

Reviewed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2035



September
2022

Made Version

FOREWORD BY CHAIRMAN

We are very proud to write an introduction to our revised Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

A Neighbourhood Development Plan gives residents the opportunity to identify how they would like their village to develop over the next 15 years and gives the Parish Council and District Council additional control over any planning applications that are proposed.

Our plan started life several years ago with the excellent work done by the Wittenham Vision group. With changes to Planning law in 2011, the Parish Council decided to embark on our NDP in 2014. It has been a massive commitment largely undertaken by volunteers on the Steering Group which has been very ably chaired by Peter Rose. The Steering Group was drawn from the various organizations (including the Head Teacher and Governors of the school), clubs and interest groups around the village to make sure it was truly representative. We have also held many consultation events and a village survey. We were delighted that the turn out for the referendum for the original plan was one of the highest recorded in the country and the result showed resounding support for the plan.

The whole village was disappointed and frustrated by subsequent events when a planning application that we considered outside our NDP was passed, following a public inquiry. We took expert advice following this which suggested that we could strengthen our plan by revising some of the policies. This document is the result of that work.

Gordon Rogers, Chair Long Wittenham Parish Council 2017-2022

Steve Brown, Current Chair Long Wittenham Parish Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| FOREWORD BY CHAIRMAN | 1 |
| NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING | 4 |
| Figure 1: Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan Area | 5 |
| THE HISTORY OF LONG WITTENHAM | 6 |
| Figure 2: OS map 1888 - 1913 | 9 |
| Figure 3: OS map 1955-1961 | 10 |
| Figure 4: Satellite image of Long Wittenham in relation to Didcot (March 2018, Bing) | 11 |
| VILLAGE PROFILE | 12 |
| Figure 5: Sketch by Paul Nash | 12 |
| OUR CHALLENGES | 14 |
| The Village Hall | 14 |
| The pre-school | 15 |
| The primary school | 15 |
| The lack of a shop | 16 |
| Traffic and parking | 16 |
| Distance to services and reliance on cars | 16 |
| NDP VISION | 18 |
| In the year 2035, Long Wittenham will be a place where: | 18 |
| REALISING THE VISION | 19 |
| DEVELOPMENT PATTERN | 20 |
| Figure 6: Community Hub Development Sites | 23 |
| COMMUNITY HUB SITE | 24 |
| Figure 7: Scheduled Monuments In And Around Long Wittenham Parish | 25 |
| Policy LW1: Community Hub | 27 |
| SAFEGUARDING LAND FOR COMMUNITY HUB | 29 |
| Policy LW2: Safeguarded sites | 30 |
| HOUSING MIX | 31 |
| Policy LW3: Housing Mix | 32 |
| COUNTRYSIDE | 33 |

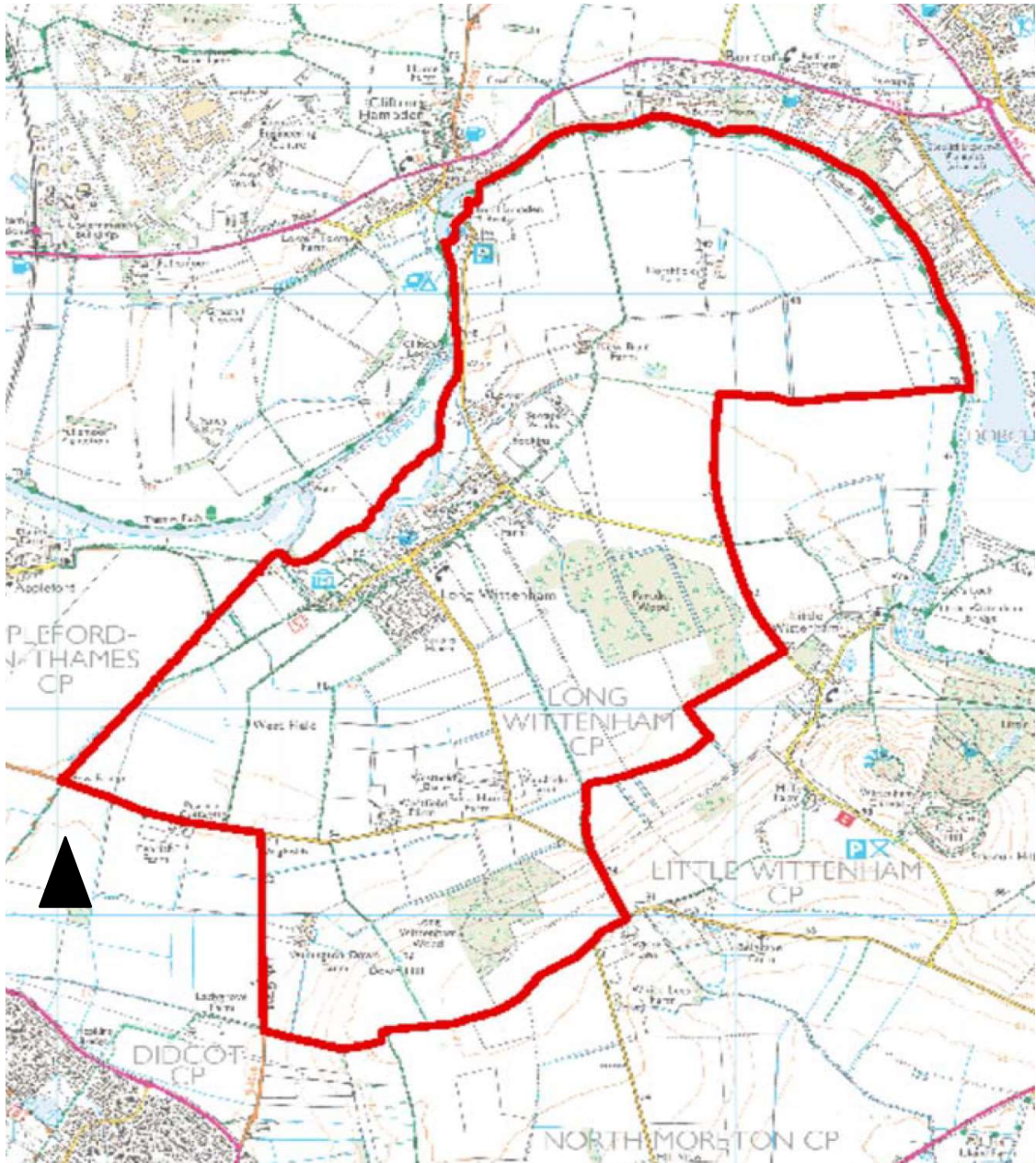
| | |
|---|-----------|
| Figure 8: Development Constraints | 35 |
| LW4: Countryside | 36 |
| PROTECTED VIEWS | 36 |
| Figure 9: Key views | 38 |
| Policy LW5: Protected Key Views | 39 |
| Figure 10: Listed buildings and structures in Long Wittenham | 41 |
| Figure 11: Long Wittenham Conservation Area | 42 |
| Policy LW6: Heritage and Design | 44 |
| CYCLE AND FOOTPATHS | 45 |
| Policy LW7: Cycle and Footpaths | 46 |
| PARKING | 47 |
| Policy LW8: Off-street parking | 47 |
| ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA | 48 |
| Figure 12: Aug 2016 Helix pomatia along Fieldside (OX14 4QJ) (Tony Leatham) | 48 |
| Figure 13: Ecologically sensitive zone and Roman Snail habitat | 49 |
| Policy LW9: Ecologically Sensitive Areas | 49 |
| COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE | 50 |
| Community Objective: Infrastructure | 50 |
| IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING | 51 |
| Implementation | 51 |
| Monitoring | 51 |
| Twelve Month Review | 51 |
| Five Year Review | 51 |
| End of Plan Period Review | 51 |
| Monitoring of the Plan against national policy | 51 |
| LIST OF EVIDENCE PAPERS | 52 |
| Acronyms | 52 |



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of planning policy giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) designated the parish as a Neighbourhood Area in October 2014. The Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by a steering group including parish councillors and community volunteers with support from Community First Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire District Council. Professional support has been provided by Andrea Pellegram MRTPI and AECOM through Locality.
2. The original 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. However, despite strong community support, the plan as written was not successful in focusing new development to the community hub site which was the key objective of the NDP, and it was decided to proceed to an immediate review.
3. This document takes the made LWNDP as its starting point, clarifies the existing policies (taking account of changes to the local development plan), to revise and update the existing suite of policies. It will be referred to as “the proposed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan” (NDP) or the Reviewed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan (RLWNDP).
4. 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. 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.
5. The NDP sets out a plan for a sustainable future for the village, encompassing the views and needs of the residents. The NDP reflects community comments and concerns that emerged from consultation and is based on a substantial evidence base set out as separate Evidence Papers.
6. The NDP policies are in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) and are based upon evidence from the made LWNDP (2017) and the Development Plan for the District (South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011- 2035, adopted December 2020).
7. The NDP meets the community’s aim of ensuring that Long Wittenham continues to thrive, whilst retaining its unique and distinctive character and providing an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations of residents. The NDP is intended to run in parallel with the new Local Plan for South Oxfordshire until 2035.
8. The made NDP forms part of South Oxfordshire District’s Development Plan. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the decision-making framework as development proposals come forward. The NDP area is shown in **Figure 1**.

FIGURE 1: LONG WITTENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA



9. A steering group took the original LWNDP forward, supported by independent advisors Community First Oxfordshire and planning consultant David Potter MRTPI. This revision has been prepared by the Parish Council's planning consultant, Andrea Pellegram MRTPI.
10. The NDP has been written considering the context of European Conventions, National Policy & Guidance and the Development Plan.

11. The steering group followed a community consultation strategy and encouraged community involvement through open meetings, via newsletters and emails, the website and a survey which assessed housing need and other key issues for the village.
12. At each stage in the process, elements such as the baseline evidence, the plan objectives, alternatives and draft policies have been refined in response to feedback from residents and statutory consultees. New and updated evidence was considered in the review.

THE HISTORY OF LONG WITTENHAM

13. People have lived in this area since the Stone Age. At that time there were woolly mammoths and sabre-tooth tigers here too. The region was densely forested with the woodland and rivers providing food, shelter, clothing and fuel for the early inhabitants who were hunter-gatherers. Later the forests were cleared for agriculture and the people became more settled and society more structured as evident from the 'ritual landscape' of the Upper Thames Valley which included Big Rings at Dorchester where there was evidence of Bronze Age burials.
14. By the beginning of the Iron Age, this area became the focus of tribal tensions between established tribes, locally the Bodunni (to the north west), the Catuvellauni (to the northeast) and the Atrebates (to the south) resulting in the building of the hill fort at Castle Hill, Wittenham Clumps. In Long Wittenham an Iron Age round house was excavated in 2017 by archaeologists from the Department of Continuing Education at Oxford University and volunteers. The Wittenham Sword and the Wittenham Shield, both found in the River Thames near to the village and both from the Iron Age are now on display in the Ashmolean Museum.
15. By the first century AD, the focus of the settlement shifted to an oppidum or trading centre at Dorchester, established using the natural loops of the rivers Thame and Thames augmented by building large earth banks known as Dyke Hills to complete the defences. The remains of Dyke Hills can be clearly seen today and are a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
16. Soon after the invasion of 47AD the Romans began to build their own military settlement not far from the oppidum. This became a major point on the road between Silchester and Alcester and later a small civilian town and important regional administrative and distribution centre. We know the Romans walked this way as a Roman brooch was found under the floor at Church Cottage in the village when installing a damp-proof course. They integrated themselves into the local area so when the Roman army left in the early 400s AD, their influence and local presence remained; there is a Romano-British settlement at Northfield Farm, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
17. The Saxons arrived in the fifth century and settled here by the river. We believe it was Witta and his family giving us the name Long Wittenham. It was a substantial settlement as reflected in the cemetery excavated by John Akerman in the 1860s, when over one hundred skeletons were found. Other finds include pots and rings, many now in the Ashmolean. This is just part of the extensive Saxon heritage and landscape in this area with a Saxon hall house found at Sutton Courtney and several Saxon cemeteries have been excavated nearby. In 2016, a large Saxon house was excavated behind the Community Orchard at the east end of the village. A bid for Heritage Lottery Fund grant was successful, and this will become a centre for Saxon re-enactment and education. The Anglo Saxon Hall has now been built.

18. Birinus, later Saint Birinus, was sent by the Pope to re-Christianise this area. Augustine had success in Kent but after the Romans left, the locals here had lapsed back into paganism. It was Birinus who came in 635AD and converted the local ruler, Cynegils, King of Wessex, to Christianity. The cross in the village is where Birinus also preached to the villagers who later built a church here.
19. The Normans arrived in 1066 and changed life forever. By this time the land was organised into manors with a manor house and land. Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, was Lord of the Manor of Long Wittenham in 1066 and it was only when she died in 1075 that William the Conqueror gave the manor to one of his knights, Walter Giffard. It was his grandson, also Walter, who started to build the church here in 1120. We are a Domesday village with the land and people recorded in the survey of 1086.
20. The manorial way of life continued with a manorial court establishing which arable crop would be grown each year in which part of the manor and which should be left fallow. The land was divided into two large areas- the West Field and the North Field and then into furlongs and these into strips. This way of working the land stayed much the same until gradually the land was enclosed, that is, divided up into smaller fields marked with hedges and ditches. In Long Wittenham, this did not happen until 1809-1812, with an Act of Parliament. The new way was needed as agricultural equipment improved and farming methods changed. But as ever the winners were the wealthy farmers and the losers were those who had just a few acres and couldn't afford to pay for the hedging and had to give up their land, and the poor who had no land and lost their rights to graze animals and cut wood on the common land.
21. The Lord of the Manor changed over the centuries, sometimes through inheritance and sometimes by sale. Gilbert de Clare was Lord of the Manor here in the thirteenth century with the south chapel at the church built as a memorial to him in 1295. However by 1547, there were no more heirs and the land reverted to the Crown. It was bought in 1554 by Thomas White who founded St John's College in Oxford and bought up several manors to provide his college with an income in rent; money, wheat, oats, barley, wood and so on. Ever since then, and until quite recently, the President and Scholars of St John's College have been the Lords of the Manor. Now however, nearly all the houses (they owned about two thirds of the total) and much of the land has been sold.
22. The First World War shattered the rural way of life with fourteen men and boys losing their lives, all from established Wittenham families. They are remembered every Armistice Day with a service at the War Memorial with wreaths laid and short biographies of some of those named read by pupils from the school. Fortunately, the village suffered no losses in the Second World War but did its bit, taking in evacuees from London, bottling fruit and making jam. Everyone was issued with gas masks and tank traps, and pill boxes were erected in case of invasion along the river.
23. Until the 1960s, it was still a largely unassuming farming village, self-sufficient for most items – there were grocers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, bakers, drapers and five pubs. There were as many as fourteen farms then. But as machinery improved, the number of those employed as 'agricultural labourers' declined. Much of the land is still farmed but there are only two or three farms and far fewer people needed to run them. The Earth Trust now owns some of the land between Long and Little Wittenham and has planted trees – Paradise Wood named after

Paradise Furlong and Neptune Wood with oaks planted to celebrate HMS Neptune and the Battle of Trafalgar

24. Nowadays few people work on the land and most people go out of the village to work in London, Oxford, Didcot and the surrounding towns. There are several small businesses in the village; Plant-Rite, Pendon Museum, Earthwise, three pubs/restaurants, craftspeople at the Wood Centre, but the numbers are small.
25. Locally there are major employment sites at Harwell and Culham, both based on scientific research and development and Milton Park which is based on warehousing and distribution and scientific start-ups and innovation. The Science Vale has attracted huge inward investment from the government and private finance. An infrastructure of housing, shops, cinema, arts centre is growing, mainly centred on Didcot.
26. Although Long Wittenham has benefitted from some of this, these changes have contributed to the loss of public transport the bus service has resumed, but still reduced compared with former times, loss of our village shop and post office and to greatly increased traffic coming through the village.
27. The village was once a relatively large settlement in the area, dwarfing nearby Didcot. **Figure 2** shows the relationship of the two settlements at the turn of the last century. **Figure 3** shows the relationship in mid-century. **Figure 4** shows the current relationship. These maps show that, whilst Long Wittenham's built form has remained largely stable, Didcot has grown in size and influence in the area, and its borders are steadily encroaching on the parish. A recent planning permission resulted in a south western portion of Long Wittenham parish being transferred to Didcot Town Council, bringing Didcot's development boundary to the edge of the parish, now reduced in size.

FIGURE 2: OS MAP 1888 - 1913



FIGURE 3: OS MAP 1955-1961

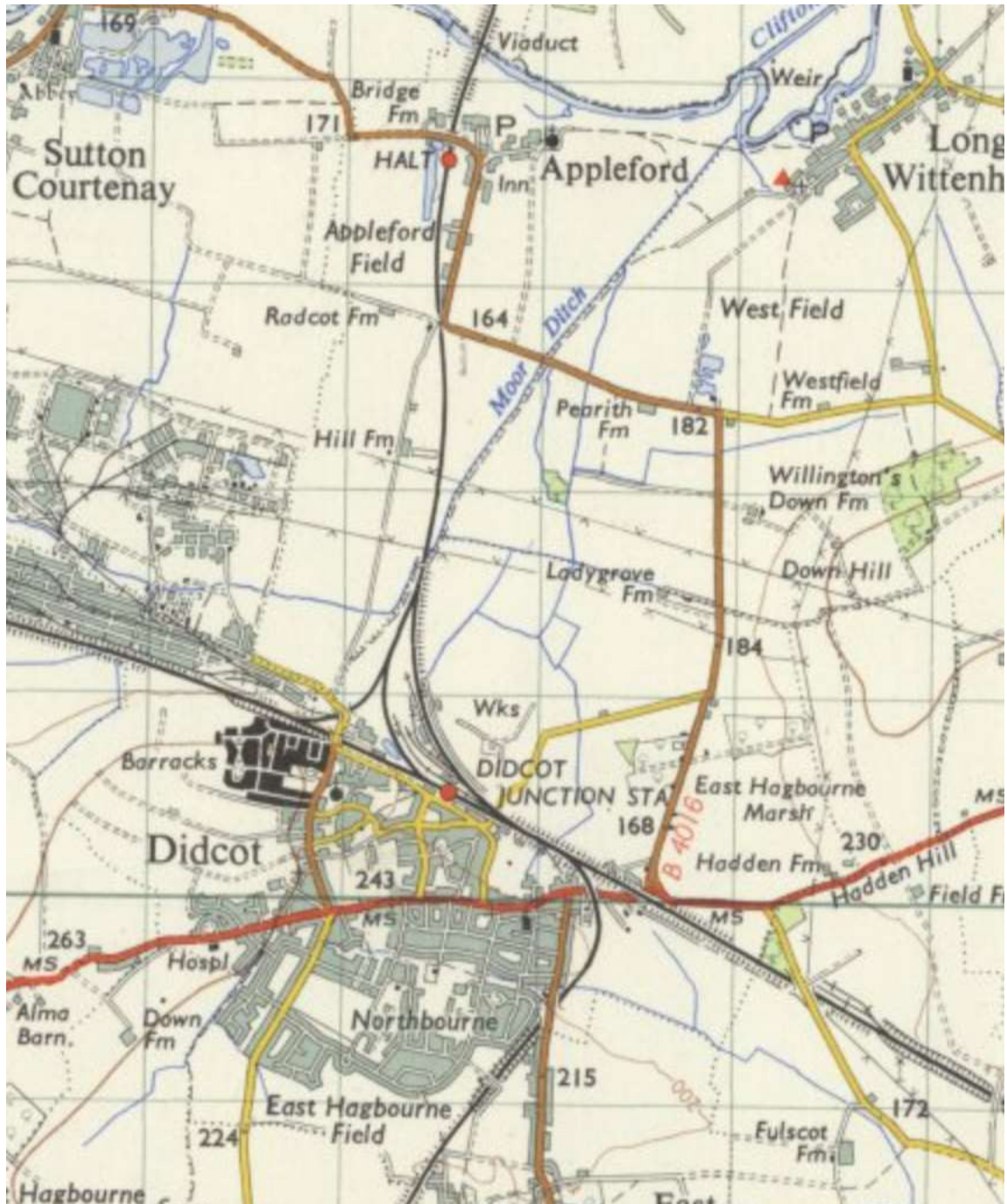


FIGURE 4: SATELLITE IMAGE OF LONG WITTENHAM IN RELATION TO DIDCOT (MARCH 2018, BING)



VILLAGE PROFILE

35. Long Wittenham parish is in the County of Oxfordshire, in South Oxfordshire District, 3 miles north of Didcot and 3.5 miles southeast of Abingdon. The village is located on the south bank of the River Thames in rolling countryside. To the south are clear views of Wittenham Clumps, a famous local landmark and viewpoint painted by artist Paul Nash (**Figure 5**). Though none of the parish lies in the Oxfordshire Green Belt, the River Thames marks its northern most boundary so that development in Long Wittenham forms the backdrop to the Green Belt. Likewise, though there is no AONB designation in the parish, the AONB encompasses the Wittenham Clumps, and again, the parish adjoins the AONB.

FIGURE 5: SKETCH BY PAUL NASH



Reproduced by kind permission of the Ashmolean Museum Oxford

36. Long Wittenham is a safe, caring and active community and residents find it a good place to live. According to the most recent survey undertaken in 2015, residents find it friendly, with great neighbourliness and community spirit. They like its rural location and its quiet and peaceful character with easy access to walking paths and attractive rural landscape. People also value the proximity to Didcot, Abingdon, Wallingford and Oxford for leisure and employment (including Science Vale).

37. The population is 875 residents living in 325 houses according to the 2011 census. There are slightly more children in the village (22%) than the national average (19%) but slightly fewer working age people (63% in the village and 65% nationally). There are fewer BME (6% in the village and 20% nationally).
38. There were 291 houses, 17 flats and 26 caravans in Long Wittenham in the 2011 census. 264 of the houses (82%) were owner occupied, 24 (7%) were rented and 36 (11%) were socially rented. Median house prices in Long Wittenham are higher than the national average. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey showed that the relatively high house prices have created a need for smaller starter homes, family homes and a limited amount of affordable housing. The high cost of housing and the lack of suitable housing were the main reasons given for respondents wanting to move but not being able to move within the village or return to the village from outside.
39. Overall, the village enjoys low crime rates, and relatively high prosperity.
40. There is no General Practitioner (GP) in the village, and the nearest surgery is in Clifton Hampden to the north (2.6 km away).
41. There were 490 adults age 16-74 who were economically active (76% in the village compared to 70% nationally) and significant number of people travel to work with only 8% working from home. This indicates that the private car is important to the economically active and that employment leads to travel to work journeys. Long Wittenham is within the Science Vale UK area of economic growth which includes Harwell, Milton Park and the Culham Science Centre.
42. Most of the village centre lies within the Long Wittenham Conservation area with 39 listed buildings. The village enjoys many local services such as a primary school, Village Hall, playing fields, an accessible and attractive countryside setting and two pubs and a bar-restaurant. However, as will be described below, the services provided by the local authorities are now somewhat out of date or no longer optimally located or appointed. A main driver behind the Neighbourhood Plan was to seek to improve these services to enhance the village for the people who live there.



OUR CHALLENGES

43. At first glance it would seem the village is well-provided for in terms of community facilities. It has a well-established school rated 'Needs improvement' in 2019, a thriving pre-school, a Village Hall, a church, two pubs and a bar-restaurant and a sports field. But closer inspection of the Village Hall and the school show all is not well.¹
44. The Village Hall and the school are both over 100 years old and showing their age. The Village Hall provides an adequate space for small events, for example our 'swap shop' or children's parties but is not suitable for larger events. It looks to be what it is: an old building that must 'make do'. The village is proud of and delighted to have a pre-school that facilitates early years education within the village. But this is provided at the cost of excluding any other group from using the Village Hall during preschool sessions. These total some 25 hours per week over a 36-week school year. In addition, pre-school equipment must be cleared away at the end of every session, limiting the scale of activity. In 2021, the pre-school still functioned but Covid stopped other uses of the Village Hall. In 2022 other users are slowly returning.
45. Societies and groups that in other villages would be using the Village Hall are obliged to meet in members' homes or, occasionally in the pub. These compromises are not conducive to development of community activities.
46. The adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 policy TRANS3: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes, safeguards land including for the widening of the A4130 at Didcot, Clifton Hampden Bypass, Didcot Science Bridge and Culham River Crossing.
47. In local surveys, and in the community engagement activities for this Neighbourhood Plan, villagers have consistently raised the same concerns.

The Village Hall

48. Although centrally sited and much valued by the groups who use it, the Village Hall is over 100 years old and lacks the modern facilities, parking and community space that people expect in a community building in the 21st century.
49. The current Village Hall is much loved by its users but requires extensive and costly repairs. It only has one room, which restricts its use. The toilet and kitchen facilities are basic, there are no disabled facilities, and there is very limited storage space. People in the village would like a facility that can provide a wider range of uses and has more



¹ Evidence Paper Site Allocations.

parking. The pre-school needs a permanent home rather than to be competing with other users of the Village Hall.

The pre-school

50. The pre-school is the Village Hall's primary user. When the pre-school is in session it is the sole user as there is only one room- the single space restricts use at other times. Other facilities, toilets and the kitchen are also inadequate.
51. The pre-school needs a dedicated building so that it does not have to pack equipment up after each session. It is not able to increase its opening hours as required by the government and is not therefore able to compete with other pre-schools which can offer longer sessions every weekday. The preschool has been unable to find a suitable site on which to build new premises despite efforts in the past.

The primary school

52. The primary school is popular, with good academic results, but the facilities are outdated and inadequate. Some of the current buildings date from 1854, some from the 1950s, with some more recent temporary modular buildings. The school fails to meet current policies for internal and external facilities.
53. The school has insufficient outside space. This fact has raised concerns within the village over the long-term future of the primary school. Loss of the school would undermine the sustainability of the village.
54. Advice commissioned by the school governors found that re-development of the school is not financially viable. The current school site is small with no opportunity to add a playing field. The current school hall cannot accommodate the whole school and would be difficult to upgrade to meet current requirements for disabled pupils. In 2020, the Parish Council was forced to pay for repairs to keep the school safe for children. The current school has high maintenance costs which could make it unviable in its current form, particularly given the prospect of a cluster of local primary schools forming an academy. The centre of population is now more to the west of the village so a school towards the west would be more easily accessible for more families.



The lack of a shop

55. Until 2005/2006, the village had its own shop and post office, but this closed when it became economically unviable. Finding suitable premises has been the main stumbling block to trying to run some sort of shop in the village, whether this is a monthly market, community-run shop or just a supply of basic commodities. Realistically, it is doubtful whether a commercial shop would be viable.

Traffic and parking

56. The speed and the volume of the traffic going through the village and the road rage is a concern together with the noise and pollution that is caused by congestion when cars park along the high street for school drop off and pick up or when there is an event at the Village Hall.
57. A recent traffic survey showed that although overall traffic flows are not excessive, traffic volume is high at peak times, resulting in severe congestion in the high street. This is because the road through the village is used as a route from Didcot to Oxford or the M40, compounded by the parking problems in the high street. This problem should eventually be addressed by the proposed additional Thames river crossing, if it is built. Traffic surveys show that many cars exceed the speed limit at the entry and exit points to the village. The Parish Council has been working with Oxfordshire County Council as the Highways Authority to agree plans for speed reduction with traffic calming and this has resulted in a 20mph speed limit in the village.
58. In addition to these problems in the high street, the quality of the roads approaching the village is poor. Access is constrained from the north east by a single lane bridge and a road that is frequently impassable through flooding. In the winter 2014/5 and again in 2020/21, the road was impassable for a number of weeks.
59. Traffic congestion on the high street has been a major concern for many years. Much of the traffic congestion is caused by school and pre-school drop off and pick up and by people parking for activities in the Village Hall. Traffic congestion along the main high street will remain a significant problem while the school and Village Hall remain on their current sites.

Distance to services and reliance on cars

60. The neighbourhood plan survey showed that a footpath and cycle path to Clifton Hampden would be well-used by local people.
61. Long Wittenham was retained as a “smaller village” in the Local Plan due mainly to its low score on transport sustainability and the number of facilities². 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.

² Table 1, page 5, Local Plan Background Paper Settlement Assessment 2018.

62. In summary, even though the village is a thriving and active community, it lacks several core services including a shop, modern community facilities to support village activities, modern educational facilities, a dedicated pre-school building, public transport. It only offers a minimum amount of employment within the village, and it suffers from traffic congestion due to high flow and little off-road parking.



Photo showing congestion on the High Street

NDP VISION

63. Over many years of consultation and discussion within the community, our problems have been identified and ambitions for the future have come together. The community-led plan, Wittenham Vision (2010), put many of the ideas into action plans, which were continued with the LWNDP (2017) and ongoing negotiations between the Parish Council, the community and landowners. The new plan will transform Long Wittenham from its current status as an unsustainable smaller village to a more sustainable settlement that is fit for its current and future purpose. The vision is multi-faceted and complex. It involves creation of new facilities and reconfiguration of civic services.

In the year 2035, Long Wittenham will be a place where:

- A new community hub will be conveniently located. This will provide a modern and well-equipped Village Hall that can accommodate a range of clubs and activities, perhaps contain a shop or café, host pop-up craft and food markets, and be the stage for public life in the village.
- The modern primary school and pre-school will have good outdoor facilities and capacity to accommodate all children's needs.
- Playing fields for the school and the community will be available with modern facilities to encourage healthy life styles throughout the year.
- There will be good provision for sustainable transport routes in the village to encourage more people to walk and cycle for commuting and recreational purposes.
- On-street parking will be reduced, and road users will have unimpeded access through the village.
- The high-quality character of the village, including its physical and visual links to the surrounding countryside and the River Thames, will be as good or better than in 2018.
- There is a pleasant and green environment that respects biodiversity, local views and the intrinsic value of the countryside.
- Sufficient new housing of the right type will be available to meet the changing needs of the villagers as they start new families or down-size for retirement.

REALISING THE VISION

66. The NDP vision is ambitious. It will cost money to realise and it will require services to be delivered differently. It should ideally be delivered in a cost-neutral manner and increase the village's overall sustainability. It affects many sites and footpath/cycle routes.
67. The village's challenges can be met by a strategic re-organisation of civic activities. At the heart of the strategy is the creation of a new community hub on a single site. Since the existing Village Hall and primary school can no longer meet current expectations and cannot be modified to do so, it is now necessary to rethink their current location and form. A preferred solution has emerged which brings all the current civic uses onto one site with improved supporting infrastructure. This solution cannot put a strain on the public purse given current pressures on public resources, so it will be necessary to support the public service provision with other activities that generate enough profit to fund the entire scheme.
68. A site has been identified and allocated in the NDP for the community hub. The site is sufficiently large to accommodate the new Village Hall, school and pre-school, playing fields, circulation and parking and enough housing to cross-subsidise the cost of the public development.
69. As the new facilities come on-stream, the redundant facilities at the Village Hall and the school will be redeveloped for housing, thus providing further income towards the overall hub project.
70. Along the way, other improvements will be generated, subsidised either directly through the hub development or through CIL funding and developer contributions. These include a new village green on the former school site with an enhanced setting for the war memorial and space for community events such as traditional May Day maypole dancing, and for informal play activities.
71. Footpath improvements have been identified that will allow villagers and visitors to better access the beautiful local countryside and to take healthy and safer journeys by cycle. Parking policies will ensure that more suitable parking is available for the school and pre-school and community facilities and that new developments make provision on-site for the parking requirements they generate.
72. The character of the village and the countryside and local habitats for protected species will be preserved.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

73. The community hub proposal has been in the public eye since it was first considered in the Wittenham Vision in 2010. Since that time, there have been many discussions, as part of the NDP but also by the Parish Council and the community at large, about how the community hub project could be realised.
74. The Parish Council is the democratically elected body that is acting as overall sponsor for the community hub project and which undertakes negotiations on its behalf.
75. Agreement has been secured either in Memoranda of Understanding, verbal agreements and parish council activities. Appendix 1 is a letter from the County Council setting out its position regarding the school site and the proposed new school. An option agreement has been signed between the parties.
76. The outline proposal for the community hub project is as follows and relates to three sites which are illustrated in **Figure 6**:
- **Didcot Road:** this is the main hub proposal site. It compares favourably against all other known sites. This land is privately owned. In the made LWNDP, this is referred to as “Site 2a”. However, the current site is larger than the original site 2a and has been renamed so that the modified boundaries can be differentiated.
 - **The school site:** this site would be subject to a “land swap” as enabling development. This land is jointly owned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the Oxford Diocese.
 - **The Village Hall site:** this land would be redeveloped as 1-2 houses by the Parish Council and the funds used towards the costs of a new village hall within the hub scheme on the Didcot Road site. This land is owned by the parish council.
77. The proposal seeks to balance the need for economic return with the need to improve the village’s overall sustainability by allowing sufficient housing to be built to cross-subsidise the community infrastructure. Transport issues will be addressed as congestion caused by school drop off and collection is moved from the High Street to improved parking and access at the hub site. A quantum of around 40-45 open market housing and affordable housing units, is proposed to be built as a commercial activity to cross-subsidise the development of the school, car parking, playing fields, etc. at no cost to the public purse.

The plan to relocate the school and village hall pre-dates the development of the 2017 made LWNDP. It was first suggested in the village plan, Wittenham Vision. The proposal was slow to be agreed because it was difficult to find a way to provide the development without funding from any Local Authority partners. It would have been impossible to build the community buildings on land purchased at market rates without building well in excess of 100 houses. The village as a whole resisted new housing on this scale and for this reason, progress on the scheme slowed.

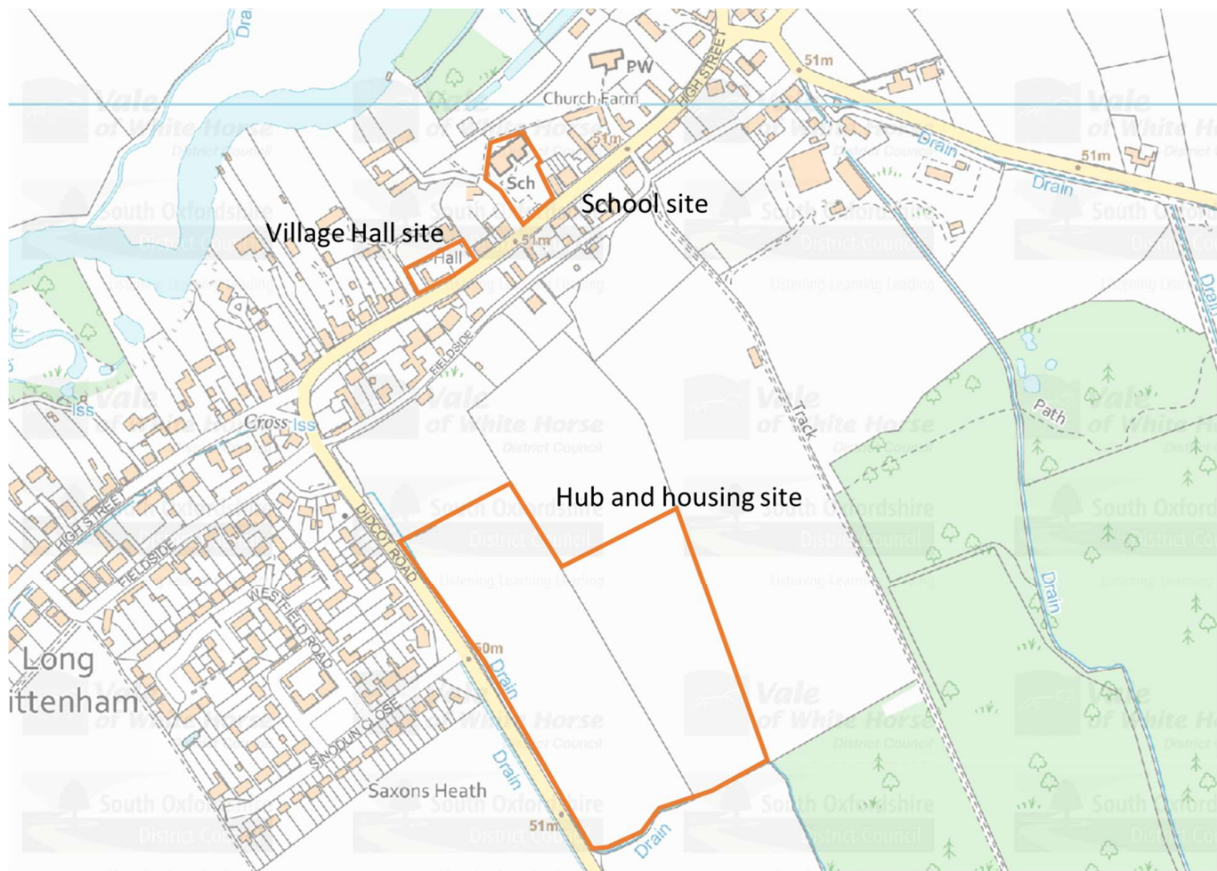
79. During the process of developing the made LWNDP, a local land owner offered to sell land to the Parish Council at CIL rates (i.e. the rate per hectare as determined by South Oxfordshire District Council for this type of project). This made the project viable with a reduced number of new market rate and affordable houses needed to cross-subsidise the non-housing components

from 100 to the 2017 estimate of 35-40. This was acceptable to the village and this proposal was put forward in the 2017 LWNDP Policy LW1 and supporting text.

80. The Parish Council, working with the landowner, identified a development partner to take the project forward. These three bodies have worked closely together to plan the project, also taking advice from the planning authority. However, the project is complicated due to the number of parties involved (Parish Council, landowner, developer, OCC and Oxford Diocese as the owners of the school site).
81. Legal agreements have now been drawn up between the parties. The development partner has an option to purchase the land to progress the Parish Council's objectives once planning permission has been received. The agreement only allows housing development in conjunction with the hub development. If the school closes in the future there will be a covenant that prevents OCC/Oxford Diocese selling the land for housing.
82. The final piece of the jigsaw was achieved at the end of August 2018 when the Diocese and Oxfordshire County Council agreed to move the school to the proposed new site and release the current school land to the developer working on behalf of the Parish Council for housing. In addition, the County Council has agreed to cover its own fees and the Diocese have also offered to meet the cost of furnishing the new school if it became an Academy, though to date the school has not become an Academy.
83. During the course of the discussions the project evolved in a number of ways:
 - a) OCC as the landowner and education authority requested that the school should have a playing field appropriate for a one form entry school, though the school building will be half form entry. This provision will "future proof" any school expansion should this be required. However, this resulted in the need to include a larger land parcel than originally envisaged.
 - b) The developer agreed that the Parish Council should keep the current Village Hall site, so that it could provide an income that would offset any future costs from the new Village Hall.
84. The developer's original estimate for the number of houses to cross fund the school and village hall was 35-40. Detailed viability calculations have only been undertaken since August 2018 when the developer was reassured by the Parish Council that the project could proceed. These calculations plus the additional costs to the developer listed above have resulted in the project now requiring around 45 houses to cross fund the new community facilities.
85. The project plan in outline will involve:
 - a) Planning application in line with LWNDP LW1;
 - b) Purchase of Didcot Road (RLWNDP LW1) by the development partner working on behalf of the Parish Council on receipt of planning permission;
 - c) The development partner will use its own funds to build up to 45 houses (including a portion of affordable houses), school and village hall and associated playing fields and amenity areas as set out in LW1;

- d) On completion of the hub development, ownership of the newly constructed school building and associated land will be given to Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford Diocese and in return, the development partner will take ownership of the current school buildings and land referred to in RLWNDP LW2;
 - e) On completion of the hub project in RLWNDP LW1, the ownership of the portion of the new development containing the new Village Hall, its parking and associated green space will be transferred to the Parish Council;
 - f) The northern part of the current school site will be developed for 5 houses as set out in RLWNDP LW2. At this time, ownership of the southern portion of the former school site including the War Memorial, will be given to the Parish Council to develop as a village green. This part of the project is set out under RLWNDP Policy LW2.
 - g) RLWNDP LW2 allows the Parish Council to redevelop the redundant Village Hall site for housing. The future plans for this site have not been considered at the time of preparing evidence for the RLWNDP.
86. Since the overall purpose of the hub is to make the village more sustainable, so that villagers will have more convenient access to necessary services on foot or near their homes, it has always been discussed within the village that the hub and the housing would be located on the same site. This has been assumed in all public consultation since the 2010 Wittenham Vision and it can be considered that the principle that there is a community preference for the hub and the housing to be co-located has been established.
87. The NDP was subject to Regulation 14 consultation in Autumn 2018 and submitted to SODC in October 2018. At the latter stages of the NDP preparation after Regulation 16 consultation on the 2018 submission draft, Historic England scheduled part of the allocation site. The 2018 draft NDP was withdrawn upon the advice of the Examiner, and Archaeological work was undertaken to understand the historic context of the portion of the allocation site that was not subject to scheduling. The full background is set out in the **Evidence Paper: Archaeology, the SEA Environmental Report and the evaluation prepared by Cotswold Archaeology (2021)**. All documents accompany the LWNDP and should be consulted in the preparation of any scheme or proposal. The scheme and the RLWNDP has been amended accordingly. The principles outlined above have not been changed.

FIGURE 6: COMMUNITY HUB DEVELOPMENT SITES



88. Local Plan Policy H8 states that 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). This amounts to at least 16 new houses over the local plan period up to 2035. Since 2011, 43 dwellings have been approved in Long Wittenham³.
89. The policies below seek to accommodate a further 40-45 houses in addition to what has already been granted permission. The purpose of the community hub is to create better and more robust community infrastructure to better support recent housing permissions and future growth.
90. Further information regarding the community hub and the policy background can be found in **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations** and **Evidence Paper: Planning Policy Context**.

³ Site Allocations Evidence Paper, Part 4.

COMMUNITY HUB SITE

97. The 2017 LWNDP Policy LW1 made provision for the community hub in a criteria-led policy with no site allocation. The intention of the policy was to provide a firm basis for a forthcoming Community Right to Build Order (CRTBO) that would be prepared after the LWNDP being made. The current 2018 reviewed LWNDP takes a different approach and seeks to allocate land for a hub with a policy to guide and direct the management of that development.
98. The original 2017 LWNDP principles remain valid. The community hub will become the new focus of the village, creating new patterns of movement and community activity. The new hub must provide a safe and attractive learning environment for the children who will use the school and pre-school, and good play areas, and must be accessible to parents who either chose to walk to school and pre-school or who must fit the school drop-off and pick-up around their commute to work.
99. The Village Hall should always be available and have enough capacity to cater for a range of groups and activities. The playing fields should, if possible, be attractive and accessible outside school hours so that the entire community can benefit from the recreational opportunities they provide.
100. The congestion currently experienced in the village centre should be reduced by convenient parking for parents and people who wish to access other services.
101. The housing needed to cross-subsidise the hub should relate spatially to it and the remainder of the village, and the entire site should relate well to the countryside and the recently allowed scheme for 36 new houses off Fieldside (RLWNDP policy LW3).
102. The development must also respect the area's archaeological and natural features and complement the village character in its design. During the Regulation 16 consultation and Examination in 2018, Historic England raised significant concerns about the preferred hub site. Subsequent archaeological investigations were undertaken in accordance with HE guidance, which is explained in detail in **Evidence Papers: Archaeology and Site Allocations**.
103. The **Strategic Environmental Assessment** was updated in 2021 to take account of the additional evidence and advice. That exercise concluded that there is only one site in the village suitable to meet the community's expectation, Didcot Road, which will be referred to here as the "community hub site". This site is located on agricultural land to the south of the village, off Didcot Road. The site is within convenient walking distance from the village centre, is favourable in terms of all relevant planning policies and has been made available to the parish council at a cost which is low enough to allow the community and education facilities to be built at no cost to the public purse.
104. The Parish Council responded to the growth scenarios assessment in the updated SEA (2021) as follows:

Option 1 (Didcot Road) is the Parish Council's preferred option, in light of the SEA Environment Report, which shows this option to perform well relative to Option 2.

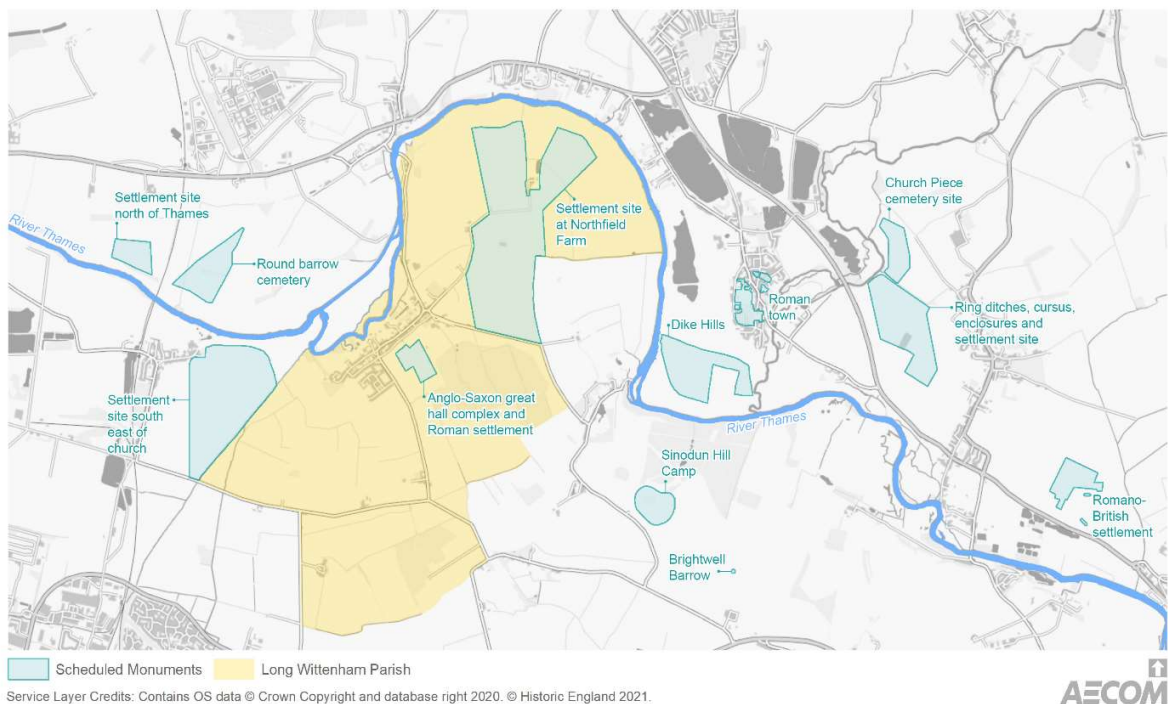
It is recognised that there are a range of issues and likely impacts associated with Option 1; however, there will be the potential to avoid and mitigate impacts through the development management

process, guided by policy within the RLWNP. There may nonetheless be residual negative impacts, perhaps most notably in respect of the historic environment, but the Parish Council believes that these are likely to be outweighed by the community benefits that will result from delivering a new community hub, and enabling the relocation of the school and village hall away from their current locations on the High Street.

There is no other 'do something' option for the RLWNP, as there is little or nothing that the plan can do to enable a successful redevelopment of the existing school site. The only other option for the Parish Council would be to not progress with a RLWNP focused on the allocation of land for community infrastructure, but this option is not favoured because of a well understood need to proactively take steps to address the current issues with the school and village hall

105. **Figure 7** shows how the new Scheduled Monument (Anglo-Saxon great hall complex and Roman settlement) sits within a wider historic landscape protected by a significant number of other scheduled sites.

FIGURE 7: SCHEDULED MONUMENTS IN AND AROUND LONG WITTENHAM PARISH



106. The scheduled monument has been defined to preserve a sample of the 'sunken featured building' features in the southern part of the monument. However a number of these features lie outside the monument in the eastern part of the development site proposed in LW1. In defining the site to be scheduled, a decision was made by Historic England to afford the protection as a scheduled monument to a sample of these features, but those outside that protected area still receive a level of protection and need for consideration through the requirements of the NPPF and local plan policies. It is likely that these features relating to the allocation in LW1 will be harmed to an extent by construction works as part of the development. This would be considered to be, at least, a moderate harm to the wider site of archaeological interest requiring some form of mitigation to the heritage asset where possible, in addition to the justification of the public benefits to be delivered.
107. A way forward that would allow the development at Didcot Road to proceed with an acceptable level of harm through mitigation was agreed between the Steering Group and Historic England and this has been set out in the Environment Report and codified in LW1. Applications and proposals for land at Didcot Road should consult the Environment Report (2021), the Archaeological Evaluation prepared by Cotswold Archaeology (2021) and the Evidence Paper: Archaeology (2021).
108. The housing portion of the proposal is contingent upon delivery of the other elements of the scheme, as set out in A above. Housing development that does not make provision for A a-f will not be allowed on this site.

Policy LW1: Community Hub

- A. The site referred to as the “Community Hub” shown on **Figure 6** is allocated for development of:
- a. A primary school (c. 100 pupils and on land at least 1.34 ha in line with current standards) and pre-school with outdoor space to allow for potential expansion;
 - b. A Village Hall with ancillary activities such as café, shop, meeting spaces, performance space, and other community based recreational activities;
 - c. Playing fields with ancillary development and infrastructure;
 - d. An appropriate level of pick up/drop off parking should be provided so that parking pressures on nearby roads are limited whilst also ensuring that high quality walking and cycling provision (including appropriately located/designed cycle parking) is provided in order to encourage the use of active modes of travel as opposed to private car usage;
 - e. Cycle and footpath linkages to the surrounding adopted, permitted and proposed network, maximising the potential of Footpath 287/5 to provide links between the site and the village centre and the countryside;
 - f. 40-45 houses (to include affordable housing as required in Local Plan policy H9).
- B. Development on the community hub site shall be subject to a masterplan and design brief to be agreed with the local planning authority. The masterplan will address the following points:
- a. Innovative and attractive design in compliance with educational standards will be required whilst complementing the unique character of Long Wittenham as described in **Evidence Papers: Character Assessment and Countryside**;
 - b. Parking and circulation in the scheme will lead to an overall increase in sustainable transport choices and a reduction in congestion in the village;
 - c. Use of Sustainable Urban Drainage will manage surface and fluvial flooding.
- C. Heritage Appraisal and Impact Assessment proportionate to the significance of the designated and non-designated assets and archaeological remains should inform proposals in accordance with national policy in particular.

- a. The layout and design of development will be demonstrated to preserve remains of archaeological interest that have been identified within the site in-situ, giving the highest priority to remains that contribute to the significance of the adjacent scheduled monument. This should include the siting of areas of open space within the development to preserve such remains from disturbance where possible.
 - b. A construction management plan will be required to ensure these areas are not disturbed during the construction process.
 - c. A management plan for open space following construction will be required to ensure it is appropriately maintained.
 - d. Where the loss of remains of archaeological interest is unavoidable and justified based on the public benefits that would arise an appropriate record should be made prior to their loss to a level of detail agreed with the Council's archaeological advisor.
 - e. The findings of any investigation and recording, along with those from previous investigations should be made available to the public through an interpretation strategy, including on-site measures that should be agreed as a condition of consent.
 - f. The layout, landscaping and scale, materials and form of buildings will be designed to minimise harm to the setting of the scheduled monument as well as exploring opportunities to emphasise the importance of the monument as a site of national archaeological interest.
- D. Development proposals should clearly set out development phasing including off-site contingencies. The community hub element of the project should be legally transferred to the Parish Council before completion of the 20th dwelling, and the primary school and pre-school should be transferred to the education authority/academy before the start of the final 10% of the residential component.

SAFEGUARDING LAND FOR COMMUNITY HUB

105. The community hub scheme requires land from the vacated school to be made available to the developer (the parish council and its partners). The development partner will take ownership of the site in a “land swap” to build 5 new houses on the school site plus transfer land ownership to the parish Council for them to create a new village green and a better setting for the war memorial. The provision and sale of this additional housing is part of the business case for the scheme.
106. The Village Hall is owned by the Parish Council. Once the new Village Hall is built, this land may be sold for redevelopment to cross-subsidise the maintenance and fit-out of the new facility.
107. The **Evidence Paper: Site Allocations** considers options how best to secure the role of the school and Village Hall sites in the overall community hub scheme.
108. The most viable use of the Village Hall and school sites at present is for housing. Therefore, for this review of the NDP, it is proposed that those sites will become redundant when the new facilities at the hub are built and that those sites will be put to best use which is housing.
109. It is not necessary for the RLW NDP to allocate further housing sites since the need identified in Local Plan Policy H8 has been met. However, the development of the Village Hall and school sites are safeguarded as housing sites in order to cross-subsidise the delivery of the hub scheme. However, should the cross-subsidy not be required, the policy must anticipate that proposals for other land uses may come forward and may be supportable.
110. The safeguarding approach is being used in LW2 for the Village Hall and school sites since it will be more flexible if the community hub scheme fails. The safeguarding approach, rather than a housing allocation, anticipates that other land uses may come forward on these sites, for instance Class E or Class F development.

Policy LW2: Safeguarded sites

- A. The sites referred to as the “school” and “Village Hall” shown on **Figure 6** are safeguarded as part of the community hub proposal.
- B. In the event that the community hub scheme progresses, and a new school and/or Village Hall is provided, the following development will be supported:
 - a. School site: up to 5 houses and village green and improved setting for the War Memorial;
 - b. Village Hall site: 1-2 residential units
- C. Where it can be demonstrated that either safeguarded site is not required to cross-subsidise the proposal in LW1, alternative development will be supported.

HOUSING MIX

111. The NDP seeks to protect and enhance the character of our small rural village and avoid new pressure on local infrastructure. In the event of housing proposals coming forward, it is essential that additional housing meets local needs with a locally appropriate mix of housing types.
112. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey in 2015 found that in the view of many residents, the main local need for new housing is for smaller or starter homes for existing residents and those living outside but known to have a wish to move here (70% of respondents), strong demand for family homes (50%) and for affordable housing (48%). A total of 18 residents identified a need for either 1- or 2-bedroom property. High cost of housing and lack of suitable housing were the main reasons given for wanting to move but not being able to move within the village or from outside the village.
113. It is expected that proposals for new housing will reflect a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of residents of Long Wittenham but will also contribute towards locally identified need. This is in addition to the Development Plan requirement for affordable housing. The policies and evidence behind housing mix is discussed in more detail in Evidence Paper: Planning Policy Context and Evidence Paper: Evidence Base. There is a preference towards smaller houses as starter properties and homes for those who wish to downsize.
114. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)⁵ found that ‘...the data suggests a slight shift towards a requirement for smaller dwellings relative to the distribution of existing housing. This is understandable given the fact that household sizes are projected to fall slightly in the future (which itself is partly due to the ageing of the population).⁴’
115. Further local housing needs surveys will be carried out from time to time throughout the NDP period. The SHMA acknowledges that local market conditions/environment need to be considered, although it may not be appropriate or possible to insist on housing to meet local housing needs.

⁴ Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, GL Hearn Final Report, April 2014, 7.21.

Policy LW3: Housing Mix





- A. Development proposals for schemes of more than ten dwellings, should:
 - a. deliver the affordable housing requirements set out in the Development Plan, and;
 - b. deliver an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes, having regard to the local community's needs as identified in the housing needs survey, and other local evidence.

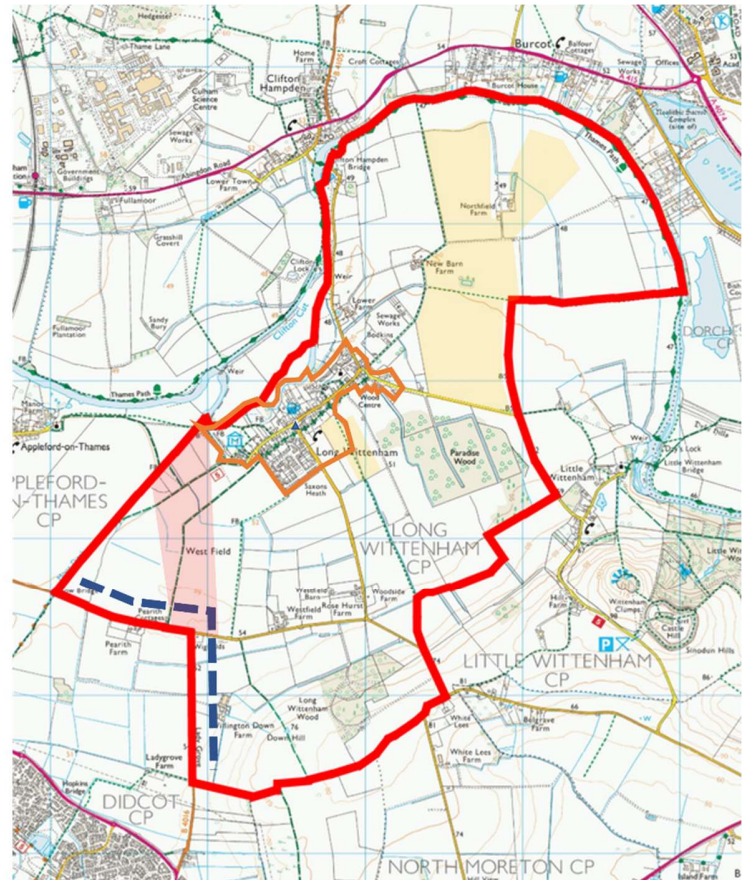
COUNTRYSIDE

116. Long Wittenham village is surrounded by countryside on all sides which provides a buffer between it and other built-up areas. The countryside generates multiple benefits for the village by providing local employment, recreational opportunities, tranquillity, and a green setting for the village itself which can be enjoyed from many viewpoints outside the village or from within, looking out to the countryside.
117. The countryside separates Long Wittenham from Didcot to the south east, Appleford to the west and Culham, Clifton Hampden and Burcot across the River Thames to the north. The River Thames and its 'cut' forms the north western boundary of the village. To the north of the Thames is Oxfordshire Green Belt. To the east is a relatively wide gap of undeveloped countryside separating the village from the settlements of Little Wittenham and Dorchester. Wittenham Clumps lie to the south east of the village and the south east boundary of the parish demarks the North Wessex Downs AONB. To the south of the village is another relatively large open swathe of countryside. These designations and features are discussed in detail in the Evidence Paper: Countryside.
118. Didcot is a major settlement to the south west of Long Wittenham which has been designated as a Garden Town within the wider Science Vale. The Garden Town Delivery Plan (October 2017) highlights key priorities that affect Long Wittenham parish which is identified as part of Didcot's Area of Influence. Importantly, the delivery plan indicates that the countryside in Long Wittenham parish is a valued recreational and landscape resource for Didcot and recommends that a green gap is adopted by neighbourhood plans between Didcot and their own settlement boundaries. A planning permission for around 2000 homes will bring Didcot's development boundary up to the edge of the re-defined Long Wittenham parish boundary.
119. The countryside surrounding Long Wittenham village is subject to several planning policy objectives and constraints such as the need to: protect the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB; preserve and enhance scheduled ancient monuments and heritage assets; maximise the opportunities from the value of the River Thames Corridor; avoid development in areas subject to flooding; and, improve transport connections. A fuller discussion of the nature of these constraints and opportunities is set out in the evidence paper.
120. The development plan and other policies and aspirations inter alia establish a set of countryside development principles that guide the LWNDP's approach. The Countryside Principles are set out in the Evidence Paper: Countryside.
121. The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Strategy indicated that there should be a Green Gap between the settlements of Didcot and Long Wittenham and that additional tree planting should be used to screen inter-visible views between the settlements. However, it was not within the delivery strategy's gift to identify where the gap should be located and so, in Figure 8.7 from the Delivery Strategy (reproduced in the evidence paper), the location of the Green Gap and recommended tree screening was only broadly indicated. It has been left to the planning authority and adjacent NDPs to refine that recommendation.
122. There is no Green Gap policy in the Local Plan, i.e. the plan is silent on the matter. However, though silent, the policy approach advocated in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Strategy is relevant.

123. The LWNDP identifies housing sites in LW1 and LW2 and has demonstrated that it has met and exceeded its local housing requirement as a result. There is therefore no compelling argument why additional housing land will be required over and above this. There will therefore not be a need for major development in the countryside in Long Wittenham parish.
124. NPPF para 28 states that non-strategic policies can be used by local communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas which can include conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment. Para. 29 states that neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area.
125. It is justified for the NDP to set out how development will occur outside the village built-up area. Figure 8 shows the unofficial development boundary in 2018 which is the base year for the RLWNDP. Development that has been permitted or is in-situ at the time of the NDP's referendum will form the actual baseline to define the village's built-up area. The area outside the built-up area can be considered Countryside for the purposes of this policy.
126. Figure 8 shows the location for safeguarded transport land that the Planning Authority has identified as necessary to progress the Green Line from Didcot to Culham (pink shading). Policy LW5 identifies important views worthy of protection. The Settlement at Northfield Farm is a large Scheduled Ancient Monument in the countryside where development should be carefully managed, and which has been identified as contributing to the green infrastructure of Didcot Garden Town (yellow shading in Figure 8). In addition, other constraints exist since some of the land is subject to flooding and there are heritage designations.

FIGURE 8: DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

| Key | |
|---|---|
|  | Approximate village built up area in 2018 |
|  | Approximate location of tree screening |
|  | Scheduled Ancient Monument |
|  | Safeguarded transport route |



LW4: Countryside

Proposals for development outside the built-up area boundary will only be supported if they are appropriate to a countryside location and are otherwise consistent with development plan policies.

The following types of development will be considered as exceptions to this policy approach:

- appropriate forms of residential development in the countryside identified in national and local policy including rural exception sites, limited infill rural workers dwellings, minor extensions and conversions of existing rural buildings; and
- the expansion of rural businesses which avoid unnecessary intrusion into the surrounding countryside.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals of this nature should comply with all the following criteria as relevant to the site concerned:

- they would conserve or enhance the adjacent North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- they would not create unacceptable harm to the tranquillity of the countryside;
- they otherwise comply with Policy LW5 of this Plan;
- they would be closely associated with the existing built form of the village and are well integrated within the wider landscape; and
- where appropriate, they limit potential urbanising influences with tree and screen planting at the edge of settlements and other major features such as transport infrastructure.

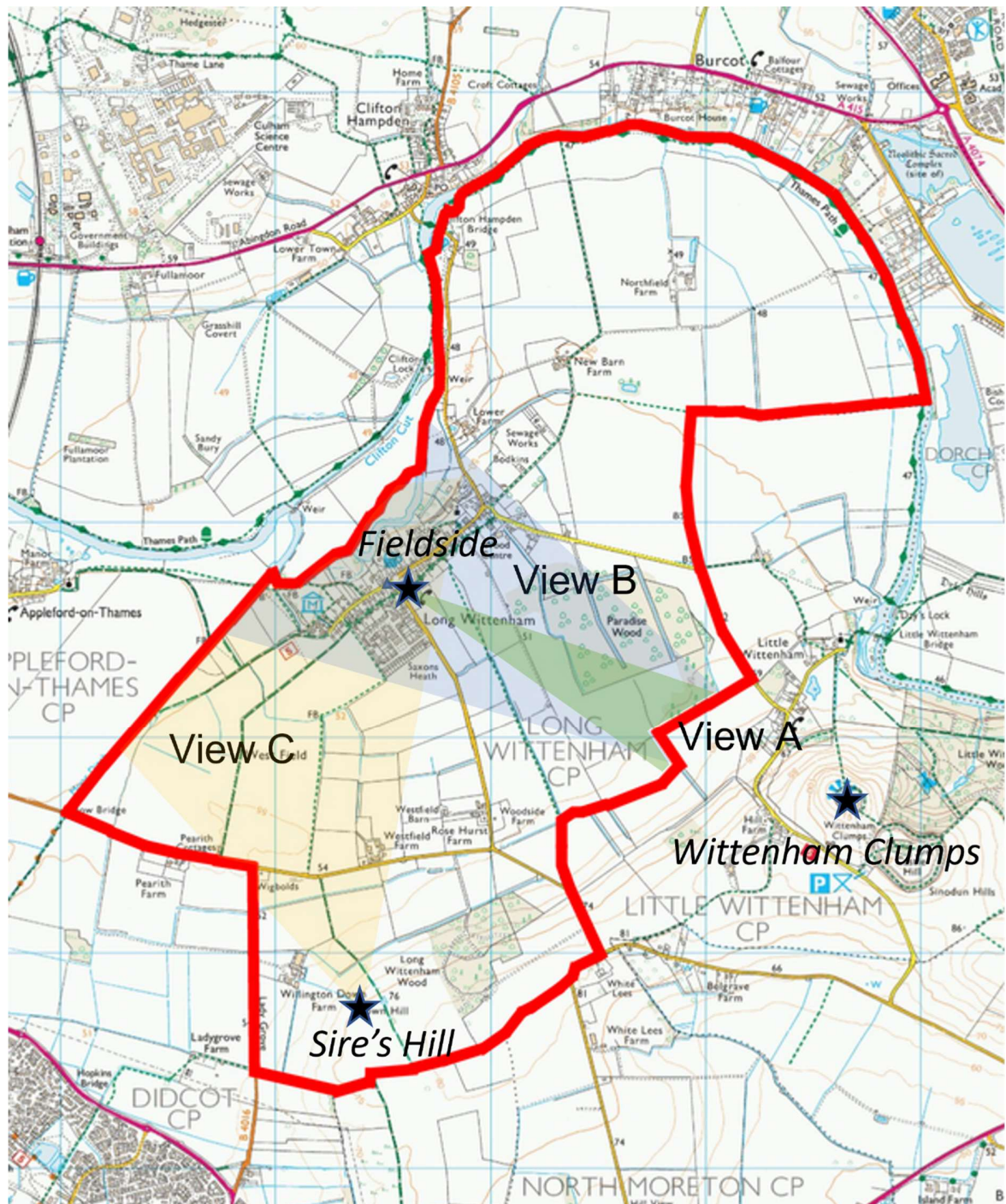
PROTECTED VIEWS

127. The views in Figure 9 have value derived from the sense of openness that they provide. This is illustrated in the photo record presented in the Evidence Paper: Countryside. To retain this sense of openness, new development should not have an unacceptable impact on the views from important public vantage points such as public rights of way (as illustrated in the photos).
128. For the purpose of development management decisions, an unacceptable impact would arise where a view corridor was originally “wide”, showing a broad vista over the area in question and this is unacceptably reduced. This would happen where the width of the viewable corridor becomes restricted either at the edges or within the vista to the extent that the difference is perceptible and noticeable to the viewer. There will inevitably be a range of how much harm takes place regarding individual developments, and this will be a matter for individual

proposals to address. Therefore, there may be some instances where the impact is imperceptible, or perceptible but acceptable, to the viewer. However, as the level of impact increases, there will be a commensurate increase in the perception of harm to the view and the viewer's enjoyment of the landscape.

129. Development proposals should pay particular attention to the protected views and should seek to avoid harm wherever possible. Where it is likely that a development will have an impact on a protected view the planning application should consider the preparation of a Landscape and Visual Assessment to determine the level of harm and the available options for mitigation. Policy LW5 applies to the protected views insofar as they are within the designated neighbourhood area

FIGURE 9: KEY VIEWS



Policy LW5: Protected Key Views

- A. The Plan identifies three Key Views as follows:
 - a. The view from Fieldside over the countryside towards Wittenham Clumps;
 - b. The view from Wittenham Clumps over the countryside towards Long Wittenham village;
 - c. The view from Sire's Hill over the countryside towards Long Wittenham and Appleford villages.
- B. The design, layout and massing of new development should take account of the Key Views and safeguard their significance in the neighbourhood area.
- C. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on an identified Key View will not be supported.

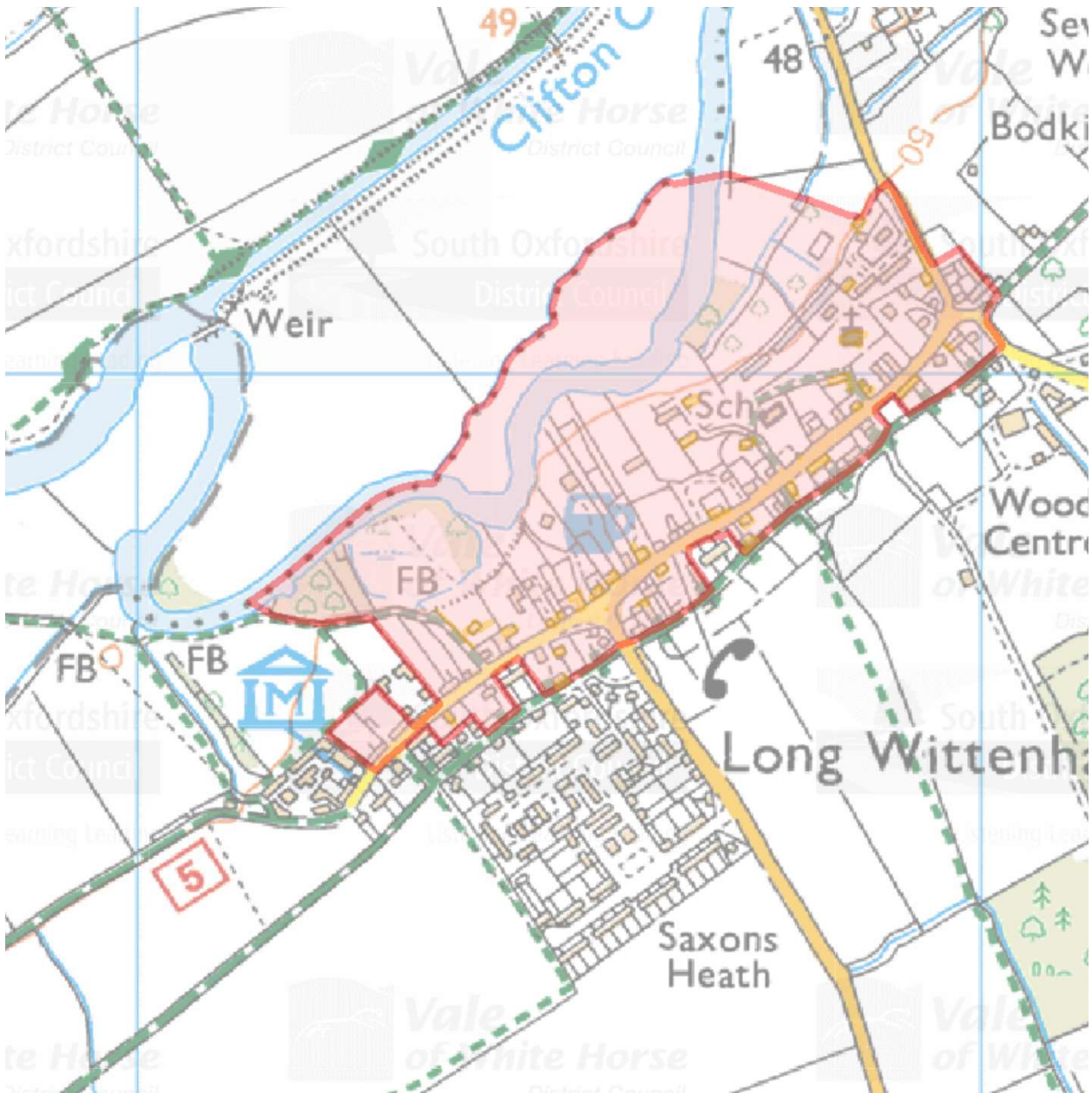
HERITAGE AND DESIGN

130. A comprehensive Character Assessment was prepared in 2016 in support of the LWNDP. This document remains relevant and is included in the NDP as Evidence Paper: Character Assessment. This has been updated by additional work undertaken in 2018 which considers the character of the open countryside around the village, set out in Evidence Paper: Countryside. These evidence papers should both be consulted in support of this policy.
131. The village is located on the border of the North Wessex Downs, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of which the Wittenham Clumps form a part. The Clumps afford 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside and can be seen from several locations within the village. Also known as the Sinodun hills, they form a unique backdrop to the village and are integral to the spirit of the place.
132. The village is predominantly linear in nature and historically it has developed along the High Street. The linear nature of the village is further defined along its northern edge as the length of the original village runs parallel to the River Thames. The main road through the village now forms part of a main route from Didcot in the south to the river crossing of the Thames at Clifton Hampden, connecting the village with principle routes to Oxford and beyond. The original geometric form of the village has changed from a simple linear form to a 'T' shape as the village as more recent housing development has grown along the main road towards Didcot.
133. The organic growth of the village has been determined in recent years by the surrounding physical geography, the movement of people between the principal urban areas in south and central Oxfordshire and connections to major transport links. The river Thames to the north and the flood plain precludes development in this direction as does the agricultural land to the west, but the road leading from Didcot and the A34 in the south to the river crossing at Clifton Hampden is perhaps the principal determining factor in the way in which sites for recent development have been chosen.
134. There is a Conservation Area in Long Wittenham and 39 listed buildings including the Grade 1 listed Church of St Mary and two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Figure 10 shows the listed buildings as green dots and the Church of St Mary is shown in red. Figure 11 shows the boundary of the conservation area.

FIGURE 10: LISTED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES IN LONG WITTENHAM



FIGURE 11: LONG WITTENHAM CONSERVATION AREA



Source: South Oxfordshire interactive Conservation Areas map

135. As might be expected in a village which has had an organic development pattern, there are a range of architectural periods evident in the village of Long Wittenham ranging from the 14th century Cruck Cottage through numerous examples of thatched cottages to Georgian and a few Victorian properties up to 20th century buildings. Although there is building stock from a range of historical periods, it is still possible to identify a palette of materials from these buildings which contribute to create a local vernacular architecture, such as: red brickwork in a Flemish bond especially with traditional lime mortar pointing; blackened timber cladding such as is found on agricultural buildings; traditional timber casement or sliding sash windows; red roof tiles; slate or traditional thatched roofing; and, white painted render walls. There is also a common sense of scale with houses, irrespective of their period, being no more than 2 ½ storeys in height. Together with its unique setting, these attributes define the unique character of Long Wittenham.
136. Those areas which yielded positive ratings in the character assessment are:
- St John's Row, whose scale of houses and their arrangement and grouping within the landscape gives rise to a sense of a microcosm of community within the wider village context. These were the first reinforced concrete houses built in the country in 1870. The community feel is further enhanced by the individualism of each house that the owners have bestowed upon it through various sensitive extensions and the use of colour on the external render.
 - The High Street, whose permeable nature, disposition of buildings, urban grain and views out towards the surrounding countryside define the structure of the place. It is easy to walk between the village and countryside and there are views into and out of the village. The palette of materials used in the buildings of the High Street, ranging from brick, to the timber cladding to the traditional thatched roofs, all contribute in a positive way.
 - The Granary and Manor, whose green space and arrangement of buildings around the original village green and their materials add depth and intrigue and a sense of permeability to the village.
 - Central Fieldside, further enhancing and reinforcing the permeable nature of the village and the views across to the Sinodun Hills, the open green space which runs parallel to the High Street gives further depth to the village and affords residents a semi-private route through the urban fabric away from the traffic on the High Street.
 - Fieldside East, like St John's Row, fosters its own sense of a smaller community within the wider village community thanks in part to the planning of the houses between the Little Wittenham Road to the east and the community allotments which offer views towards the Sinodun Hills.
 - Clockhouse and Long Wall, for the rich red brick material whose character provides a richness and unique character to the entrance of the village when approached from the north.
 - Green space, which is prevalent in Long Wittenham and evenly dispersed across the village. The green pockets serve as recreation, refuge, visual delight and as a set of lungs to the urban environment of the village. They further enhance the permeable nature of the village.

137. Taken together the attributes as described in the above areas form a palette and a toolbox for creating any new development which would complement and enhance the existing environment and contribute to the built fabric of the village in a positive way.

Policy LW6: Heritage and Design

- A. All new development should preserve and enhance the overall character and appeal of Long Wittenham parish as described in **Evidence Papers: Character Assessment** and **Countryside**.
- B. Development proposals should reflect the following:
 - a. Adjacent and nearby development;
 - b. Streetscape;
 - c. Conserve and enhance the Conservation Area and its setting;
 - d. Conserve and enhance designated heritage assets including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments;
 - e. Protected views;
 - f. Local distinctiveness and sense of place;
 - g. Historic built form of the village and;
 - h. Permeability by foot and cycle for all villagers.
- C. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss.
- D. Incidental green spaces within the built-up area of the village should be preserved and enhanced where practicable.

CYCLE AND FOOTPATHS

138. There is a need to improve both walking and cycling opportunities between the villages of Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden. The villages are only one mile apart, yet there is no safe and easy walking or cycling route between the two. There is also a major strategic issue for sustainable transport between Didcot and the employment centre at Culham (The Science Vale).
139. Long Wittenham is classified as a small village in the Development Plan partly due to its lack of public transport access. Though it is beyond the remit of the NDP to facilitate significant public transport improvements, it is possible to improve access to existing public transport modes by bicycle and on foot. In addition, it is possible and desirable to improve recreational access to the surrounding countryside.
140. The new policy seeks to promote four sustainable transport projects:
- a) Community Hub: Improved footpath links between the Didcot Road site and the Village centre.
 - b) Didcot to Wittenham Clumps: Improved cycle and footpath links between Didcot Garden Town and Wittenham Clumps.
 - c) Link: The completion of the cycle route between Culham, Didcot and Harwell – the section from Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden is the only gap in this network for future sustainable public transport. It will also be used by Long Wittenham residents to get to the shop/doctors (in Clifton Hampden) safely by bicycle, and for recreational use.
 - d) Circular Route: The creation of a circular walking route between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden, along the Thames Path.
141. Further information on these two sustainable transport projects and the reasoning behind this policy is available in Evidence Paper: Cycle and Footpaths.

Policy LW7: Cycle and Footpaths

- A. Where development leads to increased demand for transportation infrastructure as set out in Development Plan policies, proposals should make a proportionate contribution to the proposals in Part B of this policy.
- B. Proposals for new cycle and footpaths at the following locations will be supported:
 - a. Between the Community Hub site (LW1) and the village High Street;
 - b. Between Didcot Garden Town and Wittenham Clumps;
 - c. Between Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden alongside the existing High Street; and
 - d. The Circular route between the villages of Long Wittenham and Clifton Hampden incorporating the Thames Path.

PARKING

142. Long Wittenham residents are predominantly dependent upon the car though sustainable transport options exist. This has consequences in a village that was not built to accommodate this mode of transport. The roads are narrow in places, but more importantly, cars must be parked. In older properties, where there is no capacity to park off-street, cars will inevitably be parked on-street. These factors together lead to unwanted congestion in the village, visual damage to the High Street views and physical damage to verges. New development should not make this situation any worse.
143. Evidence Paper: Evidence Base identifies parking problems as a major challenge for the village. The evidence documents high levels of car ownership, limited public transport, lack of employment in the village and lack of services generally. Wittenham Vision identified further actions to improve traffic and parking in the village⁴ and the 2015 Neighbourhood Plan survey also identified significant concerns about parking.
- Parking is a problem for 20% of respondents;
 - 73% supported the concept of a village car park;
 - 43% found parking associated with school runs to be a problem.
144. The policy does not set out minimum parking standards but instead seeks to recognise that existing problems should not be made worse. Our aim is to encourage developers to engage with the local planning authority on how best to overcome this problem. The fall-back position will be the application of development plan standards in place at the time of the determination of any planning application. Within this context, it would then be for the developer to explain the extent to which the application of development plan minimum standards would meet the future parking needs of that development within the NDP period.
145. In circumstances where this would not be the case, an assessment could then be made of the additional requirements as part of the determination of a planning application. Where a development proposal recognises and assesses the local circumstances and proposes a higher standard, this will be supported insofar as it is consistent with good layout and design.
146. In all cases, on-street parking is discouraged.

Policy LW8: Off-street parking

- A. New development should accommodate its parking needs off-street in accordance with adopted parking standards.

ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA

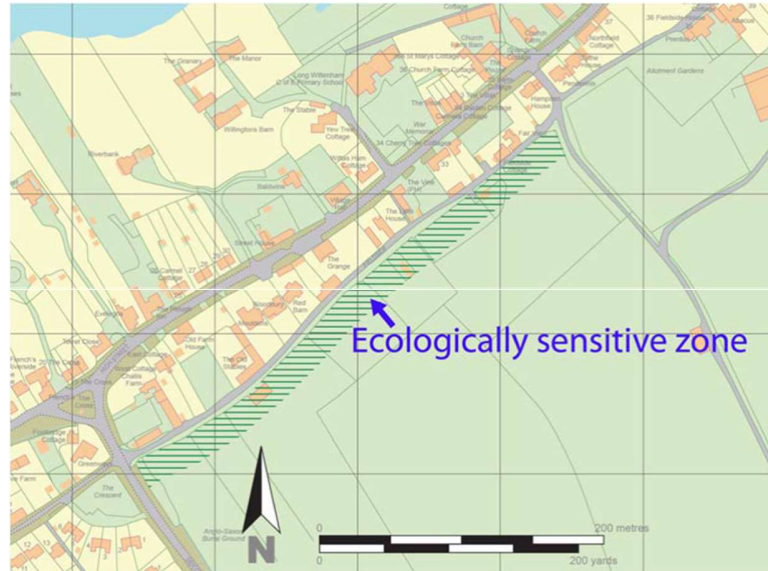
147. A population of Roman Snails have been observed along Fieldside (Figure 12). This is discussed in more detail in Evidence Paper: Roman Snails.
148. While common in some Eastern European countries, these snails are rare in Britain and restricted to a few localities. Roman snails live a solitary life, hiding away for much of the day, emerging after it rains, and it prefers laying its eggs in rough ground. *Helix pomatia* is on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (International Union for Conservation of Nature). In 2008 the Roman Snail, *Helix pomatia* was added to Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and it became an offence under UK law to intentionally kill, injure or take individuals. The legal protection this species is now afforded has implications for development projects.

FIGURE 12: AUG 2016 *HELIX POMATIA* ALONG FIELDSIDE (OX14 4QJ) (TONY LEATHAM)



149. Roman snails are not a native species and were probably introduced to Long Wittenham by the Romans, possibly related to the assumed nearby Roman villa. Roman Snails favour rough and tussocky grassland, hedge banks and require loose, friable soil for burying into for hibernation and for depositing eggs. They will avoid grazed grassland and very open, exposed habitats. They don't travel very far – they have an average migration of 3.5-6metres.
150. The NDP seeks to protect the local colony of Roman Snails and has identified a buffer zone, illustrated in **Figure 13**, where their habitat should be protected from future development.

FIGURE 13: ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE ZONE AND ROMAN SNAIL HABITAT



Policy LW9: Ecologically Sensitive Areas

- A. Development proposals within the immediate vicinity of the Wittenham Special Area of Conservation or the south of Fieldside (shown as the ecologically sensitive zone in Figure 13) should assess the ecological and heritage impact in a way which is proportionate to the development concerned. Where appropriate, the development proposal should include mitigation measures including the creation and linking of habitats.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

151. As the challenges listed above show, there are currently deficiencies in the village's infrastructure. These will only grow as more houses are developed in the village and surrounding area such as Didcot. It is therefore important that provision is made for new infrastructure to keep pace with development as it comes on stream.
152. South Oxfordshire operates a CIL policy. It can be expected that the Parish Council will receive significant amounts of CIL funding should all proposed and permitted new developments be realised in the plan period. More information on likely CIL receipts can be found in Evidence Paper: Planning Policy Context.
153. In addition to CIL contributions paid to the Parish Council, it is possible that developer contributions will be required to overcome specific issues relating to individual developments. Should new development come forward in the parish in the NDP period, it is possible that additional burdens will be placed upon existing infrastructure. It may become necessary for mitigation to be put in place to offset any harm caused. The information in the Evidence Paper: Infrastructure Project List should be considered by applicants as a starting point. The projects set out in the evidence paper provide evidence where pressures may arise and how these may be managed.
154. Keeping the Infrastructure Project List up to date will be the responsibility of the Parish Council who, as the responsible financial authority, will monitor and amend it as necessary.

Community Objective: Infrastructure

Developments giving rise to the need for off-site community infrastructure should consider the requirements identified in **Evidence Paper: Infrastructure Project List** as a starting point when considering mitigation.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

IMPLEMENTATION

155. Implementation of the NDP will be ongoing. Responsibility for determining planning applications rests with the South Oxfordshire District Council.

MONITORING

156. The following monitoring plan will be adopted by Long Wittenham Parish Council.

TWELVE MONTH REVIEW

157. The NDP will be assessed one year after its adoption at community referendum by the parish council and the reconvened Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The purpose of assessment will be primarily to determine the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan objectives have been implemented in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting the Neighbourhood Plan objectives; and secondly, to rectify any errors and omissions.

FIVE YEAR REVIEW

The NDP will be reviewed every five years. Review of policies will be led by the Long Wittenham Parish Council. The purpose of review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the objectives have been achieved in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting those objectives; and secondly to rectify any errors and omissions. In particular, the Parish Council will monitor the delivery of the community hub. If delivery is unlikely to proceed the Parish Council will consider a review of the Plan to identify the extent to which an alternative site can be secured for this important scheme.

END OF PLAN PERIOD REVIEW

158. At least two years prior to the expiry of the NDP, a full review will be undertaken to gauge the success of the Plan in meeting its objectives and to put in place a succession plan.

MONITORING OF THE PLAN AGAINST NATIONAL POLICY

159. The Parish Council will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan against national policy. It will also assess the extent to which the Plan has regard to any changes which may arise to national policy. Where necessary, it will consider the need for a full or partial review of the Plan.

LIST OF EVIDENCE PAPERS

- Archaeology
- Character Assessment
- Countryside
- Cycle and Footpath Network
- Infrastructure Project List
- Long Wittenham NDP Final Made Plan
- Long Wittenham NDP Survey Report (July 2015)
- Planning Policy Context
- Roman Snails
- Site Allocations

ACRONYMS

- CIL – Community Infrastructure List
- LWNDP – 2017 made NDP
- NDP – Neighbourhood Development Plan, and specifically “the proposed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan”
- NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
- PROW – Public Rights of Way
- RLWNDP – 2018 NDP