

# BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2011 – 2035

CONTRIBUTING TO  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Brightwell cum Sotwell**  
Neighbourhood Plan



Published by Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council

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## **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

1. This report uses the framework established for the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2032 Sustainability Report (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) (“SA/SEA Report”) of February 2017 to ensure that the modifications to the Brightwell-cum- Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan (“the Modified Plan”) are appropriately considered for any significant social, environmental and economic effects.
2. The main purpose of the report is to present an appraisal of the proposed modifications, rather than the Modified Plan as a whole. However, consideration is given to the cumulative effects of the modifications in terms of their overall influence across the entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan, where appropriate.
3. The Modified Plan seeks to modify 10 existing policies and add 3 new policies of the made Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan (“the Neighbourhood Plan”). One policy has been deleted as a scheme has been approved and built. The Modified Plan has been approved by the Qualifying Body, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) for Regulation 14 consultation under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) and for submission now.
4. The report ensures that the Modified Plan will meet the ‘basic conditions’ in respect of showing how the policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
5. The proposed modifications are not considered to change the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan as detailed in the Modification Statement. The main sustainability issues in the Parish remain, although the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan have resulted in the affordable housing need identified now having been met. The proposed modifications are intended to ensure the continued deliverability of the Neighbourhood Plan and to improve clarity for more effective implementation.
6. There have been changes to national planning policy with the National Planning Policy Framework of July 2021 and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan was adopted in December 2020. However, neither are considered to make a material difference to the scope of sustainability objectives used in 2017 and this report therefore continues to apply the SA Framework established in the Final SA/SEA Report.
7. The assessment indicates that the majority of the effects of the preferred modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan will be neutral, but with important positive effects in some cases. However, there remains potential for some negative effects, but such effects have been addressed through avoidance or mitigation measures.
8. It can therefore be concluded that the Modified Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report uses the framework established for the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2032 Sustainability Report (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) (“SA/SEA Report”) of February 2017 to ensure that the modifications to the Brightwell-cum- Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan (“the Modified Plan”) are appropriately considered for any significant social, environmental and economic effects.

1.2 The Modified Plan seeks to modify 10 existing policies and add 3 new policies of the made Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan (“the Neighbourhood Plan”). One policy has been deleted as a scheme has been approved and built. The Modified Plan has been approved by the Qualifying Body, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) for Regulation 14 consultation under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) and for submission now.

1.3 The main purpose of the report is to present an appraisal of the proposed modifications, rather than the Modified Plan as a whole. However, consideration is given to the cumulative effects of the modifications in terms of their overall influence across the entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan, where appropriate.

1.4 The report ensures that the Modified Plan will meet the ‘basic conditions’ in respect of showing how the policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

1.5 There have been changes to national planning policy with the National Planning Policy Framework of July 2021 and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan was adopted in December 2020. However, neither are considered to make a material difference to the scope of sustainability objectives used in 2017 and this report therefore continues to apply the SA Framework established in the Final SA/SEA Report.

1.6 The proposed modifications are not considered to change the nature of the plan, as set out in the Modification Statement accompanying the Modified Plan.

1.7 The report provides an assessment of the modifications to existing policies and the additional new policies and seeks to do it in a way that is proportionate to this task and that recognises the limitations of the available data and means of measuring direct impacts.

1.8 The Modified Plan does not contain any new site allocations. The modified and new policies either sets out criteria by which development proposals should be judged or comprise a series of criteria-based landscape, green space and design proposals for development management purposes.

## **2. Background**

2.1 The proposed modifications are not considered to change the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan as detailed in the Modification Statement. The main sustainability issues in the Parish remain, although the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan have resulted in the affordable housing need identified now having been met. The proposed modifications are intended to ensure the continued deliverability of the Neighbourhood Plan and to improve clarity for more effective implementation.

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has since been updated; however, the Neighbourhood Plan continues to be consistent with the provisions of the latest version of the NPPF and the Modified Plan includes modifications where appropriate. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2035 has now been adopted and reflects the provisions in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Modification Proposals includes modifications where appropriate. The Modified Plan has updated references to the NPPF and the Local Plan.

2.3 This report continues to apply the SA Framework established in the Final SA/SEA Report of February 2017, copied in Table A overleaf.

<b>Key Message from Policy Context</b>	<b>Sustainability Objective</b>
Increase housing supply, especially affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help provide existing and future residents with an opportunity to live in a decent home, by delivering at least 10 new homes within the plan period</li> </ul>
Improve the quality and design of existing and new housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New development to enhance the overall quality and character of the Parish and maintain a strong sense of place</li> </ul>
Improve the mix of housing size and tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help ensure suitable homes are available to all sectors of the community</li> </ul>
Preservation and enhancement of the rural landscape and sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To conserve the rural nature of the parish as a vital lung for all surrounding settlements. To protect and maintain the network of rights of way.</li> <li>To protect and maintain important views, including those out and to the main settlements.</li> </ul>
Risk of Flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure flood risk from all sources is managed effectively and sustainably</li> </ul>
Risk of drought and water Shortage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the protection, improvement and sustainable use of water resources</li> </ul>
Threats to biodiversity and opportunities to enhance it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To conserve and enhance biodiversity</li> </ul>
Heritage assets and the historic environment are irreplaceable resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To conserve and enhance the Parish's built heritage for its historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place</li> </ul>
Increasing use of the road network within and through the Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To benefit the wellbeing of the community by the management of parking and traffic congestion</li> <li>encouraging walking and cycling</li> </ul>
Enhance the setting of new housing and conservation of rural setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To retain existing trees and hedgerows and design new landscaping to conserve and enhance the established character</li> </ul>

Table A: Framework of Sustainability Objectives

### 3. Assessment of Modification Proposal Policies

3.1 The Modification Proposal contains 3 new policies (shown as \*) and modifies 10 existing policies which have a series of social, environmental and/or economic impacts. Using the sustainability framework in Table A above, the assessment of each new and modified policy is summarised in Table B below. The assessment is of the proposed policies with their mitigation measures. One policy has been deleted as a scheme has been approved and built.

Modification Proposal Policies		Sustainability Objectives									
		Housing Supply	Design	Housing Mix	Landscape	Flooding	Water	Biodiversity	Heritage	Roads	Rural Character
BCS1	Brightwell cum Sotwell Village Boundary	+	0	0	+	0	0	0/-	0	+	0
BCS5	House Types and Tenures*	+	+	+/0	0	0	0	0/-	0	0	0
BCS6	Design Code	0	+	0	+/0	+/0	0	+/0	+	+/0	+
BCS7	Assets of local heritage value	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+
BCS8	Local Green Spaces	0	0	0	+	0	0	+/0	+	0	+
BCS9	Local Gaps	0	0	0	+	0	0	+/0	0	0	+
BCS10	Landscape Character	0	+/0	0	+	0	0	+/0	+/0	0	+
BCS11	Dark Skies*	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+
BCS12	The Green Heart	0	0	0	+	0	0	+/0	0	0	+
BCS13	Local Nature Recovery	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	+

BCS14	Natural Flood Management*	0	0	0	0	+	0	+/0	0	0	+
BCS16	Renewable Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BCS17	Community Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0

*Table B: Comparison of Modified Policies and Sustainability Objectives*

### **Policy BCS1**

3.2 No changes have been made to the Village Boundary or the spatial strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan and so the original assessment remains valid. The modified policy clarifies how new sustainable economic development and new or extended community facilities, including sport and recreation facilities, proposals should be judged. By protecting defined Local Gaps, Key Views and local landscape character, the policy avoids a negative effect on the rural character of the village.

### **Policy BCS5**

3.3 The policy is two-fold, firstly it responds to the First Homes policy initiative introduced by the Government in 2021 by establishing criteria for Exception Schemes. Secondly, the policy responds to the prompt set out in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy H13 in respect of older persons accommodation.

3.4 The policy has a positive housing supply effect, allowing for up to 9 new homes to be delivered in the plan period. If such a scheme is delivered during the plan period, the minimum 30% discount on market value homes, capped at £250,000 on its first sale, ought to allow smaller and more affordable homes to contribute to rebalancing the housing mix in the Parish resulting in a positive housing mix effect. Given that there are many other, well located, larger villages and towns in the district better suited to providing specialist accommodation for older people, and the Neighbourhood Plan delivers a mix of housing to meet local needs, the policy avoids negative housing mix effects.

3.5 By directing future First Homes Exception Sites to those parts of the defined Village Boundary where development may be appropriate the policy avoids any significant negative landscape, heritage and traffic effects. Other provisions of the development plan, such as addressing biodiversity effects and delivering a net gain on sites where a loss is unavoidable, will continue to apply to First Homes Exception Site schemes. It is not considered necessary to duplicate this requirement here.

### **Policies BCS6 – BCS14**

3.6 The original assessment remains valid for these design, heritage, local gaps, landscape, green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity policies as the aim continues to reflect the intention of improving the management of development through the consideration of details that are specific to this Parish. The design code (BCS6) is much more prescriptive in this respect and contains detailed design codes in respect of assets of local heritage value (BCS7), the landscape, flooding and roads which ought to lead to more positive design

outcomes in respect of these matters. The effects of new Policies BCS11 and BCS13 are generally neutral but there are some positive effects, as they seek to minimise light pollution (BCS11), capture the importance of natural flood management measures in reducing flood risk as well as wider ecosystem benefits, they may deliver (BCS13), and seek to conserve the rural character of the Parish (all).

3.7 Given the Modification Proposal does not change the very positive housing supply effect as a result of its policies, the constraining nature of these policies on new development will not have negative effects, and still allow for small infill or redevelopment schemes of the right scale and design.

#### **Policies BCS16 – BCS17**

3.8 The original assessment remains valid for these modified policies.

### **4. Summary of the Assessment**

4.1 The assessment indicates that the majority of the effects of the preferred modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan will be neutral, but with important positive effects in some cases. However, there remains potential for some negative effects, but such effects have been addressed through avoidance or mitigation measures.

4.2 It can therefore be concluded that the Modified Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.



## **APPENDIX A**

**Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan Final SA/SEA Report – February 2017**

Brightwell Cum Sotwell NP

The Clerk  
Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Council  
The Parish Office  
The Village Hall  
Brightwell cum Sotwell  
Nr. Wallingford  
Oxon

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Neighbourhood Plan

