



Abingdon-on-Thames
Neighbourhood Plan

PLACE Analysis

for a neighbourhood plan

The purpose of this download is to help you create a map of elements that, when used together, show the character of your place. For this analysis, we are defining PLACE as Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Culture & Engineering.

Through this activity, you can start to establish what makes your place special, the qualities you want to build on and keep and what doesn't work — the things you would like to change. This activity will provide an insight into the way the design of the built environment needs to be considered as part of the neighbourhood plan process. Crucially, your research will inform future choices the steering group make about the focus of the neighbourhood plan.

Your neighbourhood plan potentially represents a once in a generation opportunity to shape the future of the neighbourhood and its surroundings. A question we need to ask ourselves is this: If sites were to come forward for new development, or sites for redevelopment and improvement were to be identified, what would be the right design response? What will your community consider good planning and good design? Only once we can answer this question, can we start to prepare the policies to be included in your plan.

Working in teams of five, each team member will be responsible for either Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Culture or Engineering. Each team of five will undertake a critical analysis of a specific area and its immediate surroundings. As you walk try to remain open-minded. Read through the prompts before you start and think about how to annotate the map. It important to undertake this task without any specific design proposals in mind.

LANDSCAPE

This download is for considering landscape and ecology issues only. We ask that when you are out on site — either in the real world or online — you focus your observations around the prompts provided for this aspect only. You can make notes directly onto a map and in the spaces provided in this download.

Once the audit for your area is completed, it can be used to produce a complete map that registers the full complexity of the area, allowing, for example, architectural elements to be in conversation with engineering and landscape or culture. This whole picture will inform the neighbourhood plan and enable you to begin a full analysis of the specific issues you want to focus on.

Please record your field notes. There follows some prompts and ideas for you to consider. These prompts are by no means exhaustive. You will no doubt have your own ideas too.

L1. As you walk try to notice any longer distance views looking from the urban centre out to the landscape? Where are these from and what significance do they have? *Mark these views on the map indicating where you are standing and the direction of the view. Annotate anything you know about this view below.*

L2. Where are the nearest parks or other green and open spaces?
Note down on the map where the parks and open spaces are and the quality of these spaces — what can you do here? (e.g walk, play football, fly a kite, explore an urban wild space etc)

L3. Make an audit of how many public green spaces there are in this area.

L4. What are green spaces currently used for? *Note down your thoughts on the map and include your observations of how public green space is used, this might include seasonal variations (e.g. sunbathing, picnics, park runs etc) or social uses (e.g. parents and children meeting at the playground)*

L5. How do these green spaces connect? Is it possible, for example to walk into the centre using only greenways and footpaths? Does the area and its surroundings have the beginnings of any green corridors (either for people and/or wildlife) along natural features or streets and roads? Could these corridors be extended or strengthened? *Note these routes, or potential routes, on the map.*

L6. Can you make any comment on biodiversity? For example parks with wild areas, log piles or communities of gardeners creating opportunities for biodiversity. *Note your thoughts below.*

L7. Are there any nearby watercourses, either above ground or underground in pipes or culverts? *Note these down on the map.*

L8. As you walk, look for tree cover. Are there any shelter belts? These could include trees or other planting that help create a more comfortable micro-climate. *Note down these areas on the map.*

L9. Are there any street trees nearby? Make observations about the trees you see — are they beautiful, shady, sheltering, screening, damaged, sick or overgrown?

Note the location of these trees on the map.

L10. Note any streets or routes that could accommodate more trees in the future. *Note the location of these trees on the map.*

L11. Look for trees, shrubs, flowers, grass, planters, hanging baskets. Are gardens a haven for wildlife or used for car parking? *Note below your thoughts about the ecology of the area you are walking in.*

L12. Do any parts of this site lend themselves to a productive landscape for food growing? Where are the nearest allotments? *Note down on the map any allotments you notice or potential growing space.*

L13. Are there any significant hedgerows? If so, start to think about how they could be retained and incorporated successfully into any future redevelopment. *Note down on the map where these are.*

L14. Are there any areas that could be used to form small-scale nature reserves? *Note down on the map where these could be located.*