

Cholsey Parish Council



Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan

Green Infrastructure Network

Extract from South and Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy
Consultation Draft – March 2017

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Strategic Area: Wallingford

Description

The Wallingford Strategic Area follows the route of the River Thames as it forges a narrow valley at Goring before opening out onto a lowland plateau towards Wallingford. The southern part of the area is deeply influenced by the Chilterns and Berkshire Downs ridge line, through which the River Thames passes. Large areas of woodland along the ridge line to the south open out into large-scale rolling farmland to the north

Traditionally an important transport route between Reading and Oxford, settlements developed at key crossing points of the River Thames and along adjacent roads and railway. The area encompasses the market town of Wallingford and the large villages of Benson, Blewbury, Crowmarsh Gifford, Cholsey, Woodcote and Goring. Today, the area is still vital to the local transport network and there is pressure for development to extend existing settlements.

The area contains a number of biodiversity designations. Particularly to the south on the edge of the Chilterns these include Hartslock Wood SAC. Little Wittenham SAC is to the north close to several Scheduled Ancient Monuments clustered around Dorchester.

The Ridgeway crosses through the southern part of the area and the Thames Path follows the River Thames. Apart from these national trails, PRoWs are relatively limited within the rolling farmland to the north and more numerous to the south. Access to nature is however enhanced by the large areas of land around Wittenham Clumps owned by the Earth Trust, and National Trust land located to the east of the River Thames near Goring, just outside the districts.

In the northern part of the area, there are few crossing points across the River Thames resulting in severance

Existing Contribution to GI Objectives

The Strategic Area is an attractive area to live and has good connections with the major employment centres of Oxford, Didcot and Reading. Agriculture and woodland management also contribute to the area, increasing economic prosperity demonstrated by the low levels of income deprivation.

Biodiversity is rich, with a range of habitats including deciduous woodland and grassland of the southern Chilterns, to alluvial meadowlands along the River Thames. Access to nature is encouraged with a network of Public Rights of Way within the Chilterns and around major settlements.

The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) analysis has shown access to all three size levels, although there are no 20ha or 100ha sites within the catchment of Blewbury, yet the Ridgeway to the south provides a major focus for access.

In general, the existing Green Infrastructure (GI) network meet many of the GI objectives, however, further development will place a strain on these GI assets.

Opportunities for Enhanced Contribution to GI Objectives

Support sustainable economic growth:

- integrate GI into new developments and provide sustainable modes of transport which connect between key settlements and commuter routes. Form links to railway stations at Cholsey, Goring and Didcot (in Strategic Area 4); and
- explore and support opportunities to improve connectivity across the River Thames

Improve health and well-being:

- although the ANGSt analysis has shown the majority of the Strategic GI Area has reasonable provision of Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG), to ensure all new developments incorporate footpath and cycle connections
- to the existing GI assets creating a network of green spaces and green corridors through the area; and
- improve access to 20ha ANG sites and above from Cholsey , in particular seek to maximise opportunities to create footpath and cycle connections with the Ridgeway

Increase biodiversity and access to nature:

- expand the diversity of habitats and facilities at Wittenham Clumps and strengthen links with the River Thames corridor, including the Thames Path; and
- maintain and protect the habitats within the North Wessex Downs AONB and improve access to the Ridgeway

Adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change:

- protect the catchment of the River Thames in any development proposals and maintain flood capacity.

Reinforce and/or enhance local character:

- contribute to the provision of new multifunctional public green space, or the enhancement of the quality or accessibility of existing green space within or surrounding new development, within the larger settlements of Wallingford, Cholsey and Goring.

Accessible Natural Green space are identified for Cholsey and neighbouring villages as summarised in Table 1 below:

Settlement	2ha+ site within 300m	20ha+ site within 2km	100ha+ site within 5km
Cholsey	Partial Deficit	No Deficit	Deficit
Wallingford	Partial Deficit	No Deficit	No Deficit
Crowmarsh Gifford	Partial Deficit	No Deficit	No Deficit
Benson	Partial Deficit	No Deficit	No Deficit

Cholsey: Green Infrastructure Network

Cholsey is a larger village in the west of South Oxfordshire District, located to the west of the River Thames approximately 3km south of Wallingford.

Settlement Profile:

The population of Cholsey in 2011 was 3,457¹. The village has a primary school, village halls and several shops. It has a good bus connection to Wallingford, a railway station and good road links to the local towns. Cholsey exhibits low levels of deprivation, for income and health overall. Sports participation is relatively high, in the region of 45-55%².

Landscape Character Context³:

The following landscape types adjoin Cholsey:

- lowland village farmlands
- alluvial lowlands

The landscape adjoining Cholsey is flat or gently undulating. Land cover is dominated by agriculture, comprising of medium to large sized, broadly regular fields, mostly of arable, with patchy hedgerow networks. However, an area north of the village has smaller, mostly pastoral fields. There are few areas of woodland, plantation and scrub.

¹<http://www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk> Accessed Dec 2016

²See Figure 3

³OWLS: Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study (2004)

Key Green Infrastructure Assets

Promoted Routes

See Figure 2

Public Open Space

See Figure 2

Wildlife Sites

See Figure 2

Accessible Natural Greenspace Analysis⁴

Cholsey is generally well served by accessible natural green space sites of 2-20ha and 20-100ha, the latter by means of the Thames Path and Ridgeway National Trails. However, as these are located outside the village there is a deficit in access to these from the centre. Cholsey lacks a site over 100ha within 5km of the village.

Conservation Target Areas⁵

The Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area (CTA) is the only CTA within 1km of Cholsey. This CTA includes fen, swamp and reedbed (South Stoke Marsh and Cholsey Marsh), wet woodland (several small areas) and wet grassland (Cholsey Marsh and fields near Wallingford). The following Oxfordshire BAP Targets are associated with the CTA:

- lowland fen, reedbed (and swamp) – management
- wet woodland - management
- floodplain grazing marsh – management (and potential to extend the area)

Habitat Regulations Assessment⁶

The HRA concluded that adverse effects of air pollution, changes in hydrology and increased recreational pressure on European sites, as a result of new residential development, are possible. The provision of sustainable transport links, water efficiency measures and alternative accessible natural green space/green infrastructure in relation to any new development(s) are recommended as mitigation.

⁴ See <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Draft%20Green%20Infrastructure%20Strategy%20-%20Part%201.pdf> Section 2.7

⁵ <http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/> Accessed Dec 2016

⁶Habitats Regulations Assessment for South Oxfordshire District Council, 2015. LUC for South Oxfordshire District Council

Green Infrastructure Opportunities

- retain, enhance and manage the existing green infrastructure assets in and around the village
- create and maintain new accessible natural green space, including a site greater than 100ha within 5km of the village to address a deficit in provision
- create and maintain new accessible natural green spaces to meet the needs of the communities in planned new developments to the east and north-west the village, for example: to provide a green corridor between the village and the River Thames, alongside rights of way and incorporating existing features such as hedgerows and trees
- create and maintain new accessible natural green space to mitigate potential impacts of residential development on European Sites, especially Hartslock Wood and Little Wittenham SACs
- develop and enhance recreational access links between existing and new green infrastructure assets, including new planned developments, for example: eastwards to the River Thames and across the railway to the west
- explore opportunities for positive management of wetland habitats within the CTA to meet Oxfordshire BAP Targets
- planned new development should include landscape planting, for example: along boundaries, to integrate the development into the wider landscape and to soften its visual impact

Fig 1. Green Infrastructure Network - Strategic Corridors and Links

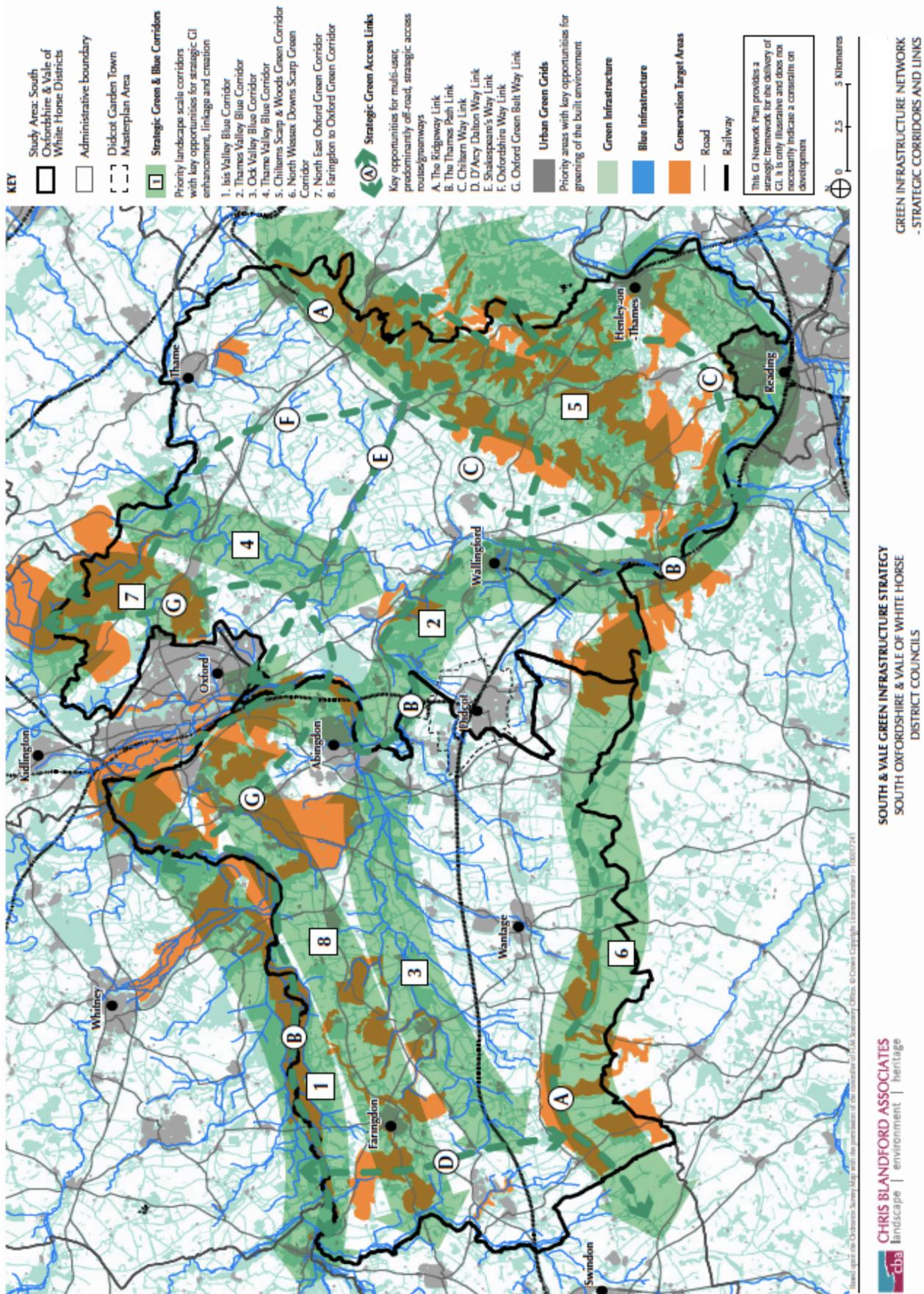


Fig 2. Cholsey - Green Infrastructure Network

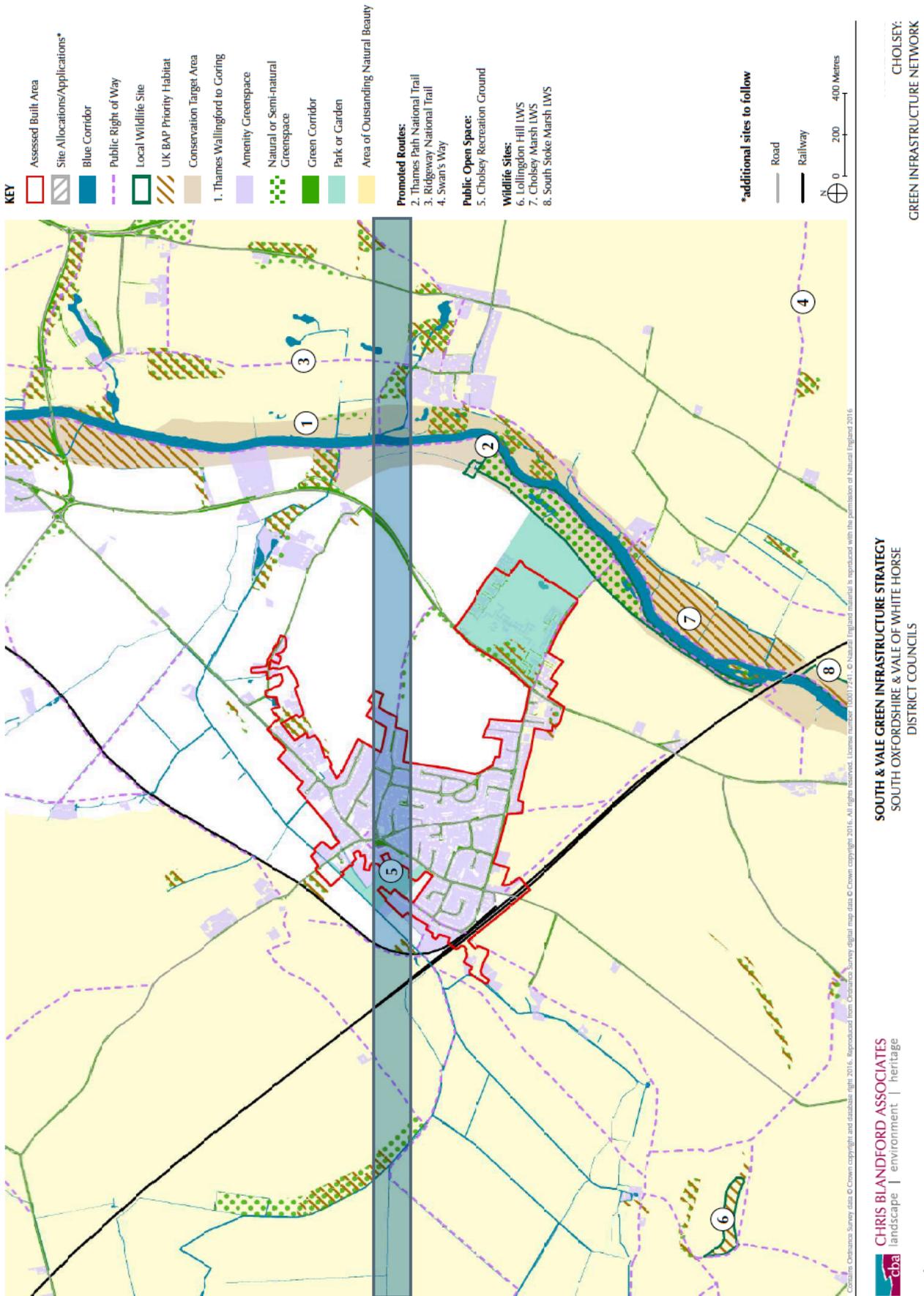
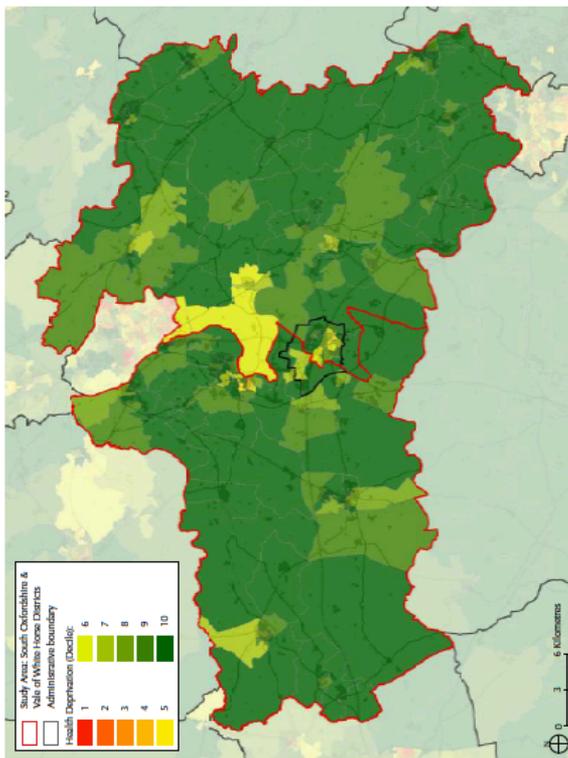
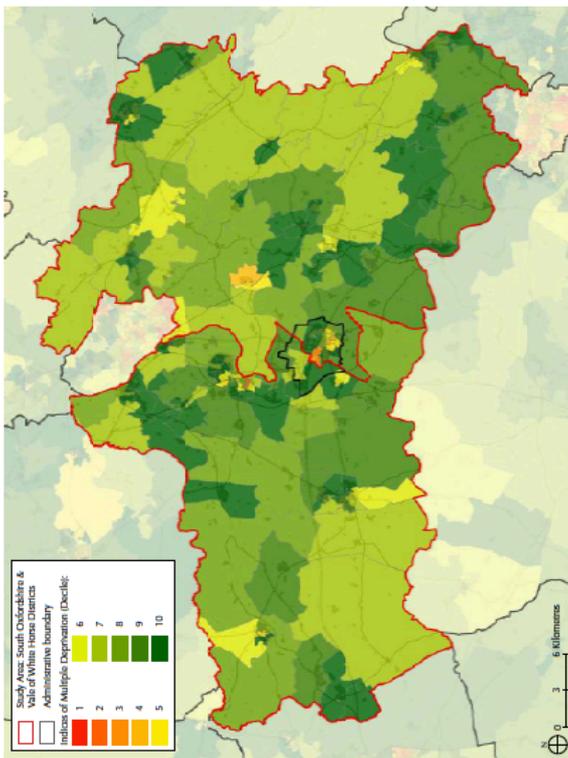
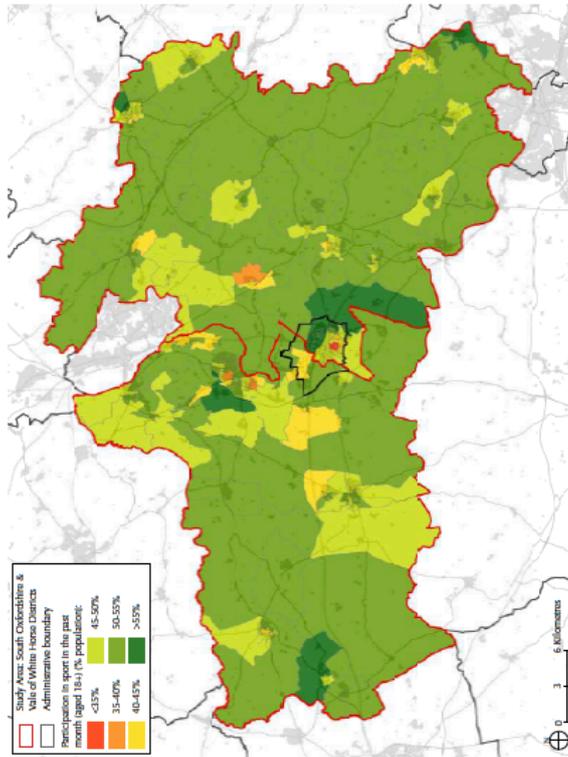
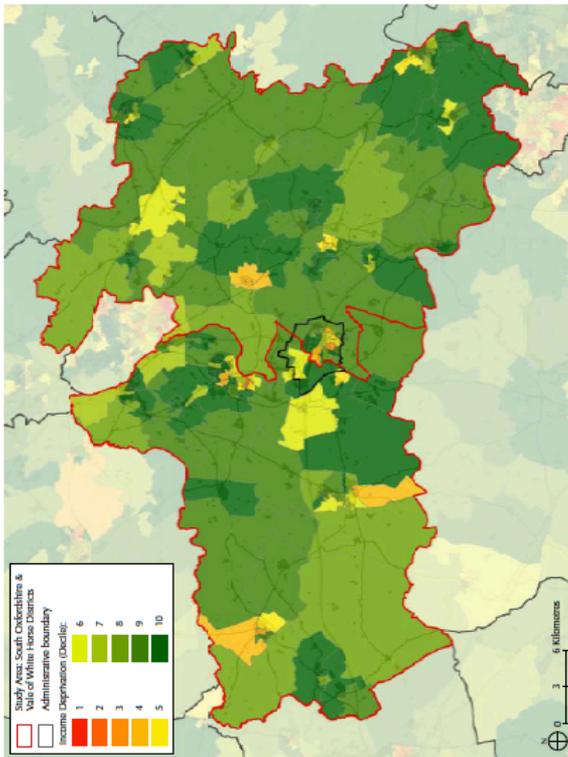


Fig 3. Indicators of Deprivation



If you wish to raise any queries regarding this document or what it includes, please contact the Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan Team using the details below:

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The Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan Team

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