

Guide to the Draft Plan and Summary

Our Neighbourhood Plan is finally ready in draft format for review and comment by Whitchurch Residents and it is now uploaded to the Whitchurch web site at www.whitchurch.org. The draft plan has been provided for review to Buckinghamshire Council and multiple statutory bodies including Natural England, The Environment Agency, English Heritage and others for their comments. **This process of consultation is known as Regulation 14 and will be open until end of day Friday Feb 17th. If you have comments to make on this Plan, please send them to the Clerk to Whitchurch Parish Council, preferably by email, as below :**

clerkwhitchurchaylesbury@gmail.com

If providing comments by post, please send to : Mr T. Skeggs, Whitchurch Parish Council Clerk, Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan, c/o 2 Westminster Drive, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 7LS

What happens after Regulation 14 consultation closes on Feb 17th?

All comments will be assessed and where appropriate changes may be made to the draft plan. Buckinghamshire Council will appoint an independent inspector who will review the final version of the plan and where necessary require further changes. This process of independent inspection is referred to as Regulation 16. When it is complete the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan will be put to all residents within the Parish in a referendum. If a majority vote Yes the plan will become incorporated into the Local Development Plan and becomes “made”.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan and why is it important?

A Neighbourhood Plan is the tool by which a town, village or other small neighbourhood can influence the development of housing in its area. National housing policy and growth requirements are usually determined by central government. Local Planning Authorities (in this case Buckinghamshire Council) then set their strategies to deliver these policies at a local level using a longer term Local Development Plan. A smaller community can use both National and Local Authority plans to create their own housing policies within a Neighbourhood Plan. It is the tool by which Whitchurch will retain greater control over development in the village, and give the residents a stronger say in what is built, where it is built, and what it should look like.

A Neighbourhood Plan that is well made, supported by the community and the local authority, and which has full regard to planning law and the Local Development Plan becomes an integral part of the Local Development Plan. When deciding on planning applications the Local Planning Authority must take account of a “made” Neighbourhood Plan and its policies.

Our Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) supports controlled housing development and contains housing development policies that will be used by the Local Planning Authority (Buckinghamshire Council) to determine planning and development applications until the year 2040. This growth is

seen as essential to allow the village to thrive and evolve. The WNP allocates sites for future development and sets out policies over numbers, location and types of new houses. It seeks to protect important green spaces and the village's rural character.

How to review the draft plan

This guide provides a brief overview only and seeks to explain what documents are available and their significance. The draft plan comprises many highly detailed documents and we would encourage everyone to review them as far as possible. There are three documents that together provide the recommended policies for Whitchurch through to 2040.

Pre-Submission Report : In this document you will find all policies and proposals for Whitchurch, including new home site allocation, types and controls. The report also includes a very extensive set of Design Guidelines for how new homes should be designed to ensure a good “fit” with our existing built village environment.

Green Spaces Report : This report details various locations within the village that are picked out for extra protection to ensure the fundamental nature of the village is protected as far as possible for the long term.

Important Views Report : This report details viewpoints to and from the village that are picked out for extra protection to ensure the fundamental nature of the village is protected as far as possible for the long term.

To back these reports up there are other important documents which provide the evidence base for the policies:

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) : The SEA is required for any planned development to look at the cumulative effect of housing development on the local environment. It considers impacts such as the effects of pollution, impact on wildlife, potential for flooding and rates all sites that were considered on a Red / Amber / Green matrix.

Housing Needs Assessment : The Housing Needs Assessment is a comprehensive review of the existing housing stock within the village. It identifies the likely need for smaller or larger homes, the average cost of homes against average income and affordability.

Site Assessment Report : In making a decision about allocating sites to be included in the WNP, the Site Assessment Report uses a combination of all of the evidence documents and the outcomes of the public consultations to recommend the most suitable sites for development.

Assessment of Whitchurch community views on planning issues

Whitchurch residents have been regularly consulted before and during the process of Neighbourhood Plan development. Residents were asked to rank their key priorities in terms of importance and the results were as below, with the number and location of new homes being the main issues, alongside volume and speed of traffic.

| Issue | Score out of 5 |
|---|----------------|
| • Access to the countryside | 4.1 |
| • Concerns about future development | 4.1 |
| • Protection of our green spaces | 4.3 |
| • Concern about volume and speed of traffic | 4.4 |
| • Location of new homes within the village | 4.4 |
| • Number of new homes | 4.7 |

Traffic was a recurring concern, and there was general agreement that new housing development should offer smaller and more affordable homes. Residents felt that new homes should be built using traditional materials and be sympathetic in style to existing built environment.

The strong sense of place and recognition of the rural environment has meant that the Neighbourhood Plan has included key green spaces and views that help to define the character of the village.

The call for sites

In order to understand the availability of land for future planned development of the village, landowners with any substantial plots bordering the existing built-up village were invited to submit sketch proposals. 11 plots were offered initially, 3 soon withdrew from the process leaving 8 viable plots around the village. One of these withdrew in November 2022. The plots on offer were presented to the village during open public consultations and attracted a range of views from village residents. The feedback from these sessions enabled the WNP to become more focused on what was desirable and deliverable.

The Policies

Taking all of the documents in the evidence base into account the WNP makes a number of policy decisions which will determine where new homes should be built in the period to 2040. The policies support a strong vision for the village through to 2040. This vision is described below:



Policy W1: Settlement Boundary

The policy is intended to distinguish between the built-up area of the main village settlement of Whitchurch and the surrounding countryside in order to manage development proposals accordingly. A settlement boundary has been drawn that is principally derived from the definition of the existing developed footprint of the village. Future development within the settlement boundary may be permitted as infill. The settlement boundary is drawn to include any sites that are supported by the WNP for development. Applications for development outside of the Settlement Boundary will not be allowed other than in exceptional circumstances. The Settlement Boundary can be seen in the Policies Maps section below.

Policy W2: Development of land at Kempson House:

This site has been selected for development. The policy allocates land adjacent to the A413 on the north eastern edge of the village for a total of approximately 23 new homes. The land is in single ownership and has been made available for housing development in line with the provisions of the policy. The Whitchurch Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) included in the evidence base identifies the need for affordable housing in the parish, particularly smaller, low-cost housing and housing available to meet the needs of those wishing to downsize from larger family properties. The opportunity to provide affordable housing within the existing built-up area of Whitchurch is extremely limited and the site presents an opportunity to deliver a range of new homes across a number of open market and affordable tenures.

The landowner has agreed, subject to Agreement with Highways, to provide a suitable pedestrian crossing across the A413.



Policy W3: Development of land at Manor Farm:

This site will be held in reserve, only to be developed if the approved site at Kempson House does not proceed, or if additional housing development is imposed by national or local policy in the period up to 2040. The policy reserves land adjacent to the A413 on the northern edge of the village for a total of approximately 35 new homes.

Policy W4 : Whitchurch Design Code:

To ensure that new buildings respect the existing character and blend well into the village. This report is included within the Pre-Submission Report.

Policy W5 : Managing Traffic: encourages safe, accessible and convenient travel through the parish. It makes specific (but non-binding) recommendations for improvements to footpaths and accessibility.

Policy W6 – Essential Commercial Businesses and Services:

Identifies businesses in the village that should be protected from unnecessary loss.

Policy W7 – Community Facilities and Pubs:

To protect these where possible from loss through change of use.

Policy W8 – Local Green Spaces:

To recognise and protect special areas of green space.

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

- i. Duck-End Pond
- ii. Mount Pleasant mound
- iii. Grass bank Kempson House/Old House
- iv. Grass bank and verges Market Hill
- v. Wildflower bank, Oving Road
- vi. Green circle Ashgrove Gardens
- vii. The Meadows Recreation Area
- viii. The Meadows Orchard Area
- ix. Jubilee Tree Triangle
- x. Whittle Hole spring and stream
- xi. Allotment land Ashgrove Gardens

Proposals for development in a Local Green Space will only be supported in very special circumstances.

Policy W9 - Important views:

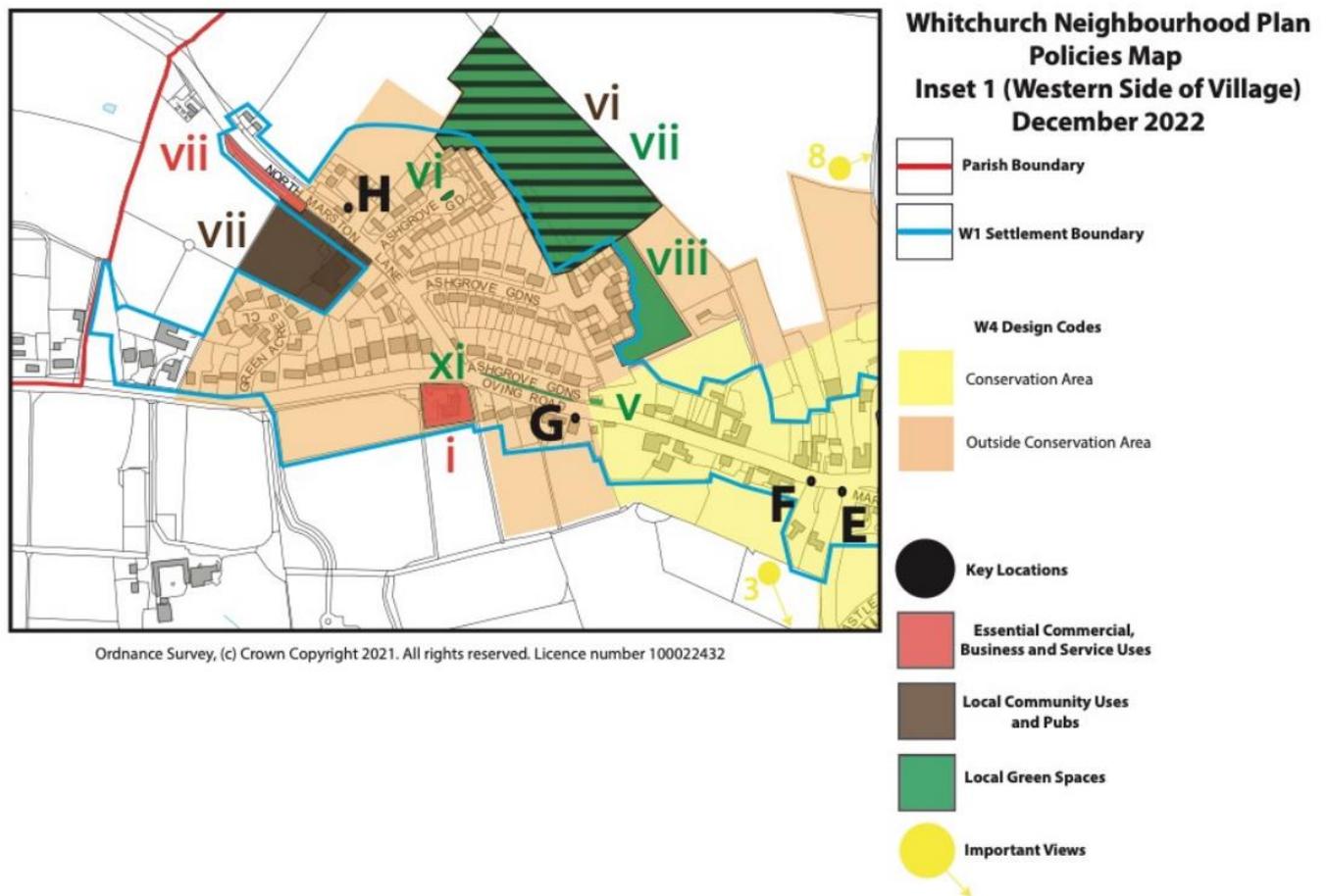
Identifies a series of views from public vantage points in and beyond the edge of the village that are considered in the Important Views report as especially important in defining the relationship between the village and its rural setting.

Policy W10 – Green Infrastructure:

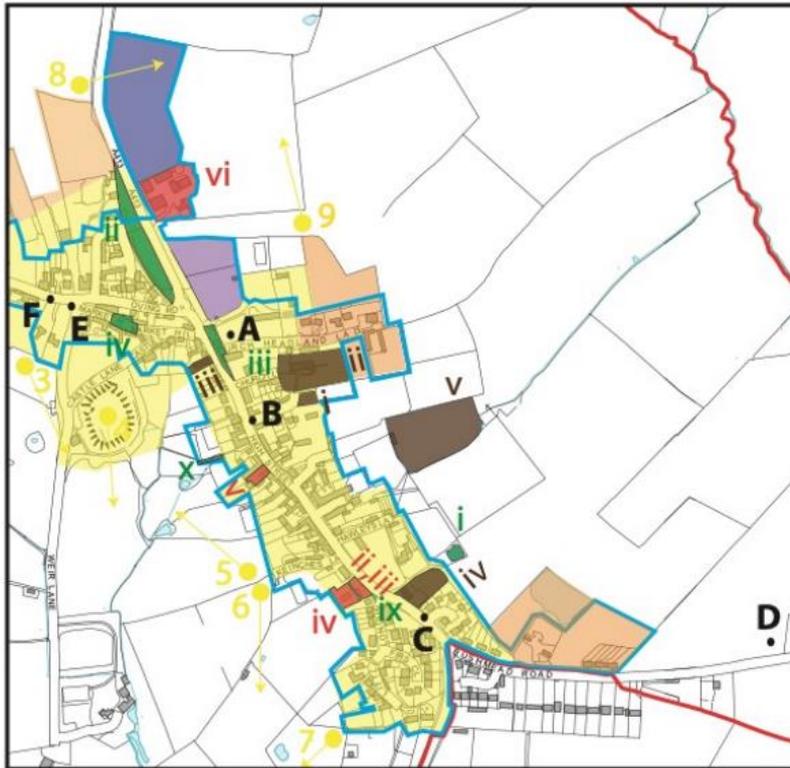
Identifying the importance of protecting the green infrastructure of Whitchurch, such as the extensive public footpath network; the open space of the recreation Ground & Community Woodland; the many established hedgerows as well as the springs and woodland. At this stage the policy is not fully evolved and would be addressed in a future review of the WNP.

Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Policies Maps

The two map views of Whitchurch that follow can be seen in the Pre-Submission Report and together show the village built area. They show how Neighbourhood Plan policies W1-W9 are seen “on the ground”. For example the light blue line shows how the Settlement Boundary (policy W1) is drawn around the village, the new housing allocation site at Kempson House (policy W2) is shown in Inset 2 and Green Spaces and Important View locations are shown.



**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map
Inset 2 (Central and Eastern Side of Village)
December 2022**



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-  Parish Boundary
-  W1 Settlement Boundary
-  W2 Housing Allocation - Land at Kempson House West
-  W3 Reserve Site - Land at Manor Farm North
- W4 Design Codes**
-  Conservation Area
-  Outside Conservation Area
-  Key Locations
-  Essential Commercial, Business and Service Uses
-  Local Community Uses and Pubs
-  Local Green Spaces
-  Important Views