

Reviewed Long Wittenham
Neighbourhood Development Plan
2018-2035

EVIDENCE PAPER PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

November
2021

Submission Draft (revised)

Prepared by Dr Andrea Pellegram, MRTPI

Introduction and purpose of this report

1. The Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan (LWNDP) was made on 12 October 2017 following a successful referendum on 7 September 2017. The “yes” vote was 59.9% of the electorate with a 92% majority in favour.
2. Despite strong community support, the LWNDP was not a successful planning framework when tested against the planning appeal at Fieldside Track, Didcot Road (APP/W3115/W/17/3169755). The Parish Council objected to the proposal and that view was shared by the planning authority who determined that they would have refused the proposal had they been in a position to do so. However, the deemed refusal was overturned at appeal and the development for up to 36 houses was allowed.
3. The Parish Council gave evidence at the planning inquiry seeking to use the LWNDP as the basis for the inspector to uphold the council’s decision. However, the planning application was considered in the circumstances where there was no 5-year housing land supply and the inspector gave the need for additional new housing weight in his decision.
4. In his decision report for the appeal, the inspector gave little weight to LWNDP policies and the argument that the proposal would jeopardize the Community Right to Build Order (CRTBO) which was the preferred means of providing the community hub. The LWNDP steering group and the Parish Council determined that the LWNDP should be immediately reviewed with the intention of strengthening the approach so that the interests of the village would be given more weight in future planning decisions.
5. The LWNDP did not allocate sites. Because of this, the inspector was not able to apply the terms of the Ministerial Statement (December 2016) which requires only a three-year land supply to be proven where sites are allocated in an NDP.) This has now been overtaken by para. 14 of the NPPF 2019.
6. The Parish Council considered that, by entering into an immediate review, it would be possible to rely upon the data and evidence from the September 2017 made version because it would be less than 3 years old (most of the substantive evidence was gathered in 2015/2016.) The community’s views that the plan met their expectations was ratified in the 2017 referendum.
7. The RLWNDP was subject to Regulation 14 in autumn 2018 and was submitted to SODC in October 2018. During the examination, significant objections were raised by Historic England regarding the archaeological significance of the site allocation for the community hub, and following advice from the Examiner, the Parish Council withdrew the NDP in order to resolve matters. Since that time, the Parish Council has worked with its preferred

developer for the hub scheme who have commissioned archaeological reports regarding the site. The scheme has been modified to take account of these findings, and the RLWNDP has been modified accordingly. This is revised set of documents which take account of this new evidence. This report considers the planning policy context for the review of the LWNDP, taking account of the appeal decision and the concerns of Historic England.

8. This report will form part of the evidence base for the review of the LWNDP. Part 1 of the report sets out the policies in the development plan as they are relevant to the entire LWNDP review. Part 2 of the report considers the policy implications for the proposed site allocations.

Part 1: Development Plan policies relevant to the review of the LWNDP

9. **The Development Plan for the RLWNDP is the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, December 2020 and the made Long Wittenham NDP.**

Viability of the Community Hub and policy LW1

10. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that:

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

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

12. PPG goes on to say that:

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

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

and

Assessing the viability of plans does not require individual testing of every site or assurance that individual sites are viable; site typologies may be used to determine viability at policy level. Assessment of samples of sites may be helpful to support evidence and more detailed assessment may be necessary for particular areas or key sites on which the delivery of the plan relies.

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 10-006-20140306

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

Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 10-014-20140306

Discussion

13. No formal viability assessment has been prepared since the proposal will occur in the future and commercial decisions cannot be anticipated in order to carry out an assessment. The preferred developer who is working with the Parish Council has provided viability evidence but this is commercially confidential and has not been included in the evidence papers though it will be made available to the planning authority on request. The site assessment methodology will ensure that any site allocations will be supported by relevant policy which is in line with the PPG advice.
14. The community hub will be a partnership between public and private stakeholders. Those in the public sector, such as the school and the Parish Council, have limited financial resources and the proposals should ideally be cost-neutral to them.
15. There is evidence that the hub proposal is viable because there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Parish Council, a landowner, a developer indicating that they believe the scheme to be viable. A key factor in this is the value of the land which is being offered at a philanthropic rate far below market value (the rate for a community facility as per the South Oxfordshire CIL). Agreements have been signed between all partner which is described more fully in **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations**.
16. In support of the Parish Council's case before the inspector¹, reference was made to the December 2014 report by Savills considered the overall viability of a hub proposal. It concluded that, as a starting point, the land value that would be required to render the proposal cost neutral, taking account of sale of the Village Hall and school land, would be in the order of £130,000-150,000 per acre.² The report highlights that the standard range of residential development land values are between £1.1 million and £1.5 million per acre.³
17. The Savills report was the benchmark for the Parish Council's negotiations on land value: one of the key "success criteria" for the hub allocation assessment is the value attributed

¹ APP/W3115/W/17/3169755

² Savills, December 2014, *Long Wittenham Village Hub*, page 7.

³ Ibid, page 5.

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

18. The proposal must comply with planning policies for affordable housing according to Local Plan policy H9.

Site assessment

19. Full guidance for undertaking site assessments in neighbourhood plans is set out in My Community's "Site Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: A toolkit for Neighbourhood Planners".
20. Any type of site for any land use may be allocated in an NDP. The reviewed NDP will contain two types of land allocation.
21. Housing allocations are, in the first instance, the responsibility of the local planning authority according to para. 17 of the NPPF 2019 to include strategic policies which under para. 60 should consider housing.
22. Para. 13 states that NDPs should be support the delivery of these strategic policies.

Strategic development strategy

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

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

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

For the 15 year period recommended for HELAA documents (as opposed to the longer Plan period), there is therefore an indicative capacity for 22,066 dwellings. In addition, the additional capacity for homes on HELAA sites beyond this 15 year

period brings the total indicative capacity to 1,536 dwellings (excluding completions and commitments). Including completions and commitments, this therefore results in an indicative capacity of 31,250 units within the 15 year period, and 32,786 in total.

In addition to the sites above which are identified solely for housing use, there is capacity for up to 58,098 dwellings on sites which are be suitable for a potential mix of housing and employment uses (either a mix of uses or one or the other). This figure is a theoretical maximum indicating the potential housing delivery were these sites to be built solely for housing use. ⁴

The HELAA did not consider the contribution from windfall sites.

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

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

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

⁴ Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2017, pages 1-2.

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

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

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

28. Long Wittenham falls short of the larger villages by some margin, and is particularly low-scoring on public transport. The earlier study indicated that this was to some degree offset by high employment and proximity to larger urban areas.
29. The Science Vale Area Action Plan underwent an Issues and Scope consultation in 2015. It identified Long Wittenham as within the AAP boundary. The proposed vision for the Science Vale was:

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

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

Didcot will be a vibrant, modern town and the attractive market town of Wantage will be enhanced. The attractive countryside will continue to be an important asset for Science Vale. It will be maintained and where needed, improved to support a high quality of life for residents. (emphasis added).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Consider the needs of people who wish build their own homes in appropriate locations.
- Protect the distinctive character and heritage of Science Vale’s market towns, villages and countryside.

Discussion

34. Long Wittenham has retained its hierarchical designation as a “smaller village” due mainly to its low score on transport sustainability and the number of facilities. However, it is near to Didcot and is within the proposed Science Vale action area so villagers can gain access to facilities but must rely upon private transport to do so though some bus services have recently been introduced.
35. Local Plan policy H1 allows for residential development on sites not allocated in the Development Plan will only be permitted where there are specific exceptions/circumstances defined in a Neighbourhood Development Plan which is the case here.
36. The emerging Science Vale action plan emphasizes the beneficial contribution of the rural hinterland in the action area and proposes objectives to protect the distinctive character of the villages and countryside.

Housing land allocation

37. Local Plan policy H8 Housing in the Smaller Villages again sets out the role of NDPs in allocating housing land.

1. The Council will support development within the Smaller Villages in accordance with Policy H16. Where a Parish Council wishes to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan and make housing allocations within it to support further growth, the Council will support this.

2. Those Neighbourhood Development Plans will need to demonstrate that the level of growth they are planning for is commensurate to the scale and character of their village, and this is expected to be around a 5% to 10% increase in dwellings above the number of dwellings in the village in the 2011 census (minus any completions since 1 April 2011).

3. Neighbourhood Development Plans allocating sites on greenfield sites in these locations should consider how development can meet the bespoke needs of their village, including housing mix, tenure and the amount of affordable housing.

Discussion

38. NPPF 2019 paras, 28,29 states that NDPs should be in conformity with the Local Plan policies and may not promote less development. Provided that the strategic provisions of the Local Plan are conformed with, the NDPs may allocate additional housing land “shape and direct sustainable development in their area”.
39. The LWNDP has indicated that it seeks to make provision for a community hub with enabling housing development. Evidence presented to the inspector at the planning inquiry estimated that this would be in the order of 47 additional houses in the village. Subsequent analysis and evidence in support of this review of the NDP has now estimated that 40-45 houses will be provided as part of the hub scheme.
40. The appeal allowed an additional up to 36 houses in the light of the absence of a 5-year housing land supply. Overall, since 2011, 43 dwellings were permitted in the parish. This is explained in detail in Part 4 of the Site Allocations evidence paper.
41. Together, these proposals far exceed the expectations of the Local Plan regarding housing delivery. However, under the provisions of the NPPF, it is acceptable for neighbourhood plans to provide excess housing over requirement provided that the proposal is a sustainable form of development and that any ensuing harm is outweighed by its benefits.

HOUSING MIX

42. Local Plan Policy H11: Housing Mix requires

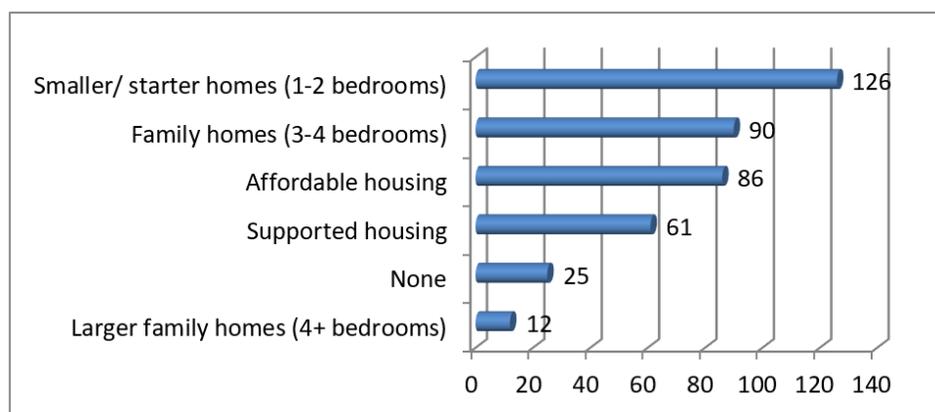
- 1. A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be sought on all new residential developments.**
- 2. All affordable housing and at least 15% of market housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more should be designed to meet the standards of Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings (or any replacement standards).**
- 3. At least 5% of affordable housing dwellings should be designed to the standards of Part M (4) Category 3: wheelchair accessible dwellings.**
- 4. All affordable housing and 1 and 2 bed market housing dwellings should be designed to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards.**
- 5. The mix of housing should have regard to the Council’s latest evidence and Neighbourhood Development Plan evidence for the relevant area.**

Discussion

43. The Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report (July 2015) indicated strong support for the development of more small housing units and more affordable units. Question 11 of the report is reproduced here. There was also strong support for the creation of new family homes.

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

178 respondents – 400 total choices



Community infrastructure

44. Local Plan policy INF1 states that new development must be served and supported by appropriate on-site and off-site infrastructure and services. Planning permission will only be granted for development where the infrastructure and services needed to meet the needs of the new development is already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale as set out in plans and strategies including the LWNDP or the RLWNDP.
45. The Community Infrastructure Levy CIL Regulation 123 List seeks contributions towards primary schools and sports and recreation but there is no specific allocation toward Long Wittenham and the provision is targeted at strategic housing allocations. However, it may be possible that some CIL funding can be diverted to the needs of Long Wittenham.

46. Discussion

47. The LWNDP sets out infrastructure requirements for the village to be paid from CIL funding in **Evidence Paper: Infrastructure Project List** .
48. The upheld appeal for up to 36 additional home is likely to yield approximately £650,000 in CIL contributions. Because there is a made LWNDP in place, 25% of this will go towards the Parish Council to fund the infrastructure identified in Appendix 3 of the LWNDP.
49. The community hub proposal (including all sites and all enabling housing) will yield in the order of another 45-50 houses which will also be subject to CIL. It can be estimated that, using the appeal proposal as a guide, the LWNDP will generate approximately £812,500 - £902,300 in total. 25% of this funding will be directed to the Parish Council. The Parish Council's CIL funding may be as much as £450-500,000 over the plan period.

Heritage and Design

50. Local Plan Policy ENV1 protects the countryside against inappropriate development. Local Plan policy ENV6 states that proposals for new development that affects heritage assets must conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and its setting. Policy DES2 states neighbourhood plan character assessment, positive features should be incorporated into the design of the development.
51. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) sets the local context for new development in the District. The LWNDP contains a Character Assessment which sets out a palette and a toolbox for creating new development which would complement and enhance the existing environment and contribute to the urban fabric of the village in a positive way.
52. The Long Wittenham conservation area is shown on maps A1 and A4 in the LWNDP Evidence Base (Appendix 1). The AONB and Green Belt boundaries are outside of the parish area but form a visual backdrop for the village and future development. Figure A2

shows the broad location of the viewing corridor for the view cones to Wittenham Clumps and which is afforded special protection under LWNDP LW4 (3).

53. The South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies the River Thames and Thames Path in Long Wittenham as an Existing Green Infrastructure Asset. Local Plan policy ENV1 states that development will only be permitted where it protects or enhances the landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames and its flood plains.

Discussion

54. LWNDP policy LW4 has been found in conformity with the local plan in the LWNDP examination and there are no intentions to substantively modify this policy in the review.
55. The hub proposal and enabling housing will however require careful design.
56. The hub proposal site, (Didcot Road) will be affected by the allowed planning appeal at Fieldside Track. That proposal will provide a screen between the proposed hub and enabling housing and the Conservation Area, though any future development of Didcot Road should consider its wider impact upon the conservation area and its relationship with the Fieldside Track proposal.
57. The character of the Thames Path and River Thames environs is supported by Long Wittenham's village character as set out in the Character Assessment. Major developments have been permitted on the outskirts of Didcot. It would be undesirable in landscape terms to allow for a coalescence due to further development in the gap between Didcot and Long Wittenham along the River Thames or its floodplain.

Archaeology

58. Local Plan policy ENV6: Historic Environment states that proposals for new development that may affect designated and nondesignated heritage assets should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of those assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. The policy goes on to state in Clause 2:

Proposals for new development should be sensitively designed and should not cause harm to the historic environment. Proposals that have an impact on heritage assets (designated and non-designated) will be supported particularly where they:

- i) conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and settings. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that will be given to its conservation;*
- ii) make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (through high standards of design, reflecting its significance, including through the use of appropriate materials and construction techniques);*

- iii) *make a positive contribution towards wider public benefits;*
- iv) *provide a viable future use for a heritage asset that is consistent with the conservation of its significance; and/or*
- v) *protect a heritage asset that is currently at risk*

59. Long Wittenham is known to be an area of particularly high archaeological potential documented both through finds of significant remains of Anglo-Saxon funerary remains excavated during the 19th and 20th centuries as well as through recording of crop marks seen in aerial photographs suggesting an area of historic settlement (shown through excavations in 2015 and 2016 to be a multi-period site including elements of both Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon character) on the southern edge of the present settlement, as well as earlier prehistoric settlement and trackway remains seen elsewhere in the area. Some of these areas have been designated as scheduled monuments, but other non-designated areas may yet be of equal national archaeological interest.

60. A full discussion of archaeology is put forward in a separate Evidence Paper.

Sustainable Transport

61. Local Plan Policy TRANS2 seeks to ensure that new development is designed to encourage walking and cycling, not only within the development, but also to nearby facilities, employment and public transport hubs. The policy supports the provision of measures which improve cycling and walking networks. Local Plan policy TRANS5 seeks to ensure that development should provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians.

62. In its response to the Regulation 14 consultation, Oxfordshire County Council responding on behalf of the Highways Authority raised concerns that Long Wittenham lacked public transport and that they may object to new housing in the area until strategic highways improvements had been put into place. RLWNDP policy L9 proposes improvements to the footpath and cycle network which will go some way to addressing this concern. Parents will be able to access the new school by foot and cycle if they wish as required under RLWNDP L1W1.

Discussion

63. There are few employment opportunities in the village, limited bus services that are unlikely to be improved and a lack of interest in using bus services for commuting as evidenced by the LWNDP survey report: therefore the focus of the LWNDP is upon the provision of sustainable transport mainly for short local journeys, the purposes of leisure and accessing nearby villages. There are known capacity issues on the highway network on Clifton Hampden bridge and the A415 staggered crossroads. In terms of transport

accessibility, Long Wittenham is not considered to be a sustainable location for new development.

64. The LWNDP survey report showed strong support for the creation of a new cycle/footpath between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden and, if available, 57% of respondents felt they would use it at least once a week.
65. Appendix 3 of the LWNDP identifies several footpaths and cycle paths that might be funded by CIL contributions. And the Oxfordshire County Council and Science Vale project to link Culham to Harwell campuses with a cycle route comes via the village.

The new community hub scheme and associated housing should make appropriate provision for sustainable transport in the form of access by foot and cycle between the hub and the village and between the village and the countryside.

Parking

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

Discussion

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

Ecologically sensitive areas

68. Local Plan policy ENV2: Biodiversity – Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species ensures that development likely to result, either directly or indirectly to the loss, deterioration or harm to protected species will only be permitted if the need for, and benefits of the development outweigh the adverse effect on the interests and it can be demonstrated that it could not be located elsewhere and measures will be provided that would avoid, mitigate or as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects resulting from development.
69. Local Plan policy ENV3: Biodiversity supports development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district. All development should provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. As a minimum, there should be no net loss of biodiversity.
70. LWNDP policy LW6 identifies an ecologically sensitive strip of land to the south of Fieldside Track, which is the preferred habitat of the Roman Snail (*Helix pomatia*).

Discussion

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

Public Open Space

72. Local Plan Policy CF3: New Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities supports proposals for new sport and recreation facilities particularly where they are co-located with other community uses and are well related to the settlements they serve.

Discussion

73. The community hub proposal in LW1 seeks to introduce open space in the form of play areas and sports fields.

Minerals and Waste

74. Local Plan Policy EP5: Minerals Safeguarding Areas directs development away from Minerals Safeguarding Areas but where development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas cannot be avoided, developers are encouraged to extract minerals prior to non-mineral development taking place, where this is practical and environmentally feasible.
75. There are no waste designations on the sites.

Discussion

76. As explained in the site allocations evidence demonstrates, there are no alternative sites in the Parish where the hub proposal in LW1 can be provided. Though this is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area alongside the majority of all land in the Parish, this is in itself not a reason to abandon the potential allocation. The Minerals Planning Authority has indicated that it does not object to the scheme which is not proposed to extract minerals prior to development.

Community Facilities

77. Local Plan Policy CF1: Safeguarding Community Facilities resists the loss of community facilities unless the proposal would lead to the significant improvement of an existing facility or the replacement of an existing facility equally convenient to the local community it serves and with equivalent or improved facilities and it has been determined that the community facility is no longer needed.
78. Local Plan Policy CF : Provision of Community Facilities and Services states that Development proposals for the provision of new or extended community facilities and services will be supported, particularly where: i) they are located within or adjacent to the

built-up area of an existing settlement; ii) they would clearly meet an identified local need; and iii) they are accessible for all members of the community and promote social inclusion.

Discussion

79. The proposals in the RLWNDP LW1 and LW2 meet the provision for this policy as explained in the NDP supporting text and the site allocation evidence. Though there will be a loss of community facilities in LW2 (the Village Hall and the school) there will be a replacement with superior facilities in LW1. This has been done in detailed consultation with the community since it was first discussed in 2010 in the *Long Wittenham Vision*.

Part 2: Planning policy context for site allocations (hub, Village Hall, school)

Types of site allocations

80. **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations** sets out the types of site allocations proposed:

- a. A community hub site
- b. Safeguarding enabling land
- c. Village Hall Site (change of use to two dwellings)
- d. School Site (change of use to 5 dwellings with village green and enhanced war memorial
- e. Allocation of land for housing for sites that have been granted planning permission since 2011 under Emerging Local Plan policy H8.

85. The site assessment methodology identified the following development management policies as relevant to the allocations:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Housing mix and affordable housing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan policy H9 • SHMA 2014 • LWNDP LW3 |
| <p>Community infrastructure</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan policy INF, CF1, CF2. • LWNDP LW1, LW2 |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Heritage and Design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan ENV1, ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, ENV9, DES2, H16 • South Oxfordshire Design Guide • LWNDP LW1, LW3, LW4 |
| Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan policies TRANS2, TRANS5 • LWNDP policy LW6, LW6 |
| Ecology and biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan policies ENV2,ENV3 • LWNDP LW7 |
| Public Open Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan ENV5 |
| Minerals and Waste | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan EP5 |

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

COMMUNITY HUB SITE (DIDCOT ROAD)

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

Housing mix and affordable housing

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

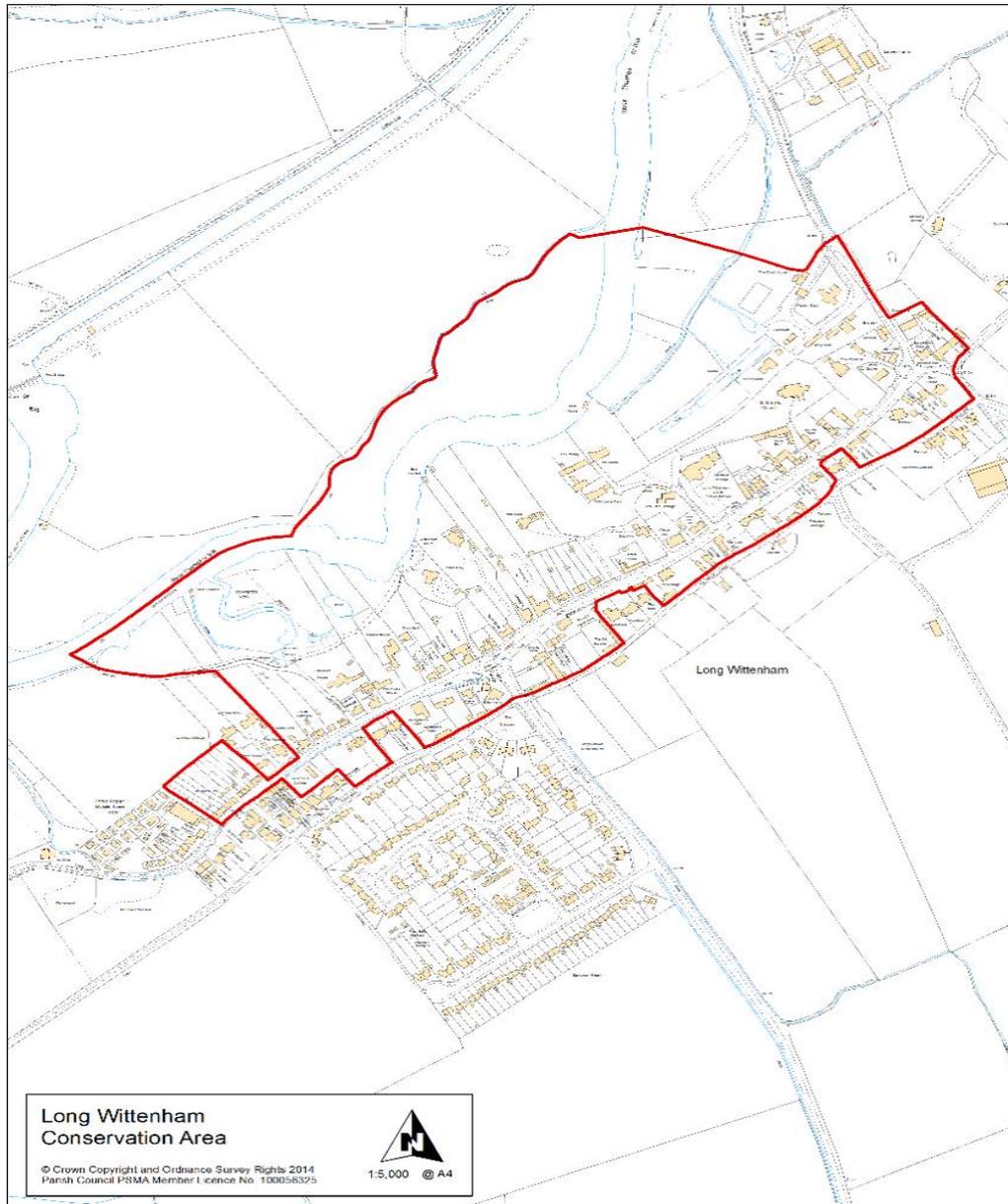
Community infrastructure

91. The community infrastructure requirements for the hub are set out in the LWNDP and the allocation methodology as: new primary school; pre-school; Village Hall; sports and community spaces; café; playing field; drop off and pick up points for children/parents.
92. The site is of sufficient size to accommodate the hub proposal.
93. The proposal for 40-45 houses will generate CIL funding at 25% which should assist the Parish Council in delivering necessary additional infrastructure, for instance improved access to other parts of the village so that the entire community can benefit from the hub development.
94. When considering the scheme's overall viability and the need to provide affordable housing, a suitable housing mix, and the need to provide high quality community infrastructure, the availability of CIL funding should be taken into account. Consideration should be given to the use of CIL funding from the CIL Regulation 123 list and the Parish Council's CIL funds.

Heritage and Design

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

Figure 1: Long Wittenham Conservation Area



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

98. The archaeological significance of the site is set out in Annex III of the 2021 SEA Environmental Report.

Transport

99. The site is well located on Didcot Road to allow for safe access to the highway, and is therefore capable of meeting the requirements of Emerging Local Plan policy TRANS5.
100. The LWNDP and the community survey have indicated that there are deficiencies in the footpath network in and around the village. LWNDP policy LW1 requires the hub proposal to create effective foot and cycle path links to the village and seeks to improve the overall foot and cycle path network across the village and links to rural areas and other villages. Footpath 287/5 runs across the site and links to the village high street. This link should be retained and improved.
101. All transport considerations and policies should be capable of being met on this site. It may be necessary to consider cross-subsiding the connections of the hub site to the surrounding village by foot and cycle path with CIL funding from the planning authority and parish funds.
102. Any hub development on this site should describe in detail how it will meet the provisions of TRANS2 and LW1 by acting as a sustainable transport hub for the village, enabling local people to access community infrastructure by modes of transport other than the car. Off-site provision may be necessary to achieve this, and this can be secured through S106 contributions and the use of CIL contributions in unilateral agreements between the developer, the Parish Council and the planning authority.
103. Overall, the community hub scheme on this site should be capable of meeting the requirement of Local Plan policy TRANS2, TRANS5, Local Plan policy T1 and LWNDP policy LW5. Also it will reduce congestion in the High Street .

Ecology and biodiversity

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

Public Open Space

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

Minerals and Waste

107. The site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and is safeguarded against development that would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of the mineral under policy EP5. However, the County Council has raised no objection to the development of this site for this purpose under this policy.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

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

Village Hall Site (change of use to two dwellings)

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

Housing mix and affordable housing

110. Local Plan policy H9 requires affordable housing for sites with a net gain of 10 or more houses. The policy does not apply here because the proposal is beneath this limit.

Community infrastructure

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

Heritage and Design

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

Transport

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

Ecology and biodiversity

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

OVERALL CONCLUSION

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

School Site (change of use to 5 dwellings with village green and enhanced war memorial)

Housing mix and affordable housing

116. The site is located on the village High Street and within the Long Wittenham Conservation Area. It is approximately 0.2 ha in size. Immediately on the street frontage sits the War Memorial which is a listed structure. There are a number of listed structures and buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site. To the north of the site is the manor house and old cock pit, to the east is the cemetery, and to the west is a private access road.
117. The proposal would be aligned with Local Plan policy H8 in that it is a small scale proposal progressed through a neighbourhood plan.

Community infrastructure

118. The LWNDP allocation anticipates that a village green will be created on part of the site which exceeds any proportionate requirements for community infrastructure. The development will be subject to CIL and will contribute in that regard as well. The allocation is therefore capable of meeting the requirements of Local Plan policy INF1 and LWNDP LW2.

Heritage and Design

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

Transport

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

Ecology and biodiversity

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

Public Open Space

122. There are currently playing fields associated with the school on the site. These will be reconfigured to provide a village green and enhanced setting for the war memorial. The allocation is therefore capable of meeting the requirements of Local Plan policies CF3, CF4 and CF5.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

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