SYDENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2026 - 2041



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SYDENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2026-2041

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FOREWORD

This Neighbourhood Plan prepared by a group of villagers from the Parish of Sydenham focuses primarily on the aspect of future development of houses within the area, and most particularly the village of Sydenham.

This approach was felt appropriate mainly because of the relatively small designated area it covers but also in recognition that it is predominantly a rural community with a mix of people, with no retail or commercial enterprises within its boundaries other than farming and two pubs and whose main concern is housing and appropriate development.

Sydenham lies between the expanding market town of Thame and the significantly developed (and developing) large village of Chinnor. Indeed, it forms the rural break between the two.

As a place to live, it retains its rural village environment with a strong, active and caring community. It maintains a church, with a strong choir, two busy and popular pubs (each running teams for the Oxfordshire pub game - Aunt Sally), a WI, cricket club, book club and many other social organisations that use the Old School Room (the village hall) for events. Every year it organises a very successful, and much envied locally, traditional Fayre to raise funds for local causes and organisations.

The people who live in the village tend to stay for many years, moving within the village as their needs dictate. They all feel that Sydenham is a “special place” and recognise the importance of a balanced mix of housing encouraging both young and old to live and add to the sustainability of the Parish.

This Neighbourhood plan reflects the views of villagers and their aspirations to ensure that this distinct rural community retains its identity and character.

This 2026 update supersedes the original Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan that was made in 2021. The update has been prepared to ensure alignment with current national and local planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (published 17 August 2026) and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. It extends the plan period to 2041 to align with the emerging Joint Local Plan and introduces the following new policies:

SYD9 Site Allocation

SYD10 Dark Skies

SYD11 Landscape Character and Setting

SYD12 Development Size and Form

SYD13 Rural Roads and Traffic Management

SYD14 Residential Parking Provision

SYD15 Protection of Historic Roofline

SYD16 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

This updated plan should be read in conjunction with its accompanying documents of the Character Appraisal, Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement.

We would like to thank South Oxfordshire District Council for its support

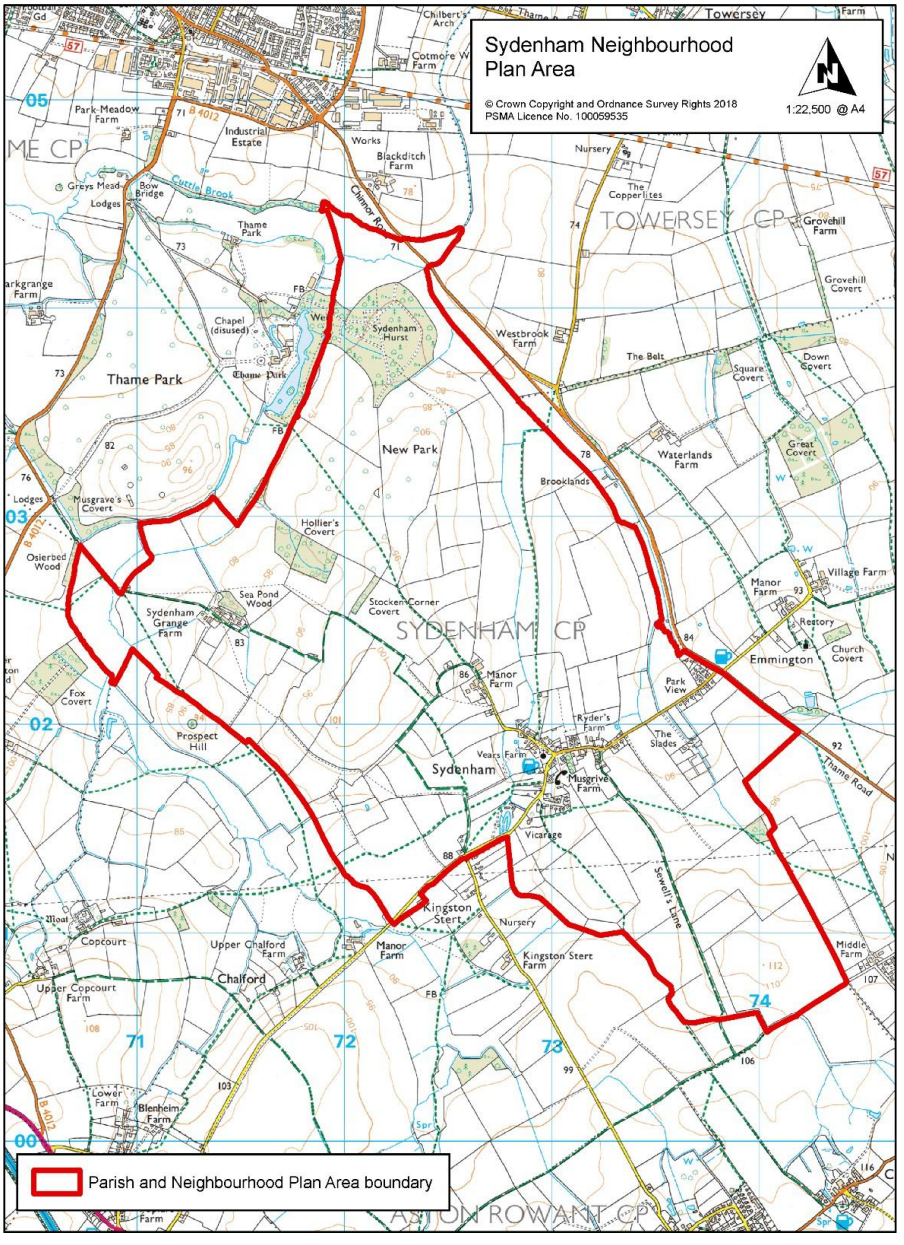
LIST OF POLICIES

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE
SYD1	Village Boundary & Infill Development
SYD2	Housing Mix
SYD3	Design
SYD4	Local Heritage Assets
SYD5	Local Green Space
SYD6	Separation of Settlements
SYD7	Important Views
SYD8	Community Facilities
SYD9	Site Allocation
SYD10	Dark Skies
SYD11	Landscape Character and Setting
SYD12	Development Size and Form
SYD13	Rural Roads and Traffic Management
SYD14	Residential Parking Provision
SYD15	Protection of Historic Roofline
SYD16	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sydenham Parish Council prepared a Neighbourhood Plan in March 2018 for the area designated by the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council, which was subsequently adopted This is a revised plan for 2026 also prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).

1.2 The area coincides with the parish boundary (see Plan A below).



Plan A: Designated Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.3 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used by the District Council to determine planning applications in the area in the period to 2041. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will protect the key characteristics of the village and its surrounding

landscape while planning for sustainable development in the parish to 2041.

1.4 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities, like Sydenham, with the chance to manage the quality of development of their areas and to shape future development of their area.

1.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some 'basic conditions'. In essence, the conditions are:

- Does the Plan have regard to national planning policy?
- Would the Plan avoid reducing the amount of housing that the development plan for the area provides for? (Since 25 March 2026 this test replaces the old test of being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.)
- Does the Plan contribute to the achievement of sustainable development?
- Does the Plan meet the other legal requirements, including the environmental assessment and habitats rules, human rights law, and the duties on climate change and local nature recovery strategies?

1.6 In addition, the Parish Council will need to demonstrate to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community in preparing the Plan. The examiner will then produce a report which recommends if the plan meets basic conditions (which may include a series of modifications). Following the recommendations made by the examiner, the District Council will then determine if the plan should proceed to referendum of the local electorate.

Sustainability Appraisal & Environmental Assessments

1.7 South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) has determined that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) (see the Basic Conditions Statement for further details).

1.8 Additionally, the Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to determine whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

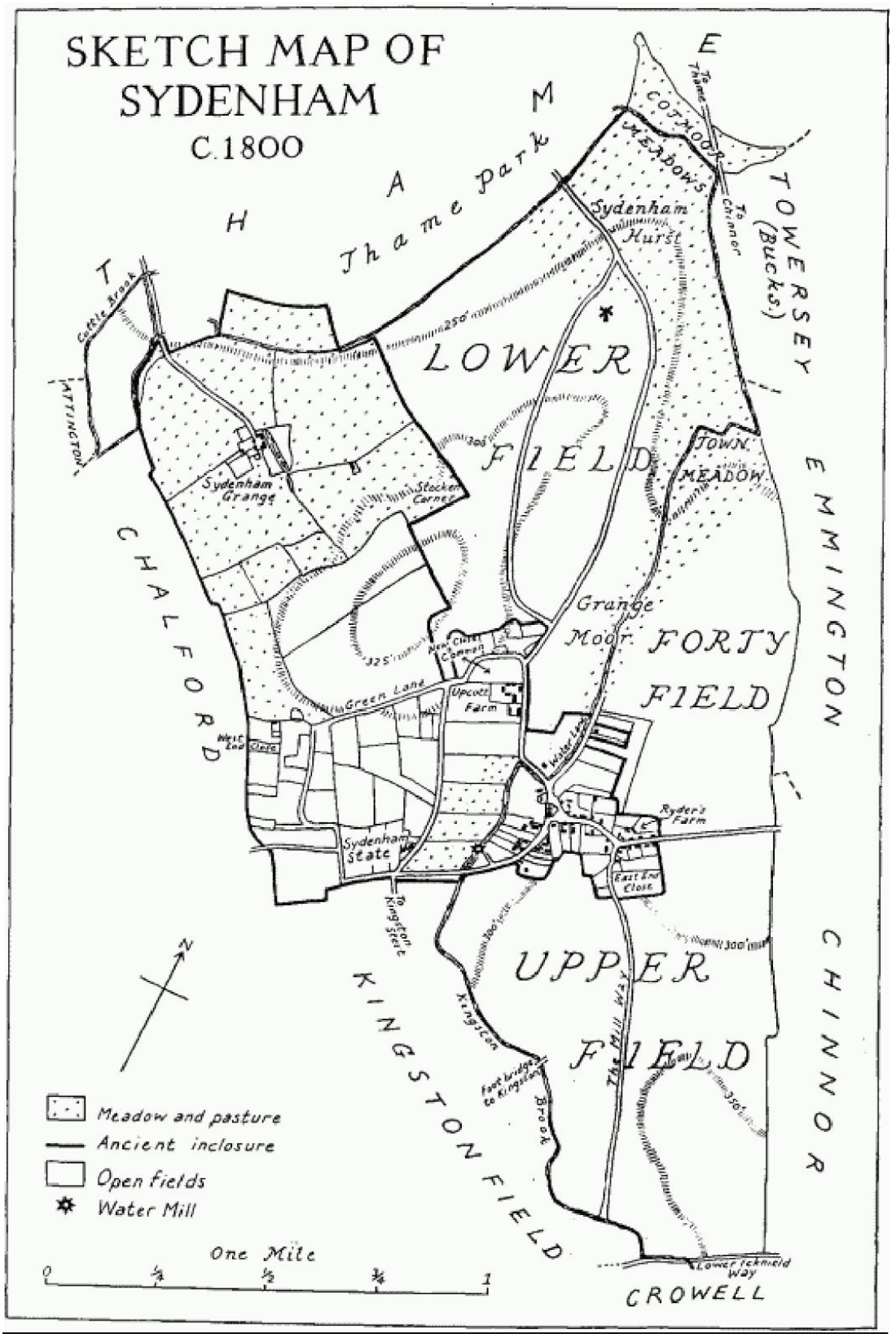
2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

(Based on A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 8, Lewknor and Pyrton Hundreds. Originally published by Victoria County History, London, 1964, and gratefully acknowledged)

2.1 The parish covers 1,548 acres and lies in the plain between the market- town of Thame, about 3 miles to the north-west, and the foot of the Chiltern hills, about 2 miles to the south.

2.2 Sydenham (Sidreham in 1086, Sidenham in 1216, Sydham in 1237 and various other spellings) means 'by the wide water meadow'. The Domesday book records that there was land for 14 ploughs and 60 acres of meadow land. The manor of Sydenham was acquired by the Cistercian monks of Thame Abbey in the middle of the 12th century. After the dissolution of the monasteries the estate went to Sir John Williams, then to his daughter Margaret and her husband Sir Henry Norreys and later to the Wenmans and their heirs. Most of it was sold in 1917 when many of the tenants were able to buy their farms and cottages. Until comparatively recently Sydenham was dependent on agriculture and this led to great poverty. To help alleviate this, several families were assisted to emigrate to Australia in 1843 and 1844. The men were given a shovel and the ladies enough cloth to make a petticoat. Most of them survived and prospered and in the past few years their descendants have contacted the village when tracing their roots. Many of the family names still exist in the village.

2.3 By the early Middle Ages Sydenham was a chapelry of Thame, a connection which probably preceded the Conquest, but it was feudally bound to Chinnor, its neighbour on the south-east, being a member of Chinnor manor. The chief interest, however, of the parish's history has been the long connection with the abbots of Thame and their successors at Thame Park. This can be traced from the 12th century to 1917. Otherwise, no persons of national importance have related to the place. Nor has it been connected with any events of importance except during the Civil War. Although off the main lines of communication the village can hardly have escaped from the foraging parties of both Parliamentary and Royalist troops stationed in the vicinity, but no record of their depredations has survived.



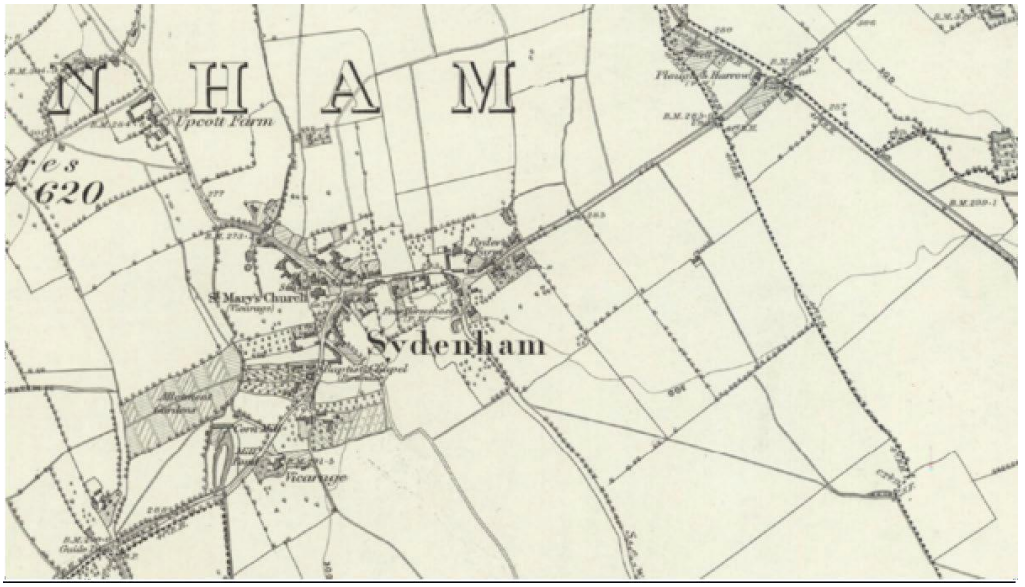
Plan B: Sketch map of Sydenham c.1800

(based on Davis's map (1797) and the Enclosure award and map (1826))

2.4 There have been no recorded boundary changes and the parish bounds must be substantially the same as they were in Anglo-Saxon times. The short southern boundary follows the ancient trackway, the Lower Icknield Way, and until 1932 when Towersey was transferred from Buckinghamshire to Oxfordshire part of the north- eastern boundary was the county boundary. Small brooks, notably Crowell Brook and its continuation Kingston Brook, as they were called in the 18th century, form parts of the rest of the boundary. This brook also flowed through the centre of the parish and drove the mill lying to the south of the village. There its waters were dammed up to form the mill-pond and it was bridged on the Chalford road by a bridge long known as Grimbaud's Bridge after its 12th- and 13th- century millers. Where the brook crossed the village street to the north of the church the bridge was called Church Bridge in 1627. Another large pond once in the north of the parish has disappeared. It is now just marshland and its site is marked by Sea Pond Wood.

2.5 The chief road in the parish runs from Chalford through the village to Emmington and links the main London road with a minor road from Thame to Chinnor. The last was probably the royal road (*via regia*) mentioned in a 13th- century charter and along which some of Thame Abbey's land lay. Sewell Lane, running south from the village towards Crowell, used to be called the Mill Way, since it was no doubt used by the Crowell villagers to go to Sydenham mill.

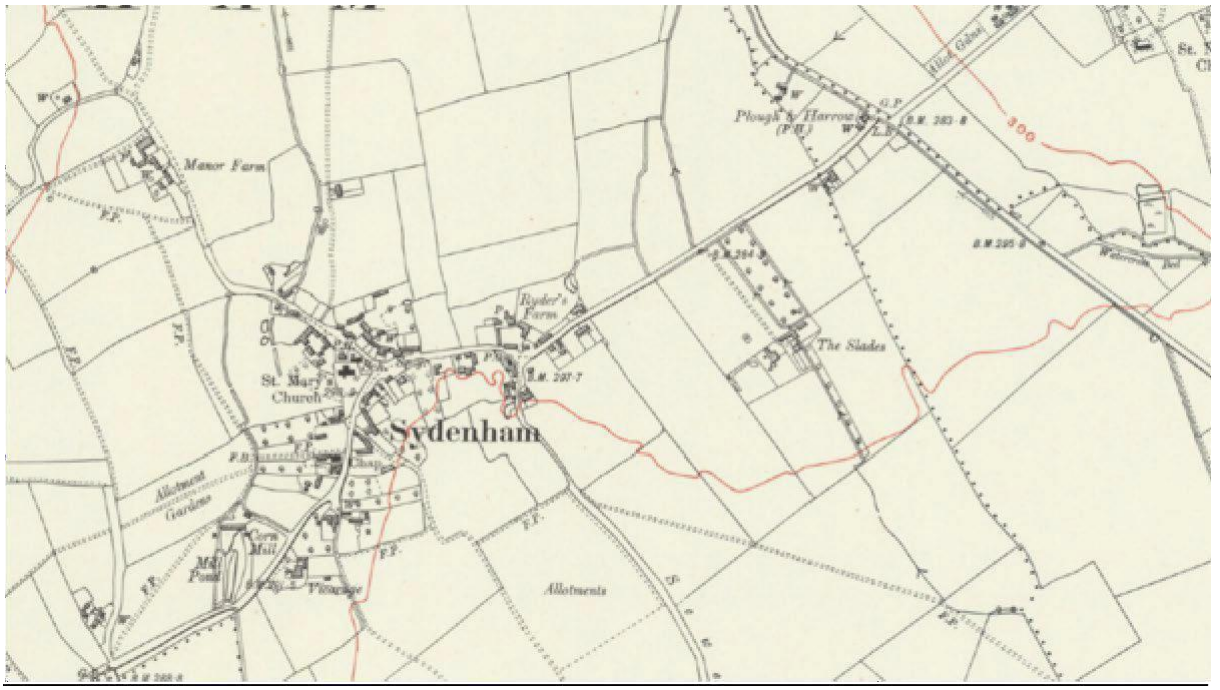
2.6 It is clearly the brook by which it lies that determined the village's situation. It was a fairly large settlement both in the Middle Ages and in the 17th century when 41 of its householders paid tax on 81 hearths for the hearth tax of 1662. Not all these houses, however, were in the village. There were two big outlying farms at the Grange and Upcot (now Manor Farm) that probably had cottages adjoining and there were perhaps a few cottages at West End and at Sydenham Stert.



Plan C: Sydenham, 1885 (Source: Buckinghamshire XXXVI (includes: Aston Rowant; Sydenham; Tetsworth; Thame.) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, National Library of Scotland)

2.7 Many 16th–17th-century cottages have also survived in the village. At the south end, Vicarage End as it is called, there are a couple of timber-framed cottages of this period; they have brick (sometimes herring-boned) or lath-and- plaster infilling and are thatched; a row of three timber-framed cottages, now used as one house, are thatched and also mostly built of brick, although there are traces of older construction. Some lath and plaster survive and at the gable- end of the oldest cottage there are cruck beams. Other ancient cottages, including the very picturesque post office which is built of rubble stone, lie on the Emmington road. Some cottages here, built of mud, were demolished in 1950. In the 18th century most of the farmhouses in the village were rebuilt and some entirely new cottages were erected. A good example is the farmhouse at Vicarage End that belonged to the Musgrave estate and was still called Musgrave Farm in the early 20th century.

2.8 In 1849 a National School was built. It closed in 1948 and is now used as the village hall. Events and gatherings are organised in the evenings and at weekends, the highlight of the year being Sydenham Fayre which occurs every year, around the hall and the village greens, on the first Saturday in June. Two nonconformist chapels were erected in the first half of the 19th century; one was rebuilt of cheap red brick in1881.



Plan D: Sydenham, 1922

(Source: Buckinghamshire XXXVI (includes: Aston Rowant; Sydenham; Tetsworth; Thame.) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, National Library of Scotland)

2.9 Munday's Charity was established in 1660 (i.e. six years before the Great Fire of London!) when land was given to the village by Robert Munday to provide allotments for the benefit of the villagers. The actual land was re- allocated at the time of the mid-1800s Enclosures Acts resulting in the Charity owning two parcels of land extending to 16 acres, some of which is used as allotments and the rest is farmed. The playing field was given to the village by Cdr Henry Montague Burrows and opened in 1982. It now has swings, a climbing frame, cricket nets and space for ball games.

2.10 Increasing population and prosperity in the first half of the 19th century led to rebuilding and expansion. By 1841 there were 86 dwellings in the parish compared with 60 in 1811. Some of these were outside the village: six new houses, for instance, were built at Cassilty Row on the Emmington road and at some distance away. But a well-built row of brick cottages was also added to the village street.



Plan E: Sydenham, 1961

(Source: Sheet 159, The Chilterns - Ordnance Survey One-inch to the mile maps of Great Britain, Seventh Series, 1952-1961, National Library of Scotland)

2.11 The 20th century contributed eight Council houses at Sydenham Grove: they were built in pairs and lay off the Emmington road, though they were redeveloped in 2020 for open market homes. There is a row of former council houses, called Park View, outside the village along the road to Emmington. Currently there are approximately 144 households and a population of about 340. Much of the village lies within a conservation area and housing development has been restricted, so retaining its rural appeal.

2.12 There are now only two active farms left in Sydenham – Musgrave and Sydenham Grange, and two pubs, The Inn at Emmington and The Crown. The Sun, the Windmill and The Four Horseshoes have all been converted into homes, as have many of the old farmhouses and barns. The Crown Inn was purchased by a consortium of villagers in 2008 to stop it's loss to the village.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The parish lies within the South Oxfordshire District Council area in the county of Oxfordshire.

National Planning Policy

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), originally published in 2012 by the Government, is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The current Framework was published on 17 August 2026 and, because this Plan was submitted after that date, it applies for the purpose of examining and implementing the Neighbourhood Plan.

The following chapters and policies of the NPPF (August 2026) are considered especially relevant:

- Delivering homes, including exception sites and isolated homes in the countryside (policies HO2, HO5, HO7, HO10 and HO11)
- Healthy communities (policies HC1 to HC8)
- Community facilities (policies HC3, HC4 and HC6)
- Local Green Space (policies HC2 and HC8)
- Achieving well-designed places (policies DP1 to DP4)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (policies N1 to N4)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (policies HE1 to HE9)
- Meeting the challenge of climate change (policies CC1 to CC3) and flood risk and drainage (policies F1 to F9)
- Neighbourhood plans and the presumption in favour of sustainable development (policies PM5, PM6 and S6)

The NPPF says that, in the case of local plans, a housing requirement figure should also be set for designated neighbourhood plan areas unless it is impractical to do so, in which case the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure instead.

The adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 identifies in paragraph 4.37 that there is no defined requirement for smaller villages to contribute towards delivering additional housing (beyond windfall and infill development) to meet the overall housing requirement for South Oxfordshire. However the South Oxfordshire Local Plan is more than 5 years old and this is a material change in circumstance. As such, South Oxfordshire District Council have provided an indicative figure of zero as set out in the emerging Joint Local Plan page 78 Policy SP1 bullet point 11. This figure takes into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.

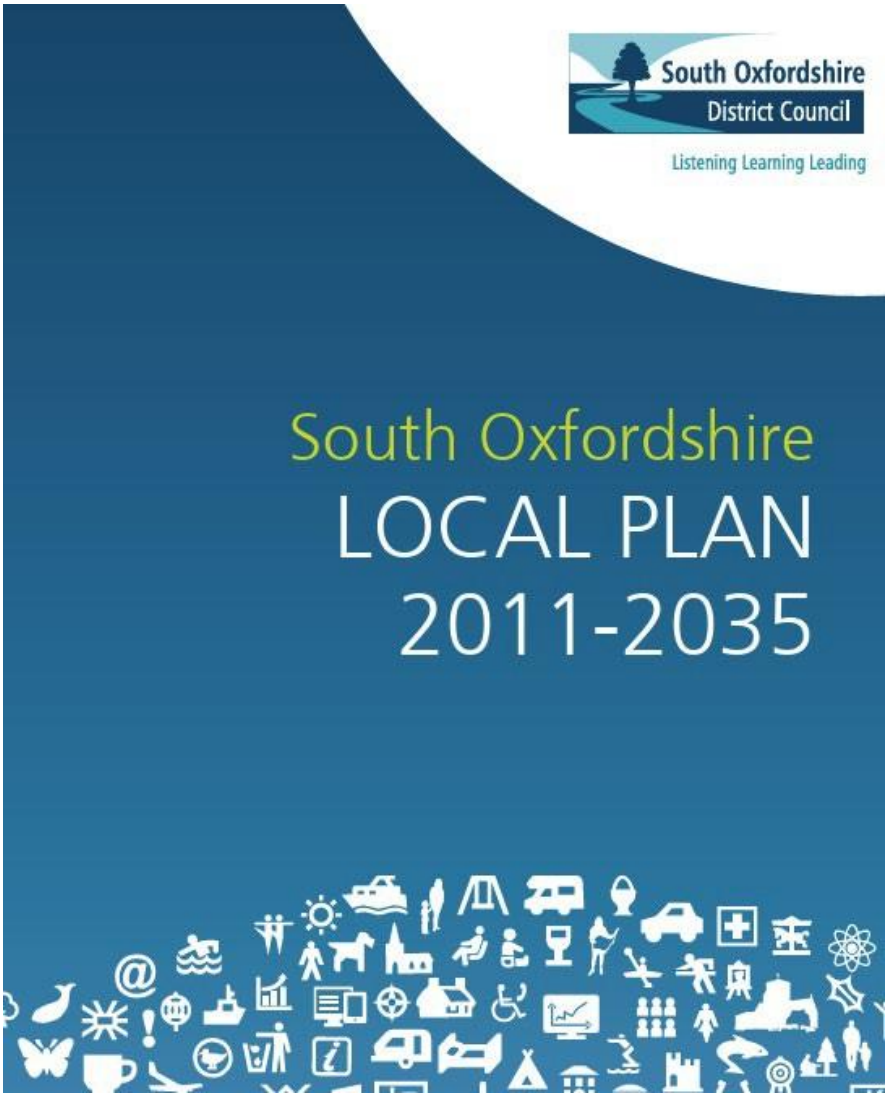
The Parish Council has taken a proactive approach to meeting local housing needs through this plan

review by allocating Site 1 (approximately 0.06 hectares) for residential development of either a single or semi-detached dwelling (Policy SYD9). This allocation demonstrates the Parish's commitment to sustainable development while maintaining the essential character of this small rural community.

Strategic Planning Policy

3.3 Since 25 March 2026 (section 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) the Neighbourhood Plan must also be able to show that its making would not result in the development plan for the area proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in the area than if the Neighbourhood Plan were not made. The development plan for South Oxfordshire currently includes the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 adopted in December 2020. The Neighbourhood Plan has also been prepared to align with its strategic policies.

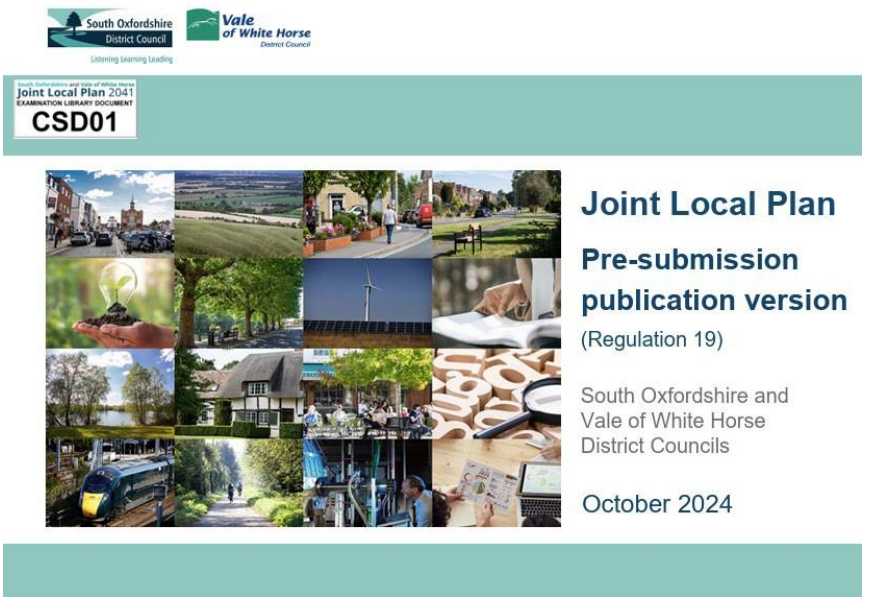
3.4 South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council are jointly preparing a new Local Plan for the period to 2041. The Joint Local Plan 2041 is currently at Regulation 22 stage, Examination stage. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be aligned with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan 2035 while having regard to the emerging policies in the Joint Local Plan 2041.



3.5 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 includes a settlement hierarchy that has significant implications for future development in the neighbourhood area. Sydenham West remains designated as a 'Smaller Village' in the settlement hierarchy (based around St Mary's Church and The Crown Inn). Sydenham East remains one of the 'Other Villages' in the settlement hierarchy (based around the Emmington Inn at the junction of Sydenham Road and the B4445 Chinnor to Thame Road). The overall strategy aims to support rural communities by focusing development at the most sustainable locations while allowing limited development in smaller villages and other villages.

3.6 The following policies in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 are considered particularly relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan:

STRAT1 - The Overall Strategy
STRAT5 - Residential Densities
H8 – Housing in the Smaller Villages
H16 - Infill Development
EMP10 - Development in Rural Areas
ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside
ENV2 - Biodiversity - Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species
ENV3 - Biodiversity
ENV4 - Watercourses
ENV5 - Green Infrastructure in New Developments
ENV6 - Historic Environment
ENV7 - Listed Buildings
ENV8 - Conservation Areas
ENV12 - Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity
DES1 - Delivering High Quality Development
DES2 - Enhancing Local Character
DES3 - Design and Access Statements
DES5 - Outdoor Amenity Space
DES6 - Residential Amenity
DES7 - Efficient Use of Resources
DES8 - Promoting Sustainable Design
DES9 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
DES10 - Carbon Reduction
EP3 - Waste Collection and Recycling
EP4 - Flood Risk
CF1: Safeguarding Community Facilities
INF1 - Infrastructure Provision
INF4 - Water Resources



3.7 The emerging Joint Local Plan 2041 is being prepared by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. Key emerging themes that may affect this Neighbourhood Plan include:

- Climate emergency response and mitigation
- Biodiversity net gain requirements
- Design and placemaking standards
- Changes to the settlement hierarchy
- Updated housing and employment policies
- Green and blue infrastructure strategies
- Enhanced natural environment protection
- Sustainable transport networks

3.8 Under the adopted Local Plan 2035, Sydenham West remains classified as a 'Smaller Village' and Sydenham East as an 'Other Village'. Policy H8 states that smaller villages that want to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan and make allocations, need to demonstrate that the level of growth they are planning for is commensurate to the scale & character of their village. The Local Plan states that it is not generally expected that “other villages” will provide a significant source of housing supply, though some development proposals may come forward.

3.9 Policy H16 of the Local Plan 2035 defines 'infill development' as:

"the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings"

The policy does not mean that every space within the settlements will be developed. The policy includes protection against developments that:

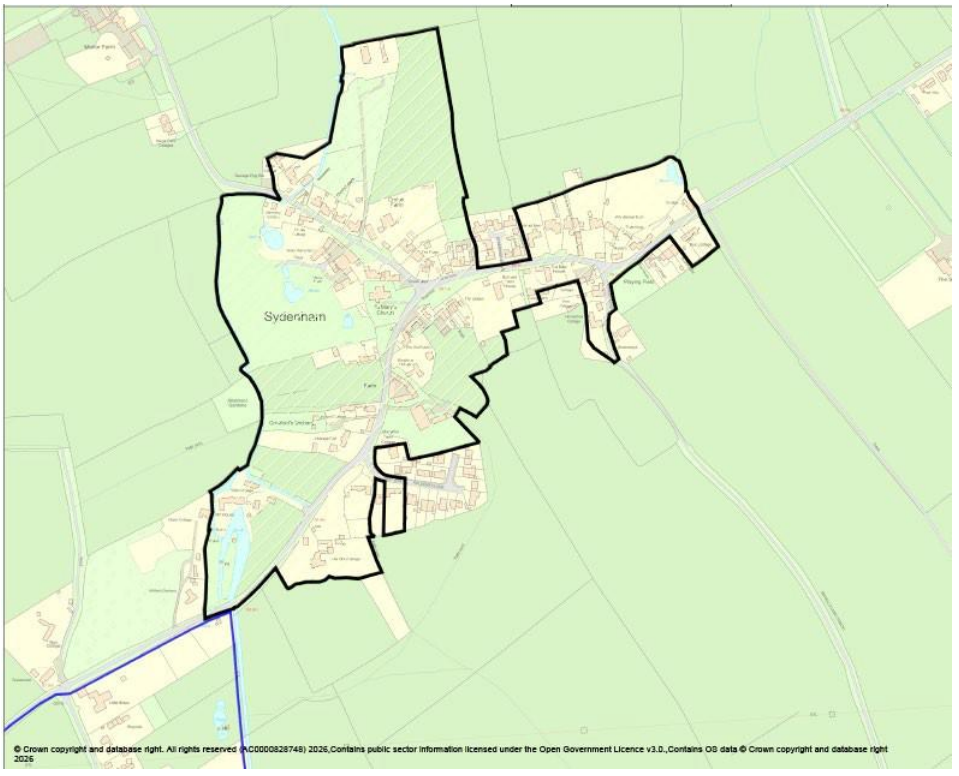
- cause harm to important open space of public, environmental, historic or ecological value or important public views
- constitute backland development that would create problems of privacy and access and would extend the built limits of the settlement

Adjacent Neighbourhood Plans

3.10 Neighbourhood planning is popular in South Oxfordshire and a number of plans have been made, or are in preparation, in the vicinity of the Parish. These include made Neighbourhood Plans in Chinnor (2017, reviewed 2024), Thame (2013, reviewed 2025) and Towersey's (2023). None are considered to comprise proposals that directly affect this Neighbourhood Plan.

The Sydenham Conservation Area

3.11 The Conservation Area was designated by South Oxfordshire District Council on 11 December 1984 (see Plan F below). Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, to protect areas of special interest as opposed to individual buildings. Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 72 in the South Oxfordshire District. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas and from time to time to review the boundaries. Such areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.



Plan F: Sydenham Conservation Area

3.12 The main attributes that define the special character of an area are its physical appearance and history, i.e. the form and features of buildings and the spaces between them, their former uses and historical development. Where there are a number of periods of historical development, the character of individual parts of the conservation area may differ. Contrasts between the appearance of areas and the combination of buildings of various ages, materials and styles may contribute to its special character.



Part of the Sydenham Conservation Area

3.13 Policies which seek to preserve or enhance the special character of the council's 76 conservation areas, are contained in South Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2035. Unfortunately, all the South Oxfordshire District Council records concerning the Sydenham Conservation Area were lost in the 2015 fire. However, an appraisal of the Area was never undertaken following its designation, and so a new Character Appraisal report has been prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan (see separate report).

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 Sydenham Parish Council originally asked for volunteers to form a group (SNPG) to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish in November 2017. The same group has undertaken this current review, which was kicked off with two village meetings were held in January 2025 where the process for Sydenham's Neighbourhood Plan review and update was explained. The slides presented at these meetings are available on the village web site.



Public meeting of Neighbourhood Plan in village Old School Room

Village Consultation - 2025 Village Survey

4.2 The survey was open for eight weeks between 28 March – 26 May 2025. It was a digital survey, with an offer of hard copies for those that wanted them. A link to the survey was provided to all households within the parish and reminders were sent via the parish email, Facebook group, and parish newsletter. A copy of the questions is in Appendix II of the accompanying Consultation Statement. The consultation answers are in Section 2.3 of the Consultation Statement. A summary is below:

4.3 A majority of respondents are aware of the existing Neighbourhood Plan (87.2%). Additionally, a majority of respondents perceive it as being effective:

- Very effective: 59.6%
- Somewhat effective: 19.1%
- Unsure: 17%
- Not very effective: 4.3%

4.4 Respondents were asked which housing types are most needed in Sydenham. The strongest emphasis was on starter and family homes:

- Starter homes: 34.2%
- Family homes: 27.6%
- Affordable housing: 26.3%

4.5 When asked which existing policies needed reinforcement, the most frequently cited were those policies concerned with the Village Boundary & Infill Development, Housing Mix, and the Local Gap:

1. SYD1 – Village boundary & infill development: 25%
2. SYD2 – Housing mix: 21% –
3. SYD6 – Local gap: 21%
4. SYD5 – Local green space: 19%
5. SYD7 – Important views: 17%
6. SYD4 – Local heritage assets: 13%
7. SYD8 – Community facilities: 8%
8. SYD3 – Design: 8%

4.6 Respondents were able to insert free text comments on existing policies. The main themes that emerged were concerned with maintaining the village identity by protecting green fields, agricultural land, and rural separation from neighbouring areas; avoiding large-scale, inappropriate developments; strengthening mapping and policy wording to better reflect important local views; ensuring green spaces are safeguarded, and recognising both village pubs as vital community assets.

4.7 Respondents were presented with a range of new policies that could be included in the revised Neighbourhood Plan. There was overwhelming support for this with 97.9% responding positively. Only 2.1% opposed the insertion of new policies.

4.8 The current Neighbourhood Plan includes a development boundary within which development is permitted. Respondents were asked their views on extending the boundary. The vast majority (89.4%) oppose any extension.

4.9 Respondents were asked whether there any new issues or challenges that have emerged since the existing Neighbourhood Plan was adopted that should be addressed. While nearly three-quarters (74.5%) reported no new issues, around one quarter (25.5%) highlighted concerns. These included:

- Pressure from nearby Chinnor's growth — risk of coalescence and loss of green separation.
- Threats from solar farm proposals near parish boundaries.
- Transport and safety issues — potholes and the dangerous bend near the play park.
- National housing policy pressures — fear that central government housing targets could undermine local protections.
- Maintaining harmony and housing balance — concerns that housing mix policies might unintentionally change village social dynamics.

Call for Sites

4.10 Following the public meetings in January 2025, the Neighbourhood Plan Group undertook a Call for Sites process to identify potential locations for housing development within the parish.

4.11 The Call for Sites documentation was shared with South Oxfordshire District Council for comment before circulating to landowners. The call was open for 6-8 weeks during Spring 2025.

5. Four sites were put forward for consideration by landowners. These sites were assessed against criteria developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Group, based on guidance from Locality and examples from other Neighbourhood Plans. The assessment criteria referenced both the existing policies in the current Neighbourhood Plan and the new policies being proposed in the updated plan.

6. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

Vision

6.1 The Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan provides a framework to guide development within the Parish until 2041. The Vision is largely inspired by the responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, the feedback responses and, more broadly, by the consultation with parishioners during the preparation of the plan.

6.2 This framework is based on and supports the following Vision:

> *"To preserve Sydenham Parish's rural village environment by ensuring that appropriate development occurs within the area, recognising the need for a balanced community."*



Road leading into Sydenham from the Chalford Road

Objectives

6.3 In order to achieve the above Vision, a number of objectives have been identified:

To provide good quality housing at all levels of affordability that respects the distinct characteristics of the village, using styles and materials that currently exist within the village.

To conserve and enhance the essential rural character of Sydenham Parish by growing the village in small places that form part of the established pattern of development and by conserving the existing network of green spaces, trees, and hedgerows.

To sustain the sensitive landscape setting of Sydenham Parish and the intrinsic relationship between 'village' and green spaces, by avoiding harmful development and by preventing any further elongation of the village into the countryside or precious village green spaces.

To sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings of Sydenham Parish and their settings

Land Use Policies

6.4 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged, in terms of, for example, their design or access.

6.5 The purpose of these policies is to encourage planning applications to be made for potential development that reflect the Vision and Objectives, as outlined at the beginning of this section. The policies have been clearly written so that they can be easily interpreted and applied in the consideration and determination of planning applications.

6.6 The Neighbourhood Plan deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key development issues in the area. For all other planning matters, the national and local policies of other planning documents, the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 will continue to be used.

POLICY SYD1 VILLAGE BOUNDARY & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

The Neighbourhood Plan defines two village boundaries for Sydenham – (Sydenham West and Sydenham East) as shown in Appendix D.

Proposals for small scale, infill development within the village boundaries will be supported, which is consistent with the status in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy hierarchy*, provided they accord with the design & development management policies of the development plan and other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposals for development outside the boundaries will only be supported if they are appropriate to a countryside location and they are consistent with local development plan policies.

Sydenham West is classified as a "smaller village" and Sydenham East as "an other village" in the Local Plan 2035

6.7 This policy is intended to distinguish between the built-up areas of the two parts of the village and their surrounding countryside to manage development proposals accordingly. The boundary has been drawn using the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal and the conventions deployed by other local planning authorities that use this development management tool, but essentially it follows the observed village edge formed by buildings.



Part of Sydenham Road on north east side of village

6.8 In defining the boundary on the Policies Map, applicants, the local community, and the local planning authority will have certainty of how the policy should be applied when preparing, commenting on, and determining planning applications respectively. This is consistent with a

number of South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 policies to encourage sustainable forms of development in the rural areas.

Within the context of this policy the following definitions apply:

Sydenham West – the principal settlement in the neighbourhood area (based around St Mary's Church and the Crown Inn). Sydenham West is the 'Smaller Village' of Sydenham in the South Oxfordshire settlement hierarchy.

Sydenham East – the smaller settlement in the neighbourhood area (based around the Emmington Inn at the junction of Sydenham Road and the B4445 Chinnor to Thame Road). Sydenham East was assessed as part of Emmington and classified as the 'Other Villages' of Emmington in the South Oxfordshire settlement hierarchy.

For clarity and completeness, the definition of Emmington as an 'Other village' in the settlement strategy refers also to Emmington itself which lies approximately 300 metres to the north east of the crossroads of the B4445/Sydenham Road. Emmington is outside the neighbourhood area and within Chinnor Parish'.

6.9 Most new development will be acceptable in principle within the defined boundaries, subject to complying with the NP policies and to it being appropriate in terms of its design and other arrangements. This will be small scale, infill housing and other uses that are appropriate in scale to very small villages with a severely limited road network and no effective public transport services. For the purpose of this policy 'small scale' is defined as sites of up to 0.2 hectares in Sydenham West and as sites of up to 0.1 hectares in Sydenham East. This reflects the limited opportunities for such development and the restricted plot sizes in the two defined village boundaries'.

6.10 For clarity, 'infill' is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built- up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. In respect of infill, there is no established pattern of land-locked, 'backland' development that is not part of a cluster of established (often former agricultural) buildings and proposals as such would not be acceptable. The proposed design of schemes will be judged using the policies of the adopted Development Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan relevant to each part of the village.

6.11 The policy requires that development proposals outside the defined village boundaries should comprise development of brown field sites only and reflect land uses that are appropriate to a countryside location. Their appearance should protect the local landscape and character of the natural environment. This recognises the valued function of the countryside and working farmland in shaping rural character. Existing suitable countryside uses include paddocks, recreational facilities, agricultural units and individual dwellings. The policy does not seek to prevent other such similar uses nor to prevent the improvement or appropriate extension of those uses.

6.12 While the original Neighbourhood Plan did not make any housing site allocations, this updated Plan allocates a small site for housing development through Policy SYD9 to proactively meet local housing needs during the extended plan period to 2041. It also recognises that planning has been approved, but not yet commenced on a site at Park View; and that planning permission has been granted for the conversion of a disused Dutch barn at Manor Farm, last used for the purposes of agriculture, into a dwelling house (Class Q(a).

6.13 The boundaries will allow for infill opportunities for smaller homes (see Policy SYD2) on suitable sites as expected of a 'Smaller Village' or of an 'Other Village' by Local Plan 2035 Policies H8 and H9.

In any event, consent has already been granted for 7 new homes in the village since 2011 (a 5% increase), a trend with which the policy is also broadly consistent. The site allocation in Policy SYD9 will provide a further modest contribution to meeting housing needs.

POLICY SYD2 HOUSING MIX

New infill residential developments should provide homes which meet local or District wide housing needs. The development of two- or three-bedroom homes will be particularly supported.

6.14 This policy refines Local Plan 2035 Policy H11 on housing mix. *It requires new infill residential developments to provide homes which meet local or District wide housing needs. It offers particular support to the development of two- or three-bedroom homes'*



New houses in Holliers Close

6.15 There are 149 homes in the Parish. Table A below compares the types of those homes (by number of bedrooms) with the most recent analysis of what mix of housing types South Oxfordshire should plan for to2033.

	Total No. of Homes by No. of Bedrooms & % Mix				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4+**	**Total**
Sydenham	6 (4%)	18 (12%)	61 (41%)	64 (43%)	149
South Oxfordshire Target	10%	25%	40%	25%	-

Table A: Comparison of Housing Mix of Sydenham with South Oxfordshire

6.16 The data shows a significant imbalance between the number of 4+ bedroom homes (almost double the target) and of 2 bedroom homes (less than half the target). To an extent, this is to be expected of a remote, small village with few local services. However, the infill residential development provided for by Policy SYD1 can be used to begin to correct this imbalance. In the original Neighbourhood Plan survey, the strongest response was for 2 bed room started homes (with 46% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that these were most suitable).

POLICY SYD3 DESIGN

Proposals for development will be supported, provided they sustain and enhance the distinctiveness of the neighbourhood area, taking account of the Joint Design Guide and, where appropriate, the character and appearance of the Sydenham Conservation Area and its setting.

Development proposals should use building forms and materials that reflect the vernacular of the Parish. Proposals that use sustainable methods of construction and contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation will be supported.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should also have full regard to the following design principles:

- ***the importance to defining the essential character of the neighbourhood area of two storey, semi- and detached dwellings fronting on to the main road and Brookstones and set back on a variety of building lines***
- ***the prominence in the street scene of large complexes of former agricultural buildings of a variety of heights and shapes retaining their original building materials and essential forms***
- ***the importance of a small number of long views to the Church and other listed buildings from within the neighbourhood area (see Appexdix E)***
- ***the importance of mostly short and punctuated views along the main road into and through the neighbourhood area towards its centre, requiring attention to be paid to the location of buildings within their plot (see Appexdix E)***
- ***the importance of the group value of heritage assets, other buildings and structures, open spaces, mature trees, and tall hedges to defining the village centre in front of St. Mary's Church and the former village green at the junction of the main road with Sewell's Lane***
- ***the importance of mature trees and tall hedges along the frontage boundaries of plots, requiring the landscaping and access proposals of schemes to avoid or to minimise the loss of existing vegetation, or to provide new trees and tall hedges if currently absent***
- ***the common use in the most important heritage assets in the neighbourhood area of traditional red brick, thatch, flint and flared brick headers in building and boundary materials, the common use of half hip roof forms, clay and slate roof tiles and timber window frames set within a deep reveal to accentuate shadowing***
- ***the importance of rare glimpse views from the main road through plots to the open countryside beyond, requiring the layout of proposals to avoid siting new buildings that will obstruct such views (see Appexdix E)***
- ***the incorporation of measures to reduce carbon emissions and to enhance climate change resilience***
- ***the use of sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water runoff***
- ***the provision of appropriate space for refuse and recycling facilities***
- ***the provision, where feasible, of electric vehicle charging infrastructure***
- ***the incorporation of measures to enhance biodiversity and create wildlife habitat***

Where planning permission for development results in the need for off-site infrastructure upgrades they will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.

6.17 This policy establishes the importance of the design of new development in the village to maintain its essential, for the most part, historic character. In doing so, it refines the design quality principles of Local Plan 2035 Policies DES1, DES2 and DES8. It also identifies the key characteristics of listed buildings and the Conservation Area for the application of Local Plan 2035 Policies ENV6, ENV7 and ENV8. The policy also supports the national and local policy emphasis on sustainable design and climate change mitigation and adaptation as reflected in the NPPF (August 2026, policies DP3, CC2 and CC3) and Local Plan 2035 Policies DES7, DES8, DES9, and DES10.



Sydenham Grove

6.18 The policy highlights a series of development principles that are drawn from the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal of the village. Those principles set out those features of the village that make it distinctive from its neighbouring villages and help define the significance of the Conservation Area. It therefore informs the Design & Access Statements prepared for planning applications in demonstrating that, where relevant to the nature and location of the proposal, regard has been paid to those principles. Although it allows for modern architectural responses to the vernacular, it makes clear that 'pattern book' housing forms that dominate urban and suburban towns will not be appropriate and the village survey has indicated a strong preference that any new buildings should be in keeping with existing styles, with a preference against modern building styles/materials. The policy also recognises the importance of incorporating sustainability measures in line with the requirements of the NPPF (August 2026) to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

POLICY SYD4 LOCAL NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground, of local architectural and historic interest, listed in Appendix A and which are designated as non-designated heritage assets. Development proposals affecting these identified non-designated heritage assets should preserve or enhance their significance. Any harm should be clearly justified having regard to the significance of the asset.

Any proposal affecting a non-designated heritage asset should demonstrate, through proportionate evidence, an understanding of the assets including any contribution made by its setting.

6.19 This policy identifies several buildings in the Parish that, whilst not designated as listed buildings, either have some local heritage value or, often together with other buildings, play an important role in defining the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting. They are set out in the schedule in Appendix A, with a short description for their inclusion, as derived from the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal.



St Mary's Sydenham

6.20 Local Plan 2035 Policy ENV6 on the historic environment requires proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets to be assessed based on the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset, in accordance with policy HE7 of the NPPF (August 2026) in respect of 'non-designated heritage assets.' While the District Council does not maintain a list of such assets, the designation of non-

designated heritage assets in Neighbourhood Plans is established practice nationally and supported by Planning Practice Guidance and Historic England Advice Note 7: Local Heritage Listing (2021).

POLICY SYD5 LOCAL GREEN SPACE

The Neighbourhood Plan designates the field adjoining Musgrave Cottages and Chapel End, as shown on the Policies Map, as Local Green Space.

Proposals for development within designated Local Green Space will only be supported in very special circumstances which will not exist unless the potential harm to the Local Green Space by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

6.21 This policy designates a much cherished and historically important field in a prominent location in the Conservation Area as a Local Green Space in accordance with policy HC2 of the NPPF (August 2026). The justification of how this area meets the three NPPF criteria is set out below. The policy has the effect of managing development proposals in line with policy HC8 of the NPPF, under which development affecting Local Green Space is determined consistently with national policies for the Green Belt, so that development is not approved unless very special circumstances exist. The policy provides additional clarity on what might constitute 'very special circumstances' and appropriate development within Local Green Space in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance.



Field adjoining Musgrave Cottages and Chapel End

6.22 The field is identified and described in the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal and is the only remaining green gap in the village, breaking up an otherwise continuous street-scape thus reinforcing the village “feel” and providing an important view reflecting the rural character of the village. It maintains the direct connection, in the centre of the village, between the built environment and the countryside and provides the only rural vista from the main road.

6.23 It lies in very close proximity to the local community, the pub, the village hall, and the church, is on

the main through road and is the only green space in the village accessible via a footpath. It is not considered to be an extensive tract of land, given it is only 0.8 Hectares, and has a strong boundary definition on all four sides – the main road, Musgrave Cottage, Chapel End and Crowell Brook.

6.24 Crowell Brook and part of the field are within flood zones 2 & 3, as identified by the Environment Agency. The field also provides natural flood management benefits to the local area.

6.25 Its existence and use as grazing land reinforce its rural connection and compliments the heritage setting of both the old Methodist Chapel (Chapel End) and the listed Musgrave cottages, a relationship which has not changed for centuries.



Public footpath in field adjoining Musgrave Cottages and Chapel End

6.26 The public footpath running along the edge of the field (shown as 378/5 on the Oxfordshire Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way), which leads to the village allotments beyond, is the most used in the village by dog walkers and families (thousands of times a year) to access the countryside. The field plays an integral part in the enjoyment of the village, has been used for Village Fayre events and is considered special to the local community. In the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, the field was identified as one where the most respondents (75%) did not want development to occur. The designation of this area as Local Green Space is also consistent with the Local Plan 2035 Policies ENV5 on Green Infrastructure and CF4 on Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities, which aim to protect and enhance green spaces for their multiple benefits including recreational value, visual amenity, historic significance, and biodiversity value.

POLICY SYD6 SEPARATION OF SETTLEMENTS

Development proposals between Sydenham West and Sydenham East should conserve the open and tranquil character of the intervening landscape and its views.

Development proposals within the landscape between Sydenham West and Sydenham East for the re-use of rural buildings, for agricultural and forestry related development, for playing fields and other open land uses will be supported where they would preserve the separation between the two settlements. Proposals which would, either individually or cumulatively, unacceptably detract from the separation between the two settlements will not be supported.



Aerial view of landscape between Sydenham West and Sydenham East

6.27 Policy SYD6 provides a context that recognises the sensitivity of the existing gap between the two separate settlements in the neighbourhood area. It reflects the contribution that the separation between the two settlements makes to the visual and historic character and appearance of the wider neighbourhood area. This policy is consistent with Local Plan 2035 Policy ENV1 on Landscape and Countryside which seeks to protect the district's landscape character and key features that contribute to local distinctiveness.

6.28 The importance of retaining separation between the two settlements in the neighbourhood area has been recognised in a past planning decision and related appeal decisions for parcels of land on either side of the Sydenham Road to the immediate west of the Emmington Inn (P/17/S3659/O and P/18/S0423/O). Policy SYD6 seeks to reinforce the approach taken in these decisions and to provide a context within which any future such applications would be considered and determined.

6.29 In the original Neighbourhood Plan Survey, between 43% - 59% of respondents identified the fields either side of the road as areas where they did not want development to occur.



Fields between Sydenham West and Sydenham East

POLICY SYD7 IMPORTANT VIEWS

Development proposals should preserve or enhance the local character of the landscape and through their design, height and massing should recognise and respond positively to the various important views, as shown on the Views Policies Map in Appendix E.

Proposals that may have a detrimental impact on an identified view should identify ways in which this impact can be appropriately and sensitively mitigated.

Development proposals which would have a significant adverse impact on an identified important view will not be supported.

6.30 This policy identifies a series of views from public vantage points around the village that are considered in the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal as especially important in defining the relationship between the two parts of the village and its rural hinterland.

6.31 These views are particularly distinctive of the rural landscape setting, with the village lying low within it but with long views into the countryside, especially to the Chilterns National Landscape escarpment to the south. The policy does not seek to prevent any development lying within a view but requires that proposals recognise and take account of these in their design. In each case, only the minimum area of land necessary to define the view has been identified.



View up Brookstones

POLICY SYD8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following community facilities, as shown on the Policies Map.

- ***The Crown Public House***
- ***The Inn at Emmington Public House***
- ***St Mary's Church***
- ***Village Hall/Old School Room***
- ***Recreation and children's play area adjoining Sewell's Lane***
- ***Allotments at the rear of April Cottage***
- ***The Allotment field & small holding at the end of Sewell's lane, donated by Munday's Charity to the village***

Proposals that help to sustain the viability of a community facility will be supported, provided they conform to other land use policies of the development plan. Proposals that will result in either the loss of, or significant harm to an identified community facility, will not be supported, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that

i. The operation of the facility, or of another community use of the facility or land, is no longer economically viable, or that there is an alternative, accessible location within or adjoining the village boundaries of Sydenham West or Sydenham East; and

ii. The facility has been appropriately marketed for a period of at least 12 months at a price or rent that reflects its condition and existing use, and no reasonable offers have been refused; and

iii. It has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the facility through exploration of community management or ownership.

Proposals for new community facilities or for the extension or improvement of existing community facilities will be supported, provided they would not have significant harmful impacts on:

i. The amenities of residents in the vicinity of the site;

ii. The character and appearance of the locality; and

iii. The highway network in terms of traffic generation, highway capacity and on-street parking.



The Crown Public House

6.32 This policy seeks to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued local community facilities. It identifies several buildings in the village that form an essential part of community life. Given the remote and small nature of the village, the loss of any of these facilities would be significantly detrimental, so even though a specific type of community use may no longer be viable, the opportunity to retain the premises or land in this use cannot be lost. This policy is consistent with Local Plan 2035 Policy CF1 which seeks to protect community facilities and prevent their loss unless specific criteria are met.



Recreation and children's play area

6.33 This policy strengthens the protection of community facilities by ensuring that those making proposals provide clear evidence that the location, as well as the current facility operations, is no longer viable for community use before its change of use and redevelopment are supported. However, it does allow for the relocation of established uses without this test being passed, provided the relocation proposal benefits local people by being within or adjoining the village, and is not lost to other parishes. The policy also reflects policies HC4 and HC6 of the NPPF (August 2026), which give substantial weight to the benefits of new and improved community facilities and resist the loss of key community facilities unless specified tests are met, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.



The Inn at Emmington Public House, a community facility

POLICY SYD9: HOUSING POLICY

Land at Site 1, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for residential development of either a single detached dwelling or two semi-detached dwellings (maximum two properties in total).

Development proposals will be supported provided they:

i. Deliver dwelling sizes and types in accordance with Policy SYD2, with a focus on smaller (2-3 bedroom) homes suitable for first-time buyers, younger families, and older residents wishing to downsize;

ii. Incorporate high quality design that responds positively to the site's context and complies with Policy SYD3;

iii. Provide safe vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access from Sydenham Road;

iv. Incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water runoff and minimize flood risk;

v. Include landscape buffers to minimize visual impact on the surrounding countryside;

vi. Incorporate renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures in accordance with Policy SYD16;

vii. Maintain and enhance existing hedgerows and trees around the site boundaries, in accordance with Policy SYD11; and

viii. Include measures to mitigate any impacts on the local road network, including provision of adequate on-site parking for residents and visitors, in accordance with policies SYD13 and SYD14.

6.34 An objective, criteria-based assessment of each of the four potential development sites put forward as part of the call for sites process was undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan review programme. The sites were assessed against the following criteria:

- Suitability, availability & achievability
- Conformity with policies in both the existing, made Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan and updated Neighbourhood Plan

The Site Assessment report can be found at Appendix C.

Maps of the sites put forward for assessment are shown below.



Plan C: Map of Sydenham East showing the location of Sites 1, 2 & 4



Plan D: Map of Sydenham West showing the location of Site 3

6.35 Following the assessments of these four sites, Site 1 has been allocated for housing development in this Neighbourhood Plan. The selected site represents sustainable development and further less suitable sites are not required as the local housing requirements will be more than met by the allocated site.

6.36 Development proposals must be accompanied by:

i. A Design and Access Statement demonstrating how the scheme responds to the character of the surrounding area;
ii. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
iii. A Biodiversity Net Gain Plan;
iv. A Sustainable Drainage Strategy;
v. A Transport Statement or Assessment, as appropriate; and
vi. An energy statement.

6.37 Although the indicative housing requirement for the Sydenham neighbourhood area is identified as **zero**, the Neighbourhood Plan has taken a proactive approach in considering whether additional housing could be supported locally. The Neighbourhood Plan Group recognises that the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 does not require smaller villages to contribute towards meeting the district's overall housing requirement. However, it also acknowledges that the Local Plan is now more than five years old and that national policy encourages neighbourhood plans to support sustainable development where appropriate. In this context, and having undertaken a

proportionate and evidence-based site assessment process, the Neighbourhood Plan proposes the allocation of a site to deliver a modest level of additional housing.

6.38 The site allocation has been selected through the technical site assessment process to ensure it represents the most sustainable and appropriate location for housing growth in the parish. The site has been assessed as **suitable, available and achievable for development**, and its allocation will make a modest but important contribution towards supporting local housing needs during the plan period to 2041. Its inclusion in the Plan therefore represents a positive and plan-led approach to supporting sustainable development in accordance with the **National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026),** in particular policies PM5(1)(a), PM9(2)(b) and HO7(1).

POLICY SYD10: DARK SKIES

Sydenham's dark night skies must be preserved as a key feature of its rural character, protect wildlife habitats, and maintain the distinction between the village and more urban settlements.

Development proposals should also demonstrate that they meet or exceed the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance and other relevant standards or guidance, including the District Council's Lighting Design Guidance and CIE 150:2017 Guide on the Limitation of the Effects of Obtrusive Light from Outdoor Lighting Installations, or any equivalent replacement/updated guidance for lighting within environmental zones.

Development proposals should have regard to the following hierarchy:

a) The instillation of external lighting, especially street lighting, is avoided;

b) If external lighting is necessary for its intended purpose or use, any adverse impacts are avoided; and

c) If it is demonstrated that a) and b) are not achievable, then adverse impacts of the lighting are appropriately mitigated.

Development proposals which include lighting should ensure that:

- ***The measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not reduced***
- ***Lighting is not unnecessarily visible in nearby designated areas and key habitats***
- ***The visibility of lighting from the surrounding landscape is avoided***
- ***Building designs should avoid large areas of glazing which would result in light spillage into rural and unlit areas***
- ***Glazing should be screened at night to avoid light spillage into rural and unlit areas where possible***

6.39 Sydenham has historically been free from street lighting, which contributes significantly to its rural character and tranquillity. Dark skies are increasingly rare in South Oxfordshire and are a valued characteristic of the village that residents wish to preserve.

6.40 Development proposals will be supported where:

a) No street lighting is included within the development design

b) Any necessary external lighting is:

- Fully justified in a lighting assessment

- Directed downwards and shielded to prevent upward light spillage
- Operated on motion sensors and timers
- Of low intensity and warm colour temperature (3000K or less)
- Positioned to minimise visibility from outside the curtilage of the property

c) Window designs and positions minimise light spillage, with mitigation measures for roof lights and glazed extensions

d) Building design avoids large areas of glazing where visible in the landscape

e) Lighting does not illuminate:

- Hedgerows, trees and woodland edges
- Wildlife corridors and habitats

6.41 The absence of artificial lighting:

- Maintains the rural character of the village
- Protects wildlife and their habitats, particularly nocturnal species
- Allows residents and visitors to enjoy views of the night sky
- Reduces energy consumption
- Helps maintain the distinction between the village and more urban settlements
- Contributes to the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape

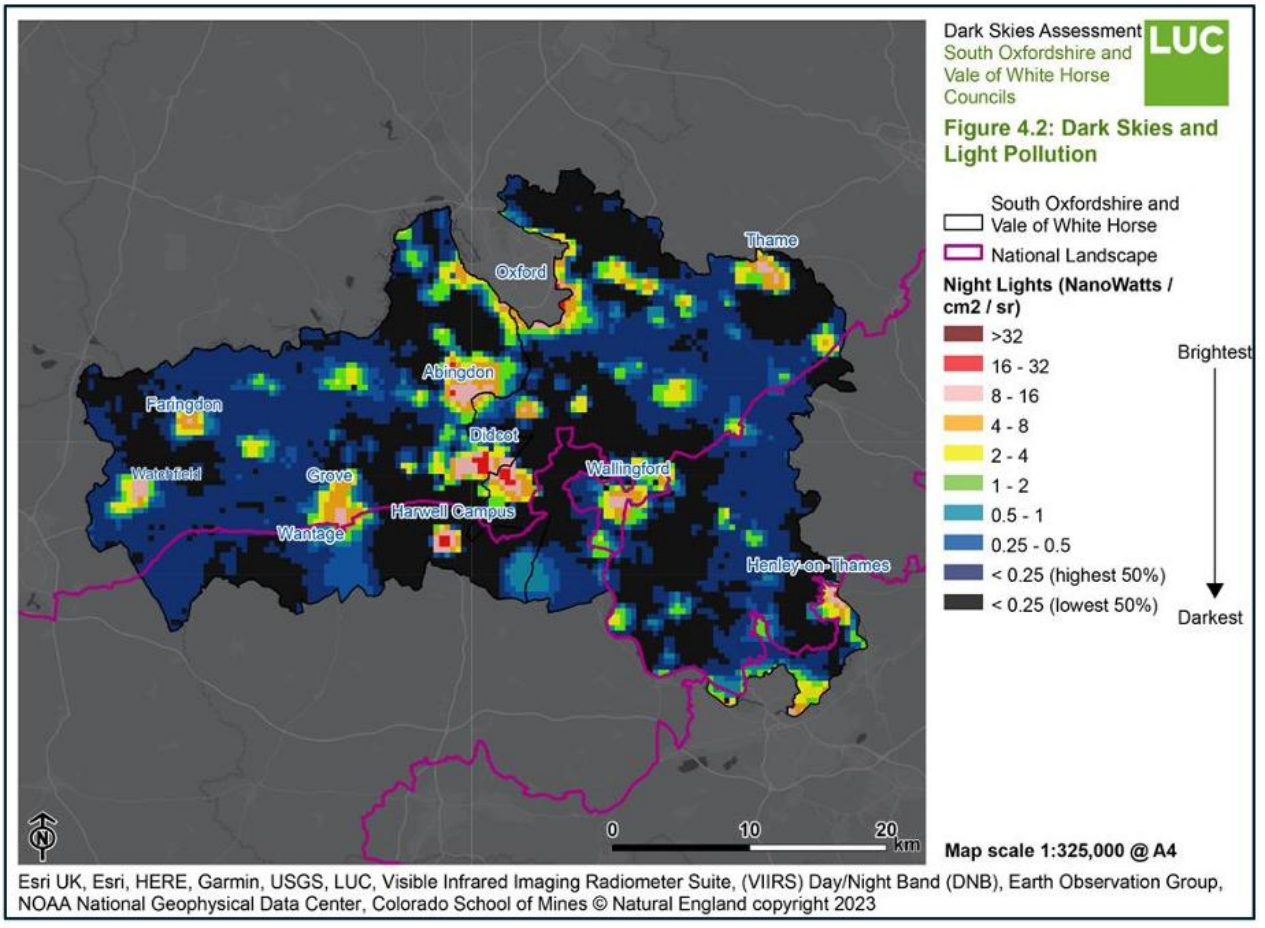
6.42 This policy aligns with policy P3(2)(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), which requires development to limit any adverse impact from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature.

6.43 The policy also supports South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Policy ENV12 (Pollution - Light and Visual Amenity) which requires development proposals to avoid adverse impacts from light pollution.

6.44 The area of outstanding natural beauty plan for the Chilterns National Landscape 2025-2030 recognises dark skies as a special quality of the protected landscape and includes Policy DP8 addressing light pollution impacts.

6.45 For lighting design purposes, Sydenham meets the requirement of ILP guidance for designation as Environmental Zone E1 (intrinsically dark areas) in accordance with Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance.

2024 South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Dark Skies / Light Impact Assessment Methodology Report Map – Sydenham sits to the south east of Thame in the darkest zone



POLICY SYD11: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SETTING

Development proposals will be supported where they conserve and enhance Sydenham's distinctive rural landscape character, protect its setting in relation to the Chilterns National Landscape, and maintain the visual separation between settlements.



View of the Chilterns from Sydenham

6.46 Development proposals will be supported where they:

a) Protect and enhance the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape by:

- Preserving views to and from the CNL escarpment
- Maintaining the visual relationship between the Clay Vale landscape and the wooded backdrop of the CNL
- Preserving the pre-eminence of the CNL in the wider landscape

b) Respect and enhance the rural landscape setting of Sydenham by:

- Maintaining clear settlement boundaries with strong landscaped interfaces to open countryside
- Protecting the historic field patterns and hedgerow network
- Preserving the visual separation between Sydenham and neighbouring settlements
- Respecting the gently rolling topography and open character of the Clay Vale

c) Protect key views and visual amenity by:

- Preserving identified important views within, into and out of the village
- Maintaining the visual relationship between the settlement and its rural surroundings
- Preserving the open aspects that contribute to local landscape character

d) Incorporate high-quality landscaping that:

- Uses native species appropriate to the local landscape character
- Strengthens existing landscape features and field boundaries
- Creates effective visual integration with the surrounding countryside
- Maintains or enhances ecological networks and green infrastructure

6.47 Sydenham lies within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape (CNL), which forms a distinctive wooded escarpment approximately 1.7km to the south of the village. The CNL setting is not defined by a geographical border, but rather by how development might affect the natural beauty and special qualities of the CNL.

6.48 In the most recent Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse 2024, Sydenham sits in the Upper Vale (LCT11), specifically LCA 11C, Eastern Upper Vale. The key characteristics include:

- A network of small watercourses which feed into more substantial brooks and then into the main rivers.
- Scattered small blocks, copses and linear belts of woodland , contrast with more open areas.
- Predominantly large-scale arable farmland, with some pasture on lower ground and along watercourses.
- Hedgerows are in variable condition, with some being closely clipped, some gappy with few hedgerow trees, and others are species-rich.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of nucleated villages and farmsteads; the characteristic local vernacular includes the use of Corallian Limestone and thatched roofs. Some isolated historic manors and churches.

6.49 The landscape setting of Sydenham plays a vital role in defining the village's distinct identity and maintaining its rural character by:

- Creating a clear sense of place for residents
- Providing a natural boundary that helps maintain the compact form of the settlement
- Preserving the historic evolution and traditional character of the village
- Ensuring visual separation from neighbouring settlements, particularly Chinnor, Thame, Towersey. Aston Rowant, Kingston Blount and Postcombe.

6.50 This policy aligns with South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Policy ENV1 and the area of outstanding natural beauty plan for the Chilterns National Landscape 2025-2030 policy DP4.

6.51 In accordance with section 38B(2B) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Plan takes account of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), published in November 2025. The LNRS Local Habitat Map identifies parts of the Parish as priority locations for measures that include creating and enhancing species-rich grassland (measures PM06 and PM11), wood pasture, parkland and woodland (PM23, PM29 and PM38), rivers and riparian habitats (PM42), ponds (PM55) and village greenspaces and allotments (PM76 and PM83), together with species measures for the Small Blue butterfly (PM220), fish passage (PM226) and water voles (PM249). Most of these measures depend on land management by landowners and agencies, which a neighbourhood plan cannot direct. The Plan supports them through its policies on landscape character, field patterns and hedgerows (Policy SYD11), Local Green Space beside Crowell Brook (Policy SYD5), protection of community allotments (Policy SYD8), design and biodiversity features (Policies SYD3 and SYD12), roadside verges and hedgerows (Policy SYD13), dark skies and wildlife corridors (Policy SYD10) and climate change adaptation and biodiversity net gain (Policy SYD16). New planting encouraged by the LNRS should respect the important views identified in Policy SYD7 and the open gap protected by Policy SYD6.

6.52 Development proposals must be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or a Landscape and Visual Assessment proportional to the scale of development, demonstrating how this policy criteria have been addressed.

POLICY SYD12: DEVELOPMENT SIZE AND FORM

Development proposals will be supported where they maintain Sydenham's distinctive loose-knit rural settlement pattern, retaining the rural and non-suburban style character of the village.

Development proposals must reference and take account of the village Character Assessment 2019.



Houses in Sydenham

6.53 This policy establishes and will maintain the following important characteristics of the village:

a) Spacious character

- Building footprints generally no more than 30% of the total plot area (excluding garages and outbuildings)
- Commonly at least 60% of the plot remaining as garden/open space
- Spacing between buildings consistent with the immediate surrounding area

b) Traditional rural settlement pattern

- Generous gardens & gaps between buildings visible from public viewpoints
- A patchwork of hedgerows, rural spaces and frontages
- Adequate space for landscape features including native trees and hedgerows
- Garages and outbuildings remain subordinate to main buildings with varied building orientations
- Clear visual separation between buildings when viewed from the street

c) Site layout

- Sufficient space for on-plot parking and turning, including for visitors
- Adequate outdoor amenity space
- Room for biodiversity features and sustainable drainage
- Space for waste storage and collection
- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows

6.54 Sydenham's rural character is defined by its loose-knit settlement pattern with buildings set within generously-sized plots. This spaciousness contributes significantly to the village's rural feel and provides important habitats for wildlife.

6.55 This policy seeks to prevent suburban-style development characterised by:

- Uniform plot sizes
- Standardised building layouts
- Minimal spacing between buildings
- Small gardens
- Dominant hard surfacing
- Regular building lines
- Urban boundary treatments

6.56 The 30% maximum building footprint requirement is derived from analysis of existing development patterns in Sydenham and reflects the traditional rural settlement character.

6.57 Applications must include plot ratio calculations, site coverage figures, comparative analysis with neighbouring properties, and detailed site layout plans showing all buildings, parking, and amenity spaces.

6.58 This policy aligns with policy DP3(1) of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), which expects development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting, Policy DES1 (Delivering High Quality Development) and Policy DES2 (Enhancing Local Character) in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, and guidance in Building for a Healthy Life (2020).

POLICY SYD13: RURAL ROADS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Development proposals will be supported where they preserve the rural character of Sydenham's road network while ensuring safe movement for all users and retain the rural character of the village roads.

As appropriate to their nature, scale and location, development proposals should:

- ***Be designed to avoid adverse impacts on road safety within the Neighbourhood Plan area.***
- ***Be designed to avoid additional parking problems by having adequate off-road parking***
- ***Where justified, secure road safety improvements particularly for pedestrians and cyclists that do not detract from the rural character of the area***
- ***Be accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate how an increase in traffic (including HGV movements) which may be generated by a proposal could be accommodated with adequate and appropriate mitigation measures.***

Development proposals must demonstrate through a Transport Statement how they maintain the rural character of village roads, avoid creating parking pressures, ensure safe access and movement, and protect existing roadside verges and hedgerows.

Road going through the centre of Sydenham



6.59 Sydenham's rural road network is characterised by narrow (in places, single track) lanes, grass verges, and an absence of urban highway features. This traditional arrangement contributes significantly to the village's character and charm.

6.60 This policy will maintain the rural character of the village roads by avoiding urban features, ensuring that levels of traffic remain appropriate to the narrow roads in the village, and ensure that the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians is not compromised.

6.61 Developments should incorporate appropriate rural design in any necessary traffic management features using natural materials, traditional signage and appropriate rural design features. Standard urban solutions such as yellow lines, excessive signage, and formal traffic calming measures would be inappropriate in this rural setting.

6.62 Any new access points should be designed to minimise their visual impact and avoid the removal of hedgerows.

6.63 This policy aligns with policy TR6(4) of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), under which development should be refused if it would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or a severe adverse impact on the transport network, policy TR4 on street design and access, and policy DP3(1), which expects development to respond to local character.

6.64 The policy also supports guidance in the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), Manual for Streets 2 (Chapter 12), and Historic England's Streets for All (2018).

POLICY SYD14: RESIDENTIAL PARKING PROVISION

Development proposals will be supported where they maintain Sydenham's rural character and ensure safe movement throughout the village by requiring sufficient off-road parking in all new developments

Development proposals will be supported where sufficient off-road parking is provided within the curtilage of the development in accordance with the following minimum standards:

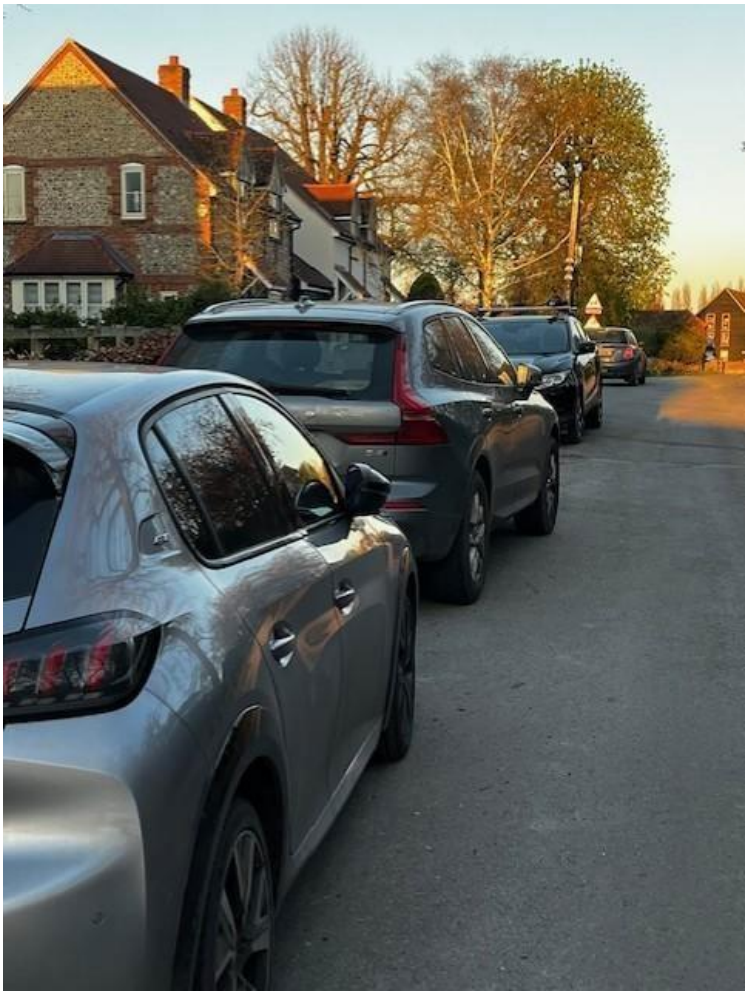
- ***1-bedroom dwelling: 2 spaces***
- ***2-bedroom dwelling: 3 spaces***
- ***3+-bedroom dwelling: 4 spaces***

Development proposals must include parking areas that are designed as an integral part of the development, using appropriate materials that complement the rural character of the village. These parking spaces must be of adequate dimensions (minimum 2.5m x 5m) with sufficient access and turning space. Garage spaces will only count toward the parking provision where they meet minimum internal dimensions of 3m x 6m.

Overflow parking on the village roads must be avoided by accommodating visitor parking within the development site and providing sufficient space for commercial/delivery vehicle access within the site.

Applications for the conversion of garages to living accommodation will be resisted unless alternative off-street parking can be provided within the curtilage of the property.

Development proposals that cannot provide adequate off-street parking will not be supported unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.



Cars parked on road outside Sydenham Grove

6.65 This policy recognises the already significant amount of on street parking in the village, which if added to would create safety hazards, impede access for emergency, service & farm vehicles, and detract from the rural character of the village. The policy seeks to ensure that new developments incorporate adequate parking from the outset, avoiding the displacement of vehicles onto streets and lanes not designed for parking.

POLICY SYD15: PROTECTION OF HISTORIC ROOFLINE



View of St Mary's spire from the lane to Manor Farm

Development proposals will be supported where they preserve Sydenham's historic roofline and views of non-designated heritage assets; and maintain the visual prominence of St Mary's Church spire as a defining feature of the village's heritage and identity.

Development proposals will be supported where the ridge height of any new development is no higher than the ridge height of adjacent existing buildings, roof ridges do not break the established historic roofline when viewed from key vantage points; and they maintain the visual prominence of St Mary's Church spire,

Development proposals should incorporate appropriate design elements including roof forms that complement traditional local styles, materials sympathetic to the historic roofscape and designs that avoid creating a 'wall' effect that could diminish views of the church spire.

Development Proposals should avoid appearing over-bearing in comparison with neighbouring buildings, having regard to their height, massing and general scale.

Development proposals resulting in significant harm to Sydenham's historic roofline or the visual prominence of the church spire will not be supported.

6.66 Sydenham's historic roofline, comprising traditional thatch, slate, and clay tiles, punctuated by the prominent spire of St Mary's Church, is a defining characteristic of the village's heritage and identity. The church spire serves as both a landmark and orientation point, visible from numerous vantage points within and around the village. The harmonious relationship between the church spire and surrounding roofscape has evolved over centuries. The spire's visual prominence reflects its historic role as the centre of the community. This traditional hierarchy of building heights, with the church

spire as the dominant feature, contributes significantly to Sydenham's sense of place and historical continuity.



St Mary's spire from Brookstones

6.67 Development proposals should be accompanied by:

- Accurate scaled elevations showing heights in relation to existing buildings
- Cross-sections demonstrating the relationship with neighbouring properties and the church spire
- A Heritage Impact Assessment addressing impacts on the church spire's setting
- A Visual Impact Assessment including verified views from agreed viewpoints
- Photomontages showing the development in context
- Height calculations relative to existing buildings and the church spire

6.68 Development that would compromise views of St Mary's Church spire or harm the historic roofline character of Sydenham will not be supported.

POLICY SYD16: CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Development proposals will be supported that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation through sustainable design, renewable energy use, and appropriate environmental measures.

Development proposals that will be particularly supported where they:

- ***Reduce carbon emissions through design, construction methods, and operational measures***
- ***Utilise renewable and low carbon energy sources, where technically feasible***
- ***Enhance water efficiency and minimise water consumption through appropriate technologies and design features***
- ***Include flood resilience measures and natural flood management features, such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)***
- ***Conserve and enhance biodiversity and provide biodiversity net gain***
- ***Include electric vehicle charging infrastructure in line with or exceeding the requirements of the Local Plan and Building Regulations***
- ***Support active travel through provision of secure cycle storage***

Support will be given to renewable and low carbon energy generation developments that:

i. Are led by, or meet the needs of local communities; and

ii. Create opportunities for colocation of energy producers with energy users, in particular heat, and facilitate renewable and low carbon energy innovation.

When considering such proposals, regard will be given to the wider benefits of providing energy from renewable sources, as well as the potential effects on the local environment, including any cumulative impact of these proposals.

6.69 This policy aims to ensure that new development in Sydenham contributes to both climate change mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (preparing for and responding to climate impacts). The policy is also one of the ways in which the Plan is designed to secure that development and the use of land in the Parish contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as required by section 38B(2B) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023).

6.70 Applicants should demonstrate compliance with this policy through design and access statements, energy statements, or sustainability assessments proportionate to the scale of development proposed.

Monitoring and reviewing the policies

6.71 The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by SODC and the Parish Council, using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at a Parish level, relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the Plan will be formally reviewed on a five-yearly cycle or to coincide with the development and review of the Local Plan if this cycle is different.



Sydenham Fayre outside The Old School Room

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of the local planning authority's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish.

Development Management

7.2 The Parish Council will use a combination of the Local Plan 2035 and this Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by the planning authority. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

7.3 Where necessary, the Parish Council may seek to persuade the Secretary of State to call-in a planning application that it considers is in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan but which the planning authority has deemed to consent. Similarly, it may also seek to persuade the Secretary of State to recover an appeal of a refused application, where the conflict with one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies has been important in the reasons for refusal. In both cases, the Parish Council will do so if it considers matters of national policy significance (for neighbourhood planning) are raised.



Barns in Brookstones

Local Infrastructure Improvements

7.4 Although the scale of development likely to be consented in the parish during the plan period is likely to be very limited, there may be opportunities through S106 agreements (or through the Community Infrastructure Levy) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. Should an opportunity arise, the Parish Council will review the evidence base and community consultations for the neighbourhood plan to inform its view in liaising with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

Other Non-Planning Matters

7.5 During the process of preparing this revised Neighbourhood Plan, there have again been many ideas for improving or addressing current problems in the parish that lie outside the scope of the land use planning system to control. The Parish Council has noted these issues and will take them forward through its day-to- day business and in partnership with the local community and relevant parties.

APPENDIX A: Schedule of Local Non-Designated Heritage Assets (Policy SYD4)

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
Sydenham Mill		Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD. Monastic site. No remains of mill work. Upper two storeys weather boarded. House conversion in 1930s. (HER Ref 330). Archaeological value
Medieval Shrunken Village		Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD to 1900 AD. Earthworks in two fields, including holloway, platforms, croft boundaries, and boundary ditch immediately SW of church and further platforms, holloways, boundary ditch and couple of detached crofts to north of Manor Farm road. Not many house sites are evident; present village is substantial, and degree of shrinkage must be slight. (HER Ref 9218)

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
Wykenhams Barns, Brookstones		Agricultural character and prominent in views along street
The Old Sun, Brookstones		Former public house and prominent in views along street local historic building and group value together with The Old School Room and St. Mary's Church

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
The Forge		Local historic building and group value together with Crossways and Croton Farmhouse
Croton Farm		Local historic building, group value together with Crossways and The Forge, agricultural character and main barn and lower frontage barn are prominent in views along street

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
Old School Room, Crossways		Local historic building, prominent gable end to Crossways and group value together with St. Mary's Church and The Sun. Used as the village hall for a wide variety of community uses, including village fundraising events, WI meetings, pilates classes and parish council meetings
Old School House, Crossways		Local historic building, prominent gable end, connected to the Old School Room

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
The Old Smithy, Crossways		Group value with Crossways, Barn End Cottage, Forge Cottage and The Barn on Sydenham, prominent by way of forward building line and helps define the space at Crossways with buildings opposite
The Barn House, Sydenham		Prominent barns on road frontage with agricultural character

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
Rose Cottage, Sewell's Lane		Group value with The Old Post Office and Vine Cottage and helps define former village green space at Sydenham Road / Sewell's Lane junction
Vine Cottage, Sewell's Lane		Group value with The Old Post Office and Rose Cottage

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
The Inn at Emmington (former Plough & Harrow PH), Sydenham		Prominent in views from Sydenham by way of forward building line and revealed at entrance to village from B4445
The Green and Crossways		Local historic building and group value with Thatched Cottage and 1,2,3 The Green that helps define the space at Crossways with buildings opposite

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
The Old Bakery, Sydenham		Local historic building, group value with Kingham House (formerly Musgrove Farm House), The Crown PH and St. Mary's Church and prominent at entrance to core historic village by way of orientation to the main road
The Crown PH, Sydenham		Local historic building, group value with St. Mary's Church, The Bakery and Thatched Cottage

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
Musgrove Farm Barns, Sydenham		Prominent barns on road frontage with agricultural character and complementary in setting to the listed Kingham House
Former chapel, Sydenham		Local historic building, prominent in views from core historic village and group value with April Cottage and White House

Name	Image	Description and Heritage Value
April Cottage, Sydenham		Local historic building, prominent in views from core historic village and group value with former Chapel and White House
White House, Sydenham		Local historic building, prominent in views from core historic village and group value with former Chapel and Vicarage End

APPENDIX B: Glossary of Terms

Biodiversity Net Gain: An approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development began. The Environment Act 2021 mandates a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain for most developments.

Clay Vale: A low-lying, gently undulating landscape character type that overlies Gault Clay across the centre of South Oxfordshire. Characterised by a flat landform with mixed land uses dominated by pastureland, small to medium-sized hedged fields, many mature hedgerow trees (particularly oak, ash and willow), and tree-lined watercourses and ditches. The heavy clay soils have traditionally made settlement difficult, resulting in a well-defined pattern of small to medium-sized nucleated villages with dispersed farmhouses. The tree cover associated with hedgerows and watercourses creates a sense of enclosure and imparts a wooded appearance to the landscape. (Source: Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study)

Climate Change Mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Conservation Area: An area designated by the Local Planning Authority under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Development Plan: The set of planning policy documents that set out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the local authority area. In South Oxfordshire, this currently includes the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and made Neighbourhood Plans.

Local Green Space: A designation introduced by the NPPF that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): A spatial strategy for nature, prepared by the county council for Oxfordshire, that sets biodiversity priorities and identifies where measures to recover nature are most needed on the Local Habitat Map. Neighbourhood plans must take it into account (section 38B(2B) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The current version was published on 17 August 2026.

Non-designated Heritage Asset: Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

APPENDIX C: Site Assessment Report

This report sets out the methodology, criteria and assessment process used to consider sites submitted for potential allocation in the Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan update. It explains how sites were identified, assessed and compared in a transparent and robust manner consistent with national planning policy and the development plan for the area. The report forms part of the evidence base supporting the preparation of the updated Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan.

1. Assessment Approach:

The site assessment process followed a structured and proportionate methodology designed to ensure that the identification of potential development sites was transparent, evidence-based and capable of withstanding independent examination.

The process was informed by national planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular policy PM9 of the August 2026 version, under which the assessment of land for allocation considers availability, suitability and achievability.

The assessment process consisted of the following key stages:

1. Call for Sites to identify land promoted for development
2. Detailed site assessment of submitted sites
3. Independent peer review of the assessment process
4. Final consideration of sites by the Neighbourhood Plan Group

Sites were assessed against a consistent framework reflecting the established planning tests that a site must be suitable, available and achievable for development. The assessment also considered whether sites aligned with the objectives and policies of the Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

2. Call for sites

A Call for Sites exercise was undertaken to identify land that may be suitable for housing development within the Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Call for Sites opened on 1 April 2025 and ran for eight weeks during Spring 2025.

The Call for Sites sought sites that:

- were located within or well related to the existing village
- could potentially deliver housing within the neighbourhood plan period
- were available for development and supported by the landowner
- were capable of complying with national and local planning policy

The Call for Sites documentation was shared with South Oxfordshire District Council prior to being circulated. The invitation and supporting documentation used in the Call for Sites process are included in Appendix G.

As a result of the Call for Sites exercise, four sites were submitted for consideration.

3. Site Assessment Methodology

Given the small number of sites submitted, the Neighbourhood Plan Group undertook a detailed assessment of all sites rather than a staged filtering process. Each site was assessed using a standardised site assessment framework.

The assessment criteria is provided in section 6, Assessment Summary below.

The detailed assessment considered planning policy, site characteristics, potential constraints and the relationship of the site to the existing settlement.

The findings of these assessments were recorded using a consistent assessment proforma to allow comparison between the submitted sites.

4. Peer Review

To ensure the assessment process was transparent and robust, the site assessments were independently reviewed by a development expert. The purpose of this peer review was to confirm that the methodology had been applied consistently and that the conclusions reached were reasonable and supported by evidence.

5. Assessment Framework

Each site was assessed against a consistent set of criteria derived from planning policy and neighbourhood plan objectives.

A pass or fail judgement was applied to each criterion to allow clear comparison between sites. The overall assessment considered whether the site satisfied the key planning tests required by national planning policy, namely whether the site is:

- Suitable for development in planning terms
- Available for development, with landowner support
- Achievable and capable of delivery within the plan period

The full assessment of each site is provided in Appendix F.

6. Assessment Summary

Four sites were submitted through the Call for Sites process and assessed using the methodology described above. The locations of the four sites are in the following two maps.


Site 1
Site 2
Site 4
The Inn at Emmington
Guide Post
Bramley Greenfields
Park Villa
Cottage
Wheatsheaf Barn
Thatchings
Ryders
Box Cottage
Playing Field
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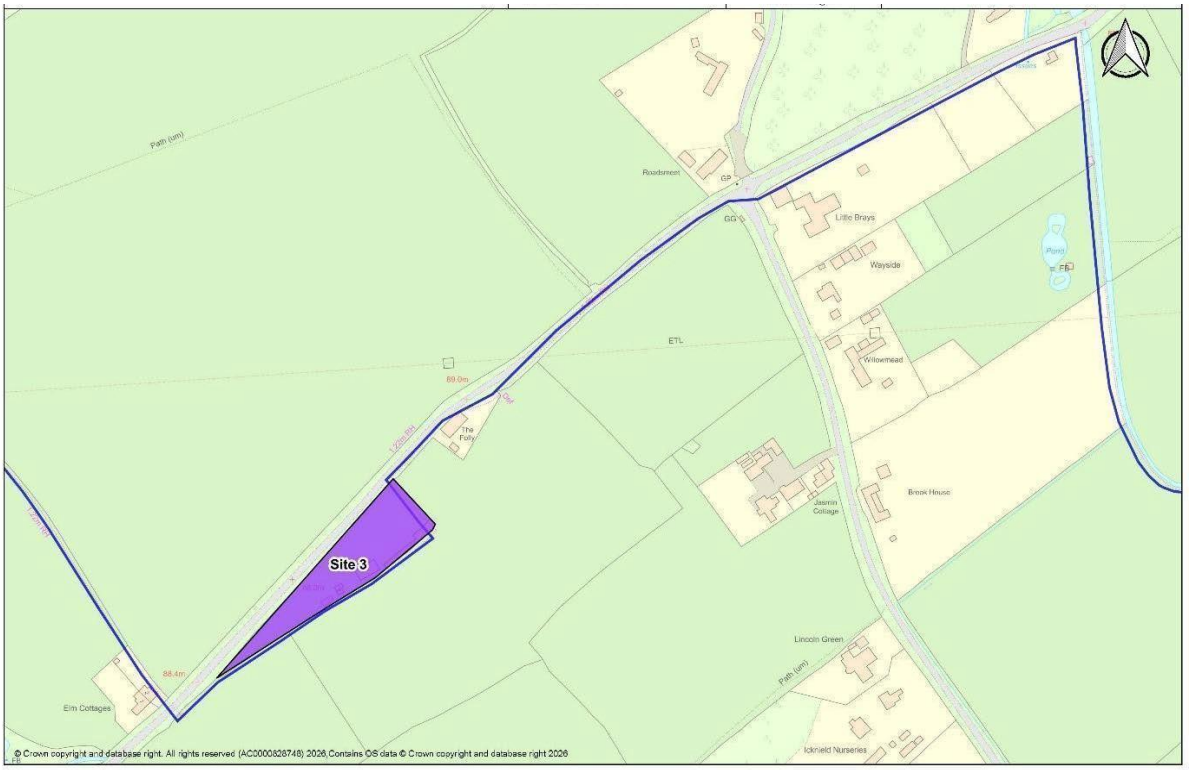
Site 3
Roadsmeet
Little Brays
Wayside
Willowmead
Brook House
Jasmin Cottage
Lincoln Green
Elm Cottages
Ickfield Nurseries
ETL
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The image below provides a visual comparison of how each of the four sites performed against the assessment criteria.

			SITES			
			1	2	3	4
Category	**LP/SNP Ref**	**Criteria**	**Assessment - Pass/Fail**	**Assessment - Pass/Fail**	**Assessment - Pass/Fail**	**Assessment - Pass/Fail**
Base Information						
Identification						
Address						
Owner						
Site Description						
Site Plan						
Site Size (hectares)						
General						
		Is the site available for development	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Does the owner agree to development	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Could the development be delivered within the timeframe of the NP	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Has planning permission been rejected previously	N/A	Fail	N/A	Fail
		Are there any known legal ownership issues	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass
	LP-ENV 1,2,3,12	Is the site in flood zone 3	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	SYD 5	Is the development within the designated Green Space	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	SYD 6	Would the development unacceptably detract from the seperation between the two settlements	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass
Village Boundary & Infill						
	SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.2 hectares (Sydenham West)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Pass
	SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.1 hectares (Sydenham East)	Pass	Fail	N/A	N/A
	SYD 1	What is current use of site	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass
	SYD 1	Does the development constitute infill	Pass	Fail	Fail	Pass
	SYD 1	Is the development backfill	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	SYD 1	Is the site within the development boundary	Pass	Fail	Fail	Pass
		if not				
	SYD 1	- would development be appropriate for a countryside location	N/A	Fail	Pass	N/A
	SYD 1	does the site abut another potential or allocated site	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Heritage and Community Assets						
	SYD 4	Would the development harm an existing Local or Designated Heritage Asset	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail
	SYD 8	Would development result in the loss or significant harm to a social or community facility	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Accessibility						
	SYD13	Does site have safe walking to access to public transport	Pass	Pass	Fail	Fail
	SYD15	would the development generate unacceptable levels of traffic	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Does the site have access restriction ie from a narrow road over other landowners land	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass
	SYD13	Is there safe pedestrian access to the site	Pass	Pass	Fail	Fail
Land and Visual Impact						
	LP-D10	Would the development result in the loss of any best or most versitile agricultural land	N/A	Pass	Pass	N/A
	SYD 11	Would the development adversely affect the landscape character of the village	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass
	SYD 7	Would the development have a significant adverse impact on an identified important view	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass
	SYD11	Would the development have an adverse impact on the patchwork of green spaces and hedgerows within the village boundaries	Pass	N/A	N/A	Fail

Site Assessment Summary - The full assessment of each site is provided in Appendix F

7. Outcome of Site Assessments

Following the assessment process, three sites (Sites 2, 3 and 4) were not considered suitable for allocation as they failed one or more of the key assessment criteria. In particular, these sites were found to have constraints or policy conflicts that meant they could not be considered suitable, or achievable for development.

Site 1 was found to meet the assessment framework and satisfy the planning tests of suitability, availability and achievability.

8. Justification for Site Allocation

The identification of Site 1 for allocation reflects the outcome of the objective assessment process undertaken through the neighbourhood plan update.

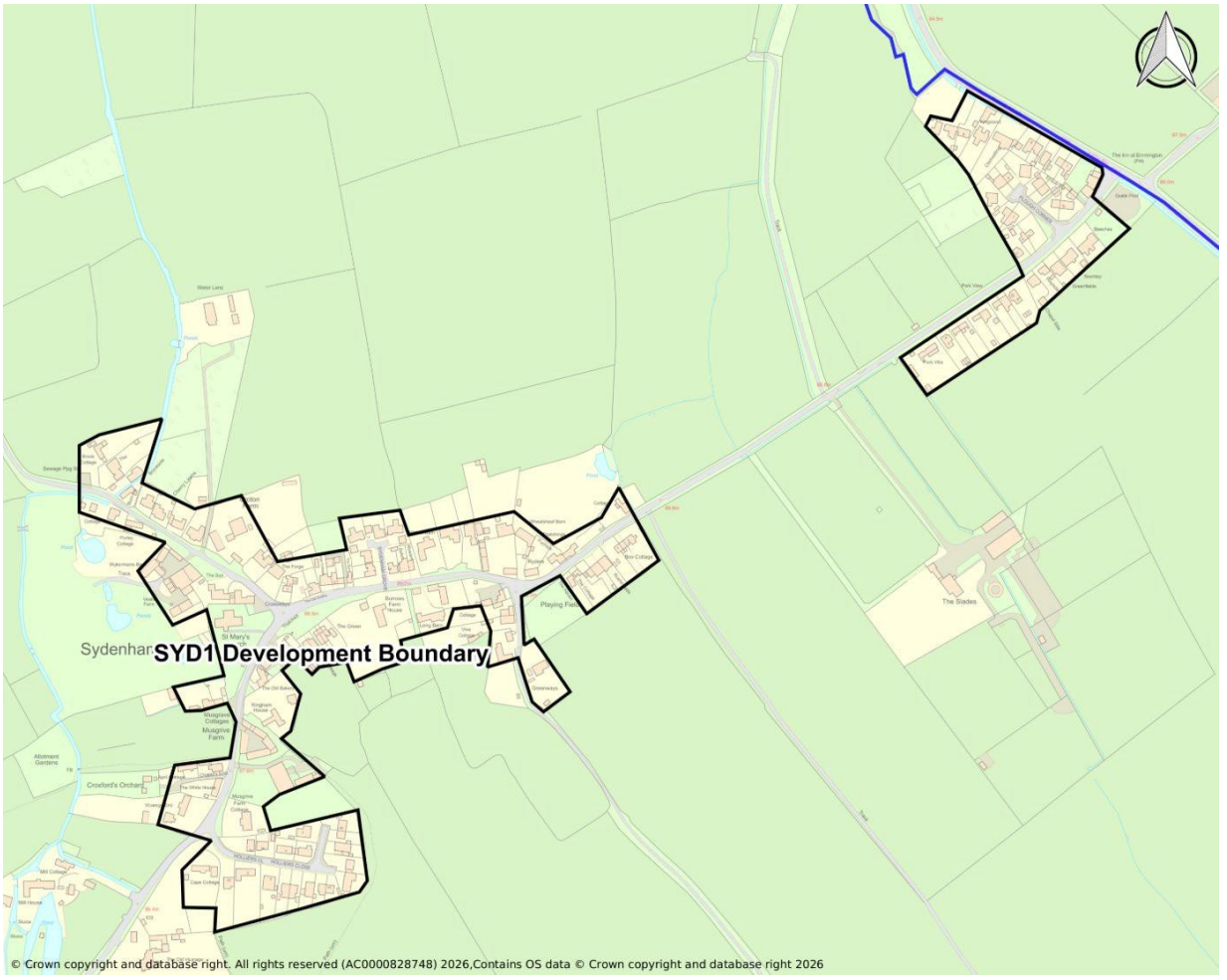
Having assessed all submitted sites against the agreed criteria, Site 1 was the only site found to meet the necessary planning tests and align with the objectives of the Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan.

Allocating this site therefore ensures that the neighbourhood plan positively supports appropriate housing development while maintaining consistency with local and national planning policy.

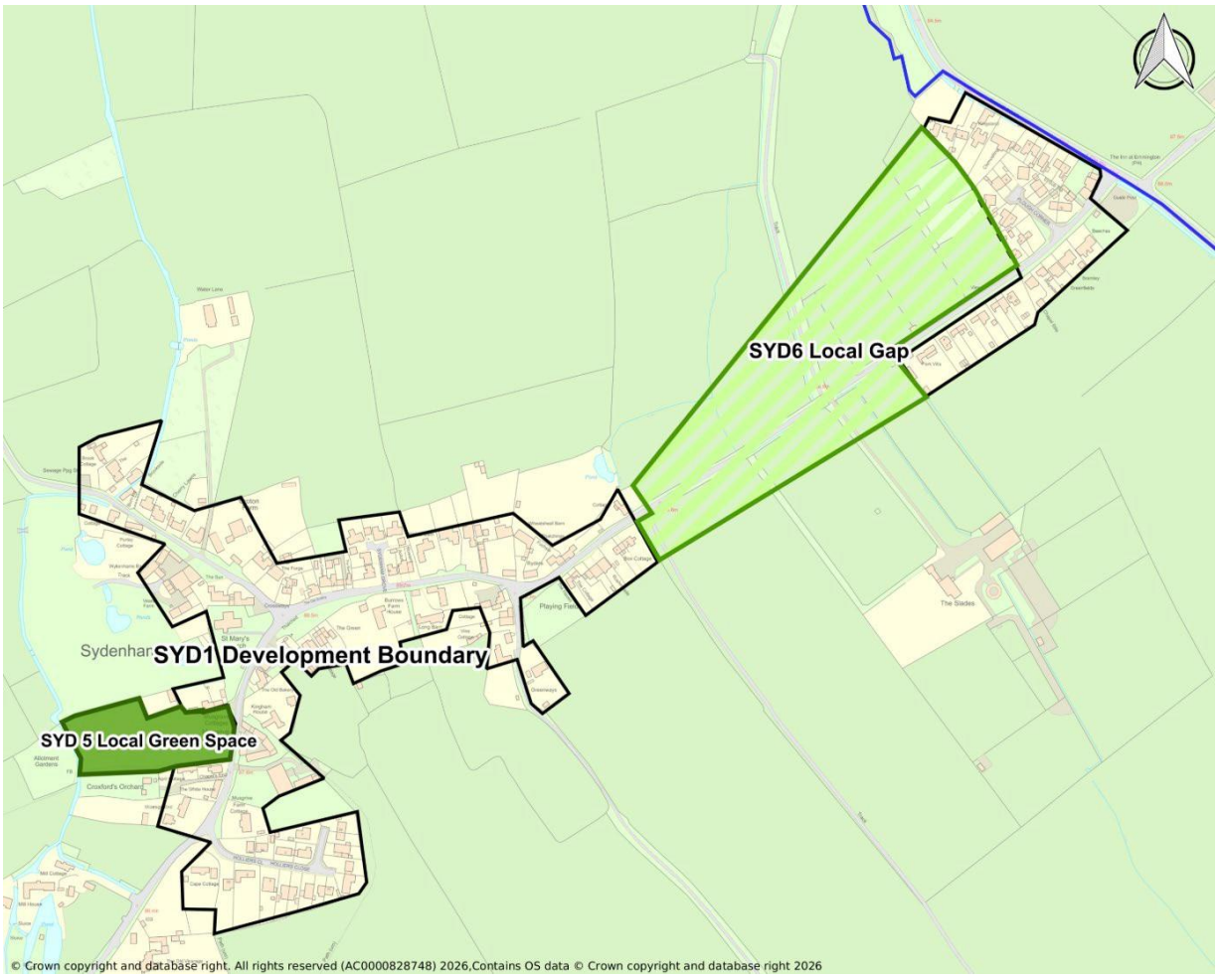
The corresponding site allocation policy for this site is set out in Policy SYD9.

APPENDIX D: Development Boundary Policy Map

Development Boundary Map – Showing Sydenham West & Sydenham East

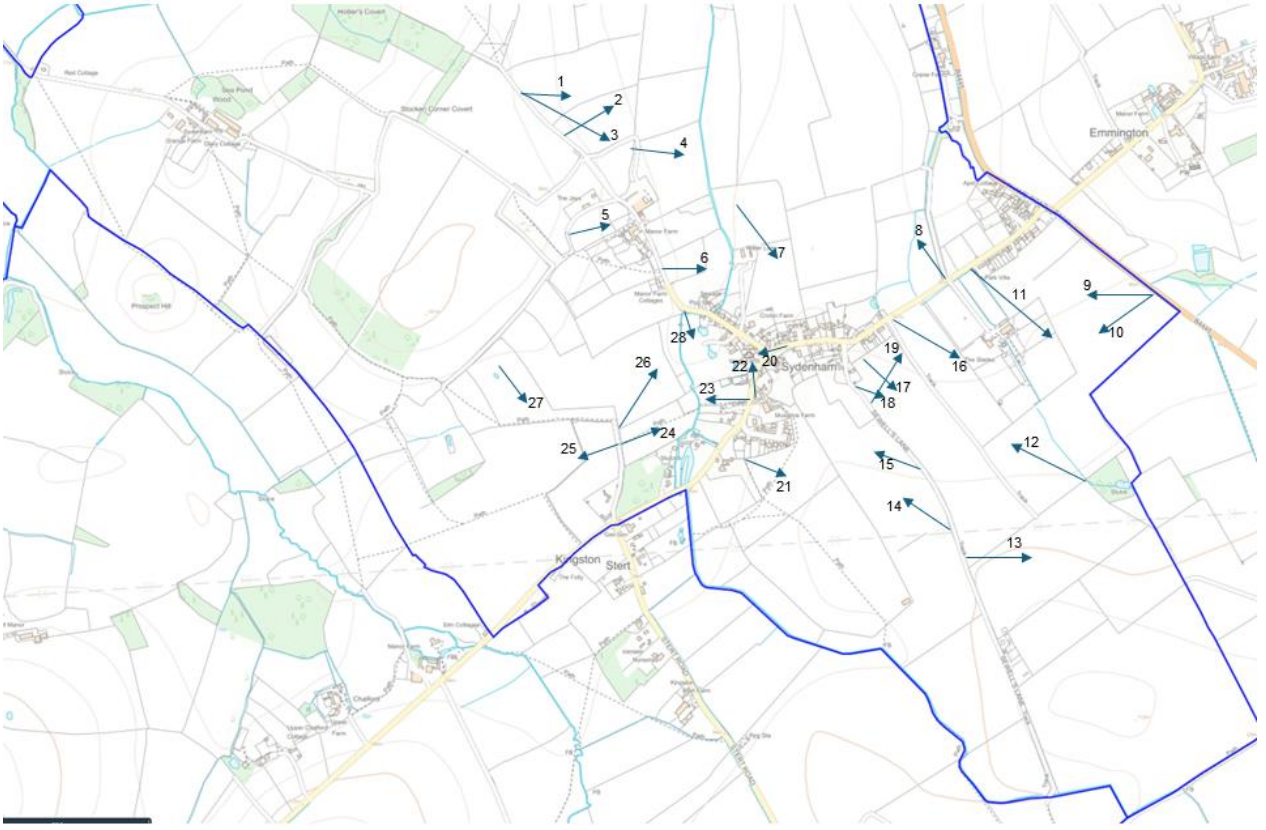


Gap and Green Space Map



Appendix E: Important Views Policy Map & Images

Important Views Policy Map



Important Views Images

View 1 - View demonstrating the rural nature of the village



View 2 - View demonstrating the rural nature of the village



View 3 - View demonstrating the rural nature of the village



View 4



View 5 - View demonstrating the rural nature of the village



View 6



View 7



View 8



View 9



View 10



View 11



View 12



View 13



View 14



View 15



View 16



View 17



View 18



View 19



View 20



View 21



View 22



View 23



View 24



View 25



View 26



View 27



View 28



Appendix F: Individual Site Assessments

Site 1: Land between the Inn at Emmington Car Park and The Beeches

Category	SNP Ref	Criteria	Assessment - Pass/Fail	Comments
Base Information				
Identification		Site Adjacent to the Inn at Emmington car park		
Address		Sydenham Road, Sydenham East		
Owner		Mr B Smith		
Site Description		Land between Inn at Emmington Car Park and The Beeches		
Site Plan		Yes		
Site Size (hectares)		0.06 hectares		
General				
		Is the site available for development	Pass	0-5 years see site application
		Does the owner agree to development	Pass	site application
		Could the development be delivered within the timeframe of the NP	Pass	site application
		Has planning permission been refused previously	Pass	No previous applications
		Are there any known legal ownership issues	Pass	site application
		Is there a utilities infrastructure deficiency	Pass	Utliities in Sydenham Road
		Is the site in flood zone 2 or 3	Pass	See flood map
	SYD 5	Is the development within the designated Green Space	Pass	No
	SYD 6	Would the development unacceptably detract from the seperation between the two settlements	Pass	No
Village Boundary & Infill				
	SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.2 hectares (Sydenham West)	N/A	
	SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.1 hectares (Sydenham East)	Pass	0.06 hectares
	SYD 1	What is current use of site	Pass	Caravan storage, overgrown
	SYD 1	Does the development constitute infill	Pass	Yes,similar to Land adjacent to Park House application P24/S0911/FUL
	SYD 1	Is the development backfill	Pass	site adjacent to road, not backfill
	SYD 1	Is the site within the development boundary	Pass	land within development boundary
		if not		
	SYD 1	- would development be appropriate for a countryside location	N/A	
	SYD 1	does the site abut another potential or allocated site	Pass	No
Heritage and Community Assets				
	SYD 4	Would the development harm an existing Local or Designated Heritage Asset	Pass	No
	SYD 8	Would development result in the loss or significant harm to a social or community facility	Pass	No
Accessibility				
		Does site have safe walking to access to public transport	Pass	Closeset site to public transport with safe access
	SYD15	would the development generate unacceptable levels of traffic	Pass	No
		Does the site have access restriction ie from a narrow road over other landowners land	Pass	No, on main road through Sydenham
		Is there safe pedestrian access to the site	Pass	wide verge
Land and Visual Impact				
	LP-D10	Would the development result in the loss of any best or most versitile agricultural land	Pass	Not used for agriculture
	SYD 11	Would the development adversely affect the landscape character of the village	Pass	No, adjacent to pub car park
	SYD 7	Would the development have a significant advesrse impact on an identified important view	Pass	No important views from the site
	SYD 11	Would the development have an adverse impact on the patchwork of green spaces and hedgerows within the village boundaries	Pass	No, adjacent to a car park

Site 2: Cobweb Farm, Park View

Category	LP Ref	SNP Ref	Criteria	Assessment - Pass/Fail	Comments
Base Information					
Identification			Park View, Sydenham East		
Address			8 Thame Road, Sydenham,OX39 4LB		
Owner			Ms N Bailey & Mr M Graham		
Site Description			Site Adjacent to Park View		
Site Plan			Yes		
Site Size (hectares)			0.2		
General					
			Is the site available for development	Pass	Yes, see application
			Does the owner agree to development	Pass	Yes, see application
			Could the development be delivered within the timeframe of the NP	Pass	Yes, 0-5 years see application
			Has planning permission been refused previously	Fail	Yes, applications failed at appeal APP/Q3115/W/18/3198439. Reasons for dismissal still valid
			Are there any known legal ownership issues	Fail	We understand there is a ransom strip along road frontage, thus not guaranteed access
			Is there a utilities infrastructure deficiency	Pass	No, see application
			Is the site in flood zone 2 or 3	Pass	No
		SYD 5	Is the development within the designated Green Space	Pass	No
	ENV1	SYD 6	Would the development unacceptably detract from the seperation between the two settlements	Fail	Contravenes Policy SYD6 detracting from the seperation between Sydenham East and Sydenham West
Village Boundary & Infill					
		SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.2 hectares (Sydenham West)	N/A	
		SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.1 hectares (Sydenham East)	Fail	0.2 hectares
		SYD 1	What is current use of site	Fail	Farmland
		SYD 1	Does the development constitute infill	Fail	No, it would not amount to filling in a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage or where closely surrounded by buildings. Ref: point 5 of Appeal decision notice
		SYD 1	Is the development backfill	Pass	site adjacent to road, not backfill
		SYD 1	Is the site within the development boundary	Fail	No, land outside development boundary ref: call for sites invitation
			if not		
		SYD 1/SYD 6	Would development be appropriate for a countryside location	Fail	Domestic dwellings are not deemed acceptable within the landscape between Sydenham West and Sydenham East Ref SYD 6
		SYD 1	does the site abut another potential or allocated site	Pass	No
Heritage and Community Assets					
		SYD 4	Would the development harm an existing Local or Designated Heritage Asset	Pass	No, not close to any heritage assets
		SYD 8	Would development result in the loss or significant harm to a social or community facility	Pass	No, no social or community facilities near the site
Accessibility					
			Does site have safe walking to access to public transport	Pass	Wide verge on other side of raod
		SYD15	would the development generate unacceptable levels of traffic	Pass	No
			Does the site have access restriction ie from a narrow road over other landowners land	Fail	We understand there is a ransom strip along road frontage, thus not guaranteed access
			Is there safe pedestrian access to the site	Pass	Wide verge on other side of raod
Land and Visual Impact					
		LP-D10	Would the development result in the loss of any best or most versitile agricultural land	Pass	It is used for agriculture but not best or most versitle
		SYD 11	Would the development adversely affect the landscape character of the village	Fail	It would directly affect the open and tranquil character of the landscape and its views between Sydenham West and Sydenham East, in contraavention of SYD 6 and reinforced by the Appeal decision
		SYD 7	Would the development have a significant advesrse impact on an identified important view	Fail	It would directly affect the open and tranquil character of the landscape and its views between Sydenham West and Sydenham East, in contraavention of SYD 6 and reinforced by the Appeal decision
		SYD 11	Would the development have an adverse impact on the patchwork of green spaces and hedgerows within the village boundaries	N/A	outside village boundaries

Site 3: Chalford Road

Category	LP Ref	SNP Ref	Criteria	Assessment - Pass/Fai	Comments
Base Information					
Identification			Land Registry title ON368966		
Address			Chalford Road, Sydenham West		
Owner			Mrs C Haines-Gray & Mrs J Winfield		
Site Description			Land adjacent to Chalford Road between The Folly & Elm Cottages		
Site Plan			yes		
Site Size (hectares)			0.4		
General					
			Is the site available for development	Pass	Yes
			Does the owner agree to development	Pass	Yes
			Could the development be delivered within the timeframe of the NP	Pass	Yes
			Has planning permission been refused previously	Pass	No previous applications
			Are there any known legal ownership issues	Pass	No
			Is there a utilities infrastructure deficiency	Pass	No, services in Chalford Road, although disconnected to site
			Is the site in flood zone 2 or 3	Pass	No
		SYD 5	Is the development within the designated Green Space	Pass	No, isolated site outside the developmentboundary
	ENV1	SYD 6	Would the development unacceptably detract from the seperation between the two settlements	Pass	No, site on the Chalford side of the village, not between Sydenham West and Sydenham East
Village Boundary & Infill					
		SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.2 hectares (Sydenham West)	N/A	0.2 and 0.1 hectares relates to infill withing the development boundaries?
		SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.1 hectares (Sydenham East)	N/A	0.2 and 0.1 hectares relates to infill withing the development boundaries?
		SYD 1	What is current use of site	Pass	Brownfield, agricultural
		SYD 1	Does the development constitute infill	Fail	Isolated site, not adjacent to any existing properties
		SYD 1	Is the development backfill	Pass	site adjacent to road, not backfill
		SYD 1	Is the site within the development boundary	Fail	land outside development boundary
			if not		
		SYD 1	- would development be appropriate for a countryside location	Pass	brownfield site, with previous agricultural use
		SYD 1	does the site abut another potential or allocated site	Pass	No
Heritage and Community Assets					
		SYD 4	Would the development harm an existing Local or Designated Heritage Asset	Pass	No, not close to any Heritage assets
		SYD 8	Would development result in the loss or significant harm to a social or community facility	Pass	No
Accessibility					
			Does site have safe walking to access to public transport	Fail	Isolated from the village
		SYD15	would the development generate unacceptable levels of traffic	Pass	No
			Does the site have access restriction ie from a narrow road over other landowners land	Pass	
			Is there safe pedestrian access to the site	Fail	No, along country lane with no safge access
Land and Visual Impact					
		LP-D10	Would the development result in the loss of any best or most versitile agricultural land	Pass	No, previous use for small scale agricultural purposes
		SYD 11	Would the development adversely affect the landscape character of the village	Pass	No
		SYD 7	Would the development have a significant advesrse impact on an identified important view	Pass	No
		SYD 11	Would the development have an adverse impact on the patchwork of green spaces and hedgerows within the village boundaries	N/A	Outside village boundaries

Site 4: Thatchings, Sydenham Road

Category	SNP Ref	Criteria	Assessment - Pass/Fail	Comments
Base Information				
Identification		Thatchings, Sydenham West		
Address		Sydenham Road, Sydenham, OX39 4LJ		
Owner		Lynn Rockwell		
Site Description		Site adjacent to Thatchings Cottage		
Site Plan		Yes		
Site Size (hectares)		0.01		application says 0.01 acres but we believe it is 0.1hectares
General				
		Is the site available for development	Pass	
		Does the owner agree to development	Pass	
		Could the development be delivered within the timeframe of the NP	Pass	0-10 years
		Has planning permission been refused previously	Fail	Application in 2008 approved but application in 2014 rejected
		Are there any known legal ownership issues	Pass	No
		Is there a utilities infrastructure deficiency	Pass	Utilities in road and serve adjacent houses
		Is the site in flood zone 2 or 3	Pass	No
	SYD 5	Is the development within the designated Green Space	Pass	No
	SYD 6	Would the development unacceptably detract from the seperation between the two settlements	Pass	No, infill
Village Boundary & Infill				
	SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.2 hectares (Sydenham West)	Pass	google maps measurement approx 0.1 hectares (50mx20m)
	SYD 1	is the site less than or equal to 0.1 hectares (Sydenham East)	N/A	
	SYD 1	What is current use of site	Pass	Domestic garden
	SYD 1	Does the development constitute infill	Pass	Yes, between two existing properties
	SYD 1	Is the development backfill	Pass	site adjacent to road, not backfill
	SYD 1	Is the site within the development boundary	Pass	Yes
		if not		
	SYD 1	- would development be appropriate for a countryside location	N/A	
	SYD 1	does the site abut another potential or allocated site	Pass	No
Heritage and Community Assets				
	SYD 4	Would the development harm an existing Local or Designated Heritage Asset	Fail	Adjacent to a listed building (Fuchsia and Thatchings Cottages) harmful to its setting, as also detailed in planning appeal refusal in 2014
	SYD 8	Would development result in the loss or significant harm to a social or community facility	Pass	No, near the village playground but would not result in any impact or loss of amenity
Accessibility				
		Does site have safe walking to access to public transport	Fail	Site is on the very narrowest part of Sydenham Road, which has suffered from speeding issues for many years and is very dangerous to walk along
	SYD15	would the development generate unacceptable levels of traffic	Pass	No
		Does the site have access restriction ie from a narrow road, over other landowners land	Pass	Access would be onto narrow road, so maybe subject to highways objections
		Is there safe pedestrian access to the site	Fail	No footpath or verge to walk along. Site is on the very narrowest part of Sydenham Road, which has suffered from speeding issues for many years and is very dangerous to walk along
Land and Visual Impact				
	LP-D10	Would the development result in the loss of any best or most versitile agricultural land	N/A	not used for agriculture
	SYD 11	Would the development adversely affect the landscape character of the village	Pass	No, infill between two existing properties
	SYD 7	Would the development have a significant advesrse impact on an identified important view	Pass	No, infill between two existing properties
	SYD 11	Would the development have an adverse impact on the patchwork of green spaces and hedgerows within the village boundaries	Fail	Significant part of dense hedgerow and vegitation would need to be removed. Also as detailed in planning appeal refusal in 2014

Appendix G: Call for Sites Documentation

Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan
Village Survey and Call for Sites Application

Dear Resident,

As part of the consultation process for updating the Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan, please find enclosed details of how you can take part in the survey to give your views on the updating of the plan, and the process and associated forms for submitting a plot within the parish of Sydenham for potential development.

Survey
The survey can be accessed via the Sydenham Parish website, http://www.sydenhamvillage.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html within the Neighborhood Plan section and will be open until **Monday 26 May 2025.**

If you prefer a hard copy of the survey, please contact Toby Roe (tobyroe@roecomms.com).

Call for Site Applications
Enclosed you will find a letter setting out the process for submitting a site for potential development, along with an application form that needs to be completed with each application.

All applications need to be submitted to c/o Sydenham Parish Council, 12 Park View, Sydenham, Chinnor, OX39 4LQ no later than **Monday 26 May 2025.**

Sydenham Parish Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites Letter
Closing date: 26 May 2025

An application form as attached to this Call for Sites Letter (the "**Form**") is to be filled out by any interested parties who want to promote a site for development to be allocated in the Sydenham Parish Neighbourhood Plan. As part of the current update of the Sydenham Parish Neighbourhood Plan, Sydenham's Neighbourhood Plan Committee on behalf of Sydenham Parish Council is undertaking a '**Call for Sites**' to identify available sites, (within the village boundary as defined in the current Sydenham Parish Neighbourhood Plan, made in May 2021 and referenced in policy SYD1), that can be considered for housing within the next five years.

The Call for Sites will run for **8 weeks between 1 April 2025 and 26 May 2025**. Only one Form should be submitted for each individual site. However, a separate Form must be completed for each individual site submitted.

Completed forms should be sent to: **c/o Sydenham Parish Council,12 Park View, Sydenham, Chinnor, OX39 4LQ.**

Alternatively, forms can be submitted by email to **parishcouncil@sydenhamvillage.co.uk**

Forms must be received by 26 May 2025.

A copy of the form is attached to this letter and may be copied if required, or you may request further hard copies by emailing: parishcouncil@sydenhamvillage.co.uk

The Forms received as part of Sydenham Parish Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites will be published and made available for public viewing. By submitting a Form, you are consenting to the details about you and your individual site(s) being stored by Sydenham Parish Council and potentially shared with the other parties including, but not limited to South Oxfordshire District Council and that the details of the site will be published for consultation purposes.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Sydenham Parish Council will be the data controller. The purposes of collecting this data are:

- to assist in the preparation of the Sydenham Parish Neighbourhood Plan
- to contact you, if necessary, regarding the answers given in your Form
- to evaluate the development potential of the submitted site for the uses proposed within the Form.

By submitting a Form, you are consenting to the details about you and your individual sites being stored by Sydenham Parish Council, and the details being published for consultation purposes. Any information you consider to be confidential is clearly marked in the submitted Form and you have confirmed with the Council in advance that such information can be kept confidential.

Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan Committee

Application Form for plot to be considered for site allocation within the Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan

1. **Proposer name and contact details**

2. **Site name**

3. **Site address including postcode**

4. **Ownership of site (name, contact details)**

5. **Does the owner support this application?**

6. **Site area (in hectares)**

7. **Expected number of units**

8. **Type and size of house(s).**

9. **Intended development type (eg Affordable housing, starter homes, family homes, retirement housing, self build).**

10. timescale expected for development?

- **Between 0-5 years**
- **5-10 years**
- **10-15 years**

11. Any barriers to development (e.g., legal or contamination issues).

12. Utilities available on site (eg, electricity, water, access to highway).

13. Any potential restraints (eg, ransom strips).

Please ensure that an Ordnance Survey based plan is included with this application showing the boundary of the site in red, plus shapefiles and GIS mapping.

Completed applications should be sent to c/o Sydenham Parish Council, 12 Park View, Sydenham, Chinnor, OX39 4LQ or via email, parishcouncil@sydenhamvillage.co.uk no later than Monday 26 May 2025

Notes:

i) Submission of a site does not guarantee its allocation or development.

ii) The assessment of a site's potential for development does not confirm that it will be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

iii) The process should not be interpreted as creating expectation about how individual planning applications will be determined.

iv) Site promoters are responsible for demonstrating that their development proposals are viable and policy compliant.

v) Information provided during the call for sites cannot be treated as confidential, and site boundaries may be published in emerging evidence documents.

vi) Sydenham Parish Council reserves the right to make its own assessment of submitted sites, which may differ from information provided by the applicant.

vii) Site allocation in the final, published Neighbourhood Plan does not grant permission for any specific proposal; planning permission will still need to be secured through the regular planning process.

viii) As defined in policy SYD1 of the current Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan, we are only looking for small plots of land to accommodate 1 or 2 houses within the village boundaries.