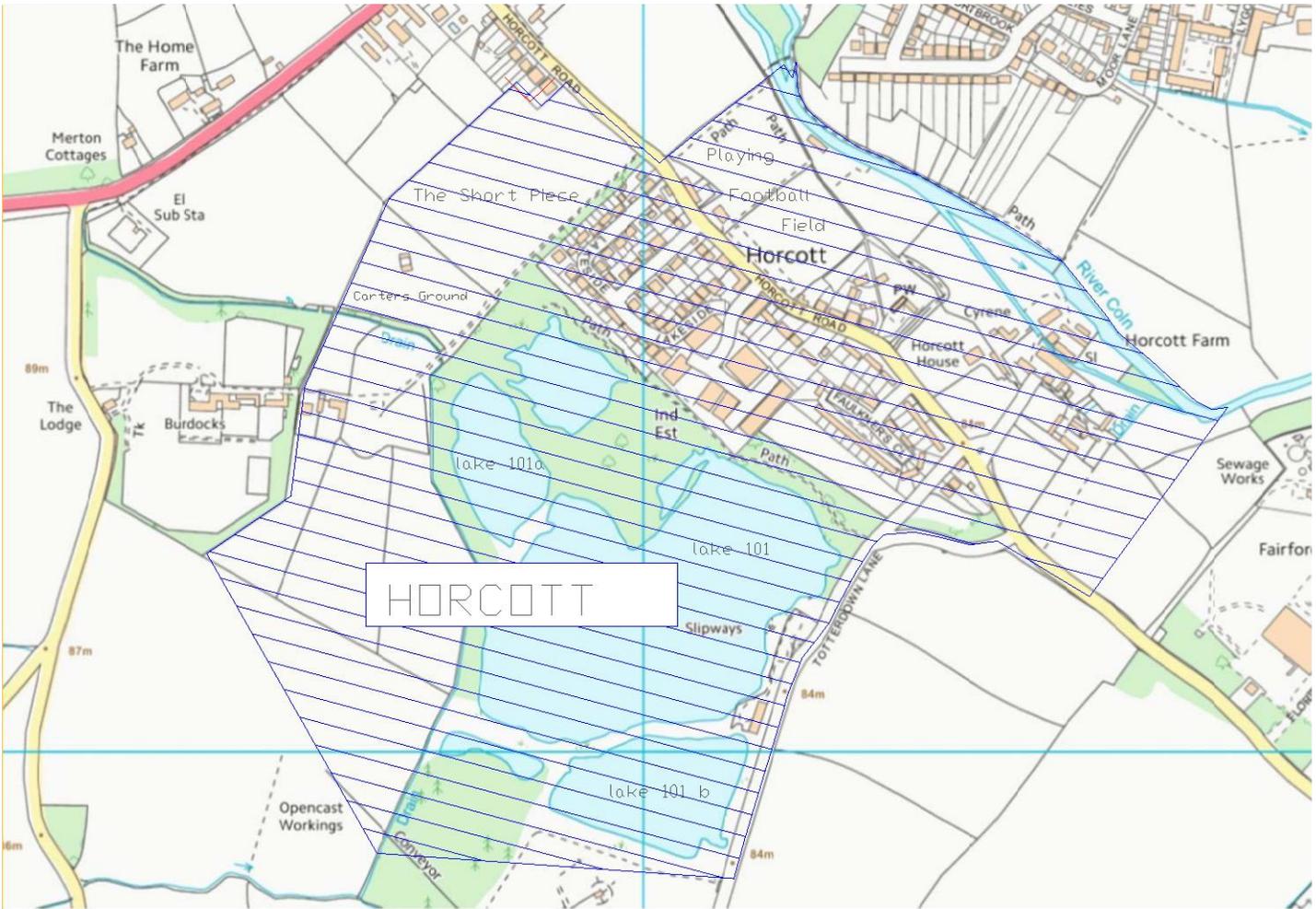
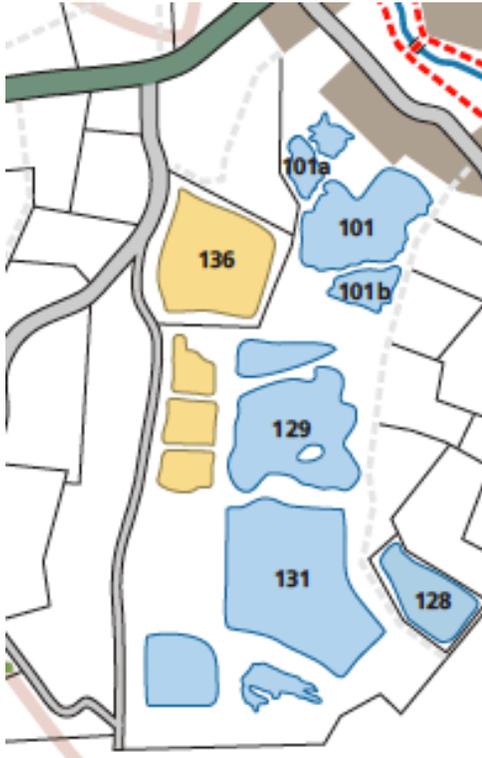


## 6.1 Horcott

See map below for Street Names. See Character Area Plan to see area boundary and relationship to other character areas



Date Created: 25-12-2016 | Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 415367 / 201088 | Scale: 1:10000 | © Crown copyright and c



6.1.1  
Horcott Lakes with Cotswold  
Water Park numbering

## 6.2 Layout

6.2.1 This area is divided into two by Horcott Road. To the east are generally the oldest buildings many of which are listed. To the west post WW2 construction. To the south are a series of lakes, created over many years by gravel extraction (now exhausted).

## 6.3 Topography

6.3.1 The area is generally flat with two catchments divided by Horcott Road; the first lies between the River Coln and Horcott Road, the second sloping gently down from Horcott Road to Horcott Lakes. At the edge of the settlement the fields rise to the south up Horcott Hill.



6.3.2 To the east of Horcott Road - Horcott House (lateC18th/  
the east



6.3.3 Horcott Farm access road to

## 6.4 Spaces

6.4.1 There are three distinct sub-areas in Horcott with different spatial types: agricultural, residential and industrial. The fields of Horcott Farm and Horcott House form the southern boundary of the area, the fields of The Mere, the northern boundary. The verges are generally wide and grassed between the footpath and the housing. The spaces are generally edged with hedges (FNP14 No.5) and/or low walls (Cotswold stone and brick).

6.4.2 The light industrial estate feels spacious and open with small green spaces at road junctions, wide footpaths and access roads, dominated by vehicles during working days. Faulkner's Close is built around a public central green space with small trees.

6.4.3 Travelling along the road, the most open areas are the Roman Catholic Church of St Thomas of Canterbury and presbytery grounds with their wide sweeping parking area to the front and a bench on the green verge beside the footpath. Further towards Fairford the road is lined on one side with open playing fields and a car park. Mere fields, Carters Ground and The Short Piece, (amongst others) provide a vital gap which separates Horcott from Fairford (FNP11).

6.4.4 Horcott Lakes<sup>1</sup> themselves are well used for fishing and local walkers (Fairford Town Council has a lease on a circular route around some of the lakes). Totterdown Lane, an old drove road, runs alongside all the lakes, offering spectacular views across the water, especially in the evening.

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<sup>1</sup> Horcott Lakes as used here refers only to Lakes 101,101a 101b, the lakes between Horcott itself and the Scout Hut. The lakes beyond, also Horcott Lakes, are currently inaccessible, visible only from Totterdown Lane (FNP22).



6.4.5 St Thomas' Catholic Church and Presbytery, Horcott Road

## 6.5 Roads/Streets/Routes

6.5.1 The whole area is accessed from Horcott Road which has a weight restriction of 18 tonnes between Totterdown Lane and the A417. The road has reasonably wide footpaths and verges, down either side in some places but on one side only in others, which may make navigation awkward for those with wheelchairs, pushchairs. Some of the more recent housing on Horcott Road has small front gardens but most houses lie within the cul-de-sacs. The industrial estate, also within a cul-de-sac, has wider roads and pavements in order to take the lorries which service the businesses.

6.5.2 There are several PROW footpaths: St Thomas' Roman Church to Waterloo Lane (in Fairford), Horcott Road to Dilly's Bridge, footpath through Horcott Farm, part of a route around the River Coln. There are permissive paths around Horcott Lakes accessed from Totterdown Lane and a footpath leading down from Horcott Road. Some of these are accessible to cyclists; those from Horcott Road to the riverside and through to the town centre are not."



6.5.3  
Horcott Road,  
travelling  
towards  
Fairford.  
NB Overhead  
services (FNP14  
No.17)

## 6.6 Green and Natural Features/Ecology

6.6.1 Horcott is surrounded by green spaces: Horcott Hill, Horcott Lakes, River Coln, Fairford-Horcott Local Gap (FNP11). To the east the view is primarily agricultural with fields, paddocks, playing fields, farmyards. The large gardens here are walled or fenced and clearly private (Horcott House, Old Schoolhouse) with long driveways (Horcott House, Roman Catholic Church, The Old Schoolhouse).

6.6.2 Most houses have both front and back gardens, often with hedges, fences or walls. Those nearest the lakes have views over fields and the water although the lake edges generally are heavily wooded.

6.6.3 A feature of Fairford is the lack of public trees and Horcott is no different. Whilst there are significant trees along the roadside (in the important Fairford-Horcott Local Gap in particular) they are largely on private land (FNP11).

6.6.4 NB Fairford-Horcott Local Gap is the designation attached to the green spaces between Fairford and Horcott. It is considered vital to maintain this gap in order to preserve the material integrity of Horcott as a separate settlement with its own history and character. The gap is particularly fragile at the Mere fields (Carters Ground and The Short Piece) where new buildings (eg. Fairford Gate South) are, literally, one field away from Horcott. Coln House School playing field and Fairford and Lechlade Youth Football Club are also crucial sections of the gap (FNP11 - see Milton End, Section 2.11, 2.12).

6.6.5 NB It is proposed that The Short Piece and Coln House School Playing Field (opposite The Short Piece in Milton End section) be designated Local Green Spaces (FNP10).

## 6.7 Landmarks

6.7.1 The distinctive features of Horcott are the farm, the larger buildings (including the industrial units), the Roman Catholic Church, presbytery and burial ground, and the high Cotswold stone walls to the east ie. the oldest part of the settlement. Colnside stands alone on the riverside, beyond the Fairford and Lechlade Youth Football Club playing fields.

6.7.2 Horcott Lakes are a well-known feature. Just beyond the Parish boundary, Horcott Hill itself is prominent on the skyline as is the 1944 water tower for the RAF Fairford (installed when the airbase was built in 1944).

## **6.8 Buildings and Details**

6.8.1 The hamlet of Horcott with a mill was originally centred on the River Coln at a ford; thus although today a cul-de-sac, originally this would have been a continuing route (FNP14 No.11) through the ford to the fields beyond ((Moor Farmhouse opposite is only 450m away). A farmhouse and other agricultural buildings, dating from early C18th, and new, traditionally built farm cottages are all still integral parts of a working farm.

6.8.2 To the northeast is a listed manor-style house, a C19th Roman Catholic church, presbytery and old schoolhouse (now a private home). These latter are accessed from the Horcott Road. The farm and its associated buildings, including a more recently built private bungalow (Cyrene) are accessed via cul-de-sacs off the main farm access track.

6.8.3 Further north, towards Fairford, is a terrace of C18th agricultural labourers' cottages, Horcott Cottages (FNP14 No.1), which follow the line of the road. Between these older buildings is a late 1990s small estate of large 'executive-style' houses which include some Georgian style features, presumably referencing other buildings in Fairford; these are accessed from a cul-de-sac, and are on the site of the C19th Carriers Arms Public House. Elsewhere decorative fascia boards are a feature (Belton, Horcott Road).

6.8.4 The main growth of the hamlet occurred during WW2. Navvies came to build the runway for the new airfield and were housed in huts at the foot of Horcott Hill. At the end of the war the huts were demolished and council housing was provided for those workers who remained. Over the next decade or so more public housing was built. Faulkner's Close and Lakeside are housing developments arranged as cul-de-sacs with a combination of bungalows (a few of which have since been converted to 1.5 storey buildings) and 2-storey buildings.

6.8.5 Between Faulkner's Close and Lakeside (both 1960s) is the Horcott Industrial Estate which consists of low-level factory Class B1 industrial units (creating 27 business spaces) which now house a range of businesses from a paperback book distribution centre to an MOT garage. This is another cul-de-sac arrangement. Apart from the barns and the modern executive homes, all housing in Horcott has a maximum of 2 storeys only.

6.8.6 Still in the parish but over a kilometre down Totterdown Lane is a small group of renovated, enlarged old farm buildings converted to residential use. The White House, one of the older houses in Horcott, marks the entrance to Totterdown Lane from Horcott Road.

## **6.9 Land Uses**

6.9.1 The land uses are housing, agriculture and equestrian, recreation (playing fields and Horcott Lakes) and light industrial. Many residents work from home in this part of Fairford (electrician, general builder, roofing etc.)

## **6.10 Views**

6.10.1 Winter (and summer, but particularly lovely in the winter) views of St Mary's Church from across the playing fields.

6.10.2 From Horcott Road looking towards Horcott House paddocks, Horcott Farm and Horcott Hill.

6.10.3 Views across the Horcott Lakes at all points including views from the permissive paths, Totterdown Lane and Lakeside.

6.10.4 Views back from Horcott Lakes to Horcott Hill.

6.10.5 Views from Horcott Farm and the river PROW north and east across the river.

6.10.6 View across The Short Piece towards the Conservation Area (below).



6.10.7 Looking across The Short Piece from near PROW to Horcott Lakes



### 6.10.8

'Views' references  
 NB NOT viewpoints but the  
 general locations mentioned in  
 6.10

1. St Mary's Church
  2. Coln House School Playing Field
  3. Horcott House paddocks
  4. Horcott Farm
  5. Horcott Lakes
  6. Totterdown Lane
  7. Lakeside
  8. The Short Piece
- Conservation Area: green line  
 Horcott Hill: see 2.10.6

### 6.11 Summary Table for Area 5: Horcott

Characteristic	Character Area Detail
Layout	Essentially linear. Horcott Road is the spine which links all buildings in a series of cul-de-sacs, some recent, others dating back into the centuries, linking the road with the river. To the east, large building plots, open ground, long drives, stone walls, hedges, fenced paddocks. To the west, medium sized building plots, light industrial sheds, hedges, grass verges.
Land uses	Residential, agricultural, equestrian, light industrial, self-employed working from homes.
Building scale, appearance	Max. 2 storeys even in the listed buildings. Highest are agricultural barns and the church. Newer houses are a good mix of bungalows, semi-detached and detached. Materials are largely Cotswold stone, yellow brick, render.
Green features	Hedges, trees and grass verges (FNP14 No.5). Much of Horcott overlooks playing fields and the river to the east, and lakes to the west. Green area, grass and trees in

	the middle of Faulkner's Close. Fields and playing fields forming a gap between Horcott and Fairford (FNP11)
Open space	Horcott Lakes, playing fields, river walks, PROW through fields and garden. Mere fields (Carters Ground and The Short Piece) and Coln House School playing fields form a key part of the Fairford-Horcott Local Gap (Fairford Neighbourhood Plan FNP11 <sup>2</sup> ) as do the Fairford and Lechlade Youth Football Club grounds.
Landmarks	Horcott House, St Thomas' Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery

## 6.12 Summary Comments

6.12.1 Horcott is a distinct settlement with many of the features of an attractive small village (although the public house, The Carriers Arms, was lost in the 1990s): a wide range of housing styles, sizes, ages, values; playing fields, church, access to the river and lakes; employment opportunities in the light industrial estate. There is a good mix of age ranges in the buildings and the area is a safe place for children.

6.12.2 One of the problems is the distance from Horcott to the facilities in Fairford; elderly residents in particular can find it a long way to walk with a heavy shopping load. It might be worth considering supporting a small 'village' shop/sandwich bar in the industrial estate.

6.12.3 A second issue is the presence of large lorries on the road accessing the industrial estate. Signposting from the industrial estate is inadequate.

6.12.4 The importance of the fields and playing fields which separate Horcott from its neighbouring, larger settlement is recognised in the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan policy FNP11, Protecting the Fairford – Horcott Local Gap. The significance of the gap and its importance to local Horcott residents cannot be sufficiently strongly emphasised.

6.12.5 Unsightly overhead services interrupt the street scene. Wherever possible all efforts should be made to relocate these underground should the opportunity arise (FNP14 No.17).

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<sup>2</sup> The full justification for the Fairford-Horcott Local Gap FNP13 is to be found in the Fairford Neighbourhood Plan supporting document, 'Landscape and Local Green Space Study: Local Gaps'



6.12.6 Horcott House looking from Horcott Road across the horse paddock to the southeast façade of the house

### 6.13 Horcott Listed Buildings and other selected HER records<sup>3</sup>

Address	Date	HER reference number/s
Horcott Farmhouse, Horcott Lane	Early C18th, altered early C19th	43937
Horcott House, Horcott Lane	Late C18th / early C19th	43938
Bailiff's Cottage, Horcott Farm	Late C17th	43939
Presbytery of Roman Catholic Church of St Thomas of Canterbury	c. 1865	43922
Roman Catholic Church of St Thomas of Canterbury	1845	8272
Site of Carriers Arms, Horcott Road – not listed		17217
Field barn and storage shed – not listed		12840
Horcott Farm Mill and assoc. earthworks (at Cyrene) – not listed		15676
Horcott Mill – not listed		3211
Land off Horcott Road – not listed		48671
Water Tower, Horcott Hill – not listed		19908

<sup>3</sup> This list has been created using the Historic England list of listed buildings: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> and the Gloucestershire County Council Historic Environment Record [http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results\\_Application.aspx?resourceID=108](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Application.aspx?resourceID=108). For definitive details on individual buildings, please refer to the Historic England and the Gloucestershire Heritage Environment Record information.

## 7.1 Conclusion

7.1.1 The valley that descends to the bend of the River Coln at Fairford/Horcott has been inhabited by homo sapiens for, literally, thousands of years. The two fords, the proximity to the River Thames, the fertility of the land as the high ground of the 'wolds' descend and give way to the gravel of the Thames basin - all have played their parts in the development of the settlement, and, crucially, continue to be features which affect the town today. The river crossing is a pinch-point on a trunk road; rain falling in Withington higher in the water catchment area drains down through fields and the river to this spot<sup>4</sup>; the geological features give rise to variations in water-table levels; routes criss-cross the landscape as paths, drove roads and lanes, find their meeting points in or near the town.

7.1.2 This is an ancient landscape, with a long and rich history about which discoveries are still being made. It was only 2013 when the skull, followed by the skeleton, of an 18-24 year old Sub-Saharan African woman was found by children playing in the River Coln near Cutler's Ford<sup>5</sup>. The bones were dated between 896AD – 1025AD ie. some time between Alfred the Great and King Canute.

7.1.3 The C15th Church of St Mary's is one of the most important parish churches in England; visitor numbers are increasing, with up to 20,000 last year. The town centre is, with only a couple of exceptions, Georgian (to the east). To the west it is largely a century or so older, and to the north is open parkland, a rare feature in any town centre. The road through the town is lined, on both sides of the river, with listed buildings, one of which still has a doorway dating back to the time of the Peasants' Revolt and the Black Death. The town contains several examples of agricultural workers' cottages dating back a hundred and fifty to two hundred years, and these together with the range of C20th council housing, demonstrate a changing pattern of housing for workers over the centuries. Some of the tenant farms for Fairford Park have gone but the patterns of their footprint remain both in the conversion of many agricultural buildings and in the productive fields and meadows within and around the town. Above all, this is a rural community which is deeply connected with the landscape within which it sits.

7.1.4 Since the Second World War there has been a tremendous growth in building. In addition a huge volume of gravel has been extracted and there has been a massive loss of facilities of all kinds in the town which has led to the impoverishment of culture and community. During this time there has also been a decline in understanding of the geography and other important aspects of the town on the part of the authorities. Flooding incidents have occurred with unprecedented frequency, even after flood alleviation measures were installed. The impact of so much gravel extraction and increased urbanisation has never been investigated and the town's infrastructure is showing ever-increasing strain. The recent losses of the police station and the bank are cases in point.

## 7.2 Dangers

7.2.1 The ruination and potential loss of ancient Drove Roads. Fairford is particularly rich in these wide roads and pathways but insensitive tarmacking, cutting into the verge heedlessly, traffic riding up onto

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<sup>4</sup> A flood alleviation scheme was installed in 2014. See FNP7 for outstanding issues.

<sup>5</sup> Anyone following 'The Last Kingdom' series by Bernard Cornwell (now a BBC TV series) might be interested to know that Fairford is the manor gifted to Uhtred by King Alfred on his deathbed, and the presence of such a woman in Fairford is imagined. All in the sixth book of the series, 'The Death of Kings' 2011 (before the discovery of the skeleton). The attribution of this skeleton is unverified and has yet to be formally confirmed and included in County Records.

verges etc. is damaging them. Drove roads are ideal routes for sustainable travel and so vital for a sustainable C21st future.

7.2.2 Unfortunately, the major loss to archaeology in the parish was to gravel extraction before 1990. Since then, full in-depth archaeological excavations with full recording of finds has been standard practice before gravel extraction. In the case of recent housing sites pre-determination surveys and evaluations have resulted in short reports. Archaeological post-excavation is a very protracted process and full reports can take many years to prepare – well after the site in question has been built upon. Ideally, the Council for British Archaeology Best Practice advice should be followed and where there is evidence of potentially valuable findings, the site should be left untouched and any evidence left in the ground for future generations.

7.2.3 Loss or damage to listed and other historic buildings. The effect of increasingly heavy traffic through the centre of town (lined with listed buildings which sit right on the pavement) has a detrimental effect on the structures of these old buildings. The pollution caused by exhausts eats into the soft Cotswold stone of the fabric of the buildings.

7.2.4 Loss of characteristic local stone colour. The stone of the southern Cotswolds is the light white/cream coloured stone – the butter yellow belongs to the north Cotswolds. Yet, the main approach into Fairford from the west is now lined with a butter yellow Cotswold stone wall (FNP16 No.3), and the colour of stone in the Keble Fields development to the east is inappropriately yellow.

7.2.5 Loss of listed tombstones. Those in St Mary's Churchyard, and in Fairford United Churchyard are urgently in need of conservation.

7.2.6 Insensitive development which fails to knit in with the rest of the town. This is not simply a question of style (covered in the Cotswold Design Code) but is, literally, a question of knitting in with paths and networks of routes around the town as well as compatibility with the particular location in the town, in terms of style and layout. As has been shown, Fairford was originally, and remains, a web of interlinking routes (paths, roads, shared surfaces etc.) which hold the town together. The current predilection for single point entry/exit cul-de-sacs can lead to inward-looking communities, cut off from the rest of the town. Larger developments should not only link in with existing pathways but should create more of their own.

7.2.7 One of the characteristics of Fairford/Horcott, like many other Cotswold towns and villages, are the open spaces (fields, parks, large gardens, greens) which are found throughout the town. These should not be regarded as opportunities for development but preserved wherever possible.

### **7.3 Hopes**

7.3.1 The archaeology and history of the valley will be secured, preferably left undisturbed in the ground, or, where totally unavoidable, excavated fully and thoroughly.

7.3.2 Residents and visitors to Fairford/Horcott will have a greater sense of the long and deep history of the place, and value it accordingly.

7.3.3 Residents and visitors to Fairford/Horcott will have a more detailed appreciation of the beauty and distinctiveness of the town.

7.3.4 Characteristic and valuable features of the townscape will be preserved and enhanced.

7.3.5 Problematic issues which have been identified will be remedied over time.

7.3.6 Community cohesion will be encouraged.

7.3.7 Opportunities for appropriate tourism, an important source of prosperity for the town, will be enhanced.

