

Brightwell cum Sotwell

Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 32



Made Version October 2017

BRIGHTWELL CUM SOTWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2032

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Brightwell cum Sotwell
Neighbourhood Plan



Foreword

People have lived and worked in Brightwell cum Sotwell for over 3000 years, each generation shaping the landscape in their own way. Today, the landscape is varied and includes the River Thames floodplain, the ridge of the Sinodun Hills, the gravel terraces and former marshland to the south. Agriculture still dominates the scene.

Brightwell cum Sotwell is a rural parish that consists of six separate settlements. The largest is formed by the merged communities of Brightwell and Sotwell that nestles in a hollow below the Sinodun Hills. The main settlement is separated from the outlying hamlets of Mackney, Shillingford Hill, Clapcot and Sires Hill by a patchwork of fields, orchards, woods and meadowland. The main settlement, together with Mackney is collectively referred to in this plan as 'the village'.

The parish retains many facilities such as a shop (with a post office), a school, the village pub, village hall, a riverside hotel, several garages and an award winning vineyard. Mixed farms, the Island Donkey Sanctuary and Sotwell Manor Fruit Farm are a reminder of the area's agricultural past whilst the Earth Trust's facilities at North Farm provide a site of high nature conservation interest. Footpaths criss cross the parish offering excellent walking opportunities linking the settlements with the countryside that notably provided the inspiration to the artist Paul Nash. The parish is unfortunately cut in two by the busy A4130 road that runs between the main settlement and the Sinodun Hills.

In the village itself, dotted along the narrow lanes are the picturesque thatched cottages that are so typical of South Oxfordshire. These traditional buildings mix with new developments that on the whole blend seamlessly into the rural scene. Streams and orchards, hedges and mature trees characterise much of the village and help to provide a very strong sense of place. There is a strong community spirit in Brightwell cum Sotwell with all manner of events taking place throughout the year, and a variety of clubs and societies to belong to. The parish forms a desirable place to live although with an ageing population and identified housing need. To meet the parish's housing needs and to guide sustainable development, it was agreed in 2013 at the Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Meeting to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council established a sub-group to consult on and produce a neighbourhood plan with the intention that following referendum the Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan will form part of South Oxfordshire's Development Plan and will guide development within our parish.

The neighbourhood plan has been informed by the Brightwell cum Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan that was published in August 2014. The Parish Plan set out community aspirations for a range of issues that are of importance to Brightwell cum Sotwell, its residents, businesses and community groups. The Parish Plan was developed in a way that it could provide much of the background and community views that underpin this Neighbourhood Plan although these assumptions were re-tested and modified as the neighbourhood plan progressed. In 2015 a Housing Needs Survey was carried out and a series of public meetings / workshops have ensured that the evidence base that underpins this report continued to reflect the views of local residents and current trends.

The BCSNP has made account of comments submitted during the Pre Submission and Submission consultation, where relevant and has made all changes following the independent examination. A full list of comments is available in the Consultation Statement. Generally, the Plan has been well received by local people, the District Council and statutory agencies. This report forms the Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2032.

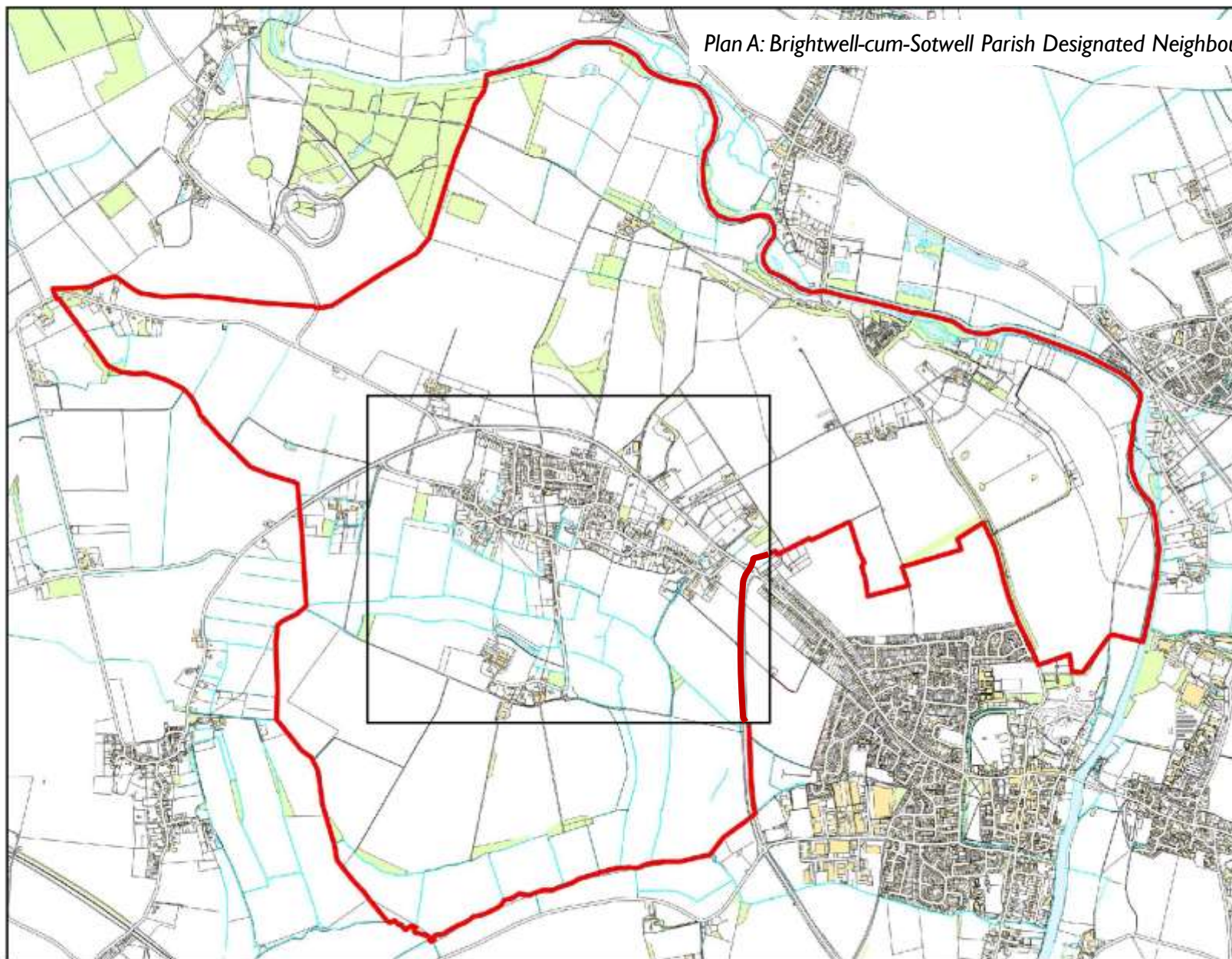
List of Policies

BCS1	Brightwell cum Sotwell Village Boundary
BCS2	Land at Bosley's Orchard
BCS3	Land at Little Martins & Home Farm Barns
BCS4	Land at Thorne's Nursery
BCS5	Slade End Green including; Slade End Farm, Strange's Nursery, Slade End South to West of Green Lane
BCS6	Local Gaps
BCS7	Landscape Character and the Villages
BCS8	The Green Heart
BCS9	Design Principles in the Parish
BCS10	Design Principles in the Conservation Areas & their Settings
BCS11	Local Green Spaces
BCS12	Biodiversity, Trees, Hedgerows & Wildlife Corridors
BCS13	Footpaths & Bridleways
BCS14	Renewable Energy
BCS15	Community Facilities
BCS16	Tourism Facilities
BCS17	Natural Burial Ground

Our vision is:

***“To retain our separate identity as a rural parish set within open countryside, conserving the character of the various settlements;
in a way that allows the community to evolve whilst sustaining our core vital services”***





I. Introduction & Background

I.1 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The designated area shown in Plan A opposite.

I.2 The purpose of the Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BCSNP) is to make planning policies that can be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to March 2032. Its policies aim to positively plan for the growth of the main village but to do in ways that will protect and enhance the special character of the Parish.

I.3 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to shape the future development of their areas. The Neighbourhood Plan, having been approved at referendum has become a statutory part of the development plan for the parish and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided.

I.4 Neighbourhood Plans can therefore only contain land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are more important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan if they are not directly related to planning.

I.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some 'basic conditions'. These are:

- Is the Plan consistent with the National Planning Policy?
- Is the Plan consistent with local planning policy?
- Does the Plan promote the principles of sustainable development?
- Has the process of making the plan met the requirements of the European environmental standards?

I.6 In addition, the Parish Council must be able to show that it has properly consulted local people and other relevant organisations during the process of making its Neighbourhood Plans and has followed the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

I.7 These requirements were tested by an independent examiner once the Neighbourhood Plan was finalised. Being satisfied, the examiner recommended that South Oxfordshire District Council progress the plan to a referendum of the local electorate. At referendum on 14th September 2017, a simple majority of the turnout voted for the Plan. South Oxfordshire District Council subsequently adopted it as formal planning policy for the parish on October 12th 2017.

I.8 A Pre Submission version of the Plan contained the draft proposals and was consulted on during November 2016 to January 2017. This exercise demonstrated a majority of local community support for the Plan and the general support of the District Council and other statutory bodies. Only those land interests that have not been favoured by the Plan have made objections. Some minor modifications were made to the Submission version of the Plan to ensure its policies met the basic conditions.

1.9 The Parish Council has received a screening opinion from SODC, which established the need for the BCSNP to be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) under the EU Directives 42/2001 and the 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. The Parish Council consulted the statutory bodies on the scope of the SA/SEA and it consulted on a separate Draft SA/SEA report alongside the Pre Submission Plan. Again, minor changes were made to reflect the modifications made to the Plan and to add further clarity to how policy alternatives have been compared and the final choices made.

2. The Neighbourhood Area

2.1 Brightwell cum Sotwell is located in the County of Oxfordshire, and is 2.2 miles away from Wallingford and 3.6 miles from Didcot. The population of Brightwell cum Sotwell is currently 1,550. This Parish covers 1,320 hectares and was formed by the merger in 1948 of Sotwell and Brightwell, including the Liberty of Clapcot. The hamlets at Mackney, Shillingford Hill and Sires Hill also fall within the parish, which has been part of South Oxfordshire District Council since the 1974 local government reorganisation when North West Berkshire was transferred to Oxfordshire.

2.2 The main village evolved from a number of small hamlets spread out along the spring line located on The Square, the Red Lion, the Priory Farm, Bakers Farm/Sotwell Manor and at Slade End. Over the centuries the 'gaps' in between have been developed; although this settlement pattern still predominated until after WWII. Several large Victorian properties are located on high ground north of the High Road.

2.3 Brightwell cum Sotwell was within living memory a predominantly rural community where agriculture dominated, with arable farming on the higher ground, grazing on the surrounding marshland and Thames floodplain and orchards around the settled areas. By the 1940s, the main village was still a mosaic of farmsteads, cottages and small manor houses, separated by orchards and smallholdings. Between 1945 and 1990, two large building developments, Greenmere and Kings Orchard were constructed south of the High Road. Greenmere was planned as a model estate to house former agricultural workers who had previously lived in tied cottages across the village. The estates were separated from the historic core of the village by strip of field and orchard but linked by the footpath network. During the 1970s and 80s; a private housing estate was constructed at Monks Mead. Elsewhere small clusters of family houses and bungalows appeared, typically one property deep. These flanked the lanes between the older properties, but preserved boundaries of historic enclosures. At Shillingford Hill the post WW II breakup of the Rush Court Estate led to the establishment of the residential Home Park site and former farm cottages becoming private homes. The estate house has become the Elizabeth Finn Trust home.

2.4 The parish Facilities include The churches (St. James and St. Agatha's), the Village School (and Pre-school), the village stores, post office, Red Lion pub, village hall and the Rec and Pavilion.

2.5 In 2014, the parish council published its ten-year vision in the Brightwell cum Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan. This report updated the Vital Villages Report of 2004.

2.6 Transport links include First Great Western Trains providing a fast link to Oxford, Reading and London from Didcot, while Cholsey has local stopping services. In terms of bus routes the X2 Wallingford-Didcot-Oxford service passes through the main settlement of Brightwell and Sotwell.

2.7 There are two conservation areas – the largest covering most of the village of Brightwell cum Sotwell and the other covering Mackney – a map of which can be found in the appendix section of this document (Plan E). There are 49 listed buildings in the Parish, which is a relatively high concentration in a small area, and their prominence and cumulative effects play a very significant role in defining the character of the Parish.

2.8 The Parish is set around the east-west ridge of the Sinodun Hills running from Wittenham Clumps across Brightwell Barrow towards Wallingford. To the south is a flat area of farmland and to the north, the River Thames forms the parish boundary as it meanders through its floodplain. Sotwell and Brightwell are linear villages stretching 2km along the southern flank of the hills. The A4130 skirts the settlement on three sides but from every aspect views of the settlement are mainly of surrounding farmland, with only a few village buildings and mature trees showing. Even at the four entrances to the village off the A4130, the settlement blends so well into the landscape they could easily be missed. The Parish is situated just west of the River Thames and is also surrounded by the Mill Brook and Kibble Ditch, which are both susceptible to flood risk and there is therefore land that falls within flood zones 2 and 3 (as shown on the Environment Agency mapping). The same mapping also shows there are some areas susceptible to surface water flooding in the Parish (see Plans C and D in the Appendix section of this report).



3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 The Parish lies within South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) in the County of Oxfordshire.

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the government in 2012 is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The BCSNP must demonstrate that it is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF as a whole. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are especially relevant to the issues addressed by the BCSNP:

Supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 28)

Good Design (paragraph 58)

Protecting healthy communities (paragraph 70)

Protecting local green spaces (paragraph 76)

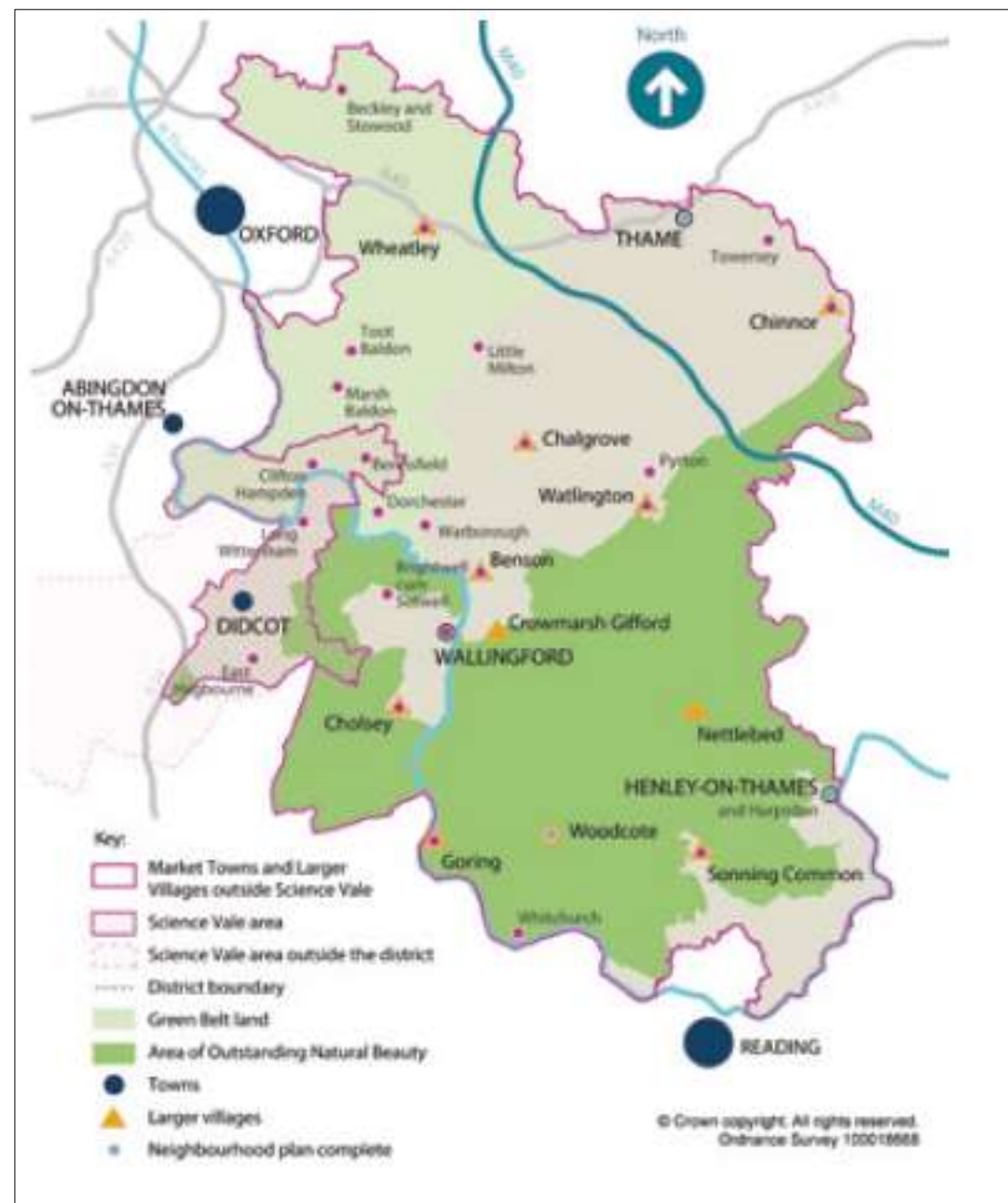
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 109)

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 126)

Neighbourhood planning (paragraph 185)

3.3 The development plan for the Parish currently comprises the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy of December 2012 (covering a plan period to 2027) and a number of saved policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 adopted in January 2006 (covering the plan period to 2011).

The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033 will, when adopted, replace the Core Strategy and older saved policies. The BCSNP will also replace the core strategy and older saved policies and will cover the period 2011 to 2033. The plan also includes minerals and waste plan documents adopted by Oxfordshire County Council.



Plan B: South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 Key Diagram

3.4 Set out in Appendix B is an overview of the current and emerging development plan policy framework. Although the BCSNP will be tested for its general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Core Strategy and Local Plan, the imminence of the new Local Plan means the BCSNP is wise to consider the emerging policy direction and its reasoning and evidence.

3.5 The essence of the overall planning strategy for the District has been and will continue to focus development on the main towns and larger villages of the District and to maintain the rural character of the open countryside that makes up the majority of the area. The Parish does not lie within an area planned for significant growth and is currently considered a 'smaller village'.

3.6 The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033 indicates that the spatial approach of the Core Strategy will be maintained. The approach towards economic development is set out in Chapter 6 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033 (Second Preferred Options).

3.7 The affordable housing policy framework is well-established and is not likely to change in respect of the proportion of overall numbers required per scheme. However, national changes to affordable housing policy – most specifically the inclusion of Starter Homes in its definition – are likely to significantly alter the economics and therefore mix of tenure type that can be planned for through the local planning system.

3.8 In identifying a benchmark for the housing supply strategy of the BCSNP, the Planning Practice Guidance states, "Neighborhood plans are not obliged to contain policies addressing all types of development. However, where they do contain policies relevant to housing supply, these policies should take account of latest and up-to-date evidence of housing need. In particular, where a qualifying body is attempting to identify and meet housing need, a local planning authority should share relevant evidence on housing need gathered to support its own plan-making." (§4I_040)

3.9 The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033 indicates that the spatial approach of the Core Strategy will be maintained. Housing and employment growth will be focused in the main towns. This is a conventional and reasonable approach.

3.10 The District Council has advised that rural villages should look to plan for 5% - 10% growth in their total housing stock to 2032, taking into account their facilities and local environmental constraints. For Brightwell cum Sotwell the main settlement (or 'village'), as the only settlement of any scale in the Parish (with c. 450 total housing stock), this means growth in the order of 22 – 45 homes. In the first five years of the plan, the plan would need to allocate deliverable sites of at least one third of this number (8 – 15 homes). The remainder of this total would come from other deliverable sites (i.e. available now, meaning a greater supply of new homes delivered in the period to 2021) and from developable sites (i.e. those sites that are not ready to come forward before 2021 but are otherwise suitable for housing).

3.11 In the absence of an up-to-date strategic policy framework, and there being no other robust means to translate objectively assessed housing need at a District level to that of a parish, this appears a reasonable approach to take. However, should the eventual, adopted Local Plan require additional homes to be delivered in the village, then the Parish Council will consider if a first review of the Neighbourhood Plan will be necessary to ensure growth remains plan-led

and consistent with its spatial objectives for the village and supported by the community. As the quantum of new homes is spread over the next 15 years, there will be sufficient time for such a review without undermining the contribution the Plan makes to the District's five year supply of housing land.

3.12 Although the whole parish was considered for its development potential, it is considered that the main village is the most sustainable place for new housing and as such the spatial strategy has focused new housing development in this location. This scale of growth takes into account the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The Core Strategy requires the mix of housing types on schemes to reflect local circumstances, which is expected to remain a requirement as this is consistent with the NPPF. A housing needs survey was carried out in the preparation of the BCSNP to help inform local housing need.

3.13 The Core Strategy and saved policy both seek to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued community facilities. This provides an opportunity for the BCSNP to identify those community facilities in the Parish that warrant protection from these policies.

3.14 There is a comprehensive framework of landscape protection policies that are relevant to the Parish, given the presence of the AONB and River Thames in parts of the Parish. The framework allows for appropriate development but reinforces the importance of ensuring all development proposals respect the special landscape character. The policies have informed the spatial plan and other policies of the BCSNP. Although some of these policies repeat national policy guidance (and so are therefore unlikely to be included in the new Local Plan in these forms), they reinforce the importance of proposals having full regard to heritage assets, whether formally designated or not.

3.15 The Parish generally, and the village specifically, contains a significant number of listed buildings, as well as two Conservation Areas. These heritage assets will very much shape the site selection and other policies of the BCSNP.

3.16 The policy framework contains a range of generic design and development management policies to be applied to all types of development proposal across the District. Again, there is the opportunity for the BCSNP to refine the framework so the guidance is specific to the Parish and carries greater weight in decision making.

3.17 The framework contains a variety of policies promoting the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure assets. Such assets are especially important in defining the character and in the functioning of the village and wider Parish. In which case, the BCSNP provides an opportunity to bring forward specific proposals to protect and improve existing assets and to create new assets through development proposals.

4. Community Views on Planning

4.1 The decision to prepare a neighbourhood plan was taken by Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Council and agreed at the Parish Meeting in spring 2013. A sub-group for this project was formed by Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Council in the winter of 2013. Steering group members are volunteers with a broad mix of skills and experience, Several members of the group are also parish councillors.

4.2 The parish council submitted its application to South Oxfordshire District Council to designate the area to be covered by the BCS Neighbourhood Development Plan in 2014. A decision from SODC was delayed due to an issue concerning Slade End Fields to the east of the parish that had recently been designated in the local plan as a site for the development of 555 houses. It was proposed to transfer this land from Brightwell cum Sotwell parish to be included in Wallingford under the Boundary Commission changes 2015. The NP area was agreed in 2015.

4.3 In August 2014, the Brightwell cum Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan was published. This plan followed two years of intensive community consultation that had been designed from the onset so that it could provide a strong evidence base for the neighbourhood plan. The 2014 Parish Plan updated the 2004 Vital Villages report – one of the first community led plans in the UK.

The 2014 Community Led Parish Plan set out to define what is special about Brightwell cum Sotwell - who lives in the parish, why people live in the parish, what is valued about living in the parish and what would be changed. In essence it was a statement of how the parish viewed itself in 2014 and how parishioners would like to see Brightwell cum Sotwell evolve over the next ten years. To inform the plan, a two year process of consultation had taken place. Parishioners were asked to have their say about what their priorities were, what they liked about living here and what would they improve. This included a doorstep survey of every household in the parish 'Have your Say' survey, drop-in sessions and pop up displays at numerous local events. Eight working groups were established to investigate specific topics including: community and facilities; business and economy; crime and safety; young people; landscape and built heritage; wildlife; sustainability; and housing.



In October 2013 every adult over the age of 16 was offered the opportunity to fill in a detailed Parish Questionnaire. This included 143 separate questions and was used as evidence to inform the report. Younger people were targeted at a series of special events. In total 64% of households completed and returned the Parish Questionnaire. In addition, 130 young people either completed a Have Your Say form or returned their Parish Questionnaire.

The Parish Plan established the general principles for the neighbourhood plan to follow. It identified the general needs of the community and the wider issues such as landscape, facilities, views and heritage which are important and should be accounted for in the neighbourhood plan.

The Parish Plan included a comprehensive action plan for delivery. Action BCS 1 concerned the BCS Neighbourhood Plan setting out the issues that should be addressed. The 2014 Parish Plan also included an updated Village Design Statement. The general nature of this report, and the quality of the consultation process was such that the sub group has used it as a key part of the evidence base for this Plan.

4.4 The neighbourhood plan is a community project, and must derive its authority and policies from the community. Communication, feedback and consultation have played a major part in developing our Plan. The consultation process included:

- The steering group met monthly
- Minutes of these meetings are available on the parish council website
- Updates were provided in the village magazine and on the village Facebook page
- One to one meetings with interested groups, landowners and residents
- Updates to the Parish Council and the steering group
- Stalls at village events such as the annual fete
- Public workshops to establish design principles and community views on where development should go
- Leaflet drop to every household in the village with an opportunity to have their say by post or email
- Special public meetings – some of which have been attended by over 150 local residents
- Poster campaign on village notice boards and telegraph poles

As the draft neighbourhood plan progressed, the frequency of public meetings has increased in order to gauge community responses to draft policies and site allocation.

In addition, three important projects have been undertaken to provide additional evidence needed for the Plan.

4.5 In 2015, an independent Housing Needs Survey was commissioned by the parish council and carried out by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. The Housing Needs Survey provided opportunities for respondents to make general comments and answer questions designed to help establish priorities for the Plan whilst testing some of the key findings assumed by the Parish Plan 2014. The results were then independently analysed and made available to the parish council.

4.6 A Landscape and Green Spaces Study was carried out by the sub-group. This short report included a desk top review of the findings of the Village Design Statement, the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and appropriate landscape reports. It also used the findings of the Parish Plan and feedback from workshops / meetings / leaflet drops that had been carried out to inform the neighbourhood plan.

4.7 A Site Assessments Report has been carried out to provide a summary of site assessments for background information and input in to the spatial and housing allocation policies for the Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan (BCSNP).

4.8 A qualified planning consultant was appointed to guide the neighbourhood plan subcommittee and to ensure that the draft neighbourhood plan.

4.9 The submission and pre submission report and its supporting evidence was made available on the Parish Council website with links to this site on the parish website and Facebook page. Posters were placed around the village advertising the consultation and every household in the village was leafleted to inform them on how to have their say. To allow for those without access to the web, printed copies were made available at a number of accessible village locations.

Public meetings were held with two drop in sessions for residents to have one to one meeting with the sub-committee during the pre-submission stage. At the same time, the Parish Council consulted a full list of the statutory bodies such as the County Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England and Thames Water.



5.Vision, Objectives & Land Use Policies

5.1 Vision

The Vision for Brightwell cum Sotwell is:

“To retain our separate identity as a rural parish set within open countryside, conserving the character of the various settlements; in a way that allows the community to evolve whilst sustaining our core vital services”

5.2 Objectives

To achieve this vision a number of key objectives have been identified as follows:

- Conserve and enhance the essential rural character of the Parish and its settlements by growing the main village in small places that form part of the established pattern of development and by conserving the existing network of trees, hedgerows, wetlands and wildlife sites
- Sustain the sensitive landscape setting of the main settlement and the intrinsic relationship between ‘village’ and ‘working farmland’ by avoiding harmful development in the AONB and by preventing any further elongation of the settlement into the countryside or precious village green spaces
- Encourage the use of well-located, non-productive, agricultural or horticulture land on the periphery of the main village to minimise the need for building on open green field land
- Sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings of the Parish and their settings
- Protect the remaining community core facilities and services from unnecessary loss and encourage proposals to sustain and improve their viability
- Rebalance the community profile of the main village to help sustain the core village facilities by planning for new homes suited to first time buyers and young families and by enabling older residents to remain in the village and to make their larger homes available to new residents

Land Use Planning Policies

5.3 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged in terms of their design, access etc.

5.4 The purpose of these policies is to either encourage planning applications to be made for things the local community wants to see happen or to discourage applications for developments that they do not want to happen. Policies must be clearly written so they can be easily applied when considering planning applications.

5.5 The plan deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key development issues in the area. For all other planning matters, the national and local policies of other planning documents – the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the various South Oxfordshire development plan documents - will continue to be used. The BCSNP also looks to the reasoning of the policies and the evidence base of the emerging Local Plan.

5.6 Set out below are the proposed policies of the Plan. Each policy has a number and title and the policy itself is written in bold italics for ease of reference. There is also a short statement explaining the intention of the policy and any other relevant background information. At the end of this document are the Policies Map – where a policy refers to a specific site or area then it is shown on the Maps.

Spatial Strategy

Policy BCS1: Brightwell cum Sotwell Village Boundary

5.7 This policy is intended to distinguish between the built up area of the main village and its surrounding countryside in order to manage development proposals accordingly. In defining the boundary on the Policies Map, applicants and the local planning authority will have certainty when preparing and determining planning applications respectively. This is consistent with a number of Core Strategy and Local Plan policies to encourage sustainable forms of development in the rural areas.

5.8 Most new development will be acceptable in principle within the defined Boundary, subject to it being appropriate in terms of its design and access arrangements. This may be infill housing, as well as new shops, businesses and other commercial activities that are appropriate in scale to a small village with a limited road network and public transport services. The proposed design will be primarily judged using the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, notably policies BCS6 and BCS7. The suitability of proposed access will be judged by the planning and highways authorities in the normal way.

Policy BCS1: Brightwell cum Sotwell Village Boundary

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Brightwell cum Sotwell Village Boundary, as shown on the Policies Map.

Proposals for infill development within the boundary will be supported, provided they accord with the design and development management policies of the development plan and other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposals for development outside the boundary, including within the settlement of Mackney, will only be supported if they are appropriate to a countryside location and they are consistent with local development plan policies.

5.9 The policy requires that development proposals outside the defined Boundary are appropriate to a countryside location and are consistent with relevant policies of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in respect of protecting local landscape and character of the natural environment character, most notably Policy CSEN1 of the Core Strategy, Policy C4 of the Local Plan and policies BCS9 and BCS10 of the Neighbourhood Plan. This recognises the valued function of the countryside and working farmland in shaping rural character. In some places, there are paddocks, fruit farms, recreational facilities, agricultural units and dwellings in open countryside or on the edge of village extending into the countryside beyond. The policy does not seek to prevent the improvement and extension of such uses. In addition, the third paragraph of the policy provides flexibility for new commercial and recreational development to be supported where that development would be in accordance with development plan policies. These may include Core Strategy policies CSEM4 (Supporting economic development), CSR2 (Employment in Rural Areas) and CSR3 (Community facilities and rural transport). The Plan's spatial strategy is reflected in paragraph 5.11. It is on this basis that housing proposals are expected to come forward within or adjacent to the existing extent of the built-up area and without needing to take up land in the surrounding countryside.

5.10 The Boundary has been drawn to reflect the present observable, developed edge of the village and makes provision for the proposed development schemes of policies BCS2, BCS3, BCS4 and BCS5. As such, it is the outcome of the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village, having been tested in the Sustainability Appraisal against a variety of alternative strategies.

5.11 The preferred strategy presents a coherent combination of sites that effectively complete the opportunities to infill the village envelope without requiring incursions into the surrounding countryside. It is therefore considered the best way to deliver the vision and objectives of the BCSNP and manage change in the village. As a result, the Boundary accommodates land for approximately 60 new homes across the allocated sites, which exceeds the indicative scale of growth advised by the District Council but should ensure the village will not be vulnerable to unplanned, harmful development for the plan period.

5.12 The preferred strategy has not made provision for additional employment or retail land on the edges of the village. The parish already supports a surprising number of businesses including local traders (builders, roofers, plumbers and electricians), farms, garages, people working from home, joiners and other craftsmen, Shillingford Bridge Hotel, Frogs Island, a micro brewery, the donkey sanctuary and Brightwell Vineyard. Local communities and economies

benefit from the activities of a vibrant local small business sector. However, as the Core Strategy Policies CSS1, CST1 and CSR2 make clear, small villages are not sustainable locations for the release of green field land for schemes of this type of development. In which case, the focus of this policy is on supporting the improvement of the existing business locations in the Parish and enabling new infill development within the Boundary if it is suitable in all other respects.

Site Allocation Policies

Policy BCS2: Land at Bosley's Orchard

Policy BCS2: Land at Bosley's Orchard

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Bosley's Orchard, as shown on the Policies Map, for a development scheme comprising up to 20 dwellings. The scheme will be supported provided:

- i. There is an emphasis on 2-3 bedroom homes in the housing mix including at least two serviced self-build plots;*
- ii. Affordable housing is provided in accordance with development plan policy;*
- iii. Vehicular access is via High Road only with a minimal loss of the existing hedgerow;*
- iv. The access scheme contains measures to improve safety for vehicular access turning into the site;*
- v. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for a minimum 25m wide buffer bordering Style Acre footpath to form a publicly accessible open space to include a community orchard, through which a pedestrian access is provided;*
- vi. There is a minimum loss of existing mature trees and hedgerows including the mature trees to the south of the site, the mature hedgerow to the east and;*
- vii. That the design and layout provides an appropriate buffer zone for properties along Bell Lane through the retention of existing scrub to the rear of properties on Bell Lane;*
- viii. The design of buildings includes a variety of architectural styles, materials and forms that reflect the distinctive rural character of buildings seen elsewhere in the village;*
- ix. There is no street lighting, the road layout being designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village without pavements and;*
- x. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement.*

5.13 This policy allocates land for a housing scheme on a site that is well-related to the main built up area of the village. It is a former orchard bordered on three sides by existing village development. Most of the fruit trees have been cut by the landowner in recent years although there is diverse hedge line to the north and east of the site alongside the public footpath that should be retained and a row of mature trees to the south of the site that provide a valuable contribution to the townscape and a nesting site for buzzards and red kites. This may reduce the net developable area.

5.14 Several applications have been submitted by the landowner that have all been refused due to access and consideration that the site is outside the established line of settlement. However, the principle of access to High Road is now agreed for at least ten houses and if mitigating measures are delivered under s278 up to a maximum of 20 houses would be acceptable. The Neighbourhood Plan has reviewed the most sustainable edges of the village to plan for new homes.

5.15 The location is suited to a mix of housing types including homes of 2 or 3 bedrooms; and some houses suitable for downsizing. A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment will be required and should demonstrate how a landscape scheme for the site will be successfully delivered. A green buffer is required around the perimeter of the site, together with a publicly accessible open space alongside the public footpath. This could form a new community orchard, retaining the heritage of the site providing a valuable wildlife habitat in the green corridor that links the remaining orchards in the village with the orchards to the north of the High Road. It would also retain the rural character of the adjoining Style Acre footpath and the rural character to the north at this key gateway to the village.

The design needs to be in keeping with the tradition found elsewhere in the village with a mix of housing types, with no street lighting. The road layout should be designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village with shared surfaces, few pavements, providing eclectic verge side boundary treatments and varying road widths to minimise the impression of an 'estate build'.

Policy BCS3: Land at Little Martins & Home Farm Barns

5.16 This policy allocates land for a housing scheme on a site that is close to the main village services. The site includes the last remaining barns from a former farm that was situated to the south and was re-developed in the 1980s. The policy allows for the demolition of the barns, which have no historic value, and requires a scheme of a mix of house types.

5.17 The size and location of the site are such that it provides an excellent opportunity to deliver a range of homes, including those especially suited to downsizers and self-builders. The community consultations so far have indicated a local demand from downsizer households and for some self-build. The policy does not specify the precise number of homes or plots to meet these specific needs but places the onus on a future planning application to make a proposal that reflects these requirements in the light of an overall scheme. This approach strikes the right balance between the desire for a clear policy outcome to benefit the local community on the one hand, and allowing an applicant the flexibility to bring forward a successful scheme on the other.

In respect of the scheme design, the policy acknowledges that the land falls within the setting of the Conservation Area. The layout, massing and building materials will need to reflect this significance.

Policy BCS3: Land at Little Martins & Home Farm Barns

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Little Martins and Home Farm Barns, as shown on the Policies Map, for a development scheme comprising approximately 30 dwellings. The scheme will be supported provided:

- i. There is an emphasis on 2-3 bedroom homes in the housing mix including at least three homes as serviced self build plots;*
- ii. Affordable housing is provided in accordance with development plan policy;*
- iii. Vehicular access is via Waterman's Lane, comprising the minimum carriageway length and width to achieve a satisfactory access and no pavement, and allowing for the continuation of the Lane as a footpath;*
- iv. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for a minimum 30m wide buffer bordering Waterman's Lane, through which a pedestrian and cycle access is provided;*
- v. The landscape scheme and layout should minimise the impact of development to existing housing bordering the rear of properties along Church Lane, The High Road and Old Nursery Lane;*
- vi. There is a minimum loss of existing mature trees and hedgerows particularly along Waterman's Lane and to the south of the site;*
- vii. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement;*
- viii. The design of buildings includes a variety of architectural styles, materials and forms that reflect the distinctive rural character of buildings seen elsewhere in the village; and*
- ix. There is no street lighting, the road layout being designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village with few pavement or raised kerbs.*

Ways to minimise the effect of development on existing properties should be sought. This should be linked to wildlife corridors established in this and adjacent sites. Innovative environmentally friendly drainage solutions will be sought. In addition, the treatment of access is paramount. Waterman's Lane runs to the west of the site and is a popular rural walk for the village. As much of Waterman's Lane as possible should be retained as a rural walk. A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment will be required and should demonstrate how a landscape scheme for the site will be successfully delivered. This should provide for a landscape / wildlife buffer along Waterman's Lane to the west of the site, which allows for pedestrian and cycle access onto the Lane from the site. This would help to melt the development into open countryside (the site is surrounded by existing houses on all other sides) and ensure that the effect on views from the AONB are minimised. The access and layout arrangement must minimize the land take to create a vehicular access and maintain pedestrian access to the public footpath. Its detailed design must also preserve the rural character of this location and avoid a highways specification and materials that are of urban appearance, including street lighting.

Policy BCS4: Land at Thorne's Nursery

Policy BCS4: Land at Thorne's Nursery

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Thorne's Nursery, as shown on the Policies Map, for a development scheme comprising 4 dwellings using the entire site. The scheme will be supported provided:

- i. The homes are 4+ bedroom houses that with the exception of any landscape or wildlife strip and the extension to the Village Hall car park occupy the entire site;*
- ii. Vehicular access is via Old Nursery Lane only;*
- iii. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for a minimum 10m wide wildlife buffer along the eastern boundary of the site to help mitigate the loss of scrub and to conserve the setting of nearby listed building on Little Lane; and for landscaping along Old Nursery Lane;*
- iv. Land is provided and laid out as an extension to the adjoining village hall car park, as indicated on the Policies Map for use as a car park and open space;*
- v. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement;*
- vi. That as much existing vegetation is retained in the scheme as possible and*
- vii. There is no street lighting; and*
- viii. Any sustainable drainage scheme forms a wetland area linked to the opening of culverted watercourses.*

5.18 This policy allocates land for a small housing scheme within the main village area. It is a former nursery site with a long planning history. The site has been left empty for 40 years and has now scrubbed over in places. Several applications have been refused due to access – it now seems clear that only a scheme of up to four houses on the entire site would be possible for this reason. The landowner has informed the Parish Council that this will now be acceptable in principle including the provision of land to extend the Village Hall car park.

5.19 The redevelopment of this land will be beneficial in two key ways: it will make better use of redundant horticultural land on a site close to the village services; and it will create an opportunity to extend the currently limited village hall / community car park on its southern boundary. Together with a wildlife buffer around the perimeter of the site next to Brightwell Stream, these benefits justify the allocation.

5.20 The policy requires that the scheme proposes improvements to Old Nursery Lane that sustain the special historic character of the Grade II listed Woodley's Cottage and Orchard Cottage; whilst the buffer to the east of the site will help to minimise the effect of development to the listed buildings on Little Lane. In practice, these enhancements and the future responsibilities regarding the maintenance of the road will need to be agreed with local residents before any planning application is submitted. Similarly, the maximum retention of mature trees on the site will be important and there should be no street lighting. It is recommended that proposals should be submitted as full planning applications. A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment will be required and should demonstrate how a landscape scheme for the site will be successfully delivered.

Policy BCS5: Slade End Green

5.21 This policy allocates three sites for housing and business development at Slade End, the combination of which is intended to recreate one of the earliest parts of the village at Slade End Green; one of the original nucleus of settlements in the village. The Green formed a small medieval hamlet distinct from the rest of the village known as Bishop's Sotwell or East Brightwell. The hamlet was focused on the manor house and farm with a number of small cottages (most now lost and replaced by more modern developments or left undeveloped). The site is in three separate ownerships and the intention of the policy is to bring these together under one holistic vision.

5.22 The vision for the land is to bring back the idea of Slade End Green by designing any development around a central area located on Green Lane. To realise that vision in practice requires the policy to be implemented either through a single planning application covering all three sites or the prior agreement of a masterplan to which subsequent planning applications will adhere. The sites are in different land ownerships, so the policy does not make for unreasonable requirements in terms of legal agreements or land value equalization. It also acknowledges that it may take some time for all the proposals to come forward, but the Parish Council has secured the agreement of all three landowners that this approach meets with their expectations for their individual sites. The masterplan process will be co-ordinated by the Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan in due course.

5.23 The development will need to respect the setting of the nearby listed buildings and to preserve or enhance the conservation area. This may best be achieved by buildings of a more traditional appearance and form.

The land includes a former farm belonging to Slade End House. It now comprises two 18th century barns used for domestic storage associated with Slade End House and two large blocks of 20th century pig and turkey sheds used for storage and workshops. A strip of land between the redundant farm yard and Green Lane includes scrub and two derelict cottages. On the opposite side of Green Lane is a former nursery site now derelict and overgrown with scrub and a third small triangular plot of land that includes some utility service buildings. The removal of the remaining structures to the east of the lane and their replacement with new buildings will need to enhance the listed buildings, the conservation area and their settings. The scheme should be designed in a way that its layout, building massing and orientation and materials are appropriate in order to achieve this.

5.24 Improvements to Green Lane will be required in order to facilitate safe access. This could be through a shared surface. It is important that the special historic character of the Grade II listed cottages on Chapel Lane and the setting of Slade End House, its listed barns, Peacock Cottage and Triangle Cottage are protected or improved. For example, it may be important to establish a sufficient distance between the schemes and these older buildings, so as not to undermine their structural integrity, as well as to sustain their visual contribution to the village scene. Areas of scrub have emerged on the derelict land that is a valuable habitat for wildlife – measures will need to be taken to create similar habitat within the area covered by the masterplan, with appropriate landscaping to the remainder of the area.

The significant trees on the land should be retained where possible and street lighting should be avoided in order to retain the rural character of the lane. There is a history of surface water flooding in the area and this needs to be resolved as part of any development on any of these sites.

Policy BCS5: Slade End Green

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the redevelopment of land at Slade End Green, as shown on the Policies Map, for three housing schemes and at Slade End Farm for business use. Proposals will be supported providing they are either made as one planning application for all three sites or they are made as separate applications that each adhere to a previously approved masterplan covering all three sites.

BCS5A: Slade End Farm

5.25 This first site is a former farmyard, with former pig and turkey sheds being used for storage and workshops with a strip of scrubland alongside Green Lane that contains the ruins of two former cottages (last used as a scout hut).

5.26 The policy encourages development which will enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area by removing the existing unsightly structures that currently detract from its character. In doing so, the policy seeks to improve the setting of the listed buildings, to enhance the Conservation Area and to preserve the setting of the Conservation Area. It sets out the principles for a small development scheme consistent with the published guidance of English Heritage/Historic England. The scheme includes housing and business uses. As with the other two schemes, the policy requires works are undertaken to upgrade Green Lane.

5.27 The site referred to in the policy forms part of the larger Slade End House site that includes two Grade II listed, 18th Century stone and timber barns. Outside of this policy and through a separate planning application, the owner is proposing to restore the listed barns, reinstate the enclosure of the old farmyard with a new building for garages, garden equipment and home office and enhance the appearance of the section of farmyard this surrounds for the private use of Slade End House.

BCS5A: Slade End Farm

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates up to 6 houses and additional business use at Slade End Farm, provided:

- i. The homes are a mix of 2 – 3 - 4 bedroom houses;**
- ii. The former derelict bungalow on Green Lane is demolished, replacement housing being designed in agreement with the wider vision for Slade End Green;**
- iii. The modern Slade End farm buildings are demolished and the area is improved with the provision of 6 tourism units and associated business premises in agreement with the wider vision for Slade End Green;**
- iv. That the business use is for tourist accommodation with supporting communal buildings, parking and landscaping;**
- v. The development needs to respect its context in proximity to Slade End House, Triangle Cottage, Slade End House Barns listed buildings and their setting;**
- vi. The layout, orientation and massing of the development has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement;**
- vii. There is satisfactory vehicular access agreed in the masterplan;**
- viii. Green Lane should be improved; and**
- ix. There is no street lighting, the road layout being designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village (where they have few pavements or raised curbs).**

BCS5B: Strange's (Slade End) Nursery

5.28 This policy allocates land for a small housing scheme as part of the holistic vision for Slade End. It is a former nursery site with a long planning history. The site has been left empty for 20 years and has now scrubbed over. Several applications have been refused due to access and consideration that the site lies outside the edge of settlement.

5.29 The redevelopment of this land will be beneficial in two key ways: it will make better use of redundant horticultural land on a site close to the village; It will form an essential part of the wider scheme to restore the Slade End Green each side of Green Lane – an area of the village that has been derelict for many years. The policy requires that the scheme proposes minimal improvements to the Croft Path in order to sustain the special historic character of the Grade II listed cottages on Chapel Lane including the setting of Honeysuckle and Cappaslade Cottages. Similarly, the maximum retention of mature trees on the site will be important and there should be no street lighting. An innovative design is welcome that reflects the sites shape, setting and constraints.

BCS5B: Strange's (Slade End) Nursery

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates up to 6 houses at Strange's (Slade End) Nursery, provided:

- i. The homes are a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses including some as serviced self build plots;*
- ii. Vehicular access is off Green Lane only;*
- iii. A financial contribution is made to fund works to improve Green Lane from Slade End to the site access to the minimum adoptable standard;*
- iv. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for an appropriate boundary along the Croft;*
- v. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to the significance of the setting to the adjacent listed buildings and their setting;*
- vi. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement;*
- vii. The development provides for a biodiversity net gain for the parish;*
- viii. The scheme provides an innovative solution that respects the sites unusual shape and the setting of the Croft footpath; and*
- ix. There is no street lighting, the road layout being designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village with few pavement or raised kerbs.*

BCS5C: Slade End South to West of Green Lane

5.30 The third site is also derelict agricultural land adjoining an active electricity substation and water pumping station. Its redevelopment will contribute to the recreation of Slade End Green. The policy requires that the scheme includes an effective buffer to the utility facilities and that the design of the home reflects the location of the site in the setting of the Conservation Area and the wider vision for Slade End Green.

BCS5C: Slade End South to West of Green Lane

Proposals for a housing scheme of a single house on the triangular piece of land to the west of Green Lane will be supported, provided:

- i. Vehicular access is off Green Lane only;*
- ii. A financial contribution is made to fund works to improve Green Lane from Slade End to the site access to the minimum adoptable standard;*
- iii. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for a buffer along the boundary to the adjacent pumping station;*
- iv. The house is designed in agreement with the wider vision for Slade End Green;*
- v. The layout, orientation, design and massing of the house has full regard to the significance of the setting to the Brightwell cum Sotwell Conservation Area; and*
- vi. There is no street lighting.*



Landscape Policies

5.31 A Landscape and Green Space study has been prepared for the BCSNP.

5.32 The parish is set around an east-west ridge of low hills running from Wittenham Clumps across Brightwell Barrow towards Wallingford. To the south is a flat area of farmland and to the north, the River Thames meanders through its floodplain. Brightwell cum Sotwell has four distinctive landscape types:

The Thames floodplain

The chalky-marl ridge of the Sinodun Hills that extends from Shillingford Hill in the east of the parish and to Sires Hill in the west.

The main settlement of Brightwell and Sotwell following the spring line on a gravel terrace

The flat former marshland area that wraps around Mackney island to the south of the main village

The defining landscape feature of Brightwell cum Sotwell is the ridge of the Sinodun Hills that can be seen from many places around the parish. The tree capped hills including the iconic Brightwell Barrow sweep up from the River Thames to the north and from the flat valley floor around Mackney to the south, rising through open countryside, framed by the orchards and gardens of the village. From the hills themselves, long rural views across the main settlement are enjoyed across open farmland towards The Chilterns and Berkshire Downs.

The Sinodun Hills and the Thames floodplain are situated in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The merged villages of Sotwell and Brightwell stretch for 2km along the southern flank of the Sinodun Hills immediately to the south of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the edge of which follows the route of the old A4130 (the village was bypassed in 1974).

The A4130 bypass cuts across ancient tracks and old field boundaries, skirting the settlement on three sides, but from every aspect views of the settlement are mainly of surrounding farmland, with only a few village buildings and mature trees showing. Even at the four entrances into the village off the bypass, the settlement blends so well into the landscape it could easily be missed with open fields and orchards extending the countryside across the busy road to the village. In this way the A4130 does not form an artificial and hard edge to the settlement.

5.33 All developments proposals that could have an impact on the AONB or its setting should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to support any planning application.

5.34 In the 2014 the BCS CLPP identified that the overwhelming perception by the community was that Brightwell cum Sotwell is a rural parish and should strive to remain so. 98% of respondents indicated that the rural character of the parish is important. The CLPP identified that the number one concern of local residents was a perceived loss of rural character and the prospect of the main settlement being joined to Wallingford at Slade End. As Wallingford continues to expand westwards there is only one field separating the village from the town. Another important gap between settlements was identified between the main village and Mackney. In both cases working farmland performs a valued function, preventing the coalescence of distinct settlements.

5.35 The CLPP set out to identify the specific landscape features that are important in order to define the landscape character of the parish that is set out in a Design Statement. This was tested through a series of consultation events including 'The Village Questionnaire' and has been used to inform the NP.

5.36 Views play a key role in how local people relate and interact with their surrounding environment. These may be 'big sky' views on open farmland in Mackney, sweeping panoramas across the Thames Valley from the top of the Sinodun Hills or shorter views within settlements terminating on a particular feature.

Although the main village is surrounded by working farmland it offers few glimpses to open countryside. Gaps in the settlement boundary and glimpses from footpaths that afford long country views are of particular importance to residents; linking the historic core of the village with its wider rural landscape.

5.37 At the centre of the main village is a large area of open space that is of considerable landscape significance. The open space adds to the rural character of the main settlement, is rich in wildlife and is a much used and cherished part of village life. This open space is identified on the policies map and is located to the south of Greenmere and Kings Orchard, to the east of Church Lane, to the north of The Street and to the west of Monks Mead. The open space is connected to open countryside via the garden of Vine House, the Croft fields and The Swan Allotments and Wilderness.

Policy BCS6: Local Gaps

5.38 This policy seeks to protect the essential countryside character of two key areas between the settlements of Brightwell cum Sotwell and Mackney and between Brightwell cum Sotwell and Wallingford ('the Slade End Gap'), in order to prevent coalescence between these separate settlements and to protect their distinctive individual character and setting. In doing so, it will conserve the way that the main settlement sits invisibly in the landscape, retaining the fields between Slade End and the bypass and between Mackney and the main settlement preferably as working farmland in order to keep a clear 'rural' buffer between settlements.

5.39 The gaps are shown on the Policies Map and have been drawn to include only the minimum essential area to achieve the policy objective. They each make a significant contribution to maintaining the individual character of their adjoining settlements. The Evidence Base includes the Landscape & Green Spaces Study which describes each gap in greater detail and the particular contribution that it makes.

This policy does not seek to prevent development that may otherwise be suited to a countryside location but ensures that the scale, massing and height of proposals do not result in the integrity of a gap being undermined. Development that is consistent with this policy might include minor extensions to existing buildings, the creation of playing fields, or other open land uses.

Policy BCS6: Local Gaps

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following Local Gaps on the Policies Map:

- i. Brightwell cum Sotwell - Mackney Local Gap; and*
- ii. The Slade End Local Gap.*

Development proposals should ensure the retention of the open character of the Local Gaps. Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings will be supported where they would preserve the separation between the settlements concerned and retain their individual identities.

Policy BCS7: Landscape Character & the Villages

5.40 This policy seeks to ensure that all development proposals have understood and responded to the special landscape character of the Parish, and how that character plays such an important role in shaping the character of Brightwell cum Sotwell and Mackney especially. The policy does not seek to impose a blanket restriction on development around or inside the villages but requires design statements to show that proposals will not harm this character.

5.41 The topography of the main village is important in maintaining the landscape character in that the shape of the village is hidden in its landscape as set out in the Landscape and Green Spaces Study. Development in that part of the Parish within the AONB is already managed by policies of the NPPF and development plan. This policy aims to complement those policies by identifying as special the ridge of the Sinodun Hills sweeping up from the flat valley floor, rising through open countryside to the tree capped hilltop at Brightwell Barrow. This is the defining landscape feature of Brightwell cum Sotwell and together with the River Thames landscape is special to the local community with its open character, recreational value, flood storage capacity and wildlife potential.

Policy BCS7: Landscape Character & the Villages

Development proposals within and around the villages of Brightwell cum Sotwell and Mackney should demonstrate how they have taken account of the contribution made to the character of the villages by the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and especially the Sinodun Hills.

Policy BCS8: The Green Heart of the Village

Policy BCS8: The Green Heart of the Village

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Green Heart formed by a connected sequence of open spaces within the village, as shown on the Policies Map.

Development proposals on land that lies within the Green Heart will be supported where they:

- i. demonstrate how they sustain or enhance the visual characteristics, the function and biodiversity of the land; and*
- ii. have regard to how their landscape schemes, layouts, access and public open space provision and other amenity requirements may contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the Network.*

5.42 The main village of Brightwell cum Sotwell is an inward looking settlement with few opportunities to view open countryside. At the core of the village however is a network of green infrastructure assets, including informal open space and Local Green Spaces, allotments, private gardens, playing fields, a school playing field, assets of biodiversity value, children's play areas, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways. Although much of this network is enclosed, being situated within the settlement boundary, it provides a different function to the rest of the built area in giving a countryside feel to a large proportion of the village due to its open nature and rural character. Views from lanes and footpaths across public and private open spaces are particularly important, whilst the open spaces help to define and reinforce the separate identity of the historic twin villages of Brightwell and Sotwell. This policy does not prevent development, rather it sets out to ensure that any development does not cause harm to the Green Heart.



Heritage and Design Policies

5.43 There are distinctive features of Brightwell cum Sotwell that shape its character. In the main village this does not just include the buildings. Mature trees; hedgerows, gardens, open spaces and country lanes all make a significant contribution to the unique and special character. These assets are set out in the Brightwell cum Sotwell Conservation Area Character Appraisal (BCS CACA) and in the BCS Village Design Statement (BCS VDS) that forms part of the BCS Community Led Parish Plan (2014). The Design Statement is a formal record of residents' views, addressing aspects of the landscape and settlement that are central to the parish's identity and sense of place. The first Design Statement was published in 2004 and following public consultation was updated in 2014 for inclusion in the BCS CLPP.

5.44 This policy refines Core Strategy Policy CSQ3 on design quality by identifying a number of key design principles of special importance to managing future development proposals in the village. Not all these principles will be relevant to every planning application. Where they are relevant, the policy expects applicants to show how they have taken these principles into account in their proposals, with an explanation of why any principle has not been adhered to as necessary.

5.45 A major feature that shapes the character of Sotwell, Mackney and Brightwell is that these settlements have been bypassed since medieval times by the old High Road, now in turn replaced by the A4130. Without the need to have accommodated through traffic for over 500 years, internal movements are still largely via unimproved lanes and old trackways with few pavements or raised kerbs. These narrow and winding lanes help create a very strong and special sense of place. It is a village that is naturally unfriendly towards vehicular traffic, with an internal network of ancient footpaths that encourages pedestrian movement.

Curving streets of varying widths, flanked by combinations of banks, cottage gardens, hedges, old barns and traditional walls maintain the rural character and on the whole do not dominate the buildings beyond, but are in scale with the style, period and setting of any given location. This character also has a natural speed calming function slowing vehicular traffic down. Most of the village has recently been designated as a 20 mph zone.

5.46 Street lighting has been resisted in most parts of the parish adding greatly to the rural identity, with particular advantages for nocturnal wildlife – owls, bats and stag beetles are a common sight during the summer. In the Village Questionnaire 77% of people indicated that they liked not having street lighting. A further 88% felt a dark night time sky was important in shaping character. Badly designed exterior house lights, in particular the installation of flood lamps that are not attached to sensitive light sensors detract from this character.

5.47 Off-street parking is common and should be encouraged. The design of access to driveways from the highway is an important consideration; there being a strong vernacular that adds much to the rural village character. Many properties have old barns or detached garages that fit in well with the village scene. Open plan frontages to properties with large car parking areas are not in keeping and have begun to alter the character of the village – particularly outside of the conservation area.

5.48 There is a very wide range of materials, styles and type of building in the main settlement including lime washed timber framed cottages, old barns, converted farmsteads and modern detached dwellings that generally fit well into the character of the village. Thatch, slate and clay tile roofs sit happily next to each other. The height, scale and density of properties vary greatly and change rapidly although due to careful conservation planning and the retention of historic curtilage boundaries, with well-treed gardens and remnants of old orchards much of the charm of the village can be found in this variation; the village retaining a very strong character and identity. Simply because there is not a single characteristic village style, there is no excuse for the introduction of anonymous architecture however. Whether new development is in a traditional style or is more modern; it is the quality of design, use of materials, scale, density and landscape details that is important.

New developments and extensions need to suit the character and scale of their immediate setting. Careful matching of building style and scale that use traditional materials and locally distinctive details should be sought. The way that the development fits in to the streetscape is important with sensitive boundary treatment and landscaping that respects the local vernacular. There is a growing concern that new works are failing to reflect the proportions of nearby properties, being out of context with their setting.

5.49 While the earliest record of two villages of Brightwell and Sotwell date from the Saxon period the Parish has archaeological evidence showing human activity from prehistoric times through to WWII as set out in the Historic Environment Records. Inevitably there will be the potential for archaeology to be present on any of the development sites and this will need to be allowed for in any development proposal.



Policy BCS9: Design Principles

Policy BCS9: Design Principles

Development proposals will be supported, provided they complement, enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness of the village and where appropriate are designed to enhance the setting of the conservation areas and their settings.

Proposals must show clearly how the scale, mass, density, layout and design of the site, building or extension fits in with the character of the immediate area and wider context within the village. The scale of new developments should conserve and enhance the rural character and appearance of the village and its landscape setting as defined in the adopted Village Design Statement and Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

In addition, development proposals will be supported if they have had regard to the following design principles, as appropriate:

- i. They do not include street lighting;*
- ii. They retain the dark visual ambiance of the village via minimal external illumination;*
- iii. They have regard to historic plot boundaries, hedgerows and enclosure walls;*
- iv. Proposals for new garages, outbuildings or tall garden walls must be subservient in scale and, whether of a traditional or modern design, should draw from the local palette of vernacular building materials;*
- v. The impacts on residential amenity of the construction arrangements are minimized by way of lorry movement, deliveries, working times, lighting and loss of vegetation wherever possible;*
- vi. They do not include installing pavements or kerbs to existing village lanes;*
- vii. Proposed parking arrangements should seek innovative solutions that do not necessitate large expanses of driveway nor the loss of vegetation along the highway but do not necessitate parking on village lanes;*
- viii. The layout, orientation and massing of new houses on larger residential schemes must avoid an estate-style appearance by dividing the developable area into distinct parcels and by responding to the historic grain of the development in the village, including its road and footpath network and historic property boundaries;*
- ix. They use permeable surfaces on driveways and use sustainable drainage systems that can connect directly to an existing or new wet environment wherever possible; and*
- x. They will not require the culverting of existing ditches.*

Policy BCS10: Design Principles in the Conservation Areas & their Settings

Policy BCS10: Design Principles in the Conservation Areas & their Settings

In addition to the policy BCS9, development proposals in the Conservation Areas, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported, provided they have full regard to the following design principles:

- i. Boundary treatments to highways and village lanes should comprise the use of native hedgerow, stone, brick or flint boundary walls or iron railings as appropriate to the immediate context of the site;*
- ii. There should be no sub-division of the historic curtilage of listed buildings if it can be demonstrated that the historic significance of the building and its setting would be harmed and;*
- iii. Landscape schemes should include local indigenous trees and features that form part of the vernacular of the conservation area.*

5.50 This policy refines Core Strategy Policy CSEN3 on the historic environment by identifying three key principles that help define the specific character of the two Conservation Areas in the Parish. The BCSNP recognises that new development should reinforce the local distinctiveness of the conservation area as set out in the detailed Conservation Area Character Appraisal and where appropriate be designed to enhance its setting. New development (including its scale, height, mass, form, detailing and use of traditional building techniques) should not cause harm to the character or significance of any heritage asset. For all listed buildings, and for alterations or extensions to heritage assets in the conservation area, a Statement of Significance should demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the heritage asset affected. It should also set out how the proposed changes will retain and, where possible, enhance that significance.

5.51 The constraints offered within the Brightwell cum Sotwell and Mackney Conservation Areas offer few opportunities for new development beyond some in-fill and extension of existing properties. Where new development does take place and alterations or extensions to buildings is proposed it is vital to ensure that this is done in a way that is sensitive to the historic character and context as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Village Design Statement.

5.52 It is generally accepted that Conservation Areas have been adequately protected the historic core of the main village although the character is changing as gardens are sub-divided and new build is increasingly out of scale relative to plot size and the setting.

5.53 One of the principal characteristics of Brightwell cum Sotwell is its close relationship with the landscape: grass verges, trees, remnants of old orchards, green spaces between buildings, and views out across open countryside are as much a part of the character of the village as traditional materials and historic buildings.

Modern development has most affected the historic borders of the settlement on the north side but remains separated from the core of the village by green open spaces. On the south side, the edge of the village retains an immediate relationship with open fields and the countryside beyond. A buffer of open space remains at the east and west ends of the village but the historic boundaries have become blurred by inappropriate modern development.

Green Infrastructure Policies

5.54 Brightwell cum Sotwell is rich with wildlife with a variety of different habitats that support a diverse range of species. To the north of the parish on the floodplain of the Thames the Earth Trust has recently created a large area of wetland through its River of Life project and a Site of Special Scientific Interest at Wittenham Clumps is located immediately to the west of the parish.

5.55 Surrounding the settlements is a patchwork of fields, orchards, woods and meadowland. To the south of the parish is a network of stream and ditches draining the land towards the Mill Brook, flowing through an environment that despite being predominantly agricultural does contain a good number of species although it could be improved through more wetland habitat creation possibly linked to environmentally sensitive drainage enhancements. The area given over to woodland in the parish has increased significantly over the past 50 years and the destruction of hedgerows now ceased. Around the margins of many fields, strips are left for wildlife.

5.56 Deer and badger are a common sight in the parish. Many garden song birds have declined over the past decade whereas other species have increased. The red kite and buzzard are now common and nest in the village. Orchards once dominated the main village and a good number survive although many are in a poor state. Their wildlife importance is only now being recognised with Natural England recently supporting their conservation through new legislation. Brightwell cum Sotwell's old orchards are our most unique and special habitat and should be conserved. Many fruit trees are found in our hedgerows providing an ample supply of fruit for homemade jams and drinks and add significantly to the character. Street lighting has been resisted in most parts of the parish having advantages for nocturnal wildlife.

5.57 Native hedges and flower-rich verges are found in many garden boundaries and along the lanes. Many of these hedges follow historic enclosure lines and provide a distinct local vernacular. They are an essential part of the natural cycle that sustains the countryside, providing food for our hungry pollinators and other wildlife such as birds and mammals; and a vital element in the green corridors that wildlife moves about in.

The Village Environment Group has surveyed the hedgerows and many of the publicly owned verges and hedgerows are now managed by the Parish Council as a wildlife asset. Scrub is an important habitat in the village particularly on redundant nursery sites. Measures to off-set its loss will be needed as these sites are redeveloped.

5.58 Streams and wet areas in the main village have a considerable positive effect on character, being important to 94% of residents. Many public footpaths follow the course of these streams. Measures to open up (both physically and through improved access) other water features in and around the parish should be explored.



5.59 Private and public space seems to be an important element in shaping our place. Within the village, large gardens are common and provide a valuable habitat for wildlife. Public open space is important including the churchyards, the two recreation grounds, the Swan Wilderness and the Millennium Wood all adding much to the character of the village.

5.60 Brightwell cum Sotwell has a good network of footpaths both in the main village and in the countryside that are cherished by many local people. A variety of routes connect the parish and connect us with our neighbouring settlements at Wittenham, Wallingford and Moreton. With 88% of parishioners regularly walking around the parish, our network of paths is the most used asset. In total, 97% of villagers use a footpath at least once a month.

Of particular significance is the network of paths at the centre of the village (in the area known as the Green Heart) and the three village footpaths that pass through open countryside or adjacent to old orchard sites (Croft, Style Acre and Waterman's Lane). It is important that the character of these rural footpaths do not become alleyways between new developments.

5.61 The River Thames floods periodically, naturally filling its floodplain. The Mill Brook catchment (including the Kibble Ditch) that drains farmland around Mackney also floods regularly with low lying agricultural land being left unproductive for a period after the flood water has receded. Surface water has flooded several sites in the main village at Slade End, Sotwell Street and around the War Memorial, that has been washed (by passing cars) into nearby properties.

As climate changes it is predicted that rainfall patterns will evolve and more flood events will become the norm associated with long periods of drought. This will affect our parish in several ways. Springs and streams may dry whilst at other times surface water flooding will continue to increase. Drainage ditches may not be able to cope with increased rainfall and larger areas of agricultural land will flood causing disruption to agricultural activity and blocking public rights of way. It is anticipated that the River Thames will flood more often.

Policy BCS1 I: Local Green Spaces

5.62 This policy proposes six important green spaces in and on the edge of the village are protected from development by their designation as Local Green Spaces in accordance with §76 and §77 of the NPPF. The policy has the effect of managing development proposals in line with the NPPF provisions in the Green Belt.

In each case, the green spaces play an integral part in the enjoyment of the Parish and are therefore special to the local community. A fuller description of each site, and the justification for its designation, is provided in the Landscape & Local Green Space Study report in the Evidence Base.

Policy BCS11: Local Green Spaces

The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following locations as Local Green Space, as shown on the Policies Map:

- i. Millennium Wood*
- ii. Kings Meadow Playing Field*
- iii. Wellsprings Footpath and stream*
- iv. The Recreation Ground*
- v. Swan Allotments*
- vi. Swan Wilderness and Community Orchard*

New development will not be permitted on land designated as Local Green Space except in very special circumstances.

Policy BCS12: Biodiversity, Trees, Hedgerows & Wildlife Corridors

Policy BCS12: Biodiversity, Trees, Hedgerows & Wildlife Corridors

Development proposals will be supported if they have had regard to the following biodiversity principles:

- i. Avoid the unnecessary loss of mature trees, hedgerows or other form of wildlife corridor, either as part of a landscape scheme and layout or as part of the construction works of a development scheme;*
- ii. Where the loss of a mature tree or hedgerow is unavoidable, the proposals must make provision on site for replacements;*
- iii. Wherever possible developments should seek to have a biodiversity net gain for the parish;*
- iv. Where the loss of scrubland is unavoidable, the proposals must retain one or more wildlife strips of scrub linked to adjacent areas of open space wherever possible;*
- v. For new homes, an owl box, bat box and/or bird boxes (particularly suited to their use by swifts, swallows and house martins) should be installed as an integral part of any house design;*
- vi. Wherever possible, piped water courses should be re-opened in new developments linked to wetland creation; and*
- vii. Proposals that result in run off of surface water into the stream network of the village should ensure the water flows through an appropriate sustainable drainage system*

5.63 This policy complements Core Strategy Policy CSB1 in setting out how development proposals should address biodiversity matters as relevant to the nature and scale of the proposal. Not all of these principles will be relevant to each proposal. For the most part, they can be dealt with as part of the proposed landscape scheme as a means of ensuring any potentially harmful effects of the development can be satisfactorily mitigated. Whilst this policy does not require formal biodiversity offsetting it is the Parish Council's intention as set out in Section 6 to prioritise biodiversity projects in the parish. This will help to compensate for the unavoidable loss of some biodiversity value due to the development proposals in this plan.

Policy BCS13: Footpaths & Bridleways

Policy BCS13: Footpaths & Bridleways

Proposals for development adjoining a public footpath or bridleway should have regard to maintaining the rural character of the footpath or bridleway.

Proposals to create new pedestrian and cycle links from adjoining development schemes to a public footpath or bridleway will be supported, provided they avoid or minimise the loss of mature trees and hedgerows and use materials that are consistent with a rural location.

5.64 This policy aims to prevent development from undermining the established and popular network of rural footpaths and bridleways. The main settlement is criss-crossed by many well used footpaths and bridleways. Their functionality and character should be maintained so that they do not become alleys between new developments. In particular, the network of paths in the green heart of the main village and the three village footpaths or bridleways that pass through open countryside (Croft, Style Acre and Waterman's Lane) should retain their rural character.

Policy BCS14: Renewable Energy

5.65 This policy supports in principle the development of renewable energy for the Parish to contribute to global measures to tackle climate change. However, it acknowledges that there are parts of the Parish where such development is not appropriate as a matter of principle, i.e. the nationally and locally designated landscapes. Elsewhere, a solar array may be suitable provided the potential for negative landscape and amenity effects can be satisfactorily mitigated.



Policy BCS14: Renewable Energy

Proposals for a solar energy array will be supported in principle, provided:

- i. they are located and designed to suit the character of the local landscape;*
- ii. it is effectively screened;*
- iii. it will not cause significant harmful noise or light pollution*
- iv. It will not cause substantial harm to a designated heritage asset*

Local Facilities and Service Providers

5.66 A community facility is a facility that is judged by our community to be essential if we are to ensure a sustainable community. In Brightwell cum Sotwell these are:

- The Churches (St. James and St. Agatha's)
- The Village School (and Pre School)
- The Village Stores
- The Post Office
- The Red Lion public house
- The Village Hall
- The Recreation ground and Pavilion
- Kings Meadow

Policy BCS15: Community Facilities

5.67 This policy seeks to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued local community facilities. In doing so, it refines Core Strategy Policy CSR3 and saved 2011 Local Plan Policy CF1 as they apply to this Parish. Those policies share the same purpose, but allow for facilities to be lost without considering the ongoing community value of their established use and without requiring their re-provision close by. This policy addresses those weaknesses by ensuring that those making proposals provide clear evidence that the location, as well as the current facility operations, is no longer viable for community use before its change of use and redevelopment are supported. However, it does allow for the relocation of established uses without this test being passed, provided the relocation proposal benefits local people by being within or adjoining the village, and is not lost to other parishes. The fourth component of the policy seeks to safeguard shops, pubs and other commercial uses by not supporting proposals to change their uses. This approach will need to take account of permitted development rights. In 2015, additional flexibility was introduced into these procedures. They may continue to change within the Plan period.

Policy BCS15: Community Facilities

Proposals that help to sustain the viability of the community facilities listed in paragraph 5.66 will be supported, provided they conform to other land use policies.

Proposals that will result in either the loss of, or significant harm to an identified community facility, will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the facility, or of another community use of the facility, is no longer economically viable, or that there is an alternative, accessible location within or adjoining the Village Boundary of Policy BCS1.

Proposals to expand existing shops or commercial premises as well as to create new shops or commercial uses will be supported, provided they conform to other development policies.

In so far that planning permission is required proposals to change the use of shops, pubs and other commercial units will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that their continued use is no longer viable.

Policy BCS16: Tourism Facilities**Policy BCS16: Tourism Facilities**

Proposals for tourist and leisure facilities will be supported, provided:

- i. they are located and designed to suit the character of the local landscape; and*
- ii. they do not harm the special scenic beauty of the AONB or the special character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.*

5.68 This policy encourages tourism and leisure development in the most appropriate parts of the Parish that preferably would help to support the Parish's local facilities.

5.69 Brightwell cum Sotwell has a good tourist offer. There is excellent walking, rolling countryside, the River Thames, the Sinodun Hills and the picture postcard village lanes and cottages. The parish is located only 45 miles from London, is midway between Henley and Oxford and is firmly within the 'Midsomer' Trail.



The parish benefits from the Shillingford Bridge Hotel (with open air Thameside swimming pool), excellent B&Bs, the Earth Trust, Brightwell Vineyard, Frog's Island Donkey Sanctuary and the internationally renowned Dr Bach Centre that attracts many overseas visitors. Cultural connections with artists such as Paul Nash and DR Bach bring further visitors to the parish. Visitors can help to sustain core services such as the pub and Village Stores.

Much of the Parish is already attractive to visitors because of its landscape beauty, Thames riverside, cultural associations and historic buildings. It may therefore be suitable for future tourism and leisure development. In which case, the policy seeks to ensure that such development is properly located so as not to undermine the special character, which is the main source of visits in the first place.

Policy BCS17: Natural Burial Ground

5.70 This policy supports in principle the establishment of a natural burial ground, for which there is anecdotal demand in the wider area and no current supply.

Policy BCS17: Natural Burial Ground

Proposals for the development of a natural burial ground, including any necessary, permanent ancillary structures for the management of burial arrangements, will be supported, provided they are located and designed to suit the character of the local landscape.

Monitoring & Review Policy

5.71 The BCSNP will be monitored primarily by the Parish Council (and with assistance by the District Council on more strategic elements) using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity but other data collected and reported at a scale relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the BCSNP will be formally reviewed by the Parish Council on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the review of the development plan.

6. Implementation

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

Development Management

6.2 Most of the policies contained in the Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers. In preparing the Plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable.

Whilst the local planning authority will be responsible for the development management, the Parish Council will use the BCSNP to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with the District Council to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development.

Community Infrastructure Levy

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

6.4 In this part of the District, the CIL charges new housing development £150/sq.m. and retail development £70/sq.m. The Regulations require the District Council to pass on a proportion of the revenues from CIL receipts to the parishes within which the chargeable development took place. Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan will receive 25 per cent of the revenue from the CIL development that they choose to accept – and parishes without a plan will receive 15 per cent of the levy revenue, subject to a cap of £100 per existing council tax dwelling per year. This money must be spent on infrastructure. To ensure transparency both the council and any community in receipt of CIL must report annually on how this money has been spent.

6.5 There are no major infrastructure schemes affecting this parish (and included on what is known as the 'Regulation 123 List'). But, there will be opportunities to invest CIL funds and it is proposed to prioritise investment in new biodiversity projects like hedgerow replanting. In the absence of the District Council operating a formal biodiversity offsetting scheme, these projects will help compensate for the acknowledged loss of some biodiversity value as a result of the site allocation policies of the BCSNP (as detailed in Policy BCS12).

6.6 In addition, should there be sufficient CIL collected over the plan period, the following have been suggested:

- Village Hall
- School
- Kings Meadow play area
- Recreation Ground play area
- Extension of St. Agatha's Graveyard
- Footpath repair / accessible gates and styles
- The Village Stores
- Starting a fund to buy a community asset should it fail such as the pub
- New cycle ways to Didcot
- New footpaths to Earth Trust / Sires Hill and Ridgeway
- Tree / hedge planting to the High Road (Chestnut Tree to Style Acre) and to the west of Calvin Thomas Way to reinforce the rural gap between Wallingford and Brightwell cum Sotwell
- Interpretation panel near pub

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

6.7 In addition to its biodiversity actions, the Parish Council will support the designation of new land in the Parish that is considered to have the essential biodiversity features of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). These may be based on linear features such as hedgerows and stream networks, or they may be old orchards or the river corridor.

Policies Maps

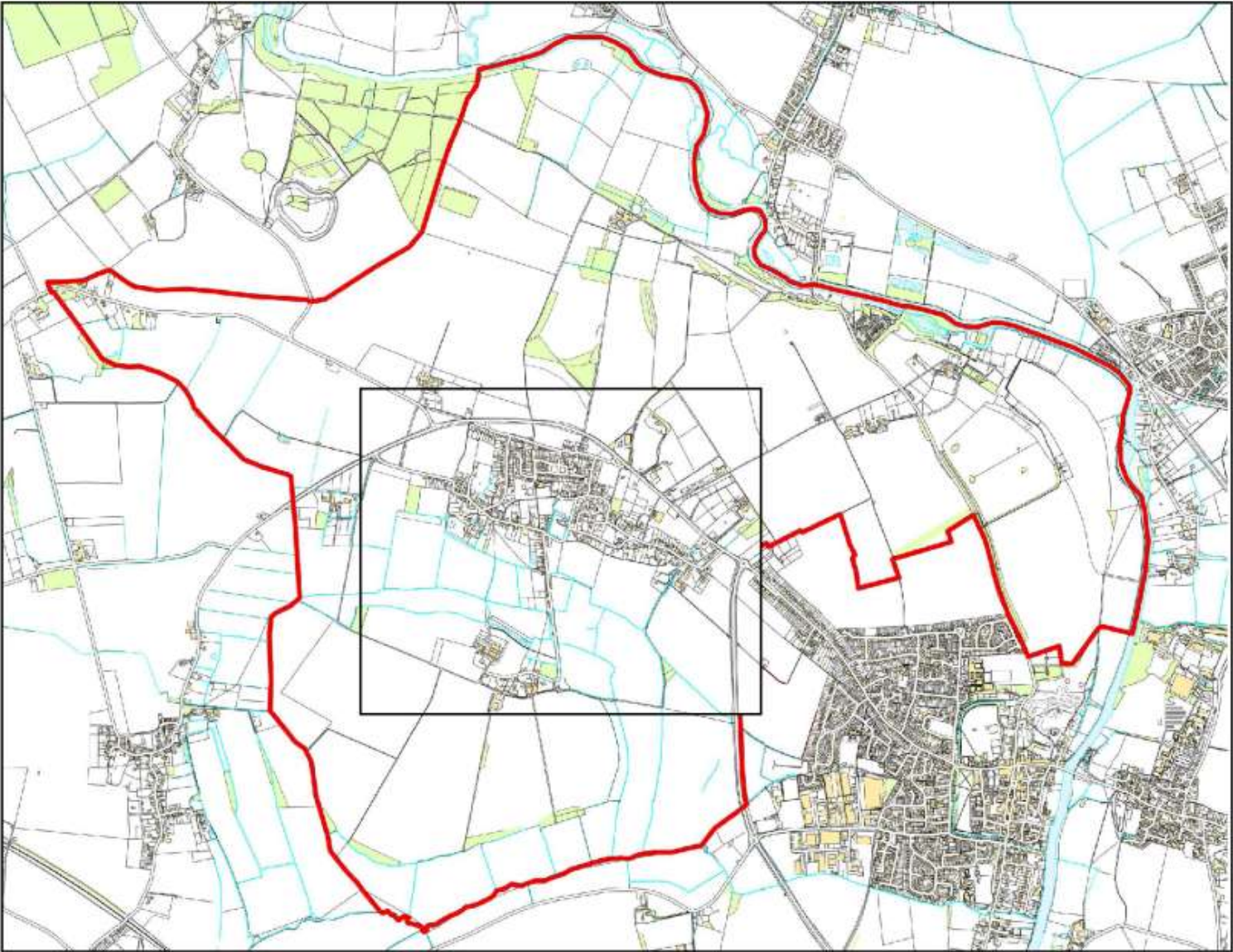
Brightwell cum Sotwell
Neighbourhood Plan

Policies Map

Key

Parish Boundary

Inset A



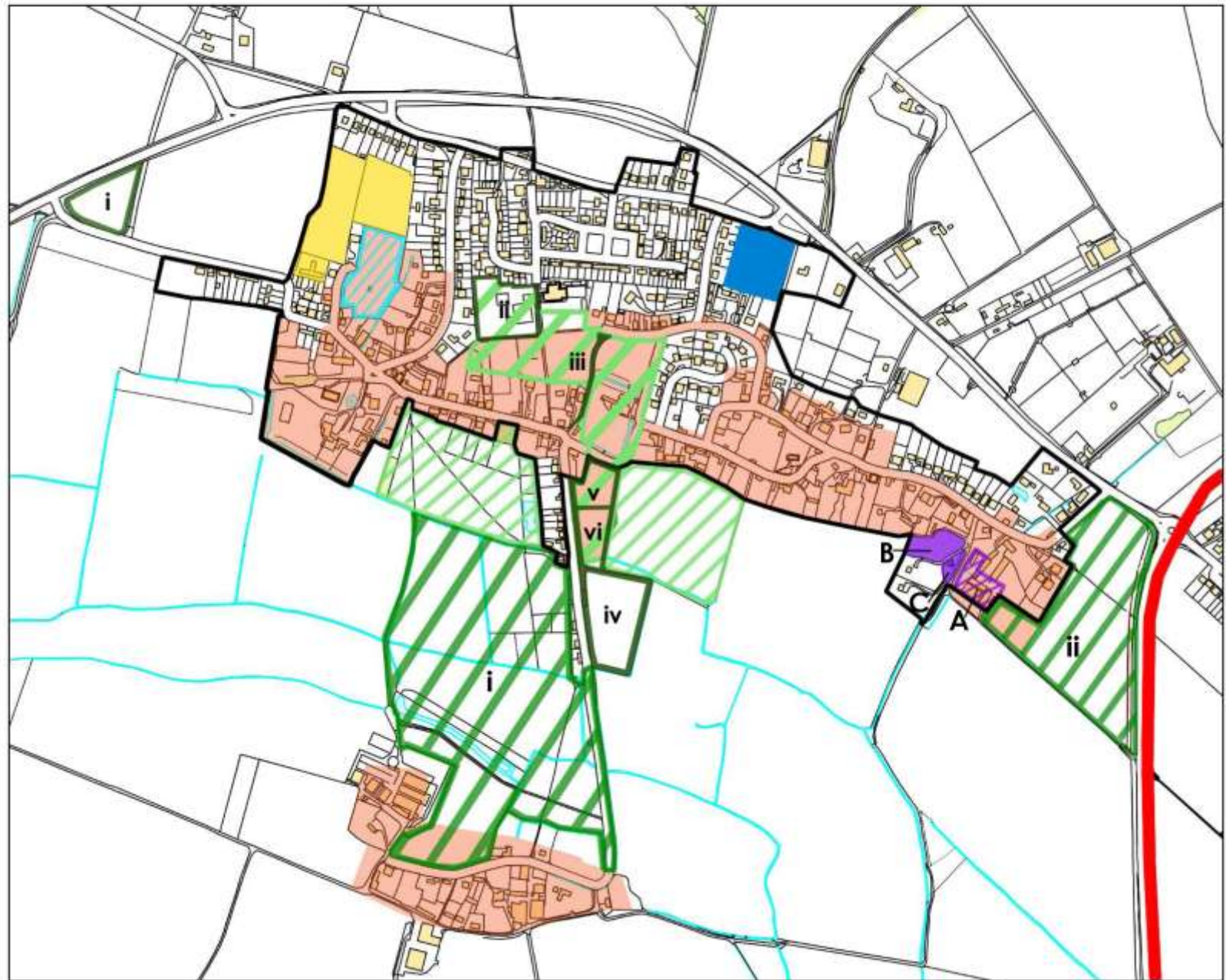
Policies Maps

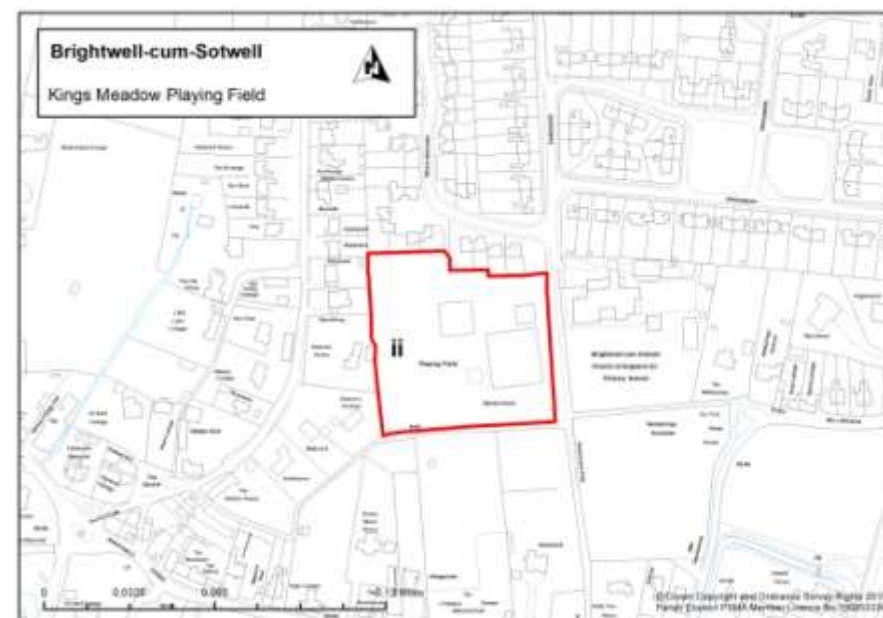
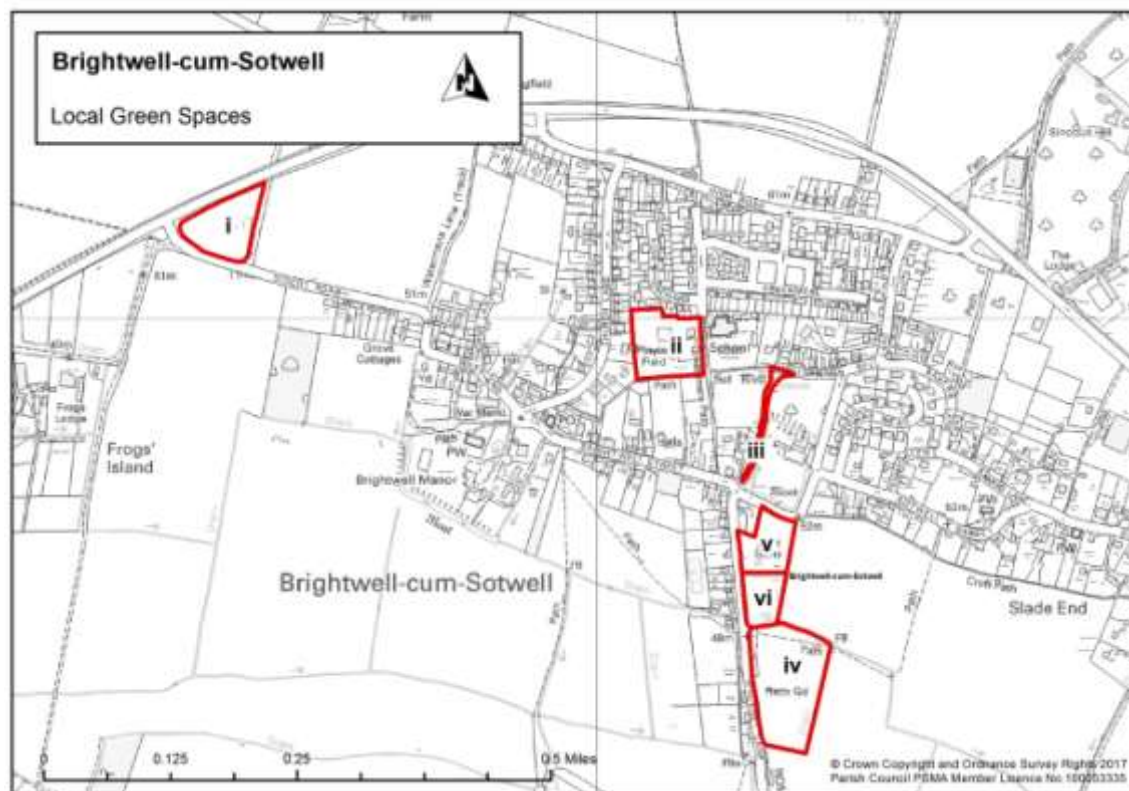
Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan

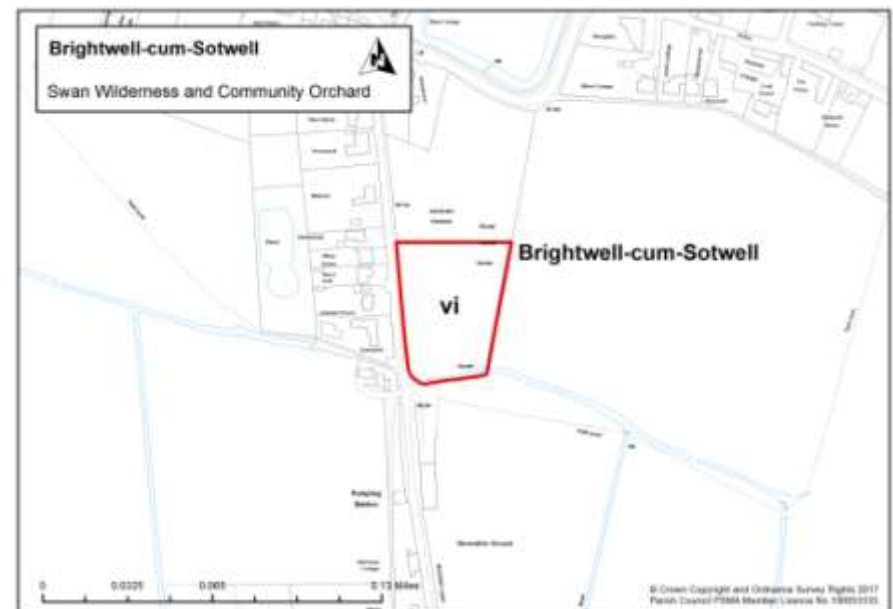
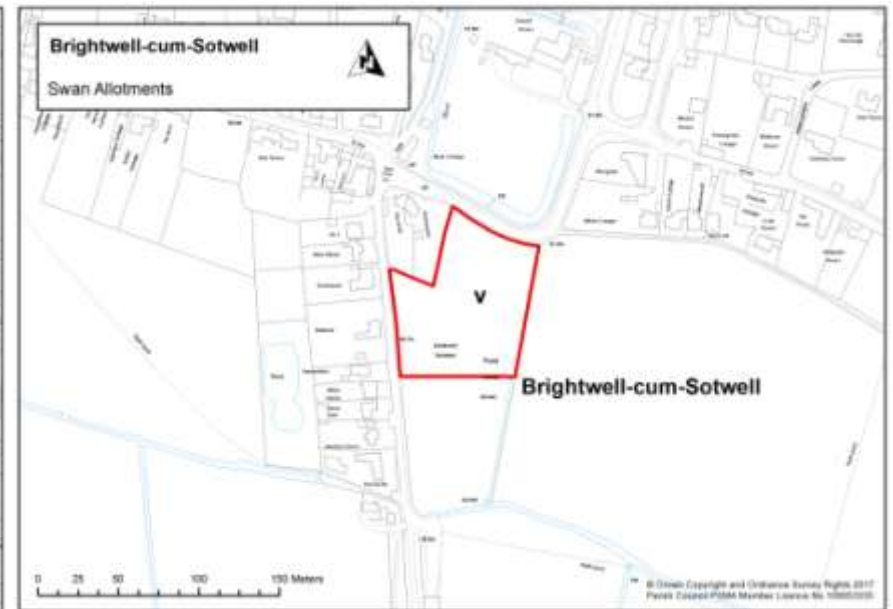
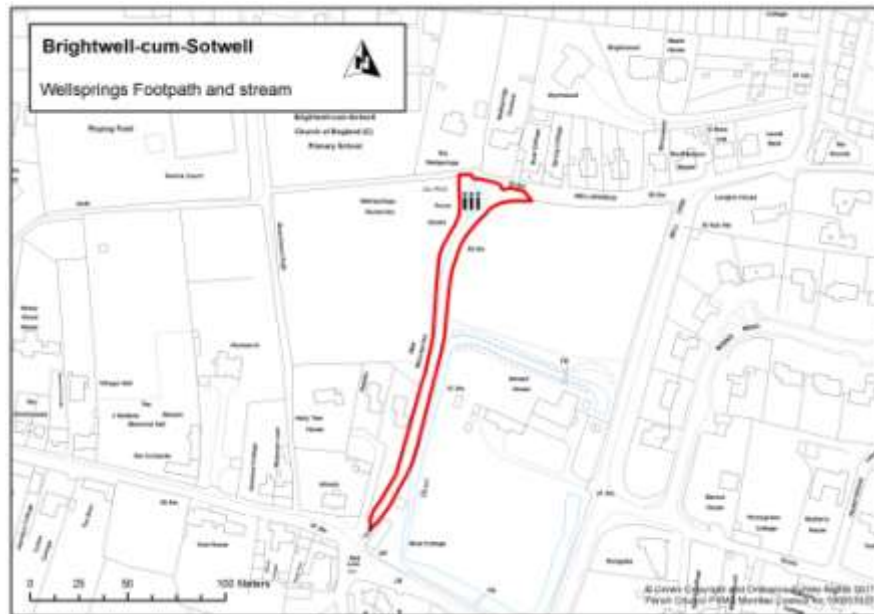
Policies Map Insert A

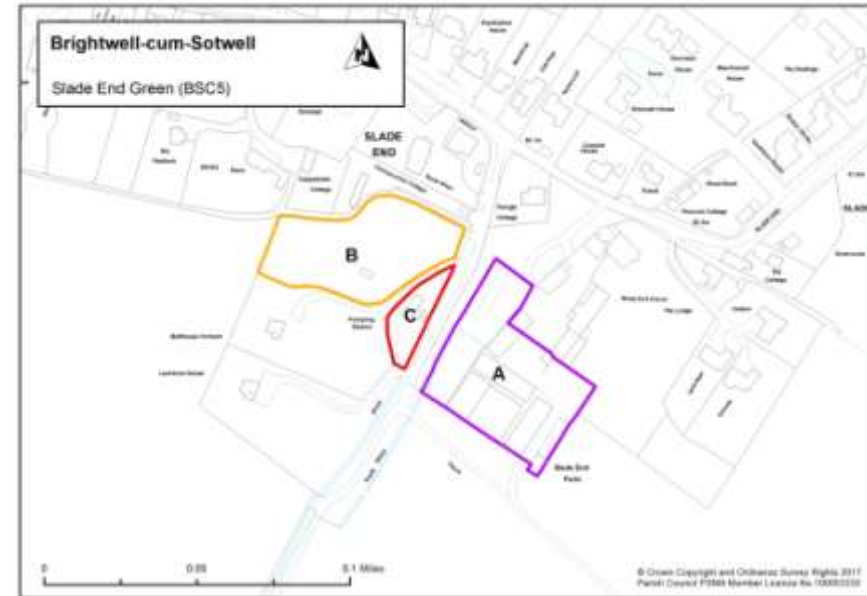
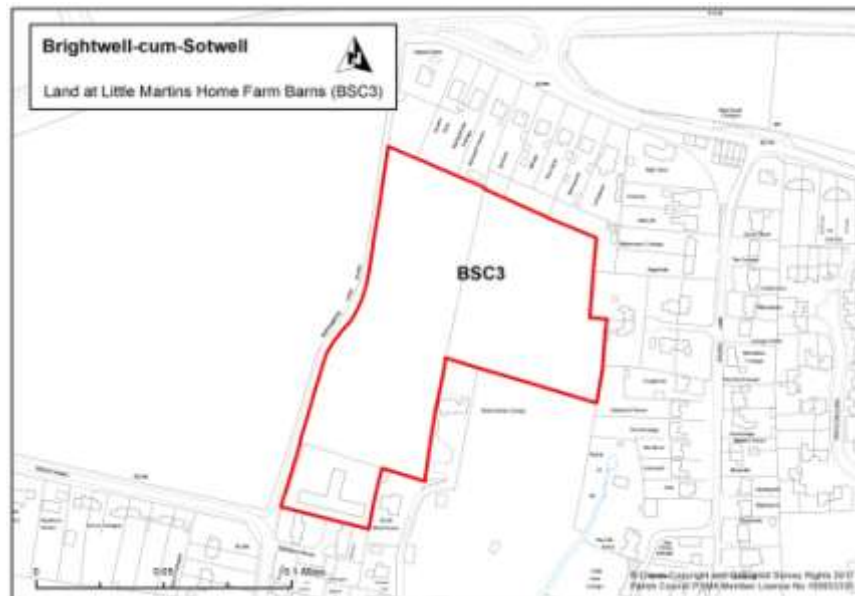
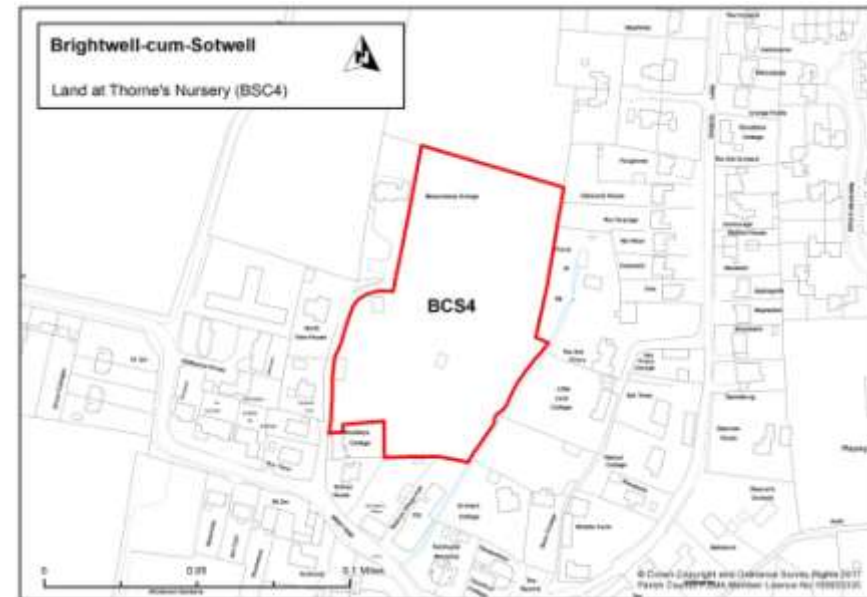
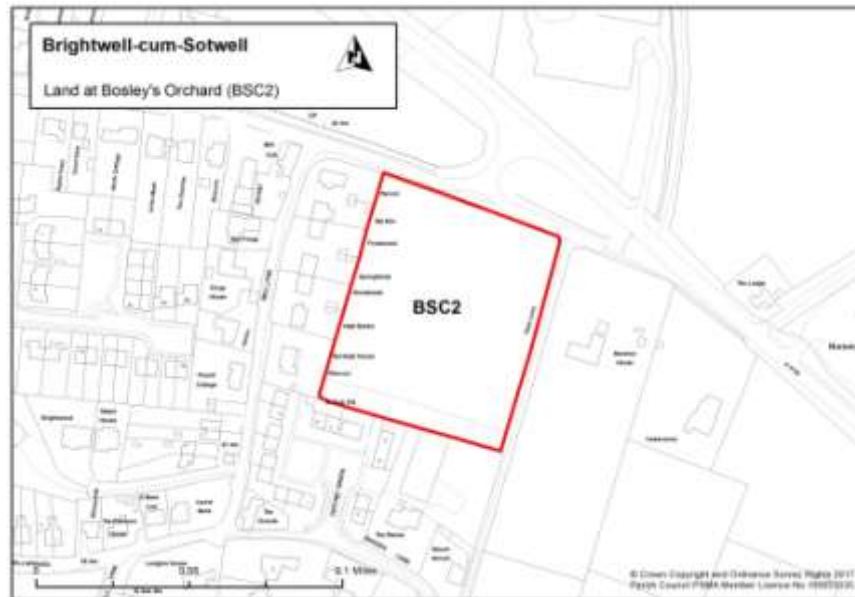
Key

-  Parish Boundary
-  BCS1 - Village Boundary
-  BCS2 - Land at Bosley's Orchard
-  BCS3 - Land at Little Martins Home Farm Barns
-  BCS4 - Land at Thorne's Nursery
-  BCS5 a - Slade End Green
-  BCS6 - Local Gaps
-  BCS8 - The Green Heart
-  BCS10 - Conservation Areas
-  BCS11 - Local Green Spaces









APPENDIX A

EVIDENCE BASE

Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan: Landscape and Green Spaces Study (2016)
Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan: Site Assessment Report (2016)
Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan: Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report (2016)
Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan: Housing Survey Report (2015)
Brightwell cum Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan 2014 – 2024 (2014)
Brightwell cum Sotwell Conservation Area Character Appraisal
South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012)
South Oxfordshire Local Plan (2011)
South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options (Consultation Report, June 2016)
VoWH and SODC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Updated 2013)
South Oxfordshire Design Guide (2008)
South Oxfordshire Design Guide (Consultation Report 2016)
Oxfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (online)

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

For ease of reference, the Core Strategy policies are coloured **Amber**, the saved policies of the 2011 Local Plan are coloured **Green**, and the proposed policies of the Local Plan 2032 are coloured **Blue**.

CSS1 Overall Strategy

*(iv) supporting other villages in the rest of the district by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment and by the provision and retention of services; and
(v) outside the towns and villages, and other major developed sites, any change will need to relate to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.*

Policy G2

The district's countryside, settlements and environmental resources will be protected from adverse developments.

Policy G3

Development that would give rise to a significant increase in traffic generation in relatively inaccessible or isolated rural locations will not be permitted.

Policy G4

The need to protect the countryside for its own sake is an important consideration when assessing proposals for development.

Policy G5

In considering development proposals within the built-up areas of settlements the best use of land and buildings will be sought, in terms of the type and density of development, in order to reduce the need for development of greenfield sites or of sites in non-sustainable locations. Priority will be given to the release of previously-developed sites within the four towns over greenfield sites or sites in less sustainable locations. In seeking to make the best use of land regard will be had to the role and importance of open space within settlements.

Proposed Policy - The Overall Strategy

Proposals for development in South Oxfordshire should be consistent with the overall strategy of:

- supporting smaller villages by allowing limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services*
- protecting and enhancing the countryside and particularly those areas within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Oxford Green Belt by ensuring that outside towns and villages any change relates to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment*

ANALYSIS

The essence of the overall planning strategy has been and will continue to be to focus development on the main towns and larger villages of the District and to maintain the rural character of the open countryside that makes up the majority of the area. The Parish does not lie within an area planned for growth and is currently considered a 'smaller village', though this may change to a 'medium village' in the new Local Plan (see later).

CSEM1 Supporting a Successful Economy

(vi) supporting the prosperity of the area's tourism industry and recreation-based rural diversification where proposals are of a scale and type appropriate to their location.

Policy CSEM4 Supporting economic development

Planning permission will be granted for:

- (iv) appropriate forms of working at home, where permission is needed;*
- (v) new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on suitable sites within the built-up area of settlements;*
- (vi) the re-use of rural buildings where the proposals accord with other policies in the development plan.*

Policy CSR2 Employment in Rural Areas

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which support the economy of the rural areas through:

- schemes for agricultural diversification and the re-use of rural buildings;*
- small-scale infill schemes in villages including mixed housing and employment schemes;*
- working at home;*
- schemes which support agricultural production and the retention of functioning farm units;*
- and schemes which support tourism based on the character of the area.*

Policy E7

Where planning permission for working at home is required permission will be granted provided that:

- (i) the business use would not adversely change the overall character of the dwelling and the locality;*
- (ii) the business use does not generate a material and detrimental increase in the amount of traffic or in car parking requirements;*
- (iii) there is no outside storage of goods, vehicles or materials; and*
- (iv) the proposed use does not cause problems as a result of noise, dust, smell or loss of privacy, nor cause any other environmental problems, in accordance with Policies EPI to EP9.*

Policy E8

Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings will be permitted provided that:

- (i) they are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;*
- (ii) their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;*
- (iii) the fabric and essential character of the buildings are maintained;*
- (iv) if the buildings are in the Green Belt, the proposed use does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;*
- (v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections;*
- (vi) in the case of proposals for B1 or B2 uses the floor space in the building or in the complex of buildings does not exceed 500 square metres; and*
- (vii) in the case of proposals for residential use, other uses have been explored and found to be unacceptable in planning terms.*

Policy TSM1

The prosperity of the area's tourist industry will be supported through encouragement for enterprises which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the inherent qualities and heritage of the area, provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.

Policy TSM2

Proposals for improvements to tourist attractions and facilities, and proposals for new attractions based on the character of the area, will be permitted provided that:

- (i) there is no conflict with policies for the Green Belt;
- (ii) the scale, nature and location of the development is appropriate and in character with the area;
- (iii) the design, layout and materials relate well to adjacent buildings and are in keeping with the surroundings;
- (iv) where appropriate the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas; and
- (v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.

Policy TSM6

Touring caravan and camping sites will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the site is not in the Green Belt;
- (ii) the proposed development has no adverse impact on the landscape, ecological or historic characteristics of the site and its surroundings;
- (iii) the proposal is limited in scale and incorporates a comprehensive landscaping scheme which reinforces the visual, historic and ecological character of the site and its surroundings;
- (iv) the proposed development would not cause any detrimental impact on the amenity of adjacent occupiers or the quiet informal enjoyment of the open countryside;
- (v) where appropriate, the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas;
- (vi) there are no other overriding amenity, environmental, or highway objections; and
- (vii) where possible associated facilities are sited in existing buildings in accordance with Policy E8. Where new buildings are essential these must be designed to a high standard and be sensitively sited.

Where permission is given, it will normally be subject to a condition restricting the use to holiday accommodation and the site may also be made subject to a seasonal occupancy condition. Static caravans will not be permitted.

ANALYSIS

The rural economic development strategy favours rural diversification, tourism development and home working, provided proposals respect the quality of their countryside location. There is no specific policy proposal in the new Local Plan to this effect but it is not expected the strategy will change, thus encouraging BCSNP policies to promote appropriate proposals to support local jobs in the Parish.

Policy CSH3 Affordable Housing

40% affordable housing will be sought on all sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings subject to the viability of provision on each site.

*In cases where the 40% calculation provides a part unit a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part unit;
A tenure mix of 75% social rented and 25% intermediate housing will be sought;
With the exception of part units the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with the market housing;
The housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.*

Proposed Policy – Affordable Housing

On all sites where there is a net gain of 11 or more dwellings 40 percent of the dwellings on the site shall be affordable housing subject to the viability of provision on each site.*

*In cases where the 40 percent provision provides a part unit a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part unit
A tenure mix of 50% social rented and 50% intermediate housing will be sought for the affordable element
With the exception of part units the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with and be indistinguishable from the market housing
The affordable housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type that meets the requirements of those in housing need*

**except in the AONB where affordable housing at 40 percent will be required on sites with a net gain of 6 or more dwellings. However, the cost of the 40 percent provision on sites with a net gain between 6 and 11 will be sought as an off-site commuted sum.*

ANALYSIS

The affordable housing policy framework is well-established and is not likely to change in respect of the proportion of overall numbers required per scheme. However, national changes to affordable housing policy – most specifically the inclusion of Starter Homes in its definition – are likely to significantly alter the economics and therefore mix of tenure type that can be planned for through the local planning system.

Policy CSR1 Housing in villages

In order to contribute to the present and future economic, environmental and social sustainability of the villages, housing will be allowed where the scale and nature of the development is as follows:

Smaller villages infill on sites of up to 0.2ha and no allocations*

All development should respect national designations ... and should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Suitably designed and located development at an appropriate scale that facilitates the economic and social wellbeing of such areas ... will be supported. This includes the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs.

Local character and distinctiveness will be protected and the requirements of relevant development plan policies will be met. Redevelopment proposals in all categories of settlement may be acceptable but will be considered on a case by case basis through the development management process in line with other policies in the Development Plan.

Policy CSH4 Meeting housing needs

A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be sought on all new residential developments.

At least 10 per cent of market housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards.

In the case of affordable housing all ground-floor properties should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards.

The provision of dwellings for people with additional special needs will be sought as part of the overall affordable housing percentage.

Specialist accommodation for older people should be provided in the new greenfield neighbourhoods identified in this strategy and will be permitted at other suitable locations.

Proposed Policy – Housing Provision

Provision will be made for at least 19,500 new dwellings over the plan period, following our overall strategy:

Sites in smaller villages (Neighbourhood Plans) and windfalls - 785no

Proposed Policy – Housing Provision Rest of the District

In the “rest of the district” outside Didcot and Science Vale, planning permission will be granted for at least 12,200 homes between 2011 and 2032. These will be delivered, wherever possible, through neighbourhood Plans.

This is based on the following model: Towns and Larger Villages: 10% growth and Smaller Villages: 5% growth

We have considered how we could amend the settlement hierarchy to reflect the up to date information. Options we considered are:

- 1. Do nothing, leave the settlement hierarchy as it is*
- 2. Move some villages from the ‘Smaller villages’ category into the ‘Larger villages’ category*
- 3. Introduce a ‘Medium sized village’ category with an appropriate scale of growth, perhaps at 7.5%*

There are currently 58 villages in the district that are classed as 'smaller villages.' The smaller villages are expected to deliver 5 percent growth, based on the number of dwellings at the 2011 Census, plus completions over the period 2011-16 and outstanding commitments at 31 March 2016. This will be met through small sites of 10 homes or less, and infill development, and will not be allocated by the local planning authority. Where smaller villages are preparing a neighbourhood plan, they may choose to allocate sites for housing in their plan.

ANALYSIS

The housing supply strategy of the Core Strategy is deemed out of date by §49 of the NPPF, given the District Council cannot demonstrate it has a five year supply of housing land, and this is unlikely to change until the new Local Plan is adopted. The new strategy proposes a significant increase in the pace and scale of housing development over the period to 2032.

This is likely to require the BCSNP to plan for at least 50 new homes over the plan period. The Core Strategy requires the mix of housing types on schemes to reflect local circumstances, which is expected to remain a requirement as this is consistent with the NPPF.

Policy CSR3 Community facilities and rural transport

Proposals which result in the provision of facilities and services in the rural areas will be encouraged, those which result in the loss of services and facilities will be resisted.

Policy CFI

Proposals that result in the loss of a recreation facility or an essential community facility or service, through change of use or redevelopment, will not be permitted unless:

- (i) suitable alternative provision is made for the facility (or similar facilities of equivalent community value) on a site elsewhere in the locality, or*
- (ii) in the case of recreational facilities, it is not needed, or*
- (iii) in the case of commercial services, it is not economically viable.*



South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 Key Diagram

ANALYSIS

The Core Strategy and saved policy both seek to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued community facilities. This provides an opportunity for the BCSNP to identify those community facilities in the Parish that warrant protection from these policies.

Policy CSEN1 Landscape

The district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced.

- (i) Where development is acceptable in principle, measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character of the area.*
- (ii) High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the ... North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and planning decisions will have regard to their setting. Proposals which support the economies and social well being of the AONBs and their communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement.*
- (iii) The landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames corridor will be maintained and where possible enhanced as will the setting and heritage of the river for its overall amenity and recreation use.*

Policy C3

The distinctive character of the River Thames and its valley and the settlements on its banks will be maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced. Proposals for any form of development which detracts from its special character will not be permitted.

Policy C4

Development which would damage the attractive landscape setting of the settlements of the district will not be permitted. The effect of any proposal on important local landscape features which contribute to the visual and historic character and appearance of a settlement will be considered.

Policy C9

Any development that would cause the loss of landscape features will not be permitted where those features make an important contribution to the local scene, and/or provide all or part of an important wildlife habitat and/or have important historical value. Where features are retained within the development site, conditions will be used to ensure that they are protected during development and have sufficient space to ensure their survival after development.

Policy R9

In considering proposals for recreational development associated with the River Thames and its valley, the overriding aim will be to preserve the river environment and landscape.

ANALYSIS

There is a comprehensive framework of landscape protection policies that are relevant to the Parish, given the presence of the AONB and River Thames in parts of the Parish. The framework allows for appropriate development but reinforces the importance of ensuring all development proposals respect the special landscape character. The policies will help inform site selection and other policies of the BCSNP.

Policy CSEN3 Historic Environment

The district's designated historic heritage assets, both above and below ground such as nationally designated assets including listed buildings ..., conservation areas; and their settings will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy CON4

A change of use of part or the whole of a listed building will be permitted only if its character and features of special architectural or historic interest would be protected. Proposals for a change of use should incorporate details of all intended alterations to the building and its curtilage, to demonstrate their impact on its appearance, character and setting.

Policy CON5

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused.

Policy CON7

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area.

ANALYSIS

Although these policies now repeat national policy guidance (and so are therefore unlikely to be included in the new Local Plan in these forms), they reinforce the importance of proposals having full regard to heritage assets, whether formally designated or not. The Parish generally, and the village specifically, contains a significant number of listed buildings, as well as two Conservation Areas. These heritage assets will very much shape the site selection and other policies of the BCSNP. The BCSNP may also define the special character of the local Conservation Areas and raise the status of current supplementary guidance to carry the full weight of the development plan.

Policy CSQ3 Design

Planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality and inclusive Design

Policy CSH2 Density

On sites where housing development is acceptable in principle, a minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare (net) will be required unless this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area.

Policy EP3

Proposals for new floodlighting and other external lighting that would have an adverse effect on neighbouring residents, the rural character of the countryside or biodiversity will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented.

Policy D1

The principles of good design and the protection and reinforcement of local distinctiveness should be taken into account in all new development

Policy R6

When granting planning permission for new residential development, developers will be required to provide public open space for informal recreation to meet the needs of the new residents in accordance with an amount appropriate to the locality and the size of the development proposed.

Policy T1

Proposals for all types of development will, where appropriate:

- (i) provide for a safe and convenient access to the highway network;*
- (ii) provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians;*
- (iii) be accessible by public transport and have a safe walking route to nearby bus stops or new bus stops and appropriate infrastructure should be provided;*
- (iv) be served by an adequate road network which can accommodate traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment;*
- (v) where new roads, pedestrian routes, cycleways and street lighting are to be constructed as part of the development, be constructed to adoptable standards and be completed as soon as they are required to serve the development; and*
- (vi) make adequate provision for those whose mobility is impaired.*

ANALYSIS

The policy framework contains a range of generic design and development management policies to be applied to all types of development proposal across the District. Again, there is the opportunity for the BCSNP to refine the framework so the guidance is specific to the Parish and carries greater weight in decision making.

Policy CSG1 Green infrastructure

A net gain in green infrastructure including biodiversity will be sought through developer works, developer contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources. Proposals for new development must demonstrate that they have taken into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing green infrastructure. Where appropriate, proposals will be required to contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure and/or the improvement of existing assets including Conservation Target Areas in accordance with the standards in the South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy. A net loss of green infrastructure including biodiversity through development proposals will be avoided.

Policy CSQ1 Renewable Energy

Proposals for development for the generation of energy from renewable resources will be permitted provided any adverse impact on the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of an area, traffic generation or the amenities of local communities is outweighed by wider environmental, social, economic or other benefits.

Policy CSB1 Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

A net loss of biodiversity will be avoided, and opportunities to achieve a net gain across the district will be actively sought. Opportunities for biodiversity gain, including the connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and habitat re-creation will be sought for all types of habitats, with a primary focus on delivery in the Conservation Target Areas.

Damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest, local wildlife sites, local nature reserves, priority habitats, protected or priority species and locally important geological sites will be avoided unless the importance of the development outweighs the harm and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

Policy R7

The role of the countryside in providing for a wide range of informal recreational activities is recognised. Small-scale facilities (such as car parking, toilets, or picnic sites) which support the recreational use will be permitted at popular locations, provided that they are sensitively designed and sited and there is no overriding amenity, environmental or traffic objections.

Policy R8

The retention and protection of the existing public rights-of-way network will be sought and where appropriate proposals to improve it will be supported.

Policy C6

In considering proposals for development, the maintenance and enhancement of the biodiversity resource of the district will be sought. Full account of the effects of development on wildlife will be taken. Where there is any significant loss in biodiversity as part of a proposed development, the creation and maintenance of new landscape features, habitats, habitat links and wildlife corridors of appropriate scale and kind will be required to ensure there is no net loss in biodiversity resources.

ANALYSIS

The framework contains a variety of policies promoting the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure assets. Such assets are especially important in defining the character and in the functioning of the village and wider Parish. In which case, the BCSNP provides an opportunity to bring forward specific proposals to protect and improve existing assets and to create new assets through development proposals.



South Oxfordshire Adopted Local Plan Policies Map

December 2012

Proposal Map 4 - South West

- District Boundary
- Thames Path
- Conservation Area
- Mixed Use Site
- Article 4 Directions in Conservation Area
- Local Nature Reserve
- Special Area of Conservation
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Green Belt
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Historic Park, Garden or Battlefield

Reference numbers relate to policies in the Local Plan



South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies Map Extract (2012)





BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2033



Cover Image by Susan Ganney

Brightwell cum Sotwell
Neighbourhood Plan

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