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HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

HIGH PEAK LOCAL PLAN

**LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF ADDITIONAL SITES FOLLOWING
WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS**

August 2014

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the study

- 1.1.1 In 2013 Wardell Armstrong was commissioned by High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) to undertake a Landscape Impact Assessment (LIA) of settlements within the High Peak, used to inform the preparation of the Local Plan by the Council.
- 1.1.2 The overall aim of the project was to prepare a LIA which would provide a robust landscape evidence base for the Local Plan. It informed the selection of sites for allocation in the Local Plan and provided support for other policies and proposals which protect landscape character or manage change in the landscape.
- 1.1.3 The Landscape Impact Assessment took account of earlier landscape character studies including Derbyshire County Council's *The Landscape Character of Derbyshire* and High Peak Borough Council's *Landscape Character SPD5* adopted in March 2006.
- 1.1.4 The landscape of the High Peak is recognised as being of national and international importance. Its quality reflects that of the adjoining Peak District National Park. In preparing the Local Plan the High Peak Borough Council had to assess the impact of its proposals on the setting of the Peak District National Park. The plan area includes parts of the Pennine Moors, The Peak District Dales and the Peak District Moors European designated sites. The North West Derbyshire Green Belt also extends across the northern and north central parts of the plan area.
- 1.1.5 The key focus of the study was to assess the potential landscape impacts of sites that have been identified for development by HPBC, and to assess the suitability of remaining land on the edge of the settlement for development in landscape terms which would not have adverse impacts on the Green Belt, the landscape character of the wider countryside in the study area and on the Peak District National Park.
- 1.1.6 The allocation of sites for the development of new homes and employment opportunities needs to be managed carefully as part of the Local Plan process to ensure that the important characteristics of the High Peak landscape are not unacceptably harmed.
- 1.1.7 Sites suitable for inclusion in the local designations of Strategic Gap, Green Wedge and Local Green Space were also assessed.
- 1.1.8 This current report assesses additional sites which have been submitted to High Peak Borough Council, as part of the Local Plan making process, by applying the same

methodology of assessment that was used for the original Landscape Impact Assessment report.

1.1.9 The methodology used and general issues associated with the completion of site assessment sheets are appended to this current report as Appendices A and B.

1.1.10 The results of the survey of the additional sites are set out in the next section (Section 2). Conclusions are provided at Section 3.

2 RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS

2.1.1 The following tables set out the summaries and recommendations for each of the additional sites put forward in written representations to the High Peak Local Plan which could potentially accommodate development without significant harm on visual amenity, landscape character, the purposes of the Green Belt, and the setting of the National Park.

2.1.2 In addition details are provided of additional sites put forward in written representations which could not accommodate development without significant harm to visual amenity, landscape character, the purposes of the Green Belt, and the setting of the National Park.

2.1.3 Brief details of potential landscape frameworks specific to each site are provided in the table. For a more detailed discussion of an appropriate landscape framework see Section 5.4 of the Landscape Impact Assessment (January 2014), replicated at Appendix D of this report.

2.2 GLOSSOPDALE

2.2.1 Table 1 presents the summary and recommendations for additional sites in the Glossopdale Sub-Area where development could be accommodated without significant harm in landscape terms. The table includes appropriate mitigation recommendations to improve the urban edge or to enable proposed development to be more readily absorbed within its setting.

Table 1. Additional sites with potential to accommodate development in the Glossopdale Sub-Area

WITHIN GREEN BELT		
Name	Ref.	Summary Mitigation and Design Recommendations
Platt Street, Padfield (SHLAA ref SS037)	2	Developing woodland and scrub on rising land between Padfield and Hadfield, south-east of a disused railway line which is on an embankment elevated above the northern part of the site. The southern part of the site rises above the level of this embankment. The existing settlement edge is well defined and vegetated. The site is well screened by vegetation within and surrounding the site. Built development and changes in topography surrounding the site also provide effective screening. However, development of the site

		would lead to physical coalescence between Padfield and Hadfield. Potential site identified as suitable for development in landscape terms subject to the physical coalescence between Hadfield and Padfield being addressed.
Brickfield Street, Padfield (SHLAA ref SS036)	12	Sloping, semi-enclosed, semi-improved grassland and scrub on a small field between existing residential development on the settlement edge. Beyond the site the land rises up from the settlement edge to a ridge to the south of the site. The site has low visual prominence as the ridge screens views from the south, and remaining views are well screened by the existing surrounding built development. Development of the site could improve the existing settlement edge, subject to vegetation to the south of the site being retained and augmented to create a vegetated edge. Potential site identified as suitable for development in landscape terms subject to the creation of an appropriate landscape framework which would include the retention of the existing surrounding vegetation.

2.3 CENTRAL

2.3.1 Table 2 presents the summary and recommendations for additional sites in the Central Sub-Area where development could be accommodated without significant harm in landscape terms. The table includes appropriate mitigation recommendations to improve the urban edge or to enable proposed development to be more readily absorbed within its setting.

Table 2. Additional sites with potential to accommodate development in the Central Sub-Area

WITHIN OPEN COUNTRYSIDE		
Name	Ref.	Summary Mitigation and Design Recommendations
Land rear of Milton Meadow, Tunstead Milton	9	This site is located outside the Area of Search assessed in the original Landscape Impact Assessment. A single, semi-enclosed field of semi-improved grassland to the rear of linear development on Manchester Road, north of Tunstead Milton. The topography of the site is predominantly flat, with a stream located in a ditch on the north-western boundary. The site is well

		<p>screened from short to medium distance views by boundary vegetation and built development. Combs Reservoir is located 220m south-east of the site and is designated as a SSSI and SIN, however there are no habitat connections with the site. The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 2. Long distance views may be available from the Peak District National Park (PDNP) (located approximately 1km to the south), and from high topography to the north. Development of the site would have a limited adverse impact on the setting of the PDNP, however it would be seen beyond existing development within the settlement. The existing settlement edge is well defined and vegetated. However the boundaries to the site are also well vegetated. If the site was to be developed gaps in vegetation on the exiting boundaries should be planted up, particularly on the northern boundary to provide screening from the surrounding area. Potential site identified as suitable for development in landscape terms subject to flood issues being resolved and the creation of an appropriate landscape framework which would include the retention and reinforcement of the existing boundary vegetation.</p>
<p>Plot 2 – Land at Hogs Yard, Whaley Bridge</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Site is located within the Bingswood, Whaley Bridge employment site assessed in the original Landscape Impact Assessment, and currently has consent for mixed-use development. The site comprises an enclosed, flat area of ruderal grassland and woodland between the Peak Forest Canal, which is designated as an Archaeological Site, and the river. It is located below the adjacent elevated roads, including the access road to the Tesco superstore to the north. An area of Ancient Woodland and Goyt Mill Wood Wildlife Site are located 100 metres to the east. The eastern fringe of the site, adjacent to the river, is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The existing settlement edge is well defined and vegetated. The site is largely screened from the surrounding area by trees and its lower elevation. Potential site identified as suitable for development in landscape terms subject to the creation of an appropriate landscape framework which would include the retention of existing vegetation and consideration of the setting of the canal.</p>

Homestead, Chapel	11	Small site comprising a section of a field of semi-improved grassland, adjacent to the existing well defined, urbanised settlement edge to the west and north. The site is located on sloping topography, with the highest point at the south-east corner. The eastern extent of the site would be visible from the PDNP to the north and south. Impacts on the setting of the PDNP would be limited by the size of the site and the context of the existing adjacent built development. There is the potential to improve the settlement edge through planting on the southern and eastern site boundaries. Potential site identified as suitable for development in landscape terms subject to the creation of an appropriate landscape framework which would include planting on the southern and eastern boundaries.
WITHIN GREEN BELT		
Name	Ref.	Summary Mitigation and Design Recommendations
Bridgeholme Industrial Estate (SHLAA ref NB allocation is for employment use)	6	<p>This site is located outside the Area of Search assessed in the original Landscape Impact Assessment. The existing EMP8 designation (Major Developed Site in the Green Belt) is located on the site of Bridgeholm Green Mill Archaeological Site and comprises former mill buildings (now residential) to the north and commercial/industrial buildings currently in employment use to the south. There is a small area of grassland located adjacent to the employment area which was previously the mill tip. A brake testing facility in the form of a paved track is located on the line of the Peak Forest Tramway to the south and east of the employment area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mill tip is enclosed by the existing built infrastructure to the north and west and mature hedgerows to the east and south. It is screened from the surrounding area and views from the PDNP by vegetation, existing built development and localised changes in topography. Development of this part of the site would not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt and is identified as suitable for development in landscape terms subject to the creation of an appropriate landscape framework which would include retention of the existing boundary vegetation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The brake testing facility is separated from the existing development by vegetation, and extends approximately 330m east of the existing site to the Chapel Milton Conservation Area and the railway viaduct (designated as a Listed Building and Archaeological Site). The track is only partially screened by adjacent vegetation and further development could potentially be visible from the surrounding area and the PDNP. In addition such development would adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt, would not safeguard the countryside from encroachment and could lead to coalescence of Bridgeholm Green with Chapel Milton. Development of this part of the site would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt and this part of the site is not suitable for development in landscape terms.
<p>Thornsett Industrial Estate (site is partially within Green Belt)</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>The site is located in the same area as the Thornsett Industrial Estate employment site assessed in the original Landscape Impact Report. The site has been re-submitted with a new site boundary to be considered for housing. The new boundary includes the majority of the existing developed area, the access road to the west, and areas of woodland on the surrounding valley slopes. Approximately 70% of the site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The woodland within and adjacent to the north of the site is covered by a TPO. Public footpaths NEWM117 and NEWM119 are located within the site and the Sett Valley Trail (which is also an Archaeological Site and Local Wildlife Site) is located adjacent to the southern site boundary. Thornsett Mill Pond within the south of the site is also a Local Wildlife Site. Approximately 75% of the site is located within the Birch Vale Garrison Bleach Works Archaeological Site. Subject to these constraints, the existing developed area is suitable for development as housing, including the area of hard standing to the east and the warehouse to the south-west which are currently not included within the site boundary. However the woodland on the surrounding valley edges screens the existing development and its removal would have significant adverse impacts on the landscape character of the area and enable both short and long distance views into the</p>

		site. Potential site identified as partially suitable for development in landscape terms subject to the creation of an appropriate landscape framework which would limit development to the existing developed area and include the retention of the existing trees and woodland.
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2.3.2 Table 3 presents a summary of additional sites in the Central Sub-Area which could not accommodate development without significant harm on visual amenity, landscape character, the purposes of the Green Belt, and the setting of the National Park.

Table 3. Additional sites which could not accommodate development without significant harm on visual amenity, landscape character and the purposes of the Green Belt and National Park.

WITHIN GREEN BELT		
Name	Ref.	Summary
Land off Buxton Road, Bridgemont (SHLAA ref SS026)	1	Ruderal grassland and scrub on a strip of land semi-enclosed by the railway line to the west, existing built development on Bridgemont to the north-east and woodland to the south-east. The site is elevated, sloping down from the railway towards, but above, the existing properties in Bridgemont. Public footpath WHA15 is located within the north of the site and adjacent to the western site boundary beyond the railway line. The existing settlement boundary is well defined and vegetated. The site is well screened from the north and east by properties in Bridgemont and the woodland to the south-east. As a consequence development would not lead to the visual coalescence of Bridgemont with the part of Whaley Bridge located to the east of the railway line. However, the site is visible from west of the railway line, particularly from footpath WHA15 and properties on the northern edge of Whaley Bridge. Development of the site could thus cause visual coalescence between Bridgemont and Whaley Bridge to the west of the railway line. Currently from this direction the edge of Bridgemont is well screened by a combination of existing vegetation and localised changes in topography. The site is located above the level of

		existing properties at Bridgemont and is not effectively screened by vegetation. The site appears as a continuation of open countryside to the west of the railway line. Site is not suitable for development in landscape terms.
Land at Meadows Road, Hayfield, Meadows Farm (SHLAA ref SS155 & HP98)	3	Visually prominent, semi-improved grassland which rises steeply above the settlement. The site is visible from the PDNP to the north and east, and its development would adversely impact on the setting of the PDNP. It is adjacent to and visible from the Hayfield Conservation Area, is visible from a number of archaeological sites, and has the potential to impact on listed buildings within the settlement. The existing settlement edge is partially vegetated. Development of the site would not improve this edge. Development of the site would be visually prominent and have significant adverse landscape impacts. Site is not suitable for development in landscape terms.
Kinder Road and extension (SHLAA ref HY013)	4	An extension of the Kinder Road site put forward in the original Landscape Impact Assessment (Ref. P11). The boundary of P11 has been extended to include the land to the east, which rises steeply above the settlement. P11 was identified as being suitable for development as it would serve to infill a gap in existing development and strengthen the settlement boundary. However an extension beyond the boundary of area P11 (as identified in the original Landscape Impact Assessment) would adversely impact on the existing settlement as it extends well beyond the settlement on rising topography. The site is adjacent to and visible from the Hayfield Conservation Area, is visible from a number of archaeological sites, and has the potential to impact on listed buildings within the settlement. The extension has high visual prominence and its development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the PDNP, the Hayfield Conservation Area and other archaeological and cultural heritage assets within the settlement. Extension beyond the boundary of P11 (as identified in the original Landscape Impact Assessment) is not suitable for development in landscape terms.
Land off Batemill Road, New Mills	5	A large, undulating site adjacent to the proposed New Mills Green Wedge at Ladyshaw Bottom. The majority of the site is wooded, with two fields of semi-improved pasture in the north-west of the

(SHLAA ref NM055)	<p>site. A stream forms the north-eastern site boundary, and continues through the centre of the site to the south-western boundary. Approximately 70% of the site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order, and approximately two thirds of the site is located within Flood Zone 3. The Sett Valley Trail is located adjacent to the south-eastern boundary on a dismantled railway which is also designated as a SINC and an Archaeological Site. Watford Lodge Local Nature Reserve is located within and adjacent to the west of the site and is also designated as a SINC. The majority of the site is located within the Watford Bridge Printworks Archaeological Site and there is a Grade II Listed Building adjacent to the north-western boundary, although the setting of this is already affected by adjacent development. The fields adjacent to Batemill Road are not covered by any designations, however they are partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and there are two 132kV overhead lines located within them. They are also open, have high visual prominence and perform the function of linking the proposed Green Wedge with countryside beyond the site to the north-east and north-west. The site is visible in long distance views from the PDNP to the north and east and development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the PDNP. Site is not suitable for development in landscape terms.</p>
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2.4 BUXTON

2.4.1 Table 4 presents the summary and recommendations for the additional site in the Buxton Sub-Area where development could be accommodated without significant harm in landscape terms.

Table 4. Additional site with potential to accommodate development in the Buxton Sub-Area

WITHIN OPEN COUNTRYSIDE		
Name	Ref.	Summary Mitigation and Design Recommendations
Employment land allocation and Primary	13	The site is an extension of the Waterswallows employment site which was assessed in the original Landscape Impact Report. The site is flat and open and comprises the existing industrial

<p>Employment Zone, Waterswallows, Buxton</p>		<p>buildings and agricultural fields to the north and east. The site is visually prominent including from the National Park to the south, west and north-west. The extension of the site to the east was recommended in the original Landscape Impact Report, subject to the creation of a landscape framework which would include additional planting on the site boundaries to screen the development. However the extension to the north is not suitable for development in landscape terms as it would be visually prominent, cause physical and visual coalescence between the industrial development and the settlement of Batham Gate and adversely impact on the setting of the National Park. If further land is required for employment use the site could extend further to the east so that it would be seen in the context of the existing development on Waterswallows Road. Potential site identified as partially suitable for development in landscape terms subject to the creation of an appropriate landscape framework which would limit development to the existing employment allocation proposed in the Local Plan and to land to the east of the existing site; and include planting on the site boundaries.</p>
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2.4.2 Table 5 presents a summary of additional sites in the Buxton Sub-Area which could not accommodate development without significant harm on visual amenity, landscape character and the setting of the National Park.

Table 5. Additional sites which could not accommodate development without significant harm on visual amenity, landscape character and the setting of the National Park.

WITHIN OPEN COUNTRYSIDE		
Name	Ref.	Summary
<p>Harehill Kennels B16 (SHLAA ref HP141)</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>Site comprises woodland, existing built development, scrub and a small section of ruderal grassland which forms part of the adjacent field, and is located approximately 100m east of the PDNP boundary. Over half of the site is covered by a TPO, and another TPO is adjacent to the southern boundary. A SSSI is located approximately 120m to the west and a SINC is located</p>

		<p>approximately 280m to the north. The existing settlement boundary is well defined and vegetated due to the trees within the site. Development of the site would be limited by the TPO within the site. Development to the west of the TPO has the potential to adversely impact on the existing vegetated settlement edge. The site has high visual prominence and could adversely affect the setting of the nearby PDNP as new development could be prominent outside the existing vegetated edge. Site is generally not suitable for development in landscape terms although some limited development could be accommodated subject to these constraints.</p>
Land off Macclesfield Main Road, B17	8	<p>A large, open site to the south-west of Buxton, sloping up from the settlement edge to Macclesfield Main Road and comprising a number of fields of semi-improved grassland. A SSSI is located approximately 160m to the north-west and a SINC is located approximately 450m to the north-west. There is a single TPO within the east of the site, and two TPO regions adjacent to the site. The site has very high visual prominence and is adjacent to the PDNP to the south and in close proximity to the west. Development of the site would have significant adverse impacts on the setting of the PDNP. Site is not suitable for development in landscape terms.</p>
Part of B17 (off Level Lane)	8a	<p>An area of semi-improved grassland sloping up from the existing settlement edge, dissected by a track and the River Wye with a small area of built development in the eastern corner of the site. The southern section of the site is elevated above existing properties and the existing settlement edge is well defined and vegetated. There is a TPO point and a TPO region within and adjacent to the site. A SSSI is located approximately 300m to the west and a SINC is located approximately 400m to the north-west. Development of the site would be prominent against the existing vegetated edge and would adversely affect the PDNP (located approximately 200m south of the site). It would also adversely affect the existing well-defined settlement edge. Site is not suitable for development in landscape terms.</p>

3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1.1 This report has assessed sites submitted as representations to High Peak Borough Council as part of the Local Plan making process.

3.1.2 The methodology used for this assessment is included at Appendix A.

3.1.3 The results of the survey of these additional sites are set out below.

3.2 Sites located within the Green Belt

3.2.1 The following recommendations are made on the Green Belt amendments proposed in the written representations. It should be noted that the Green Belt purpose “To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns” has not been considered as this is not relevant to any of the representations.

3.2.2 It is not recommended that the land at Bridgemont, as proposed in the written representation, is removed from the Green Belt. Although the land is bound by the railway line it appears as a continuation of the countryside between Whaley Bridge and Bridgemont. Thus this land contributes to the purposes of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preventing the unrestricted sprawl of built up areas. It prevents visual and physical coalescence from occurring between Bridgemont and Whaley Bridge, as it is elevated and currently screens the majority of properties in Bridgemont.

3.2.3 A small section of the new site for proposed housing development at Thornsett Industrial Site is located within the Green Belt, and is not recommended for removal. In addition to being a wooded area of the site which is not suitable for development in landscape terms, the woodland acts as a strong boundary to development which prevents sprawl and safeguards the countryside from encroachment. Development within the existing development footprint would encourage the recycling of developed land within the existing industrial site.

3.2.4 In addition it is not recommended that the land at Meadows Road, Hayfield; the extension to the Kinder Road site, Hayfield; or the land off Batemill Road, New Mills is removed from the Green Belt. Although none of these sites are in close proximity to neighbouring towns, their development would adversely impact upon the existing settlement boundaries, would encroach on the countryside and could lead to unrestricted sprawl. They assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land in Hayfield and New Mills. The land at Kinder Road is

only suitable for development within the boundaries put forward in the previous Landscape Impact Assessment as P11, as development of this area would strengthen the existing settlement boundary and would not impact on the purposes of the Green Belt.

- 3.2.5 The removal of land at Platt Street, Padfield from the Green Belt could be supported on some grounds. The railway line acts as a strong existing boundary to development. The land does prevent Hadfield and Padfield from physically merging into one another. If it were to be developed and vegetation on the periphery was retained there would be no visual coalescence due to screening by existing vegetation surrounding the site and the railway embankment. The removal of land at Brickfield Street is supported as it would fill a gap in the development on the existing settlement edge, which does not prevent the unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas or safeguard the countryside from encroachment. In addition the land does not prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
- 3.2.6 The development of the mill tip at Bridgeholme Industrial Estate is supported. It does not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt as it can be considered *“redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development”* (National Planning Policy Framework, para 89, pp21). It is enclosed on two sides by developed land, and has strong vegetated boundaries which would check unrestricted sprawl and safeguard the countryside from encroachment. There are no neighbouring towns in proximity to this area of land. In addition, the land itself was previously developed as a mill tip, and so its development would assist in urban regeneration. Further development on the brake testing facility is not supported. The track which forms this facility extends well beyond the existing industrial estate, to Chapel Milton. Further development would therefore encroach on the countryside, could potentially lead to unrestricted sprawl of the industrial estate, and could cause coalescence between Bridgeholm Green and Chapel Milton. It would also constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

3.3 Sites located outside the Green Belt

- 3.3.1 The settlement of Buxton is constrained in terms of development options due to its character as a valley-bottom settlement. The three housing sites put forward for development are located on the periphery of the settlement, which is elevated with high visual prominence and development could impact on the setting of The National Park.
- 3.3.2 There is some limited potential to develop on the land at Harehills Kennels but the site is constrained by a TPO covering a large part of the site. In addition development beyond this could adversely affect the settlement edge. The other two sites in Buxton are more visible and development would adversely affect the setting of the National Park.
- 3.3.3 An extension to the existing Employment land allocation and Primary Employment Zone at Waterswallows is only suitable to the east, as recommended in the original Landscape Impact Report. It is still recommended that additional planting be undertaken on the site boundaries to screen development. The extension to the north would be unsuitable in landscape terms as it would be visually prominent; cause physical and visual coalescence between the employment site and the settlement of Batham Gate; and would adversely affect the setting of the National Park.
- 3.3.4 The sites at Tunstead Milton and at Homestead, Chapel-en-le-Frith have the potential to accommodate development subject to a landscape framework to reinforce/create a vegetated edge to the settlement. These sites are visible from the National Park but their development would not lead to a significant effect on the setting of the National Park.
- 3.3.5 The site at Hogs Yard, Whaley Bridge was identified within the original Landscape Impact Assessment as being part of an employment site which was suitable for development subject to access to the site, which would not adversely affect habitats, being addressed. The site at Hogs Yard is screened from most of the surrounding area by trees and its lower elevation, and is suitable for development which complements the setting of the adjoining canal. Concerns remain regarding access which would not adversely affect habitats. This should be addressed prior to development.

**APPENDIX A: EXCERPT FROM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT REPORT (JANUARY
2014) – METHODOLOGY**

1 METHODOLOGY

1.1.1 This section outlines our methodology for the assessment of sites as it was developed during the course of the study. The study required the categorisation of data, the identification of key issues and the use of a GIS database relating to areas of search. GIS has the ability to store, manipulate and display geographically related data. Information can be presented in a user friendly format using ordnance survey data as a background with transparent layers on identified areas of search and constraints, as well as specific information relating to specific sites.

1.1.2 The methodology for this project was split into the following stages:-

- Define the Study Area.
- Desk Study and Mapping.
- Formulation of Site Assessment Sheets which would be used on site.
- Site Survey and analysis of potential landscape impacts of sites that have been identified for development by HPBC, and to assess the suitability of remaining land on the edge of the settlement in landscape terms for development or protection.

1.2 Extent of Study Area

1.2.1 Following the requirements of the study regarding the scope of the assessment, the following Study Area was assessed:-

- The allocated sites within the High Peak Preferred Options Local Plan, including sites expected to form part of the first 5 year land supply and sites identified as proposed green wedge, local green spaces and strategic gap. This included an overview of those sites noted as having current developer interest and which are at application or pre application stage.
- Other potential locations within Glossopdale and the Central Area which are within the Green Belt and Open Countryside where development would not adversely affect the integrity/openness of the Green Belt and/or the setting of the National Park within Glossopdale and the Central Area.
- Other potential locations within the Central Area and around Buxton within Open Countryside where development adjacent to existing settlements would not adversely affect the setting of the National Park.

- 1.2.2 The extent of this assessment did not include the full extent of the North West Derbyshire Green Belt or areas around settlements not identified as Market Towns or Larger Villages as listed in HPBC's Settlement Hierarchy (Policy S2 within HPBC's Local Plan Preferred Options, February 2013).
- 1.2.3 Areas of search were restricted to locations adjoining/surrounding these Market Towns and Larger Villages. The areas of search reflected the form of settlements. Where settlements are closely related the area of search extended around both settlements.
- 1.2.4 It should be noted that for the purposes of this study that currently allocated education sites have been categorised as being unsuitable for development.
- 1.2.5 The overall approach was to identify more land than would be required so that the optimum sites, in terms of landscape and environmental suitability (to be tested in the following stages); could be selected from a large number of locations. The definition of boundaries of areas of search and for potential sites was left to the field survey stage.
- 1.3 Desk Study and Mapping**
- 1.3.1 The work undertaken in this stage acted as the first stage in the "sieving" process to identify detailed boundaries of land appropriate for potential development or protection. The boundaries of the areas of search were identified with reference to aerial photomontages, OS map and GIS data, with particular reference to landform and changes in landscape character.
- 1.3.2 The desktop study comprised researching available documentation relating to identified areas, including the identification of sensitive environmental receptors. The GIS database was used to locate clusters of environmental assets for field survey within and adjacent to defined sites and help identify the configuration of areas of search within the Green Belt and Open Countryside.
- 1.3.3 The assessment highlighted the following sensitive environmental receptors in or close to potential sites/the study area specifically in relation to the following GIS datasets: -
- High Peak Borough Boundary
 - Peak Park Boundary
 - Built Up Areas
 - Green Belt

- Flood Zones
- Public Rights of Way
- Topography
- Landscape Character Areas
- Landscape Description Units
- Special Landscape Areas
- Agricultural Land Classification
- Tree Preservation Orders and Ancient Woodland
- Sites of Nature Conservation
- High Peak Wildlife Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Archaeological Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Regionally Important Geological Sites

1.3.4 OS maps and aerial photographs were also used to identify potential environmental constraints.

1.4 **Site Assessment Sheets**

1.4.1 This stage analysed the information gathered in the Desk Study for each of the sites/Areas of Search identified for field testing.

1.4.2 The output of this stage was the production of Site Assessment Sheets which list the constraints identified in the Desk Study. The format of the Site Assessment Sheet was agreed with the client team prior to use. The template Site Assessment Sheet is set out in Appendix C.

1.4.3 The Site Assessment Sheets were then used during the field survey to determine in broad terms areas that needed to be protected and those that could accommodate development, based on:-

- Landscape character types/areas (LDUs);
- Landscape designations;
- Geology;
- Landscape and vegetation structure;

- Current land use/habitats;
- Biodiversity;
- Flood risk;
- Ground water protection zone;
- Historic assets and setting;
- Site context.

1.4.4 This information was then used to advise on the landscape impacts of individual sites and which areas of land within the Areas of Search should be safeguarded or where development could be accommodated without significant harm. The sheets also incorporated a written description of appropriate mitigation recommendations to improve the urban edge or to enable proposed development to be more readily absorbed within its setting.

1.4.5 A key stage in the assessment process was to identify what is present within each site/ Area of Search in terms of: -

- The landscape features present;
- The relationship to the cultural environment;
- Ecological and hydrologically important features;
- Nature of adjacent settlement edges;
- Compliance with to Green Belt Purpose; and
- Setting of the National Park.

1.4.6 For sites identified as proposed Green Wedge and Local Green Spaces the Site Assessment Sheet was amended to take account of the following questions:-

- Is the green space in proximity to the community it serves?
- Does the site have special community significance?
- Is the site local in character or is it an extensive tract of land?
- Are there significant views from the local area into the site?
- Does the site afford the public with significant views out into the wider countryside?
- Does the site provide the public with amenity value without providing public access?

- Does the site form a significant green break within the settlement?
- Does the site have ecological value?

1.4.7 This amended Assessment Sheet (see Appendix D) could be used by HPBC as a set of criteria to assess further applications for Local Green Space designations.

1.5 **Field Survey**

1.5.1 This stage applied the Site Assessment Sheets to each of the sites/Areas of Search identified.

1.5.2 The environmental assets within the sites and the relationship to the Green Belt/National Park/settlement edge were recorded on the Site Assessment Sheets providing the basis for a written description and recommendations for each site/Area of Search.

1.5.3 This stage identified whether sites had significant landscape impacts. It also identified land within the Areas of Search:-

- Which could potentially accommodate development with managed impact on visual amenity, landscape character and the purposes of the Green Belt and National Park.
- Which could not accommodate development without significant harm on visual amenity, landscape character and the purpose of the Green Belt and National Park.

1.5.4 This led to:-

- Consequent recommendations on Green Belt boundary changes.
- Appropriate mitigation and design recommendations to improve the urban edge for land with potential to accommodate development.

**APPENDIX B: EXCERPT FROM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT REPORT (JANUARY
2014) – GENERAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH COMPLETION OF SITE
ASSESSMENT SHEETS**

1 GENERAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH COMPLETION OF SITE ASSESSMENT SHEETS

- 1.1.1 The site assessment was undertaken between the 26th September and the 2nd October 2013. Several sites in Buxton were revisited on the 15th October due to poor visibility on the original site visit. The following text sets out the issues encountered when completing each section of the Site Assessment Record Sheet. The term “site” in the following text refers to both the Preferred Option sites and areas of land with the potential to accommodate development identified in this assessment.
- 1.1.2 **Character Areas:** - These were determined prior to the site survey following the results of the desk survey. A written description of the character of the site and surrounding area was completed during the site visit.
- 1.1.3 **Existing Landscape Designations:** - These were identified prior to the site visit through the desk study.
- 1.1.4 **Geology:** - The presence of any Important Geological Sites, Geological SSSI's or Safeguarded Mineral Resources was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study.
- 1.1.5 **Topography:** - Information on the topography of the site and surrounding area was recorded during the site visit. Topography was often complex or varied due to the nature of the High Peak and was often a major factor in determining the visual prominence and the appropriate boundaries of the site.
- 1.1.6 **Landscape and Vegetation Structure:** - The degree of openness or enclosure of the site resulting from the nature of the vegetation structure was recorded during the site visit. The presence and condition of landscape elements within the site (such as hedgerows, dry stone walls, scrub, or woodland) was recorded providing important pointers towards appropriate mitigation and management opportunities. Field size and pattern were recorded, providing the opportunity to note differences both within and between sites. Such differences in pattern may also relate to the historic classification of the landscape. The presence of Tree Preservation Orders within or adjacent to the site was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study.
- 1.1.7 **Current Land Use/Habitats:** - Classification of land use and habitat types was undertaken during the site visit. A visual assessment of condition again helped to provide pointers towards future management requirements. The presence of Public Rights of Way and Long Distance and Local Trails within or adjacent to the site was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study.

- 1.1.8 **Biodiversity:** - The presence of statutory designations (SPA, SAC, SSSI, NNR, LNR), local designations (Local Wildlife Site) and ancient woodland within or adjacent to the site was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study. The presence of water bodies within or adjacent to site was identified during the desk study and the site visit, as the presence of water bodies could contribute to the value of the site in terms of biodiversity.
- 1.1.9 **Flood Risk:** - The flood risk associated with the sites was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study.
- 1.1.10 **Ground Water Protection Zone:** - The presence of the Buxton Mineral Water Catchment Area within or adjacent to the site was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study.
- 1.1.11 **Historic Assets and Setting:** - The presence of historic assets (Conservation Area, Archaeological Sites, Buxton Area of Archaeological Interest, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens) within or adjacent to the site was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study. The potential impact on the setting of these assets was established during the site visit.
- 1.1.12 **Site Context:** - The proximity of the site to the National Park boundary was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study. The potential impact on the setting of the National Park was established during the site visit. The presence of Strategic Gaps, Local Green Space and Green Wedges adjacent to the site was identified prior to the site visit through the desk study. The adjoining settlement edge, the adjacent building type and density and the visual prominence of the site was determined during the site visit.
- 1.1.13 In assessing the nature of the adjoining settlement edge, the degree of vegetation (e.g. trees in gardens) on the edge was noted. The presence or absence of vegetation (i.e. an urbanised edge) was not taken as being necessarily a positive or a negative attribute but merely a component contributing to the character of the edge. Similarly the nature of the definition of the edge, i.e. whether weakly or strongly defined, was not taken as either a positive or a negative attribute but was dependent upon the perception of these characteristics on the site. For example there may be a well defined historic urban edge which strongly contributes to the character of the settlement. At the other extreme there may be a well defined urbanised edge which is marred by inappropriate development.

- 1.1.14 The site visit was also used to determine if development of the site would contribute to visual coalescence of existing settlements, or create the potential for improvement of the settlement edge.
- 1.1.15 **Summary and Recommendations:** - If the site was within the Green Belt the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes were assessed. The comments and the tick box layout of the form, arranged according to each issue, helped to form a logical progression of summarised points to the end of the form. The recommendation for each site was developed from this logical progression of analysis against the criteria set out in the NPPF and Local Plan. Thus the answers provided by the summaries directly informed whether development of the whole or part of the site would have significant landscape impacts. Where this was the case then recommendations were presented for potential mitigation measures that could be implemented in order to allow development.
- 1.1.16 **Other Issues:** - There were several issues tackled during the site assessment which were not outlined on the site assessment sheets.
- 1.1.17 Site boundaries for the Preferred Options were provided by the High Peak Borough Council. However the final definition of these boundaries could only be determined on site. Logical cut off points which define boundaries are often only apparent on site. Such boundaries may relate to subtle changes in topography, habitat and vegetation type or screening elements which alter the extent of visibility out of or into the site.
- 1.1.18 All sites were checked on the field survey to establish logical boundaries. Where sites adjoined settlements the boundary generally corresponded with the edge of the existing settlement. Often the site boundary was determined by a distinct change in topography or vegetation type, existing field boundaries, or transport infrastructure (e.g. roads, railways or canal). Consequently some of the site boundaries were suggested for amendment to better reflect these logical boundaries.
- 1.1.19 The Site Assessment Sheets were also used to assess the suitability of land within the Areas of Search (not included in the Preferred Options) to accommodate development in landscape terms. The areas of land identified have been presented as areas of land with the potential to accommodate development without significant harm on visual amenity, landscape character and the purposes of the Green Belt and National Park.
- 1.1.20 The assessment of land within the Areas of Search was undertaken at a strategic level. It should be noted that within the Areas of Search categorised as being unsuitable for

development there will inevitably be variations in the level of landscape impacts. Such variations could be determined by further more detailed survey at the field level.

APPENDIX C: SITE ASSESSMENT SHEET

High Peak Local Plan - Landscape Impact Assessment

Site Assessment Sheet

DATE SURVEYED:

SITE NAME:

SITE REFERENCES:

AREA (Hectares):

Settlement:

CHARACTER AREAS

Regional Character Area: Dark Peak: White Peak:

County Landscape Type:

Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity (AMES) Landscape Character:

District Landscape Character:

Brief description of site and surrounding area:



Notes:-

EXISTING LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

	Located in	Adjacent to	Visible from
National Park:	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Green Belt:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Previously designated as Special Landscape Area:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

GEOLOGY

Important Geological Site:

County Geological Sites:
(Regional):

Safeguarded Mineral
Resources:

TOPOGRAPHY

Flat: Sloping: Undulating:

Description of topography:

LANDSCAPE AND VEGETATION STRUCTURE

Landscape Structure:-

Open: Semi enclosed: Enclosed:

Field pattern:-

N/A: Regular: Irregular:

Small: Medium: Large:



Notes:-

Enclosure materials: -

Fencing:

Hedgerows:

Hedgerows
With trees:

Dry Stone
Walls:

Other:

Hedgerow condition: -

Managed:

Unmanaged:

Gappy:

Hedgerow trees/tree belts (condition):- Good:

Poor:

Woodland adjacent to site: - Yes:

No:

Comments:

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs):-

TPO Ref No:

In site:

Adjacent to site:

Comments:

CURRENT LAND USE/HABITATS WITHIN THE SITE

Previously Developed
Land:

Improved grassland:

Unimproved/Semi
improved grassland:

Bracken/Scrub:

Arable:

Woodland:

Ruderal grassland:

Marshland:



Notes:-

Horticulture: Allotments:

Quarrying / Mineral Working: Landfill:

Amenity:-

Playing fields: Informal Open Space:

Historic Parks and Gardens: Other: _____

Public footpaths / Bridleways: In Adjacent

National Trails / Bridleways:

Long Distance and Local Trails (HPT, MSW, PB, PC, GW, LL, SVT, TPT, LT, GT):

Peak Forest Canal/Tramway

BIODIVERSITY

Statutory Designations: - SPA: SAC: SSSI:

NNR: LNR:

Ancient woodland on or adjacent to site: Yes: No:

Local Designations: -

Local Wildlife Site/ SINC: On: Adjacent to:

Presence of water bodies on, or adjacent to the site:-

On site: Adjacent to site: No:

Comments:



Notes:-

FLOOD RISK

Area within Zone 3:

Zone 2:

Zone 1:

Comments:

GROUND WATER PROTECTION ZONE

Within Buxton Mineral
Water Catchment Area:

Adjacent to site:

HISTORIC ASSETS AND SETTING

Conservation Area:-

Within:

Adjacent:

Visible from:

Archaeological Sites:-

Within:

Adjacent:

Visible from:

Buxton Area of Archaeological Interest:-

Within:

Adjacent:

Visible from:

Areas potentially affected:-

Listed Buildings:

Yes:

Setting

No:

Scheduled Monuments:

Yes:

No:

Historic Parks and Gardens:

Yes:

No:

Other historic assets potentially affected:

Comments:



Notes:-

SITE CONTEXT

National Park:-

Does the site adjoin The National Park Boundary: Yes: No:

Does the site affect the setting of The National Park?

Yes: No:

Comments:

Is the site adjacent to:

	Yes:	No:
Strategic Gap:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Green Space:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Green Wedge:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Adjoining settlement edge:-

Well defined Edge:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weakly defined Edge:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegetated Edge:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urbanised Edge:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adjacent building type:-

Residential: Commercial/Industrial: Agricultural:

Other: _____



Notes:-

Adjacent building density:-

High: Medium: Low:

Visual prominence of site:-

High: Medium: Low:

Would development contribute to visual coalescence of settlements/existing centres?

Yes: No:

Potential for improvement of settlement edge:-

Yes: No:

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Is the site within the Green Belt? Yes: No:

If yes, does the site meet the following Green Belt purposes?

1 To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas:

Yes: No: N/A:

2 To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:

Yes: No: N/A:

3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:

Yes: No: N/A:

4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns:

Yes: No: N/A:

5 To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land:

Yes: No: N/A:



Notes:-

Comments:

If no, is the site adjacent to the Green Belt boundary?

Yes:

No:

If adjacent to the Green Belt boundary, is it:

Within the settlement boundary:

Within the open countryside:

Comments:-

Summary:-



Recommendations, including Mitigation:

**APPENDIX D: EXCERPT FROM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT REPORT (JANUARY
2014) – LANDSCAPE MITIGATION**

1.1 Landscape Framework

1.1.1 Where new development sites are identified, an appropriate landscape framework should be created as part of the development. The characteristics of the landscape framework will assist in mitigating the impact of the new development on its wider landscape setting.

1.1.2 The landscape framework of a new development should generally comprise three main elements of vegetation:

- Retained vegetation (trees and hedges);
- New blocks of native tree and shrub planting and individual or groups of larger tree species (generally within public open space); and
- Domestic sized trees (within property boundaries).

1.1.3 The framework planting within a development should reflect the setting of the site. The retention of existing established trees and planting features will give new development a sense of maturity and place. Where there are existing trees and woodland both on and off site which contribute to landscape structure of a site, consideration should be given to their long term protection by use of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), by conditions or through off site planning obligations.

1.1.4 New planting should take account of landform, landscape scale and size of field pattern. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the scale of the landscape is not disrupted. New broadleaved woodland associated with green infrastructure improvements can be used effectively to counteract the effects of fragmentation and isolation of ancient woodland. This must consider the context and form of existing woodland. In areas of small scale landscape the introduction of large scale woodland blocks used for screening new development can have an adverse impact on the local landscape character.

1.1.5 Main tree species introduced into the site should include those which are indigenous to the area and are found in the locality. Plant material should where possible contribute towards local habitats following guidelines identified for the relevant landscape character type. Oak is the predominant species in the Settled Valley Pasture landscape areas. However the incidence of Ash is significant. Sycamores predominate

in the Plateau Pastures of the White Peak and are supported by secondary species of Beech and Ash. The spread of Ash Die Back Disease (*Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus*) is likely to have a significant adverse affect on the vegetational structure particularly in the Dark Peak. In time, disease resistant Ash may be available but, given the current uncertainty, it is not appropriate to plant Ash trees at the present time within a development area.

- 1.1.6 Selection of plant species should take into account the ground and soil conditions, the vulnerability of the location and the likely level of future maintenance. Choice of shrubs should concentrate on species which are vigorous, hardy and readily available.
- 1.1.7 Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and drystone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- 1.1.8 Hedges often form the boundary to a site development and can enclose compartments within larger sites which are made up of a number of fields. Hedgerows can also break up the scale of a site and can give protection and shelter to new planting. Ancient hedgerows are extremely important for nature conservation.
- 1.1.9 Hedgerows are notoriously difficult to retain as rear garden boundaries. Householders understandably want their property to be secure and 'pet and small children' proof. Even if the developer does not erect a close boarded fence, the likelihood is that the owner will do so under permitted development rights and the hedge then cannot be adequately maintained. As a consequence hedgerows are best retained within areas of open space where they can be adopted and managed by the local authority or by third party management.
- 1.1.10 Views of the site from the surrounding area may require appropriate screen planting to reinforce boundaries and enable the development to be more readily absorbed into its setting. Planting can also be used effectively to frame views into a site. Careful consideration should be given to boundary treatments ensuring that the vegetation structure of the existing site and its environs are either strengthened or protected and that any new planting carried out as part of the proposals is sympathetic with the local landscape. Where the existing landscape structure is eroded and in a poor condition, new development can provide the opportunity for creating a strong new landscape structure and 'vegetated edge' to the settlement. Appropriate tree and shrub planting

can act as a buffer between development and the adjacent countryside and create a strong new defensible boundary to a settlement.

1.2 Open Space

1.2.1 Open space can be used to create views out to the surrounding countryside. Within settlements, areas of open space with associated vegetational framework can provide important breaks within built up areas. These spaces can act as green corridors, visually connecting new development on the edge of settlements with the surrounding countryside.

1.2.2 The planting on open space areas within a residential area should contribute significantly to the framework planting of the site. Public open space should ideally be located in the parts of the site where existing mature trees are to be retained. These areas also offer the opportunity to plant native species that need space to establish and which will grow into large mature specimens or groups. Where existing hedgerows are to be retained this is best achieved by incorporating them within or bounding areas of public open space, so that the hedge can then be maintained as part of the open space. This should secure its continued existence and allow a consistent approach to maintenance to be achieved.

1.2.3 Creation of footpaths and cycleways running through open space within new development should aim to maximise links with existing Open Space, Public Rights of Way, cycleways and bridlepaths in the locality to enhance accessibility and linkages for the local community.

1.3 Built development

1.3.1 The grouping and form of new building should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional buildings characteristic of the locality.

1.3.2 The colour of prefabricated industrial/commercial buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation or sky, as well as local materials, so as to minimise the visual effect of the development.

1.3.3 Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene particularly where new development sites are in proximity to open countryside or the National Park boundary.

1.4 Design Briefs

1.4.1 The preparation of design briefs, taking account of landscape character type and the setting and character of settlements, can encourage development that is sympathetic and contributes to the local scene. This is particularly important for larger sites where the scale of the development can be reduced by the establishment of a vegetational framework which reinforces the existing landscape structure and retains existing trees and hedges.

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