

Reviewed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2033



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Submission draft

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FOREWORD BY CHAIRMAN

I am very proud to write an introduction to our revised Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

A Neighbourhood Development Plan gives residents the opportunity to identify how they would like their 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.

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 a village survey. We were delighted that the turn out for the referendum for the original plan was one of the highest recorded in the country and the result showed resounding support for the plan.

The whole village was disappointed and frustrated by subsequent events when a planning application that we considered outside our NDP was passed, following a public inquiry. We took expert advice following this which suggested that we could strengthen our plan by revising some of the policies. This document is the result of that work.

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

Gordon Rogers Chair, Long Wittenham Parish Council

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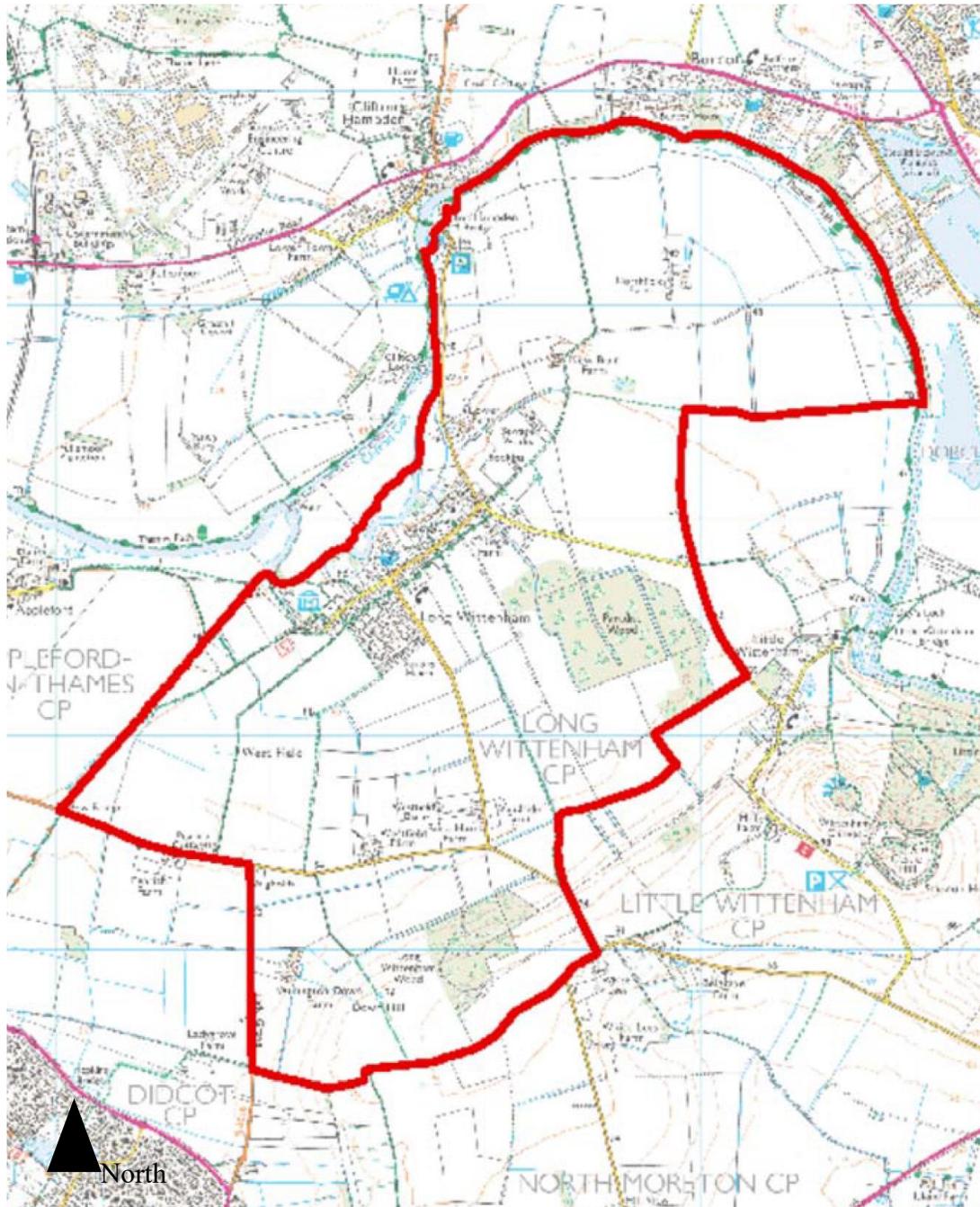


PART 1 INTRODUCTION

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

1. 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 (SODC) 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. Professional support has been provided by Andrea Pellegram MRTPI and AECOM through Locality.
2. The original Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan (LWNDP) was made on 12 October 2017 following a successful referendum on 7 September 2017. The “yes” vote was 59.9% of the electorate with a 92% majority in favour. However, despite strong community support, the plan as written was not successful in focusing new development to the community hub site which was the key objective of the NDP, and it was decided to proceed to an immediate review. This document takes the made LWNDP as its starting point, clarifies the existing policies (taking account of changes to the local development plan), to revise and update the existing suite of policies. It will be referred to as “the proposed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan” (NDP) or the Reviewed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan (RLWDNP).
3. The NDP sets out a plan for a sustainable future for the village, encompassing the views and needs of the residents. The NDP reflects community comments and concerns that emerged from consultation and is based on a substantial evidence base set out as separate Evidence Papers.
4. The NDP policies are compatible with NPPF (2018) and are based upon evidence from the made LWNDP (2017) and the Development Plan for the District:
 - a) South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012;
 - b) South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2011 (2006);
 - c) The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2033 (publication version October 2017).
5. The NDP meets the community’s aim of ensuring that Long Wittenham continues to thrive, whilst retaining its unique and distinctive character and providing an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations of residents. The NDP is intended to run in parallel with the new Local Plan for South Oxfordshire until 2033.
6. Once the NDP has been made (following a successful referendum) it will form part of South Oxfordshire District’s Development Plan. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the decision-making framework as development proposals come forward.
7. The NDP area is shown in **Figure 1**.

FIGURE 1: LONG WITTENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA



8. A steering group took the original LWNDP forward, supported by independent advisors Community First Oxfordshire and planning consultant David Potter MRTPI. This revision has been prepared by the Parish Council's planning consultant, Andrea Pellegram MRTPI.

9. **The Steering Group would like to pay special tribute to David Potter who was instrumental in the production of the original plan and who sadly died of cancer in late 2017. Thank you, David.**

10. The NDP has been written considering the context of European Conventions, National Policy & Guidance and the Development Plan.
11. The steering group followed a community consultation strategy and encouraged community involvement through open meetings, via newsletters and emails, the website and a survey which assessed housing need and other key issues for the village.
12. At each stage in the 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. New and updated evidence was considered in the review.

THE HISTORY OF LONG WITTENHAM

13. People have lived in this area since the Stone Age. At that time there were woolly mammoths and sabre-tooth tigers here too. The region was densely forested with the woodland and rivers providing food, shelter, clothing and fuel for the early inhabitants who were hunter-gatherers. Later the forests were cleared for agriculture and the people became more settled and society more structured as evident from the 'ritual landscape' of the Upper Thames Valley which included Big Rings at Dorchester where there was evidence of Bronze Age burials.
14. By the beginning of the Iron Age, this area became the focus of tribal tensions between established tribes, locally the Bodunni (to the north west), the Catuvellauni (to the northeast) and the Atrebates (to the south) resulting in the building of the hill fort at Castle Hill, Wittenham Clumps. In Long Wittenham an Iron Age round house was excavated in 2017 by archaeologists from the Department of Continuing Education at Oxford University and volunteers. The Wittenham Sword and the Wittenham Shield, both found in the River Thames near to the village and both from the Iron Age are now on display in the Ashmolean Museum.
15. By the first century AD, the focus of the settlement shifted to an oppidum or trading centre at Dorchester, established using the natural loops of the rivers Thame and Thames augmented by building large earth banks known as Dyke Hills to complete the defences. The remains of Dyke Hills can be clearly seen today and are a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
16. Soon after the invasion of 47AD the Romans began to build their own military settlement not far from the oppidum. This became a major point on the road between Silchester and Alcester and later a small civilian town and important regional administrative and distribution centre. We know the Romans walked this way as a Roman brooch was found under the floor at Church Cottage in the village when installing a damp-proof course. They integrated themselves into the local area so when the Roman army left in the early 400s AD, their influence and local presence remained; there is a Romano-British settlement at Northfield Farm, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
17. The Saxons arrived in the fifth century and settled here by the river. We believe it was Witta and his family giving us the name Long Wittenham. It was a substantial settlement as reflected in the cemetery excavated by John Akerman in the 1860s, when over one hundred skeletons were found.

Other finds include pots and rings, many now in the Ashmolean. This is just part of the extensive Saxon heritage and landscape in this area with a Saxon hall house found at Sutton Courtney and several Saxon cemeteries have been excavated nearby. In 2016, a large Saxon house was excavated behind the Community Orchard at the east end of the village. A bid for Heritage Lottery Fund grant was successful, and this will become a centre for Saxon re-enactment and education.

18. Birinus, later Saint Birinus, was sent by the Pope to re-Christianise this area. Augustine had success in Kent but after the Romans left, the locals here had lapsed back into paganism. It was Birinus who came in 635AD and converted the local ruler, Cynegils, King of Wessex, to Christianity. The cross in the village is where Birinus also preached to the villagers who later built a church here.
19. The Normans arrived in 1066 and changed life forever. By this time the land was organised into manors with a manor house and land. Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, was Lord of the Manor of Long Wittenham in 1066 and it was only when she died in 1075 that William the Conqueror gave the manor to one of his knights, Walter Giffard. It was his grandson, also Walter, who started to build the church here in 1120. We are a Domesday village with the land and people recorded in the survey of 1086.
20. The manorial way of life continued with a manorial court establishing which arable crop would be grown each year in which part of the manor and which should be left fallow. The land was divided into two large areas- the West Field and the North Field and then into furlongs and these into strips. This way of working the land stayed much the same until gradually the land was enclosed, that is, divided up into smaller fields marked with hedges and ditches. In Long Wittenham, this did not happen until 1809-1812, with an Act of Parliament. The new way was needed as agricultural equipment improved and farming methods changed. But as ever the winners were the wealthy farmers and the losers were those who had just a few acres and couldn't afford to pay for the hedging and had to give up their land, and the poor who had no land and lost their rights to graze animals and cut wood on the common land.
21. The Lord of the Manor changed over the centuries, sometimes through inheritance and sometimes by sale. Gilbert de Clare was Lord of the Manor here in the thirteenth century with the south chapel at the church built as a memorial to him in 1295. However by 1547, there were no more heirs and the land reverted to the Crown. It was bought in 1554 by Thomas White who founded St John's College in Oxford and bought up several manors to provide his college with an income in rent; money, wheat, oats, barley, wood and so on. Ever since then, and until quite recently, the President and Scholars of St John's College have been the Lords of the Manor. Now however, nearly all the houses (they owned about two thirds of the total) and much of the land has been sold.
22. The First World War shattered the rural way of life with fourteen men and boys losing their lives, all from established Wittenham families. They are remembered every Armistice Day with a service at the War Memorial with wreaths laid and short biographies of some of those named read by pupils from the school. Fortunately, the village suffered no losses in the Second World War but did its bit, taking in evacuees from London, bottling fruit and making jam. Everyone was issued with gas masks and tank traps, and pill boxes were erected in case of invasion along the river.
23. Until the 1960s, it was still a largely unassuming farming village, self-sufficient for most items – there were grocers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, bakers, drapers and five pubs. There were as many as fourteen farms then. But as machinery improved, the number of those employed as 'agricultural labourers' declined. Much of the land is still farmed but there are only two or three farms and far fewer people needed to run them. The Earth Trust now owns some of the land between Long and

Little Wittenham and has planted trees – Paradise Wood named after Paradise Furlong and Neptune Wood with oaks planted to celebrate HMS Neptune and the Battle of Trafalgar

24. Nowadays few people work on the land and most people go out of the village to work in London, Oxford, Didcot and the surrounding towns. There several small businesses in the village; Plant-Rite, Pendon Museum, Earthwise, three pubs/restaurants, craftspeople at the Wood Centre, but the numbers are small.
25. Locally there are major employment sites at Harwell and Culham, both based on scientific research and development and Milton Park which is based on warehousing and distribution and scientific start-ups and innovation. The Science Vale has attracted huge inward investment from the government and private finance. An infrastructure of housing, shops, cinema, arts centre is growing, mainly centred on Didcot.
26. Although Long Wittenham has benefitted from some of this, these changes have contributed to the loss of public transport, loss of our village shop and post office and to greatly increased traffic coming though the village.
27. The village was once a relatively large settlement in the area, dwarfing nearby Didcot. **Figure 2** shows the relationship of the two settlements at the turn of the last century. **Figure 3** shows the relationship in mid-century. **Figure 4** shows the current relationship. These maps show that, whilst Long Wittenham's built form has remained largely stable, Didcot has grown in size and influence in the area, and its borders are steadily encroaching on the parish. A recent planning permission resulted in a south western portion of Long Wittenham parish being transferred to Didcot Town Council, bringing Didcot's development boundary to the edge of the parish, now reduced in size.

FIGURE 2: OS MAP 1888 - 1913



FIGURE 3: OS MAP 1955-1961

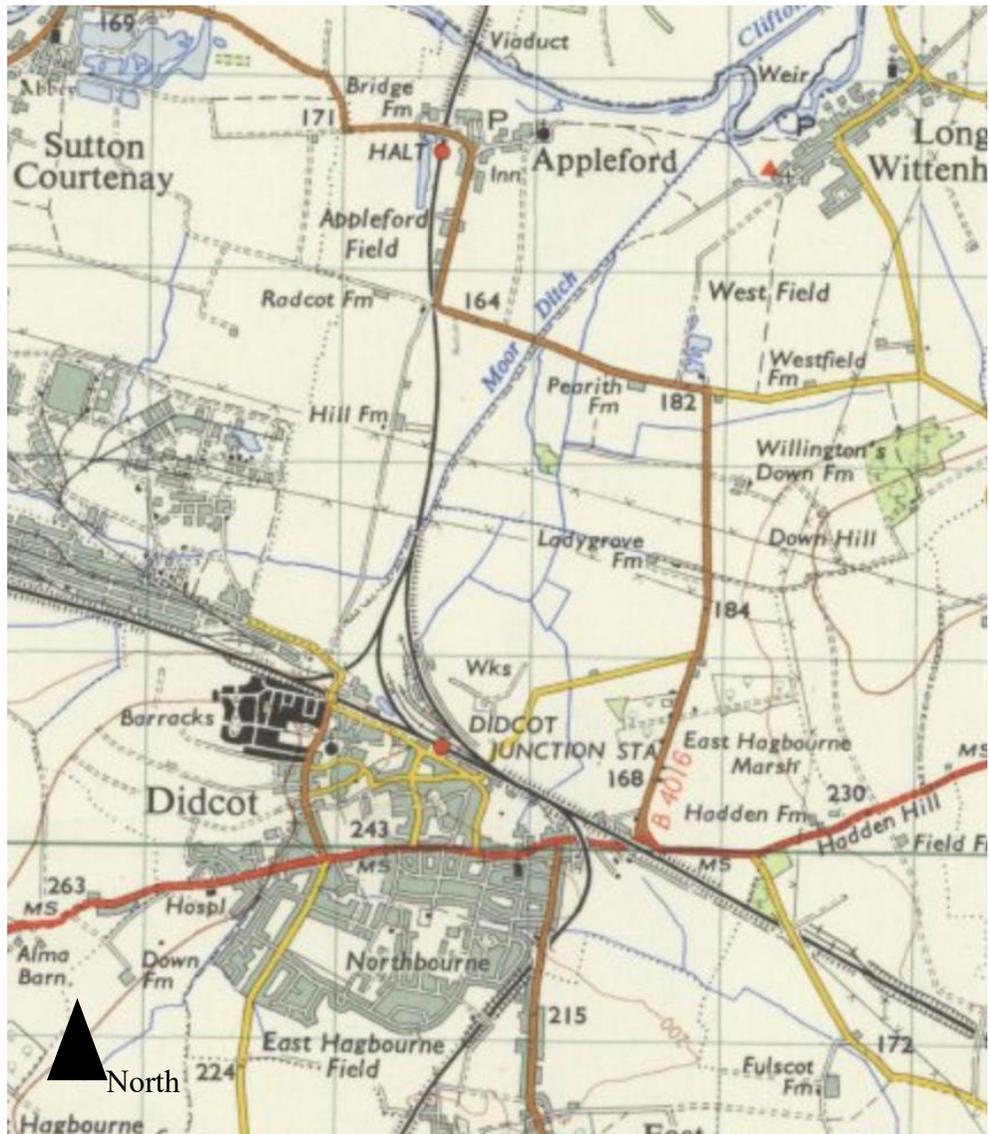


FIGURE 4: SATELLITE IMAGE OF LONG WITTENHAM IN RELATION TO DIDCOT (MARCH 2018, BING)



VILLAGE PROFILE

30. Long Wittenham parish is in the County of Oxfordshire, in South Oxfordshire District, 3 miles north of Didcot and 3.5 miles southeast of Abingdon. The village is located on the south bank of the River Thames in rolling countryside. To the south are clear views of Wittenham Clumps, a famous local landmark and viewpoint painted by artist Paul Nash (**Figure 5**). Though none of the parish lies in the Oxfordshire Green Belt, the River Thames marks its northern most boundary so that development in Long Wittenham forms the backdrop to the Green Belt. Likewise, though there is no AONB designation in the parish, the AONB encompasses the Wittenham Clumps, and again, the parish adjoins the AONB.

FIGURE 5: SKETCH BY PAUL NASH



Reproduced by kind permission of the Ashmolean Museum Oxford

31. 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).
32. The population is 875 residents living in 325 houses according to the 2011 census. There are slightly more children in the village (22%) than the national average (19%) but slightly fewer working age people (63% in the village and 65% nationally). There are fewer BME (6% in the village and 20% nationally).
33. There were 291 houses, 17 flats and 26 caravans in Long Wittenham in the 2011 census. 264 of the houses (82%) were owner occupied, 24 (7%) were rented and 36 (11%) were socially rented. Median house prices in Long Wittenham are higher than the national average. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey showed that the relatively high house prices have created a need for smaller starter homes, family homes and a limited amount of affordable housing. The high cost of housing and the lack of suitable housing were the main reasons given for respondents wanting to move but not being able to move within the village or return to the village from outside.
34. Overall, the village enjoys low crime rates, and relatively high prosperity.
35. There is no General Practitioner (GP) in the village, and the nearest surgery is in Clifton Hampden to the north (2.6 km away). Access to health and social care services is difficult for some residents without the use of a private car, as public transport services are absent. There is a pool of volunteers to take residents without a car to the surgery and to collect prescriptions.
36. There were 490 adults age 16-74 who were economically active (76% in the village compared to 70% nationally) and significant number of people travel to work with only 8% working from home. This indicates that the private car is important to the economically active and that employment leads to travel to work journeys. Long Wittenham is within the Science Vale UK area of economic growth which includes Harwell, Milton Park and the Culham Science Centre.
37. Most of the village centre lies within the Long Wittenham Conservation area with over 30 listed buildings. The village enjoys many local services such as a primary school, Village Hall, playing fields, an accessible and attractive countryside setting and two pubs and a bar-restaurant. However, as will be described below, the services provided by the local authorities are now somewhat out of date or no longer optimally located or appointed. A main driver behind the Neighbourhood Plan was to seek to improve these services to enhance the village for the people who live there.
38. **Evidence Paper: Evidence Base** provides further background information.



OUR CHALLENGES

39. At first glance it would seem the village is well-provided for in terms of community facilities. It has a well-established school with good results rated Good in 2014, a thriving pre-school, 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.¹
40. The Village Hall and the school are both over 100 years old and showing their age. The Village Hall provides an adequate space for small events, for example our 'swap shop' or children's parties but is not suitable for larger events. It looks to be what it is: an old building that must 'make do'. The village is proud of and delighted to have a pre-school that facilitates early years education within the village. But this is provided at the cost of excluding any other group from using the Village Hall during preschool sessions. These total some 25 hours per week over a 36-week school year. In addition, pre-school equipment must be cleared away at the end of every session, limiting the scale of activity.
41. Societies and groups that in other villages would be 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.
42. The village does not have 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 lights at the bridge and subsequent road junction. The road between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden sometimes becomes flooded and impassable.
43. In local surveys, and in the community engagement activities for this Neighbourhood Plan, villagers have consistently raised the same concerns.

¹ Evidence Paper Site Allocations.

The Village Hall

44. Although centrally sited and much valued by the groups who use it, the Village Hall is over 100 years old and lacks the modern facilities, parking and community space that people expect in a community building in the 21st century.
45. 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 basic, there are no disabled facilities, 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 to be competing with other users of the Village Hall.

The pre-school

46. The pre-school is the Village Hall's 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.
47. 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 preschool has been unable to find a suitable site on which to build new premises despite efforts in the past.



The primary school

48. The primary school is popular, with good 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.
49. 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.



50. 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 for 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 west would be more easily accessible for more families.

The lack of a shop

51. 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

52. 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 private cars, further isolating some residents.

Traffic and parking

53. 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.
54. 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, if it is built. Traffic surveys show that many cars exceed the speed limit at the entry and exit points to the village.
55. In addition to these problems in the high street, the quality of the roads approaching the village is poor. Access is constrained from the north 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 3 weeks.
56. Traffic congestion on the high street has been a major concern for many years. Much of the traffic congestion is caused by school and pre-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.

Distance to services and reliance on cars

57. 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.
58. Long Wittenham has retained its hierarchical designation as a “smaller village” in the emerging Local Plan due mainly to its low score on transport sustainability and the number of facilities. However, it is near to Didcot and is within the proposed Science Vale action area, so villagers can gain access to facilities but must rely upon private transport to do so.
59. In summary, even though the village is a thriving and active community, it lacks several core services including a shop, modern community facilities to support village activities, modern educational facilities, a dedicated pre-school building, public transport. It 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.



Photo showing congestion on the High Street

NDP VISION

60. Over many years of consultation and discussion within the community, our problems have been identified and ambitions for the future have come together. The community-led plan, *Wittenham Vision* (2010), put many of the ideas into action plans, which were continued with the LWNDP (2017) and ongoing negotiations between the Parish Council, the community and landowners. The new plan will transform Long Wittenham from its current status as an unsustainable smaller village to a more sustainable settlement that is fit for its current and future purpose. The vision is multi-faceted and complex. It involves creation of new facilities and reconfiguration of civic services.

In the year 2033, Long Wittenham will be a place where:

- A new community hub will be conveniently located. This will provide a modern and well-equipped Village Hall that can accommodate a range of clubs and activities, perhaps contain a shop or café, host pop-up craft and food markets, and be the stage for public life in the village.
- The modern primary school and pre-school will have good outdoor facilities and capacity to accommodate all children's needs.
- Playing fields for the school and the community will be available with modern facilities to encourage healthy life styles throughout the year.
- There will be good provision for sustainable transport routes in the village to encourage more people to walk and cycle for commuting and recreational purposes.
- On-street parking will be reduced, and road users will have unimpeded access through the village.
- The high-quality character of the village, including its physical and visual links to the surrounding countryside and the River Thames, will be as good or better than in 2018.
- There is a pleasant and green environment that respects biodiversity, local views and the intrinsic value of the countryside.
- Sufficient new housing of the right type will be available to meet the changing needs of the villagers as they start new families or down-size for retirement.

REALISING THE VISION

61. The NDP vision is ambitious. It will cost money to realise and it will require services to be delivered differently. It should ideally be delivered in a cost-neutral manner and increase the village's overall sustainability. It affects many sites and footpath/cycle routes.
62. The village's challenges can be met by a strategic re-organisation of civic activities. At the heart of the strategy is the creation of a new community hub on a single site. Since the existing Village Hall and primary school can no longer meet current expectations and cannot be modified to do so, it is now necessary to rethink their current location and form. A preferred solution has emerged which brings all the current civic uses onto one site with improved supporting infrastructure. This solution cannot put a strain on the public purse given current pressures on public resources, so it will be necessary to support the public service provision with other activities that generate enough profit to fund the entire scheme.
63. A site has been identified and allocated in the NDP for the community hub. The site is sufficiently large to accommodate the new Village Hall, school and pre-school, playing fields, circulation and parking and enough housing to cross-subsidise the cost of the public development.
64. As the new facilities come on-stream, the redundant facilities at the Village Hall and the school will be redeveloped for housing, thus providing further income towards the overall hub project.
65. Along the way, other improvements will be generated, subsidised either directly through the hub development or through CIL funding and developer contributions. These include a new village green on the former school site with an enhanced setting for the war memorial and space for community events such as traditional May Day maypole dancing, and for informal play activities.
66. Footpath improvements have been identified that will allow villagers and visitors to better access the beautiful local countryside and to take healthy and safer journeys by cycle. Parking policies will ensure that more suitable parking is available for the school and pre-school and community facilities and that new developments make provision on-site for the parking requirements they generate.
67. The character of the village and the countryside and local habitats for protected species will be preserved.

PART 2: ALLOCATIONS

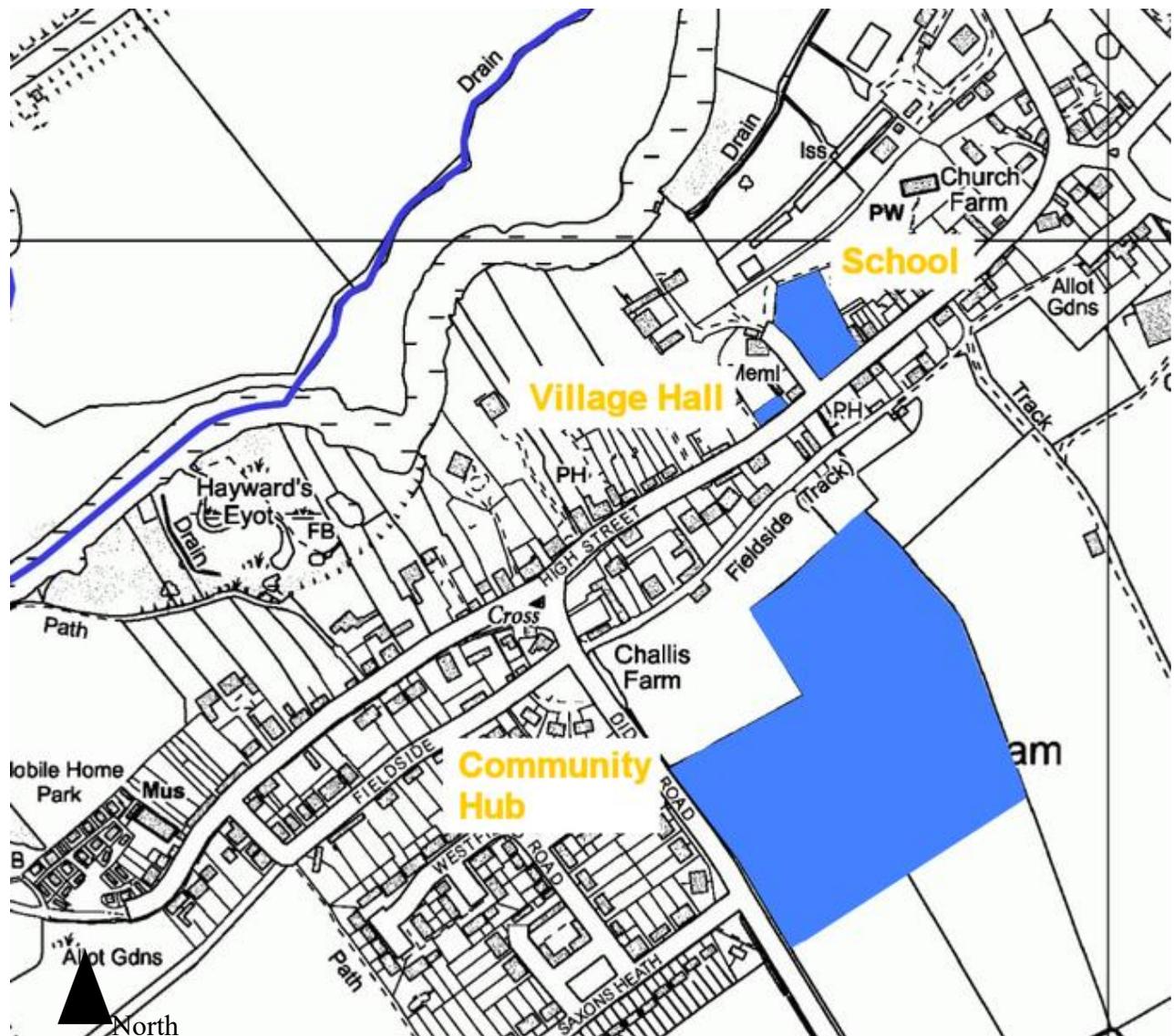
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

68. The community hub proposal has been in public consideration since it was first discussed in the *Wittenham Vision* in 2010. Since that time, there have been many discussions, as part of the NDP but also by the Parish Council and the community at large, about how the community hub project could be realised.
69. The Parish Council is the democratically elected body that is acting as overall sponsor for the community hub project and which undertakes negotiations on its behalf.
70. Agreement has been secured either in Memoranda of Understanding, verbal agreements and parish council activities. **Appendix 1** is a letter from the County Council setting out its position regarding the school site and the proposed new school. An option agreement has been signed between the parties.
71. The outline proposal for the community hub project is as follows and relates to three sites which are illustrated in **Figure 6**:
- **Didcot Road:** this is the main hub proposal site. It compares favourably against all other known sites. This land is privately owned. In the made LWNDP, this is referred to as “Site 2a”. However, the current site is larger than the original site 2a and has been renamed so that the different boundaries can be differentiated.
 - **The school site:** this site would be subject to a “land swap” as enabling development. This land is jointly owned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the Oxford Diocese.
 - **The Village Hall site:** this land would be redeveloped as 1-2 houses by the Parish Council and the funds used towards the costs of a new village hall within the hub scheme on the Didcot Road site. This land is owned by the parish council.
72. The proposal seeks to balance the need for economic return with the need to improve the village’s overall sustainability by allowing sufficient housing to be built to cross-subsidise the community infrastructure. Transport issues will be addressed as congestion caused by school drop off and collection is moved from the High Street to improved parking and access at the hub site. A quantum of around 40-45 open market housing and affordable housing, is proposed to be built as a commercial activity to cross-subsidise the development of the school, car parking, playing fields, etc. at no cost to the public purse.
73. The plan to relocate the school and village hall pre-dates the development of the 2017 made LWNDP. It was first suggested in the village plan, *Wittenham Vision*. The proposal was slow to be agreed because it was difficult to find a way to provide the development without funding from any Local Authority partners. It would have been impossible to build the community buildings on land purchased at market rates without building well in excess of 100 houses. The village as a whole resisted new housing on this scale and for this reason, progress on the scheme slowed.

74. During the process of developing the made LWNDP, a local land owner offered to sell land to the project at CIL rates (i.e. the rate per hectare as determined by South Oxfordshire District Council for this type of project). This made the project viable with a reduced number of new market rate and affordable houses needed to cross-subsise the non-housing components from 100 to the 2017 estimate of 35-40. This was acceptable to the village and this proposal was put forward in the 2017 LWNDP Policy LW1 and supporting text.
75. The Parish Council, working with the landowner, identified a development partner to take the project forward. These three bodies have worked closely together to plan the project, also taking advice from the planning authority. However, the project is complicated due to the number of parties involved (Parish Council, landowner, developer, OCC and Oxford Diocese as the owners of the school site).
76. Legal agreements have now been drawn up between the parties. The development partner has an option to purchase the land once planning permission has been received. The agreement only allows housing development in conjunction with the hub development. If the school closes in the future there will be a covenant that prevents OCC/Oxford Diocese selling the land for housing.
77. The final piece of the jigsaw was achieved at the end of August 2018 when the Diocese and OCC agreed to move the school to the proposed new site, pay for relevant legal fees, furnish the new school and release the current school land to the developer for housing.
78. During the course of the discussions the project evolved in a number of ways:
 - a) OCC as the landowner and education authority requested that the school should have a playing field appropriate for a one form entry school, though the school building will be half form entry. This provision will “future proof” any school expansion should this be required. However, this resulted in the need to include a larger land parcel than originally envisaged.
 - b) The developer agreed that the Parish Council should keep the current Village Hall site, so that it could provide an income that would offset any future costs from the new Village Hall.
79. The developer’s original estimate for the number of houses to cross fund the school and village hall was 35-40. Detailed viability calculations have only been undertaken since August 2018 when the developer was reassured by the Parish Council that the project could proceed. These calculations plus the additional costs to the developer listed above have resulted in the project now requiring around 45 houses to cross fund the new community facilities.
80. The project plan in outline will involve:
 - c) Planning application in line with LWNDP LW1;
 - d) Purchase of Didcot Road (RLWNDP LW1) by the development partner on receipt of planning permission;

- e) The development partner will use its own funds to built up to 45 houses (including a portion of affordable houses), school and village hall and associated playing fields and amenity areas as set out in LW1;
 - f) On completion of the hub development, ownership of the newly constructed school building and associated land will be give to Oxofrdshrie County Council and Oxford Diocese and in return, the development partner will take ownership of the current school buildings and land site referred to in RLWNDP LW2;
 - g) On completion of the hub project in RLWNDP LW1, the ownership of the portion of the new development containing the new Village Hall, its parking and associated the green space will be transferred to the Parish Council;
 - h) The northern part of the current school site will be developed for 5 houses as set out in RLWNDP LW2. At this time, ownership of the southern portion of the former school site including the War Memorial, will be given to the Parish Council to develop as a village green. This part of the poject is set out under RLWNDP Policy LW2.
 - i) RLWNDP LW2 allows the Parish Council to redevelop the redundant Village Hall site for housing. The future plans for this site have not been considered at the time of preparing evidence for the RLWNDP.
81. Since the overall purpose of the hub is to make the village more sustainable, so that villagers will have more convenient access to necessary services on foot or near their homes, it has always been discussed within the village that the hub and the housing would be located on the same site. This has been assumed in all public consultation since the 2010 *Wittenham Vision* and it can be considered that the principle that there is a community preference for the hub and the housing to be co-located has been established.

FIGURE 6: COMMUNITY HUB DEVELOPMENT SITES



83. Emerging Local Plan Policy H8 states that in villages such as Long Wittenham where there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place, there should be at least a 5% increase in dwelling numbers above those recorded in the 2011 census. This amounts to at least 16 new houses over the local plan period up to 2033. A recent planning appeal allowed 36 houses which exceeds the requirement by some way – this site has been allocated under NDP policy LW3. In addition, there has been another 4 houses built since 2011 as infill development. There is therefore no additional requirement for Long Wittenham to allocate sites according to the emerging Local Plan and its supporting evidence base. The supporting text for H8 states that smaller villages will look to larger villages for higher level services and facilities. The Emerging Local Plan considers Long Wittenham to be relatively less sustainable in terms of its services and facilities than other villages and towns.

84. The policies below seek to accommodate an additional 40-45 houses in addition to what has already been granted permission. The purpose of the community hub is to create better and more robust community infrastructure to better support recent housing permissions and future growth.
85. Further information regarding the community hub and the policy background can be found in **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations** and **Evidence Paper: Planning Policy Context**.

COMMUNITY HUB SITE

86. The 2017 LWNDP Policy LW1 made provision for the community hub in a criteria-led policy with no site allocation. The intention of the policy was to provide a firm basis for a forthcoming Community Right to Build Order (CRTBO) that would be prepared after the LWNDP being made. The current 2018 reviewed LWNDP takes a different approach and seeks to allocate land for a hub with a policy to guide and direct the management of that development.
87. The original 2017 LWNDP principles remain valid. The community hub will become the new focus of the village, creating new patterns of movement and community activity. The new hub must provide a safe and attractive learning environment for the children who will use the school and pre-school, and good play areas, and must be accessible to parents who either chose to walk to school and pre-school or who must fit the school drop-off and pick-up around their commute to work.
88. The Village Hall should always be available and have enough capacity to cater for a range of groups and activities. The playing fields should, if possible, be attractive and accessible outside school hours so that the entire community can benefit from the recreational opportunities they provide.
89. The congestion currently experienced in the village centre should be reduced by convenient parking for parents and people who wish to access other services.
90. The housing needed to cross-subsidise the hub should relate spatially to it and the remainder of the village, and the entire site should relate well to the countryside and the recently allowed scheme for 36 new houses off Fieldside (RLWNDP policy LW3).
91. The development must also respect the area's archaeological and natural features and complement the village character in its design.
92. A site selection exercise has been undertaken, set out in **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations**. That exercise concluded that there is only one site in the village suitable to meet the community's expectation, Didcot Road, which will be referred to here as the "community hub site". This site is located on agricultural land to the south of the village, off Didcot Road. The site is within convenient walking distance from the village centre, is favourable in terms of all relevant planning policies and has been made available to the parish council at a cost which is low enough to allow the community and education facilities to be built at no cost to the public purse.
93. NPPG para. 33 requires local plans to be reviewed every 5 years. It took Long Wittenham Parish Council 8 years to agree the scheme with all the landowners and partners. It can be concluded that should the hub scheme fail, it would take longer to redesign the scheme than it would to review the NDP. Therefore, should the hub scheme fail, the allocated Didcot Road site would not be

developed, and the preparation of a revised Community Hub scheme would be dealt with in the next review of the NDP.

Policy LW1: Community Hub

- A. The site referred to as the “Community Hub” shown on **Figure 6** is allocated for development of:
- a. A primary school (c. 100 pupils and on land at least 1.34 ha in line with current standards) and pre-school with outdoor space to allow for potential expansion;
 - b. A Village Hall with ancillary activities such as café, shop, meeting spaces, performance space, and other community based recreational activities
 - c. Playing fields with ancillary development and infrastructure;
 - d. Car parking sufficient for meeting the needs of the land uses set out above;
 - e. Cycle and footpath linkages to the surrounding adopted, permitted and proposed network, maximising the potential of Footpath 287/5 to provide links between the site and the village centre and the countryside;
 - f. 40-45 houses (to include affordable housing as required by the local planning authority).
- B. Development on the community hub site shall be subject to a masterplan and design brief to be agreed with the local planning authority. The masterplan will address the following points as a minimum:
- a. Innovative and attractive design will be required that takes full account of changing educational and social expectations whilst complementing the unique character of Long Wittenham as described in **Evidence Papers: Character Assessment and Countryside**;
 - b. The proposal will complement the adjacent Fieldside development (LW3), and if possible, will propose how the two developments will jointly address issues such as access, the protection of views into and out of the countryside (particularly with regard to Wittenham Clumps as set out in LW8). If it is not possible to consider these matters jointly, the masterplan should consider them for the community hub site alone;
 - c. Open space provision, including the playing fields and the open space associated with the housing portion of the site, should relate to and compliment provision made at Fieldside, and to provision in the wider village with the aim of providing a variety of open spaces that can serve different recreational and amenity purposes;
 - d. Parking and circulation in the scheme will lead to an overall increase in sustainable transport choices and a reduction in congestion in the village;
 - e. Use of Sustainable Urban Drainage will manage surface water.
- C. Heritage Appraisal and Impact Assessment proportionate to the significance of the designated and non-designated assets and archaeological remains should inform proposals in accordance with national policy.

- D. Development proposals should clearly set out development phasing including off-site contingencies.
- E. The housing portion of the proposal is contingent upon delivery of the other elements of the scheme, as set out in A above. Housing development that does not make provision for A a-f will not be allowed on this site.

SAFEGUARDING LAND FOR COMMUNITY HUB

- 94. The community hub scheme requires land from the vacated school to be made available to the developer (the parish council and its partners). The development partner will take ownership of the site in a “land swap” to build 5 new houses on the school site plus transfer land ownership to the parish Council for them to create a new village green and a better setting for the war memorial. The provision and sale of this additional housing is part of the business case for the scheme.
- 95. The Village Hall is owned by the Parish Council. Once the new Village Hall is built, this land may be sold for redevelopment to cross-subsidise the maintenance and fit-out of the new facility.
- 96. The **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations** considers options how best to secure the role of the school and Village Hall sites in the overall community hub scheme.
- 97. The most viable use of the Village Hall and school sites at present is for housing. Therefore, for this review of the NDP, it is proposed that those sites will become redundant when the new facilities at the hub are built and that those sites will be put to best use which is housing.
- 98. Since the housing land allocations in this NDP are sufficient to ensure that Long Wittenham’s housing requirement has been met, it is not necessary during this review of the NDP to allocate further housing sites. Therefore, it is not necessary to preclude the development of the Village Hall or school sites for housing unless this makes a contribution to the hub scheme. If the Village Hall and school sites are not required to make such a contribution, then it is possible that a non-housing land use would be preferable. In this case, the optimal future land use would need to be proven in individual planning applications.
- 99. The safeguarding approach is being used in LW2 for the village hall and school sites since it will be more flexible if the community hub scheme fails than would a straightforward housing land allocation which is proven to be unnecessary.

Policy LW2: Safeguarded sites

- A. The sites referred to as the “school” and “Village Hall” shown on **Figure 6** are safeguarded as part of the community hub proposal. In the event that the community hub scheme progresses, and a new school or village hall will be made available, neither site should be developed for any other purpose than:

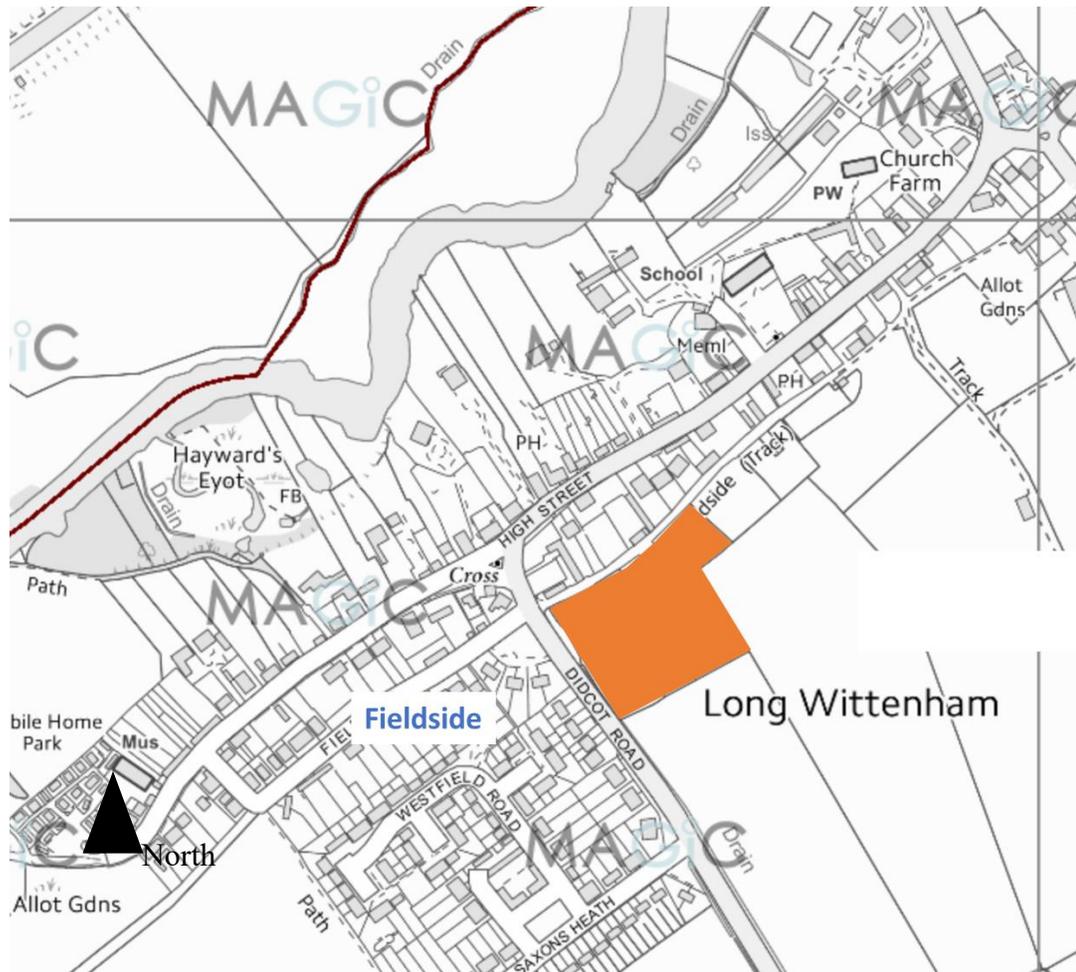
- a. For the school site: up to 5 houses and village green and improved setting for the War Memorial;
 - b. For the Village Hall site: 1-2 residential units
- B. Development for other purposes will only be allowed where the site concerned is no longer required for housing related to the overall community hub scheme.

HOUSING LAND ALLOCATION

100. Emerging Local Plan policy H8 sets out the expectation that NDPs will allocate land (where they do so) at around 5% of housing stock in 2011. As set out above, this expectation has already been met.
101. An additional 40 dwellings have received planning permission since 2011. Of these, 4 were “infill” development of 1-2 units, and the remaining 36 were allowed under the Fieldside scheme.
102. The Fieldside scheme (referred to as Fieldside Track in APP/Q3115/W/17/3169755) is a substantial housing development on a large plot and there is no evidence available that the proposal, tested at a planning inquiry, is not the optimum density for the site². Though local plan policy indicated that the proposal should not be permitted, it was allowed because of the benefit that the scheme offered in the absence of a proven 5-year housing land supply. In addition, the Fieldside site was considered the most deliverable of available alternative housing sites, taking account of the allocations in LW1 and LW2, as demonstrated in the **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations**.
103. The assessment indicated that the Fieldside site was suitable as a housing site, but not for a community hub and housing site. This site, shown in Figure 7, is therefore allocated under Emerging Local Plan Policy H8 to bring the reviewed LWNDP up to date since 2011.
104. The Inspector allowed the outline proposal in January 2018 and no reserved matters application has been received. This gives rise to uncertainty regarding the future of the site for two reasons: there is no clarity on how final proposals will integrate with LW1 regarding the adjacent community hub, school and housing, and, there is no certainty that the development will be delivered.
105. Therefore, to create greater certainty, and to meet and exceed Long Wittenham’s housing requirement, the Fieldside site will be allocated and clarification will be required regarding the reserved matters application, or any new planning application on the site.

² In its reasons for refusal, the planning authority did not challenge the proposal's housing density.

FIGURE 7: FIELDSTIDE SITE



Policy LW3: Housing allocation

- A. The site referred to as the “Fieldside”, shown on **Figure 7**, is allocated for up to 36 housing units.
- B. Development on the site shall be subject to a masterplan and design brief to be agreed with the local planning authority. The masterplan will address the following points as a minimum:
 - a. Innovative and attractive design will be required, complementing the unique character of Long Wittenham as described in **Evidence Papers: Character Assessment and Countryside**;
 - b. The proposal will complement the adjacent Community Hub development, and if possible, will propose how the two developments will jointly address issues such as access, the protection of views into and out of the countryside, particularly with regard to Wittenham Clumps as set out in LW8. If it is not possible to consider these matters jointly, the masterplan should consider them for the Fieldside site alone;
 - c. Open space provision should relate to and compliment provision made at the community hub and to provision in the wider village with the aim of providing a variety of open spaces that can serve different recreational and amenity purposes;
 - d. Parking and circulation in the scheme will lead to an overall increase in sustainable transport choices and not add to congestion in the village;
 - e. Use of Sustainable Urban Drainage will manage surface water.
- C. A Heritage Appraisal and Impact Assessment proportionate to the significance of the designated and non-designated assets and archaeological remains should inform proposals in accordance with national policy.

COUNTRYSIDE

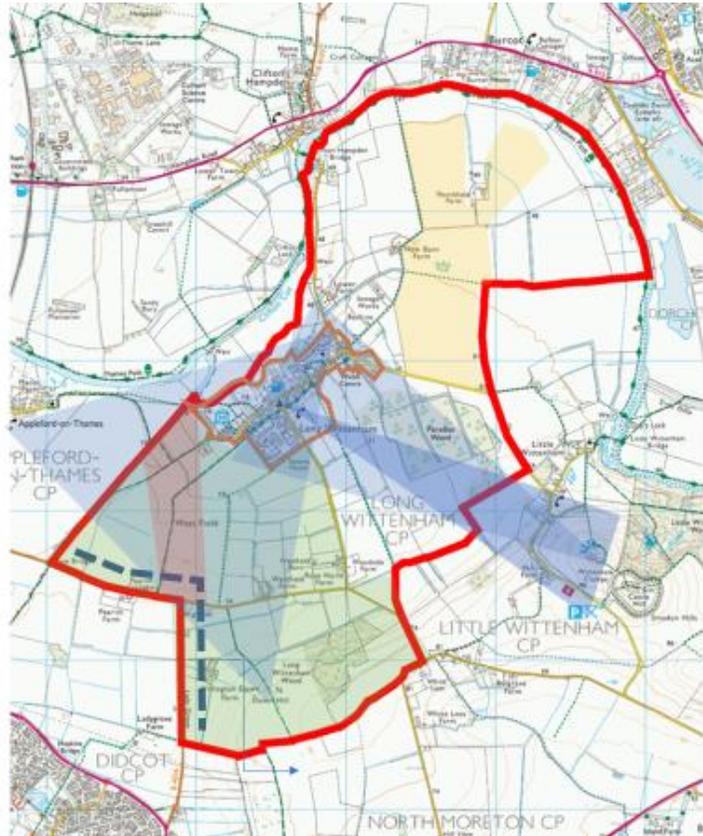
106. Long Wittenham village is surrounded by countryside on all sides which provides a buffer between it and other built-up areas. The countryside generates multiple benefits for the village by providing local employment, recreational opportunities, tranquillity, and a green setting for the village itself which can be enjoyed from many viewpoints outside the village or from within, looking out to the countryside.
107. The countryside separates Long Wittenham from Didcot to the south east, Appleford to the west and Culham, Clifton Hampden and Burcot across the River Thames to the north. The River Thames and its 'cut' forms the north western boundary of the village. To the north of the Thames is Oxfordshire Green Belt. To the east is a relatively wide gap of undeveloped countryside separating the village from the settlements of Little Wittenham and Dorchester. Wittenham Clumps lie to the south east of the village and the south east boundary of the parish demarks the North Wessex Downs AONB. To the south of the village is another relatively large open swathe of countryside. These designations and features are discussed in detail in the **Evidence Paper: Countryside**.
108. Didcot is a major settlement to the south west of Long Wittenham which has been designated as a Garden Town within the wider Science Vale. The Garden Town Delivery Plan (October 2017) highlights key priorities that affect Long Wittenham parish which is identified as part of Didcot's Area of Influence. Importantly, the delivery plan indicates that the countryside in Long Wittenham parish is a valued recreational and landscape resource for Didcot and recommends that a green gap is adopted by neighbourhood plans between Didcot and their own settlement boundaries. A recent planning permission for around 2000 homes will bring Didcot's development boundary up to the edge of the re-defined Long Wittenham parish boundary.
109. The countryside surrounding Long Wittenham village is subject to several planning policy objectives and constraints such as the need to: protect the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB; preserve and enhance scheduled ancient monuments and heritage assets; maximise the opportunities from the value of the River Thames Corridor; avoid development in areas subject to flooding; and, improve transport connections. A fuller discussion of the nature of these constraints and opportunities is set out in the evidence paper.
110. The development plan and other policies and aspirations inter alia establish a set of countryside development principles that guide the LWNDP's approach. **The Countryside Principles are set out in the Evidence Paper: Countryside.**
111. The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Strategy indicated that there should be a Green Gap between the settlements of Didcot and Long Wittenham and that additional tree planting should be used to screen inter-visible views between the settlements. However, it was not within the delivery strategy's gift to identify where the gap should be located and so, in Figure 8.7 from the Delivery Strategy (reproduced in the evidence paper), the location of the Green Gap and recommended tree screening was only broadly indicated. It has been left to the planning authority and adjacent NDPs to refine that recommendation.
112. There is no Green Gap policy in the adopted or emerging Development Plan, i.e. the plan is silent on the matter. However, though silent, the policy approach advocated in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Strategy is relevant.
113. The LWNDP allocates land for housing in LW1, LW2 and LW3 and has demonstrated that it has met and exceeded its local housing requirement as a result. There is therefore no compelling

argument why additional housing land will be required over and above what has been identified. There will therefore not be a need for major development in the countryside in Long Wittenham parish and so it will be possible to introduce a Green Gap policy.

114. NPPF para 28 states that non-strategic policies can be used by local communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas which can include conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment. Para. 29 states that neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area.
115. It is justified for the NDP to set out how development will occur outside the village built-up area. **Figure 8** shows the notional development boundary in 2018 which is the base year for the RLW NDP. Development that has been permitted or is in-situ at the time of the NDP's referendum will form the actual baseline to define the village's built-up area. The area outside the built-up area can be considered Countryside for the purposes of this policy.
116. Figure 8 shows the location for safeguarded transport land that the Planning Authority has identified as necessary to progress the Green Line from Didcot to Culham. Policy LW8 has identified important views worthy of protection. The Settlement at Northfield Farm is a large Scheduled Ancient Monument in the countryside where development should be carefully managed, and which has been identified as contributing to the green infrastructure of Didcot Garden Town. In addition, other constraints exist since some of the land is subject to flooding and there are heritage designations.
117. The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan recommendations for a Green Gap in Long Wittenham were imprecise and the broad area where such a gap should lie is indicated in Figure 8. This notation is not prescriptive but is a general indication of development that would conform with the many identified planning constraints, some of which apply to the entire parish. However, the desirability of protecting the area denoted as Green Gap in the Figure should be given weight in planning decisions if the overall policy objectives and Development Principles are to be met.

FIGURE 8: GREEN GAP AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT CONTRAINTS

Key	
	Notional village built up area in 2018
	Approximate location of tree screening
	Views covered in LW8
	Notional green gap area
	Scheduled Ancient Monument
	Safeguarded transport route



LW4: Countryside

GREEN GAP

- A. Development will be permitted in the land identified on Figure 8 as the Green Gap that:
- a. Is for transport purposes relating to the proposed Green Line and to improve cycle and pedestrian access between Didcot Garden Town and Wittenham Clumps;
 - b. Provides a woodland buffer between the built-up edge of Didcot Garden Town and the countryside.

COUNTRYSIDE INCLUDING THE GREEN GAP

- B. Development will be permitted in the Countryside (defined as outside the built-up area of Long Wittenham Village from the date that the NDP is made) that:
- a. Is not for housing other than rural exception sites or is infill development as defined in the Development Plan;
 - b. Provides opportunities for rural business and enterprise to grow and expand whilst avoiding unnecessary intrusion into open farmland and countryside;
 - c. Conserves and enhances the North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - d. Can demonstrate that it avoids harm to the tranquillity of the countryside;
 - e. Complies with policy LW8;
 - f. Closely associates with existing built form and is well-integrated within the landscape;
 - g. Limits urbanising influences with tree and plant screening at the edge of settlements and other major features such as transport infrastructure.

PART 3 HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

HOUSING MIX

118. The NDP seeks to protect and enhance the character of our small rural village and avoid new pressure on local infrastructure. In the event of housing proposals coming forward, it is essential that additional housing meets local needs with a locally appropriate mix of housing types.
119. 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 but known to have a wish to move here (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.
120. It is expected that proposals for new housing will reflect a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of residents of Long Wittenham but will also contribute towards locally identified need. This is in addition to the Development Plan requirement for affordable housing. The policies and evidence behind housing mix is discussed in more detail in **Evidence Paper: Planning Policy Context** and **Evidence Paper: Evidence Base**.
121. 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 are projected to fall slightly in the future (which itself is partly due to the ageing of the population).’³
122. Further local housing needs surveys will be carried out from time to time throughout the NDP period. The SHMA acknowledges that local market conditions/environment need to be considered, although it may not be appropriate or possible to insist on housing to meet local housing needs.

Policy LW5: Housing Mix

- A. Development proposals for schemes of more than ten dwellings, will be required to:
 - a. deliver the affordable housing requirements set out in the Development Plan, and;
 - b. deliver an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes, having regard to the local community’s needs as identified in the housing needs survey, and other local evidence. There is a preference towards smaller houses as starter properties and homes for those who wish to downsize.

³ Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, GL Hearn Final Report, April 2014, 7.21.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

123. As the challenges listed above show, there are currently deficiencies in the village's infrastructure. These will only grow as more houses are developed in the village and surrounding area such as Didcot. It is therefore important that provision is made for new infrastructure to keep pace with development as it comes on stream.
124. South Oxfordshire operates a CIL policy. It can be expected that the Parish Council will receive significant amounts of CIL funding should all proposed and permitted new developments be realised in the plan period. More information on likely CIL receipts can be found in **Evidence Paper: Planning Policy Context**.
125. In addition to CIL contributions paid to the Parish Council, it is possible that developer contributions will be required to overcome specific issues relating to individual developments. Should new development come forward in the parish in the NDP period, it is possible that additional burdens will be placed upon existing infrastructure. It may become necessary for mitigation to be put in place to offset any harm caused. The information in the **Evidence Paper: Infrastructure Project List** should be considered by applicants as a starting point. The projects set out in the evidence paper provide evidence where pressures may arise and how these may be managed.
126. Keeping the Infrastructure Project List up to date will be the responsibility of the Parish Council who, as the responsible financial authority, will monitor and amend it as necessary.

Community Objective LW6: Infrastructure

- A. Developments giving rise to the need for off-site community infrastructure should consider the requirements identified in **Evidence Paper: Infrastructure Project List** as a starting point when considering mitigation.

PART 4: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

HERITAGE AND DESIGN

127. A comprehensive Character Assessment was prepared in 2016 in support of the LWNDP. This document remains relevant and is included in the NDP as **Evidence Paper: Character Assessment**. This has been updated by additional work undertaken in 2018 which considers the character of the open countryside around the village, set out in **Evidence Paper: Countryside**. These evidence papers should both be consulted in support of this policy.
128. The village is located on the border of the North Wessex Downs, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of which the Wittenham Clumps form a part. The Clumps afford 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside and can be seen from several locations within the village. Also known as the Sinodun hills, they form a unique backdrop to the village and are integral to the spirit of the place.
129. The village is predominantly linear in nature and historically it has developed along the High Street. The linear nature of the village is further defined along its northern edge as the length of the original village runs parallel to the River Thames. The main road through the village now forms part of a main route from Didcot in the south to the river crossing of the Thames at Clifton Hampden, connecting the village with principle routes to Oxford and beyond. The original geometric form of the village has changed from a simple linear form to a 'T' shape as the village as more recent housing development has grown along the main road towards Didcot.
130. The organic growth of the village has been determined in recent years by the surrounding physical geography, the movement of people between the principal urban areas in south and central Oxfordshire and connections to major transport links. The river Thames to the north and the flood plain precludes development in this direction as does the agricultural land to the west, but the road leading from Didcot and the A34 in the south to the river crossing at Clifton Hampden is perhaps the principal determining factor in the way in which sites for recent development have been chosen.
131. There is a Conservation Area in Long Wittenham and 39 listed buildings including the Grade 1 listed Church of St Mary and two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. **Figure 9** shows the listed buildings as green dots and the Church of St Mary is shown in red. **Figure 10** shows the boundary of the conservation area.

FIGURE 9: LISTED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES IN LONG WITTENHAM

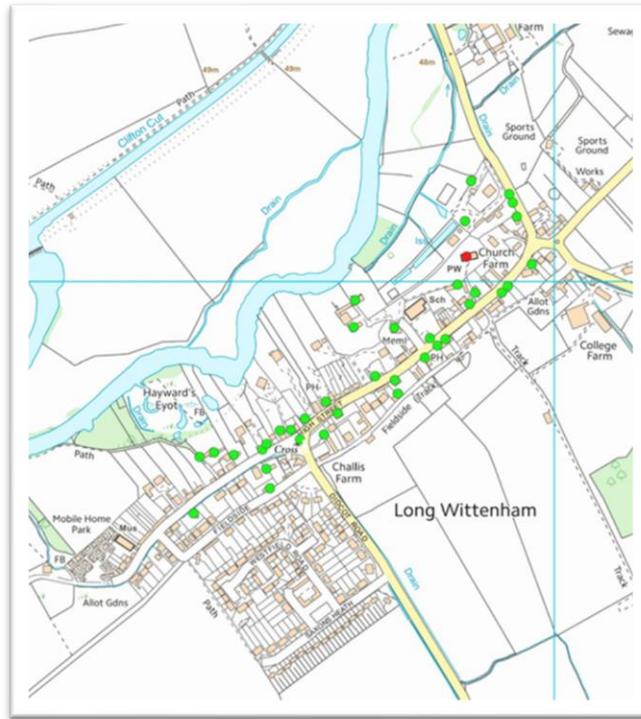
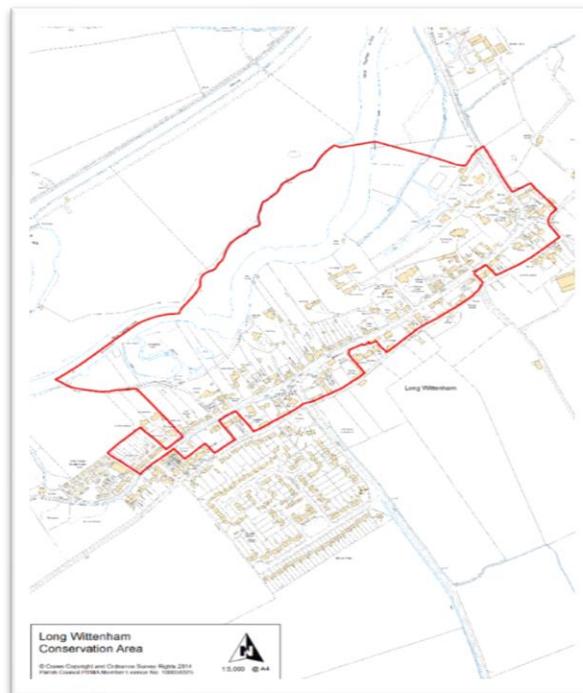


FIGURE 10: LONG WITTENHAM CONSERVATION AREA



132. As might be expected in a village which has had an organic development, there are a range of architectural periods evident in the village of Long Wittenham ranging from the 14th century Cruck Cottage through numerous examples of thatched cottages to Georgian and a few Victorian properties up to 20th century buildings. Although there is building stock from a range of historical periods, it is still possible to identify a palette of materials from these buildings which contribute to create a local vernacular architecture, materials such as; red brickwork in a Flemish bond especially with traditional lime mortar pointing; blackened timber cladding such as is found on agricultural buildings, traditional timber casement or sliding sash windows, red roof tiles, slate or traditional thatched roofing and white painted render walls. There is also a common sense of scale with houses, irrespective of their period, being no more than 2 ½ storeys in height. Together with its unique setting, these attributes define the unique character of Long Wittenham.
133. Those areas which yielded positive ratings in the character assessment were:
- St John's Row, whose scale of houses and their arrangement and grouping within the landscape give rise to a sense of a microcosm of community within the wider village context. These were the first reinforced concrete houses built in the country in 1870. The community feel is further enhanced by the individualism of each house that the owners have bestowed upon it through various sensitive extensions and the use of colour on the external render
 - The High Street, whose permeable nature, disposition of buildings, urban grain and views out towards the surrounding countryside define the structure of the place. It is easy to walk between the village and countryside and there are views into and out of the village. The palette of materials used in the buildings of the High Street, ranging from brick, to the timber cladding to the traditional thatched roofs all contribute in a positive way
 - The Granary and Manor, whose green space and arrangement of buildings around the original village green and their materials add depth and intrigue and a sense of permeability to the village
 - Central Fieldside, further enhancing and reinforcing the permeable nature of the village and the views across to the Sinodun Hills, the open green space which runs parallel to the High Street gives further depth to the village and affords residents a semi-private route through the urban fabric away from the traffic on the High Street;
 - Fieldside East, like St John's Row, fosters its own sense of a smaller community within the wider village community thanks in part to the planning of the houses between the Little Wittenham Road to the east and the community allotments which offer views towards the Sinodun Hills;
 - Clockhouse and Long Wall, for the rich red brick material whose character provides a richness and unique character to the entrance of the village when approached from the north;
 - Green space, which is prevalent in Long Wittenham and evenly dispersed across the village. The green pockets serve as recreation, refuge, visual delight and as a set of lungs to the urban environment of the village. They further enhance the permeable nature of the village.

134. Taken together the attributes as described in the above areas form a palette and a toolbox for creating any new development which would complement and enhance the existing environment and contribute to the built fabric of the village in a positive way.

Policy LW7: Heritage and Design

- A. All new development should preserve and enhance the overall character and appeal of Long Wittenham parish as described in **Evidence Papers: Character Assessment and Countryside**.
- B. Design decisions should reflect the following:
 - a. Adjacent and nearby development;
 - b. Streetscape;
 - c. Historic context;
 - d. Protected views;
 - e. Local distinctiveness and sense of place;
 - f. Historic built form of the village;
 - g. Permeability by foot and cycle for all villagers.
- C. The parish's designated historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground including the conservation area, listed buildings, and scheduled ancient monuments, will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution and enhanced distinctiveness, character and sense of place.
- D. Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss.
- E. Incidental green spaces within the built-up area of the village should be preserved and enhanced where possible.

PROTECTED VIEWS

135. There are still places in the parish of Long where it is quiet, and no man-made structures can be seen. Views towards Appleford have been compromised by Didcot Power Station but these will eventually become more rural in character once the remaining large buildings of the power station are demolished. The landscape of the area is still relatively unspoilt.
136. There is easy access to a good network of public rights of way from the village making it safe and convenient to walk off road to Little Wittenham, Appleford and towards Sires Hill areas. The Thames Path National Trail runs along the parish bank of the Thames from Clifton Hampden towards Days Lock in Little Wittenham. There is a well-used cycle route (Sustrans 5) from the village towards Didcot taking cyclists and pedestrians on a hard-surfaced off-road route into Ladygrove. The Harwell to Culham Science Vale cycle route is also accessible.

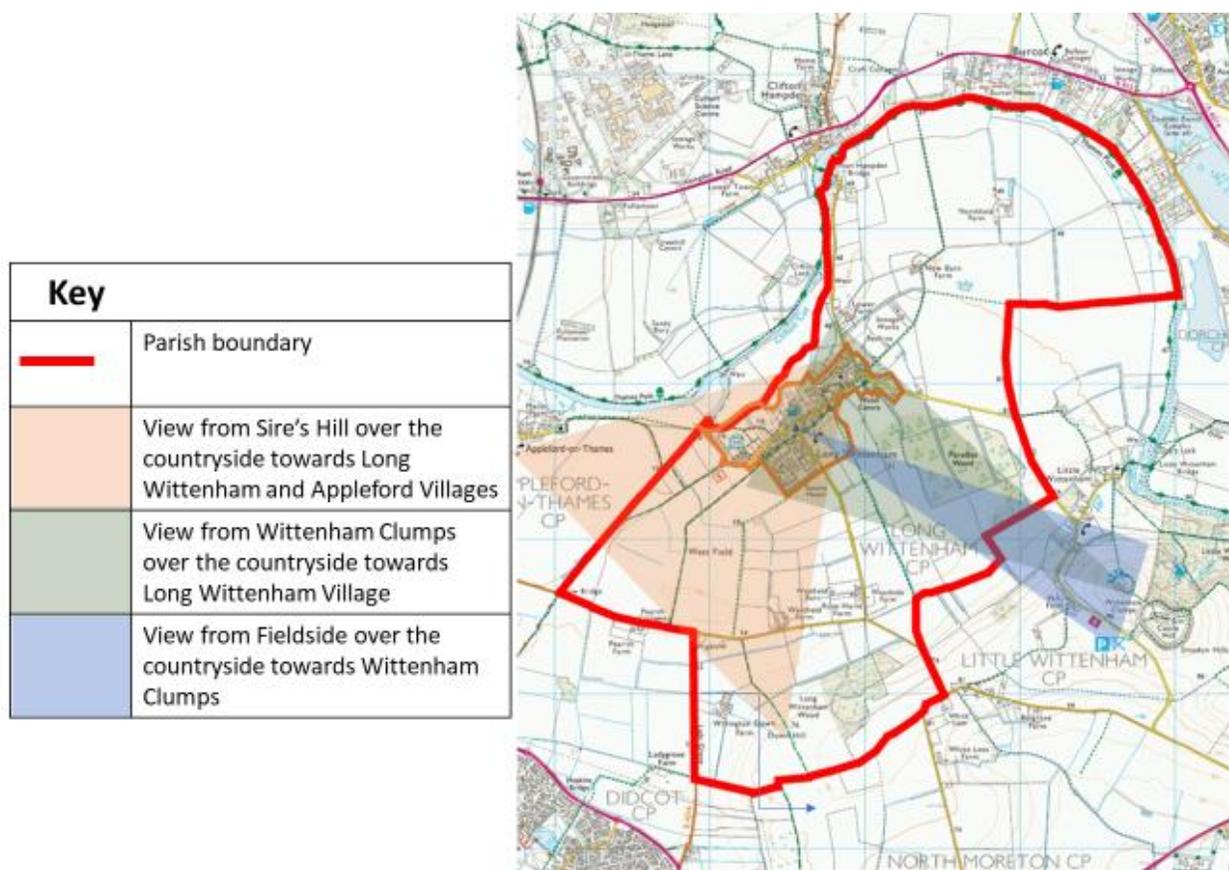
137. The NDP community survey⁴ showed relatively high regard to the countryside.

138. The planning policy and evidence review in **Evidence Paper: Countryside** indicates that there are additional views of importance over and above what was included in the made LWNDP. The following views have been identified as needing special protection and are shown in **Figure 11**:

139. Protected views:

- The view from Fieldside over the countryside towards Wittenham Clumps;
- The view from Wittenham Clumps over the countryside towards Long Wittenham village;
- The view from Sire's Hill over the countryside towards Long Wittenham and Appleford villages;

FIGURE 11: PROTECTED VIEWS



⁴ Question 25

140. The views' value derives from the sense of openness that they provide. This is illustrated in the photo record presented in the evidence paper. To retain this sense of openness, new development should not "obstruct" the views from important public vantage points such as public rights of way (as illustrated in the photos).
141. For the purpose of development management decisions, an "obstructed" view is where a view corridor was originally "wide", showing a broad vista over the area in question and this is unacceptably reduced. The view would be "obstructed" where the width of the viewable corridor becomes restricted either at the edges or within the vista to the extent that the difference is perceptible and noticeable to the viewer. There will inevitably be a range of how much "obstruction" takes place regarding individual developments, and this will be a matter for individual proposals to address. Therefore, there may be some instances where the obstruction is imperceptible, or perceptible but acceptable, to the viewer. However, as the level of obstruction increases, there will be a commensurate increase in the perception of harm to the view and the viewer's enjoyment of the landscape.
142. Development proposals should pay due regard to the issue of obstruction of protected views and should seek to avoid harm wherever possible. Where it is likely that a development will cause obstruction to a protected view, it would be prudent to prepare a full Landscape and Visual Assessment to determine the level of harm and options for mitigation.

Policy LW8: Protected Views

- A. Development will be allowed where it does not lead to the obstruction or detriment of the following protected views from publicly accessible vantage points:
 - a. The view from Fieldside over the countryside towards Wittenham Clumps;
 - b. The view from Wittenham Clumps over the countryside towards Long Wittenham village;
 - c. The view from Sire's Hill over the countryside towards Long Wittenham and Appleford villages;
- B. Where development has the potential to cause harm to a protected view, the proposal should seek to retain its visual integrity and will be required to undertake a full Landscape and Visual Amenity Assessment for this purpose.

CYCLE AND FOOTPATHS

143. There is a need to improve both walking and cycling opportunities between the villages of Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden. The villages are only one mile apart, yet there is no safe and easy walking or cycling route between the two. There is also a major strategic issue for sustainable transport between Didcot and the employment centre at Culham (The Science Vale).
144. Long Wittenham is classified as a small village in the Development Plan partly due to its lack of public transport access. Though it is beyond the remit of the NDP to facilitate significant public transport improvements, it is possible to improve access to existing public transport modes by bicycle and on foot. In addition, it is possible and desirable to improve recreational access to the surrounding countryside.
145. The new policy seeks to promote four sustainable transport projects:
- a) Community Hub: Improved footpath links between the Didcot Road site and the Village centre.
 - b) Didcot to Wittenham Clumps: Improved cycle and footpath links between Didcot Garden Town and Wittenham Clumps.
 - c) Link: The completion of the cycle route between Culham, Didcot and Harwell – the section from Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden is the only gap in this network for future sustainable public transport. It will also be used by Long Wittenham residents to get to the shop/doctors (in Clifton Hampden) safely by bicycle, and for recreational use.
 - d) Circular Route: The creation of a circular walking route between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden, along the Thames Path.
146. Further information on these two sustainable transport projects and the reasoning behind this policy is available in **Evidence Paper: Cycle and Footpaths**.

Policy LW9: Cycle and Footpaths

- A. Where development leads to increased demand for sustainable transport as set out in Development Plan policies, proposals should consider how they could make a proportionate contribution to the proposals set out in **Evidence Paper: Cycle and Footpaths**.
- B. Proposals for new cycle and footpaths at the following locations will be supported:
 - a. Between the Community Hub site (LW2) and the village High Street;
 - b. Between Didcot Garden Town and Wittenham Clumps;
 - c. Between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden alongside the existing High Street; and
 - d. The Circular route between the villages of Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden incorporating the Thames Path.

PARKING

147. Long Wittenham residents do not have access to public transport in the village and are therefore entirely dependent upon the car. However, this has consequences in a village that was not built to accommodate this mode of transport. The roads are narrow in places, but more importantly, cars must be parked. In older properties, where there is no capacity to park off-street, cars will inevitably be parked on-street. These factors together lead to unwanted congestion in the village, visual damage to the High Street views and physical damage to verges. New development should not make this situation any worse.
148. With no bus service or railway station, 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 this often results in the need for at least two cars per household.
149. Evidence Paper: Evidence Base identifies parking problems as a major challenge for the village. 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. *Wittenham Vision* identified further actions to improve traffic and parking in the village⁷ and the 2015 Neighbourhood Plan survey also identified significant concerns about parking.
- Parking is a problem for 20% of respondents;
 - 73% supported the concept of a village car park;
 - 43% found parking associated with school runs to be a problem.
150. The policy does not set out minimum parking standards but instead seeks to recognise that existing problems should not be made worse. Our aim is to encourage developers to engage with the local planning authority on how best to overcome this problem. The fall-back position will be the application of development plan standards in place at the time of the determination of any planning application. Within this context, it would then be for the developer to explain the extent to which the application of development plan minimum standards would meet the future parking needs of that development within the NDP period.
151. In circumstances where this would not be the case, an assessment could then be made of the additional requirements as part of the determination of a planning application. Where a development proposal recognises and assesses the local circumstances and proposes a higher standard, this will be supported insofar as it is consistent with good layout and design.
152. In all cases, on-street parking is discouraged.

Policy LW10: Off-street parking

- A. New development should accommodate its parking needs off-street in accordance with adopted parking standards.

ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA

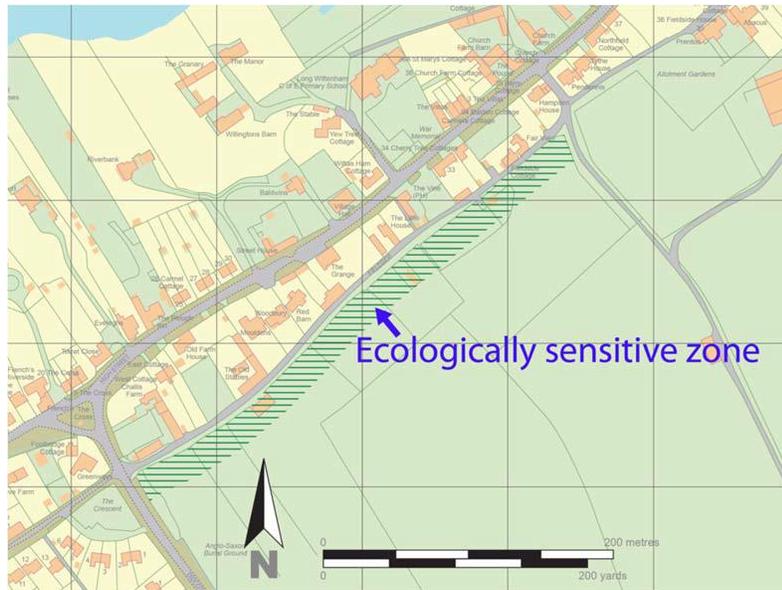
153. A population of Roman Snails have been observed along Fieldside (Figure 9). This is discussed in more detail in **Evidence Paper: Roman Snails**.
154. While common in some Eastern European countries, these snails are rare in Britain and restricted to a few localities. Roman snails live a solitary 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.

FIGURE 9: AUG 2016 HELIX POMATIA ALONG FIELDSIDE (OX14 4QJ) (TONY LEATHAM)



155. Roman snails are not a native species and were probably introduced to Long Wittenham by the Romans, possibly related to the assumed nearby Roman villa. Roman Snails favour rough and tussocky grassland, hedge banks and require loose, friable soil for burying into for hibernation and for depositing eggs. They will avoid grazed grassland and very open, exposed habitats. They don't travel very far – they have an average migration of 3.5-6metres.
156. The NDP seeks to protect the local colony of Roman Snails and has identified a buffer zone, illustrated in **Figure 10**, where their habitat should be protected from future development.

FIGURE 10: ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE ZONE AND ROMAN SNAIL HABITAT



Policy LW11: Ecologically Sensitive Areas

- A. Development of land having an impact on the Wittenham Special Area of Conservation or to the south of Fieldside (notated as the ecologically sensitive zone in Figure 10) 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.

PART 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Implementation

157. Implementation of the NDP will be ongoing. Responsibility for determining planning applications rests with the South Oxfordshire District Council.

Monitoring

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

Twelve Month Review

159. The NDP 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 determine 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

160. The NDP 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

161. At least two years prior to the expiry of the NDP, 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.

PART 6: EVIDENCE PAPERS

Character Assessment
Countryside
Cycle and Footpath Network
Evidence Base
Infrastructure Project List
Long Wittenham NDP Final Made Plan
Long Wittenham NDP Survey Report (July 2015)
Planning Policy Context
Roman Snails
Site Allocations

Acronyms

CIL – Community Infrastructure List

LWNDP – 2017 made NDP

NDP – Neighbourhood Development Plan, and specifically “the proposed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan”

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework

PROW – Public Rights of Way

RLWNDP – 2018 NDP