2.3. Rural Service Area: Pangbourne – PAN 001, PAN 002

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Settlement map:
## Assessment of Settlement

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<th>Date of site surveys</th>
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Key landscape characteristics

**AONB LCA 2B Ashampstead Downs** (unless source noted otherwise)
- Plateau incised by dry valleys running east-west
- Extensive interconnected semi-natural woodland on valley sides and steep slopes
- Pasture, including remnant herb rich grassland, concentrated along the steeper slopes, particularly along the escarpments or valleys
- Intricate network of minor roads, rural lanes and tracks, lined by dense hedgerows and woodland edges
- Varied field pattern including sinuous medieval and post medieval enclosure and regular, straight edged open fields resulting from parliamentary enclosure
- Historic features including archaeological sites, parkland and historic field pattern
- Unsatisfactory modern forestry plantations
- Quiet rural landscape
- Historically, the landscape was a mix of fields, woods and commons and small settlements, and farms were scattered throughout the zone. The combination of land-use and topography gave a very sinuous grain to the landscape (HECZ: Pang- Thames Modernised Landscape)
- Reorganised fields derived from pre18th C irregular fields (HLC): both SHLAA sites
- Strong contrast between settlement and surrounding countryside (VDS)
- Contrast between floodplain to east and hills to west (VDS)
- Strips of arable fields between river valleys and upland chalk (NDLCA LCT 2): PAN001
- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees, banks and wide grass verges (NDLCA LCT 2): PAN001
- Large scale landscape grain (NDLCA LCT4): PAN002
- Dramatic landform (BLCA LCA N1): PAN002;
- Settlement strongly influenced by topography with settlement in the valleys (NDLCA LCT2 and 4):
- Wooded dry valleys (VDS)
- Historic Bere Court and Pangbourne College (VDS)

**AONB LCA 7D Pang Valley** (unless source noted otherwise)
- Open more shallow landform than common in the river valleys
- Varied land cover with lowland mosaic of woodland and wet meadows in the lower section east of Pangbourne
- Willow pollards, poplars and alder and strips of pasture along river banks
- Comparatively isolated, intimate and secluded
- Riparian woodlands
- Chalk stream
- Manor houses
- Small scale landscape
- Contained by the wooded escarpment to the east (NDLCA 16)
- Complex of ditches and small streams (NDLCA 16)
- Piecemeal enclosure with irregularly shaped fields (HECZ Thames Valley Floor)
- Loss of many historic boundary features but the grain of the landscape survives (HECZ Sulham Gap)
Key visual characteristics

**AONB LCA 2B Ashampstead Downs** (unless source noted otherwise)
- Mainly enclosed by woodland with restricted views
- Arable hillsides more exposed and of fragmented appearance (BLCA LCA F3): PAN001
- Views of the river and river meadows (VDS)
- Views from Pangbourne Hill to the Chilterns (VDS)

**AONB LCA 7D Pang Valley** (unless source noted otherwise)
- Visually enclosed (NDLCA 16)

Key settlement characteristics

**AONB LCA 2B Ashampstead Downs** (unless source noted otherwise)
- Hamlets and small villages clustered around cross roads or a small green
- Early 20th century and recent housing developments that have expanded out from the historic village of Pangbourne (HECZ: Pangbourne Suburban Area)
- Compact settlement (VDS)
- Growth since the medieval period in response to location on the rivers Thames and Pang; location on coaching road from Reading to Oxford; and coming of railway line along valley (VDS)
- Strong village centre and pattern of housing reflecting growth over time (VDS)
- Distinctive gateways into the village (VDS)
- Character of the former Breedon estate west of Tidmarsh Road is dominated by the landscape rather than the houses themselves (VDS)

**AONB LCA 7D Pang Valley** (unless source noted otherwise)
- Minor lanes and farms
- Scattered farms along valley with hamlets clustered around a church and small town of Pangbourne at the confluence of the rivers
- Mixed pre inter-war development with a medium sized area of Victorian housing as far east as Horseshoe Road. Post war suburban estates to the east as far as Sulham Lane (Quality Design)
Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development

The settlement at Pangbourne, and its hinterland, has two distinct character areas: the river valleys of the Pang and Thames in the north, east and south-east; and the rising open hillsides of Ashampstead Downs in the west and south-west. The village remains compact and, despite more recent development up the valley hillsides, retains its importance as a settlement on the confluence of these two rivers. Away from the village settlement is sparse and scattered, providing great contrast with the urban Reading conurbation. North of the railway line the Thames landscape remains dominant with small scale older housing areas. South of the railway line the centre has a variety of small areas of development but much larger estates are a common feature on the periphery. The impact of the existing built form is mitigated by the heavily landscaped setting of the former Breedon Estate. Housing which has crept up the hillsides to the west of the Pang corridor, is of decreasing density and increasing vegetation cover further up the hillside. With the exception of an outlier at Jesmond Hill, most of this housing sits below the 70m AOD. East of the Pang housing has spread across the valley floor between this river and Sulham Brook. However the remaining open valley floor and its riparian landscape, and the open agricultural hillsides are all important to the setting of the settlement, along with the meadows of the Thames. Any proposed development which would result in further incursion into the surviving riparian landscapes of the Pang and the Thames or which was sited on the exposed open slopes is likely to have a detrimental affect on the special qualities of the AONB and the settlement of Pangbourne. New development sites within the riparian landscape setting of the river Thames, river Pang or Sulham Brook would harm a number of locally and nationally important features of the AONB.

The area is also noted for the views across the river Thames and to the Chilterns AONB and from and to the open slopes. It will also be important to protect the character of its rural lanes and the gateways to the village, and the sense of tranquillity, despite the proximity of Reading.

Some of the field sizes on the perimeter of the settlement are large and not easy to sub-divide. The landform, orientation of the field, relationship to the settlement pattern and ability to include a high cover of vegetation will determine a site’s suitability for new housing. It is important that the current perception of compactness is not lost through expansion into visually exposed areas.

Sources:

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002;
Additional information from:
- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Quality Design SPD- Part 3
- Pangbourne Village Plan (VDS)
SITE PAN 001

Photographs:

View from Green Lane at corner with Courtlands Road
### Relationship with adjacent settlement
- Abuts extensive area of former Breedon estate.
- Adjoining housing is semi-rural in character with the landscape being the dominant characteristic.
- Enclosed by tree belts and hedgerows in back gardens and along Bere Court Road.
- Enclosed by settlement on 2 sides and houses in large grounds on a third.
- The site relates well to the adjoining parts of the village.

### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside
- Located on valley side slopes of Jesmond hill.
- Short boundary to adjacent field marked by fragmented hedgeline.
- Part of area of reorganised fields, formerly pre 18th century irregular fields extending into the wider landscape.
- The southern boundary sits on the north, settlement side, of the bluff on this hillside, orientating the site into the village.

### Impact on key landscape characteristics
- Loss of small area of open hillside.
- Site is off minor road serving low density housing.
- No loss of woodland or herb rich pasture.
- No adverse impact on historic features.

### Impact on key visual characteristics
- Site is not visually exposed.
- Low rise development in keeping with the adjacent development would not be visually intrusive.
- Would not further fragment the open hillside.
- No adverse impact on views of the rivers or meadows.
- Localised impact on views to the Chilterns.

### Impact on key settlement characteristics
- Development on the site would link the built form at Jesmond Hill with that to the north-east.
- Site would not compromise the compactness of the village.
- Development would not affect a gateway into the village.
- Size of site is in keeping with the settlement pattern.

### Summary of compliance with PPS7 paragraph 21
- Development on this site, subject to the recommendations below, would result in little harm to the natural beauty of the AONB.
Recommendations

- Development on this site should be subject to the following conditions and the protection and enhancement of the following features:
- Views from the east and north-east should be protected through limits on the mass and height of the development and native boundary planting along the southern boundary
- Retention of on site trees
- Retention of the hedgerow boundary along the north-western boundary
- Provision of a high level of internal tree and shrub planting to blend the site into the adjacent Breedon Estate
- Retention of the character of Bere Court Road
SITE PAN 002

Photographs:

View from edge of woodland at the northern end of Riverview Road across north part of site

View from land immediately north of Pangbourne Hill over south part of the site

Relationship with adjacent settlement

- Lies to west of area of former Breedon estate
- Adjoining housing is semi-rural in character with the landscape being the dominant characteristic
- Abuts small pockets of Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war housing
- Separated from settlement by tree belts and shrubbery in back gardens and along Pangbourne Hill
### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside
- Part of open arable field pattern west of village
- No boundary vegetation to western boundary with the wider landscape
- Straddles slopes above the village facing the Chilterns
- Part of area of reorganised fields, formerly pre 18th century irregular fields extending into the wider landscape

### Impact on key landscape characteristics
- No impact on woodland or pasture or particular landscape features
- Loss of open arable field which forms a part of the wider open landscape on the hillside west of Pangbourne
- Development on the southern part of the site would extend the village envelope above the predominant 70m AOD to 80m AOD
- Tranquillity of northern part of the site is already compromised by the railway line
- Access would require partial removal of local tree cover

### Impact on key visual characteristics
- Development particularly on the higher slopes would be prominent in views from the west, the Chilterns AONB; and this approach to Pangbourne, affecting this gateway; development on the lower northern slopes would be less intrusive
- Views from the river corridor largely unaffected
- Potential loss of panoramic views from Pangbourne Road across the Thames Valley to the Chilterns

### Impact on key settlement characteristics
- Development would extend the village along the Thames valley in keeping with local settlement character
- Uniform development over the whole site would not be in keeping with the pattern of built form in the village
- The density and level of internal Green infrastructure would need to reflect the local characteristics of the Breedon Estate

### Summary of compliance with PPS7 paragraph 21
- Development on the whole site would result in significant harm to the natural beauty of the AONB. However, development on the lower parts of the site in small phases of distinct character, in keeping with the local settlement form, may avoid harm to the special qualities of the AONB provided that the following recommendations below are included
Recommendations

- Development on this site should be subject to the following constraints to ensure the protection and enhancement of the AONB:
  - The mass and scale of development should not be visually intrusive and must not detract from views of the Thames valley and the Chilterns
  - The western boundary should be planted with a linear woodland designed to respect the local topography and vegetation pattern and contain the settlement
  - The continuous bank and tree cover along Pangbourne Hill/Road should not be broken to provide access to the site
  - The development should be in keeping with the mass, scale and density of the western part of Pangbourne and include a high level of landscape infrastructure as found in the adjacent Breedon Estate
  - The layout should work with the grain of the topography and be restricted to lower slopes below the 75m AOD contour, or 70m AOD where the site is more visually exposed

Conclusion

It is concluded that some development can be accommodated adjoining the settlement of Pangbourne within the two potential SHLAA sites examined without incurring material harm to the special qualities and natural beauty of the AONB. It is therefore recommended that PAN001 be retained subject to the landscape requirements in the Recommendations. PAN002 is a large site and development of the whole area would have an adverse impact on the western side of Pangbourne, most significantly in visual terms. However partial development, subject to the above recommendations, may be possible. Both sites could be developed concurrently as although they are close in distance they are clearly separated by landform and the existing settlement.