

# Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review

2019 - 2035



## WNP First Review

# Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review

1.	Introduction.....	6
2.	Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: From Inception to First Review.....	7
3.	Wheatley character .....	10
4.	Wheatley today.....	10
5.	The Community Survey.....	24
6.	Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: Vision and objectives .....	26
7.	Land Availability for Development .....	32
8.	Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: Design Code and Policies.....	32
	Introduction.....	32
	Character and Design .....	33
	<b>POLICY H1: DESIGN AND CHARACTER PRINCIPLES</b> .....	34
	<b>POLICY H2: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER</b> .....	35
	The nature of Housing Needs in Wheatley .....	35
	<b>POLICY H3: MIX AND SIZE OF NEW HOUSING</b> .....	37
	<b>POLICY H4: IN-FILL AND SELF-BUILD DWELLINGS</b> .....	37
	Transport and movement.....	38
	<b>POLICY P1: PARKING PROVISION</b> .....	38
	<b>POLICY T1: IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE ROAD NETWORK</b> .....	38
	Social and Community Infrastructure.....	40
	<b>POLICY SCI1: SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b> .....	40
	<b>POLICY SCI2: IMPROVEMENT TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b> .....	41
	Burial provision.....	41
	<b>POLICY B1: BURIAL PROVISION</b> .....	41
	Retail and village centre .....	41
	<b>POLICY VCE1: WHEATLEY VILLAGE CENTRE</b> .....	41
	Employment.....	42
	<b>POLICY E1: SUPPORTING WHEATLEY’S ECONOMY</b> .....	42
	Preservation of the Landscape.....	42
	Preservation of the Environment.....	44
	<b>POLICY EN1: BIODIVERSITY</b> .....	44
	Preservation of Historic Environment .....	46
	<b>POLICY HE1: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT</b> .....	46
	Design quality and sustainability .....	46

	<b>POLICY DQS1: INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan: Oxford Brookes Campus .....</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>POLICY SPOBU – WHE25 .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Amending the Green Belt Boundary .....</b>	<b>50</b>
	<b>POLICY GBBA1: Green Belt Boundary Amendments .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Wheatley Village Enhancement .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan: Policy for Village Enhancement Sites .....</b>	<b>53</b>
	<b>WHE16, The Bungalows’ Site .....</b>	<b>53</b>
	<b>POLICY SPES1: WHE16 .....</b>	<b>54</b>
	<b>WHE22, The Littleworth Industrial Area .....</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>POLICY SPES2: WHE22 .....</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>WHE15 Miss Tombs’ Field .....</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>POLICY SPES3: WHE15 .....</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>WHE17, Mobbs’ Land .....</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>POLICY SPES4: WHE17 .....</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>WHE15/16/17, Boundary Issues .....</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>Green Route Policy .....</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>POLICY SPGR: GREEN ROUTE .....</b>	<b>62</b>
	<b>Realisation .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Delivery and Monitoring .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>64</b>

## Appendices

- 1 Wheatley Character**
- 2 Site Selection**
- 3 Housing Needs Assessment**
- 4 Site Based Development Appraisal**
- 5 Environmental Report**
- 6 Basic Conditions Statement**
- 7 Consultation Statement**
- 8 Design Guidance and Codes**



14 December, 2023

Dear Residents

Following Examination, a referendum on the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan was held on 06 May, 2021. A 43% turnout that produced clear majority support for the Plan was good not only for the morale of our community but also for the members of the Committee and so the WNP was formally adopted. The Examiner had been obliged to begin the examination in October 2019 within the context of the *emerging* SODC Local Plan. Consequently, several sections of the submitted WNP relating to changes in the Green Belt in the area were deleted in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance. By December 2020 the exceptional circumstances relating to the adoption of the SODC Local Plan (LP2035) had been resolved. and LP2035 was then formally adopted. A detailed version of these events is described in chapter 2 of this document.

Importantly, LP2035 establishes the need for detailed amendments to the Green Belt to be made by the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan thereby permitting the reinstatement of the sections that had been previously deleted. These reinstated sections offer enormous benefits not only to the village but also to the landowners, but will depend on the key decisions regarding development being coordinated and managed for mutual benefit to reflect the policies of the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan and the village of Wheatley's values and sentiments.

In preparing this First Review of the WNP we have not only reinstated the deleted sections but also taken the opportunity to update the WNP and address any new issues or developments that have arisen since the original submission in 2019. This First Review of the WNP has been prepared in the best interests of our community and submitted for examination in December 2022. Following statutory consultation, a referendum was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023 that supported the WNPR. The WNPR was formally adopted by SODC on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2023.

Thank you all for your trust and encouragement,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Fox". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

John Fox,  
Chairman,  
Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Committee, 2016 – 2022.

## **Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Committee**

Rebecca Beadman  
Mark Davies  
Roger Farrow  
John Fox (Chairman)  
Ellie Freeman  
Roy Gordon (Vice Chairman)  
Chris Hallsworth  
David Harverson  
Kevin Heritage  
Andrew Johnson  
David Mancey  
Rachel Newman  
Toby Newman  
Audrey Parsons  
Simon Shew  
Lucy Thomas  
Mike Vaughton

### **Associates**

Roger Bettess  
Tim Blightman  
Alan East  
Alan Hicks  
Doris Pridmore

Supported by Michelle Legg (Wheatley Parish Clerk)

**One of the first WNP projects undertaken was to sponsor a competition at Wheatley Park Academy for pupils to design a logo for the WNP Committee. The successful entry was designed by Milly Whittington and Alison Driver.**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This document is the Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parish of Wheatley and the part of the Oxford Brookes University (OBU) campus that is in the parish of Holton. The plan, known as the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review (WNPR), has been prepared and reviewed by the communities of Wheatley and Holton. WNPR sets out the community vision for the future of the area during the plan period (2019 - 2035), together with providing a land use framework for development in the area, which will be achieved through a series of objectives and policies. The designated area of the Neighbourhood Plan is shown in Figure 1.1.

1.2 The right of communities to prepare and establish a neighbourhood plan was facilitated by the Localism Act 2011 [1]. Neighbourhood planning is part of the government's vision to provide local communities with the opportunity to engage with, and have a prominent say in, what goes on in the local area.

1.3 While the Localism Act enables the local community to make decisions in relation to planning, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) [2] sets out the guidelines for the process. As well as having regard to national policies and advice, WNPR needs to be in conformity with the strategic policies of the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) development plan for the area.

1.4 Any neighbourhood plan may provide more than the number of houses and amount of retail and leisure floor space set out in the Strategic Policies in the Local Development Plan, but there is no provision for neighbourhood plans to provide for less than the proposed amount of development.

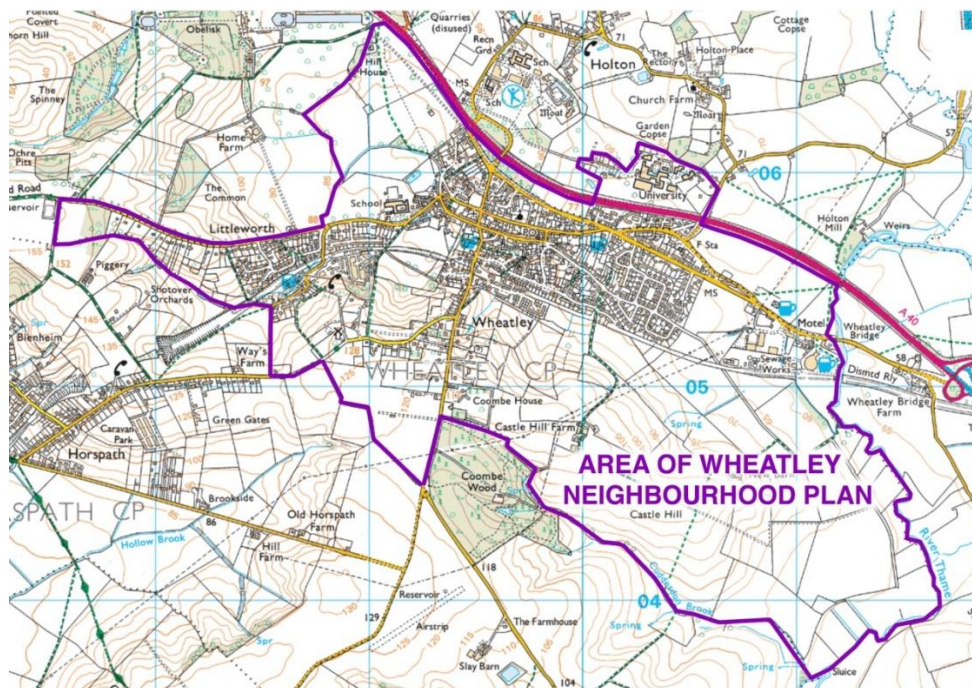


Figure 1.1 Designated Area of Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review

1.5 Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for local communities to have a say in where development is most appropriate by adding a level of local detail to the existing

Local Development Plan policies and/or allocating sites for development. With input from the local community WNPR has developed a set of policies that guide development in Wheatley.

1.6 The First Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was formally adopted by a community referendum held in May 2021. Within WNP provision was made for monitoring and reviewing WNP by Parish Council representatives following its adoption. The purpose of such a review would be primarily to assess the extent to which the WNP objectives have been implemented in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting those objectives; and secondly to rectify any errors and omissions. Furthermore, there was also provision made in the event of the adoption of a new Local Plan for the District which would represent an initial opportunity to assess whether any elements of WNP needed to be reviewed at that time.

## 2. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: From Inception to First Review

2.1 In addition to listening to the local community, the WNP Committee has drawn on national and local sources and compiled its own evidence base (EB) which is available at [www.wheatleyneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.wheatleyneighbourhoodplan.co.uk).

**The WNP Committee has endeavoured to seek the views of the local community in preparing the neighbourhood plan and where appropriate has responded and acted upon all correspondence. Copies of comments and responses can be found at [www.wheatleyneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.wheatleyneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) .**

2.2 The resident-based WNP Committee convened in January 2016 with 21 members, including members of Wheatley Parish Council, Holton Parish Council and the Business Manager of Wheatley Park Academy. The Committee met approximately once a month from January to July in 2016, and thereafter at approximately 6 - 8 weekly intervals as the work evolved and also devolved to smaller teams and workshops. Minutes of all WNP Committee meetings are recorded in the WNP website Evidence Base.

2.3 In April 2016, the WNP Committee outlined its purpose and intentions at the Annual Wheatley Parish Assembly. Community consultation began in May 2016 with a Straw Poll [3]. This was sent to 750 Wheatley homes (44%) in all parts of the village, and 458 responses (60% of those polled) were returned. The Straw Poll was launched on 7 May 2016 with an Open Day. On 1 June 2016 SODC published their emerging Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options [4] in which SODC announced that future housing for Wheatley would be solely based on the forthcoming development of the OBU site. This was confirmed subsequently in the Local Plan 2033 Second Preferred Options [5]. A joint SODC/WNP Public Open Day was held on 13 July 2016.

2.4 Wheatley Parish Council responded (4 August 2016) to the SODC Consultation on the Local Plan by advising that it would wait for the forthcoming WNP before providing any further response. Holton Parish Council responded (18 August 2016) separately to the SODC Consultation with their report. As part of this Consultation SODC received almost 8000 responses which were made available on the SODC website. In February 2017 the WNP

Committee undertook an analysis of 234 of these responses relating to the OBU site. This WNP Committee analysis [6] has been included in the evidence base.

2.5 In August 2016, a Community Survey [7] was sent to all 1860 homes in Wheatley and Holton, courtesy of local volunteers and Community First Oxfordshire Ltd (CFO). A 36% return was achieved. WNP and CFO published the survey report in mid-October 2016. The Community Survey [7] contained two parts: Housing Needs Survey prepared by CFO and Community Opinion Survey prepared by the WNP Committee. (The results of the Community Survey are discussed in Section 5).

2.6 The WNP Committee has not relied solely on questionnaires. Conversations have been held with individuals, organisations and groups as representatives of the community. These range from shopkeepers and business owners, to schools’ leaders, GPs and representatives from the local churches [8].

2.7 The WNP Committee prepared a process to deliver the plan as shown in Figure 2.1.

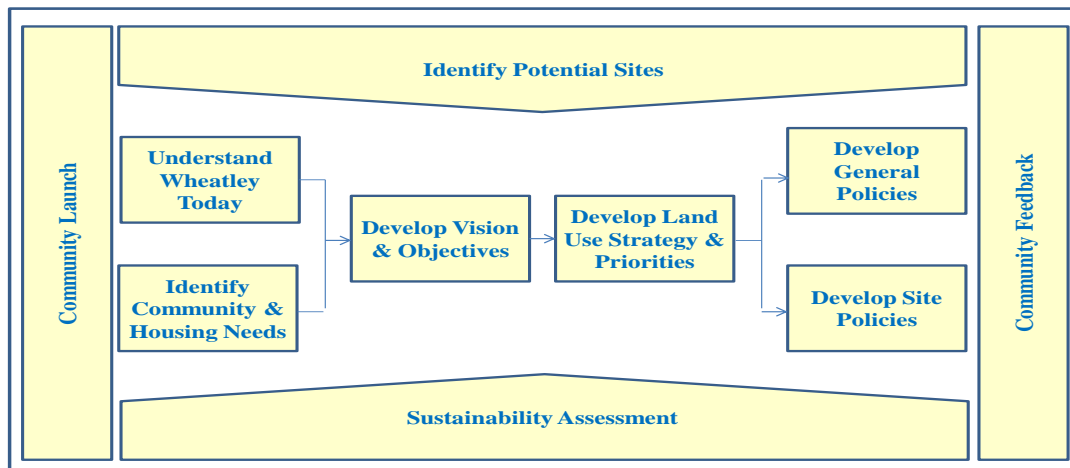


Figure 2.1 The process used to develop the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan

2.8 Following a series of eight working group sessions held from November 2016 to May 2017 to analyse the results of the Community Survey [7] and after various draft stages a first consultation, inviting comments on the draft plan from SODC, local people, other stake holders and statutory consultees, took place during May – June 2017.

2.9 The WNP Committee also commissioned two separate assessments to inform and analyse the content of the draft plan. The first commission was a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) that was directed at establishing the quantity and type of housing most suitable for Wheatley. The results are discussed in later chapters and the whole HNA is described in Appendix 3. The second commission was a Site Based Development Appraisal (see Appendix 4) or Viability Assessment (VA) that tested whether or not the proposals contained in the WNP were viable.



2.10 In October 2017 the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2033 Publication Version [9] became available wherein the SODC strategy (STRAT10) for the development of the Land at Wheatley Campus was described. The public consultation for this Local Plan was completed by November 2017. The emerging Local Plan (emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2034 [10]) was published in January 2019 (with STRAT10 now renamed STRAT14) and during the preparation of the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan it was hoped that the emerging Local Plan would be adopted by late 2019. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] was in fact only adopted in December 2020.

The First Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was examined between October 2019 and February 2020. In October 2019 the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government issued a temporary Direction on the Council in relation to its intention to withdraw the then emerging Local Plan from the examination process. The temporary Direction was made under the provisions of Section 21A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). This meant that the emerging Local Plan had no effect whilst the direction was in force.

In process terms, the timings involved and the unusual circumstances experienced did not permit the submitted WNP directly to take account of the emerging local planning context during its examination. Nevertheless, the WNP was prepared within its wider development plan context. In doing so it relied on up-to-date information and research that underpinned existing and emerging planning policy documents from the District Council. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

On 3 March 2020 the Secretary of State issued South Oxfordshire District Council with a Direction under Section 27 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to progress the emerging Local Plan through examination to be adopted by December 2020. Adoption was completed by Full Council on 10 December 2020. It now forms part of the development plan for the district and replaces the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011[10] and Core Strategy 2012 [11].

The Council took a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with Wheatley Parish Council to ensure the draft WNP had the greatest chance of success at independent examination. In line with the NPPF, Section 10 of the WNP relied on strategic policies establishing the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries in the area. Policy STRAT 6 of the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan provided the necessary strategic framework for the Section 10 proposals. Policy GBBA1 contained a trigger ensuring detailed amendments to the Green Belt proposed in the WNP would not come into effect until the emerging Local Plan was adopted.

The temporary Direction on the emerging Local Plan, in place during the examination of the WNP meant that the emerging Local Plan had no effect whilst the direction was in force. Within this context, the examiner found that the intentions of the WNP were overtaken by events and as such the proposals to make detailed amendments to the Green Belt boundary did not meet the basic conditions.

The examiner's report, for reasons that were proper at the time, recommended the deletion of Section 10 in its entirety. However, the Local Plan 2035 adopted in December 2020 establishes the need for detailed amendments to the Green Belt to be made by the WNP First Review.

Figure 2.2 Circumstances related to the examination of the First Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan

2.11 The original submission version of the WNP included several proposals for Village Enhancement some of which involved the release of land from the Green Belt. For the reasons described in Figure 2.2 the Examiner deleted some of the Village Enhancements to ensure conformity with due process until such times as there was a Local Plan in place. The adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan [48] has therefore provided a trigger to review the WNP. So, in the WNP First Review (WNPR) the Village Enhancement proposals have been reinstated and relevant issues that arose during the period between the original submission in September 2019 and adoption in May 2021 have also been addressed. Following statutory consultation, the submission of the WNPR was completed in December, 2022.

### **3. Wheatley character**

3.1 The WNP Committee recognises that there is a strong feeling of identity among the residents of Wheatley. A very important aspect of the village is its location, inset within the Green Belt, which confers a very rural nature and setting to the village making it attractive. Proximity to the open spaces that surround the built environment is particularly valued.

3.2 The local geography has both defined and constrained the development of the village to the extent that further development will involve some creative planning to provide the housing needs while at the same time retaining the essential character of the village which has been built up over many centuries. This character development is described in some detail in Appendix 1.

### **4. Wheatley today**

4.1 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] identifies Wheatley as one of the 12 settlements classed as a “Larger Village” within South Oxfordshire. Wheatley is a linear village, extending for two miles, adjoining the A40 and leading directly to the M40. It is considered a “major hub” serving surrounding villages in retail, light industry, education, Post Office services and medical practice. With the village of Holton, which is outside the neighbourhood plan area, both of these villages host a complete school system for children aged 5 to 18 years, including secondary and special education schools serving Oxford City and the surrounding villages. As part of the Settlement Assessment supporting the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] Littleworth was elevated to “Smaller Village” status.

4.2 The Straw Poll [3] conducted by the WNP Committee in May 2016 showed residents' key concerns (Figure 4.1). From the 452 respondents (60% of those polled), some key issues were clearly identified, and these have been used by the WNP Committee in examining the needs of the village.

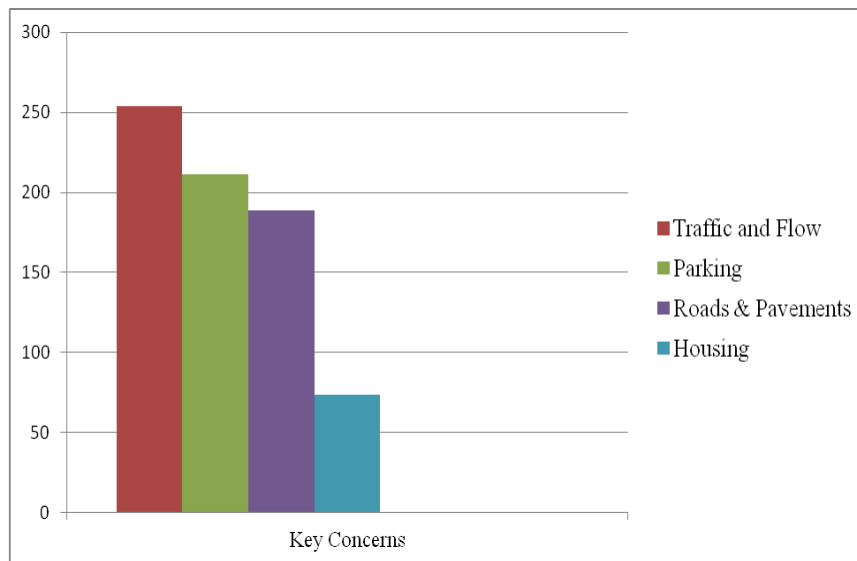


Figure 4.1 Key concerns of residents from the Straw Poll [3] held in May 2016

### Population

4.3 Census information shows that the population of Wheatley has not increased significantly since 2000. This is in part due to Green Belt constraints on housing development, although there have been some infill sites (notably the former railway land). The National Census April 2011 [12] put Wheatley's population at 4,092, an apparent increase of 11 on the 2001 census. A UK Office of National Statistics estimate [13] in June 2014 revised this to an estimated 4,125. In addition, 108 homes in Holton were transferred to Wheatley by boundary change in 2015. The 2011 Census showed that more people in Wheatley were over 65 (769) than were in the age range 16-29 (600). This corresponds to 18.6% of Wheatley being 65 or over in line with the UK national average [14].

### Employment

4.4 The 2011 Census provides data on the types of industry that residents within the plan area work in, with a total of 2077 working residents recorded overall. (See also the Annual Business Inquiry [15], Business Register and Employment Survey [16] and Oxfordshire Employment and Land Review [17].)

4.5 Analysis of the employment profile of Wheatley shows that the largest employment sector is Education (18%) closely followed by Health/Social work (14.2%) and Retail (12.3%). A wide range of professional services is also provided (e.g. communications, scientific and technical, linguistics, architectural and legal).

## **Housing**

4.6 WNP Committee research [18] together with recent completions show that, despite the constraints of the Green Belt, at least 431 homes (24.3% of the current total of 1771) had been built in Wheatley since about 1980, the latest completed development being the upper London Road development of an additional 51 homes on a rural exception site, permitted on 31 March 2016. All this post-1980 development has been achieved mainly through extensive in-fill and re-use of brownfield sites. Significantly, much of the recent development stands on former British Rail property in the post-Beeching era. It should be noted however that despite these increases there has not been a commensurate improvement in infrastructure relating to traffic, parking, roads and pavements.

4.7 Wheatley housing is expensive, but desirable. The WNP Committee Straw Poll [3] in May 2016 showed that the principal reasons for the popularity of the neighbourhood were access to the M40 and A34, access to London and Oxford, access to three railway stations by bus, the village facilities including schools and surgery, its community spirit, a wide range of organisations and the setting and history of the village. All combine to make the area an attractive place to live and work. For this to be sustainable the community must retain its diversity in age, occupations, attitudes and ideology. Therefore, it is important that as many young people be retained and accommodated satisfactorily in the village to maintain and sustain community life without being priced out by the ballooning property market, inflated by metropolitan commuters.

4.8 The same Straw Poll [3] showed a 16% interest in more types of housing including affordable, starter, sheltered and, to a lesser extent, rented accommodation. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 [19] confirmed these findings and also showed that only 31.4% of owner-occupied homes in the district are 1- and 2-bedroom units. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 [19] recommends that future housing should be evenly split between 1- and 2-bedroom units and larger 3+ bedroom units. It also recommends that 35% of affordable homes in the SODC area should be 2-bedroom properties, 32% should have 1 bedroom, and 29% should have 3 bedrooms. The District Council requires affordable housing contributions where there is a net gain of 11 or more dwellings, in line with national policy and guidance. More recently the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] has outlined in policy H9 clear criteria for the provision of affordable housing. The need for affordable housing is acute and has shaped the WNPR ambition to provide this housing in as timely a fashion as possible in accordance with SODC guidelines.

## **Public Health and Medical Services**

4.9 Being surrounded by Green Belt with parks and public footpaths there are many recreational opportunities for the community. The local educational establishments also provide several sports amenities that can contribute to the general well-being of the community. However, the lack of “green spaces” within the village does limit the recreational opportunities for the elderly. The GP and district nursing services are based at Morland House. It has a reputation for being one of the best teaching practices in the county. At present the practice can support the proposed increase in housing at OBU although parking at Morland House is likely to come under further pressure. When the new 65 bed nursing home is completed the Surgery will have to hire further clinical and ancillary staff.

Wheatley's GP services are provided by Morland House Surgery

- Provides all the services traditionally associated with a General Practice plus a wide range of clinics, a dispensary service and a pharmacy.
- Currently staffed by 11 doctors together with ancillary colleagues
- Supports a population of approximately 11,000 people of all socio-economic groupings within a radius of ca 5 miles from Wheatley
- Supports the Triangle Care Home in Wheatley and is scheduled to support a new 65 bed nursing home currently being built in Wheatley
- The practice is a teaching practice for Oxford University medical students

## **Education**

4.10 Unusually for Oxfordshire villages, Wheatley and Holton between them have the full range of state schools: Wheatley Primary Academy and Wheatley Park Academy (run by different trusts) and a Local Authority Special School (John Watson) with junior and senior levels. These schools also serve other villages and the nearby suburbs of Oxford City, generating a school transport flotilla (a total of 12 buses serve Wheatley Park) and considerable private traffic at drop-off and pick-up times. Some 4-5 minibuses ferry pupils between the John Watson junior and senior sites each morning and afternoon. Wheatley Park and John Watson senior school share the school site adjacent to the OBU site, and both sites lie within the perimeter of medieval Holton Park. Wheatley also has two early learning centres/day nurseries.

4.11 Wheatley Primary Academy has accommodation for further pupils, but there are safety concerns about cross-village access, traffic and parking in the morning and afternoon. A questionnaire [20] about footpaths supported a green route through the village which would be a little over a mile long, and also asked for much-needed crossings at the High Street crossroads. Wheatley Park Academy's greatest concern is the problem of staff recruitment due to the cost of housing. It also has an aspiration for a Lord Baker-style technology foundation on the OBU site after the Brookes Formula Student workshop closes, but funding is lacking.

4.12 With the growth of Academies the villages of Wheatley and Holton unfortunately have had no youth service, a key factor and link between school and community for young people. To some extent 'Fusion', a faith-inspired Community Church, has played a voluntary youth work role. In addition, St. Mary's CE Church and the United Reform Chapel are planning more community and youth activities. The Wheatley Scout Movement has over 90 members and owns its own building (former wartime fire station) which is however somewhat run down with access only from the very busy Holloway Road. A private language school (Oxford House) has thrived on Wheatley High Street since 1983.

## **Oxford Brookes University – The Land at Wheatley Campus**

4.13 Oxford Brookes University (OBU) is a university that can trace its origins to 1865 when the former Oxford School of Art was established. The university was renamed in 1992 to honour its former principal, John Henry Brookes. In 1976 the university acquired the

Wheatley campus when it amalgamated with the Lady Spencer - Churchill teacher training college. One of the reasons for the inclusion of both Wheatley and Holton Parishes in the WNPR is because this campus is located north of Wheatley, in Holton Parish.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 para 3.121 [48]

The Local Plan has inset Wheatley Campus from the Green Belt. The site is adjacent to the village of Wheatley which is already largely inset from the Green Belt. The existing development within the site has compromised the site's openness and countryside character, and the site is well contained and too close to Wheatley to play any significant role in the setting or special character of Oxford City. The exceptional circumstances justifying a review of the Green Belt through the Local Plan in this area are:

- There are opportunities for the site to be well connected to surrounding settlements, particularly the major urban area of Oxford City, by public transport and cycling;
- To inset the site from the Green Belt will enable the most efficient use to be made of a partially previously developed site;
- There are limited alternatives for accommodating additional development at Wheatley other than through Green Belt release; and
- The redevelopment of the site will provide new homes, helping to meet identified housing needs, including affordable housing needs.

Figure 4.2 Extract from the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48]

4.14 OBU intends to vacate the site shortly and therefore it is unlikely to be able to provide much needed housing for probably 5 years. The site was granted outline planning permission for up to 500 dwellings, pending its sale. Initially, in 2015 as part of the Draft SODC Local Plan 2032 Refined Options Stage, 2015 [21], SODC proposed 180 + new homes to be built in Wheatley (corresponding to ~10% growth in the number of homes). However, following the OBU announcement in 2016 to vacate the site SODC ceased to require additional new housing in Wheatley and instead, via several subsequent versions [4], [5], [9], proposed "at least 300 homes" for the OBU site. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] allocates the land at Wheatley Campus to deliver approximately 500 new homes, which has altered the Green Belt boundary.

4.15 A key challenge to be considered in the WNPR is the impact of the proposed OBU development (and any other development) on the parishes of Wheatley and Holton, and how to mitigate any adverse effects, whilst seeking to maintain and improve the general living conditions for all the residents. For this reason the aspirations of the Local Plan in relation to the OBU site are of particular relevance in determining the content of the WNPR.

### **Retail and village centre**

4.16 The retail activities in Wheatley centre are mainly food shops (the Co-op, Costcutter, a well-established baker and butcher) and catering (pub, coffee shop, restaurant, chip shop and take away). Among other High Street services there is the post office, hairdressers, pharmacy, dog grooming, estate agent, a laundrette and a tattooist. Above the High Street on Church Road services include another pub, an architect's business, garage, dentist, the library, the parish church and a further estate agent. A car tyre supplier operates on Holloway Road and a veterinary practice can be found on Roman Road. Away from the village centre, there is the Fire Station, the Triangle Care Home, a motel complex, an ASDA store and petrol

station, a car sales outlet, a coach depot, an aquarium centre and two garden centres. The seven pubs of 1975 have now been reduced to two (and one private club). There are four worshipping congregations: Anglican, Catholic, United Reform and Community Church.

4.17 There is a light industry park at the east end of the village which has grown haphazardly since the 1950s. It includes four plant and building materials suppliers together with a garage business and also there is a business park (Wheatley Business Centre). Four car workshops are located at Littleworth on a site that is in disappointing condition at the centre of Littleworth.

4.18 Limited population growth might suggest that the retail outlets do not need to expand, but Wheatley retail outlets also serve the surrounding smaller villages (Cuddesdon, Holton, Little Milton etc) and the demand for retail would increase with additional residents in the areas served by Wheatley.

4.19 The village centre is based on the High Street, a mixture of 18<sup>th</sup> century town houses, refurbished cottages and a row of 1960s shops with flats above. In 1888, the Millers of Shotover Park constructed The Merry Bells to provide employment and then for use as a Temperance Hotel. In 1970 the Shotover Estate sold The Merry Bells to the village to be used as a village hall. Together with a mixture of listed buildings, this forms the centre of the Conservation Area, created in 1989. Today the building (including the Stable) houses Wheatley Library, Wheatley Archive, the Parish Offices and meetings rooms. It is a significant community centre but there are some events that it cannot accommodate. The main village crossroads is at the centre of the High Street. Traffic flows one way east of this crossroads, and two ways towards the west. Parking in the High Street and in the neighbourhood is a major concern, with parking in Church Road being highlighted by 16% of the respondents in the WNP Committee Straw Poll [3]. Shops need access, but unrestricted garage conversions, households with multiple-car ownership and the growing use of Wheatley by non-residents for free parking (due to access to the buses into Oxford, Thornhill Park and Ride and onwards to London and airports) are growing concerns. The latter is particularly significant on Church Road (and also Park Hill, Littleworth Road and London Road). The practice of parking cars 'For Sale' in laybys and on grass verges is also on the increase.

4.20 The condition of the village centre is a community concern. The WNP Committee Straw Poll [3] highlighted the need for the centre to be modernised. The WNP Committee formally supported the successful bid by the local Post Office to take over the vacant Barclays Bank building.

4.21 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] was adopted in December 2020 and has made alterations to the Green Belt to accommodate the allocation of land at Wheatley Campus, for approximately 500 new homes. Ultimately the outcome will depend on the intentions of the purchaser. New housing would increase the demand on High Street retail services, and on village facilities (including schools and GP services). It takes 25 minutes to walk from the centre of the OBU campus to the High Street in Wheatley. Unless the connection from the campus site is improved, net traffic congestion would grow in the centre of the village as residents would inevitably use their cars to travel from the campus site to the village centre and to Wheatley Primary School, thereby putting further pressure on the parking facilities (another big issue) not only in the centre but also in the wider village.

## Transport and movement

**The WNP Committee is well aware that the focus of the neighbourhood plan is housing and land use and not traffic, except where new roads, parking infrastructure and management are necessary. The wider community also understands these issues. However, the WNP Straw Poll [3] and the Community Survey [7] identified traffic, parking and footpaths/pavements as the dominant issues that concern the *community*. So, when new housing is proposed, the first question is, ‘What about the infrastructure?’**

4.22 Wheatley is reliant on bus services and key roads to maintain employment and other services. Its schools rely on bus and private transport. According to a UK Office of National Statistics Survey [13] conducted in 2014, the majority of Wheatley residents travel to work by car, van and bus. The bus services available are:-

Bus Service	Destinations	Status
X7	Oxford – Aylesbury	Operational
400	Oxford - Wheatley Campus	Operational
46	Oxford – Horspath – Great Milton	Operational

Figure 4.2 Wheatley bus services

4.23 Loss of the 103/104 bus services in 2016 was keenly felt by the residents of the Miltons, Littleworth and Horspath and as a consequence some lost jobs. The 46 bus service commenced in January 2021.

“Wheatley, near J8, M40, has some traffic management problems and is used by some drivers as a rat-run into Oxford to avoid congestion on main routes. Room for pedestrians and for access to the countryside could be improved. Noise from the A40 has been highlighted.”  
OCC Local Transport Plan (3) 2011-2030, 26.4, (2012) [23]

“J.8 is not congested, however it does attract traffic through nearby villages for access to the M40”  
OCC Local Transport Plan (3) 2011-2030, 27.9 (2012) [23]

“Wheatley is at one end of a Secondary Interurban Corridor [Oxford to M40] and at one end of a Primary Interurban Corridor [Aylesbury – M40 – Oxford]”  
OCC Local Transport Plan (3) 2011-2030, 27.21 (2012) [23]

‘Traffic problems in rural settlements ... excessive traffic on rural roads, particularly lorries, and lack of support for pedestrians and cyclists ...’  
OCC Local Transport Plan (4) 2015-31, 26.27 (2012) [24]

### 4.3 Extracts from Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plans

4.24 The M40 extension to Birmingham in 1990 reduced part of Wheatley into a virtual 2-mile slip road to the M40, but it also brought better access to routes afforded by the M40 from J8/J8A. In 1989-1990 motorway protesters warned that ‘capillary action’ would draw traffic through Wheatley to and from the M40. With ‘access’ comes ‘intrusion’ and perhaps



unintended consequences as confirmed by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) (see Figure 4.3).

4.25 The WNP Committee Straw Poll [3] highlighted parking as a major issue. The village has become a commuter ‘rat-run’ [23], to and from the M40 to avoid the Green Road roundabout on the Oxford City ring road. There are entries and exits to the village via Littleworth Road, Ladder Hill, Park Hill and the London Road. At peak times this creates significant congestion in Wheatley, similar to that found in other villages and small towns as 21<sup>st</sup> century traffic intrudes on roads and pavements designed and furnished for the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The location of the road junctions that are subject to peak time congestion are shown in Figure 4.4. On-street parking is at a premium in Wheatley both for residents and also for those people who travel to Wheatley to provide services in the retail shops, educational and other professional establishments. Therefore, it is disappointing to find that increasingly Wheatley roads are used as a day long, free parking alternative to the Park and Ride facilities at Thornhill thereby adding to the parking and congestion issues. Littleworth Road, London Road, Church Road, Kiln Lane and Park Hill in particular suffer from the inappropriate use of roads and associated verges.

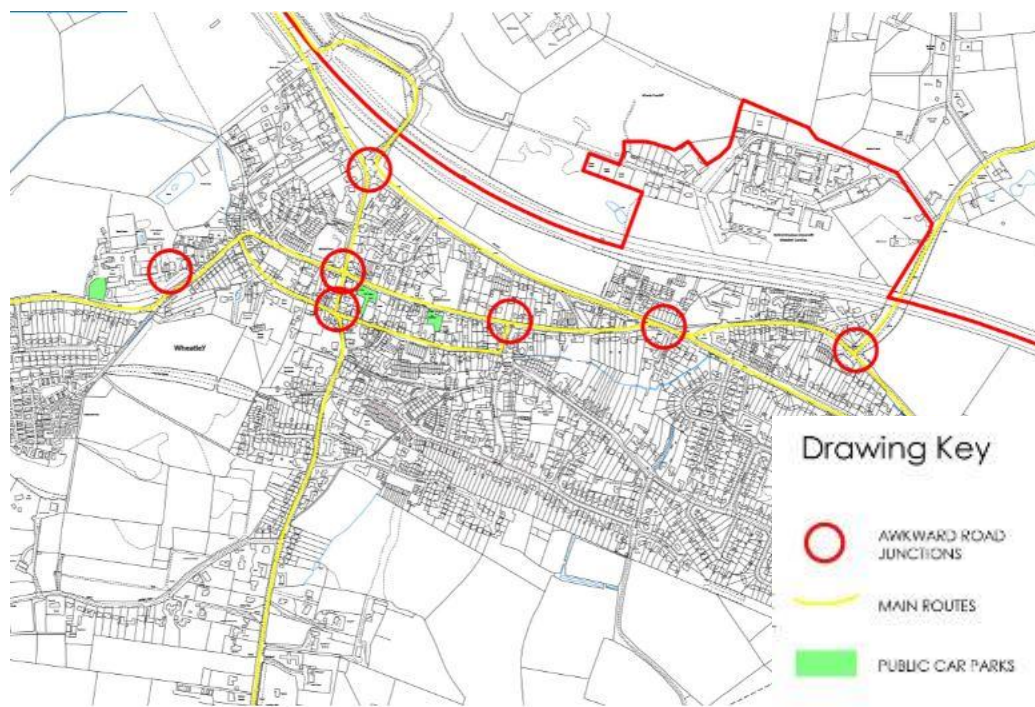


Figure 4.4 Locations of congestion at peak times [25]

4.26 Modern HGVs (no longer the ‘lorries’ of OCC’s 2015 Local Transport Plan [24]) are rated typically at 40 tonnes gross weight and, increasingly, draw hoist-bearing trailers. Although they were designed to transport goods across such destinations as the Alps they were permitted in the UK since 2011. These HGVs now deliver to the light industrial units, building suppliers, garages, supermarkets and even village centre convenience stores (such as the Co-op). They increase the wear and tear on Wheatley streets, most notably London Road, now a *de facto* internal village bypass. The access to Wheatley from the east for these HGVs lies over the Wheatley stone bridge, originally an 8 arch medieval bridge renovated in 1809, which is now subject to regular inspections. Farm tractors at 5 tonnes gross weight with trailers are now part of mechanised, split-site farming and unfortunately add to the traffic issues. Inappropriate parking has destroyed grass verges on London Road and Park Hill. The London Road has begun to be used for ‘stack parking’, and the link road towards J8A has sometimes even been used as an HGV park for those awaiting ferries to the continent. OCC metal parking signs (2-hour limit) on the road from J8A to Wheatley in March 2016 were stolen within the month and not enforced. There are parking restrictions along the High Street and in Crown Square but there are no such restriction on parking along the London Road layby that was originally designated for residents.

### **Green Routes, Pavements and Pathways**

4.27 A green route footpath east-west across Wheatley for safer access to Wheatley Primary Academy has been mooted (and supported by the Head teacher) in a minor WNP Committee survey [20]. Parts of the village lack pavements and in some places the pavements really should be raised (Station Road) or widened where they are too narrow for safe use by a pushchair and pose problems for wheelchair users where there is no dropped access. Pavements are modern urban street furniture, but villages now face urban-scale traffic. The increased traffic flow through the village poses traffic management problems and parking issues that highlight the need for extensive improvement in the quality and number of pavements in the village. The WNP Committee has produced a pavement map of the village [22]. There are no pavements [22] by The Sun, along Old Road or throughout Littleworth. Heavy parking outside the primary school, on Littleworth Park Lane and a combination of traffic, parking and inadequate pavements the full length of Church Road are further safety concerns. No footpaths or pavements connect the nearby villages of Forest Hill, Cuddesdon and Great Milton with Wheatley.

4.28 Four pedestrian crossings were requested in July 2016 through the Primary School and Footpath Committee Survey [20]: –

- a) across Station Road/Ladder Hill
- b) between the primary school and the nursery/Littleworth Park
- c) across the bottom of Holloway Road.
- d) across Holloway Road at junction with Church Road

4.29 Currently, only request (a) has been satisfied (partially) as part of the completion of a development on site WHE18a for homes built for those residents aged over 50 years. Although there are significant concerns in the community regarding these transport issues the WNP Committee can only address housing needs together with issues relating to employment, leisure and the environment. However, the Committee will aim to mitigate and not exacerbate any of the existing issues associated with transport.

## Air Quality and Noise Pollution

4.30 Poor air quality and noise pollution have a negative impact on all of society [51]. Today, the air quality of modern Wheatley is largely determined by a series of east-west roads following a “valley contour” bringing traffic into the centre of the village thereby raising concerns about pollution.

4.31 National policy on air quality is set out in the Clean Air Strategy 2019 [26]. This provides a framework for reducing air pollution in the UK and sets standards (objectives) for nine air pollutants to protect health, vegetation and ecosystems. The best-known of these since the international diesel engine emissions scandal are nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). However, the current standards may have to be revised in the light of a recent London coroner’s verdict [52].

4.32 Modern traffic using Wheatley’s roads creates concern about air quality to add to those about congestion, parking and HGVs. Noise pollution has been partially offset with new road surfaces on the A40 north of Wheatley and on lower London Road (the ‘cut’) and the installation of acoustic barriers bordering the A40. However, experience shows that there is still a need for improvements and better technology [50]. Since 2011, the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has generated maps [27] showing national estimates of background concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) for the whole of the UK on a grid of 1 km x 1 km. For Wheatley and the surrounding area, the background estimate for NO<sub>2</sub> ranges between 13.5 µgm/m<sup>3</sup> and 14.9 µgm/m<sup>3</sup> and for PM<sub>10</sub> the estimate ranges between 16.9 µgm/m<sup>3</sup> and 17.9 µgm/m<sup>3</sup>.

4.33 SODC has monitored annual average NO<sub>2</sub> levels in Wheatley since 2006 as part of a general concern about the M40/A40 corridor. Monitoring began on Beech Road and at 50 High Street (Figure 4.5) in 2006 as the ‘least’ and the ‘worst’ locations respectively. It was discontinued on Beech Road after 2011 but will continue on High Street until 2032. There are also concerns now about pollution levels around the Old London Road and these have been brought to the attention of the WNP Committee and SODC. The annual average concentration of NO<sub>2</sub> in Wheatley is described as being high (but without exceeding the maximum allowed). The average over the decade 2006-2016 was 28.7 µgm/m<sup>3</sup> per annum, with the dip in 2015 being explained by “unusually stable weather conditions”. It is understood that the NO<sub>2</sub> levels are mainly from HGV emissions.

4.34 Further evidence of the issues experienced in Wheatley is shown in Figure 4.6 not only from an air quality standpoint but also as an example of the use of inappropriately programmed SatNavs that take no account of 18<sup>th</sup> century streets having to deal with 21<sup>st</sup> century trucks, lorries and HGVs.

4.35 It is recommended by SODC in the Air Quality Action Plan [29] and endorsed by WNP Committee that no housing development should be considered as acceptable if as a consequence the Air Quality Action Plan objectives are exceeded.

Location	50 High Street (SODC site 27)
Year	Annual Mean NO <sub>2</sub> Conc. (µgm/m <sup>3</sup> )
2006	27.3
2007	28.0
2008	30.4
2009	30.9
2010	31.7
2011	29.7
2012	29.8
2013	29.6
2014	28.0
2015	24.0
2016	26.8
2017	25.8

Figure 4.5 Summary of diffusion tube results in Wheatley [28]. Permissible limit is 40 µgm/m<sup>3</sup> [29]



Figure 4.6 Use of inappropriately programmed SatNavs bring HGVs into the centre of the village



Figure 4.7 War Memorial donated by Magdalen College to replace worn original

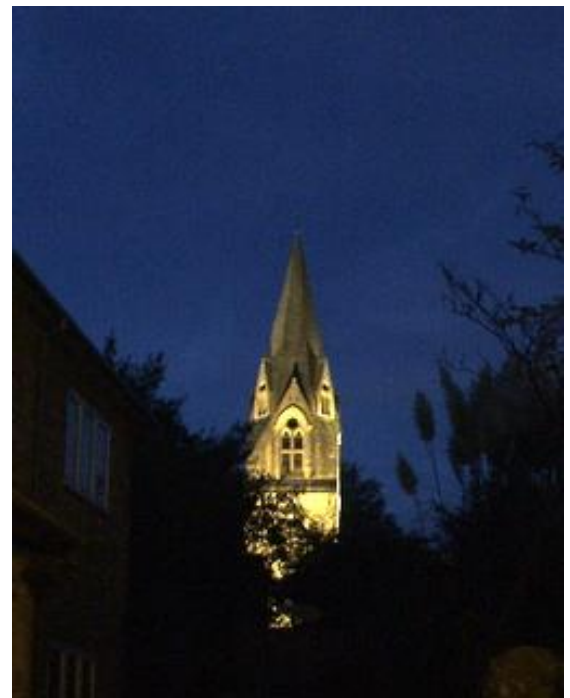


Figure 4.8 The spire of St. Mary's CE Church seen from the High Street

## Heritage Assets

4.36 Wheatley has numerous listed buildings, scheduled Ancient Monuments and an interesting history. The Wheatley Conservation Area was established in December 1989. The special character of buildings in the Area arises from the harmoniously balanced mixture of local limestone and locally produced warm red brick and tile. There are small cottages, terraces and individual dwellings in brick and stone reflecting the structure of society in the past. Roofs are generally traditionally pitched. Welsh slates were introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wheatley has one of the few windmills with an octagonal shaped tower. It dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century being in continuous use up until 1914 whereupon it suffered a period of considerable decline. A restoration project started in the 1970s has now been completed (see front cover) and the windmill now enjoys a prominent role as a local tourist attraction. The present Manor House building was completed by the Archdale family in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although not in the Conservation Area (1989) there is a 1927 “Garden Estate” of 50 “Homes for Heroes” lying on the south side of the London Road, east of Ambrose Drive, and including The Avenue. At the time, these houses, lying on elevated farmland, represented a Health and Housing revolution. The density at 6 houses per acre, complete with generous gardens (see Appendix 1), provided by the Ministry of Health and Wheatley UDC was lower than the prevailing Rural Minimum [53].



Figure 4.9 Manor House East Wing datestone



Figure 4.10 The Manor House East Wing, older buildings lie to the west

4.37 The parish church and adjacent schoolhouse (Figure 4.11) are Victorian designs by the architect G.E Street. Numerous buildings, including a restored windmill, date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Wheatley Lock Up (Figure 4.12) built in 1834, with an evocative pyramidal shape, has become the village’s unofficial logo.



Figure 4.11 The Old School (G.E. Street). Formerly the Wheatley National School 1858 – 1987.



Figure 4.12 The Roundhouse, now known as the Lock Up, built during rural unrest, 1834

## Environment and landscape

4.38 The village of Wheatley is tightly surrounded by the Green Belt and lies next to Shotover Country Park (Figure 4.13). In addition to the Conservation Area the Parish owns Wheatley Common Allotment, managed by the Howe Trust, (Figure 4.14) and other common (community) land which is used for grazing horses. A number of public footpaths and rights of way cross parts of the village to lead to the countryside beyond.

4.39 The OBU site has been extensively landscaped to the extent that there are Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in place for many of the trees that flourish on the site. This arboriculture has been the subject of one survey [30] by SODC in 2005 and a further survey [31] carried out by the WNP Committee in 2017. Wheatley is inset in the Green Belt and is surrounded by parkland and woodland all of which provide the delightful setting that is typical of the Chiltern countryside. However, Figure 4.15 illustrates that within the confines of the village there are very few “green spaces” for recreational activities especially for young families and the elderly. It would be desirable if there were more opportunities for the elderly to be able to enjoy recreation and walking in green spaces reasonably close to their homes without having to face the steep hills that lie in all directions except towards the east of the village.



Figure 4.13 Westfield from Shotover Park in winter



Figure 4.14 The Howe Trust Land looking W towards Shotover Park

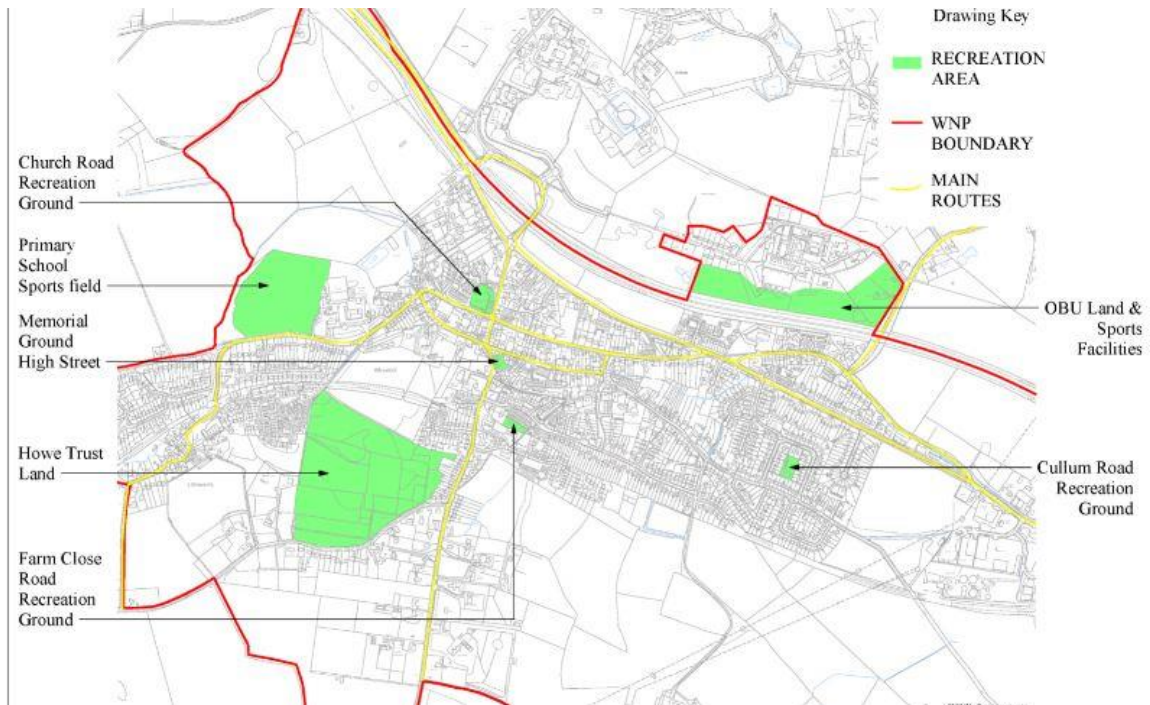


Figure 4.15 Recreation areas in Wheatley [25]

## Provision of Burial Space

4.40 St. Mary's CE Church is surrounded by an extensive cemetery which has served the community since 1857. However, the need for further burial capacity is now at a critical level and it is imperative that a new site (approx. 0.3 Ha) is found. The WNP Committee, WPC and the Vicar of Wheatley have discussed the issue but no suitable site in Wheatley has emerged. The cemetery has been closed to new burials since the first quarter of 2019. The WNP Committee has agreed to support an application once WPC and Wheatley Parish Council of Churches propose a suitable site

## Water Supply and Sewerage

4.41 Thames Water have a responsibility to provide mains water and sewerage for new housing in Wheatley [32] but this can only be provided if there is collaboration with SODC and any potential developers. Any proposed development in Wheatley should take account of the impact of increased demand for water and sewerage services. There is a risk that any new development may impact the wider water or sewerage system and cause problems elsewhere in the system. Any developer in Wheatley is encouraged to engage with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity to consider the potential impacts on water supply, sewerage and surface water drainage. Thames Water also needs to be consulted if proposals include building over or close to an existing public sewer. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] includes policies for the delivery of infrastructure (Policy INF1). This Plan is the focus for ensuring that the investment plans of Thames Water match any proposed developments in Wheatley. The surface water runoff from most new developments is now usually controlled so that the peak flow is no greater than the peak flow before development. With this condition, then the risk of surface water flooding should not be significantly increased by the development.



Figure 4.16 River Thames in spate at Wheatley Stone Bridge

## 5. The Community Survey

5.1 A Community Survey [7], carried out during August – October 2016, was sent to every home in Wheatley and Holton. Parts 1–4 (Housing Needs Survey) of this survey were compiled by Community First Oxford (CFO) and this provided a Housing Needs Survey. Part 5 (Community Opinion Survey) comprised a series of questions compiled by the WNP Committee to ask the residents about their views, concerns and aspirations for the future of the villages. There was a 36% response from a total of 1860 homes in Wheatley and Holton. A copy of the whole survey is available at [www.wheatleyneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.wheatleyneighbourhoodplan.co.uk). With respect to the housing needs, the key messages provided by the CFO Survey are summarised in Figure 5.1.



<b>Housing</b>
<b>Status (% figures are given with respect to the number of respondents)</b>
Most houses are owner occupied (91%)
Most houses have 3 bedrooms or more (77%)
Distribution of age (N) (64%, N ≥ 45)
Proportion of retirees (38%, N ≥ 65)
42% of individuals in some form of employment
Strong village association (58% have lived in the area for 20+ years)
<b>Aspiration</b>
Appetite for downsizing (26% of respondents might be interested)
Lack of affordable housing is a major reason given for leaving the village (36% of leavers)
Strong support for affordable housing (63%), starter homes (53%) and supported housing (47%, with preference towards independent accommodation with care)
Strong support for owner occupied/shared ownership properties; home ownership is preferred among families/individuals wishing to move within the next 5 years (80%)
Most families/individuals wishing to move require 2+ bedrooms (90% of respondents)
Need for supported housing among families/individuals wishing to move is low (only 9 expressed a need)
There is demand for housing from households living outside Wheatley; the greatest demand is for 2- and 3-bedroom properties

Figure 5.1 Key results of the Housing Needs Survey [7] (Parts 1-4)

5.2 Like most semi-rural village locations, the community is generally car owning. The survey showed that 50% of the respondents lived in households having two or more vehicles. There is a relatively large retirement population in the villages of Wheatley and Holton so when taken in conjunction with the lack of local employment opportunities for younger people this means that the population is inevitably ageing.

5.3 Further analysis of the Community Survey [7] reveals specific issues related to the housing needs for Wheatley and Holton. Some of the key issues related to the type of housing needed for the elderly can be summarised:-

- a. Approximately one third of the respondents is of retirement age
- b. Nearly 60% of the respondents are unlikely to leave within 20 years
- c. A significant number of retirees would like to downsize and stay in the village but availability of suitable property is an issue
- d. There is an expressed need for some form of supported housing

The conclusion of the survey is that it is necessary to make provision for the housing needs of retired and elderly residents together with their associated well-being.

5.4 There is strong support for the Green Belt (56% of respondents), with priority being given to the development of brownfield sites (86% of respondents).

5.5 Although areas were identified where the standard of living could be improved, the conclusions from Part 5 of the survey showed that in general the residents were satisfied with the quality of life in Wheatley and Holton. The local amenities provided are sufficient to

ensure that day-to-day needs are catered for without having to leave the villages. The residents enjoy a pleasant rural location and have good access to neighbouring conurbations. Two particular issues gives rise to considerable dissatisfaction viz:- traffic and transport together with parking problems especially around the centre of Wheatley. This confirms the findings of the WNP Clarity Straw Poll [3] (Figure 4.1). Residents’ concerns are further illustrated in Figure 5.2. In particular, the traffic flow on a single carriageway (London Road) corresponds to a rate of one car every 10 seconds in each direction for a period of one hour at peak times.

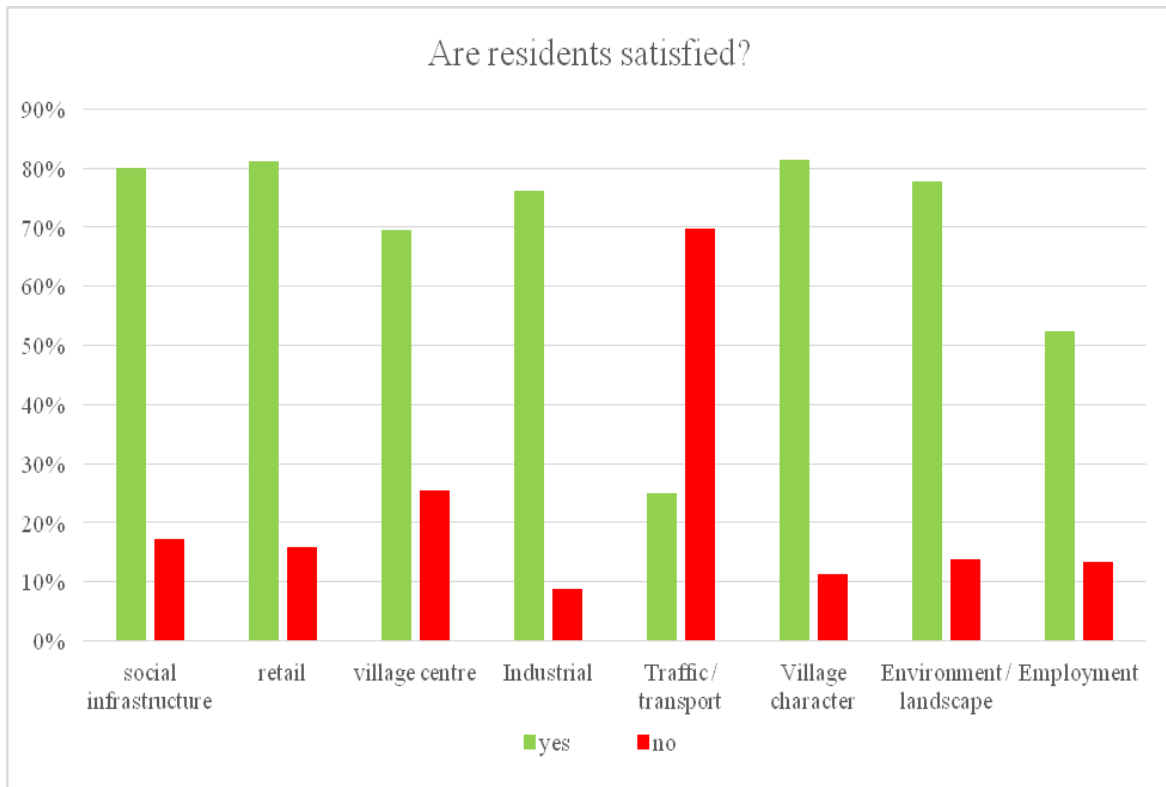


Figure 5.2 Key resident concerns [7] (Part 5, Community Opinion Survey)

5.6 It therefore must be a priority for the WNPR that, in seeking to satisfy the housing needs, any potential impacts arising in terms of traffic, transport and parking are satisfactorily mitigated.

## 6. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: Vision and objectives

**The WNP Committee welcomed the opportunity to deliver a neighbourhood plan that would revitalise the villages of Wheatley and Holton and thereby act as a catalyst for fulfilling current and future housing needs.**

6.1 This section sets out the community’s vision for Wheatley, the themes and primary objectives for the WNPR, and the strategy for bringing the vision and objectives forward. The planning policies which follow in Section 9 are the delivery tools for realising the vision, objectives and strategy.

6.2 The WNPR objectives and policies are organised around a set of main themes that have been the subject of planning policy, planning applications, Parish Council stewardship and community needs for many years. Continuing to address and review these themes is an important part of the WNPR and in so doing they have undergone extensive community consultation. The main themes are: -

- Housing and land use
- Social infrastructure
- Retail services
- Village centre
- Industrial and commercial environment and infrastructure
- Traffic and transport
- Village character
- Quality of the environment and natural landscape
- Employment opportunities

6.3 Each of these themes has an individual vision, with primary objectives:-.

<b>Housing and Land Use</b>		
<b>Vision</b>		<b>Objectives</b>
HL1V	Wheatley will comprise a balanced range and quantity of housing that meets the needs of both current and future residents of all ages. The housing should be mixed, including affordable homes. It should be thoughtfully located and designed, and integrated into the village of Wheatley to minimise any negative impact on the natural environment.	HL1O1 Provide a range of different types of new houses across all tenures to meet the needs of all income and age ranges, including key workers, within Wheatley and its catchment area using design guidance based on the South Oxfordshire Design Guide [35] and the Chilterns Building Design Guide [36] HL1O2 Promote the provision of 40% affordable homes, in line with the policy of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan HL1O3 Build new homes within walking distance of the village centre, especially those designed for the elderly HL1O4 Ensure that affordable dwellings are mixed with, and indistinguishable from, the market housing HL1O5 Prioritise the redevelopment of brownfield sites, and intensify the use of existing land where this will not have unmitigated significant environmental effects

		HL1O6 Set aside land for housing for the elderly
HL2V	The Green Belt will be retained where it contributes to the purposes of the Green belt. Areas of historic heritage will be preserved.	HL2O Support land released from the Green Belt within the framework of the Local Plan only where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.
HL3V	The built-up area of the OBU site as shown on the Neighbourhood Plan Area will be transformed to provide additional housing and business amenities in accordance with the community vision for Wheatley. The OBU tower should be demolished, it is a blight on the landscape (see Figure 9.2)	HL3O1 Encourage redevelopment proposals to consider that serviceable OBU buildings can be retained for re-use as business/residential units HL3O2 Support the demolition of the OBU tower. HL3O3 Ensure that the profile of any and all new housing and buildings does not harm either the views from the listed building of Holton House or the views from the OBU site towards Brill.
HL4V	Commercial businesses and non-retail businesses will be relocated where practical to the eastern perimeter of the village, encouraging growth, improving services and the environment for residents together with enhancing the village.	HL4O1 Promote the relocation of businesses in central village locations in order to facilitate the relief of traffic congestion and parking issues HL4O2 Promote the relocation of businesses in designated area WHE22 to create a site for housing commensurate with the surrounding environment HL4O3 Set aside land to attract new businesses and to accommodate relocated businesses to the east of Wheatley which could include sites released from the Green Belt within the framework of a Local Plan
HL5V	There will be sufficient burial capacity.	HL5O Set aside land for burial since the present cemetery is now closed.
HL6V	Create a more sustainable and low carbon community	HL6O Pay attention to good quality existing design guidance which includes the South Oxfordshire Design Guide [35] and the Chilterns Building Design Guide [36]

## Social infrastructure (including a range of sport, education, healthcare and leisure services)

Vision		Objectives
S11V	There will be a range of high-quality sports, leisure, education, healthcare, recreational open space and social facilities to meet the community needs commensurate with an expanding population of all ages especially the elderly.	<p>SI1O1 Ensure social infrastructure in place to meet the increased needs of new and existing residents</p> <p>SI1O2 Maximise the leisure opportunities for all ages, including the allocation of land and identification of ways of delivering new and improved facilities at appropriate locations to meet increased demand</p> <p>SI1O3 Preserve leisure facilities used by residents of Holton and Wheatley that are located on the OBU site.</p> <p>SI1O4 Consider identifying land to re-locate the current accommodation used by the Scout Movement to improve safety and encourage increased participation in the organisation.</p>
SI2V	Wheatley will continue to operate as a hub village and Local Service Area	SI2O Expand the amenities to satisfy the increasing demand

## Retail Services

Vision		Objectives
RS1V	Wheatley will be served by a thriving hub village economy that provides a diverse range of accessible day-to-day services for its residents and those of the surrounding villages.	<p>RS1O1 Retain and support a mix and variety of shops in the village centre</p> <p>RS1O2 Improve traffic flow to ease congestion in the village centre</p> <p>RS1O3 Provide adequate parking close to the village centre</p>

## Village Centre

Vision		Objectives
VC1V	The village centre will provide a pleasant, attractive, safe and convenient place for residents of all ages to shop, socialise and generally enjoy life.	<p>VC1O1 Support the provision of a public toilet for the village centre</p> <p>VC1O2 Set aside land for public parking</p>

VC2V	The village centre will be a vibrant place for use by the community that is reviewed to provide improvement and regeneration.	VC2O New homes should be built within walking distance of village centre, to maximise use of the shops, reduce parking needs and provide ease of access for the elderly
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### Industrial and commercial environment and infrastructure

Vision		Objectives
IC1V	Wheatley will remain home to the growing number of small enterprises covering all ownership sectors (private, voluntary and public) across the tertiary sector and light manufacturing sectors.	IC1O To provide more business units capable of flexible use and expansion
	New businesses will be located around the eastern end of the village, close to existing ones, with some flexibility for expansion.	IC2O Relocate existing commercial units to provide opportunities to develop Littleworth industrial area (WHE22) brownfield site for residential use (see Figure 11.2)

### Traffic (motorists, pedestrians and cyclists) and transport

Vision		Objectives
TT1V	Wheatley will be supported by a safe and efficiently functioning road network with sufficient village parking.	TT1O1 Ensure that new developments minimise congestion TT1O2 Enhance parking management and provision TT1O3 Ensure that new developments do not exacerbate the issues with existing traffic black spots, rat runs and movement of HGVs
TT2V	The village centre, all schools and leisure facilities will be safely accessible by walkers, cyclists and the elderly and infirm.	TT2O1 Provide new and improved pavements throughout Wheatley TT2O2 Promote safe cycling and walking routes east to west for access to schools TT2O3 Promote safe walking routes in the High Street TT2O4 Provide a new pedestrian link to OBU which could include a new pedestrian and cycling bridge for safe and practical access to the village centre

		TT2O5 Ensure that parking provision for the health and education services are met for future population levels
TT3V	Wheatley will continue to have good public transport.	TT3O Promote public transport as the first-choice mode of transport for residents
TT4V	Under all circumstances air quality standards [26] will be met.	TT4O To identify opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts, especially at critical locations, by using through traffic and travel management together with green infrastructure provision and enhancement.

### Village character

Vision		Objectives
VCh1V	Wheatley will enhance its reputation as a welcoming village, respectful of its heritage, where residents experience a strong community spirit.	VCh1O Preserve and enhance the village character by providing, within walking distance, safe access from all new housing to a vibrant village centre.

### Quality of the environment and natural landscape

Vision		Objectives
EL1V	Residents will continue to enjoy the natural landscape that offers a range of green spaces and outstanding local vistas.	EL1O1 Preserve the Green Belt in line with national and local strategic planning policies. EL1O2 Ensure that the key visual landscapes are preserved
EL2V	The rural habitat and ecological diversity will be protected and enhanced.	EL2O1 Promote enhancement of wildlife sites through the creation of features such as ponds, spinneys, wetlands and grassland

### Employment opportunities

Vision		Objectives
EO1V	There will be increased employment opportunities for the communities served by the Wheatley hub (see para 4.1) especially for our young people.	EO1O1 Encourage business expansion in Wheatley through improved and new business infrastructure

## 7. Land Availability for Development

7.1 A list of all potential development sites was created from the OCC SHLAA [37] and SHELAA [38] reports (including updates published during the NP process), local knowledge of the village, maps and Google Earth. Brownfield sites were reviewed and considered with respect to possible relocation of existing inappropriate development. All the sites were assessed against locally developed criteria aimed at identifying the suitability, availability and the deliverability of potential sites. The site assessment of suitability has been carefully considered with respect to SODC planning policies and constraints. The vision and objectives of the plan have been important considerations in the identification of suitable sites. All the sites were screened and evaluated according to a series of criteria designed to find the sites that would fulfil the aspirations of the Vision and Objectives and also to address the need for a sustainable community to retain its diversity in age, occupations, attitudes and ideology as discussed in sections 4.6 and 4.7

7.2 The site assessment identified seven sites to be considered in more detail. The detailed assessment identified WHE2, WHE15, WHE16, WHE17, WHE22, WHE25 and WHE28 for further consideration. The entire site assessment process is described in Appendix 2.



Figure 7.1 Public Consultation 17 June 2019

## 8. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: Design Code and Policies

### Introduction

8.1 The policies are organised by themes and relate to the WNPR objectives described in Section 6. For clarity, the WNPR objectives should not be confused with the WNPR policies. Figure 8.1 shows how the policies of the WNPR will meet the objectives set out in Section 6.



<b>WNPR Objectives</b>	<b>WNPR Policies</b>
<b>Housing &amp; land use</b>	
HL1O1 – 6	H1, H2, H3, H4
HL2O	H2
HL3O1 – 4	H1
HL4O1 – 3	H4
HL5O	B1
HL6O	DQS1
<b>Social infrastructure (sport, education, healthcare and leisure)</b>	
SI1O1 – 5	SCI1, SCI2
SI2O	SCI1, SCI2
<b>Retail services</b>	
RS1O1 – 3	T1
<b>Village centre</b>	
VC1O1 – 3	VCE1
VC2O	VCE1, H3
<b>Industrial/commercial environment &amp; infrastructure</b>	
IC1O	H4
IC2O	H4
<b>Traffic (motorists, pedestrians, cyclists) &amp; transport</b>	
TT1O1 – 3	T1, P1
TT2O1 – 5	T1, P1
TT3O	T1
TT4O	T1
<b>Village character</b>	
VCh1O	T1, VCE1
<b>Quality of the environment &amp; natural landscape</b>	
EL1O1	EN1
EL2O	EN1
<b>Employment opportunities</b>	
EO1O1 – 2	E1

Figure 8.1 Relationship between the WNPR objectives and the WNPR policies

### **Character and Design**

8.2 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] allocates the land at Wheatley Campus for approximately 500 new homes in Policy STRAT14.

8.3 In addition to enabling communities to decide where new development should go, one of the key purposes of neighbourhood planning is to enable local communities to say what new development should look like. To ensure Wheatley and Holton residents and businesses are able to influence and shape new developments at an early stage, Design Guidance together with Codes have been prepared (see Appendix 8) and it would be welcomed that developers engage with Wheatley and Holton Parish Councils in applying this Design Guidance. The Design Guidance does not apply to the Wheatley Campus of the Oxford

Brookes University. This reflects its scale, its allocation for housing development in the adopted Local Plan and the extensive range of criteria for the development of the site in Policy STRAT14 of that Plan.

### **POLICY H1: DESIGN AND CHARACTER 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 area and its 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 development proposals will be supported where they reflect the Wheatley Design Guidance and Codes and where they respond positively to the following principles as appropriate to their scale, nature and location within the neighbourhood area :-

- a. Provides a high-quality of internal and external living space;
- b. Has regard to historic plot boundaries, hedgerows and enclosure walls;
- c. 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;
- d. The impacts on residential amenity of the construction arrangements are minimized by way of lorry movement, deliveries, work times, lighting and loss of vegetation;
- e. 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;
- f. They use permeable surfaces on driveways and use sustainable drainage systems that can connect directly to an existing or new wet environment wherever possible;
- g. They will not require culverts for the existing ditches, unless there is a demonstrable benefit to walking, cycling, highway safety or access;
- h. The layout maximises the opportunities for open space and recreation facilities
- i. The layout provides a high-quality landscape scheme; and
- j. The proposals should incorporate where possible walking and cycling routes, and where possible, enhance and connect existing walking and cycling routes.

8.4 Attention should be paid to good-quality existing design guidance which includes the South Oxfordshire Design Guide [35] and the Chilterns Building Design Guide [36] with particular reference to low carbon sustainable development.

8.5 On windfall sites of 10 or more net additional dwellings, or comprising 500 sqm or more of additional new employment, retail, hotel, community service, or leisure floor space, the preparation of a Design and Access Statement is encouraged in the spirit of good planning and positive frontloading of the decision-making process. The use of development proposal websites and other social media to provide residents with information and an opportunity to comment on emerging proposals is encouraged.

8.6 It is important to ensure that the local community, through Wheatley Parish Council and Holton Parish Council, maintains an active and positive role throughout any decision-making process undertaken by SODC and OCC on a planning application. Where appropriate, a Planning Performance Agreement between the applicant, SODC, OCC, Wheatley Parish Council and Holton Parish Council would be welcomed, particularly for the sites allocated for development within the WNPR.

8.7 Wheatley's character is its landscape, its history and its community. From medieval times the village focused on agriculture and quarrying which survived well into the beginning of the 20th century. Most of the houses were built from local stone giving the village a characteristic “feel” in its rural setting. The setting is fairly tightly constrained by a geological fault that eventually levels out towards the east. Looking out from Wheatley there are several views unique to the village. To the south there is Castle Hill (see Figure 8.4) and the poplar ridge of “Cuddesdon on the hill” (Figure 2.4, Appendix 1), to the east is the Chiltern ridge (see Figure 9.3) and to the north the village of Brill (see Figure 8.5) is easily recognised. A detailed description of the character of Wheatley (and Holton) is provided in Appendix 1.

## **POLICY H2: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should take account of their relationship with the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In addition, development proposals should protect and enhance valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or of geological value together with soils subject to their compliance with other development plan policies. Proposals which would make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area and its landscape context will be supported.

### **The nature of Housing Needs in Wheatley**

8.8 It is also important to ensure that new housing meets the housing needs of Wheatley and Holton at present, over the lifetime of the WNPR and into the future. As housing needs in terms of size, type and tenure will vary over the lifetime of the WNPR, a flexible policy approach is required to ensure that future development proposals are able to respond to the housing needs at that time. Wheatley is a Larger Village in South Oxfordshire that is inset from the Green Belt. In the NPPF [33] it states the five purposes of the Green Belt, viz:-

- a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

8.9 So, in meeting housing needs, proposals should take advantage of any opportunities afforded if or when there are boundary changes made to the Green Belt **within the framework of a Local Plan** and these facilitate residential or commercial development in

conjunction with urban regeneration and improved well-being of residents. As evidenced by the Community Survey [7] the main housing needs are for affordable housing, starter homes and supported housing for the elderly (see Figure 5.1) and the quantity of affordable housing is identified by the HNA (see Appendix 3). The aim of policy H3 is to create new good quality living accommodation over and above that allocated in the Local Plan [10] in order to accommodate the young families of existing residents and maintain the diversity of people living in the village. Offering new and attractive options for households will encourage an increase in owner occupation, strengthen local demand for shops and support local employment.

8.10 Policy H3 sets out a context within which these matters can be addressed in the development management system. Where necessary the potential impact of the delivery of affordable housing on development viability will be taken into account. Any such impacts will need to be assessed against independent and robust evidence. Plainly this will vary on a site by site basis and will be addressed on a case by case basis in either pre-application discussion or the determination of planning applications.



Figure 8.2 Cottages in Bell Lane



Figure 8.3 Wheatley High Street



Figure 8.4 The Chiltern Ridge from Castle Hill..... and some Wheatley residents

### **POLICY H3: MIX AND SIZE OF NEW HOUSING**

Development proposals with a net gain of ten or more dwellings (Use Class C3) or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more should deliver 40% affordable housing.

Taking into account the requirements for affordable housing set out in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] (Policy H9) as well as the requirement that at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered should be First Homes, the affordable housing tenure sought should be in accordance with the table below:

<b>Tenure</b>	<b>South Oxfordshire</b>
First Homes	25%
Social Rent	35%
Affordable Rent	25%
Other routes to affordable home ownership	15%

8.11 The Green Belt boundary at Wheatley is drawn tightly around the built edge of the village. Almost all of the opportunities for in-fill development have been exploited. Many of them have indeed provided suitable accommodation but sometimes without really adequate provision for parking especially where the in-fill has taken place within or close to the Conservation Area. When the in-fill development is used as rental accommodation with multiple occupancy the parking issue becomes even more significant. As a result, several roads in Wheatley (e.g. Farm Close Road, High Street, Mulberry Drive) together with their associated pavements are regularly overwhelmed by parked cars and vans, this unintended consequence of some of the in-fill development detracts from the character of the village. Policy H4 is designed not to necessarily present a barrier to in-fill development but rather to ensure that there is no inappropriate implementation especially when the WNPR has provided more appropriate means of providing housing through the enhancement proposals. The Self-Build Register [55] indicates that there is little demand for self-build dwellings, nevertheless self-build development can be supported where the development is in compliance with the WNPR.

### **POLICY H4: IN-FILL AND SELF-BUILD DWELLINGS**

In-fill and self-build development, which reflects the scale and character of the village, will be supported within the built-up area of Wheatley where it accords with the policies of this Plan, the Wheatley Design Guidance and Codes and the wider development plan.

Proposals for residential development outside of the built-up area of Wheatley will only be supported if they are appropriate for their location in the countryside in general or the Green Belt in particular or are otherwise allocated for development in the neighbourhood plan itself, or other development plan policies.

## Transport and movement

8.12 In Section 4 of the WNPR the issue and the causes of parking problems in Wheatley were described (see paras 4.19, 4.22 & 4.25). Parking standards [39] for new residential developments recognise the use of ‘tandem’ parking but fail to recognise the reality that both spaces are rarely used to the extent that adjacent street parking becomes the norm. Given this, and in order to guard against overspill onto the existing busy and constrained road infrastructure WNPR will support only the limited use of tandem car parking in calculating the level of parking provision for residential development.

### **POLICY P1: PARKING PROVISION**

New development proposals should provide off road parking to meet the County Council’s car parking standards.

The detailed configuration of car parking provision should deliver innovative and attractive arrangements which complement the character of the neighbourhood area. Parking arrangements which avoid the following matters will be particularly supported:-

- 1) the extensive use of tandem parking;
- 2) the need for large expanses of driveway;
- 3) the loss of vegetation along the highway, and
- 4) discourage informal parking on grass verges and pavements in the immediate locality

8.13 Traffic congestion within Wheatley causes major inconvenience to road users, cyclists and pedestrians, and creates an unpleasant environment, particularly within the village centre. Exhaust fumes also contribute to air pollution. Presently, Air Quality is measured only at the High Street in Wheatley.

8.14 The WNPR seeks to minimise the impact of existing and additional congestion on the road network, particularly the village centre. Any increase in traffic volumes is a very strong concern and has influenced the housing site selections. Proposals should consider carefully and as a high priority the traffic and air quality impacts of their proposals and show that they will not lead to significant impacts in air quality (i.e. greater than levels shown in Figure 4.5) and unacceptable traffic.

### **POLICY T1: IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE ROAD NETWORK**

The provision of new or improved walking or cycling routes, improvements to public transport and the incorporation of electric car charging points, will be supported.

8.15 To help to improve Wheatley’s transport issues over the longer term the WNP Committee has listened to the views of many residents in Wheatley. These views have been

collated and listed below to aid the Wheatley Parish Council develop schemes to manage and mitigate traffic flow through the village of Wheatley:-

- a) To improve cycling routes (access, quality and safety) across and beyond the WNPR area
- b) To promote information on existing cycle routes and facilities, and to explore the potential for new sustainable transport initiatives
- c) To promote information on existing walking routes, especially those used for ‘health walks’ and to improve alternative walking routes along parallel secondary routes
- d) To increase the accessibility of the village to pedestrians, including reviewing opportunities to increase the one-way system and through short-term initiatives (e.g. temporary street closures for weekly and/or seasonal markets)
- e) To support the introduction of electric cars and buses and low-emission vehicles (e.g. through the provision of charging points for electric cars)
- f) To explore the feasibility of a low-emission zone in the village centre
- g) To ensure that schools and educational establishments work with SODC to seek ways to improve the safety and well-being of their students in terms of walking and cycling
- h) To introduce 20mph zones on roads adjacent to the village centre
- i) To ensure that all major village businesses, employers and institutions, including schools and educational establishments, complete a travel plan that identifies how they are minimising congestion on the roads
- j) To deliver public transport improvements in Wheatley, including the running of buses with enhanced energy efficiency and electrification, reviewing the location of existing bus stops, and to provide real-time information
- k) To engage with the highway authorities to re-direct strategic traffic, where appropriate, away from Wheatley village centre
- l) To install sufficient signage to control and reduce the passage of HGVs through the village by restricting weights over the flyover and Wheatley Bridge. Restrictions to be implemented in the village centre, Ladder Hill and Littleworth Road, with access hour restrictions and SatNav and strategic route advisory management
- m) To remain open to new forms of traffic infrastructure, such as roundabouts, that may aid the safe flow of traffic
- n) To address road safety along a number of routes perceived as particularly dangerous
- o) To encourage a review of car parking throughout the village and to remain open to implementing Controlled Traffic Zones as appropriate
- p) To encourage the development of additional car parking spaces, including the provision of ‘load and go’ bays (where possible) in the village centre for short-term car parking
- q) To continue to fund the bus services through S106 funding [41]

8.16 The WNP Committee has made a formal request to WPC to set up an appropriate committee to liaise and seek to work with OCC (subject to appropriate funding) to resolve as many of these issues as possible.

8.17 During the preparation of the WNP there have been two developments contiguous with the roundabout at Park Hill. Morland House surgery has expanded its dispensary services and a 65-bed care home has been constructed on the former site of three substantial detached properties. Both of these developments will increase the traffic at the roundabout. Measures to discourage *ad hoc* parking on grass verges and pavements in proximity to the roundabout should be instigated together with complementary measures to prevent migration

of this unwelcome parking to neighbouring locations on London Road, Morland Close, St Mary's Close and The Glebe

### **Social and Community Infrastructure**

8.18 Redevelopment of the access, pavements and parking at Wheatley Primary School (WHE27) would alleviate the current traffic congestion and parking issues associated with collection and transport of pupils which need to be addressed if pupil numbers increase.

8.19 Constraints on land availability in Wheatley reduce opportunities to deliver new community facilities. Existing facilities, notably the Merry Bells and the Wheatley Scout Movement premises together with new refurbishments at St Mary's Church and the URC Chapel provide important community services. The schools too now offer larger facilities for bigger events. Establishing a 'sustainability hub' which brings together ideas and organisations related to low-carbon living should be considered. These facilities are important Community Assets and are listed as follows:-

- a. Merry Bells
- b. Wheatley Churches
- c. Wheatley Scout Movement building
- d. Public Library
- e. Wheatley Archive
- f. Educational Establishments
- g. Pubs and restaurants
- h. Howe Trust Land

8.20 Policy SCI1 provides a context within which the Plan seeks to safeguard these important community facilities. It includes three circumstances where the loss of a community facility might be supported. Appropriate, detailed and robust evidence will be required to satisfy the above criteria. South Oxfordshire District Council will require the independent assessment of this evidence.'

8.21 Community facilities wishing to apply for renewal utilising S106 [40] or CIL [41] funds should register with Wheatley Parish Council.

#### **POLICY SCI1: SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Proposals that result in the loss of an essential community facility or service described in paragraph 8.15, or of any other established community use, through change of use or redevelopment, will not be supported unless:

- a. it would lead to the significant improvement of an existing facility or the replacement of an existing facility equally convenient to the local community it serves and with equivalent or improved facilities;
- b. it has been determined that the community facility is no longer needed;
- c. in the case of commercial services, it is not economically viable



## **POLICY SCI2: IMPROVEMENT TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Proposals to improve any of the community facilities described in paragraph 8.15, or of any other established community use by way of an extension or partial redevelopment of buildings and land will be supported. Proposals that would result in the provision of additional community facilities or services within settlements will be supported where such proposals are in accordance with other development plan policies and do not generate any unacceptable amenity, environmental or traffic impacts.

### **Burial provision**

8.22 St Mary's CE Church has the only serviceable burial ground in Wheatley. The vicar has already advised the Wheatley Parish Council that with effect from the first half of 2019 the burial ground has been closed. It is therefore urgent that an alternative location is found preferably within the curtilage of the villages of Wheatley and Holton. New burial space will improve overall neighbourhood satisfaction, principally for those who have been residing in the village for many years and feel an emotional attachment to the area.

## **POLICY B1: BURIAL PROVISION**

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

### **Retail and village centre**

8.23 Wheatley has a strong mix of independent traders serving the local rural district. In keeping with national trends in recent years, the village has lost a number of its pubs and at present has only two restaurants. It is important that the village's vitality and viability is maintained and where possible improved. It is also important that Wheatley village centre remains at the heart of the community as a destination not just for shopping, but also as a place where current and future residents want to work, socialise and live. Policy VCE1 sets the context for new developments to achieve this important objective. It has been designed to reflect the importance of a dynamic and multi-use village centre. Proposals for non-retail uses should demonstrate how they would not detract from the overall retail attractiveness of the village centre.

## **POLICY VCE1: WHEATLEY VILLAGE CENTRE**

Proposals for new housing, retail, leisure and office developments in or adjacent to the village centre and which would maintain and where practicable improve its overall vitality and viability will be supported.

## **Employment**

8.24 Wheatley provides some important opportunities for local employment which need to be retained and enhanced. In particular, the needs of small and medium-sized businesses in the business, professional, creative industries and information technology sectors must be supported, as well as more traditional industries and arts and crafts.

8.25 Pressures on land due to additional housing requirements focus the strategy employed to be on intensification (including higher density) and partial redistribution and/or change of use of land.

8.26 Industrial and office activity will be supported towards the eastern end of the village at the industrial estate. Where possible, opportunities for new office-based employment within the village can also be considered.

### **POLICY E1: SUPPORTING WHEATLEY'S ECONOMY**

The development of new businesses and the expansion and/or reconfiguration of existing businesses within the built-up area of Wheatley will be supported where they do not generate any unacceptable amenity, environmental or traffic impacts.

## **Environment**

### **Preservation of the Landscape**

8.27 The Parish Councils of Wheatley and Holton will seek to encourage development proposals to take full account of the important views and landscapes (see Figure 8.5) that are in the district. The following development considerations will be supported:-

- a. Redevelopment of a site that affords the opportunity to improve the visual aspect of the site and its surroundings
- b. Enhancement of the approaches to any site under development
- c. Enhancement of the views to, from and within the site and its surroundings
- d. Preservation of tree avenues (especially those of significant age and historic nature)
- e. Creation within the site of a built form that has a scale and massing that reflects the local context
- f. Creation of a network of secondary spaces that responds to the built form around them and respects the location of mature trees, ecological features and ancient monuments
- g. Enhancement of the biodiversity and landscape setting of any site under development
- h. Improvement of the quality of the built environment/public realm especially with respect to the needs of young families and the elderly



Shotover .....



..... and its residents



Wheatley.....



..... and its residents



Brill from OBU



Holton House from OBU



Memorial garden



Homes Fit for Heroes

Figure 8.5 Scenes from around Wheatley

## Preservation of the Environment

8.28 The parish councils of Wheatley and Holton will seek to preserve and enhance the environment, habitat and biodiversity of the area. In addition, Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be protected (e.g. Littleworth Brick pit).

### **POLICY EN1: BIODIVERSITY**

Proposals that would protect or enhance urban and rural biodiversity will be supported. Proposals which would result in net gains in biodiversity, through the creation of new habitats, the enhancement of existing sites, and the development and implementation of ecological management plans will be supported.

8.29 The geology of the Wheatley area is varied; the strata in the Littleworth geological SSSI include iron sands, other sands, fossilised limestone and clay. In turn, this has resulted in a great diversity of local habitats and consequent biodiversity.

8.30 The Howe Trust Land (WHE10) was surveyed by an ecological consultant in 2009 [43] and by the WNP Committee in 2017 [31]. This report indicated a range of wooded and grassland areas, supporting a good biodiversity. It found 22 bird species, 8 butterfly species, 2 reptile species and 180 species of plant, including the common spotted orchid. Since then, a management programme has been implemented to encourage a greater biodiversity, through extensive tree planting and better grassland management.

8.31 The whole Oxford Brookes University Site (WHE25 and the adjacent area not in the WNPR designated area) was surveyed for tree diversity in 2017 [31]. In the brownfield section of the site alone, there were about 84 trees with tree preservation orders, including ancient oaks. Over the whole site 155 trees were noted, many with tree preservation orders. The most common were Oak and Ash. There were rare species in the brownfield part of the site, including Ginkgo biloba (the maidenhair tree) and Davidia involucrate (the ghost tree). Many invertebrates have been recorded over many years in the grassland areas. Great Crested Newts have been recorded in the pond area by a survey team from Pond Action [44].

8.32 Westfield, an area of ancient grassland within the WNPR area and the Shotover Target Conservation Area [42] has classic ridge and furrow, with biodiversity changing between ridge and furrow. It also has a stream from the springs that come out of Shotover Hill.

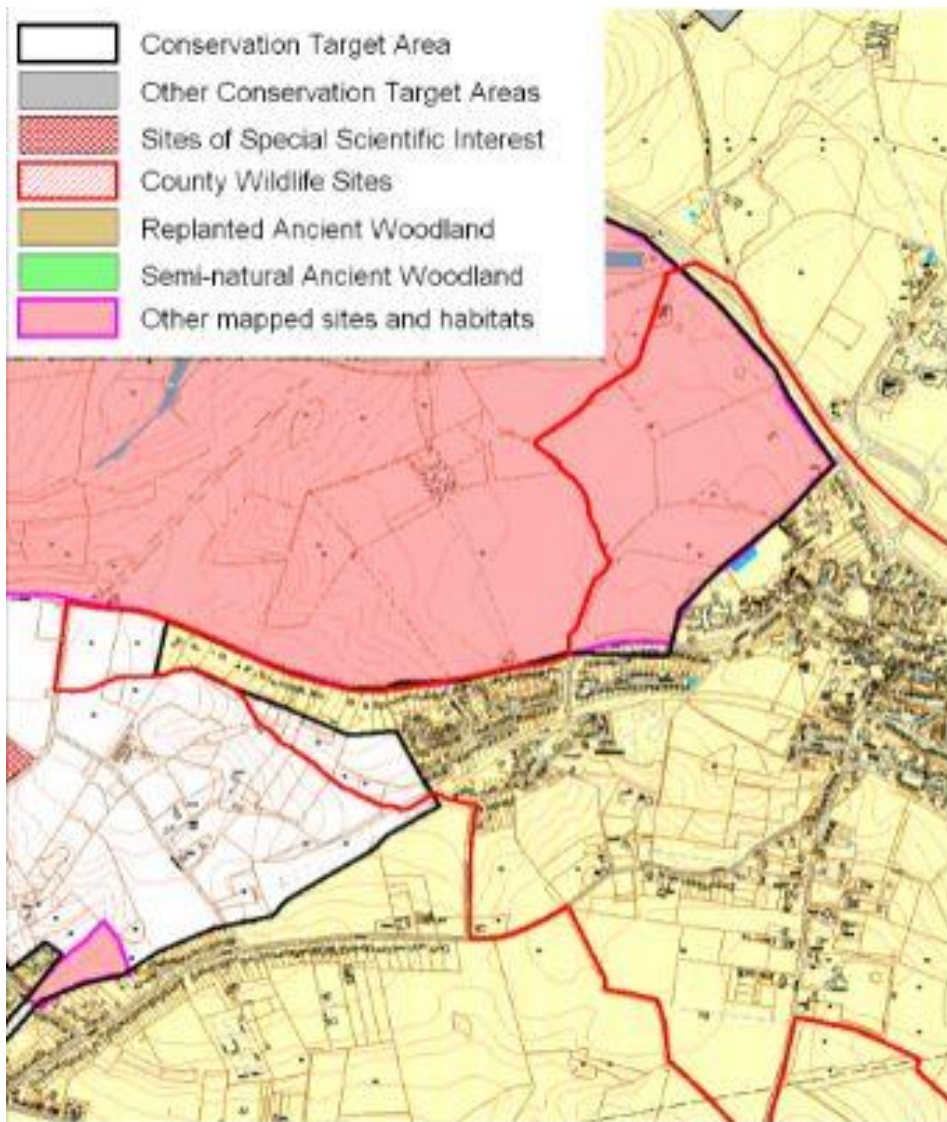


Figure 8.6 Shotover Target Conservation Area [42].  
The boundary line of the WNPR designated area is shown in red

8.33 Shotover is a significant wildlife area adjacent to the eastern boundary of the WNP area, and has been monitored over many years by Shotover Wildlife; it contains woodland SSSI, with ancient woodland species of anemone and English bluebell. Together with extensive areas of grassland and heathland, there is a great diversity of wildlife, including all three woodpecker species and three species of lizard. The mammals living on Shotover are often seen in Wheatley.

8.34 The river Thames borders the eastern side of WNP; it is a well-known fishing site, and the banks support wetland plants, such as bulrush. It frequently floods adjacent fields. There are many other wildlife habitats surrounding Wheatley village that have not been surveyed to date, such as the areas south of the village envelope. Within the village, there have been many reports of slowworms and of a range of bird species in gardens. The red kite is common in the skies above Wheatley.

8.35 Wheatley is a Larger Village inset within the Green Belt. It is important that new developments make and maintain provision for green space within the site. Contributions and arrangements will be sought for management of spaces, expected to be carried out by SODC or Wheatley Parish Council. Green infrastructure should be considered in conjunction with playing pitches and the facilities to support them.

### **Preservation of Historic Environment**

8.36 The Parish Councils of Wheatley and Holton will seek to preserve the designated historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and the conservation area.

#### **POLICY HE1: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

The parish's designated historic assets and their settings, both above and below ground including listed buildings and the conservation area as listed in Appendix 1 of the Plan 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 into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF [33]

### **Design quality and sustainability**

8.37 The community welcomes the development of innovative high-quality sustainable homes that can act as exemplars for other villages and towns, and for the country as a whole.

8.38 In 2014 the UK government launched a Community Energy Strategy making it easier for the owners of buildings to install renewable energy. Proposals in Wheatley and Holton that promote community energy projects taking advantage of initiatives within the government's Community Energy Strategy including the Rural and Urban Community Energy Funds will be supported.

8.39 The Wheatley and Holton communities will also take advantage of Oxfordshire's pioneering role in the community energy field. The expertise of the organization Low Carbon Hub, a promoter of community energy initiatives working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council, will be utilised, exploring the possibility of carrying out a Wheatley schools' photovoltaic project financed through the issue of community shares.

#### **POLICY DQS1: INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS**

Individual and community renewable energy projects will be supported, provided they have regard to good quality existing design guidance provided by the South Oxfordshire Design Guide [35] and the Chilterns Building Design Guide [36] and are appropriately located.

## 9. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: Oxford Brookes Campus

9.1 The approach taken in this chapter is not an allocation for development, rather it aims to communicate the aspirations of the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Committee in consultation with the local people in the villages of Wheatley and Holton.

9.2 The Oxford Brookes Campus is a brownfield site, approximately 12.1HA (as shown in Figure 9.1). This Plan comments only on that part of the wider Campus site within the designated neighbourhood area. The Campus is a strategic housing allocation in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Policy STRAT14). That policy proposes the development of approximately 500 houses on the site. It includes a comprehensive range of criteria and development principles to shape the development of the site. Planning permission has been granted for the development of the site and a current planning application (P22/S3973/0) is being considered by South Oxfordshire District Council.

9.3 Oxford Brookes University has vacated the Wheatley Campus site and sold it to Crest Nicholson on 23 March, 2023. The site is physically separated from the retail, community, and educational facilities in Wheatley by the A40. Policy SPOBU sets out an approach which complements that set out in Policy STRAT14 of the adopted Local Plan.

9.4 The Campus includes sports and recreational facilities. Some of these facilities are outside the neighbourhood area (to the west of the built development on the site). Whilst they are primarily for university use, they have represented valuable amenities for local people. The future of these facilities should be addressed in the masterplan for the redevelopment of the site.

9.5 A high quality well integrated development of the OBU site has the potential to enhance the overall quality of the neighbourhood area by removing some of the worst architectural features on the site (such as the Tower Block, see Figure 9.2). New or improved access arrangements may permit access for buses from the site through the Wheatley Park Academy (WPA) site to the Holton flyover and thereby create opportunities to implement a new routing for the bus service in Wheatley that could alleviate traffic issues in Wheatley and perhaps, more importantly, also provide an easier and safer location for WPA pupils to access the buses rather than having to negotiate the Holton flyover to reach the bus stops at Park Hill.

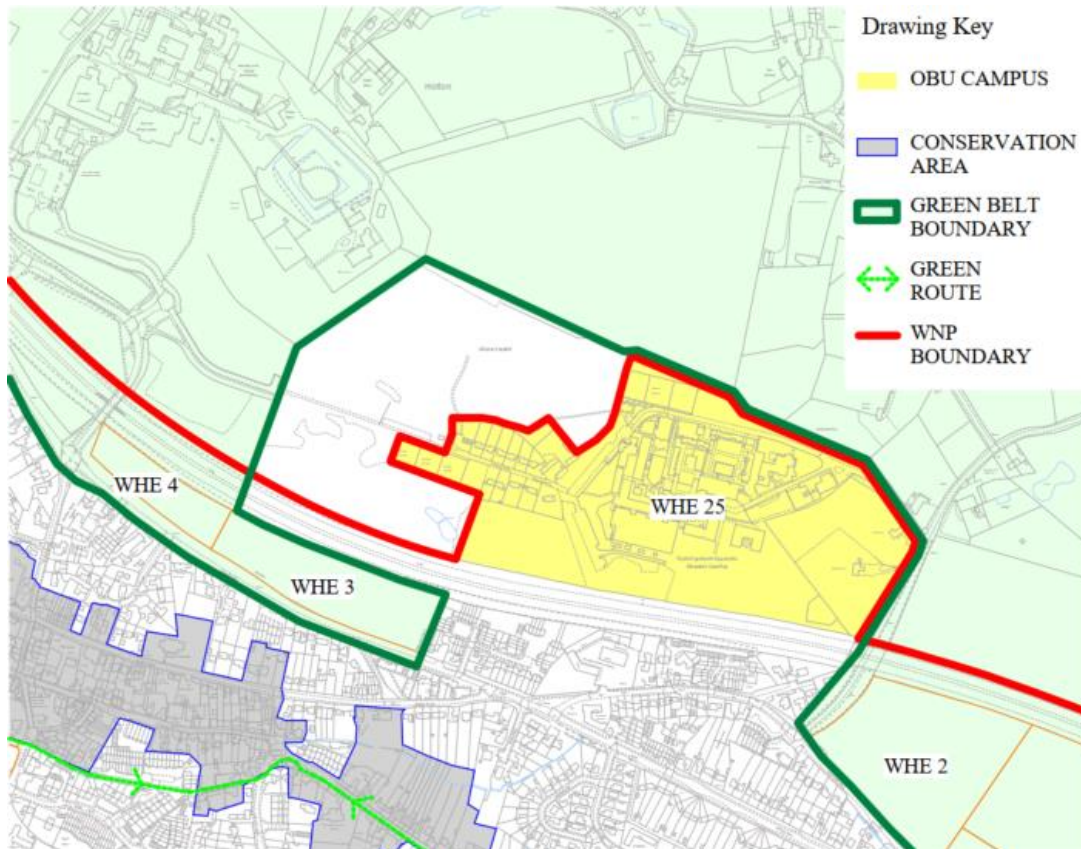


Figure 9.1 Location of the OBU site. WHE25 [25]

### POLICY SPOBU – WHE25

Proposals for the comprehensive redevelopment for residential purposes of the Wheatley Campus site as shown on Fig 9.1 will be supported where they conform with the requirements of Policy STRAT14 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and have regard to the following development principles:-

- the development is underpinned by a masterplan addressing infrastructure, access, landscaping, and recreation/open space issues;
- the layout, design and height of the new buildings should minimise their impact on the surrounding countryside;
- the development should incorporate robust measures to alleviate traffic noise from the A40 dual carriageway that lies along the site's southern boundary
- the development should incorporate high quality public realm and open space; and
- the development should address opportunities to incorporate safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycling access to and from Wheatley





Figure 9.2 The OBU tower



Figure 9.3 Looking east from Wheatley  
towards the Chiltern Ridge

## 10. Amending the Green Belt Boundary

10.1 Neighbourhood Plans are now able to make detailed amendments to the Green Belt boundaries where a need for changes has been established through strategic policies the NPPF [33] states that:-

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans”.

10.2 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan, LP2035, has now been adopted thereby permitting changes to Green Belt boundaries to be made by an adopted WNPR. The inset boundary at Wheatley is drawn tightly around the built edge of development, and as such there are limited opportunities to redevelop existing land within the inset boundary. The removal of land from the Green Belt would enable new development to take place in Wheatley.

10.3 The Green Belt Study, which forms part of the evidence base for LP2035, found that the land immediately adjacent to the eastern built-up edge of Wheatley has few essential characteristics of the Green Belt.

10.4 The mechanism to allow WNPR to make detailed amendments to the Green Belt is provided in Policy STRAT6 in LP2035, which identifies that:-

“3. Detailed amendments to the Green Belt made by the Wheatley Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in compliance with requirements of the NPPF and the need identified within the Local Plan.”

10.5 Through working with the Local Planning Authority, the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Committee have established that exceptional circumstances exist that permit the release of land from the Green Belt in Wheatley.

10.6 The exceptional circumstances for the release of land from the Green Belt at Wheatley are:-

- a. Wheatley is a Larger Village, which is an appropriate location for accommodating additional development
- b. There are limited alternatives for accommodating additional development at Wheatley other than through Green Belt release
- c. To meet bespoke housing needs of Wheatley
- d. To contribute towards offsetting the loss of employment at the OBU site
- e. To enable the relocation of existing employment uses to more suitable locations in Wheatley, thus creating better facilities and improving the interaction between

different land uses. This will also enable vacated employment sites to be developed for housing.

- f. To enable development to take place to provide for a mix of uses to the benefit of existing and future residents
- g. To make efficient use of land that has few essential characteristics of the Green Belt

### **POLICY GBBA1: Green Belt Boundary Amendments**

Detailed amendments to the Green Belt boundary are made to accommodate allocations at WHE15, WHE16 and WHE17. The boundary of the amended Green Belt is identified on Figure 10.3.

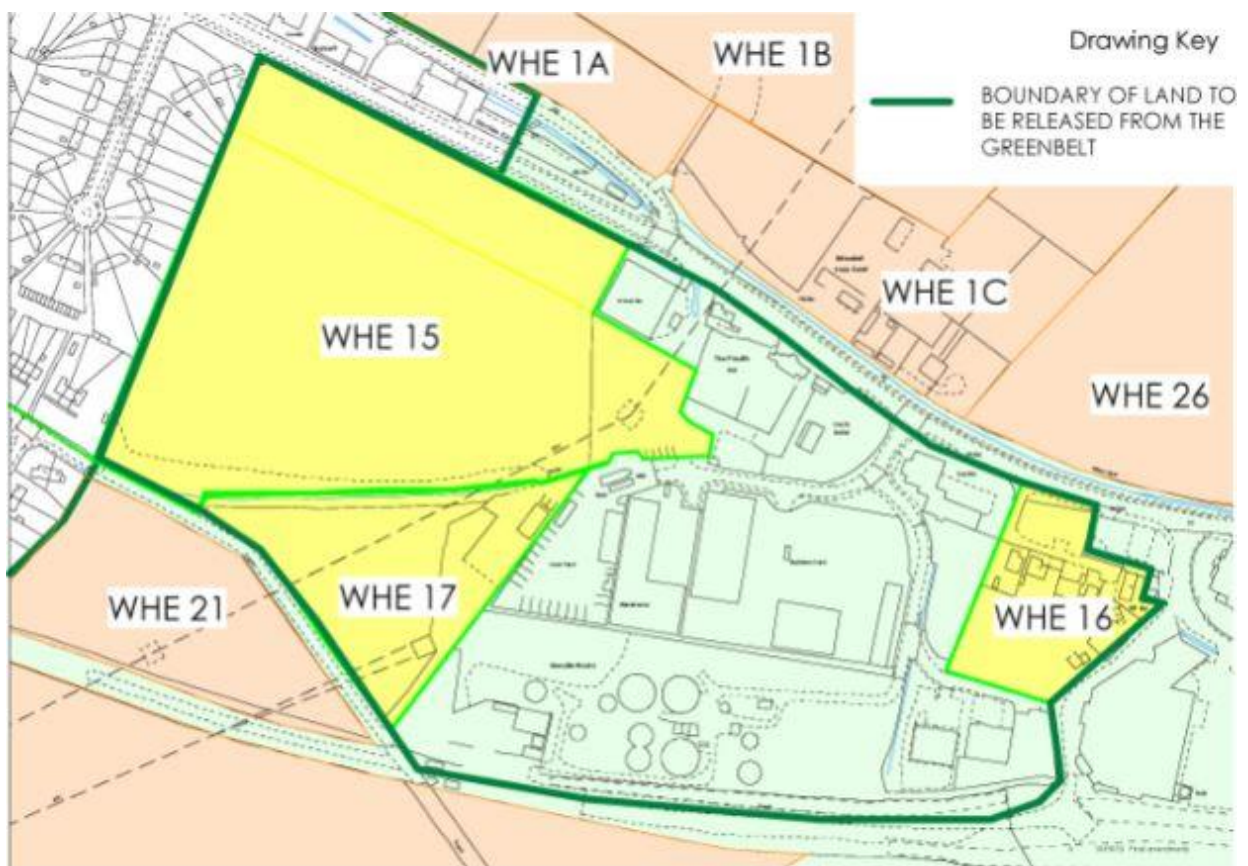


Figure 10.3 Amendment to Green Belt Boundary

## **11. Wheatley Village Enhancement**

11.1 With the adoption of the Local Plan 2035 [48] that establishes the need for the release of Green Belt land in Wheatley and together with the provisions set out in GBBA1 the concerns raised by the Examiner (see Figure 2.2) have now been addressed thereby allowing the WNPR to support the coordinated development of WHE15, WHE16, WHE17 and WHE22. Such a Village Enhancement Plan will provide housing to meet bespoke local needs

and at the same time improve connectivity through the village, rationalise light industry and provide opportunities for employment at the expense of only a small loss of Green Belt.

11.2 In considering potential land use in Wheatley and Holton the initial selection process was based on suitability, availability and achievability for development followed by a more rigorous process based on key strategy issues. The site selection process is described in detail in Appendix 2 and summarised in the spreadsheets contained therein. WHE15, WHE16, WHE17 and WHE22 emerged as the clear preferred candidates to provide the housing, employment and improved connectivity throughout the village.

11.3 Each of the four preferred candidate sites was given a development appraisal to establish the viability of developing these sites as proposed. The appraisal is described in Appendix 4. The findings from the appraisals indicated that the four sites were viable.

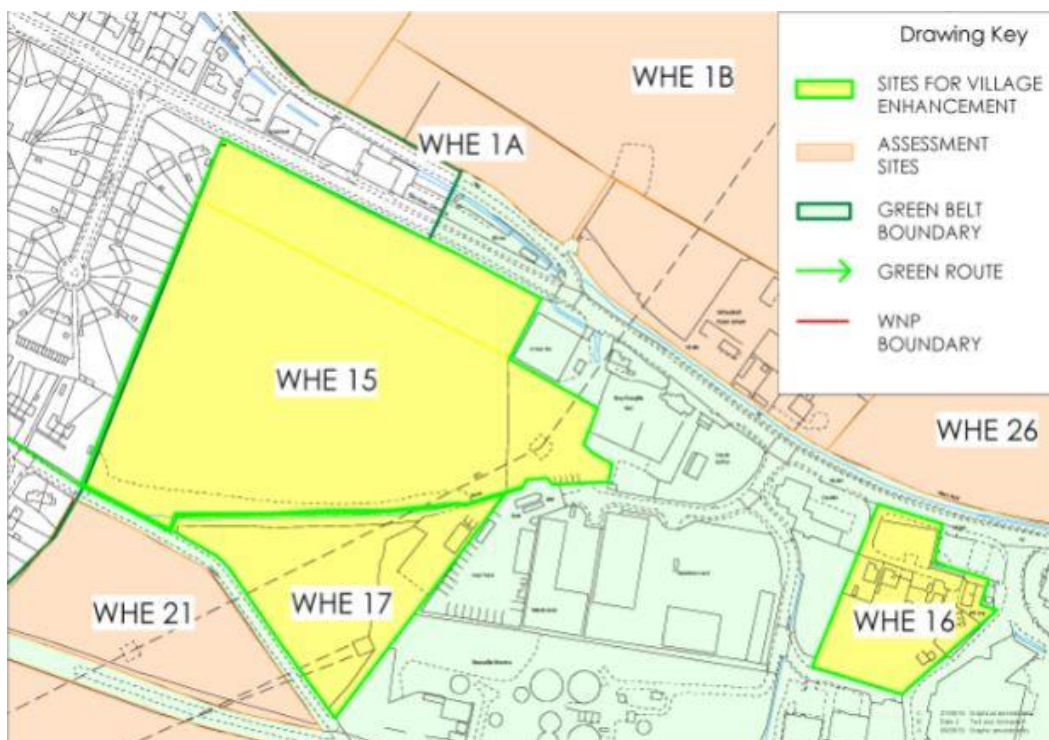


Figure 11.1 Location of WHE15, 16 and 17 and eastern part of the green route [25]

11.4 Each of these sites is identified in Figures 11.1 and 11.2 showing their locations with respect to each other and the green route. They will now be described further together with a specific site policy. The number of houses that would eventually be built on the sites has been shaped by a housing needs assessment (see Appendix 3).



Figure 11.2 Location of WHE22 and western part of green route

## 12. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review: Policy for Village Enhancement Sites

### WHE16, The Bungalows' Site

12.1 Wheatley has experienced substantial expansion since the early 1960's which has resulted in the creation of a site for light industry towards the eastern parish boundary. The idea for this site was to accommodate the relocation of badly sited industry in other parts of the village. Development of this light industrial area has had benefits in terms of employment and also in providing a location for the village sewage works. Planning however has not been well coordinated to the extent that a small community of 6 bungalows (#'s 148 – 158 London Road (even numbers)) has become isolated, not only within this area but also disconnected from the main village, serviced only by an unadopted road and located close to the sewage works. These bungalows lie within WHE16 (Figure 12.1), a parcel of land that is 0.88HA and located almost completely within the light industrial area. At the front and rear of the bungalows lie two portions of land (in total 0.35HA) which would be suitable for green space

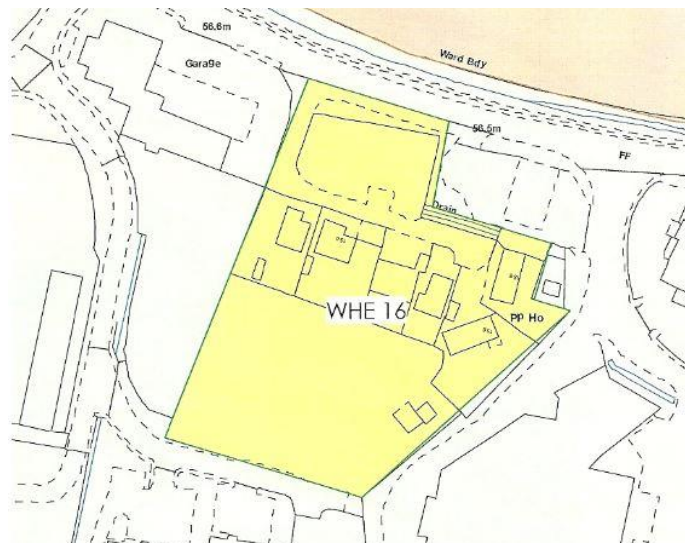


Figure 12.1 WHE16 [25]

improvement and a small development. The land to the rear of the bungalows is used daily for *ad hoc* parking for 30+ cars by the local businesses and any change of use for this land would have to make provision for this car parking. All the car parking spaces on the access road to the industrial estate are used regularly and this road and connecting roads cannot accommodate any more parking. This will occupy around 0.07 hectares of the overall site. It would be desirable to reconcile the effects of historical planning decisions that would now appear to be inappropriate and improve the character of WHE16 together with providing connectivity to the rest of the village.

12.2 The portion of land lying at the front of the bungalows comprises an unadopted access road in poor condition, unmaintained scrubland and a drainage ditch. As such it would prove ideal to develop for improved access to the existing site with suitable visibility splays to the London Road, accommodate a bus stop lying to the east of the site and also provide a much needed, improved green space to enhance the frontage of the bungalows.

12.3 The land lying to the rear of the bungalows can provide two types of land use; residential and car parking. Access to the land lying adjacent to the rear of the bungalows can be provided via the space between two of the existing bungalows (#s150 and 152) thereby permitting development, to the south, for up to 10 two-storey dwellings (corresponding to approximately 45 houses/HA). The whole Bungalows' site is tightly constrained on three sides with light industry and employment activities. The development would need careful design and planning to include appropriate separation from the bungalows together with green space and tree planting. The land that lies further south and adjacent to the industrial estate access road can be used to provide a two-storey car parking facility to satisfy the local need.

#### **POLICY SPES1: WHE16**

Development proposals on land at the Bungalows Site (as shown on Figure 12.1) will be supported provided:-

- a. the housing delivered responds positively with the provisions of Policy H3 of the Plan;
- b. the public realm within the site is enhanced through design and landscape measures, public open space and/or financial contributions, subject to viability;
- c. the development has no unacceptable impact on the surrounding environment and where possible enhances the landscape and scenic beauty;
- d. appropriate access is incorporated from the London Road to ensure that the development is serviced adequately;
- e. the development does not have unacceptable impacts on the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight
- f. the development provides appropriate car parking to meet the County Council's standards; and
- g. the delivery of ancillary car parking for adjacent businesses.

## **WHE22, The Littleworth Industrial Area**

12.4 This section of the report provides a policy context for the potential redevelopment of the Littleworth Business Centre. It reflects the condition of the site and its range of car repair and related uses. It has been designed to bring forward a local interpretation of Policy EMP3: Retention of Employment Land of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48]. This policy provides an opportunity for redundant land and buildings formerly in commercial use to be used for residential purposes where the uses are no longer viable and where the sites concerned have been marketed for a specific period of time.

12.5 The Littleworth Business Centre is a brownfield site (Figure 12.2) located in the village of Littleworth which lies to the west of Wheatley linked by a narrow band of housing along the Littleworth Road. The road itself is winding and has a sharp bend on a bridge across the disused railway line prior to entering the village from Wheatley. The road continues through the village and is awkward with tight bends. Wheatley Primary School is located along the road between Wheatley and Littleworth. The site comprises a small industrial/commercial area based on several buildings standing on plots with multiple ownerships. Many of the buildings are over 50 years old and are in need of major refurbishment and regeneration. The front of the site is used for parking, in a rather uncontrolled manner, by the business employees and also by the neighbouring residents most of whom have no access to a garage or alternative off-street parking. The rear of the site rises fairly steeply through well vegetated land up to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The location and condition of this brownfield site make it ideal for redevelopment for housing but not however at the expense of the loss of employment that such redevelopment would entail. The businesses are willing to relocate within Wheatley, subject to satisfactory commercial terms, thereby maintaining jobs and even offering the scope of growth and expansion on a more suitable location.

12.6 In any redevelopment of this site the proposal must comply with the existing South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 [48] which has a policy that protects existing employment land, Policy EMP3: Retention of Employment Land. On this basis Policy SPES2 has been designed so that any redevelopment can only proceed in the event that the site is no longer economically viable.

12.7 A change of land use from industrial to residential would end the need for many commercial vehicles to negotiate the narrow roads in Littleworth although more residents' cars would have to be accommodated. With good access to the Primary School, smaller, low cost dwellings appear appropriate, some of which could be terraced to reflect those on the adjoining main road and also target first time buyers particularly those with young families



Figure 12.2 Development of WHE22 restricted to be respect Green Belt and SSSI [25]

12.8 As part of a change of land use there would have to be recognition that at present the frontage of the site is regularly used, on an ad hoc basis, by residents of the adjacent terraced houses for parking. The constrained nature of the roads in Littleworth makes it imperative that provision is made to regularise and accommodate this need for parking to avoid on-street parking. The indicative layout shown in Figure 12.2 is solely for illustrative purposes and not intended to prejudice any future planning applications. Policy SPES2 sets out a policy arrangement for the potential redevelopment of the site. As indicated on figure 12.4 the eastern part of the site is within the Green Belt. As such it should not be incorporated into the wider redevelopment proposals. The policy requires a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. Any partial redevelopment for residential purposes would be likely to generate unacceptable amenity and access arrangements for the occupiers of new dwellings on the site. Criterion b. of the policy comments about the height of the new houses. In general terms they should be two storeys in height to respect the height of the other houses in the immediate locality. Nevertheless, a degree of flexibility may be appropriate where such an approach would assist in the delivery of a high-quality development. This could include two storey houses with accommodation in the roof space or three storey houses.



## **POLICY SPES2: WHE22**

The comprehensive redevelopment of the Littleworth Road Industrial Estate for residential purposes will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer economically viable and has been marketed at a reasonable price for that or any other suitable employment or service trade uses.

Within this context development proposals should respond positively to the following design criteria.

- a. The delivery of approximately 25 homes in an attractive and imaginative way which complements the public realm of the surrounding residential areas.
- b. The height of the dwellings should reflect the contours of the site and the design and height of the residential properties in the surrounding area. The development should be designed to reflect the natural contours of the site.
- c. Existing access retained and used as the main feeder road to the proposed dwellings.
- d. The layout of the site includes appropriate and safe access from Littleworth Road for motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.
- e. Retain an area adjoining the road as an open green space/village green and provide a footpath that links with the main footpath to Coopers Close.
- f. Retain an area of approximately 0.05HA adjoining the road as provision for resident parking for use by designated terrace houses and flats neighbouring the development on north side of Littleworth Road.
- g. The development of the site should be arranged so that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the Littleworth Brick Pit SSSI.
- h. Any development in the eastern part of the site within the Green Belt must comply with national and local Green Belt policy’.

## **WHE15 Miss Tombs’ Field**

12.9 This site (Figure 12.3) lies at the eastern end of the village between the settlement boundary and the large-scale industrial buildings. It consists of a single field of irregular shape and is crossed by two power lines. In the 1960s the land use was described as “pastureland” but since then the field has reverted to rough grassland with shrubs and young trees. Although the field is not a priority habitat site there is some evidence of the existence of slow-worms and, given the expected natural regeneration that has occurred on the site, any future development will be subject to the biodiversity provisions contained in the Environment Act (2021) [54]. The land is visually important, particularly when approaching the village from the east and is a desirable and much needed, albeit informal, green space within the parish boundary. As part of Parcel 09 in the South Oxfordshire Green Belt Study [49] it was considered for boundary changes. The land was acquired by housebuilder Lagan Homes on 12 September, 2023. Care will have to be taken such that any development does not have an adverse impact either on the houses at the settlement boundary or on the adjacent Green Belt lying to the south.

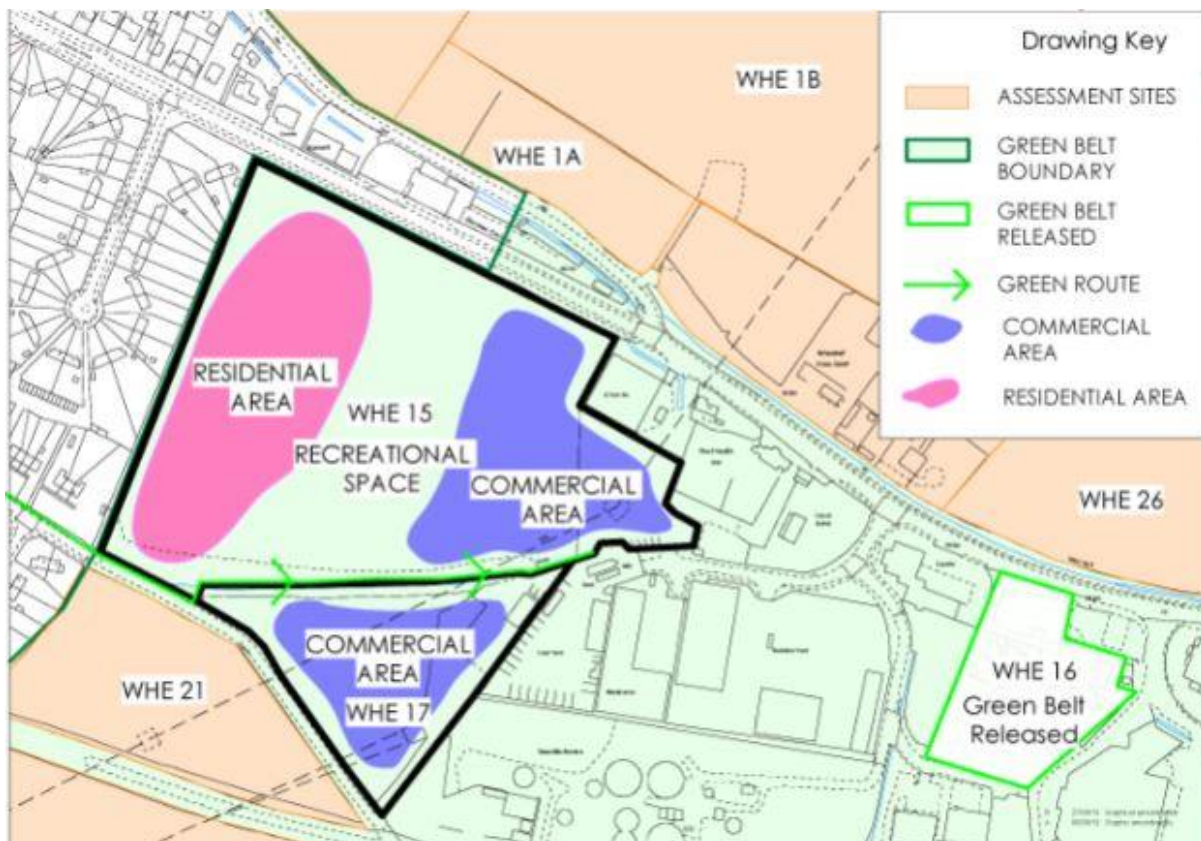


Figure 12.3 WHE15 and WHE17 are shown within the black boundary [25]

12.10 In view of the presence of the power lines and proximity to the Green Belt the site lends itself to mixed development viz:- commercial, residential, and recreational. The indicative layout shown in Figure 12.3 is solely for illustrative purposes and not intended to prejudice any future planning applications.

- a. An area for commercial uses adjacent to the existing power lines would be able to accommodate demand for employment uses in the parish. This could include existing businesses that would wish to be relocated from the Littleworth Industrial Estate (WHE22). In addition, this space could accommodate other local businesses or new ventures. Road access to this part of the site would be through the feeder road that already services the existing industrial area.
- b. An appropriate residential development can be accommodated between the settlement boundary and the newly created commercial space. Vehicular access would be from the London Road to the north with no through vehicular access to Roman Road in the south. The development would be contoured to provide a “soft transition” from the urban development to the recreational space and Green Belt to the south.
- c. A formal recreational space can be provided in the southern portion of this site, between the development and the Green Belt. Figure 4.15 already shows the lack of recreational space within the settlement. This recreational space would also form part of a Green Route for cyclists and pedestrians through the village.

### **POLICY SPES3: WHE15**

Mixed development proposals on land at Mis Tomb's Field (as shown on Figure 12.3) will be supported provided:-

- a. An area of approximately 1.7HA available for appropriate commercial buildings;
- b. an area of approximately 1.7HA available for appropriate residential accommodation for 55 houses, the height of the dwellings should reflect the contours of the site and the design and height of the properties in surrounding area;
- c. the overall development responds positively to the position of existing pylons/power cables, to priority species and delivers a net gain in biodiversity;
- d. the delivery of a wildlife corridor with winding path and planting to eastern and western boundaries of the housing development to ensure gap between the rear gardens of The Avenue, proposed new housing and commercial development;
- e. the delivery of a Green Route access to the primary school;
- f. recreational space of approximately 1.7HA is provided to relate to the adjacent Green Belt together with a games area adjacent to Elton Crescent;
- g. the public realm within the site is enhanced through design and landscape measures, public open space and/or financial contributions, subject to viability;
- h. there is appropriate access only from London Road to ensure that the site is serviced adequately; and
- i. the Green Route is surfaced appropriately for use by pedestrians and cyclists in all weather, it should be designed to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists and incorporate appropriate lighting.

### **WHE17, Mobbs' Land**

12.11 This site (Figure 12.3) lies at the eastern end of the village between the boundary of WHE15 and the large-scale industrial buildings. It consists of a single agricultural field of irregular shape and is crossed by two power lines. The land is owned by A.W. Mobbs (Building Supplies) whose buildings share a common boundary with WHE17. The site is land locked but access can be achieved via the eastern boundary shared with A.W. Mobbs. The owner of the land has made it clear that it will only be made available for commercial development. As part of Parcel 09 in the South Oxfordshire Green Belt Study [49] it was considered for boundary changes. Care would have to be taken that any development did not have an adverse impact on the Green Belt south of WHE17 and on the adjacent sewage works.

#### **POLICY SPES4: WHE17**

Employment development proposals on land at Mobb's Land (as shown on Figure 12.3) will be supported provided that:

- a. the development can be satisfactorily accommodated in the surrounding environment and, where appropriate, enhances the landscape and scenic beauty;
- b. appropriate vehicular access is secured from the adjacent commercial site to the east; and
- c. proposals are designed to ensure that they will not result in significant unacceptable impacts on human health, the natural environment and/or the amenity of the neighbouring uses.

#### **WHE15/16/17, Boundary Issues**

12.12 As can be seen on Figure 12.3, WHE15 and WHE17 each consist of a single agricultural field of irregular shape and crossed by two power lines. In order to facilitate the appropriate development, the land owners may wish to negotiate a rearrangement of the boundaries to achieve regularly shaped plots that are more easily developed. WHE15/16/17 are located near to a sewage works so care must be taken to liaise with Thames Water to consider whether an odour assessment is required.

#### **Green Route Policy**

12.13 Wheatley is a linear village that was built up along the side of the E-W roads that provided a route from London to destinations in the west. As already mentioned in paragraph 4.16, in and around the centre of the village and the conservation area the roads are narrow, uneven and suffer from a lack of pavements in some stretches making them not particularly suitable for push-chairs and the various classes of wheel-chair. There are also some road junctions (eg crossroad at Holloway and the High Street) that present difficulties for those using push-chairs and wheel-chairs. The WNPR would like to promote safe and easy access through the village for the residents of Wheatley and Holton, in particular the young and the elderly, enabling them to access the shops, the primary school and the surrounding recreational areas. Emphasis has already been placed on retaining sports facilities as part of the OBU redevelopment.

12.14 In paragraph 100 of the NPPF [33] it states:-

“Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails”

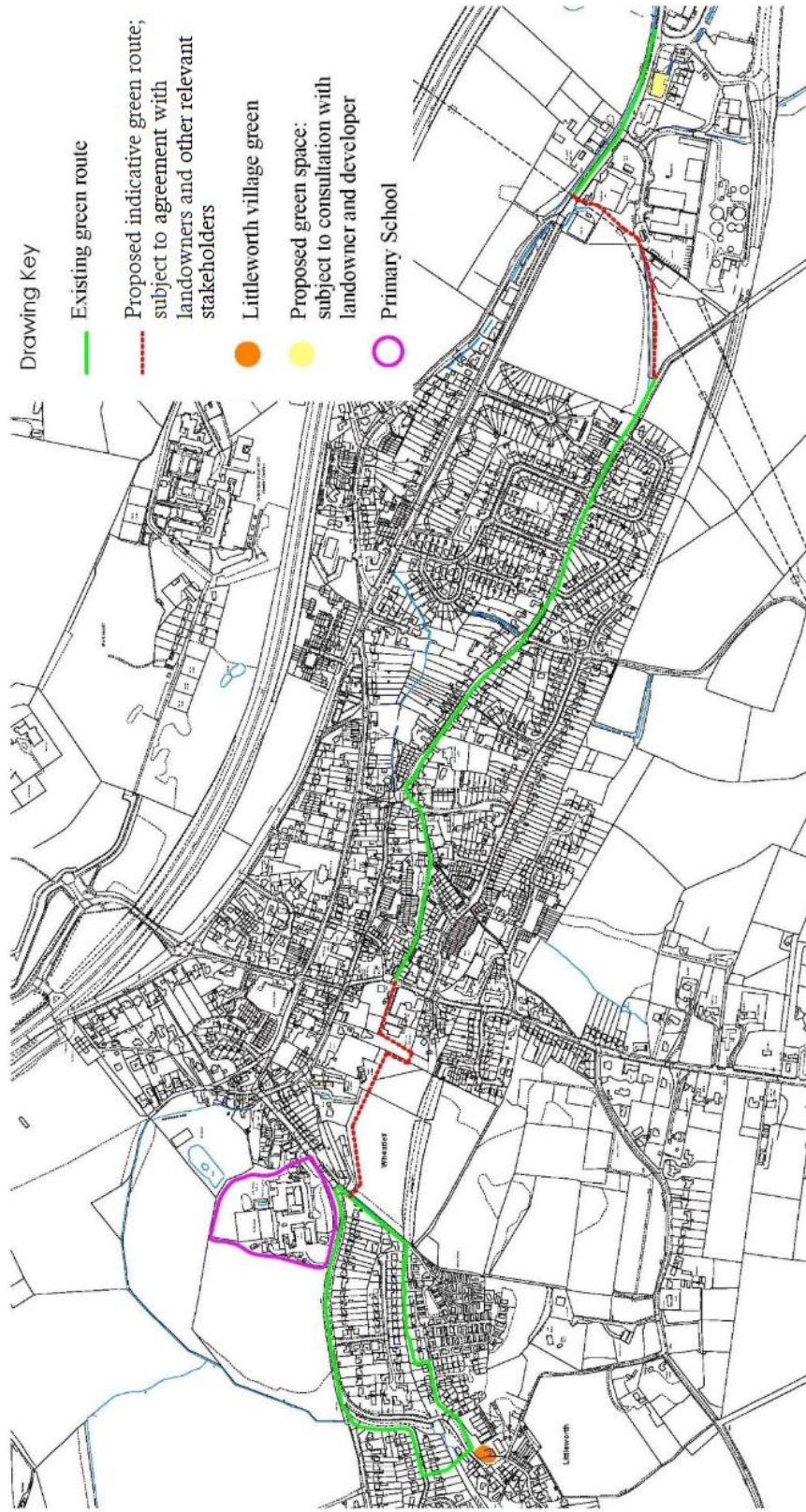


Figure 12.6 Indicative proposal for a Green Route

12.15 The opportunity for a Green Route currently exists in Wheatley for pedestrians and cyclists stretching from Littleworth in the west to the ASDA supermarket in the east that would connect the whole village to retail, Primary school and recreational facilities. There are sections of the proposed indicative Route shown on Figure 12.6 that cross privately owned land. Finalising the route will require agreement with landowners and other relevant stakeholders. The path of travel would need to be upgraded with suitable all-weather surfacing, adequate provisions for width and lighting. As a result, this will support the health and well-being of residents by enhancing access to open space, facilitating improvements in levels of physical activity and enhancing social interaction between new and existing residents.

12.16 Policy SPGR provides effect to this ambition. Its second part recognises that some development proposals offer the potential to deliver elements of a wider Green Route. Such proposals would be supported and the Parish Council will seek to engage with potential developers on a case-by-case basis. The application of this part of the policy will need to take account of the practicability of such an approach on any particular site and any effects on the overall viability of the substantive development proposed.

#### **POLICY SPGR: GREEN ROUTE**

Proposals for the creation of a Green Route stretching from Littleworth in the west to the Asda supermarket in the east will be supported.

Where they are otherwise in accordance with the policies in the development plan in general, and the policies in this Plan in particular, development and safeguarding proposals which would deliver elements for a complete Green Route will be supported.

#### **Realisation**

12.17 The Village Enhancement Plan has been developed by engagement with the community, businesses and SODC. Developing a Neighbourhood Plan has afforded the opportunity to rectify some of the consequences of planning decisions that historically were not as well formulated or regulated as those of today. The opportunity to rationalise the layout of industry in the village and also revitalise the Littleworth (WHE22) and the Bungalows' (WHE15) sites is one that should not be missed. Therefore it should be recognised that release of WHE15 and WHE17 from the Green Belt is a key element undertaken to realise the redevelopment of the Littleworth (WHE22) site and the overall enhancement of Wheatley.

12.18 Fulfilment of the Village Enhancement Plan is dependent on a number of factors. The policies relating to Wheatley and Holton in South Oxfordshire Local Plan LP2035[48] are crucial as is ensuring that subsequent overall development in Wheatley and Holton does not prejudice the ability to deliver Primary and Secondary School Education. It is essential that the Village Enhancement Plan is seen as a mutually cooperative development between all of the selected sites complementing the nature and scope of the development proposed in policy STRAT14 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan LP2035 [48]

12.19 The benefit of the WNPR including the Village Enhancement Plan is summarised in Figure 12.7 which shows the estimate of the number of homes that could be built in Wheatley and Holton as a result of the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan LP2035[48] and First WNP. The actual number of homes that can be built will be limited by the capacity of Primary and Secondary School Education available in Wheatley and Holton.

Site	Type of Development	Homes
Completions and Commitments (as at 1 April 2021)	Housing	175
SODC LP STRAT14	Housing	500 <sup>§</sup>
The Bungalows (WHE16)	Housing	10*
Littleworth (WHE22)	Housing	25*
Miss Tombs' Field (WHE15)	Housing and employment	55*
Mobbs' Land (WHE17)	Employment	0
<b>Total Homes (net increase) 2011 – 2033</b>		<b>765</b>

\*These are estimates, final numbers can only be established following planning application

<sup>§</sup> Outline planning permission

Figure 12.7 Estimate of increase in number of homes

### 13. Delivery and Monitoring

13.1 When completed, the WNPR policies will form part of the development plan for the area and will thus help to determine planning applications. The Wheatley and Holton Parish Councils will monitor the impact of the policies of the WNPR.

13.2 The following items have been identified from the Community Opinion Survey [7] to help guide any spending by Wheatley and Holton Parish Councils of funds resulting from Section 106 Agreement [40] and/or Community Infrastructure Levy [41] payments.

- Transport management
- Parking and appropriate parking management
- Renewal and enhancement of existing community facilities (eg youth centre, Scout premises)
- Provision of public toilets
- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including football fields and tennis courts
- Junior, mini and adult playing pitches
- Children's play areas
- Wheatley village centre action plan priorities
- New and replacement or enhanced green infrastructure including parks and gardens, accessible natural and semi-natural green space, allotments and amenity green space
- Improved green spaces with public access

<b>Monitoring Plan</b>	
Five (5) year review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The WNPR will be reviewed every five (5) years thereafter and led by Wheatley Parish Council</li> <li>• The purpose of the review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the WNPR objectives have been implemented in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting those objectives; and secondly to rectify any errors and omissions</li> </ul>
End of Plan review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least two (2) years prior to the expiry of the WNPR, a full review will be taken to gauge the success of the Plan in meeting its objectives and to put in place a succession Plan.</li> </ul>

Figure 13.1 Monitoring WNPR

13.3 A monitoring plan described in Figure 13.1 will be adopted by Wheatley Parish Council. The adoption of the emerging Local Plan may alter the strategic context for new development in the neighbourhood area. In this context the two parish councils will consider the need for a full or partial review of the Plan within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan 2041.

13.4 Evidence and suggestions gathered by WNP Committee related to traffic and infrastructure will be collated and presented to WPC for further consideration.

## 14. Glossary

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

- a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions:
  - i. the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable);
  - ii. the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and
  - iii. it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 [46] and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the



time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

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

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

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):** Statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Together with National Parks, AONB represents the nation's finest landscapes. AONBs are designated by Natural England.

**Brownfield site:** Previously developed land, which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

**Built form:** A term used in urban planning to describe a site in terms of the man-made building aspects including the man-made spaces between the buildings

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** CIL regulations introduce a levy whereby developer payments contribute to the provision of infrastructure or refurbishment of existing provision to support the additional burden that new development makes on both local and strategic infrastructure.

[Developer Payments - Community Infrastructure Levy, s106 agreements and Viability, \(April 2014\).](#)

**Conservation Area:** An area designated by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990 [47]) as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are additional controls over demolition, minor developments and the felling of trees. The emphasis will be on careful control, positive management of change and positive enhancement, to enable the area to remain alive and prosperous, but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with the area's special architectural or historic interest. Designation as a Conservation Area puts an onus on prospective developers

to produce a very high standard of design which respects or enhances the particular qualities of the area in question.

**Flood zones:**

- Zone 1 (low probability) comprises land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<1%).
- Zone 2 (medium probability) comprises land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding (1% - 0.1%).
- Zone 3a (high probability) comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%).
- Zone 3b (the functional floodplain) comprises land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green spaces, urban and rural, that is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental benefits for the local communities.

**Greenfield site:** Land which is farmland, which has not previously been developed.

**Infill site:** The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**OFSTED:** A non-ministerial department, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills has the responsibility for inspection and regulation of services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

**OCC:** Oxfordshire County Council

**Section 106 (S106):** Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), commonly known as s106 agreements, are a mechanism which make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, that would not otherwise be acceptable. They are focused on site-specific mitigation of the impact of development. s106 agreements are often referred to as 'developer contributions' along with highway contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/106>

**Sequential Test (Flooding):** The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of river or sea flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities may consider available sites within Flood Zone 2 (areas with a medium probability of river or sea flooding).

**Sequential Test (Retail):** The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential approach is followed to steer new development to areas in the most sustainable location. This requires that applications for main village centre uses (e.g. shops) should be located in village centres. If that is not possible, then they should be located in edge-of-centre locations, and only if suitable sites are not available should out-of-centre sites be considered.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** A Site of Special Scientific Interest in Great Britain or an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) in the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland is a conservation designation denoting a protected area in the United Kingdom and Isle of Man.

**SODC:** South Oxfordshire District Council

**SHLAA:** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is a technical study to inform future planning policy development. It also assists in monitoring whether there is an adequate supply of deliverable housing land.

**SHELAA:** The Strategic Housing and Economic Land availability Assessment is a technical document which provides information on sites; submitted by Landowners and Agents, for potential housing, economic development, Gypsy and Travelling Show-people, Self-Build housing etc. in relation to their suitability, availability and achievability.

**Sustainable development:** Sustainable development balances social, economic and environmental needs.

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO):** A mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value. A tree subject to a tree preservation order may not normally be topped, lopped or felled without the consent of the local planning authority.

**Windfall Site:** Any site that has not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process.

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