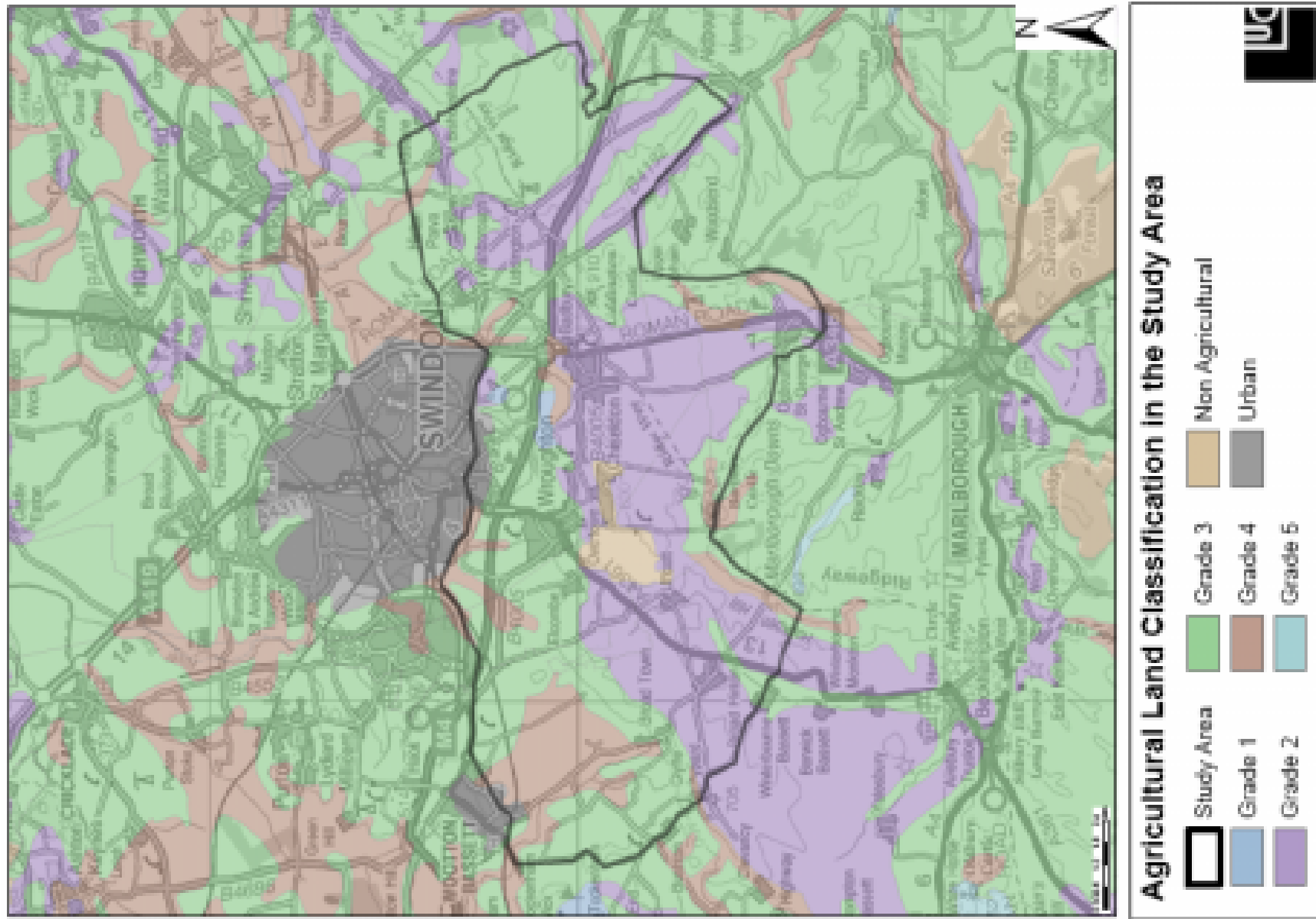


Figure 5: Agricultural Land Classification

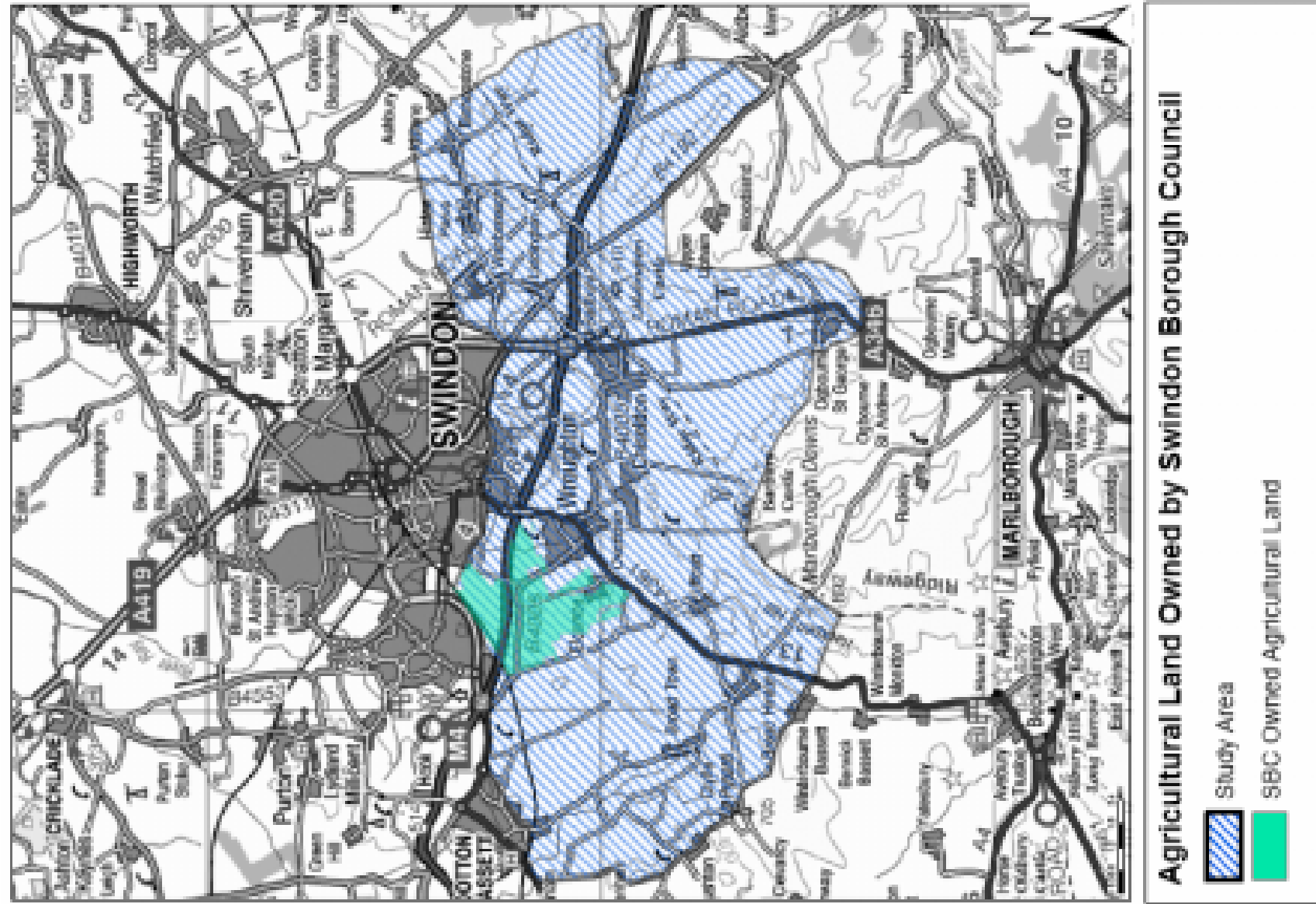


Figure 6: Swindon BC owned land

2.18. Thus, there is likely to be an overall evolution and subtle change in land use, rather than any radical or sudden alteration.

2.19. **Woodland and Forestry:** Although included in the Great Western Community Forest (GWCF) the area is sparsely wooded at present (**Figure 7**), including important ancient woodland on the scarp slope, and some areas of new planting under the auspices of the GWCF.



2.20. **Major development and the settlements of the urban fringe:** Swindon is identified in Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 10) as a 'major urban area' proposed for significant future growth. It is also the only Principal Urban Area (PUA) in Wiltshire. 26,000 additional dwellings are proposed in the Borough by 2016 (from 1996), and 280 hectares of employment land are also planned in the same

timeframe (*Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan Review 2016: Deposit Draft Alteration – October 2003*). In Swindon Borough alone, around 5,500 new dwellings are proposed by 2011 (not including allocations for the Southern Development Area and Coate considered separately below).

2.21. Swindon is clearly a growth area and a significant proportion of this growth will be on the edges of the current built up area. The past rapid growth of the town has clearly left apprehensions about future growth amongst those currently living in the urban fringe, not least major proposed development sites.

2.22. **The Southern Development Area (Figure 8)**, on the south western edge of Swindon, is confirmed as an area of expansion. Development there will comprise 4,300 new dwellings and associated development including employment, retail and community facilities, schools and open space. Strategic green corridors and open spaces will remain to enable access to Swindon and the countryside. A legal agreement has now been signed and includes widespread mitigation works in the countryside immediately south of the site.

2.23. To the south east of the current built up area of Swindon, and in the central part of the Action Plan area, adjacent to Coate Water Country Park is the Coate development area. This is another proposed site of major expansion for Swindon, comprising a new university campus and associated facilities, including 1,800 new dwellings. Although now endorsed by a Structure Plan Examination in Public, the local plan policy is still subject to an Inspector's report, as English Nature raised concerns, at the Local Plan Inquiry, about the likely impact on the Coate SSSI and the Countryside Agency was concerned about the potential visual

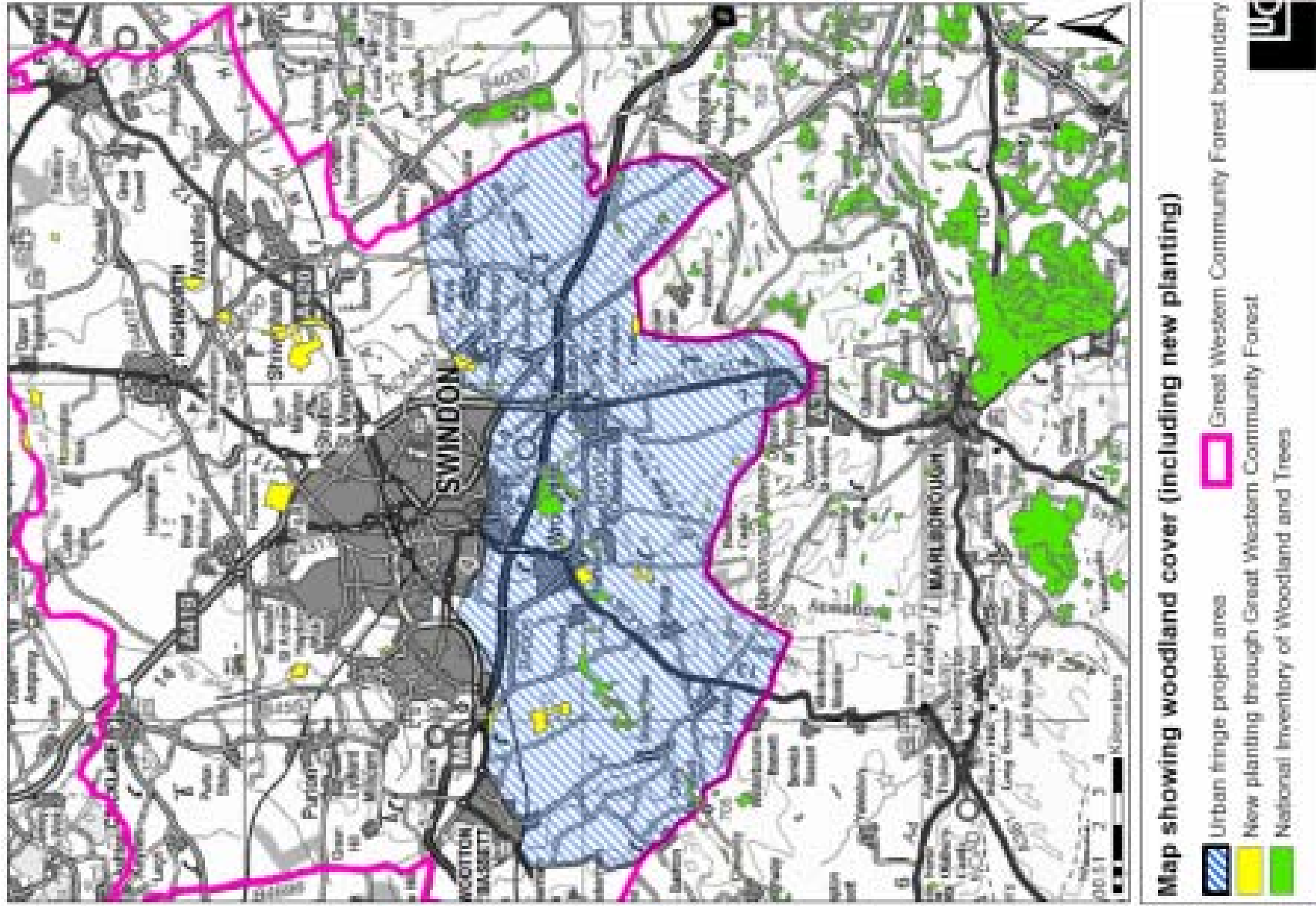


Figure 7 GWCF and woodland cover

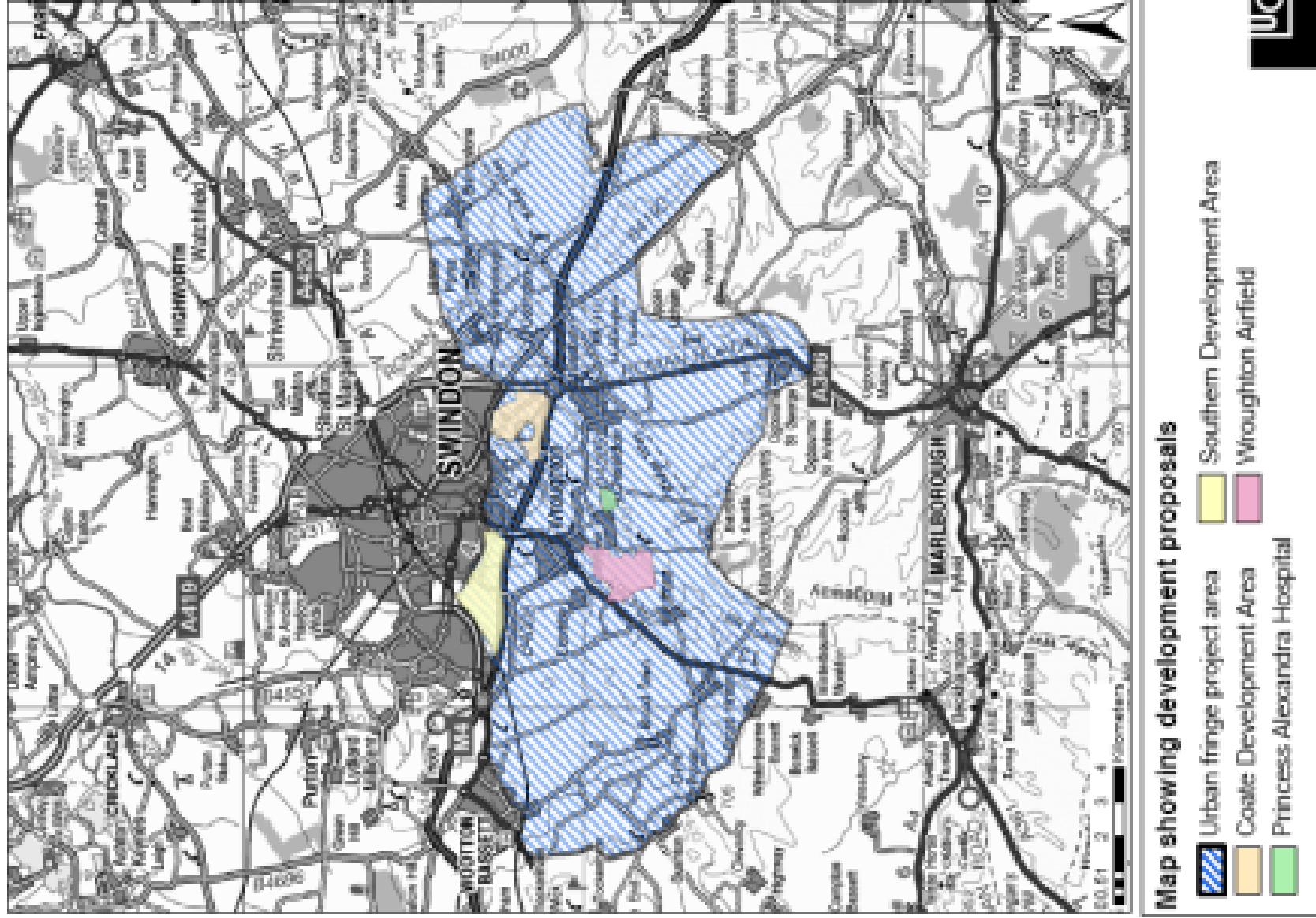


Figure 8: Major Development Sites

impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB. Several statutory Consultees have also objected to the outline planning application.

2.24. The third potential site of major development is **Wroughton airfield** where the National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI) has plans to develop a National Collection Centre and major new resource on the theme of sustainable development. The draft Local Plan contains a policy in support of development on the site, but this is also subject to objections, including one from the Government Office for the South West, and will also be considered at the local plan inquiry.

2.25. Wroughton is the largest settlement in the study area. It has experienced rapid expansion, particularly through the development of new residential estates in the 1960s, and now has a population of 6,850 (2001 Census). The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 Revised Deposit Draft (2003), identifies Wroughton as a primary rural settlement where only limited development will be provided.

2.26. Other settlements within the Action Plan area include Chiseldon (total population 2,225), Wanborough (total population 1,595) and Badbury, and Ogbourne St George, with a scatter of smaller villages and hamlets. The large market town of Wootton Bassett lies on the immediate western edge of the Action Plan area.

2.27. In addition to the M4 and Junction 15, which have a profound influence on the character of the area, the A4361 (Devizes to Swindon), A346 (Salisbury, Marlborough to Swindon) and B4192 (Hungerford to Swindon) all feed into Swindon through the Action Plan area, and are heavily used at rush hour for commuting. Wroughton is subject to heavy net

out-commuting, containing only 1,854 jobs but 3,164 economically active people (Regional Observatory 2005). According to the 2001 Census figures, the three larger settlements of Wroughton, Chiseldon and Wanborough combined have a total of 2,500 people commuting daily to Swindon. But this, of course, is a small fraction of the total number of people passing through the Action Plan area daily as part of work commuting, both to Swindon and to the M4 as the route to other main employment centres (**Figure 9**). Through consultations as part of this study, the A4361 and B4005 through Wroughton and the lane through the small hamlet of Hodson were identified as particularly suffering from rush hour /'rat running' problems.

2.28. **Local services:** The range of services available within the settlements of the Action Plan area reflects their size and function. Wroughton as a small market town and the main settlement of the Plan Area has a range of services including one primary and one secondary school; two supermarkets (Co-op and Somerfield), a post office and pharmacy; Ridgeway Hospital and MRI Centre, a health centre, hospice and nursing home; a business park of eight units; and a leisure centre shared with the secondary school.

2.29. The services available in the other settlements are as indicated in Table 2.2 (this information has been drawn from a yellow pages search and site visits but requires verification by the local communities).

Figure 9: Scale of commuting into Swindon across the study area

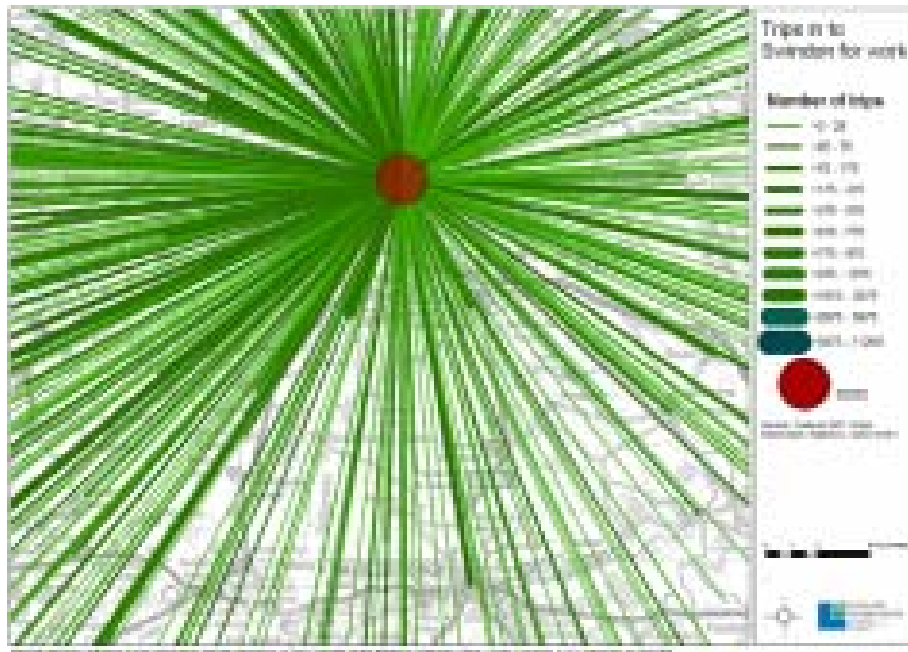


Table 2.2: Services offered by the settlements of the Action Plan area

	Village shop/	Post office	Garage	Pub	Hotel	Village Hall	Primary school	Surgery
Bishopstone	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-
Broad Hinton	1	1	1	2	-	-	1	-
Broad Town	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-
Chiseldon	1	1	1	4	2	-	-	1
Clyffe Pypard	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Hinton Parva	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Liddington	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Ogbourne St George	1	1	-	2	1	1	1	-
Uffcott	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wanborough	1	1	2	4	-	-	-	1
Winterbourne Bassett	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

2.30. **Access and rights of way:** There is a fairly dense network of rights of way running through the study area up to the edge of Swindon (**Figure 10**). The Ridgeway National Trail forms the boundary to the Action Plan area running along the top of the upper scarp and passing out of the Action Plan area to the north east, while the White Horse Trail joins the Ridgeway from the west of the Action Plan area. There are also new Greenways around Swindon, and additional Greenways proposed by a recent study for the Community Forest (**Figure 11**). In addition a number of cycle routes are associated with the area including National Route 45, Aldbourne Chase Route, Swindon Loop, and the Wiltshire Cycleway (**Figure 12**).

2.31. Barbury and Liddington Castles are two large Iron Age hill forts on the Ridgeway within the Action Plan area. Barbury Castle has a large car park and toilet block, run by Swindon Borough Council as a Country Park. The other Country Park within the Action Plan area is that of Coate Water which has already been described.

2.32. As indicated from the table on the previous page, there are at least 20 pubs and three hotels within the study area (including those in the open country). According to a yellow pages search, there are also at least 11 livery yards / riding stables within the Action Plan area, as follows:

- Broad Hinton (2)
- Chiseldon (3)
- Wanborough (1)
- Winterbourne Bassett (1)
- Wootton Bassett (3)
- Wroughton (1)

The area covered by the Swindon Urban Fringe Action Plan in many ways is an area of contradictions. It includes the spectacular landscapes of the North Wessex Downs, it is rich in biodiversity and includes a wealth of historic features. It still includes a strong agricultural economy but areas close to Swindon are under pressure as a result of uncertainty over the future, marginal viability, and urban pressures, including vandalism and litter dumping. The future of the area hangs in the balance. With carefully guided support it could become an area of immense opportunity and multiple-use, but without specific focus much of that which is most valued could be squandered and the great potential of the area, both as the gateway to the North Wessex Downs AONB and to Swindon, and as the bridge between town and country, could be lost.



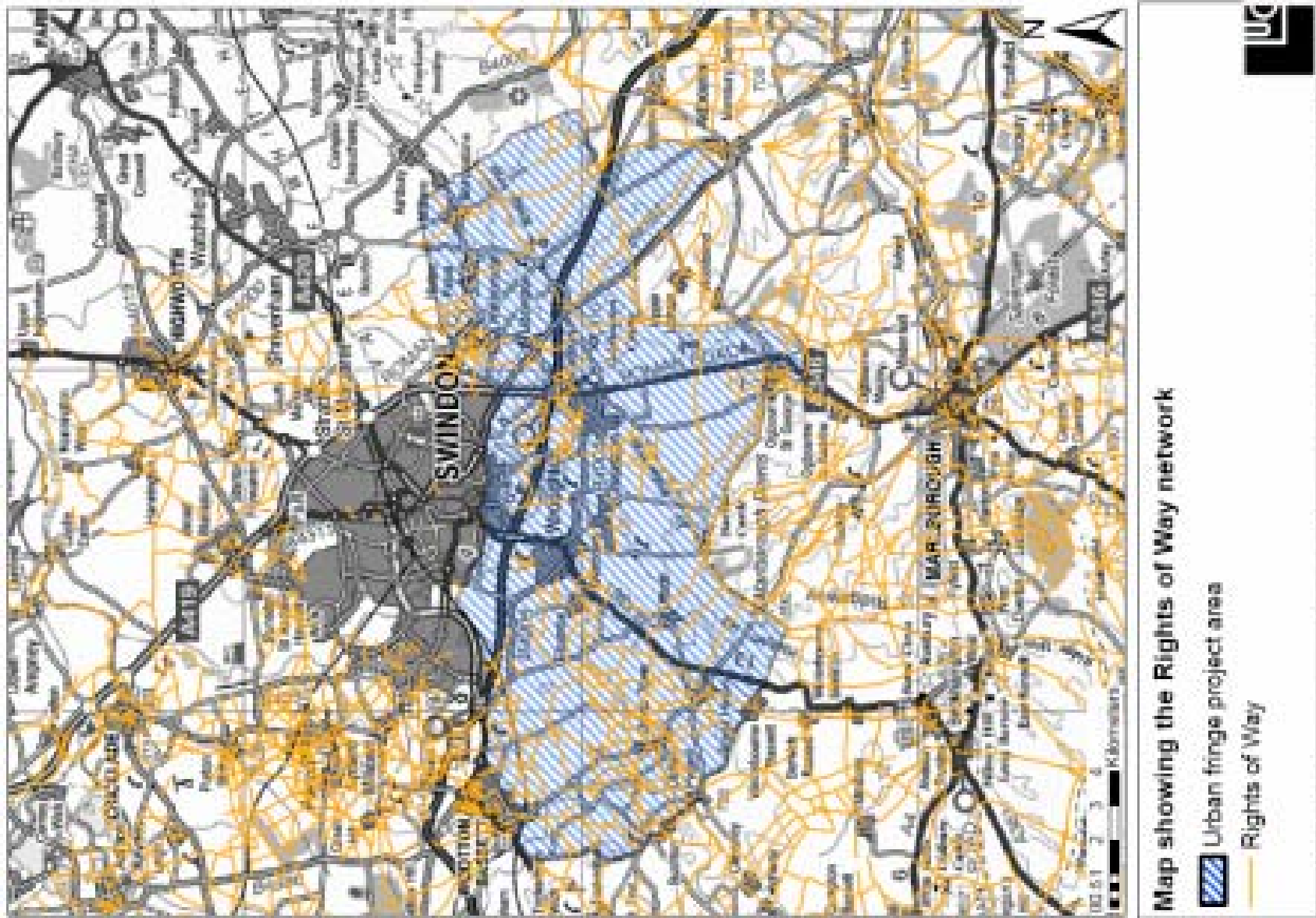


Figure 10: Rights of Way

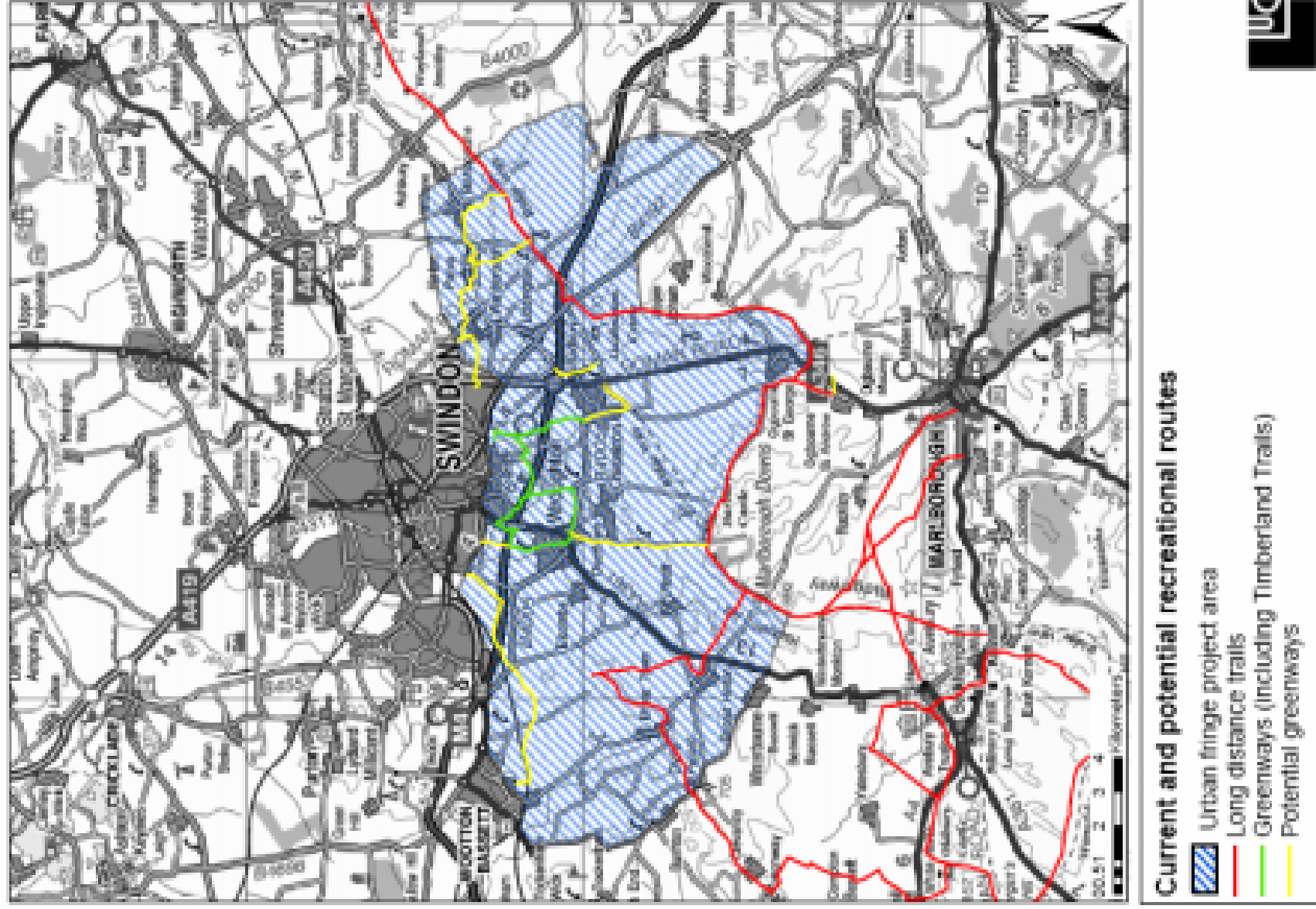
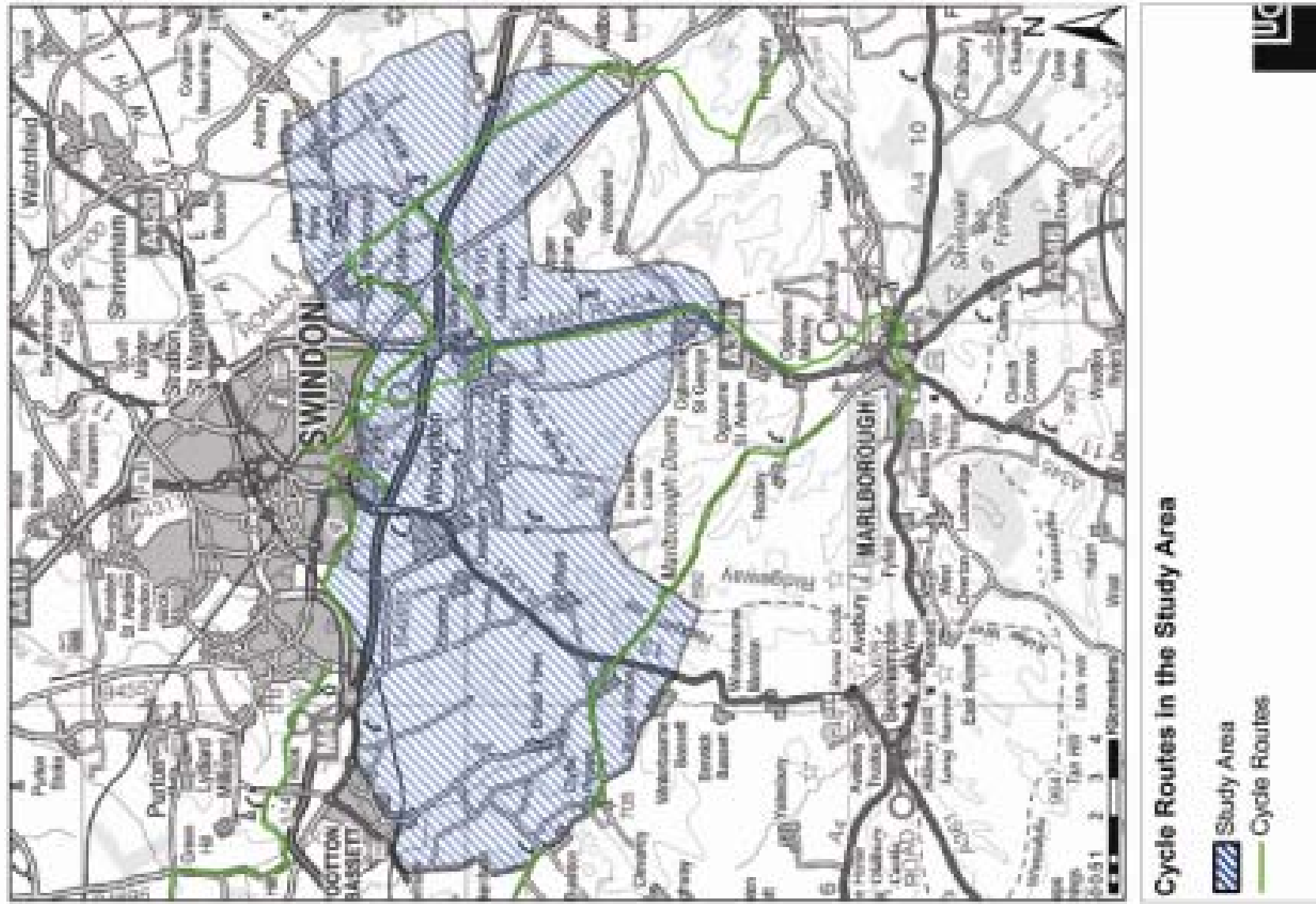


Figure 11: Existing and Potential Greenways



3. PREPARING THE URBAN FRINGE ACTION PLAN: IDENTIFIED ISSUES

Process of preparing the Urban Fringe Action Plan

3.1. Preparation of the Swindon Urban Fringe Action Plan has been a collaborative activity, involving the four local authorities that cover the Action Plan area, national and regional agencies and parish councils and other local groups.

3.2. The starting point for its preparation was the ***Fringe Benefits*** workshop organised by the North Wessex Downs AONB team, Swindon Borough Council and the Great Western Community Forest and held on 31 March 2004. The event brought together over 50 stakeholders to begin to understand the perceived problems relating to this urban fringe area. The event was deemed a great success. It proved the case for a closer focus on the urban fringe in policy and action, and demonstrated the commitment from all quarters for such an endeavour.

3.3. Following this, a series of three working group meetings were held over the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 to prepare this Urban Fringe Action Plan. This approach reflects that:

- € the issues the Action Plan needs to address are best defined by those who know the area best – those who live there and those whose work involves the urban fringe
- € because the implementation of the Action Plan depends so much on a coordinated and integrated approach across a number of organisations, such organisations need to be ‘at the table’ from the outset.

3.4. Invitees to the working groups were drawn from a smaller selection of organisations than for *Fringe Benefits*, as the focus in these meetings was on progressing this earlier work, and thus required a leaner structure. A full list of invitees to this second round of working group meetings is attached at Appendix 1.

3.5. The purposes of the **first** working group meeting were to:

- € update participants on progress since the *Fringe Benefits?* workshop
- € confirm the issues identified by *Fringe Benefits?*
- € explore the evidence base supporting these issues
- € confirm problems and opportunities
- € identify main components of the vision
- € begin consideration of key actions
- € collectively agree the main players in achieving the appropriate actions within the urban fringe

3.6. The **second** working group meeting:

- € confirmed the vision and objectives for the UFAP
- € considered additional evidence gathered since the first working group
- € began work to identify the detailed actions needed to deliver the vision and objectives

3.7. Finally the **third** working group meeting:

- € confirmed the full set of actions

- € considered responsibility for the individual actions
- € set priorities for individual actions.

3.8. Following this approach, each working group effectively built on the previous one, though augmented by additional work in between. Through this process a UFAP emerged that enjoyed wide support across those involved, and which is already leading to movement on the actions identified in the Plan.

Evidence

3.9. The primary evidence that has informed the UFAP has been:

- € a review of existing policy documents and strategies that overlap with the Action Plan area
- € the views of stakeholders expressed at *the Fringe Benefits?* meeting and subsequently at the three workshops
- € primary data sources, where available

3.10. It must be stressed that the evidence in support of the identified issues is generally light. This reflects a national problem. Whilst the issues facing the urban fringe are well known, little quantified evidence is available to confirm their extent. Nevertheless the frequency with which the issues were raised underline their perceived significance.

3.11. The issues identified through *Fringe Benefits?* and the subsequent workshops are summarised on the next page. These have guided the development of the Action Plan.

Table 3.1: KEY ISSUES RELATING TO THE SOUTHERN URBAN FRINGE OF SWINDON

1. Erosion of landscape character and biodiversity	<p>As a result of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € uncertainty about future development proposals and their implications € unsympathetic development and development pressure on the urban edge, and as a result of inappropriate farm diversification € poorly managed horse-pasture and neglect of land where it has fallen out of agricultural use (immediately along Swindon's urban edge and between Wroughton and the M4) € suburbanisation of the landscape associated with unsympathetic cumulative development and clutter (such as the proliferation of road signs) leading to a lack of distinction between urban and rural areas € poor management of sites of cultural importance
2. Uncertainty about the future of agriculture in the urban fringe	<p>As a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € uncertainty about future development proposals and their implications € the implications of CAP reform € lack of support for maintaining the core farm business € lack of business knowledge on appropriate farm diversification options within the farming community € misuse and abuse as a result of trespassing and rubbish dumping
3. A fragmented and poorly managed rights of way network	<p>As a result of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € pressure / need for recreation on Swindon's doorstep € lack of management of the rights of way network € lack of strategic links (walking and cycling) from Swindon's urban edge into the deeper countryside € lack of appropriate bridleway links from the inner urban fringe into the deeper countryside € lack of short circular walks suitable for use by local residents € damage caused by off-road vehicular use (both legal and illegal)
4. Lack of transport alternatives to the car	<p>As a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € lack of public transport provision that serves the recreational needs of the urban fringe

Table 3.1 cont/: KEY ISSUES RELATING TO THE SOUTHERN URBAN FRINGE OF SWINDON

5. Rat running on rural roads	As a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € rising car use € a significant increase in commuter traffic
6. Declining community sustainability	As a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € loss of basic services from the settlements of the urban fringe € lack of affordable housing in urban fringe settlements
7. Lack of understanding / communication	As a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € lack of information on existing initiatives and sources of advice within the urban fringe € perception of lack of community engagement and involvement € misunderstanding between rural and urban communities
8. Misuse of the countryside	As a result of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € vandalism € trespass € rubbish dumping <p>which in combination adversely affect the viability of agriculture, the recreational experience and the pride of local communities</p>
9. Lack of integration	As a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € lack of joined up approaches to management and provision in the urban fringe

4. CONSIDERING THE SWINDON URBAN FRINGE IN POLICY

4.1. Whilst the issues associated with the southern urban fringe of Swindon have much in common with many other urban fringe areas, it is notable that the urban fringe has received little special or separate treatment within the main policy documents that cover the area (up to the end of 2004 when the full review of policy documents was undertaken).

Regional Planning

4.2. Current Regional Planning Guidance (RPG10), and other regional planning documents do not pick out the urban fringe as a special or distinct area. Unlike the emerging South East Plan, the most recent draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026 does not pick out the urban fringe in specific policy. It does however have a policy on Green Infrastructure (GI) and recognises its role in helping to accommodate change and ensure quality of life in expanding settlements. The Strategy states that GI should be required as an integral part of development and provision for GI should be incorporated into Spatial Strategies.

Local Plans and Strategies

4.3. A summary of the content of local plans and strategies available at the end of 2004 relative to the urban fringe is given in the Table on the following pages:

The urban fringe – a policy gap

4.4. This review highlights that existing plans and policies generally DO cover many of the issues associated with the urban fringe, but they DO NOT have a clear urban fringe focus.

In other words, existing plans and strategies ‘wash over’ the urban fringe, rather than giving the area a particular policy focus that reflects the specific contributions that it can make to sustainable development and the future of town and country.

4.5. So policy coverage of issues such as rights of way, sustainable transport, landscape protection, local services, farm diversification, and of designations such as the AONB, lack an urban fringe emphasis.

4.6. As a consequence, regional and local policy fails to acknowledge the strategic significance of the urban fringe, so the opportunity of a collective policy uplift in the urban fringe, with mutually supportive policies, is missed, and progress to deliver a multi-purpose urban fringe can only be piecemeal.

4.7. The UFAP needs the support of a more robust and coordinated set of regional and local policy, as explored in the next section and detailed at the end of the Action Plan.

Table 4.1: LOCAL POLICY RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR THE SOUTHERN URBAN FRINGE OF SWINDON

Issue	Plan / Strategy	Response
1. Erosion of landscape character and biodiversity (through development pressure, suburbanisation and poor land management)	All Local Plans	Have policies that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € protect the countryside for its own sake € protect designated landscapes and statutory nature conservation and heritage sites, including those with EU recognition from development € protect the landscape setting to historic settlements such as Wootton Bassett
	Swindon Borough Local Plan (1999) / Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 Revised Deposit Draft (October 2003)	Has policies that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € address development in the countryside and landscape character protection. There is also accompanying Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance. € state that new development will be largely concentrated in the urban area and development land to the South (the Southern Development Area and Coate) € protect the separate identities and distinctive character of named towns and villages and prevent their coalescence with Swindon through the maintenance of rural buffers € recognise the foreground of the AONB as an Area of Local Landscape Importance in providing a setting to the AONB. This area has been carefully defined, having regard to its visual relationship to and visibility from the AONB € protect against development that is harmful to the implementation of the Great Western Community Forest and Strategic Green Corridors
	Swindon Borough Council Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation in Planning and Development	Encourages developers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € consider how their development can make a positive contribution to biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

Table 4.1 cont/: LOCAL POLICY RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR THE SOUTHERN URBAN FRINGE OF SWINDON

Issue	Plan / Strategy	Response
1. Erosion of landscape character and biodiversity contd.	Swindon Borough Council: Enhancing Biodiversity in Green Space for New Development – a draft design guide	Provides guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € improving biodiversity in green space € calls for a hierarchy of accessible green space provision in line with English Nature's Accessible Natural Green space Standards in Towns and Cities
	North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004	Has policies that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € encourage the use of planning briefs for major development within and on the edge of the AONB (such as those for Wroughton Airfield) € seek environmental improvements as part of major developments € encourage farm diversification supported by a whole farm plan and linked to design guidance € promote the best environmental management of horse pasture
	Kennet District Landscape and Conservation Strategy 2011 Supplementary Guidance and Landscape Character Assessments for North Wiltshire and the North Wessex Downs	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € information on the character, quality and sensitivity of different parts of the landscape, providing important information to inform planning decisions € (Kennet Conservation Strategy) identifies conservation enhancements for the Marlborough Downs and Avebury Plain (parts of which fall within the Action Plan Area)
	Biodiversity Action Plans for Swindon and Wiltshire	Set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Targets for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity
2. Uncertainty about the future of agriculture in the urban fringe	Support for the core farm business is rarely mentioned in policy and strategy documents, with the focus on the opportunities and implications of farm diversification	
	All Local Plans	Have policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € on farm diversification
	Adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2001	€ Has policies on equestrian activities
	Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 Revised Deposit Draft	€ Has a policy for rural diversification which includes horse related activities

Table 4.1 cont/: LOCAL POLICY RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR THE SOUTHERN URBAN FRINGE OF SWINDON

Issue	Plan / Strategy	Response
2. Uncertainty about the future of agriculture in the urban fringe contd.	Kennet Local Plan 2011 (adopted April 2004)	Has a specific policy: € on farm shops
	Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2001	Identifies the potential for Short Rotation Coppice in the Great Western Community Forest Area
	North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004	Has policies that: € support appropriate farm diversification, the giving of integrated advice and adding value to land-based products
	Swindon Economic Partnership Action Plan	Has a priority for rural regeneration, including support for farm diversification
3. A fragmented and poorly managed rights of way network	All Local Plans	Have policies that: € protect existing rights of way from development and support network extensions as part of development proposals
	Swindon Borough Council Green Transport Plan 2000	Has led to: € the development of a greenways project to increase access to the urban fringe for cyclists, walkers and riders € a planned access strategy with the national Milestones initiative used as a management tool for its implementation
	Great Western Community Forest Plan	Sets objectives to: € improve and extend the rights of any network, including establishing new greenways
	North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004	Has policies that promote: € development and promotion of a good network of recreational routes across the AONB € control of motorised traffic on rights of way

Table 4.1 cont/: LOCAL POLICY RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR THE SOUTHERN URBAN FRINGE OF SWINDON

Issue	Plan / Strategy	Response
4. Lack of transport alternatives to the car	Swindon Borough Local Transport Plan 2006-2011	Has policies: € on developing a more accessible local transport system, that provides travel choice, and on integration between all forms of transport provision
	Swindon Community Strategy 2004	Seeks the: € mapping of rural transport routes, with particularly poor levels of service identified
	Marlborough Community Area Plan 2004	Identifies: € the need to improve community transport
	North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004	Has a policy: € promoting integrated transport schemes to serve local people and visitors
5. Rat running on rural roads	Swindon Borough Council Green Transport Plan 2000	Aims to: € encourage sustainable transport use and decreased private car usage across the Borough
6. Declining community sustainability (through lack of affordable housing and declining services)	Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Strategy 2000; Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership Action Plan; and Swindon's Community Strategy 2004	Aims to: € maintain adequate coverage of local services that are considered essential to the vitality of Wiltshire's rural communities and support rural regeneration more widely

Table 4.1 cont/: LOCAL POLICY RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR THE SOUTHERN URBAN FRINGE OF SWINDON

Issue	Plan / Strategy	Response
6. Declining community sustainability contd.	Swindon Borough Local Plan (1999) / Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 Revised Deposit Draft (October 2003)	Have a policy: € for an exception to be made for affordable housing, where there is proven local need and no other alternatives are available
	North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004	Has a policy: € supporting the provision of affordable housing in the AONB to achieve sustainable communities and key workers in the land-based sector
7. Lack of understanding / communication	Consultation exercises and increased community involvement with the AONB, Community Forest and the area's Community Strategies are going some way in helping to raise awareness and involve people on the ground	
8. Misuse of the countryside	North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004	Has a policy: promoting detection, prosecution and change of public behaviour to reduce radically rubbish dumping in the AONB
9. Lack of integration	<p>The development of multi-disciplinary partnerships to develop integrated strategies and projects to manage pressures and opportunities relating to the proximity of Swindon was identified as a policy in the AONB Management Plan. It is also a priority in the Swindon Community Strategy that there is "<i>Working with partners to ensure that the needs of rural areas are identified and addressed</i>".</p> <p>Partnerships are already in place in the area – such as the Swindon Strategic Partnership (who prepared the Community Strategy and were on the Steering Group for the preparation of this UFAP), <i>but most partnerships are not looking at the urban fringe area specifically.</i></p>	

5. INTEGRATED DELIVERY

5.1. To achieve the vision of the UFAP, it will be essential that the urban fringe and the UFAP become embedded in policy, to ensure that the urban fringe has a clear and LONG TERM policy focus. It will equally be important to ensure that there is integrated delivery of the actions within the UFAP as of NOW so that:

- € individual actions deliver multiple benefits for the urban fringe
- € there is integration between different actions to ensure the joined up delivery of the UFAP

5.2. The various means for delivering the UFAP are outlined below, considering the role of the planning system first followed by other means of delivery. Delivery of the Plan is then picked up in detail at the end of the Action Plan.

Policy delivery (spatial planning)

5.3. National policy makes a clear case for distinctive urban fringe policy, both for agriculture and recreation. The embedding of the urban fringe in general and the UFAP in particular in policy is vital on two counts:

- € to provide a policy and strategy framework that clearly recognises the urban fringe as a distinct area in need of special treatment and focus of effort
- € to use policy to guide decision-making and resource allocation in the fringe such that it is contributing to a common vision for the area

5.4. To achieve this there needs to be:

- € co-ordination between plans and strategies that address the urban fringe
- € a central place where a clear strategic case is made for the strategic role of the urban fringe – the root of the coordination

5.5. As set out in PPS1 (2005), the new planning system is designed to perform this co-ordinating role:

“The new system of regional spatial strategies and local development documents should take a spatial planning approach. Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function. That will include policies which can impact on land use, for example by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission and which may be implemented by other means.” (para 30)

5.6. The importance of the urban fringe is essentially strategic – it is a crucial component of both urban and rural sustainability.

5.7. The new planning system is well suited to making the strategic case for the uplift of the urban fringe, and coordinating the range of policies and actions that will achieve

this. It is hard to see where else such an overview could be provided, apart from in Community Strategies, to which the new planning system is closely linked, but which lack its explicit spatial emphasis.

5.8. The strategic case needs to be shared across Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) for the area. The RSS should be expected to clearly state the importance and expected roles of the urban fringe in the region, and identify any particularly important areas of urban fringe (such as those of major urban areas).

5.9. Similarly, the core strategies of LDFs, when prepared or reviewed (in the case of Saved policies) as appropriate, will need to explain the local importance and roles of the urban fringe. Below this, whether Area Action Plans, Supplementary Development Documents or other local development documents are the correct vehicles to add detail on the urban fringe to the Core Strategy will be a matter for local circumstances.

5.10. It is unlikely that the southern urban fringe of Swindon will be covered by a single LDD, as the area is divided between three district / borough councils and Wiltshire County Council. Nevertheless, given the shared policy interest in this urban fringe area, early discussion and co-ordination of the separate LDDs will be advisable.

5.11. Major development bordering the urban fringe presents a particular challenge. It may be accompanied by Area Action Plans, and these should consider the impacts of the development on the neighbouring urban fringe. In principle all development should make a net positive contribution to the urban fringe. To do this, significant enhancements will be

needed to urban fringe land. Such works will mostly be concentrated close to the development – this area should be included in the Area Action Plan. However works may also be justified across a wider area of the urban fringe which would not be expected to appear in an Area Action Plan but would fall under the scope of a Planning Obligation that would need to satisfy the requirements of Circular 5/05.

5.12. In addition, of vital importance will be other plans and strategies that provide the framework for the delivery of specific aspects of the UFAP, not least:

- € Local Transport Plans
- € Rights of Way Improvement Plans
- € Biodiversity Action Plans and Landscape Strategies
- € Local Waste Plans

5.13. In this respect the Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan already has a strong urban fringe focus, and the latest Local Transport Plan (Swindon Borough Council Local Transport Plan (2006-2011)) produced following the draft of the UFAP, fully embraces the importance of the urban fringe (see summary on page 33) and acts as an exemplar of the way ahead.

Swindon Borough Council (March 2006) Local Transport Plan (2006-2011)

Relevant objectives and transport visions:

Objective "To improve rights of way to, from and within Swindon's **urban fringe** and rural buffer, to enhance access to the countryside and improve pedestrian/cycle links with the urban networks".

Transport vision of: "Swindon surrounded by beautiful countryside, which needs to be accessibleTransport must address those particular needs, as well as working to open up the **rural fringe** through footpaths, cycle ways etc, whilst conserving the environment".

Other relevant sections

"During the consultation undertaken as part of the second Local Transport Plan, and by the **Urban Fringe Working Group**, the issue of the use of 'offroad' vehicles on by-ways open to all traffic was raised both by walkers and horse riders.Swindon Borough Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities on this matter."

"21% of respondents wanted to see more facilities for cyclists, including more routes, especially within and to and from rural areas. **This result agrees with the findings of other research, for example, the urban fringe study [this UFAP]** and with the results of the extensive survey of cyclists undertaken by the Swindon Bicycle Users Group."

"It should be noted that an increase in cycling trips crossing the middle cordon of 18% was recorded. **It is believed that even further increases can be achieved once the urban cycle network is more fully completed and the new urban fringe and rural access routes to Swindon are also completed**, as the consultation responses have requested. The Council will continue to work in partnership with Sustrans, employers and education sites to identify and implement links, and intends to re-launch its sustainable travel initiatives alongside those of the lottery funded Active Swindon initiatives."

"Review undertaken as part of the development of the second Local Transport Plan has.. **highlighted the need for schemes which address urban fringe utility cycling** as well as recreational cycling in all environments."

ROWIP framework, background: **In addition, part of its southern urban fringe is contained within the North Wessex Downs AONB**, giving access to the chalk uplands of the Marlborough Downs."

The local Rights of Way Liaison Group will supplement the role locally of the joint Wiltshire County Council/Borough Council local access forum and will be instrumental in ensuring that urban fringe development makes adequate provision for a rights of way network that continues to provide access opportunities into the countryside.

Other means of delivery

5.14. Aside from planning, there is a range of other means of delivery which will be essential for taking forward the actions identified in the UFAP. These are summarised below, **with their specific role considered at the end of the Action Plan.**

Information collection and project development: There are some areas of activity identified in the UFAP which require further investigation and project development before specific improvements and projects can be taken forward. Improving the evidence base will be a vital part of the Plan's delivery

Targeted incentives: A range of incentives are potentially available to land managers and businesses within the Action Plan area. Most notable amongst these are the incentives available under the England Rural Development Programme, in particular, agri-environment schemes (the Environmental Stewardship scheme) and the Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES). It will be important that these are targeted to meet the Vision and Objectives of the UFAP.

Integrated advice, demonstration and support: The majority of the land within the UFAP area will remain in private ownership. Part of the Action Plan is concerned with assisting landowners and managers to meet the challenges and opportunities of the urban fringe. This requires advice, demonstration and support. Such advice may cover conservation management, business development, community links and recreation. Where possible this advice should be integrated using a coordinated/team-based approach, to avoid situations where advice from one party contradicts that from another. It will be very important that all advice is clearly focused on delivering the vision and objectives for the UFAP.

Countryside management: Local authorities already undertake a range of land management activities within the UFAP area, including rights of way management and management of the public open spaces within the UFAP area. These are important tasks and ones that will almost certainly grow under the UFAP.

Specific and integrated projects: There are a number of actions within the UFAP which will either require the development of new projects or the extension of existing work being undertaken by the local authorities, Community Forest and others. In some cases the achievement of these projects will require the identification and winning of new targeted funding.

Promotion and awareness-raising: Through the UFAP emphasis is placed on using the urban fringe to increase understanding of the countryside, but there is also a broader issue, and that is using the UFAP to influence planners, policy makers and decision-takers of the importance of the urban fringe and the contribution that it can make to sustainable development.

Monitoring: Monitoring of the successes and failures of the UFAP will be essential to ensure that delivery is as cost-effective as possible.

Working in partnership

5.15. Delivery of the UFAP will involve a wide range of organisations and individuals. Cross-boundary, partnership working will be essential to maximise the expertise and resources available, to avoid duplication of effort and to avoid developments and activities on the urban fringe having knock-

on impacts across a wider area, in particular further south into the AONB.

5.16. Central to these partnerships will be the local communities, especially land managers and owners, for the knowledge and experience they can bring and for their counsel on local issues and priorities. They will be critical to the delivery of the Plan. Equally, in addition to the strategic actions identified through this Action Plan there is a real opportunity for local communities to improve local facilities and their local environment through Village Design Statements and **Parish Plans**, with these local improvements and pride in place forming part of a wider uplift in the environment and image of the urban fringe.

The urban fringe action plan (UFAP)

SYNOPSIS

In summary: This is an area of contrasts: the pressures associated with the outward expansion of Swindon meeting the protective designation associated with the nationally important landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

The action plan, therefore, needs to:

- € solve existing problems in the urban fringe, such as fly tipping, misuse of rights of way, and other manifestations of a nearby urban population; and
- € unlock the, as yet, unrealised potential of the area as multi-purpose countryside linking town with country of the very highest quality.

The study area is largely a landscape in good heart, despite the pressures it is under (although the viability of farming close to Swindon is under increasing threat).

Its potential as a bridge between town and country, as a gateway both to the AONB and to Swindon, as an area offering quiet enjoyment within a landscape rich in biodiversity and cultural history, and as an area fostering new enterprise that helps sustain the landscape of the area, has yet to be realised.

Achievement will require more focused management of existing resources by the public sector, and targeted support and advice for landowners and other businesses. This will be helped by a more purposeful and 'urban fringe aware' policy 'umbrella'.

There is an added crucial dimension. There is one approved and two potential major development sites within the study area. First, the Southern Development Area (SDA) on the southern fringe of Swindon already has planning permission. Second, the Coate development, also on the southern edge of Swindon, has yet to be approved. Third, there is the possible development of the Wroughton Airfield as NMSI's National Collection Centre on the plateau above Wroughton within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

The planning obligations for the SDA include significant environmental enhancements to parts of the study area. Should the developments at Coate and Wroughton go ahead then significant contributions to the urban fringe should also be expected. Both developments will significantly add to the pressures on the study area (as the SDA development also will), and so should be expected to mitigate this pressure so that any development becomes, overall, a good thing for the urban fringe, not a bad thing, thus it is crucial that the UFAP sets out expectations of what future major development should contribute to the study area.

This is not to say that the UFAP supports the major development proposals in any way, or depends on them. But it is to say that should they go ahead, their impacts on the urban fringe should be fully accounted for and measures put in place to ensure that the overall effect is clearly positive.

A strategic division of the Plan area

Of course the Study Area varies significantly in character. There is a distinct area of countryside close up to the southern edge of Swindon, which will be most affected by the SDA and Coate, and where the greatest opportunities lie for a concentration of new leisure and recreation activities. This is the area shaded green in **Figure AP1**, described as the **near urban fringe**. It lies between Swindon and the northern edge of Wroughton and Chiseldon.

Beyond this area is the **further urban fringe**, where urban impacts are currently more diffuse, and the nature of necessary action will be different, not least because of the change in landscape character. This is that part of the Action Plan area lying within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

The UFAP has adopted this basic distinction to frame the identified actions. Of course the two areas are closely linked, but they are fundamentally not the same.

Linkages and connections within the Plan area

Figure AP2 shows the main recreational routes, gateways and nodes within the Plan area, thus the SDA, Coate, the eastern edge of Swindon, Barbury Castle Country Park, Wootton Bassett and Wroughton airfield are all shown as gateways – key entry points to the area. Wroughton, Wroughton airfield and Chiseldon are shown as nodes – key destinations within the area.

Although Coate and Wroughton airfield are included in this map, it is not assumed that they will go ahead, but should they go ahead it is vital that they bring widespread environmental benefits to the wider area through the development.

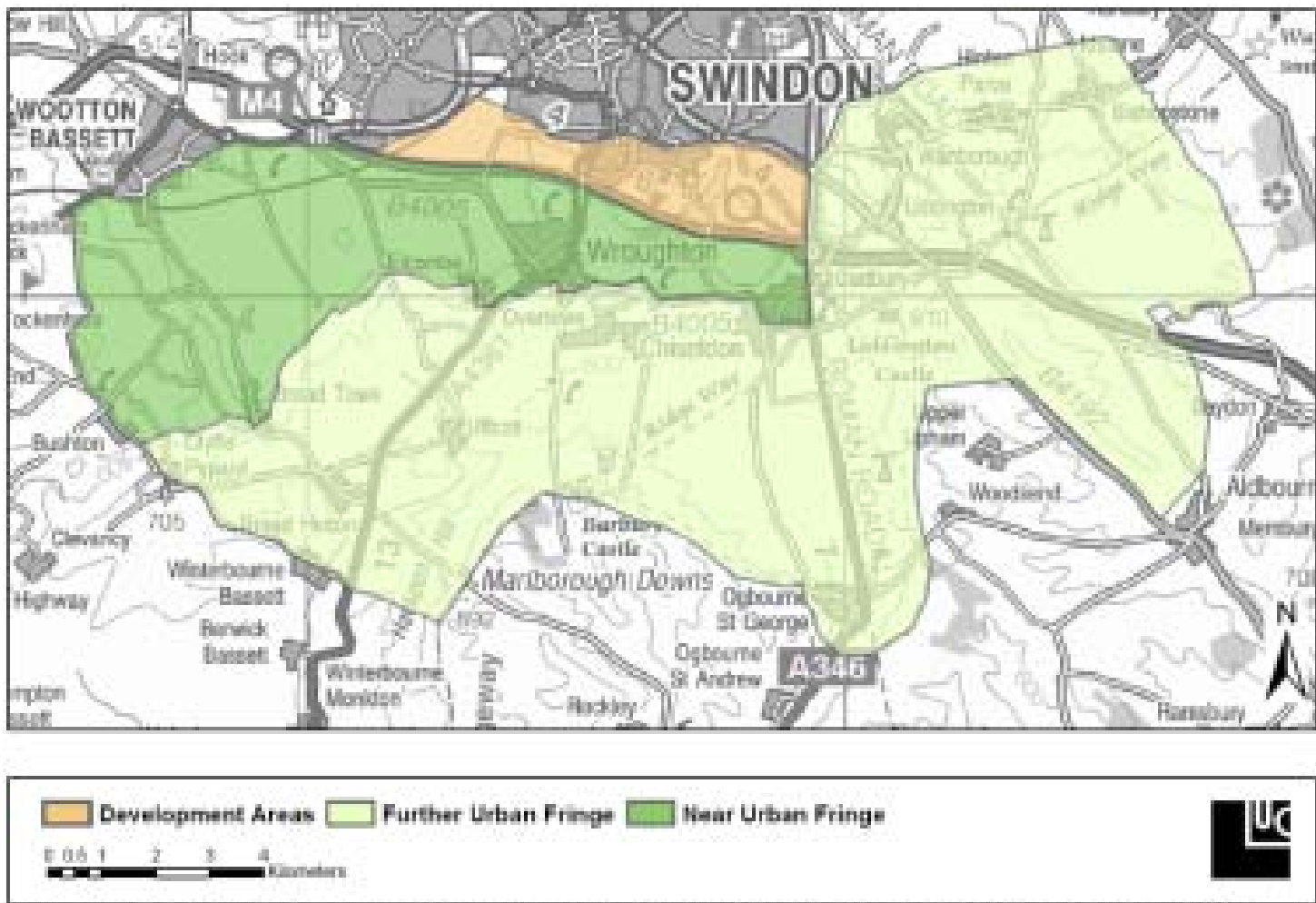
Both Coate Water and Wroughton airfield are important gateways/destinations in their own right, without the proposed development.

The routes shown are a combination of existing major routes (pedestrian, shared use, greenway and minor roads) and some proposed routes (mainly greenways). It also shows that there is an obvious east-west missing link in the network from Chiseldon, though Wroughton and over to Wootton Bassett.

The major routes have obvious potential for enhancement, ensuring a connected and useable network for those on foot, horse or cycle. Where necessary, design solutions should separate those legitimate uses with potential conflicts. These routes should be integral components in the landscape structure of the area, particularly in the near urban fringe where considerable planting is already proposed though the SDA planning obligation. Reinforcing existing hedges and providing new woodland and hedges to either side of the routes would directly contribute to the experience of users.

In addition, there are other smaller routes connecting to the main routes, helping to create a series of circular walks and rides. Filling in detail around the skeleton will be integral to the ongoing work of implementing the Action Plan.

Figure AP1 The Near and Further Urban Fringe



The Near and Further Urban Fringe

The Near Urban Fringe

The **near urban fringe** is the area which receives the greatest impact from the urban area of Swindon, but it is also where there is greatest potential for beneficial action. This is for a number of functional reasons, recognising that this is the 'doorstep countryside' for southern Swindon and its villages:

- € it is closest to the urban population, and so most available for everyday use
- € its landscape structure offers greatest potential for increased recreational use
- € its farm structure and type offers clear potential for beneficial diversification
- € its position, adjacent to and linking the Southern Development Area and Coate, opens the possibility of considerable assistance from these two developments

In view of this, the primary focus of the Action Plan is this area. It should also be seen as the gateway to the wider AONB, thus emphasising the importance of effective links between the two.

Equally this is the area where farms and the local community fall directly under the influence of Swindon.

The Further Urban Fringe

The **further urban fringe** comprises most of the study area and most of the AONB in the study area. This is a distinct chalkland landscape dominated by scarp slopes and expansive chalk plateaux. It is a large scale open landscape reflecting the strong landform of the chalk, with the Ridgeway following the line of the upper scarp and affording expansive views over Swindon and the Vale of White Horse. Much of this area is a significant distance from Swindon, and functionally is different to the near urban fringe:

- € the AONB designation sets clear restrictions on new development and activities
- € there are opportunities for farm and micro business developments which seek to respond the market potential offered by the nearby urban area
- € the area, while in constant use by local residents, is more likely to be seen as a weekend recreational resource by those living in Swindon and further afield
- € recreational activities are likely to focus on opportunities for walking, riding and cycling with links to a number of important long distance routes
- € should it go ahead, NMSI's National Collection Centre will be of obvious importance to the area, principally as a gateway for access and interpretation

So in this area the Action Plan has a lighter touch. Nevertheless the influence of Swindon is still significant, and there is a need to maximise opportunities that bring benefits to the local communities and wider area, while seeking to conserve and enhance this unique and spectacular landscape.

Figure AP2 Network Structure

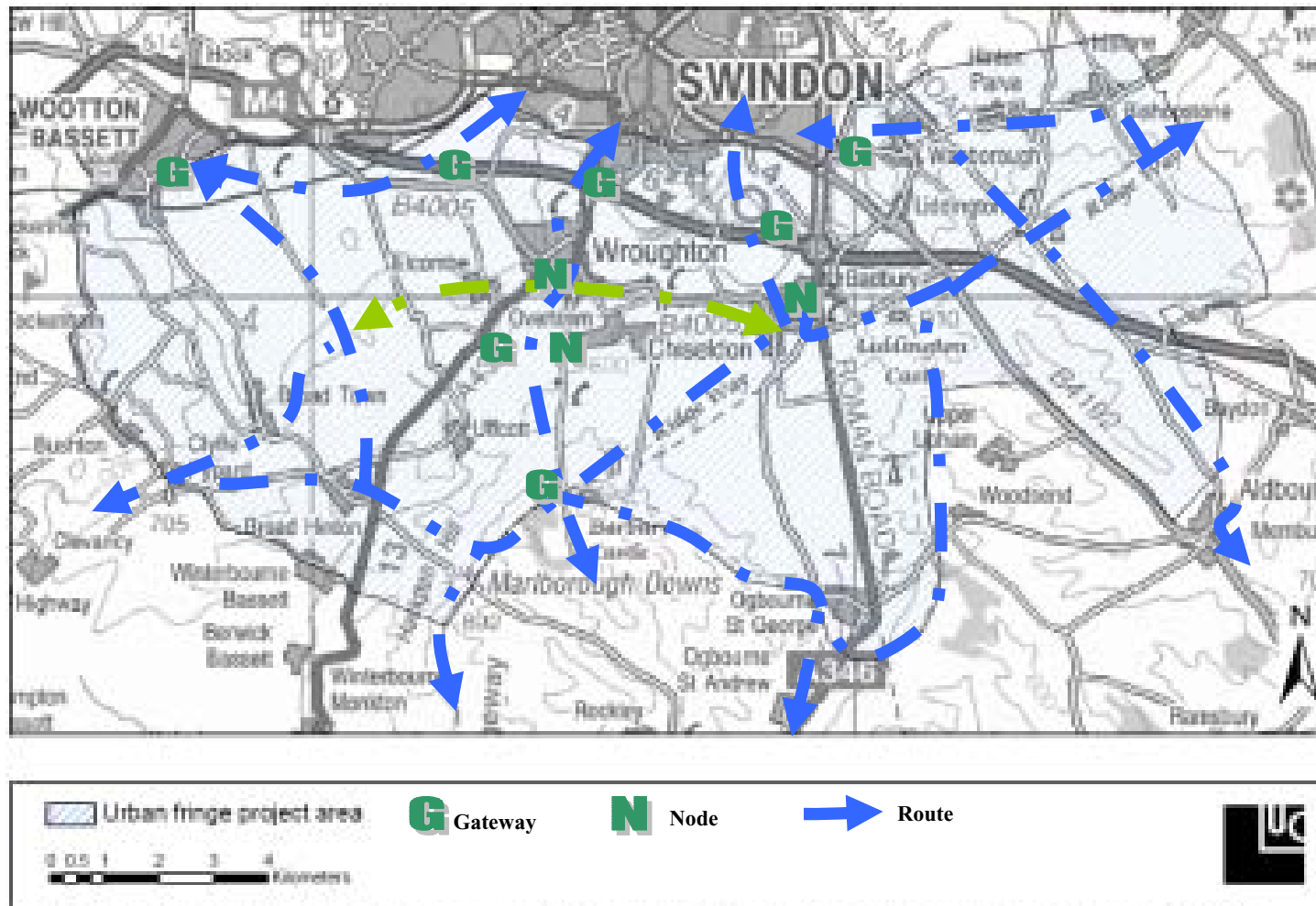
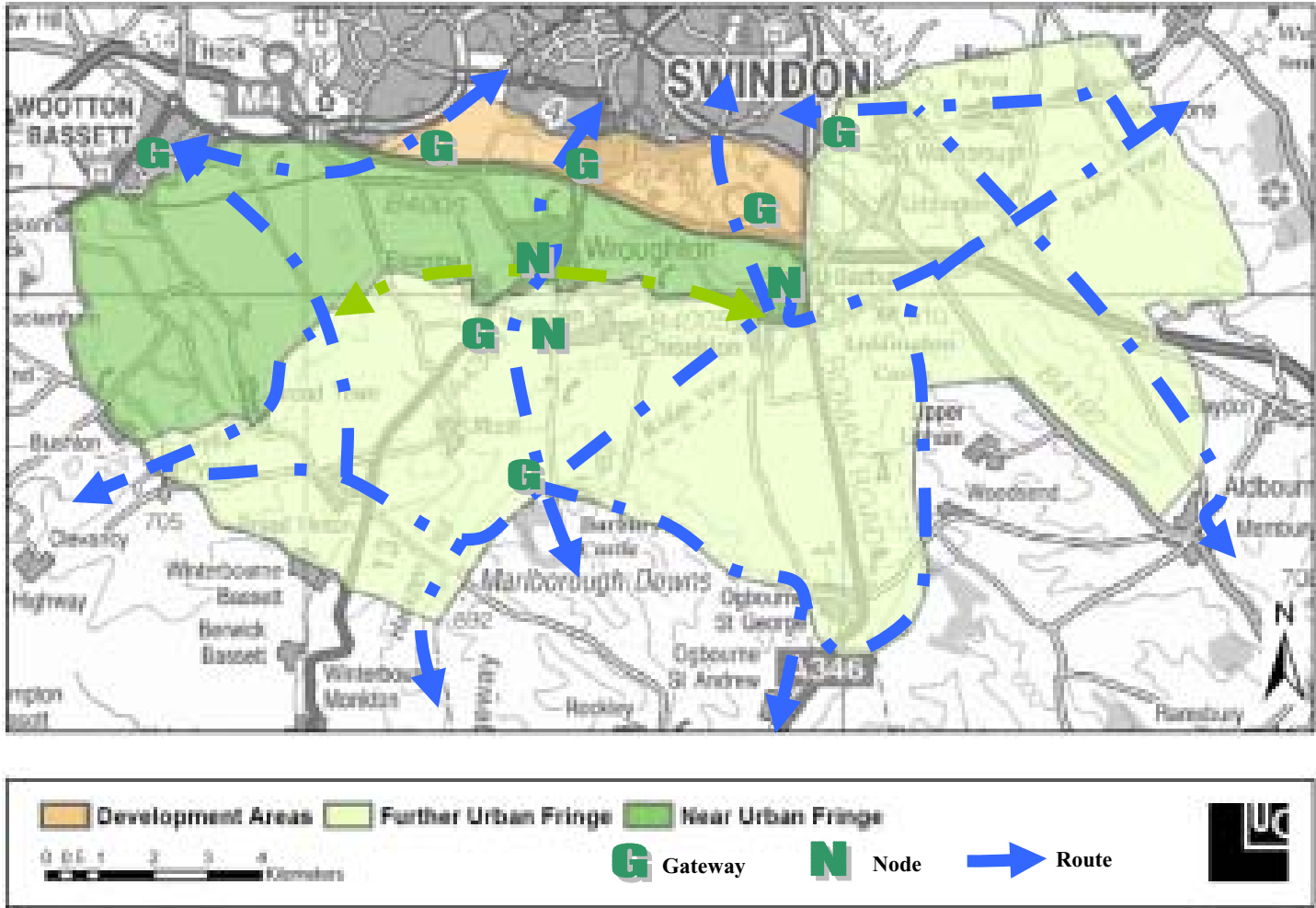


Figure AP3 Overall Spatial Strategy



VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The vision and objectives for this UFAP are set out on the following pages. They define the purpose of the Action Plan. In turn the identified actions are the specific means by which the vision and objectives will be delivered.

The vision and objectives should be enduring, whereas the actions will need to be reviewed on a regular basis. The vision and objectives provide the means to evaluate the suitability of additional actions not identified in this Plan, and to assess potential threats to the study area over the coming years.



From the foot of the lower scarp looking north-west towards Swindon

Vision and objectives

OVERALL VISION

A vision of the countryside on Swindon's southern doorstep planned and managed as an exemplar of land where town meets country.

It is an area with a certain future. It is a well-managed, attractive and evolving multi-purpose landscape, supporting productive agriculture. It is much valued by local people and those visiting from further afield. It is a place with its own distinct and valued identity where change is taken as an opportunity to make things better, with development used to achieve positive improvements in the rural area.

For those living in Swindon and the M4 corridor the area is a gateway to the wider countryside, including the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Equally, it provides well-used access into Swindon for those living in the area and not travelling by car.

It offers wide-ranging opportunities for low-impact recreational pursuits operating in harmony with farming and local communities and positively contributing to local business opportunities.

This important area lies between a growing, dynamic and fast changing urban area and a protected area of national importance, valued for its enduring qualities, tranquillity and slow pace of change. This countryside doorstep has a strategic role in separating these two very different areas and melding the best of both to create an adaptable, healthy respected and well-used area of countryside rich in wildlife in which there is strong pride in place.

VISION THEMES			
Landscape and the natural and cultural environment A vision of an area of countryside with its own clearly distinct identity and sense of place, free from litter and visual intrusion. An area with a strong and robust landscape framework rich in biodiversity and cultural history, giving a strong sense of rurality and offering a network of green spaces and interlinking habitats, including farmed land. A landscape that runs into the urban areas and structures new urban development. An area where views of surrounding development are filtered while views to the M4 and other major infrastructure are effectively screened.	Agriculture and forestry A vision of an area that retains viable and productive agriculture and forestry where businesses are helped to overcome the pressures of an urban fringe location. Businesses that are provided with opportunities to develop local markets for their products and to diversify into activities that meet local needs, respond to the recreational potential of the area, help support the viability of the core business and maintain the distinctly rural character of the area. An area where businesses receive public support for the public benefits that they provide	Access and recreation A vision of an accessible countryside for the residents of Swindon and the local communities of the area, where access is positively encouraged by modes other than the private car. An area offering a well maintained hierarchy of safe footpaths, cycleways, and bridleways that reflect identified local needs and provide strategic links between the edge of Swindon and the North Wessex Downs and the Ridgeway, where recreational activity is actively managed to minimise conflict with the other land uses of the area. An area where rural lanes are safe for recreational use and where key nodes act as gateways into the wider countryside	Communities A vision of strong and separate rural communities each with their own distinctive community identity and local economy, where there is confidence and, certainly in the future, pride in the locality. Settlements that are accessed by a range of community transport options (that also serve the recreational users of the area) and provide local services that assist in maintaining community vitality

OBJECTIVES

Landscape and the natural environment	Agriculture and forestry	Access and recreation	Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € To create a strong and robust landscape framework rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage that has its own distinct character and sense of place, that will endure and has the capacity to mitigate and absorb change over the next 100 years € To create a landscape that provides a fitting gateway and setting to Swindon and the North Wessex Downs AONB € To ensure that new development positively contributes to and respects this landscape framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € To assist farmers in overcoming the negative impacts on their business of an urban fringe location € To create opportunities for the marketing and sale of local produce € To promote and facilitate those aspects of farm diversification that contribute to the overall vision for the area € To identify methods for supporting local agricultural and forestry businesses that provide the environmental and recreational benefits that people want 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € To establish a well-maintained rights of way network that provides links between the edge of Swindon and the North Wessex Downs AONB and serves the modern-day recreational needs of local communities € To minimise conflict between recreational use and the agricultural management of the land € To reduce traffic use and rat running on the rural road network of the area for the benefit of local communities, businesses and recreational users of the area € To provide positive incentives for access by means other than the private car, both within the area and as a gateway to the North Wessex Downs AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € To maintain the distinctive and rural character of individual settlements € To maintain existing services and support appropriate new ones to help support community vitality € To develop community transport links between communities and between communities and Swindon and the AONB € To ensure good communication allowing local communities to have a strong say in the future of their locality

ACTIONS

The actions that follow deal with the ACTIVITIES needed to address the particular threats and opportunities of the urban fringe. The POLICY implications of these activities are then set out in the following section on 'Means of Delivery'. The identified activities are structured under the following headings that reflect the objectives of the UFAP:

Landscape and the natural environment

1. Landscape and habitat management and enhancement

Agriculture and forestry

2. The tenant farms and wider agriculture
3. Local products

Access and recreation

4. The rights of way network
5. Transport and park and ride
6. Rat running on rural roads
7. A gateway to the AONB

Communities

8. Local services and facilities

Other vital concerns

9. Education and promotion
10. Fly tipping and composting

Timescales for the actions are expressed as one of the following:

- € within 6 months
- € within 1 year
- € within 2 years
- € within 5 years

Although identified as a series of separate activities, the ambition must be to achieve delivery by a series of integrated projects, each delivering a number of (or parts of) the activities identified, with some projects working in defined geographical areas.

LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Despite proximity to Swindon much of the study area retains a strong and recognisable landscape character. It is also of considerable wildlife and historic importance (paras 2.4 – 2.11).

Issues

To achieve the vision and objectives for the area, there are a range of important issues, identified from the workshops and by visual inspection during preparation of this UFAP, that need to be addressed, particularly relating to the near urban fringe:

- € uncertainty about future development proposals and their implications
- € unsympathetic development and development pressure on the urban edge and as a result of inappropriate farm diversification (considered in the section on agriculture)
- € poorly managed horse-pasture and neglect of land where it has fallen out of agricultural use (immediately along Swindon's urban edge and between Wroughton and the M4)
- € suburbanisation of the landscape associated with unsympathetic cumulative development and clutter (such as the proliferation of road signs) leading to a lack of distinction between urban and rural areas
- € poor management of sites of cultural importance

Response

Reflecting the vision and objectives, the central response must be to create a robust landscape framework which frames existing development and into which future development can be fitted; to bring certainty and strength to the current landscape framework across the whole of the UFAP area; to create a landscape befitting entry to one of the most important urban areas in the South West region and to the AONB; and, most importantly, to provide a robust landscape structure within which a multi-functional countryside can develop. In the near urban fringe this is likely to require significant landscape enhancements, including structural tree planting, such that the area has the capacity to absorb change whilst having a clear and distinct identity in its own right. In the further urban fringe the primary requirement is to enhance the existing landscape character drawing on proposals set out in the AONB Management Plan and reflecting the Landscape Character Assessments for the area. There is also a need to provide an appropriate setting to significant historic features and to ensure that these features are managed appropriately.

Specifically in the near urban fringe the challenge is both:

- € to strengthen the character and biological diversity of the farmed land through boundary improvements, creation of farm woodlands and copses, ponds and areas of semi-natural meadow land and low input grazed pasture that together form a biological and visual network
- € to integrate into this a structure of interlinking green corridors and areas of open access land – 'commons' - that

accommodate the main recreational routes and bring a strong identity and cohesion to the area, involving major tree planting and the creation of open trackways and droves with wide flower-rich verges. The historical and cultural geography of the area should also guide the form of this network.

This should be achieved through a **Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan** focusing on the near urban fringe but also reaching up to encompass the new housing development on the Princess Alexandra development site west of Chiseldon. This is a structuring Plan which should integrate proposals for the landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage, access and development of the area. A GI Plan for the area would:

- € use the existing landscape assessments and plans (SDA, GWCF) as a basis
- € assess the collective and cumulative impact of the activities, issues and developments proposed in this area on the landscape
- € consider opportunities arising from identified changes and identify a robust 'green' framework within which those changes can happen
- € identify locations, in negotiation with landowners where small areas of open access might be provided
- € provide a model for developing a wider GI planning approach in the sub-region
- € provide a strategic approach which will pre-empt and inform the site by site piecemeal response that tends to characterise urban fringe areas.

The Southern Development Area and potential Coate development provide a clear impetus for the GI Plan. It will be important to take the landscape structure into the

development areas so as to reduce a hard development edge. The GI Plan will need to take account of the identified ambitions for the tenant farms as set out by the Community Forest in the Planning Obligation for the Southern Development Area and of the biodiversity objectives that are being developed for the area through the Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan; the Rebuilding Biodiversity Initiative; and English Nature's target of ensuring that all people live within 300 metres of wildlife-rich greenspace. It will also need to link to the ambitions for the landscape of the further urban fringe set out in the AONB Management Plan and the Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy 2011. But critically it will need to influence and take account of the primary access proposals set out in this Action Plan, as these should form the backbone of any landscape framework.

Southern Development Area Planning Obligation

The planning obligation for the SDA includes a wide range of landscape and environmental improvement works on the large area of tenanted farms owned by Swindon Borough Council in the near urban fringe. Their headlines are:

- € ~ 60 ha of new woodland planting
- € ~ 4km of new hedgerows
- € restoration of ~ 9km of existing hedgerows
- € restoration of 50 ha of grassland
- € creation of 29 new ponds, restoration of six existing ponds
- € creation of 5 ha of wetland scrapes
- € creation of ~ 9.5km of new bridleway

To assist the delivery of the GI Plan:

- € **Incentives:** Support should be sought for the targeting of the Higher Level (HLS) of the Environmental Stewardship scheme and other incentives to encourage land managers and owners to help implement the agreed GI Plan, in both the near and further urban fringe. This should include bringing under appropriate management sites of wildlife and / or cultural importance, especially where they are suffering recreational pressure as identified through the Farm Environment Plan (FEP) required for entry into the Higher Level scheme.
- € **Advice:** Environmental advice to farmers should be positively promoted within the Action Plan area as a means of encouraging the implementation of the GI Plan and to assist applications for relevant incentives (see AONB Management Plan policies IA1 – IA10). This should include advice on the appropriate management of horse pasture, reflecting advice available from the British Horse Society (BHS) (see AONB Management Plan policy IA7).
- € **Demonstration:** One or more demonstration farms should be identified to illustrate best practice in terms of environmental management and access in the urban fringe (see AONB Management Plan Action A77).
- € **Design guidance:** Design guidance, when prepared for the AONB (AONB Management Plan policy DP15), should give particular consideration to that part of the AONB lying within the UFAP area. Liaison between key partners will be necessary to ensure that any guidance is co-ordinated across the urban fringe area, including that part which is

outside the AONB boundary. Such design guidance should:

- reflect the GI Plan
- consider the form of individual settlements as well as the design of individual buildings
- the meeting of broader sustainability issues through sustainable design, such as heat and water conservation and the use of local building materials

The Guidance should also give close consideration to highways design, ensuring that roads reflect their RURAL setting and the reduction of highway clutter associated with the proliferation of road signs.

Countryside management: Existing countryside management works will need to continue within the UFAP area. As the GI Plan is implemented this should be supplemented with community involvement in the maintenance of areas with public access.

- € **Grazing scheme:** A grazing scheme, potentially linked to a larger grazing scheme covering the North Wessex Downs, may need to be considered in the longer term to assist with the management of access land and semi-natural habitats in the urban fringe (see AONB Management Plan Policy IU11).
- € In the near urban fringe it is anticipated that the SDA and Coate (if it is approved) should contribute to the implementation of the GI Plan (and also VITALLY its subsequent maintenance), which may be set out in a separate Area Action Plan. It is equally to be anticipated that any development of the Wroughton airfield site should contribute to that part relating to Wroughton, Chiseldon and the Princess Alexandra development site and again, its subsequent maintenance.

LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENTS			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Information collection and project development</i>			
L1. Development of a Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan for the near urban fringe	Development of a GI Plan for the near urban fringe area that takes full account of existing important habitats and species as well as habitat creation and linkage and the cultural heritage of the area.	<p>Within 1 year Lead: Great Western Community Forest in co-ordination with Swindon Borough Council and the North Wessex Downs AONB team</p> <p>Partners: English Nature, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Swindon Biological Records Centre</p>	The GI Plan should be developed in close consultation with the farming community within the near urban fringe area, and should clearly link with the landscape strategy being developed for the SDA and the separate landscape strategies for the further urban fringe (Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy 2011 and the AONB Management Plan). It should consider the need for further ecological survey. It will also need to take account of proposals relating to Coate and NMSI's National Collection Centre at Wroughton airfield
<i>Targeted incentives</i>			
L2. Targeting of the HLS and the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS)	<p>Implementation of the GI Plan should be supported by appropriate targeting of the HLS and Woodland Grant Scheme and funding under Rural Renaissance. This should include financial support for the provision of public access and maintenance of sites of wildlife and historic</p> <p>When the targeting of these schemes is reviewed the vision and objectives of the UFAP should be a consideration</p>	<p>Within 1 year Lead: Great Western Community Forest, AONB team and Natural England (RDS)</p> <p>Partners: Natural England (RDS), Forestry Commission, FWAG and English Heritage The ES could also provide elevated and targeted support to a demonstration farm initiative (see below)</p>	All farmers in the UFAP area should be encouraged to apply for the Entry level Scheme (ELS) of Environmental Stewardship as a necessary pre-requisite for entry into the HLS

LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENTS			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Integrated advice, demonstration and support</i>			
L3. Environmental advice to farmers	Farm advisory services operating within the urban fringe area should specifically promote the objectives of this Action Plan and those of the GI Plan to the land managers of the area	Within 1 year Lead: Great Western Community Forest / AONB team Partners: Wiltshire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)	It will be important for all advisors operating within the area to be fully briefed on the objectives of the Action Plan for the Southern Fringes of Swindon and, specifically, the objectives of the GI Plan
L4. Identification of demonstration farm(s) in the urban fringe	<p>Identification of a suitable farm or farms that could demonstrate best practice for farming in the urban fringe - environmental best practice, farming and access</p> <p>It is possible that a conservation grazing herd could be based on one or more demonstration farms (see below) and help graze sites of high biodiversity value within the urban fringe</p>	Within 1 year Lead: AONB team Partners: Farmers, Swindon Borough Council, Great Western Community Forest, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England	Could also set up a machinery ring for hay making within the urban fringe, potentially focused on the demonstration farms, etc
L5. Preparation of design guidance for the NWD AONB	Design guidance, prepared for the North Wessex Downs AONB (AONB Management Plan Policy DP15) would need to consider whether urban fringe issues are relevant. Highway design could form an important part of this guidance, including minimising impact of signage.	Within 2 years Lead: AONB team Partners: The Planning and Highway Authorities of the constituent local authorities including those in the UFAP area	

LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENTS			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Countryside management</i>			
<i>L6. Encouraging active participation of the local community in the management of the urban fringe countryside</i>	All opportunities should be sought to encourage community participation in the management of the urban fringe countryside where there is public access	Within 5 years Lead: Great Western Community Forest Partners: Swindon Borough Council, North Wilts District Council, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	Swindon Borough Council runs volunteer rangers through its ranger service
<i>L7. Conservation Grazing Scheme</i>	Building on initiatives with in the AONB, development of a conservation grazing network to graze key conservation sites within the UFAP area	Within 5 years Lead: Wiltshire GAP Partners: Wiltshire County Council, FWAG, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England	Specific funding will be needed to cover this development
<i>L8. Landscape works as off-site mitigation for major development</i>	Implementation and MANAGEMENT of the G I Plan should be supported through off-site mitigation works undertaken as part of major new development in the area	As / if planning permissions are granted Lead: Swindon Borough Council Partners: Great Western Community Forest, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust SDA legal agreement (through Swindon Borough Council). Potential legal agreements for Coate and NMSI (if they go ahead), again through Swindon Borough Council	

THE TENANT FARMS AND WIDER AGRICULTURE

Swindon Borough Council owns an area of 300 ha of mainly small tenant farms, predominantly dairy or past dairy farms. This area has been identified as the subject of mitigation measures for the Southern Development Area, involving habitat replacement, landscape improvement (see previous section), and agricultural management which will need to be integrated with the ongoing commercial management of these farms. A number of these farms have uncertain agricultural prospects at present.

These farms make up a sizeable proportion of the near urban fringe. They are therefore a large part of the area most affected by the Southern Development Area. Equally, there are other farms adjacent to the Coate development that will need to be considered in the mitigation measures for this development if it is approved.

Issues

The key issues identified by farmers within the area, both through the workshop and interviews with individual farmers, are:

- € uncertainty about future development proposals and their implications for agriculture
- € uncertainty over the implications of CAP reform (as illustrated by the Wiltshire Economic Partnership which, in their economic assessment for 2003/04, consider the likely implications of CAP reform)
- € lack of support for maintaining the core farm business

- € lack of business knowledge on appropriate farm diversification options within the farming community
- € misuse and abuse as a result of trespassing and rubbish dumping. A national study undertaken by the National Farmers Union (NFU) in 2002 identified that fly-tipping and trespass are among the more common problems faced by farmers in the urban fringe.

Response

Profitable agriculture still has a central role to play in this area. The role of the UFAP must be to assist in consolidating core farm businesses, helping reduce the urban pressures which farming faces in the area (litter dumping trespass etc) and enabling diversification and change that build a new and economically stable future for the area that contributes to the overall vision for the urban fringe.

Although the tenant farms give an obvious focus for this action, the opportunities to consolidate and diversify farm businesses is relevant to all farms within the urban fringe.

The central actions to assist farm and other land-based businesses within the area will include:

- € **Advice:** Assistance with consolidating core farm businesses through business advice focusing on consolidating the existing dairy businesses in the near urban fringe, potentially supported by grant through the Rural Enterprise Scheme

- € **Farm diversification:** Assistance with the identification and development of appropriate diversification activities that help sustain the core business, meet community aspirations and contribute to the Vision for the area
- € **Incentives:** Incentives for the development of recreational routes and corridors where these will not disrupt the core farm business
- € **Management support:** Provision of management support to counter problems associated with farming in the urban fringe
- € **Infrastructure:** The provision of infrastructure, such as road crossings and traffic calming (covered elsewhere) that open up diversification opportunities in sympathy with the vision for the area. A key problem for farms in the near urban fringe is that they cannot diversify into equestrian activities, as their land does not have safe and easy access to the bridleway network of the further urban fringe, hence the need to extend these links into the near urban fringe at strategic points.

Farm diversification: Farm diversification will be a central component to achieving the viability of individual farm holdings. Farm diversification has widespread policy support from the national to the local level. The current Economic Development and Tourism Strategy for Kennet District sees the diversification of the farm economy as one of its four priority areas for action, a sentiment that is similarly reflected in the Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Strategy (2000).

Farms in the urban fringe have a key advantage in that they have easy access to urban markets. Nevertheless, as

illustrated by a large number of national studies⁵, diversification of agricultural buildings in the urban fringe can lead to the migration of businesses from adjacent urban areas into the surrounding countryside, setting up patterns of reverse commuting which bring little benefit to the urban fringe. Equally, in a highly accessible location such as the southern Swindon urban fringe, with easy access to the motorway network, there are strong incentives for the establishment of haulage and storage businesses, which can bring significant increases in traffic levels on the rural road network serving the farm holding.

The challenge for the Swindon urban fringe is to identify those forms of farm diversification that both help support the farm business **and** bring clear benefits to a multi-purpose urban fringe, reflecting the vision and objectives of the UFAP. Within the Action Plan area such farm diversification is likely to be of the following types:

- € **Local products:** The adding of value to the core farm product(s) has great potential in the urban fringe with the nearby urban market. This is considered further in the next section on Local Products
- € **Recreational diversification:** Directly reflecting the huge recreational potential of the urban fringe, there is great opportunity to diversify into recreational opportunities that assist in the quiet enjoyment of the countryside, including (well managed) equestrian centres; fishing lakes; and farm visits and education. This may also include recreational

⁵ eg Land Use Consultants et al 1995 *Planning Controls over Agricultural and Forestry development and Rural Building Conversions* (DoE) and Land Use Consultants et al 2001 *The Implementation of National Planning policy Guidance (PPG7) in Relation to Farm Diversification of Farm Businesses*

facilities in converted farm buildings, from climbing walls to refreshments

- € **Tourist accommodation:** In line with objectives for the North Wessex Downs AONB, there is the great potential to develop farm tourist accommodation (B&B) and bunk barns linked to regional and national routes, particularly the Ridgeway. Of particular value will be the development of overnight accommodation for horses and riders using these routes and exploring the North Wessex Downs more generally
- € **Craft studios:** Craft studios, arising from the conversion of farm buildings, have the potential to add to the recreational opportunities of the urban fringe both through sales and tuition
- € **Office and workshop starter units:** Office and workshop starter units may have a role to play where they support the local economy, are meeting local community needs, are of a scale that precludes major traffic generation, and will help meet the objectives of this UFAP
- € **Green composting:** In the longer term there may be the potential to set up a green composting unit using garden waste, set within a strong landscape framework. This would require a separate feasibility study before being taken forward (identified below under Flytipping and Composting)
- € **Wood fuel:** Development of wood fuel has significant potential within the urban fringe, adding to the sustainability performance of the area, and responding to the lead of the Great Western Community Forest. Reflecting the AONB Management Plan, at least in the first

instance, the emphasis should be on wood fuel community heating schemes and other community-based solutions.

A considerable range of farm diversification opportunities are available therefore, which have the potential to add significantly to the multi-functional nature of the urban fringe. In all cases though it will be important for diversification proposals to contribute positively to the vision and objectives for the UFAP area by:

- € fitting within the GI Plan and positively contributing either directly or indirectly to the management of the landscape fabric of the holding in line with the GI Plan
- € being of a design sympathetic to the RURAL location of the development (illustrated in the proposed design guidance)
- € not adding significantly to traffic on the rural road network. It is known that livery stables are a high traffic generator⁶. It makes spatial sense therefore if these are located in the near urban fringe, minimising traffic flows into the deeper countryside and also maximising the opportunity for these facilities (and other forms of farm diversification) to be accessed by means other than the private car.

In the case of significant diversification proposals it may be appropriate for planning application to be accompanied by a whole farm plan, indicating how the proposals will support the core farm business; assure the maintenance of the landscape and deal with traffic generation.

⁶ Land Use Consultants and the University of the West of England (2002) *Farm Diversification and Traffic Generation* for the Countryside Agency and Land Use Consultants (2002) *The implications of Farm Diversification on Quiet Lanes*, also for the Countryside Agency

THE TENANT FARMS AND WIDER AGRICULTURE			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Information collection and project development</i>			
A1. Common agreement on appropriate diversification opportunities	Agreement amongst planning authorities and farm advisors of suitable diversification opportunities that reflect the objectives for the area and will contribute to farm viability	<p>Within 6 months Lead: Swindon Borough Council and Great Western Community Forest</p> <p>Partners: Business Link Wiltshire, Kennet and North Wiltshire District Councils, AONB team and local businesses, in consultation with Rural Renaissance</p>	Agreed opportunities should link with the diversification opportunities being identified as part of the SDA mitigation study for the tenant farms
<i>Targeted incentives</i>			
A2. Targeting of incentives to assist appropriate farm diversification options	Working with the RDS to ensure that available funding supports farm diversification opportunities that will maximise benefits for a multi-functional urban fringe, including the provision of new access routes (potentially supported under the Higher Level (HLS) of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme)	<p>Within 6 months Lead: Great Western Community Forest, Natural England (RDS)</p> <p>Partners: Business Link Wiltshire. Wiltshire Economic Development Service and National Farmers Union</p>	
<i>Integrated advice, demonstration and support</i>			
A3. Assistance with consolidation of the core farm businesses through business advice linked to grant support (above)	<p>Discussions with Business Link / the Farm Business Advisory Service on the type of advice that could be offered to farm and other rural businesses in support of the objectives of this Action Plan and identified diversification opportunities</p> <p>Development of a programme of business</p>	<p>Within 1 year Lead: Swindon Borough Council and the Great Western Community Forest</p> <p>Partners: Business Link Wiltshire/Farm Business Advisory Service (FBAS),</p>	Particular emphasis should be placed on diversification activities that help support the sustainable management of the land and contribute to the quiet enjoyment of the countryside

THE TENANT FARMS AND WIDER AGRICULTURE			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
	<p>advice for farmers within the area linking with opportunities offered under the England Rural Development Programme</p> <p>Encouragement of funding applications that help invigorate the core farm business and reflect the objectives for the area</p>	Natural England (RDS) and Rural Renaissance	
Countryside management			
A4. Management support to counter problems of farming in the urban fringe	Work with the police to strengthen the Farm Watch network in the area to combat damage and trespass	<p>Within 1 year</p> <p>Lead: NFU and the local police force</p> <p>Partners: the farming community</p>	<i>Other issues relating to fly tipping and dumping and management of the rights of way network are covered separately below</i>
A5. Infrastructure improvements (such as road crossings and traffic calming) to facilitate diversification	Covered under rights of way network and rat running on rural roads (below)		

LOCAL PRODUCTS

With a large population close at hand, the urban fringe has a major opportunity to spear head the production, marketing and promotion of local products – food, wood and potentially other products such as green composts and garden mulches created from local wastes. Currently the core agricultural businesses of the study area are commodity producers, characterised by dairying in the near urban fringe, and cereals in the wider urban fringe. Nevertheless, there is very considerable opportunity to both add value to existing products, with dairying having the potential for cheese and ice cream production, and to diversify into new products which have the potential to find a ready market in the nearby urban areas – from free range poultry and horticultural products to quality meats and garden products.

In Swindon there is a weekly farmers' market with roughly 15 stallholders run by 'Made in Stroud' and supported through Swindon's Community Strategy. There are Country Markets (formally Women's Institute Markets). There is also a farmers' market in Wootton Bassett. Over the last four years local food networks have been encouraged by Wiltshire Food Links run by North Wiltshire District Council, and a products directory has been published for Wiltshire, listing over 100 producers and processors of local food and drink products (available from tourist information centres). A Local Products Directory has also been launched on the North Wessex Downs AONB website.

Opportunities

The potential development of local products in the UFAP area both responds to the need to encourage farm diversification in support of the core farm business and the very significant opportunities offered by the urban fringe. There is also great potential to link to the health and education agendas, following a similar programme that has been developed in the Great North Forest (another Community Forest to the south of Newcastle).

While the farms and other rural businesses within the study area have the potential to be at the forefront of the development of local products serving the large markets of Swindon and surrounding areas, this is an initiative that should involve farms



well beyond the boundaries of the study area, linking to proposals within the wider AONB to promote local production and marketing.

NMSI's National Collection Centre, which has a major focus on sustainability, were it to go ahead, is likely to take a central role in promoting and marketing local products, recognising its potential to provide a major outlet and market for such products. However, development of local products within the UFAP area is certainly not dependent on NMSI's proposals.

Response

A considerable range of actions is needed to help facilitate the development of local products. These include:

- € **Networks and products:** Forming links with developing local product networks within the area
- € **Local procurement:** Promoting local procurement amongst local companies and tourist and leisure outlets and potentially major public service providers including local hospitals and schools. Encouraging local procurement of foods and other products could create a significant market for local products. In part, the need will be to understand the constraints faced by potential purchasers to see how these constraints might be overcome
- € **Co-operative networks:** Assisting in the development of co-operative networks in the production, processing, marketing and delivery of local products

LOCAL PRODUCTS			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Information collection and project development</i>			
LP1. Forming links with local producer networks	Identifying existing local food and producer networks operating in the locality and considering how they might assist the development of local food and producer networks serving the urban fringe area; especially considering potential links with the North Wessex Downs AONB	Within 1 year Lead: Swindon Economic Partnership Partners: Part of a wider initiative to develop local producer networks within the AONB, in association with the Great Western Community Forest	It is important to understand the scope of existing networks so that any new initiatives build on existing activity, especially the networks being established through Swindon's Farmers' Market, and those that developed under Wiltshire Food Links. It will also be important to work closely with NMSI should their proposals be approved
LP2. Identifying local producers	Identifying existing local producers within the locality (which would also include the north western part of the North Wessex	Within 1 year Lead: Swindon Economic Partnership	This links to the North Wessex Downs AONB Action Plan (A32)

LOCAL PRODUCTS			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
	Downs AONB). This would require: € identifying those local producers working with existing networks and/or with their own farm shop € holding an open meeting of existing and potential local producers within the locality to assess interest in developing markets for local products	Partners: Part of a wider initiative to develop local producer networks within the AONB	
Targeted incentives and integrated advice			
LP3. Assisting the development of local cooperative networks	Through Product Evaluation Groups (PEGs) being developed for the wider AONB and advice offered to individual businesses by Business Link, it is possible that the opportunities for co-operative working will be identified, such as a suppliers co-operative to local schools. Such initiatives should be positively encouraged and supported through funding from the Rural Enterprise Scheme, Processing and Marketing Grant and funds under the South West Local Food Partnership	Within 2 years Lead: Business Link and Natural England (RDS) Partners: Natural England, South West Foods, CLA and NFU	
Promotion and awareness-raising			
LP4. Promoting local procurement	In parallel with the above action, developing an awareness-raising campaign of local procurement opportunities for food and other local products amongst schools, health care facilities, and restaurants, pubs and hotels, involving: € Workshops € Publications and leaflets € Discussions with procurement officers	Within 1 year Lead: Swindon Economic Partnership and the Great Western Community Forest Partners: Rural Renaissance, South West Foods, local education authority, hospital trusts and NMSI (if their proposals are approved)	This partly links to the North Wessex Downs Action Plan (A34) to identify local markets for timber products and to the aim to develop public sector procurement as set out in <i>Making the difference – the Delivery Plan for a Sustainable Farming and Food Industry in South West England</i>

THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

A comprehensive and well-maintained rights of way network is central to a successful urban fringe, for visitors, residents and local enterprise. The urban fringe offers great potential for accessing the countryside around towns and providing a stepping stone into the deeper countryside and, amongst other things, helping meet the government's agenda for encouraging more healthy lifestyles. It provides the opportunity of providing accessible countryside on the urban doorstep.

Issues

This is against a context of a rights of way network that may no longer be particularly well designed for this use, and where lack of management in the face of considerable recreational pressure, may result in conflicts with other urban fringe land uses, most notably farming.

From Fringe Benefits and the workshops held in support of this Action Plan there was general agreement that:

- € there is pressure for recreation on Swindon's doorstep. As indicated by an audit of Swindon's open space undertaken in 2003, some 73% of Swindon's population use open spaces for informal recreation every two to three months, with the greater concern being the quality rather than the quantity of provision
- € the rights of way network suffers from lack of management
- € there is a lack of strategic links (walking and cycling) from Swindon's urban edge into the deeper countryside

- € There is a need for cycleway linkage from Wroughton to the Swindon network
- € there is a lack of appropriate bridleway links from the inner urban fringe into the deeper countryside
- € there is a lack of short circular walks suitable for use by local residents
- € the rights of way are damaged by off-road vehicular use (both legal and illegal)

There is little survey information to substantiate these points, especially as the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) for the area are not to be produced until 2007. But these general problems are acknowledged in Swindon's Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011, and were widely agreed at the urban fringe workshops, with Swindon's urban cycle and pedestrian network currently ending at the urban boundary.

Nevertheless, a Greenways Project is being taken forward by Swindon Borough Council through their Green Transport Plan 2000 with a number of short Greenways developed within the urban fringe south of Swindon (para2.28 above), and with the aim of increasing access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders in the urban fringe to link to the area's National Trail's (Primarily the Ridgeway to the south). In parallel, a study for the Great Western Community Forest has identified a number of potential urban-rural linking greenways in the urban fringe south of Swindon (Figure 12 above), and an Access Strategy for the Borough is planned.

The Borough has a target of 90% of rural footpaths and cycleways reaching Government standards of "easy to use"

(Swindon 2010) and the Swindon Local Transport 2006-2011 has a range of proposals in support of an improved rights of way network within Swindon's urban fringe.

Response

At the strategic level the main task now is to consider the network as a whole in terms of:

- € overall connectivity (including the different intensities of use in the near and further urban fringe and how they are linked)
- € use by different modes (on foot, by bike and on horse back)
- € access to the network (from Swindon, Wroughton and Wootton Bassett), from park and ride facilities, other parking and public transport
- € access and linkage to services and attractions
- € the ongoing maintenance of the rights of way network, such that it is able to fulfil its strategic and local functions without conflict with other land uses and businesses

The main tasks, therefore, building on the existing range of initiatives would be:

- € consideration of the need for new routes (and road crossing points) to make the network 'work' better, including opportunities for segregation on busy routes, creation of strategic links (linking town with country), identification of more local links to meet the needs of the local community, and access for the less able. This will also include the identification of bridleway links, linking the near urban fringe with the bridleway network of the further urban fringe

- € enhanced maintenance of the existing rights of way network (to meet existing pressures and ensure their suitability for increased use)
- € management of misuse (off road vehicles and flytipping)
- € enhanced way-marking
- € development of a series of guided routes for all modes

A strategic review of the network: Improving the state of the existing network is an obvious priority, but needs the context of a strategic review that identifies a hierarchy of routes, key missing links, and important road crossings etc as indicated above. The preparation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) provides the appropriate mechanism for implementing a strategic review, but an early start is needed to inform the Green Infrastructure Plan. The Parish Councils have expressed a clear desire to assist in this task, potentially co-ordinated by the Community Forest to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Maintenance of the network: The strategic review of the network should include an assessment of current condition leading to prioritisation of maintenance needs, including waymarking and removal of obstructions, with particular priority given to the near urban fringe. This information should be fed into the RoWIPS.

Development of 'guided' trails: The setting out of guided routes in the near urban fringe, but linking to the further urban fringe, supported by leaflets and web-based material, would help promote the recreational opportunities of the urban fringe to a wider audience.

Implementing and maintaining the rights of way network within the study area will carry a significant cost, with the Southern

Development Area, and Coate and NMSI's National Collection Centre Planet (should they go ahead) potentially being important partners in the delivery of an enhanced rights of way

network. This work is already underway through the mitigation negotiations for the Southern Development Area.

THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Information collection and project development</i>			
<i>RW1. Strategic review of the rights of way network</i>	<p>The strategic review should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € use € gateways, access points, connectivity and safe road crossing points € different user groups and potential segregation of users € missing links, in linking town with country and in more local routes serving local residents <p>with the aim of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € identifying a hierarchy of routes for different users € prioritising strategic links and links to access points and nodes. <p>The focus should be on the needs of the near urban fringe. This strategic review should form a central input to the RoWIPs</p>	<p>Within 6 months Lead: Highway Authorities and the Access Forum</p> <p>Partners: Parish Councils and the Great Western Community Forest</p>	<p>Parish Councils have already expressed a desire to be actively involved in this work.</p> <p>This review will need to be closely co-ordinated with other access initiatives in the urban fringe, not least Swindon's Green Transport Plan and the Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011, and will need to feed into the Green Infrastructure Plan for the southern urban fringe, hence the need to take this work forward as soon as possible.</p>
<i>RW2. An assessment of current condition of the rights of way network</i>	<p>In parallel to the above action, an assessment of the condition of the network, identifying key maintenance improvement works, including waymarking and removal of obstructions. This should particularly focus on the near urban fringe and connections to the strategic network. Again, this would form a central input to the RoWIPs</p>	<p>Within 6 months Lead: Highway Authorities / Parish Councils</p> <p>Partners: Highway Authorities and Access Forum</p>	<p>The results of this condition review will need to be integrated with the strategic review to identify a clear hierarchy of maintenance priorities</p>

THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Countryside management</i>			
<i>RW3. Enhanced maintenance of the network</i>	<p>Ensuring the 'health' of the network by clearing obstructions, maintaining surfaces, gates / stiles and way-marking according to the priorities established through the assessment of current condition</p> <p>There should be particular focus on the near urban fringe</p>	<p>Within 1 year Lead: Highway Authorities</p> <p>Partners: Parish Councils / Access Forum</p> <p>Potential legal agreements for Coate and NMSI's proposals should support maintenance of the network</p>	<p>Without a 'healthy' network many of the objectives of the UFAP are compromised</p> <p>It will be vital that maintenance works maintain the rural character of the rights of way network</p>
<i>Specific and integrated projects</i>			
<i>RW4. Implementation of new routes</i>	<p>Implementation of new routes according to the priorities set by the strategic review and incorporated into the Green Infrastructure Plan, potentially including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € new strategic links for different users € new links for local users € links to access points and nodes € safe road crossings € segregation of users where this will improve safety and convenience € access for the less able 	<p>Within 2 years Lead: Highway Authorities using resources from the SDA legal agreement and possible resources from potential legal agreements for Coate and NMSI's National Collection Centre</p> <p>Partners: The farming community and the RDS with some permissive routes potentially provided though the Higher level of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme</p>	<p>Guided by the strategic review of the network</p>

THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>RW5. Development of guided routes</i>	<p>Early development of selected routes using existing access points and nodes, including boosting awareness of existing trails. Focus on the near urban fringe but also key routes to and in the further urban fringe</p> <p>Production of route guides as leaflets and also online</p> <p>Later consideration of a full, complimentary range of routes for the whole network and covering a range of user groups</p>	<p>Within 1 year Lead: Highway Authorities</p> <p>Partners: Parish Councils / Access Forum, Rural Renaissance and Active Swindon</p>	<p>An important component in getting the ball rolling and in encouraging the health benefits of walking and cycling</p> <p>Clear guidance needed on access rights and responsibilities to minimise access conflicts.</p>

TRANSPORT AND PARK AND RIDE

The majority of traffic in the study area is car-borne. Any uplift in activity in the area (principally recreation) must not be accompanied by a commensurate increase in traffic, and all opportunities should be taken to encourage a shift from car use to other transport modes. It is also very important that traffic generated by major new development is managed to minimise impact on the urban fringe road network.

Issues

From Fringe Benefits and the workshops held during the preparation of this Action Plan there was general agreement that there is a lack of public transport provision serving the recreational needs of the urban fringe. This is combined with a perceived lack of public transport provision serving the communities of the urban fringe more generally.

Response

Existing plans and strategies acknowledge the lack of public transport provision in rural areas, and the Local Transport Plan calls for the integration of transport planning with other plans, with Wiltshire's Rural Strategy calling for public transport routes and services in rural areas to be mapped.

Public transport is largely provided by private companies on a commercial basis so local authorities generally have limited influence. However large scale new developments can bring opportunities. An example of this is the Section 106 agreement for the Southern Development Area which requires developer contributions to pump prime bus services and to

install a number of crossings in the southern urban fringe area.

The central focus of this Action Plan is on those factors that make the urban fringe DIFFERENT from other areas of countryside, and therefore the key focus in this context is on recreational transport provision.

The issues identified require:

- € better rights of way links from the edge of Swindon to the southern edge of the study area (covered separately above)
- € greater use of Park and Ride facilities to service recreational opportunities
- € enhanced use of bus services and other forms of public transport for recreational trips
- € traffic management measures associated with new developments

Park and ride: The existing Wroughton park and ride and that proposed as part of the SDA and Coate developments offer two opportunities

- € as strategic car parks servicing the near urban fringe, particularly at weekends (currently the Wroughton car park is closed on Sundays)
- € offering a reverse bus trip from central Swindon to the outlying car parks, as the starting point for recreational trips out of Swindon at weekends

This would require both operation of the park and rides at weekends and linking of these car parks into the network of

strategic recreational routes, such that they provide a good starting point for recreational activities within the urban fringe.

Bus links: In parallel, the provision of bus services operating between the park and ride car parks and the further urban fringe, has the potential to service local communities and provide transport links into the AONB.

NMSI, as part of its National Collection Centre proposals, is proposing extensive use of bus and coaches as the main method by which visitors will arrive at their site from both the park and ride car park and Swindon railway station. If this

proposal goes ahead, access into the AONB could be enhanced, with the Wroughton Airfield site providing a

gateway into the AONB and also servicing the transport needs of local residents. These proposals provide 'glue' that join other elements of the Action Plan together.

Travel plans: In addition, it is very important that all new major developments within the urban fringe are subject to transport plans that seek to minimise the traffic generated by these developments, and particularly traffic impacts on the more minor roads of the urban fringe.

TRANSPORT AND PARK AND RIDE			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Specific and integrated projects</i>			
<i>T1. Operation of park and ride facilities at weekends and evenings in summer</i>	<p>Investigating the feasibility of operating the existing Wroughton park and ride at weekends and in the evenings served by buses from central Swindon once waymarked linking routes have been established (see below)</p> <p>Potential planning permission for a new park and ride site associated with the Coate development should require this 'dual use'.</p>	<p>Within 2 years Lead: Swindon Borough Council</p> <p>Future LPSAs should seek greater public support for the recreational operation of Park and Ride facilities in the urban fringe</p>	<p>Use should be monitored.</p> <p>Facilities including bike hire, safe bicycle lock ups and catering should be encouraged at park and ride sites</p> <p>Should NMSI's proposals proceed, the proposals for park and ride and a wider transport system serving the site should be 'tapped into' to maximise recreational benefits for the wider urban fringe</p>

TRANSPORT AND PARK AND RIDE			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>T2. Development of links to recreational routes from park and ride sites</i>	A particular aspect of the strategic review of the rights of way network considered above. These links would form important starting points for many of the guided routes developed with the UFAP area.		
<i>T3. Development of bus routes linking Swindon, urban fringe communities and recreation nodes</i>	<p>Initially seeking to publicise and adapt existing bus routes operating within the urban fringe to give them a stronger recreational focus at weekends and during the summer months</p> <p>Later seeking a more purposeful linking of settlements and recreational opportunities. NMSI's transport system could be useful here</p>	<p>Within 5 years Lead: Highway Authorities</p> <p>Partners: LSPs, public transport operators</p> <p>Future LPSAs to support greater public expenditure on public transport provision in the urban fringe</p> <p>Potential legal agreements for Coate and NMSI should support this</p>	<p>Transport proposals in the urban fringe should take account of existing services, such as the Saturday only Ridgeway Bus run by Weaveaway Travel, and help support and promote community transport schemes, such as Transport 4U organised by Wootton Bassett Town Council.</p> <p>Proposals should form part of the delivery of the objectives in the Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011 and the AONB Management Plan to promote integrated passenger transport schemes (Policy T5)</p>
<i>T4. A requirement for all new major developments to have a transport plan</i>	All major new developments should be required to have a Transport Plan that seeks to minimise the impact of car use on the urban fringe and seeks to maximise use of alternative modes. Wherever possible dual use with recreational opportunities should be considered	<p>Within 6 months Lead: Swindon Borough Council as planning authority</p>	

RAT RUNNING ON RURAL ROADS

As indicated by commuter flows (**Figure 9**), Swindon's southern urban fringe is increasingly crossed by commuter traffic and, according to the Swindon Borough Local Transport Plan 2000 – 2006, traffic is predicted to increase in the general area by 19% by 2015, above the national average.

Issues

A specific issue identified through the workshops held during the preparation of this Action Plan was rat running on rural roads as a consequence of increased traffic congestion on the main roads. This problem peaks during the rush hour, although inappropriate vehicle speeds are a problem at all hours. Anecdotal reports highlighted the A4361 and the B4005 through Wroughton, and the lane through Hodson amongst others, as particular problem areas.

Rat running has widespread impacts. It seriously inhibits informal recreation such as walking, cycling and riding, as it makes roads difficult and intimidating to cross or use as part of a route. It reduces quality of life for communities in the urban fringe, gives rise to conflicts with agriculture (movement of animals and machinery), and generally degrades the local environment. It also seriously inhibits some forms of farm diversification such as horse livery, with heavily trafficked lanes isolating farms from the rights of way network.

Arguably the new developments on edge of Swindon will exacerbate the problem as more people (and their cars) will be brought closer to the neighbouring rural road network, whilst in tandem the recreation pressure on the area will be increased.

The minor roads in the urban fringe are not intended to be used as strategic routes into Swindon, and their over-use as such has a clearly disproportionate impact on beneficial activity in the urban fringe.

These problems are accentuated in the near urban fringe, where traffic is funnelled onto a limited number of roads.

Response

Rat running is a defining problem for the area. It has to be tackled effectively for the Swindon urban fringe to realise its potential. There have already been studies for Greenways in the area (as yet unimplemented other than short lengths taken forward by Swindon Borough Council). At present equestrian and cycle use of the near urban fringe, in particular, is clearly inhibited.

A Quiet Lanes project has been suggested as a solution for this problem. Whilst offering part of the solution, Quiet Lanes rely on an existing low level of traffic use and goodwill amongst motorised vehicle users, thus Quiet Lanes are not a perfect fit for the near urban fringe. Traffic management measures would be needed alongside Quiet Lanes (particularly for Hay Lane, Wharf Road and Elcombe Lane). On this basis something stronger than Quiet Lanes is required. A road hierarchy plan for the area should be developed and implemented, which recognises the importance of the use of certain roads by non-motorised transport, and puts traffic management measures in place alongside the usual signage, design and publicity package typical of Quiet Lanes.

RAT RUNNING ON RURAL ROADS			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Information collection and project development</i>			
T5. Development of road hierarchy plan	<p>Development of a road hierarchy plan for the urban fringe that reflects traffic counts of rat running and recognises the importance of certain roads for recreational use</p> <p>The development of this road hierarchy will need to build on the strategic review of the rights of way network (identified above), considering the role that certain minor roads play in contributing to the overall recreational network</p>	<p>Within 5 years Lead: Highway Authorities</p> <p>Partners: Parish Councils / Access Forum and user groups</p> <p>Needs coordination with implementation of the Local Transport Plan</p>	This should link to the Greenways project being developed by Swindon Borough Council, and to the separate Greenways project that was promoted by the Community Forest.
<i>Specific and integrated projects</i>			
T6. Traffic management / use restriction on 'recreational' key roads	<p>Based on the agreed road hierarchy, traffic management measures should be put in place on those roads identified for recreational use (such as Mill Lane). The nature of these measures may vary but should have the single purpose of making these routes safe to use by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders</p>	<p>Within 5 years Lead: Highway Authorities</p> <p>Partners: Parish Councils / Access Forum</p> <p>Needs coordination with implementation of the Local Transport Plan</p> <p>Potential funding for the works involved through the legal agreement for the SDA and the potential legal agreements for Coate and NMSI's National Collection Centre</p>	This action is vitally important but potentially difficult to achieve

A GATEWAY TO THE AONB

As recognised by the Countryside Agency and Groundwork Trust vision for the area around towns, such areas have the potential to provide a gateway to the wider countryside.

Opportunity

Key sites within the near urban fringe and other key locations, such as Wroughton airfield and Barbury Castle, have the potential to act as gateways to the AONB.

These gateways will be both actual – with routes into the AONB starting in the urban fringe – and virtual, in encouraging and welcoming local communities and visitors to have the confidence and knowledge to explore the near and further countryside in ways that respect the needs of land managers and farmers.

Response

Through the Green Infrastructure Plan it will be vital to identify key gateways into the wider countryside and the AONB.

These gateways are likely to take a number of forms: development sites; Park and Ride facilities; village fringes; key recreation facilities such as Coate Water Park and Barbury Castle Country Park; and virtual information on the web (considered under Promotion and Awareness-raising below).

These gateways need to be distinct and of the highest quality. The design treatment of each gateway is likely to be different, reflecting the immediate surroundings, but each gateway should have a distinctly RURAL character, reflecting their role as a gateway to the countryside. Overtly engineered solutions

should be avoided – they should not add to the suburbanising influences within the urban fringe.

The development of these gateways, which are identified on Figure AP2, requires a range of actions, as follows:

- € **Review of gateways / entrances:** Review of key 'entrances' points to assess design and landscaping requirements to create fitting 'entrances' of quality that reflect their rural location and function. This review will form part of the Green Infrastructure Plan and the strategic review of the rights of way network.
- € **Design and implementation of gateways / entrances:** Key gateways will require design and implementation. Whilst the works will be small-scale, the quality of the design will be critical. This work should also include the landscape enhancement of existing gateway sites, most notably Barbury Castle Country Park, which currently has a suburban flavour with engineered car parking area
- € **Providing links to the immediate countryside:** Identifying and providing links from gateways, through the rights of way network, to the immediate countryside and the wider AONB beyond. This will form part of the strategic review of the rights of way network and the creation of new links (covered under the rights of way network above).

Aspects of awareness-raising are picked up separately below.

A GATEWAY TO THE AONB			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
Information collection and project development			
G1. Review of gateways / entrances	Forming a critical part of the Green Infrastructure Plan (Landscape and Habitat Management and Enhancement) and the Strategic review of the rights of way network (The rights of way network)		
Specific and integrated projects			
G2. Design and implementation of gateways / entrances:	Key gateways in the near urban fringe will require landscape design and subsequent implementation. The emphasis must be on creating the highest quality rural character with native planting and localised habitat creation, as space allows. Where these gateways are associated with new development sites (the SDA and potentially Coate and NMSI's National Collection Centre), they should be provided as part of the development but in accordance with the Green Infrastructure Plan This work should include the landscape enhancement of existing gateway sites, most notably Barbury Castle, to ensure that such sites have a clearly rural character that befits their rural surroundings	Within 2 years Lead: Swindon Borough Council and the Great Western Community Forest Partners: Parish Councils / Access Forum	
G3. Providing links to the immediate countryside from gateways	Forming part of the Strategic review of the rights of way network and creation of new links (the rights of way network) Will also need to integrate closely with the actions relating to Transport / park and ride		

LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The creation of sustainable communities is now a central concern of Government policy, ensuring both mixed communities and those supported by a range of viable services. These are themes picked up in the Rural White Paper.

In this Action Plan the focus is on the maintenance of viable local services as these cross-relate to the specific functions and opportunities of the urban fringe.

Through the workshops, a key issue identified related to the provision of affordable housing within the settlements of the urban fringe. This vitally important issue is not picked up specifically here as it is a universal problem facing all rural areas. It therefore requires urgent attention but not one that is specific to the urban fringe. In other words, it does not require an urban fringe 'specific' response.

Issue / Opportunity

The workshops that contributed to the preparation of this UFAP identified the loss of basic services as a key concern within the settlements of the urban fringe, although some settlements retain basic services (para 2.29). These form a valuable base on which to build, with high quality services forming a natural partner with a vibrant multi-purpose urban fringe. Such services help enhance the recreational experience of the area. Equally, over time enhanced recreational use may create new business opportunities, such as bicycle hire and tea shops, in turn widening the service base for local communities.

Response

Building on the objectives and work of existing initiatives, there is an opportunity to: encourage those services which help enhance the recreational experience of the urban fringe and to develop innovative approaches to the retention and expansion of services, such as the multiple use of existing facilities and the promotion of 'The Pub as a Hub' and similar initiatives. Reflecting the area's strategic importance, the Regional Development Agency, with its local partners, should develop a package of assistance for enterprises providing services and facilities that support the multi-functional nature of the area.

Information about existing services and facilities should be embedded in promotion of the urban fringe and guided routes.



LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Information collection and project development</i>			
S1. Audit of existing services and facilities	<p>Initial work to establish a baseline of existing local services and facilities (public and private) building on the evidence collected to-date including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - location of services - nature of services - hours of operation <p>Follow up with investigation of potential for combining of services, growth and expansion, with particular attention paid to the vision and objectives of this Action Plan and location on recreation networks</p>	<p>Within 2 years Lead: Parish Councils (potentially through Parish Planning exercises)</p> <p>Partners: LSPs and Rural Renaissance</p>	
<i>Specific and integrated projects</i>			
S2. Assistance for improvement of local services and facilities	<p>Identification of beneficial improvement to services and facilities, leading to grant support for those business cases that offer a real improvement to the range and quality of services on offer to visitors and the communities of the urban fringe.</p>	<p>Within 5 years Lead: Parish Councils, Swindon Economic Partnership and LSPs</p> <p>Partners: Rural Renaissance (and successor schemes for business development) and Community First grants and advice</p> <p>Potential legal agreements for Coate Water and NMSI's National Collection Centre could support local service provision within the urban fringe</p>	<p>Support for rural services reflects a widespread concern identified in local plans, the Community Strategy and the Wilts and Swindon Rural Strategy as well as the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan</p>

LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Promotion and awareness-raising</i>			
S3. Embedding information about local services and facilities in recreation guides	Recreational route guides produced for the rights of way network should promote services and facilities, and their ability to serve rights of way users. The services and facilities included in these guides should be based on providers putting themselves forward for inclusion	Within 1 year Lead: Highway authorities and Business Link Partners: Local authorities, parish councils and local service providers	

PROMOTION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Issues / opportunities

The urban fringe is not well understood. The potential of the area needs to be brought to the attention of decision takers. Likewise as opportunities in the area increase these need to be promoted to potential visitors.

This needs to be paralleled by widespread awareness-raising amongst those visiting and living in the area and amongst school children, of the need to respect the area and the businesses that it supports. There is also obvious potential to use the urban fringe for environmental education and to widen understanding of the Community Forest; particularly as its work on the ground will be given a boost through the UFAP,

There is an important flip-side to these issues. Society as a whole faces increasing concerns about the lack of exercise in the general population, and the health problems that this gives rise to. The urban fringe offers a valuable location for informal recreation to help combat these issues, through walking and cycling, as promoted through the national Walking the Way to Health Initiative being promoted by the Countryside Agency and the British Heart Foundation.

Swindon Borough Council has the Active Swindon Programme which promotes exercise opportunities of all types. In time, were it to draw the urban fringe into its work, not only would it be able to offer additional types of exercise activity to the communities of Swindon, but those communities would in turn learn about the countryside in the urban fringe. Alternatively this banner could be taken up by a Swindon

Walking Group with the assistance of the Walking the Way to Health Initiative.

Response

There are a range of actions that need to be taken to raise awareness of the urban fringe in all its facets. These include:

- € **Policy development:** Embedding the urban fringe in regional and local policy such that its importance and potential is brought to the attention of decision takers (Considered in Chapter 4 and at the end of this Action Plan)
- € **Press campaigns:** Raising awareness of the urban fringe and the issues it faces through press campaigns in association with the local media
- € **School links:** Developing the use of the urban fringe for environmental education by forging links with the local education authority and individual schools, potentially encouraging schools to 'adopt' particular sites or farms
- € **Web promotion:** Using the web to promote the opportunities available for recreation in the urban fringe and, in particular, the guided walks and linked service opportunities.

PROMOTION AND AWARENESS-RAISING			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Promotion and awareness-raising</i>			
AW1: Promoting the urban fringe on the web	Using the web to act as a virtual gateway to the area, promoting the opportunities available for recreation in the urban fringe and, in particular, the guided walks and linked service opportunities. .	Within 2 years Lead: Great Western Community Forest Partners: AONB team, LSPs, local communities	An existing website should host additional pages specifically on the urban fringe. These should link to the websites of individual communities
AW2: Developing school links	Schools should be encouraged to take an interest in the urban fringe as their nearest countryside, potentially both to raise awareness of the countryside and the issues it faces and as an outdoor classroom for particular aspects of the curriculum As part of this farms should be encouraged to support educational visits	Within 2 years Lead: Education authorities, Ggreat Western Community Forest, AONB team Partners: LSPs, the farming community, NFU	
AW3: Publicity campaigns to raise awareness of the urban fringe	Publicity campaigns should be encouraged both to identify the problems that urban fringe faces and the opportunities that it offers	Within 5 year Lead: Great Western Community Forest Partners: LSPs, AONB team, NFU and farming communities, local communities	Example: publicity regarding access and recreational opportunities should also contain clear messages about safe and responsible use of the rights of way network.

FLY TIPPING AND COMPOSTING

Fly tipping is a major problem in Swindon's urban fringe, as in most other area surrounding major urban areas. It detracts from the area, disrupts farming, and places a cost burden on local land managers, who may be saddled with removing it. It also significantly detracts from the recreational value of the area.

It is a pervasive problem that requires a strong and effective response.

Control essentially involves:

- € education and other measures (CCTV) to prevent fly tipping
- € policing and high profile prosecutions
- € removal of fly tipping

There are important legal considerations here. Tipping on the public highway (including rights of way) is the responsibility of the local authority. Tipping on private land (everywhere else except local authority property) is the responsibility of the landowner, though local authorities might clear it on a discretionary basis.

In addition, the Environment Agency is sometimes involved in incidents involving larger or more hazardous waste.

As a proportion of the fly-tipped waste is compostable garden material, it has also been suggested that a composting facility could be provided in the urban fringe, also providing a potential business opportunity, as indicated under farm diversification.

Response

Swindon Borough Council is the main authority responsible for dealing with fly tipping, as proportionally more occurs in the near urban fringe. The Borough is already involved in a range of initiatives aimed at reducing fly tipping and more sustainable waste management including increased facilities for kerbside recycling, increased garden waste collections, and distribution of leaflets on recycling and waste disposal opportunities.

However, the Council's ability to respond to illegal tipping in the urban fringe is significantly limited by lack of resources. This is an area where the Council might legitimately seek additional funds, potentially assisted by financial contributions (through legal agreement) from all new developments affecting the urban fringe.

Detailed suggestions for action include:

- € a rapid response system for fly tipping including the provision of a telephone number that land owners affected can ring for the removal of tipped rubbish. This is currently available for fly tipping on public land but not for tipping on private land
- € a mobile surveillance camera
- € publicity campaigns against flytipping through the local press and radio
- € showcase prosecutions
- € design of entrances to rights of way and lay-bys

This would amount to a modest uplift in current work rather than a revolution.

This is the sort of problem that needs to be 'cracked', and once this happens may become easier to control, particularly once the area is better used.

The setting up of a composting facility in the urban fringe, to supplement that already run by Swindon Borough Council, is something that should be the subject of a small supplementary study as there are technical considerations beyond the capacity of this plan.

FLY TIPPING AND COMPOSTING			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
<i>Specific and integrated projects</i>			
FT1. Design of entrances and lay-byes	Design of lay byes and entrances to the rights of way system to deter fly-tipping. Such designs should be sympathetic to their rural location.	Within 2 years Lead: Highways Authorities and Great Western Community Forest Partners -	This should link in with the design of gateways (G2)
FT2. Composting facility	Feasibility study for composting facility in the near urban fringe Possible establishment of composting facility	Within 5 years Lead: Waste Authorities Partners: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Waste Team, Rural Renaissance for feasibility study and business development	Swindon Borough Council already runs a composting facility for green waste. Liaison also needed with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Waste team.
<i>(Countryside) management</i>			
FT3. Rapid response system	Accented publicity of existing systems Specific top up measures for certain types of tipping in the urban fringe	Within 1 year Lead: Waste Authorities Partners: Farmers and landowners Future LPSAs to support greater public expenditure	The provisions of the Clean Neighbourhood Act bring much of this into being, but measures are needed to provide a higher level of clearance and to clear private land. This would require additional funds

FLY TIPPING AND COMPOSTING			
Heading for action	Specific actions	Responsibilities	Comments
		Possible support from the potential legal agreements for Coate and NMSI's National Collection Centre	
FT4. Mobile surveillance camera	If acquired, develop a protocol for use which is understood by all effected partners	<p>Within 2 years Lead: Waste Authorities</p> <p>Partners: Farmers, landowners and the local community</p> <p>Future LPSAs to support greater public expenditure. Likely also to require support from the potential legal agreements for Coate and NMSI</p>	
Promotion and awareness-raising			
FT5. High profile prosecutions	A concerted campaign to identify and prosecute culprits	<p>Within 2 years Lead: Waste Authorities, Environment Agency, and Police</p> <p>Partners: Farmers and landowners and the local community</p>	
FT6. Publicity campaigns against flytipping	Seeking support of the local press and radio on major publicity campaigns to counter the problem of flytipping in and around Swindon, assisted by publicity of showcase prosecutions	<p>Within 2 years Lead: Great Western Community Forest with local press and radio</p> <p>Partners: Farmers, landowners and the local community</p>	

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

The preceding sections have identified those who should take responsibility for individual actions, with a lead partner identified in all cases. Partnership working will be essential for the delivery of this Plan.

However, the urban fringe needs a champion or champions – to take a day to day lead in seeing that the Action Plan is delivered. So while partnership working is essential, relying on partnership alone may not be enough.

Given the widespread and strong interest in the process of putting this plan together, it would be sensible to carry this momentum into the implementation of the Plan.

Responsibility

So who should be the urban fringe champion? It is not appropriate for the UFAP to name a specific organisation as such a decision requires political and financial support which the UFAP cannot organise. But it is proposed that there should be a Policy Lead and an Implementation Lead.

The Policy Lead should be taken by an existing multi-agency partnership including both officers and members, such as the Swindon Strategic Partnership. The purpose of this group will be to ensure that the strategic importance of the urban fringe is recognised and to ensure that the ambitions of the UFAP become embedded in policy at the regional and local level.

The Implementation Lead should be taken by an organisation already responsible for delivery in the urban fringe – Swindon Borough Council or the Great Western

Community are obvious candidates. The role of the Implementation Lead will be to champion and co-ordinate work across the plan area and across disciplines. This role will need to be supported by necessary resources.

There will need to be regular liaison between the Policy Lead and the Implementation Lead. Until these leads are set in place the UFAP will be delivered through individual projects with the AONB team acting as co-ordinator.

ACTION PLAN: MEANS OF DELIVERY

As already noted, it is essential that this Plan and its identified actions are embedded in policy to provide a strategic framework for future actions and to guide future resource allocations. Individual actions will then be delivered through a range of mechanisms.

Policy

A more effective policy set for the urban fringe requires a clear justification for the strategic role of the urban fringe which is then shared and coordinated across the wide range of policy and strategy documents covering the area.

With this in mind, this section lays out how regional and local strategies and policies should 'do their bit' in delivering the actions identified in this UFAP.

Regional policy: This should not be expected to reach down to the specific detail of the *Swindon* Urban Fringe, but the current absence of any real appreciation of the problems and opportunities that the region's urban fringe presents in the regional policy set needs to be amended. The sustainability benefits to be gathered by fuller multi-functional use of the urban fringe is a key theme.

On this basis the following additions to regional policy would be needed:

Regional policy and its treatment of the urban fringe

<i>Integrated Regional Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Clear support for the multipurpose functions and roles of the urban fringe € Overview of the roles of thematic strategies in delivering this
<i>Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Clear support for the multi-purpose functions and roles of urban fringe € Stated expectation that LDFs, as appropriate, will recognise the strategic importance of the urban fringe as an area of multi-purpose land use € Stated expectation that new development affecting the urban fringe should make a net positive contribution to the urban fringe
<i>Regional Environmental Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Recognition of the multipurpose functions and roles of urban fringe and the need for high quality environments within them
<i>Biodiversity Action Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Recognition of the potential of the urban fringe to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets for both species and habitats
<i>Regional Forestry framework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Recognition of the importance of the urban fringe to future woodland and forestry policy, reflecting the national Woodland Strategy and the role of the Community Forests
<i>Regional Delivery Plan for Sustainable food and Farming</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Recognition of the role of the urban fringe in developing local products for nearby urban markets, with the potential to form direct links between producers and major purchasers (such as schools and hospitals)

Regional policy and its treatment of the urban fringe / cont.

Regional Tourism Strategy	€ Statements of the heightened importance of the urban fringe as a location for sustainable recreation and tourism
Regional Sports Plan	€ Targeted initiatives and support for recreation/tourism activities and enterprises in the urban fringe
Regional Economic Strategy	€ Targeted initiatives and support for farm diversification and other enterprise supporting the multipurpose use of the urban fringe

Sub-regional policy: As part of the emerging RSS a series of sub-regional strategies are in preparation, including a Swindon Sub-regional Strategy (draft) 2005. This Sub-regional Strategy should clearly recognise the importance of the urban fringe and the potentials it offers to Swindon in helping to achieve quality of life and sustainability objectives. It should also recognise the role of the Green Infrastructure Plan (see below) in setting a framework for the future of the urban fringe.

Local policy: This should provide a local policy framework which supports the objectives for the urban fringe. The Table which follows provides guidance on the additions to local policy required to provide that support.

In particular, the production of a **Green Infrastructure Plan** (GI Plan), a key activity arising from this Action Plan, will be important to a wide range of local policy. This is because the GI Plan is essentially a technical document, setting out a template for the future of the area that will be delivered across a number of fronts. Where the GI Plan should be expected to have a role is indicated in the Table which follows.

There is also a possibility that the GI Plan could be used as a local development document and should be integrated into the Local Development Framework.

Suggested additions to Local Policy to support the objectives of this UFAP for Southern Swindon

<p>Local Development Frameworks to be prepared for:</p> <p>Swindon Borough Council, Kennet District Council, North Wiltshire District Council</p> <p><i>Comments refer to all LDFs unless otherwise stated</i></p>	<p>Draws on the GI Plan for overall strategy for the urban fringe and also identifies this as a consideration in planning decisions</p> <p>Establishes the strategic importance of the urban fringe as an area of multi-purpose land use, primarily concerned with retaining prosperous agriculture in the area, developing a strong network of infrastructure and facilities for informal recreation and enjoyment, and enhancing the landscape of the urban fringe</p> <p><i>This needs to go beyond just treating the urban fringe area as a buffer or just as part of the wider countryside. The urban fringe has to be identified as a different sort of countryside where multi-purpose use is actively sought</i></p> <p><i>Particularly for the Swindon Borough LDF, it may be useful to develop a Supplementary Planning Document specifically addressing the urban fringe. This will partly depend on the depth of coverage in the Core Strategy</i></p> <p>Identifies the importance of establishing gateways to the urban fringe and AONB, from existing and new development.</p> <p>Sets a requirement that development affecting the urban fringe should make a net positive contribution to the urban fringe where appropriate, thus major off-site works could be required</p> <p>Particularly for the Swindon Borough LDF, Major development proposals required to have good connectivity to pedestrian and cycle routes</p> <p><i>If Area Action Plans are used for areas of major development in Swindon Borough, their coverage should extend into the urban fringe over land where major off-site works would be expected. Necessary works in the wider urban fringe should also be expected</i></p> <p>Policies for farm diversification should recognise the heightened imperatives in the urban fringe area and give enhanced support to farm diversification (in particular the types of diversification promoted through this Action Plan) supporting the multi-purpose use of the urban fringe</p> <p>Policies should support the retention of services in rural settlements and should emphasise the importance of services in the urban fringe, not just for residents but also for visitors</p> <p>Accessibility policies should support the development of a road hierarchy plan in the urban fringe area, and require that new development proposals are judged against their effects on this hierarchy</p>
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Local Development Frameworks contd.	<p>Accessibility policies should seek treatment of roads used as rat-runs, especially where this would be intensified by new development and where traffic calming and other measures would offer significant gains to the recreational use of the urban fringe</p> <p>Transport-related policies for Swindon Borough should support flexible use of new park and ride facilities, enabling evening and weekend use to serve the recreational use of the urban fringe</p>
Community Strategies	<p>Draw on the GI Plan for overall strategy. Clearly supports the importance of the urban fringe as an area of multi-purpose land use. Lays out the necessary plan and strategy connections</p>
Local Transport Plans	<p>State that in the urban fringe area the importance of multi-purpose land use, and particularly of non-motorised transport, means that transport objectives are different, requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € a strong non-motorised transport network € a road hierarchy designed to meet the multi-purpose use of the urban fringe, with strategic needs directed to specific corridors so as not to conflict with recreational and local users € facilitation of access to the urban fringe from Swindon by public transport and non-motorised means <p>With the LDF promoting development of a road hierarchy in the urban fringe area, traffic calming and other measures will be required on those roads that suffer from rat-running where use would be intensified by new development and / or where the road offers significant opportunities for recreational use, and /or flexible use of new park and ride facilities</p> <p>Supports review of the Rights of Way Network (shared with ROWIPs)</p>
Rights of Way Improvement Plans	<p>Seeks strategic review of the Rights of Way Network in the urban fringe area (shared with LTPs)</p> <p>Arising from the review, integrate rights of way proposals into the GI Plan</p> <p>Supports enhanced maintenance of the network in the urban fringe area, implementation of new strategic links, and development of guided routes</p>
Community Forest Plan	<p>Overlaps considerably with the UFAP</p> <p>Draws on the GI Plan for combined strategy within the urban fringe area</p> <p>Focuses Community Forest work where it can achieve greatest combined benefits</p>
AONB Management Plan	<p>Overlaps considerably with the UFAP for the area of the urban fringe in the AONB</p> <p>When the Management Plan is reviewed there will be a need to develop a suite of policies that considers the</p>

	interaction of the AONB with the large urban centres that lie close to its boundary
Local Biodiversity Action Plans	Draws on the GI Plan for combined strategy within the urban fringe area and indicates the habitat and species targets that can be assisted by habitat creation and management within the urban fringe
Local Economic Strategies	Target support for farm diversification and other enterprises and initiatives furthering the multi-purpose use of the urban fringe, including local services
Local Waste Plans	Prioritise actions to tackle fly tipping in the urban fringe area Supports setting up of composting facility in the urban fringe area
Rural Strategies	Rural strategies are a non-statutory plan, and not all authorities produce them. Where they exist there is a need for close coordination with the UFAP

Major development is the last consideration for planning policy. In particular it needs to consider the potential developments at Coate and NMSI's National Collection Centre. It is not known whether these developments will go ahead, but if they do they should be expected to contribute to the urban fringe area in order to ensure a net positive impact.

In summary both major developments should be expected to make positive contributions in the urban fringe area in terms of:

- € landscape and biodiversity enhancements
- € enhancement of the rights of way network, including better maintenance, and new routes
- € contribution to the MANAGEMENT of landscape, habitat and rights of way enhancements within the urban fringe Action Plan area
- € provisions of gateways to the urban fringe and AONB at both sites
- € flexible use of any park and ride facilities provided

- € support for better public transport routes in the urban fringe, linking with the new and with existing development
- € supporting the road hierarchy plan
- € prevention of rat-running
- € support for local services
- € promotion and education for new and existing residents and visitors
- € support for mechanisms to tackle fly tipping

Other delivery mechanisms

The specific means of delivering the individual actions identified in this Action Plan are summarised below, with actions ordered according to their timetable for delivery.

In addition, as already identified, local communities will have a critical role to play in seeking improvements to their local area through Parish Plans and other approaches, with local pride in place forming part of a wider recognition of the strategic importance of the urban fringe.

ACTIONS ORDERED BY MEANS OF DELIVERY			
Action	Page ref.	When?	Lead responsibility
Information collection and project development			
A1. Common agreement on appropriate diversification opportunities	Page 59	Within 6 months	Swindon Borough Council and Great Western Community Forest
RW2. An assessment of current condition of the rights of way network	Page 66	Within 6 months	Highway Authorities / Parish Council
RW1. Strategic review of the rights of way network (feeding into the Green Infrastructure Plan) including identification of links to park and ride opportunities (T2)	Page 66	Within 6 months	Highways Authorities and Access Forum
L1 Development of a Green Infrastructure Plan for the near urban fringe including review of gateways / entrances (G1) and informed by the review of the rights of way network	Page 53	Within 1 year	Great Western Community Forest in co-ordination with Swindon Borough Council and the North Wessex Downs AONB team
LP1. Forming links with local producer networks for local products	Page 62	Within 1 year	Swindon Economic Partnership
LP2. Identifying local producers	Page 62-63	Within 1 year	Swindon Economic Partnership
S1. Audit of existing services and facilities	Page 77	Within 2 years	Parish Councils
T5. Development of road hierarchy plan linking to the strategic review of the rights of way network	Page 73	Within 5 years	Highways authorities
Specific and integrated projects			
T4. A requirement for all new major developments to have a transport plan	Page 71	Within 6 months	Swindon Borough Council as planning authority
RW5. Development of guided routes on the rights of way network, latterly linking to Park and Ride facilities	Page 68	Within 1 year	Highways authorities
RW4. Implementation of new routes on the rights of way network , assisting in the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Plan, including links to Park and Ride facilities (T2) , to key gateways (G3) and including safe road crossings and links to assist farm diversification opportunities (A6)	Page 67	Within 2 years	Highways authorities
T1. Operation of park and ride facilities at weekends and evenings in summer	Page 70	Within 2 years	Swindon Borough Council

ACTIONS ORDERED BY MEANS OF DELIVERY			
Action	Page ref.	When?	Lead responsibility
G2. Design and implementation of gateways / entrances in the near urban fringe as part of the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Plan	Page 75	Within 2 years	Swindon Borough Council and Great Western Community Forest
FT1. Design of entrances and lay-byes to reduce flytipping (links to G2) in the near urban fringe	Page 82	Within 2 years	Highway Authorities and Great Western Community Forest
FT2. Composting facility as a feasibility study	Page 82	Within 5 years	Great Western Community Forest and Waste Authorities
T3. Development of bus routes linking Swindon, urban fringe communities, and recreation nodes	Page 71	Within 5 years	Highways authorities
T6. Traffic management / use restriction on 'recreational' key roads	Page 73	Within 5 years	Highways authorities
S2. Assistance for improvement of local services and facilities	Page 77	Within 5 years	Parish Councils, Swindon Economic Partnership and LSPs
Targeted incentives			
A2. Targeting of incentives to assist appropriate farm diversification options under the Rural Enterprise Scheme	Page 59	Within 6 months	Great Western Community Forest and Natural England (RDS)
L2. Targeting of the HLS and the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) to assist in the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Plan	Page 53	Within 1 year	Great Western Community Forest, AONB team and Natural England (RDS)
LP3. Assisting the development of local cooperative networks to market and promote local products	Page 63	Within 2 years	Business Link and Natural England (RDS)
Integrated advice, demonstration and support			
L3. Environmental advice to farmers to assist in the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Plan	Page 54	Within 1 year	Great Western Community Forest and AONB team
A3. Assistance with consolidation of the core farm businesses through business advice linked to grant support	Page 59	Within 1 year	Swindon Borough Council and Great Western Community Forest
L4. Identification of demonstration farm(s) in the urban fringe to demonstrate best practise in farming in the urban fringe	Page 54	Within 1 year	AONB team
L5. Preparation of design guidance for the UFAP area	Page 54	Within 2 years	AONB team and Swindon Borough Council

ACTIONS ORDERED BY MEANS OF DELIVERY			
Action	Page ref.	When?	Lead responsibility
Countryside management			
A4. Management support to counter problems of farming in the urban fringe	Page 60	Within 1 year	NFU and local police force
FT3. Rapid response system to counter flytipping	Page 82	Within 1 year	Waste Authority
RW3. Enhanced maintenance of the rights of way network	Page 67	Within 1 year	Highway Authorities
FT4. Mobile surveillance camera to counter flytipping	Page 83	Within 2 years	Waste Authority
L6. Encouraging active participation of the local community in the management of the urban fringe	Page 55	Within 5 years	Great Western Community Forest
L7. Conservation Grazing Scheme to assist with the conservation management of land in the urban fringe	Page 55	Within 5 years	Wiltshire GAP
Promotion and awareness-raising			
LP4. Promoting local procurement of local products	Page 63	Within 1 year	Swindon Economic Partnership and Great Western Community Forest
S3. Embedding information about local services and facilities in recreation guides on the rights of way network	Page 78	Within 1 year	Highway Authorities and Business Link
AW1: Promoting the urban fringe on the web	Page 80	Within 2 years	Great Western Community Forest
AW2: Developing school links	Page 80	Within 2 years	Education authorities, Great Western Community Forest, and AONB team
FT5. High profile prosecutions for flytipping in the urban fringe	Page 83	Within 2 years	Waste Authorities, Environment Agency and the Police
FT6. Publicity campaigns against flytipping	Page 83	Within 2 years	Great Western Community Forest and local press
AW3: Publicity campaigns to raise awareness of the urban fringe	Page 80	Within 5 years	Great Western Community Forest

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This UFAP is not a statutory document and so there are no formal guidelines laid down for its monitoring and review.

The Plan itself provides the structure which should be used for the monitoring as it lays out a series of time-specific actions under themed headings. Monitoring the implementation of the plan is therefore a matter of tracking the progress of the various actions.

Review of the plan is a less certain task. A considerable amount of effort has gone into putting this plan together. At this point and for the near future further effort is better placed in implementation rather than review of the plan.

The trigger to review should be that the plan has become out of date. Thus if certain actions lose their relevance, either by having been completed, or no longer being feasible, review will be necessary. Nevertheless, if the needs of the urban fringe are better integrated into wider policy, as argued through this Plan, it is possible that a specific Urban Fringe Action Plan will no longer be needed.

The vision and objectives should be relatively enduring. Some actions can be expected to be more ephemeral. This essentially suggests that the Plan should be reviewed on a piecemeal and iterative basis, and a more general review only considered if wider circumstances change significantly, or after a suitably long period of time (say 10 years).

APPENDIX 1

Stakeholders

Organisation	Position/Department (if known)	Representative(s)
Kennet District Council	Planning (Local Plans)	Tim Guymer/Louisa Down
Kennet District Council	Landscape	Will Harley
North Wiltshire District Council	Community Projects	David Evans/Mike Hasted
North Wiltshire District Council	Planning (Local Plans)	Lachlan Robertson
North Wiltshire District Council	Regeneration Projects Officer	Damian Wood
Swindon Borough Council	Enforcement & Recycling	Geoff Davies
Swindon Borough Council	Rights of Way	Geoff Bryant
Swindon Borough Council	Planning (Forward Planning)	Linda Jewell
Swindon Borough Council		Daryl Jones
Swindon Borough Council	Landscape	Charlotte Riggs
Wiltshire County Council	Rights of Way	Paul Gerrard/Richard Broadhead
North Wiltshire District Council	Councillor	Allison Bucknell
Swindon Borough Council	Councillor	Jemima Milton
Wiltshire County Council	Councillor	Toby Sturgis
Wroughton Parish Council		Sarah Bush
Chiseldon Parish Council	Chair	Chris Barry

Organisation	Position/Department (if known)	Representative(s)
Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Parish Council		James Hussey
Broad Town Parish Council		Barbara Phillipps
Wanborough Parish Council	Chair	Bill Suter
Wootton Bassett Parish Council	Clerk	Jonathan Bourne
Bishopstone and Hinton Parva Parish Council	Chair	Robert Clark
Ogbourne Parish Council	Chair	Tim Frost
Clyffe Pypard Parish Council		P Gantlett
Liddington Parish Council	Chair	Marion Warren/David Hughes
Great Western Community Forest	Community Forest Officer	David Evans/Jonathan Wilshaw
Swindon Tenant Farmers		Mike Hinder
Business Link for Berkshire and Wiltshire	Farm Business Advisory Service	Tim Evans
Country Land and Business Association (CLA)		Robert Langton
National Farmers' Union (NFU)	Chair (Wiltshire)	Denise Plummer
Community First		Philippa Read
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust		Harry Barton/Neil Pullen
English Nature		Gerry Hamersley/Tim Frayling
National Museum of Science and Industry		Clive Gordon/Steve Briggs

Organisation	Position/Department (if known)	Representative(s)
(NMSI)		
Wiltshire and Swindon Rural Regeneration Partnership		Stella Yates/Kerry Greenhalgh
Countryside Agency	Senior Countryside Officer	Graham Bryant/Andrew Burns

