

SITE ASSESSMENT AUDITING

The interim conclusions stemming from the site appraisal surveys completed by residents were discussed and agreed by the NDP Site Assessment sub-group. The next step in the process was to share and validate these results with the wider community and to undertake a more formal audit.

Wider Community Check

Initially, this was managed through two open meetings in the Village Hall, one on the evening of Thursday 7 February 2013, the other on the morning of Saturday 9 February. The total attendance was around 170 people.

The NDP Working Party had prepared handouts, display boards and several members gave presentations, explaining what had been done, why and by whom and with what interim conclusions for each of the 14 SHLAA sites. There was no discussion session (although people were able to ask questions of the NDP Working Party after the presentations) but the audience was invited to complete, or take away and complete, forms on which they could note their comments about each site proposal.

The two presentations were extremely well received (including by some land agents present at the evening meeting) and a total of 416 proposal comments forms were returned. The main conclusions from the analysis of these comments are recorded in Appendix 1.

On Friday 19 July 2013, the NDP team held an evening, open meeting to update the community on the work of the group since February. This included the results of surveys completed by residents on an additional site, SON 15, which covers specific areas of Chiltern Edge School. The Governors of the school applied to SODC to have the site added to the SHLAA for development consideration and it was subsequently accepted in May 2013. As with previous meetings, proposal comments forms were returned and the main conclusions drawn from the subsequent analysis are recorded in Appendix 1.

Audit

With regard to SONS 1-14, 16 local residents were invited to undertake the audit in a process managed independently by the NDP Working Party's consultants. The 16 were selected from across the village. All had undertaken at least one Site Assessment survey and all had been to one of the presentation sessions. The audit was managed over two 2 hour sessions on Saturday 9 February with the participation of 14 residents, two having had to withdraw at the last minute.

Participants were divided into pairs/threes, mixed to ensure geographical coverage. Each pair/threesome was asked to consider a selection of the SHLAA sites, included some 'rule-ins' and some 'rule-outs'. The information available to them per site included (a) an aerial photo, (b) a site plan, (c) the summaries of the Site Assessment surveys and (d) an evaluation grid showing the suggested 'traffic light' ranking for that site against the key criteria. They were asked to check each red, green or amber annotation against their own knowledge and what had emerged from the site survey summaries as if they were independent Planning Inspectors. If they queried any annotation they noted this with, in most cases, an argument why and a suggested re-annotation. They were also asked to consider the basic classification of 'rule-in' or 'rule-out'. Once all sites had been considered by a pair/threesome, their conclusions were shared with others in a plenary session.

A similar process was completed on the evening of Thursday 27 June, when 7 local residents undertook the audit of the 'traffic light' analyses prepared by the NDP, based on residents' Site Assessment surveys, in respect of SON 15. Although this audit was organised by the NDP

Working Party, no member was present during the event, which was chaired by an officer of the Sonning Common Parish Council who is not a member of the NDP. The consultants to the Sonning Common NDP confirm that they are content with the outcome.

The main conclusions were as follows, with full notes recorded in Appendix 1:

- No basic classification (ie 'rule-in' or 'rule-out') was queried in either session.
- The only proviso to this was the views of a group who considered site SON 5. They queried a number of the criteria annotations and, although they still felt the site should be ruled out, they considered that to be a very marginal decision and one that could prove difficult to defend.
- Both groups felt that SONs 1, 2 and 3 should be considered together and the same for SONs 7, 8 and 9. This was not necessarily suggesting that they be released together but that some sort of 'plan' for all three was needed first.
- For several sites, including SON 7, it was felt that a blanket 'rule-in' was inappropriate because there would need to be some clear and robust conditions set about access, retention of trees, wildlife corridors and so forth.
- There was also a view that clarification is needed (though not necessarily at this selection stage) about development densities and the inclusion of affordable housing.
- SON 8 was not considered in either session as a result of time pressures. It was regarded as low priority for audit because it has not been considered for housing development. In addition, its current sports uses are intended to continue and may in fact be developed further.
- SON 11 was not audited but all agreed with the overall conclusions and proposals.

In summary, sites to be taken forward for further consideration both in their own right and in terms of an overall strategy to deliver the correct amount and location of land were as follows:

- SON 1
- SON 2
- SON 3
- SON 6 (part only)
- SON 7
- SON 8
- SON 9
- SON 11 (part only)
- SON 15 (15A only)

It must be stressed that this is an *interim* set of conclusions only.

5 September 2013

APPENDIX 1: AUDIT DETAILS

What follows is a verbatim report of all comments made with regard to each site considered. In some instances, there are two sets of comments for a site because both the morning and afternoon groups reviewed it. A few specific comments arising from the plenary discussions have also been added – these are shown in italics. The annotations, eg D, AC etc. - relate to the items in the 'traffic light' evaluation grid. In some cases auditors did not use the annotations but their comments should be clear.

The post-audit responses, completed by the NDP Site Assessment sub-group, are recorded in blue and take account of the notes from the 14 auditors and their marked-up evaluation 'traffic light' grid sheets.

SON 1 (AM session Chris M and Michael)

- SONs 1, 2 and 3 should be considered as a whole. (Noted for Design Phase.)
- R. If sites are considered as one then good walking, cycling, access to Chiltern Edge School could be provided. (No change to amber 'traffic light' as greater than 400m.)
- AC. Development of the whole site should be graded red as impact on Old Copse would be unacceptable. (Also has housing so 'traffic light' correctly amber.)
- AF. Site can be viewed externally and should be graded amber. This can be mitigated by partial development. ("Looking from the outside" means in the landscape outside the site and the settlement; this is principally about the landscape setting of the village viewed from outside it. The screening is excellent so no change to green 'traffic light' required.)

SON 1 (PM session Paul and Sue)

- H. Does Old Copse not count as a Heritage Asset? If so, it should be amber as it adjoins? (Previously SODC have not listed this asset, but, on reflection, given the importance of Old Copse to the community and its ancient woodland status this is agreed. 'Traffic light' changed from green to amber).

SON 2 (AM session James and Karen)

- Survey part 2B. Only 8 responses recorded, not 9. (Although only eight surveys, one survey recorded two answers to one of the 'tick box' questions. No change to amber 'traffic light' needed.)
- Agree with proposal. In reality SONs 1, 2 and 3 should be considered as an integrated package for suitable development. Housing and recreation facilities of varying types. (Noted for Design Phase.)

SON 3 (AM session David and Chris R)

- P and Q accessibility. Note: Reade's Lane safety issues to be addressed with improved path with cut-through. (Noted for Design Phase.)
- Overall grid evaluation sheet: Agree. (Noted. No changes required.)

SON 3 (PM session Ian, Bernard and Claire)

- Planned for large number of houses which will impact on village, school, health centre etc. (AB and AD) – so not green. Sonning Common will have to take its overall allocation of new homes which will be relevant to these facilities. However, no commitment exists for a "large number of houses" on this specific site and a number of potential uses are being considered in the recommended proposals. As regards AB, this site is adjacent to significant density around Farm Close and Ashford Avenue and is opposite the secondary school and housing on Reade's Lane. It is externally very well screened by mature trees

and hedgerows. As regards AD, this site is sustainably close to the Village Centre and, likely to support it with economic demand rather than to undermine it. Thus the green 'traffic lights' are fully justified. However, concerns noted for Design Phase.)

- Recommend includes recreational facilities/green space, not block housing, max. 50-60 houses. (Noted for Design Phase.)

SON 4 (AM session Chris M and Michael)

- Totally agree with summary. (Noted. No change required.)
- (Plenary session: Could just part of the site to the North be developed?) (It should be noted that the entire site is in the AONB and that this AONB is considered to be of high landscape quality. In addition, it should be noted that **all** of the landowners have confirmed that they do not want this land developed and, furthermore, it is not available for development.)

SON 5 (AM session David and Chris R)

(NB: Many of the notes below appear to be queries rather than conclusions. The NDP sub-group, in considering the evaluations and comments, also took into consideration the evidence and conclusions contained in the Planning Inspector's Report from the recent Appeal hearing on this site. However, to be fair, this document was not made available to the Task Groups on 9 February.)

- D: Reference to sink hole in NW corner within boundary. Could this be kept as protected area? Comments about animal runs – where to? (Is this relevant if the area is protected?)(This criterion concerns environmental and ecological sensitivity. The hedgerow to the AONB is acknowledged to be "important" and of long-standing existence. It provides an important wildlife habitat and 'runs' into it are clearly visible from the neighbouring SON 4 site. SON 5 has an obvious adjacency to the AONB land beyond, which is some of the most highly-prized AONB land and recognised as such by responses in the Site Assessment surveys. There are two sinkholes, one within the site and one huge and very deep one just outside the site. The latter is so deep that it is difficult to glimpse the base of large Ash etc trees growing out of it. It appears to offer a singularity in terms of environment and the likely associated ecology. For all these reasons the amber 'traffic light' appears fully justified and is retained.)
- J: Marked as red? Is access too narrow? Pylon – can it be moved with cables underground? Access onto narrow road and bus stop opposite. (As presented, the site access is judged to be problematic with access moving through a pylon alley where the pylon will need to be maintained and where avoidance of the pylon by vehicular traffic may involve clearing trees, which are significant in the street scene. There has been a previous proposal by the developers that from the Kennylands Road pylon to the SON 4 pylon **only**, the high-voltage cables could be re-located underground, but that the actual Kennylands Road pylon will need to be retained to enable the cables to cross the road and to continue to the East. There are concerns about overspill parking from this site into Kennylands Road and the potential impact around the bus stop. However, following review, this 'traffic light' has been changed from red to amber.)
- K: Why amber? Trees should screen from AONB. (The AONB outside is of very high quality. The deciduous hedgerow along the boundary is recognised as being important and of long-standing. However, the hedgerow and trees along the boundary are very sparse in places and do not provide adequate screening, particularly given the rising topography towards Kidmore End, where it is possible to stand on the ridge and see **over** much of the planting, as well as **through it** in numerous places, especially in winter (mentioned in the Appeal report). Amber 'traffic light' is justified.)
- L: Drainage – not sure how sink hole would affect this. (Sinkholes are caused by water drainage in certain unstable chalk sub-soils. The presence of one significant sinkhole within the site and one massive sinkhole outside it are due cause to flag caution with an amber 'traffic light'.)
- M: Access to highway. (Unclear comment, so 'traffic light' remains amber.)

- S: Depends on density and number of houses (impact on local traffic). (There are issues with the access and its relationship to the pylon and there is a risk of overspill parking (and its impact on the bus stop) given the limited width of Kennylands Road. Therefore the 'traffic light' remains amber.)
- U: Differing opinions on quality of boundary. (Rather inchoate. In view of the highly sensitive location, the boundaries would need to be complete and of much better quality. This would include the orchard area, which with the line of Scots pines does not fit the parameters of the rest of the site and where consideration of the quality of the boundary screen to SON 6 is also necessary. The caution of the amber 'traffic light' remains appropriate.)
- AA: Trend to merging with another settlement – ref. Kidmore End. Beg to differ! (Development of this site beyond the existing built limits of the settlement would create clear and obvious precedents for further extensions all along Kennylands Road. Given the abnormally small gap to the settlement of Kidmore End this would be wholly inappropriate. The red 'traffic light' is therefore retained.)
- AB: Question of **density** (appropriate to scale.) (This is a small site with challenges for planting and appropriate root protection areas for the heights which planting will need to attain and maintain to screen it from the rising ground of the AONB. It will also face challenges for access and infrastructure. The net developable area is thus likely to be modest and the density of existing housing is thought to be something like 14 per net hectare. As a backland development under the Core Strategy this site would be strongly constrained in terms of density. Because of the AONB and its rising ground, ridge heights would also need to be strongly constrained. Thus the amber 'traffic light' correctly flags appropriate caution as to the potential of this sensitive site.)
- AC: Not sure why amber? Is this the woodland or adjacency to the yard? (It is true that the noisier activities in Kidby's yard take place at the deeper part of that site – furthest away from the existing houses of Kennylands Road, whereas they would be much more proximate to any new housing on this site. However, the conflict of use is also with the surrounding countryside and agricultural use – particularly given the high value of the AONB and the topography outside this site. As noted by the Appeal Inspector this site, in its existing use, provides a valuable transition from the iconic AONB outside and the line of housing along Kennylands Road. This was also strongly reflected in survey responses. Accordingly, the amber 'traffic light' remains valid.)
- AD: Potential for blockage if parking in Kennylands Road. (Agreed, the thoroughfare of Kennylands Road is of key significance and the amber 'traffic light' is appropriate.)
- AF: Due to screening should not be an issue but comments made about height of development. (Please refer to the response at 'K' above. Even with planting, the Appeal Inspector was not satisfied that the quality of the AONB landscape setting could be effectively protected to an appropriate height and depth, or in an acceptable timeframe. The amber 'traffic light' is thus fully justified.)

SON 5 (PM session Paul and Sue)

The NDP sub-group, in considering the evaluations and comments, also took into consideration the evidence and conclusions contained in the Planning Inspector's Report from the recent Appeal hearing on this site. However, to be fair, this document was not made available to the Task Groups on 9 February.)

- D: Where is the evidence to support claims of ecological sensitivity? (Please refer to the response to 'D' in the previous SON 5 evaluation (AM session).)
- F. If there are TPOs, why amber and not red? How many TPOs and where? (TPOs on the boundary are flagged amber and those having a significant impact on the central areas are flagged red. Thus in this case the amber 'traffic light' is correct.) There are two TPOs and the references are: 09S25 and 53H07.)
- M. Looking at map and photo, why not red? (It is clear that the access is sub-optimal. However, it appears from the recent Planning Inspector's Report that the OCC Highways department would be prepared to sanction access into Kennylands Road at this point,

based on their minimum standards. Given the view of OCC Highways, there is not in our view a sound case for a red 'traffic light', but given the many sub-optimal aspects from a wider planning context and in the interest of the community who would need to live with the consequences, there is a sound case for the amber 'traffic light'.)

- U. Are the trees a natural boundary? Could it be green? (In view of the highly sensitive location, the boundaries would need to be complete and of much better quality. This would include the orchard area, which with the line of Scots Pines does not fit the parameters of the rest of the site and where consideration of the quality of the boundary screen to SON 6 is also necessary. The caution of the amber 'traffic light' remains appropriate.)
- V. What evidence? Surveys suggest low rise only because of views of AONB. (This is a fair point, the surveys and the Appeal indicated that strong restraints on ridge heights would need to be applied **IF** any development were to be approved. Accordingly, the 'traffic light' has been changed from green to amber.)
- Surveys support the conclusion of ruling the site out. (Noted.)

SON 6 (AM session James and Karen)

- D. Recognition of need to preserve tree line needs to be recorded. (Noted for the Design Phase, and is as proposed in presentations. No change to 'traffic light' required.)
- AB. **Whole** site development should be ranked as amber as this would involve housing beyond the existing line along Kennylands Road. (On reflection, for the **full** site, this correction is required and the 'traffic light' is therefore changed from green to amber.)
- For Part SON 6 site do not agree that there would be a significantly adverse visual impact. Development of site would be in line with existing housing along Kennylands Road. (Agreed, but the necessary planting and landscape screening of the rear of such properties out to the AONB, Ruggings Plantation/Bur Wood etc for potential mitigation is not presently in place – so the present amber 'traffic light' seems reasonable.)
- Overall: agree with proposal for consideration of part development of site/ribbon development. (Noted.)
- (Plenary session: Need for wildlife corridor across to SON 7 and into Hagpits Wood.) (Noted (re badgers etc) for Design Phase.)

SON 6 (PM session Ian, Bernard and Claire)

- Obvious site – ribbon of housing, partial development. Recommend mirror the existing boundary line. (Noted for Design Phase; no 'traffic light' changes required.)

SON 7 (AM session Chris M and Michael)

- D. Development of site so close to Hagpits Wood is likely to have an adverse effect on its wildlife. (On reflection, recognizing the adjacency of Hagpits Wood, with its known badger etc habitats and of the presence of Hagpits Orchard within SON 7, the 'traffic light' has been amended from green to amber.)
- AH. We do not consider this site suitable for non-housing uses. (No rationale is provided here. If it is about wildlife, arguably an open estate for a small development of offices, or for green sports pitch use, might be more sympathetic to wildlife than housing? Green 'traffic light' remains in place.)

SON 7 (PM session Linda, Janet and Keith)

- D. Development acceptable on part of the site. The orchard with old trees and old grassland etc. is worthy of preservation. Change green to amber. (Please refer to the response to 'D' in the previous SON 7 evaluation (AM session).)
- G. Not known. (Therefore green 'traffic light' remains.)
- J. Access to Kennylands Road could be difficult (sight lines); perimeter bank of Hagpits should be preserved. Change to amber. (We do not agree. It appears that there is

enough scope to meet OCC Highways standards and that there is not a compelling reason to change this infrastructure 'traffic light' from green.)

SON 9 (PM session Ian, Bernard and Claire)

- S. Accessibility = amber. Walk through to Essex Way, SON 7 etc. to Kennylands bus route possible. Also, no further than SON 6 to centre of village. If SON 7 developed also, plan to link SONs 7 and 9 - not to become a rat run. (This criterion considers traffic impact including access and risks/impact of overspill parking. The B481 road outside the site has a 40 mph speed limit, is the main by-pass for much of the village and, accordingly, carries a significant number of trucks and heavy vehicles. Thus over-spill parking on the B481 would be a significant risk and one of major concern. It may be possible to have the speed limit reduced from 40 mph. However, in the wider context it seems appropriate to flag the traffic impact of development here with an amber 'traffic light'. Although "S" is noted, a number of the comments seem to relate more to criteria N to R?)

(As regards these criteria, it is necessary to measure the walk distances involved. In terms of strict distances, SON 9 is one of the most distant and least accessible sites and this is compounded when considerations of safety are also factored in. (Criterion N considered access to healthcare facilities. Here pedestrian **and** bus access were considered. In the absence of bus cover, and if a safe distance of 400m, was considered to be green; 800m amber; and, if longer distance, or less safe route, flagged red. If bus access was good the site was considered green.)

(Criterion O specifically considered the walk distance and safety to access regular bus services. Criteria P and Q considered access to shops and community facilities on the same approach as N above. Criterion R considered walk distances to schools with consideration of safety appropriate to the ages of potential users. It is also recognised that access to the Kennylands Road bus service is the only option available to potential residents of SON 9. In short, there is recognition that, safe pedestrian routes need to be devised.)

(It is agreed that it would be sensible to consider SONs 7 and 9 together to explore scope for better solutions, including, safe pedestrian access, and this is noted for the Design Phase. We would point out, however, that local residents are strongly opposed to linking SON 9 through to Kennylands Road for use by vehicular traffic. Overall, there does not seem to be due cause to change any of the criteria N to S 'traffic lights' from amber in respect of SON 9.)

- Not an AONB site – overlooking only, very like majority of sites (SONs 1, 2, 3 in the AONB). (It is unclear whether this comment applies to criterion K or criterion AF. In fact, as the notes in red against line K on the evaluation grid ('traffic lights') indicate, sites which are adjacent to the most iconic AONB land and where topography means that 'vision in' is possible, then these sites are marked amber. SONs 4 and 10, for example, are regarded and confirmed, via the Site Assessment surveys, as being particularly high-value and iconic AONB land. In the case of SON 9, the AONB of SON 10 rises up towards upper Blackmore Lane and a clear line of sight exists from there into SON 9 and, from both SON 9 and the edge of SON 7, up to that AONB land. Accordingly, SON 9 is appropriately marked with an amber 'traffic light'. As to SONs 1, 2 and 3, while these lie within the AONB, this AONB is not considered to be iconic and, in addition, these sites are deeply screened with very tall and mature tree lines and also dense hedging. Thus SONs 1, 2 and 3 are marked amber, as opposed to red.)
- Would be good to include some open green spaces. (Noted for the Design Phase.)
- We agree at least 45 houses – infill to footprint of village. (Noted for the Design Phase, although other uses, including offices and sports/recreation, are also to be considered.)

SON 10 (AM session Chris M and Michael)

- D. Site would affect wildlife in Young Wood. (Fair comment and 'traffic light' changed from green to amber.)
- Agree with remaining summary. (No other changes required.)

SON 11 (PM session Ian, Bernard and Claire)

- (Plenary session: Watch out for the mist line that can cut across the lower part of this site.) (Noted for the Design Phase, although the recommendation is to use 'part' SON 11 only.)

SON 12 (PM session Ian, Bernard and Claire)

- Sewage works – smell travels up dry bed, unsuited for housing. (Noted.)
- Slow worm – agricultural machinery not great for their survival, gardens more suited. (Noted. They are understood to be active mostly only in the twilight and to remain in the hedgerows or under stones/logs most of the time. They like damp environments and unlike other reptiles only rarely openly bask in the sun. They are relatively slow moving and are very much at risk from domestic cats against which they have no defence.)

SON 13 (PM session Linda, Janet and Keith)

- AF. Possibly red rather than amber. (Full site and line AE – see marked audit evaluation sheet with coloured traffic lights.) (Fair point, on the full site, which would go much closer towards the ridge of the land; the 'traffic light' has been changed from amber to red.)

SON 14 (AM session James and Karen)

- Survey part 2A: Survey responses do not support red ranking. More evidence required. (On reflection, 'traffic light' changed from red to amber. Noted: further ecology evidence base to be collected as and when required.)
- Survey part 2B: responses are not relevant to the question and do not support ranking, more evidence required. (Reviewing **all** the completed sections of the surveys, the "responses" are deemed valid and support the validity of the amber 'traffic light'.)
- H. Do not support green ranking. Amber ranking more appropriate due to neighbouring Reddish Manor and Widmore Pond. (Reddish Manor is not adjacent nor in realistic sight. However, on reflection we agree that although Widmore Pond is not currently listed by SODC, it has a long history, is cherished by the community and should be recognised as a Heritage Asset. So, given the strong adjacency and dominance over the pond, this 'traffic light' has been changed from green to amber.)
- S. Do not agree with red ranking. Limited development of the site should not have a significant effect on traffic. (No change has been made to the ranking because of the major problems in vehicular access to this site. Thus a red 'traffic light' is considered wholly valid.)
- AC. More evidence required for a red ranking. Site adjoins housing and an industrial estate. (Although parts of the Johnson Matthey car park can be glimpsed from a few parts of the site, the research plant itself is on the other side of Blounts Court Road and not in line of sight. It is also heavily screened by trees around SON 14 and those surrounding the research site. The real adjacencies of this site are to Widmore Pond (in particular), woodland and open countryside. Whilst some sparse housing is nestled in below this hill-spur site and glimpses of some chimneys and parts of roofs are possible through the trees, the sensitivity of the surrounding uses is sufficient to justify a red 'traffic light'.)
- AE. Small site size would appear to preclude green ranking. (This criterion concerns open space accessible to the public and public footpaths etc. In view of the lack of any such features the green 'traffic light' is entirely valid.)
- Overall: Agree with rule-out proposal but evidence base needs to be heightened to support decision. (Noted: further evidence base to be collected as and when required.)

SON 15 was divided into two parcels of land (SON 15A and SON 15B) principally due to its shape and size.

SON 15A (Gina, Stan, Debbie and Alan)

- L: Group expressed fears about potential water run-off from site into Kidmore Lane (In general, this site is positioned on high ground over a chalk sub-soil and is thus considered to have good drainage potential. The direct impact of this site on Kidmore Lane is limited (as only a small part of the site abuts it); however, it was recognised that the whole, wider site slopes gently down towards the lane. It may be that SUDS and other normal drainage action in construction could prevent such run-off. That said, the sunken nature of Kidmore Lane was noted and after discussion the 'traffic light' was amended from green to amber in recognition of this issue.)
- R: Are local schools reasonably accessible. Concerns expressed over distance to primary school, so should flag be amber?
(*Traffic light' to remain green as secondary school sits alongside and distance to the primary school is considered to be reasonable.)
- AK: Group suggested it could be an ideal site for the primary school?
(OCC had already been consulted at a senior level on this specific question, informally, and they rejected the idea.)

SON 15B (Group 1: Sue, Ian and Richard) & (Group 2: Gina, Stan, Debbie and Alan)

- 5: Sustainability - walking and cycling: Group 1 questioned the surveyors' responses in respect of SON 15B as some had been answered from the perspective of access to Kidmore Lane only. Yet many of the surveys commented "only if access is via Reade's Lane". Therefore, should the flag for sustainability access be changed from red to amber?
(The surveyors' brief was for access via Reade's Lane only; this was intended to cover all means including walking and cycling. Kidmore Lane is narrow and winding and is considered unsafe for a lot of pedestrian or cycling access; if reviewed via this route, the 'traffic light' would be red - on safety grounds. If the village centre and local facilities are accessed via Reade's Lane, it is clear that the distance is well over 800m - thus signifying a red 'traffic light'. Against this background, the red 'traffic light' is deemed to be entirely appropriate).
- D: Is the site sensitive environmentally and ecologically? It was marked red but both groups queried whether there was sufficient evidence to justify this in the surveys. Isn't the wildlife sensitivity largely only on the boundary?
(Both the environmental nature of this site, being very exposed to the wider landscape - which is of high quality AONB, and the old and important nature of the hedgerows, boundary trees and wildlife within them, suggest that SON 15B is very sensitive. On the other hand, the centre of the site is essentially a grassed area and, whilst some of the surveyors found evidence of some notable plants within it, it is clear that the grassed area itself is not particularly special for wildlife or, indeed, for rare plants. On balance, therefore, the 'traffic light' is amended from red to amber.)
- L: Is the site free from flood risk. Both groups expressed concern about potential water run-off onto Kidmore Lane.
(In general, this site is positioned on relatively high ground over a chalk sub-soil and is thus considered to have good drainage potential. The direct impact of this site on Kidmore Lane is significant (as a large part of the site abuts it) and, furthermore, the site slopes down towards that boundary. It may be that SUDS and other normal drainage action in construction could prevent such run-off. However, on reflection, the sunken nature of Kidmore Lane was noted, particularly on some of the lower

areas of the lane, and following discussion this 'traffic light' was amended from green to amber to recognise this risk.)

- N and P: Village facilities reasonably accessible, including by bus, was changed from red to amber by both audit groups.
(As with 5 above, the surveyors' brief was for access to be via Reade's Lane only; this was intended to cover all means including walking and cycling. Kidmore Lane is narrow and winding and is considered unsafe for a lot of pedestrian or cycling access; if reviewed via this route the 'traffic light' would be red - on safety grounds. If the bus stop on Wood Lane to travel to the village centre and local facilities is accessed via Reade's Lane, it is clear that the distance is over 800m - thus signifying a red 'traffic light'. The decision, therefore, was for the 'traffic light' to remain red.)
- V: Can the site take a mixed housing development? Some members of the audit groups queried the red 'traffic light.'
(Any built development on SON 15B would stand out starkly into the AONB and be virtually impossible to screen due to the topography. This would suggest that any built development would have to be **severely** constrained in terms of ridge-heights and would in no sense offer scope for a 'normal' mix. The red 'traffic light' is thus deemed to be appropriate.)