

Old Basing & Lychpit
Neighbourhood Plan Review:

Local Gap Study

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APPENDICES

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Ecology Solutions Ltd was instructed by Old Basing & Lychpit Parish Council to assess the potential extension to the Basingstoke to Old Basing Strategic Gap, as identified within the Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study, January 2024, to form a Local Gap within the Emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.2. This Local Gap Study has been commissioned as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Review to form part of the evidence base and inform planning policies within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.3. The purpose of the study is to assess whether the land north of Old Basing performs a strategic settlement separation function and whether its inclusion within a Local Gap designation would assist in maintaining the distinct identity and setting of Old Basing and Lychpit.
- 1.1.4. As this gap would form part of the Neighbourhood Plan rather than the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan, it is being referred to as a Local Gap rather than a Strategic Gap.

1.2. Approach

- 1.2.1. There is an existing, robust Strategic Gap between Basingstoke and Old Basing and Lychpit encompassing Basing Fen, Mill Field, Basingstoke Common, Crabtree Plantation, Basing House and the River Loddon. Basingstoke and Deane's Local Plan has multiple policies intended to safeguard the character and appearance of the district including ENV1, ENV5 for the Loddon valley landscape. There are further policies for avoidance of coalescence (ENV2, ENV6) and protection of heritage assets (ENV1 and SPS 5.6).
- 1.2.2. The Draft Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2024–2042 (Updated Spatial Strategy, Regulation 18 Consultation, November 2025) identifies an increased housing requirement across the borough and proposes an updated spatial strategy to accommodate additional growth. This increases development pressure on land at the urban edge of Basingstoke, reinforcing the importance of retaining robust landscape buffers and settlement separation corridors where these perform a clear anti-

coalescence function. In this context, the proposed Local Gap assumes greater significance as a mechanism for safeguarding the distinct identities of Old Basing, Lychpit and adjacent settlement edges.

- 1.2.3. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan Review, the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire highlighted a strong response from residents to maintain the separate identities of Old Basing and Lychpit from the wider urban area of Basingstoke.
- 1.2.4. Old Basing and Lychpit have therefore approached Ecology Solutions Ltd to objectively assess the potential for Local Gap to Basingstoke and Old Basing from a landscape perspective. This study will form part of the evidence base for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and inform the policies therein.
- 1.2.5. The proposal would form a Local Gap rather than a Strategic Gap as it relates to the Neighbourhood Plan rather than the Local Plan, however, this study has been undertaken in line with the methodology set out within the Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study which forms part of the evidence base of the Emerging Local Plan, with the Local Gap performing the same functions as the Strategic Gap.
- 1.2.6. This Local Gap Study will take the following format:
 - Review of the study area and its context in terms of the baseline situation, with reference to the published assessments, and its suitability as a Local Gap from a landscape perspective;
 - Introduce and assess the relevant adopted and emerging policies against the proposed Local Gap;
 - Description of the proposed Local Gap; and
 - The conclusions of the study will be set out.

Although the proposed designation forms a Local Gap through the Neighbourhood Plan rather than a Strategic Gap through the Local Plan, it has been identified using the same methodology as the Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study. The proposed Local Gap performs the same function of maintaining the physical and perceived separation between settlements whilst protecting the distinct identity of Old Basing and Lychpit.

2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

2.1. The Study Area

- 2.1.1. Old Basing and Lychpit Parish lies to the south east of the large urban area of Basingstoke. The Parish is illustrated within its context on Map 1 within the Made Neighbourhood Plan, which is reproduced below at Figure 1.

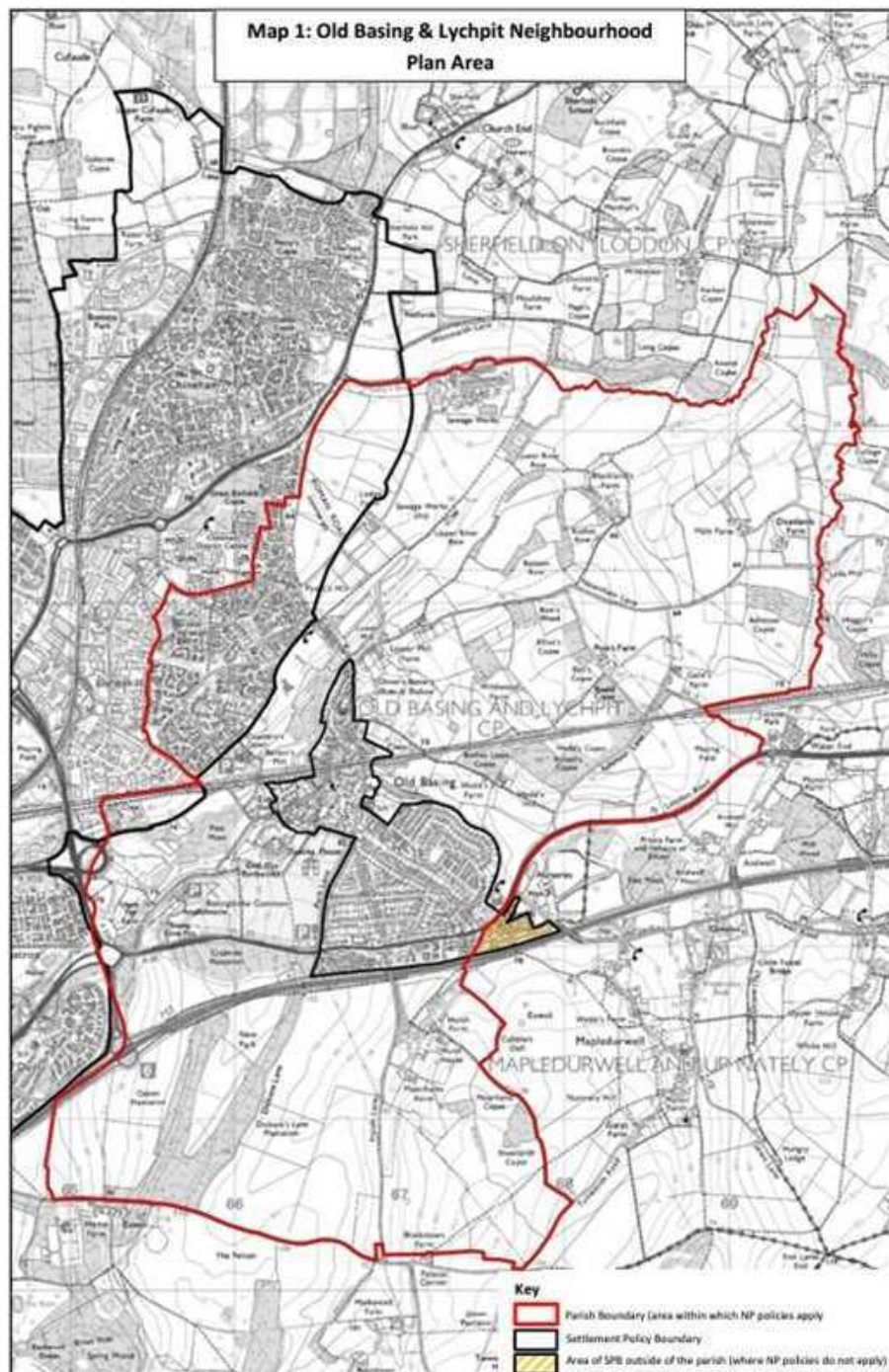


Figure 1: Map illustrating Old Basing & Lychpit Parish

- 2.1.2. The study area is focussed along the River Loddon Valley, extending to the north of Pyotts Hill, between Basingstoke and Old Basing. The study area is shown on the **Study Area Plan (SAP.001)** which is also reproduced at Figure 2, below.

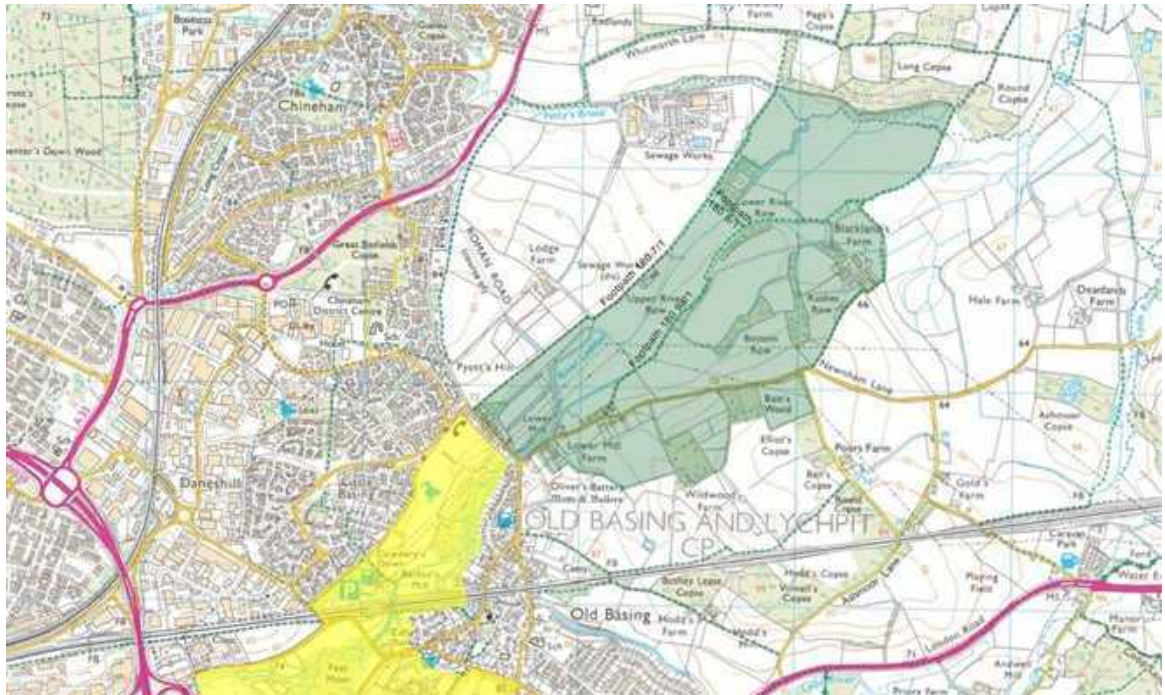


Figure 2: Map illustrating the Study Area

- 2.1.3. The study area comprises a series of medium sized agricultural fields and established vegetation associated with the River Loddon and wider network of watercourses and field boundaries, set within a broad, low lying valley landscape. The study area is illustrated within its more immediate setting on the Area Context Plan (ACP.002) which is also reproduced below.

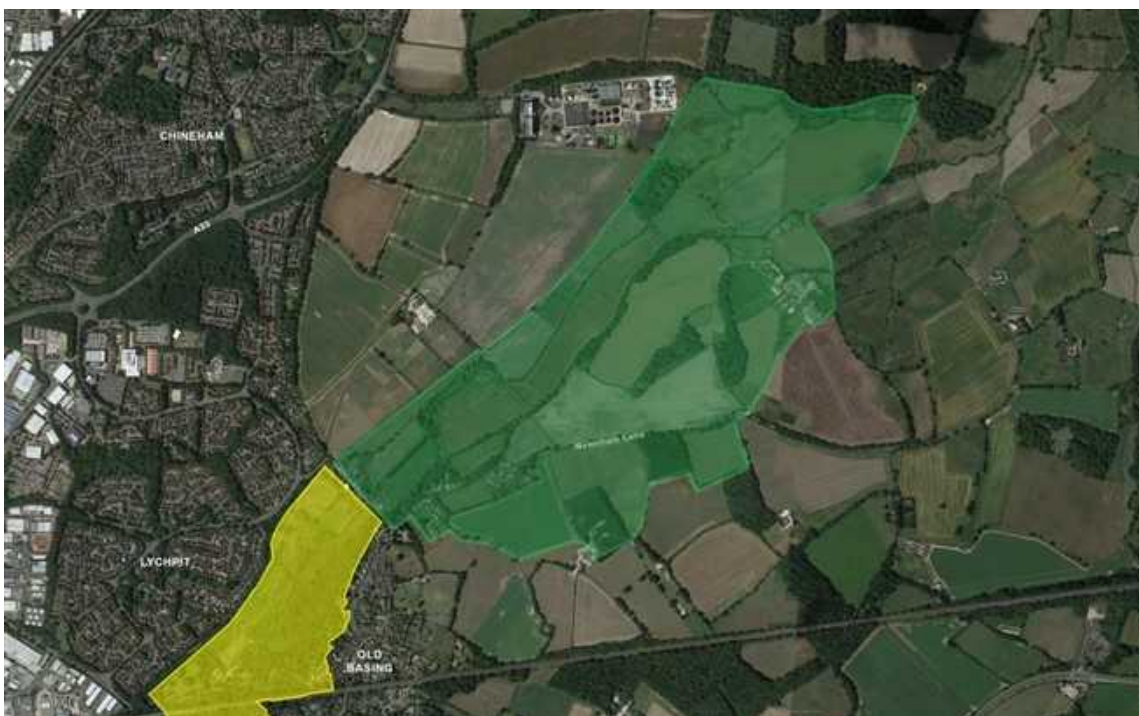


Figure 3: Plan illustrating the Study Area within its localised context

- 2.1.4. Old Basing is a small rural village located to the east of Basingstoke in north east Hampshire. The village is generally picturesque and has a nucleated character, extending outwards from St Mary's Church in the centre, to the north along Pyotts Hill and south towards the M3, which forms the southern settlement boundary. The South West Main Line railway line runs east to west through the centre of the village, splitting the settlement into two halves.
- 2.1.5. Recent northwards expansion to the village has effectively merged Old Basing with Lychpit where the two settlements meet at Pyotts Hill. The study area is not currently subject to any qualitative landscape designations, although the Basingstoke & Deane Valued Landscape Study (which forms part of the evidence base for the Emerging Local Plan) suggests that the River Loddon be designated as a Valued Landscape in the updated Local Plan.
- 2.1.6. The existing Basingstoke and Old Basing Strategic Gap extends to the south west of Pyotts Hill, ensuring that the settlements of Old Basing, Lychpit and Basingstoke maintain their sense of separation and individual identity. It is noted that the existing Strategic Gap does not cover the established settlement along Pyotts Hill.

2.2. Landscape Related Policy Background

2.2.1. The study area is covered by the policies of the adopted Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011–2029 (May 2016). Relevant emerging policy context is also provided by the Draft Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2024–2042, including the Updated Spatial Strategy published for Regulation 18 consultation in November 2025.

2.2.2. With reference to the Adopted Local Plan, it is considered that the following policies are relevant to this study:

- EM1: Landscape
- EM2: Strategic Gaps

2.2.3. With reference to the emerging Local Plan Update, it is considered that the following policies are relevant to this study:

- ENV1: Landscape
- ENV2: Strategic Gaps
- ENV5: River Loddon, Test and Enborne Corridors
- ENV6: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation
- ENV7: Green and Blue Infrastructure

2.2.4. Policy SPS1 establishes the overarching spatial distribution of future growth across the borough and is relevant to this study as it informs the scale of development pressure affecting settlement edges around Basingstoke.

- SPS1: Scale and Distribution of Development

2.3. Local Landscape Character Context

2.3.1. HDA, on behalf of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC), have undertaken the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (May 2021) which forms part of the evidence base for the Emerging Local Plan and breaks the district down into broad landscape character areas and smaller landscape character types. The study area is located within the “Loddon and Lyde Valley” landscape character area (LCA 6) and is located within the “Open Valley Floor Farmland” (LCT V1) and “Mixed Farmland and Woodland” (LCT FW2) landscape character types (refer **Landscape Character Areas Plan LCA.003**). An extract of

the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment is included within Appendix 1.

2.3.2. The published assessment identifies a series of key characteristics associated with the “Loddon and Lyde Valley” LCA, which include:

- **“Broad, shallow valley sides of the River Lyde and River Loddon that meander through, and unify, the varying landscape types.**
- **Pattern ranging from open farmland around Stratfield Saye, Blacklands Farm and Mapledurwell, to that which is smaller-scale and more enclosed in the mid-section of the area and within the valley itself. The flat, lowlying valley floor pasture has a distinctive pattern of drainage ditches, watercourses lined with willow, alder and poplar, water meadows and an often pastoral, remote character.**
- **Generally unspoilt, quiet and rural character, and a sense of remoteness in less accessible parts of the river valley, but with intrusion by major roads, including the A33, A30 and M3 motorway, railway lines, including the South Western Main Line, and the Reading to Basingstoke line, electricity pylons, which cross the Character Area in several locations, and by a waste management facility immediately east of Chineham.**
- **Relatively large-scale, open arable fields with low, well-trimmed hedgerows and infrequent woodland in the north and far south, reflecting the 17th – 18th century informal enclosure and late 18th – 19th century parliamentary enclosure respectively.**
- **More enclosed assart fields within an intact, strong hedgerow and woodland structure (some of it assarted) between Stratfield Saye and Newnham.**
- **Nationally important habitat types, including the ancient semi-natural woodland, unimproved neutral grassland associated with the River Loddon alluvial floodplain (including the Stanford End Mills SSSI), areas of fen vegetation (the SSSI at Mapledurwell Fen holding one of central southern England’s richest associations of fen species), and Greywell Tunnel SSSI (sheltering Britain’s largest bat population).**
- **Localised, well managed quality added by the Grade II Stratfield Saye Park, and 17th garden at Basing House.**
- **Relatively low intervisibility within the area, due to landform and vegetation minimising views, but more extensive views possible in the more open northern and southern landscapes.**

- **Low settlement density, with dispersed villages and hamlets, such as Stratfield Saye in the north, and Mapledurwell in the south, and isolated farmsteads, such as Hale and Deanlands Farms, to the north west of Newnham, linked by a network of narrow winding roads. Several villages to the south are within conservation areas, with numerous listed buildings, including Mapledurwell, Up Nately and Newnham.**
- **Several adjoining urban areas, including Bramley, Sherfield on Loddon, Basingstoke and Chineham and the village of Old Basing.**
- **The area is served by a network of Public Rights of Way, including part of the Brenda Parker Way, although some areas of farmland, and lengths of River Loddon and Lyde River are without formal public access. Hartley Wood Common is an area of open Access land to the east of Sherfield on Loddon, and part of the Open Access land of Hook Common is within the south east corner of the Character Area.**
- **Historic river crossings, including stone bridges, and pedestrian footbridges, forming key locations in the landscape with cultural significance.**
- **Many historic landscape features across the area, from medieval moated sites, deer parks, hunting lodges and castles, to scheduled ancient monuments including Bulls Down Camp Iron Age hillfort and remnant enclosed strips and furlongs in Stratfield Saye parish. Old mills, which have contributed to the Valley's development, add to the sense of place."**

2.3.3. While the published assessment does not provide a series of key characteristics associated with the landscape character types, it does describe the "Open Valley Floor Farmland" LCT as **"flat, low lying farmland on the valley floor, mainly under grazed pasture or meadow grassland but with occasional arable, distinctive pastoral and riparian character and distinctive species of alder and willow along watercourses; hedgerows, trees and woods comparatively sparse, creating a more open character along the valley floor"**.

2.3.4. Similarly, the assessment describes the "Mixed Farmland and Woodland" LCT as **"medium to large scale mosaic of predominantly arable farmland and woodland; strong hedgerow structure creates a moderate sense of enclosure"**.

2.4. Study Area Landscape Character Context

2.4.1. As illustrated at Figure 1 above and on the **Study Area Plan (SAP.001)**, the study area lies within the broad river valley associated with the River Loddon and along the

eastern edges of the valley slope, comprising a medium sized network of agricultural fields, mainly in arable use, with some pastoral enclosures located nearby to the settlement edge. The area is defined by a network of minor watercourses connected to the River Loddon, giving the valley a rich and distinct floodplain character that meanders northwards into the wider countryside. Given the well-defined drainage network, the landform is, unsurprisingly, low lying, but rises sharply to the south and west along the valley slopes, nearby to the established settlements.

- 2.4.2. The low lying and well drained character of the landscape creates a series of strong riparian corridors within the valley floor, which provides a good degree of containment to the study area and physically separates it from the wider agricultural and settled land uses, with scattered, fragmented woodlands also helping to contain the landscape. Internally, the main landscape features of note are the network of riparian corridors and woodlands within the valley, as well as the network of field boundary hedgerows and occasional scattered trees, more prevalent within rising arable land in the west. Vegetation increases within the curtilage of Old Basing, forming a defensible edge to the residential properties that back onto the study area.
- 2.4.3. Away from the study area and established settlements, agricultural land uses dominate the landscape to the north and east, creating a medium to large scale field pattern, interspersed with small to medium sized fragmented woodlands.
- 2.4.4. The well contained nature of the landscape, as well as the separation from the settlements, creates a distinctly remote and often tranquil character, which reinforces the findings of the published character assessment. The landscape is generally unspoilt, however, the presence of the Veolia waste management site to the north, does present a prominent detracting feature in more open parts of the landscape.
- 2.4.5. The Loddon Valley landscape performs a fundamental role in maintaining the physical, visual and perceptual separation between Old Basing, Lychpit and Chineham. The broad, low-lying valley floor, together with its network of watercourses, riparian vegetation, mature hedgerows and fragmented woodland, forms a coherent and distinctive landscape corridor that clearly separates the surrounding settlement edges.
- 2.4.6. The study area benefits from a good Public Right of Way network, which extends through the agricultural landscape and provides onward connections to Basingstoke and the surrounding countryside. Notable routes include Footpath 180 9a/1, 180 8/1 and 180 7/1, located within and around the study area boundary.

2.5. Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity Study (2021)

- 2.5.1. In addition to the 2021 Landscape Character Assessment, BDBC also commissioned HDA to prepare the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity Study (April 2021) relating to the various site options being considered for future residential allocations within the emerging Local Plan. An extract from the 2021 Landscape Sensitivity Study, which forms part of the evidence base for the Emerging Local Plan, is included within Appendix 2.
- 2.5.2. This document assesses the landscape and visual susceptibility and value of the various sites to reach a judgement in terms of sensitivity. The study area is located across several site's including OLD002 A, OLD002 B, OLD003 A, OLD003 B and OLD012.
- 2.5.3. Site OLD002 A is described as having a "**Low / Medium landscape sensitivity**. **The site is adjacent to an allocated development site and may have potential to accommodate housing development without significant character change or adverse landscape / visual effects. Effects on the setting to listed buildings and the conservation area would need to be mitigated.**"
- 2.5.4. Site OLD002 B is described as having a "**Medium landscape sensitivity**. **The site is adjacent to an allocated development site, but has intervisibility across the Loddon valley to the east, which would need careful consideration, if any limited development is to occur without significant character change or adverse effects.**"
- 2.5.5. Site OLD003 A is described as: "**this site is judged to have Medium / High landscape sensitivity. The site is almost entirely within the floodzone, has high landscape character and sense of place, and is detached from existing settlement. The site is therefore unsuitable for significant housing development from a landscape perspective.**"
- 2.5.6. It is also noted that under the settlement pattern and identity criteria, it is concluded that the western part of the site (i.e. the study area) "**contributes to maintaining the separate identity of Old Basing from Basingstoke**".
- 2.5.7. Site OLD003 B is described as: "**this site is judged to have Medium / High landscape sensitivity. The site is an intact rural landscape, has well defined landscape character**

and sense of place, and is detached from existing settlement. The site is therefore unsuitable for significant housing development from a landscape perspective.”

2.5.8. Site OLD012 is described as having a **“Medium / High landscape sensitivity. Any development should be on a smaller scale where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would not have an adverse effect on the landscape, and are supported by further detailed assessment.”**

2.5.9. The findings of the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity Study have informed the study area and proposed Local Gap.

2.6. Basingstoke & Deane Valued Landscape Study (February 2023)

2.6.1. As part of the evidence base for the Emerging Local Plan, BDBC have also had a study prepared by HDA which assesses the landscape value of the borough outside of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

2.6.2. The eastern part of the study area is located within Parcel L1: Loddon Floodplain and is identified as suitable for a potential designation as a local ‘Valued Landscape’. An extract from the Study is included in Appendix 3.

2.6.3. The study notes that **“Parcel L1 is defined primarily by flood zones 2 and 3 along the River Loddon, with boundaries taken where possible to identifiable features on the ground. The parcel incorporates the river itself, along with adjoining watercourses, ponds and riverside fields within the floodplain.”**

2.6.4. The study identifies that the presence of Basingstoke and associated development has an adverse effect upon the perceptual value of the parcel and identifies the importance of the river corridor in separating Basingstoke and Old Basing.

2.6.5. The study concludes that **“the Loddon Floodplain as identified on plan HDA 1 has exemplary natural heritage, and function, and the majority other factors are good. There are variations in the character of the river corridor along its length, but adverse influences are primarily within the vicinity of Basingstoke and Sherfield on Loddon. Given the overall weight of evidence, Parcel L1 ‘Loddon Floodplain’ is judged to be suitable for designation as a Valued Landscape.”**

2.6.6. The western and a small section of the southern part of the study area is located within Parcel L2: Loddon River Terraces. The study notes that **“The Loddon River**

Terraces...is notable for its cultural heritage, which is assessed as good. However, all other factors are considered to be average compared to other parts of the borough and Parcel L2 'Loddon River Terraces' is judged to be unsuitable for designation as a Valued Landscape".

3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

- 3.1. The landscape and visual analysis provided in this section includes the consideration of the boundaries and functionality of the proposed Local Gap between Old Basing, Lychpit and Chineham.
- 3.2. The viewpoints are illustrated on the **Viewpoint Location Plan** (VLP.004) within Appendix 4. The photographs were taken in March 2024. The day was clear with good visibility at longer distances.
- 3.3. The photographs are taken from publicly accessible locations from along the comprehensive Public Rights of Way network and local roads, which typically define the boundaries of the study area. The localised Public Rights of Way network extends north east from Old Basing (Footpath 180 9a/1) following the route of a minor watercourse, where it turns to the north west and joins Footpath 180 8/1. The footpath network then turns back towards Old Basing, heading south west along Footpath 180 7/1. Other notable routes within the localised Public Rights of Way network include Footpath 180 4/1, which forms the eastern edge to Lychpit and Chineham, to the west of the Study Area.
- 3.4. **Viewpoint 1** is taken from the junction of Pyotts Hill, the Street and Newnham Road within Old Basing. The view demonstrates the sense of separation created by the riparian vegetation that follows the watercourse that extends through the study area, visually and physically separating Old Basing from the study area. From this location, there is no intervisibility between Old Basing and the other settlements, due to the intervening vegetation, which reinforces the suitability of the study area to be designated as a Local Gap. The high voltage pylons and overhead cables, built form and localised highway network, do erode the sense of tranquillity in this location, but do not impinge upon the sense of separation between settlements.
- 3.5. **Viewpoint 2** is taken from Footpath 180 9a/1 and demonstrates how the established settlement edge interfaces with the adjacent study area. From this location, there is a clear sense of separation between the settlements, created by the riparian vegetation that characterises the southern and eastern parts of the study area. As one moves north east along the footpath, there is a distinct sense of leaving Old Basing and entering the well vegetated and more tranquil landscape that creates the setting of the village. The mature treescape contributes to this setting and enhances the sense of separation between settlements. Lychpit and Chineham are not evident from this location, and once the receptors are further along the footpath, neither is Old Basing.

- 3.6. **Viewpoints 3 and 4** are taken from Newnham Road to the east of Old Basing. In both views, the intervening roadside and riparian vegetation, contain views towards the study area. There is some longer distance, heavily filtered views towards the Veolia waste management site and eastern edge of Chineham, however, neither are prominent and would only be perceived by motorists. The broad scale of the intervening study area between the road and built edge of Chineham, coupled with the well vegetated valley landscape that helps to contain views, contributes to the sense of separation between the settlements.
- 3.7. **Viewpoints 5 and 6** illustrate the sense of remoteness that walkers experience as they move through the riparian corridor along Footpath 180 9a/1. From these locations, it is clear that one has left Old Basing and has entered a rich and diverse landscape, although the high voltage pylons within the study area do somewhat erode the tranquillity. As one emerges from the vegetated footpath corridor at **Viewpoint 7** and walks north east to **8**, the receptor experience open views out across the study area, with limited intervisibility between the footpath and Chineham. Old Basing and Lychpit are not visible, due to the containment provided by the vegetation along Footpath 180 9a/1, while only the taller and more elevated built form within Basingstoke is evident, seen in heavily filtered glimpses through the intervening treescape. Tranquillity is further reduced in this part of the study area due to the prominence of the waste management site and the high voltage pylons that cross the landscape, but otherwise, the landscape remains attractive.
- 3.8. **Viewpoint 9** shows the panoramic view between Old Basing, Basingstoke, Lychpit and Chineham. The view clearly demonstrates the strong sense of separation, created by the broad, vegetated valley between the settlements, ensuring that no settlements are visible in the view. The view demonstrates how the undeveloped nature of the study area already contributes towards the landscape setting of Old Basing and, if remained undeveloped, would ensure that the individual identity of each settlement is safeguarded from coalescence. The high degree of containment created by the surrounding treescape, enhances the sense of tranquillity and remote character of the landscape, forming a strong backdrop to the view and helping to soften the prominence of the high voltage pylons that cross the landscape.
- 3.9. **Viewpoint 10** is taken from the Lodge Farm access track, where it joins Footpath 180 7/1. The view further illustrates the sense of separation between Old Basing, Lychpit and Chineham created by the intervening, low lying valley landscape and associated vegetation cover, which screens views between settlements. Taller built form within

Basingstoke is evident along the alignment of the footpath, however, this forms a very small proportion of the wider view, while the wider settlements remain screened. The riparian vegetation associated with the River Loddon is a prominent and attractive feature within the view which, along with the native hedgerow alongside the footpath, creates a compartmentalised character to the network of fields in this location. This is also evident within

- 3.10. **Viewpoint 11**, taken further south west along the footpath. The view once again demonstrates how the established vegetation cover contributes to the landscape setting of Old Basing, ensuring that intervisibility is limited to filtered glimpses and that a sense of separation is maintained.

4. PROPOSED LOCAL GAP ASSESSMENT

4.1. Strategic Gap Function and Identification Criteria

- 4.1.1. While this study relates to a Local Gap, it is considered that the adopted and emerging Local Plan policies, together with the supporting evidence base define the context of such a designation and, as such, the criteria and assessment methodology have informed this study.
- 4.1.2. Adopted Local Plan Policy EM2: Strategic Gap and emerging Local Plan Policy ENV2: Strategic Gaps states that **“in order to prevent coalescence of built up areas and to maintain the separate identity of settlements, the generally open and undeveloped nature of (Basingstoke – Old Basing) will be protected. Development in gaps will only be permitted where:**
- a. **It would not diminish the physical and / or visual separation; and**
 - b. **It would not compromise the integrity of the gap either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development; or**
 - c. **It is proposed through a Neighbourhood Plan or neighbour Development Order, including Community Right to Build Orders.”**
- 4.1.3. The policies go onto state that **“in parts of Basingstoke the towns and villages are located relatively close to one another and the land allocations within this plan will in some instances reduce the distance between settlements further. The gaps have not been defined to protect the countryside or landscape, they are essentially a planning**

tool to prevent the coalescence of settlements and maintain the separate identity of settlements.

A clear gap between settlements helps maintain a sense of place for both residents of, and visitors to, the settlements on either side of the gaps. When travelling through a Strategic Gap (by all modes of transport) a traveller should have a clear sense of having left the first settlement, having travelled through an undeveloped area and then entered the second settlement.”

4.1.4. The Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study, which forms part of the evidence base for the Emerging Local Plan outlines a series of criteria for the designation of Strategic Gaps:

- a) **“The land to be included within the gap is open and provides a sense or perception of separation between settlements.**
- b) **The land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the character of settlements in the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence (in particular from land allocations in the Local Plan).**
- c) **In defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included, having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation, being informed by topography, field boundaries and natural features.”**

4.2. The Proposed Local Gap

4.2.1. The proposed Local Gap has been informed by the evidence presented within Sections 1 to 3 and the Study Area refined to the area as illustrated on the **Proposed Local Gap Plan** (PLG.005), refer Figure 4 below.

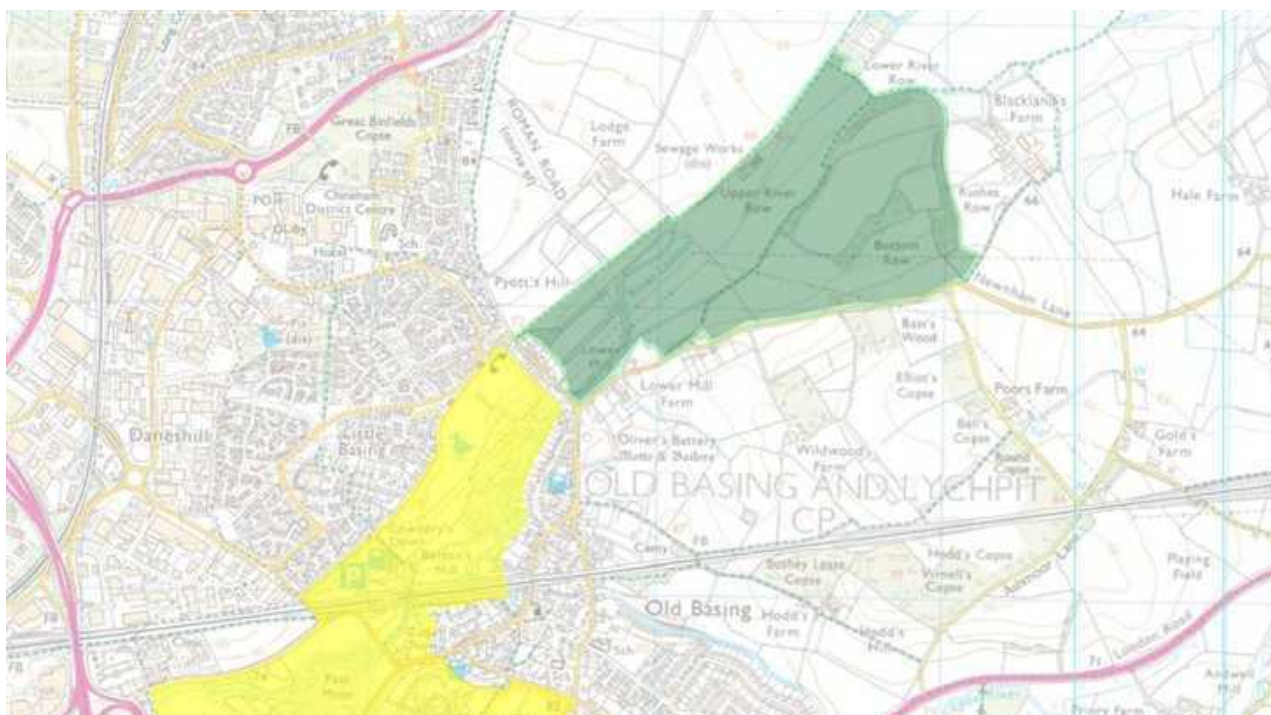


Figure 4: Plan illustrating the proposed Local Gap

- 4.2.2. The proposed Local Gap is also consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and support development that responds positively to local character and landscape setting.
- 4.2.3. The proposed Local Gap has been deliberately defined to include only the minimum extent of land necessary to maintain the physical and perceived separation between Old Basing, Lychpit and Basingstoke. The boundaries have been drawn using robust and defensible physical features and have not sought to include wider areas of countryside that do not directly contribute to preventing coalescence. This targeted approach ensures that the designation is proportionate, evidence-based and focused solely on land that performs an essential settlement separation function.
- 4.2.4. The Draft Local Plan Updated Spatial Strategy (Regulation 18, November 2025) identifies increased development pressure on land to the west of the study area, including uplift in the scale of proposed residential development. This materially increases the risk of perceived settlement coalescence unless the remaining open valley landscape is protected.
- 4.2.5. Furthermore, areas further north along the Loddon Valley, away from the settlements have been excluded from the gap given the separation from the built up areas. The

waste treatment plant was considered a robust and defensible boundary to the northern extent of the proposed Local Gap.

- 4.2.6. The land to the south east of Newnham Road has also been excluded as the road corridor was considered to form a robust and defensible edge to the proposed Local Gap.
- 4.2.7. The proposed gap broadly extends between the northern edge of Old Basing, from Newnham Lane to the rear of properties along Pyotts Hill, north eastwards through the low-lying valley either side of the River Loddon. The boundaries have been defined by appropriate and easily identifiable features within the landscape, including residential plot boundaries, woodlands, field boundary hedgerows and watercourses. It is considered that any introduction of new built development into this area would potentially introduce new intervisibility between Old Basing and Lychpit and diminish the perception of people leaving the established settlement and moving through an area of undeveloped land. When viewed together with the potential expansion to the east of Basingstoke, this would further erode the settlement boundaries and their sense of separation.
- 4.2.8. At present, there is limited intervisibility between Old Basing and Lychpit due to the combined influence of landform, intervening distance and the strong vegetation structure associated with the Loddon Valley landscape. The low-lying valley floor, together with riparian vegetation, mature hedgerows and scattered woodland, restricts direct views between settlement edges and contributes to a clear perception of separation.
- 4.2.9. The proposed Local Gap boundary has been informed by the existing landscape structure and follows robust, defensible and readily identifiable physical features on the ground. These include established field boundaries, mature hedgerows, woodland edges, riparian vegetation corridors, watercourses and settlement edges, all of which contribute to defining a coherent and logical extent for the gap. Using these established landscape features ensures that the boundary reflects the underlying character and form of the Loddon Valley landscape rather than arbitrary parcel lines or administrative boundaries. This approach provides a clear and durable boundary that can be readily understood and consistently applied in planning terms.
- 4.2.10. The use of strong physical boundaries also ensures that only land which makes a meaningful contribution to settlement separation is included within the Local Gap designation. This avoids the inclusion of unnecessary land while ensuring sufficient

extent is retained to preserve both physical and visual separation between Old Basing and Lychpit.

- 4.2.11. In many parts of the study area, adjacent settlement edges are screened or visible only in filtered glimpses, reinforcing the perception of open countryside.
- 4.2.12. The riparian vegetation associated with the River Loddon and its tributaries also serves to contain the settlements from one another. The proposed Local Gap would be partially defined by this vegetation, as illustrated within Viewpoint 1, and any intrusion into this landscape would compromise the sense of separation that the settlements currently experience and would give rise to the perception of coalescence. Any loss of this well vegetated edge to the settlement would detract from the landscape setting of Old Basing and provide greater opportunity for people to perceive Old Basing, Lychpit and Chineham together.
- 4.2.13. Similarly, with regard to views from the local footpaths located adjacent to and within the proposed Local Gap (Viewpoints 2 & 5 – 11), any introduced built form would potentially be seen in the context of the expanded eastern edge of Basingstoke, again providing greater opportunities for people to view both settlements. This would also have an impact on the tranquillity and visual qualities of these routes.
- 4.2.14. From Viewpoint 12, the settlement edge to Lychpit lies directly west of the viewers location and it is considered that the perception of the route is along the settlement boundary, rather than having left it. It is noted that the settlement edge to the north has the potential to become more visually prominent over time. Any intrusion of built form into the proposed Local Gap would increase opportunities for the settlements to be perceived together, thereby eroding the current sense of separation between Old Basing and Lychpit.
- 4.2.15. In order to justify the proposed Local Gap as shown on the **Proposed Local Gap Plan**, it is considered appropriate to assess the suitability of the proposed area against the established criteria outlined within the published Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study (which forms part of the Local Plan evidence base), refer Table 1 below.

Table 1: Compliance of the proposed Local Gap with the criteria set out within the Basingstoke and Deane 'Strategic Gaps Study'

Criteria for the designation of Strategic Gaps, as outlined within the Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study	Does it Comply with the Criterion?
<i>The land to be included within the gap is open and provides a sense or perception of separation between settlements.</i>	Yes – As demonstrated above and within the Photographic Record in Appendix 4, a good proportion of the proposed Local Gap is open, typically comprising arable fields with some occasional pasture closer to the settlement boundary. The landscape character is well vegetated, with riparian vegetation lining the watercourses within the floodplain and native hedgerows defining arable field boundaries. This mature landscape setting provides a buffer along the northern edge of Old Basing, helping to contain the proposed Local Gap from the settlement. As one moves through the proposed Local Gap, the intervening distance between settlements, together with the mature vegetation located within the valley landscape, helps to create a distinct sense of separation between Old Basing and the other settlements. The existing vegetation framework within the Loddon Valley is particularly important in maintaining this visual separation, softening settlement edges and preventing the perception of coalescence. As a result, each settlement retains a clear and distinct identity, with the valley landscape providing both a physical and perceptual buffer between them. At present, there is no intervisibility between the settlements from within the proposed gap and it is considered that the proposed Local Gap would maintain this perception of separation.
<i>The land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the character of settlements in the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence (in particular from land allocations in the Local Plan).</i>	Yes – The proposed Local Gap has a distinctly riparian character due to its location within the floodplain and the network of watercourses, including the river Loddon, located within it. The strong riparian vegetation network associated with this area contributes strongly to the setting of Old Basing, helping to contain it from the wider agricultural landscape to the north and north east. The land performs an important role in maintaining the distinct identities of Old Basing and Lychpit. The riparian landscape, open agricultural character and intervening vegetation provide a clear transition between

	settlements and contribute to their individual settings. The area therefore performs a strategic settlement separation function irrespective of future development. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the majority of land within the proposed Local Gap has been assessed as unsuitable for residential development due to its location within the floodplain and detachment from the established settlements.
<i>In defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included, having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation, being informed by topography, field boundaries and natural features.</i>	Yes – The desktop study and subsequent field survey has informed this study and the proposed boundaries to the proposed Local Gap are considered to be appropriate in maintaining the separation and individual identities of Old Basing, Lychpit and Chineham. The extent of the proposed Local Gap extends south to Newnham Road, and would limit any future expansion to the north of the road. Similarly, the south western boundary is created by the plot boundaries to properties along Pyotts Hill, to limit further expansion of the village eastwards. The remaining boundaries are formed by natural features such as field boundary hedgerows, woodlands and watercourses, which would serve as robust and readily recognisable features as boundaries for the Local Gap. The proposed boundary has been informed by landscape character, topography, vegetation structure and settlement form. It follows strong and defensible physical features that are readily recognisable on the ground and represents the minimum extent of land required to maintain effective separation between settlements. The boundary avoids inclusion of land that does not contribute directly to the settlement separation function.

4.2.16. As outlined above, it is considered that the proposed Local Gap complies with the criteria and methodology set out within the Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study. The land within the proposed Local Gap performs an important role in safeguarding the setting and identities of the established settlements and is defined by robust boundary features that are readily recognisable in the landscape.

4.2.17. It is concluded that while the proposed Local Gap is related to the Neighbourhood Plan, it would meet the criteria for the designation of Strategic Gaps and would not

compromise the effectiveness of the wider Basingstoke to Old Basing Strategic Gap that extends to the south. Indeed, it is considered that the Local Gap would extend the objectives of preventing coalescence and maintaining landscape character and settlement separation further along the Loddon Valley. The proposed Local Gap is supportable from a landscape perspective.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. ES Landscape Planning Ltd was instructed by Old Basing & Lychpit Parish Council to assess the potential extension to the Basingstoke to Old Basing Strategic Gap, as identified within the Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study, January 2024, to form a Local Gap within the Emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.2. This Local Gap Study has been commissioned as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Review to form part of the evidence base and inform planning policies within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.3. The proposed Local Gap would provide a robust and landscape-led mechanism for maintaining the physical and visual separation of Old Basing, Lychpit and Chineham. The proposed boundary reflects the extent of land necessary to preserve settlement identity and prevent coalescence while following strong and defensible landscape features. The justification for the designation is derived from the existing landscape structure, settlement pattern and perception of separation rather than reliance upon emerging development allocations.
- 5.4. The proposed Local Gap has been defined having regard to the strategic allocations within the current and emerging Development Plan. It is intended to complement strategic planning policy by protecting the remaining land that continues to perform an important settlement separation function and is not intended to prejudice the delivery of strategic allocations.
- 5.5. As demonstrated in this study, built development within the proposed Local Gap would reduce the current perception of separation between Old Basing, Lychpit and Chineham by increasing intervisibility and eroding the experience of moving through undeveloped countryside. Although individual development proposals may appear limited in scale, incremental development over time has the potential to erode the openness of the gap

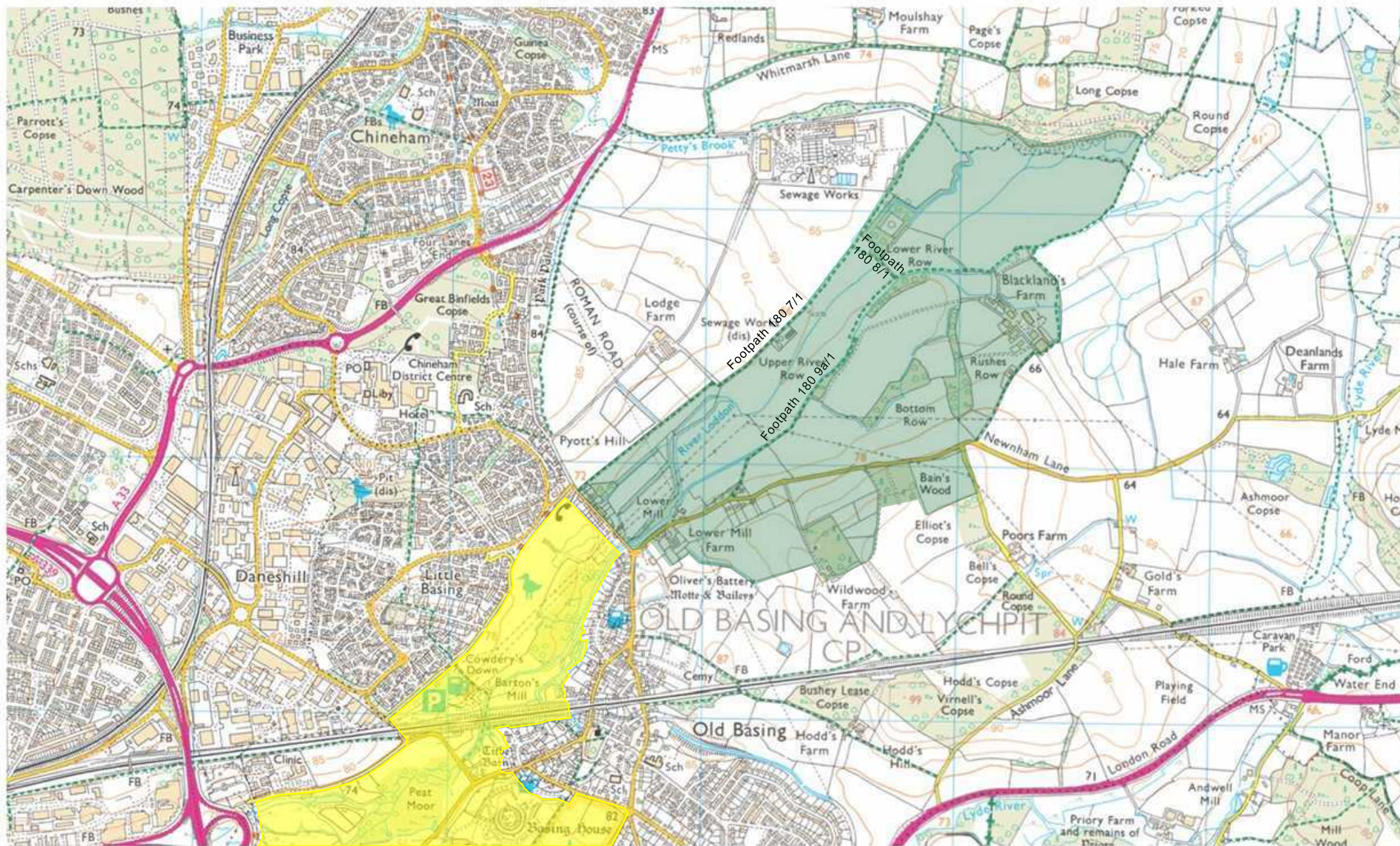
and weaken the perception of separation between settlements. Protecting this remaining area of open land will therefore help ensure that the distinct identities of Old Basing, Lychpit and Basingstoke are maintained over the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.6. The proposed Local Gap would provide an effective mechanism for conserving the landscape setting of Old Basing and retaining the open nature and sense of separation between the village and the wider urban area to the west, preventing the coalescence of the neighbouring settlements. It would also ensure that each settlement's individual identity and sense of place is conserved.
- 5.7. River Loddon and its associated floodplain are particularly important landscape features within this corridor. Their presence not only contributes to ecological and visual value but also reinforces the natural containment of settlement form, limiting intervisibility between settlements and preserving the distinct identity and setting of each settlement. The Loddon Valley therefore represents more than simply open land between settlements; it forms a robust landscape framework that actively prevents the perception of coalescence. The retention of this valley landscape is critical to safeguarding settlement separation and conserving the individual character, sense of place and landscape setting of Old Basing and Lychpit.
- 5.8. Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the proposed Local Gap represents the minimum area of land necessary to maintain the physical and visual separation between Old Basing, Lychpit and the edge of Basingstoke. The boundaries have been defined using robust and defensible physical features, including existing woodland, field boundaries, roads and watercourses, and have been informed by the methodology used within the Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Gaps Study. Whilst the area also contributes significantly to landscape character, biodiversity and the setting of the River Loddon, the primary purpose of the designation is to prevent the coalescence of settlements and retain their separate identities. The proposed Local Gap therefore complements strategic planning policy and provides a locally specific evidence base to support Policy OB&L3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.9. The Neighbourhood Plan Review consultation identified widespread community support for protecting the landscape setting of Old Basing and Lychpit and maintaining the separation between the parish and Basingstoke. Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of retaining the open character of the Loddon Valley and avoiding further coalescence between settlements.

The proposed Local Gap has therefore been informed by both the landscape assessment contained within this report and the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.

- 5.10. It is concluded that while the proposed Local Gap is related to the Neighbourhood Plan, it would meet the criteria for the designation of Strategic Gaps and would not compromise the effectiveness of the wider Basingstoke to Old Basing Strategic Gap that extends to the south. Indeed, it is considered that the Local Gap would extend the objectives of preventing coalescence and maintaining character and settlement separation further north along the Loddon Valley. The proposed Local Gap is supportable from a landscape perspective.

PLANS



Not to Scale

Key

- Study Area
- Existing Basingstoke and Old Basing Strategic Gap



Old Basing Local Gap Study Study Area Plan

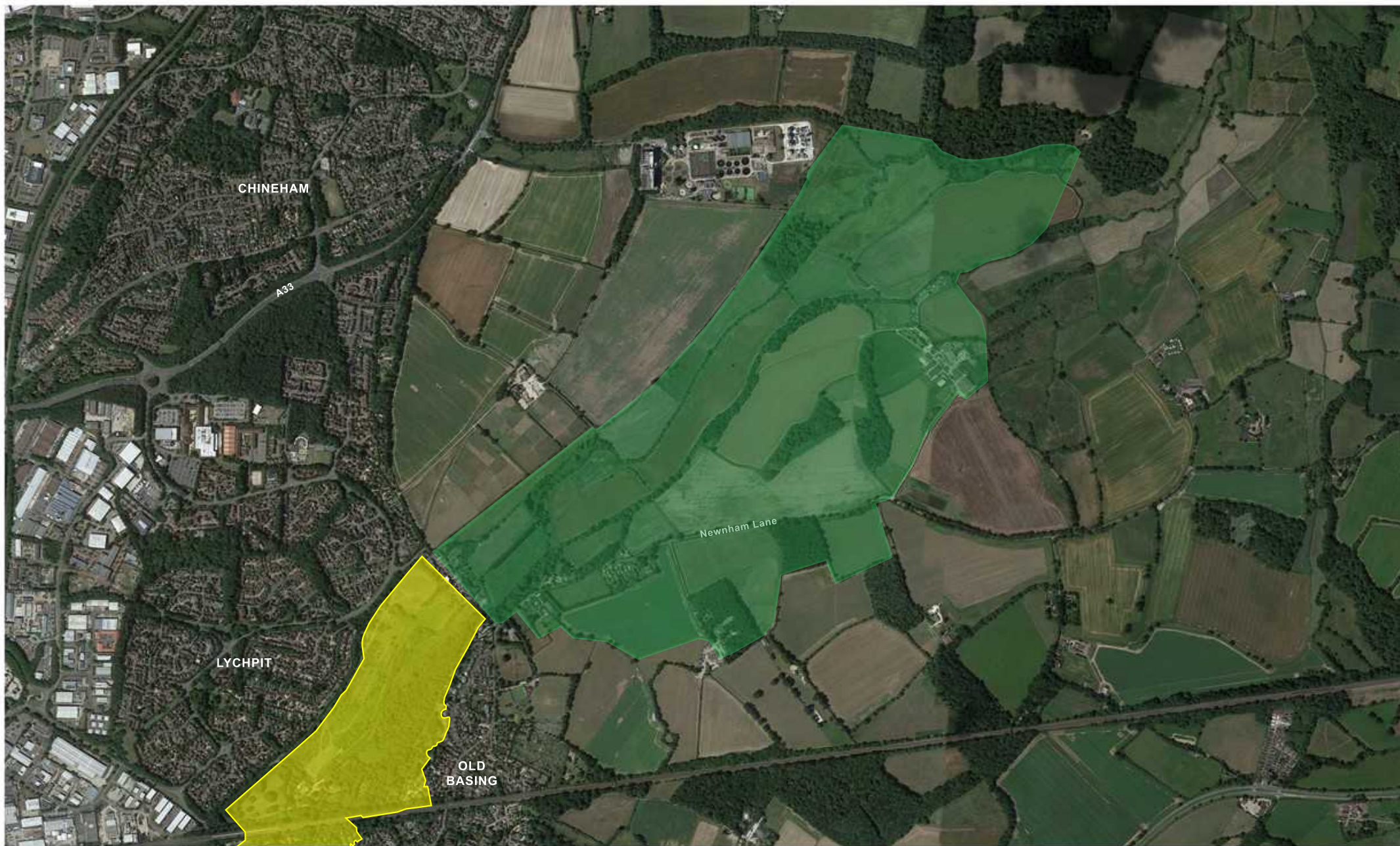
Old Basing and Lychpit Parish
Council

Drawing Ref: 14772L.SAP.001 Rev. A

Date: Jun 2026

Drawn: EB

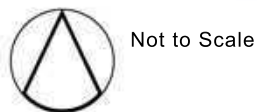
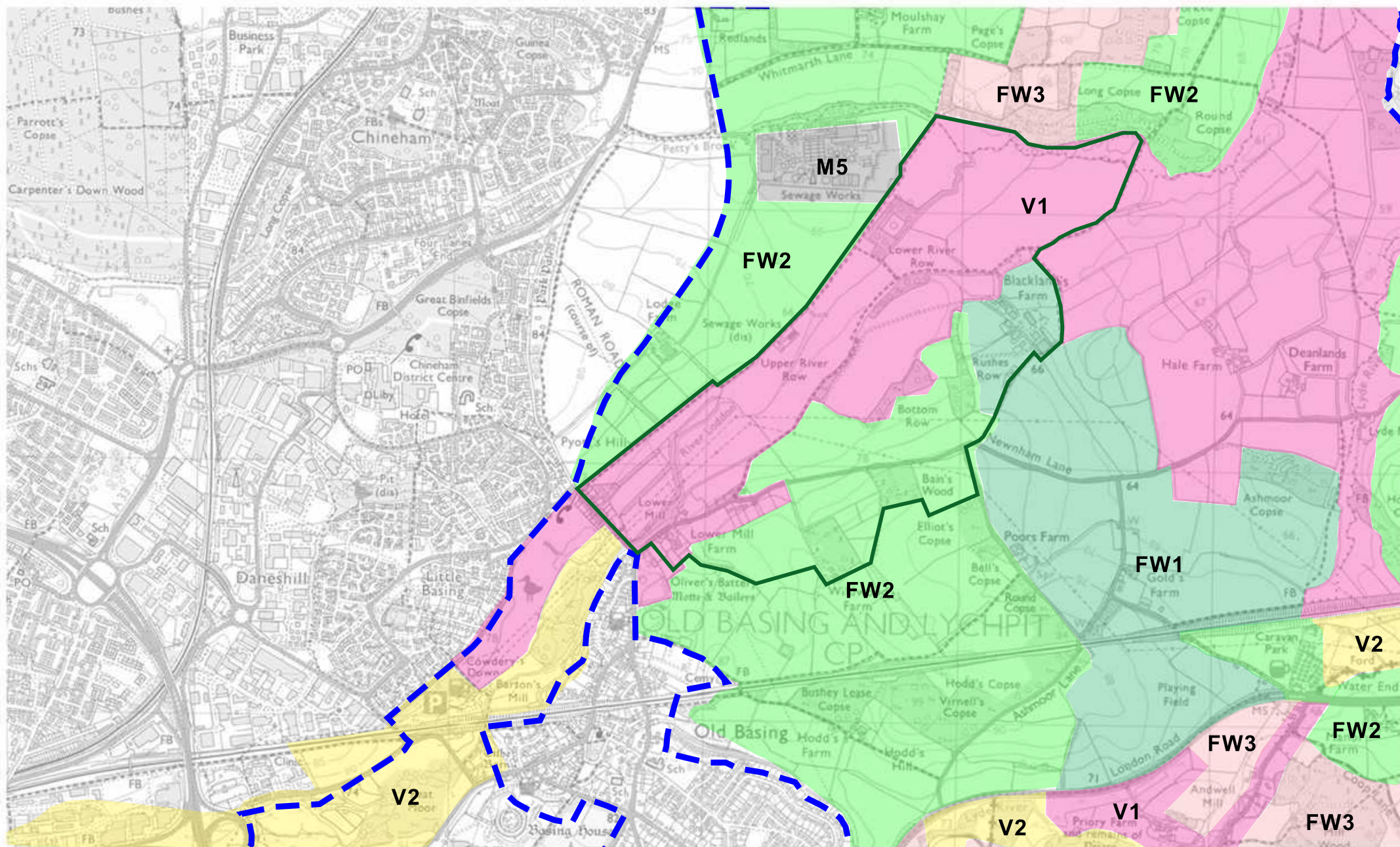
Checked: JG



Not to Scale

Key

- Study Area
- Existing Basingstoke and Old Basing Strategic Gap



Not to Scale

Key

- Loddon and Lyde Valley (LCA 6)
- Open Valley Floor Farmland (LCT V1)
- Enclosed Valley Floor Farmland (LCT V2)
- Open Farmland and Woodland (LCT FW1)

- Mixed Farmland and Woodland (LCT FW2)
- Mixed Farmland and Woodland Small Scale (LCT FW3)
- Disturbed Landscapes (LCT M5)
- Study Area

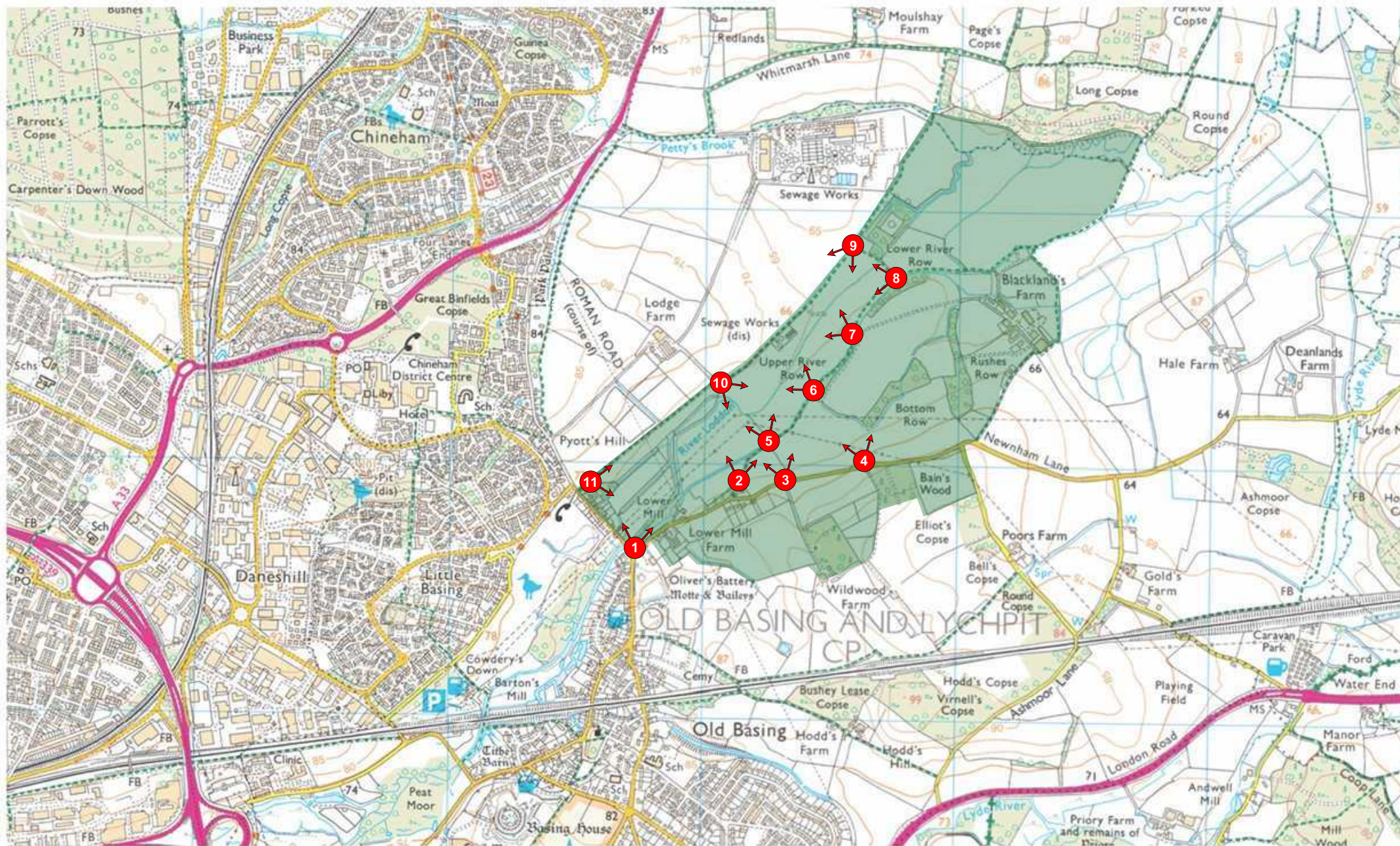


**Old Basing Local Gap Study
Landscape Character Areas**

Old Basing and Lychpit Parish
Council

Drawing Ref: 14772L.LCA.003 Rev. A
Date: Jun 2026 Drawn: EB Checked: JG

Drawing notes: Based on Ordnance Survey data
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Key

 Study Area

 Viewpoint Locations

Drawing notes: Based on Ordnance Survey data
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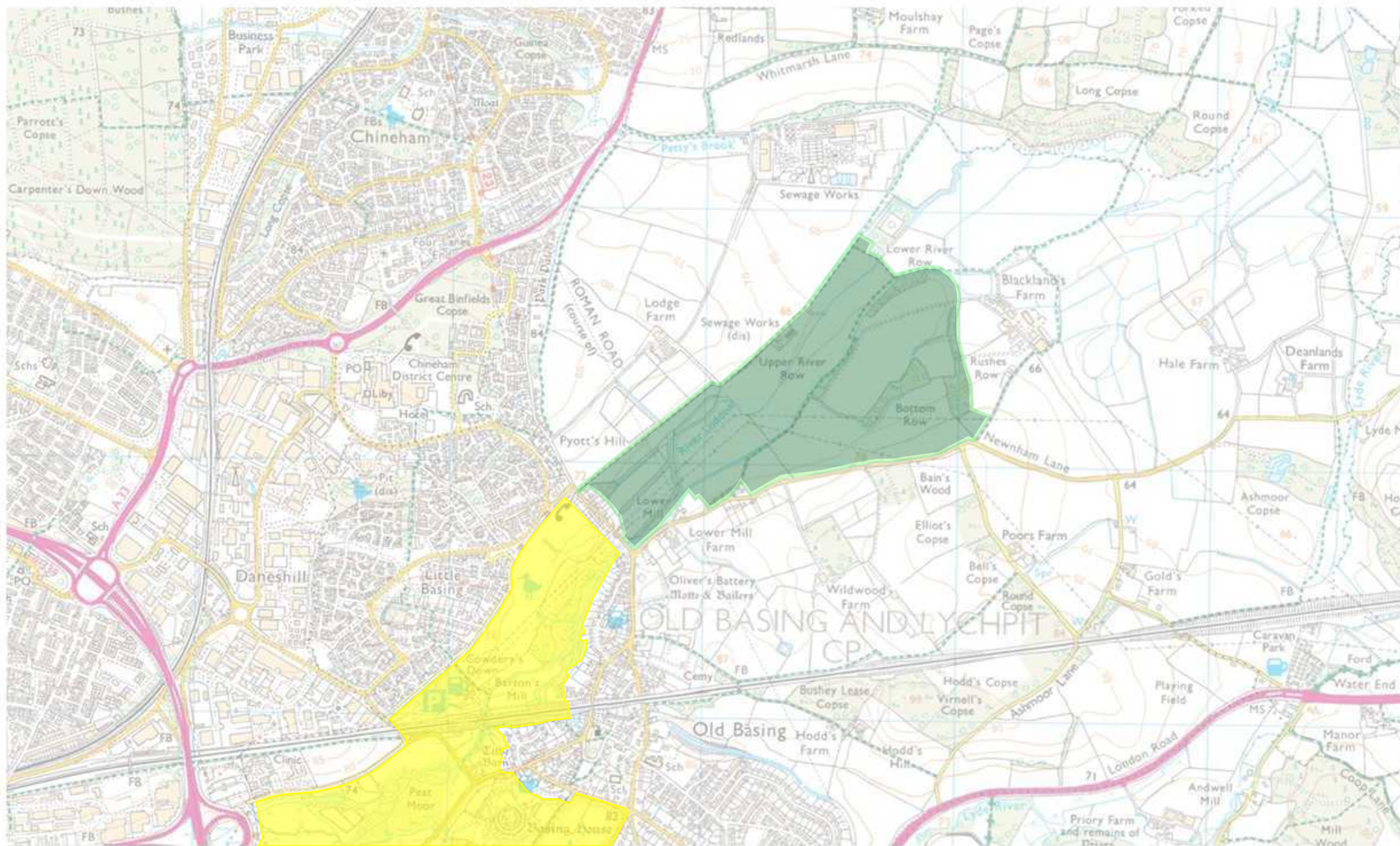


Old Basing Local Gap Study
Viewpoint Location Plan

Old Basing and Lychpit Parish
Council

Drawing Ref: 14772L.VLP.004

Date: Jun 2026 Drawn: EB Checked: JG



Not to Scale

Key

- Proposed Local Gap
- Existing Basingstoke and Old Basing Strategic Gap



Old Basing Local Gap Study Proposed Local Gap Plan

Old Basing and Lychpit Parish
Council

Drawing Ref: 14772L.PLG.005 Rev A
Date: Jun 2026 Drawn: EB Checked: JG