



# Ewelme

## Neighbourhood Plan



Referendum Plan

February 2021

*Published by Ewelme Parish Council for Pre-Submission Consultation under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42.*

## Executive Summary

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### Background

1. The Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the future of the village and its surrounding countryside, providing a strategy and land-use planning framework to guide development within the Parish for the period 2019-2035.
2. The Government and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) encourage local communities to be involved more directly in planning decisions through preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.
3. This Plan builds on and is consistent with policies laid down in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the adopted development plan (South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035).
4. Ewelme is classified by SODC as a Smaller Village. The SODC Local Plan 2035 envisages a substantial amount of extra housing within the District but does not expect smaller villages to contribute to this. It recognises that some will nevertheless wish to do so to maintain the viability of local services or for other reasons.
5. Because the number of extra houses expected to be built in Ewelme is very small, this Neighbourhood Plan does not identify sites for development but rather sets out policies against which proposals for new development, alterations and extensions can be assessed in the future.
6. The Plan has been prepared to reflect the views of village residents collected through house-to-house surveys, meetings in the Village Hall and informally at various events.

### Evidence Gathering

The Plan is based on:

1. The views of residents collected as described above. A scoping survey was first conducted to gain a high-level view of residents' concerns. From this, a vision for the future of the village was developed, which was approved by 98% of respondents in an online poll. Following this, a more detailed questionnaire was sent to all houses in the Parish to gather information on residents' views on more specific topics.
2. Data from the 2001 and 2011 census and from the Office for National Statistics; the Village Plan of 2008; also, information from a range of other bodies, such as OCC Highways, Thames Water, the Chiltern Society etc.

In addition, we took into account many other factors, including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), in which most of the village lies; the Conservation Area; flood risk; areas of high-grade agricultural land; the Watercress Beds and Local Nature Reserve; listed buildings; important views, both into and out of the village; car parking; transport issues; the Recreation Ground and Common; footpaths, and green spaces.

*This document is dedicated to the memory of Christopher Jenkins*

## The Vision and Objectives

The overall vision, approved by village residents, on which detailed policies are based is:

*To protect the rural environment and retain the quietness and tranquillity of Ewelme as a 'small' village for this and future generations of village residents while retaining and developing those facilities that make the village an attractive place to live.*

The original scoping survey elicited a number of concerns from residents, prominent in which were traffic hazards and nuisance, lack of affordable housing and a desire to avoid street lighting in addition to those embodied in the Vision. These were all incorporated into a set of objectives from which detailed policies have been developed.

## Policies

The policies mainly set criteria to guide planning decisions. In summary they:

- direct new housing to within the historic centre and existing Built-up areas of the Parish;
- require that any new development or alterations are in keeping with their surroundings, are of high-quality design, energy efficient, contain adequate parking and use renewable energy resources;
- support smaller and affordable housing development, suitable for young families and older people wishing to downsize;
- support proposals that preserve or enhance biodiversity, particularly of the Brook and Nature Reserve, and avoid pollution of the Brook;
- protect views of the village, particularly of the Church, School and Alms-House complex, and of the surrounding landscape from the village;
- support proposals which conserve and enhance Ewelme's heritage assets;
- support developments which extend the accessibility and use of sporting and leisure facilities;
- support proposals that support new and existing employment in the village, provided that they do not have a detrimental impact on traffic, the character of the village or nearby residents;

Although not eligible to be part of the formal policies, there is also a Pledge to support initiatives which limit vehicle numbers and speeds entering or within the village.

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## 1. Foreword

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This Neighbourhood Plan covers the Parish of Ewelme. Neighbourhood Planning allows a community to have a strong voice in how development i.e., the use of land, should be shaped in their town or village in the future.

The content of this Neighbourhood Plan is guided and informed by a number of higher-level planning policies and studies. Unless otherwise referenced, the statistics used in this section come from the 2011 census provided by the Office of National Statistics.

The objectives were arrived at by looking at the views expressed by residents in both village appraisals (1997 and 2008) and the consultations and surveys conducted as part of the evidence gathering for this Plan.

The Parish Council wishes to thank members of the Steering Group who produced the Plan, the many outside organisations who have given invaluable assistance and, most particularly, to all the villagers who have contributed to the production of the Plan.

### 1.1 Planning Policy Context

The Plan area lies within South Oxfordshire District in the County of Oxfordshire.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government in 2019 is an important guide in the preparation of Local and Neighbourhood Plans. The Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate that it is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are particularly relevant to the Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan:

Supporting a prosperous rural community (paragraph 83)

Good Design (paragraphs 124-132)

Protecting healthy communities (paragraphs 91-92)

Protecting Open spaces (paragraphs 96-100)

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 170)

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 185)

Neighbourhood Planning (paragraphs 29-30)

### 1.2 Terminology

The following terminology is used throughout this document:

**National Policy** - Refers to policy set at Government level and will therefore normally refer to policy specified in the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019).

**Development Plan** – Refers to the Development Plan for the Parish comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035

source: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

## 2. Introduction

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### 2.1 What are Neighbourhood Plans?

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Ewelme Parish Council under powers granted by the Localism Act 2011 to give the community the ability to shape the development of its local area to suit its needs and covers the period up to 2035 to align with the expected validity of the emerging South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan.

Ewelme Parish Council is a “qualifying body” and authorised to lead in the preparation of the Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan (ENP). To produce the Plan, the Parish Council appointed the ENP Steering Committee. On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017 South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) gave approval for the Neighbourhood Plan Area being defined as the whole Parish of Ewelme, (which includes part of RAF Benson) per the designated map in Map 1.

### 2.2 What Will the Plan be Used For?

This document sets a shared vision for Ewelme and policies for the Village Character, Housing, Community Assets, Services, Facilities, the Economy and its Infrastructure. The Plan will be used to guide the future development of the village and provide a basis for decisions on:

- \* How can new housing in Ewelme be contained in the Parish?
- \* What are the most important characteristics of the Parish that new housing should respect?
- \* What community facilities would be on the list of those to be protected from a change of use?

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 their design, access, etc.

The 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.

Ewelme’s Neighbourhood Plan, once approved by a community referendum and accepted by SODC, will have statutory force and set a comprehensive agenda for the village’s future development over the period up to 2035.

### 2.3 Next Steps

This is the Referendum Version of the Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan. The Pre-Submission document was published to allow all Ewelme residents and others with local interests to comment on its scope, policies, supporting evidence and general content. Consultation was undertaken within a six-week response period.

Feedback from the Pre-Submission Consultation was assessed, and appropriate amendments incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan. Ewelme Parish Council submitted the final document to SODC as the Submitted version of the Neighbourhood Plan. This document is accompanied by supporting documentation including a **Basic Condition Statement**, **Protection of Views** and the **Consultation Statement**.

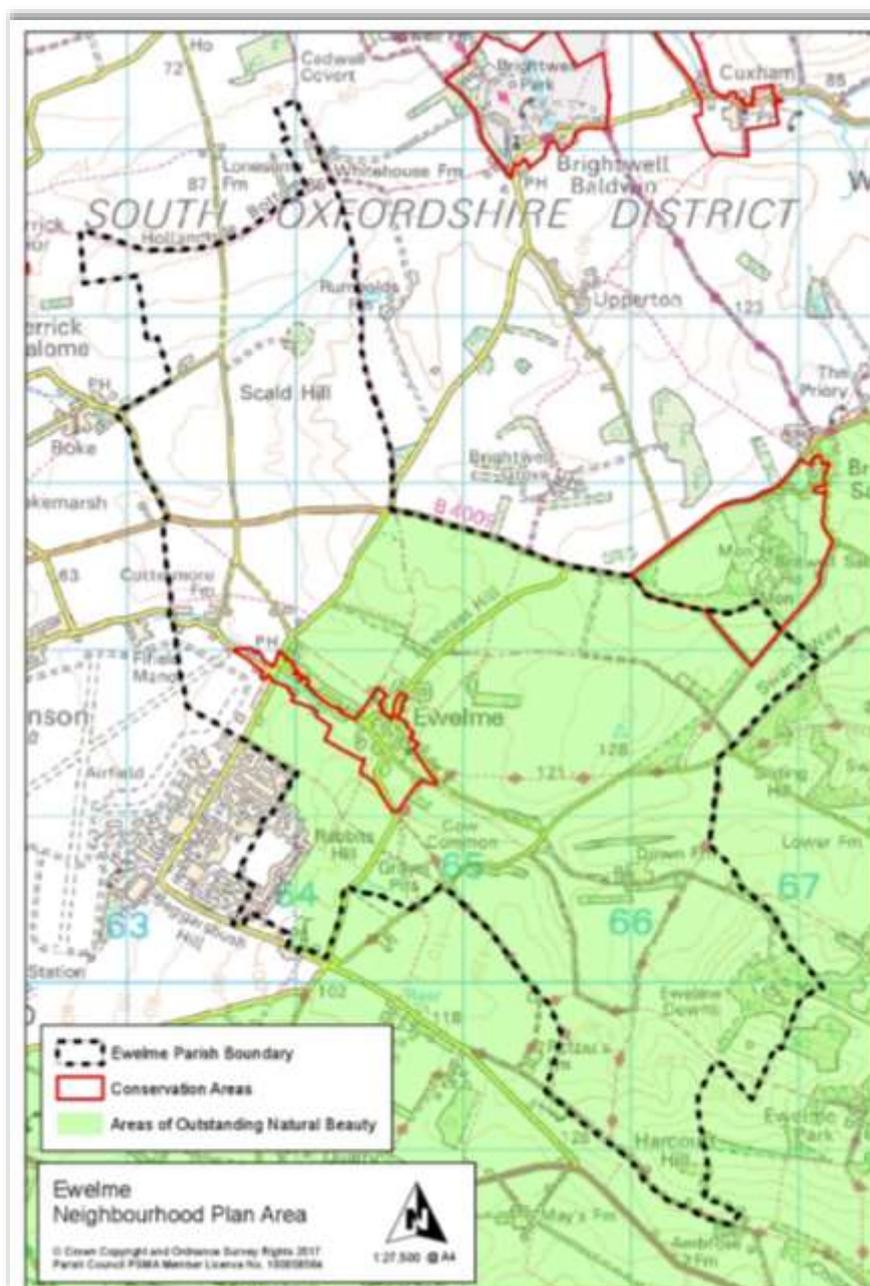
Arrangements for the remaining stages in the Neighbourhood Planning development process are largely in the hands of the District Council. This includes the exposure of the Plan to a local referendum.

### 3. Ewelme – Our Village

#### 3.1 The Neighbourhood Area

Sections 1 and 2 introduced the Neighbourhood Area as the Parish of Ewelme, and the wishes of those who live and work in the Neighbourhood Area provide the basis for the Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan. This Section of the Plan:

- provides an overview of the Neighbourhood Area; its location, surroundings, size, housing, heritage and a summary of what residents think about life therein;
- Identifies the challenges facing the Neighbourhood Area; and
- summarises policies to address, where possible, these challenges.



The area covered by the Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan is defined by the Civil Parish boundary. The Parish is bounded by Ewelme Downs to the east, and to the south-west, Benson Airfield, the north-eastern corner of which includes significant housing within the Parish boundary. To the north, Whitehouse Farm is set within rolling farmland.

The Parish and thus the Neighbourhood Area boundary is shown by the black dotted line on the map shown left.

*Map 1. Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan Area defined by Ewelme Parish Boundary*

## 3.2 RAF Benson

Built just before the start of WWII, many of the personnel were billeted in Benson and Ewelme and other surrounding villages or were housed in huts on the main base. The extensive housing area was developed in the 1950s and 60s. While most of the RAF airfield and its associated accommodation for personnel and their families lies within Benson Parish, a significant area of housing lies within Ewelme Parish. It is difficult to gather information on this area and its inhabitants, and most of the families living there do not look on Ewelme as their long-term home. The RAF accommodation lies well away from Ewelme village within a security fence. The base has its own school, shop and social facilities. The RAF agreed to distribute our Village Questionnaire to the 162 houses within Ewelme Parish; only one was returned completed.

This situation complicates the assessment of Ewelme Parish. The best statistics for population and its demographics, housing stock and other parameters of importance for planning for the future come from the most recent census conducted in 2011. Unfortunately, it is not possible to separate the data for RAF housing from the rest of the village.

For the purposes of this Neighbourhood Plan, and effective housing analysis, every effort has been made to include those who live on the RAF camp but within the Parish of Ewelme. In reality, it has been difficult to get any meaningful level of engagement as these people feel naturally aligned to the RAF community. It was therefore considered important to exclude the residents on the RAF camp from the overall Ewelme figures as Ewelme has no jurisdiction over housing and other development on the camp. It is recognised that the average age of the population on the camp tends to be younger.

In order to do this, we have compared the number of adults recorded on the Electoral Register of 2016 to the number of residents in the Parish in the Census of 2011. This has enabled us to make an assumption about the number of children in the Parish. By applying these assumptions to the live Parish data, we can deduce that there are 421 dwellings in Ewelme and 162 on camp. Evidentially this concludes that there are some 225 dwellings outside of the RAF perimeter, within the Ewelme Parish. A total of 34 are second homes, holiday homes or with no usual residents. We have not been able to make any assumptions about relative age profiles or numbers of individuals.

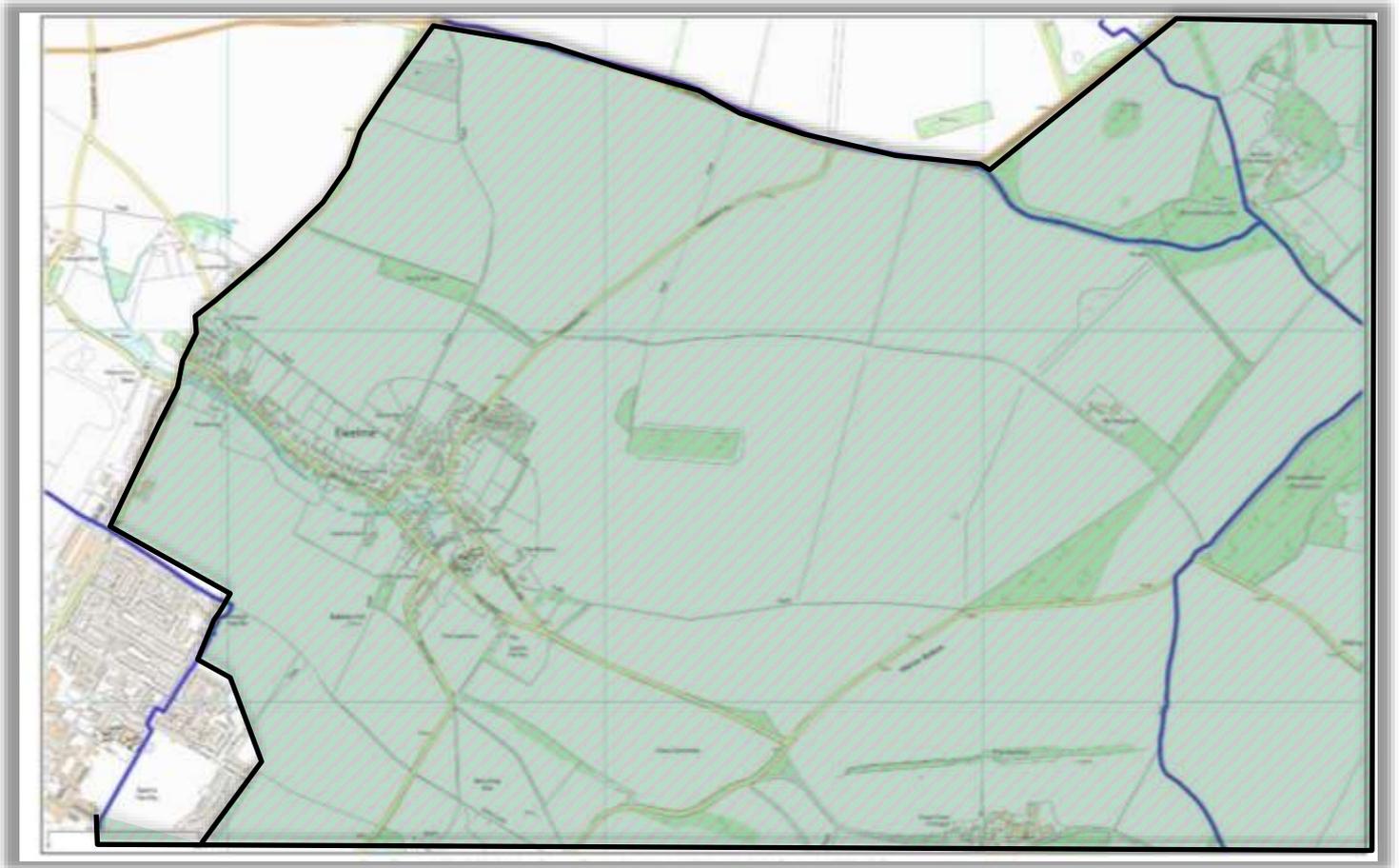
## 3.3 Location

Ewelme is a small village located within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as shown in Map 2 and much of the village forms the Ewelme Conservation Area as shown in Map 3. It is located in the County of Oxfordshire and is approximately three miles from Wallingford and two miles from Benson. The village is at the bottom of a valley with residential development rising up to the north including modern housing. There are many historic buildings distributed across the village and interspersed by green spaces. The surrounding countryside with its fields, rolling landscape and public footpaths forms the backdrop to these buildings and the overall village. All of these qualities make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the AONB and the Conservation Area and greatly enhance its importance. Ewelme has been defined as a 'small' village as designated within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Appendix 7 (Settlement Hierarchy)

The South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (SOLA) for Character Area 8 describes Ewelme as a settlement within the Chilterns Escarpment Central Biodiversity Conservation Target Area (CTA) in the south-western end of the plan area. This is an area identified for potential investment in biodiversity enhancement that could complement the existing Ewelme Watercress Beds and Local Nature Reserve and proposed extension LWS. Details of CTAs can be found at <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservationtarget-areas/> and from the district council.

The "Chilterns Escarpment" is described by the SOLA as forming:

"the most visually significant and distinctive landform unit within the whole District. It comprises the steep face and top of the Chilterns escarpment, which forms a dramatic backdrop to the low-lying landscape of the vale to the northwest".



Map 2. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

### 3.4 Landscape

The Parish occupies an area of about 11.5 km<sup>2</sup> (2842 acres) on the scarp slope of the Chiltern Hills. It lies predominantly on chalk, overlain in places with sand, gravel and clay. To the west, the land flattens out along terraces of river gravels towards Benson and the Thames and followed by the course of the Ewelme Brook.

The highest point in the Parish is at about 200m above sea level, on the scarp slope of the Chilterns; the lowest point is on the boundary with Roke Parish at about 58m. The Parish, especially the south-eastern two thirds, comprises delightful rolling countryside with hardly a building in sight. To the north and east, the land rises steeply into the Chiltern Hills, whilst to the south, a ridge separates it from the Thames Valley.

The Parish lies in a predominantly rural agricultural setting which is important to the overwhelming majority of residents; 250 out of 278 respondents to the Village Questionnaire rated rural location/lifestyle as “important” or “very important”. Most land in the Parish outside the village and RAF housing is farmed, mainly for arable crops, although there are a significant number of sheep, cattle, and especially pigs. Woodland is more prevalent on the higher ground in the south-east of the Parish. The few dwellings that do exist in this part of the Parish are accessed by smaller or unadopted lanes.

The village itself is near the centre of the Parish. The Parish boundary adjoins surrounding parishes in open countryside and the village has a significant gap between it and other local developments.

A central topographical feature of the Parish and village is the Ewelme Brook, which is indeed the reason for the existence and location of the village. This rises from springs in the village and being a chalk stream has a remarkably stable and reliable flow regime. There was in earlier times at least one, possibly two, watermills within the village. A series of commercial watercress beds developed along the brook in the 1880s and continued in production for about 100 years. Since their abandonment the site has been managed as a Local Nature Reserve, a major feature and amenity within the village - Map 4.

The village itself nestles within the valley of the Ewelme Brook in a valley with the Church, School and Alms-Houses being visible landmarks from the west and south. The Parish lies between the Oxford Green Belt to the north-west and the Chiltern Hills to the south and east. Apart from houses on Green Lane, Cottesmore Lane, Benson Road and a handful of others, the whole of the village is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as is the south-eastern two-thirds of the Parish.

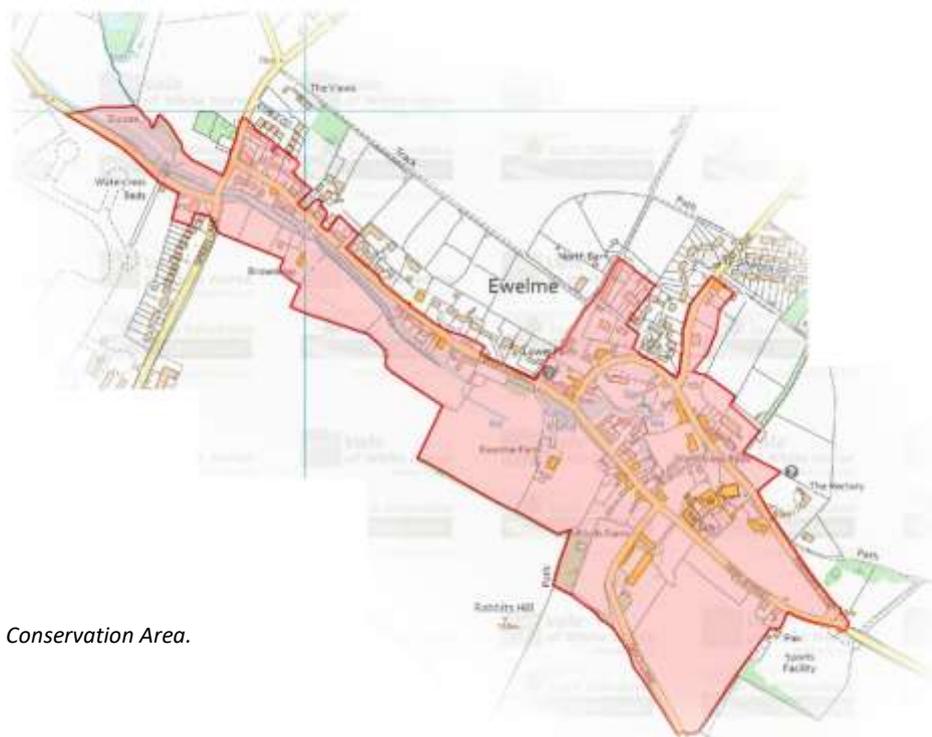
The settlement enjoys many public amenity spaces within the village as well as the extensive network of bridleways and paths which radiate from the village into the surrounding open countryside.



Figure 1. Views of Cow Common, the School and the Church

### 3.5 Heritage

There are 46 listed buildings or structures in Ewelme (see Section 7.1) representing one for every 23 head of population in the Parish; this compares to about one per 150 head of population for England as a whole. Most of the protected structures lie within the Ewelme Conservation Area. Figure 1 shows the complex of Church, Alms-houses and School building, all Grade I listed.



Map 3. Ewelme Conservation Area.

Ewelme Manor was once a royal palace, a very large and impressive building surrounded by a moat. The existing Manor House was originally an outer part of the palace and is the only part of it still remaining.

The village has a rich history, with connections to the Chaucer family, Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, the Civil War and Jerome K Jerome. Its most significant historic buildings are the medieval complex of Church, Alms-houses and School built by Alice de la Pole and her husband the Duke of Suffolk in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century and maintained today by her legacy Trust, the Ewelme Alms-house Charity and Exhibition Endowment usually called the Ewelme Trust. The legacy of their charitable Trust has contributed significantly to the character of Ewelme and is still an integral part of Ewelme today.



*Figure 2. Alms-Houses Courtyard*



*Figure 3. Ewelme C of E Primary School*

### 3.6 The Ewelme Trust

The Ewelme Trust was set up in 1437 by the Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole, with royal license from Henry VI, as a Chantry Foundation and an Alms-House for thirteen poor men at Ewelme. The income for running the Foundation and the Alms-House was to come, as it still does today, from the endowment of estates owned by the de la Poles at Marsh Gibbon near Bicester, Ramridge near Andover, Conock in Wiltshire and Ewelme. The thirteen poor men were also expected to come from these estates. In exchange for their free board and lodging in the Alms-House, the duties of the almsmen were to attend a number of daily services in the St John's Chapel of the adjacent Ewelme Church in order to pray for the King, the Duke and Duchess and their successors, and all Christian souls.

One Chaplain, known as The Master, was in overall charge of the Alms-House and officiated at all the services in the Chapel. A second chaplain was the Grammar Master, who taught in the school. The school was the third part of the Endowment to be built and is now the oldest primary school building in England still in daily use. Boys were brought to Ewelme from the estates. They were fed, lodged, and taught Latin, handwriting, logic, philosophy and maths, in the hope that they would go on to Oxford University to study. This was extraordinary in the 15th century when only the sons of the wealthy were able to go to Oxford.

The St John's Chapel, built on the south side of the existing church during the same period as the Alms-Houses, contains the Duchess's remarkable tomb. This is a very rare example of a cadaver tomb, and the only one in existence of a woman. Being part of the Endowment, the Chapel is maintained by the Ewelme Trust and is used regularly by the residents of the Alms-Houses and the children who attend Ewelme School.



*Figure 4. Effigy of Alice de la Pole*

Today the Trust still owns and maintains over 70 commercially and residentially let properties and farms, the income from which funds the charitable objectives. The Charity is registered at the Charity Commission (Charity No 200581) and is governed by a Board of 10 Trustees.



*Figure 5. Entrance to the Alms-Houses*

It comprises the Ewelme Alms-House Charity, the Ewelme Elementary Educational Foundation and the Ewelme Exhibition Endowment, The Alms-House Charity manages the Alms-Houses and provides accommodation for elderly persons in financial need. Alms-Houses are located in Ewelme and Marsh Gibbon in Buckinghamshire. The Ewelme Alms-House was named 'God's House in Ewelme' and that remains to this day as the formal name of the charity. Preference is given to applicants from, or with connections to, those localities.

The Exhibition Endowment is run by a separate body of Governors, appointed by the charity, who administer the provision of financial support for the education of those with particular needs or talents.

In summary, the extraordinary endowment in the heart of the village has set the scene and essence of the place for several centuries.

### 3.7 Connections

Ewelme enjoys ready access to the national road network, with the B4009 running through the Parish connecting Watlington to Benson but bypassing the village. Junction 6 of the M40 motorway is approximately six miles north-east of the village. Oxford and Reading can be reached by car in around 25 minutes. Public transport provision comprises two bus services which link Ewelme to Benson, Watlington, Wallingford and Cholsey. They offer limited services during the daytime on a Monday to Saturday only and are focused on the

west side linking residents on the RAF camp to the Benson community. They provide little opportunity for those living to the east, over a mile away.

### 3.8 Living in the Neighbourhood Area

The Census of 2011 recorded the Parish's population as 1048<sup>1</sup>, inclusive of RAF Benson personnel - a population decrease of 55 since 2001. The Electoral Register of 2016 identified a total electorate of 748 in the Parish.

We can glean some meaningful information from the census data. The population in Ewelme is ageing; the number aged 65 or more increased by 45% between 2001 and 2011, the number of children under 18 has reduced by 14%, while overall the Parish population has reduced by 5% in the same period. It is likely that the overwhelming majority, if not all, of residents over 65 live outside the RAF base. If the ageing trend continues it will challenge the vitality of the community and place extra, and different, demands on local health, transport and housing.

Local unemployment is low, but the proportion of self-employed residents amongst the economically active is much higher than average District and National levels. There are limited local businesses, but within the Parish are Hazel and Jefferies, and Grundons as well as the RAF base and a number of tourism accommodations and agricultural enterprises. A proportion of residents also operate a range of generally home-based domestic and professional service businesses. However, most of those in employment commute out of the village to work.

Above average car ownership (92.2% of respondents owned a car c.f. 55% of 18 + year olds nationwide (Statista Feb 2017)) is perhaps a reflection of (i) the paucity of public transport services and local employment opportunities (ii) ready access to a well-developed road network connecting with more active centres of business and employment and (iii) above average household income.

There is no medical or dental practice in Ewelme. Practices at Benson, Watlington and Wallingford are highly regarded by their patients; from 36 comments received, 28 stated that residents would like to see a Pop-up Surgery in the village. Consideration may be given to part-time use of an existing amenity such as the pavilion, Village Hall or Watercress Centre.

The 2008 Ewelme Village Plan observed that people liked living in Ewelme. Residents are relatively prosperous; enjoy good health, good housing, and an exceptional environment. Educational standards are high; unemployment and crime are low, and deprivation is exceptionally low.

Residents of the main area of the village live within easy walking distance of the pre-school, the primary school, the local pub, Church, village shop and Village Hall. A strong sense of community is supported by many clubs and societies, the social facilities offered by the Village Hall, the Watercress Centre, the church, the village pub, the village shop, the Ewelme News (the village magazine) and major community events such as the annual Horticultural Show and the Church Fete.

Despite these advantages no community is perfect and Ewelme faces challenges. The paucity of other village facilities and public transport is reflected in Ewelme lying near the foot of the District Council's scoring of these attributes for smaller villages in its Settlement Assessment published in June 2016.

Ewelme receives a number of visitors from surrounding areas who are attracted by its historical connections, cress beds, general attractiveness and village events. These visitors are welcomed as the village is happy to share its good fortune in these respects. Visitors also help support the village shop and public house. However, facilities for tourists are minimal, with restricted parking and no public toilets. In the absence of any evidence of a desire from any parties to increase significantly the level of tourism in the village, this plan does not include any policies to encourage expansion of visitor numbers or facilities.

These challenges were evident in the consultations undertaken during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and are explored in succeeding sections.

<sup>1</sup> 2011 census

## 4. Vision, Objective and Policies

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### 4.1 Preparation

The preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address a wide range of overlapping issues which have been described in Sections 1-3. A Vision and suite of Objectives have been developed to provide a framework to address the issues and link the Plan's policies and supporting evidence to their intended outcomes.

### 4.2. Sustainable Development

The principle of Sustainable Development is central to the economic, environmental and social success of the country as a whole and because of this is a core principle that underpins all planning documents. This Plan supports and encourages small scale development within the Built-up area (Policy EP3). All development must however contribute to wider sustainability objectives and the definition of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

In determining the acceptability of planning applications, the following points will be used to guide the delivery of sustainable development.

Development proposals should show how they:

- Contribute to the vitality and viability of Ewelme Parish;
- Complement the local vernacular and character of the village and its rural setting by use of an appropriate design;
- Maintain, restore or enhance the local landscape character, paying special attention to long-distance views and views into and out of the village of Ewelme or within the built area;
- Do not increase the risk of flooding, either from increased runoff or from building within flood risk areas, and take account of the predicted impact of climate change during the lifetime of the development;
- Preserve or enhance the local biodiversity network, paying special attention to the Brook and the nature reserve and the surrounding landscape;
- Make development easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport;
- Provide appropriate communications infrastructure including high speed broadband that connects to all new developments; and
- Minimize energy use and its overall carbon impact during construction and in occupation and use.

### 4.3 Vision

The Vision of Ewelme's Neighbourhood Plan is:

*To protect the rural environment and retain the quietness and tranquillity of Ewelme as a 'small' village for this and future generations of village residents, while retaining and developing those facilities that make the village an attractive place to live.*

#### 4.4. Objectives

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This Plan supports the development of Ewelme Parish to meet the housing needs of residents and to optimise current technology in its development and infrastructure. In addition to providing a general development plan for the Parish, this vision translates into a framework of key objectives for the Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan to deliver:

<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b>
SD1. To support sustainable development and design that meets the needs of residents now and in the future.
<b>VILLAGE CHARACTER</b>
VC1. To enhance our strong sense of place, community and cherished local environment.
VC2. To ensure that new housing development responds to the character within the village, protects the AONB and offers a high quality of design whilst minimising detrimental impact on views.
VC3. To protect the aesthetic beauty of the village and the historic character of the AONB.
<b>HOUSING</b>
H1. To provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home and provide a mix of housing, especially smaller homes and those suitable for the elderly to meet local needs better.
H2. To ensure that new development does not cause new or exacerbate existing traffic, parking and road safety issues around the village and seeks to improve them.
<b>HISTORIC ASSETS</b>
CA1. To ensure that heritage assets, community assets and assets of community value and open spaces are protected.
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>
EV1. To conserve the local landscape and environment and to minimise the impact of development on its surroundings, landscape and ecosystem.
EV2. To seek opportunities for landscape, recreational and ecological gain whilst minimising the environmental impact of new development.
<b>ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
EC1. To improve the infrastructure supporting local businesses and residents.

## 5. The Natural Environment

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The Development Plan places a high priority on protecting the local environment (Objective EV1) to conserve the local landscape and environment and to minimise the impact of development on the countryside, landscape and ecosystems.

### 5.1 The Terrestrial Environment

Most of the Parish is under intensive agriculture and, as such, little of the natural land cover remains. However, Cow Common has remained unenclosed and is said to be “*a rare survival in the county of a medieval and postmedieval system of farming*”<sup>1</sup>. The agricultural regime does favour some species such as birds which forage in the harvested and ploughed fields in autumn and winter. There are two remnants of natural vegetation that remain, and by their very limited extent are disproportionately important for wildlife. These are woodland, and unimproved (i.e. not ploughed and fertilised) chalk grassland.

There is relatively little woodland in the Parish, mostly towards the SE end. There are a number of copses of a few acres, and many overgrown hedgerows. These are important bird- nesting habitat and also support many species of mammals and insects among other wildlife. Abundant crab-apple trees in some of the hedgerows provide food for birds such as fieldfares and redwings.

Unimproved grassland was a widespread habitat within the Chilterns but is now mainly limited to slopes too steep to plough. This habitat supports a remarkable range of plant species and invertebrates such as butterflies. There are a few remnants on the steeper slopes at the far SE end of the Parish. Meadows within the Watercress Beds Nature Reserve (see below) are being managed to recover their unimproved status, and there is also possible scope for Cow Common to be managed in the same way.

<sup>1</sup>Sowe. Oxfordshire County Council website – Historic Landscape Walk 3: Ewelme

### 5.2 Environmental Assets

Environmental assets of great value requiring special protection not provided by the Local Plan 2035 or other means are:

- The Ewelme Brook
- The Ewelme Watercress Beds and the associated nature reserve

Environmental issues to be addressed, mitigated or contained are:

- Surface water flooding
- Groundwater flooding
- Pollution of surface and ground water from road runoff, inadequate sewers and the resulting sewer overflows, oil spills and garden chemicals.

### 5.2.1 Ewelme Brook, Watercress Beds and Local Nature Reserve

The most important wildlife habitat in the Parish is the Ewelme Brook and the nature reserve which includes a half-mile length of the stream and 6.5 acres of old cress beds and surrounding meadows.

The brook is a sparklingly clear chalk stream and supports a strong community of aquatic plants and invertebrates including water crowfoot (*Aquatic Ranunculus*), freshwater shrimps and insects. Fish species breeding naturally are brown trout, bullhead and ten-spine stickleback. The first two species are of significant conservation interest. Chalk streams are a UK Biodiversity Plan (BAP) priority habitat; the Ewelme Brook is one of only five chalk streams in Oxfordshire.

After commercial production of cress ceased, the site was acquired by the Chiltern Society and designated a Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It is home to, and is visited by, a remarkable range of flora and fauna. Among the species recorded there are almost 200 flowering plants, 25 butterflies and more than 300 moths. Among 96 bird species kingfishers and grey wagtails are resident, little egrets and water rail are regular winter visitors, and such rarities as bee-eater and great white egret have been seen in recent years. Among 21 species of mammals recorded on site are such scarcities as water shrew, polecat, water vole and harvest mouse.

This remarkable ecosystem, being so closely bound into the village, is vulnerable to disturbance of various kinds and any deterioration in the water quality of the Ewelme Brook. It warrants special consideration in planning any nearby developments and any action that is likely to increase traffic in the vicinity.

The watercress beds has been registered as an Asset of Community Value. Conservation is a high priority and protection of the countryside and the environment is very important to the residents of Ewelme as is demonstrated by their response to Questions 19 and 21 in the Village Questionnaire.



Map 4. Ewelme Local Nature Reserve

Policy EP1 sets out the Plan's approach to these important matters. In the first part of the policy, biodiversity net gain should be assessed using a recognised assessment method such as the DEFRA biodiversity offsetting metric.

### **Policy EP1: Natural environment, wildlife and biodiversity**

Proposed development of land which include or which are adjacent to either the Brook or to the Nature Reserve should protect and enhance the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity. Where appropriate, on site biodiversity enhancements such as new roosting features for bats or nesting features for birds should be incorporated into the fabric of the development. Where ecologically relevant, fences, walls or hedges should be designed to incorporate features that allow dispersal of wildlife through areas of green space and gardens.

Subject to the provisions of other policies in this Plan, development proposals will be supported where they:

- \* protect or enhance the biodiversity of the Brook and the Nature Reserve concerned;
- \* are located at least 10 metres away from the banks of the river concerned (Map 5). Where a 10 m wide buffer zone is not possible due to existing development being within 10 metres of the brook then a smaller buffer zone may be allowed, but should be accompanied by detailed plans to show how the land will be used to promote biodiversity;
- \* preserve the tranquillity and the natural environment of the affected part of the Plan area: and
- \* should make a positive contribution to the ecology of the Brook and the Nature Reserve

### **Supporting Objective: VC3, CA1, EV1, EV2**

#### **Evidence**

There is strong support in the Village Questionnaire to “Minimise environmental impact”. Over 97% indicated their support (Question 22)

Over 75% of respondents stressed the need to protect ecological habitats (Question 23)

The Ewelme Brook, a chalk stream fed by groundwater springs, has a very stable and reliable flow which creates an unique environment for the growth of watercress and abundant biodiversity. Any development in close proximity to the brook could adversely affect this flow and hence be detrimental to our environmental asset. Achieving sustainable development is the golden thread running through the National Planning Policy Framework. Policy EP1 has particular regard to the environmental dimension to sustainable development set out in para 8 of the NPPF: (‘achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives. [This includes] an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity’).

Other relevant paras of the NPPF to which policy EP1 has regard are: 170 (planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by): a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland... d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures); 174 (‘to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should... promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity); and 175 (‘ When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused... c) development

resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity’).



Map 5. 10m exclusion zone

### 5.3 Flood Risk Areas

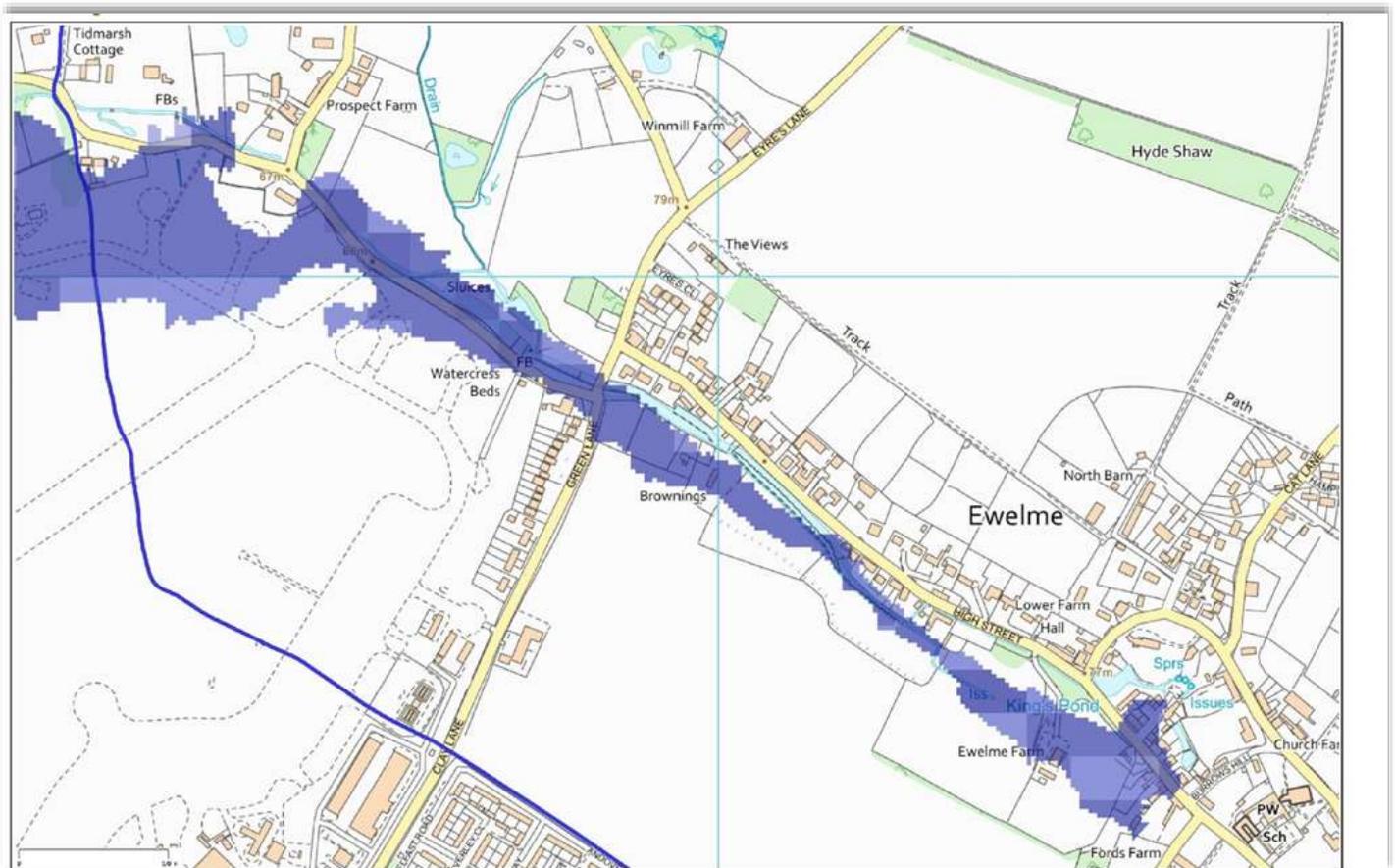
The Neighbourhood Area contains one Zone 3 Flood Risk Area (probability of flooding in any year greater than 1 in 100) according to the Environment Agency, see Map 5. National and local policy states that inappropriate development in such risk areas should be avoided except where necessary.

### 5.4 High Ground Water Levels

In recent years there have been several prolonged periods of high rainfall. On those occasions, houses at the top end of The Street were flooded by rising groundwater, manhole covers pushed off and The Street flooded from Day's Lane to King's Pool. In the most recent event, in 2014, water flowed down The Street as far as the Watercress Beds Visitor Centre.

## 5.5 Flooding from Sewers

The main drains in Ewelme were laid many years ago and are only 150 mm (6") in diameter. Since then the village has expanded and water use risen. The drain is a combined drain, meaning it receives both sewage effluent and surface water runoff. Because of its age and condition, it also receives infiltration from groundwater. The consequence of this situation is that in times of high rainfall and high groundwater levels the present drains become overloaded and effluent escapes. Today's design standards would require a minimum sewer diameter of 300 mm.



Map 6. Flood Risk Areas

### Key

#### **Low Probability**

Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding. (Land shown in light blue )

#### **Medium Probability**

Land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding; or land having between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding. (Land shown in blue)

#### **High Probability**

Land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding; or Land having a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of sea flooding. (Land shown in dark blue)

## 5.6 Protection of Views

Certain views into the village from outside, from the village to the surrounding countryside and to historic structures inside the village are very important to the community. Conservation of such views is an important element of preserving the character of the village and the surrounding landscape. Development which would obstruct such a view, or which would lead to a detrimental impact on the view should not be permitted.

### 5.6.1 Key Views

The Protection of Views document discusses the importance of Key Views into and out of the village. Open views across the landscape are characteristic of the area surrounding the village. Views of key landmarks within the Parish, principally the Church, School and Alms-houses from the top of Day's Lane is worthy of special note.

### 5.6.2 Significance of Views

The policy seeks to conserve the special character of the village and the open countryside around the village. Views across open country either from or towards the village are an important part of the character of the village. If that character is to be conserved, then those views also should be preserved. The number of views given specific protection under this policy is small, but those views are of particular significance to the community. This topic is covered in detail in the **Protection of Views** document.

#### **Policy EP2: Protection of Views**

Development should preserve or enhance the local character of the landscape and not have a unacceptable impact on important views.

Certain views in the Parish as specified in the Protection of Views document and summarised in Map 7 are of special significance to the local community. Development proposals should be carefully designed and located to take account of the following key views:

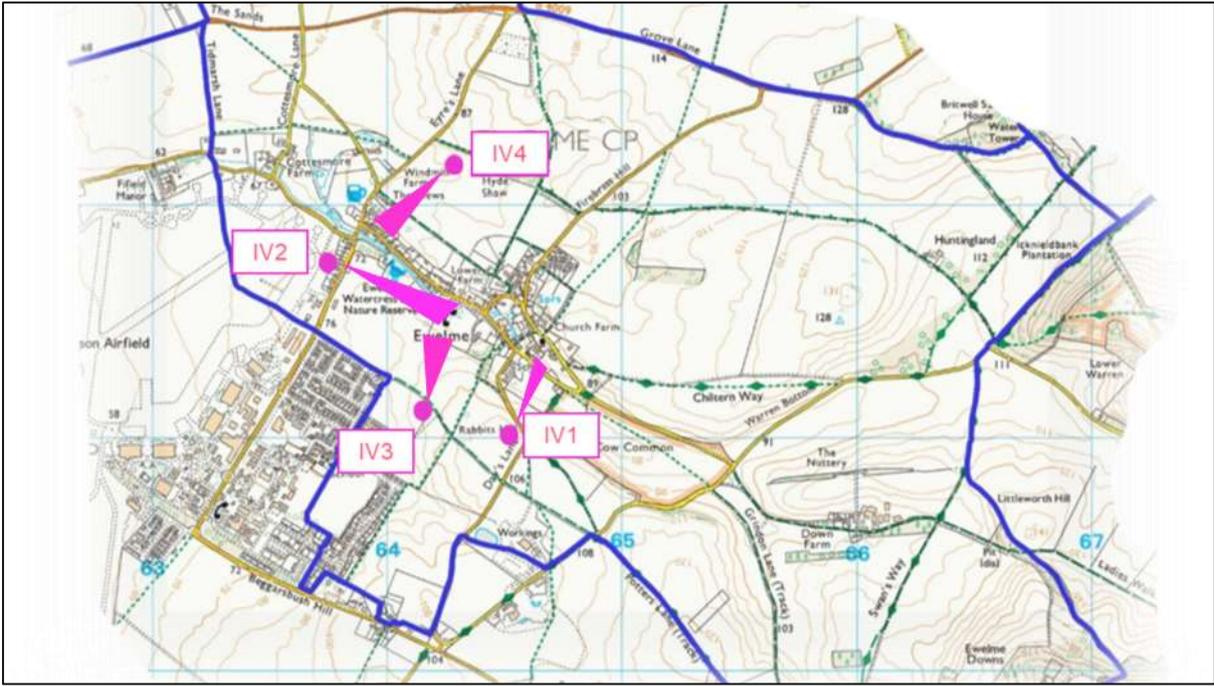
- IV1 – Ewelme Village from the roadside at the top of Rabbits Hill;
- IV2 – Ewelme Church and Old Rectory glimpsed from Green Lane;
- IV3 – View of Ewelme in the valley of Ewelme Brook from Footpath 22;
- IV4 – Looking towards the Wessex Downs with The Views, Winmill Farm and part of the airfield in the foreground.

**Supporting Objective: VC1, VC2, VC3, CA1, EV1**

## Evidence

There is strong support in the Village Questionnaire to “Minimise impact on open views”. Over 95% rated this as Important or Very important (Question 21).

Over 97% indicated their support to “Minimise environmental impact” (Question 22).



Map 7. Summary of protection of views

## 6. Housing

Ewelme forms an integral part of the Chilterns AONB; it is a valley bottom, scarp-foot village. The centre of the village is a Conservation Area including fifteenth century Alms-Houses, a church and school. Ewelme is vulnerable to development of gaps and at edges which may spoil its distinct character, cherished views and surrounding rural landscape. Additional housing would encourage usage of ‘minor’ roads which reduces the compact, small-scale and rural character of this unique village.

### 6.1 Objective

To promote sustainable development that meets the needs of residents now and in the future by providing the opportunity to live in a decent home and provide a mix of housing, especially smaller homes and those suitable for the elderly, (Objectives SD1 and H1).

To ensure that new development does not cause new or exacerbate existing traffic, parking and road safety issues and seeks to improve them, (Objective H2).

Overall, this Neighbourhood Plan promotes sustainable development which is in keeping with the surrounding built environment and respects the Heritage, AONB, Conservation Area and adjacent open rural landscape. (Objectives VC2, VC3 and CA1).

### 6.2 Trends

The distribution of types of dwelling has changed little since 2001. In 2011, of the 421 dwellings, 142 were detached houses (compared with 140 in 2001); 233 were semi-detached (229 in 2001) and 41 were terraced houses (36 in 2001) with the remainder in purpose-built flats/conversions.

Overall the village population reduced by 5% between the Census of 2001 and 2011. This decrease is significant and could threaten the vitality of our community. The Neighbourhood Plan must ensure that there is adequate housing provision made for old and young alike and that the housing mix provides a range of smaller homes at more affordable prices.

The proportion which were owner occupied has increased slightly over time (from 43.8% in 2001 to 45.7% in 2011), compared to the proportion of social rentals which has decreased (11.6% in 2001 to 8.8% in 2011). Whereas there were no homes in shared ownership in 2001, there are now two.<sup>1</sup>

As the population has fallen the average number of people resident in each household has dropped from 2.81 in 2001 to 2.7 in 2011 (Census Data).

Housing in the Neighbourhood Area is expensive and less affordable than across England as a whole. In 2010 the Affordable Housing Ratio for South Oxfordshire was assessed to be 16.8. The national figure was 10.91.

The housing styles and materials reflect the developments within Ewelme over several centuries as listed in the **Village Character Assessment**.

### 6.3 Number of New Homes

The Local Plan 2035 does not seek any target for extra housing in smaller villages as defined in the settlement hierarchy (Appendix 7), beyond windfall and infill development to meet the overall housing requirement of South Oxfordshire.<sup>2</sup>

In view of this it is not intended to select sites for development within this Neighbourhood Plan but rather to set out policies against which proposals for new development, alterations and extensions can be assessed in future. It is expected that infill, development of brownfield sites and sympathetic conversion will provide any additional housing.

### 6.4 What Type of Housing is Required?

The Village Questionnaire identified significant consensus on the type of future development required in Ewelme;

- 67% of respondents expressed a need for smaller (1-3 bedrooms) and more affordable housing for young families and the elderly (Questions 14, 15)
- Large scale development is not supported by the community (128 respondents were against single site developments of multiple houses) (Question 19)
- new housing should be delivered through infill and brownfield sites (Question 14).
- Residents indicated strongly that they expect the Chilterns AONB to be a material consideration with regard to both the amount and scale of any new development, buildings, alterations and extensions. Development should be appropriate to the historic character of the village (Questions 1 and 23)

### 6.5 How We Defined the Built-up Area of the village

The Chilterns were designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1965 by the Government. The primary purpose of the designation is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, which includes wildlife, physiographic features and cultural heritage as well as the more conventional concepts of landscape and scenery. It is given in recognition of the special quality and character of the landscape and encourages landowners and local authorities to manage the area in ways which will ensure its protection now and in the future.

Whilst the village recognises the need for limited additional housing, it is very mindful that any such development should not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the area, including the Chilterns

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<sup>1</sup> Figures are not available for the proportion in privately rented housing in 2001.

<sup>2</sup> The draft Local Plan, (reference plan at the time of the Village Questionnaire) sought growth of 5% in the smaller villages. This equates to 13.25 houses in Ewelme. Analysis of available data, (Census 2011 and audit of planning permissions since 2011) indicated that Ewelme had almost reached this figure (12 houses Nov 2018). In the Village Questionnaire, 50% of respondents did not support the building of any additional houses beyond the 10-15 houses sought. A further 30% were comfortable with growth of an extra 10 houses.

AONB and the Ewelme Conservation Area. This view was strongly supported in the recent survey of residents where 74% support or strongly support living in the AONB and the surrounding countryside and in an Independent Inspector's decision dated 22 January 2018<sup>1</sup> which stated that any "harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, including the Chilterns AONB and Ewelme Conservation Area... would not be outweighed by the benefits of development in terms of housing supply and support for local services".

For this reason, it is proposed to permit the development of smaller and more affordable houses within the already Built-up area of the village.

This policy defines the term "Built-up area" for the purpose of enabling limited infill development and resisting other development outside of the Built-up area. The Built-up area is defined by the boundaries of permanent non-agricultural buildings located around the edge of the village, where such properties are directly connected to the village's main, single form, The Built-up area therefore does not include:

- i. individual buildings or groups of dispersed buildings that are separated by farmland or paddock land from the continuous Built-up area of the settlement;
- ii. large gardens, paddocks and other undeveloped land in the curtilage of buildings on the edge of the settlement, where they provide a transition between the surrounding countryside and the Built-up area of the settlement;
- iii. agricultural buildings and associated land on the edge of the settlement;
- iv. or outdoor sports and recreation facilities and other formal open spaces on the edge of the settlement.

It is also consistent with the status of Ewelme as a 'smaller village' as defined by SODC in the District settlement hierarchy and with its policy managing development in the smaller villages. Proposals located outside the Built-up area of the village will be supported only if they are appropriate to a countryside location and they are consistent with development plan policies.

Infill development 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. Rural exception sites are small sites for affordable housing within or adjacent to villages where housing would not normally be permitted.

### **Policy EP3: A Spatial Plan for the Parish**

Proposals for limited infill development inside the Village's built-up area (as described in section 6.5 para 4 of this Plan) will be supported where they comply with the design and development management policies of this plan, and other relevant policies in the development plan. In addition, proposals should have regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide (including accompanying technical documents) and should be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area as identified in the Village Character Assessment.

Development proposals on land outside the Village's Built-up area will be supported only if they are appropriate to a countryside location and are in accordance with the development plan.

Development proposals between Ewelme and Cottesmore should conserve the open and tranquil character of the intervening landscape and its views. Proposals which would either individually or cumulatively, unacceptably detract from the separation between Ewelme and Cottesmore will not be supported.

Development for essential utility infrastructure will be supported where it can be incorporated into the village in a sensitive manner.

**Supporting Objective: VC1, VC2, VC3, CA1, SD1, EV1**

## Evidence

76% of respondents rated “retain traditional character in keeping with neighbouring properties” as important or very important (Question 21)

44% of respondents rated "have no development outside of the existing Built-up area of the village" as Most preferred or Preferred, against 23% who had no objection or least preferred development outside the existing Built-up area (Question 19)

73% of respondents rated "prevent coalescence of Benson and Ewelme" as Most preferred or Preferred (Question 19)

## 6.6 The Location of New Development

A large proportion of residents did not want to see developments (of more than 10-20 dwellings) added to the village (Village Questionnaire Q19), an aspiration supported by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge, Inspector, in his report dated January 2018 who advocated caution saying that 'public benefits of development carry no more than moderate weight when compared to the significance of the conservation area and listed buildings'....Further encroachment into the landscape outside the village is not justified where it would have adverse effects on the AONB and heritage assets”.

There was a strong aversion to building on greenfield sites or agricultural land. Residents did not want large developments attached to the outskirts of the village.

Valley bottom villages are particularly vulnerable to insensitive development. Conversions of farm buildings and workshops are an integral part of the village scene (Chilterns Design Guide). By restricting new developments to infill, development of brownfield sites and conversion of existing stock, this policy encourages development of single, smaller houses.

## Evidence

Over 50% of residents did not want development of sites of 10 houses or more. Village Questionnaire Question 19

66% of respondents favoured the development of smaller 2- or 3- bedroom houses. 66% of respondents wanted 2- or 3- bedroom houses. Village Questionnaire Question 15

More than 80% of village residents favoured development of infill and brownfield sites to achieve additional housing. Village Questionnaire Question 18

## 6.7 Protecting our Open Spaces

The heritage of Ewelme plays an important part in who we are today. The openness of the village and its location in the Chilterns AONB are greatly valued by the majority of Ewelme residents.

Residents identified as important the ‘green space’ (farmland, bridleways and footpaths) surrounding Ewelme. This Green space is considered to be an integral part of what Ewelme is today.

Open spaces within the village were also identified as important by respondents to the Questionnaire, and include the “School Lawn”, Cow Common, the cricket pitch / recreation ground and playground (the Common), the School playing field, the Watercress Beds and Nature Local Reserve, the Pound, King’s Pool, the allotments, churchyard / burial ground as identified in Map 8.

The open spaces identified in the Questionnaire have been assessed to confirm that they are publicly available for recreation and educational purposes and have particular importance to Neighbourhood Plan residents.

They have then been reconsidered to ensure that each identified Open space has adequate protection from future development.

Analysis concludes that the green space surrounding Ewelme is already protected by planning legislation regulating development in an AONB and NPPF para 98, See also Policy EP3: Spatial plan for the village in this plan.

It was not deemed necessary to designate any of the identified Open spaces as a new Local Green Space (with associated protection) as all of the identified Open spaces are protected as a result of (i) their location within the Conservation Area or AONB or (ii) their landscape setting in close proximity to a Listed building.

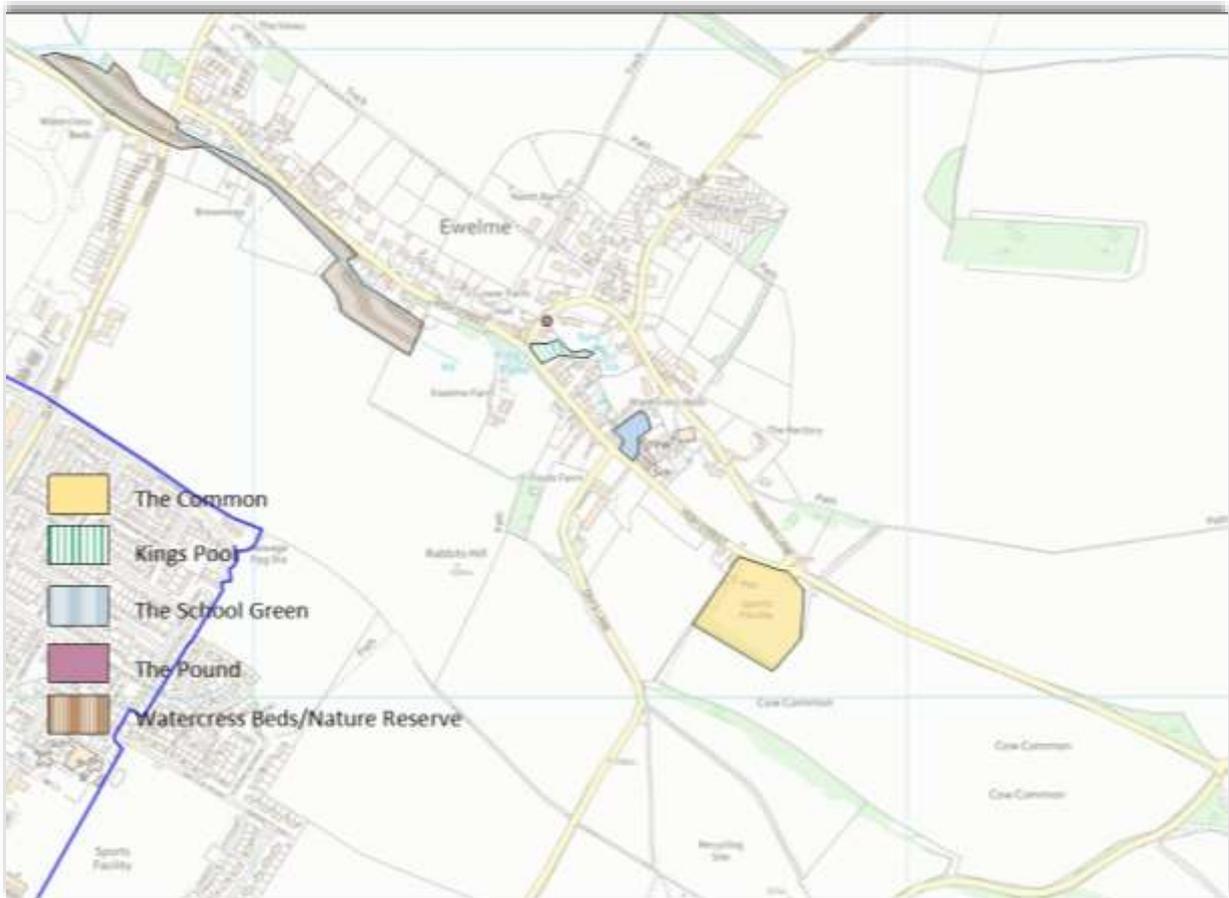
#### **Policy EP4 Housing – Protecting our Open Spaces**

The following parcels of land as shown on Figure 8 are designated as open spaces

- The Common
- Watercress Beds Nature Local Reserve
- The School Green
- The Pound
- Kings Pool

Development proposals should respect the openness and the integrity of the designated open spaces. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on the nature, the use or access to the designated open spaces will not be supported.

#### **Supporting Objectives: VC1, VC2 and VC3, CA1, EV1**



Map 8. Open Spaces

## Evidence

The majority of questionnaire respondents strongly agreed that the reason they liked living in Ewelme was for the rural location/lifestyle, that it is a pleasant place to live with easy access to the countryside and the Chilterns AONB (Questions 19, 21 and 23). They did not want development to damage the AONB, its landscape or setting. 76% of respondents rated retaining traditional character in keeping with neighbouring properties as important or very important (Question 21) and 50% of respondents supported no more than 20 additional houses in the village (Question 13).

More than 88% of respondents wanted to protect the green spaces and agricultural land outside the Built-up area of the village (Question 19).

70 residents identified open spaces within the village that were important to the village, publicly available and enjoyed for recreational/educational purposes.

Development may damage the AONB and landscape through a loss of valued views across open countryside from within, and into the village (Question 21)

Half of the respondents supported residential development in the Ewelme Built-up area if it does not conflict with any other policies in this plan. (Q13 Questionnaire).

## 6.8 Housing Mix

In the Village Questionnaire 2017, residents agreed that the focus of future development should be on 2- and 3-bedroom homes (69% and 77% support respectively). The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment also points to a need for houses of this size.

It is important that a good balance of the mix of houses be achieved over time and that new development does not skew the housing balance of the village away from smaller houses, suitable for both young adults or older people down-sizing, towards larger houses. In common with many other villages in Oxfordshire, there is a desire to make houses, whether market housing or 'affordable housing' less expensive, particularly for younger people. The pricing of houses is beyond our control, but we would encourage measures which seek to limit the price of houses whilst also achieving good standards of design and materials. (Objective SD1).

Thus, this Neighbourhood Plan encourages that any building of more homes should only be of 2- and 3-bedroom size in the village.

### **Policy EP5: Housing Mix**

A. Proposals for new residential development should incorporate a mix of dwelling types and sizes which:

- \* meet the needs of current and future households, and
- \* address the district wide shortage of smaller houses, and
- \* are appropriate to the site in terms of style and design,

B. Proposals that recognise the need for smaller dwellings and comprise of single houses, terraced cottages or semi-detached houses with a maximum of three bedrooms will be particularly supported.

C. Development on rural exception sites that are in conformity with the Development Plan will be supported.

**Supporting Objective: SD1, H1, H2**

## Evidence

66% of respondents favoured the development of smaller, 2- to 3- bedroom houses. Village Questionnaire Question 15.

61% of respondents rated as important or very important the availability of smaller houses 1-2 bedrooms including flats.

51% of respondents rated as important or very important the availability of homes suitable for the elderly.

## 6.9 Affordable Housing

A need for affordable housing in Ewelme had been identified in the Housing Needs Surveys of 2008 and 2012. But as no land was made available, the need has remained unfulfilled. These surveys are now deemed to be out of date.

The Village Questionnaire again identified a potential need for more affordable housing. Question 14 of the Questionnaire asked, “What type of new housing do you think Ewelme needs most?” Respondents rated affordable housing and affordable rented housing as very important or important.

Some respondents felt that the provision of “relatively affordable” one- and two- bedroom properties on small developments would help meet village needs, so it became important to differentiate between the legal and the colloquial use of the term.

In accordance with the NPPF, developments of 10 or more (five in the AOBN) dwellings require a percentage of on-site affordable housing provision, in South Oxfordshire this would be 40%. These sites will seek to meet the district-wide need and will be allocated in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy. Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2019, sets out a definition of affordable housing.

### **Policy EP6: Affordable Housing**

Proposals for small scale local affordable housing sites or exception sites will be supported where they are accompanied by an up-to-date housing needs survey that justifies the need for the houses needed in the neighbourhood area.

All new affordable homes on a rural exception site will be allocated in line with the Rural Exceptions Site section of the Housing Allocations Policy.

### **Supporting Objective: H1, H2**

The National Planning Policy Framework defines exception sites as: small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community. If a site becomes available within the plan area, a further Housing Needs Survey should be conducted to confirm the need for affordable housing within Ewelme.

## 6.10 Parking

The village has a very limited bus service. Therefore, most of the population is very reliant on a car as it is the primary means of transport in and out of the village. 60% of respondents use a car every day and a further 40% use a car 4 days + a week. The ability to park cars safely is very important. Houses which were built either before the era of the motor car or without parking provision now need such provision.

On-street parking is possible but becoming more of a problem in areas of concentrated housing such as Eyres Close, Hampden Way and Martyn’s Way. It is important that any future development includes adequate provision for off-street parking.

Parked vehicles in The Street are perceived both as a fortuitous means of slowing down the traffic and as an obstruction to the free flow of vehicles. The Village Questionnaire showed a decisive opinion of residents in favour of the former. This could possibly be beneficial in other areas of the village, such as Cat Lane.

A proposal for an extension of the existing car park at the Common has proved unpopular in the past and would probably be prohibitively expensive, whilst encroaching further upon the Common

The character of an area is frequently determined not by the design of the houses but by the vehicle parking. Ewelme is fortunate in that, despite both the mix of older and newer houses, the situation is currently largely under reasonable control. The community wishes this to continue and discourages inconsiderate parking:

- a) Parking part way on pavements, thus restricting pedestrian access
- b) Blocking driveways or restricting space opposite driveways
- c) Not allowing sufficient space for large vehicles, particularly emergency services, to pass.

#### **Policy EP7: Parking**

New residential development that gives rise to the need for additional parking will only be supported where adequate parking provision is made in line with the Oxfordshire County Council parking standards.

In order to achieve this:

1. Development proposals that provide on-plot parking arrangements that adequately meet current and likely future needs will be supported.
2. Where on-plot parking solutions are not practicable or are inappropriate, planning proposals should set out reasonable alternative provision as indicated in Section 6 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Design Guide'.
3. Proposals should also address the need for parking provision for visitors.

Supporting Objective E1, H2, SD1

#### **Evidence**

92% of respondents to the Village Questionnaire rated 'sufficient' parking as either important or very important for any new development.

## 7. Conserving Our Heritage

A fuller description of the heritage assets of the village is contained in the Village Character Assessment. Map 3 show the boundaries of the Ewelme Conservation Area (designated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1978) and Map 9 the location of listed buildings.

In the 2008 village plan survey and in the 2017 Village Questionnaire, the community of Ewelme placed a high priority on maintaining the atmosphere and sense of community of the current village and conserving its historic and rural character. The area designated as the Built-up area should be protected from inappropriate development.

### 7.1 Listed Buildings/Structures in Ewelme

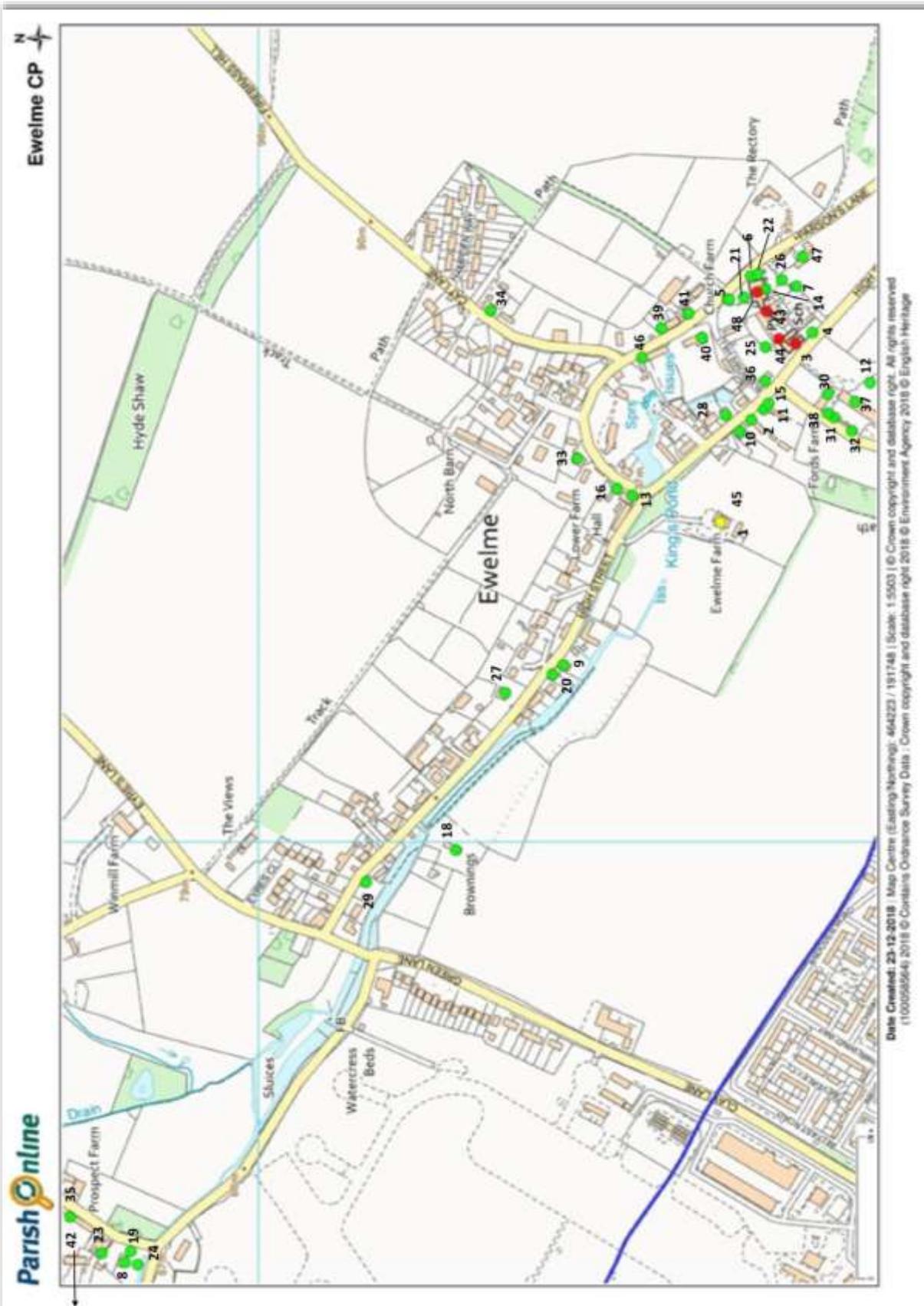
There are 46 listed buildings or structures that contribute to the designated heritage assets of the village. The numbers are identified in Map 6. Additionally, the site surrounding Ewelme Manor is a Scheduled Ancient Monument – the site of a royal palace. These listed or historic buildings should be conserved. Such protection is afforded by policies laid down in the Development Plan which contribute to achieving Objective CA1.

Title	Type	Location	Grade	No.
EWELME MANOR	Listing	Ewelme Manor, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II*	1
THE GREYHOUND AT EWELME PUBLIC HOUSE	Listing	The Greyhound at Ewelme Public House, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	2
EWELME CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL	Listing	Ewelme Church of England Primary School, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	I	3
WALL ADJOINING EWELME CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL TO EAST	Listing	Wall Adjoining Ewelme Church of England Primary School to East, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	4
CHEST TOMB TO TOM JACOB APPROXIMATELY 22 METRES NORTH OF PORCH OF CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	Chest Tomb to Tom Jacob Approximately 22 Metres North of Porch of Church of St Mary, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	5
CHEST TOMB TO SIMON HUMPHRIES APPROXIMATELY 3 METRES EAST OF CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	Chest Tomb to Simon Humphries Approximately 3 Metres East of Church of St Mary, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	6
CHEST TOMB TO ROBERT DAY APPROXIMATELY 1 METRE SOUTH OF CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	Chest Tomb to Robert Day Approximately 1 Metre South of Church of St Mary, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	7
THE OLD MANSION	Listing	The Old Mansion, Cottessmore Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	8
THATCHINGS	Listing	Thatchings, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	9
INGLENOOK	Listing	Inglenook, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	10
DAYS COTTAGE	Listing	Days Cottage, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	11
GRANARY APPROXIMATELY 40 METRES SOUTH OF FORD'S FARMHOUSE	Listing	Granary Approximately 40 Metres South of Ford's Farmhouse, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	12
KING'S POOL COTTAGE	Listing	King's Pool Cottage, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	13
WALL ADJOINING GOD'S PLACE TO EAST	Listing	Wall Adjoining God's Place to East, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	14

THE COTTAGE	Listing	The Cottage, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	15
KING'S POOL HOUSE	Listing	King's Pool House, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	16
BROWNING'S	Listing	Brownings, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	17
WALL APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES WEST OF THE OLD MANSION	Listing	Wall Approximately 20 Metres West of The Old Mansion, Cottesmore Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	18
THE COTTAGE	Listing	The Cottage, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	19
CHEST TOMB TO FRANCIS MOORE APPROXIMATELY 21 METRES NORTH OF PORCH OF CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	Chest Tomb to Francis Moore Approximately 21 Metres North of Porch of Church of St Mary, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	20
CHEST TOMB TO LANE FAMILY APPROXIMATELY 3 METRES EAST OF CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	Chest Tomb to Lane Family Approximately 3 Metres East of Church of St Mary, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	21
COTTESMORE HOUSE	Listing	Cottesmore House, 1 And 2, Cottesmore Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	22
WALL APPROXIMATELY 30 METRES SOUTH OF THE OLD MANSION	Listing	Wall Approximately 30 Metres South of The Old Mansion, Cottesmore Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	23
CHEST TOMB TO THOMAS HEATH APPROXIMATELY 3 METRES NORTH OF PORCH OF CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	Chest Tomb to Thomas Heath Approximately 3 Metres North of Porch of Church of St Mary, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	24
GATEWAY AND WALL APPROXIMATELY 35 METRES NORTH WEST OF THE OLD RECTORY	Listing	Gateway and Wall Approximately 35 Metres North West of The Old Rectory, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	25
HIGH HOUSE	Listing	High House, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	26
EAST AND WEST COTTAGE	Listing	East and West Cottage, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	27
SMOCKACRE	Listing	Smockacre, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	28
FORD'S FARMHOUSE	Listing	Ford's Farmhouse, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	29
GRANARY APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES SOUTH WEST OF FORD'S FARMHOUSE	Listing	Granary Approximately 20 Metres South West of Ford's Farmhouse, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	30
STABLE APPROXIMATELY 35 METRES SOUTH WEST OF FORD'S FARMHOUSE	Listing	Stable Approximately 35 Metres South West of Ford's Farmhouse, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	31
FIELDS END AND ATTACHED WALL	Listing	Fields End and Attached Wall, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	32
CAT LANE COTTAGE	Listing	Cat Lane Cottage, 1 and 2, Cat Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	33
BARN APPROXIMATELY 30 METRES NORTH EAST OF NUMBERS 1 AND 2 COTTESMORE HOUSE	Listing	Barn Approximately 30 Metres North East of Numbers 1 and 2 Cottesmore House, Cottesmore Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	34
THE OLD POTTERY	Listing	The Old Pottery, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	35
BARN APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES SOUTH OF FORD'S FARMHOUSE	Listing	Barn Approximately 20 Metres South of Ford's Farmhouse, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	36

OUTBUILDING APPROXIMATELY 4 METRES SOUTH OF FORD'S FARMHOUSE	Listing	Outbuilding Approximately 4 Metres South of Ford's Farmhouse, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	37
CHURCH FARM COTTAGES WEASEL COTTAGE	Listing	Weasel Cottage, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	38
HILL HOUSE	Listing	Hill House, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	39
CHURCH FARMHOUSE AND ATTACHED RAILINGS	Listing	Church Farmhouse and Attached Railings, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire	II	40
COTTAGE APPROXIMATELY 230 METRES WEST OF THE OLD MANSION	Listing	Cottage Approximately 230 Metres West of The Old Mansion, Tidmarsh Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	41
GOD'S PLACE AND LOBBY TO CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	God's Place and Lobby to Church of St Mary, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	I	42
SCHOOL HOUSE AND ARCHWAY	Listing	School House, High Street, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	I	43
SITE OF MANOR HOUSE AND ROYAL PALACE	Scheduling	Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	44
SAFFRON COTTAGE SAFFRON HOUSE	Listing	Saffron Cottage, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	45
THE OLD RECTORY	Listing	The Old Rectory, Parsons Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	II	46
CHURCH OF ST MARY	Listing	Church of St Mary, Parson's Lane, Ewelme, South Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire	I	47

Source: National Heritage List for England



Map 9. Location of Listed buildings and structures

## 7.2 Protecting the Historic Environment

NPPF (paragraph 128) states that ‘Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and where necessary, a field evaluation’. Policies ENV6-10 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 provide considerable protection for Ewelme’s heritage assets.

Ewelme is steeped in history and it is imperative that this characteristic is protected and embraced. Residents and visitors alike accept the need for small-scale developments that must be sensitive to the historic environment and effective in terms of conservation. Such developments need to preserve and enhance the Built-up area and requires that special attention be paid to any planning proposal to alter or extend any existing building or to add new buildings/structures that if dealt with in an insensitive manner would cause considerable harm.

Such development will ensure the continued viability of this historic village and conform with South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

In consultation meetings and workshops residents made it quite clear that they felt very strongly that planning should be strictly controlled within the Built-up area with many indicating that the Conservation Area should be expanded. The preservation and protection not only of historic buildings but also the environment and setting of these buildings was also strongly supported. Residents valued the high quality and sometimes unusual types of buildings. Many also valued some of the eccentricities of the core of the village including the Church, School and Alms-House complex, the non-uniform/sometimes absent pavements, the absence of street lighting and of “street furniture” - all combining to create the unique charm of the village.

The Character Assessment notes that the landscape of Ewelme Parish is dominated by its nucleated village settlement pattern which has strongly influenced the pattern of routeways, fields and tree cover. There are certain features of the Built-up area which are unique to Ewelme that should be retained and enhanced including:

- a) A wide variety of dwellings in terms of period, style, design, materials and layout with no obvious misfits;
- b) Colour schemes are subdued;
- c) Houses are built in varying densities and are not all clustered closely together;
- d) The entirety of the village is ‘hidden’ within the valley, the boundary of the Built-up area gives views on to open country.
- e) The layout of roads and paths away from The Street has evolved over time and has an informality about it. Along much of The Street pedestrians and vehicles share the road.
- f) There are no streetlights within the village Built-up area and villagers prefer it that way.

The Village *Character Assessment* has highlighted the importance of retaining the overall character of the village, not just within the Built-up area but within the Parish as a whole. Within the Built-up area it is important to maintain the character of the area by:

- a) maintaining a variety of styles and materials but in keeping with the area
- b) ensuring that new development does not stand out unnecessarily amongst surrounding established buildings
- c) ensuring colour schemes are in keeping with surrounding buildings
- d) maintaining a variety of housing density.

Character area studies, identification and records of historical buildings and other heritage assets, such as archaeological remains found by the community, help to protect the when subject to planning applications

Finding new, suitable uses for old buildings both listed and unlisted, will protect and enhance them and ensure they continue to bring economic, social and environmental benefits for Ewelme.

While listed assets are already recorded (7.1) and protected, unlisted assets in Ewelme will be identified and formally recorded, perhaps as part of a heritage cluster, character area or view, noting their history and assessing their role and value following assessment criteria in Historic England's Advice note 7; Local Heritage Listing. EPC will liaise with SODC, Historic England and local volunteer groups to achieve this.

#### **Policy EP8: Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets**

Development proposals should enhance and better reveal the special quality of Ewelme as identified in the Village Character Assessment. New development, including alterations to existing buildings and features, should conserve or enhance the character, appearance, integrity, significance, fabric and setting of Ewelme and its heritage assets, by reusing original, natural materials or employing the best available highest quality new materials in accordance with the Character Assessment.

Development proposals should address the interaction between the built environment and the surrounding countryside and any key views and vistas. New development should take account of known surface and sub-surface archaeology and ensure that other potentially significant deposits are identified and appropriately safeguarded during development. Where practicable, the legibility of archaeological features should be preserved. New development should promote high-quality design and take the opportunity to enhance or better reveal the significance of the Parish's historic built environment and its specific heritage assets.

Development proposals will be assessed against the principles in the NPPF. Great weight will be accorded to the conservation of designated heritage assets. For proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets the conservation of the identity and character of buildings of local significance will be weighed against the benefits that would arise from the proposed development.

#### **Supporting Objective: CA1, VC1, VC3**

### **7.3 Design and Character**

It is important to recognise that a part of what makes Ewelme a strong community is its village identity. That identity is in part created by the community itself but also by the shape and form of the village, its resources and infrastructure. An important part of this character is the way the village has evolved over time to create a place which has several different and distinctive architectural styles, historic buildings and public and private spaces. These combine to create a unique character.

The Village *Character Assessment* identifies what is important about Ewelme, both in terms of its setting and individual areas within the village. The intention is to secure development that does not result in detriment to the character, appearance and landscape setting of Ewelme and should, preferably, enhance it.

65% of respondents to the Village Questionnaire feel that it is important that development proposals within the Built-up area should be sensitive to the rural setting; the design and materials used should complement what is already in place. It is also important that the scale of building reflects neighbouring properties. Policy EP8 sets out the Plan's approach to this important issue and addresses the design and character of that development.

Some types of housing development would be out of place in a village with many important character buildings. The policy aim is to ensure that landowners and developers agree with the Parish Council and the community what might be appropriate.

A policy on design is considered essential to manage any proposal including redevelopment of a single house on a large plot into multiple housing. This policy is not intended to create a copybook approach to design or limit

innovation in the type or range of development. It is also recognised that use of infill and brownfield sites on a sympathetic scale, using harmonious materials, planting and respect for context and energy conservation would be beneficial to our community. Innovative design, where appropriate, is not precluded. Any departure from the traditional approach where this is identified as important within a character area will need to demonstrate why this should be set aside.

Any proposals should adopt design, materials and landscaping in keeping with the local vernacular unless an acceptably high standard of alternate or contemporary design can be demonstrated, enabling the development to accord with the aim of this policy as well as policies elsewhere within this Plan and design principles of the adopted South Oxfordshire Design Guide. The policy recognises and supports the value of the SODC Design Guide, and the design principles detailed in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide on local building material and use of locally sourced building materials. However, such design guidance is more easily applied to larger sites but development that impacts on the street scene is very important locally. The aim is not to constrain development or innovative design but to reflect the best in design and not the lowest common denominator.

This Plan supports the Local Plan 2035 in ensuring that development proposals within or next to the Conservation Area or listed buildings must ensure that the overall character of the area is enhanced or preserved. Inappropriate development can cause irreparable damage to the sensitive historic environment.



*Figure 6. Ewelme School House*

## 7.4 Design Principles

### Supporting evidence

Over 160 out of 262 respondents to the Village Questionnaire (Questions 21 and 23) identified efficient design, sustainable building methods, retention of traditional character, quality design, sufficient parking and minimal impact on views and environment as 'important' or 'very important' when considering the design and layout for new housing.

Better broadband was identified as a service which would improve quality of life in Ewelme.

The reduction of Public Transport provision in the rural area has resulted in residents being more dependent on private vehicle transport. Such dependency requires appropriate parking (Questions 24,25,30 and 33 of Village Questionnaire).

66% of residents agree or strongly agree that having no street lights is a reason to like living in Ewelme. A further 18% of residents have no strong opinion on street lights (Question 23). Good design limits the impact of light pollution from artificial light on the area surrounding the development in order to preserve the existing dark skies around Ewelme.

97% of residents do not want developments to have an impact on the historical assets of the village (Question 19).

88% of residents like living in a village with high quality unusual and historically significant buildings. (Question 23).

The following design principles, some of which are prioritised in the National Planning Policy Framework, aim to ensure these wishes are reflected in the development of any new housing.

i. **Waste Water Management** - both in respect of sustainable drainage and water capture (for use in activities such as gardening, car washing) - will be expected and supported. (See NPPF 163).

ii. **Foul Water Drainage** - proposals to erect new dwellings must be accompanied by a drainage strategy which demonstrates that development will not overload the foul drainage system nor increase flood risk elsewhere (see NPPF 163).

iii. **Features** - including solar panels and heat pumps, must be designed to avoid harm to the appearance of the building and the street scene. If a building is listed or within the Conservation Area, then equipment specifically designed to be consistent with the character of the surroundings will be required.

iv. **Local Fibre or Internet Connectivity** – the aim is to see any new housing development connect to the Internet with a minimum symmetrical speed of 25Mbps and with realistic future-proof upgrades available. As a minimum, and subject to viability and deliverability in accordance with paragraph 112 in the National Planning Policy Framework, suitable ducting that can accept fibre should be provided either to:

- a. roads or footpaths within the development site;
- b. the public highway; or
- c. a community-led local access network; or
- d. another location that can be justified through the connectivity statement.

Where possible and desirable, additional ducting should be provided that can also contribute to a community-led access network.

Justification The provision of good telecommunications is an important aspect of sustainable economic growth in rural areas supported by Government-backed initiatives to provide good connectivity.

v. **Sustainable Development** - new developments must maximise the use of renewable energy opportunities offered by a particular site.

vi. **Integration into Existing Neighbourhood** - developments must adopt the guidance produced by the Building for Life Partnership and, in particular, that proposals for development integrate the new homes into the existing neighbourhood and support a more pedestrian and cycle friendly neighbourhood with adequate storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and secure cycle storage.

vii. **Sustainable Connections** - access links must be provided to local facilities and public transport via safe and convenient direct paths suitable for those pushing a pushchair, in a wheelchair, walking with a stick or walking frame or using a mobility scooter.

viii. **Highway Access and Provision of Off-Road Parking** - wherever possible, development proposals should use existing and satisfactory highway access and include provision for adequate off-road vehicle parking spaces to facilitate unimpeded road access for other road users, including motor vehicles and pedestrians. Proposals that do not demonstrate adequate off-road parking will not be supported in instances where the Local Planning Authority identify that additional on-street parking will be detrimental to highways safety or impede access for public transport, emergency vehicles or any other service vehicles. All new developments should include an electric vehicle charging point

ix. **Light Pollution** - Notwithstanding the fact that light from RAF Benson to the west of the village will impact on the dark sky above the village, the lack of street lighting is important to the majority of village residents. 160 out of 262 respondents to the Village Questionnaire 'strongly agreed' that the absence of street lights was important (Question 23). Consideration should be given to the layout, height and orientation of buildings together with any external lighting adversely affecting neighbouring properties. Proposals for street and external lighting will not be supported.

x. **Impact of New Development on Historical Assets** - Proposals for development will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss that may be caused to the historic environment of Ewelme or community assets, whether designated or not

The results of the Village Questionnaire support the design and layout criteria detailed above.

#### **Policy EP9: Sustainable and High-Quality design**

Proposals for new buildings should reflect the character of Ewelme. As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals should:

- \* Incorporate sustainable drainage;
- \* demonstrate that, in consultation with Thames Water, the waste water network and treatment works either already have sufficient capacity or will be upgraded to provide sufficient capacity before any new development is occupied;
- \* Provide adequate storage spaces for bins and the design of the storage should not detract from the street scene;
- \* Incorporate energy efficiency measures and use renewable energy resources; and
- \* Protect trees, hedges and other valuable ecological features of the site.

**Supporting Objective: SD1, H1, H2, EV1**

## **8. Infrastructure and Services**

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Objective: To ensure that future development is within the capacity of the local infrastructure and facilities and that, where necessary, provision is made for improvements in advance of development commencing.

### **8.1 Community Facilities**

As a smaller village, Ewelme has a limited capacity to absorb future development. The village enjoys and values (Question 22) the following Community Facilities: a) Church b) Alms-houses, c) Pre-school d) Primary School e) Pub (Shepherd's Hut) f) village shop (including postal facilities), g) Village Hall h) Recreation Ground, including the Pavilion, Children's Play Area, and cricket net (the Common).

Consequently, it is important that these amenities are sustained and development proposals for such amenities, particularly those which will enhance capacity or sustainability, and which meet the policies laid in this Neighbourhood Plan, should be supported. (Objective EC1)

In order to protect the facilities and amenities valued by today's residents, and to encourage a balanced and sustainable community, it is important that: a) none of these important facilities are lost to development and b) any reasonable proposals to enhance a facility are supported to allow a community group to prepare a bid for its purchase.

### 8.1.1 Pavilion/Recreational Ground

Ewelme is well provided with outdoor recreational facilities insofar as there is a large recreation ground of 1.57 ha complete with a cricket pitch, outdoor gym equipment and multi-functional children`s playground (the Common). The latter is in fairly good condition, but consideration is being given to additional facilities.

The pavilion was built in 1968 by village volunteers when the recreation area was levelled on the Common. It is used by the Cricket Club, Chiltern Chase run, village barbecues, parties, fetes and shows from time to time and lacking in basic facilities. In 1995, the Parish Council considered updating the pavilion, but the proposal was not implemented because of the costs.

More recently, an initiative was launched to try again to replace the old one with a “proper” cricket pavilion, but the Parish Council has renovated rather than new build, making the best use of the current structure for a limited expenditure.

#### **Policy EP10: Community facilities and leisure**

New developments on the Recreational Ground that broaden and extend the accessibility and use of sporting and leisure facilities by residents and visitors will be supported where they retain the character and appearance of the village and preserve its natural environment.

**Supporting Objective: EC1, CAV1, EV2**

### 8.1.2 Ewelme Village Hall/Reading Room

The Village Hall is administered by an independent trust which is a registered charity that is responsible for the care and maintenance of the building. The Village Hall was built in 1981 and has benefited from significant investment and improvement in the last five years. It comprises a main hall which can seat 100, a modern kitchen and the smaller Reading Room – as used by Ewelme Pre-School. It is used for a very diverse range of activities, including dances and social functions, committee meetings, mums and toddlers’ group, exercise group, badminton, community meetings, Guides, lunch break for senior citizens, the New Elm Club and private lettings. The hall is heavily used by many of the village organisations listed above.

### 8.1.3 Ewelme Village Pre-school

Ewelme Village Pre-school is the only offering within Ewelme Parish for children of pre-school age. The number of places is limited to 30 as accommodation is in the Reading Room at Ewelme Village Hall. The Pre-school has been running at full capacity, with a healthy waiting list for several years.

The Pre-school relies heavily on children from RAF Benson who make up 80% of the roll with the remainder coming from Ewelme and surrounding villages. Ewelme Village Pre-school is keen to explore alternative premises within the village to accommodate more children and provide more outdoor space. Ideally, they would want to stay within the Parish.

### 8.1.4 Ewelme C of E Primary School

Most (Ewelme) parents want their children to be educated to an acceptable standard at a local school without the need for excessive travelling. In this respect, there are three key issues involved - school capacity, choice of school and transport.

Ewelme C of E Primary School is the only primary school in Ewelme and is the oldest functioning primary school in the UK. It provides for children in Foundation stage through to Year Six. Places are allocated in accordance with its Admission Policy with preference given to children living within the school’s catchment.

The school is always full in Foundation (the point of entry) but on-roll figures can fluctuate within the older academic years as families move in and out of the area (predominantly RAF families). It is possible that even with the steady growth of houses and the new development in Benson, there will still be gaps within certain year groups.

There are no secondary schools in Ewelme. Ewelme Parish is in the catchment area of Icknield Community College, Watlington. Icknield Community College has an Admission Number of 140 pupils per year and provides education for children aged 11-16. There is no sixth form provision. Current figures for pupils are slightly below capacity but future housing developments in Benson, Chalgrove, Watlington, Lewknor and Chinnor will add to demand for places with plans for future growth of the school not publicly available.

Historically, Ewelme children were also able to choose to go to Wallingford School but following recent housing developments in the wider area, Wallingford School is now over-subscribed and operates a waiting list for each academic year. Growth plans have been considered in line with local housing developments in Wallingford and the surrounding areas.

### 8.1.5 St Mary's Church: Churchyard and Graveyard

Ewelme burial ground has sufficient capacity reasonably close to the Church. The present site comprises the Churchyard, both North and South areas, plus the Graveyard on the other side of Parson's Lane, opposite the Church. As the Graveyard cannot take further burials, the Diocese has recently given permission for the South Churchyard to be re-used where there are no obvious graves, plus the creation of the Garden of Remembrance with a capacity for about 100 interments of ashes.

Under the former arrangements, demand is unlikely to exceed capacity for a considerable time. However, there is a possibility to extend the Graveyard into part of the present Rectory garden. This would be considered favourably provided the land is proven to be suitable.

## 8.2 Mobile Telephones

Mobile phone signal strength within the Neighbourhood Plan area is generally adequate, although there is a poor signal from some providers along The Street. There is a risk that increased demand from new homes may overload existing facilities. The Parish Council should monitor the situation and put pressure on service providers should residents report deteriorations in the system.

Permission for areas of private or public land suitable to site a fenced mobile phone mast to improve cellular phone and 5G internet coverage, to be granted by SODC will be encouraged.



*Figure 7. Ewelme C of E Primary School playing field*

## Justification

This will improve the experience and productivity of both private and village-located business users of the internet and cellular mobile phones from indoor locations.

### 8.3 Roads and Transport

Many of the factors influencing traffic which runs through our village, now and in the future, lie outside the Parish of Ewelme. A Neighbourhood Plan can only set policies for development:

- which lie within the Neighbourhood Plan Area and
- which require planning consent.

Many road maintenance and improvement schemes are classed as Permitted Development and thus do not require planning consent. Similarly, schemes such as speed limits or weight restrictions are not planning matters and thus cannot be the subject of a Neighbourhood Plan policy. That is not to say that non-land use planning proposals like those above can't be included in a Neighbourhood Plan, it just means that they need to be included as community aspirations/projects and we have listed these as Pledges. These are included as important but unlike the land use planning policies, these Pledges will not carry any legal weight. Having them in a Neighbourhood Plan can focus the community's efforts on realising the projects and therefore help them to be delivered more quickly.

#### 8.3.1 Highways and Traffic Flow

Most transport in and out of the village is of necessity by private car. Public transport is very limited. Hospital and Doctor's appointments can be accommodated by the Benson Volunteer Helpline which arranges a volunteer car service. Most non-local, business traffic bypasses the lower part of the main street in Ewelme - 'The Street' - by either using Eyres Lane, Green Lane and Beggarbush Hill to access the RAF camp and Henley beyond (Route 1), or Firebrass Hill, Cat Lane, Parsons Lane, King's Pool and Days Lane (Route 2). Within the immediate area, the RAF base, Hazell & Jefferies, Agrivert and Grundons provide local jobs. These generate a mixture of private car and heavy vehicle movements, largely affecting Route 1 access through the village.

Roads within the village itself are mostly narrow and relatively lightly used. The Street, being historically and for current residents presently the principal artery of the village, is narrow but reasonably straight. Cars parked along it most of the time help to limit speed. However, large delivery vehicles are a problem, as for most of its length, it is not possible for two large vehicles to pass. Large vehicles include school buses, delivery and removal vehicles, agricultural machinery and the occasional heavy goods vehicle which has missed the 7.5 tonne weight limit.

There are no streetlights and for most of the length of The Street, no footpath. Ewelme benefits from a state primary school and village pre-school. Both of these contribute to traffic within the village at the beginning and end of the day as over 40% of pupils live outside the village. Congestion is notable at drop-off and pick up times but for the most part, pedestrians, cyclists and cars mix relatively happily.

#### The Threats

Significant housing development in Benson and anticipated development in Chalgrove and Watlington will inevitably impact on traffic flows through our village. Route 2 is an attractive short cut for traffic from the Watlington direction travelling towards Reading or Wallingford. Development in Watlington would put more pressure on this route unless measures are taken to make it less attractive.

#### 8.3.2 Footpaths and Pavements

The main part of the village is poorly served with footways for pedestrians. Aside from The Street (see above), the most important omissions are on Cat Lane, Parsons Lane, the lower part of Eyres Lane and across the bridge near to the Shepherd's Hut. Aside from the hazard to pedestrians at most times, these all constitute important routes for children to school and to catch school transport. An excellent footway extends along Benson Road and Green Lane, linking Benson Village with Ewelme and towards Benson RAF Station, albeit requiring the

crossing of the road several times. Unfortunately, it does not extend across the bridge by the Shepherds Hut, nor to the main gate of RAF Benson.

Creation of a footway along The Street appears impractical, but there is suitable grass verge along much of Cat Lane and Parsons Lane next to Chaucer Court that could well be converted to a footway.

This addresses the concerns registered to Question 24 of the Village Questionnaire and encourages walking within the village, especially for children travelling to school.

New developments should deliver improvements to the existing footway/cycleway network. Connections to local facilities, services and schools could be improved where appropriate and feasible.

### 8.3.3 Walking and Cycling

Recreational walking and, particularly, cycling have increased considerably, both on and off-road, in the Parish over the past few years. This has been encouraged by the nearby Chiltern Cycle Way and the refreshment facilities at the Village Store. There are, however, some problems associated with recreational road cycling, with a number of near-miss incidents at the junction of Days Lane and The Street and at King's Pool.

A measure to force a reduction of speed near the bottom of Days Lane would also benefit safety from motor vehicles along the same route, as well probably as carrying over to the King's Pool junction. Any future proposals will be discussed and agreed with OCC.

### 8.3.4 Transporting Children to School

Preschool children tend to arrive at school by car as do many primary school children whose parents then head off to work.

Children aged 11-16 and living in Ewelme are eligible for school transport. The challenge is to find the safest and most sustainable method to transport the children to school. Due to the distance and road network, walking and cycling to Icknield Community College is not a safe option, meaning that school buses pass through the village at the beginning and end of each day, en-route to schools in either Watlington or Wallingford.

### 8.3.5 Transport Pledge

Traffic volume and speed were raised as concerns by many consultees during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as it was considered that they had implications and potential solutions beyond the remit of the Plan, the matter was referred directly to the Parish Council. We are pleased to note that this has been taken on board by the Parish Council and that a series of initiatives, including traffic surveys and monitoring, consultation with OCC, plans for a public meeting, and exploration of options for management have been taken. We look forward to appropriate future developments.

#### Pledge 1: Transport

Developments or projects which limit vehicle speed and size entering or within the village and encouraging shared usage of The Street will be actively supported.

This requirement:

- addresses comments made to Question 24 of the Village Questionnaire (15 respondents) and to Question 25 (4 comments);
- reflects the response to Question 31 of the Village Questionnaire, in which 63% of respondents rated the volume of traffic through the village as a significant or very significant issue;
- reflects the response to Question 31 of the Village Questionnaire, in which 65% of respondents rated the number of large vehicles through the village as a significant or very significant issue;
- reflects the response to Question 32 of the Village Questionnaire in which 75% of respondents preferred a reduced speed limit in the village; the introduction of a chicane would slow traffic entering

the village, reducing the hazard to pedestrians and the chance of collisions with vehicles exiting Fords Farm, Eyres Close, Britwell Road, Hampden Way and Martyn’s Way. The Neighbourhood Plan survey results (Question 32) show that residents are opposed to chicanes and other physical traffic restraint measures inside the village, so these measures are proposed outside the Built-up area;

- improves safety and the environment within the village;
- would deter motor traffic from using The Street in preference to Green Lane and Beggarsbush Hill and Eyres Lane, improving the attractiveness of The Street and reducing the nuisance and hazard from motor vehicles.

## 8.4 Economy

It is clear that it is important to encourage and assist local employment opportunities to help build a sustainable community. The main sources of employment in Ewelme are Hazell and Jefferies, Grundons, the RAF base, the Shepherds Hut, Riviera Autobody, Nuffield Garage, agriculture and home working. They are not directly related to land use, unless a requirement for additional retail space is identified. That seems unlikely unless the village shop outgrows its present location, or the lease is not renewed.

### **Policy EP11: Economy**

Planning proposals, which will enhance employment opportunities, support existing businesses or provide opportunities for home working will be supported within the Built-up area of Ewelme provided:

- The proposal respects the built character and landscape character of the village;
- The proposal does not cause an unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby residential properties; and
- The proposal provides adequate parking, servicing and access arrangements in accordance with the most recently published standards of Oxfordshire County Council.

### **Supporting Objective: EC1**

## 9. Community Infrastructure Levy

The South Oxfordshire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been effective since April 2016. The CIL is a levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new development in their area. The money raised can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure to support growth set out in the adopted Local Plan 2035, including schools, transport, flood defences, and community, leisure, and health and social care facilities.

In this part of the District, the CIL charges new housing development £150 per sq m rising to £170.73 in 2018. The average 3-bedroom house is 110-120 sqm. These rates may change within the lifetime of this Plan. The Regulations require the District Council to pass on a proportion of the revenues from CIL receipts to the Parishes within which the chargeable development took place. Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan will receive 25 per cent of the revenue from the CIL development that they choose to accept – and Parishes without a plan will receive 15 per cent of the levy revenue, subject to a cap of £100 per existing council tax dwelling per year. This can be spent on things concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the parish area. To ensure transparency both the council and any community in receipt of CIL must report annually on how this money has been spent.

There are no major infrastructure schemes affecting this Parish (and included on what is known as the ‘Regulation 123 List’).

Any planning applications for new development within the village Built-up area must demonstrate how they can contribute towards the delivery of community development. This may be through contributions via a Section 106 agreement or through payment of any future Community Infrastructure Levy. Provision towards community

development, either through direct provision of new facilities or through financial contributions, will be expected from all development subject to the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework including the ability for development to be delivered sustainably. Any contribution secured as a result of development within the Built-up area shall be prioritised by the Parish Council towards the delivery of targeted community objectives which will be reviewed and updated annually.

## 10. Monitoring and Review Policy

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### Monitoring

ENP will be monitored primarily by the Parish Council (and with assistance by the District Council on more strategic elements) and reviewed annually. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at a scale relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the NP will be formally updated by the Parish Council on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the review of the Local Development Plan.

### Implementation

The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of the District Council's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the Parish, and through steering public and private investment into a series of infrastructure proposals contained in the Plan.

### 10.1 Development Management

Most of the policies contained in the Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers. In preparing the Plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable. Whilst the local planning authority will be responsible for the development management, the Parish Council will use the ENP to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with the District Council to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development.

## 11. Footnote

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### Evidence Base Overview

The analysis, objectives and proposals in this Neighbourhood Plan have drawn on a variety of sources. Data on:

- i. population, employment, housing, deprivation, and car ownership was obtained largely from the Office of National Statistics;
- ii. the housing need was obtained from the SODC housing register, housing needs surveys, local estate agents, and the views of residents at the public consultations;
- iii. Opinions on life in the village was obtained from the Village Appraisal (1997-8) and the 2008 Village Action Plan, the views of residents at the public consultations and workshops, meetings with key service providers including the schools in the village, and the responses to the Questionnaire survey;
- iv. landscape and biodiversity was obtained from the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment;
- v. flood risk was obtained from the Environment Agency.

More detailed information on this extensive evidence base can be found throughout the Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan supporting documents and Appendices.

## 11.1 Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council

## 12 NPPF (Annex 1)

The following is a copy of the NPPF definition regarding affordable housing.

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions:

(a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable);

(b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and

(c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

