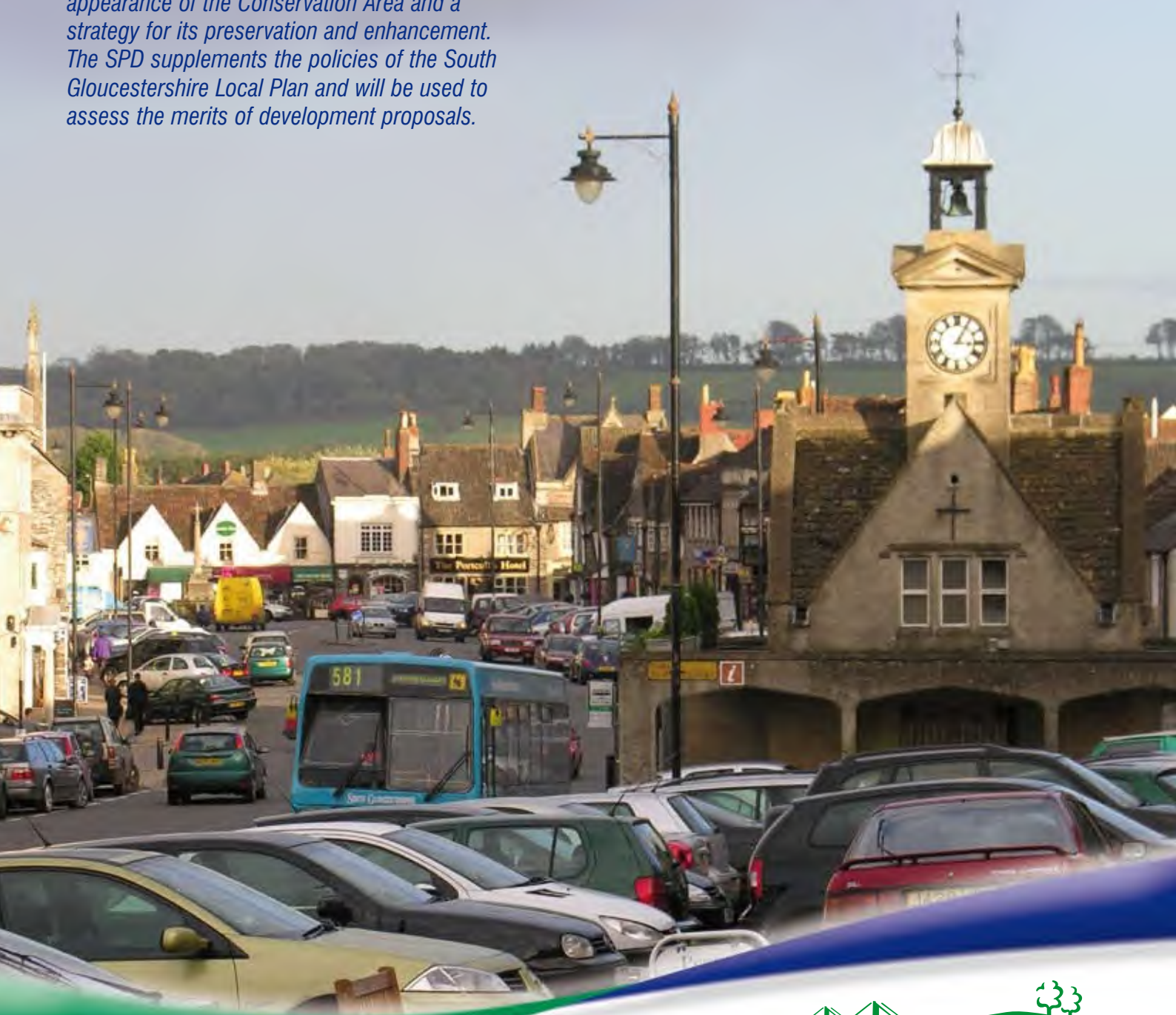


Chipping Sodbury Conservation Area

Supplementary Planning Document

February 2009

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides an appraisal of the Chipping Sodbury Conservation Area. It sets out the main features contributing to the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area and a strategy for its preservation and enhancement. The SPD supplements the policies of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan and will be used to assess the merits of development proposals.





Introduction

The medieval planned market town of Chipping Sodbury was designated as a Conservation Area on the 27th November 1975 in recognition of its special architectural and historic character and appearance; with its exceptionally well preserved medieval town plan, long, narrow burgage plots curving gently back from the wide bustling market street; and rich variety of historic buildings. The boundary of the Conservation Area is shown on the attached plan 1.

In designating a Conservation Area the local planning authority has a duty to ensure that any proposed development will preserve or enhance the special qualities of the area.

Purpose of the document

This guidance seeks to identify the main elements that contribute to the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area and provides a strategy for its preservation and enhancement. It is hoped that by providing an appraisal of the buildings, features and spaces which characterise the Conservation Area, this will help ensure future proposals respect the local character. The adopted document will supplement policy L12 in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan, and is a material consideration giving additional guidance when development proposals are assessed.

South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the local plan, which includes planning policies relating to the protection of the historic environment and landscape character. In particular, Conservation Area policy L12 requires development proposals to take full account of the special architectural or visual qualities of the Conservation Area. Applicants should provide an assessment to demonstrate how their proposals will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Proposals having a harmful impact will be refused.

The emphasis is on preserving and enhancing those buildings, spaces and features, which give each Conservation Area its special character

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*The Clocktower -
an important focal
point*

What is a Conservation Area

A Conservation Area is an area of **“special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”**.

Designation is a recognition of the group value of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect, not just the individual buildings, but the distinctive character of the area as a whole. The special character derives from a combination of many features – including trees, hedges, boundaries and walls, open spaces, groups of buildings, the degree of enclosure and coherence, as well as the size, scale, and detailing of the buildings. Each area is unique.

Please note: This Conservation Area appraisal sets out the main elements contributing to the character of the Conservation Area which it is felt any development should take account of. It is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Chipping Sodbury Character Assessment

Chipping Sodbury has been described as a rare example of -

“... a new planted town of twelfth century origin with a street plan surviving almost unaltered. It is based on a grid pattern which is paralleled by less than 30 examples of similar date elsewhere in the whole country. Future planning proposals should respect this unusual street layout.”¹



Looking down the wide main street towards the dramatic view of the Cotswold scarp in the distance.

The Landscape Setting

The small bustling market town of Chipping Sodbury is situated alongside the River Frome at an historic crossing point leading north to Wickwar and east to Old Sodbury. The historic core of the town is linear in form and is located on a low limestone ridge that rises to the west separating it from the adjoining settlement of Yate. Ascending Bowling Hill from the west and entering the town through Rounceval Street, the impressive wide market street enclosed by its rich variety of historic buildings is revealed with the splendid views of the Cotswold scarp rising in the distance. To the south and east, the historic settlement is surrounded by modern development. In contrast, the land on the north side of the River Frome and by Brook Street is less intensively developed giving a more rural and open character enabling an appreciation of the dramatic form of the river valley. Much of this area was formerly quarried for carboniferous limestone which supplied the building material for the historic town. However, today the open land and trees along the river and on valley sides form an important part of the setting to the Conservation Area.



Looking down on the town - from the Cotswold Scarp- part of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Steep valley sides and trees by Brook Street

¹ R.Leech - from Small Medieval Towns in Avon 1974.

The Historic Context

The special character of Chipping Sodbury has been shaped by its history and its location on the River Frome by important trade routes. Its main stages of development are summarised below.

In the 12th Century William Crassus, the Lord of the manor at nearby Old Sodbury, laid out a new town at Chipping Sodbury. The new town was based on a grid pattern comprising long narrow strips of property (called burgage plots) extending back from narrow frontages on the wide market area or pitchings of High Street and Broad Street. The burgage plots typically contained a narrow dwelling on the market frontage and a rear yard, served by a back access lane. The yard was often cultivated and used for the rearing of livestock. The Burghers usually carried on trades and crafts which, together with their property rights, distinguished them from the feudal peasant thus creating a small medieval middle class. They paid an annual fixed rent to the lord of the manor and were free to buy and sell their burgage tenancies as they wished.

Taking advantage of important trade routes between Bristol and the Cotswolds, the town provided a convenient market for local merchants specialising in wool, cloth, malt, livestock and other foodstuffs. The River Frome supplied power for the development of the cloth and weaving industries contributed to the prosperity of the town in the 17th Century.



Historically located by an important cattle drovers route - livestock were traded in the market.

As the town prospered, more specialist shops and civic buildings such as the Guildhall, banks and hotels were built. By 1727 there were 12 Coaching Inns which played an important part in both social and commercial life of the town.

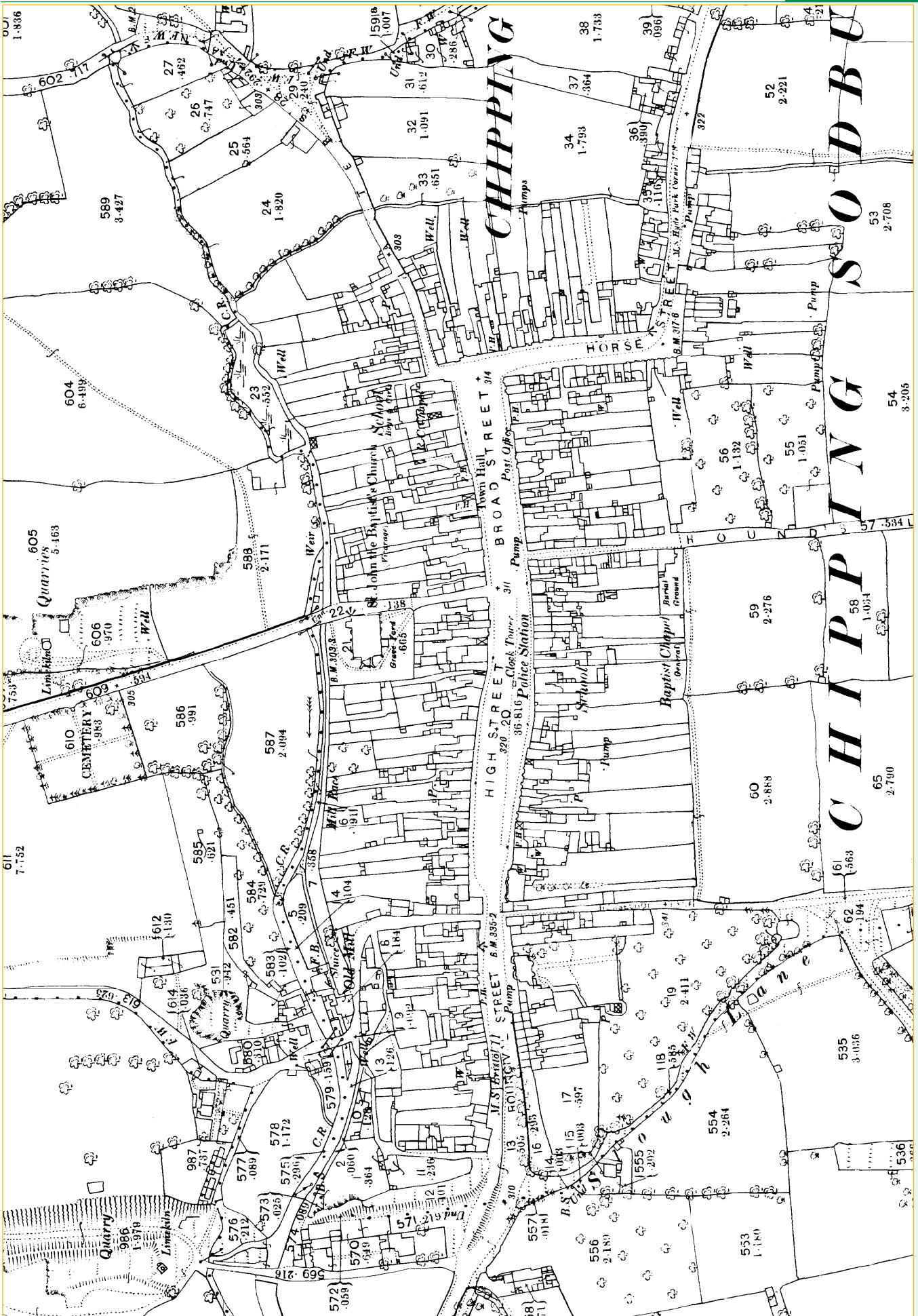
18th Century improvements to the road network resulting from the introduction of the Turnpike system included the building of the Wickwar Road bridge. Changing uses and fashion meant many earlier buildings were altered or re-fronted producing a rich variety of buildings and architectural styles.

By the 19th Century the fortunes of the town had declined as the focus shifted to the urban areas. However, notable changes included the erection of the Clocktower in the High Street and alterations to the Town Hall (former Guildhall) and the Parish Church.

During the 20th Century residential suburban development occurred around the edges of the settlement with some encroachment of commercial and residential development into rear burgage plots. Although quarrying has occurred since the Middle Ages this was greatly expanded to the north of the town at Barnhill.



Circa 1880 First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan of Chipping Sodbury



Chipping Sodbury's 12th Century Plan is exceptionally well preserved highlighting its national as well as local importance.

For more on history Visit [Chipping Sodbury Tourist Information Centre](#).



Simple symmetrical casement window.

The Special Features

Chipping Sodbury derives its special character from a combination of elements - the layout of the settlement; the form and detailing of buildings and their boundaries; the treatment of roads and the spaces between buildings; the open spaces and planting.

The historic town plan - Chipping Sodbury's medieval origins in the 12th Century as a planned settlement are still clear and rates highly amongst the small number of similar planned towns dating to this time. It is the best preserved of the four medieval towns in South Gloucestershire highlighting its national as well as local importance. It is particularly important that new development respects its surviving form and morphology of the historic settlement.

Archaeology - Due to its long history the town is a valuable source of archaeological information. Applicants will usually need to provide an archaeological assessment of the potential impact of their proposals.

The historic buildings and structures - the town has a distinctive architectural character with its rich and attractive mix of traditional buildings reflecting its status as an historic market town. These range from humble vernacular cottages to grand commercial buildings in many different period styles. The 17th Century buildings with their steeply pitched gables predominate and contrast with the simple classical proportions of the later Georgian buildings. Many are listed as being of 'special architectural or historic interest'.

The form, proportions, original materials, architectural details - windows, doors, chimney stacks, roof materials etc are all essential elements of the period character of these traditional buildings.



There are about 150 'listed' buildings & structures - including the market cross, tollpost marker, some boundary walls & tombstones.

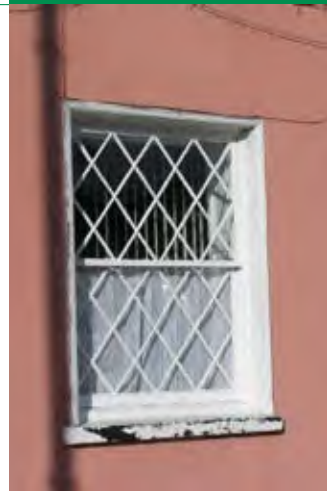
Building materials - while a variety of stone is evident locally quarried rubble carboniferous limestone predominates. Much of it would have originally been rendered or lime-washed. For many of the grander 18th and 19th Century buildings the fashionable Bath limestone was used to provide formal rich detailing. Others have stucco and lined render to give the underlying rubble stone the appearance of Bath stone. Roofs, steeply pitched or partially hidden behind parapets, traditionally use natural clay pantiles, double roman tiles or Welsh blue / grey slates. The inappropriate use of modern materials / finishes such as reconstituted stone, cement renders and concrete tiles has harmed the appearance of and fabric of some traditional buildings and will be resisted.



Steeply pitched gables add interest to the street scene.

Windows - there is a wide range of windows reflecting the different periods and mix of properties. These include metal casement windows with stone mullions and leaded lights, simple wood casements, small-paned Georgian sashes and large-paned Victorian sashes. Typically windows are of painted timber and recessed behind the wall face giving depth. The appearance of some traditional buildings has been harmed by unsympathetic replacement windows and doors or by using inappropriate details, materials or finishes. Owners are encouraged to reinstate these with windows sensitive to the period character.

Boundaries - typically consist of rubble stone walls with cock and hen coping. However, Bath stone and iron railings are used for some of the grander buildings. The walls are essential to the character delineating property boundaries along Burgage plots and providing an attractive feature and enclosure along roads. The removal of sections of stone walls has harmed the character and any further loss will be resisted. Owners will be encouraged to reinstate stone boundary walls and ensure any boundary treatment is sensitive to the historic character.



Diagonal glazing bar sash window.



Simple wood painted fascia sign - an attractive traditional feature.

Shop-fronts and signs are an important part of the building and can add to the vitality of the street scene. However, it is important that they are correctly proportioned and detailed. Where original historic shop-fronts and architectural features exist these should be retained along with the correct window proportions in any refurbishment works. Simple painted timber shop-fronts and fascia signs or the use of individual letters generally works best. The use of plastic, overlarge fascia signs, large areas of plate glass and a clutter of signs which adversely affect the appearance of the street will be refused. Signs should be kept to a minimum and sensitively positioned.

Streetscape and surrounding spaces - much of the special character and interest derives from its contrasting streetscape with its variations in road width, the bends and sense of surprise as a new scene unfolds combined with the informality and enclosure by buildings, stone walls and grass verges. Historic surfaces and structures such as the bridges, market cross, pumps and the turnpike milestone contribute to the distinctive character and should be preserved. Care is needed to ensure that any highway or other works respect historic street patterns and appearance using appropriate materials and avoiding a proliferation of signs, road markings or street furniture –seats, bins etc which can have an adverse visual impact.



Traditional stone kerbs and sets to foot-ways should be retained. Avoid use of concrete kerbs or edging.



You should seek to protect the character in all work – even if consent from the Council is not required

If you are unsure about the impact of your proposals – please ask a Conservation Officer for advice.



Some repairs to listed buildings may require consent

Keeping And Enhancing The Character

When considering changes - great care is needed. The cumulative impact of often quite small changes such as using the wrong materials, unsympathetic extensions or alterations to shop-fronts, erosion of walls and loss of trees can harm the unique character and downgrade the area. Similarly, insensitive changes to the public realm, roads, verges and open areas can also detract from the pleasant informal character and sense of place. Collectively, residents, businesses, landowners and local and town councils can help to protect this unique area by ensuring any works they do are sensitive to the character. To encourage works sensitive to the character, a suggested strategy for the preservation and enhancement of the area – including both general and more specific guidance is set out below and on the accompanying plan 2.



Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

The overall aim is to preserve and enhance the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area, its historic buildings, features and their setting as follows:-

1) Preserve and reinforce the historic character.

By encouraging repairs and ensuring any works to both the listed and unlisted buildings, features and surroundings are considered in relation to the historic context and use appropriate materials, scale and detailing.

2) Ensure that any new development (or alteration) respects the historic context.

New development or alterations needs to be in scale and sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is important that it does not adversely harm the setting of the existing historic features, views, or archaeology.

3) Minimise the impact of modern development

By ensuring adjoining modern development does not impinge on the historic character and setting. Enhancement proposals should seek to reduce this impact by protecting important views or gaps and using planting and natural stone walls to help soften the impact of obtrusive features and create a sense of enclosure and place.

4) Preserve and reinforce the vitality of the historic market town.

By ensuring alterations, new development or changes of use are appropriate and enhance its function.

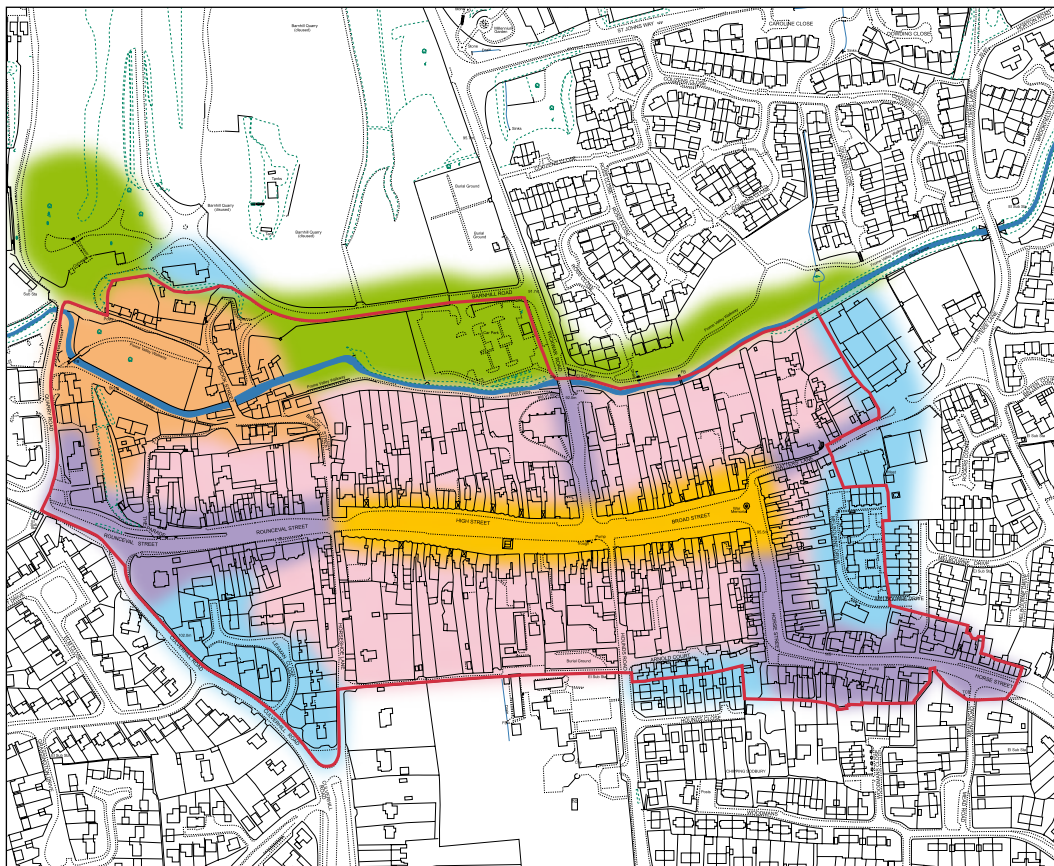
Character Areas

The traditional market town of Chipping Sodbury contains a number of different areas each with their own distinctive character reflecting the various functions and uses of the settlement. Within these areas any alterations or changes thus need careful consideration to ensure the character is not diluted or lost by inappropriate works, The characteristics of these areas are described on pages 10 -19. They include:-

- 1) The Market Place - High Street and Broad Street.**
- 2) The Burgage plots and back lane areas.**
- 3) Brook Street.**
- 4) Other streets adjoining the market place - Horse Street, Hatters Lane, Rounceval Street, The Parade and Wickwar Road.**
- 5) The River Frome and the area to the north.**
- 6) Modern development on the settlement edge.**



Horse Street cottages.



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Key

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Market Place High Street and Broad Street The Burgage plots and back lane areas Brook Street | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The River Frome and the area to the north Other streets adjoining the market place- Horse Street, Hatters Lane, Rounceval Street, The Parade and Wickwar Road. Approaches and modern development on the settlement edge |
|--|---|



water pump in High Street.



The Moda Hotel with its grand Georgian façade, is set forward of other properties forming a prominent townscape feature, closing the upper end of the High Street

1) The Market Place - High Street and Broad Street

The busy, lively centre of Chipping Sodbury with its wide dramatic main street lined by attractive historic buildings retains many characteristics typical of a medieval market town. Its dominant feature is the wide main street and market pitchings. Maps dating from mid 18th Century show market buildings erected down the centre of the street. Originally used as a cattle market (up until the 1950's) the road narrows at each end, adjoining Rounceval Street and Horse Street, to enclose the former market place.



The market tradition continues today with annual fairs and farmers markets.

Traffic and parking has a dominating impact on the main street and pitchings. However, measures to control parking and traffic need to be sensitive to the historic character as well as responsive to local residents and shoppers.

Despite the considerable width of the main street, the continuous frontages of mainly three storey historic buildings – many with the steep gabled roofs give an enclosed feel and strong sense of place. Apart from the distant vista to the Cotswold scarp views outwards are restricted to small glimpses through archways and occasional views of trees and the church tower just visible above some buildings. It is essential that any surrounding development behind frontages or on the edges of the settlement do not impinge on views or detract from this historic character.

There is a wide range of historic buildings. Some of the earliest are of 14th and 15th Century date although the majority date from the 16th and 17th Century. Many were altered and refaced in the 18th and 19th Centuries reflecting changes in fashion and use. To maximise the number of properties along the market frontage the buildings typically had narrow frontages and rectangular plan forms characteristic of medieval planned settlements. Building heights vary from two, to three storeys, many with steeply pitched gabled roofs. This results in a pleasing mix of architectural styles, detailing and variation in rooflines adding interest to the street scene. However, care is needed over alterations as even small changes, if not sympathetic, can harm the period character.



The market cross – provides a focal point



The variety of building styles and roof lines adds interest to the street scene

Reflecting its important function as a commercial centre the principal streets of the town include a mix of houses, shops, public houses, grand public buildings and other services. These uses, along with the variety of traditional shop-fronts, signs and architectural detailing, contribute to the distinctive and lively bustling character of the town. Typically shops are small units – reflecting the form of the historic buildings and many are managed by independent local retailers adding to the unique sense of place. It is important to retain the character and form of buildings by avoiding unsympathetic signs, alterations to shop-fronts or the amalgamation of shop units.

Maintaining the viability and attractiveness of the town to shoppers and visitors and usage of the historic buildings is important. Proposals to change the use of shops, or for new retail development on the edge of the town will need to be carefully considered to ensure such changes do not harm the vitality of the town and the use of its historic buildings.

Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Ensure any development behind frontages or on the edges of the settlement do not impinge on views or detract from the historic character.*
- ▶ *Retain architectural and historic character and ensure any repairs, extensions or alterations are sympathetic.*
- ▶ *Shopfronts and signs need to be sensitive in terms of scale, design, materials, position, number, colour and detailing. Resist the amalgamation of units.*
- ▶ *Ensure traffic management measures, street furniture and highway works are appropriate and sensitive to the historic character.*
- ▶ *New large scale retail / commercial development proposals within or adjacent to the town centre should be subject to an independent retail assessment to ascertain the impact of the scheme on the viability and vitality of the historic centre and its traditional shops.*
- ▶ *Seek to reduce the adverse impact of traffic and parking on the historic town. A Transport Assessment will be required for development having significant transport implications.*



Simple hanging signs on metal brackets are a traditional feature



Clutter of signs and posters is harmful to the character



The archways to the rear plots give glimpses out from the main street which contribute to a sense of mystery.

2) The Burgage Plots and back lanes.

Running behind the buildings fronting the wide main street are long narrow property strips – burgage plots. Typically defined by stone boundary walls, these plots were used for cultivation and the rearing of animals; and for storage and small -scale industrial and commercial activities associated with the market town. The plots usually contain a number of generally small- scale outbuildings with a lane providing access to the rear of the plots. Waste was usually disposed in pits dug into the garden so the area has potential as a rich source of archaeological information.

Today the survival of the deep burgage plots running back from the frontage properties is an important part of the character of the settlement. However, the introduction of large scale development and unsympathetic uses, car parks and the amalgamation of individual plots has resulted in the partial loss of the historic town layout. Retaining the remaining burgage plots is therefore particularly important and proposals to amalgamate plots or split parts of the plots for development are unlikely to be acceptable.



The stone walls to the Burgage Plots and rear lane are an important characteristic

Largely hidden from the main street, views are restricted to occasional glimpses from the main street, and from narrow side lanes such as Hounds Lane and Horseshoe Lane and the informal rear paths. In contrast with the more urban and built up character of the main street frontage the rear burgage plots generally have a quieter character and softer green feel provided by gardens, trees and planting giving an attractive setting to the traditional buildings.

The main frontage property is generally characterised by a less formal rear elevation. Many have been extended over time as more space was required. Typically these extensions are domestic scale and subservient to the main property resulting in a variety of roof profiles producing an interesting informal mix.



Glimpse to rear burgage plot.



The narrow Hounds Lane and range of narrow outbuildings within burgage plot

Within some plots are individual outbuildings or long rows of narrow small scale buildings single (or sometimes one and a half) storeys high and constructed of stone and usually incorporating one of the stone boundary walls to the plot. They have a distinctive character reflecting their historic use for storage or other commercial activities connected with the market. It is important to keep these traditional buildings allowing appropriate uses whilst ensuring the form and character is not harmed.

Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Protect the original plan form of the settlement. Retain the long narrow character of the plots by resisting the amalgamation or division of plots or their separation from the historic frontage property.*
- ▶ *Retain gardens and open spaces which contribute to setting of the historic properties and resist new development or uses harmful to the character and setting.*
- ▶ *Seek to reduce the impact of existing unsympathetic development or uses and require any new development to respect and enhance.*
- ▶ *Retain historic stone outbuildings and encourage their repair and sensitive use. Ensure any alterations are appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the building and its surroundings.*
- ▶ *Retain, repair and reinstate historic stone boundary walls which delineate the burgage plots and rear lanes. Avoid the use of fencing which is harmful to the character.*
- ▶ *Extensions to rear of existing properties should be subservient and sympathetic with the property. Extensions / development within plots should be small scale and should not extend full width of the narrow plot.*
- ▶ *Retain the informal, enclosed character of the narrow lanes. Resist the creation of new vehicular access to properties or other alterations where this would harm the character or undeveloped appearance.*



Archway to rear of burgage plot with its range of buildings.



The narrow rear lane enclosed by stone walls and planting



Halfway up the valley side to the north of the river the terrace of stone cottages, formerly occupied by quarry workers is prominent in views



The narrow stepped path and stone walls contribute to the character

3) Brook Street

Away from the busy main street this area has a more relaxed and informal village character with a jumble of small traditional stone cottages set along the narrow winding road and stepped paths which slope down to the river crossing. Some of the buildings are set on, or at right angles to, the road frontage but others are set back with small gardens enclosed by stone boundary walls. The trees, planting, grass verges, open spaces and landform of the valley sides give this area a green and rural character in contrast to the more built up feel of the rest of the settlement. The planting to the north and west around quarry works are essential to screening the quarry and retaining the more rural outlook.

Constructed in the local vernacular style the stone cottages (some with render) are small scale, typically with narrow gables and generally of 1 and a half to 2 storeys. They have simple proportions and detailing with timber painted side hung casements or sash windows. The roofs, of clay tiles or slates, are generally steeply pitched and with their chimneys are important features in views looking down and across the valley. Some cottages have lost boundary walls or had unsympathetic alterations, such as replacement windows or overlarge extensions. This demonstrates how fragile the historic character can be if insufficient care is exercised over such changes.



The small scale size and ad hoc arrangement of cottages gives an informal village character.

Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Proposals should respect the small cottage character. Poorly designed and large scale extensions will be refused consent.*
- ▶ *Seek the retention and reinstatement of traditional details, windows, doors. Chimneys and stone boundary walls etc in a sympathetic manner.*
- ▶ *Maintain enclosure to the road by resisting the loss of stone walls or the widening or formation of new accesses.*
- ▶ *Protect important views and resist the loss of trees, green or open space and informal verges which contribute to the character and setting.*
- ▶ *Care is needed to ensure the verges and grassed areas maintain their informal character. Avoid the use of kerbs and road markings which give an urban character.*

4) Other Streets adjoining the market place

Leading from the wide market place are the narrower roads of Hatters Lane, Horse Street, Wickwar Road, Rounceval Street and The Parade. These roads are less commercial in character with more residential properties. They are important approaches to the settlement and care is needed to ensure street works, signs and adjoining development do not detract from the ‘entrances’ and setting to the town.

Horse Street

At the lower end of Broad Street by the market cross, the road takes a sharp right turn into Horse Street enclosing the market place. In contrast to the wide main street the reduced road width and tall buildings alongside combined with another sharp left turn in the road gives a strong sense of enclosure. Many of these buildings have attractive architectural details. Moving along the road the character changes as the scale and intensity of development reduces and commercial development gives way to smaller houses and cottages. A small number of gardens occur which are important to the setting of the adjoining cottages as well as the character of the street and should be kept undeveloped.

Originally opened in the early 18th Century as a turnpike road out of the town to the east it became an important route for travellers and cattle drovers. A turnpike milestone can still be seen today indicating the distance to Hyde Park Corner in London. Grass verges to the road edge are also important to the local character and help mark this transition from urban to rural. The verges need to be preserved. Where hard surfacing and parking have completely taken over, this has detracted from the buildings and quality of the streetscape.

Preservation & Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Retain gardens, verges, trees and planting which provide an attractive setting to buildings and street scene.*
- ▶ *Resist loss and seek to reinstate grass areas now used for parking.*
- ▶ *Maintain street furniture – pump, historic signs.*



House and pump in Horse Street



The attractive group of Georgian terrace houses by the bend close off the view.



The tall buildings alongside the narrow road give a strong sense of enclosure.



Turnpike milestone



*Rounceval
Street .*

Rounceval Street and The Parade

Situated at the upper end of the market place, this is the most dramatic entrance as views of the historic town gradually unfold. Characterised by mainly residential properties interspersed with some commercial uses it includes a mix of small scale and some larger grander buildings – many formerly used as pubs, hotels and banks. It has a more genteel character and open feel with some buildings set back from the road with small gardens to the front enclosed by stone boundary walls or iron railings. The Parade is situated on a high ridge and its properties are separated from the bustle of main road by a high stone retaining wall. The area contains a number of mature trees within the grounds of properties which give an attractive green character and are prominent above the buildings in Rounceval Street. The trees close to the junction of Culverhill Road help demarcate the edge of the town at the top of hill and in combination with those to the north help filter views of modern development to the west.



*Narrow,
enclosed Hatters
Lane*

Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Retain trees and verges on approaches*

Hatters Lane

Named after the hat and weaving trade, this was the site of a ford crossing the river and the original route eastwards out of the town. Today it comprises mainly traditional small domestic scale cottages set along a very narrow winding lane. Most of the properties are set onto the road but a few have small gardens enclosed by stone boundary walls. The gardens provide an attractive setting to the cottages. A notable building is Tudor House with its jettied and timber framed upper floor projecting forward into the lane. Originally the house of a Master Weaver it is one of the oldest in the town dating from the 14th Century. To the rear, within the former burgage plot, a row of traditional buildings form an attractive group marred by the unattractive car-park and wide entrance resulting in a loss of enclosure to the lane.

On the edge of the Conservation Area, the modern industrial development, signs, aerals, expanse of car parks and lack of enclosure to the lane detracts from the historic character and setting. Enhancements and new more sympathetic development and boundary treatment should be encouraged to improve this entrance to the town.



*Tudor House
dating from
14th century
was altered in
1530 and in 17th
Century.*

Preservation & Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Seek to retain and reinstate enclosure to the lane.*
- ▶ *Seek to reduce the adverse impact of adjacent poor quality development and uses with environmental improvements and new more appropriate development.*

Wickwar Road

Originally a short lane to the church, in the 18th Century this became one of the main roads into the town with the turnpiking of the road from the north and the construction of a bridge over the river. To accommodate increasing industrial traffic the road was widened in the 20th Century resulting in the demolition of a property and loss of a burgage plot on the east side of the road. The church and tower dominates views and along with the bridge, stone walls, river and trees contribute to the distinctive character. The trees by the Cemetery and quarry help to enhance the approach from the north however, more recent housing development, the ATS site with its signs and traffic management measures have generally detracted from the setting introducing a more urban feel.

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, dating from the 13th Century is set in an attractive secluded position alongside the river and surrounded by mature trees. It is a later addition to the planned medieval town and is slightly unusual as it was located away from the main street. Originally, a small chapel it was expanded as the town prospered funded by the weaving trade. Its tall tower is a prominent landmark visible in views from various locations. It is important to retain the dominance of the church and its tower and to ensure any development does not detract from its setting.



The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist is listed Grade 1 and with its tall tower provides a focus for many views in and around Chipping Sodbury.



The church has a dominating impact whilst the trees enhance the setting.

Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Retain dominance of the church and tower. Resist development of aerials or other buildings / structures which would detract from the setting and prominence of the church.*
- ▶ *Seek to reduce the impact of modern development with better boundary treatment and planting.*
- ▶ *Secure enhancements and more sympathetic signage to the ATS site or encourage a more sensitive use.*



View of church from the car park

5) The River Frome and area to the north.

The River Frome marks the northern boundary of the historic town and was an important source of water and power for the town residents and industry with a number of mills and mill race. Today it is a quiet backwater spanned by stone bridges at Brook Street (the original route to the north) and the Wickwar Road. Alongside the river is the Frome Valley walkway an important recreational route.

Sloping down to the river, the gardens to the burgage plots on the north side of the High Street form part of the attractive setting to the church and River Frome, with a concentration of mature trees along the river. The Frome walkway forms part of the rear access to burgage plots which are enclosed by high stone boundary walls. The path has a quiet, secluded and informal character. Open land to the north of the river allows views to the church and the streamside vegetation.



Rear gardens and plots to properties form important part of setting to river and church

The burgage plots bordering the river on the north side of Broad Street and Hatters Lane are predominantly gardens. A number of developments close to the river such as the ATS garage and town hall car park have a detrimental visual impact on the river and views. Trees within the garden areas and along the river are important in filtering views of the more intensive uses.

To the north of the river

The land rising up from the river makes an important contribution to the setting of the historic settlement and Conservation Area.

Between Brook Street and the car-park the area comprises open land, field and groups of mature trees that border the north side of the River. This land provides an attractive setting for the Frome walkway and contributes to the rural character of Brook Street with the trees screening the car park.

The public car park which has been expanded westwards provides valuable parking for the town centre. It allows some views across to the church but has an increasingly urban character in views from Wickwar Road and the Frome Valley Walkway. The riverside trees are essential in limiting the impact of the car park on the setting of the church and by the river.



Brook Street- the grass verges, adjacent trees & open land contribute to the landscape character

Adjoining to the west and north on the skyline, just outside the Conservation Area, are the woods at Ridgewood, the open grassland and trees of the former quarry and cemetery which all contribute to the setting.

To the east of Wickwar Road, the Frome Walkway continues along the public open space adjoining the river. This attractive open space with groups of trees is just outside the Conservation Area but makes an important contribution to its setting. It has an open character allowing views to the river, the church and trees along the edge of the Conservation Area. Modern housing on rising land to the north would benefit from the softening impact of additional planting.

Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Retain informal rural character and ecological value of the River Frome and walkway, by preserving riverside trees, planting and open spaces which contribute to the setting to river and Frome walkway.*
- ▶ *Seek to ensure that development, uses and other changes do not exacerbate flood risk to the historic settlement.*
- ▶ *Seek to minimise impact of existing harmful development / uses*

6) Modern Development on the settlement edge.

Once set within a rural hinterland much of the land adjoining the town is now characterised by modern development. The form, scale and design of some development and uses have not respected the character or appearance of the historic town detracting from the setting and views in and out of the Conservation Area. In considering proposals, care is needed to ensure the identity of the historic town and particularly those areas on the edge of the historic core and on approaches to the settlement are not harmed by insensitive development or uses.

Existing stone boundary walls, trees and planting lessens the visual impact of some unsympathetic development and should be retained. Encouragement will be given to securing further enhancement measures or new uses which will have a beneficial impact on the Conservation Area and its setting.

Preservation and Enhancement Strategy

- ▶ *Proposals should not harm views or the setting of the Conservation Area.*
- ▶ *Seek enhancements to the “entrances” / approaches to the town.*
- ▶ *Protect existing trees, vegetation, stone walls and spaces that contribute to the character. Encourage sympathetic management and appropriate new planting.*
- ▶ *Secure new more appropriate uses or enhancements such as boundary or landscaping improvements or other mitigating measures to minimise the adverse impact of existing unsympathetic development and uses.*



Pleasant views of the River Frome are gained from the Frome Valley Walkway



Attractive setting provided by open space to east of Wickwar Road



Preserve local details and features which make an important contribution to the local character

What Happens Now?

This document was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document on the 23rd February 2009. It will be taken into account when assessing the merits of planning applications and other proposals in the area. Applicants will need to provide an assessment of the character to demonstrate how their proposals will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Those proposals, failing to give due weight to the guidance in this SPD, which have a harmful impact will be refused.

In preparing the document the views of the local residents, businesses and other interested parties were sought. Consultation on the draft document and enhancement strategy took place in August and September 2008 by way of an advertisement, publication on the council's website and circulation of the leaflet within the conservation area. Comments and proposed amendments to the document were subsequently reported to the Executive Councillor prior to adoption. (For details see Statement on Consultation Report - available from the Council).

The Council is keen to work with the local community to help preserve and enhance this special area. The strategy sets out ways we can help to achieve this. If you wish to help or have further suggestions - please let us know.

How to contact us

If you have any queries or suggestions
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This information can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audio tape. Please phone 01454 868004 if you need any of these or any other help to access Council services.