

Reviewed Long Wittenham
Neighbourhood Development Plan
2018-2033

EVIDENCE PAPER PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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Submission draft

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1. The Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan (LWNDP) was made on 12 October 2017 following a successful referendum on 7 September 2017. The “yes” vote was 59.9%.
2. Despite strong community support, the LWNDP was not a successful planning framework when tested against the planning proposal at Fieldside Track, Didcot Road. The parish council objected to the proposal and that view was shared by the planning authority who determined that they would have refused the proposal had they been in a position to do so. However, the deemed refusal was overturned at appeal and the development for up to 36 houses was allowed.
3. The parish council gave evidence at the planning inquiry seeking to use the LWNDP as the basis for the inspector to uphold the council’s decision. However, the planning application was considered in the circumstances where there was no 5-year housing land supply and the inspector gave the need for additional new housing sufficient weight in his decision.
4. In his decision report for the appeal (APP/W3115/W/17/3169755), the inspector gave little weight to LWNDP policies and the argument that the proposal would jeopardize the Community Right to Build Order (CRTBO) which was the preferred means of providing the community hub. The LWNDP steering group and the parish council determined that the LWNDP should be immediately reviewed with the intention of strengthening the approach so that the interests of the village would be given more weight in future planning decisions.
5. The LWNDP did not allocate sites. Because of this, the inspector was not able to apply the terms of the Ministerial Statement (December 2016) which requires only a three-year land supply to be proven where sites are allocated in an NDP.)
6. The Parish Council considered that, by entering into an immediate review, it would be possible to rely upon the data and evidence from the September 2017 made version because it would be less than 3 years old (most of the substantive evidence was gathered in 2015/2016.) The community’s views that the plan met their expectations was ratified in the 2017 referendum.
7. This report considers the planning policy context for the review of the LWNDP, taking account of the appeal decision.

8. This report will form part of the evidence base for the review of the LWNDP. Part 1 of the report sets out the policies in the development plan as they are relevant to the entire LWNDP review. Part 1 of the report considers the policy implications for the proposed site allocations.

PART 1: DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE REVIEW OF THE LWNDP

The Development Plan

9. The Development Plan relevant to the review of the LWNDP consists of the following documents:
10. The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012, (Core Strategy)
11. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2011, 2006, (Local Plan)
12. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2033, Publication Version, October 2017 (Emerging Local Plan). This plan should be given limited weight.

Viability of the Community Hub

13. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that:

The National Planning Policy Framework says that plans should be deliverable and that the sites and scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened.

14. The NPPF therefore establishes the principle that development should be viable if it is identified in a plan.

15. PPG goes on to say that:

Assessing viability requires judgements which are informed by the relevant available facts. It requires a realistic understanding of the costs and the value of development in the local area and an understanding of the operation of the market.

(Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 10-004-20140306)

and

Assessing the viability of plans does not require individual testing of every site or assurance that individual sites are viable; site typologies may be used to determine viability at policy level. Assessment of samples of sites may be helpful to support evidence and more detailed

assessment may be necessary for particular areas or key sites on which the delivery of the plan relies.

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 10-006-20140306

Central to the consideration of viability is the assessment of land or site value.

Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 10-014-20140306

Discussion

16. No formal viability assessment has been prepared since the proposal will occur in the future and commercial decisions cannot be anticipated in order to carry out an assessment. The preferred developer who is working with the parish council has provided viability evidence but this is commercially confidential and has not been included in the evidence papers though it will be made available to the planning authority on request. The site assessment methodology will ensure that any site allocations will be supported by relevant policy which is in line with the PPG advice.
17. The community hub will be a partnership between public and private stakeholders. Those in the public sector, such as the school and the parish council, have limited financial resources and the proposals should ideally be cost-neutral to them.
18. There is evidence that the hub proposal is viable because there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the parish council, a landowner, a developer indicating that they believe the scheme to be viable. A key factor in this is the value of the land which is being offered at a philanthropic rate far below market value (the rate for a community facility as per the South Oxfordshire CIL). Agreements have been signed between all partner which is described more fully in **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations**.
19. In support of the parish council's case before the inspector, reference was made to the December 2014 report by Savills considered the overall viability of a hub proposal. It concluded that, as a starting point, the land value that would be required to render the proposal cost neutral, taking account of sale of the village hall and school land, would be in the order of £130,000-150,000 per acre.¹ The report highlights that the standard range of residential development land values are between £1.1 million and £1.5 million per acre.²
20. The Savills report was the benchmark for the parish council's negotiations on land value: one of the key "success criteria" for the hub allocation assessment is the value attributed

¹ Savills, December 2014, *Long Wittenham Village Hub*, page 7.

² Ibid, page 5.

to the land and, as the Savills report has indicated, this should be in the order of around £130,000 per acre.

21. The proposal must comply with planning policies for affordable housing and it is assumed that a 40% affordable housing provision will be required in the hub scheme.

Site assessment

22. Full guidance for undertaking site assessments in neighbourhood plans is set out in My Community's "Site Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: A toolkit for Neighbourhood Planners".
23. Any type of site for any land use may be allocated in an NDP. The reviewed NDP will contain several types of land allocation.
24. Housing allocations are, in the first instance, the responsibility of the local planning authority according to para. 17 of the NPPF to include strategic policies which under para. 60 should consider housing.
25. Para. 13 states that NDPs should be support the delivery of these strategic policies.

Strategic development strategy

26. As part of the SODC review of the local plan, Arup was commissioned in 2017 to prepare a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). The HELAA concluded that,

In summary, 283 sites over [2.5 ha - sic] were considered to be deliverable (defined as at least part of the site coming forward within the next five years), with an indicative capacity for 15,651 dwellings on these sites – taking into account completions and commitments, this equates to 21,108 units in the next five years. The objectively assessed housing need figure for the district is for 17,050 net additional homes across the Plan period, equal to an annual average of 775 dwellings per annum; this means that the HELAA demonstrates more than a five year supply of deliverable land. However, it should be acknowledged that the HELAA is a 'policy off' formative assessment and so does not take into account planning considerations such as the Green Belt, AONB or relationship with existing settlements and services.

In addition, a total of 67 sites were considered to be developable (defined as coming forward within between five and 15 years), capable of bringing forward 6,415 dwellings.

For the 15 year period recommended for HELAA documents (as opposed to the longer Plan period), there is therefore an indicative capacity for 22,066 dwellings. In addition, the additional capacity for homes on HELAA sites beyond this 15 year period brings the total indicative capacity to 1,536 dwellings (excluding completions and commitments). Including completions and commitments, this therefore results in an indicative capacity of 31,250 units within the 15 year period, and 32,786 in total.

In addition to the sites above which are identified solely for housing use, there is capacity for up to 58,098 dwellings on sites which are be suitable for a potential mix of housing and employment uses (either a mix of uses or one or the other). This figure is a theoretical maximum indicating the potential housing delivery were these sites to be built solely for housing use. ³

The HELAA did not consider the contribution from windfall sites.

27. The “Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2017” Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2017 collated information on the services and facilities available in settlements across the district. The focus was on settlements categorised in the current Core Strategy as towns, larger villages, and smaller villages. Long Wittenham was classified as a “smaller village” in Table 1. Long Wittenham scored relatively highly in terms of employment, and very highly in terms of proximity to a larger settlement. Long Wittenham did not score highly on access to a bus service. Appendix 2 of the report provides the final scores for Long Wittenham, reproduced below.

	Facilities score	Population score	Employment score	Proximity score	Public transport score
Long Wittenham	15	3	75	75	10

28. The Settlement Assessment Background Paper was updated in October 2017. It used the following scoring system in support of refining the development hierarchy. Having scored each settlement, the study applied a bench mark against which settlements would be considered for each category:

³ Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2017, pages 1-2.

Total score	Category
0-5	Not featured in hierarchy
5-15	Other village
16-79	Smaller village
80+	Larger village
500+	Town

29. In the updated assessment, Long Wittenham retained its classification as a “smaller village”. The revised score is set out below.

	Facilities score	Proximity score	Public transport score
Long Wittenham	22	5	0

30. Long Wittenham falls short of the larger villages by some margin, and is particularly low-scoring on public transport. The earlier study indicated that this was to some degree offset by high employment and proximity to larger urban areas.
31. Paragraph 13.6 of the Core Strategy 2012 states:

The overall strategy aims to support rural communities. It allocates growth to the larger villages and allows some limited development in other rural communities. The concept is to develop a network of settlements to reduce the need to travel to meet day-to-day needs. We want to allow flexibility for development that can assist sustainability but which doesn't detract from the character of the settlement.

32. The Science Vale Area Action Plan underwent an Issues and Scope consultation in 2015. It identified Long Wittenham as within the AAP boundary. The proposed vision for the Science Vale was:

Science Vale will consist of thriving communities that have benefited from sustainable growth underpinned by the successful delivery of major infrastructure. It will be an area for internationally competitive science based employment, which continues to attract investment.

It will have a range of high quality housing supported by community facilities and an enhanced infrastructure.

Didcot will be a vibrant, modern town and the attractive market town of Wantage will be enhanced. The attractive countryside will continue to be an

important asset for Science Vale. It will be maintained and where needed, improved to support a high quality of life for residents. (emphasis added).

33. The consultation raised a number of issues for consultation. Issue 2 considers how Didcot has not yet reached its potential as a vibrant centre for Science Vale. Issue 4 explored achieving growth without compromising one of the AAP's identified foundations of success – its natural beauty, historic and rural character.

34. The consultation document offered a number of commitments. The most relevant for Long Wittenham are:

3. We will provide excellent places to live by developing vibrant neighbourhoods whilst ensuring our villages and countryside maintain their distinctive character:

- *Didcot will become the urban centre of Science Vale providing all the housing, recreation, leisure, retail, health and civic facilities of a typical thriving science town.*
- *Science Vale will offer a unique mix of living environments for residents, ranging from its **villages** to its towns.*
- *Science Vale will **capitalise on the natural environment** that has made it so successful in the past.*
- *Science Vale will be home to a number of vibrant and mixed new neighbourhoods that are well integrated and designed to an exceptional quality.*

35. From this point, the document proposed a number of objectives. This follows on from the commitments set out above:

3. To provide excellent places to live by developing vibrant neighbourhoods whilst ensuring our villages and countryside maintain their distinctive character, we must:

- Ensure excellent design is embedded throughout Science Vale.
- Refuse development proposals that degrade the built and natural environment.
- Create an urban design framework focused on key sites, setting out a coordinated approach to new development in Science Vale.
- Improve Didcot to be the well serviced and high quality centre of Science Vale.
- Achieve balanced and sustainable employment and housing growth.
- Deliver diverse, high quality, attractive housing developments, enjoyable to live in and appropriate to the surrounding environment.
- Ensure that the location of new services and facilities are coordinated.
- Consider the needs of people who wish build their own homes in appropriate locations.

- Protect the distinctive character and heritage of Science Vale’s market towns, villages and countryside.

Discussion

36. Long Wittenham has retained its hierarchical designation as a “smaller village” due mainly to its low score on transport sustainability and the number of facilities. However, it is near to Didcot and is within the proposed Science Vale action area so villagers can gain access to facilities but must rely upon private transport to do so.
37. The Core Strategy 2012 does not allocate housing sites in smaller villages and foresees limited growth in smaller villages, seeking to create a network of facilities to meet day-to-day needs.
38. The emerging Science Vale action plan emphasizes the beneficial contribution of the rural hinterland in the action area and proposes objectives to protect the distinctive character of the villages and countryside.

Housing land allocation

39. Core Strategy CSS1, which sets out the strategic distribution of development in the district, focuses major new development at the growth points of Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford. Smaller villages such as Long Wittenham⁴ are expected to provide only limited amounts of housing and employment and by the provision and retention of services. Core Strategy CSR1 indicates that for smaller villages, infill development would be acceptable on sites up to 0.2 ha, which is equivalent to 5-6 houses.
40. The Emerging Local Plan STRAT1 has not made any strategic housing allocation in Long Wittenham which is considered to be a “smaller village”. The Emerging Local Plan settlement background paper “Preferred Options” (June 2016) identifies Long Wittenham as a “smaller village” because it scored poorly on sustainability criteria and the availability of facilities and services.
41. Emerging Local Plan Policy H1 acknowledges that LWNDP’s can allocate housing land. It states that housing will only be permitted where it is infilling within the existing built up areas of smaller villages if there is no allocation in the NDP.
42. Emerging Local Plan policy H8 again sets out the role of NDPs in allocating housing land. In smaller villages, where there is no NDP, a 5-10% increase in dwelling numbers over what was recorded in the 2011 census will be achieved through the development of suitable

⁴ Appendix 4 of the Core Strategy identifies Long Wittenham as a smaller village.

sites and through infill development. The quantum for Long Wittenham is estimated to be 15 houses over the current LWNDP plan period.

43. However, policy H8 states that where an LWNDP allocates land for housing, this should be at around 5% increase.
44. The supporting text for H8 states that smaller villages will look to larger villages for higher level services and facilities. The NDP considers Long Wittenham to be unsustainable in terms of its services and facilities. The purpose of the Community Hub is to create better and more robust community infrastructure so that new housing can be accommodated.

Discussion

45. According to the Core Strategy, as a smaller village, only infill development would be appropriate and the Emerging Local Plan indicates that there should be around a 5% increase in housing should the LWNDP allocate a site for this purpose.
46. NPPF paras, 12-13 states that NDPs should be in conformity with the Local Plan policies and may not promote less development. Provided that the strategic provisions of the Local Plan are conformed with, the NDPs may allocate additional housing land “shape and direct sustainable development in their area”.
47. The LWNDP has indicated that it seeks to make provision for a community hub with enabling housing development. Evidence presented to the inspector at the planning inquiry estimated that this would be in the order of 47 additional houses in the village. Subsequent analysis and evidence in support of this review of the NDP has now estimated that 40-45 houses will be provided as part of the hub scheme.
48. The appeal allowed an additional up to 36 houses in the light of the absence of a 5-year housing land supply.
49. Together, these proposals far exceed the expectations of the Core Strategy or Emerging Local Plan regarding housing delivery. However, under the provisions of the NPPF, it is acceptable for neighbourhood plans to provide excess housing over requirement provided that overall proposal was a sustainable form of development and that any ensuing harm is outweighed by its benefits.

HOUSING MIX

50. The Core Strategy requires 40% affordable housing on sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings subject to a viability assessment. The policy also requires 75% social rented and 25% shared ownership to meet locally identified need.
51. Emerging Local Plan policy H9 also requires that on all sites with 22 or more residential units, a minimum of 40% affordable housing will be required. The tenure mix should be 75% social rented and 25% shared ownership or as required by the most up to date housing evidence, for instance the evidence in support of the LWNDP.
52. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014) (SHMA) gives an indication of the overall housing mix required (market plus affordable) in Table 62, reproduced here:

Table 64: Implications of Demographic Projections on Overall Housing Mix

Number of bedrooms	Market			Affordable		
	Households	Dwellings	% of dwellings	Households	Dwellings	% of dwellings
1 bedroom	3,933	4,092	7.0%	11,239	11,695	28.4%
2 bedrooms	13,812	14,381	24.4%	13,739	14,303	34.7%
3 bedrooms	24,234	25,221	42.9%	12,951	13,475	32.7%
4+ bedrooms	14,553	15,139	25.7%	1,687	1,755	4.3%
Total	56,532	58,832	100.0%	39,617	41,228	100.0%

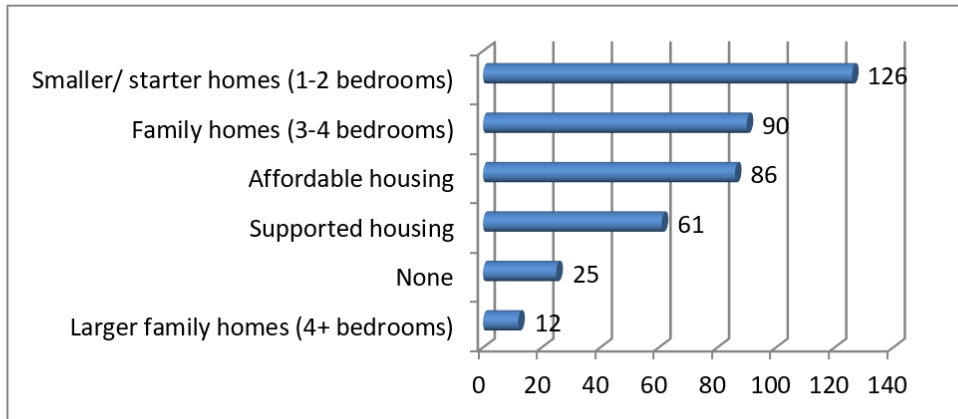
Source: Housing Market Model

Discussion

53. The Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report (July 2015) indicated strong support for the development of more small housing units and more affordable units. Question 11 of the report is reproduced here. There was also strong support for the creation of new family homes. Generally, it can be considered that the survey indicated broad support for the SHMA findings.

11. What type of accommodation do you think Long Wittenham needs?

178 respondents – 400 total choices



Community infrastructure

- 54. Core Strategy policy CSR3 supports proposals which result in provision of facilities for rural areas. CSI1 ensures that new development must be served by appropriate on- and off- site infrastructure and services to meet the needs of new development. This may be sought through conditions or planning obligations.
- 55. Emerging Local Plan policy INF1 states that new development must be served and supported by appropriate on-site and off-site infrastructure and services. Planning permission will only be granted for development where the infrastructure and services needed to meet the needs of the new development is already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale as set out in plans and strategies including the LWNDP.
- 56. The Community Infrastructure Levy CIL Regulation 123 List seeks contributions towards primary schools and sports and recreation but there is no specific allocation toward Long Wittenham and the provision is targeted at strategic housing allocations. However, it may be possible that some CIL funding can be diverted to the needs of Long Wittenham.

57. Discussion

- 58. The LWNDP sets out infrastructure requirements for the village to be paid from CIL funding in Appendix 3.
- 59. The upheld appeal for up to 36 additional home is likely to yield approximately £650,000 in CIL contributions. Because there is a made LWNDP in place, 25% of this will go towards the Parish Council to fund the infrastructure identified in Appendix 3.
- 60. The community hub proposal (including all sites and all enabling housing) will yield in the order of another 45-50 houses which will also be subject to CIL. It can be estimated that, using the Kler proposal as a guide, the LWNDP will generate approximately £812,500 -

£902,300 in total. 25% of this funding will be directed to the Parish Council. The Parish Council's CIL funding may be as much as £450-500,000 over the plan period.

Heritage and Design

61. Core Strategy CSEN1 states that the district's landscape character will be protected against inappropriate development.
62. Emerging Local Plan Policy ENV1 protects the countryside against inappropriate development. Emerging Local Plan policy ENV6 states that proposals for new development that affects heritage assets must conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and its setting. Policy DES2 states neighbourhood plan character assessment, positive features should be incorporated into the design of the development.
63. Local Plan policy C4 states that development that damages the attractive landscape setting of settlement will not be permitted. Local plan policy D1 states that good design protects and reinforces local distinctiveness and this should be taken into account. CSQ3 seeks new development that will respond positively to the character of the site and surroundings, enhancing local distinctiveness.
64. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) sets the local context for new development in the District. The LWNDP contains a Character Assessment which sets out a palette and a toolbox for creating new development which would complement and enhance the existing environment and contribute to the urban fabric of the village in a positive way.
65. The Long Wittenham conservation area is shown on maps A1 and A4 in the LWNDP Evidence Base (Appendix 1). The AONB and Green Belt boundaries are outside of the parish area but form a visual backdrop for the village and future development. Figure A2 shows the broad location of the viewing corridor for the view cones to Wittenham Clumps and which is afforded special protection under LWNDP LW4 (3).
66. The South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies the River Thames and Thames Path in Long Wittenham as an Existing Green Infrastructure Asset. Core Strategy policy CSG1 requires proposals to improve existing assets. Emerging Local Plan policy ENV1 states that development will only be permitted where it protects or enhances the landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames and its flood plains.

Discussion

67. LWNDP policy LW4 has been found in conformity with the local plan in the LWNDP examination and there are no intentions to substantively modify this policy in the review.
68. The hub proposal and enabling housing will however require careful design.

69. The hub proposal site, (Didcot Road) will be affected by the allowed planning appeal at Fieldside Track. That proposal will provide a screen between the proposed hub and enabling housing and the Conservation Area, though any future development of Didcot Road should consider its wider impact upon the conservation area and its relationship with the Fieldside Track proposal.
70. The character of the Thames Path and River Thames environs is supported by Long Wittenham's village character as set out in the Character Assessment. Major developments have been permitted on the outskirts of Didcot. It would be undesirable in landscape terms to allow for a coalescence due to further development in the gap between Didcot and Long Wittenham along the River Thames or its floodplain.

Archaeology

71. Core Strategy policy CSEN3 states the development affecting non-designated historic assets should take account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset. NPPF para. 189 requires a desk-based assessment and possibly a field evaluation
72. Long Wittenham is known to be an area of particularly high archaeological potential documented both through finds of significant remains of Anglo-Saxon funerary remains excavated during the 19th and 20th centuries as well as through recording of crop marks seen in aerial photographs suggesting an area of historic settlement (shown through excavations in 2015 and 2016 to be a multi-period site including elements of both Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon character) on the southern edge of the present settlement, as well as earlier prehistoric settlement and trackway remains seen elsewhere in the area. Some of these areas have been designated as scheduled monuments, but other non-designated areas may yet be of equal national archaeological interest.
73. Historic England have suggested in their response to the Regulation 14 draft that the Historic Environment Record, the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment and "A short review of archaeology of the Oxfordshire Parishes" should be consulted.
74. The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential between the site of an important Anglo Saxon cemetery and a possible Saxon high status settlement.
75. Didcot Road site has been assessed by Historic England for scheduling and it will not be scheduled. No archaeological assessments are available.
76. The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential immediately east of the site of an Anglo Saxon burial ground, excavated by J Y Akerman in the late 1850s. The excavations recorded 188 inhumation burials and 46 cremations along with a large quantity of grave goods. A large crop marked site has been identified from aerial photographs immediately south and east of the proposal site. The site consists of a series of probable Iron Age or Roman trackways and enclosures, a possible Iron Age pit alignment and a number of possible Saxon timber framed buildings.

- 77. An archaeological evaluation immediately north of the proposal area recorded further aspects of the Anglo Saxon cemetery including 3 cremation deposits and an inhumation. A series of Roman and Saxon linear features were also recorded. Lidar images obtained from the Environment Agency have shown that a series of low linear earthworks survive on the site and may be related to these archaeological deposits.
- 78. The potential Saxon timber framed buildings within the area of the proposed playing fields have been suggested represents a high status Hall site and may be considered to be of demonstrably equivalent significance to a scheduled monument and could be a significant constraint to any development.

Discussion

- 79. A full review of all archaeological evidence is beyond the scope of the NDP steering group's resources and the NDP will therefore rely upon the protection offered under Development Plan policies and does not propose to deviate from or augment Development Plan policies. NPPF 31 states that the preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence that is adequate and proportionate. It is not proportionate to require to RLW NDP to prepare archaeological evidence for all sites in the site assessment when there are adequate policy protections in place in the Development Plan.
- 80. Conditions were placed upon the adjacent allocated site referred to in this report as Fieldside by the Inspector in his decision APP/Q3115/W/17/3169755. That proposal site would have had similar archaeological constraints. The Inspector placed the following condition upon Fieldside:
 - No development shall commence until a written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and the approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 81. It is considered that since there is no existing archaeological assessment, the Inspector's approach is sufficiently robust to overcome the objection raised by English Heritage.

Sustainable Transport

- 82. Core Strategy policy CSQ3 seeks to ensure that new development ensures high levels of accessibility and ease of use by all modes of transport both within the site and with the wider area, also making sure that any new development is properly integrated with existing development ensuring accessibility to local services.
- 83. Local plan policy T1 ensures that all proposals will provide for safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians, including safe walking routes to bus stops.

84. Emerging Local Plan Policy TRANS2 seeks to ensure that new development is designed to encourage walking and cycling, not only within the development, but also to nearby facilities, employment and public transport hubs. The policy supports the provision of measures which improve cycling and walking networks. Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS5 seeks to ensure that development should provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
85. In its response to the Regulation 14 consultation, Oxfordshire County Council responding on behalf of the Highways Authority raised concerns that Long Wittenham lacked public transport and that they may object to new housing in the area until strategic highway improvements had been put into place. RLWNDP policy L9 proposes improvements to the footpath and cycle network which will go some way to addressing this concern. Parents will be able to access the new school by foot and cycle if they wish as required under RLWNDP L1W1.

Discussion

86. There are few employment opportunities in the village, absent bus services that are unlikely to be improved and a lack of interest in using bus services for commuting as evidenced by the LWNDP survey report: therefore the focus of the LWNDP is upon the provision of sustainable transport mainly for short local journeys, the purposes of leisure and accessing nearby villages. There are known capacity issues on the highway network on Clifton Hampden bridge and the A415 staggered crossroads. In terms of transport accessibility, Long Wittenham is not considered to be a sustainable location for new development.
87. The LWNDP survey report showed strong support for the creation of a new cycle/footpath between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden and, if available, 57% of respondents felt they would use it at least once a week.
88. Appendix 3 of the LWNDP identifies several footpaths and cycle paths that might be funded by CIL contributions. And the Oxfordshire County Council and Science Vale project to link Culham to Harwell campuses with a cycle route comes via the village.
89. The new community hub scheme and associated housing should make appropriate provision for sustainable transport in the form of access by foot and cycle between the hub and the village and between the village and the countryside.

Parking

90. Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS5 requires new development to comply with the Oxfordshire County Council parking standards. LWNDP policy LW5 seeks to ensure that new residential development provides off-street parking.

Discussion

91. The LWNDP survey indicated that there was not a high degree of concern regarding parking in general in the village though there was concern about on-street parking in the village centre, school drop-off/collection and the impact that these had on congestion in the village. The survey results showed that 73% of the respondents supported the creation of a new car park which the hub proposal seeks to provide.

Ecologically sensitive areas

92. Emerging Local Plan policy ENV3 requires that for non-designated sites, all development will provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. Development proposals which would result in the net loss of biodiversity will only be considered if they can demonstrate that the alternatives which will avoid impact on biodiversity have been fully explored. Planning permission will only be granted if impacts on biodiversity can be avoided, mitigated or compensated.
93. Local plan policy C6 requires that development takes full account of the effect upon wildlife.
94. Core Strategy policy CSB1 seeks to avoid a loss of biodiversity, seeking to increase opportunities for new biodiversity by enhancement and habitat re-creation.
95. LWNDP policy LW6 identifies an ecologically sensitive strip of land to the south of Fieldside Track, which is the preferred habitat of the Roman Snail (*Helix pomatia*).

Discussion

96. Any development for the community hub or enabling housing will be required to consider impact on the local ecology and biodiversity.

Public Open Space

97. Core Strategy policy CSQ4 requires proposals for housing developments to be accompanied by a design brief that, amongst other things, must include consideration of how the proposal will demonstrate that community facilities and amenities will be provided to meet the needs of all the community and to ensure that open space standards are met and that the new spaces relate well to others in the network.

98. Local Plan policy R1 encourages the development of improved outdoor sport and children’s play facilities and R2 sets out that new residential development is required to provide outdoor playing space for the new residents to a minimum standard of 2.4 ha. Per 1000 persons. The supporting text to policy R2 sets out how the standards should be applied.

Discussion

99. The allowed appeal for up to 36 houses adjacent to the proposed community hub allocation will be required to meet the provisions of R1 and R2 in the reserved matters stage.
100. The community hub proposal also seeks to introduce open space in the form of play areas and sports fields.
101. The open space standards and R2 require development briefs to ensure that the development’s play spaces relate well to others.
102. It will therefore be necessary for the reserved matters for Fieldside Track development and the proposals for the Community Hub allocation consider their public open space provision and design together so that benefits for each development and the community as a whole are maximised.

Minerals and Waste

103. Didcot Road site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy. The site is safeguarded against development that would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of the mineral under policy M8. However, development will be permitted on a safeguarded mineral working site where the site has been allocated for development in an adopted LWNDP.

Discussion

104. Didcot Road site will be allocated for development in the reviewed LWNDP which meets the requirements of Core Strategy policy M8.

PART 2: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT FOR SITE ALLOCATIONS (HUB, VILLAGE HALL, SCHOOL)

Types of site allocations

105. **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations** sets out the types of site allocations proposed:
- a. A community hub site
 - b. Safeguarding enabling land
 - c. Village Hall Site (change of use to two dwellings)
 - d. School Site (change of use to 5 dwellings with village green and enhanced war memorial)
 - e. Allocation of land for housing for sites that have been granted planning permission since 2011 under Emerging Local Plan policy H8.
106. The site assessment methodology identified the following development management policies as relevant to the allocations:

Housing mix and affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy policy CSH3, CSH4 • Emerging Local Plan policy H9 • SHMA 2014 • LWNDP LW3
Community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy CSR3, CSI1 • Emerging Local Plan policy INF1 • LWNDP LW1, LW2
Heritage and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy policies CSEN1, CSEN3 • Emerging Local Plan ENV1, ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, DES2, H16 • South Oxfordshire Design Guide • LWNDP LW1, LW4
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy policies CSQ3, CSM2 • Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS2, TRANS5 • Local Plan policy T1 • LWNDP policy LW5
Ecology and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy CSB1 • Emerging Local Plan policy ENV2/ENV3 • LWNDP LW6

Public Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy CSQ4 • Local Plan policies R1, R2
Minerals and Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy policy M8

107. The purpose of Part 2 of this document is to determine whether the allocated sites are **capable** of complying with relevant development plan policies. Each allocation will be tested on principle.

COMMUNITY HUB SITE (DIDCOT ROAD)

108. The preferred community hub site, Didcot Road, on a greenfield site which is currently used for agriculture. It is approximately 2.5 ha. in size plus additional land for playing fields. To the north of the site is the recently allowed Fieldside Track proposal for 36 houses. To the west, on the far side of Didcot Road is the Saxons Heath area described in the Character Assessment. Land to the south and east of the site is arable land. The northeast corner of the site impinges upon the wider setting of the view lines to the AONB as set out in LWNDP W4.

Housing mix and affordable housing

- 109. The site is of sufficient size (approximately 1 ha of land available for housing development) that it will be able to provide the estimated 40-45 houses anticipated in the assessment methodology and the LWNDP. Any planning applications that are forthcoming on the site should include proposals for affordable housing and a housing mix to reflect the housing need identified in the SHMA.
- 110. The community survey provides information on housing need in the village and it would be desirable for proposals to consider this evidence in the light of Core Strategy CSH3 and CSH4.
- 111. It should therefore be possible to comply with Core Strategy policy CSH3, CSH4, Emerging Local Plan policy H9, the SHMA 2014 and LWNDP policy LW3.

Community infrastructure

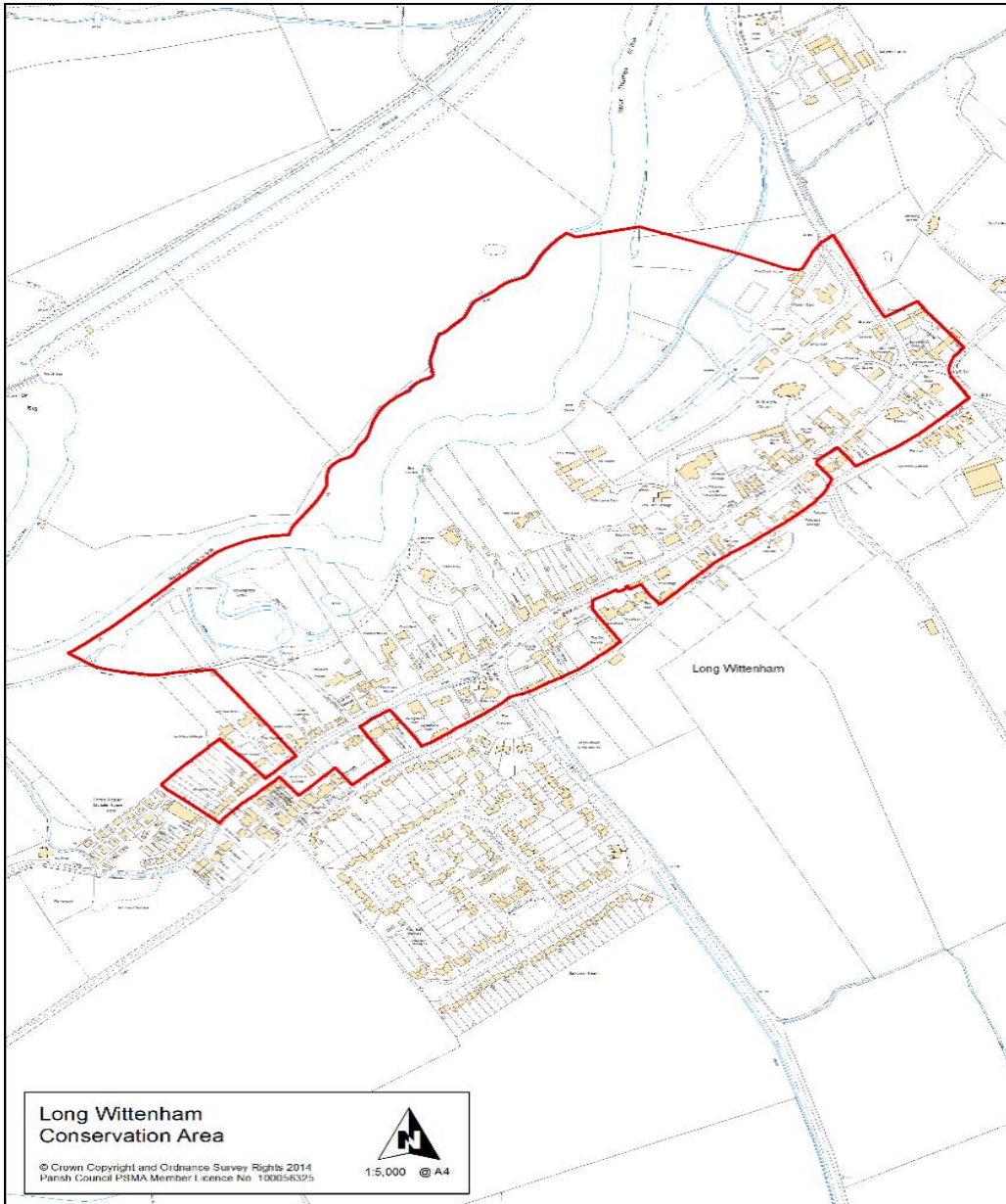
- 112. The community infrastructure requirements for the hub are set out in the LWNDP and the allocation methodology as: new primary school; pre-school; village hall; sports and community spaces; café; playing field; drop off and pick up points for children/parents.
- 113. The site is of sufficient size to accommodate the hub proposal.

114. The proposal for 40-45 houses will generate CIL funding at 25% which should assist the parish council in delivering necessary additional infrastructure, for instance improved access to other parts of the village so that the entire community can benefit from the hub development.
115. When considering the scheme's overall viability and the need to provide affordable housing, a suitable housing mix, and the need to provide high quality community infrastructure, the availability of CIL funding should be taken into account. Consideration should be given to the use of CIL funding from the CIL Regulation 123 list and the parish council's CIL funds.

Heritage and Design

116. The site is separated from the Long Wittenham Conservation Area by the intervening Fieldside Track proposal. Development on this site can therefore be considered to have a minor impact on the wider setting of the conservation area. Figure 1 shows the conservation area.

Figure 1: Long Wittenham Conservation Area



117. The north east portion of the site impinges upon the view of Wittenham Clumps contrary to LWNDP policy LW4 and therefore Core Strategy CSEN1. The Fieldside Track proposal, which has a more significant potential impact upon the view corridor was allowed as an outline proposal. Therefore, the implications for the view corridor will be given further consideration at the reserved matters stage.
118. The overall design of the community hub scheme should be sensitively treated according to LWNDP policy LW1 and LW4 and the Character Assessment.

119. Core Strategy policy CSQ4 requires Design Briefs to demonstrate their integration with the surrounding area. It is therefore necessary for both developments to consider their mutual impact upon the views to the Wittenhan Clumps and the AONB.
120. Careful consideration of the joint impacts of the allowed Fieldside Track proposal and the Didcot Road site in cross-referenced master planning could meet the tests of LW4, CSEN1 and CSQ4.
121. Historic England has raised concerns that there would appear to be the potential for significant effects on archaeological remains on the site though no archaeological assessment has been undertaken. In order to determine whether the significant effects were on the site and whether this matter should be considered in the site selection process, it would be necessary for the NDP to assess all other sites in the RLWNDP evidence and site selection as well. This is far beyond the capacity of the NDP steering group and the Parish Council and is not necessary when Development Plan policies and protections are already in place. The potential for significant effects on archaeology can be dealt with at the planning application and decision-making stage where conditions may be applied if justified.

Transport

122. The site is well located on Didcot Road to allow for safe access to the highway, and is therefore capable of meeting the requirements of Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS5.
123. The LWNDP and the community survey have indicated that there are deficiencies in the footpath network in and around the village. LWNDP policy LW1 requires the hub proposal to create effective foot and cycle path links to the village and seeks to improve the overall foot and cycle path network across the village and links to rural areas and other villages. Footpath 287/5 runs across the site and links to the village high street. This link should be retained and improved.
124. All transport considerations and policies should be capable of being met on this site. It may be necessary to consider cross-subsiding the connections of the hub site to the surrounding village by foot and cycle path with CIL funding from the planning authority and parish funds.
125. Any hub development on this site should describe in detail how it will meet the provisions of TRANS2 and LW1 by acting as a sustainable transport hub for the village, enabling local people to access community infrastructure by modes of transport other than the car. Off-site provision may be necessary to achieve this, and this can be secured through S106 contributions and the use of CIL contributions in unilateral agreements between the developer, the parish council and the planning authority.
126. Overall, the community hub scheme on this site should be capable of meeting the requirement of Core Strategy policies CSQ3, CSM2, Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS2,

TRANS5, Local Plan policy T1 and LWNDP policy LW5. Also it will reduce congestion in the High Street .

Ecology and biodiversity

- 127. The site is currently a green field and the ecological profile is currently being investigated by the Parish Council's development partner. There are no designations on the site.
- 128. A proposal for the community hub on this site is capable of meeting the requirements of Core Strategy CSB1, and Emerging Local Plan policy ENV2/ENV3.

Public Open Space

- 129. The site is of sufficient size that it can accommodate playing fields. Therefore, a proposal for a hub on this site is capable in principle of meeting the requirements of Core Strategy CSQ4 and Local Plan policies R1, R2.

Minerals and Waste

- 130. The site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and is safeguarded against development that would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of the mineral under policy M8. However, development will be permitted on a safeguarded mineral working site where the site has been allocated for development in an adopted LWNDP.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

- 131. The overall conclusion is that Didcot Road site is capable of meeting the requirements of the development plan and that there are no insuperable planning reasons why the allocation and proposal should not proceed.

VILLAGE HALL SITE (CHANGE OF USE TO TWO DWELLINGS)

- 132. The Village Hall site is located on the village High Street. It is currently a single-story brick building and is not listed. It is approximately 315 sq. m. in size. The curtilage of the site is limited but there should be sufficient land available to either convert the existing building into two small dwellings or to demolish it to create 2 semi-detached purpose-built properties with modest gardens to the rear.

Housing mix and affordable housing

- 133. Core Strategy policy CSH3 requires an affordable housing contribution to be made for developments of 3 or more dwellings and therefore does not apply to this site.

Community infrastructure

- 134. The new dwellings will be subject to CIL and the scale of development does not warrant further contributions.

Heritage and Design

135. The site lies within the Long Wittenham Conservation area and therefore any scheme would require careful consideration of the impact on its setting and its overall design. However, the proposal for two dwellings on this site should be capable of meeting the requirements of Core Strategy policies CSEN1, CSEN3, Emerging Local Plan ENV1, ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, DES2, H16 and LWNDP LW4.

Transport

136. The site has direct access to the High Street where the preschool is located and there is existing access for the village hall. Any new proposal will generate less traffic than is currently generated at this public location. There is currently parking to the front. It should therefore be acceptable in terms of Core Strategy policies CSQ3, CSM2, Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS2, TRANS5, Local Plan policy T1 and LWNDP policy LW5.

Ecology and biodiversity

137. The site is currently developed, and it is unlikely that there are any ecological issues of concern, with the possible exception of the presence of bats. Therefore it should therefore be possible to redevelop the site according to the requirements of Core Strategy CSB1 and Emerging Local Plan policy ENV2/ENV3.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

138. The overall conclusion is that village hall redevelopment is capable of meeting the requirements of the development plan and that there are no insuperable planning reasons why the allocation and proposal should not proceed.

SCHOOL SITE (CHANGE OF USE TO 5 DWELLINGS WITH VILLAGE GREEN AND ENHANCED WAR MEMORIAL

Housing mix and affordable housing

139. The site is located on the village High Street and within the Long Wittenham Conservation Area. It is approximately 0.2 ha in size. Immediately on the street frontage sits the War Memorial which is a listed structure. There are a number of listed structures and buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site. To the north of the site is the manor house and old cock pit, to the east is the cemetery, and to the west is a private access road.
140. The allocation anticipates that 5 houses will be built on the site and it will therefore be required to make an affordable housing contribution in accordance with Core Strategy CSH3.

Community infrastructure

141. The LWNDP allocation anticipates that a village green will be created on part of the site which exceeds any proportionate requirements for community infrastructure. The development

will be subject to CIL and will contribute in that regard as well. The allocation is therefore capable of meeting the requirements of Core Strategy CSR3, CSI1, Emerging Local Plan policy INF1 and LWNDP LW2.

Heritage and Design

142. The site lies within the conservation area and has the potential have an effect upon a number of scheduled structures and buildings. With thoughtful and sensitive design, the allocation is capable of meeting the requirements of Core Strategy policies CSEN1, CSEN3, Emerging Local Plan ENV1, ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, DES2, H16 and LWNDP LW4.

Transport

143. The site is currently occupied by a school and the proposal for a change of use to 5 houses will reduce traffic congestion. The site is located on the High Street and is therefore well connected to the highways network. It should therefore be acceptable in terms of Core Strategy policies CSQ3, CSM2, Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS2, TRANS5, Local Plan policy T1 and LWNDP policy LW5.

Ecology and biodiversity

144. The site is currently developed, and it is unlikely that there are any ecological issues of concern, with the possible exception of the presence of bats. Therefore it should be possible to redevelop the site according to the requirements of Core Strategy CSB1 and Emerging Local Plan policy ENV2/ENV3.

Public Open Space

145. There are currently playing fields associated with the school on the site. These will be reconfigured to provide a village green and enhanced setting for the war memorial. The allocation is therefore capable of meeting the requirements of Core Strategy CSQ4 and Local Plan policies R1, R2.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

146. The overall conclusion is that school site redevelopment is capable of meeting the requirements of the development plan and that there are no insuperable planning reasons why the allocation and proposal should not proceed.