

**Hungerford Town Council**

# **Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2041**

**Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Version  
December 2023**



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## **Photos**

Front cover photo: Market Day on the High Street. Credit: Moore-Photographics. There are several other photos in the plan from Moore-Photographics which are abbreviated as \*M-P.

All other photos have been donated by members of the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan Group.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the plan

- 1.1 This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Hungerford parish for the period 2023 to 2041. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Hungerford and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.
- 1.2 The Plan builds on the extensive work carried out by the community in the development of the Hungerford 2010+ Plan (2005) and Town Plan Refresh from 2013. These included detailed household survey work, policies and actions for all the main issues. Several of the Town Plan team members are also part of the Neighbourhood Plan team, which has helped to develop a continuity of approach.
- 1.3 The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish. It also provides guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Hungerford, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.4 Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, West Berkshire District Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.
- 1.5 The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of non-policy actions which have been included in the policies' sections as 'Actions'. Note however that these non-policy actions are not specifically related to land use matters.



## Policy context

- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2023 to 2041, the other parts being the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017) and the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (saved 2007).
- 1.7 West Berkshire District Council, as the local planning authority, designated the Hungerford Neighbourhood Area in April 2018 to enable Hungerford Town Council to prepare the

Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) Steering Group.

- 1.8 The HNP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The HNP Steering Group has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period.
- 1.9 The map in Figure 1.1 overleaf shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Hungerford parish. Note that the western boundary is also the boundary of Berkshire and the Southeast region.



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Figure 1.1: Hungerford neighbourhood plan area



## Monitoring the Plan

- 1.10 Hungerford Town Council, as the responsible body, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

## 2 LOCAL CONTEXT

### History of Hungerford

2.1 **The location:** The attractive town of Hungerford stands at the very western end of Berkshire, near the borders with Wiltshire and Hampshire. It lies in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and forms part of the Great West Way. A walk around the town and its immediate surrounding countryside will reveal the inherent charm of the area.

2.2 **Its growth through the centuries:** Hungerford can be traced back to the 11th century, and the historic core of the town was laid out as a planned town in the 12th century. Since then, it has grown through the centuries as a rural market town supplying goods and services to the surrounding villages. Much of the town has remained unaltered for generations.

2.3 **On key transport routes:** The town benefitted by lying on key transport routes. The Bath Road (later the A4) passes through the town, and the prosperity of the coaching trade on both the London to Bath and Bristol route and the Oxford to Salisbury route led to its greatest period of prosperity in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



2.4 The Kennet and Avon Canal was dug through the heart of the town in 1798, and this brought additional prosperity until the railway came in 1847, leading to a modest population decline as large towns like Reading prospered.



\*M-P

2.5 When the nearby M4 motorway opened in 1971, the town grew again, as it became a popular rural home for commuters to London and other nearer towns and cities.

2.6 **The Town and Manor:** In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the townspeople were given important rights to the market and fishing by John of Gaunt, who is much celebrated in the town. The Town and Manor of Hungerford (now a registered charity) administers the town common land (over 400 acres) around the town, much of which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Town and Manor also manages the Town Hall and Corn Exchange, the John O'Gaunt Inn and much other property.



\*M-P

2.7 Hocktide – two weeks of events and celebrations which take place after Easter each year are nationally famous. On Tutti Day (the second Tuesday after Easter) the Commoners’ Court sits to conclude the financial year, and a celebratory luncheon is held in the Corn Exchange. Hungerford is now the only town in the country still practising these ancient customs.

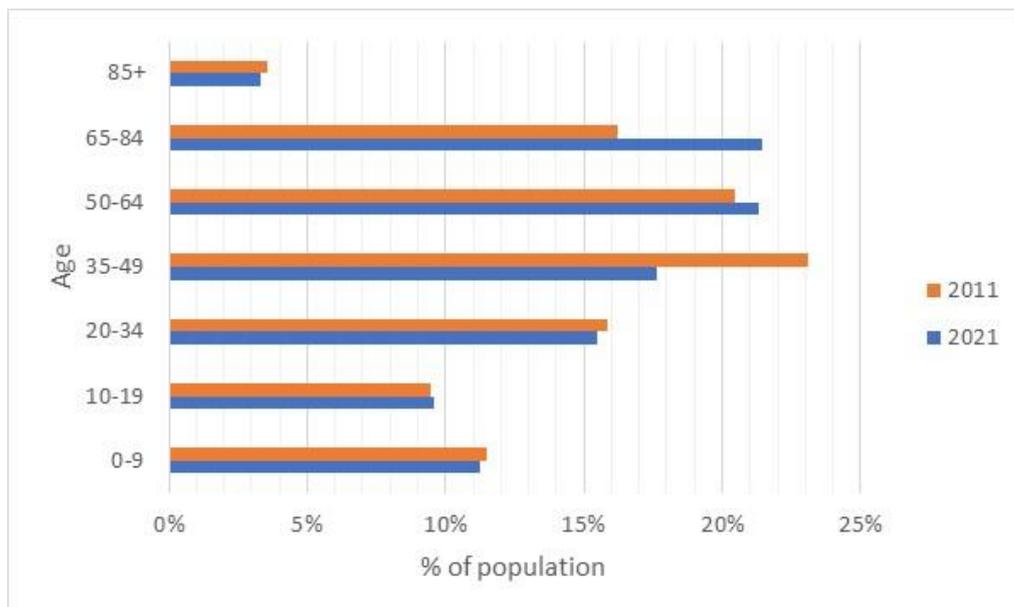
2.8 In 1688, having landed at Brixham on his quest for the throne of England, William of Orange met the commissioners of King James II at The Bear in Hungerford. These successful negotiations led to ‘The Glorious Revolution’ and to William acceding to the throne as King William III. \*M-P



## Profile of the community

2.9 In 2021, the population of Hungerford parish stood at 5,864 persons and 2,695 households. The population has increased by 97 people (1.7%) since 2011 and households by 95 (3.7%) (sources 2021 and 2011 Census). Whilst this growth is comparatively low (the population of West Berkshire as a whole grew by 5%), there have been some significant changes in the age profile of the population. Figure 2.1 shows that there has been a significant increase in the population of retirement age (65+) yet there has been a correspondingly large decline in the population most likely to form family households with dependent children (aged 35-49). The population of Hungerford is ageing.

**Figure 2.1: Age profile of Hungerford, 2011 and 2021**

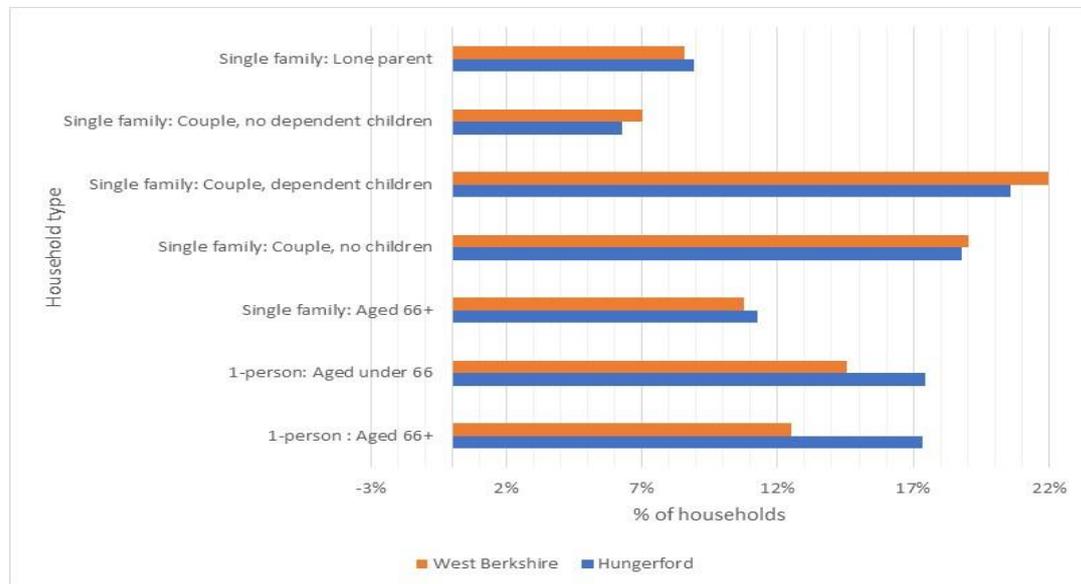


Source: 2011 and 2021 Census

2.10 This is supported by evidence from the 2021 Census on the profile of households. Figure 2.2 shows that whilst the largest share of households in Hungerford are families with dependent

children, the proportion of those forming smaller households is very high when compared with West Berkshire as a whole. Couples with no children and single person households account for 54% of households compared with just 46% in West Berkshire.

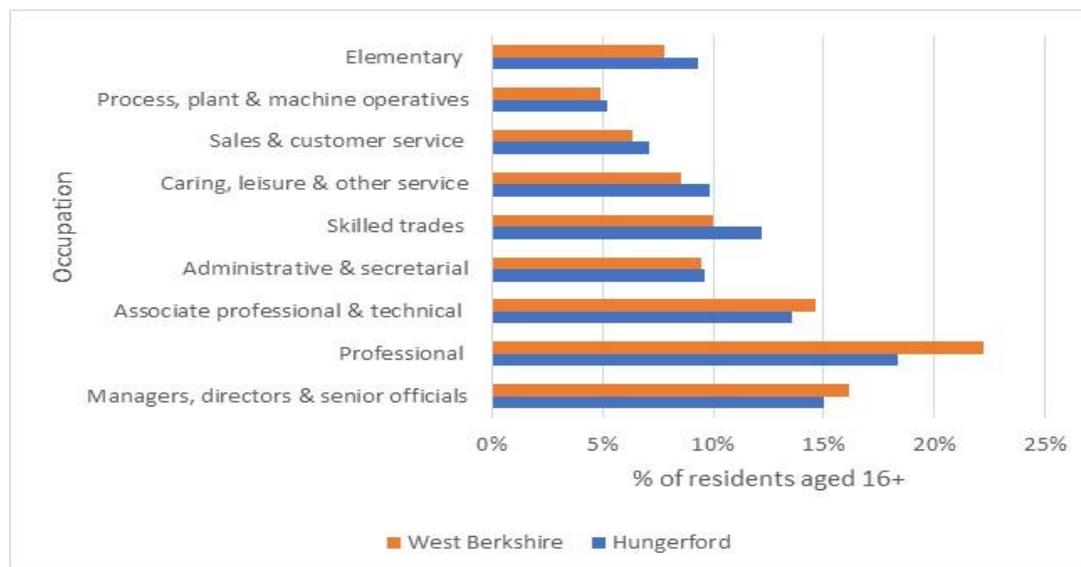
**Figure 2.2: Household composition, 2021**



Source: 2021 Census

2.11 Figure 2.3 shows the types of occupations that people from Hungerford work in. This shows that comparatively lower skilled occupations are strongly represented (compared with West Berkshire), with higher skilled occupations comparatively less well represented. Hungerford is well represented however in skilled trades.

**Figure 2.3: Occupations, 2021**



Source: 2021 Census

## Hungerford today

2.12 Hungerford is a lively and well-connected town on the boundary between the south east and southwest of England. Economically it tends to look more eastwards, with the pull of Newbury, Reading and London.

2.13 Hungerford is well provided for with schools which serve the local community and villages in the area. There is the Croft Nursery School, the Primary School and John O'Gaunt Secondary School. This provides education from birth to 16 years of age, with sixth form education regrettably withdrawn, although this is available in Marlborough and Newbury.



2.14 Medical facilities are largely provided through the Croft Surgery. After a challenging few years following the Covid-19 pandemic and a shortage of GPs, the Hungerford Surgery team is looking forward to stability and maintaining a high standard of primary care to its 7,500 patients in the town and surrounding areas. The addition of a variety of healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, musculoskeletal physio, mental health practitioner and social prescriber, in collaboration with neighbouring member practices of the West Berkshire Rural Primary Care Network, has given patients better access to a wider range of services.



2.15 Emergency services have a tri service facility that helps to coordinate activities for fire, police and ambulance, which is largely utilised by the fire service. The police force has to cover a large rural area and resource to cover this is a challenge. The fire station is the local base for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service which provides a well trained and diverse service.

2.16 The town has good transport links. It is at the crossroads of the A4, the old London to Bath route and the A338 between Oxford and Salisbury. Nearby is the M4 and A34 providing excellent access to the rest of the country. Along the High Street which forms part of the A338, there is a tension between high volumes of traffic and local residents and businesses. There is high car ownership and car dependence within the town. Cycle facilities are poor, but walking facilities and footpaths are extensive.

2.17 Public transport is mainly provided by rail along the Thames Valley. There is a rail station with regular services to Reading and Paddington and westwards to Westbury, Taunton and Exeter. The hourly direct service to Paddington was cut in 2021 causing much concern and disruption. The rail station has inadequate parking supply and lacks facilities. Bus services are provided

to Swindon, Marlborough and Newbury, but they struggle with patronage and require subsidies.

- 2.18 There are excellent sporting facilities for the size of the town. The Leisure Centre boasts a 25m swimming pool and covered facilities that are shared with the adjacent secondary school. A professional standard 3G football pitch was constructed in 2023 and there is a successful football club, in the highest league of any club in West Berkshire. There is a cricket pitch with club facilities. The 'triangle field' with clubhouse is mainly used by Hungerford Rugby Club.



- 2.19 Playground facilities are well distributed around the town and maintained to a high standard by the Town Council. A new skate park was constructed in 2023 to replace an older facility at Bulpit Lane.



- 2.20 Outdoor leisure and recreational facilities are available on the Common, the Marsh, the canal and the towpath. There is an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways which are generally well cared for, with some landowners better than others at maintaining the pathways.
- 2.21 There are several cultural locations that include the town hall, the library and hub, the Croft Hall and Croft Field Project.

### **Antiques and other shops**

- 2.22 Hungerford has been widely known as a centre for antiques since the mid-20th century, and today it has many antique shops and several arcades. There are many other independent retail premises such as a florist, a prize-winning bookshop, several jewellers and clothing shops. Each Wednesday morning there is a street market on the west side of the High Street, as shown on the Plan front cover. There are also regular farmers' markets and trade fairs.

### **Tourism**

- 2.23 Tourism is hugely important to the modern town of Hungerford, with visitors enjoying the antique shops, the canal (with its ever-popular trip boat "The Rose of Hungerford"), the nearby Hungerford Common and water meadows, the independent shops in the town and its heritage buildings and



town trails. There are Sustrans cycle routes through the town, and it is surrounded by magnificent rolling countryside with numerous walking routes.

2.24 The town is served well by a wide variety of hotels, restaurants and coffee shops.



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2.25 Nearby are several popular tourist destinations:

- Littlecote Roman Villa (recently renovated and displaying one of the largest and finest mosaics in Britain).
- Crofton Pumping Station on the Kennet and Avon Canal (with two historic steam powered beam engines dating from the early 1800s).
- Wilton Windmill (a working flour mill dating from 1821).
- Highclere Castle (made famous as Downton Abbey on the BBC TV series).
- Uffington White Horse (England's oldest chalk horse), and several nearby monuments along the ancient Ridgeway.
- Avebury Stone Circle (a Neolithic stone circle – one of the greatest marvels of prehistoric Britain).

### **The Town and Manor**

2.26 A key organisation of the town is the Town and Manor. The extensive land holding of the Town and Manor charity has undoubtedly shaped the development of the town over the centuries and continues to do so. Today the charity's land extends to over 400 acres (170 hectares) of which approximately 75 hectares are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The land lies primarily to the north, east and west of the town and this, together with boundaries defined by the railway and the canal, has resulted in most greenfield development over the past 50 years being to the south of the town.



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- 2.27 The estate includes large areas of common land such as the Common Port Down, Freeman's Marsh and the Croft which is the town's registered village green. The land is managed in an environmentally sustainable way for the benefit of local people and visitors to the town using money generated from the charity's assets such as the Fishery, the John O'Gaunt public house and the Town Hall complex. The common land includes land used by the Hungerford Town Football Club, the Cricket Club and the War memorial avenue. This means that these are all well protected.
- 2.28 In addition to the ancient lands, which have been owned for many centuries, the Town and Manor has more recently been able to acquire several substantial parcels of land from owners who wished to see them managed sympathetically and protected from built development. The most recent acquisition in 2018 was a 40-acre site known as Undy's Meadow, lying to the north of the town between Charnham Park road and the River Kennet. The charity is planning to develop a wetland nature reserve on the site.
- 2.29 Figure 2.4 below shows a map of the Town and Manor estate. The areas in green are owned by Town and Manor.

Figure 2.4: The Town and Manor Land Estate, 2023



Credit: Town & Manor of Hungerford

## Main issues and challenges in Hungerford

2.30 The main issues and challenges facing Hungerford can be summarised as:

- Retaining the traditional character of Hungerford while optimising its potential.
- Protecting the Marsh, Common and surrounding countryside.
- Local and strategic traffic impacts and speeds compromising the local environment.
- Improving the town centre environment.
- Climate change and trying to reduce the town's carbon footprint.
- Affordable housing for local residents.
- Retaining the mix of independent shops along the High Street.
- Inadequate car parking supply in the town centre, especially on Wednesday mornings when there is the street market.
- Providing more jobs in the town centre and Charnham Park area.
- Improvements to rail station and rail services which have recently been cut back.
- An ageing population which notably impacts on health and education services.
- The challenge of improving pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.



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### 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

#### Vision for Hungerford

3.1 The vision for Hungerford over the plan period to 2041 is as follows:

**Hungerford sits at the heart of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and is treasured for being an historic market town set within beautiful and accessible countryside and waterways.**  
**The residents of Hungerford seek to work together to embrace constructive change that ensures a vibrant, robust and sustainable economy that will enhance their prosperity and provide an affordable and nurturing environment for current and future generations.**  
**This should be achieved whilst conserving Hungerford's natural and manmade heritage and enhancing its strong sense of being a caring community and a fulfilling place to live.**



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#### Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.2 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

##### Housing

*Aim: Ensure that new housing in Hungerford meets the needs of current and future generations of residents in a way which complements the character of the town and the countryside surrounding it.*

**Objective A:** Allocate sites to meet the housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan to 2041, where possible making best use of previously developed land and minimising encroachment into the countryside.

**Objective B:** Ensure that housing development provides a range of house types, sizes and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.

**Objective C:** Seek to ensure that new housing reflects the character of its neighbourhood whilst embracing high quality design principles and modern energy efficiency standards.

### **Employment and Economy**

*Aim: Support growth in the variety of shops, restaurants and businesses in the town and the employment opportunities which they create. Promote Hungerford as an attractive place to live and work (particularly for young people), with good facilities, services and transport links.*

**Objective D:** Encourage businesses and support initiatives, including those which promote a vibrant high street and increase the range of shops, services and eating places in the town for the benefit of residents, tourists and visitors of all ages. Recognise that Hungerford acts as a service centre providing facilities to neighbouring villages.

**Objective E:** Promote an increase in the number and quality of employment opportunities within the town.

### **Getting About**

*Aim: Seek improvements to Hungerford's transport infrastructure so that safe, effective, sustainable and efficient travel is available and accessible to all.*

**Objective F:** Minimise the effects of traffic in the town centre and especially the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians and all road users.

**Objective G:** Increase walking and cycling in the town.

**Objective H:** Encourage public transport usage to and from the town.

### **Leisure, Wellbeing, Public Safety and Learning**

*Aim: Hungerford should offer young people and children a safe, healthy and nurturing environment in which to develop and mature. This will include a full range of educational services and plenty of leisure and sports activities. Develop Hungerford's thriving sports, arts and social community and protect its green, open spaces. Ensure that Hungerford remains a safe, healthy and caring place to live.*

**Objective I:** Protect and maintain existing public playgrounds and open spaces to a high standard and look at ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.

**Objective J:** Support the development of sports, arts, youth clubs, social and leisure facilities, including the widest possible range of activities for young people.

**Objective K:** Support and develop services which assist and encourage people to maintain their own health.

**Objective L:** Minimise crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the town.

**Objective M:** Support and enhance the schools in Hungerford.

## **Our Heritage**

*Aim: Conserve and, where practicable, enhance Hungerford's natural and built environment.*

**Objective N:** Protect and enhance the appearance and historic environment of the town and parish.

**Objective O:** Improve the approaches to the town by road, rail and canal to create favourable first impressions and a soft boundary between the countryside and the town.

**Objective P:** Protect the landscape around Hungerford and support the charities and agencies which are responsible for its conservation.

**Objective Q:** Enhance the environment of Hungerford High Street and Bridge Street between the Bridge Street/A4 roundabout and the Atherton Road/High Street roundabout.

## **Climate Change and Biodiversity**

*Aim: Hungerford will encourage low carbon development to promote lower energy costs, cleaner air and healthier lifestyles, contributing to the well-being of current and future generations. It will also ensure that development enhances the biodiversity of the parish.*

**Objective R:** Reduce carbon emissions with more energy efficient buildings.

**Objective S:** Encourage new development to maximise the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

**Objective T:** Support proposals for individual and community scale renewable energy generation provided the benefits outweigh any adverse impacts.

**Objective U:** Increase resilience to climate change.

## 4 HOUSING

### Housing mix

**Objective B: Ensure that housing development provides a range of house types, sizes and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.**

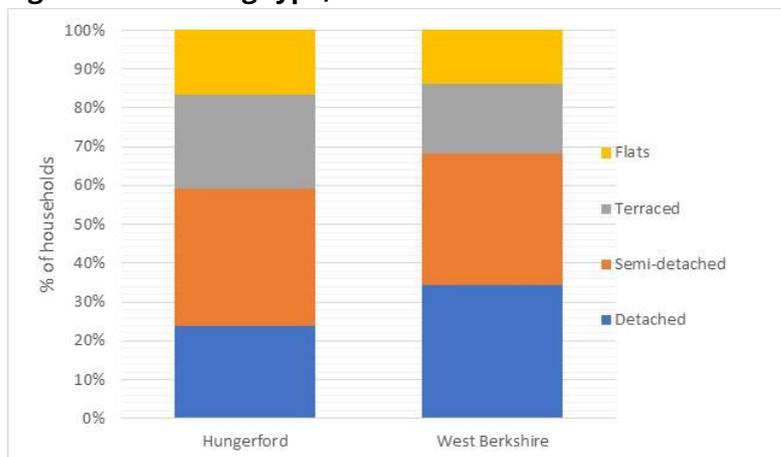
4.1 Hungerford has a different housing mix and need to the rest of West Berkshire. As reported in the Hungerford Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2019<sup>1</sup>, the parish has a much higher proportion of one-person households than West Berkshire which in turn has a higher proportion of families with dependent children. Hungerford has a higher share of older residents while West Berkshire has a higher proportion of younger ones. This is supported by the 2021 Census with 35% of Hungerford's households being single person compared with 27% in West Berkshire; moreover, 20% of Hungerford's population is aged 65 or over compared with 15% in West Berkshire.



4.2 Over the period 2011 to 2021, the number of households in Hungerford grew by 95 to 2,695. Of this increase, 72 households were housed in properties of at least 3-beds with just 36 in 1- or 2-bed properties. Figure 4.1 shows the breakdown of housing by type in Hungerford in 2021 compared with West Berkshire as a whole. This shows that semi-detached and terraced housing dominates Hungerford's stock. Such housing typically provides the bulk of 2- and 3-bed housing. 60% of Hungerford's stock of properties are at least 3 bedrooms in size.



**Figure 4.1: Housing type, 2021**

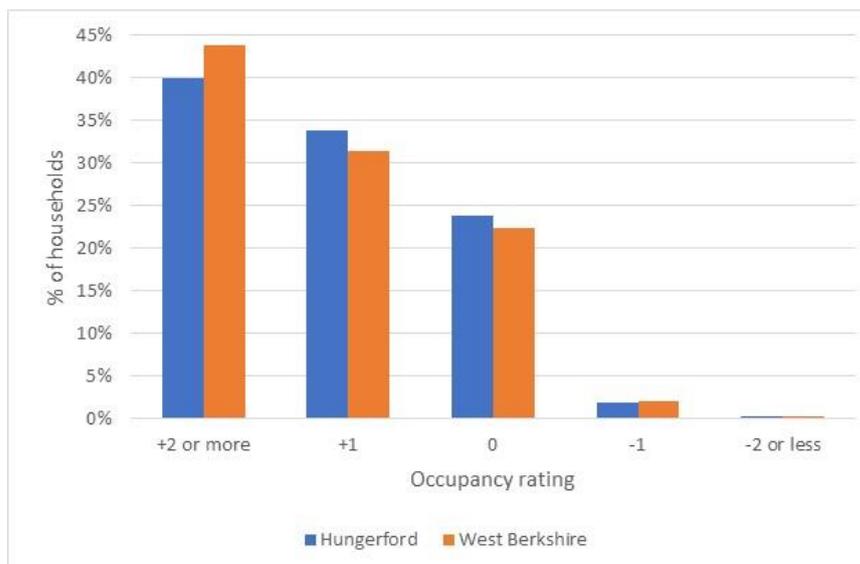


Source: 2021 Census

<sup>1</sup>AECOM (2019) *Hungerford Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)*, for Hungerford Town Council

- 4.3 This is not only the case historically but been continuing more recently. Housing development in West Berkshire in recent years has been skewed towards larger housing. Whilst this creates the potential for growth in family households, it does not address the needs of the ageing population; in 2021, 29% of Hungerford’s households were aged over 65. The Hungerford HNA forecast that this would increase to 48% by 2036. If one looks at the household profile of Hungerford in 2021, the picture is the same – 62% of households are either single person or a co-habiting couple. These households may choose to have, but do not necessarily require family-sized housing.
- 4.4 This is supported by occupancy rate analysis. Figure 4.2 shows the occupancy rate of houses in Hungerford and West Berkshire in 2021. A +1 or +2 figure means that a house is under-occupied, i.e., it has either 1 or 2 more bedrooms than required by that size of household. Conversely, a -1 or -2 figure means a house is over-occupied, i.e., over-crowded. This shows that Hungerford has significant levels of under-occupation with 40% of households having at least 2 spare bedrooms. Again, this supports the profile of a housing stock that is increasingly not meeting the needs of the changing population.

**Figure 4.2: Occupancy rate, 2021**



Source: 2021 Census

- 4.5 Policy CS4 in the West Berkshire Core Strategy requires development to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community. This should have regard to the evidence of housing need and demand from Housing Market Assessments and other relevant sources. Similarly, Policy SP18 in the emerging West Berkshire Local Plan Review sets a specific ‘base mix’ from its Local Housing Needs Assessment Update 2022<sup>2</sup> as shown in Table 4.1 below:

<sup>2</sup> Icen (2022) *West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment Update*, for West Berkshire Council

**Table 4.1: Mix of housing by size and tenure (informing emerging Local Plan policy)**

	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Market	5-10%	40-45%	35-40%	10-15%
Affordable home ownership	20-25%	45-50%	20-25%	5-10%
Affordable housing (rented)	30-35%	35-40%	20-25%	5-10%

Source: West Berkshire Local Plan Review, Proposed Submission, Table 3

- 4.6 If the midpoint of the ranges shown is taken and the two types of affordable housing amalgamated, this requires 42.5% of both the market and affordable housing on any scheme of at least 10 dwellings to be 2-bed properties. In seeking to address the main need for smaller properties – for first-time entrants to the housing market and for older downsizers from existing larger family properties – this is the key property size.
- 4.7 It is important to recognise however that there is a wealth of different types of 2-bed property that can be delivered, most commonly small houses (terraces, semi-detached), bungalows or flats. Depending on their design, they will clearly appeal to different markets – a bungalow is likely to be more popular for older downsizers than first-time buyers for example. In recognising the need to cater for a range of different household types, it is important that larger developments (of at least 10 dwellings) deliver either a mix of types of 2-bed property or seek to focus the 2-bed properties on a design that can best cater for the needs of as wide a range of the market for such properties as possible. It is not considered appropriate for example to deliver just 2-bed flats or 2-bed bungalows. Whilst the physical context of any particular site may provide certain limitations on what can be delivered, this should be an important principle informing the mix of 2-bed dwellings.
- 4.8 In addition, Hungerford is likely to see a proportion of its growth over the plan period on smaller developments through windfall development. Such developments – which could be up to 9 properties – should still be expected to deliver the housing needed in Hungerford. As such, the requirement to deliver a mix of properties also applies to developments of between 5 and 9 dwellings.

**POLICY HUNG1: HOUSING MIX**

- A. To address the identified housing needs in Hungerford, developments of 5 dwellings or more should provide a mix of dwelling sizes (market and affordable) and types that reflect the requirements of the West Berkshire Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2022 or any successor document.**
- B. For developments of 5 dwellings or more, the 2-bed properties shall provide a mix of dwelling types that reflects the needs of both first-time entrants to the housing market and older downsizers. Any departure from this mix of 2-bed properties shall only be permitted in the following circumstances:**
- a. Any physical site factors that limit the mix.**
  - b. If there is clear evidence for the need for a particular type of housing, e.g., specialist older persons' housing.**

## 5 DESIGN AND CHARACTER

***Objective C: Seek to ensure that new housing reflects the character of its neighbourhood whilst embracing high quality design principles and modern energy efficiency standards.***

- 5.1 The design of new housing in Hungerford parish is important. It needs to reflect the locally distinctive character. Policy SP7 (Design Quality) of the West Berkshire emerging Local Plan requires development to take opportunities that are available for conserving and enhancing the character, appearance and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 5.2 Hungerford does not have a homogenous style of design. Whilst it does have a large Conservation Area covering the centre of the town, this has been effective in demonstrating how different buildings can sit alongside one another and represent good quality design. Hungerford's community has a desire to see this eclectic mix of styles continue, provided quality is maintained. In particular within the context of new residential development outside the town centre and Conservation Area, the concern is twofold: that large developments will seek homogeneity of design and that parking and movement, if not properly managed, can erode the character of Hungerford's neighbourhoods.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not supported by a specific set of detailed design codes, the principles of West Berkshire emerging Local Plan Policy SP7 – which itself references the National Design Guide – are reinforced with respect to these specific local issues of diversity and movement.

### **POLICY HUNG2: DESIGN AND CHARACTER**

- A. Development should demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the local character of Hungerford.**
- B. In delivering high quality design, development proposals must demonstrate the appropriate use of building design, layout, materials and features. The following principles should be considered as part of design proposals:**
- a. Development should integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings, with all connections including road patterns ensuring permeability for cyclists and pedestrians.**
  - b. A range of densities, house types (where appropriate) and plot layouts should be used.**
  - c. Building heights and rooflines should provide diversity of frontage, scale and form, with building heights that reflect the prevailing height of surrounding buildings unless it can be demonstrated that a taller building could complement or enhance the local character.**
  - d. Parking to support residential uses should be provided within the development in accordance with West Berkshire Council parking standards.**

## Landscape and Town approaches

**Objective O: Improve the approaches to the town by road, rail and canal to create favourable first impressions and a soft boundary between the countryside and the town.**

**Objective P: Protect the landscape around Hungerford and support the charities and agencies which are responsible for its conservation.**

- 5.3 Hungerford is entirely within the North Wessex National Landscape. The purpose of this designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. It is a national designation and, therefore, represents a significant level of protection from inappropriate development. Nevertheless, this does not prevent all development and it is important that the growth and change of Hungerford over time continues to reflect the role of the National Landscape.
- 5.4 Of relevance to this are the entry points into Hungerford along main and smaller routes. These include Bath Road (A4), Charnham Street, the B4192, North Standen Road, Park Street, Salisbury Road and Priory Road. These provide a range of views of the entry to the town as you move from countryside to urban area. Most provide a soft, rural feel that only becomes more visually urbanised comparatively close to the main built-up area of the town. It is important that any development retains this soft feel.



### **Bath Road and Priory Road gateways – good examples of a rural feel with significant landscaping**

- 5.5 The overall setting of the town, with an abundance of trees and shrubs, is important for preserving its identity. In this regard, its gateways are key to this. Any development that might occur in the future along the gateway routes into and out of Hungerford therefore needs to ensure that the transition from rural countryside to urban settlement is gradual, avoiding dense, bulky buildings with large, bare walls as the first built development one sees on entering the town. Development can achieve this through effective landscaping buffers along boundaries, including lining the gateway routes with trees, and through ensuring that development avoids creating an overly dense feel close to the gateways.
- 5.6 Equally significant gateways to Hungerford are the routes in along the Kennet and Avon Canal. Whilst not subject to the same levels of traffic as the road routes, it is important that the view

of Hungerford by those entering along the Canal is a positive one. These users tend to be tourists who, if they feel compelled to stop in Hungerford, will increase spending in the local area. A good first impression is important to this.

5.7 The gateways are shown on Figure 5.1.

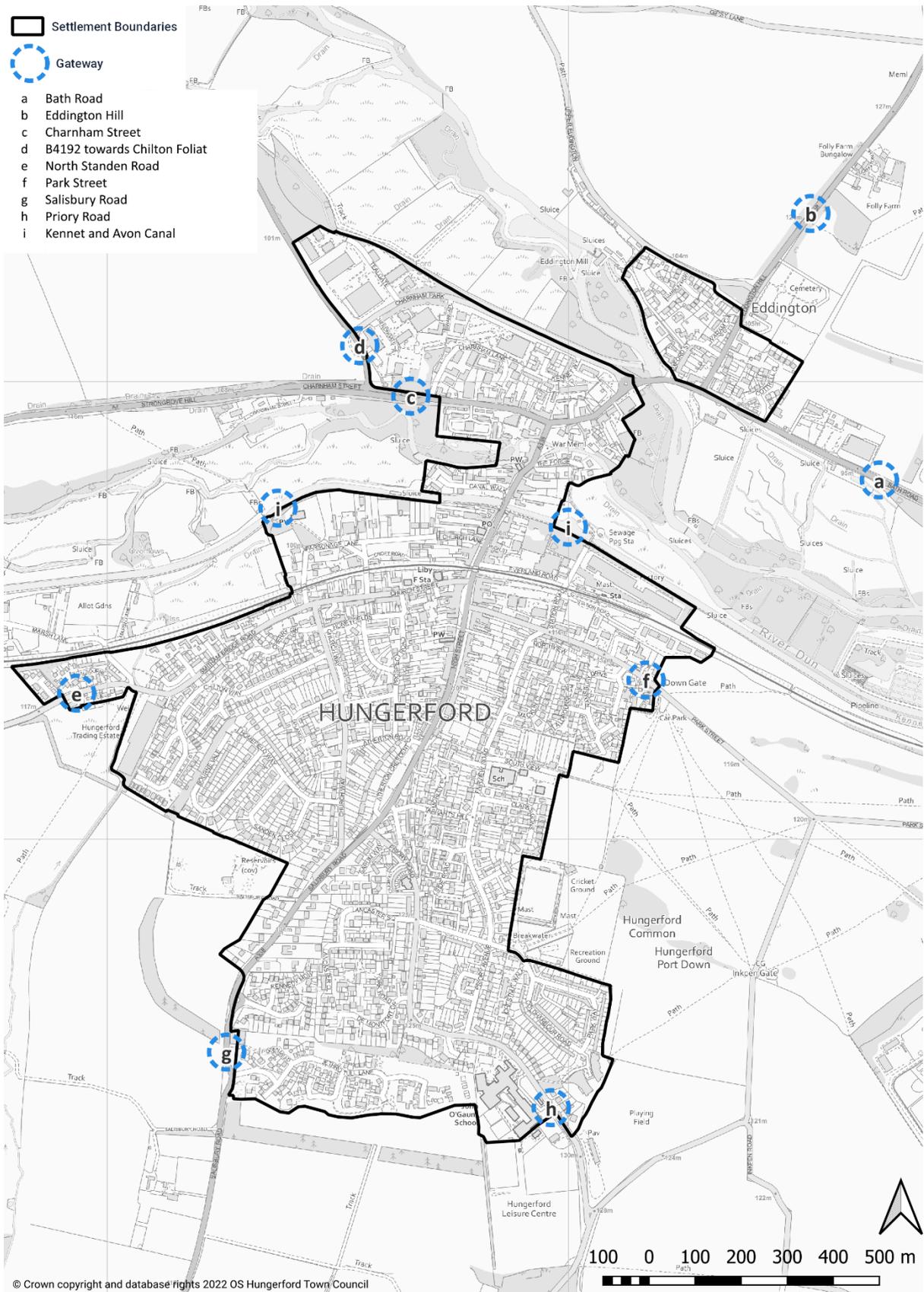
**POLICY HUNG3: GATEWAYS INTO AND OUT OF HUNGERFORD TOWN**

- A. Development proposals adjacent to the gateways into Hungerford town should demonstrate how they contribute to creating a gradual transition from rural countryside to urban settlement (and vice versa). Development proposals should avoid creating an overly dense feel and appropriate planting or other natural boundary treatments should be used to mitigate the impact of development and retain the open feel. This should include the use of trees to line the gateway routes.**
- B. The gateways into Hungerford town are on the following approaches:**
- a. Bath Road**
  - b. Eddington Hill**
  - c. Charnham Street**
  - d. B4192 (towards Chilton Foliat)**
  - e. North Standen Road**
  - f. Park Street**
  - g. Salisbury Road**
  - h. Priory Road**
  - i. Kennet and Avon Canal**

**ACTION A: CONSERVATION OF HUNGERFORD'S LANDSCAPE**

**Support the charities and agencies which are responsible for the conservation of the landscape around Hungerford.**

**Figure 5.1: Gateways into Hungerford town**



## Heritage

### ***Objective N: Protect and enhance the appearance and historic environment of the town and parish.***

- 5.8 The town of Hungerford has a significant history, much of which is still evident today. Its Conservation Area was designated in 1974 and covers much of the town centre. West Berkshire is undertaking the preparation of a series of Conservation Area Appraisals which will include Hungerford. Once this has been prepared and adopted it will outline the items of special interest particular to that Conservation Area and proposals for its preservation and enhancement. It then acts as a framework that guides future development in the Conservation Area.
- 5.9 In addition, Hungerford parish has 139 listed buildings, all grade II listed and three of these have grade II\* status. The vast majority of the listed buildings are located along the High Street. It also has one scheduled monument, the bowl barrow on Barrow Hill in Hungerford Newtown. These listed buildings and monuments are already well protected through Local Plan policy.
- 5.10 A particular issue in Hungerford is the quality of refurbishment of listed buildings and the Conservation Area. It is important that the energy efficiency of buildings is maximised, but this has often been used as justification for replacement features, particularly windows, that are not considered in keeping with the heritage of the building in question. It is now possible to source energy efficient wooden window frames and other replacement features in similar materials that are sympathetic to heritage concerns. These should be used unless there is clear justification why not.

#### **POLICY HUNG4: RETROFITTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

- A. The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures in historic buildings will be encouraged, including the retrofitting of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, provided that it safeguards the historic characteristics of these heritage assets.**
- B. Where this is to be achieved through measures to reduce heat loss, this could include secondary, double or triple glazing in conservation areas and listed buildings. Such measures should seek to use timber framed windows, with alternative materials only permitted where it is demonstrated that this would not result in harm to the significance of listed buildings or character and appearance of conservation areas.**
- C. The sensitive retrofitting of solar panels in the Conservation Area is encouraged, provided they are of a design and colour that integrates well with the existing architecture and does not compromise the visual integrity of the Conservation Area.**

- 5.11 There are a number of buildings in Hungerford which, whilst not worthy of national listing, do have local heritage merit. These 'non-designated heritage assets' can be identified and, where appropriate, added to the West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets.



\*M-P

- 5.12 Other heritage objectives O, P and Q are covered elsewhere in the plan: O & P earlier in Section 5 and Q in Section 6. These objectives specifically look to address improvements to the public realm of Hungerford town and also the heritage landscape character of the approaches to the town.



\*M-P



\*M-P

**ACTION B: IDENTIFY NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS**

**Undertake a review of non-designated heritage assets (buildings of heritage merit which are not nationally listed) and seek their addition to the West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets.**

## 6 ECONOMY

### Hungerford Town Centre

***Objective D: Encourage businesses and support initiatives, including those which promote a vibrant high street and increase the range of shops, services and eating places in the town for the benefit of residents, tourists and visitors of all ages. Recognise that Hungerford acts as a service centre providing facilities to neighbouring villages.***

***Objective Q: Enhance the environment of Hungerford High Street and Bridge Street between the Bridge Street/A4 roundabout and the Atherton Road/High Street roundabout.***

- 6.1 Hungerford town centre (see Figure 6.1) has been at the heart of Hungerford's role as a market town for many centuries. It has always thrived and continues to do so despite the changing ways that modern communities use their town centres. It will be important that Hungerford continues to adapt to the needs of the community. Hungerford is also a tourist venue which brings significant spending into the town. It is vital that this continues to be nurtured so that local shops, restaurants and facilities which rely on this trade can prosper.
- 6.2 A town centre strategy for Hungerford is being prepared by West Berkshire Council<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of the study is to develop a set of ideas that will enable Hungerford Town Centre to adapt and respond to the continuing changes in what is demanded of a town centre. This has been informed by the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.3 The key issues that the Town Centre Strategy proposes projects to address align closely with a number of the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives:
- Encouraging tourism by promoting Hungerford's heritage.
  - Encouraging visitors to stay longer and explore more of the town centre.
  - Promoting the use of the canal and green spaces for recreation and leisure.
  - Integrating community facilities within the town centre.
  - Reducing the impact of traffic on the High Street.
  - Increasing opportunities for independent cafes, restaurants, retail and other start-up businesses.
  - Improving space for indoor and outdoor markets and events.
  - Improving walking routes to the High Street from car parks and the railway station.
  - Enhancing arrival to the town centre.
- 6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to endorse specific projects in the Town Centre Strategy. However, there is a common desire to address the issues that were identified

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<sup>3</sup> New Masterplanning, Urban Movement and Hemingway Design (2023) *Hungerford Town Centre Strategy: Final Draft*, for West Berkshire Council

through the survey work that was used to inform the Strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide an appropriate policy framework to realise this.

- 6.5 Convenient and adequate car parking is important to the success of the town centre. On Wednesdays when it is market day there is an under supply, which is a classic market town problem with the street market taking up parking at the very time when there is most demand. Queuing traffic from the Tesco car park regularly extends onto the High Street which blocks the main road. Additional short stay off street parking would be welcomed.



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- 6.6 In order to protect the retail uses in Hungerford, it is important that the main retail area – signified by the Primary Shopping Frontages – is retained for mainly retail and food and drink uses. The existing uses provide a good balance of shops and services which underpin the heart of the town centre. If these ground floor units are lost to other uses then it will harm the vitality of the town as a whole.

- 6.7 As part of the development of the Plan, the Primary Shopping Frontages have been reviewed. On the eastern side of the High Street, the Primary Shopping Frontage has been extended to incorporate a number of shops and services that are integral to the success of the town centre. More detail of this extension is provided in Appendix A. Figure 6.1 shows the full extent of the extended Primary Shopping Frontage.

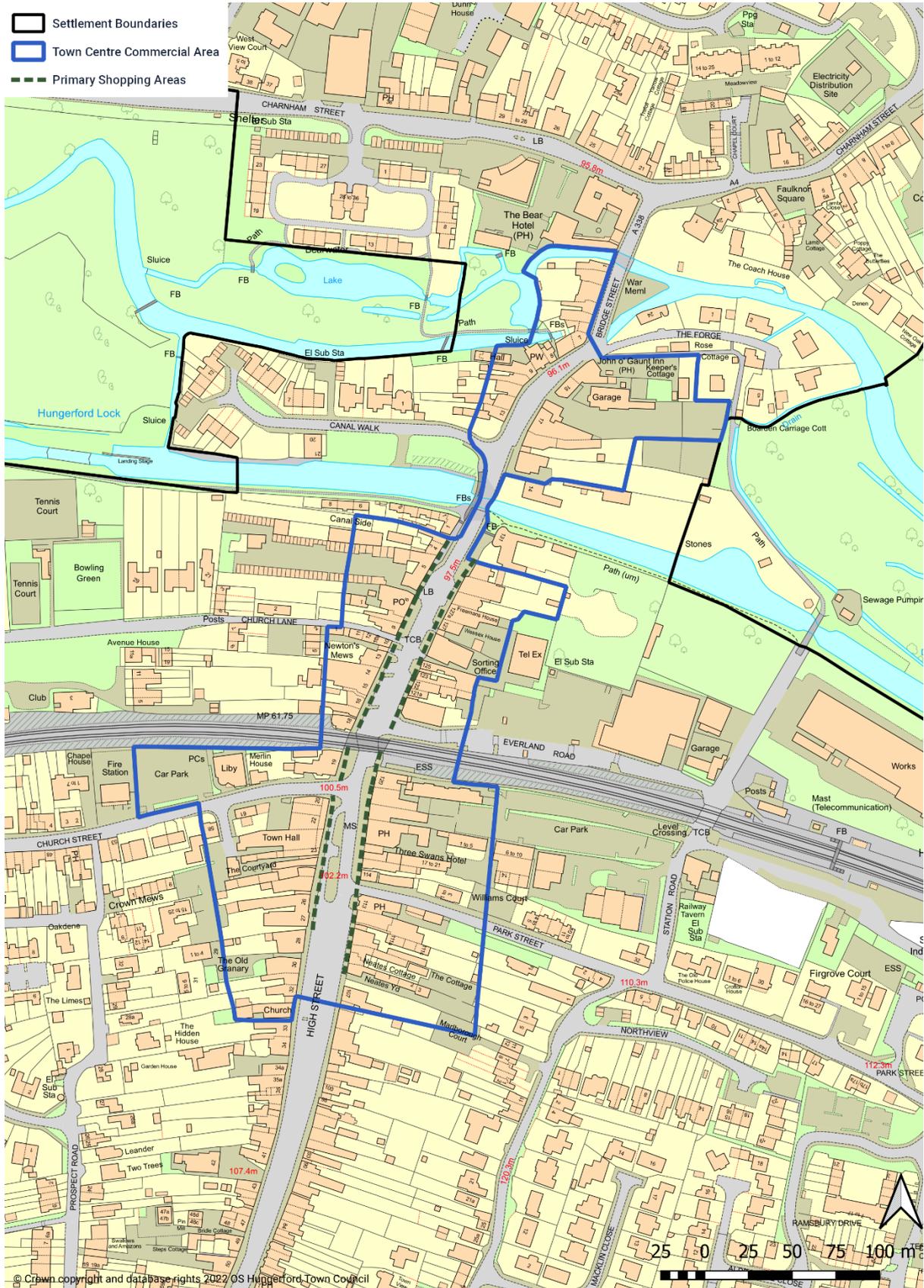


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Figure 6.1: Hungerford Town Centre



**POLICY HUNG5: RETAINING AND ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF HUNGERFORD TOWN CENTRE**

- A. To secure the ongoing vitality of Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area, proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of town centre uses – including retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural and community – will be supported, subject to the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

Primary Shopping Frontages

- B. To maintain the vitality of the Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area, the predominant uses in the primary shopping frontages, as shown on the Policies Map, are expected to be retail and food and drink uses. Proposals for non-Class E uses will only be permitted where they do not result in a disproportionate concentration of non-Class E units that would be harmful to the vitality of Hungerford Town Centre.

Temporary uses

- C. The use of premises for main town centre uses on a temporary basis will be supported in the Hungerford Town Centre. Such uses include 'pop up' shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events.
- D. Such uses must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential through excessive noise and pollution.
- E. Such uses will generally not be considered appropriate if the operation of the business requires large amounts of vehicle parking in order to function unless sufficient parking arrangements have been presented.

Public realm

- F. Proposals which enhance the quality and accessibility (specifically for pedestrians and disabled users) of the public realm in Hungerford Town Centre will be supported.

**ACTION C: HUNGERFORD TOWN CENTRE**

- i. Work with West Berkshire Council, local businesses and business groups to deliver the main initiatives which promote a vibrant high street.**
- ii. Enhance Hungerford High Street and Bridge Street between Charnham Street and Atherton Road by slowing traffic and improving the pedestrian environment.**
- iii. Support the introduction of additional off street short stay car parking within easy reach of the town centre.**

## Employment

**Objective E: Promote an increase in the number and quality of employment opportunities within the town.**

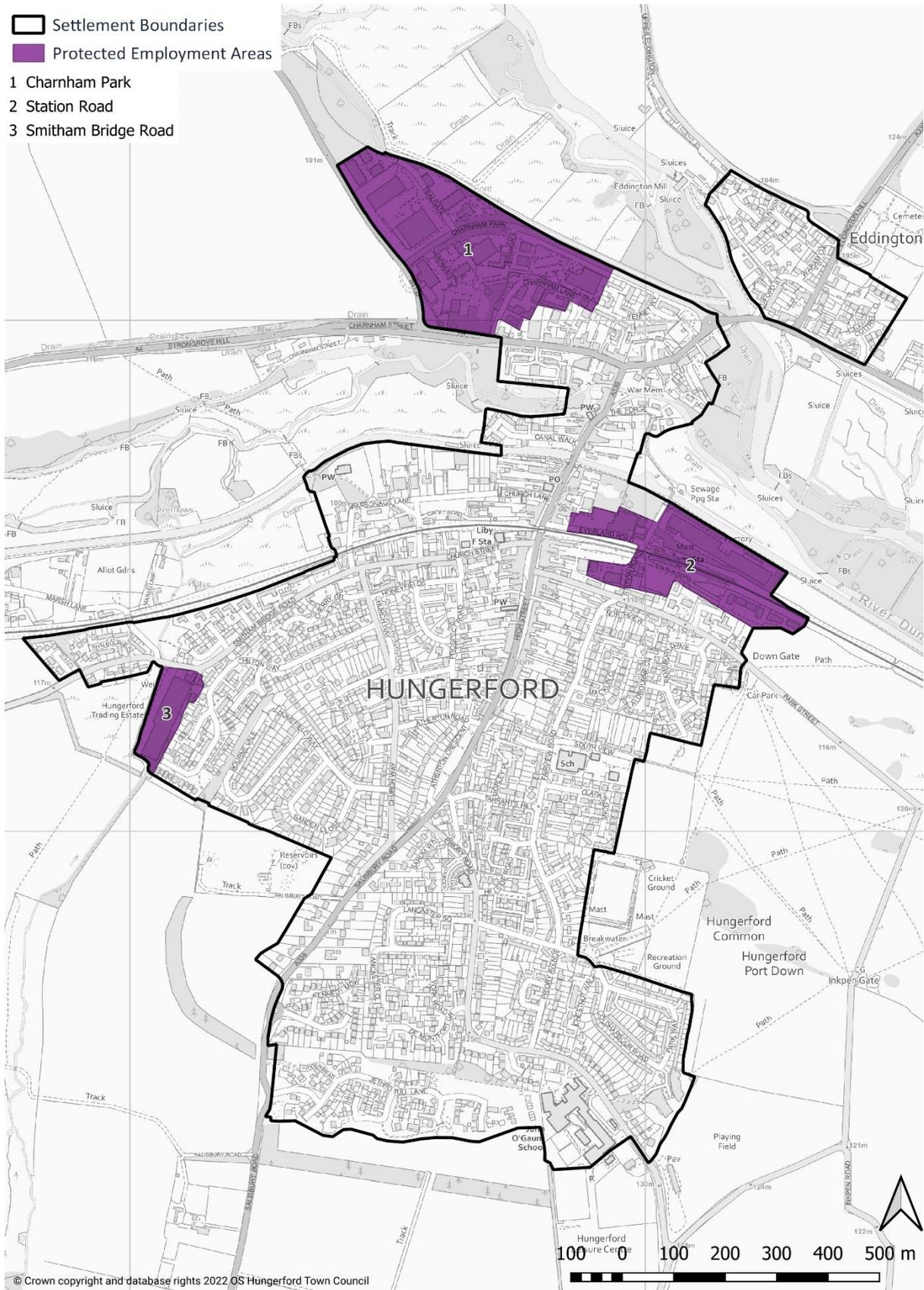
- 6.8 Hungerford has three Protected Employment Areas, at Charnham Park, Station Road and Smitham Bridge Road (see Figure 6.2). These are the main centres for traditional office and light industrial employment in the town. West Berkshire Local Plan policy protects these areas from loss of employment use. For Hungerford to thrive it is important that these centres are successful but that other opportunities to provide a wide range of employment within the town and, where appropriate, the wider parish are also taken.



- 6.9 The Station Road employment area has some significant access difficulties for goods vehicles. The junctions of Park Street with the High Street and Station Road are particularly constrained and sub-standard. Those sites north of the railway also require crossing the railway line at the level crossing. The former Oakes Brother's site and an adjacent site, located south of the railway station, are being converted to residential. Relocation of the employment uses which generate heavy goods vehicle movements to and from this area would be welcomed.

**Figure 6.2: Protected Employment Areas**

-  Settlement Boundaries
-  Protected Employment Areas
- 1 Charnham Park
- 2 Station Road
- 3 Smitham Bridge Road



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- 6.10 There is a need to provide space, ideally on flexible terms, for micro-businesses to help establish new businesses in the town. The Barrs Yard area was set up as a mixed use enterprise centre with small units with some retail. Since this time it has become almost entirely retail. Several employment sites have been set up outside of Hungerford town in farm or equestrian buildings such as at Leverton to the north of the town. Figure 6.3 shows six locations known about, although it is acknowledged that there are likely to be several others. Some of these have developed informally and offer starter unit type facilities. However, key concerns with these sites are goods vehicle access along narrow lanes and car dependence for access to employment and visitors. There are business and access advantages in having a concentrated location within the town which could form an enterprise hub or centre.
- 6.11 Tourism is important for the town as referred in Section 2 (para 2.23) and there is considerable potential to develop this further. The High Street, Bridge Street and Charnham Street still retain much of the historic integrity. It is surrounded by beautiful and unspoilt countryside in the National Landscape. There is the canal and excellent road and rail links which suggests that the town should be a greater draw for visitors.

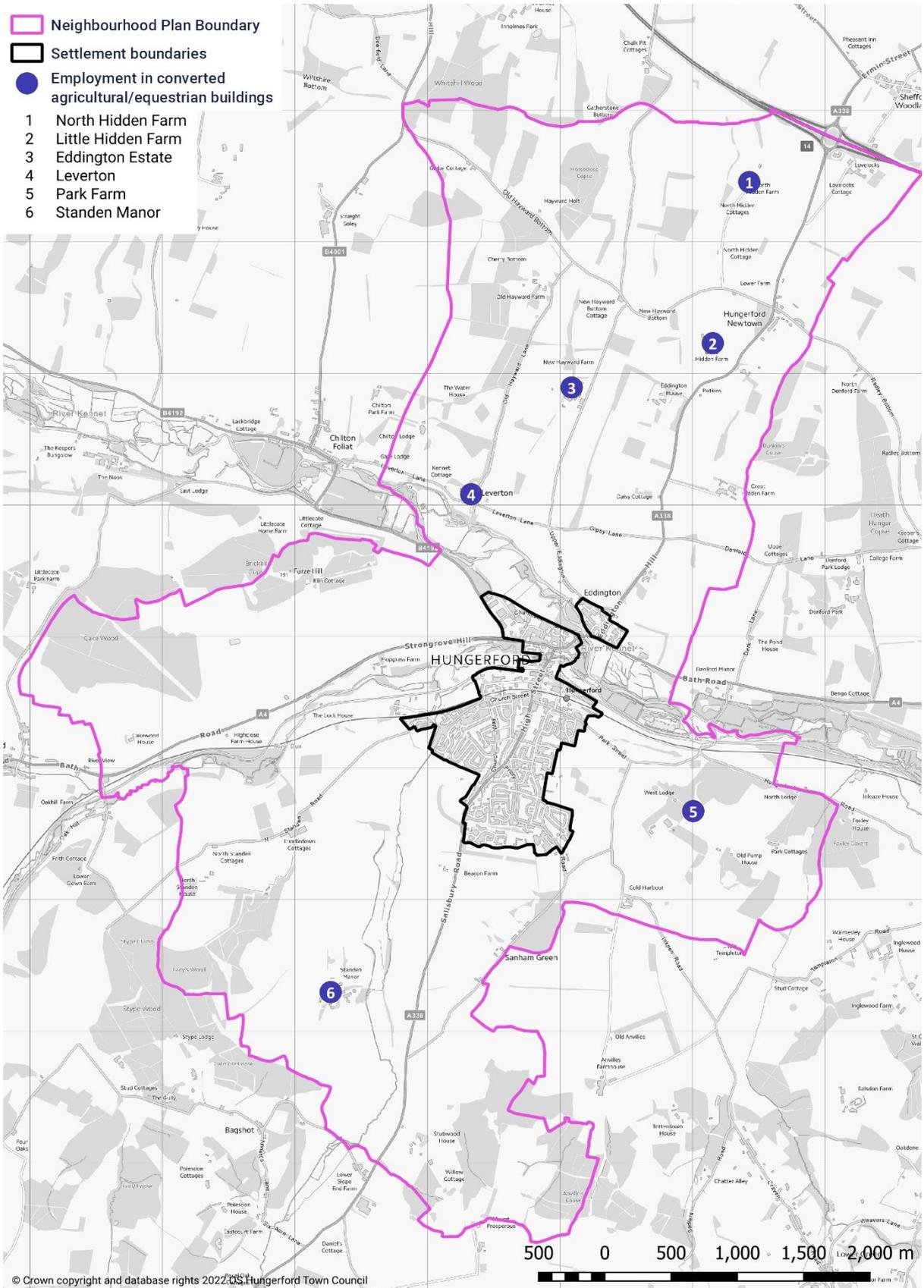
#### **ACTION D: EMPLOYMENT IN HUNGERFORD**

- i. Work with local businesses, business groups and West Berkshire Council Economic Development Team to promote an increase in the number and quality of employment opportunities within the town.**
- ii. Encourage the relocation of Station Road employment area sites that generate heavy goods vehicle movements via Park Street.**
- iii. Investigate the establishment of an additional enterprise centre for the town.**
- iv. Ensure employment uses at farm or equestrian buildings address the impacts of traffic and especially heavy goods vehicles.**

#### **ACTION E: TOURISM IN HUNGERFORD**

- i. Promote Hungerford as an historic market town for visitors.**
- ii. Provide a drop off point and parking for a minimum of two coaches with level access to the High Street.**
- iii. Work with local organisations to promote Hungerford as a tourist destination.**
- iv. Continue to emphasise Hungerford's role in the antiques trade, historical surroundings, the canal and the 'Great West Way' initiative.**

**Figure 6.3: Employment in Converted Agricultural /Equestrian Buildings**



## 7 GETTING ABOUT

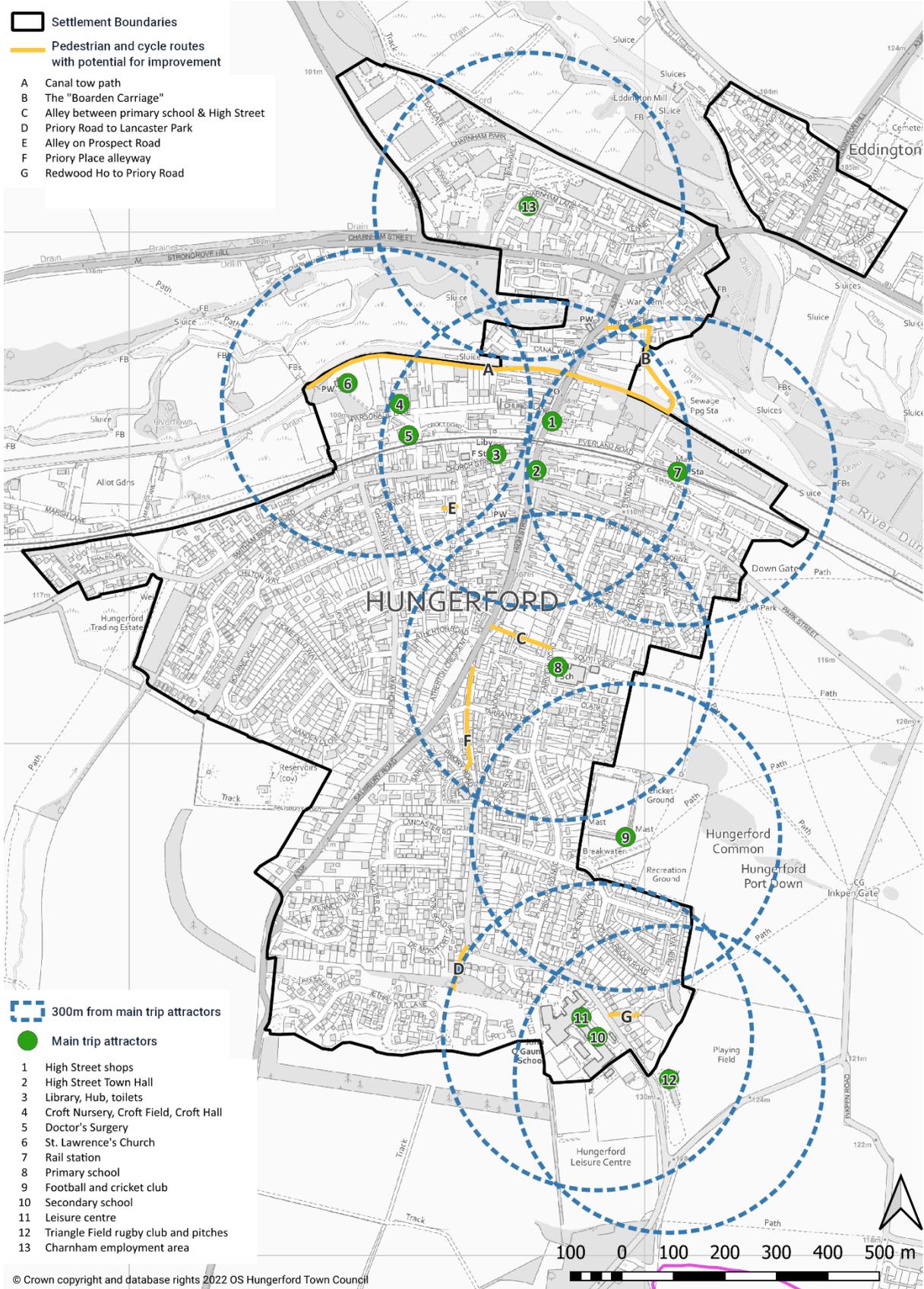
***Objective F: Minimise the effects of traffic in the town centre and especially the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians and all road users.***

***Objective G: Increase walking and cycling in the town.***

***Objective H: Encourage public transport usage in and to and from the town.***

- 7.1 In terms of trying to positively influence future patterns of movement into and around Hungerford town, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus on making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to encourage more walking and cycling. Linking the new housing allocations, as well as the existing parts of the town, into a network of safe walking and cycling routes is vital to encourage more walking/cycling and less use of the car. Such improvements have a range of benefits including:
- Providing genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing key shops and services, the schools and other community facilities.
  - Providing health benefits through increased walking.
  - Reducing congestion at busy times by encouraging children to walk to and from school and people to walk to the shops rather than jumping in the car for a short journey.
  - Providing a safer environment for the community of Hungerford, including vulnerable users.
- 7.2 To help address this, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to improve access to safe and high-quality walking and cycling routes. A series of Key Walk/Cycle Routes has been identified where improvements will have the greatest potential to increase levels of walking and cycling and at the same time reduce pollution and improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Figure 7.1 shows the seven routes with potential for improvement (the Key Walk/Cycle Routes) and how they link up the important, regular destinations (the 'main trip attractors') where residents make regular local journeys. It also shows how many parts of the town are within 300m of these main trip attractors.
- 7.3 The improvement of these routes for pedestrians and also for cyclists will be particularly important as development comes forward. This includes ensuring that where possible footways have street lighting and are wide enough to accommodate all users, including disabled users, and that crossings are provided as necessary. Where appropriate traffic calming and improvements to enhance pedestrian and cyclist priority will also be supported.

Figure 7.1: Key Walk/Cycle Routes



**POLICY HUNG6: KEY WALK/CYCLE ROUTES**

- A. Development proposals which would improve cycling and walking in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported. In particular, provision of segregated cycle and pedestrian routes will be strongly supported. Such routes should also ensure that access by disabled users, the blind and deaf and users of mobility scooters is secured.**
- B. To ensure that residents can access public transport facilities, schools, leisure and other important facilities serving Hungerford, where practicable development proposals should ensure safe and continuous pedestrian routes that connect to the Key Walk/Cycle Routes shown on the Policies Map and Figure 7.1.**
- C. Proposals to enhance the identified Key Walk/Cycle Routes will be supported.**
- D. Development proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on the safety and accessibility of Key Walk/Cycle Routes. Development proposals should provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian and cycle access on the identified Key Walk/Cycle Routes.**
- E. Development within or close to Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area which is designed to reduce dependence on car use will be strongly supported.**

- 7.4 Hungerford benefits from having a rail station with a direct service to London Paddington and routes to the southwest. However, in recent years the direct service has been significantly cut back and facilities at Hungerford Station need improvement. The number of car parking spaces at the station has been reduced recently with the Oakes site no longer being available so there is a significant shortfall which is impacting on other car parks in the town. The poor state of the rail station and the reduced service is despite it being an important transport hub for a wide hinterland, being one of only two stations in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. As the station sign says, Hungerford is at the 'Heart of the Area of Outstanding Beauty'<sup>4</sup>.
- 7.5 HGVs cause problems associated with their size on country lanes and the historic town layout. This is especially the case along Park Street and its junctions as referred in the Employment Chapter. On a number of narrow and bendy country lanes 'rat-running' is taking place with excess speed and HGVs are causing hazardous situations and verge damage when they meet on-coming traffic.
- 7.6 As vehicles transition from petrol and diesel to electric (eVs) there will be traffic noise and local air quality benefits. However, battery charging infrastructure is required to enable residents and visitors to charge their vehicles.

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<sup>4</sup> Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was the former title for what are now referred to as 'National Landscapes'.

**ACTION F: TRAFFIC IMPACTS IN HUNGERFORD**

- i. Work with West Berkshire Council Highways Team to explore possible schemes to minimise the effects of traffic in the town centre and especially the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians and all road users.**
- ii. Work with the local train operator to improve the rail services and facilities at Hungerford Station by:**
  - a. Improving rail station facilities to include a warm waiting room with toilets.**
  - b. Providing addition rail station long stay car parking.**
  - c. Bringing back 60-minute frequency off-peak direct services between Hungerford and London Paddington.**
  - d. Enhancing rail services to the West Country and support the Kennet & Avon Rail Partnership which aims to provide regular services between Westbury and Reading.**
- iii. Discourage the use of Park Street by heavy goods vehicles.**
- iv. Discourage goods vehicle and rat-running traffic from unsuitable country lanes. Also endeavour to slow this traffic to improve highway safety. These lanes include:**
  - a. Roads through the Common (Park Street, Inkpen Road & Hungerford Road).**
  - b. Old Hayward Bottom between the A338 and B4001.**
  - c. Upper Eddington between the A338 and Leverton Lane.**
  - d. Leverton Lane and Gipsy Lane between the A338 and B4192.**
  - e. Inkpen Road through Sanham Green and Hornhills between the Triangle Field and the A338.**
- v. Support the introduction of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**



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## 8 LEISURE, WELLBEING, PUBLIC SAFETY AND LEARNING

### Play facilities

**Objective I: Protect and maintain existing public playgrounds and open spaces to a high standard and look at ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.**

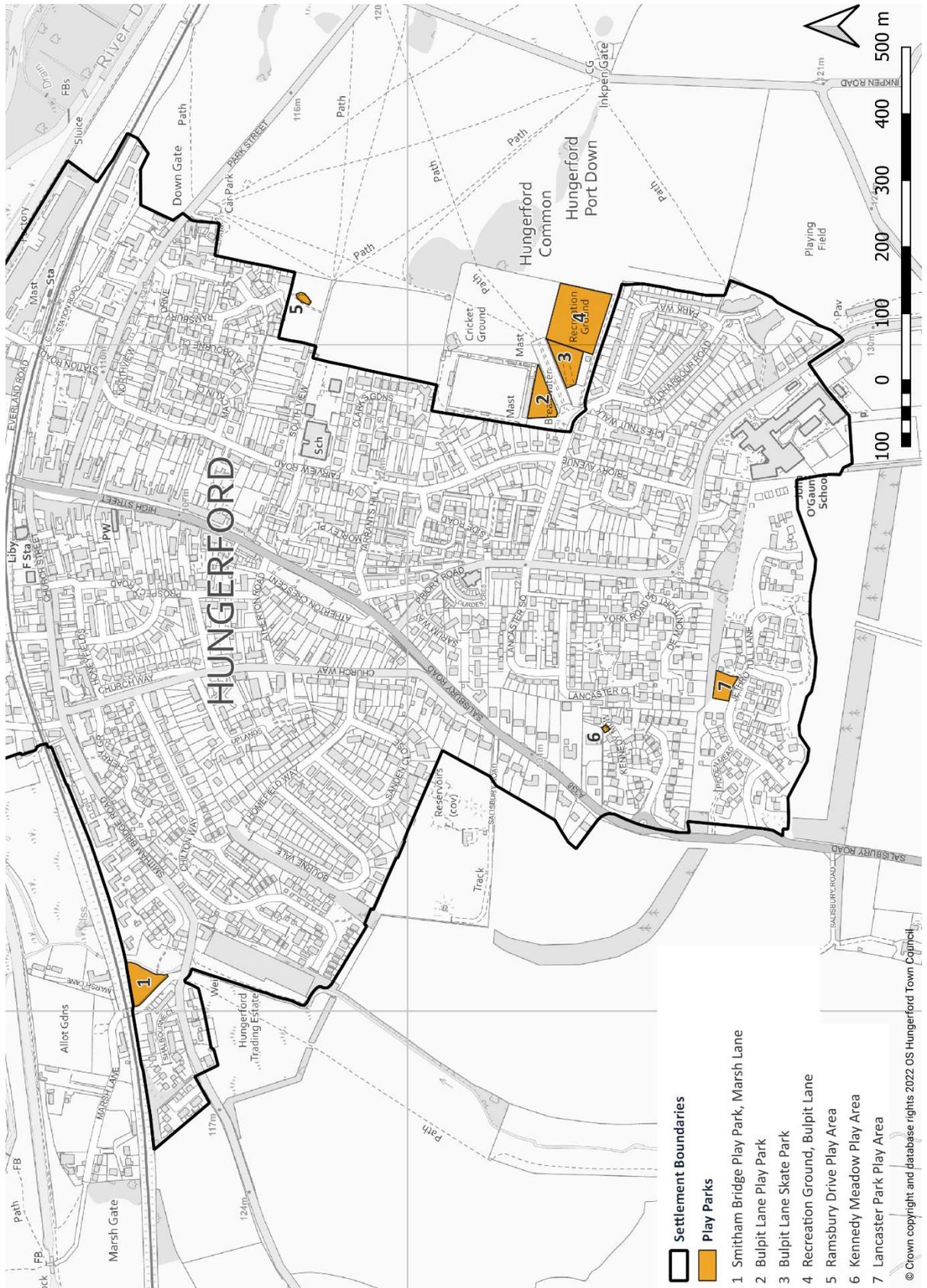
**Objective J: Support the development of sports, arts, youth clubs, social and leisure facilities, including the widest possible range of activities for young people.**

8.1 Play facilities in the town are provided at the following locations as shown on Figure 8.1:

- Bulpit Play Area
- Bulpit skate park
- Smitham Bridge Play Area
- Ramsbury Drive Play Area
- Kennedy Meadows Play Area
- Lancaster Park Play Area



Figure 8.1: Existing play facilities



- 8.2 Most of the above are in good condition and an annual survey is carried out and appropriate maintenance undertaken. The Bulpit play area is the largest and oldest and most years replacement of at least one feature takes place. Maintenance funding would be welcomed to enhance and improve some of the facilities. The skate park refurbishment undertaken in 2023 was part funded by developer contributions. Similarly, contributions will be sought from the site allocations to ensure that the existing play facilities are of a modern standard and provide sufficient play space for the growing population of the town.

#### **POLICY HUNG7: PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES**

**The provision and maintenance (including periodical upgrades) of play and youth facilities to serve the community of Hungerford will be strongly supported.**

#### **ACTION G: MAINTAIN HIGH QUALITY PLAY FACILITIES**

- i. Maintain existing public play areas and open spaces used for informal play to a high standard.**
- ii. Where appropriate, provide accessible equipment/facilities for older residents on play areas.**

## **Leisure and sports facilities**

***Objective J: Support the development of sports, arts, youth clubs, social and leisure facilities, including the widest possible range of activities for young people.***

- 8.3 The Town is well provided for with sports and leisure activities. The main facilities are as follows as shown on Figure 8.2:

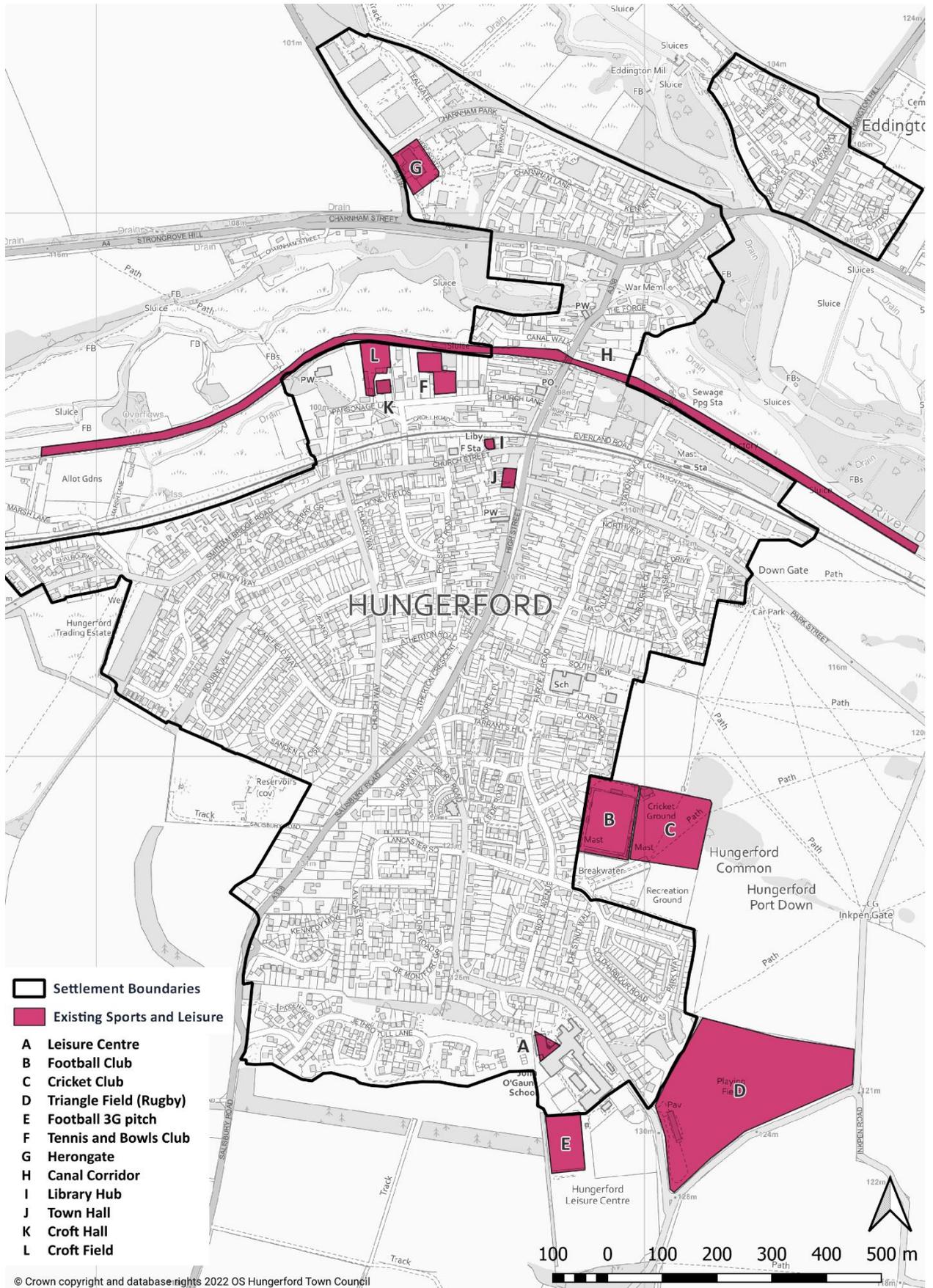
- Hungerford Leisure Centre, which includes a 25m swimming pool, gym and a sports hall.
- Hungerford Town Football Club, This has a small stadium and is currently in the 7<sup>th</sup> tier of English football.
- The Cricket Club with pavilion.
- The Triangle Field with club house. This has two rugby pitches and is the home of the rugby club. There are two other pitches mainly used for football.



- The football 3G pitch. A pitch was installed in 2023 in the John O' Gaunt school grounds. This is a full sized pitch largely funded by the Football Association.
- Herongate with a swimming pool, squash courts, a gym and other indoor facilities.
- Hungerford Tennis and Bowls Club.
- Canal corridor which facilitates boating, water sports, walking, cycling and other activities.
- Library and hub facilities, which is now run as a charity and includes the Town Council Office.
- The Town Hall, a key building in the town on the High Street with three rooms available.
- The Croft Hall, an arts and craft building with a hall where events regularly take place.
- The Croft Field, which includes a building that was refurbished in 2023 and a field popular for fetes. There is also a scouts hut on the Field.



Figure 8.2: Existing sports and leisure facilities



- 8.4 There is potential to expand facilities, especially to accommodate the needs of the youth sections of sports clubs. The Football Club require new changing room facilities for the club juniors. Also, the Youth Council are keen to have more flexible covered areas and specifically have requested a table tennis hall.



**ACTION H: EXPANDING HUNGERFORD'S FACILITIES**  
**Explore ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.**

**ACTION I: SUPPORTING YOUTH SPORT**  
**Support youth clubs and the junior sections of local sports clubs. To include support for a junior football changing facilities and a table tennis hall.**

## Local green spaces

***Objective 1: Protect and maintain existing public playgrounds and open spaces to a high standard and look at ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.***

- 8.5 Green spaces are important to Hungerford and the town benefits from several of these within easy reach of residents. Notably there is the Common Port Down to the east and Freeman's Marsh to the west, both owned and managed by the Town and Manor. These areas are already protected along with the Memorial Avenue and the Croft.



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8.6 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 106 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

8.7 The following four areas are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:

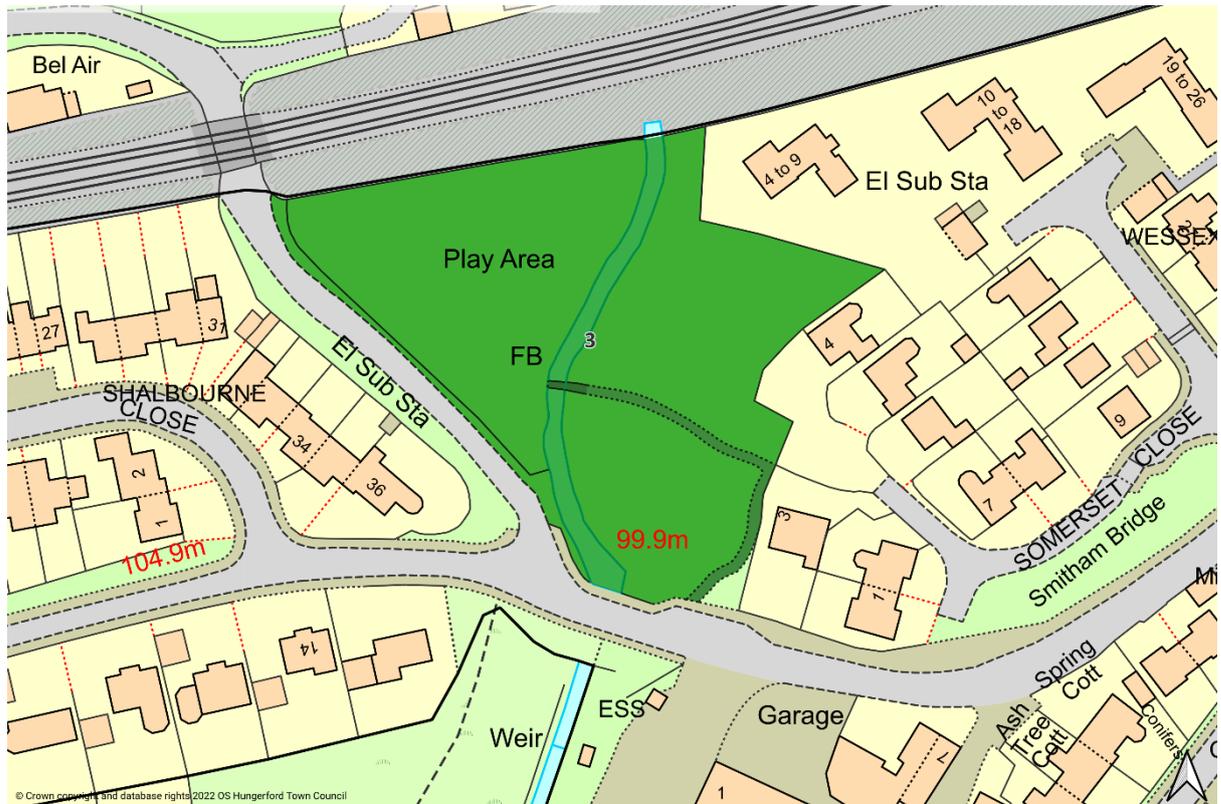
- Atherton Crescent green space.
- The canal wharf.
- Land adjacent to Smitham Bridge play area.
- Lancaster Park green spaces.

### ***Atherton Crescent***





**Land adjacent to Smitham Bridge Play Area**



- 8.10 The land adjacent to the Smitham Bridge play area is a plain grassed area that is also next to the Shalbourne chalk stream and is needed for the setting of the area between the railway embankment and Smitham Bridge Road.



**Lancaster Park green spaces**



8.11 Lancaster Park is Hungerford's most recent development and benefits from several green spaces which need protection to retain its character and setting on the edge of the town within the National Landscape.



#### **POLICY HUNG8: LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

**A. The following areas shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces:**

- a. Atherton Crescent green space**
- b. The canal wharf**
- c. Land adjacent to Smitham Bridge play area**
- d. Lancaster Park green spaces**

**B. Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless the proposal is for an ancillary feature, and it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to support or enhance the role and function of the identified Local Green Space.**

## **Health and wellbeing**

***Objective K: Support and develop services which assist and encourage people to maintain their own health.***

- 8.12 The health and wellbeing of the community in Hungerford is fundamental to its prosperity. This does not only mean access to medical services to address ill health but access to nature and the development of local resilience in matters such as food supply as a way of preventing ill health. Many communities thrive by ensuring that development is embedded into its natural environment with care and in a way that enables its residents to gain the benefits of living in that environment.
- 8.13 Relevant to this is the Environment Act 2022 which requires all development other than at the smallest householder scale to deliver a net biodiversity gain. In other words, it must ensure that there is more biodiversity – at least 10% more – once the development is complete as compared with what is there prior to development. This represents a challenge, particularly for greenfield development, and all avenues to enhance biodiversity need to be considered.
- 8.14 One area where this can be achieved is through the design of green spaces in developments. This means not only the private gardens of houses but the communal green spaces that stitch a development together. Often these spaces are simply laid to grass with limited planting to provide basic landscape buffers. However, the opportunities to reimagine these spaces as places rich in biodiversity and as spaces where people will want to gather and share in their community are substantial. As a minimum, major development that must address flood risk through the use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) should be encouraged to design these so they become havens for wildlife and have amenity value, providing a place for residents and others to enjoy and be closer to nature and green infrastructure.



**Examples of multi-functional SuDS provision**

Credit: Pinterest

Credit: Open House London

- 8.15 Communal spaces also offer the opportunity for community food growing and planting of biodiversity-rich habitats. Food growing in a more natural way that mimics nature – forest gardening – is distinct from allotments which provide more formal growing areas often away from where people live. Such growing can be done by the community that lives there on their doorstep, with this approach having the added advantage of requiring less upkeep.



**Examples of forest gardening**

Credit: Regenerative Farmers of America

Credit: Ourwildgarden.com

## Public Safety

### **Objective L: Minimise crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the town.**

8.16 Hungerford has a relatively low crime rate statistically. But, there is crime that notably includes burglaries and traffic incidents. Speeding traffic has become a significant issue and the Common now benefits from a 30mph speed limit. The Town Council has recently introduced some Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), which has helped reduce speeds.

8.17 Development should actively seek to demonstrate, through its design, how it will minimise the opportunities for crime to occur. One commonly used framework for this is the Police's 'Secured by Design' framework<sup>5</sup>.



#### **ACTION J: CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

- i. Work in partnership with the police on crime prevention initiatives, such as CCTV.**
- ii. Retain the emergency services building (tri service building shown in photo, known as the 'tri-station'), encourage its full use by all forces and support improvement and/or expansion of the facility.**
- iii. Reduce traffic speeds by encouraging more enforcement by the police, introducing more Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and trialling of 20mph zones.**

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/design-guides>

#### POLICY HUNG9: WELLBEING AND SAFETY THROUGH DESIGN

- A. Development should be designed to maximise the wellbeing of its residents, visitors and users. The landscaping and layout of green infrastructure and spaces should demonstrate that all opportunities have been taken to create a high quality environment that people can actively engage with. This should be supported by an appropriate ongoing programme of maintenance.
- B. Where development is required to mitigate the risk of flooding through use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), these should be designed to be multi-functional and where possible, create the opportunity to be enjoyed by residents and/or the community. SuDS should not only be a well-integrated and attractive part of a development but it should be designed where possible for use as public open space.
- C. Development is encouraged to design green spaces that not only create and enhance habitats for wildlife but create the opportunity for food growing, e.g. food forests.
- D. Development is encouraged to demonstrate, through its design, how it will minimise the opportunities for crime to occur.

## Schools

### ***Objective M: Support and enhance the Schools of Hungerford.***

8.18 Hungerford is a focal point for children's services. The Nursery school not only provides basic educational needs, but is also a centre for a number of parent and children activities offering support and help in learning, development and health areas.

8.19 The Croft Nursery School is a successful and popular facility which has had challenges to its funding in recent years. Ensuring that there remains an inflow of young families with children so that pupil demand remain high is important for the future.



8.20 Hungerford Primary School is a larger than average primary school currently catering for the needs of about 360 children across 14 classes across two per year group. There are two separate buildings that make up the school and both were originally built in 1910. The school has extensive grounds, a forest school area, an outdoor gym area and large playing fields that back onto Hungerford Common. Approximately 27% of the children have a special educational need and about 30% are classed as disadvantaged.



8.21 John O'Gaunt Secondary School has a growing number pupils and has classes from years 7 to 11 (ages 11 to 16). It no longer has a sixth form, but operates as part of the Excalibur Academies Trust group of schools which includes St John's at Marlborough (which has a sixth form). Many of the students are from villages and hamlets surrounding Hungerford and the school offers a wide range of facilities including drama, art and sports in addition to core academic subjects.

8.22 Many residents feel that there is not enough provision for young people in Hungerford. Whilst there may be room for improvement in some areas, this view also may be in part due to a lack of publicity. It is important that clubs and organisations maintain a high profile, making information on their activities and facilities available to the general public.

#### **ACTION K: SCHOOLS**

- i. Ensure the Croft Nursery School continues to operate.**
- ii. Support the development of facilities at Hungerford Primary School and John O'Gaunt Secondary School.**
- iii. Encourage the development of a youth council linking up youth with organisations in the town.**

## 9 CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

### Sustainable design

#### ***Objective R: Reduce carbon emissions with more energy efficient buildings.***

- 9.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 committed the UK to an 80% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050. In June 2019, an announcement was made by Government to reduce this further to almost 100% by 2050. This will be a major task that will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities, to businesses and local and national government.
- 9.2 In 2016, the residential sector alone accounted for over 16% of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions (source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy). The total emissions from all building types will therefore be much greater. Standards for ecologically sustainable homes and developments are established through Building Regulations and West Berkshire Local Plan policies. However, in order for built development to make a meaningful contribution towards achieving net zero by 2050, development needs to go as far as it possibly can. New development is therefore encouraged to exceed the requirements of Local Plan policy<sup>6</sup> or, at very least, to ensure that new properties are designed so that they are ready to receive the technologies that are crucial to minimising their energy use, e.g. underfloor heating to increase the effectiveness of heat pumps, buildings orientated south to maximise the potential from solar panels if installed.

### Flooding and heating

#### ***Objective U: Increase resilience to climate change***

- 9.3 Flooding associated with more extreme weather events linked to climate change needs to be planned for. The town is in the Kennet valley and benefits from the Marsh to the west which functions as a sponge to absorb much of the water. But with more extreme weather and other areas such as Denford being prone to flooding, risks are increasing. Where possible, hard surfaces with faster run-off should be discouraged and the use of porous surfaces encouraged. For example, when adding a driveway, ensure the surface is porous.
- 9.4 More extreme heat during the summer periods is also forecast and ensuring all buildings are well insulated reduces overheating in the summer as well as keeping them warmer during the winter.

#### **ACTION L: MINIMISING FLOOD RISK, DAMAGE AND OVER-HEATING**

- i. Encourage the use of porous surfaces where possible to minimise the speed of run-off that contributes to flooding.**
- ii. Keep the flood risk emergency action plan up to date and ensure its proposals include materials that are readily available such as sand bags, sand and signage.**

<sup>6</sup> West Berkshire Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS15 and West Berkshire Emerging Local Plan Policy DM4

- iii. Encourage the installation of high levels of insulation in existing buildings to reduce over-heating during hotter periods and to keep warmer during the winter.**

**POLICY HUNG10: LOW ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENT DESIGN**

- A. Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, must demonstrate how the design of buildings and site layouts minimise consumption of energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources in order to minimise carbon emissions.**
- B. All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:**
- a) Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;**
  - b) Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change, for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;**
  - c) Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and**
  - d) All development shall minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable SuDS-based drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change. In particular development should also maximise the use of porous surfaces on open areas such as driveways.**

## Community scale energy generation

***Objective T: Support proposals for individual and community scale renewable energy generation provided the benefits outweigh any adverse impacts.***

- 9.5 The Neighbourhood Plan is supportive in principle of proposals to provide community-scale energy generation schemes that serve the community of Hungerford. The importance of maximising both energy generation from renewable sources and the ability to withstand outside influences on the market for energy has increased substantially in recent years. The Neighbourhood Plan does not designate any specific sites for a community energy scheme, nor does it express a preference for any particular type of provision (e.g. solar, water, wind, combined heat and power). Policy DM4 in the West Berkshire Emerging Local Plan provides the supportive policy framework for such provision, subject to it being in a suitable location and not causing harm to residential amenity. Hungerford Town Council will work with any interested landowners to explore the potential for such provision.

### **ACTION M: PROVIDING RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES**

**Work with landowners to explore the delivery of community scale renewable energy generation projects.**

## Wildlife-friendly design

***Objective S: Encourage new development to maximise the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.***

***Objective P: Protect the landscape around Hungerford and support the charities and agencies which are responsible for its conservation.***

- 9.6 The design of individual buildings and of neighbourhood scale green and open spaces, including private gardens, will help to ensure that existing habitats present in Hungerford can thrive and a range of new habitats can be created. This is in line with the requirement of the Environment Act 2021 for all new development (excluding small householder proposals) to achieve net biodiversity gain of at least 10%.
- 9.7 Planting is an important aspect of development and habitat creation. Not only does a well-considered planting scheme provide high quality landscaping, it is a fundamental aspect of enhancing biodiversity that otherwise would be lost. Planting schemes should ensure that tree species should be carefully selected to be responsive to landscape and historic character and to suit the planting location<sup>7</sup>. Planting should not simply consist of trees but a range of shrubs and grasses too and should seek to include native species.

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<sup>7</sup> See 'Right Tree in the Right Place for a Resilient Future' by Forest Research - <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/ftth/urban-tree-manual/>

9.8 Other creative ways of providing habitats can be designed easily into developments of any size (see image below).



**A bin store with green roof and habitat features**

Credit: Green Roof Shelters

9.9 Protecting species present in the area is also important. Examples of the simple solutions that well-thought out design can easily incorporate are:

- Integral bird and bat boxes under the eaves of the new houses, or artificial nests sited in places away from windows and doors, can create vital new roosting sites to support populations of birds and bats. Hungerford has a long tradition of swifts in the town during the summer and support of this population with more roosting bricks would be welcomed.
- Boundaries between dwellings can be made hedgehog friendly by including pre-cut holes for hedgehogs to more effectively move across neighbourhoods to forage.
- New planting schemes can support bees and other pollinators by including nectar-rich plants.



**Bricks that allow birds to nest**

Credit: Pinterest



**Hedgehog-friendly fencing**

Credit: Pinterest

- 9.10 Development is encouraged to be informed by the full list of considerations in Natural England's 'Green Infrastructure Framework 2023'<sup>8</sup>.

**POLICY HUNG11: WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT**

- A. All development proposals should aim to protect existing habitats and species, including hedgerows and mature trees. In particular, developments required to deliver measurable biodiversity net gain (a minimum of 10%) that propose the removal or reduction of existing habitats will be expected to deliver biodiversity net gain on site.**
- B. The incorporation of design features into new development that encourages local wildlife and biodiversity to thrive will be supported. This includes the use of green roofs, swift bricks and hedgehog-friendly fencing.**
- C. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should be designed to retain trees, shrubs and hedgerows of arboricultural, habitat and amenity value on-site and to conserve and enhance connectivity to the wider green and blue infrastructure networks. Where practicable, any new planting should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses and be designed in a way that would allow their use as stepping stones for wildlife. Any new planting should recognise the need for support through an appropriate ongoing programme of maintenance.**

**ACTION N: WILDLIFE FRIENDLY PROPOSALS**

**Support organisations to provide wildlife friendly schemes, such as the Town and Manor's planned wetland nature reserve at Undy's Meadow.**

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<sup>8</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx>

## 10 SITE ALLOCATIONS

**Objective A: Allocate sites to meet the housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan to 2041, where possible making best use of previously developed land and minimising encroachment into the countryside.**

10.1 The West Berkshire Local Plan Review Submission Version (January 2023) requires a minimum of 55 dwellings to be delivered on allocated sites within the Hungerford Neighbourhood Area over the plan period. The process to allocate those sites is expected to be undertaken through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, the following sites are allocated for residential development in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Land at Smitham Bridge Road – for a minimum of 44 dwellings (Policy HUNG12).
- Land north of Cottrell Close – for a minimum of 12 dwellings (Policy HUNG13).

### Land at Smitham Bridge Road

10.2 The site is 2.78 hectares and is currently pasture land. It slopes down to the south east, therefore screening will be important on the eastern side to minimise the visual impact of the neighbouring commercial uses.

**Figure 10.1: Land at Smitham Bridge Road**



10.3 Due to the presence of a stream bordering the east side of the site, there is a high risk flooding along the eastern part of the site. Development should not be proposed in this area which offers a good opportunity to provide for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and public open space.

- 10.4 Vehicular access will be on to North Standen Road. This is an identified gateway into the town (See Policy HUNG3), therefore it is expected that the gradual transition from countryside to town is not impacted by the proposed development. The site access will specifically need to be designed to appropriately reflect the North Standen Road gateway into the town. This should include a footway connection from the site to the existing footway heading eastwards from Pennyfarthing Close. During construction it is important to minimise the impacts of construction traffic along Church Street and Smitham Bridge Road.
- 10.5 There is an existing Public Right of Way (HUNG46) which must be retained along its current route on the eastern side of the site. In order to provide safe pedestrian access into Hungerford town centre, this Public Right of Way should be upgraded so that it is capable of year-round use, including after dark by way of suitable lighting.
- 10.6 The site is allocated to deliver a minimum of 44 dwellings and should reflect the required mix in Policy HUNG1 as well as the affordable housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan.

#### **POLICY HUNG12: LAND AT SMITHAM BRIDGE ROAD**

Land at Smitham Bridge Road (approximately 2.78 hectares as identified on the Policies Map and in Figure 10.1) is allocated for a minimum of 44 dwellings and development proposals will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a. It provides a mix of dwelling sizes in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan.
- b. Affordable housing is provided to meet the requirements of the relevant policies in the development plan.
- c. The design of the dwellings reflects the character of the surrounding area and protects North Standen Road's role as a gateway into Hungerford (Policy HUNG3).
- d. The upgrading of Public Right of Way HUNG46 so that it is capable of everyday use all year-round and has suitable lighting for use after dark. Such lighting must be designed to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- e. The provision of appropriate vehicular access into the site from North Standen Road. This should reflect the role of North Standen Road as a gateway to the town.
- f. Creation of a footway connection from the site to the existing footway along North Standen Road (east of Pennyfarthing Close).
- g. Provision of a Construction Traffic Management plan to help minimise construction traffic impacts along Church Street and Smitham Bridge Road.
- h. The provision of high quality public open space.
- i. Development is located away from areas at high risk of surface water flooding.
- j. Provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to the satisfaction of the lead flood authority.
- k. Contributions towards improvement of the Smitham Bridge Play Park.
- l. Ecological surveys are undertaken which are able to demonstrate that the presence of any protected species on the site can be adequately mitigated.

## Land north of Cottrell Close

- 10.7 The site is 1 hectare and is currently pasture land. It slopes down to the south/south west, therefore development will need to take care not to be overly visible from Hungerford Common. There is also a grade II listed building to the west of the site that should be protected from heritage harm.

**Figure 10.2: Land north of Cottrell Close**



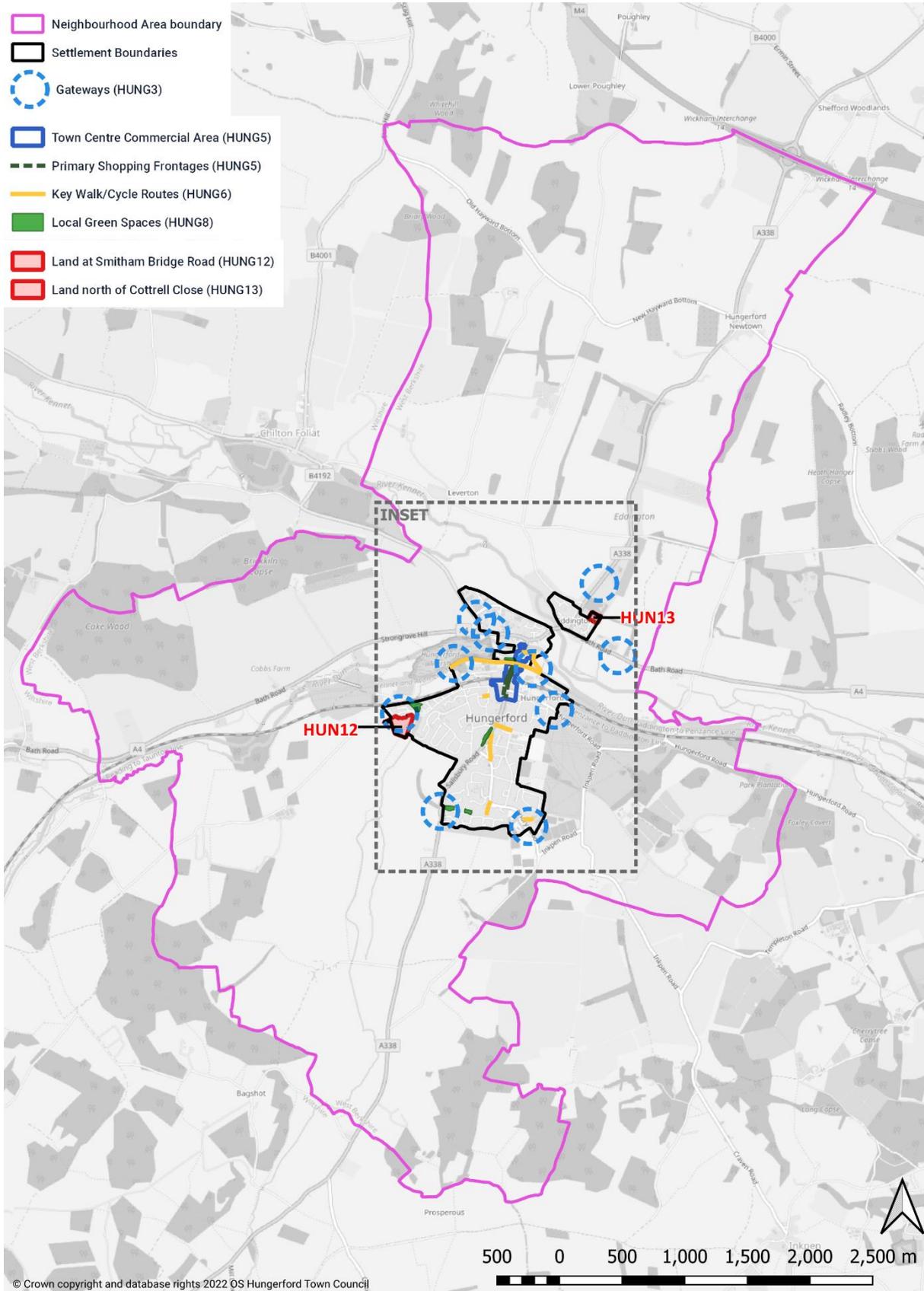
- 10.8 Vehicular access will be via Cottrell Close and it is expected that development will ensure safe pedestrian access can be achieved through to Cottrell Close. During construction it is important to minimise the impacts of construction traffic. To maximise accessibility and permeability by sustainable modes, a lit footway link should also be provided between the site and Eddington Hill via the cemetery. Any footway should remain open to the public through the site.
- 10.9 The site is allocated to deliver a minimum of 12 dwellings and should reflect the required mix in Policy HUNG1 as well as the affordable housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan.

#### **POLICY HUNG13: LAND NORTH OF COTTRELL CLOSE**

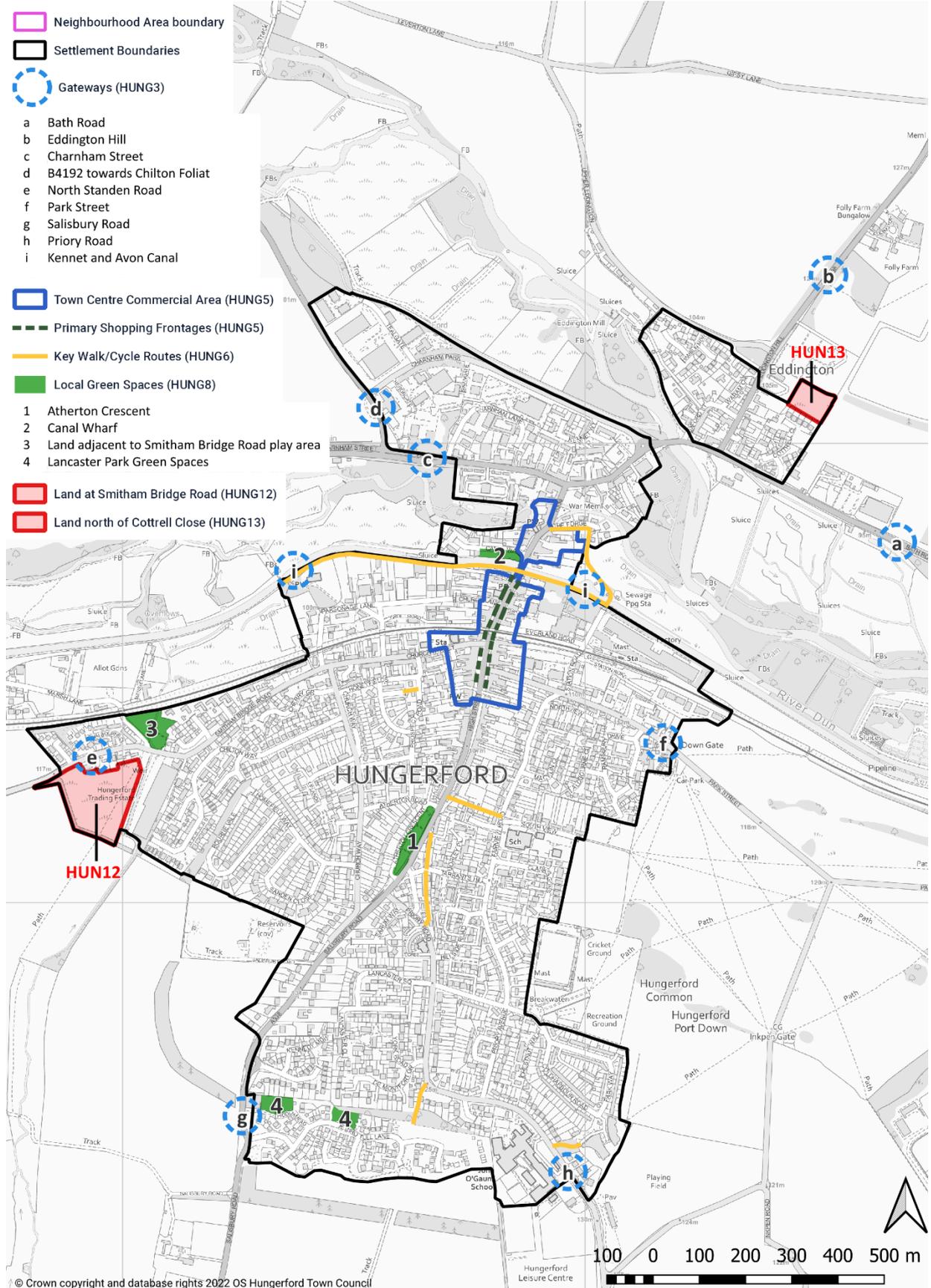
Land north of Cottrell Close (approximately 1 hectare as identified on the Policies Map and in Figure 10.2) is allocated for a minimum of 12 dwellings and development proposals will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a. It provides a mix of dwelling sizes in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan.
- b. Affordable housing is provided to meet the requirements of the relevant policies in the development plan.
- c. The design of the dwellings reflects the character of the surrounding area and minimises the impact on views from Hungerford Common.
- d. The provision of appropriate vehicular access into the site from Cottrell Close and appropriate pedestrian access from the site to Cottrell Close.
- e. Provision of a Construction Traffic Management plan to help minimise construction traffic impacts through Cottrell Close.
- f. Provision of a pedestrian connection to the neighbouring cemetery with appropriate financial contributions towards a footway between the site and the A338 Eddington Hill.
- g. Provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to the satisfaction of the lead flood authority.
- h. The setting of the grade II listed building to the west of the site and the Hungerford Conservation Area is preserved.
- i. Ecological surveys are undertaken which are able to demonstrate that the presence of any protected species on the site can be adequately mitigated.

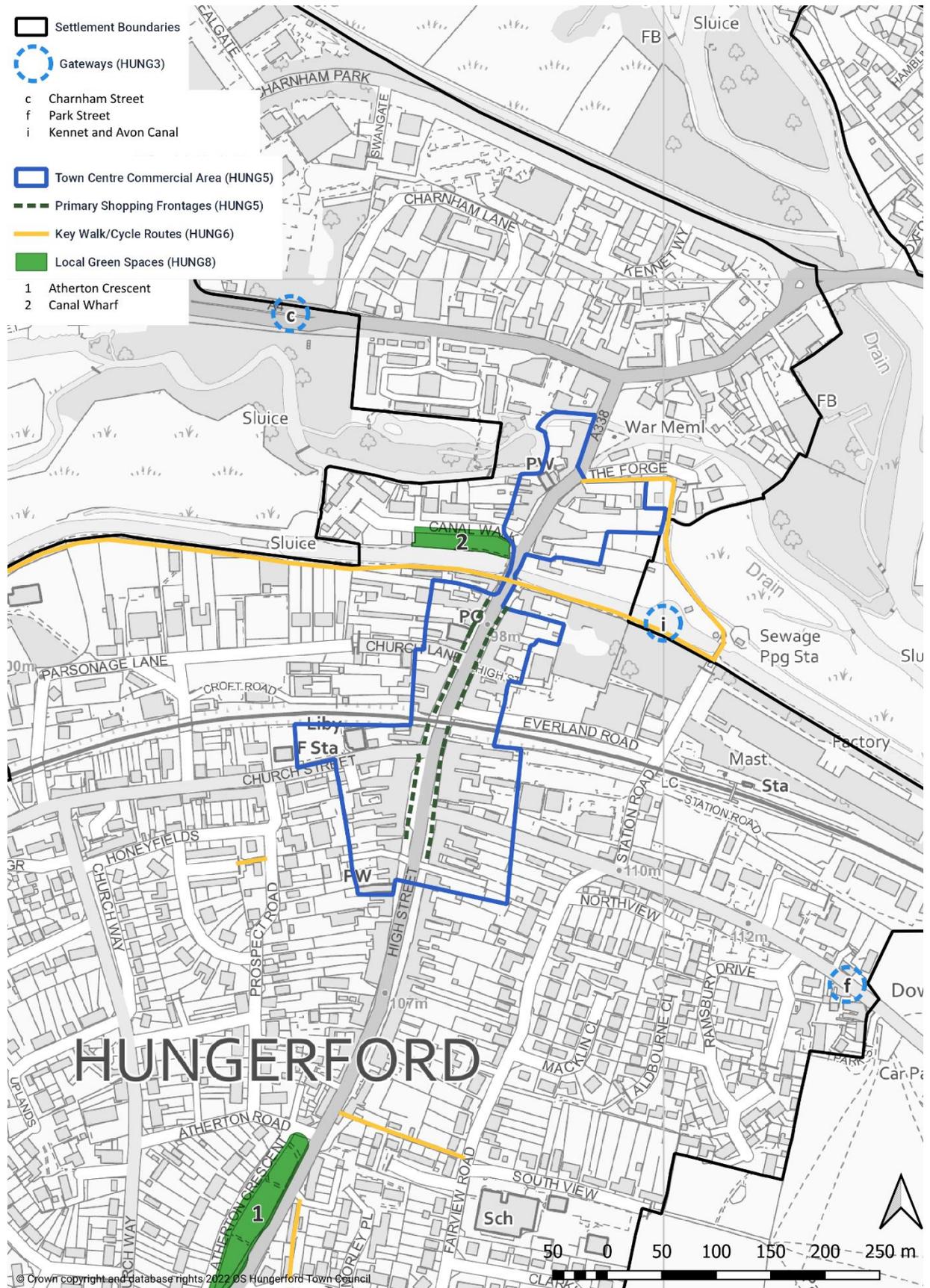
# 11 POLICIES MAPS



**INSET MAP**



**TOWN CENTRE INSET MAP**



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