

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Revised Thame Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

April 2022

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
Emily Baker Graduate Environmental Planner			
Cheryl Beattie Principal Environmental Planner			

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V1	April 2022	Draft Part 1 for internal review	Cheryl Beattie	Principal Environmental Planner

Prepared for:

Thame Town Council

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
3rd Floor, Portwall Place
Portwall Lane
Bristol BS1 6NA
United Kingdom

T: +44 117 901 7000
aecom.com

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Table of Contents

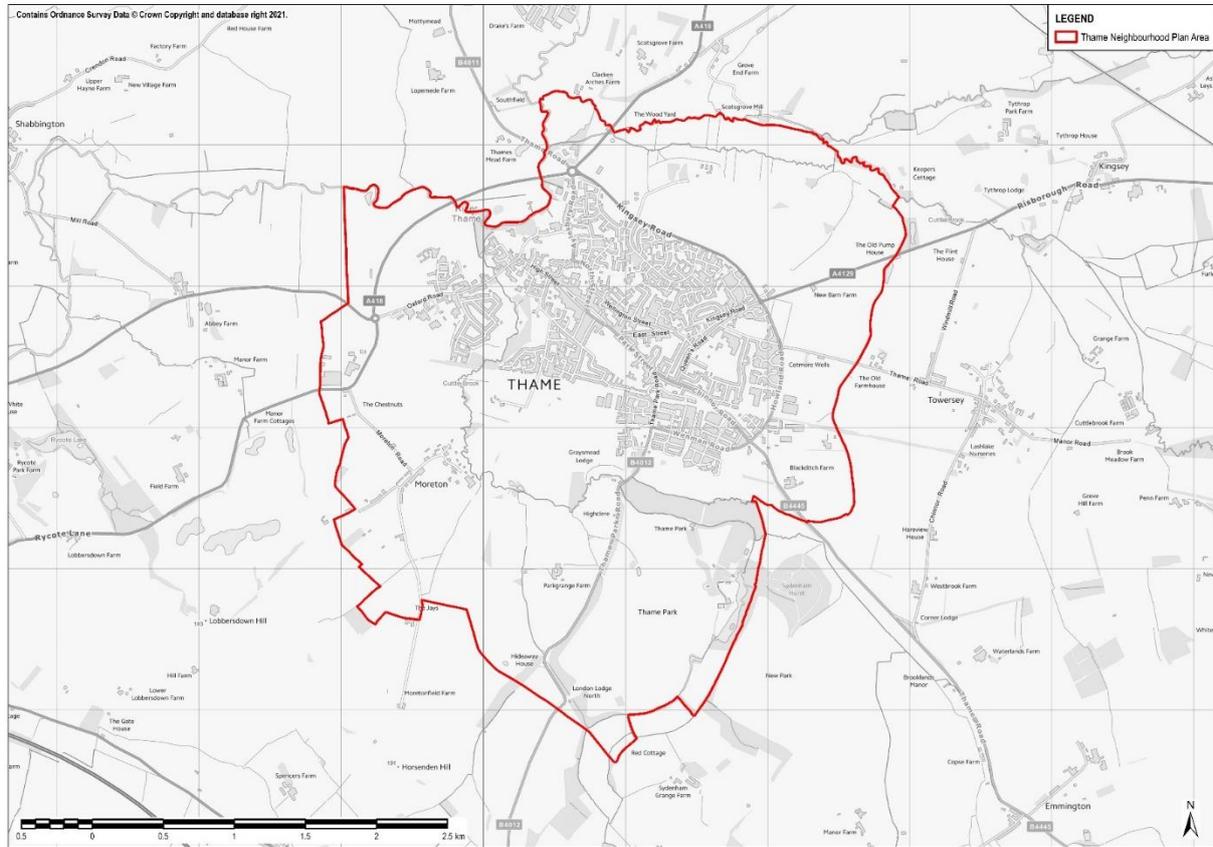
1. Introduction	i
Appendix A Document copies	23
A.1 App heading 2	24

Non-Technical Summary

1. Introduction

2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

Preamble



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3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Preamble

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity sites and features and deliver demonstrable biodiversity net gains.
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the TNP2 area.
	Support the resilience of the TNP2 area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the TNP2 area.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the TNP2 area.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape/townscape.
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.
	Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.
Population and communities	Ensure growth in the town is aligned with the needs of all residents and capacity of the settlement and social infrastructure, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.
Transportation and movement	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

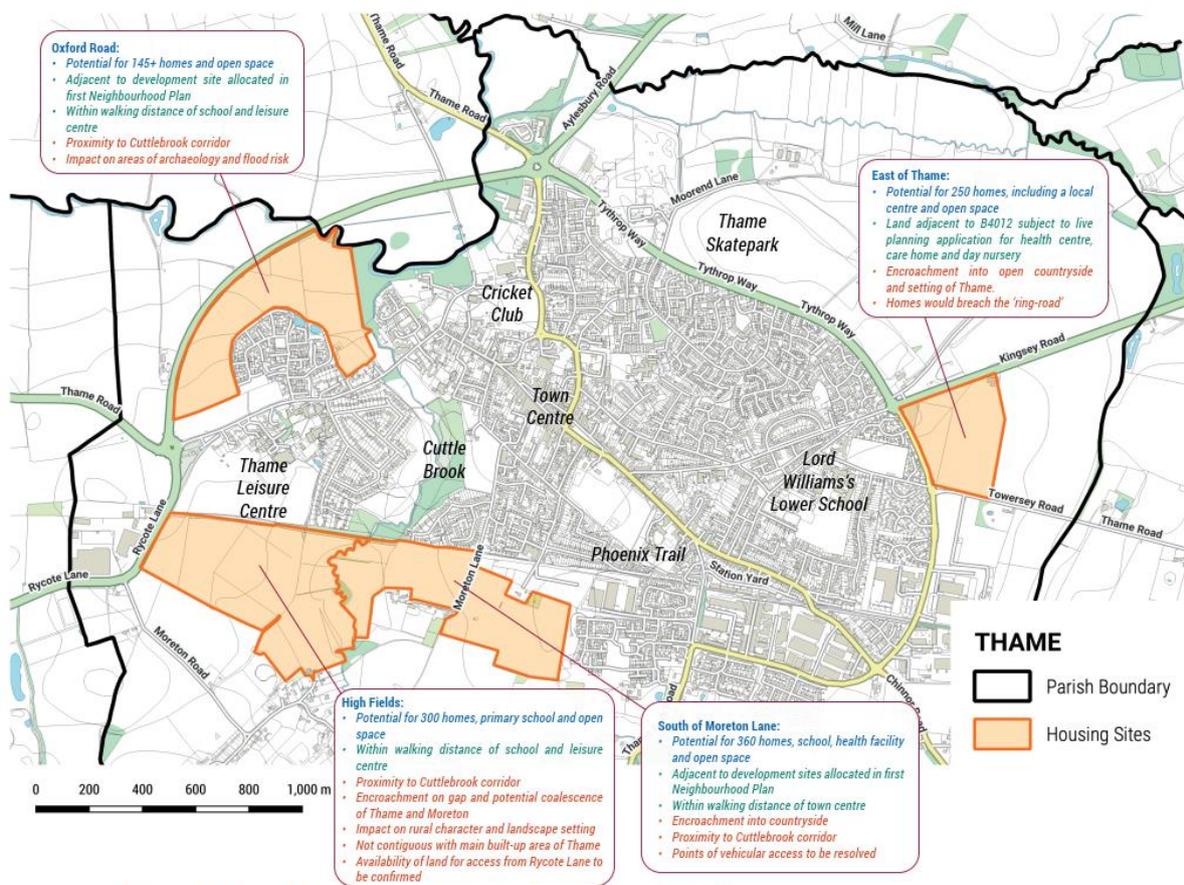
5. Establishing reasonable alternatives

6. Appraising reasonable alternatives

Housing

Options for housing:

- **Option 1:** Oxford Road (North West of Thame) 145+ homes;
- **Option 2:** Land between Kingsey Road and Towersey Road (East of Thame) 250 homes;
- **Option 3:** High Fields (South of Thame) 300 homes; and
- **Option 4:** South of Moreton Lane (South of Thame) 360 homes.



Biodiversity and geodiversity	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
Rank	2	1	2	2

Commentary:

6.1 There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within proximity to any of the sites, nor do any of them overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the type of development likely to be brought forward through the neighbourhood plan. There are no biodiversity designations on or within

proximity to any of the sites except Cuttle Brook LNR, which is approximately 170m south-west of the North West of Thame site (Option 1) and 50m north of South of Thame (High Fields) site (Option 3) and South of Thame (Moreton Lane) site (Option 4).

- 6.2 In terms of habitat type, all four sites are comprised of varying amounts of acid, calcareous and/or neutral grassland and arable and horticultural land. Additionally the North West of Thame and both South of Thame sites have improved grassland, and North West of Thame, East of Thame (Option 2) and South of Thame (Moreton Lane) sites have scrub. The East of Thame site also includes small amounts of built up area and garden land cover type.
- 6.3 None of the sites have Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats on them, however the North West of Thame site has an area of deciduous woodland located adjacent to it to the east, and both South of Thame sites have deciduous woodland approximately 50m north.
- 6.4 Considering the above, Option 2 is ranked the highest due to its distance from the Cuttle Brook LNR and BAP Priority Habitats. The other three sites are ranked equally due to their proximity to biodiversity designations. Minor negative effects are anticipated for any site taken forward due to the potential for habitat loss on the site, however no significant negative effects are deemed likely for any of the options.

Climate change	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	Yes – negative	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
Rank	2	1	2	2

Commentary:

- 6.5 The North West of Thame site (Option 1) is mostly within Flood Zone 1, with an area of Flood Zone 3 covering the north-eastern part of the site – this is due to the presence of the Cuttle Brook which is on the eastern site boundary. The same area is at low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding; other than another area at low risk and part of the site adjacent to the A418 the rest of the site is at very low/no risk of surface water flooding.
- 6.6 The East of Thame site (Option 2) is entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is almost entirely at very low/no risk of surface water flooding; there is an area at low risk of surface water flooding in the north-west corner.
- 6.7 The South of Thame (High Fields) site (Option 3) is mostly within Flood Zone 1 with the eastern section in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 linked to the Cuttle Brook watercourse. This area is also at low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding in addition to part of the southern section of the site. The rest of the site is at very low/no risk of surface water flooding.
- 6.8 The South of Thame (Moreton Lane) site (Option 4) is also mostly within Flood Zone 1, with the western section in Flood Zone 3 linked to the Cuttle Brook watercourse. This area is also at low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding.

- 6.9 The incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in areas with an increased risk of surface water flooding, and the addition of flood defences in areas with an increased risk of fluvial flooding, will play an essential role in mitigating the risk of flooding at these sites.
- 6.10 Considering this information, Option 2 is ranked most favourably than the other options due to its lower identified flood potential (before any mitigation is implemented).

Health and wellbeing	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	Yes - positive	No	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
Rank	1	2	4	3

Commentary:

- 6.11 The North West of Thame site (Option 1) does not overlap, nor is adjacent or in proximity to, any designated Thame town trails, walking or cycle routes according to the Thame Town Trails webpage. Additionally, the proposed site does not overlap with any green space, allotments or play area designations – however the existing neighbourhood plan outlines the future vision for Thame and highlights the creation of publicly accessible open space and landscape at this site if development is approved here. According to Oxfordshire Council, Thame has 32 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) across the parish, but none overlap with this site. It is within walking distance of the main Thame settlement and its associated health and wellbeing assets, like dental practices. The Thame NHS Community Hospital and the Thame Health Centre are an approximate 30 minute walk from the site but are an approximate five minute drive. According to the Thame Town Guide there are no open spaces, allotments or play areas in proximity to this site, but it is within walking distance of the leisure centre and Lord Williams’s Upper School.
- 6.12 The East of Thame site (Option 2) is in proximity to several designated town trails and walking and cycle routes to the north and south; the ‘To Towersey’ walking route to the south and the ‘To The Bucks Border’, ‘Haddenham’ and ‘Kingsey, Towersey & the Phoenix Trail’ walking routes to the north. Additionally, the site is adjacent to the ‘Thame Outer Circuit Linking 4’ route. There are seven cycle routes to the north and south of the site, but these are on existing roads. There are no PRoW on the site but there is a bridleway less than 100m north of the site. The site is within walking distance of the main Thame settlement and its associated health and wellbeing assets – the Thame NHS Community Hospital and the Thame Health Centre are an approximate 10 minute walk from the site. According to the Thame Town Guide, there are allotments and the Chinnor Rugby Club to the north of the site. It is also in proximity to Lord Williams’s Lower School, the tennis and bowls club and two play areas.
- 6.13 The South of Thame (High Fields) site (Option 3) is in proximity to several designated town trails and walking and cycle routes; Thame Historic Town Trail 2 is to the north of the site, a cycle route lies directly to the west and the ‘Around Moreton’, ‘North Weston’ and ‘Thame Outer Circuit Linking Route 2’ all

pass through the site. There is a PRow footpath on site. This site is further away from the main Thame settlement and therefore health and wellbeing assets are not as accessible – the Thame NHS Community Hospital and the Thame Health Centre are an approximate ten minute drive. According to the Thame Town Guide, the site is in proximity to the Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve and its associated features, the leisure centre and Lord Williams’s Upper School.

- 6.14 The South of Thame (Moreton Lane) site (Option 4) is in proximity to several designated town trails and walking and cycle routes; Thame Historic Town Trail 2 is to the north of the site, there is a cycle route to the east and the ‘Around Moreton’ and ‘Thame Outer Circuit Linking Route 2’ pass through this site. There is a PRow footpath on site. This site is further away from the main Thame settlement and therefore health and wellbeing assets are not as accessible – the Thame NHS Community Hospital and the Thame Health Centre are an approximate ten minute drive. According to the Thame Town Guide, the site is in proximity to Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve and its associated features and allotments to the north of the site.
- 6.15 Considering this information, Option 1 is ranked most favourably than the other options, as development here will not affect designated walking and cycle routes, PRow or existing open green spaces. The site will allow for publicly accessible open space and landscape to be created alongside the development and will be within walking distance of the main settlement, the leisure centre and a school. Option 2 is ranked second due to its proximity to designated walking and cycle routes. Option 4 is ranked after Option 2 due to its overlap with designated walking and cycle routes and PRow, and Option 3 is ranked least favourably due to overlapping with greater designations than Option 4.

Historic environment	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
Rank	3	2	3	1

Commentary:

- 6.16 None of the sites have listed buildings, scheduled monuments, register parks or gardens or register battlefields on them. The North West of Thame site (Option 1) has no nationally designated historic environment assets in proximity to it, however according to the HeritageGateway website there is a local HER record (MOX5750) on site and two in proximity (MOX24731 and MOX5676). Additionally, the south-east section of this site is adjacent to the Thame Conservation Area; therefore, development here could impact on the setting of this historic area.
- 6.17 The East of Thame site (Option 2) has no nationally designated historic environment assets in proximity to it, however there is a local HER record on site (MOX5753).

6.18 The South of Thame (High Fields) site (Option 3) is in proximity to nine Grade II buildings to the south (Historic England numbers below):

- 1368772;
- 1368774;
- 1368775;
- 1047932;
- 1047928;
- 1180746;
- 1368773;
- 1047930; and
- 1047931.

Additionally, according to the HeritageGateway website there is a local HER record in proximity to the south of the site (MOX5885).

6.19 The South of Thame (Moreton Lane) site (Option 4) has no nationally designated historic assets in proximity to it, however according to the HeritageGateway website there are two local HER records on site (MOX5711 and MOX5721). There are classed as 'find spot' records and indicate this area has archaeological potential.

6.20 Through considering the above it is concluded Option 4 is the least constrained option, as the local HER records are 'find' records as opposed to landscape features or buildings that can be physically experienced. Following this, Option 2 is ranked the second best due to a lack of nationally designated historic environment assets on or within proximity to it. Option 1 and Option 3 have the potential to impact on the Thame Conservation Area and multiple listed buildings and are therefore ranked the lowest. All these options have the potential for negative effects on the significance of nationally and locally significant assets, and mitigation strategies should be put in place to ensure damage or deterioration is minimised/negated.

Landscape	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative	No	No
Rank	1	2	1	1

Commentary:

6.21 Thame parish is not within or in proximity to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park, nor is there any greenbelt land. As such, the parish is not constrained by policies protecting these designations.

6.22 The North West of Thame site (Option 1) is within the catchment of the town on and is close to the northern parish boundary. The site is at the same elevation as the existing settlement in the northern half, then the elevation increases as the site moves south towards Oxford Road. Development here may be seen

from the existing settlement; however present development may offer an element of screening. Additionally, development here will keep the settlement to the east and south of the A418 and keep it within the ring road.

- 6.23 The East of Thame site (Option 2) is beyond the catchment of the town centre and would result into the open countryside beyond the B4012. The site is approximately 300m west of the eastern parish boundary and is at the same elevation as the existing settlement and will impact views given proximity to a ridgeline.
- 6.24 The South of Thame (High Fields) site (Option 3) is partially within the catchment of the town. However, development would encroach on the land used to keep Thame and the outlying village of Moreton separate, potentially impacting on their individual identities. However, development here will keep the settlement to the east and south of the A418. The western part of the site is at the same elevation as the rest of the settlement and sloped downwards to the east.
- 6.25 The South of Thame (Moreton Lane) site (Option 4) is within the catchment of the town. However, development would encroach on the land used to keep Thame and the outlying village of Moreton separate, potentially impacting on their individual identities. However, development here will keep the settlement to the east and south of the A418. The western part of the site is at a lower elevation than the existing settlement and slopes upwards to the east to be higher than the rest of the town, therefore development at this site may be seen by the existing settlement of Thame.
- 6.26 Considering this information, each site has the potential to impact on the landscape and setting of Thame; however, Option 2 is likely to have a greater negative impact and as such is ranked the lowest.

Land, soil, and water resources	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
Rank	3	4	2	1

Commentary:

- 6.27 All four sites are within the nitrate vulnerability zone (NVZ) S479 – Thame (Scotsgrove Brook to Thames) and within the drinking water safeguard zone SWSGZ4016. Additionally, none of the sites overlap with policies outlined in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste plan.
- 6.28 In the absence of a formal, in-depth land assessment, the provisional agricultural land classification (ALC) places the North West of Thame site (Option 1) within Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ and Grade 4 ‘Poor’ agricultural land, with a predicted low to moderate likelihood of being ‘best and most versatile’ (BMV) land. Additionally, the site is in proximity to the Thame (Scotsgrove Brook to Thames) Water Body which is located to the north-east; this water body currently has a moderate ecological status but a failed chemical status.

- 6.29 The ALC places the East of Thame site (Option 2) within Grade 3 agricultural land, with a small section of Grade 2 'Very Good' in the northwestern corner. It is predicted the majority of the site is low likelihood of BMV land, but the section that is Grade 2 ALC is predicted to be moderate to high likelihood. Additionally, the site is in proximity to the Kingsley Cuttle Brook and Tributaries Water Body, situated on the eastern site boundary. This watercourse currently has a poor ecological status and a failed chemical status.
- 6.30 The ALC places the South of Thame (High Fields) site (Option 3) within Grade 3 agricultural land, as well as 'land predominantly in urban use'. The section of land that is Grade 2 ALC is also classified as low likelihood of BMV land. Additionally, the Cuttle Brook Water Body overlaps with the site; this watercourse currently has a moderate ecological status and a failed chemical status.
- 6.31 The ALC places the South of Thame (Moreton Lane) site (Option 4) within land predominantly for urban use, with a partial moderate likelihood of BMV land. This site overlaps with the Cuttle Brook Water Body, as aforementioned.
- 6.32 Based on this information, Option 4 is ranked most favourable, due to being in urban use already. Following this, Option 3 is ranked second highest, Option 1 next and Option 2 is ranked least favourably due to the need to safeguard the area of Grade 2 ALC and moderate to high BMV land.

Population and communities	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
Rank	1	3	2	4

Commentary:

- 6.33 Each option is considered likely to lead to significant positive effects for the population and community through providing additional land for housing. However, the sites do have their individual advantages and disadvantages.
- 6.34 North West of Thame (Option 1) has the potential for 145+ homes and a designated open space. It offers good access to the road network and is located adjacent to existing housing. It is also located close to a school and the leisure centre. Additionally, there are several bus stops in proximity to the site and the site is accessible by foot and by bicycle through the use of pavements and cycle lanes.
- 6.35 East of Thame (Option 2) has the potential for 250 homes, including a local centre and designated open space. It offers good access to the road network. There is a school within walking distance, as well as an allotment and the Chinnor Rugby Club. However, the site is located further away from bus stops and there are no cycle lanes, nor are there any designated pavements.
- 6.36 South of Thame (High Fields) (Option 3) has the potential for 300 homes, a primary school and a designated open space and is located within walking distance of an existing school and leisure centre. It offers access to the road network via the A329 to the west, which has pavements and cycle lanes for

designated cycle and pedestrian access. However, there are no bus stops in proximity to the site.

- 6.37 South of Thame (Moreton Lane) (Option 4) has the potential for 360 homes, a school, a health facility and a designated open space and is within walking distance of the town centre. It currently has no access to the road network, pavements or cycle lanes, nor are there any bus stops in proximity.
- 6.38 Based on this information, Option 1 is ranked most favourably – despite having a lower housing number, it has no negative impacts associated with population and community. Option 3 is next due to its proximity to the A329 with pavements and cycle lane and the community assets it offers. Option 2 is ranked third due to it being located near bus stops and the road, but has no pavement or cycle land. Option 4 is ranked the lowest due to its inaccessibility.

Transportation and movement	Option 1: North West of Thame	Option 2: East of Thame	Option 3: South of Thame (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thame (Moreton Lane)
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
Rank	1	2	1	3

Commentary:

- 6.39 All options are likely to lead to increases in vehicular usage on the local road network, therefore minor negative effects can be anticipated. However, North West of Thame (Option 1) and South of Thame (High Fields) (Option 3) have better foot and bicycle access than East of Thame (Option 2) and South of Thame (Moreton Lane) (Option 4), which could promote more sustainable journeys.
- 6.40 Thame is well served with bus routes and services, however only the North West of Thame and South of Thame (High Fields) sites are in proximity to bus stops. The nearest train station is approximately 4.5km from the settlement centre. Additionally, both sites south of the existing settlement (Option 2 and Option 3) have a PRow; the East of Thame site has a PRow bridleway approximately 100m north.
- 6.41 Considering the above, Options 1 and 3 are found to perform better than Options 2 and 4 due to their proximity to more sustainable transportation options. Option 2 is ranked more favourably than option 4 due to being located adjacent to an existing road.

Summary findings

Summary findings		Option 1: North West of Thames	Option 2: East of Thames	Option 3: South of Thames (High Fields)	Option 4: South of Thames (Moreton Lane)
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	2	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	2	1	2	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	Yes - positive	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	2	4	3
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	3	2	3	1
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	1
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	3	4	2	1
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	1	3	2	4
Transportation and movement	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	1	3

Summary findings:

6.42 Overall, Option 1 is ranked more favourably across the different themes, with two significant negative effects and two significant positive effects. It is constrained due to historic environment assets and climate change risk, particularly associated with flooding.

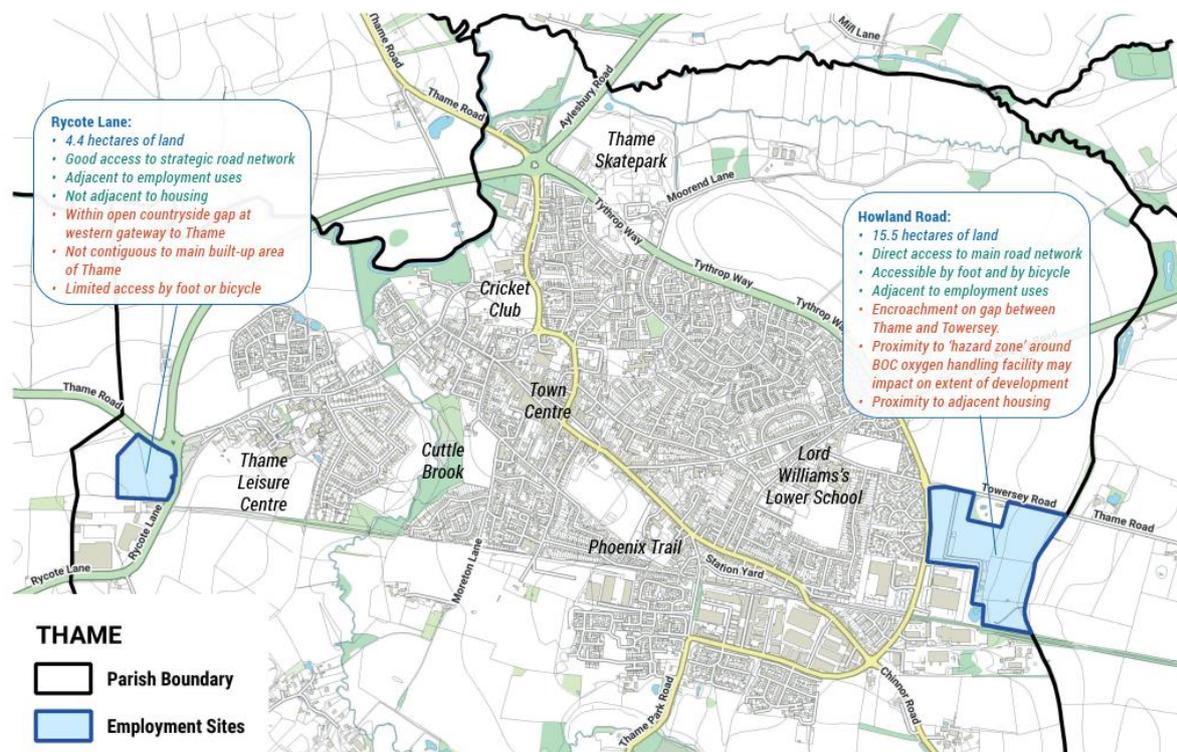
6.43 All options have historic environment sensitivities, this will require mitigation to reduce the significance of effects.

6.44 All options are likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the population and communities theme, by allocating land to meet the forecasted housing needs over the plan period.

Employment

Options for Employment:

- **Option 1:** Rycote Lane (4.4ha)
- **Option 2:** Howland Road (15.5ha)



Biodiversity and geodiversity	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	No	No
Rank	1	2

Commentary:

6.45 The Rycote Lane site (Option 1) is located approximately 830m west of Cuttle Brook Local Nature Reserve (LNR). There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within proximity to either site, nor do either of the sites overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the type of development likely to be brought forward through the neighbourhood plan.

6.46 The Rycote Lane site is comprised of arable and horticultural land and acid, calcareous and neutral grassland. There are no Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within 100m of the site but there are areas of deciduous woodland in the area. The Howland Road site is comprised of acid, calcareous and neutral grassland, improved grassland, arable and horticultural land, scrub and unclassified land; additionally, there is a small area of traditional orchard

BAP Priority Habitat on the site and areas of deciduous woodland further than 100m away.

- 6.47 Considering the above, due to the proximity of the Rycote Lane site and the Howland Road site to designated biodiversity sites, Option 2 is ranked less favourably than Option 1. Minor negative effects are anticipated under Option 2 due to the potential for habitat loss on the site, however no significant negative effects are deemed likely for either of the options.

Climate change	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative
Rank	1	2

Commentary:

- 6.48 In terms of fluvial flood risk, the Rycote Road site (Option 1) is entirely within Flood Zone 1, with no areas of Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3 in proximity to it. Additionally, there is no/very low surface water flood risk on the site. There are areas of high, medium and low surface flood risk to the north-west and the south-west.
- 6.49 The Howland Road site (Option 2) is within Flood Zone 1, with an area of Flood Zone 3 on the eastern border running alongside the watercourse present there. The majority of the site is at no/very low surface water flood risk, with high, medium and low risk following the watercourse on the eastern part of the site. Moreover, there are areas of high, medium and low surface water flood risk in the area surrounding the site, particularly on Towersey Road, Highland Road and the residential area off Howland Road.
- 6.50 The incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in areas with an increased risk of surface water flooding, and the addition of flood defences in areas with an increased risk of fluvial flooding, will play an essential role in mitigating the risk of flooding at these sites. Nevertheless, Option 2 is ranked less favourably than Option 1 due to its identified flood potential (before any mitigation is implemented).

Health and wellbeing	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	No	No
Rank	2	1

Commentary:

- 6.51 The Rycote Lane site (Option 1) overlaps with the 'North Weston & The Oxfordshire' walking trail, which is situated on the north of the site. Additionally, the site overlaps with four cycle routes in the same area, running adjacent to the A418 road. There are no PRoW on site. This site is not in proximity to the main Thame settlement and its associated health and wellbeing assets – the Thame NHS Community Hospital and the Thame Health Centre are an approximate six minute drive away. According to the Thame Town Guide the site is in proximity to the leisure centre.

6.52 The Howland Road site (Option 2) is adjacent to the 'To Towersey' walking route, situated to the north and the south, and is also adjacent to the 'Kingsey, Towersey and the Phoenix Trail' route to the south and several cycle routes. There are no PRoW on site. This site is in proximity to the main Thame settlement and its associated health and wellbeing assets – the Thame NHS Community Hospital and the Thame Health Centre are within walking distance. According to the Thame Town Guide the site is not in proximity to any designated open spaces, allotments or play areas.

6.53 Considering this information, Option 2 is ranked more favourably than Option 1 due to its proximity to the settlement; the designated walking and cycle trails are on existing road network components and no designated open or green spaces will be impacted by development here. Development at Option 1 could result in the loss of four cycle routes and it is further from the settlement.

Historic environment	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
Rank	1	2

Commentary:

6.54 Neither site has listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks or gardens or registered battlefields on or in proximity to them. However, each site is in proximity to local HER records according to the HeritageGateway search engine.

6.55 The Rycote Lane site (Option 1) is approximately 280m north of local HER entry MOX5685. The Howland Road site (Option 2) is within 300m of eight local HER entries:

- MOX27052;
- MOX5735;
- MOX26614;
- MOX5701;
- MOX5926;
- MOX5925;
- MOX5927; and
- MOX27292.

6.56 Although there are no nationally designated historic environment assets on either site, through considering the above it is concluded Option 1 is the least constrained option; therefore, it is ranked most favourably. Both options have the potential for negative effects on the significance of these locally significant assets, and mitigation strategies should be put in place to ensure damage or deterioration is minimised/negated.

Landscape	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	No	No
Rank	=	=

Commentary:

- 6.57 Thame parish is not within or in proximity to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park, nor is there any greenbelt land. As such, the parish is not constrained by policies protecting these designations.
- 6.58 Rycote Lane (Option 1) is situated adjacent to existing development at a highpoint within open countryside at a gateway location to Thame. The elevation at the site is greater than that of the town and will likely be seen by the main settlement. Additionally, this site is beyond the catchment of the town centre, is not contiguous with the main built up area and is located in the space between Thame and Moreton and thereby threatens the settlements' distinctiveness.
- 6.59 Howland Road (Option 2) is also beyond the catchment of the town and within an area of open countryside but is also situated adjacent to existing development and is contiguous with the existing built up area. It is at a similar elevation to the existing settlement. However, the site is located between Thame and Towersey and could impact the settlements' local identities.
- 6.60 Considering this information, both sites are concluded to be ranked equally.

Land, soil, and water resources	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	No	No
Rank	1	2

Commentary:

- 6.61 In the absence of a formal, in-depth land assessment, the provisional agricultural land classification (ALC) places both sites within Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, but both sites are predicted to have a low likelihood of being 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land. Additionally, both sites are within the nitrate vulnerability zone (NVZ) S479 – Thame (Scotsgrove Brook to Thames) and within the drinking water safeguard zone SWSGZ4016. There is no overlap with policies outlined in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste plan.
- 6.62 Additionally, the Howland Road site (Option 2) is adjacent to the Kingsley Cattle Brook and Tributaries Water Body, situated on the eastern site boundary. This watercourse currently has a poor ecological status and a failed chemical status.
- 6.63 Considering this, Option 1 is ranked more favourably than Option 2.

Population and communities	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	Yes – positive	Yes - positive
Rank	2	1

Commentary:

- 6.64 Each option is considered likely to lead to significant positive effects for the population and community through providing additional land for employment. Both sites are located near to existing employment land. However, both sites do have their individual advantages and disadvantages; Rycote Lane (Option 1) has good access to the strategic road network and is not adjacent to any housing, however it is located further out towards the countryside and access is limited for employers travelling by foot or bicycle. Howland Road (Option 2) offers direct access to the main road network and is accessible by foot and by bicycle, however it is in proximity to housing development and a ‘hazard zone’ around the BOC oxygen handling facility.
- 6.65 Considering the two options, Option 2 is found to perform better for population and community than Option 1. Howland Road totals 15.5ha of land but a minimum of 3.5ha needs to be allocated; this allows for an appropriate section of land to be chosen with the scope of expanding in the future. Additionally, development could be undertaken in a part of the site less visible to the housing development to the west of Howland Road until appropriate screening can be provided. Furthermore, this site is located closer to the Thame strategic road network, potentially reducing the need for private travel to the location.

Transportation and movement	Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Significant effect?	No	No
Rank	2	1

Commentary:

- 6.66 Both options are likely to lead to increases in vehicular usage on the local road network due to being located on the outskirts of the Thame settlement, therefore minor negative effects can be anticipated. However, Howland Road (Option 2) has better foot and bicycle access than Rycote Lane (Option 1), which could promote more sustainable journeys.
- 6.67 Thame is well served with bus routes and services, however only the Howland Road site has a bus stop adjacent to it. The nearest train station is approximately 4.5km from the settlement centre. Additionally, the Howland Road site has a Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath in its southern section.
- 6.68 Considering the above, Option 2 is found to perform better than Option 1 due to its proximity to the main road network in Thame, its better foot and cycle access and its better option for more sustainable travel through the bus network.

Summary findings

Summary findings		Option 1: Rycote Lane	Option 2: Howland Road
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No
	Rank	1	2
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	2
Health and wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No
	Rank	2	1
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	2
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No
	Rank	=	=
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No
	Rank	1	2
Population and communities	Significant effect?	Yes – positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	2	1
Transportation and movement	Significant effect?	No	No
	Rank	2	1

Summary findings:

6.69 Overall, Option 1 is ranked more favourably across the different themes, with one significant negative effect and one significant positive effect. It is constrained due to historic environment assets. Both options have historic environment sensitivities - this will require mitigation to reduce the significance of effects.

6.70 Both options are likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the population and communities theme, by allocating land to meet the employment needs over the plan period.

7. Developing the preferred approach

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

7.1 Body text

Appendix A Regulatory requirements

A.1 App heading 2

Body text

