

Village Design Statement Validation Checklist	
Village Design Statement for:	The Altons
(i) Does the VDS describe the distinctive character of the village and the surrounding countryside?	The VDS presents the Altons as five separate character zones, as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal, and goes on to describe these character zones (see section entitled “The Built Environment”). The VDS also describes how agricultural practice has influenced the local environment (see section entitled “Farming”). The Wildlife and Conservation section describes how there are four distinct areas within Alton Parish and goes on to describe these areas, which all contribute towards the character of the Parish and the surrounding countryside.
(ii) Does the VDS show how character can be identified at three levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the landscape setting of the village 	<p>The section entitled “The Setting” describes how The Altons are set amidst highly productive arable farmlands which dominate the immediate surroundings. This provides for many unobstructed views to the chalk escarpment of the Pewsey Downs to the north including that to the Alton White Horse.</p> <p>Alton Barnes and Alton Priors are separated by a natural spring and stream which is one of the headwaters of the River Avon that runs south towards Salisbury. The permanent pasture around the spring forms a central green core between the two villages.</p> <p>The whole area is part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and includes a National Nature Reserve and SSSI of international importance on the downland. The area is traversed by the Ridgeway and there are many ancient archaeological sites on the surrounding hills.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the shape of the settlement 	The map in the section entitled “The Built Environment” illustrates the shape of The Altons. This section goes on to describe how most of the properties are well-spaced with large spaces and gardens between them.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature of the buildings themselves 	<p>The section entitled “The Built Environment” introduces five different areas taken from the Alton Conservation Area Appraisal. This section then goes on to describe each of these areas, including reference to the nature of the buildings themselves. Under the section entitled “Planning and future developments”, typical features of buildings in the villages are described, including wheat thatch, modern thatch and arched windows.</p>
<p>(iii) Does the VDS draw up design principles based on the distinctive local character?</p>	<p>Throughout the VDS, a detailed description of the local character of The Altons is provided. Design principles are then provided throughout the document based on this character. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section 2 “The Built Environment” draws out design principles based on the distinctive local character of Alton Priors and Alton Barnes, which are characterised by “well-spaced properties in a largely peaceful rural setting”. - Section 4 “Business and Tourism” summarises that “any tourist development within The Altons must be sustainable and proportionate to the inherently rural nature of the small villages and be respectful of the fact that this is a Conservation Area and AONB.” - Section 7 “Planning and Future Developments”- provides examples of existing typical design features in the villages and advises that new buildings should use some of the best design features and material found in the villages.
<p>(iv) Does the VDS work in partnership with the local planning authority in the context of existing local planning policy and influence future policies.</p>	<p>The introduction explains that (the former) Kennet District Council was contacted at various stages in the production of the VDS for help and advice. The VDS recognises that any development must conform to the current statutory development plan.</p>

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(v) Has the VDS been developed, researched, written and edited by local people? Is it representative of the views of the village as a whole? Has the process involved a wide section of the village community in its production?	The Introduction explains that in 2007 a group of volunteers independent from the Parish Council produced a questionnaire to ascertain the views of the local residents about the future of The Altons. Every property was provided with a questionnaire to complete. Replies were collected and analysed. Members of the community with specific expertise or interests were asked to contribute key sections and the initial draft of the VDS was passed to the Parish Council for comment.
Overall Conclusions:	It is considered that the VDS is fit for purpose and complies with the validation criteria.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Village Design Statement for The Altons be approved as a material consideration for the purposes of development management.