



LONG WITTENHAM
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2017 to 2033



Submission
28/2/17

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Neighbourhood Planning.....	4
1.2 Long Wittenham: history and situation.....	4
1.3 The parish today.....	5
1.4 Our Challenges.....	5
1.5 Report purpose and structure.....	7
2. Strategy and Objectives	8
2.1 Neighbourhood Plan Strategy.....	8
2.2 Village strategy.....	9
2.3 Aims and objectives.....	12
3. Neighbourhood Plan process	13
3.1 Designation.....	13
3.2 Scoping and evidence gathering.....	14
3.3 Community engagement.....	14
3.4 Testing options.....	14
3.5 Draft Plan creation.....	15
3.6 Submission and Examination.....	15
4. Policies	16
4.1 Background.....	16
4.2 Community Hub.....	16
4.3 Community Infrastructure Levy.....	19
4.4 Dwelling mix.....	20
4.5 Heritage and Design.....	21
4.7 Car Parking.....	23
4.8 Ecologically sensitive areas.....	25
4. Implementation and monitoring	27
4.1 Implementation.....	27
4.2 Monitoring.....	27
Appendix 1 Evidence base	28
Appendix 2 Village Character Assessment	28
Appendix 3 Project list for CIL funding	29
Appendix 4 Acronyms and technical terms	31

Foreword

I am very proud to be able to write an introduction to our first Neighbourhood Development Plan.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan gives residents the opportunity to identify how they would like the village to develop over the next 15 years and gives the Parish Council and District Council additional control over any planning applications that are proposed.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been drafted to run in parallel with the new Local Plan for South Oxfordshire until 2033.

Our plan started life several years ago with the excellent work done by the Wittenham Vision group. With changes to Planning law in 2011 the Parish Council decided to embark on our NDP in 2014. It has been a massive commitment largely undertaken by volunteers on the Steering Group which has been very ably chaired by Peter Rose. The Steering Group was drawn from the various organisations (including the Head Teacher and Governors of the school), clubs and interest groups around the village to make sure it was truly representative. We have also held many consultation events and carried out a village survey.

I commend the plan to you and ask for your support when it comes to voting in the Village Referendum.

Steve Brown

Chair, Long Wittenham Parish Council

February 2017



1. Introduction

1.1 Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of planning policy giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level.

South Oxfordshire District Council approved our application to carry out a neighbourhood plan in October 2014. The Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by a steering group including parish councillors and community volunteers with support from Community First Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire District Council.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) sets out a plan for a sustainable future for the village, taking into account the views and needs of the residents. The Neighbourhood Plan reflects community comments and concerns that emerged from consultation and is based on a substantial evidence base (see Appendices 1-5). The Plan policies are compatible with the Development Plan for the District (the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012, saved Policies from the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (2006)) and meet the community's aim of ensuring that Long Wittenham continues to thrive, whilst retaining its unique and distinctive character and to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations of residents. The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been drafted to run in parallel with the new Local Plan for South Oxfordshire until 2033.

Once the Plan has been made (following a successful referendum) the Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan will form part of South Oxfordshire District's Development Plan. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan will have weight in deciding where any development should take place and the type and character of the development.

1.2 Long Wittenham: history and situation

Long Wittenham is a small village and civil parish about 3 miles north of Didcot and 3.5 miles south-east of Abingdon. Long Wittenham is Saxon in origin and is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The village was established in the fifth century and even before that there were people living in the area. Until very recently farming was the main occupation in the village, mostly the growing of crops – wheat, oats, barley and rye. Animals were also kept but mainly to support the crops; oxen to pull the ploughs and sheep to fertilise the fields.

The population of Long Wittenham was 875 people in 2011 living in 325 houses. Just under 22% were children under 16 (above the 18% average for England), just under 63% were working age adults (65% England) and just under 16% over 65 years (compared with 16% England). Three-quarters (76% of adults aged 16-74 are economically active (69% England). 10% of the working age population travel 40km or more to work, compared to 4.9% on average across England and 8% work from home (3.5% England).¹

¹ See Appendix 1 Evidence Base for details.

The village rests inside a loop in the River Thames on slightly higher ground than the flood plain around it. About one mile to the east across the river is the Roman town of Dorcic – now Dorchester-on-Thames. Much of the neighbouring parish of Little Wittenham to the south east is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the location of Wittenham Clumps which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Long Wittenham residents and visitors enjoy spectacular views towards Wittenham Clumps.²

1.3 The parish today

Long Wittenham is a safe, caring and active community and residents find it a good place to live. According to the most recent survey undertaken in 2015, residents find it friendly, with great neighbourliness and community spirit. They like its rural location and its quiet and peaceful character with easy access to walking paths and attractive rural landscape. People also value the proximity to Didcot, Abingdon, Wallingford and Oxford for leisure and employment (including Science Vale). Appendix 1 summarises the evidence base for the Plan which documents the factual information about the village.

1.4 Our Challenges

At first glance it would seem the village is well-provided for in terms of community facilities. It has a well-established school with a good profile, a village hall, a church, two pubs and a bar-restaurant and a sports field. But closer inspection of the village hall and the school show all is not well.³

What the village does not have is any public transport, any public off-road parking, a shop, or a GP surgery. The road network is poor in that vehicles heading to or from the north must use the single lane bridge at Clifton Hampden. This route is slow and frequently congested by constraints of traffic flow at the bridge and subsequent road junction. The road between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden sometimes becomes flooded and impassable (for 6 weeks in 2015).

The village hall and the school are both 100 years or more old and showing their age.

The village hall provides an adequate space for small events, for example our ‘swap shop’ or childrens’ parties but is not very suitable for larger events. It looks to be what it is: an old building that has to ‘make do’.

The village is proud of and delighted to have a pre-school that facilitates in-village early years education. But this is provided at the cost of excluding any other group from using the Hall during pre-school sessions. These total some 25 hours per week over a 36 week school year.

Societies and groups that in other villages would be found using the village hall are obliged to meet in members’ homes or, occasionally in the pub. These compromises are not conducive to development of community activities.

In local surveys, and in the community engagement activities for this Neighbourhood Plan, villagers have consistently raised the same concerns. Box 1.1 summarises these concerns.

² See Appendix 2 Village Character Assessment

³ See Appendix 1 Evidence Base

Box 1.1 Our prevailing challenges

Community facilities

Although centrally sited and much valued by the groups who do use it, the village hall is nearly 100 years old and lacks the modern facilities and community space that people expect in a community building in the 21st Century.

The pre-school uses it for 23 hours a week, 36 weeks of the year and is therefore its primary user. When the pre-school is in session it is the sole user as there is only one room. The single space restricts use at other times. Other facilities, toilets and the kitchen are also inadequate.

The pre-school needs a dedicated building so that it does not have to pack equipment up after each session. It is not able to increase its opening hours as required by the government and is not therefore able to compete with other pre-schools which can offer longer sessions every weekday. The pre-school has been unable to find a suitable site on which to build new premises.

The primary school is popular, with excellent academic results, but the facilities are outdated and inadequate. Some of the current buildings date from 1854, some from the 1950s, with some more recent temporary modular buildings. The school fails to meet current policies for internal and external facilities.

The school has insufficient outside space. The County Council has consistently been unable to produce a viable plan to redevelop a new school on the site. These facts have raised concerns within the village over the long term future of the primary school. Loss of the school would undermine the sustainability of the village.

The lack of a shop

Until 2005/2006, the village had its own shop and post office but this closed when it became economically unviable. Finding suitable premises has been the main stumbling block to trying to run some sort of shop in the village, whether this is a monthly market, community-run shop or just a supply of basic commodities. Realistically, it is doubtful whether a commercial shop would be viable.

Lack of public transport

The bus service through the village ceased in July 2016, so the only connection to bus and train routes is via bicycle, car or taxi. This results in a heavy dependence on cars, further isolating some residents.

Traffic and parking

The speed and the volume of the traffic going through the village and the road rage is a concern together with the noise and pollution that is caused by congestion when cars park along the High Street for school drop off and pick up or when there is an event at the village hall. A recent traffic survey showed that although overall traffic flows are not excessive, traffic volume is high at peak times, resulting in severe congestion in the High Street. This is because the road through the village is used as a route from Didcot to Oxford or the M40, compounded by the parking problems in the High Street. This problem should eventually be addressed by the proposed additional Thames river crossing. Traffic surveys show that many cars exceed the speed limit at the entry and exit points to the village.

In addition to these problems in the High Street, the quality of the roads approaching the village are poor. In particular, access is constrained from the east by a single lane bridge and a road that is frequently impassable through flooding in the winter 2014/5 the road was impassable for 6 weeks)

Distance to services and reliance on cars

The Neighbourhood Plan survey showed that a footpath and cycle path to Clifton Hampden would be well-used by local people. It is dangerous and difficult to get to the nearest shop and general practitioner (GP) surgery at Clifton Hampden except by car. The existing infrequent bus services ceased in July 2016 and so Clifton Hampden is the nearest bus stop.

In summary, despite the fact that the village is a thriving and active community, it lacks a number of core services including a shop, modern community facilities to support village activities, modern educational facilities, a dedicated pre-school building, public transport, only offers a minimum amount of employment within the village, and it suffers from traffic congestion due to high flow and little off road parking. The lack of all these amenities means that in its current form, the village provides a less sustainable basis for future growth. This is why the village is identified within the SODC strategy as a smaller village not suitable for a housing allocation. The role of the village within the SODC planning strategy is considered in more detail later in the Plan.

1.5 Report purpose and structure

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Neighbourhood Plan to residents, stakeholders and statutory consultees for their comments prior to the final Plan being submitted to South Oxfordshire District Council who will arrange for independent examination.

The strategy, aim and objectives of the Plan are set out in Section 2. Policies, together with justification and evidence for these, are in Section 3. The Plan will be monitored and reviewed periodically, as set out in Section 4.

The supporting evidence for the Plan is in Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Evidence base
- Appendix 2: Village Character Assessment
- Appendix 3: Project List for Community Infrastructure Levy funding
- Appendix 4: Acronyms and Technical Terms

In addition, there are two other documents that support this Plan:

- the Basic Conditions Statement; and
- the Consultation Statement

2. Strategy and Objectives

2.1 Neighbourhood Plan Strategy

The community is in a difficult situation with a deficit of community facilities and therefore may struggle to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

The neighbourhood plan has identified that upgrading the village hall, school and parking provision is needed to enable Long Wittenham to achieve a limited amount of growth in a sustainable way. The neighbourhood plan has also identified that a limited amount of development is necessary to deliver and sustain the neighbourhood area's long term infrastructure requirements.

Our Neighbourhood Plan positively encourages development which will deliver improved facilities that address the constraints which currently make the village unsustainable and where it enhances the village character.

Our priority is delivering the community facilities that are needed. We think that the best solution would be a community hub which would include a new school, pre-school and village hall and other much needed community amenities such as sports and community meeting spaces, a café, community shop or market, all on a single site together with housing. The new school and hall may free up their existing sites for additional houses and amenities. In this way the Neighbourhood Plan promotes the transformation of a currently less sustainable community into a more sustainable one by seeking to enhance existing facilities without significantly adversely affecting the character of the village.

However, the availability of suitable sites is limited and allocating any site could compound the village's problems by delivering additional housing beyond that which is sustainable without the assurance of delivering the full range of community facilities that are needed so badly even with the current level of housing. This Neighbourhood Plan examines how an inherently unsustainable community can be made more sustainable without compromising existing facilities further or adversely affecting the character of the village.

We are committed to managing the balance of benefit and harm very carefully. We have identified and prioritised the infrastructure required to address the demands of the limited amount of development expected to come forward in the neighbourhood area. These should be weighed against potential impacts on the setting of the countryside, heritage and biodiversity. Where significant adverse impacts are identified, these should be mitigated

For any site that comes forward, it is important for the community to be clear about what is being compromised to deliver a community hub (such as the country side setting, heritage and biodiversity). Therefore, we have decided that the right process for Long Wittenham is to use the Community Right To Build Order (CRtBO) procedure. This will be brought forward together with the Neighbourhood Plan. We particularly encourage land owners to work with the community to prepare a CRtBO to deliver a suitable scheme. This could be achieved through a planning application only if this was prepared in parallel with the CRtBO and addressed all of the matters in the CRtBO such that it rendered this superfluous.

A Community Right to Build Order is one of the neighbourhood planning tools introduced in the Localism Act 2011. It can be used to grant outline or full planning permission for specific development which complies with the order. For example: homes, shops, businesses, affordable housing for rent or sale, community facilities or playgrounds.

Policy LW1 sets out the neighbourhood plan's support for the delivery of a community hub and the criteria that such development must meet in order to ensure an appropriate balance between benefit and harm is achieved.

2.2 Village strategy

From many discussions with residents throughout the Plan process (see Consultation Statement), clarity has emerged on a village strategy. Long Wittenham has an active community which has been discussing its development needs over many years. This has included community-led planning of which the most recent was *Wittenham Vision* published in 2010. An action plan was launched in September 2010 with the following five main action points:

- appearance and sustainability;
- village shop or market;
- village hall and leisure facilities;
- traffic and parking;
- footpath to Clifton Hampden.

A great deal of work was done to try to progress the relocation of the village hall, development of a village shop and establishing a path to Clifton Hampden. These actions have not yet been achieved, but a community hub project idea emerged that would include a new school, village hall and shop/café, possibly on one site. The parish council commissioned a feasibility study for a new village hall in 2011.⁴ This identified potential locations within the village for the hall and looked at ways the project might be funded, mainly through the development of the existing school and village hall land for housing and building additional housing together with the new village hall. However, no suitable site was available to purchase at the time.

Our strategy now hinges on developing a community hub on a new site providing more and better facilities. This would replace the existing village hall and school and provide other facilities as well. The new community hub presents a good opportunity to use a CRTBO to enable developments that are consistent with the objectives of this neighbourhood plan, when the right site comes forward. This section explains the longer term strategy of the village as it is central to the Neighbourhood Plan.

A key part of the village strategy is to build a new school on a different site with a playing field, a larger hall and provision for drop off and pick up. We have investigated options for the re-development of the current school on its existing site (see Appendix 1 Evidence Base). The school is an important feature of the High Street with original Victorian features, although it is not listed. Advice commissioned by the school governors found that re-development of the school is not financially viable. The current school site is small with no opportunity to add a playing field. The current school hall cannot accommodate the whole school and would be difficult to upgrade to meet current requirements of disabled pupils. The current school has high maintenance costs which could make it unviable in its current form, particularly given the prospect of a cluster of local primary schools forming an academy. The centre of population is now more to the west of the village so a school towards the Didcot end would be more easily accessible for more families.

⁴ Long Wittenham Final Feasibility Study Of Sites. Architecture 00 (zero zero). 6th July 2012.

Figure 2.1 Long Wittenham Primary School



In the Community Led Plan, *Wittenham Vision (2010/11)*, one of the main concerns of residents was the lack of facilities in the current village hall (see Appendix 1 Evidence Base). This resulted in identifying the need for a new village hall which is centrally located and can provide a wider range of users and has more parking. The current village hall is much loved by its users but requires extensive and costly repairs. It only has one room, which restricts its use. The toilet and kitchen facilities are limited and there is very limited storage space. People in the village would like a facility that can provide a wider range of uses and has more parking. The pre-school needs a permanent home rather than competing with other users for use of the village hall.

Figure 2.2 Long Wittenham Village Hall



Traffic congestion on the High Street has been a major concern for many years. Much of the traffic congestion is caused by school drop off and pick up and by people parking for activities in the village hall. Traffic congestion along the main High Street will remain a significant problem while the school and village hall remain on their current sites. If the community hub site is large enough to include parking and a drop-off zone away from the High Street, then relocating the existing community facilities will greatly reduce and may even resolve the traffic and parking issues in the High Street.

Relocating school and village hall could also free up the current school and village hall sites (see Figure 2.3) for other uses. The village hall site is currently owned by the parish council. Preliminary discussions have been held with the current owners of the school site with a verbal agreement that they would be prepared to swap this land ownership in return for ownership of the re-located school site. (see Appendix 1 Evidence Base). This could enable development of a small number of well-designed homes in central locations and a village green that would enhance the setting of the War Memorial and provide a centrally located outdoor space for community events such as traditional May Day maypole dancing, and for informal play and sporting activities.

Figure 2.3 Existing school and village hall sites



If a new primary school and village hall were to be included in a community hub on a new site, then other objectives become possible. The current school and hall occupy prominent and sensitive positions within the village. These sites would be key to our objective to enhance the village character by improving the streetscape of the High Street. Residents have consistently supported the proposal of a village green in any re-development of the school site.

Another long-standing objective is a safe pedestrian and cycle path to Clifton Hampden. This is among the priority community projects listed in Appendix 4.

2.3 Aims and objectives

All of this strategic thinking, developed over a number of years, has informed our aim and objectives for the village:

Our overall aim is:

To enable Long Wittenham to continue to thrive and to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations of residents whilst retaining its unique and distinctive character.

Our objectives are:

- To provide improved and additional community facilities including a school
- To reduce traffic congestion, improve road safety and reduce traffic noise
- To encourage a more active community
- To enhance the character and quality of the village

However, in preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, it has become apparent that many of these objectives cannot be delivered directly through Plan policies.

The approach that we have ultimately decided on is:

- to set out in the neighbourhood plan the prioritised infrastructure required to address the demands **of the development identified in the plan**; and
- to identify and promote the opportunity to use a Neighbourhood Development Order (including CRtBO) to enable developments that would deliver the neighbourhood plan's objectives and longer term aspirations set out in the village strategy.

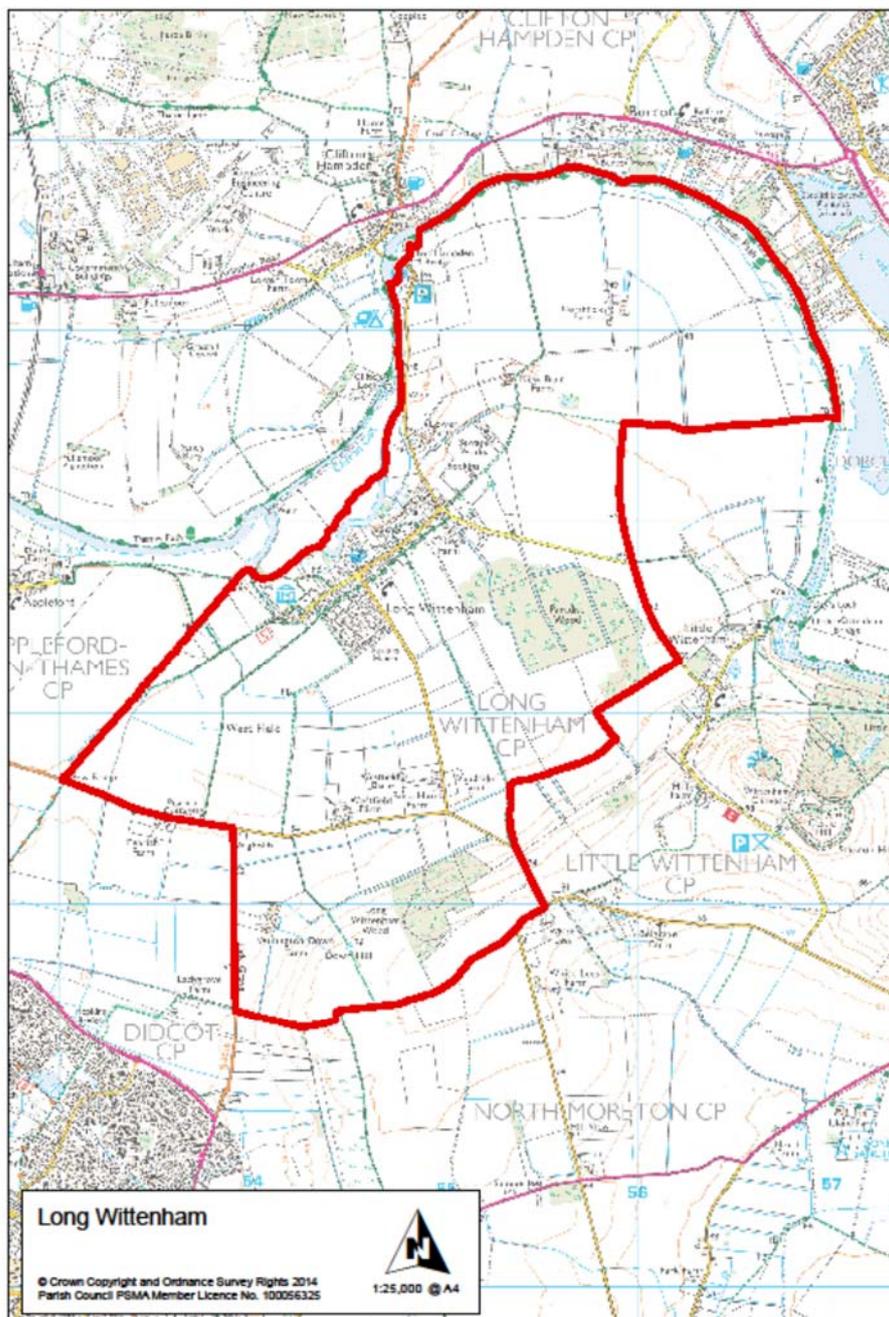
This would enable a community hub to be developed, together with housing to fund the hub, and would unlock the rest of the Plan objectives to deliver the village's longer term strategy.

3. Neighbourhood Plan process

3.1 Designation

In 2014 the parish council decided to carry out a Neighbourhood Plan. Long Wittenham's designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan was approved by South Oxfordshire District Council on 2 October 2014 (see Basic Conditions Statement Appendix 1). The Neighbourhood Plan area is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area



The designated area does not include the whole parish as it was in 2015. The south-west corner of the parish will be transferred to Didcot Town Council as a result of the large north east Didcot housing development and so was excluded from the Neighbourhood Plan area.

A steering group took the work forward, supported by independent advisors Community First Oxfordshire and planning consultant David Potter.

3.2 Scoping and evidence gathering

The Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan has been written taking into account the context of European Conventions, National Policy & Guidance (the National Planning Policy Framework & National Planning Practice Guidance), the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012, saved Policies from the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (2006) and some early indications of the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033 (See Basic Conditions Statement). The Plan is based on local evidence (see Appendix 1 Evidence Base)

3.3 Community engagement

The steering group followed a community consultation strategy and encouraged community involvement through open meetings, via newsletters, the website and a survey which assessed housing need and other key issues for the village. The community consultation is documented in the Consultation Statement.

At each stage in the Plan process, elements such as the baseline evidence, the Plan objectives, alternatives and draft policies have been refined in response to feedback from residents and statutory consultees (see Consultation Statement).

3.4 Testing options

A sub-group of the Steering Group assessed the Neighbourhood Plan objectives against the Sustainability Objectives established in a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report, which was carried out at the beginning of our Plan process following initial advice from the planning authority that Strategic Environmental Assessment would be needed. Ultimately, because of the village's designation as a smaller settlement together with its lack of infrastructure the steering group has decided not to allocate any sites for development. This is in accord with the Development Plan strategy for the District as set out below. The final screening opinion from the District Council confirmed that Strategic Environmental Assessment is not needed (see Basic Conditions Statement).

i) Local Plan Spatial Strategy

The South Oxfordshire District Council spatial strategy is important in determining whether a site is needed for development. As a smaller village there is no strategic requirement for a site to be allocated other than to meet local requirements over the period to 2033. The Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan Strategy are consistent on this point. However, the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033 does give an indicative growth rate of 5% across the district for smaller villages. In Long Wittenham, this could be achieved by infill or windfall development over the period but it does not preclude identifying a site if this would benefit the village. The need to improve local infrastructure in the form of a community hub is the benefit that would be needed to justify this.

ii) Village Requirements

As the introduction to the Plan sets out, a key local need is to deliver a community hub with the least impact on the village and the greatest community benefit. The most important aspect of site selection is the need to deliver benefits to the village. If a site is to be selected it must serve a local need as

Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan

there is no strategic requirement, but there is a strategic need to enhance sustainability. The need to design a development that fits in with the overall village character is also important.

Location is therefore a critical local consideration. No site is perfect or meets key criteria for delivery of a hub. In this case it then becomes important to test whether compromising the South Oxfordshire District Council strategy or the village form is sufficient to override these important concerns and/or the identified local need for a hub.

It is proposed that a policy be included that will enable a site to come forward if the community agrees that it is acceptable. By using a CRtBO that will give confidence and a greater degree of certainty over a development it is anticipated that a site will come forward.

This approach ensures that the sustainability issues and challenges that Long Wittenham faces have been integral to the Plan process and that the policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

3.5 Draft Plan creation

The steering group drafted their ideas for policies to meet the objectives. The steering group had input from Community First Oxfordshire, the District Council and an independent planning advisor to put these ideas into planning policies. The draft policies were presented to three open meetings for feedback which allowed further refinement (see Consultation Statement).

3.6 Submission and Examination

A pre-submission version of the Plan was submitted to the District Council in July 2016. Comments from the six-week regulation 14 consultation were analysed and discussed with the District Council Planning Department and used to refine the document. Significant changes were made as a result and the draft was therefore re-submitted to the Council in January 2017 for a further 6 week regulation 14 consultation.

Following this second consultation, we made changes in response to comments received (as summarised in the Consultation Statement) and submitted the final Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council. Once it has approved the Plan, and following regulation 16 consultation, the District Council will submit it to an independent examiner together with other Plan documents – the Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement. The examiner will check that it meets the ‘Basic Conditions’ or requirements for a Neighbourhood Plan and recommend whether it should go forward to a referendum.. The District Council will consider each of the examiner’s recommendations and how to respond to them. The Plan may be amended to incorporate the examiner’s recommendations before being put forward to a referendum.

In the event that the Plan proceeds to referendum, members of the community of Long Wittenham who are eligible to vote will be asked whether they want South Oxfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Plan area. If the Plan is supported by a majority vote at the referendum, the Plan will be ‘made’ or adopted by the district council as part of the planning policy for development in the Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan area. Together with the Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan will be used for deciding planning applications in Long Wittenham within the Plan period from when it is ‘made’ to 2033. This Plan will apply to any and all development in the Neighbourhood Plan area within this timeframe.

4. Policies

4.1 Background

In producing this Plan, we have considered the long-term needs of the whole village, looking at the existing infrastructure, housing need, all possible sites, village character and taking into account the policy context. We followed a community consultation strategy to keep everyone informed and invited feedback from the whole village at key points.

The current South Oxfordshire Local Plan does not identify Long Wittenham as a sustainable location for growth although in the emerging Local Plan small villages such as Long Wittenham should consider development up to 5% of current size. The 5% figure can only be a broad guide as much will depend on the particular needs, characteristics and constraints on bringing forward land for development in the village. Long Wittenham is classed as a smaller village and it lacks key facilities that would be needed to support new development. The 5% figure represents around 15 new homes over the Plan period or less than 1 dwelling unit per year. This is not a large number and it could potentially be delivered through minor development such as conversions, infill or plot subdivision.

The adopted Development Plan does not require small villages to make site allocations and recognises that limited development can be achieved as above. Based on our infrastructure and facility limitations (no shop or post office, bus, GP surgery) we have chosen to tackle our future growth with a balanced approach that sets out the infrastructure required to address the demands of future development. As part of this balanced approach, it is recognised that an additional limited amount of housing development, strictly in order to enable the delivery of the identified community facilities, will be considered appropriate if this balance can be achieved.

4.2 Community Hub

Introduction

As Section 2 demonstrates, a key objective for the village is to improve the amenities through a community hub, which would incorporate a new school, pre-school, village hall and community facilities (for example a café, community shop or market), parking and sports facilities on a new site. The need for this primarily results from the failings of the existing old community infrastructure, specifically the village hall and the school.

The village hall is very old and its capacity fails to meet existing demand. There is only one meeting space with limited kitchen facilities. The use of the village hall by the pre-school on a daily basis restricts other use at this time. There are many village clubs and societies that meet in homes or at one of the public houses, for example the history society and the neighbourhood plan steering group. The size of the hall limits its use for most indoor sports, particularly badminton and table tennis. There is limited storage space; for example, the history society has an archive stored in a member's house. There is no broadband for public use. Running costs and maintenance costs are high and it will need a new roof in the near future. There are only four off road parking spaces which double as the pre-school playground. The lack of off-road parking causes traffic congestion whenever there is a large gathering in the hall. There are no dedicated toilets for children and the disabled toilet is shared with the ladies' toilet.

The pre-school is thriving but numbers and facilities are severely limited because it is based in the village hall. The staff have to store all equipment after every session. Equipment is limited by storage

space. There is concern about the government's initiative to support 30 hours pre-school education because the hall facilities are not available for this amount of time over 5 days.

For the village to be more sustainable we need to ensure that the school, a key village asset, is not lost. To do this we must re-locate the primary school to a new site that meets current standards for external and internal space and indoor facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan group investigated retention of the school. It is situated in the centre of the original village on a prominent site and its original Victorian structure (although not listed) is an important feature of the High Street. However attractive it may be and whatever nostalgia it invokes, we considered that these aspects do not outweigh the negative impact on future generations of village children and the traffic problems that are caused by its position and layout. The evidence supporting a new school on a different site rather than renovating the old school is:

- A recent assessment by Mouchels, commissioned by the school governors, rejected redevelopment as financially non-viable.
- The site is small and re-development would provide no opportunity to add a playing field to the school. There is no space for a playing field on or near the current site. Teaching staff spend time every week taking pupils off site for sports.
- Redevelopment on the same site would not address the issue of parking and congestion in the High Street
- A substantial re-build would be difficult in an active school.
- The school hall cannot accommodate the whole school at one time and would be difficult to upgrade to meet current requirements of disabled pupils.
- The school does not provide facilities for one to one mentoring.
- The main centre of population is no longer the High Street, with the developments at Saxons Heath and Westfield Road. Over the last 50 years the village has 'moved away' from the school.
- Current maintenance costs are high and supervising maintenance is time consuming for the head teacher.

Policy LW1 Community Hub

Policy LW1

A proposal for a community hub will be supported where it meets the following criteria.

1. It is well related and accessible to the whole of the village by means of cycling and walking routes, preferably in a central location; and
2. The community hub and any necessary enabling development should be accommodated on the site in a manner that enhances the village character; and
3. The design of the community hub incorporates appropriate parking, playing field provision and cycle and footpath links to the village
4. The community hub and any associated enabling development should be located and designed to avoid any significant landscape impacts on the North Wessex Downs AONB; and
5. The community hub and any associated enabling development should demonstrate that they can be satisfactorily accommodated within the context of the archaeological significance of the site selected.

In circumstances where residential development is included as part of a community hub proposal, the wider package should be accompanied with a viability assessment that addresses the relationship between the different uses and, where necessary, provides a justification for the scale of residential development proposed. Any residential development should meet the development plan need for affordable housing and deliver a mix of housing types and sizes to meet the community's needs.

Explanatory text

Policy LW1 promotes the transformation of Long Wittenham into a more sustainable community. It sets out the neighbourhood plan's support for the delivery of a community hub and the criteria such development must meet, in order to ensure Long Wittenham can grow in a sustainable way.

Policy LW1 follows a sensible approach by setting out the infrastructure required to address the demands of future development and recognising that an additional limited amount of market housing development, strictly in order to enable the delivery of the identified community facilities, may be appropriate.

The policy has been prepared to set the scene for the development of this exciting community project. It sets out a series of criteria with which emerging proposals will be expected to comply. The first three criteria identify that the community hub will be expected to sit comfortably within the village and should do so in a way that enhances its character. The fourth criterion highlights the importance of ensuring that any new development takes account of the wider landscape context provided by the North Wessex Downs AONB. Depending on the scale and location of any proposal that may come forward a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment may be required. The fifth criterion requires that any development takes account of the need to assess the impact of proposed development on the rich archaeological heritage of the Plan area. Historic England has advised that the village is a particular focus of designated heritage assets and has a very high potential for archaeological remains of regional and potentially national significance.

The proposals addressed in this policy could be delivered either through a traditional planning application or through a Community Right to Build Order. The Parish Council's preference is for the second option. Irrespective of the eventual choice of delivery option, selected development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they comply with the criteria in the policy. Where development

proposals for a community hub are accompanied with residential development the viability assessment required by the second part of the policy should explain the functional relationship between the different components of the scheme. Where appropriate the assessment should also explain how the mix and type of residential properties has been chosen to bring forward an overall scheme that is both deliverable and viable.

4.3 Community Infrastructure Levy

Introduction

Because of the existing deficit in community infrastructure it is essential that housing development in the Plan period remains within the existing infrastructure capacity. Any housing development in the Plan period should be in support of the community facilities that the village needs. Any new development must provide either infrastructure on site or funding for this through a legal agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy. Policy LW2 – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) enables the village to prioritise use of any funding from development for specific costed, feasible community projects (see Appendix 3)

A number of projects have been identified through the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process and which would significantly benefit the village. The projects relate to highways, recreation, amenities and education and will contribute to meeting all of the Neighbourhood Plan objectives for community facilities, active community, traffic, and village character, including improvements to the High Street. Discussions with the County Council indicate that there will be no council funding for such improvements, but they could be financed locally or from Community Infrastructure Levy funding under this neighbourhood plan policy LW2 – CIL.

At steering group meetings, we discussed the importance of improving the visual appearance of the High Street, including provision of off-road parking and another car park (at the community hub) so that the High Street is an effective thoroughfare for all traffic and footpaths. Strong feelings were expressed at open meetings about parking on grass verges in the High Street leading to an unsightly appearance and reduced pedestrian access.

Policy LW2 Community Infrastructure Levy

Policy LW2

Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from development will be used for the benefit of the community, including the priority projects listed in Appendix 3.

Explanatory text

The full project list with indicative costing is in Appendix 3. These project proposals will be developed into specific projects that will be costed and phased and will be secured either through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or S106 where this is directly related to a development proposal. Other sources of funding (grants and/or donations) will also be investigated.

The project proposals were identified through community engagement, including *Wittenham Vision (2010/11)*, the Neighbourhood Plan Survey (2015), and village meetings (documented in the Consultation Statement).

The projects identified in Appendix 3 are based on current circumstances and priorities. These may change and the Appendix will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

4.4 Dwelling mix

Introduction

The aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to protect and enhance the character of our small rural village character and not add to pressure on local infrastructure. It is conceivable that an unforeseen proposal on a small site could come forward or that a planning application may be granted by the District Council or at a Planning Appeal. We want to ensure that if a planning application is approved then any additional housing meets local needs with a locally appropriate dwelling mix.

Policy LW3 Dwelling mix

Policy LW3 – Dwelling Mix

Planning applications for schemes of more than ten dwellings, will be required to:

1. deliver the affordable housing requirements set out in the Development Plan, and;
2. deliver an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes, having regard to the local community's needs, identified in the housing needs survey, and;

Explanatory text

Affordable housing is required to be delivered on developments that yield 11 or more houses. This policy reflects this. It is not anticipated that a site for major development will come forward given the constraints on development in Long Wittenham. However, if this does happen this policy will apply.

To meet the needs of residents of Long Wittenham it is expected that proposals for new market housing will reflect a mix of dwelling types and sizes but in particular will contribute towards locally identified need. This is in addition to the Local Plan requirement for affordable housing. Policy LW3 recognises that there is an identified need for smaller dwellings in both the District Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the housing survey carried out as part of the preparation of this Plan. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their proposals take account of the local community's housing needs as part of the planning application process.

The Neighbourhood Plan Survey in 2015 found that in the view of many residents, the main local need for new housing is for smaller or starter homes for existing residents and those living outside (70% of respondents), strong demand for family homes (50%) and for affordable housing (48%). A total of 18 residents identified a need for either 1 or 2 bedroom property. High cost of housing and lack of suitable housing were the main reasons given for wanting to move but not being able to move within the village or from outside the village.

The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)⁵ found that '...the data suggests a slight shift towards a requirement for smaller dwellings relative to the distribution of existing housing. This is understandable given the fact that household sizes a projected to fall slightly in the future (which itself is partly due to the ageing of the population).'

Policy LW3 Dwelling mix acknowledges the needs identified in the SHMA and takes into account the evidence for local housing need and mix results of our Neighbourhood Plan survey in 2015 (summarised in Appendix 1). The 2015 survey showed a need for more smaller dwellings, starter

⁵ Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment G.L.Hearn final report April 2014 section 7.21

homes and a few affordable homes. Further local housing needs surveys will be carried out from time to time throughout the Plan period.

The SHMA acknowledges that local market conditions/environment need to be taken into account, although it may not be appropriate or possible to insist on housing to meet local housing needs.

4.5 Heritage and Design

Introduction

The overall aim of this Neighbourhood Plan is to retain the unique and distinctive character of the village. Any new development, whether this is large scale or a small infill plot, needs to respect the heritage of the village and reflect its rural and agricultural history. Much of the village is in the Long Wittenham Conservation Area. A policy on design is considered essential for managing any large or small scale proposal, including redevelopment of a single house on a large plot into multiple housing. Within the overall design approach there will be opportunities for new development to change the character of less positive areas and innovative design will be welcomed in these circumstances.

For those who live and walk along the informal byway known as Fieldside the countryside immediately next to the conservation area to the south is of particular local significance because of its beauty, tranquillity and the richness of its wildlife. The views to and from the AONB were emphasised by Natural England in their comments on our scoping report. Understanding the character and heritage of the village and retaining significant historic view lines is emphasised in the village character assessment (Appendix 2).

Figure 4.1 View from gate to Wittenham Clumps



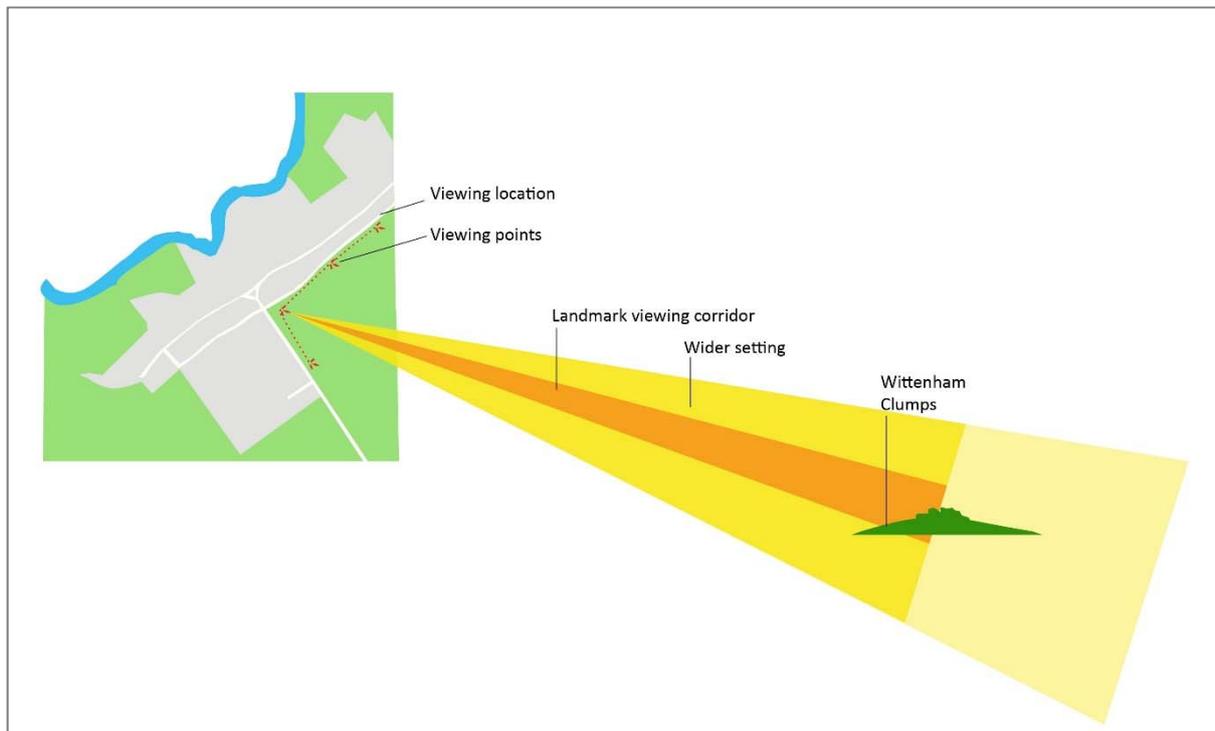
Policy LW4 - Design

LW4 – Design

Subject to other development plan policies proposals for new development will be supported subject to the following criteria:

1. They conserve and enhance the character of the immediate area and streetscene as well as the wider character of the village as defined in the Character Assessment set out at Appendix 2 and:
2. They conserve and enhance the historic and natural assets of the village as defined in the Character Assessment set out at Appendix 2 and:
3. They protect and enhance views into and out of the village as identified in this Plan and the Character Assessment set out at Appendix 2 and:
4. They reinforce local distinctiveness and sense of place and have sensitivity to preserving the views to and from the AONB and:
5. They protect and enhance the linear form of the village and existing patterns of development that contribute to this character and:
6. They make provision for access to adjacent areas and good access routes through the site itself

Figure 4.3 View lines to AONB



Explanatory text

Any masterplan or design brief should include assessment of impacts on biodiversity, archaeological assets, countryside setting, AONB, and the conservation area together with proposed mitigation of any adverse impacts. These issues were identified as sustainability issues in Long Wittenham’s scoping work as documented in the evidence base (Appendix 1).

This particularly relates to the conservation area where there are a number of listed buildings representing houses built over several centuries. These features contribute to the distinctiveness of the village together with the proximity of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) including Wittenham Clumps. Consequently, we propose a policy on design that gives the community some influence on the detailed plans for any new development, whether this is a community hub, redevelopment of previously developed land or infill development.

All developments must conform to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and reflect the materials, scale and architectural rhythm of the immediate area and character of the village as a whole as set out in the village character assessment (Appendix 2). Development proposals within or next to the Conservation Area or listed buildings must make sure that the overall character of the area is enhanced or preserved.

Any development should be in keeping with the local character and respect the views to Wittenham Clumps, which are a key feature in the character of the village as shown in the village character assessment (Appendix 2).

It is also important that any new development improves access to adjacent areas and through the site itself. Access in the context of this policy means access to roads, footpaths and cycle ways. Where the roads, footpaths or cycle ways are deficient the application for development should set out how this will be addressed.

Policy LW4 Design will apply to all applications particularly brownfield or infill. This policy is not intended to create a copybook approach to design or limit innovation in the type or range of development. Any departure from the traditional approach will need to demonstrate why this should be set aside.

The demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of a site is not encouraged where these are not redundant. However, where this is proposed, any new development should reflect the character of the surrounding area including the type and scale of development including landscape features such as large garden frontages. The character assessment set out at Appendix 2 gives guidance on this.

Proposals for new residential development should demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure exists or can be provided to support the development.

Design requirements for any new development in South Oxfordshire are rigorously described in the SODC Design Guide to which any new development would be subject. However, because of the historic nature of the village and the large proportion of the village which is a conservation area, we want to ensure that any new development enhances this aspect of the village. The plan is not trying to be prescriptive of any particular design as long as it enhances the village in the opinion of the Parish Council.

The Village Character Assessment (see Appendix 2) documents the existing shape and character of the village including the mix of building size, style and materials, gardens and spaces between buildings as well as back lanes, the open countryside setting and views.

4.7 Car Parking

Introduction

With no bus service, residents of the parish are dependent on private car usage. It is unreasonable to expect residents not to use the private car. Most working age residents need to travel to work by car and often this results in the need for at least two cars per household. Therefore we want a policy on

car parking provision to ensure that new development takes into account this local issue. In Long Wittenham this is justified because of the high levels of car ownership, lack of services in the village, with no shop and no public transport which results in a need for a car for employment, leisure, social and domestic use. We recognise that development control decisions on parking provision are a county council matter.

The number of cars currently parked on the street in Long Wittenham demonstrates the importance of making adequate provision for off-street parking in new developments. In the High Street in particular, many houses do not have off-road parking. Parking on the street results in traffic congestion in the village.

Figure 4.4 Parking and congestion on the High Street



Policy LW5 Car Parking

Policy LW5 Car parking

Proposals for new residential development will be supported where it can be demonstrated that off-street parking provision is adequate to meet assessed future needs.

Explanatory text

The evidence base for this Plan identifies parking problems as a major challenge for the village (see Appendix 1). The evidence documents high levels of car ownership, the total lack of public transport, lack of employment in the village and lack of services generally. Our Community-Led Plan *Wittenham Vision* (2010/11) concluded: 'Identify and implement further actions to improve traffic and parking in the village'. The 2015 Neighbourhood Plan survey also identified significant concerns about parking. Parking is a problem for 20% of respondents and 73% supported the concept of a village car park. 43% found parking associated with school runs to be a problem. 96% of respondents supported lobbying for the new bridge to address traffic issues, and most supported retaining traffic calming or alternatives to the existing traffic calming measures (Appendix 1).

For many years a population of a protected species of snail has been observed along Fieldside. These are the Roman Snail, *Helix pomatia*, which breed along the track (see Figure below) in the rough Headland beside Fieldside Track (see Appendix 1).

Figure 4.6 Roman Snail *Helix pomatia*



Aug 2016 *Helix pomatia* along Fieldside (OX14 4QJ) Tony Leatham

While common in some Eastern European countries, these snails are rare in Britain and restricted to a few localities. It lives a solitary life, hiding away for much of the day, emerging after it rains, and it prefers laying its eggs in rough ground. *Helix pomatia* is on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (International Union for Conservation of Nature). In 2008 the Roman Snail, *Helix pomatia* was added to Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and it became an offence under UK law to intentionally kill, injure or take individuals. The legal protection this species is now afforded has implications for development projects.

A local historian has also documented the historical importance of the ancient agricultural 'headland' feature along the northern edge of the field. The area next to the Fieldside track is an ancient headland which forms an important and relatively scarce historical record of our agriculture, plus a reservoir of our natural history as well as adding charm to the area. The headland is ancient field marking where horses rested and turned with their ploughs. The boundaries and content of this feature has been remarkably well respected both by farmers and by adjacent householders. The headland developed over centuries of ploughing and cultivation, marking the end of the furlong and providing a space for turning the teams of oxen or horses.

Little Wittenham Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is in relatively close proximity to Long Wittenham, supports an important population of Great Crested Newts. Long Wittenham should therefore support the creation and linkage of habitats (both ponds and terrestrial habitats) for this species within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Changes in farming practices have had seriously adverse effects on both of these essential requirements. Great crested newts need suitable ponds surrounded by good quality terrestrial habitat if they are to prosper.⁶

Policy LW6 Ecologically sensitive areas

⁶ See Evidence Base Appendix 1: Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook

LW6 – Ecologically sensitive areas

Development of land having an impact on the Wittenham Special Area of Conservation or to the south of Fieldside (the zone on the map in Figure 4.5 above) will be required to assess the ecological and heritage impact fully and to propose mitigation of adverse impacts including the creation and linking of habitats.

Explanatory text

This area is identified as an area of ecological value and historical value that requires further investigation should any development be proposed. There are also likely to be archaeological heritage assets. Any development proposal would need to assess the impacts fully together with proposed mitigation of any adverse impacts.

Proposals should also assess the impact of any development extending the built-up area into the countryside and avoid compromising the setting of the conservation area and country side setting.

5. Implementation and monitoring

5.1 Implementation

Implementation of the Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan will be ongoing. Responsibility for determining planning applications rests with the South Oxfordshire District Council.

5.2 Monitoring

The following monitoring plan will be adopted by Long Wittenham Parish Council.

Twelve Month Review

Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed one year after its adoption at community referendum by the parish council and the reconvened Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The purpose of assessment will be primarily to assess the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan objectives have been implemented in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting the Neighbourhood Plan objectives; and secondly, to rectify any errors and omissions.

Five Year Review

Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed every five years. Review of policies will be led by the Long Wittenham Parish Council. The purpose of review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the objectives have been achieved in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting those objectives; and secondly to rectify any errors and omissions.

End of Plan Period Review

At least two years prior to the expiry of Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan, a full review will be undertaken to gauge the success of the Plan in meeting its objectives and to put in place a succession plan.

Appendix 1 Evidence base

Appendix 2 Village Character Assessment

Appendix 3 Project list for CIL funding

Ref Number	Description	Estimated Cost £
Highways		
HW1	Construct new roadside footway from High Street (triangle) to Clifton Hampden to provide a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists between villages.	80,000
HW2	Resurface and raise level of road surface at The Maddy to reduce the risk and frequency of flooding which can cut off north /south traffic and access to essential services at Clifton Hampden. (Post Office and Doctors surgery etc)	70,000
HW3	Provide protection to Northfield Lane triangle to prevent excessive vehicle over running and reduce speed of traffic on this limited visibility corner.	3,000
HW4	High Street Footways, resurface and raise levels to improve surface condition and reduce ponding in bad weather.	20,000
HW5	High Street, enhance drainage provision in areas where ponding occurs	3,000
HW6	Revise traffic calming throughout High Street to reduce congestion and pollution but without increasing the likely through traffic.	50,000
HW7	Upgrade street lighting to low energy white lighting	15,000
HW8	Resurface footways in Westfield and Saxons Heath	15,000
HW9	Upgrade existing 'gateway' provision at start of 30mph limit x2	4,000
HW10	Review and possibly extend speed limits out from village envelope	15,000
Recreation and Amenity		
RA1	Upgrade existing play areas and equipment at Bodkins, Acklands, Westfield Road	25,000
RA2	Improve access road to Ward's Field for all weather access (FP 19)	8,000
RA3	Upgrade and improve pavilion at Bodkin's Field.	25,000
RA4	Build new head wall and clear ditches at entrance to Saxons Heath	5,000
RA5	Reinforce planting and fill gaps in historic hedgerow opposite The Crescent	1,000
RA6	Provide bus shelter at Saxons Heath for school bus stop	8,000
RA7	Upgrade the un-made section of Fieldside (from Didcot Rd to Little Wittenham Rd) (Byway 4, as part of cycle route.	25,000
RA8	Provide verge parking provision where properties have no off road	10,000

Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan

Ref Number	Description	Estimated Cost £
	space (part of review of High Street Environmental improvements)	
RA9	Plant additional street trees	2,000
RA10	Review street name plates and add any missing	1,500
RA11	Review benches, waste and dog bins, noticeboards etc and add as assessed	2,500
RA12	Improve public footpath (number 1 Thames Path and number 2) from Northfield Lane to the River Thames to form part of a new circular walking route.	7,000
RA13	Create new public footpath or permitted path from Poplars Park to Clifton Lock via weir and island as part of circular route (Extension of FP 12) and improve safety features at the weir.	30,000
RA14	Upgrade surface of damaged public footpaths adjacent Ward's Field and River Thames (FP 13)	500
RA15	Upgrade village website and supporting communication channels to better inform villagers	1,000
RA16	Upgrade and repair existing village hall (extension, renew roof new flooring, etc) (only required if unable to build new hall)	150,000

Education

E1	Upgrade existing school with extension and new facilities and additional sports provision (only required if we are unable to implement Policy LW1)*	1,000,000
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*a key issue will be the means by which these new facilities might be funded.

Appendix 4 Acronyms and technical terms

AONBArea of Outstanding Natural Beauty: an outstanding landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is in the nation’s interest to safeguard them. Regulated by Natural England

CILCommunity Infrastructure Levy: The Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. It came into force on 6 April 2010 through the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.

CRtBO.....Community Right to Build Order. A Community Right to Build Order forms one of the neighbourhood planning tools introduced in the Localism Act 2011. It can be used to grant outline or full planning permission for specific development which complies with the order. For example: homes, shops, businesses, affordable housing for rent or sale, community facilities or playgrounds.

Enabling development.....The term ‘enabling development’ is not a statutory one. It generally refers to a state of affairs in which development that would otherwise be considered harmful is considered acceptable because it would facilitate (or ‘enable’) benefits that outweigh that harm. Typically the benefits in question are the generation of funds that will be used to pay for work that will benefit the community.

GPGeneral Practitioner

LWNDP...Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan

NP/NDP..Neighbourhood Plan/Neighbourhood Development Plan

NPPFNational Planning Policy Framework

SAC.....Special Area of Conservation: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive.

SEA.....Strategic Environmental Assessment: the European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive.

SODC.....South Oxfordshire District Council, the local planning authority

SWOT.....An assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to identify significant issues in a structured framework.