

SUBMISSION
DOCUMENT
MAY 2024

Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan



FOREWORD

Wallingford lies in the Thames Valley, located between the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes. This ancient Saxon market town grew to prominence as the most accessible Thames crossing before London, and although its importance has waxed and waned throughout a long and a notable history, today it remains a vital centre within South Oxfordshire, serving not just residents directly, but also those in the surrounding parishes.

Wallingford's combination of heritage and location, with the Thames acting as a boundary on one side and the largely preserved Saxon layout in the centre, presents the town with opportunities and challenges. Both aspects make the town an attractive and interesting place to live, work and visit, but they simultaneously place constraints upon how the town can play its part in supporting sustainable growth within South Oxfordshire.

The population of Wallingford is growing – possibly by up to 40% compared to the 2011 Census as planned housing developments at Highcroft and Winterbrook Meadows proceed. Neighbouring villages, particularly Benson, Crowmarsh Gifford and Cholsey, that depend upon Wallingford for the provision of many services, are also growing by a similar scale.

The Neighbourhood Plan made in 2021 necessarily focussed on development only within its legally defined Plan Area. This Review, conducted during 2023 and 2024 has been produced in the full understanding that the cumulative impacts of new development upon the town cannot be ignored. Essential community and recreation facilities, and services for health, well-being, and education must be planned for the growing population.

Wallingford Town Council is aware of the significant implications of climate change on the natural and built environment of the town. The policies in the plan stem from the Vision and Objectives we identified for the town.

Wallingford is blessed with a vibrant community spirit which takes pride in using its many assets, physical and cultural, to create a strong sense of place. Preserving and enhancing those assets, whilst adapting to the growth in and around Wallingford, so that residents and visitors can continue to enjoy the very things which create and sustain this community-led way of life, is integral to this Neighbourhood Plan.

That same community spirit played a key role in producing the made Neighbourhood Plan as dedicated volunteers produced the text and residents took part in several rounds of consultation which shaped the content. This Review has been produced by a Working Group including some of the original team, and residents who moved to Wallingford since 2020 and were keen to contribute to the future of their new home town.

This Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision and framework against which future development in the town and immediate area is assessed. It forms a fundamental and integral element of the planning process, and is referred to by Wallingford Town Council when reviewing planning applications. The Council initiated a new Vision for Wallingford based on the themes of the Neighbourhood Plan, and continues to refer to it in public engagement activities.

We believe that the Neighbourhood Plan balances the legal requirements to support sustainable growth with the need to promote and celebrate the unique character of Wallingford. This Review document reviewed, and where necessary amended, policies to guide development in a manner which will improve the quality of life for all. We feel it will enable future generations to enjoy the town as we do.

**Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan
Working Group**

May 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Review has been produced by a dedicated team of volunteers, working hard over the last 11 months to review the made Neighbourhood Plan, research and gather information to update Chapters, and ensure this Review document meets the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

Each of the following people donated valuable time out of a love of Wallingford and a determination to see the town prosper for the benefit of future generations. Their contributions are very gratefully acknowledged.

Jen Armitage, Trevor Bedeman, Beryl Guiver, Cllr. Sue Hendrie, Cllr. Katharine Keats-Rohan, Dave Overton, Jane Randle, Wendy Tobitt, Jon Wheatcroft. Members of Wallingford Town Council who commissioned the Working Group and approved the document as it developed.

The Working Group is very grateful for the guidance and support offered by the neighbourhood planning team at South Oxfordshire District Council.

The work of AECOM, in preparing the original Sustainability Assessment, is key to the success of this work. Finally, the Working Group is very grateful to everyone who contributed to the Review through the public engagement and consultation processes.

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Chapter 1

Wallingford

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 The Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) is a community-led planning document, prepared by Wallingford Town Council through a Steering Group of local residents together with members of Wallingford Town Council. Neighbourhood Plans are part of the Government’s approach, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, to give local people a greater say in the future development and growth of their local area.

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.1.2 In 2023 the Town Council set up a Working Group to revise the made Neighbourhood Plan to ensure existing policies are kept up to date and add new policies where relevant. This WNP Review provides a planning tool to guide the long-term future of the town and its countryside for the period from 2024 to 2035. The Plan contains a vision for the area and sets out planning policies to achieve this. In our view, the WNP continues to be a strong and robust approach to the Localism agenda. Within this context it has been designed to help deliver the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 as far as this applies to Wallingford.

1.1.3 Wallingford was formally designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area on 1st May 2015 under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act with Wallingford Town Council being the qualifying body.

1.1.4 The Plan area is set out in Map 1 and covers the main town and surrounding land up to the adjacent parishes of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Cholsey and Crowmarsh Gifford.

1.1.5 This Plan is prepared in accordance with Government guidance in the Planning Practice Guidance. It is in accordance with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, and all references within the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan refer to the December 2023 version of the NPPF 2023. It is in general accordance with strategic policies in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. Whilst it has regard to the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Part 1) the Plan does not deal with minerals and waste issues, nor any nationally-significant infrastructure.

1.1.6 This document is prepared to be consistent with both national planning policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) and where relevant the supporting guidance in the Planning Practice Guidance. It is also in general conformity with the adopted strategic policies for South Oxfordshire. The word “Plan” occurs throughout this document and will be frequently abbreviated. The following terms are generally used;

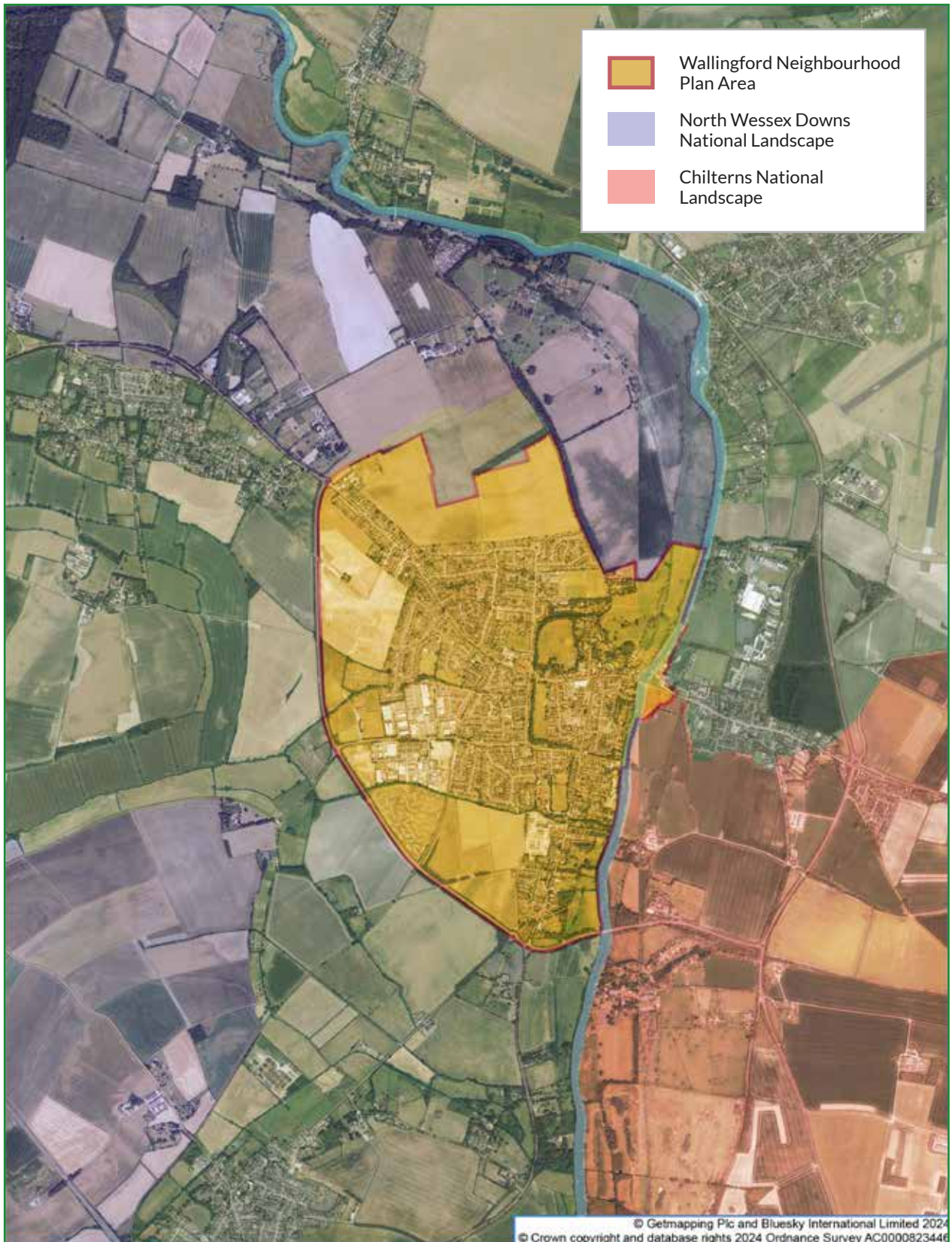
Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) This document.

**“The Plan”
“This Plan”** This document.

Development Plan (DP) The Development Plan is the current adopted set of planning documents which cover the Wallingford area. It includes the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan 2021, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1. Once the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Review has been made it will supersede the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan 2021 in the Development Plan.

WNP Review This document

- 1.2.1 Wallingford is the smallest market town in the SODC area with a population of some 8,500 people (2021 Census). It is designated within the SODC Local Plan 2035 as a market town, serving a local catchment area. Wallingford is a picturesque market town with unique historic origins because of its location at a significant crossing point of the River Thames, with the Castle founded in the 11th century.
- 1.2.2 The age profile for Wallingford in the 2021 Census indicates that over the population as a whole it has fewer people in the 20 to 35 age groups than comparator groups for England. It also has more people over 50 than comparator groups for England. This could suggest an increased need among the 65+ years group for lifetime homes and enhanced healthcare facilities (see Appendix C). Around 44% of working people are employed in managerial, administrative or professional occupations compared to 33% in England generally. Nearly 40% of working age people work mainly from home, with car or van travel being the main method of getting to work for nearly 40% of people, followed by walking for around 11% of people.
- 1.2.3 The town is located west of the River Thames and is closely linked via Wallingford Bridge with the village of Crowmarsh Gifford east of the river. The village of Shillingford lies to the north, Crowmarsh Gifford to the east, Cholsey to the south, and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell to the west. The River Thames forms the eastern boundary of the town, apart from two small areas of land to the north and south of the eastern end of Wallingford Bridge.
- 1.2.4 The WNP area includes all the built environment of Wallingford, open fields to the north and land bounded by the A4130 road to the south and west of the town, and a small amount of land on the eastern side of the river.
- 1.2.5 The town is surrounded by two National Landscapes: the Chilterns to the east and the North Wessex Downs to the north, west and south of the town. These are shown on Map 1. The northern part of the Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area 1 lies within the WNP area and is shown on Map 7.



Map 1. The Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Area showing the town in relation to the adjacent villages and the two National Landscapes: the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns

1.3 WHY WALLINGFORD NEEDS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 1.3.1 The Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) will provide a planning tool to guide the long-term future of the town and its countryside for the period from 2024 to 2035.
- 1.3.2 The WNP contains a vision for the area and sets out planning policies to achieve this. Within this context it has been designed to be consistent with the strategic policies of the Development Plan.
- 1.3.3 This local focus means that issues important to Wallingford residents and business operators are incorporated in the Plan's policies and are part of the legal planning process. There is also potential for financial benefits to the town, through developer contributions via what are termed Section 106 agreements or a Community Infrastructure Levy, to be used specifically on local infrastructure requirements.

1.4 THE PLAN PROCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

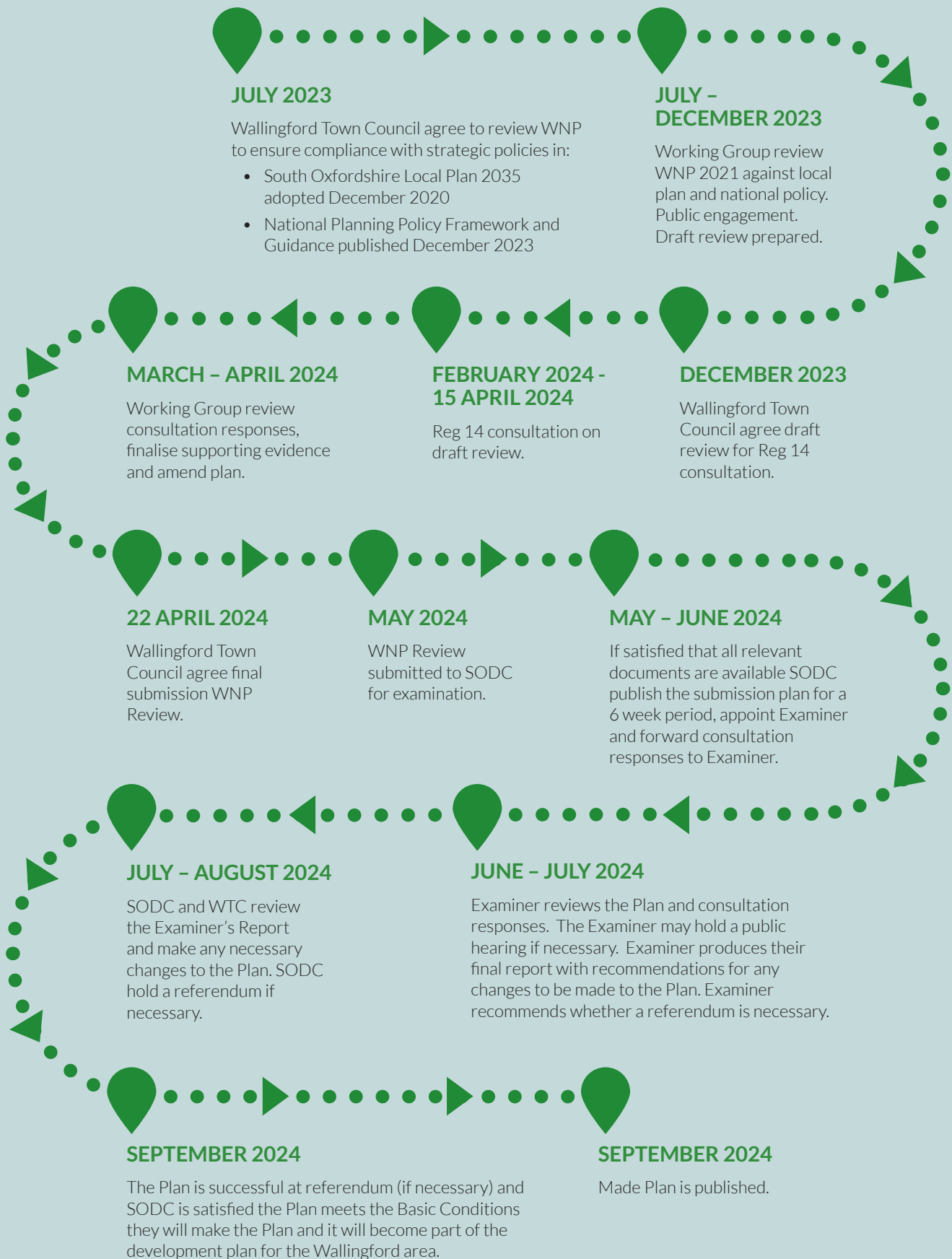
- 1.4.1 Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity for the community to shape the future development of its area. The purpose of the Plan is to make planning policies that can be used to help determine planning applications. The policies can only relate to land use matters. Other proposals are referred to at the end of this Plan in 'Community Aspirations'. These do not have a land use basis but are nevertheless important to the local community.
- 1.4.2 A timeline of the key stages in the Neighbourhood Plan process is shown in the figure overleaf.

1.5 BASIC CONDITIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 1.5.1 National Policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) and the National Design Guide requires that new development must contribute to the achievement of sustainable and well-designed places through economic, social and environmental roles.
- 1.5.2 The Development Plan, which includes Neighbourhood Plans from localities within a planning authority's area, sets out what is considered sustainable development. Since there are no new allocations and limited policy changes in this 2024 Review of the WNP, the Strategic Environmental Assessment is still relevant to this Plan. A Strategic Environmental Assessment for the proposals in the 2021 WNP was carried out by consultants AECOM looking at the environmental impacts of the Plan. This is included as one of our evidence documents.
- 1.5.3 A neighbourhood plan must also comply with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which looks at the potential for significant impacts on nature conservation sites that are of European importance. South Oxfordshire District Council consulted with Natural England, and in November 2019 gave notice in a Screening Opinion that a Habitat Regulations Assessment was not required for the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan. This opinion is included within our evidence documents.
- 1.5.4 In addition to achieving sustainable development, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some other 'basic conditions'. They are as follows:
 - 1. Is the Plan consistent with National Planning policy?
 - 2. Is the Plan in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area?
 - 3. Does the Plan promote sustainable development?
 - 4. Has the process of making the Plan met the requirements of relevant European Union obligations?
- 1.5.5 The Basic Conditions Statement is a separate document which records the compliance of this Plan with national and local policies.

Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan

The Plan's Journey



1.6 CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1.6.1 The Town Council must be able to show that it has properly consulted local people and relevant organisations during the process of making the Plan. An Independent Examiner will test this along with whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions when the Plan is submitted for examination. If he/she is satisfied, the Examiner may or may not recommend that the Plan goes to a referendum of the local electorate. If a referendum is not necessary the examiner will recommend whether the plan should be made or adopted as part of the Development Plan by SODC. If a referendum is necessary and it is accepted by a majority vote the Plan will be formally made or adopted as part of the Development Plan by SODC. Once made the plan will carry weight in determining planning applications.
- 1.6.2 This Plan has been through a consultation with the local community and local interest parties. An overview of all consultation is set out in our Consultation Statement together with a summary of responses received and actions arising from those responses. Details are also recorded in a series of reports, some of which are available to download from the Town Council website at www.wallingford.gov.uk
- 1.6.3 Much of the WNP 2021 is still relevant and up to date. This review does not seek to change the overall approach and local strategy set out in the 2021 plan rather it aims to assess:
- whether policies need changing as a result of the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 or changes to the NPPF 2023 or other material considerations
 - whether work has been undertaken so policies are no longer needed
 - whether policies have not worked as well as intended and need adjustment
 - whether there were gaps in the suite of policies which need to be filled

1.6.4 The level of consultation undertaken reflects the review nature of the plan and is set out in Table 1. Comments received have been assessed and feedback provided in feedback documents which also explain how comments received have been taken into account in this review.

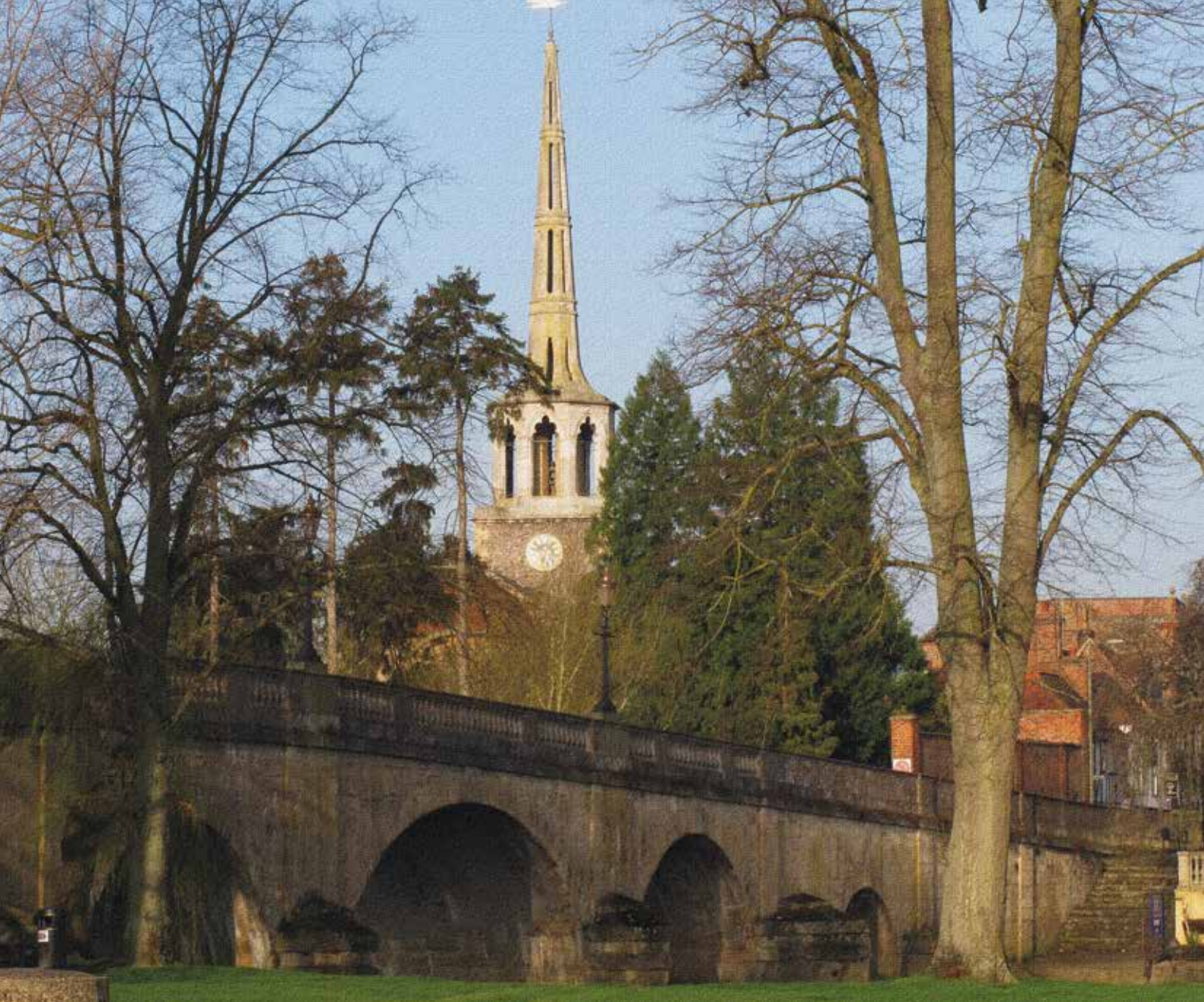
Table 1: Consultations held to input to the development of Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan 2021 and the 2024 Review

Consultation	Start date	Close date
Initial consultation	03/03/2016	05/03/2016
Non-retail business consultation	11/05/2016	11/05/2016
Fir Tree School pupils	09/2016	09/2016
Vision and Objectives	21/01/2017	04/02/2017
Wallingford School pupils	29/03/2017	29/03/2017
Site Assessment Consultation in the Regal Centre, coordinated by Nexus, running for 6 weeks	08/07/2017	19/08/2017
Public Consultation at Ridgeway Community Church focusing on draft objectives and policies, and results of site assessment work.	29/09/2018	14/10/18
Local business consultation via e-mail and social media focusing on draft objectives and policies.	12/11/18	02/12/18
Housing Needs Survey	24/02/2019	24/03/2019
Regulation 14 consultation Including public event on 28/09/2019	30/08/2019	20/10/2019
SODC Post Submission Publicity Period	16/06/2020	11/08/2020
Reg 14 consultation	03/02/2024	06/04/2024
Public consultation event at Ridgeway Community Church	26/02/2024	27/02/2024

1.7 EVIDENCE BASE

1.7.1 To provide understanding about why individual policies have been included within this Plan, we have created an evidence base that provides the detailed data and other evidence underpinning the policies in the Plan and justifying why and how we have created them. Our evidence was collected in a number of ways. We have held consultations involving residents and other interested parties, and with neighbouring parishes that have an interest in what happens in Wallingford. This has been backed by 'desktop' research where we have reviewed a wide range of relevant research and official plans such as the evidence collected by SODC for the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 documents. The evidence documents that we have used are referred to throughout the Plan.





Chapter 2

Strategy for Wallingford

2.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 The Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan sets out our positive vision for the future of the town, putting sustainable development at the heart of its proposals, recognising how important social, economic and environmental objectives are to our town. The Plan will encourage a vibrant thriving town centre with a range of independent shops and homes to support its economy and provide and maintain the focal hub of our community.

Vision

This Plan aims to:

- Protect and enhance the well-established character of Wallingford.
- Ensure that growth in Wallingford to 2035 will be managed carefully, resulting in sustainable and well-designed development that maintains the town's special character.
- Ensure that the town centre will continue to serve as the focal point for activities which strengthen the local economy and enhance a community sense of place.
- Create opportunities to make Wallingford a hub for people enjoying the heritage of the town, the River Thames and the surrounding countryside, and to encourage development of sustainable tourism based on the heritage and natural assets of the town.
- Ensure that housing for an increasing local population will consist of a mix of types, including homes for first time buyers, social and private, family-sized and retirement accommodation. It will be supported by appropriate parking, transport (including public) and links for walking and cycling.

Objectives

WNP 01: The growth of Wallingford to 2035 will be managed carefully and sustainably, conserving and enhancing the town's unique heritage assets, historic and landscape setting, and the natural environment.

WNP 02: New homes will be located on allocated sites set out in this Plan to meet identified local housing needs in terms of affordable and social housing, family and retirement homes.

WNP 03: New homes will meet sustainability and design requirements to ensure climate change resilience and future use of sustainable resources including sustainable water use are built-in.

WNP 04: New development will be provided with necessary infrastructure to provide for the well-being and needs of residents and those who depend on the facilities and services in the town.

2.1.2 Wallingford will accommodate the level of growth required to meet our local housing need whilst conserving and enhancing the heritage assets of this market town described in Chapter 4 and its attractive landscape setting. As part of this the Plan promotes sensitive development of high-quality sustainable design and design standards that retain and enhance the local character of the town and promote contemporary design where it makes a positive contribution to the townscape.

2.2 KEY THEMES

2.2.1 In this Plan we have set out eight themes that have been developed following extensive consultation with our community. Each theme has an individual vision and main objectives, which all feed back to the overarching strategic vision. The policies are arranged under the following themes:

- The Strategy for Wallingford
- Housing, Design, Character Assessment
- Historic Built Environment and Archaeology
- Natural Environment
- Employment and Economy
- Town Centre, Retail and Tourism
- Movement and Connectivity
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure

2.3 OVERALL STRATEGY

2.3.1 Wallingford Town Council declared a climate emergency in May 2020, we expect that development proposals will have regard to the relevant parts of the town strategy. This Plan will ensure that the growth of Wallingford to 2035 is managed carefully, resulting in sustainable development that maintains the unique Saxon character of our town. It strives to achieve a balance between the need for new development and the ability of existing and planned infrastructure to support that development and will enhance Wallingford's role as a hub for surrounding villages.

2.3.2 The town centre with its clear Saxon layout will continue to be the focal point, with a reduced amount of vehicular traffic and priority given to pedestrians, allowing people to relax and enjoy visiting the shops and restaurants. Infrastructure will be in place for people wishing to enjoy the heritage of the town and its surrounding countryside, encouraging visitors to support local businesses. The town will have conserved and enhanced its unique heritage assets including archaeology, the town's Scheduled Monuments, Designated Buildings and the Wallingford and Winterbrook Conservation Areas.

2.3.3 A network of recreational walking routes will link the town's residential areas with the surrounding countryside of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and the Chilterns National Landscape, and with the Thames Path National Trail which passes through Wallingford. Several roads and public rights of way from the town lead to the Thames Path when it is riverside and when the route is along Thames Street. The Ridgeway National Trail is outside Wallingford and can be accessed via the Thames Path at Winterbrook Bridge, Nosworthy Way (A4130). Both National Trails are popular long-distance walking routes and offer Wallingford opportunities to develop sustainable tourism.

2.3.4 Business growth that improves the viability and vitality of the local employment areas will be supported by sustainable transport infrastructure and high-quality facilities. Wallingford is located conveniently close to Didcot, Oxford and Reading, all of which have thriving economies, mainline railway stations and motorway connections.

2.3.5 Appropriate housing growth in line with local need will be accommodated. New developments will consist of a mix of types for social, affordable and market units, including entry level housing, family and retirement homes supported by public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure.

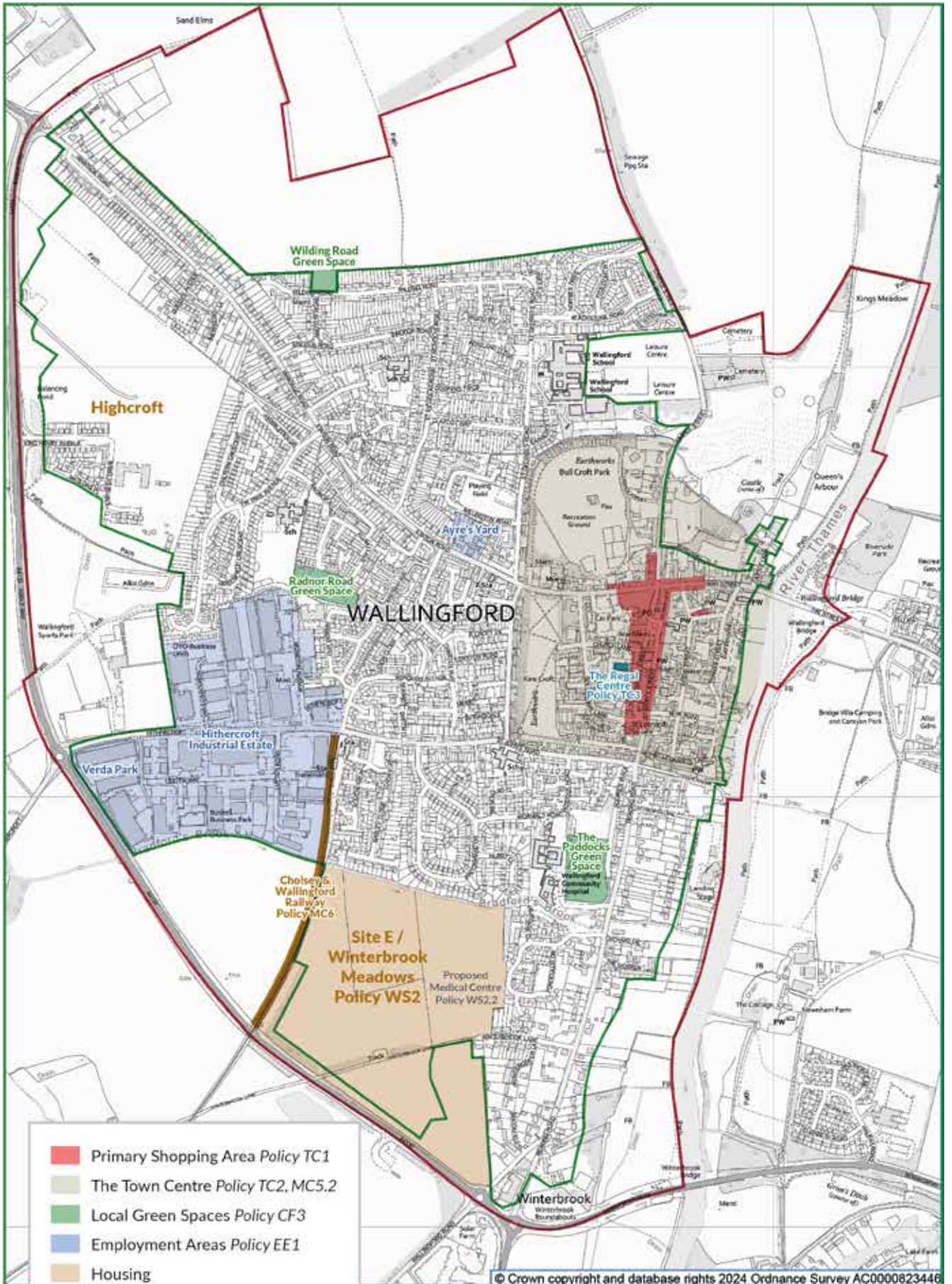
- 2.3.6 Residents and visitors will be able to access an expanded offer of high-quality social infrastructure, including education, health and leisure facilities. New development will show consideration to the local environment through sustainable construction techniques and Wallingford will become a more environmentally-friendly town with enhanced green spaces and biodiversity.
- 2.3.7 The WNP sets out a positive vision for the future of Wallingford within the context of its historic character and constraints of landscape setting. It puts sustainable development at the heart of its proposals recognising the importance of social, economic and environmental objectives.
- 2.3.8 The WNP defines specific proposals and policies for key areas of land within the Plan area. These areas are shown on the Proposals Map (Map 2). Inappropriate development which is not consistent with these policies, or which lies outside of these defined areas, will be resisted.



Wallingford Market Place



Wallingford Charter Market



Map 2. The Proposals Map, including Site Allocations and other principal areas, defined in the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan.

2.3.9 Policy WS1 (below) will ensure that those factors considered by the community as being of importance are used to help define the form and character of new development.

POLICY WS1: THE LOCAL STRATEGY FOR WALLINGFORD

- WS1.1** Development proposals should take account of the role of Wallingford as a market town in general and its natural heritage and environmental characteristics in particular. Development proposals will be supported, as appropriate to their scale and nature, where they positively:
- WS1.1(a)** support a locally appropriate level of housing growth in the town, to create a compact form and to use land efficiently, whilst also restricting inappropriate development in the countryside areas outside the town
- WS1.1(b)** focus well designed, sustainable development within the built-up area of Wallingford, and:
- ensure that development limits greenhouse gas emissions by appropriate measures, such as through its location, orientation, and design, and identifies suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources and sustainable water use
 - considers improvements to the health and wellbeing of the community, to minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, e.g. links with Green Network, provision of open spaces accessible for all, and provision of facilities for people to meet outdoors.
- WS1.1(c)** recognise and address the declining condition of heritage assets, realise their potential as positive assets within the town and conserve and enhance the heritage assets and character of the town
- WS1.1(d)** ensure development conserves and enhances the rural setting of Wallingford, the views leading to and from it, the landscape character and biodiversity
- WS1.1(e)** create a Wallingford Green Network that links public rights of way with the National Trails, Local Green Spaces and public amenity green spaces enabling residents and visitors to easily access natural areas, and to improve and extend biodiversity
- WS1.1(f)** maintain and enhance the town centre as the focal point for Wallingford, while also supporting a vibrant local economy by encouraging suitable conversions or new buildings for business and/or tourism uses
- WS1.1(g)** recognise the importance of community networks in Wallingford and protect and enhance social and economic facilities and activity hubs, with new and expanded community, economic and leisure facilities, which are important to the social fabric of the town and the health and well-being of residents
- WS1.1(h)** ensure that the level of infrastructure and services are maintained and improved so that residents of Wallingford and its dependant villages and rural areas do not have to travel further to access services

- WS1.1(i)** minimise the adverse effects of car travel, particularly air pollution in the town centre, congestion at peak times, discourteous parking and speeding, which makes our roads less attractive for other users, by:
- supporting walking and cycling as the first choice for journeys within Wallingford and ensuring new developments bring existing routes up to a high standard making them more attractive and practical to use, and provide new well-lit footpaths and cycle paths or lanes and pedestrian crossing facilities;
 - supporting bus services to all key destinations including railway stations, and ensuring that new developments provide high quality bus stops and new bus services where required, as well as direct, safe and well-lit walking routes to the bus stops.
 - ensuring that any new development does not add to air pollution, traffic congestion and speeding on local roads through appropriately sited access arrangements and traffic calming measures, or if such impacts do result from new development that these are mitigated appropriately.

2.4 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR WALLINGFORD

- 2.4.1 The NPPF 2023 states in para 29 that '*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.*' The Plan must take account of National Policy, Planning Practice Guidance and Ministerial Statements.
- 2.4.2 The Development Plan for the town comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035, this Neighbourhood Plan and the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1.
- 2.4.3 Oxfordshire County Council is preparing the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan which provides the minerals and waste strategy and planning policies to guide development within the county. The current Local Plan is in two parts: Part 1 – Core Strategy was adopted in 2017; and Part 2 – Site Allocations. Work has ceased on the site allocations and has commenced on a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan. On adoption it will replace the Minerals and Waste Part 1 and form part of the development plan. The Part 1 document contains policies to safeguard land in the WNP area for minerals and also safeguards existing waste facilities.
- 2.4.4 Table 4d in the Local Plan 2035 identifies the need for 3,873 new homes to be built in the market towns (Henley, Thame and Wallingford) and indicates that existing commitments at Wallingford are more than sufficient to meet the requirements for the WNP. There is no outstanding requirement to be met.
- 2.4.5 The WNP is in general conformity with the Development Plan. The Local Plan 2035 more than meets the level of growth identified for the district in the Oxfordshire SHMA¹.

¹ <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/SHMA%20Key%20Findings%20Summary.pdf>



Castle Gardens ramparts

SODC'S AND OUR LOCAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WALLINGFORD

- 2.4.6 The overall strategy for South Oxfordshire in the Local Plan 2035 focuses growth at Science Vale centred around Didcot with significant urban extensions at Culham and Berinsfield. In the remainder of the district there are a number of strategic sites at Chalgrove and around Oxford. Elsewhere it proposes limited (around 15%) growth at market towns and larger villages, and to maintain the rural character of the open countryside that makes up the majority of the area. The affordable housing policy framework set out in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 policy H9 is well-established and is in line with national policy and guidance.
- 2.4.7 The overall strategy for Wallingford is to enhance its role as a market town and build on its economic success while recognising the influence of Didcot, only six miles away. Wallingford has a key role as a facilities and services hub for the surrounding villages including Benson, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Cholsey and Crowmarsh Gifford and many villages in a larger catchment area.
- 2.4.8 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 recognises Wallingford's strengths and a number of challenges. Policy WAL1 states
- Neighbourhood Development Plans are expected to, and the Council will support development proposals that:
1. deliver homes in accordance with Policy H3;
 2. support measures that improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors with emphasis on the River Thames and the town's heritage;
 3. support the market place as a focal hub;
 4. improve accessibility, car and cycle parking, pedestrian and cycle links;

5. provide new employment opportunities and improve the stock of existing employment areas;
6. support schemes that enhance the town's natural and historic environment and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets;
7. address air quality issues in the town centre; and;
8. provide new, or enhanced community facilities that meet an identified need.

2.4.9 Our Local Strategy for Wallingford set out in Policy WS1 gives a clear framework for the town to address identified issues. These include:

1. a declining retail function with the closure of smaller shops;
2. community facilities at capacity including the secondary school, sports facilities and medical centre;
3. the potential for air quality issues in the High Street and beyond resulting from the volume of traffic in the town;
4. lack of car parking;
5. poor pedestrian and cycle routes in parts of the town;
6. limited public transport connectivity around the town and to larger centres;
7. the need for affordable housing;
8. the declining condition of heritage assets and lack of realisation of their potential.

2.4.10 Policy WS1 has deliberately been designed to have a general effect. It should be applied together with other more specific policies either in the Local Plan or within this Plan in the determination of planning applications.

2.4.11 Particular concern about the town centre was investigated by a number of studies seeking actions to revive the Market Town to be taken by the Town Council² and a Market Town Action Plan was set up. Many of the recommendations of these studies are still relevant.



Wallingford Charter Market

² Civic Trust Report for Wallingford Town Council 2005

2.5 HOUSING NEED ASSESSMENT

- 2.5.1 The Steering Group commissioned a Housing Need Assessment (HNA) from Chameleon Consultancy. They found that Wallingford is an attractive town in which to live, indicated by the inward migration to the town outstripping those leaving, with the majority of respondents to the HNA having lived in the town for over 10 years. The majority (57%) of respondents feel there is a lack of adequate housing in Wallingford, with 36% believing there was a need for more starter homes, and 30% feeling more affordable homes were needed. Conversely only 7% felt more market housing should be provided. SODC provided a figure of 197 housing completions for Wallingford for the period April 2011 to March 2018, and these were a mix of new build sites and infill.
- 2.5.2 The Planning Practice Guidance provides strategic plan makers such as SODC with a standard methodology to determine housing need over a wide area. Whilst using that methodology at a local level such as Wallingford is not ideal, Chameleon applied it for the HNA and used local evidence to consider the housing target set by SODC. In regard to the HNA's analysis, Chameleon proposed that it had a 95% confidence level.
- 2.5.3 The largest age group in Wallingford, showing the highest level of growth, is the 30 to 44 age band. When grouped with the under 15 age group, this shows a profile shift towards younger families. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that young families quickly outgrow their accommodation.
- 2.5.4 Whilst the proportion of existing flats and apartments is relatively low (at 12% in 2019) in the town's housing profile, the highest growth in housing type has been in the number of flats (41% increase to 2011) but flats also see the highest occupancy turnover. Semi-detached and detached 2-3 bed homes remain unaffordable for many.
- 2.5.5 Semi-detached housing is the largest property type at 34% of the housing stock in 2019. Overall, 51% of housing in the town was owned outright (2019). A fifth (20%) of respondents (191 persons) replied that either now or at some future date they or someone in their household would need to move home in Wallingford.
- 2.5.6 The Housing Need Survey revealed only 15% of households with a housing need are registered for housing.
- 2.5.7 The HNA shows that 143 units of affordable housing are required to meet current need, with 220 committed to by SODC as of January 2019. Regarding market homes a total of 169 are currently needed. The HNA reports that: *'Future need suggests that 36 units per annum are required, a total of 540 to 2034 in addition to the current 398 units needed. This means a total of 938 units are needed in Wallingford during the plan period, with 1070 units committed to in the Local Plan.'* These figures indicate a 'surplus' of 132 units over requirements.
- 2.5.8 The HNA supports the view that no more than the 1070 housing figure set by SODC is required to meet local housing needs.
- 2.5.9 The HNA evidence, as described above, together with the feedback from our public consultations identifies that the overall housing figure of 1070 set out in the Local Plan 2035 is an appropriate level of new housing growth for the town and will provide the needed affordable housing.

- 2.5.10 Wallingford is significantly constrained by the adjacent National Landscapes (see Map 1), the River Thames to the east, and land subject to mineral safeguarding to the north. The rural area surrounding the town forms a sensitive and valued landscape.
- 2.5.11 There are significant constraints in the fabric of the town (See Chapter 4). Growth above the level proposed by SODC in the Local Plan 2035 would be likely to result in significant harmful effects on the important historic fabric of the town centre.
- 2.5.12 The community has strong concerns about the remaining capacity of a number of essential services and facilities. Many of these facilities: sewage treatment, secondary education and health are shared with neighbouring villages, and it is not possible to accurately define the remaining capacity without knowing the full level of growth likely to take place around Wallingford. This is evidenced by the Water Cycle Study³ commissioned by SODC which states that “the level of development [in Wallingford] is likely to exceed current capability of [potable] mains within this area”, and furthermore that “the wastewater network capacity in this area is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated.”
- 2.5.13 In preparing the core strategy SODC carried out public consultation between 2007 and 2010 looking at where new housing in Wallingford should be located. Five potential sites were considered.
- 2.5.14 In December 2012 the SODC Core Strategy CSWAL2 allocated Site B at Slade End Farm as the preferred option for 555 homes. In making this allocation the District Council indicated that the increase in level of growth would assist in strengthening the town centre. In October 2017 planning permission was granted for 555 homes at Site B, which is now known as Highcroft. Although work has started and more than 100 homes are occupied, this site has yet to be fully delivered.
- 2.5.15 Subsequently planning permission was granted at appeal for 85 homes at Winterbrook and for 134 homes on the former Habitat warehouse site.
- 2.5.16 Outline planning permission was granted in August 2019 for 502 homes at Site E, now known as Winterbrook Meadows, land to the north and south of Winterbrook Lane, north of the bypass (A4130). This brings the total completions and commitments for the Local Plan period to 2035 to 1,431. These sites are shown on Map 3, Built-up area Boundary Map.
- 2.5.17 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 sets the housing numbers for Wallingford to zero⁴ because these existing completions and commitments satisfy the identified housing need in the town. Consequently, there is no requirement to allocate any further strategic or non-strategic housing sites in the WNP. To do so would be unsustainable since a number of essential services and facilities do not have capacity to support further housing development.
- 2.5.18 In December 2023 updated Housing Delivery figures were published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities showing that in the period 2019-2022, SODC delivered 3312 homes against a requirement of 2136.⁵

³ https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=FolderView&ID=1670533137&CODE=0CB90C6B9ECD6BE-167277D89E4133AA9&NAME=Local%20Plan%202035%20Documents%20and%20Evidence%20Base&REF=SLP_EXAMLIB&REFERER

⁴ Table 5d: provision of housing at market towns in the Local Plan 2035 shows there are 1,435 completions and commitments in Wallingford to meet a 15% growth requirement from 2011 of 1,070 homes.

⁵ Housing Delivery Test: 2022 measurement - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2.6 SITE ALLOCATION

POLICY WS2: THE LAND ALLOCATION FOR HOUSING IN WALLINGFORD

- WS2.1** 26.8 ha at Site E land west of Reading Road, south of Bradford’s Brook, north of the Wallingford bypass (A4130) as shown on the Proposals Map is allocated for development of up to 502 new homes. Proposals for the development of the site will be supported where they comply with the following criteria:
- WS2.1(a)** vehicular access is provided via a new junction at the bypass (A 4130) roundabout with formal pedestrian crossing facilities across the bypass, and
- WS2.1(b)** footpath and cycle links through the site and linking to adjacent housing at Portcullis Drive and Brookmead Drive are provided to ensure the development is well connected to the town facilities, and
- WS2.1(c)** buffer planting and green infrastructure along Bradford’s Brook and the bypass is provided to ensure that the development is unobtrusive in the wider landscape, and
- WS2.1(d)** green corridors are provided within the site which improve biodiversity and provide attractive walking and cycling routes, and
- WS2.1(e)** the design, layout, orientation and massing of the new homes has regard to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and to the setting of the town within the wider rural landscape, and
- WS2.1(f)** the design, layout, orientation and massing of the new homes does not create unacceptable harm to the setting of designated buildings in the vicinity of the site
- WS2.1(g)** recreation facilities for young children and for teenagers are provided on the site, and makes these readily accessible, by suitable placing of pedestrian and cycle routes, for use by residents elsewhere in town, and
- WS2.1(h)** that areas identified as having archaeological significance of potential national importance, including the two ring ditch monuments identified in the south east of the site ⁶, are retained as open space with landscaping limited to ensure remains are preserved in-situ and interpreted to aid understanding of the area’s heritage.
- WS 2.2** The 2.2ha of land previously identified for a school on Site E is allocated for a medical centre, with the possibility of some housing, which should ensure that specialist housing needs for older and disabled people locally have been met. Any proposals for the site should:
- Set out the rationale for the size and design of the proposed medical centre demonstrating how long term needs have been considered
 - Provide adequate vehicle and cycle parking for staff and patients
 - Ensure that access to the site encourages both walking and cycling
 - Demonstrate the viability of the medical centre and the scale of housing proposed.
- WS2.3** The care facility on Site E should be designed to take account of identified needs in Wallingford for housing for the elderly and disabled in terms of type and size of facility

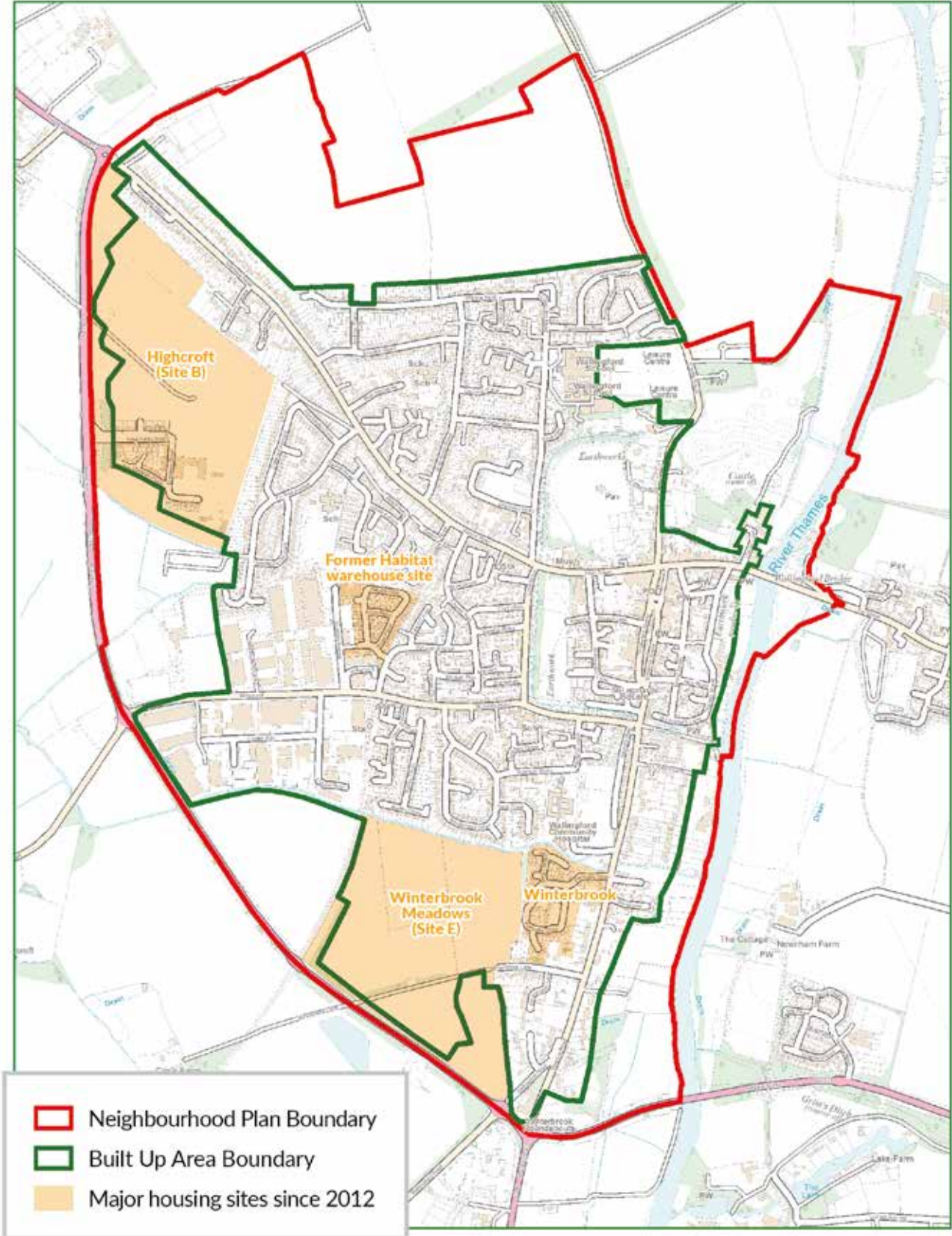
⁶ HER 2995 (SU 6024 8818) (hengiform monument) and HER 8593 (SU 6028 8834) (probable Bronze Age double concentric ditch).

- 2.6.1 Policy WS2, above, allocates Site E to secure the delivery of an appropriate level of growth and to guide decisions on any reserved matters applications or revised schemes. The Site Assessment document (Appendices A and B) shows which sites were considered and why only this site was selected. Work on Site E, known as Winterbrook Meadows, began during 2023 first occupancy is expected at the end of 2024.
- 2.6.2 The land allocated for a school is no longer required for that purpose, and Policy WS2.2 now allocates that site for a medical centre. During spring 2024, GPs from Wallingford Medical Practice are working with Berkeley Homes to prepare a joint planning application for the site.
- 2.6.3 It is essential that the design of the new medical centre is sufficient to meet the long-term needs of the local area. The design should allow space for a hub facility for the delivery of medical and health services for people in this part of South Oxfordshire and for possible expansion to meet longer term needs.⁷
- 2.6.4 The Wallingford Medical Practice is a hub facility with doctor and nurse practitioners, and related community medical services and primary care providing for both Wallingford and many surrounding villages. The current medical centre is at capacity, and the GPs say they will be unable to meet the medical needs of the committed new homes in Wallingford and surrounding areas on their existing site. There is a clear and urgent need for the medical practice to expand with space for more consulting rooms and for supporting services. 'Relocation Rationale' provided by the GPs giving justification and rationale for the relocation is attached at Appendix G.
- 2.6.5 The growing population within the catchment is leading to increased pressure on existing health facilities. The practice is already 32% undersize compared to NHS space criteria, 46% undersize compared to space criteria for the new NHS structure, and 59% undersize when known future housing development is accounted for. Plans include a future patient capacity of 22,500, which will only just meet the planned population growth within the catchment.
- 2.6.6 Policy WS2 recognises that housing allocations meet the housing requirement for Wallingford as advised by SODC and set out in the Local Plan 2035, and that it exceeds the local requirement as identified in the Wallingford HNA. WTC is conscious of the requirement in Local Plan Policy H13 and seeks to meet this by requiring that any future housing on the land previously allocated for a school at Site E should in the first instance seek to meet needs for specialist housing for older people. In addition, we indicate that the care facility on Site E should be designed to take account of specific needs of the elderly and disabled as identified in the SODC housing assessment.

⁷ Oxfordshire Health and wellbeing Strategy 2024-2030 <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/health-wellbeing>

- 2.6.7 When a new site for the medical centre is agreed, a suitable use will need to be identified for the existing medical centre site on Reading Road. The medical centre is closely linked with Wallingford Community Hospital and other health services on its current site. Continued use for health purposes would therefore be very appropriate. Housing could be a suitable alternative as the site lies within the built-up area of Wallingford. Any proposals should be considered in accordance with Policy WS3: Development within the Built-Up Area.
- 2.6.8 In developing the layout of development elsewhere within Site E, consideration must be given to conserving as far as possible the focus of late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement activity in the north west of the site. Loss of remains within this part of the site will require robust justification. Remains should be retained within open space. If this is not possible the developer is required to ensure a record of remains that will be lost is made according to a written scheme of investigation agreed in writing with the Council's archaeological advisor. Furthermore, the developer is required to provide interpretation of the site's archaeological heritage within the development, for example through public art or a display within community or publicly-accessible spaces. Where remains are to be preserved in situ commitments will be sought to ensure they are protected from and not harmed through landscaping or construction works during the construction phase of development as part of a legal agreement between the Council and developer. Criterion h of Policy WS2.1(h) addresses this matter. A maintenance plan for the affected areas should be prepared as part of the detailed development of the site. In particular it should ensure that scrub or woodland with potential to damage these remains through root action is avoided.
- 2.6.9 The Town Council wishes to ensure that the development of Site E in a positive way, maximises links to the Town Centre and services, whilst minimising the impact of the development on the setting of the town and fully supporting the Green Network. Policy WS2.1(c) comments about the need for landscape buffers along Bradford's Brook and the bypass. The details of these features should be carefully assessed based on evidence about the biodiversity characteristics of the Brook and the need to reduce the noise profile which would otherwise arise from traffic on the bypass. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that detailed plans for Site E are in general accordance with the principles outlined in this document.
- 2.6.10 Policy WS2 refers to the following National and District Policies: Local Plan 2035 Policy STRAT1

2.7 WALLINGFORD BUILT-UP AREA BOUNDARY



Map 3. Built-up Area Boundary and recent Housing sites

POLICY WS3: DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE BUILT-UP AREA

- WS3.1** The Built-up area Boundary is shown on Map 3. Within the built-up area of Wallingford development proposals will be supported subject to the following criteria:
- WS3.1(a)** an existing important, recreation or educational facility or open space, or space of ecological or environmental value is not lost except that where the proposal concerned complies with other policies in this Plan;
 - WS3.1(b)** there is no unacceptable impact on the landscape setting of the town, site and its surroundings including the setting of the adjacent Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs National Landscapes;
 - WS3.1(c)** the proposals do not result in a poor-quality environment for those who live and work in the area in general, or through noise and disturbance in particular the environment and viability of neighbouring uses is not harmed by new development or change of use;
 - WS3.1(d)** there is no loss of trees and hedgerows, and there are no unacceptable impacts on the biodiversity and flood resilience of adjacent watercourses, and
 - WS3.1(e)** proposals respect the character and appearance of the neighbouring area and locality.

Development outside the Built-up Area

- WS3.2** Proposals for development outside the built-up area will not be supported unless they are appropriate to a countryside location and are otherwise consistent with Development Plan policies and national policy.

- 2.7.1 Following the overall strategy set out for Local Plan Policy STRAT1, which identifies a need to distinguish between towns and villages and countryside areas where different policies apply, there is a clear need for a distinction between the built-up area of the town where certain forms of development are likely to be appropriate and the countryside, where conservation and enhancement of the environment are most important.
- 2.7.2 Defining the Built-up Area Boundary is a logical way of applying Government advice and strategic policy at the local level. The principle of settlement boundaries is consistent with the NPPF 2023 which expects planning to take account of the character of different areas recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, provided the boundary is not preventing the delivery of a supply of housing.
- 2.7.3 The Built-up Area Boundary and related policies provide the basis for development management decisions to: define those areas within which planning permission will normally be granted for new development, subject to other planning policies; ensure new development is sustainable; enable the best use to be made of existing and future services; provide a useful tool to protect and preserve Wallingford's important and sensitive setting by protecting the surrounding countryside from inappropriate development.

- 2.7.4 Development which consolidates the built form and is in accordance with all the relevant policies will be supported and encouraged, but proposals for inappropriate development spreading over the countryside surrounding the town not in line with relevant policies will not be supported. It is not simply a means of showing the limits of existing development, as some developed areas lie outside it, and some undeveloped areas lie within it. Appendix H explains in detail the justification for the boundary selected. The principles used in defining the Built-up Area Boundary are inclusion of:
- the main residential and/or commercial areas
 - areas on the edges of the town where planning permission has already been granted for housing
 - other land on which housing may be acceptable.
- 2.7.5 We have not included the following within the Built-up Area Boundary:
- school playing fields, recreation grounds and allotments where these adjoin the rural area
 - groups of isolated houses or other buildings where infilling or intensification of development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the rural area or setting of the National Landscapes and would be inappropriate
 - land within the curtilage of houses which adjoin the rural area where back-land development would be inappropriate
 - green buffer and land which falls outside of the curtilage of houses.
 - Land within flood zone 3 and/or within 10m of a main river
- 2.7.6 Although boundaries provide a useful guide for decision-making, all proposals must have regard to all other planning policies in the NPPF 2023 and the Development Plan.
- 2.7.7 Wallingford presents a series of challenges in terms of how best it can incorporate new development within its historic environment. We support the efficient use of resources and in particular Local Plan 2035 paragraph 8.25 which indicates that 'All development will be expected to use land efficiently, with a density and form appropriate to the site and its surroundings, considering local character and accessibility to services and facilities.
- 2.7.8 Smaller sites elsewhere in the town will also be affected by the principles in Policy STRAT5 of the Local Plan. In these cases, there will be a balance to be struck between achieving sustainable development and appropriate densities on the one hand with a series of other matters including the importance of achieving high quality design in general, and safeguarding heritage assets on the other hand.
- 2.7.9 Well designed and located infill development within the built-up area helps to provide more homes in a variety of types and sizes and can make an important contribution to the housing supply.
- 2.7.10 In 2023 planning permission was given for St Nicholas CoE School in St Nicholas Road to relocate to Highcroft, which is expected to be completed by 2026. The school's current site will be available for reuse. Continued educational and community uses would be an option for the site. Alternatively, the part of St Nicholas school site that is already developed could be used for housing, with a preference for social, affordable housing or housing for elderly people. The playing field should be retained as open space as there is very limited open space available to the community north of Wantage Road. Any proposals should be considered in accordance with Policy WS3: Development within the Built-Up Area.

- 2.7.11 All development within the built-up area must recognise the interests of nearby homes, existing businesses and community assets and take appropriate measures to ensure that the environment and viability of neighbouring activities is not harmed by new development or through change of use. Applications which have the potential to impact nearby homes, businesses or community facilities shall be expected to demonstrate that they have made appropriate mitigation as set out in paragraph 193 of the NPPF 2023 ('agent of change').
- 2.7.12 The built-up area boundary will not limit existing homes outside that area from undertaking reasonable alterations or extensions, much can be undertaken through permitted development. Development plan policies also make provision for replacement dwellings. Proposals for new homes or buildings would need to be consistent with national policies for rural housing and economies and development plan policies for rural areas

2.8 HOUSING MIX

- 2.8.1 WNP intends that new housing developments will provide an integrated mix of types and tenures of properties. This will enable young people growing up in Wallingford to continue to live locally, either renting or buying; for older people living in the town to stay in the community and downsize; and for families to grow up and stay in the town. Implementing these policies will create a cohesive community, which is one of the characteristics that makes Wallingford a desirable town to live in. Appendix C details the current status of housing provision in Wallingford.

POLICY WS4: AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING MIX

- WS4.1** A mix of housing types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be supported within new developments.
- WS4.2** Housing development should be designed to ensure that it avoids segregation by layout, housing type or tenure. New housing development should:
- WS4.2(a)** foster a sense of place that reflects the character of Wallingford, and
 - WS4.2(b)** respect the design and layout of existing buildings, and
 - WS4.2(c)** provide new, and where appropriate protect existing, public amenity green space as detailed in policies ENV1 and ENV2, and
 - WS4.2(d)** integrate affordable housing such that it is indistinguishable in appearance from the market housing on that site.
 - WS4.2(e)** not isolate affordable housing, nor concentrate it in clusters of more than 15 dwellings or 10% of the development total whichever is smaller, unless it is necessary for management purposes or to address local authority/registered provider requirements

- 2.8.2 A wide mix of housing types is needed in order to meet the requirements and aspirations of the community and to help increase the options for housing mobility within the town. The housing mix in new developments shall have regard to South Oxfordshire District Council's latest evidence of need in general, and the findings of the Chameleon Housing Needs Assessment of the town in particular. To foster a supportive environment and community well-being we encourage fully integrated developments which do not isolate particular groups for example the elderly, disabled or those in affordable housing.
- 2.8.3 Policy WS4 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 Policy H11

2.9 HOUSING FOR OLDER AND DISABLED PEOPLE

- 2.9.1 National policy seeks to ensure that appropriate provision is made for housing for older people. We have undertaken a review of potential need and the supply position for the immediate local area centred on Wallingford which has a good range of facilities and access to public transport. Appendix F sets out details of this review.
- 2.9.2 We have concluded that in the short term the supply of specialist housing is sufficient. SODC is undertaking a study of housing needs for the elderly as part of its Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Any additional need would best be addressed by expanding the permitted scheme on the Wallingford strategic housing site on Site E, Policy WS2 makes provision for this. Specialist housing needs to be provided in larger schemes (over 60 units) to be viable.
- 2.9.3 Wallingford has a number of areas providing suitable housing for elderly people wishing to remain living independently, for example St Lucian's and Silversmith Place. South Oxfordshire Local Plan policy H11 requires that all affordable housing and at least 15% of market housing on sites of 10 homes or more should be designed to meet the standards of Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings. In addition, at least 5% of affordable homes should be designed to the standards of Part M (4) Category 3: wheelchair accessible dwellings.
- 2.9.4 We also support independent living for older people in mixed-age residential areas. By improving the general mix of housing, the WNP aims to provide more opportunities for independent living by widening housing choice and flexibility for this group who wish to downsize and to retain independence.
- 2.9.5 Our view is that in the short term there is a reasonable supply of housing suitable for older and disabled people locally and this will allow time for the strategic authorities to make a more thorough and wide-ranging assessment of requirements. No allocation is made in this neighbourhood plan review, however Policy WS2.2 requires that if further housing is included on the school site on Site E then specialist housing needs for older and disabled people locally should be met.





Chapter 3

Design and character assessment

3.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. This chapter looks at sustainable design. It sets out a clear vision of what this means for the town and the objectives necessary to bring the vision to reality.

Vision

- New development in Wallingford will be integrated into a well-connected and sustainable town.
- New housing developments will be attractive places for people to live in and access key facilities and services.
- New buildings and alterations to existing buildings should include the use of sustainable materials, be energy efficient and avoid light pollution.
- New housing will be sufficient to meet local needs, as identified in the submission version of the Local Plan 2035.

Objectives

HD01: Ensure new development is constructed to meet up to date standards of resource use efficiency and to take account of the impacts of climate change

HD02: Ensure all new development is well related and connected to the town and contributes to the necessary local infrastructure and services to facilitate sustainable local travel and economic growth, and to meet the health, education and recreation needs of the growing local population within Wallingford and its dependent catchment area.

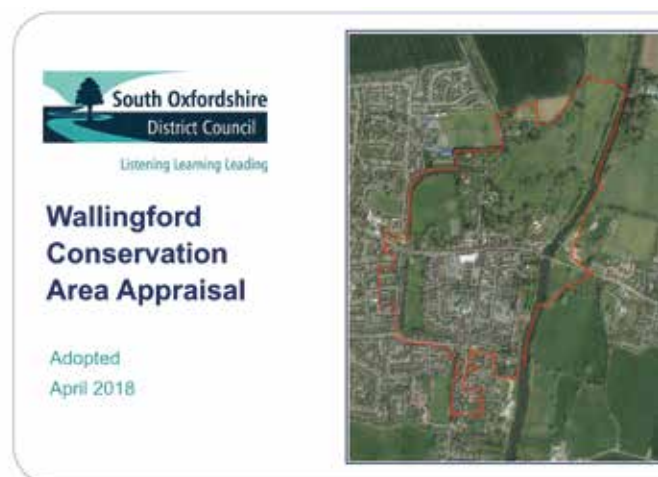
HD03: Ensure all new development is of good quality and well designed to provide an attractive environment for residents and visitors enabling them to easily access services and facilities. New development should respect the local historic and natural environments. In particular it should safeguard and enhance the setting of the nearby nationally significant landscapes, the River Thames and the fabric and setting of the town's important historic heritage.

3.1 DESIGN AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 3.1.1 Exemplary and sustainable design and architecture is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023⁸; it recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and creates better places for people to live and work in.
- 3.1.2 Our community puts a high value on the historic character of Wallingford's town centre, the town's location on the River Thames, and the attractive countryside surrounding the town. There is a desire that new development should be of good design, practical and sustainable, whether traditional or modern.
- 3.1.3 We would encourage design to include sufficient space for off-street parking, gardens, and access to open spaces for informal recreation that link into the Wallingford Green Network.

⁸ NPPF 2023 Chapter 12 and Planning Practice Guidance on design

- 3.1.4 The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide⁹ outlines design processes and principles for responding to the character of the local area. Because these guides do not offer advice on a specific local area, we have prepared a Character Assessment of the areas which fall outside the two Conservation Areas to guide applicants. This is called the Wallingford Character Assessment Outside the Historic Core and is given in Appendix E. It identifies the key features that we would encourage in new developments, and the features to avoid because they do not respect and enhance local character.
- 3.1.5 We encourage applicants to consult the Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal (2018)¹⁰ and the Winterbrook Character Assessment (2012)¹¹ which details the special historic characteristics of the town, its Scheduled Monuments and Designated Buildings (These are shown in Map 4 In Chapter 4). The Appraisal identifies a detailed analysis and photographic record of the Conservation Area, including building and paved materials.
- 3.1.6 Shop fronts play an important role in creating a welcoming ambience in the Town and determining whether people will be attracted to enter into shops. There are a good number of historic shopfronts remaining in the Town and their retention will be encouraged.
- 3.1.7 The Traditional Shopfront Design Guide¹² published by SODC in 1995 is an important document in determining planning applications. The document sets out the general principles and details of good design. It provides guidance on the retention of historic shopfronts and on the design of new shopfronts in the Town Centre. The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide (published June 2022) also has a useful section on traditional shopfront design.¹³
- 3.1.8 We encourage applicants to consult both the above documents when preparing planning applications for such alterations. The use of natural materials is encouraged avoiding the use of plastic or acrylic materials. The use of lighting for signage and within shopfronts, where necessary, should be low key and discreetly positioned. This advice will ensure that the attractive character of the Town is retained for the future and that light pollution is avoided



3.2 DESIGN POLICIES

- 3.2.1 The policies overleaf set out the general design parameters against which all new development will be assessed. These policies promote high quality, well-designed development to respect the local character of Wallingford.

⁹ SODC Local Plan 2011-2035/4 Design Policies DES1, DES2 and DES3

¹⁰ <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/11/Wallingford-Conservation-Area-Appraisal.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/Winterbrook-CA-Appraisal.pdf>

¹² https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/05/Shopfront_Design_Guide-SPG.pdf

¹³ Built form ([southoxon.gov.uk](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk))

POLICY HD1: DESIGN

- HD1.1** New development should be of a high quality and sustainable design, conserving and enhancing local character, especially in relation to distinctive building materials, and should respond positively to local surroundings.
- HD1.2** New development should have regard to the process and principles of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide and where appropriate, the Traditional Shopfront Design Guide, the detailed information in the Wallingford Character Assessment outside the Historic Core (Appendix E), the Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal and the Winterbrook Character Assessment.

- 3.2.2 Policy HD1 promotes high quality, well-designed development, including contemporary designs, which conserves and enhances the local character of Wallingford.
- 3.2.3 Policy HD1 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 Policy DES1, DES2 and NPPF 2023.

POLICY HD2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

- HD2.1** New development, including extensions, refurbishments and conversions, should be built to improve resilience to the effects of climate change. Well-designed schemes that demonstrate they are zero-carbon or negative carbon; through the use of sustainable energy features (solar panels/heat pumps), and efficient use of water will be particularly supported.
- HD2.2** Sustainable design features in new developments must be sensitive to their location and should safeguard and where possible enhance the character of designated and non-designated heritage assets and buildings in the Wallingford and Winterbrook Conservation Areas.

- 3.2.4 Policy HD2 promotes the use of sustainable design in all development and for these to be resilient to climate change.
- 3.2.5 Whilst HD2 sets a high threshold which may be challenging in some circumstances, we note that developments nationally are achieving these aims, for example: Sovereign Housing¹⁵ homes in West Oxfordshire and Net Zero homes in Southmoor.¹⁶
- 3.2.6 Policy HD2 refers to the following National and District Policies: NPPF 2023 Chapter 12& Local Plan 2035 Policies DES9, DES10

¹⁵ <https://housingdigital.co.uk/sovereign-starts-work-on-22-energy-efficient-homes-in-oxfordshire/>

¹⁶ <https://www.sustainableni.org/case-study/springfield-meadows-housing-development-better-net-zero>



Bradburn Close



Nelson Close



Station Road



St John's Road

POLICY HD3: AVOIDANCE OF LIGHT POLLUTION

HD3.1 Proposals for new lighting systems, including neon and industrial lighting, on new and existing developments (residential, recreational, retail, car parks or employment sites) should avoid upward light spill and should, in particular, mitigate the impacts of light pollution affecting residential areas and wildlife.

HD3.2 Developments should be designed to minimise the detrimental impact of glare and light spill on sensitive locations including housing, local amenity, wildlife, highway and waterway users.

3.2.7 It is acknowledged that lighting of public areas helps people feel safer and can enable activities such as sport to take place after dark. However, light pollution, the inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light, can become a public health issue because bright lights disrupt people's natural sleeping rhythms causing irritability and insomnia. Light pollution damages the character of the historic environment, adversely affects nocturnal wildlife especially bats, and reduces the opportunity for people to enjoy looking at the night sky.

3.2.8 Where lighting is proposed consideration should be given to the use of low-level lighting, flat cut off lighting, the use of motion sensors and timing switches, the design and access statement should describe why the measures have been selected, including a discussion of alternatives. Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance.¹⁷

¹⁷<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution#possible-ecological-impact>





Chapter 4

Historic environment

4.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

- The nationally significant historic character of Wallingford with its heritage assets, including built heritage, street grid and historic open spaces, and archaeology, will be conserved and enhanced.
- Wallingford's Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Local Interest Buildings (non-designated heritage assets) form the intrinsic and distinctive character of the town and will be conserved and enhanced for future generations to enjoy and learn about Wallingford's place in England's history, and reinforce the sense of place.
- New development will protect the special character of Wallingford and the Conservation Areas and link into the existing built residential and industrial environments to form a cohesive edge to the town.

Objectives

HBE1: Protect the special character of Wallingford as an historic market town with Saxon origins, within a rural landscape.

HBE2: Conserve and enhance Wallingford's rich and varied built form, historic assets and archaeology and their settings.

HBE3: Research, analyse, interpret and disseminate the history and archaeology of Wallingford, so as to strengthen the importance of heritage through education, fostering a sense of place and 'ownership' amongst residents and visitors, and contributing to the economy of the town.

HBE4: Enhance the historic character of Wallingford by using the historic environment to inform high quality design in future developments.

4.1 SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1.1 It is the view of Historic England that Wallingford stands out as a focus of nationally significant heritage assets, particularly in relation to the value of the remains of the Alfredian burh as evidence of the resurgence of the Kingdom of Wessex in the late 9th century, and the unification of Wessex and Mercia in the early stages of creation of the English nation. The town and Norman castle were also significant during the Norman Conquest and the post-Conquest period as a key point in the network of Norman royal power bases.

4.2 BACKGROUND

- 4.2.1 Wallingford is situated on the river gravels of the nationally important prehistoric landscape that borders the middle Thames. Its rise to national importance began in the late C9 when it was founded as one of two key burhs (the other was Winchester) of the Alfredian burghal system defending Wessex against the Danes. It played a key role in the Norman Conquest, marked by the building of one of the largest royal castles in the country in 1067, later the seat of the princes of Wales. Its last key role in English history was the siege of the castle by Cromwell's forces in 1646. After it was demolished in 1652, the town slid into relative

obscurity but eventually recovered modest prosperity by a revival of its malting trade, of which traces survive from the C16 and C17 (St Lucian's) and, in Goldsmiths Lane, C18 and C19. Although much of the medieval building has gone, the Conservation Area contains properties that date from the C14 to C19, including the Town Hall of c. 1670. It encloses the ancient burh, with its surviving earthen banks, the open areas of the Kinecroft and the Bull Croft, and the huge castle enceinte (about 35 acres). All of these are Scheduled Monuments, and comprise the finest surviving medieval urban townscape in the country.

GEOLGY AND LOCAL BUILDING MATERIALS

- 4.2.2 The ancient and nationally important market town of Wallingford lies on a gravel spur on the west bank of the River Thames and is surrounded by the flat river flood plain. The immediate geology is gravel and alluvium laid over the Glauconitic Marl Member close to the Thames, and the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation in the western part of the town.
- 4.2.3 This geology has traditionally dictated the building materials used locally. Some timber-framed buildings remain visible while others remain behind later brick cladding. Clunch, a soft limestone, was much used in many buildings and boundary walls, sometimes in conjunction with locally made soft red brick. Soft grey vitrified bricks, an accidental by-product of early firing methods, became a decorative enhancement until C20 when kiln design changed. Knapped flint was also much used in both buildings and boundary walls. Many of the older buildings are of a red brick which was manufactured at nearby Nettlebed until the early C20. Many of these materials are being damaged by gravel and water spray where buildings are close to roads; this problem may be exacerbated by wetter winters due to climate change. Traffic through the town's historic streets needs to be controlled to avoid this damage.



C18 vitrified header brickwork, Church Lane



Timber framing, St Mary's Street

- 4.2.4 No thatched roofs remain in the Plan area but the pitch of a number of roofs reflect the buildings' previous roofing material. Roofing materials have traditionally been locally made red clay pegged tiles. Slate was introduced in the 18th century.
- 4.2.5 All these materials strongly contribute to the distinctiveness of the town. Where repair work or replacement of parts of buildings, walls, or roofs is necessary it is expected that salvaged bricks, tiles or slates will be used or similar materials from a specialist manufacturer.

- 4.2.6 We encourage applicants to consult the Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal (2018) and the Winterbrook Character Assessment (2012), which detail the special historic characteristics of the town, its Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and non-designated historical assets. The Appraisal identifies a detailed analysis and photographic record of the Conservation Areas, including building and paved materials.
- 4.2.7 The Wallingford and Winterbrook Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Designated Buildings are shown in Map 4 (opposite). The marks on Map 4 are indicative only of listed buildings due to the small scale of the map and complexity of listing addresses. The definitive list is held by Historic England and should be consulted.¹⁸

EARLY INHABITANTS AND TOWN LAYOUT

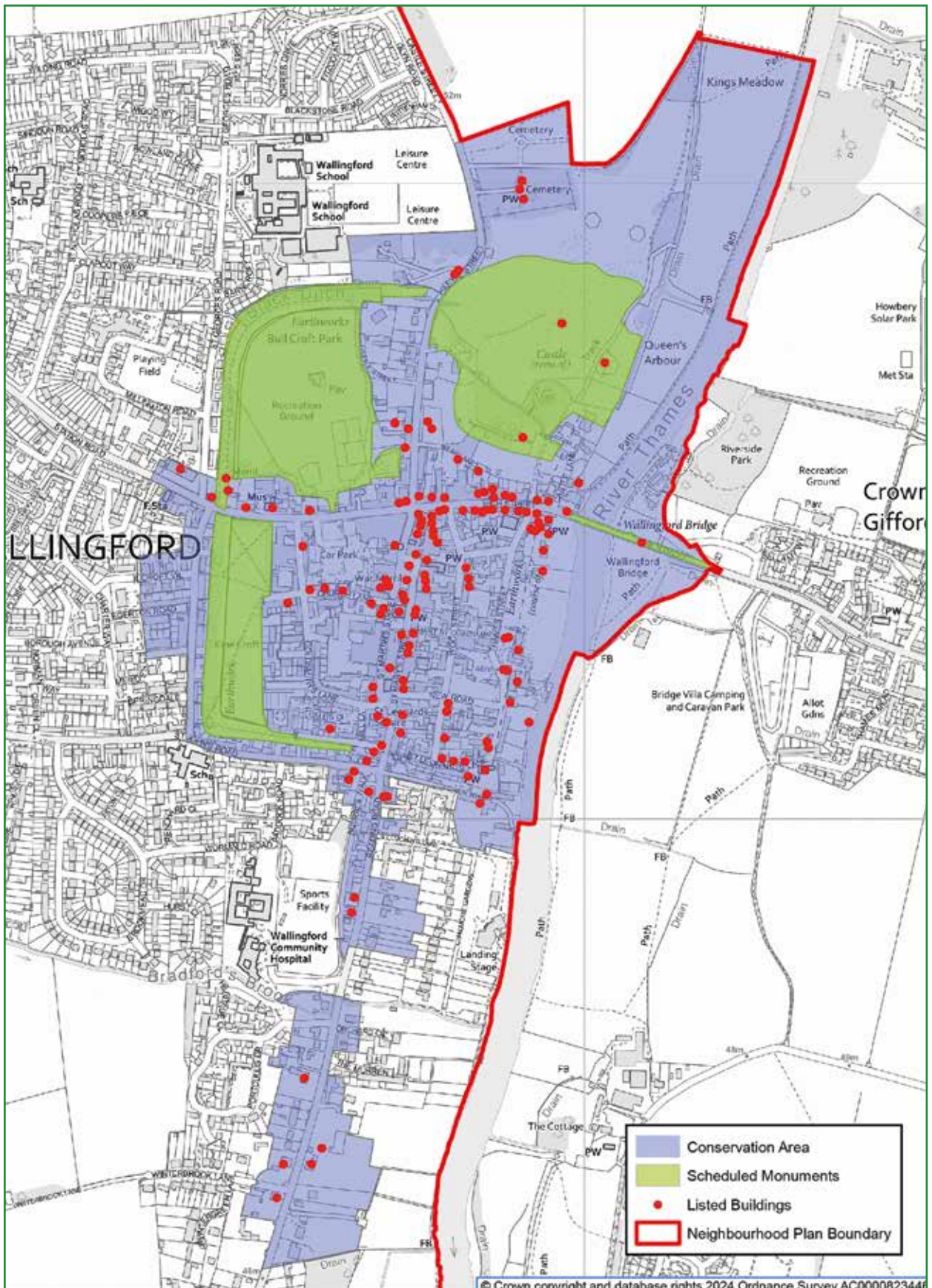
- 4.2.8 Recent archaeological research and excavations on former agricultural land to the west of Wallingford, abutting the bypass, have revealed considerable and important evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation. Neolithic pits on Site E (Winterbrook Meadows) have produced some 7,000-8,000 flints, one pit with over 2,500 pieces making it one of the largest flint assemblages recovered from an early Neolithic pit in southern England. The flints and other features are an important resource for examining technological change between the early Neolithic through to the early Bronze Age. The assemblage of prehistoric pottery too is remarkable in representing material from almost every prehistoric period and rare in being able to track changes in prehistoric ceramic use in a single, quite restricted landscape. Seeds and nutshells are revealing important information too about the way of life on the site¹⁹. Some long-lived trackways, in use from the Early Bronze Age into the Iron Age appear to be major highways that linked Sites E and B. Middle Bronze Age field systems may also be contiguous. Substantial Roman archaeology has recently been found at Site D. Important Roman and Bronze Age remains have also been found nearby in Cholsey.
- 4.2.9 The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles show that the river crossing was an important factor in siting the burh in the late C9 as part of a string of defences ordered by Alfred the Great across Wessex against the Danes. Recent and known archaeology has shown substantial remains of Saxon houses fronting the street grid. Coins were struck at a Royal Mint, Goldsmiths Lane being its assumed location. Medieval burgage plots also remain, inserted into the Saxon grid.



Wallingford Town from the bridge over the Thames

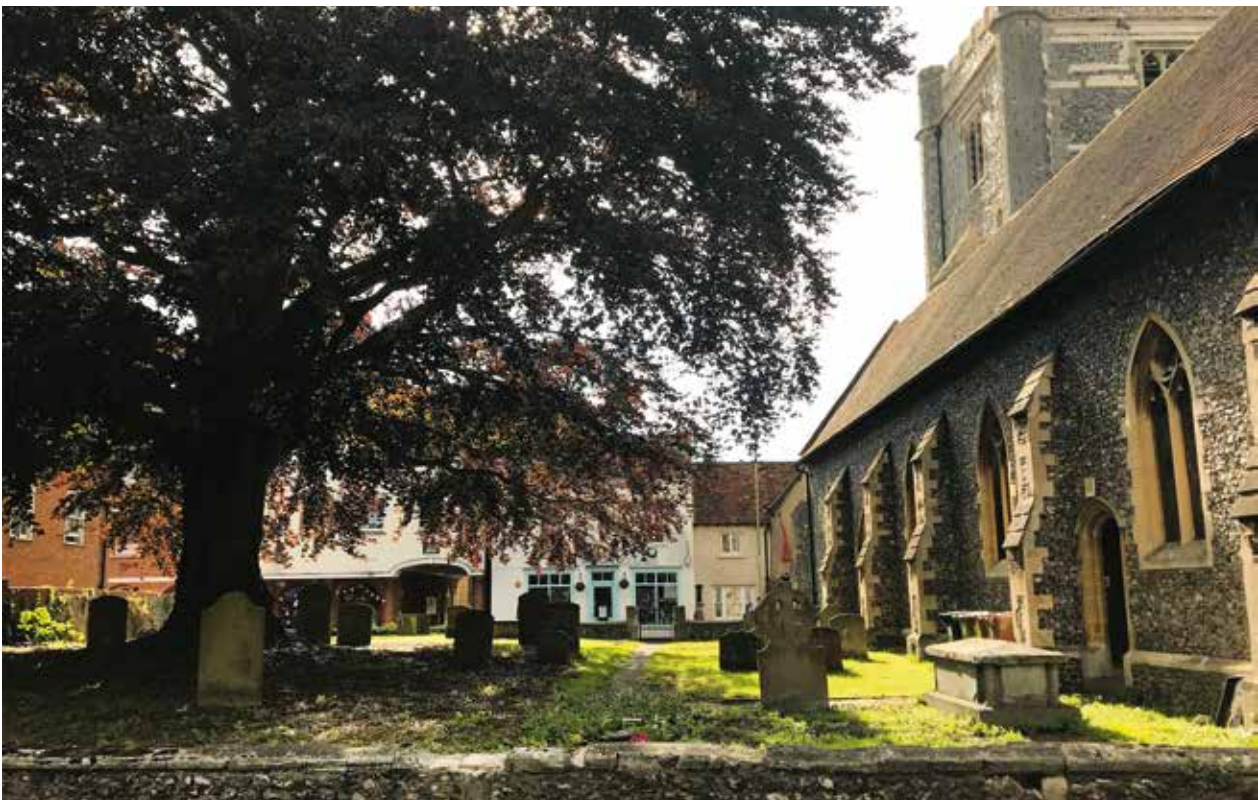
¹⁸ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing>

¹⁹ Slade End Farm, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design. Oxford Archaeology, October 2019



Map 3. Designated heritage assets within the Plan Area. This illustrates the Wallingford and Winterbrook Conservation Areas, the Scheduled Monuments and the listed buildings. For a definitive listing please consult Heritage England.

- 4.2.10 The core of the town is defined by the Alfredian burh ramparts and ditches inside which much of the Anglo-Saxon grid layout remains. These are the best-preserved Saxon defences and street grid in England. The historic character of Wallingford in the Anglo-Saxon, medieval and (in some parts of the town) later has been that of a developed core with open space lying between the core and the defensive circuit. These open spaces, known as The Kinecroft and Bull Croft, are of considerable heritage significance. On the north east burh boundary are the substantial remains of the great castle inserted by William the Conqueror in 1067. The castle was a royal residence and important in the development of the burh into a town. The impressive eastern entrance to the town is over the river bridge which contains 13th century material in four of its arches. From here the motte of the castle can be seen and the riverside meadows containing the ruins. Only a small portion of the eastern bank is within the Wallingford boundary, but water meadows here constitute borrowed landscape. The late C18 open-work spire of St Peter's church is also seen from the bridge and many other places in the town.
- 4.2.11 Before the advent of the Great Western Railway to the south of Wallingford in 1840 the River Thames was the main highway for commerce, the town having several wharves. Today the river is an important leisure amenity for boating activities and informal swimming. Oxford University has their boathouse here so that crews for the national Boat Race can train on a quiet straight stretch of the river and the town has a thriving rowing club. Trade from boats passing through and mooring in Wallingford provides important income.
- 4.2.12 In the heart of the town is the market place with an architectural set piece of a 17th century town hall behind which appears St Mary's Church, with a Norman base to the tower, and churchyard. Wallingford was granted its first royal charter in 1155 by Henry II (one of the oldest in England) and to this day a charter market is held in the open every Friday. The market place is very much the commercial and social hub of the town with many events taking place here during the year. By charter too, Wallingford held selling and hiring fairs during the year which are now replaced by a fun fair.



St Mary's churchyard looking towards St Martin's Street

- 4.2.13 Wallingford became an important trade centre for malting, brewing and the manufacture of agricultural goods. The Corn Exchange in Market Place has now found new use as a community run theatre and cinema. Hunt's Mill, Boughton's Mill and Wilder's Iron Foundry have all kept their character while having successfully been converted to residential use. The 18th century Wallingford Brewery buildings in Goldsmith's Lane are being converted to residential use, without parking.
- 4.2.14 To the west are the Bull Croft and Kinecroft, open green spaces defined by the Saxon burh ramparts and bisected by the historic line of the High Street. The Kinecroft, linked to the Market Place by a lane on the line of the ancient grid, is an undeveloped green space much used for informal recreation and to accommodate the charter fairs, the largest free music festival in the south of England, bonfire night celebrations and other community events. The Bull Croft on the northern side of the High Street was gifted to the town in 1914 to provide recreation for the inhabitants. It has sports pitches and a sports pavilion, tennis and netball courts and children's play areas.
- 4.2.15 Apart from redevelopment on the sites of existing buildings, twentieth century development has largely taken place to the west of the historic core with smaller areas to the north and south. This development mainly comprises private and social housing with an industrial estate close to the bypass. The bypass was constructed in 1993, necessitating a new bridge over the River Thames to the south of the town. Former agricultural land enclosed within the boundaries of the Plan area, primarily to the west, has been put forward for development to meet housing need.
- 4.2.16 The national importance of the historic town was highlighted by the Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project 2008-2010, a collaboration between the Universities of Leicester, Exeter and Oxford. Research on the town grid and castle continues today in collaboration with the University of Leicester. Three major academic publications came out of this project and should be used to inform future²⁰ development. These can be obtained via the Wallingford Museum.
- 4.2.17 Wallingford's distinctive layout, skyline and the many historic buildings within the Conservation Areas have created a vibrant setting and ambiance which encourages business and commerce and has become a favourite setting for several film companies and television programmes. They also create a sense of place which has considerable appeal to people wanting to live and work here.

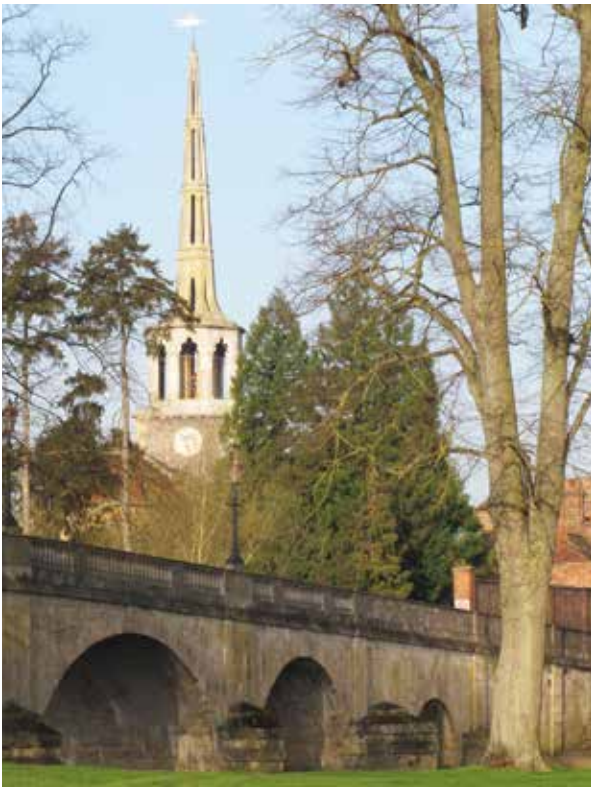
4.3 SCHEDULED MONUMENTS, ARCHAEOLOGY AND BURGAGE PLOTS

- 4.3.1 Scheduled monuments are those deemed by the Secretary of State as being nationally important. They are not necessarily archaeological although they often are. There is a presumption that they will be handed on to future generations in much the same state that they were scheduled. Wallingford has four Scheduled Monuments:
1. Wallingford Bridge (also listed Grade II*)
 2. Wallingford Castle
 3. the Anglo-Saxon ramparts recorded as Wallingford Town Walls
 4. the Bull Croft and Kinecroft recorded as the Saxon Town

²⁰ The Origins of the Borough of Wallingford - Archaeological and historical perspectives, Edited by KSB Keats-Rohan & DR Roffe, BAR British Series 494, 2009

Transforming Townscapes - From burh to borough: the archaeology of Wallingford, AD 800-1400, N Christie, O Creighton with M Edgeworth & H Hanerow, The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 35, 2013

Wallingford: the Castle & the Town in Context, KSB Keats-Rohan, N Christie, D Roffe, BAR British Series 621, Archaeopress 2015



St Peter's Church and Wallingford Bridge



Bull Croft northern ramparts



The Kinicroft



Wallingford Castle Motte & Bailey

- 4.3.2 Definitive maps are available online from Historic England²¹
- 4.3.3 The Anglo-Saxon ramparts and ditches of the Bull Croft and Kinecroft perimeter are probably the best preserved in the country and visually define the extent of the Alfredian burh.
- 4.3.4 More than 30 burhs were established but Wallingford was the largest, together with Alfred's capital, Winchester. Archaeological investigation within recent years has revealed pathways, the sites of early Medieval buildings and, on the Bull Croft, the site of Holy Trinity Priory, dissolved in 1530. The northern end of the Bull Croft also retains evidence of ridge and furrow ploughing.
- 4.3.5 William the Conqueror's instructions in 1067 to build a great castle ensured the preservation of the Saxon wall on the north by re-using it. Wallingford Castle played an important role in national events until the end of the Civil War. Having been fortified for the King, Cromwell ordered its demolition in 1652. The castle motte and bailey and ramparts remain as well-defined earthworks.
- 4.3.6 Our archaeological resource has great social, economic, cultural and educational value for the community and this potential can be developed through suitable management and interpretation. Almost everywhere within the Plan area is of potentially high archaeological interest. For example, land west of Winterbrook (Site E) has recently revealed important Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age features. It is expected that any new development or redevelopment proposals will include an archaeological assessment, provision for an archaeological watching brief and recording.

4.4 LISTED BUILDINGS

- 4.4.1 If a building is considered by the Secretary of State (for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) to be of special architectural or historic interest it will be included in a list of such buildings. The designation regime is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The list is maintained by Historic England.
- 4.4.2 Listed buildings are a finite resource and an irreplaceable asset. As at September 2020 Wallingford has four buildings designated at Grade I, 11 at Grade II* and 128 at Grade II. The Grade I buildings are:
1. The Town Hall
 2. Remains of St Nicholas's College (also Scheduled)
 3. Remains of Queen's Tower (also Scheduled)
 4. Fragment of Castle Wall (also Scheduled)
- 4.4.3 Listed buildings are important assets to the town and play an exceptional role in explaining its past and creating its ambiance and sense of place.
- 4.4.4 The schedule of listed buildings in Wallingford was last reviewed in 1984 and is now considered inadequate. On-going research and evidence have revealed that many more buildings and walls are of more significance than originally thought. For example, the substantial frame of a mid-C14 hall house has been discovered within three houses in High Street and mid-C17 timber framing within six cottages on Kinecroft.

²¹ https://mapservices.historicengland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/6360/HLE_A4L_NoGrade%7CHLE_A3L_NoGrade.pdf
https://mapservices.historicengland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/6330/HLE_A4L_NoGrade%7CHLE_A3L_NoGrade.pdf
https://mapservices.historicengland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/6329/HLE_A4L_NoGrade%7CHLE_A3L_NoGrade.pdf
https://mapservices.historicengland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/6365/HLE_A4L_NoGrade%7CHLE_A3L_NoGrade.pdf

4.5 HERITAGE AT RISK REGISTER

- 4.5.1 Historic England maintains a register of buildings, places of worship, monuments, parks and gardens, conservation areas, battlefields and wreck sites that are designated and have been assessed and found to be at risk.
- 4.5.2 In 2018 Historic England officers visited the following buildings and scheduled monuments in Wallingford and deemed them to be sufficiently at risk to place on the Heritage At Risk Register:
1. the Motte of Wallingford Castle, forming part of the Scheduled Monument listed as Wallingford Castle
 2. the Defences to the Saxon Town (the perimeter banks and ditches to the Bull Croft and Kinecroft)
 3. the remains of St Nicholas College, Grade 1 listed, and forming part of the Scheduled Monument known as Wallingford Castle. During 2022/23 the remains of St Nicholas College were repaired with grant aid and are now removed from Heritage At Risk Register.
- 4.5.3 Items (1) and (2) remain in need of consolidation, conservation and a sustainable management plan. The Motte needs stabilisation. The accelerated deterioration of the defensive ramparts around the Kinecroft and Bull Croft caused by mountain bikers continues to be problematic. Historic England is working with the Town Council to see the sites and their structures conserved, explained and maintained.

4.6 CONSERVATION AREAS

- 4.6.1 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. SODC has a duty to review the boundary of existing conservation areas and to designate additional conservation areas where appropriate (Section 69, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Wallingford Conservation Area

- 4.6.2 Wallingford Conservation Area²² boundary was reviewed and incorporated in the Wallingford Conservation Area Character Assessment adopted by SODC in April 2018.
- 4.6.3 The Conservation Area lies in the north eastern section of the WNP area. It follows the extent of the Saxon burh and Norman Castle, abutting the River Thames, with small additions to the west and south to encompass 19th and early 20th century residential expansion e.g. Croft Villas, Egerton Road, Croft Road, South View.
- 4.6.4 The Conservation Area extends east towards Crowmarsh Gifford to encompass the full extent of the Scheduled and Listed Wallingford Bridge, the Riverside Meadows to the south, and the leisure and amenity land to the north of the bridge, where the outdoor swimming pool and SODC car park are located. The banks of the River Thames immediately south and north of the bridge including moorings are included within this Conservation Area.
- 4.6.5 The Wallingford Conservation Area Character Assessment contains lists of Issues and Opportunities for each of 10 identified Character Areas in the assessment. These include the erosion of the historic character of dwellings by the insertion of uPVC windows, garish modern shop fronts and signage, and new development that fails to respect the character of the area in terms of design, scale and materials.

²²

http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=873769927&CODE=5F88EBOCF522F13DECB8A8D8FFB97BB9A

http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=873769928&CODE=5F88EBOCF522F13D7049962C3154D7E8

http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=873769925&CODE=5F88EBOCF522F13DF3E2DB1E38513A2E

http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=873769926&CODE=5F88EBOCF522F13D6AB0558721FE8629



Wallingford High Street (west)



Wallingford Market Place



Wallingford High Street (east)

Winterbrook Conservation Area

- 4.6.6 The Winterbrook Conservation Area²³ starts some 100 metres from the southern end of the Wallingford Conservation Area. Linear in character, it runs due south from Bradford's Brook, a small stream formerly delineating the Wallingford Municipal Boundary and Cholsey Parish Boundary. The area here developed from Medieval times as a roadside hamlet called Winterbrook which lent its name to the road. It terminates some 450 metres south at the southern boundaries of the listed The Lawns on the western side and No 33 Winterbrook on the eastern side.
- 4.6.7 The majority of the high-quality buildings date from the late 18th and 19th centuries, are set back from the road in spacious plots and are well preserved. Brick walls and cast-iron railings to historic boundaries make a major contribution to the street scene as do a good number of mature trees. Some agricultural buildings remain at Winterbrook Farm and Winterbrook Lodge is attached to a probably 18th century barn. No. 25 Winterbrook, formerly the Nag's Head Public House, is likely to date from the later 17th century. Winterbrook House dates from c1750 and was for many years the home of crime writer Agatha Christie.
- 4.6.8 On the eastern boundaries of the Conservation Area are large open fields abutting the River Thames.



Former Nag's Head, Reading Road, Winterbrook

4.7 NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework allows local planning authorities to identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.7.2 Wallingford has 175 buildings so designated and these are itemized as Local Interest Buildings in the Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal - Appendix A, adopted by SODC in April 2018.
- 4.7.3 The buildings encompass a wide range of styles and uses from cottages and houses (detached, semi-detached and terraces) to shops, churches, former industrial buildings, warehouses and Wallingford fire station. They all contribute to the character of the Conservation Area and speak of its history.

²³<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Winterbrook%20CA%20Appraisal.pdf>
http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Winterbrook%20CA_Map.pdf

4.7.4 Archaeological remains outside of the Scheduled Monuments are also non-designated heritage assets and constitute a huge and important source of information about the town's past. Information is continuously added to the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record hosted by Oxfordshire County Council as part of Heritage Gateway. The record can be accessed online.²⁴

4.8 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

4.8.1 An Article 4 direction is made by the local planning authority. It restricts the scope of permitted development rights either in relation to a particular area or site, or a particular type of development anywhere in the authority's area.

4.8.2 Where an Article 4 direction is in effect, a planning application may be required for development that would otherwise have been permitted development. Article 4 directions are used to control works that could threaten the character of an area of acknowledged importance, such as a conservation area.



St John's Green

4.8.3 In many instances in Wallingford it has particular relevance to the replacement of original windows and doors with unsuitable uPVC items.

4.8.4 The following areas shown on the Local Plan 2011 Proposals Map, have Article 4 Directions served on them:

1. Beansheaf Terrace and Croft Terrace
2. Nos 12-16 Castle Street
3. Kinecroft terrace and Church Lane
4. St John's Green
5. St Peter's Street, eastern end of High Street, and northern ends of Thames Street and Wood Street
6. St Leonard's Lane and southern end of Thames Street

4.8.5 It is expected that consultation with SODC will take place before any alterations by way of repair, replacement or development of any building with an Article 4 notice takes place.

²⁴ <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=97&id=4775>

4.9 VIEWS AND VISTAS

- 4.9.1 In the built environment, and in particular an historic environment such as Wallingford, views and vistas are important in creating a sense of place and explaining historic development. Planned views, key views, dynamic views and panoramic views in the Wallingford Conservation Area are shown on Map 12 of the Wallingford Conservation Area Character Assessment. There is no such map for the Winterbrook Conservation Area but it should not be assumed that such views and vistas do not exist.



Motte view

4.10 HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY POLICIES

- 4.10.1 The following policies take account of the statutory obligation to preserve and enhance Wallingford's heritage and historic assets, as set out in national legislation and national and local policies.

POLICY HA1: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- HA1.1** As appropriate to their scale and nature development proposals should protect, conserve or enhance the town's historic environment. This includes historic buildings and structures, Conservation Areas, landscapes and archaeology.
- HA1.2** Development proposals should:
- HA1.2(a)** ensure that vacant historic buildings are appropriately re-used to prevent deterioration of condition
- HA1.2(b)** ensure that alterations (internal or external to the fabric of the building (eg to improve energy efficiency), are balanced alongside the need to retain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and significance of the asset
- HA1.2(c)** make provision for the realisation of the potential of the heritage assets, through their enhancement, interpretation and education (See also TC4).
- HA1.3** Development proposals are required to take into account any impact, including cumulative impacts from other developments, on Wallingford's nationally important Saxon and Medieval layout, and to conserve or enhance the grid plan roads, lanes and burgrave plots. It is expected that where an impact is likely to occur proposals will identify its significance and appropriate ways in which the impact can be mitigated.

- 4.10.2 Policy HA1 ensures that Wallingford's built, archaeological and landscape heritage is conserved and maintained in an appropriate manner for both the present and future generations to enjoy.
- 4.10.3 Heritage assets can be enjoyed in many ways and on many levels. The Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments tend to be taken for granted as they are so much part of the town fabric. It is intended that an introductory publication outlining the history of the town will be written and a further publication explaining the historic buildings. It is also intended to renew and update the current interpretation boards on the monuments. Sites will be enhanced by ensuring appropriate use, and controlling vegetation where appropriate. Listed buildings will be enhanced by identifying and retaining original features.
- 4.10.4 Wallingford's Saxon grid layout is of national importance as are the surviving patterns of burgage plots. This policy seeks to ensure that the layout and remaining burgage plots are not destroyed or eroded.
- 4.10.5 Policy HA1 refers to the following National and District Policies - NPPF 2023 Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment & SODC Local Plan 2035 policies ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, ENV9

POLICY HA2: EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT ON HISTORIC AND HERITAGE ASSETS

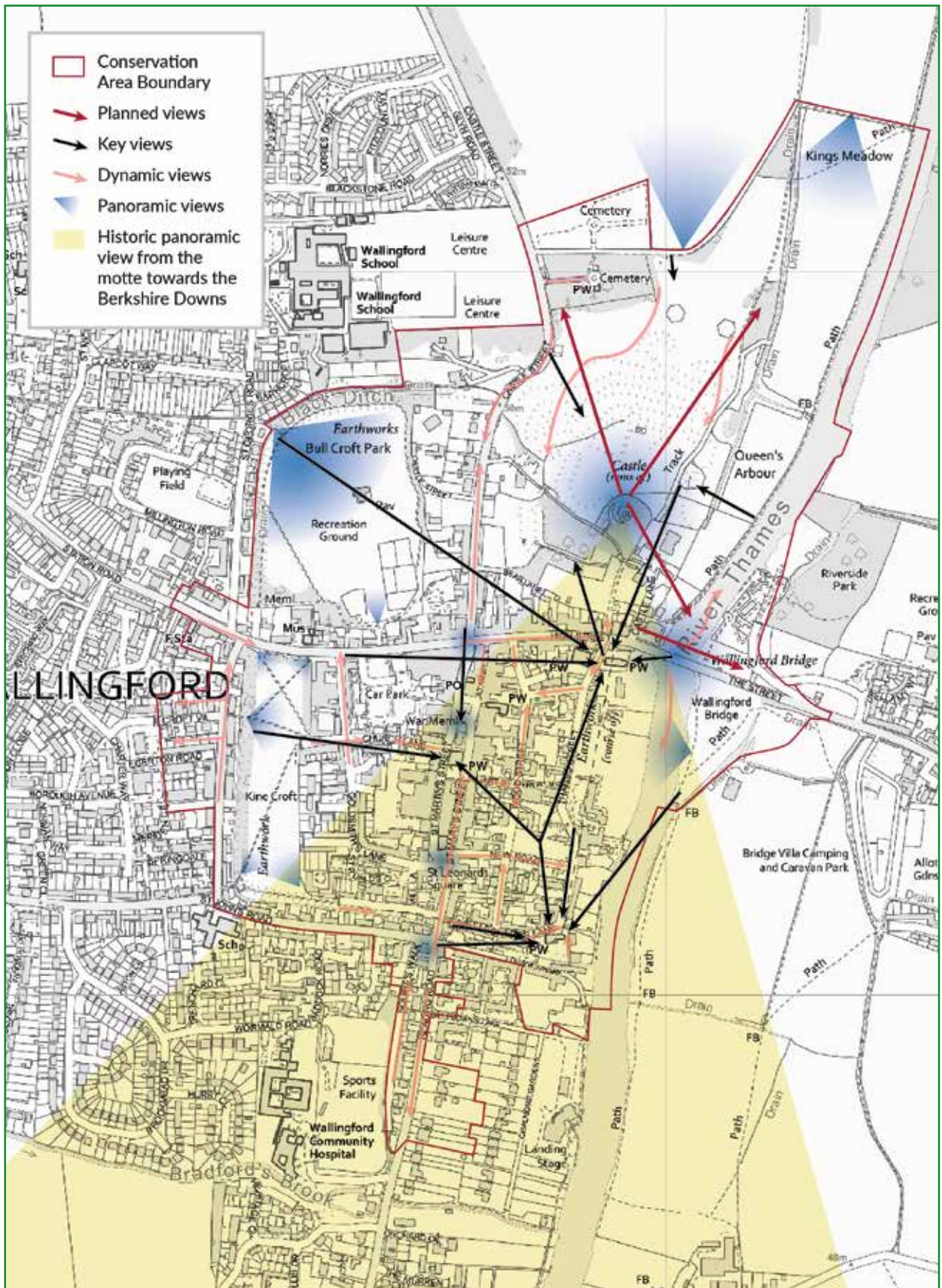
- HA2.1** Proposals for development that would result in harm (whether substantial or less than substantial) to, or loss of, the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) will require clear and convincing justification. Demolition of these buildings or any alterations should not destroy or obscure any part of their historic interest except where the tests in national policy have been met. Applicants will be expected to provide an historical analysis and statement of significance report to aid understanding of the heritage asset.
- HA2.2** Proposals for new development should be sensitively designed and should not cause harm to the historic environment. Proposals that have an impact on heritage assets (designated and non-designated) should:
 - HA2.2(a)** conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution of their setting. The more important the heritage asset the greater the weight that will be given to its conservation; and
 - HA2.2(b)** make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (through high standards of design, reflecting the asset's significance, including through the use of appropriate materials and construction techniques); and
 - HA2.2(c)** make a positive contribution towards wider public benefits; and
 - HA2.2(d)** provide a viable future use for a heritage asset that is consistent with the conservation of its significance; and/or
 - HA2.2(e)** protect a heritage asset recorded on the Heritage At Risk Register.

- 4.10.6 Policy HA2 seeks to ensure that new development within Wallingford will conserve and enhance the nationally important townscape and prevent damage or erosion of the historic environment.
- 4.10.7 Policy HA2 refers to the following National and District Policies - NPPF 2023, Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment & SODC Local Plan 2035 policies ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, ENV9

POLICY HA3: VIEWS AND VISTAS

- HA3.1** Development proposals should have appropriate regard to Wallingford's nationally important Saxon and later layout, and conserve or enhance the planned views, key views, dynamic views and panoramic views in the Wallingford and Winterbrook Conservation Areas as indicated in the Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal, April 2018.
- HA3.2** Where impacts are identified on either the layout of the town or the identified views, development proposals should identify ways in which the impacts can be appropriately and sensitively mitigated.

- 4.10.8 Policy HA3 seeks to ensure that neither views and vistas nor Wallingford's nationally important Saxon and later layout, are damaged or eroded by development proposals. Map 5 reproduces views identified by SODC in its Conservation Area Character Appraisal and adds a long distance view to the Berkshire Downs.
- 4.10.9 Policy HA3 refers to the following National and District Policies -NPPF 2023, Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment & SODC Local Plan 2035 policies ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, ENV9



Map 5 Views and vistas in Wallingford. Adapted and reproduced from map supplied by South Oxfordshire District Council.





Chapter 5

Natural environment

5.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

- Wallingford will be a greener and healthier town through the creation of a Green Network of existing and new green corridors where people enjoy walking and cycling, and wildlife thrives.
- Overall net gains for biodiversity will be achieved through improving biodiversity on new developments and improving and enhancing the biodiversity of existing and future green and blue infrastructure.
- The Wallingford Green Network will enable the connectivity of Local Green Spaces, public amenity spaces (e.g. churchyards, Castle Gardens, Castle Meadows, Kinecroft, Bull Croft and allotments), with the River Thames, Riverside Meadows, the Thames Path National Trail and the countryside of the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs National Landscapes.

Objectives

ENV 01: Create the Wallingford Green Network. This will safeguard and enhance green infrastructure integrated with walking and cycle routes (e.g. Sustrans national route 5 through Wallingford) to link existing and proposed residential and employment areas with the town centre facilities, schools, public amenity spaces, Local Green Spaces, the River Thames, public rights of way, the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails and the surrounding countryside.

ENV 02: Secure measurable net biodiversity gains as recommended by Natural England. Ensure all new development integrates and delivers net gains for biodiversity within plans, and contributes to the restoration and enhancement of the biodiversity of green and blue infrastructure, including the River Thames and its tributaries e.g. Bradford's Brook, and the priority habitats of the Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area.

ENV 03: Ensure all new development respects the natural environment of Wallingford, including the River Thames, in ways that safeguard, enhance and extend the existing ecological networks, water quality and green infrastructure to create the Wallingford Green Network.

5.2 BACKGROUND

- 5.2.1 Wallingford is located between the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs National Landscapes, both of which can be seen from many parts of the town. Wallingford can be seen from the Chilterns escarpment and the Sinodun Hills/Wittenham Clumps and Riverside Meadows.



Wildflower meadow, east and south of Wallingford Bridge

- 5.2.2 The popular Riverside Park and Pools and the Campsite to the north of Wallingford Bridge are owned by South Oxfordshire District Council. Part of this site lies within Crowmarsh Parish. A covenant states that this site should be preserved for ecological, recreation, leisure and tourism purposes.
- 5.2.3 Riverside Meadows, land to the south of Wallingford Bridge, is owned by South Oxfordshire District Council. These fields lie within the Chilterns National Landscape. Riverside Meadows is managed by the Earth Trust in compliance with the covenant on the land that states its uses are restricted to agricultural use with the exception of one river event, the Wallingford Head of the River Regatta.

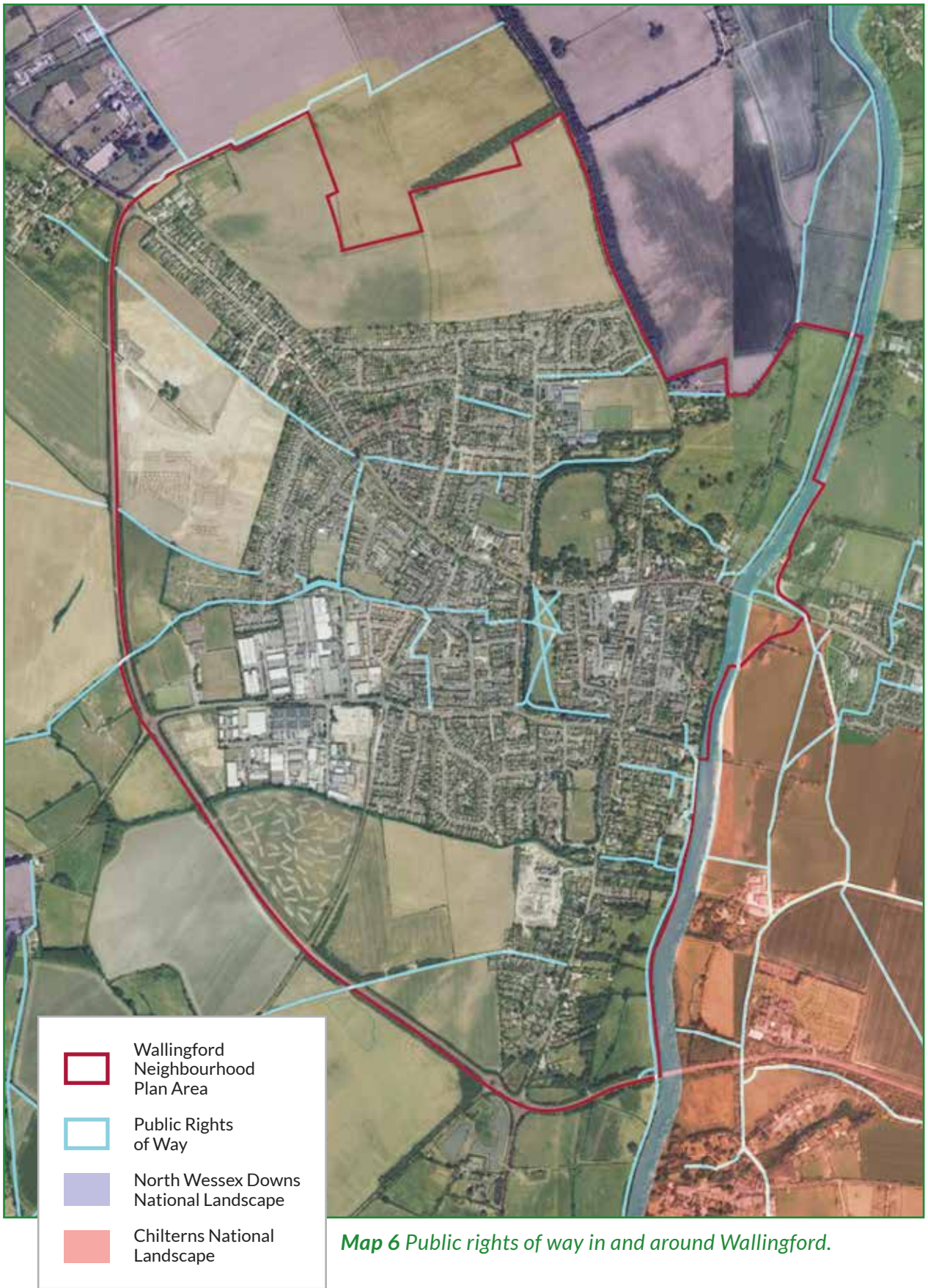


Wallingford Head of the River Regatta, Riverside Meadows

- 5.2.4 Wallingford is in SODC Local Character Assessment Area 4: River Thames Corridor. The northern section of the Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area (CTA), a Biodiversity Opportunity Area within Oxfordshire's Ecological Network. The Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan Target associated with the relevant section of the CTA is management of floodplain grazing marsh with the potential to extend the area of biodiversity.
- 5.2.5 Bradford's Brook, which includes Mill Brook, flows through the Winterbrook area of Wallingford before joining the Thames north of the CTA. Mill Brook rises in Blewbury and flows across the Moreton Plain west of Wallingford into Bradford's Brook.
- 5.2.6 Two open green spaces, the Bull Croft and the Kinecroft, are Scheduled Monuments that are popular for recreation, formal and informal sports, and large-scale community events. Three Local Green Spaces, proposed in WNP 2021 and delivered during 2022, contribute to the Green Network.
- 5.2.7 Wallingford's residential areas have an extensive network of well-used and permissive public rights of way that lead through the Bull Croft and the Kinecroft into the town centre, and on to the Thames Path National Trail, which is within the Plan Area, and the Ridgeway National Trail, which is just outside the Plan area. These are shown, in combination with the overall transport network, on Map 6.
- 5.2.8 This popular public rights of way network has the potential to be enhanced for biodiversity, through the creation of wildflower meadow planting, hedgerow and tree planting to enhance wildlife corridors through the town.
- 5.2.9 The South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy October 2017 proposes retention, creation, maintenance and potentially extension of existing green infrastructure assets and natural green spaces as well as improving access from the two National Landscapes, the National Trails and National Cycle networks within Wallingford.



Riverside Meadows



5.2.10 The proposed Wallingford Green Network, shown on Map 7, will:

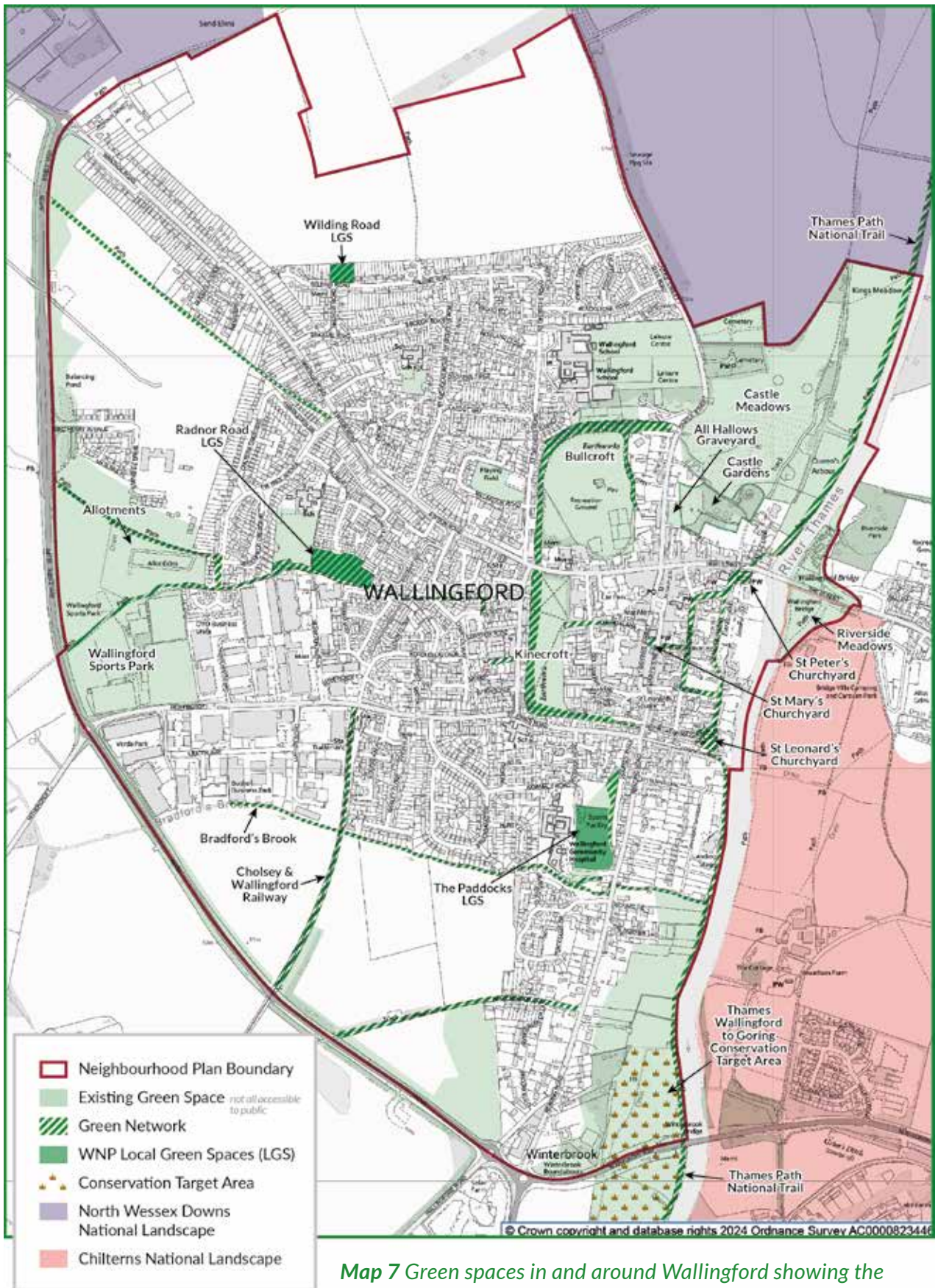
1. enable people living in Wallingford and visiting the town to benefit from the publicly accessible natural green spaces within the Plan area
2. improve and extend the biodiversity of the CTA by improving habitats north and west of the current designation
3. improve and extend the biodiversity of historic parkland at Castle Meadows and Riverside Meadows which are popular recreation areas and close to the River Thames
4. improve the biodiversity of existing and new urban areas by planting new and enhancing current hedgerows to link with hedgerows and woodland on land outside the developed areas of the town, and within the National Landscapes; this will enable wildlife to move freely between countryside and urban areas ²⁵
5. enable and encourage new appropriate tree and hedgerow planting, and better management of current trees and hedgerows alongside blue infrastructure (e.g. Bradford's Brook) as well as existing public footpaths that connect Local Green Spaces and public amenity and natural green spaces ²⁶
6. connect with new allotments and community food growing areas
7. support the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Policies ENV1 – 5 and WAL1. 5 and the Strategy for Wallingford in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 WAL1 and the WNP local Strategy WS1.



Bradford's Brook, just before its entrance to the River Thames

²⁵ Making Space for Nature, Prof Sir John Lawton and NPPF 2023 Chapter 15

²⁶ Natural England Character Assessment for the Thames Valley and Local Plan 2035 policies WAL1, ENV1, ENV2 and ENV3



Map 7 Green spaces in and around Wallingford showing the proposed Green Network. The Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area lies just within the south-eastern region of the Plan area. The Castle Gardens and Kinicroft are owned by the Town Council. The Bull Croft is managed by the Town in its role as Trustee of the Bull Croft Trust. Not all green spaces on this map are publicly accessible.

WALLINGFORD NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK AND THAMES FLOODPLAIN

- 5.2.11 The Environment Act 2021 enabled the creation of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is being developed by the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership²⁷ led by Oxfordshire County Council with the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, Wild Oxfordshire and SODC. Draft Nature Recovery Network (NRN) map²⁸.
- 5.2.12 NPPF 2023 Para 185 calls for local wildlife-rich habitats to be identified, mapped and safeguarded. Para 186 refers to principles to be applied by planning authorities including: development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- 5.2.13 Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 requires that new development achieve a net biodiversity gain of at least 10%. South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Policy ENV3 supports development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and states that all development should provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. *Urban Greening Factor for England – Development and Technical Analysis (NERR132)* published January 2023 improves the provision of Green Infrastructure, particularly in urban areas, by enhancing biodiversity in GI elements: vegetation and tree planting; green roofs and walls; sustainable drainage systems and water features; and paved surfaces.²⁹
- 5.2.14 The most recent State of Nature report, published in 2023, collates the best available data on the UK's biodiversity. It identifies the decline of biodiversity, with a 19% decline in the average abundance of wildlife in the UK since the 1970s and that many important species have much reduced in numbers.
- 5.2.15 South Oxfordshire District Council declared an ecological emergency in February 2021. The Corporate Plan champions the opportunity to restore our natural world in both biodiverse and bio-depleted areas through nature recovery networks and other means.
- 5.2.16 The concept of Nature Recovery Networks is to identify opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity, prioritising efforts where they will have greatest effect, but recognising that all areas, including agricultural and urban landscapes, can make important contributions to nature's recovery, particularly by creating ecological corridors so that wildlife can move across the landscape.
- 5.2.17 Within the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan area, the draft Nature Recovery Network highlights existing areas of higher biodiversity (Core Areas) and areas with high potential for biodiversity uplift, classed as Recovery Areas.³⁰
- 5.2.18 The Thames' floodplain in Wallingford includes Castle Meadows, Riverside Meadows and the Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area, identified by the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership as **Core and Recovery Zones** in the draft Nature Recovery Network.
- 5.2.19 Allowing the River Thames to flood into the floodplain mitigates the risk of flooding to houses and businesses in Wallingford and downstream. This is Natural Flood Management as advocated in the Thames Valley Flood Scheme³¹ being developed by the Environment Agency.
- 5.2.20 Any new development within the Thames floodplain must comply with SOLP 2035 Policy EP4 Flood Risk.

²⁷ <https://www.olnp.org.uk/>

²⁸ <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/nature-recovery-map>

²⁹ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5846537451339776>

³⁰ <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/nature-recovery-map>

³¹ <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk/engagementthq.com/hub-page/thames-valley>

5.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

POLICY EV1: GREEN SPACES AND GREEN CORRIDORS

- EV1.1** As appropriate to their scale and nature new development proposals should incorporate new public and private amenity green spaces and wildlife corridors that:
- EV1.1(a)** improve and enhance biodiversity by:
- creating new permeable green corridors that allow wildlife to move from one area of habitat to another. Traditional barriers to movement, such as fences and walls should incorporate features that will allow the dispersal of wildlife through areas of green space and gardens.
 - creating new habitats e.g. ponds, urban meadows and hedgerows and enhance existing biodiversity assets.
 - ensuring new development provides a measurable net gain for biodiversity using the most up-to-date information available.
- EV1.1(b)** connect new public and private amenity green spaces and wildlife corridors with the Wallingford Green Network to benefit wildlife and people having regard to the South and Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- EV1.1(c)** respect and restore blue infrastructure, especially creating a minimum of 10m wildlife buffer to Bradford's Book and the River Thames, except where existing development prevents this
- EV1.1(d)** respect and protect the setting of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes, the River Thames and its floodplain to enhance the water quality for human health, ecological and natural capital value of the river, its banks, the Thames Path National Trail and use of the river for formal and informal recreation and promote tourism.
- EV1.1(e)** explore opportunities for positive management of wetland habitats, such as linking up and expanding small isolated wet woodlands within the Thames Wallingford to Goring CTA to contribute to the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Network and meet Oxfordshire BAP Targets.

5.3.1 Policy EV1 aims to provide a permanent net gain for biodiversity as required in the NPPF 2023³², and in line with DEFRA's 25-year Environment Plan, to create natural links between the National Landscapes, the River Thames and Wallingford's built environment, and to contribute to Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Network. New development proposals should have regard to the priorities identified in the latest Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy when this is published.

5.3.2 Policy ENV1 of the SODC Local Plan 2035 is designed to be applied in a flexible way based

³² NPPF Chapter 15 paras 185 and 186

on the scale, nature and location of the development proposal concerned. It also recognises that the ambition to achieve a net gain in biodiversity may not always be able to be achieved within the development site itself.

5.3.3 Policy EV1 refers to the following National and District Policies and other sources:

- SO and Vale GI Strategy October 2017, pages 71, 88 and 89;
- Urban Greening Factor for England – Development and Technical Analysis (NERR132)
- NPPF 2023, Chapter 15;
- DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan;
- Natural England Character Assessment, Thames Valley;
- SODC Local Character Assessment November 2017: River Thames Corridor, Section 9.8 page 100;
- Improving access to the Natural Health Service ³³

POLICY EV2: PROTECT EXISTING AMENITY SPACES AND WALLINGFORD GREEN NETWORK

EV2.1 Where appropriate new development proposals should link to existing public and private amenity green spaces and wildlife corridors. Proposals which deliver the following outcomes will be particularly supported:

EV2.1(a) enhance the biodiversity of existing public amenity spaces, including Local Green Spaces

EV2.1(b) improve and enhance biodiversity with regard to the recommendations from Natural England Character Assessment for the Upper Thames Clay Valley to:

- conserve existing natural and green corridors
- use landscape features and create habitats e.g. ponds, urban meadows and new hedgerows

EV2.1(c) connect existing amenity spaces with the Wallingford Green Network to benefit wildlife and people having regard to the South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy.

³³ <https://naturalhealthservice.org.uk/wordpress/>

- 5.3.4 Policy EV2 will give people easy access to natural green spaces which could help them improve their health and wellbeing.
- 5.3.5 Policy EV2 provides a permanent net gain for biodiversity as required in NPPF 2023, and in line with DEFRA's 25-year Environment Plan, and to create natural links between the National Landscapes, the River Thames and Wallingford's built environment, and to contribute to Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network.
- 5.3.6 Policy EV2 refers to the following National and District Policies and other sources:
- SO and Vale GI Strategy October 2017, pages 71, 88 and 89;
 - Urban Greening Factor for England – Development and Technical Analysis (NERR132)
 - NPPF 2023, Chapter 15;
 - DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan;
 - Natural England Character Assessment, Thames Valley;
 - SODC Local Character Assessment November 2017: River Thames Corridor, Section 9.8 page 100;
 - Improving access to the Natural Health Service





Chapter 6

Employment and economy

6.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

Wallingford will positively and proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Wallingford will continue to be a vibrant market town with a bright future because of its diverse economy and rich history. The maintenance of a successful local economy and the high levels of employment will be crucial to making Wallingford an attractive place to live and work, where people can build their futures.

Wallingford will continue to be a market town with a healthy local economy and employment opportunities with local, national and international organisations for residents and people living outside the town.

Objectives

EE01: Protect, maintain and improve existing employment sites in Wallingford and support the many businesses and people that operate from home or a mobile environment.

EE02: Support the development of flexible and innovative business units of the size, shape and form suitable for small and medium-sized businesses, including start-up, incubator and grow-on spaces (Local Plan 2035 policy EMP2, range size and mix of employment)

EE03: Improve the physical connectivity links, including safe active travel, between the Hithercroft employment area and the town centre facilities via the Wallingford Green Network and public transport.

EE04: Promote the long-term viability of the town centre and its facilities (e.g. churches, community buildings) to maintain its role at the heart of the local community. Allow growth and diversity of employment opportunities by responding to changes in retail and leisure sectors and supporting a mix of building uses including where appropriate residential accommodation. (Local Plan 2035 policy TC2, new retail floorspace.)

6.2 BACKGROUND

- 6.2.1 Wallingford is the smallest market town in South Oxfordshire and is close to Science Vale UK, which is centred on Dicot and Harwell to the west. Around 6,200 people are employed in Wallingford, the majority of whom work in professional and technical services. Table 2 shows the concentration of types of jobs in Wallingford for the three largest industry groups in the Plan area.

Table 2: Main Local Employment³⁴

Wallingford Industry group in order of size	Percentage in Industry group, of all people in Wallingford in employment
Professional, scientific and technical services	15.5%
Business administration and support services	12.3%
Wholesale	10.7%

6.2.2 The South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review 2015³⁵ recognised that many highly skilled residents work outside the town, in particular Reading and Didcot. The report also identified poor access to public transport and amenities from businesses on the Hithercroft Industrial Estate.

6.2.3 Because many people now work fully or partly from home or in a mobile environment, the facilities and services available in Wallingford need to be suitable to support this employment and lifestyle choice.

6.2.4 The WNP aims to support and expand employment opportunities to secure a thriving economic future for the town and its residents and support the strategic employment policies set out in the Local Plan 2035 at EMP1, EMP2, EMP3, and EMP7.

6.2.5 The WNP policies aim to:

1. safeguard employment land provision
2. retain existing employment land providing high quality jobs to help retain skilled residents in the local workforce and boost the local economy
3. provide good quality, flexible and affordable space for small to medium sized businesses
4. support improved connectivity between the Hithercroft Industrial Estate and the town centre's services and facilities.

6.2.6 The WNP aims to retain the following existing key employment areas because they provide significant and varied employment opportunities in Wallingford:

1. Town Centre
2. Hithercroft Industrial Estate including Verda Park
3. Ayres Yard.

6.2.7 These areas will be safeguarded and proposals which enhance them and provide a diverse flexible range of employment opportunities locally in the town will be encouraged.

Town Centre

6.2.8 In Wallingford town centre there are a variety of employment opportunities including retail, trade and professional services e.g. solicitors, banks, architects, accountants, public relations consultancy, opticians.

6.2.9 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Town Centre policy TC2 and the ensuing para 10.91 identifies Wallingford as the focus of more localised retail, commercial and community facilities, leisure and services that reduce the need for people to travel beyond the town. These facilities provide a convenient and sustainable choice within walking distances of residential and other employment areas.

6.2.10 This is expanded in the Town Centre, Retail and Tourism chapter.

³⁴ Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) (2016)

³⁵ <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies/evidence-base-core-strat>

Hithercroft Industrial Estate

6.2.11 The Hithercroft Industrial Estate is approx. 25.14 ha, a key strategic employment site and important asset to the town. It provides over 85,000 sq. m of floorspace (South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review 2015³⁶). Key employers include: Gladstone, Plastichead, Lesters, Fugro geoconsulting, UK Bathrooms and Royal Mail. There are also many units occupied by other small and medium-sized businesses. Generally, uses fall within E, B2 and B8 classes. A few businesses make ancillary sales from their premises but the estate primarily comprises B class uses with the exception of the Lidl store (opened in 2019) which was built to meet the specific need for further convenience retail floorspace in the town. This provides a net tradeable floor area of 2,125 sq m. The former Habitat warehouse site was developed for housing. This has resulted in a particularly poor environment for the new residents closest to the B2 uses on the remaining industrial area, and is likely to put pressure on the neighbouring businesses about their business activities.

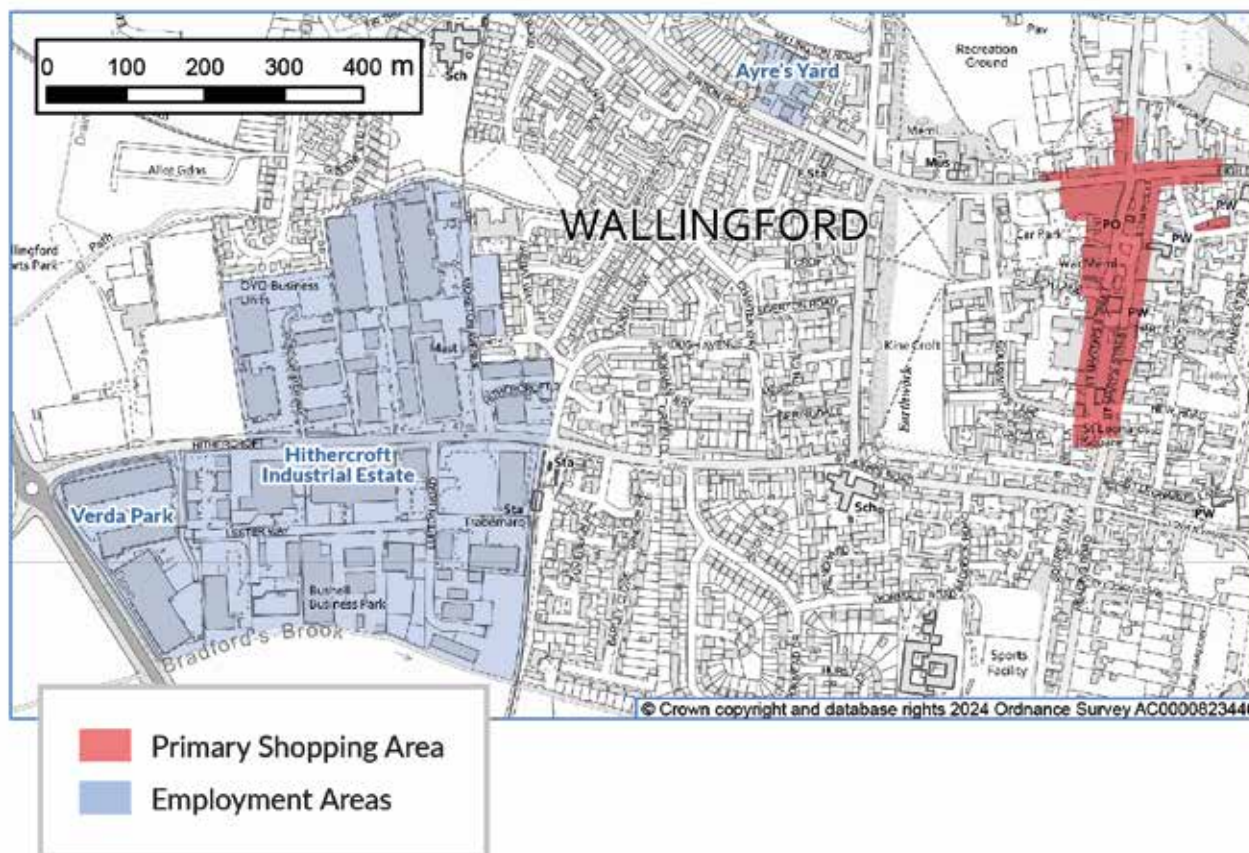


Lidl supermarket, Hithercroft Industrial Estate

6.2.12 The South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review recognised that the Hithercroft Industrial Estate suffered from poor accessibility to and from the town (lack of public transport). Section 106 monies from the Lidl store were used to improve bus services on Hithercroft Road. In 2024, Thames Travel & Oxford Bus Company is improving the bus services between Henley, Didcot and Abingdon that stop on Hithercroft Road.

³⁶ <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/16-01-15%20South%20Oxfordshire%20ELR.pdf>

6.2.13 The employment areas of the Hithercroft industrial estate, Verda Park (Site C) and Ayres Yard are shown on the Proposals Map – an enlarged section is given in Map 8 (below).



Map 8 Enlargement of Proposals Map showing the employment areas - Ayres Yard in the north and the Hithercroft Industrial Estate in the south-west. Verda Park is the triangle-shaped area between the bypass and the western edge of Hithercroft Industrial Estate. The Primary Shopping Area (shown for reference) is also a major area of employment but this is primarily for retail and is considered separately.

Ayres Yard

6.2.14 Ayres Yard is a 0.75ha site located off Station Road with access west of the Esso petrol station. Ayres Yard is considered an important employment site because it accommodates many local service businesses.

Verda Park

6.2.15 Verda Park is the development of the employment land at Site C (P14/S2633/FUL granted in 2014) for the construction of a new high bay warehouse distribution unit for 11,100sqm with office and trade showroom accommodation of 2,800sqm, plus a two-storey headquarters office building of 1,620sqm, with new access road off Hithercroft Road.

Employment cluster close to Wallingford

- 6.2.16 An important cluster of significant national and international environmental science organisations and companies are located within Wallingford and the nearby village of Crowmarsh Gifford. The parish of Crowmarsh Gifford also hosts agricultural engineering business Lister Wilder, small enterprises, and national and international companies located on the Howbery Business Park. These businesses, in this sustainable location, make a significant contribution to the economy of Wallingford. All these employment opportunities are within walking and cycling distance, less than 2 miles, from Wallingford's residential areas and served by frequent Thames Travel/Oxford Bus Company bus services including X40.

6.3 ALLOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

- 6.3.1 SODC Local Plan 2035 policy EMP1 identified that at least 3.1 ha of new B class employment land would be delivered in Wallingford through the WNP. This has been satisfied by the development of Site C, Verda Park.
- 6.3.2 All the land identified in the SODC Local Plan 2035 for employment use in Wallingford has been built out. This includes Site C, Verda Park, and 900sqm of B1 light industrial/research and starter units with access from Lester Way.
- 6.3.3 1.09 ha was identified by Local Plan 2035 policy EMP7 for employment at Hithercroft Industrial Estate. This requirement was generally satisfied by the development of the Lidl site, 1.16ha) at Lupton Road. The applicant's planning statement indicates that approximately 40 operational jobs would be provided. The store opened in January 2019. This means that the convenience goods floorspace requirement for Wallingford is met for the duration of the Plan period. Two new units to the rear of Lidl have taken up the remaining employment land.
- 6.3.4 One of the main aims of the WNP is to promote local employment opportunities so that people can work locally when possible. This will reduce the need to travel, provide a choice for people and minimise pollution and energy consumption. It is also important for sustainability to try to balance employment and housing opportunities available in the town. With this in mind we want to secure the retention of significant employment sites.
- 6.3.5 Retaining the existing areas for employment uses is important for the economy of the town, some loss of employment sites has taken place in recent years, this has resulted in a reduction in employment land and an unsatisfactory relationship between existing employment uses and new homes, likely to result in difficulties for business uses and a poor environment for residents. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to safeguard the remaining areas and prevent the further reduction in employment floorspace unless it can be demonstrated that no employment uses are viable.

6.4 EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY POLICIES

Former Policy EE1: Allocation of Employment Land at Site C has been removed from the WNP 2024 Review because Site C has been developed and is now Verda Park.

POLICY EE1: SAFEGUARD EXISTING LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SITES

EE1.1 Hithercroft Industrial Estate, Verda Park and Ayres Yard (as shown on the Proposals Map) are safeguarded for employment purposes (Use Classes E, B2 and B8) where planning permission is required. Within these areas, proposals for change of use to residential purposes will not be supported.

Proposals for the extension or the redevelopment of existing employment land and premises at the Hithercroft Industrial Estate, Verda Park and Ayres Yard for employment uses within Use Classes E, B2 and B8 will be supported where they:

- have no unacceptable harm on the landscape setting or green infrastructure of the area
- encourage pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre

EE1.2 Where an existing employment use is close to residential properties any extension of the premises or an employment redevelopment of the site should not have unacceptable impacts on residential amenities including by:

1. Loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight;
2. Dominance or visual intrusion;
3. Noise or vibration;
4. Smell, dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions;
5. Pollution, contamination or the use of / or storage of hazardous substances; and
6. External lighting.

EE1.3 Development proposals for incubator units for small start-up businesses (up to 150m²) and grow-on-space (up to 500m²) or to provide flexible sized units for small and medium sized businesses will be supported within the safeguarded employment areas.

6.4.1 Policy EE1 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 policy EMP3 Retention of employment land to support sustainable economy.

6.4.2 Policy EE1 supports sustainable economic growth and ensures that Wallingford continues to offer new employment premises opportunities for businesses and residents as defined in the South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review. The policy takes account of the greater flexibilities provided by the September 2020 Use Classes Order in general terms, and the introduction of the new E use class (commercial, business and service uses).

6.4.3 Proposals for the change of use of employment premises to residential uses elsewhere in the town will also be assessed against the contents of Policy EMP3 of the Local Plan. Both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan support sustainable economic growth to help ensure that there is a balance of employment and residential land use in Wallingford. This will provide a range and variety of job opportunities in the Plan period. The approach also seeks to support existing businesses by ensuring that new uses do not lead to changes in their business operations.

6.4.4 This policy approach acknowledges that South Oxfordshire District in general is an area of economic growth and the demand for premises is high. To ensure that land is not lost to other uses there is a requirement to market the premises and to provide such evidence that the use is not economically viable.

6.4.5 Policy EMP3 of the Local Plan 2035 provides a degree of flexibility for mixed uses developments to come forward where there is no reasonable prospect of land or premises being used for continued economic purposes.





Chapter 7

Town centre, retail
and tourism

7.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

- Wallingford Town Centre will be a vibrant and attractive centre enjoyed by residents and visitors both during the day and throughout the evening. It will adapt to the changing needs of the retail and leisure economy.

Objectives

TRT01: Promote Wallingford as a vibrant and historic market town with many attractions for visitors and residents.

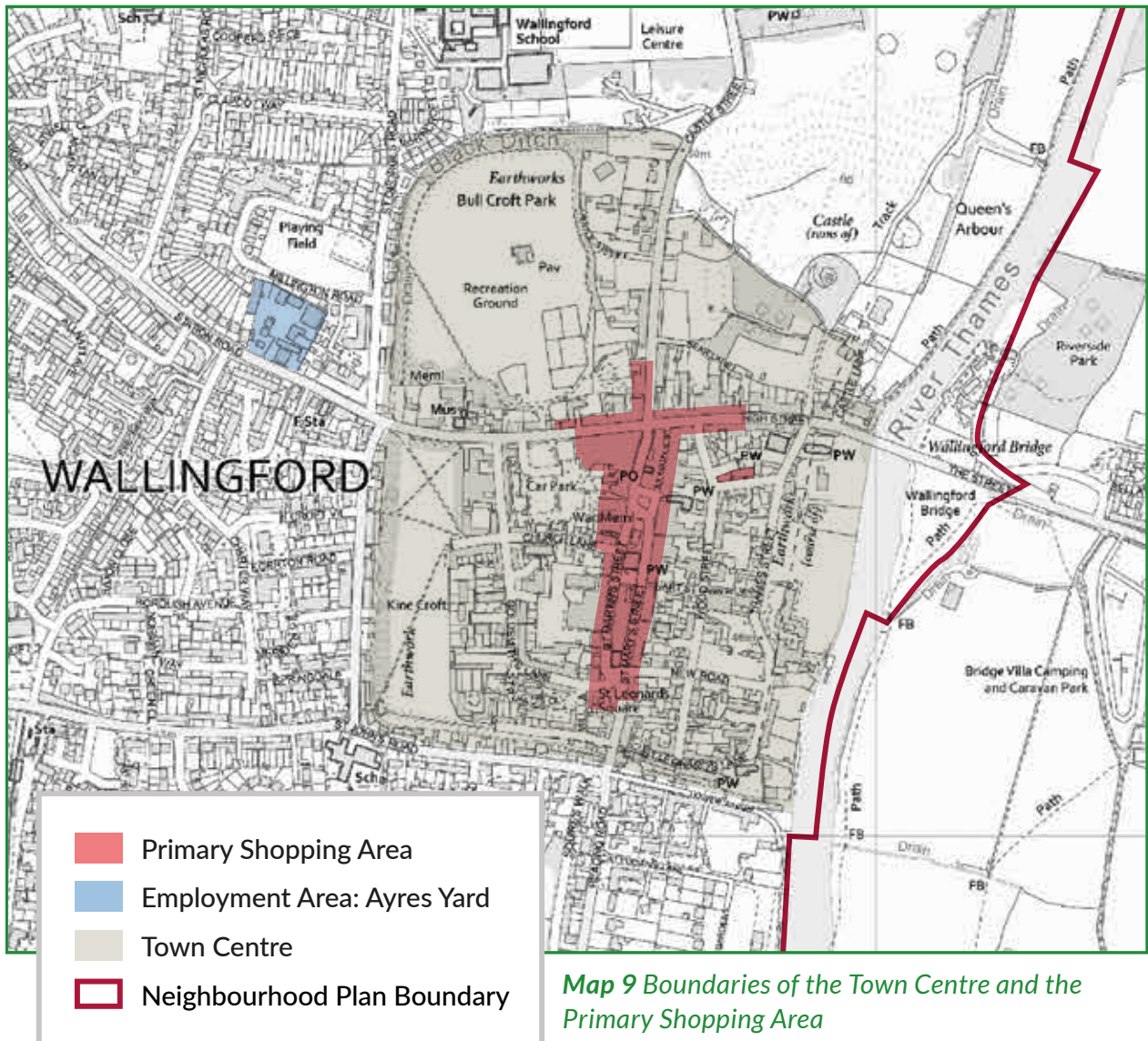
TRT02: Positively and proactively encourage the sustainable growth, management and adaptation of Wallingford's attractive town centre.

TRT03: Ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the town by encouraging:

1. more people (residents and visitors) to use the town centre in daytime and during the evening.
2. growth of retail and employment opportunities alongside residential accommodation to ensure a successful mixed-use economy.
3. improved connectivity between the town centre's services and facilities with residential and employment areas, leisure facilities, the River Thames and the natural environment.

7.2 BACKGROUND

7.2.1 The boundary of the town centre, with the primary shopping area as reflecting the current situation, is shown in the Proposals Map. An expanded view is given in Map 9 (below).



7.2.2 Wallingford's facilities are used by and important for residents from a wide catchment area including in the surrounding countryside and villages.

7.2.3 Wallingford is a vibrant and historic market town noted for its independent shops, community facilities, events and entertainment that all take place in the town centre.

7.2.4 The Market Place and surrounding streets are a hub for community-focused day-to-day activities and events in Wallingford, where people meet and enjoy the strong sense of community which is valued by people.

- 7.2.5 There is a requirement in the NPPF 2023 to define the extent of the primary shopping area and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of the town. The WNP identifies the main shopping areas in the town and shows these as the Primary Shopping Area on Map 9 and the Proposals Map. Changes to legislation³⁷ to enable more dynamism and flexibility in commercial areas mean that planning permission is not required for many changes of use in the town centre for example between shops, offices and housing. Where planning permission is required, we would wish to retain appropriate town centre uses on ground floors within the primary shopping area.
- 7.2.6 This Neighbourhood Plan supports Local Plan 2035 policy WAL1. The Local Plan 2035 Town Centre policy TC2 identifies Wallingford as the focus of more localised retail, commercial and community facilities, leisure and services that reduce the need for people to travel beyond the town. These facilities will provide a convenient and sustainable choice within walking distances of local residential areas and accessible by bike or public transport to many more in neighbouring villages. Wallingford provides services for a substantial rural area and the car will remain the only feasible transport option for many. Retaining sufficient affordable car parking in the town is important to ensure Wallingford's continued attractiveness to residents of outlying parishes and reducing the likelihood of them travelling to other centres. It is also important in supporting the vitality of the town centre businesses.
- 7.2.7 This document is still relevant:

Wallingford Town Centre – The Future. The Civic Trust report for Wallingford Town Council and South Oxfordshire District Council published in February 2006 sets out a vision, strategy and action plan for the town.



- 7.2.8 Subsequently the Town Council and Wallingford in Business carried out many actions as recommended in the report e.g. improved signage and tourist information at the riverside and public open spaces, branding on lamp posts and signposts, pop-up shops. These have contributed to the sense of place, heritage and attractions in the town.
- 7.2.9 The WNP aims to support and expand retail and employment opportunities, and residential accommodation in the town centre. This will secure a thriving economic future for the town and its residents, and supports the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan 2035.

³⁷ The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended



The former post office, St Martin's Street



St Mary's Street

7.3 RETAIL AND LEISURE

- 7.3.1 During the period of this Plan the town centre retail and community facilities will need to develop and adapt to meet the changing needs and demands of the retail and leisure sectors. This will ensure Wallingford is a successful market town with healthy local daytime and evening economies. This is in accordance with WAL1 in the Local Plan 2035.
- 7.3.2 Wallingford's residents are proud of the town's independent shops, historic buildings and heritage in the town centre, community facilities for sport, and leisure in and around the Market Place where public events take place, and the River Thames which attracts visitors.
- 7.3.3 The WNP seeks to ensure that the town centre will continue to be the heart of the town, with improved viability and vitality to benefit local people, including those from Wallingford's wider catchment area, visitors and businesses. Shopping experiences in the town centre will continue to be pleasurable and convenient for people to ensure a diverse and vibrant economy. Facilities will be easily accessible to all and encourage community cohesion.
- 7.3.4 The shopping experience in Wallingford is currently concentrated on the historic Market Place, St Mary's Street, St Martin's Street, Castle Street, the High Street, and St Peter's Street. These streets have the highest concentration of retail floorspace. Due to the historic street pattern and tight urban grain, there are not considered to be significant opportunity sites in the town centre.
- 7.3.5 Wallingford accommodates a good proportion of comparison goods operators, which means that the percentage of units dedicated to this use is above national average level (33.8% compared to 26.9% nationally) and the average evident across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's principal centres (29.4%). There has been a small increase in the proportion of commercial units dedicated to comparison goods use since 2013 (when such uses accounted for 32.7% of all units). These retailers, which are located throughout the town centre, include those which serve the day-to-day needs of the local community (such as chemist, bookshop, clothing stores and charity shops) as well as more specialist retailers (including antique shops, homewares, interior designers)^t.

Table 3: Retail Sector comparison of Wallingford with national average.

	Total Units	Comparison	Convenience	Financial	Leisure	Retail Service	Vacant
Wallingford	130	33.8%	6.2%	10.8%	23.8%	17.7%	7.7%
National Average		26.9%	9.3%	8.8%	25.2%	15.8%	13.8%

Source: South Oxfordshire's Principal Centres Unit Composition at October 2022. Composition of principal centres derived from Nexus Planning survey of October 2022; Experian Goad national averages at September 2022

- 7.3.6 Table 3 shows convenience goods at 6.2% which is below the national average. In 2005 the Waitrose store relocated from 48 St Martin's Street to 1 St Martin's Street, and continues to provide a key anchor store in the town centre. There are eight other town centre shops providing convenience goods. Outside the town centre Wallingford's convenience offer is now augmented by the Lidl store at Lupton Road on the Hithercroft industrial estate, and provides a net tradeable area of 2,125 sqm. This store generally satisfies the convenience goods floorspace for the Plan period up to 2035. In addition, there are three small convenience shops outside the town centre: Asda at the Esso garage on Station Road, Londis on Sinodun Road and Nisa on St John's Road.

³⁸https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/Town_Centres_Retail_Study_Appendices_Dec_2023.pdf

- 7.3.7 Wallingford is considered to be a vital and viable town centre and characterised by its independent offer. This reflects the specialist nature of some retailers and the commercial stock, which is traditional in character and largely of limited scale. Wallingford’s independents include antique shops, bookshop, and gift shops. The town’s principal national multiple retailers are Waitrose, Greggs and Boots. These are augmented by several charity shop operators. Retail and service uses are generally distributed evenly across the centre. The Waitrose store to the north of the centre acts as a key anchor and the Market Place is also a key focus of activity. Wallingford has a relatively low vacancy rate.
- 7.3.8 The South Oxfordshire Market Town Health-check carried out in 2022 identified 68 service (leisure, retail and financial and business) operators in Wallingford town centre. The 31 leisure service operators account for 23.8% of all units, and 23.6% of the total stock of retail floorspace. There is a diverse range of retail and service operators that provide a particularly strong food and drink offer, which is almost wholly comprised of independents with a few national chains. The hospitality offer in the centre also includes The George Hotel, which is a 16th century coaching inn with 39 rooms.
- 7.3.9 The Corn Exchange is situated on Market Place and performs an important role in providing a cultural offer within the town. It is multi-purpose venue which acts as a theatre, cinema, comedy and music venue. The venue seats 176 people and acts as an important anchor for the evening economy.

Table 4: Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2022 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2022 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2022 (%)	Study Centres Average at 2022 (%)
Comparison	6,670	29.4%	30.2%	29.6%
Convenience	4,060	17.9%	15.5%	17.2%
Financial and Business	1,770	7.8%	6.7%	8.3%
Leisure	5,350	23.6%	26.1%	24.8%
Retail	3,510	15.5%	7.2%	10.8%
Vacant	1,300	5.7%	13.8%	9.3%
TOTAL	2,660	100%	100%	100%

Source: Composition of town centre derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2022; UK Average from Experian Goad. Report September 2022

- 7.3.10 The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012 encouraged the redevelopment of the former Waitrose site provided that the retail element and car parking was retained. As no anchor store came forward on this site SODC granted permission for 22 retirement apartments and two retail units on the ground floor³⁹. Although the retirement apartments are now built and occupied, these retail units remain vacant.

³⁹SODC Planning register Beechcroft Developments (P16/S1514FUL)

- 7.3.11 The WNP views the two ground floor retail units of Silversmith Place in St Martin's Street as being particularly important to ensure that the Wallingford Primary Shopping Area is not further compromised and to ensure that an active retail frontage is retained at ground floor level.



Pedestrianised section of St Mary's Street

7.4 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

- 7.4.1 Several church buildings in Wallingford are used for community events such as markets, music and choral concerts, meetings, art exhibitions, lunch clubs. Centre 70, which was a primary school and is located next to the Kinecroft, hosts many community organisations and events including dancing academy, yoga and art exhibitions.
- 7.4.2 In September 2017 the Regal Centre building, which is owned by Wallingford Town Council, was closed due its poor condition, unsustainable maintenance costs and declining usage. This building, which dates from 1934, was originally a cinema and later a roller-skating rink. In recent years it was used by many community groups for markets, sports, exercise classes, meetings, local authority and general elections.



The former Regal cinema, and latterly a community hall

- 7.4.3 During 2018 a public consultation was held to identify future uses for the site. This strongly favoured a new community landmark building to accommodate a main hall and facilities for public events. Since then, the Town Council has not been able to develop a scheme for this purpose. In its current form the building is costly to retain and maintain; a suitable proposal for the site needs to be progressed urgently. The Town Council's Regal Centre Working Group has been actively pursuing options to resolve the situation.
- 7.4.4 There is potential to enliven the existing arcade between the Regal site and St Martin's Street, capture views to St Mary's Church, and to present a more welcoming and attractive building seen from Goldsmith's Lane car park and St Martin's Street.
- 7.4.5 Policy TC3 seeks to provide sufficient flexibility about the future use and development of the site to ensure that a suitable scheme can be developed. Some element of housing may be required to achieve a viable scheme.
- 7.4.6 Town Council offices with committee rooms and public meeting rooms; and accessible public lavatories. In 2020 the Town Council moved to alternative premises in Castle Street because the St Martin's Street offices require alterations to provide amongst other things disabled access. The Council aims to move back to the St Martin's Street offices in the future.
- 7.4.7 The Town Hall, a Grade 1 listed building, built in 1670 and owned by Wallingford Town Council, is the historic focus of the Market Place. It is used as a community building hosting public meetings and exhibitions, and is licensed for weddings and civil ceremonies. It is recognised that greater use should be made of this important building in order to enable the community to appreciate its history and importance, and to help secure its future maintenance. The Town Council is actively researching grants to fund the work.



The War Memorial, Town Hall and St Mary's Church



Town Hall main chamber set out for a wedding

7.5 EMPLOYMENT

- 7.5.1 In Wallingford town centre there are a variety of employment opportunities including retail, trade and professional services e.g. solicitors, banks, architects, accountants, public relations consultancy, opticians.
- 7.5.2 The vitality of the town centre relies on the mix of uses in and around the Market Place. The retail sector has changed in recent years because of the increase in online shopping and impacts of changes in shopping trends after the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, a mixed-use economy with the flexibility to adapt and respond positively to these changes is encouraged in the Plan. This is being achieved by encouraging people to live in the town centre, in particular at first floor and above levels, for example the shops between St Mary's and St Martin's Streets, flats overlooking the town centre and St Mary's Street, and above shops in Silversmith Place and Farthing House, on St Martin's Street.
- 7.5.3 A successful mixed-use economy in Wallingford would include residential use of first and second floor accommodation for sale and for rent above retail units. Together with service uses, cafes, restaurants, pubs and the Corn Exchange and other community uses to provide a vibrant community focus within the town and a lively evening economy.

7.6 TOURISM

- 7.6.1 Tourism makes a significant contribution to Wallingford's economy through visitors making day trips and staying on short breaks, on organised coach trips, and people holidaying on the River Thames. However, the attractiveness of Wallingford as a destination is limited by the low provision of hotel and bed & breakfast accommodation⁴⁰.

⁴⁰The George Hotel in the town centre has 39 rooms. The Shillingford Bridge Hotel (2 miles from the town centre and outside the Plan area) has 40 rooms. B&B accommodation within the town is limited to approximately 10 rooms. 20 Air B&B hosts are registered in Wallingford.



The Town Information Centre in the undercroft of the Town Hall.



Boats mooring at the former coal wharf, east side of Wallingford Bridge

7.6.2 Wallingford has many permanent events and attractions that draw thousands of visitors to the town from all over the UK and abroad, these include:

1. Wallingford Museum includes displays relating to the history of the town and local area, it organises the Agatha Christie Weekend in September and promotes the Dame Agatha Christie Trail from Wallingford Museum, via the author's home in Winterbrook to her grave at St Mary's Church, Cholsey. A new sculpture of Dame Agatha Christie (insert new photo below) was unveiled in 2023 to commemorate the 42 years she lived in Winterbrook.



Agatha Christie Statue, Kinecroft in front of Wallingford Museum, Flint House, High Street

2. Ruins of Wallingford Castle, earthworks and ramparts, and other Scheduled Monuments, including the medieval Wallingford Bridge across the River Thames.



Castle earthworks, Castle Meadows

3. Thames Path National Trail, a popular long-distance walking route, passes through Wallingford. The Thames Path enters the southern part of the Neighbourhood Plan area as the route passes beneath Winterbrook Bridge, Nosworthy Way (A4130). From its natural route beside the Thames the National Trail emerges into the town at Lower Wharf, and from St Leonard's Church follows Thames Street to cross the High Street and resume its riverside route off Castle Lane, next to The Boathouse pub. The Thames Path continues riverside through the Neighbourhood Plan area beside Castle Meadows and King's Meadow towards Benson. The Ridgeway National Trail is located at Grim's Ditch, Mongewell (just outside the NP area), and connects with the Thames Path via Winterbrook Bridge, Nosworthy Way (A4130).
4. Castle Gardens and Castle Meadows. The Gardens are owned and managed by Wallingford Town Council and are popular with residents for recreation and leisure. Castle Meadows are popular with walkers because they provide a link between the town and the River Thames. The Meadows are managed by the Earth Trust on behalf of SODC to benefit wildlife, and usually grazed by cattle. In 2023 the site was awarded Green Flag status for the 16th successive year, and Green Heritage site accreditation for the 10th year in a row.

5. Riverside outdoor swimming pool and splash-pool, owned by SODC and independently managed, are very popular family attractions.



Splash and outdoor swimming pools, Riverside Meadows

6. Independent shops, cafes, restaurants and antique shops, many are in Grade II listed buildings.
7. Many national, regional and local sporting events at Wallingford Sports Park throughout the year
8. The Cholsey & Wallingford Railway, known as the Bunk Line, and its Preservation Society, provide an asset of significant historic and heritage value to the town. More than



35,000 people visited the Bunk Line in 2022. This heritage railway has open days and weekends throughout the year for steam and diesel trains connecting with mainline services at Cholsey station. It attracts visitors to Wallingford and provides an economic value to local businesses.

The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway – also known as the Bunkline

9. Live music and festivals:

- Three-day Bunkfest (more than 30,000 visitors) in the Market Place, town centre pubs, clubs and the Kinecroft at the end of August; this is a free community-led family event
- classical concerts in St Mary-le-More Church
- Band concerts in Castle Gardens
- Winter Recitals, a series of concerts in St Mary-le-More Church.



Performance at Bunkfest on the Kinecroft

10. Vehicle Rally, Parade and Bike Sale on the Kinecroft in May raising funds for local charities.



Vehicle Rally on the Kinecroft

11. Bonfire Night Fireworks organised to raise funds for community projects.



Bonfire night on the Kinecroft

12. Wallingford Head of the River in November/December and the Long-Distance Sculls in September.



The Head of the River event at Riverside Meadows

- 7.6.3 In addition to these, there are many local community-focused and organised events in the town, which bring families into the town centre, Market Place, Kinecroft and Bull Croft. These events include: Wallingford Carnival, Agatha Christie Weekend, Curfew Bell celebration, Remembrance Day Service, RAF Benson Freedom of the Town Parade.



Remembrance Sunday, Market Place

- 7.6.4 The Corn Exchange cinema and theatre in the Market Place is very well-equipped for productions by the local Sinodun Players as well as attracting visiting companies, comedians and musicians, and staging live relays of National Theatre, RSC, opera and ballet performances. These attract local residents and people from the surrounding towns and villages, many of whom visit local restaurants, pubs and cafes pre- and post-performance.
- 7.6.5 The Town Information Centre located on the ground floor of the Town Hall in the Market Place has limited opening times⁴¹. It provides information to many day visitors, people staying in B&Bs, hotels, boating on the river and camping in Crowmarsh, and walkers on the National Trails.
- 7.6.6 Many people visit Wallingford because it was the filming location for the fictional town of Causton in the television series Midsomer Murders.
- 7.6.7 Wallingford Museum, located in the medieval Flint House opposite the Kinecroft, is open for nine months of the year⁴². The museum's activities include presenting and interpreting the Town's history. Museum volunteers have written and produced walking guides to the town, information boards and leaflets; they lead guided tours around the town and give talks. The Museum actively promotes Dame Agatha Christie, who lived in Winterbrook for 42 years and wrote many books here.
- 7.6.8 The museum also has a changing programme of displays, runs a second-hand bookshop and organises guided walking tours explaining the town's important history. As a result of the television series Midsomer Murders being filmed locally, the Museum has a display which has increased visitor numbers from the UK and abroad, with many coach trips now including Wallingford on their itinerary.

⁴¹ <https://www.wallingfordtowncouncil.gov.uk/visitors/town-information-centre/>

⁴² <https://www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk/>

7.7 CAR PARKING

- 7.7.1 As of 2023, there are 817 public car parking spaces serving Wallingford⁴³. 280 at Riverside (closed when flooded), 185 in Waitrose/St Alban's, 151 in Cattle Market, 132 in Goldsmith's Lane, 29 in Thames Street car park, 21 in Castle Street car park and 19 in St George's Rd car park. In addition, there are approximately 25 metered on-street car parking spaces in Thames Street and St Peter's Street, and 33 spaces in Wallingford Town Council's Castle Yard car park. 12 EV charge points are provided in Cattle Market car park and 12 EV charge points in Goldsmith's Lane car park. There are three EV charge points in Lidl car park.
- 7.7.2 In order for Wallingford to continue to be an attractive town for people to visit, shop and work in, it is essential that the town centre retains as many public and private car parking and cycle spaces as possible, including electric vehicle charge points for cars and cycles. During the Plan consultations many people spoke of the need for more car parking in the town centre. There are no areas designated in the town centre for new car parking spaces.
- 7.7.3 More information is given in Chapter 8 Movement and Connectivity.
- 7.7.4 Land at St Georges Road and Millington Road which is owned by the Merchant Taylor Trust has been adapted by Wallingford School to create the Walter Bigg Car Park for school staff. Adjacent land has been planted up to enhance biodiversity. The adjacent former sports-pitch/playing field area, which is owned by Oxfordshire County Council, is retained as green space for the public benefit of the local community.



Cattle market car park off Wood Street

7.8 TOWN CENTRE, RETAIL AND TOURISM POLICIES

- 7.8.1 The Strategy for Wallingford advocates: 'maintain and enhance the town centre as the focal point and community hub which supports a vibrant economy by encouraging suitable conversions of buildings or new buildings for business and/or tourism uses'.
- 7.8.2 The loss of any further retail floorspace within the Primary Shopping Area will be resisted as this will undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre.

⁴³ Parkopedia en.parkopedia.co.uk

POLICY TC1: PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA

- TC1.1** The Primary Shopping Area is defined on the Proposals Map.
- TC1.2** Where planning permission is required, proposals that result in the loss of Class E uses at ground floor level within the Primary Shopping Area should demonstrate that:
 - TC1.2(a)** they do not undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre or reduce an active frontage at ground floor level, or the new use meets an evidenced community need, and that there is no market interest in the premises concerned for Class E uses following one year of active and effective marketing..

- 7.8.3 Wallingford is a Town Centre with a role to provide retail and service facilities for the town and surrounding area. The retail area of the town centre is to be retained and strengthened to meet the future retail needs of the local and wider community
- 7.8.4 Policy TC1 refers to the following National and District Policies - NPPF 2023. Chapter 7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres & SODC Local Plan 2035 TC5, CF1

POLICY TC2: NEW USES FOR BUILDINGS WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE

- TC2.1** Within the Town Centre the provision and retention of active uses at first floor level and above will be supported. Employment and/or residential uses will be particularly supported.
- TC2.2** Proposals for the use of upper floors should be designed in a fashion which does not detrimentally affect the commercial use of the ground floor of the property concerned.

- 7.8.5 Policy TC2 will help to ensure the vitality and viability of Wallingford town centre continues because of the successful mixed-use economy.
- 7.8.6 Residential use is desirable, providing it does not jeopardise the economic viability of the town centre economy, because it not only provides ideal accommodation for small households but also adds to the vitality and security of the town centre, particularly in the evenings.
- 7.8.7 Policy TC2 refers to the following National and District Policies: NPPF 2023 Chapter 7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres & SODC Local Plan 2035 Policy TC2 and TC5

POLICY TC3: REGAL SITE

- TC3.1** Proposals for the redevelopment of the Regal Cinema site will be supported where they:
1. Seek to include some community facilities where practical and viable
 2. Ensure that the new building is sympathetic to its important setting in the historic town centre and conservation area, and has regard to Policy ENV8 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
 3. Provide car and cycle parking in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council standards
 4. Maintain and where possible enhance walking routes and connections across the site and to the town centre
 5. Ensure that appropriate archaeological investigations are carried out

7.8.8 Policy TC3 refers to the following National and District Policies - NPPF 2023 Chapter 7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres.

POLICY TC4: IMPROVE THE VISITOR ECONOMY

- TC4.1** Proposals for the provision of new visitor accommodation and tourism facilities, which encourage people to spend more time in Wallingford, will be supported provided that they protect the distinctive character of Wallingford.
- TC4.2** The provision of new tourism focussed facilities which recognise, celebrate and promote the town's heritage and community will be supported where they complement existing facilities and do not lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity for local residents.

7.8.9 Policy TC4 will ensure the vitality of the historic town. Tourism is an important constituent of Wallingford's economy and for the town to compete with similar places for tourist's attention, it needs to refresh and expand its offering.

7.8.10 Policy TC4 refers to the following National and District Policies - SODC Local Plan 2035 Policies EMP11& NPPF 2023 Chapter 6 Building a strong, competitive economy

POLICY TC5: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CAR PARKS

TC5.1 Development proposals in Wallingford Town Centre that would result in the loss of public or private car parking spaces will not be supported unless the proposal concerned demonstrates that it will create at least the same number of spaces as will be lost elsewhere within the town centre.

7.8.11 Although the Neighbourhood Plan advocates sustainable and public transport networks between residential and employment areas and the town centre, it is recognised that car parking is required close to the shopping areas and businesses in and around the Market Place to ensure Wallingford is attractive to visitors and employers and to facilitate the mixed-use economy.

7.8.12 On-street parking is a significant problem for residents, particularly for those within the Town Centre area. The narrow streets and a large proportion of houses built in times before significant car ownership cause considerable problems for residents and visitors. Furthermore, limited police resources mean that actions against poor parking practices are not prioritised by the authorities. There is a strong local feeling that nothing should be done to increase the difficulties of residents through the reduction of public parking.

7.8.13 Policy TC5 refers to the following National and District Policies - SODC Local Plan 2035 policy TRANS2 vii.

POLICY TC6: PRESERVATION OF VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

TC6.1 Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for change of use which would result in the loss of visitor accommodation will only be supported if:

TC6.1(a) the applicant can demonstrate that any visitor accommodation use is no longer viable; and

TC6.1(b) it is evidenced that there is no market interest in the site for use as visitor accommodation following one year of active and effective offline and online relevant marketing media and where the property has been offered for sale or letting on the open market for such uses at a realistic price and no reasonable offer has been refused.

7.8.14 Tourism is a vital component of the local economy and is likely to become increasingly important to Wallingford due to the challenges faced by high-street traders. The ability of tourism to contribute to the health of the local economy requires that the provision of visitor accommodation does not fall below existing, minimal, levels.

7.8.15 Policy TC6 refers to the following National and District Policies - SODC Local Plan 2035 policy EMP 14 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 6 Building a strong, competitive economy.





Chapter 8

Movement and connectivity

8.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

- Wallingford will be a town where sustainable means of transport predominate, with a better balance between facilities for vehicles and those for active travel, especially pedestrians and cycles.
- The town centre will be more pedestrian-focused, with reduced vehicular traffic, so that people can relax and enjoy visiting our shops and restaurants.
- Wallingford will have a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists with a speed limit of 20mph, excepting the bypass.
- Convenient and safe routes to the town, places of employment and public buildings will exist for walkers and cyclists.
- Visitors and commuters from Wallingford's wider catchment area will be able to travel safely to and from the town centre without causing an increase in congestion and air pollution. Through-traffic will use the bypass.
- Air quality in the town will be good and not cause health issues.
- Traffic flows on local roads will be managed to provide safe and attractive routes for all road users including pedestrians and cyclists.
- Whilst supporting and encouraging alternative means of travel, adequate car parking will continue to be available to support the viability of the town centre and safe and attractive residential environments. Disabled car parking will be more widely available.
- Pedestrian pathways and cycleways will have been identified, supported and developed⁴⁵.



Bicycle park at the Waitrose supermarket

⁴⁵ Oxfordshire SATN Strategic Active Travel Network 06/08/2023 <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/satn>

Objectives

MC01: Reduce congestion and discourage vehicular through traffic.

MC02: Ensure adequate car parking is provided in the town centre and residential areas, while supporting a reduced demand, with improved provision for public transport, cycling and walking.

MC03: Encourage people to travel by sustainable means of transport, including Active Travel such as cycling, walking; and also public transport and vehicles powered by renewable sources. To promote Active Travel, walking, cycling and public transport, as first choice modes for all residents. To ensure that children and parents can choose to walk and cycle to school safely.

MC04: Improve the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists. Increase pedestrian space in the town centre, where possible, as this area is an increasingly popular destination for social activities in the town. Use the 'Inclusive Transport Strategy' DfT November 2020, 'Active Travel England' Govt July 2022 and 'Active Travel Strategy' OCC July 2022 to consider how all highway users (pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, buses and lorries) can be safely and fairly accommodated within the constraints of the historic town centre⁴⁶.

MC05: Where practical prioritising pedestrians and cyclist movement in the town centre through the design and layout of roads and pavements in line with current DfT guidance and the provisions of the Highway Code 2022

MC06: Ensure that new development contributes positively to transport and movement within Wallingford. All new and extended homes should have adequate on-site parking and should not rely on street parking to meet their needs.

MC07: Protect, recover, maintain and enhance existing sustainable transport routes in Wallingford. This includes walking, cycling and public transport routes (buses and trains).

MC08: Develop and support highways infrastructure that reduces vehicular traffic pressure in Wallingford's historic town centre and 'rat runs' through residential areas, including Borough Avenue and in the north west of Wallingford.

MC09: Develop, support and enhance safe pedestrian and cycle links, including those to employment and recreational areas and routes, residential areas and transport hubs outside the Plan area.

MC10: Reduce air pollution (for example by facilitating electric and other sustainable vehicle use and better managing diesel vehicles) throughout Wallingford to below EU/WHO minimum standards on a consistent basis. Use of the bypass should be encouraged for all through-traffic.

⁴⁶ 'Inclusive Transport Strategy' DfT November 2020 and 'Active Travel England' Gov July 2022

8.2 BACKGROUND

8.2.1 Wallingford's sense of place owes much to its historical background, but that background also has its disadvantages.

8.2.2 Although Wallingford has a bypass to the south and west of the town, through-traffic continues to use Wallingford for very marginal time gain⁴⁷ and at peak times junctions are at or above capacity and the town centre is often congested. This problem will be exacerbated by housing growth locally and at Didcot. The narrow streets and pavements resulting from the historic Saxon layout result in significant congestion at points including the approaches to Wallingford Bridge and at the Lamb crossroads. In places the extensive and alternating roadside parking results in considerable delays, difficulties for buses, refuse and emergency vehicles, even in gridlock, and causes air pollution and safety problems for other road users.

8.2.3 Emissions from queuing traffic and especially diesel vehicles including buses in the town centre and particularly on the High Street led to the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2005. This was resolved in 2023, and continues to be monitored. All developments which generate additional vehicle movements have the potential to worsen the air quality problem in the town centre.

8.2.4 In spite of the partial by-pass, through-traffic forms a significant proportion of traffic in Wallingford. The impact of this through-traffic is exacerbated by the narrow canyon-like streets as well as by parked vehicles. Traffic seeking short cuts through residential areas is an issue for residents and particularly children. Wallingford will work to see all through-traffic eliminated.

8.2.5 There are no mandatory cycle paths in Wallingford or any full-width cycle lanes. Covered secure cycle parking is rare, and overall cycle parking provision is poor. Cycling for function and leisure is far below potential especially as Wallingford is located on a historic floodplain. Although there is a network of footpaths, they are not all surfaced and far from all are well lit. Many have been narrowed arbitrarily over time and need to be recovered. Wallingford needs to adopt a standard agreed minimum footpath width e.g. 2.5m. All new pathways need to meet National Standards. The network of ancient footpaths to the surrounding communities was cut by the bypass. There is little to encourage Active Travel in the form of cycling or walking to the town centre, places of employment, schools, leisure or healthcare facilities.

8.2.6 Parking provision in the town centre is widely perceived as inadequate. The community is concerned that all new homes should have sufficient off-street parking spaces to cater for residents' needs. Hitherto this has not been the case and the resulting high levels of on-street (and on-pavement) parking restrict access for delivery, service and emergency vehicles as well as for public transport, in addition making walking and cycling less safe.



The Lamb Crossroads at the junction of High Street and Castle/St Martin's Streets.

⁴⁷ Google map directions surveys:

Warborough to Didcot, 1736 09/06/23 time 21m for Wallingford through traffic via Shillingford, 24m around the Wallingford Bypass.

Warborough to Didcot, 1808 03/09/23 time 17m for Wallingford through traffic via Shillingford, 20m around the Wallingford Bypass.

Didcot to Warborough, 1808 03/09/23 time 17m for Wallingford through traffic via Shillingford, 20m around the Wallingford Bypass.

- 8.2.7 The UK Highway Code 2022⁴⁸ makes important changes by introducing a Hierarchy of Road Users:
- Rule H1, and Rule H2 including ‘give way at road junctions for pedestrians’ has significant implications for all road junctions within and leaving new developments.
 - Rule 72 Road Positioning advises cyclists on positions to adopt including on narrow roads. This has significant implications for signage and road markings.

The impacts of these major changes are cultural as well as in enforcement or liability, and need to be understood by all and employed in the design of new developments and any changes to existing roads.

- 8.2.8 Strategic footways and cycleways may be radial (for example Wallingford centre-Cholsey Railway Station Active Travel, Wallingford centre-Kinecroft-Croft Villas pedestrian footway) or circular (potentially around the bypass) and for internal connectivity. The strategic radial routes are Cholsey Railway Station, Brightwell, Shillingford, Benson and Crowmarsh. Cholsey, Brightwell and Crowmarsh Hill/Park View need formal crossings across the route of the bypass for pedestrians and cyclists. The Cholsey crossing needs to link at the bypass point the three routes from Wallingford, namely Reading Road, Wallingford Road and Cholsey Railway Station footway.

8.3 MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY POLICIES

POLICY MC1: IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY NETWORK AND PARKING PROVISION

- MC1.1** Development proposals should identify the way in which they would be satisfactorily accommodated within the local highway network and avoid congestion in Wallingford Town centre. In particular, development proposals should consider health outcomes and quality of life caused by vehicle emissions and risks to the safety of all road users. Measures to avoid congestion in the Town Centre will be encouraged⁴⁹.
- MC1.2** All development proposals should demonstrate that significant adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated so that:
1. congestion and poor air quality is not increased,
 2. the safety and attractiveness of roads and routes for pedestrians and cyclists is to an adequate standard
 3. formal parking availability is not reduced.
- MC1.3** Appropriate provision for works and/or contributions will be required towards providing an adequate level of accessibility by all modes of travel and mitigating the impacts of development proposals on the road network. Consideration should be given to cumulative impacts. This should take account of the latest evidence and will inform the scoping of the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

⁴⁸Highway Code 2022 edition - Hierarchy of Road users Rule H1 p5; Rule H2 ... give way to pedestrians at junctions; Rule 72 p 29 road positioning for cyclists on road narrowings. <https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/>

⁴⁹ Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy Route Map 2023-2026 June 2023

- MC1.4** Transport Assessments or Statements and Travel Plans should, where relevant:
- MC1.4(a)** illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes of travel, and;
 - MC1.4(b)** show the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site, and;
 - MC1.4(c)** detail the proposed measures to improve access by public transport, Active Travel⁵⁰ in the form of cycling and walking to reduce transport impacts, and;
 - MC1.4(d)** illustrate the impact on the highway network and the impact of proposed mitigation measures where necessary, and;
 - MC1.4(e)** include a travel plan (that considers all relevant forms of transport including accessible transport for disabled people) where appropriate; and
 - MC1.4(f)** the approach to parking provision should consider guidance from the OCC's Street Design Guide⁵¹. Due consideration will be given to local levels of car ownership and the safety and free flow of all road users including Active Travel.

- 8.3.1 Most new commercial developments and housing developments will, for the foreseeable future, generate additional vehicular traffic, which will impact on the local environment generally. Traffic congestion and noise can affect people's mental well-being, and cause drivers to become stressed, tired, irritable and angry which can lead to more road accidents. Breathing in polluted air over a long period of time can increase the risk of heart and lung diseases (Asthma and COPD) and lung cancer. There is also evidence linking air pollution to increased risk of dementia, low birth weights and diabetes. Breathing in polluted air over a shorter period, can also lead to symptoms such as eye, nose, and throat irritation⁵².
- 8.3.2 Policy MC1 refers to the following National and District Policies: Local Plan 2035 policies TRANS 2, TRANS 4 and EP1 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport.

POLICY MC2: ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- MC2.1** As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, new residential, commercial and recreational development proposals should provide access to public transport, with bus stops located within 400m or less of all homes and buildings accessed by the public via a safe and attractive walking route.
- MC2.2** Proposals which seek to improve bus services will be supported. New development proposals should not detract from access to existing bus services and/or their routes.
- MC2.3** As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, high quality supporting infrastructure should be included in major development proposals.

⁵⁰ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/active-travel-0>

⁵¹ <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s66322/Street%20Design%20Guide.pdf>

⁵² OxonAir <https://www.oxonair.uk/about-air-quality/health-advice>

- 8.3.3 An increased population is likely to increase on street parking and road congestion, potentially reducing the efficiency and viability of bus routes, for example Reading Road and Wantage/Station Roads (both key routes into and out of the town centre) can already be difficult for service buses to negotiate.
- 8.3.4 Transport infrastructure for buses within Wallingford should where practicable feature;
1. A stop-cage marking of sufficient length to enable buses access close to the kerb. Minimum of 15m per bus if unobstructed.
 2. High visibility bus stop flag and pole with appropriate and consistent branding
 3. An enhanced maintenance regime to maintain the quality feel of infrastructure investment;
 4. Higher quality footway and carriageway paving materials;
 5. A higher kerb to reduce step height between the bus and footway, minimum 125mm;
- 8.3.5 In many locations, the following features would also be beneficial:
1. 1. Safe accessible footways, with street lighting, from residential, employment and retail areas to the nearest bus stops
 2. Street lights at bus stops
 3. An attractive shelter with seating designed for those with limited mobility;
 4. Good bus stop design including real time passenger information display, printed timetable and service information, local map and way finding;
 5. A Wi-Fi hotspot so that public transport bus stop departure times can be accessed via mobile phones;
 6. Cycle parking at stops that serve express bus routes to destinations over 5 miles away;
 7. Bus stops need to be accessible for all users, for example with raised kerbs such as Harrington Humps (or equivalent) to allow wheelchair bus users etc level access.
- 8.3.6 Policy MC2 promotes the use of sustainable travel and offers transport choice. Larger development proposals have the potential to contribute towards the improvement of bus facilities in the town centre. This would assist in promoting sustainable transport movements and may contribute towards measures to address air quality management issues. Based on an assessment of each proposal on a case-by-case basis potential contributions to such improvements will be sought where they would be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 8.3.7 Policy MC2 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 policies TRANS2 and TRANS5 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport.

POLICY MC3: CYCLING

- MC3.1** New residential development proposals should provide covered, secure, convenient and safe cycle storage for each home. Commercial development proposals should provide covered, secure and safe cycle parking in line with OCC standards.⁵³

⁵³ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/PARKINGS.PDF>

- 8.3.8 Policy MC3 promotes the use of sustainable travel by facilitating cycle use.
- 8.3.9 Policy MC3 refers to the following National and District Policies: Local Plan 2035 policies TRANS2 and TRANS5 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport.

POLICY MC4: SAFE ACTIVE TRAVEL

- MC4.1** As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:
- MC4.1(a)** provide for a safe and convenient access to the highway network for all highway users and for safe and convenient access to important destinations in Wallingford including the town centre, schools, employment areas and health facilities; development proposals which join up footways, cycle paths/cycle ways into a comprehensive linked network across the area will be supported. Support will be given to proposals that:
- encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport
 - enhance and maintain connectivity with the existing rights of way network and Local Green Spaces and open spaces within the town.
- MC4.1(b)** provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians, both within the development, and including links to rights of way and other off-site walking and cycling routes where relevant, and especially safe routes to the schools. This may include the use of shared surfaces in line with current DfT guidance.
- MC4.1(c)** provide for covered, secure, convenient and safe cycle parking at residents' homes and in the town centre, complemented by other facilities to support cycling where relevant;
- MC4.1(d)** be designed to facilitate access to high quality public transport routes, including safe and attractive walking routes to bus stops;
- MC4.1(e)** provide for appropriate public transport infrastructure;
- MC4.1(f)** be served by an adequate road network which discourages pavement parking and can accommodate traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment and references 'Active Travel England' July 2020⁵⁴, and 'Inclusive Transport Strategy' DfT November 2020 to enable all highway users to be safely accommodated particularly within the constraints of the historic town centre;
- MC4.1(g)** where new roads, pedestrian routes, cycleways and street lighting are constructed as part of the development, they should be to adoptable standards and completed as soon as they are required to serve the development;
- MC4.1(h)** make adequate provision for those with impaired mobility and parking for disabled people, specifically including wheelchair and mobility scooter users;
- MC4.1(i)** be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations;
- MC4.1(j)** provide for loading, unloading circulation and turning space;
- MC4.1(k)** be designed to enable the servicing of properties by refuse collection vehicles and access by emergency vehicles;
- MC4.1(l)** where appropriate provide for traffic calming in line with current DfT guidance.

- 8.3.10 Residents, commuters and visitors need safe and convenient travel options to access all local services and facilities, they should also be encouraged to use low emission vehicles and non-car-based travel. Any new cycle parking should be in the form of Sheffield Hoops in accordance with OCC parking standards⁵⁵.
- 8.3.11 Policy MC4 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 policies TRANS 2 and TRANS 5 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport

POLICY MC5: VEHICLE PARKING

- MC5.1** Development proposals should meet Oxfordshire County Council's minimum parking standards. Where feasible and appropriate, proposals for residential development should also meet the parking provision included in paragraph 8.3.13:
- MC5.2** Within Wallingford town centre, as defined on the Proposals Map, parking provision as appropriate to the proposed use should take account of, and respond positively to, its historic environment. A reduced level of parking will be supported where it directly relates to the site concerned, the proposed use and to evidence of the way in which the proposed car parking provision can be satisfactorily accommodated in the local highway network.

- 8.3.12 Wallingford has, as a proportion of private households, a higher rate of car and van ownership than is the norm for England⁵⁶ Recent new housing has provided insufficient off-street parking. The community is concerned that the resulting high levels of on-street (and on-pavement) parking restrict access for delivery, service and emergency vehicles and public transport as well as making walking and cycling a less safe propositions.

⁵⁴ Active Travel England' July 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-england-framework-document-for-working-with-department-for-transport>. 'Active Travel Strategy' Oxfordshire July 2022 <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/ActiveTravelStrategy.pdf> 'Inclusive Transport Strategy' DfT November 2020

⁵⁵ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/cyclingstandards.pdf>

⁵⁶ <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/household-car-ownership-census-2001-ward>

8.3.13 National maximum parking standards were abolished in 2011 as it was considered they resulted in ‘congested streets and pavement parking’. The NPPF 2023 at paragraphs 111 and 112 set out criteria to be considered in relation to parking standards; these include the availability of and opportunities for public transport and local levels of car ownership. Whilst Wallingford has reasonably regular bus services to some towns, public transport access for many journeys including to essential services is poor and difficult without access to a car. Policy MC5 seeks to address this situation. It applies the County Council’s standards to new developments. However, where it is practicable to do so the following standards should be applied to residential developments. For developments of ten or less houses the mathematical calculation of these standards should be rounded up rather than down.

	1 allocated and remainder unallocated all off-road	2 allocated and remainder unallocated all off-road
1 Bed	1.4	
2 Bed		2.3
3 Bed		2.4
3/4 Bed		2.5
4 Bed		3.0
5 Bed +		3.5

8.3.14 The historic environment in Wallingford may mean that full parking provision is not appropriate, or that parking should be provided off-site. Exceptional circumstances would be needed to justify no parking provision.

8.3.15 Policy MC5 refers to the following National and District Policies: Local Plan 2035 policy TRANS2 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport

POLICY MC6: CHOLSEY AND WALLINGFORD RAILWAY CORRIDOR

MC6.1 Land immediately to the west of the existing railway line, 10m in width, as shown on the Proposals Map shall be protected from built development to facilitate the provision of commuter train services from Wallingford Station, and to provide an enhanced walking and cycling route. Development proposals within this corridor which would preclude its use for transport and movement will not be supported.

8.3.16 The railway bed is owned by Wallingford Town Council and leased by the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Preservation Society (CWRPS). The Society believes that if the railway line is upgraded to national standards this would allow for a weekday commuter railway to GWR mainline at Cholsey, whilst maintaining the existing heritage railway operation. The Town Council would support this proposal which would enable future promotion of sustainable travel. Policy MC6 refers to the following National and District Policies: Local Plan 2035 policy TRANS6 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport.

POLICY MC7: PROVISION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

MC7.1 New residential developments should be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles (including both cars and cycles) in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

8.3.17 The demand for electric vehicles (EV) is growing rapidly and publicly-accessible charging points are essential if Wallingford is to support the increased use of EV cars. There are 12 EV charge points in each of SODC's car parks at the Cattle Market and Goldsmith's Lane, and another EV charge station in Lidl car park, Lupton Road.

8.3.18 Policy MC7 recognises changing technologies and promotes and facilitates more sustainable travel. The Town Council wishes to ensure that the policy is sufficiently general to ensure that it is future-proofed throughout the Plan period. It anticipates changes in technology and the government's wider ambitions to move away from motor vehicles powered exclusively by either petrol or diesel engines. The wider issue is likely to be regulated by progressive changes in the Building Regulations. However, in the short term the Town Council suggests that developers should set out to comply with the following expectations:

1. new residential developments with off-street parking at home will incorporate a charge point as standard at every home;
2. proposals for new residential developments with on-street and unallocated parking spaces should incorporate one public charge point (kerbside or lampposts) for every 10 car park spaces;
3. new residential developments with communal bicycle storage will provide one EV charge point for every five bicycle spaces;
4. proposals for new non-residential building with more than 10 car parking spaces will provide one charge point and cable routes for charge points for one in five spaces; and
5. proposals which increase the number of charge points to at least 1 in 10 in public car parks will be supported

8.3.19 Policy MC7 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 policy TRANS5 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport.





Chapter 9

Community facilities and infrastructure

9.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

- By 2035, Wallingford residents will have access to a wide range of high quality, attractive and inviting leisure and community facilities, to support healthy, interesting and active lifestyles.
- Wallingford's parks will be easily accessible attractive destinations for both residents and visitors, with a wider play offering for children and young people of all ages and abilities,
- Formal outdoor and indoor sports facilities will have been extended to meet the needs of residents and those within the catchment area and will provide year-round access to a good range of activities.
- The town's community halls will offer residents a choice of both hire for private use and attendance at a wide variety of clubs leasing the halls.
- Access to and use of the river will be creatively developed such that Wallingford develops a reputation as a place for recreation and leisure, with easy access to low key water-based leisure activities for able-bodied and disabled residents and visitors.
- Future enhancements of community facilities will be coordinated to ensure that the limited money available is allocated to achieve the best solution for residents.
- Residents will have access to a range of high-quality facilities to be able to live healthy lives.
- Residents will be able to access education at all ages.



The main entrance to the Bull Croft on High Street

Objectives

LO1: To protect, improve and extend existing leisure and community facilities including formal and informal recreation spaces, allotments and indoor facilities to meet the needs of the increased population of the area and as described in the development plan.

LO2: New developments will support the leisure needs of future residents, either by providing leisure facilities on site or by direct contribution through Section 106 and CIL funds.

LO3: To protect and improve the capacity and quality of all existing leisure assets so that they are accessible, vibrant and have sufficient capacity.

LO4: To improve play facilities for young children by improving existing play areas and by the provision of additional play areas.

LO5: To support the creation of a leisure hub and meeting place for families and teenagers.

LO6: To support the provision of new facilities for teenagers in the town.

LO7: To provide support and encouragement to those that seek to make provision for an indoor swimming pool in Wallingford.

LO8: To promote Wallingford's riverside location and capacity for water-based recreation.

LO9: To encourage the provision of public amenity land and green spaces, particularly those that form part of the Wallingford Green Network (see Natural Environment Objectives and Policies) and create circular walking and cycling routes.

LO10: To encourage facilities supporting tourism in Wallingford such as more accommodation and improved signage.

LO11: To support the provision of enhanced cycle routes including a cycle route to Cholsey railway station to encourage sustainable access to the railway network (see Movement and Connectivity Objectives and Policies).

HO1: To facilitate the provision of health and social care infrastructure in Wallingford to meet the needs of local residents. The WNP will require new housing developments to provide Section 106 and CIL funds to support the expansion of Wallingford Medical Practice and Wallingford Community Hospital to accommodate the healthcare needs of the increasing population.

EO1: To ensure Wallingford has sufficient and varied educational provision for all ages and abilities, proportional to the increase in population and anticipated future demographic mix of the town. The WNP will require housing developers to provide Section 106 and CIL funds to support this objective.

INF1: To support the provision of effective infrastructure including transport, high-speed broadband and utilities that will facilitate economic growth and new business development.

9.2 BACKGROUND

Leisure facilities

- 9.2.1 Leisure is vital to the quality of life, health and well-being of the community, Wallingford residents enjoy a wide array of leisure facilities for both formal and informal sport and leisure activities. These facilities will need to be extended and enhanced to meet future requirements as the town increases in size.

The Thames and water activities

- 9.2.2 The River Thames, which runs along Wallingford's eastern boundary is a draw for both residents and visitors. The Thames Path⁵⁷, a National Trail and local riverside footpath, is heavily used by walkers and runners, but in bad weather can become inaccessible particularly for pushchairs and wheelchairs due to the poor surface.



Coracles beneath Wallingford bridge

- 9.2.3 The SODC camp site is at the Riverside Park and a private camp site just in Crowmarsh Gifford enable visitors to stay and enjoy facilities in the local area. In summer the Riverside draws large numbers who use the outdoor pool and Splash Park owned and run by SODC, as well as swimming, kayaking or Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP) in and on the river, and from the beach area. There are no hire facilities for kayaking, SUP or rowing boats within Wallingford which makes accessing the river itself difficult for many.
- 9.2.4 Wallingford Rowing Club⁵⁸ operates from a confined riverside site in the town and is open for local people to join. Oxford University has their boathouse in Wallingford and Oxford Brookes University has a boathouse just to the south of the town in Cholsey, both universities train extensively on this stretch of river.
- 9.2.5 The Town Council owns a number of moorings near the bridge which are available for overnight hire and enable visitors to stay close to the town facilities. Cruise boats and other boats are available to hire from Benson Waterfront Leisure Park⁵⁹ where there is also a public access slipway for those who have their own craft. There is no publicly accessible slipway in Wallingford.
- 9.2.6 A new charity venture, the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club⁶⁰ opened in 2019 and is providing opportunities for disabled people to enjoy the water. The Club has planning permission for all-year access from the Riverside to the river via a pontoon, which will be installed in 2024. The pontoon will be accessible to other river users e.g. paddle-boarders.
- 9.2.7 In May 2024 the stretch of the River Thames known as Wallingford Beach at Riverside Meadows was officially designated as a Bathing Water by Defra⁶¹.
- 9.2.8 The SODC Leisure Strategy in the 2035 Local Plan identifies existing provision in the town and future needs.

⁵⁷ Thames Path <https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thames-path>

⁵⁸ Wallingford Rowing Club <http://wallingfordrc.co.uk/>

⁵⁹ Benson Waterfront Leisure Park <https://bensonwaterfront.co.uk/>

⁶⁰ Wallingford Accessible Boat Club <https://www.wabc.org.uk/>

⁶¹ <https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/designated-bathing-waters-explained/>

Indoor and Outdoor Sport

9.2.9 Wallingford School⁶² offers an excellent sports facility to the community. An all-weather football/hockey pitch, multi-purpose sports hall, dance studio, indoor and outdoor netball courts and tennis courts. Wallingford School Leisure Centre is a multi-use centre providing priority usage for the school between 8.30 and 16.30 with the availability for hire to the community at all other times. The Leisure Centre has external hirers who run a wide range of other activities at the centre. The PE department also run a variety of extra-curricular activities for school students.



Tennis courts and Multi-use games area (MUGA) in the Bull Croft.

9.2.10 A range of clubs for children and adults use the facilities including gymnastics, dancing, athletics, climbing, fencing, archery, badminton, netball, table tennis and Tae Kwon-do. Wallingford Netball Club⁶³ trains in Moulsoford due to a lack of training facilities in Wallingford itself, and Wallingford Badminton club has moved to Benson to play since the Regal Centre shut.

9.2.11 Wallingford Sports Park⁶⁴ is a 26-acre multi-sport facility located on the edge of the town at the Hithercroft, the site serves the town and surrounding villages within around a 20minute radius. The Sports Park is run by volunteers as a charitable Trust, member clubs include rugby, hockey, football (junior, youth and adult), tennis, squash and racketball, skittles, petanque and archery. The Sports Park has one of the best all weather pitches in South Oxfordshire and the large pavilion provides space for community activities and classes. The Sports Park pitch facilities are used at capacity throughout the winter months although waterlogging and flooding of pitches is a serious issue. Many of the facilities are of competition standard including, tennis, squash and pétanque courts, the AWP and grass pitches. County regional and national competitions are hosted at the site.

9.2.12 Wallingford Hockey Club has a sizeable waiting list of juniors and a shortage of playing pitches, and the town's youth football club (Wallingford & Crowmarsh Youth FC⁶⁵) does not have enough playing pitches for training and matches. The Sports Park has plans to improve the facilities available including an increase in AWP capacity for hockey and football, grass pitch provision for junior football together with additional changing and parking facilities. Additional provision may also be made for tennis and archery. The South Oxfordshire Leisure Strategy⁶⁶ indicates that a 3G pitch should be built in the western area of the district to increase capacity for football and rugby, together with another all-weather pitch for hockey. We would like these to be in Wallingford at the Sports Park. In order to be viable and to provide the needed extra capacity for the town most outdoor pitches and courts will need to be floodlit.

⁶² <http://www.wallingfordschool.com/index.php/leisure-centre-home> .

⁶³ Wallingford Netball Club <http://www.wallingfordnetball.co.uk/>

⁶⁴ Wallingford Sports Park <http://www.wallingfordsportspark.co.uk/>

⁶⁵ Wallingford & Crowmarsh Youth FC <https://www.wandcfc.co.uk/>

⁶⁶ South Oxfordshire Leisure Strategy Part 3

9.2.13 There are also sports pitches on the Bull Croft and The Paddocks. These are mainly football facilities for children and young people and should be retained for football unless other suitable sites can be provided to offset their loss.

Greenspace and allotments

9.2.14 There are a number of green spaces in the town which are used for informal sport and recreation. These are the Bull Croft, Kinecroft, Riverside Meadows, Castle Gardens and Meadows, Wilding Road and Radnor Road.

9.2.15 The Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan 2021 Policy CF3 to designate three Local Green Spaces at Radnor Road, Wilding Road and The Paddocks has been satisfied. Residents are benefitting from informal green space outside of the major parks of the Kinecroft, Bull Croft and Castle Gardens. Local residents and Wild about Wallingford group have planted community orchards and standard trees on Radnor Road and Wilding Road, both owned by SODC, with addition of wildflowers and hedgerow at Wilding Road. There is still enough space for informal play and recreation.

9.2.16 The provision for children's play is currently poor, with just one dated Neighbourhood Area Equipped for Play (NEAP) on the Bull Croft, which is being replaced, subject to planning permission, and a small Local Area for Play (LAP) on the development at Portcullis Drive. In 2023 the Town Council submitted a planning application for a new scheme on the Bull Croft, which is being considered by SODC. This will deliver improved youth football pitches and a new pavilion, with disabled toilet, and an adult functional fitness scheme. The new NEAP for 3 to 16 year olds has been designed to be inclusive and girl-friendly, and to incorporate disabled provision, including wheelchair ramps in some of the equipment and sensory areas, following extensive local consultations.

9.2.17 The Highcroft development includes three Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and one LAP, plus an informal play trail within open space / residential areas, and a youth football pitch which is managed by Wallingford Sports Park. The Winterbrook Meadows development (Site E) will include: a multi-use ball games area, two LAPs, one LEAP, and one combined LEAP and NEAP.

9.2.18 The allotments in Wallingford are provided and run by the Town Council. Currently they meet SODC's standard and there is a waiting list. Berkeley Homes provided 38 new allotment plots, including raised growing plots, on the Highcroft development. More allotments and a Community Garden are proposed for the Winterbrook Meadows development.

Community Halls and buildings

9.2.19 There are a number of community halls in the town used by a large number of organisations; however, a lack of investment means the condition of some is poor.

1. The Regal Centre, a large hall used for community markets, music events, sports and general hire was closed in September 2017. There is more information about the future of The Regal Centre and the site in Chapter 7.
2. Centre 70, a Victorian primary school building is used by a number of organisations and is in a reasonable state of repair.
3. Wallingford Sports Park pavilion has been refurbished and is used for indoor sporting and community activities, toddler activities and has several rooms of different sizes for public hire, including a large hall.
4. St Mary-le-More church, the Baptist Church, The Ridgeway Community Church and Methodist Church have rooms and halls available to hire.
5. The Town Hall has rooms used for public meetings and exhibitions. It is a Grade 1 listed building and is in need of expensive maintenance.

6. The Scouts lease a building from SODC off Wantage Road and the Guides have a hut on the playing field at Fir Tee School.
7. The Wallingford Museum⁶⁷ is based in Flint House, an important listed historic building which is owned by the Town Council. The Museum is a volunteer-run facility popular with both residents and visitors.
8. The Recreation Rooms on the Bull Croft were demolished. In 2023 the Town Council applied for planning permission to build a new Pavilion with spaces and rooms for community groups to use.
9. The Library and adjacent Day Centre are owned and operated by Oxfordshire County Council and provide Wallingford residents with a much valued and used facility.
10. The Corn Exchange in the Market Place is used as a theatre and cinema and also has other events and is a much-valued leisure asset for local residents.
11. The Wigod Way Wallingford Family Centre was set up in June 2017 following the closure of the Children's Centre. The centre runs open access play and educational sessions and activities for local children under 5 years old and their families. Sessions are planned to be inclusive, imaginative and enriching with the aim of promoting young children's early learning outcomes and providing opportunities for families to form and build vital social support networks.

9.2.20 The future use and maintenance of many facilities are complicated by being scheduled heritage assets and/or designated buildings and by their ownership arrangements. The additional housing proposed for Wallingford will increase pressure on the existing provision of community facilities as well as creating demand for new facilities, Section 106 and CIL funding should be used to expand and improve facilities.

9.2.21 Wallingford is a compact town, if leisure and community facilities are lost through redevelopment or closure, it can be very difficult to find suitable alternative sites. This reinforces the importance of retaining and maintaining the existing provision.



The Methodist Church and community hall in St Leonard's Square

⁶⁷ Wallingford Museum <http://www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk/>

Cycling and walking

- 9.2.22 Despite the easy terrain Wallingford is not cycle-friendly and there is poor access to off-road cycle routes from the town. There is only very limited cycle provision on the Wantage Road. Sustrans route 5^t runs through the town and links with routes to Didcot, Abingdon, Oxford and Reading and the Chilterns Cycleway⁶⁹. Better cycle routes and lanes around the town and a local cycle link between the town and Cholsey station e.g. alongside the Reading or Wallingford Roads or the Cholsey – Wallingford Railway, would be advantageous. Proposals and policies for cycling are in Chapter 8 Movement and Connectivity.
- 9.2.23 The town has a network of public footpaths through residential areas connecting with the town centre, and to access the surrounding countryside with links to a number of other trails including the Thames Path and Ridgeway National Trails. These footpaths and bridleways are part of Wallingford Green Network (see Chapter 5 Natural Environment). Footpaths west and south of the town towards Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, South Moreton, and to Cholsey are severed by the Wallingford bypass.
- 9.2.24 One of these is the Dame Agatha Christie Trail a local walking route used by many visitors and residents. It links her former home in Winterbrook and her grave at St Mary's Church in Cholsey.

Healthcare Provision

- 9.2.25 The growing population of Wallingford and surrounding villages will result in increased pressure on existing health facilities: the Wallingford Medical Practice and Wallingford Community Hospital. There is a recognised need for the Medical Practice to be expanded with more consulting rooms. Some expansion has already taken place but capacity is severely limited so further provision for health care facilities to serve Wallingford and its catchment villages is being explored. Policy WS2.2 in Chapter 2 supports the development of a new medical centre on Site E, Winterbrook Meadows. When the current medical centre becomes vacant, a suitable use for the site will need to be identified. Because the medical centre is currently linked with the Community Hospital and other health services, a health-related use would be the most appropriate use. Alternatively, as the site lies within the built-up area of Wallingford housing could be suitable.
- 9.2.26 Wallingford Medical Practice has a poor Doctor/Patient ratio and uses specialist nurses to support in some areas. The practice already has major parking issues, recently introducing a payment scheme with the first half hour free, to free up parking places, but it remains an issue and access for appointments causes concern. Information about health services in Southeast Oxfordshire is provided in the document Locality Place Based Primary Care Plan: Southeast Oxfordshire Locality (IoE 39). This indicates that the three practices in the Wallingford, Goring and Woodcote group have space for around 500 additional patients without expanding their premises. In addition, that they expect an increase of around 6000 patients in the next ten years. Some capital funding has been secured from development in Wallingford.
- 9.2.27 The Community Hospital, which is on the same site on Reading Road as the Medical Practice, has the following departments; 20 in-patient beds, first aid unit, maternity unit, adult mental health, day hospital, physiotherapy, community dental service, podiatry and ultrasound scanning. Additionally, Consultants from the Royal Berkshire Hospital offer out-patient clinics including ENT, rheumatology and audiology.

⁶⁸ Sustrans cycle route map <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/map-ncn>

⁶⁹ https://www.chilterns.org.uk/map_marker/chilterns-cycleway/

Education in Wallingford

- 9.2.28 Wallingford has one infant school, one primary school and a junior school: Fir Tree Junior School, St John's Primary School, and St Nicholas CoE Infants. Children also attend Crowmarsh Gifford Primary School. There are two pre-schools in Wallingford: Paddocks and Rainbows. St Nicholas School has a nursery facility. There is also a nursery school on the same site as Wallingford School. In 2023 planning permission was given for St Nicholas CoE School to relocate to Highcroft and become a Primary School. It is expected to open in 2026.
- 9.2.29 Wallingford is a hub for secondary education, with children from surrounding villages as well as Wallingford attending Wallingford School, it is being expanded to provide an intake of 242 pupils per year from 2023/24 and is over-subscribed with a waiting list. Since 2019, children within the former catchment area of the Wallingford School have been allocated to schools at substantial distances from the town, such as Henley and Didcot. This has implications for the cost and sustainability of travel for the affected families.
- 9.2.30 The overall population of Wallingford and surrounding villages will grow with more housing, and this will result in increased pressure on existing education facilities. Provision should continue to be made for Wallingford children to attend Wallingford School rather than be pushed out to schools some distance away e.g. Didcot or Watlington.
- 9.2.31 Education proposals are set out in the Oxfordshire County Council's Children and Young People's 2018 – 2023 and the Oxfordshire County Council Pupil Place Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26 and their successor strategies and plans.

9.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

- 9.3.1 Our policies seek to protect existing facilities and allow new proposals to come forward to support the Plan's vision for leisure.
- 9.3.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy CF1 Safeguarding Community Facilities sets out criteria for the consideration of proposals which will result in the loss of an essential community facility. Other relevant local plan policies are CF2, CF3, CF4 and CF5.
- 9.3.3 The following community facilities are integral to the viability of Wallingford's economy and will be safeguarded by Policy CF1:
12. The Bull Croft and Bull Croft pavilion
 13. The Kinecroft
 14. The Regal Centre
 15. The Paddocks open space
 16. Wilding Road open space
 17. Radnor Road open space
 18. Wallingford Sports Park
 19. Library & Day Centre
 20. Scout Hut
 21. Centre 70
 22. Corn Exchange
 23. Allotments
 24. Flint House (Wallingford Museum)

POLICY CF1: SUPPORT FOR NEW FORMAL AND INFORMAL SPORT AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

CF1.1 Proposals for development of new or enhanced community and recreation facilities to improve formal and informal community and sport provisions will be supported where:

CF1.1(a) they are located within or adjacent to the town

CF1.1(b) they would meet an identified local need; and

CF1.1(c) they are accessible for all members of the community and promote social inclusion

CF1.2 Proposals for the following will be particularly supported:

1. At the Regal Centre site – a replacement community hall
2. At the Bull Croft – a replacement pavilion
3. At the Sports Park – proposals to expand capacity for sport, in particular hockey and football together with supporting facilities for changing and parking.

9.3.4 The existing and future population of Wallingford requires a range of community facilities to provide for their health and well-being, facilitate community activities and to promote a sense of place. Wallingford recognises the benefits to public health, both physical and mental, of having access to a range of quality leisure and recreational facilities which are accessible to the broadest spectrum of people.

9.3.5 Policy CF2 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 Policies CF1, CF2 and CF5 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities

POLICY CF2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

CF2.1 The following spaces, which are identified on the Proposals Map, are designated Local Green Spaces:

1. Wilding Road
2. Radnor Road
3. The Paddocks Playing Field

CF2.2 Proposals for development on a Local Green Space will not be supported except in very special circumstances.

- 9.3.6 Wallingford has a high density of housing constrained by its historical Saxon boundaries. Individual gardens are smaller than the national average and the quantity of informal open space in Wallingford is below SODC's current standard. Residents can benefit from informal green space outside of the major parks of the Kinecroft, Bull Croft and Castle Gardens. The three designated Local Green Spaces are publicly accessible. Wilding Road and Radnor Road Green Spaces are owned by SODC, and accessible to all 24/7 via footways and roads. The Paddocks is owned by the NHS and leased for youth football games. It is not publicly accessible 24/7.
- 9.3.7 Policy CF2 applies the restrictive policy approach towards development proposals on designated local green spaces. Very special circumstances can be considered by the District Council on a case-by-case basis rather than a policy approach trying to anticipate future circumstances.
- 9.3.8 Policy CF2 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 Policies CF1 and CF4 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities paras 102-107

POLICY CF3: WALLINGFORD'S RIVERSIDE

- CF3.1** The Riverside Meadows south of Wallingford Bridge are safeguarded for ecological and informal recreation use. Proposals that generate unacceptable harm to:
- the ecology, water quality or natural landscape character of the area, or
 - the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape, or
 - the important heritage assets including Wallingford Bridge,
- will not be supported.
- CF3.2** The Riverside Park and Pools area to the north of Wallingford Bridge is safeguarded for tourism, leisure and recreation uses.
- Proposals for an improved water-sports leisure centre, which may include a covered swimming pool, or those which improve opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy Wallingford's location beside the River Thames will be supported, provided they do not unacceptably harm:
- the ecology, water quality or natural landscape character of the area, or
 - the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape, or
 - the important heritage assets or their settings, including Wallingford Bridge.
- CF3.3** Proposals which improve facilities for rowing and other river-based sport or recreation uses without causing unacceptable harm to the ecology, water quality or natural landscape character of the area or to the important local historic assets or their settings, will be supported

- 9.3.9 The area beside the River Thames is an important and treasured asset for Wallingford. It separates the town from the village of Crowmarsh Gifford and provides an important approach to Wallingford giving views into the Conservation Area and many important designated buildings, including the Grade 1 listed Wallingford Bridge, a Scheduled Monument. The Riverside Meadows south of Wallingford Bridge lie within the Chilterns National Landscape and are River Thames floodplain meadows managed by the Earth Trust on behalf of SODC for wildflowers and wildlife. The meadows make an important contribution to the visual setting of Wallingford. Due to the site's rich historical and archaeological interest Riverside Meadows is on the Historic Environments Record.
- 9.3.10 The riverside areas north and south of Wallingford Bridge are an important part of the landscape setting of the town and of the Chilterns National Landscape. Any changes in these areas need to be carefully considered. Proposals will need to include comprehensive assessments of all these issues, especially potentially harmful impacts on the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape, as set out at General Policy 4 and Policy DP4 in the Chilterns Conservation Board Management Plan 2019-2024⁷⁰, as well as impacts on the setting of the historic town. Existing covenants on this land would need to be respected in any proposals for change.
- 9.3.11 The River Thames and the open areas beside the river are important contributions to the sense of place and attraction that Wallingford has for residents and visitors. The capacity of the River Thames to accommodate increased use and the water quality should be considered when assessing proposed new riverside facilities for river-based sports and recreation. In May 2024 the stretch of the River Thames known as Wallingford Beach at Riverside Meadows was officially designated as a Bathing Water by Defra⁷¹.
- 9.3.12 Wallingford is situated in the centre of Cleeve Reach, the name of the stretch of river between Benson Lock and Cleeve Lock near Streatley, a distance of 6.5 miles of open water. This length of open water makes Cleeve Reach very attractive for rowing clubs.
- 9.3.13 Wallingford Rowing Club is based in Thames Street and Oxford University Boat Club is situated in St Lucian's Lane. Oxford Brookes University Boat Club is located in Cholsey, south of Wallingford. We believe it is important to maintain the priority given to rowing at Wallingford due to the river's unique suitability for this river-based sport.
- 9.3.14 Where development proposals are being proposed for river-based sport for non-local organisations, the Town Council would welcome the feasibility of including provision for some local use of the proposed facility being considered. There is a particular local interest in rowing and compatible informal water-sports such as canoeing and kayaking.
- 9.3.15 The provision of a year-round swimming facility in Wallingford was one of the most requested facilities in our consultations. The existing heated outdoor pool operated by Better on behalf of SODC operates from May to September (four months). While it has been difficult to find a suitable alternative site for a swimming pool within the Neighbourhood Plan area, it may be feasible to increase the opening times of the existing pool by the provision of a cover or other means. This and/or the provision of other supporting facilities to improve and increase the opportunities for enjoyment of the leisure area at the Riverside Park would be supported provided they do not harm the natural or built environment, the important landscape setting of the Chilterns National Landscape and the Scheduled Monument (Wallingford Bridge) and the historic town.
- 9.3.16 Policy CF3 refers to the following National and District Policies - Local Plan 2035 Policies CF1 and CF4 & NPPF 2023 Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities.

⁷⁰ Chilterns NL Full Management Plan_.pdf

⁷¹ <https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/designated-bathing-waters-explained/>

POLICY CF4: LOCAL AMENITY PROVISION

CF4.1 The provision of local business premises to serve the needs of the residents on new housing developments in excess of 50 houses will be supported. The provision of community spaces, convenience shops and public houses will be particularly supported

9.3.17 Policy CF4 seeks to ensure that sub-communities within the wider town are not left isolated for basic provision of services, requiring them to travel for even simple needs and thus contribute to traffic and pollution problems.

POLICY CF5: HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICE PROVISION

CF5.1 Proposals that result in increasing the health and social care facilities through contributions to new/extended buildings will be supported.

CF5.2 Proposals for the expansion of the medical centre will be supported provided they have regard to the protection area adjoining Bradford's Brook and to the historic environment.

9.3.18 Access to primary healthcare in Wallingford must be sustainable. An expanding and ageing population in Wallingford should have access to appropriate health care facilities. The importance and benefit of having a fit for purpose medical and health centre to serve the local community may override other considerations on the site.

9.3.19 This policy seeks to recognise that Wallingford serves as a hub for the surrounding villages and that residents have very strong concerns that the viability and level of service provision of primary health care is at risk due to the inadequate consideration of the cumulative effects upon Wallingford of neighbouring developments. The Community Aspirations of the Plan seek to address this important issue. The Town Council will work with relevant organisations to ensure that medical facilities in the town are closely aligned with its expanding population.

9.3.20 Policy CF5 refers to the following National and District Policies - NPPF 2023 Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities.





Chapter 10

Community aspirations

10.1 COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

- 10.1.1 Over the course of the public consultations that have been held in order to guide this Neighbourhood Plan to fruition, a number of specific community aspirations have been suggested. These aspirations demonstrate how some of the policies contained within this Plan could be integrated into provision for the future benefit of Wallingford's community. These aspirations are listed below.
- 10.1.2 The Town Council's Annual Meeting will report on progress towards meeting these Community Aspirations.

Historic Built Environment and Archaeology - Review and update the Designated Buildings and Non-designated heritage assets

- 10.1.3 Periodic reviews and updates of the designated buildings and non-designated heritage assets will ensure Wallingford's heritage and historic assets are protected and maintained for future generations to enjoy, and to reinforce the sense of place that residents and visitors find so attractive. The last review was carried out in 1984 and the list is now considered inadequate.
- 10.1.4 Since 1984 criteria for listing have changed and a greater understanding through research of building types has taken place. In Wallingford few buildings were inspected internally but a good number are now proving to have much earlier interiors. Bringing up to date and maintaining records of Wallingford's heritage assets and historic environment will ensure that both are understood, celebrated and protected for future generations to enjoy. Wallingford is long overdue a review of its designated buildings and it is anticipated that as more research is carried out a number of these buildings will be added to the national list.
- 10.1.5 We will work with and encourage the relevant authorities to undertake a heritage review.
- 10.1.6 We will seek to support enhanced management of the heritage assets, which could include management of vegetation, consolidation and conservation of earthworks and masonry elements of ruins, public access and interpretation. This would involve identifying a schedule of appropriate and necessary CIL-funded works and management plans that would offset the anticipated additional impacts on these public spaces and heritage assets resulting from the town's growth and increased population.

Movement and Connectivity - Active Travel

- 10.1.7 In line with OCC's Active Travel policy, prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement in the town and promote Active Travel. Wallingford Town Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and other partners to review the status of routes including those listed below. These routes have the potential to become part of a safe, active travel network for pedestrians and cyclists, with priority for pedestrians and appropriate signage in accordance with Rule H1 of the UK Highway Code 2022. Routes include:
1. The path from Queen's Avenue to St George's Road
 2. The paths from Hithercroft, Wallingford Sports Park and Highcroft to the Market Place
 3. The path from St George's Road to Bull Croft Lodge across Bull Croft
 4. The path from the Cross Keys to Kinecroft
 5. A route linking the town centre with the Winterbrook to Cholsey cycle path and Cholsey railway station
- 10.1.8 Wallingford Town Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and other partners to improve safe, active travel opportunities for everyone, including people using mobility aids. This will be achieved through initiatives including, but not restricted to, the following:
1. Support parking enforcement including a ban on pavement parking.
 2. Ensure pedestrian footways are kept clear of overgrowing vegetation.
 3. Create cycle lanes, for example on Hithercroft and St John's Road between the Wallingford Sports Park and Reading Road, to encourage cyclists to use this route to access employment and sports locations.
 4. Support and develop the improvement of narrow roads that are shared between vehicles and cyclists. (e.g. Goldsmith's Lane) by including roadside signs and roadway symbols to encourage appropriate priority for cyclists and pedestrians as appropriate. This has already been successfully achieved on Wallingford Bridge.
 5. Clearly signpost pedestrian routes that are shared with cyclists as having priority for pedestrians. Church Lane is an example of a road that is shared between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, and should be signposted in favour of pedestrians.
 6. Support introduction of 20mph speed limits in Wallingford
 7. Support the work of the Wallingford Speedwatch community group.

8. Continue to explore the possibility of temporary or permanent pedestrianisation of the Market Place.
 9. Strongly encourage through-traffic to use the by-pass.
 10. Deter rat-running through residential streets in North West Wallingford which are used daily by the children attending three schools, in particular explore strategies to inhibit such traffic from using Wilding Road and surrounding streets.
 11. Ensure legal alternative forms of travel, e.g. e-bicycles, wheelchairs and mobility scooters, can be used safely, including by creating dropped kerbs on residential developments and within the town centre.
 12. Work with Oxford Bus Company and Going Forward Buses to identify and support bus routes serving Wallingford town centre and residential areas.
 13. Liaise with the District and County Councils on strategic bus routes which have Wallingford as a key hub and maintain minimal and not diversionary routing.
- 10.1.9 The Cholsey and Wallingford railway line to be upgraded to national standards to allow for a weekday commuter railway whilst maintaining the existing heritage railway operation.

Leisure and Recreation Facilities

- 10.1.10 The Town Council will explore with SODC the opportunity for providing an all year-round pool, a pay and play gym, a skate park and park for wheeled sports, and a 4-court sports hall in full time community use in the Wallingford area. Proposals to secure the provision of a covered swimming pool for all year use in Wallingford or within walking distance (1.6 km) of Wallingford Town Centre will be strongly supported.
- 10.1.11 For the last 20 years the Boys Brigade in Wallingford has provided both young people and others the opportunity to enjoy the local river in a safe and environmentally friendly way. This has included safety training and as a result 5 rescues have been made over this time. This has all been achieved without a base, causing craft and support equipment to be transported to the Riverside. The Town Council will support the provision of a base should a suitable site become available.

Improved Health and wellbeing facilities

- 10.1.12 The Plan takes account of the increasing pressure on medical facilities in the town. The pressures reflect the growth of the town itself, and that of the villages within its hinterland. The ageing of the local population also places its own pressure on the available facilities. In this context the Town Council will work with relevant organisations to ensure that medical facilities in the town are closely aligned with its expanding population.

Educational Facilities

- 10.1.13 The Plan takes account of the increasing pressure on educational facilities in the town. The pressures reflect the growth of the town itself, and that of the villages within its hinterland. These are referenced in the Oxfordshire County Council Pupil Place Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26⁷². In this context the Town Council will work with relevant organisations to ensure that educational facilities in the town are closely aligned with its expanding population. In particular it will work with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that the existing, well-developed arrangements for securing developer contributions towards the expansion/ modification of local school provision is continued throughout the Plan period.



⁷² <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s58985/Section%205.1%20Capital%20Investment%20Strategy%20Annex%203%20-%20Pupil%20Place%20Plan%202021.pdf>





Chapter 11

Appendices

APPENDIX A – SITE ALLOCATIONS

- A.1 The heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- A.2 The NPPF requires that: ‘Neighbourhood Plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.’
- A.3 The NPPF also states that Neighbourhood Plans make policies and allocations to meet identified housing requirements¹.

A.1 SITE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- A.4 In order to fulfil these NPPF requirements representatives from the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan working groups formed a Site Assessment Working Group in June 2017.
- A.5 The group met in a series of workshops led by Nexus Consultants who were commissioned by Wallingford Town Council to guide and advise the development of the Plan. The group met in workshops to objectively assess each potential development site put forward.
- A.6 These workshops considered the sites identified by:
1. SODC’s Housing & Land Availability Assessments (HELAA)
 2. SODC’s subsequent Strategic Housing & Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA)
 3. Call for Sites issued by Wallingford Town Council
 4. Strategic Sites put forward in the Core Strategy: Sites A, C, D and E. Site B was already allocated for development.
- A.7 People taking part in the three Site Assessment Working Group workshops in June 2017 used the criteria of Suitability, Availability and Achievability (see below) and were judged as Red, Amber & Green. Each site was then marked out of 12, where 1 was dark red and 12 was pale green.
- A.8 Suitability of the site for development
1. Connectivity: distance to the town centre, schools, shops, health facilities and employment areas
 2. Access: existing and proposed access to the site for vehicles and pedestrians
 3. Highway impact: effects of traffic to/from the site on the highways network and public safety
 4. Heritage impact: effects on designated buildings, conservation areas, archaeology, Scheduled Monuments and undesignated heritage assets
 5. Biodiversity/Landscaping/Green Infrastructure: effects on biodiversity, landscape characteristics, topography and public green spaces
 6. Flood Risk: known flood risks at the site
 7. Compatibility with surrounding land uses: would any development cause a negative impact on existing or future residents/users; e.g. noise, air pollution
 8. Parking: would development impact parking provision locally
- A.9 Availability
9. Available for development: is the site readily available for the proposed development
 10. Appropriate use: is the proposed development an appropriate land use, are there competing priorities that would affect its delivery
- A.10 Achievability
11. Is the proposed development realistic and likely to financially viable?
- A.11 The preliminary findings from the initial site assessment workshops were set out on display boards produced by Nexus Consultants², and displayed at the public consultation in the Regal Centre on 8 July 2017. This consultation was open online until 19 August 2017.
- A.12 People were invited to complete a questionnaire (online and printed handout) indicating their agreement/disagreement with the information displayed relating to: Strategic and Small Residential Sites, Leisure and Community Sites, Employment Sites and give additional information and comments.

¹NPPF February 2019, chapter 2

²WNP Community Consultation 8 July

- A.13 Representatives from the Site Assessment Working Group visited the most significant sites in October 2017.
- A.14 Information from the public consultation, new information from SODC about site availability and non-availability, and the site visits contributed to discussions in validation meetings held by the Site Assessment Working Group with members of the Plan working groups.
- A.15 With advice from SODC, the Site Assessment Working Group completed the site assessment work, which was discussed and approved at Steering Group meetings and finalised in summer 2018.

A.2 SITES ALLOCATED FOR HOUSING

- A.16 The SODC Core Strategy 2012 preferred options exercise identified potential development sites (Sites A to E) around Wallingford. After public consultation Site B green field neighbourhood for 555 homes was allocated for development. This site is currently under construction by Berkeley Homes Thames Valley (St Joseph).
- A.17 In October 2017 SODC published a Draft Local Plan which identified 295 homes required to be built in Wallingford during the plan period. This figure was used when assessing all the sites that had come forward. In August 2019 SODC granted outline planning permission for development of Site E, subject to the completion of Section 106 agreements to secure planning obligations. See P16/S4275/O.
- A.18 The emerging Local Plan identified, in Chapter 5 Delivering New Homes para 5.17, that the supply of new homes in Wallingford was satisfied by the provision of houses on Site B and Site E.
- A.19 In February 2020, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), published updated figures for its “Housing Delivery Target”³. These show that in the period 2016 to 2019, the SODC area completed 3022 new homes against a requirement of 1466, thereby demonstrating an above target delivery of new homes in the district.

THE SITE ALLOCATION IS AS FOLLOWS

- A.20 Site E is allocated for development. This site already has the benefit of outline planning permission P16/S4275/O, subject to legal agreements, for up to 502 new homes including an extra care facility, a primary school and access.
- A.21 This site is a sustainable location within the town and meets the requirements of the NPPF 2019. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 confirms that with the commitments at Site B and Site E the housing need in the town is more than satisfied.
- A.22 When making this assessment (full details are given in APPENDIX B –) we considered:
 1. Traffic flows
 2. Access from the site into Wallingford, for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers
 3. Impacts on the natural and historic environments, including Bradford’s Brook and the Bronze Age barrow.
- A.23 The detailed site assessment (Appendix B) explains this and recognises the opportunities to positively influence the way the site is developed in order that it provides an attractive and good quality environment for future residents and respects the heritage and landscape setting of the town. In particular:
 1. to review which parts of the site should be developed and which remain as green space
 2. the density and height of development
 3. the contributions the site makes to the green infrastructure network footpaths and other local public amenity spaces and infrastructure within the Wallingford Green Network.
 4. the contribution the site makes to necessary infrastructure in the town.
- A.24 A full detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was undertaken to inform the final capacity of the site, to ensure the site provides an attractive gateway to the town and to avoid adverse impacts on the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes and the town’s heritage and Conservation Areas.

A.2.1 OTHER SITES CONSIDERED FOR HOUSING

- A.25 During the Site Assessment process, Site A, north of Wallingford and Site D, south of the Hithercroft industrial estate were also considered.

³ <https://www.neighbourhood-planning.co.uk/2020/02/hdt-2019.html>

Site A

- A.26 Site A is a 77ha site on land north of Wallingford. It is divided into two sites, A1 and A2. Following the Neighbourhood Plan public consultation in July 2017 Oxfordshire County Council sent a letter dated 14 August 2017 outlining reasons for objecting to development on this site:
1. Sites A1 and A2 are within the Strategic Resource Area and Mineral Safeguarding Area for sharp sand and gravel in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy, polices M3 and M8. In addition, both sites lie within a mineral consultation area under policy M8.
 2. Traffic from Site A2 onto Shillingford Road would greatly increase the volume of traffic on Shillingford Road and Castle Street and contribute to air pollution within the Air Quality Management Area around the crossroads of Castle Street and the High Street. The sites are not near public transport.
- A.27 SODC Landscape Capacity Assessment published in September 2017 concluded that Site A was not suitable for development because:
1. Development on this site could lead to harm to views from the North Wessex Downs AONB including the Public Rights of Way
 2. Development would extend the built-form of Wallingford well beyond the settlement limit and encroach into open countryside, eroding the separation of the AONB
 3. Access to the site via the eastern boundary could do harm to the rural character of the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Conservation Area
- A.28 Site A was not been allocated for housing because it is not suitable and not achievable for housing development for the following reasons:
1. harm to the adjacent North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting,
 2. the Minerals Safeguarding from Oxfordshire County Council,
 3. and the potential increase to air pollution in the Air Quality Management Area.

Site D

- A.29 Site D is a 10.72ha site south of Hithercroft Industrial Estate. Planning application P18/S2506/O for up to 170 homes and 3.1ha of employment land with access from the A4130 was refused in January 2020 due amongst other reasons to poor accessibility and sustainability, poor design, impact on the landscape, impact on the highway network.
- A.30 Wallingford is one of the UK's best-preserved medieval towns with a constrained road network. The development of Site B and Site E with potential for 1,000 new homes will put considerable pressures on the infrastructure, services and facilities in Wallingford. It is the WNP steering group's view that the town does not have the capacity to accommodate even more homes.
- A.31 Site D was not been allocated for housing because it is not suitable and not achievable for housing development for the following reasons:
1. This site is not allocated for housing in the SODC Development Plan (Core Strategy and SODC Emerging Local Plan 2034).
 2. Proximity of this site to land used for industrial purposes which would create noise and disturbance for residents, or unreasonable constraints on existing businesses.
 3. There is no connectivity with the town centre's facilities and services.

A.3 SITES ALLOCATED FOR EMPLOYMENT

Site C, Hithercroft was allocated in the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan 2021 and has now been developed for employment use

- A.3.1 Other sites considered for employment

Ayres Yard

- A.32 Ayres Yard is a 0.75 ha site located off Station Road, Wallingford, with access west of the Esso petrol station. Ayres Yard is considered an important site within the town because it can accommodate industrial businesses with service industries close to the town centre.
- A.33 SODC's Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 364 recognised the Ayres Yard site was 'suitable for redevelopment, although it may be considered suitable only for redevelopment in employment use.' At the time the site was assessed (June 2017) the landowner was not known and therefore it was not clear if the site was available and deliverable.

A.34 During the Neighbourhood Plan period Wallingford does not need to deliver any more employment land over and above the allocation at Site C at Hithercroft.

APPENDIX B – SITE ASSESSMENT FOR SITE E

Site Reference and Name Site E (SODC WAL5; SHELAA 821 and 908) Land north and south of Winterbrook Lane, Wallingford

Site area 26.76 hectares

Description of Site The site is open farmland and countryside without built development. The site is bounded by hedgerows, trees, shrubs and grass, with residential development on the north (beyond Bradford’s Brook) and south-east boundaries. The historic ‘Bunk Line’ Cholsey to Wallingford railway line and the bypass (A4130) also border the site.

Site Plan (with red line boundary)



This site includes 821 and 908 from the SHELAA site plan

Site photograph



Site photograph taken from the entrance, looking northwest into the site from gateway to the Old Reading Road.

Planning policy Open Countryside Policies, Core Strategy 2012, SODC Local Plan 2011 and SODC Emerging Local Plan 2034.

SHELAA/ HELAA status	Site is suitable for housing and expected to deliver 435 dwellings in the Emerging Local Plan period.
Opportunities	<p>Housing, an extra care facility, primary school, sports facilities, allotments and links with the Wallingford Green Network.</p> <p>The bridleway Cholsey FP24 (The Dame Agatha Christie Trail) within the site links Wallingford with Cholsey and has the potential to form part of Wallingford Green Network, which connects Wallingford and Cholsey with the nearby Thames Path National Trail and the Ridgeway National Trail; therefore delivering the SODC ELP 2034 Green Infrastructure Network.</p>
Constraints	<p>The site is wholly within an area of known archaeological interest. Archaeological evaluation carried out in 2017 found evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlement, Bronze Age beaker burials and evidence of other archaeological features across the site. Two areas of potentially nationally-important archaeological deposits (henge) were identified to the south of Winterbrook Lane. These must remain removed from development to preserve these features in situ. Eastern part of the site is close to the Winterbrook Conservation Area. Archaeological investigations continue in 2018 providing more evidence of nationally-important deposits.</p> <p>The site is open countryside on the edge of Wallingford, between the bypass (A4130) and residential development at Brookmead Drive. It is within the SODC Landscape Character Assessment area of the River Thames Corridor: flat open farmland.</p> <p>Trees and hedgerows within the site adjoin the bypass and provide a natural screen. Views from The Dame Agatha Christie Trail afford longer range views to the Berkshire Downs, part of the North Wessex Downs AONB.</p> <p>The northern boundary of the site is Bradford's Brook, a stream that flows east into the River Thames. There needs to be an appropriate ecological buffer to the brook for flooding and biodiversity reasons. SODC Countryside Officer report: Bradford's Brook is the most important wildlife habitat on the site and supports populations of protected species e.g. water voles and bats; the majority of the more valuable wildlife habitats are on the northern edges of the site.</p> <p>The site is bounded on the west by the Bunk Line and open agricultural land beyond. North of the site is Brookmead Drive residential development. Eastern boundary includes the Winterbrook Conservation Area and residential development (existing and new build). South-west of the site is the A4130, and beyond is the New Barn Farm, Cholsey sand and gravel extraction site with processing plant MW.0094/16 (Grundon Ltd).</p> <p>The bridleway - Cholsey FP24, known as The Dame Agatha Christie Trail www.wallingford.co.uk/files/agatha_walks.pdf which runs through the site from Winterbrook Lane to the Bunk Line railway and on to Cholsey www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/countrysidemap</p> <p>This Trail, an amenity route, is actively promoted as a tourist attraction by SODC and Wallingford TC.</p>
Assessment conclusions	<p>Site is Suitable (Y/N) – YES for housing only Site is Available (Y/N) – YES Site is Achievable (Y/N) - YES</p>
Conclusions	<p>A resolution to grant outline planning permission for development of this site was made subject to the completion of Section 106 agreements to secure planning obligations. See P16/S4275/O</p> <p>The WNP has the opportunity to influence the way the site is developed, in particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to look at which parts should be developed and which remain as greenspace, • the density and height of development, • the contribution the site makes to the green infrastructure network, footpaths and other local infrastructure. <p>A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be essential to inform the final capacity of the site and to ensure effects on the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs and Winterbrook Conservation Area are avoided.</p>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Landowner: Trustees of Bosley Family Trust and Ryman Trust. Berkeley Homes have an option on the site. Meeting in May 2017 between landowner and Town Council.

Planning history: **SODC Officer Report 8 November 2017 states:**

Access to Site and impact on road network, alternative modes of transport

The site subject of this current application together with the Wates / Miller site adjoining to the east was considered for allocation in the Core Strategy (known as Site E) as an alternative to Site B. The Core Strategy Inspector (report dated 23 October 2012) highlighted a number of matters important for the development in Wallingford. Concluding he recommended Site B over Site E due to conservation issues in respect of Site E, particularly the access from Reading Road. As the Wates site and the access from Reading Road now has permission (under appeal P15/SO191/FUL) this particular issue is no longer applicable to the current site. However other matters highlighted by the Core Strategy Inspector in respect of Site E are still relevant and these include links, landscape, townscape, flooding, ecology, open space and recreation.

Planning application P16/S4275/O (outline application for up to 550 dwellings including an extra care facility and a primary school). Outline planning permission was granted in August 2019.

Access to Site and impact on road network, alternative modes of transport:

The Outline Planning application relies on all vehicular access into the site from the roundabout with the A4130 bypass and Wallingford Road.

Cycle and pedestrian access to the site are achieved from Brookmead Drive across Bradford's Brook, pending bridge construction, and from FP24, the Dame Agatha Christie Trail along Winterbrook Lane.

The community is concerned that the only access for all vehicles into and out of Site E will result in:

- increased traffic on the A4130 at this and the next small roundabout, with the A329, which are already at capacity,
- use of Reading Road into Wallingford to access services and facilities in the town
- traffic movements will increase problems of air quality and air pollution

The Reading Road footpath is narrow in places and changes from side to side a number of times.

There is no dedicated cycle path into Wallingford.

There is a joint footpath/cycle path to Cholsey railway station, although this is overgrown by hedges.

The site is close to the Thames Travel River Rapids bus route with frequent buses through Wallingford to Oxford, Reading and Henley

The site is close to the Wallingford to Cholsey bus route which links to Cholsey railway station.

Statutory public rights of way

Bridleway, Cholsey FP24 known as The Dame Agatha Christie Trail runs through the site, from Wallingford Town Centre to the Bunk Line railway and on to Cholsey www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/countrysidemap This Trail, an amenity route, is actively promoted as a tourist attraction by SODC, Wallingford TC and Wallingford Museum.

Proximity to AONB

Within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the Chilterns AONB.

Heritage and conservation

The site is wholly within an area of known archaeological interest. Archaeological evaluation carried out in 2017 found evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlement, Bronze Age beaker burials and evidence of other archaeological features across the site. Two areas of potentially nationally-important archaeological deposits (henge) were identified to the south of Winterbrook Lane. These must remain removed from development to preserve these features in situ.

Archaeological investigations continued in 2018 providing more evidence of nationally-important deposits. Research and excavations on former agricultural land to the west of Wallingford abutting the bypass have revealed considerable and important evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation. Some long-lived trackways, in use from the Early Bronze Age into the Iron Age appear to be major highways and linked sites E and B. Middle Bronze Age field systems may also be contiguous.

Eastern part of the site is close to the Winterbrook Conservation Area.

Landscape

The site is open countryside on the edge of Wallingford, between the bypass (A4130) and residential development at Brookmead Drive. Trees and hedgerows within the site adjoin the bypass and provide a natural screen. Views from The Dame Agatha Christie Trail afford longer range views to the Berkshire Downs, part of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Trees and hedgerows on the Wallingford bypass are important landscape features for the community and the setting of the town. The existing tree and hedge boundary to A4130 must be retained and strengthened to mitigate the visual impact of the development on Site E.

Trees and hedgerows help attenuate noise and air pollution from traffic. Retention of the trees and hedgerows must be a condition of the planning permission and must be satisfied – see also SODC Landscape Character Assessment recommendations below.

There is an opportunity to improve the hedgerows alongside FP24 across the site and to link these landscape features with green infrastructure within Site E and with the wider Wallingford Green Network.

The SODC Landscape Character Assessment describes the management required for the River Thames Corridor, flat open, farmland which includes Site E. WNP expects development at Site E to follow these recommendations.

- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements, and promote the use of building materials to maintain vernacular style and a scale of development and that are appropriate to River Thames Corridor (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, November 2016).
- Protect the sparsely settled character of the landscape and the integrity and vernacular character of the estate villages.
- Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and, where appropriate, pollarding willows.
- Establish buffer strips/field margins to potentially benefit small mammals, invertebrates and birds adjacent to willow pollards.
- Species-rich rivers and ditches are also very important and the aim should be to establish and maintain diverse banksides and aquatic vegetation through sympathetic management and the use of agri environment schemes.
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as alders, ash, oak and willows.
- Ancient semi-natural woodlands should be managed to ensure they are in favourable condition.

- Biodiversity** See SODC Landscape Capacity Assessment www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=765101202&CODE=61BE29920A3085BDFE9E14007E140CF7
- The northern boundary of the site is Bradford’s Brook, a stream that flows east into the River Thames. There needs to be an appropriate ecological buffer to the brook for flooding and biodiversity reasons.
- SODC Countryside Officer report: Bradford’s Brook is the most important wildlife habitat on the site and supports populations of protected species e.g. water voles and bats; the majority of the more valuable wildlife habitats are on the northern edges of site. This will link with the WNP objectives for improvements to blue and green infrastructure.
- Biodiversity will be improved if the hedgerows alongside FP24 across the site are strengthened, and linked with green infrastructure within Site E and with the wider Wallingford Green Network.
- The SODC Landscape Character Assessment (above) will improve opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.
- Flood Risk** Flood zone 1 - low probability of flooding.
flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/summary/459968/190453

APPENDIX C – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

C.1 AGE OF DWELLINGS

- C.1 The latter half of the twentieth century and the first quarter of the twenty first century have seen significant building development in Wallingford, with the percentage increase above average percentage comparators for England, as shown in Table C1.

Table C1: Age of Dwellings

Construction Period	Wallingford number	Wallingford percentage	England average percentage
Built before 1900	490	13.4%	18.1%
Built between 1900 and 1939	380	10.4%	24.4%
Built between 1945 and 1999	2,250	61.6%	56.7%
Built after 2000	530	14.5%	13.6%

Source: Valuation Office Agency (VOA) 2017

C.2 POPULATION AGE PROFILE

- C.2 The age profile for Wallingford shown in Table C2 indicates that over the population as a whole it has slightly less people of working age than comparator groups for for England (55.6% compared to 57.8%). There is also a greater percent of people over 65 than in England as a whole (21.4% compared to 18.4%). This could suggest an increased need for the 65+ years group for lifetime homes and enhanced healthcare facilities.

Table C2: Per cent of Population by Age

	Wallingford 2011	Wallingford 2021	England 2021
Population		8,500	56,490,000
Aged 0 to 4	7.2 %	5.6 %	5.4 %
Aged 5 to 9	6.1	5.9	5.9
Aged 10 to 14	5.4	5.8	6
Aged 15 to 19	5.1	5.4	5.7
Aged 20 to 24	4.8	3.8	6
Aged 25 to 29	5.9	5.1	6.6
Aged 30 to 44	22.9	19.1	20
Aged 45 to 59	18.1	22.2	19.4
Aged 60 to 64	5.8	5.4	5.8
Aged 65 to 74	9.2	10.1	9.9
Aged 75 to 79	6.3	7.7	3.6
Aged 80 and over	3	3.6	4.9

Source ONS Census 2021

C.3 WORKING AGE POPULATION

C.3 The age profile for Wallingford indicates that over the population as a whole it has less people of working age than comparator groups for the county of Oxfordshire and for England. This could suggest an increased need for the 65+ years group for lifetime homes and enhanced healthcare facilities, and for the 0-15 years age group additional educational facilities.

Table C3: Percentage Population by Age

Age Group	Wallingford	Oxfordshire	England
Age 65+ years	20.7	17.7	17.9
Working Age	59.2	63.6	63.1
0-15 Years	20.0	18.6	19.1

Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2016

C.4 BREAKDOWN OF HOUSING TYPES IN WALLINGFORD

C.4 The breakdown by type of dwelling in Wallingford is shown in Table C4.

Table C4: Wallingford housing types (as at the 2011 census)

Type of Property	Wallingford properties 2021	Wallingford properties as a % 2021	Properties in England as a %
Detached	683	18.4	22.3%
Semi-detached	1245	33.6	30.7%
Terraced	972	26.2	24.5%
Purpose built flat	627	16.9	16.7%
Flat (in converted house)	121	3.2	4.3%
Flat (in commercial property)	53	1.4	1.1%
Caravan or other temporary dwelling	2	0.1	0.4%

Source: Census 2021

C.5 AFFORDABILITY GAP

C.5 Table 5 illustrates the Housing affordability gap, which is an estimate of the gap between the cost of local houses and the amount residents can borrow.

Table C5: Housing affordability gap

Affordability Gap	Median House Price	Median gross annual work-based earnings
South Oxfordshire	£430,000	£36,357
England and Wales	£270,000	£33,079

Source: Land registry house price data (Dec15-Nov16); ONS earnings data 2013/2014

C.6 COVERAGE OF GREEN SPACE

C.6 Table C6 shows that compared to the average for England, Wallingford has more green space and there are significant green spaces along the perimeter of the Neighbourhood Plan area that are either scheduled for development through outline or full planning permissions or targeted by developers for development. When public parks and gardens are considered the situation is much worse than the average for England, reflecting the density of residential development within the boundaries of the built environment.

Table C6: Coverage of Green Space

Coverage of Green Space	Wallingford	England average
Total green space	3.04% (32.65 hectares)	2.22%
Public parks and gardens greenspace	0.43% (4.64 hectares)	0.79%

Source: OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2017

C.7 MAIN LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

C.7 Table C7 shows the concentration of workforce jobs in Wallingford for the three largest industry groups for workforce jobs based in the town.

Table C7: Main Local Employment

Wallingford Industry group in order of size	Percentage in Industry group, of all people in Wallingford in employment
Professional, scientific and technical services	15.5%
Business administration and support services	12.3%
Wholesale	10.7%

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) (2016)

C.8 COMPOSITION OF RETAIL UNITS

Table C8 a): Retail Sector comparison of Wallingford with national average.

	Total Units	Comparison	Convenience	Financial	Leisure	Retail Service	Vacant
Wallingford	130	33.8%	6.2%	10.8%	23.8%	17.7%	7.7%
National Average		26.9%	9.3%	8.8%	25.2%	15.8%	13.8%

Source: South Oxfordshire's Principal Centres Unit Composition at October 2022. Composition of principal centres derived from Nexus Planning survey of October 2022; Experian Goad national averages at September 2022

Table C8 b): Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2022 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2022 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2022 (%)	Study Centres Average at 2022 (%)
Comparison	6,670	29.4%	30.2%	29.6%
Convenience	4,060	17.9%	15.5%	17.2%
Financial and Business	1,770	7.8%	6.7%	8.3%
Leisure	5,350	23.6%	26.1%	24.8%
Retail	3,510	15.5%	7.2%	10.8%
Vacant	1,300	5.7%	13.8%	9.3%
TOTAL	2,660	100%	100%	100%

Source: Composition of town centre derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2022; UK Average from Experian Goad. Report September 2022

C.9 CAR OWNERSHIP

C9: Table C9 below shows that car ownership levels of Wallingford residents are higher than the average for England and that significantly fewer households have no vehicles.

Table C9 Car Ownership Census 2011 (Total households 1,185)

No of cars per household	0	1	2	3
No of households in Wallingford	592	1586	1163	363
% of households in Wallingford	15.9	42.9	31.4	9.8
% of households in England	23.5	41.3	26.1	9.1

Source: OCSI February 2018

C.10 Commentary on housing development for Wallingford

- C10 The Housing affordability gap is defined as the difference between the local house price (average or lower quartile) and 4.5 times local annual earnings (mortgage lenders are typically willing to lend 4-5 times annual salaries). The ONS housing affordability data (table 5) shows that South Oxfordshire is slightly less affordable than the surrounding region which in turn is much less affordable than England as a whole. Figure C3.2 shows how much affordability has worsened over time.
- C11 House price data for Wallingford (Chancellors local market survey) indicates house prices are a similar level to South Oxfordshire. When 'affordable housing' is considered (lower quartile data) the situation has significantly worsened over the last ten years, which supports this Plan's attention to 'affordability' in the local housing market.
- C12 The Socio-economic profile for Wallingford (Figure C3.1) shows 63% are in the upper four economic classifications. This supports a strong demand for houses in the mid-price range which has driven up prices in the last 10 years faster than cheaper housing; 55% for a semi-detached vs. 43.3% for a flat/apartment (Chancellors market survey). Hence future developments must support an overall mix of housing appropriate for all demand.

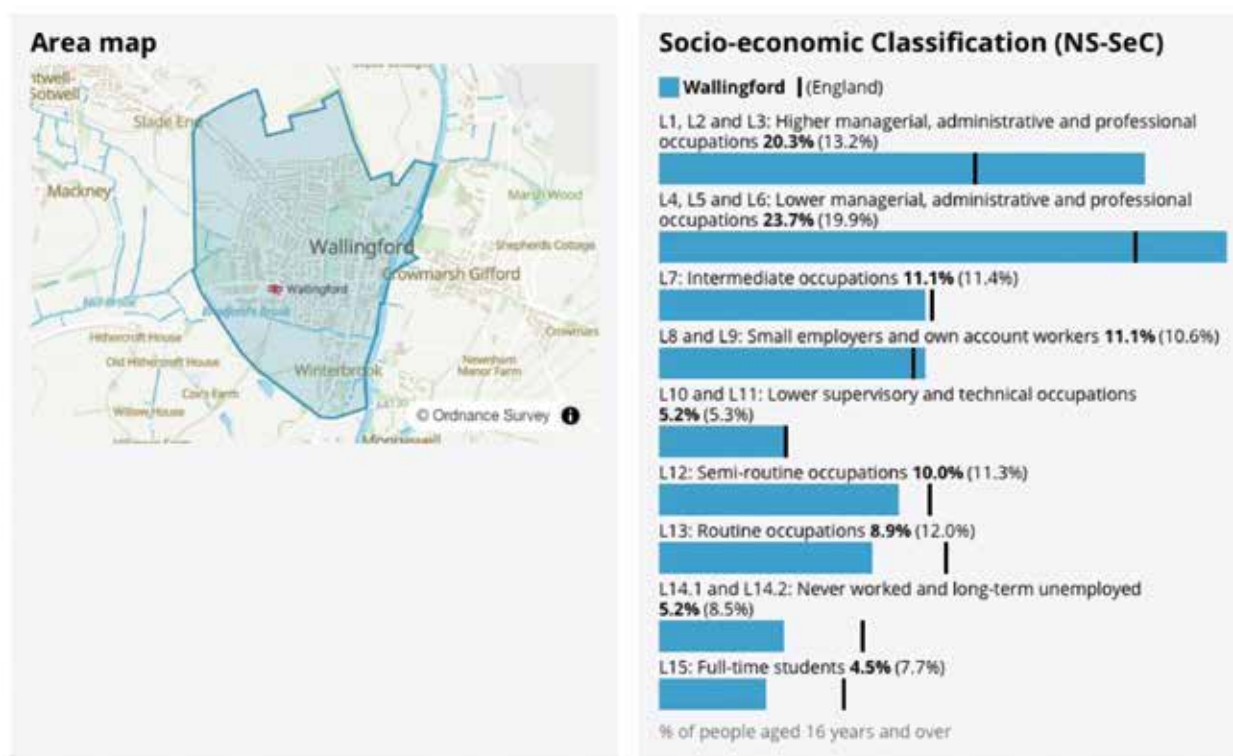


Figure C3.1 Wallingford socio-economic classification. Source ONS 2021 Census

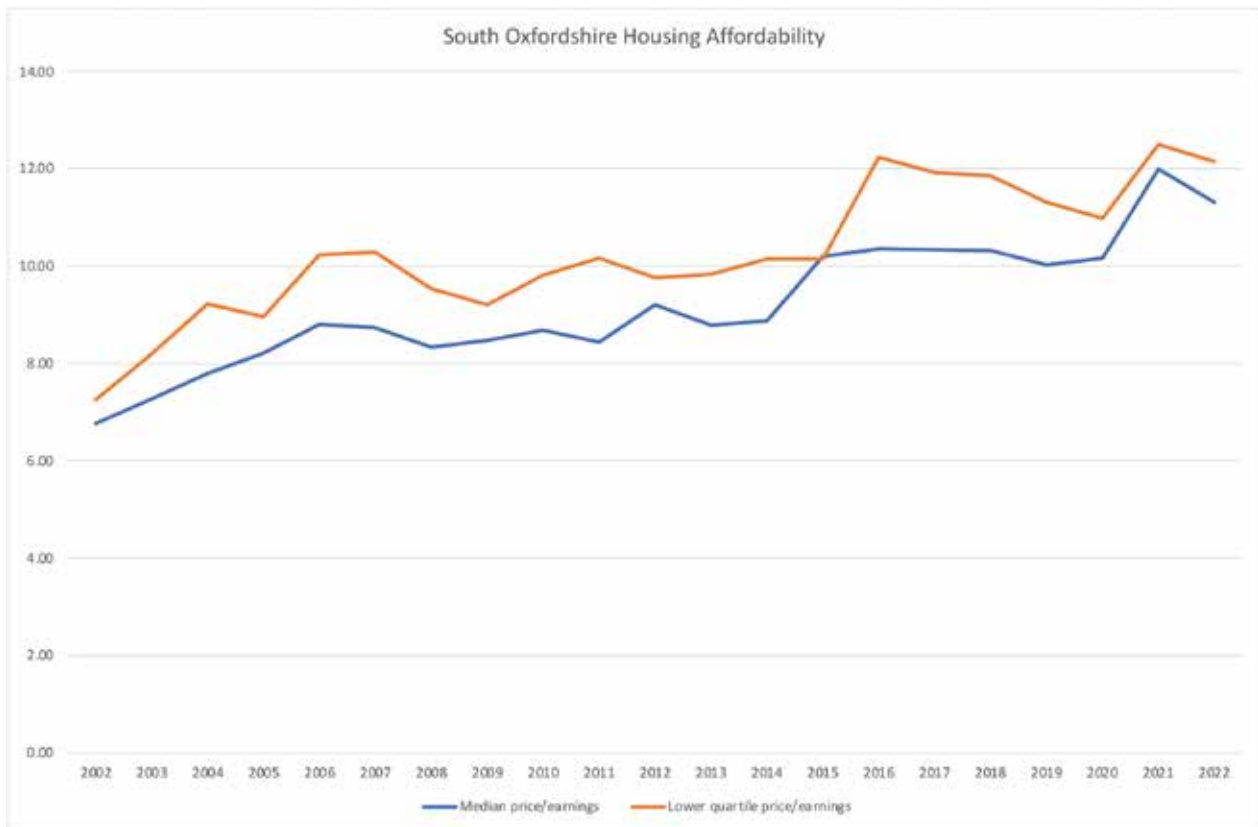


Figure C3.2. South Oxfordshire Affordability 2002-2022. Source ONS Housing affordability in England and Wales 2022.

Table C3.3 Ratio of median and lower quartile house prices to earnings

Area	Median house price	Median gross residence-based earnings	Ratio of median prices to earnings
England	275,000	33,208	8.28
South East	370,000	35,658	10.38
Oxfordshire	385,000	36,685	10.49
South Oxfordshire	430,000	38,016	11.31

Area	Lower quartile house price	Lower quartile gross residence-based earnings	Ratio of lower quartile prices to earnings
England	180,000	24,443	7.36
South East	269,950	25,923	10.41
Oxfordshire	290,000	26,734	10.85
South Oxfordshire	329,775	27,147	12.15

Source ONS Housing affordability in England and Wales 2022.

APPENDIX D – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- D.1 Relevant national and local policies and reports relating to Natural Environment Policies, which have been referenced in this Plan, are summarised below.
- D.2 The **National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Chapter 15** outlines ways in which plans should conserve and enhance the natural environment and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- D.3 The **DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan** (2018) includes consultation on achieving Net Gain for Biodiversity through planning. Biodiversity Net Gain legislation became mandatory in February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
- D.4 **Biodiversity Net Gain** www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain
- D.5 **The Environment Act** passed in 2021 enabled the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. During 2024 the **Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy** is being developed by Oxfordshire County Council in partnership with Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, Wild Oxfordshire, and the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, and reports to the **Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership** www.olnp.org.uk
- D.6 **Making Space for Nature**, by Prof Sir John Lawton recommends the development of wildlife corridors and ‘stepping stones’ that connect them with areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation.
- D.7 **Natural England Character Assessment, Thames Valley** includes Wallingford. Statement of Environmental Opportunity: Maintain existing greenspace and plan for the creation of green infrastructure associated with the significant projected growth of urban areas, to reduce the impact of development, to help reduce flooding issues, and to strengthen access and recreation opportunities. Seek links from urban areas to wider recreation assets such as the Thames Path National Trail, National Cycle Routes, and the river and canal network, and promote the incorporation of best practice environmental measures into any new development. publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3865943?category=587130
- D.8 **SODC and Vale GI Strategy October 2017, pages 71, 88 and 89** outlines opportunities to enhance existing Green Infrastructure in and around Wallingford leading to improvements in health and wellbeing and increasing biodiversity and access to nature. These are:
1. Retain, enhance and manage the existing green infrastructure assets in and around the town, such as Bull Croft and Kinecroft Parks and Wallingford Castle Meadows.
 2. Create and maintain new accessible natural greenspace within or close to the north and south of the town to address deficits in provision of 2 to 20ha sites.
 3. Create and maintain new accessible natural greenspaces to meet the needs of the communities in planned new developments around the town, including of 20-100ha sites to the north and south of the town, for example including the incorporation of existing features such as hedgerows and trees.
 4. Consider the potential for a northward extension of the existing Wallingford Castle Meadows beside the Thames.
 5. Develop and enhance recreational access links between existing and new green infrastructure assets, including from new planned developments, for example into town and to the Thames Corridor.
 6. Explore opportunities for positive management of wetland habitats, such as linking up and expanding small isolated wet woodlands within the CTA to meet Oxfordshire BAP Targets.
 7. Planned new development should include landscape planting, for example along boundaries, to integrate the development into the wider landscape and to soften its visual impact.

- D.9 **SODC Local Character Assessment November 2017: River Thames Corridor**, Section 9.8 page 100. This is particularly relevant to Site E. Recommendations to protect, conserve, enhance and restore the landscape qualities of South Oxfordshire, in relation to:
1. Development, expansion and infilling of settlements such as Wallingford.
 - a. Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.
 - b. Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials to maintain vernacular style and a scale of development and that are appropriate to River Thames Corridor (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, November 2016).
 - c. Protect the sparsely settled character of the landscape and the integrity and vernacular character of the estate villages.
 - d. The siting, scale and materials used for the construction of new barns should be chosen to minimise visual intrusion. Where appropriate, they should be screened with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area.
 2. Decline in management of existing woodland and trees.
 - a. Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and, where appropriate, pollarding willows.
 - b. Establish buffer strips/field margins to potentially benefit small mammals, invertebrates and birds adjacent to willow pollards.
 - c. Species-rich rivers and ditches are also very important, and the aim should be to establish and maintain diverse banksides and aquatic vegetation through sympathetic management and the use of agri-environment schemes.
 - d. Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as alders, ash, oak and willows.
 - e. Ancient semi-natural woodlands should be managed to ensure they are in favourable condition.
- D.10 **Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre**. Organisation with data for Conservation Target Area, Priority Habitats and Species, and Non-designated sites, Habitats and Species within the Plan area. www.tverc.org/cms
- D.11 **Improving access to the Natural Health Service**. Public Health England and the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (based in Oxford) strongly advocate greater access for people to the natural environment to improve their health and wellbeing. sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/resources

APPENDIX E – WALLINGFORD CHARACTER AREA ASSESSMENT OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC CORE

- E.1 This document links with the Neighbourhood Plan in the course of its preparation.
- E.2 South Oxfordshire District Council’s emerging Local Plan 2035 (publication version), encourages communities preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans to consider what the positive features are in their local area and identify them as part of a made plan.
- E.3 Policy DES2: Enhancing Local Character states “Where a character assessment has been prepared as part of a made Neighbourhood Development Plan, a proposal must demonstrate that the positive features identified in the assessment have been incorporated into the design of the development.
- E.4 Exemplary and sustainable design and architecture is at the heart of the National Policy Planning Framework 2018. It recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and creates better places for people to live and work in.

- E.5 There is a desire that new development should be of good design, practical and sustainable, whether traditional or modern. We envisage building new houses outside the historic core of Wallingford as an opportunity to provide architecture that the town can be proud of and thus encourage contemporary design that has architectural integrity, and do not wish to see “copybook” design nor uninformed use of local features and materials.
- E.6 The South Oxfordshire Design Guide, 2016, outlines design processes and principles for responding to the character of the local area. Because the design guide does not offer advice specifically on Wallingford, we have prepared this character assessment for the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan area.
- E.7 Other material planning considerations include the NPPG 2012 and the PPG.
- E.8 This character assessment does not seek to be a definitive guide to the whole of Wallingford outside the Conservation Area but identifies the key features in the Outer Area that we would encourage in new development, and the features to avoid because they do not respect and enhance local character.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT?

- E.9 A guide to applicants proposing development.
- E.10 To identify what is special about the way the town has developed and how we would like it to develop in the future.

GENERAL CHARACTER AND PLAN FORM OF THE HISTORIC CORE

- E.11 Wallingford is a market town of national importance. It retains its well preserved and distinctive Saxon street layout centred around a crossroads and enclosed by defensive ditches and ramparts. Medieval burgage plots survive in the town centre and a wide range of building periods is represented from the medieval period to the present day. Below ground the remains of Saxon houses are becoming increasingly evident through archaeology which verifies the street grid. The Kinecroft, Bull Croft, Castle Gardens and Castle Meadows are high quality open spaces of historic interest. The variety of built character and appearance form a rich multi-layered urban environment. This part of the town is dealt with in the Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal and contains the Scheduled Monuments and the vast majority of the Designated Buildings and Local Interest Buildings.

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC CORE

- E.12 The town expanded along two main roads; Reading Road/Castle Street runs north-south and Wantage/Station Road has an east-west alignment. These roads formed the primary route structure of the town. Away from the town centre the density of housing reduces with bigger, wider plots with parking off street and properties set well back from the road. Apart from a few functional buildings, e.g the water tower, development is generally of a two-storey nature, unassuming style, modest character and utilises local vernacular style and materials.
- E.13 Until the C20 the town was virtually contained within the historic boundaries. Only such utilitarian buildings as the Workhouse (1807), the Waterworks (1855), Wallingford Station (1866), and the Gas Works, all now demolished, were located outside the town. Still existing, just outside the boundary, are the red brick Gothic former Grammar School (1877) and former St Mary’s Vicarage, 1822, a large red and grey brick mansion.
- E.14 The late C19/early C20 saw 2 storey terraced workers’ houses in ribbon development starting along Station Road, Croft Road and other roads outside the Saxon ramparts. These created continuous street frontages, have small rear gardens and use locally made coloured bricks.

ST JOHN’S ROAD

- E.15 Wallingford was unusual for a small town in starting municipal housing before the 1919 Act. Nos. 1-4 St John’s Road (north side) of 1914 are a good example by a local builder and indistinguishable from private rental properties by the same builder in Croft Road. This ethos we wish to encourage. The design is of its time and uses the materials to good effect. Next to this row are Nos. 9-11b, c2010 and slightly earlier Nos.1-6 St John’s Road, modest buildings of brown brick with slate roofs, chimneys and, despite being uPVC, well detailed windows, porch hoods and doors. These reflect the style and character of the older buildings without lapsing into pastiche and the iron railings address the pavement in a good way.
- E.16 We want to see social housing of the same quality and design standard as the privately purchased homes and interspersed throughout the development. We do not want to see the social housing located in one corner, or pastiche or uninformed use of polychrome brickwork.



Former council houses on Station Road

STATION ROAD

- E.17 The 1930s saw suburbs grow beyond the medieval town and the local authority taking responsibility for providing homes to rent. Past the plain but well-designed 1924 Fire Station Road starts to become sunken with sloping grass verges on either side. The south side was developed all of a piece to the old Municipal Borough Boundary with attractive vernacular semi-detached red brick cottages with tall gables and roofs sweeping down to ground floor ceiling height. These reflect the national movement away from terraces and the growing aspirations of people for three bedrooms and modern facilities. Front garden sizes vary with Nos. 29 to 34 being set back to form a shallow crescent which provides movement to the streetscape. To the rear, generously large gardens were provided where people would grow their own vegetables and fruit. The style, use of materials and modest scale of these houses is very much of its time and reflects the fact that by the early 1930s this was still countryside.
- E.18 Past the crescent are three staggered terraces of vernacular design providing smaller accommodation but still with varying sizes of front gardens and large rear gardens. Car parking is available at the rear of the plots.
- E.19 We want to see good contemporary design using local materials, grass verges and decent sized gardens (an important feature for modern parents) with layouts that address the streetscape. Parking should be visible from the houses but not a dominant feature in the design of the development.



St John's Road first Municipal housing



Contemporary social housing, St John's Road

E.7 WANTAGE ROAD AND THE SOUTH SIDE OF STATION ROAD

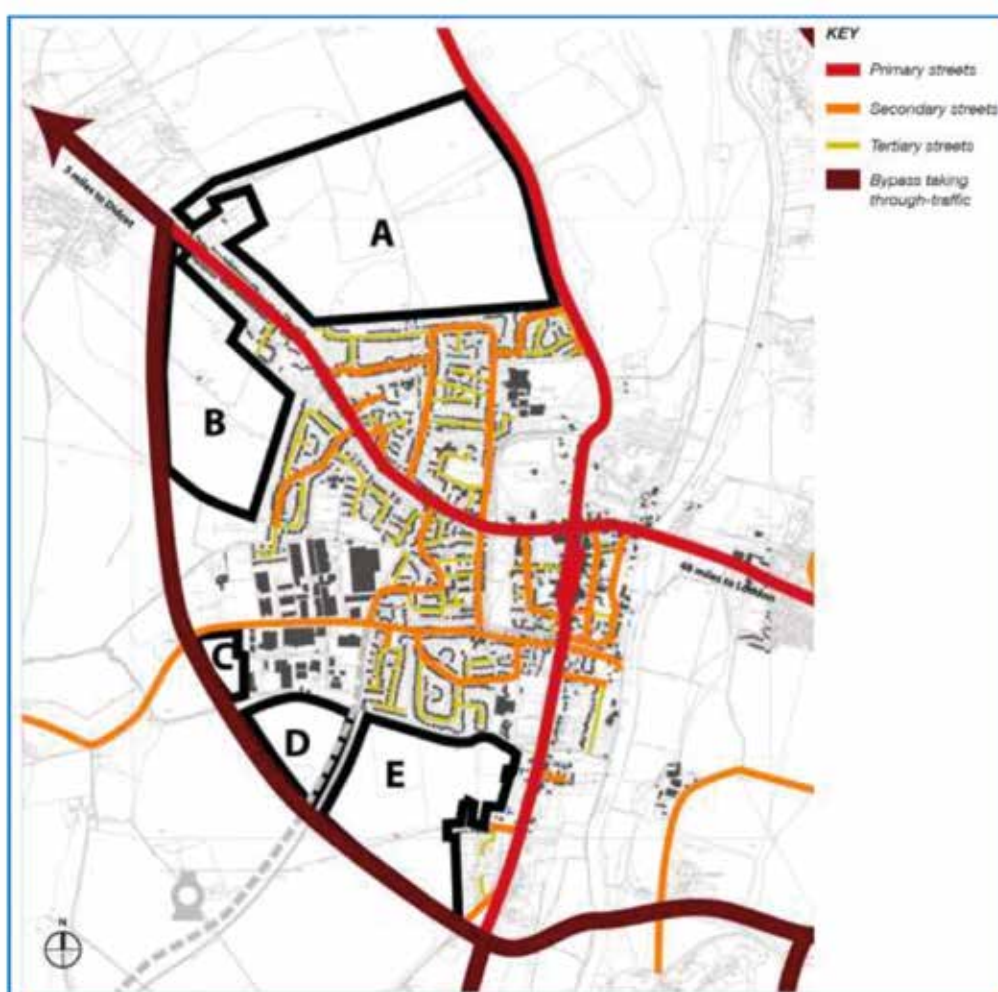
- E.20 Beyond the old Municipal Borough Boundary Wantage Road had already begun to develop by 1912 with a variety of terraced, semi-detached and the odd detached houses. For the most part these houses are undistinguished and are of a suburban type that can be seen in any town.

THE EARLY ESTATES

E.21 Bordered by Bradford's Brook to the south, Station Road/Wantage Road to the north and bisected by St John's Road discrete estates began to develop, each having its own layout and style. The 1935 Ribbon Development Act meant that developers were forced to introduce cul-de-sacs to make the best use of awkward parcels of land. A single developer, G T Crouch Ltd, was responsible for a good part of this development c1959 and 1964. The development of these estates led to distinctive linear boundaries to the countryside on the north and west of the town.

BROOKMEAD DRIVE AND OTHER CROUCH'S ESTATES

E.22 South of St John's Road, Brookmead Drive (1959) was laid out in a rough rectangle with a penetrating cul-de-sac on one side, creating a horse-shoe of houses, and projecting cul-de-sacs on the other side and top. All these houses have good size gardens both back and front, and grass verges giving a spacious feel to the estate. Although not many people would have owned cars at the time, the size of the front gardens has allowed for its inclusion without compromising the setting



E.23 Although pleasant enough, Crouch's Radnor Road and Allnutt Avenue of 1964 were less interesting but about this date Fir Tree Avenue with Chiltern Crescent and Greenfield Crescent created a loose figure of eight with staggered detached and semi-detached houses, creating a spacious feel and sense of place. A clearly defined straight western boundary running north/south allowed houses to back onto fields.

NORTH OF STATION ROAD/WANTAGE ROAD - ATWELL CLOSE, NELSON CLOSE AND BLACKSTONE ROAD, THE HARWELL ESTATE

- E.24 For the most part roads here are straight (with the exception of Atwell Close, Nelson Close and the Harwell Estate) with small front gardens and large back gardens to the older houses. The rear gardens of Wilding Road form the most part of a clearly defined long, straight northern border to the agricultural fields.
- E.25 The 1950s Harwell Estate was laid out with considerable care and attention to scale and detail. Here yellow brick terraced, semi-detached, staggered and detached houses form clusters with large back gardens backing onto each other and onto fields to the north and Wallingford School playing fields to the south. Front gardens are open-plan, stretching to the pavements. At road junctions houses are set back at an angle and grass verges have now matured trees. Although given the period parking was not built into the scheme, for the most part the gardens are large enough to accommodate this without compromise. The eastern boundary of the estate is separated from the main road (Castle Street) by a continuous planted, wide grass verge.
- E.26 We want to see an holistic approach to houses, gardens and streetscape with off-road parking, verges and semi-mature trees planted, all of which creates a sense of place. Layouts with insufficient parking will not be acceptable as this only leads to kerbside parking and clogged roads.
- E.27 Atwell Close and Nelson Close have an interesting organic layout of cul-de-sacs which allowed a high density of houses. Here attractive brick walls fronting the pavements have been used to create small private gardens for residents. Brick, flint and clunch walls are an important feature of the Wallingford street scene and their use, where appropriate, would be welcomed.



Brookmead Drive



Nelson Close

BRADBURN CLOSE AND SOVEREIGN PLACE

- E.28 Bradburn Close comprises South Oxfordshire Housing Association houses which are well designed with properly proportioned windows and doors and a good use of render. The pitched roofs integrate sustainability with inset solar panels. The development is, however, let down by lack of parking.
- E.29 Sovereign Place, again, has a good use of materials including render and has an appealing setting around a large, reasonably planted green. We would like to see good use made of large green areas which provide communal outdoor space, a sense of place and, if suitably planted, opportunities for wildlife.



Bradburn Close



Harwell Estate



Sovereign Place



Rowland Close

INTERCONNECTIVITY

- E.30 It is clear that when all these estates were built good interconnectivity by footways linking the estates & town was important and it remains so today. Walks out of the town into the surrounding countryside along these footways are also much used and appreciated. A good example of footway treatment which winds through staggered houses is seen in Charter Way. The footpath running between the end of Radnor Road and the recent Habitat site development provides good planting for a wildlife corridor.
- E.31 New developments will need to continue this interconnectivity between houses, town and country. We want to see these routes laid out in an attractive way with good visual surveillance. Narrow routes between close board fence panels to rear gardens will not be acceptable.

CONTEMPORARY BUILDING - READING ROAD

- E.32 There are very few attempts in Wallingford to build in an appropriate contemporary style but where it is done well houses can make a good contribution to the townscape.



Charter Way footpath



Contemporary house, Reading Road



Footpath between end of Radnor Road and recent Habitat site development

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED

E.33 Three storey buildings can be acceptable but care must be taken with their massing, scale and location. Two recent examples where this has not worked are Silversmith Place in the town centre and Millcroft Care Home off Habitat Way. Both were built on the footprint of earlier buildings and their bulk, massing and scale are inappropriate both to their locations and design. Both could have been landmark buildings but neither succeed. The rear elevations of both are unsatisfactory and poorly articulated. The roofs are poorly designed and in the case of Silversmith Place have created an inappropriate and ugly skyline visible from many points in the town. Height needs to make a good design statement and it should be borne in mind that Wallingford can be seen in its rural setting from many points, including the National Landscapes, around the town.

HITHERCROFT INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

- E.34 The industrial estate has developed piecemeal over many years, the early buildings having no architectural merit. However, in 1972 the former Habitat warehouse and retail showroom with strip windows was designed by Ahrends, Burton & Koralek, working with Sir Terence Conran, anticipating the out of town shopping boom. Although now with inappropriate windows to the showroom and in different use, these buildings still register as good examples.
- E.35 Later examples of good design and setting are the Fugro headquarters which is set back from the main road, has good planting and on the return the planting continues with an avenue of fastigate beech. A range of units including Monkey Business is simple and well-articulated, providing spaces for smaller businesses.
- E.36 The recent Lidl supermarket works well. Of simple, sustainable design with a low profile the building setting incorporates existing trees, has generous new planting and a large free car park.
- E.37 We would like to see architectural consideration given to any new buildings on the Industrial Estate and thought given not only to their own setting but also to how the wider setting can be improved by their build.



Monkey Business



Former Habitat showroom and warehouse



Fugro headquarters



Lidl supermarket

APPENDIX F – HOUSING FOR OLDER AND DISABLED PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

- F1 National policy is seeking to expand supported housing in the community and avoid or delay older people moving into care homes. The NPPF indicates at paragraph 62 that the housing needs of different groups in the community should be assessed. The NPPF is not looking exclusively at provision for the 'frail elderly', rather it embraces a wide range of people both in terms of age and in matters like mobility and general health.
- F2 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) suggests that strategic policy making authorities should set out in their plans these needs for both those who are already retired and for those reaching retirement age within the plan period. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has prepared some guidance which is referred to below. Unfortunately, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP 2035) does not provide an overarching requirement of need for the district or set out needs for different types of specialist housing. SOLP 2035 policy H13 suggests that neighbourhood plans can identify suitable sites. The Inspector at the Sonning Common appeal⁵ in 2022 suggested: '... without a more definitive district wide requirement it would be difficult for neighbourhood plan groups to assess the levels of provision required, which will vary; and neighbourhood plan groups generally lack the expertise to fully appreciate the requirements and the different housing models available and their viability and practicality'. SODC is preparing a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment this year which will include an assessment of needs for older people.
- F3 Nevertheless, the working group has assessed the limited evidence available. It is our view that providing facilities in the wrong places will not be sustainable or be likely to meet needs properly, facilities may remain unused and/or be unviable. We have concluded that in the short term there is a reasonable supply locally and this will allow time for SODC to make a more thorough and wide-ranging assessment of requirements. No allocation is made in this neighbourhood plan review.

TYPES OF SPECIALIST HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

- F4 The PPG sets out different types of specialist housing designed to meet the diverse needs of older people:
1. **Age-restricted general market housing:** This type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens, but does not include support or care services.
 2. **Retirement living or sheltered housing:** This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.
 3. **Extra care housing or housing-with-care** (also known as assisted living): This usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.
 4. **Residential care homes and nursing homes:** These have individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.
- F5 The list is not definitive, in addition tenure is a consideration and provision needs to be made for both market and affordable options. Any single development may contain a range of different types of specialist housing.
- F6 Quantification of the need for open market sheltered and extra care housing is not straightforward, there is no prescribed or generally accepted methodology.

⁵ Appeal reference APP/Q3115/W/20/3265861 Little Sparrows, Sonning Common RG4 9NY 21.6.2021

- F7 General housing also has a role to play which needs to be recognised. Many older people may not want or need specialist accommodation or to pay for care packages that they do not need. They may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet changes in their needs. Assistance can be bought in as required through care agencies in the same way as it is provided in sheltered or extra care housing. Location is a key consideration for older people, importantly proximity to good public transport, local amenities, health services and town centres. The Oxfordshire Market Position Statement indicates in key messages at para 6.3 that they wish to: Achieve a geographical spread of Extra Care Housing across the county, while ensuring that residents have good access to transport, health, leisure and other key services⁶.
- F8 The Oxfordshire SHMA⁷ highlights that the 55+ population is expected to grow by 46% between 2011 and 2031, with single pensioner households forming 11.5% and 2 pensioner households forming 9.1% of all households in 2011. 77% of pensioner households were owner occupiers, although single pensioner households have much lower levels of home ownership (64% compared to 81%) and higher proportions living in the social rented sector 23% compared to 8.8%.
- F9 Underoccupancy of housing is common with pensioner home owners, many have built up equity in their homes that they wish to retain and will want space to enable friends and relatives to stay. The SHMA identified that around 1,800 social rent pensioner homes had +2 bedrooms suggesting there is scope to enable downsizing if suitable accommodation is available in the right locations.
- F10 The SHMA also suggested that 'there may for example be an option to substitute some of this specialist provision with a mix of one and two bedroomed housing aimed to attract 'early retired' older people which could be designated as age specific or not. Such housing could be part of the general mix of one and two bedroom homes but built to Lifetime Homes standards in order to attract retired older people looking to 'down size' but perhaps not wanting to live in specialist retirement housing.'
- F11 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has prepared an Extra Care Housing Supplement 2019-2022⁸. This indicates that extra care facilities would normally be in schemes of 40 or more homes and usually between 50 and 80 units in order to secure the required on-site facilities. At para 6. OCC suggest provision should be made on the basis of 25 extra care units per 1000 people aged over 75. This standard is for rent, shared ownership and private ownership. They seek to achieve mixed tenure schemes aiming for a 50%:25%:25% mix of high/medium and low care needs. Provision nationally is closer to 15 units per 1000 of the 75+ population.
- F12 This assessment calculates needs based on the OCC standard. It is anticipated that a greater proportion will need to be social rented units as many homeowners will wish to retain the equity in their homes rather than downsize, particularly as equity release schemes are readily available now. Those living in social rented housing may be encouraged to downsize when alternatives are available.
- F13 The older population 75+ in 2021 in Wallingford is around 1400 people (columns a and b in Table 1) Some older people may want to move closer to health, shopping and other facilities in Wallingford rather than stay in surrounding villages.
- F14 This assessment is therefore based on the neighbouring communities of Cholsey, Wallingford, Crowmarsh Gifford and Brightwell-Cum-Sotwell. No allowance has been made for deaths over the period as it is assumed that some new older residents will move in.

⁶ Oxfordshire Market Position Statement (MPS) 2019-2022 – OCC and CCG
https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/about-us/Oxfordshire_MPS_2019-22v1_3.pdf

⁷ Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/495/strategic_housing_market_assessment

⁸ Oxfordshire MPS Extra Care Housing Supplement 2019 – 2022 - OCC
https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/adult-social-and-health-care/MPS2019-22_0.pdf

Table 1 Requirement for assisted living accommodation

Place	a) Residents over 75 in 2021	b) 65 – 74 in 2021= over 75 in 2026	c) 60 to 64 in 2021 = Over 75 in 2031
Cholsey	344	378	194
Wallingford	961	859	459
Crowmarsh Gifford	189	193	121
Brightwell cum Sotwell	259	226	117
Total by year	1753	1656	891
Total +75s	1753	3404	4295
Need at 2.5%	44	85	108

Table 2 Supply

Extra care/sheltered housing	Units	Tenure
Millcroft Wallingford (ECH)	40	rent (social landlord)
Marymead Cholsey (SH)	20	rent (social landlord SOHA)
Mariot Court Wallingford (SH)	35	Rent (social landlord)
St Lucian's Lane Wallingford (SH)	34	Freehold and leasehold
Silversmith Place Wallingford (SH)	22	Leasehold
Frances Curtis Court (ECH) Highcroft, Wallingford	70	Rent (SOHA managed including 19 shared ownership units)
Total	221	
Schemes with Planning Permission		
Longcross Place (SH)	23	Leasehold(available 2025)
Site E, Winterbrook Meadows (ECH)	Min 60	Tenure not specified
Total	83	

Table 3 Other retirement housing within 10 miles

All within category 2 or 3 of the PPG definitions having management staff and some communal facilities

Barnes Close Didcot	26	Rent (social landlord)
Castle Gardens, Watlington	41	Leasehold
Chiltern Close, Benson	19	Leasehold
Clarence Way Didcot	14	Rent (social landlord)
Fairacres, Didcot	51	Rent (social landlord)
Hale Road, Benson	14	Rent (social landlord)
Hanover Court, Didcot	31	Rent (social landlord)
Herringcote, Dorchester on Thames	19	Leasehold
Manor Farm, Didcot	24	Rent (social landlord)
Marlborough Court, Didcot	55	Leasehold
Millstream, Benson	17	Rent (social landlord)
Mowforth Close, Woodcote	24	Rent (social landlord)
Old School Place, Watlington	34	Rent (social landlord)
Orchard Walk, Watlington	51	Leasehold
Paul's Way, Watlington	14	Rent (social landlord)
Ryman's Court, Didcot	43	Leasehold
St Frideswide Court, Didcot	27	Rent (social landlord)
Stonor Close, Didcot	25	Rent (social landlord)
Williams Place, Didcot	60	Private rent, leasehold, shared ownership
Towse Court, Goring (ECH)	40	Rent (social landlord)
Thames Bank, Goring	21	leasehold
Waltham Court, Goring	21	Leasehold

Additional supply within 10 miles radius

Leasehold	330	Rent	341
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Source housing supply information:

<https://housingcare.org/elderly-uk-sheltered-housing/area-2-south-oxfordshire?page=2>

https://www.autumna.co.uk/directory/retirement-living/goring-on-thames/?gclid=EAlalQobChMIjs2m-vad-AIV31toCR2fkeXgEAAYBCAAEgJc1PD_BwE

Table 4 Care homes within 10 miles

Alma Barn Lodge Harwell	85	Care home with nursing
Benson House, Benson	70	Care home with nursing
Huntercombe Hall, Nuffield	42	Care home with nursing
Rush Court, Wallingford	50	Care home with nursing
The Meadows, Didcot	68	Care home with nursing
Watlington and District	60	Care home with nursing
Westgate House, Wallingford	61	Care home with nursing
Waterside Court, Wallingford	70	Residential Care
Sotwell Hill House	36	
The Old Vicarage, Moulsoford	61	

CONCLUSIONS

F15 Looking at the 2021 census and taking the population of 60+ (which projects the older population forward to 2031) gives an overall need for the four settlements as follows:

Table 5 Need for Assisted living or extra-care housing

	Need at 25 units/1000 of 75+ population (OCC standard)	Supply
2021	44	40
2026	85	110
2031	108	170

F16 Overall, the total supply is currently easily sufficient to meet this requirement, and the tenure mix is skewed to social rented provision. In addition, the current pipeline supply will meet needs in 2031.

F17 Table 3 identifies other current provision within a 10 mile radius and demonstrates that there is considerable choice in the locality.

F18 It is unrealistic to think that every community will have their own extra care or sheltered housing provision since it would not be viable to include the range of facilities and services needed. In addition, policies indicate that sites should be close to an established town centre and public transport. SODC are carrying out an assessment of elderly persons housing needs as part of their strategic housing market assessment which is planned to be completed later in 2024. It is clearly preferable that a needs assessment is carried out at a district level to understand needs for both affordable and market provision and to ensure that appropriate provision is made where it is required.

F19 Provision is sufficient to meet current needs, taking account of pipeline schemes. SODC is undertaking a district wide study of needs the results of which will be known later this year. No allocation is therefore proposed in this plan review but the situation will be monitored for future plan reviews. Policy WS2 seeks to retain options for adapting the provision on Winterbrook Meadows to meet the needs identified in the SODC assessment.

APPENDIX G - RE-LOCATION OF MEDICAL PRACTICE RATIONALE AND PROJECTION

Prepared by Dr Simon Morris, January 2024

- G1 Wallingford Medical Practice (WMP) needs urgently to relocate to a proposed new site on the Winterbrook Meadows development. An ideal site is available on this Berkeley Homes development just 500m away as the area put aside for the school is no longer needed by OCC. The area in question is referred to as the Phase 5 development / former school site.
- G2 This land was promised for community use, including health, if not used for a school, and allocating this land to WMP in the neighbourhood plan would greatly help us to secure the move.
- We have been in advanced discussions with Berkeley Homes for 2 years and they have stated publicly that they are willing to allocate 1.5 acres of this site to WMP for a Medical Centre.
- G3 The need for larger premises is urgent due to extensive local housing developments, a rapidly increasing patient list size, and ageing premises no longer suited to expansion. The current premises have been expanded 3 times in the past 30 years and plans for a further expansion were abandoned in 2020 as despite winning planning approval they were not cost effective or adequate in scope. All options for redevelopment of the current site have been exhausted, and the breadth and quality of current services is under threat, as is access. The practice has had to close its list recently and is actively exploring this option again in order to protect services.
- G4 The current premises measure only 797m² and approximately one third of this is not owned or controlled by the practice, rather being leased on an arrangement ending in 9 years. With a current patient list of 18,700, population projections suggest a patient list size of at least 22,500 in the next 10 years alone.
- G5 Based on standard industry measures the current premises have been established to be 32% undersized. When accounting for the additional clinical roles that are currently a central part of Primary Care Network (PCN) clinical strategy, as well as training, dispensary services and regulations, the building is established to be 46% undersized. When additionally accounting for population growth, the same calculations show the current building to be 59% undersized. These figures support our own day-to-day experience, being cramped, remote working being a necessity and using every cupboard space in the building in order to maintain our service.
- G6 The proposed move would allow a building of 2022m² including pharmacy space. This would allow for the extension of whole time equivalent GP numbers from 9 to 14, with additional GP training capacity and commensurate increases in the numbers of nurses, HCA's, additional clinical roles staff as well as proportional increases in administrative and dispensary staff. This would allow us to continue our leading role as a provider of GP training, ensuring the future workforce, and continue to allow us to operate effectively as the lead practice in the Wallingford and Surrounds PCN.
- G7 The site under discussion would also allow scope for further future expansion subject to need and funding.
- G8 Expert healthcare property consultants are actively steering the project on behalf of the practice and are negotiating with specialist developers who are willing to fund the new building. The site has in principle been endorsed by the ICB and the details of the PID are still being negotiated.
- G9 The project has the backing of the Wallingford and Surrounds Primary Care Network Clinical Director Dr David Godsiff, Wallingford Town Council, Thames Valley and Wessex School of Primary Care (GP Training), Reading GP Training Scheme and Mr David Johnston OBE MP.

FROM THE PID: PATIENT LIST SIZE AND POPULATION GROWTH

- G10 Planning growth is controlled via South Oxfordshire Local Plan which sets out the strategy for the delivery of development and supporting infrastructure for the period 2011-2034. It includes reference to the commitment to plan for 100,000 new homes by 2031, with the minimum housing requirement being 23,550 homes*.
- G11 Reference is made to 555 dwellings as part of the previously allocation in the Core Strategy and Local Plan 2011, but on the basis of 15% dwelling growth from 2011 and the requirements from the Core Strategy, 1,435 is expected to be the minimum numbers of houses to be built in the plan period.

(*South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 – page 28,87,92)

- G12 The Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) is a community-led planning document, prepared by Wallingford Town Council through a Steering Group of local residents together with members of Wallingford Town Council. The WNP provides a planning tool to guide the long-term future of the town and its countryside for the period from 2019 to 2035.
- G13 In summary, the housing growth pressures which will impact Wallingford Medical Centre and their PCN include the following, also translated into 'new residents/patients' by using the Office of National Statistics' calculation of an average of 2.4 persons per dwelling in the UK:
1. Winterbrook Lane (Site E)– 502 houses – 1,204 new residents
 2. Slade End Farm (Site B) – 555 new homes – 1,332 new residents.
 3. Benson Neighbourhood plan – 561 new residents.
 4. Cholsey Neighbourhood plan – 189 new residents.
 5. Woodcote Neighbourhood plan – 112 new residents.
- G14 In translating housing units to patient numbers, we have used a rate of 2.4 patients per household, which would suggest an increase in patients of 3,400 (plan period up to 2035), which excludes any other smaller developments from the wider practice area. The majority of these will most likely try to register with Wallingford Medical Practice, and assuming 100% of Wallingford patients (2,536) and 20% of remaining patients (173), this could equate to 2,709 patients.
- G15 At a local level we anticipate future population growth and increases to our list size resulting from recent and sustained development. If we assume the same rate of growth, we can see an increase in our list size of circa 2,078 patients by 2033:

Year	Raw Practice List Size	Percentage Increase
2012	16,010	
2013	16,147	0.9%
2014	16,477	2.0%
2015	16,516	0.2%
2016	16,532	0.1%
2017	16,757	1.4%
2018	16,812	0.3%
2019	16,943	0.8%
2020	17,110	1.0%
2021	17,306	1.1%
2022	17,329	0.1%
2023	18,120	4.6%
Overall Increase	2,110	13.2%
	Average Annual Increase	1.2%
Extrapolated growth to 2033	2,078	20,198
South Oxfordshire Local Plan predicted development increases - 15%	2,718	20,838
Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan predicted development increases - 2,710	2,709	20,829

The table above summarises the three different assessment methods, being:

1. Extrapolated increase from historical growth – projected list size being 20,198 patients.
2. South Oxfordshire Local Plan – projected list size being 20,838 patients.
3. Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan - projected list size being 20,829 patients.

The projections calculated from the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan are likely to be more accurate, reflecting the actual development from 'inorganic' growth, and the figures are supported by both a simple extrapolation of the current patient list growth trend, being 'organic' in nature. However, the figure does ignore growth from smaller developments and therefore **the 'organic' and inorganic' growth should be added together**, giving an overall increase of 4,787 patients, and increasing the list size to 22,907 patients.

G16 Taking the above into consideration (and 'rounding down'), it is reasonable to assume a projected list size of circa 22,500.

CONCLUSION – 22,500 patients by 2033 (increase of 4,380)

RURAL POPULATION INCREASES

G17 There have been a number of reports and studies referencing the increase in rural populations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and 'working from home' shift in working patterns. These trends are set to continue and will only intensify pressure on rural healthcare services. Extracts from some studies included below:

G18 National Library of Medicine – Population Disruption: estimating changes in population distribution of the UK:

"The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented changes in the population distribution of the UK...The trend of decreasing urban populations has not been monotonic, as the population of urban centers has increased during specific periods. Nor has the trend of population increases in less populous areas been uniform. As we demonstrate, rural populations have experienced increased population dynamics during public health interventions and seasonal migrations during summer holidays".

G19 DEFRA – Rural Home Working Statistics:

"The highest rate of home workers was found in rural hamlets and dispersed areas, at 34 per cent".

Dispensing Doctors' Association – Statistical Digest of Rural England

"Rural hamlets and dispersed areas have seen the highest increase in home working. The report shows that between 2006 and 2019 rural hamlets and dispersed areas saw levels of home working increase by 4.1 per cent – double the increase seen in urban areas. In total 32 per cent of people living in these areas are home workers, compared with 13 per cent in urban areas.

Much higher rates of home working are expected during 2020 due to COVID.

In 2020, 9.7 million (17.1 per cent) lived in rural areas, which represents a 600,000 increase in the rural population since 2011".

G20 In summary we have adopted a patient list size growth of circa 4,380 by 2033, increasing the current list size to 22,500 patients.

APPENDIX H - BUILT-UP AREA BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

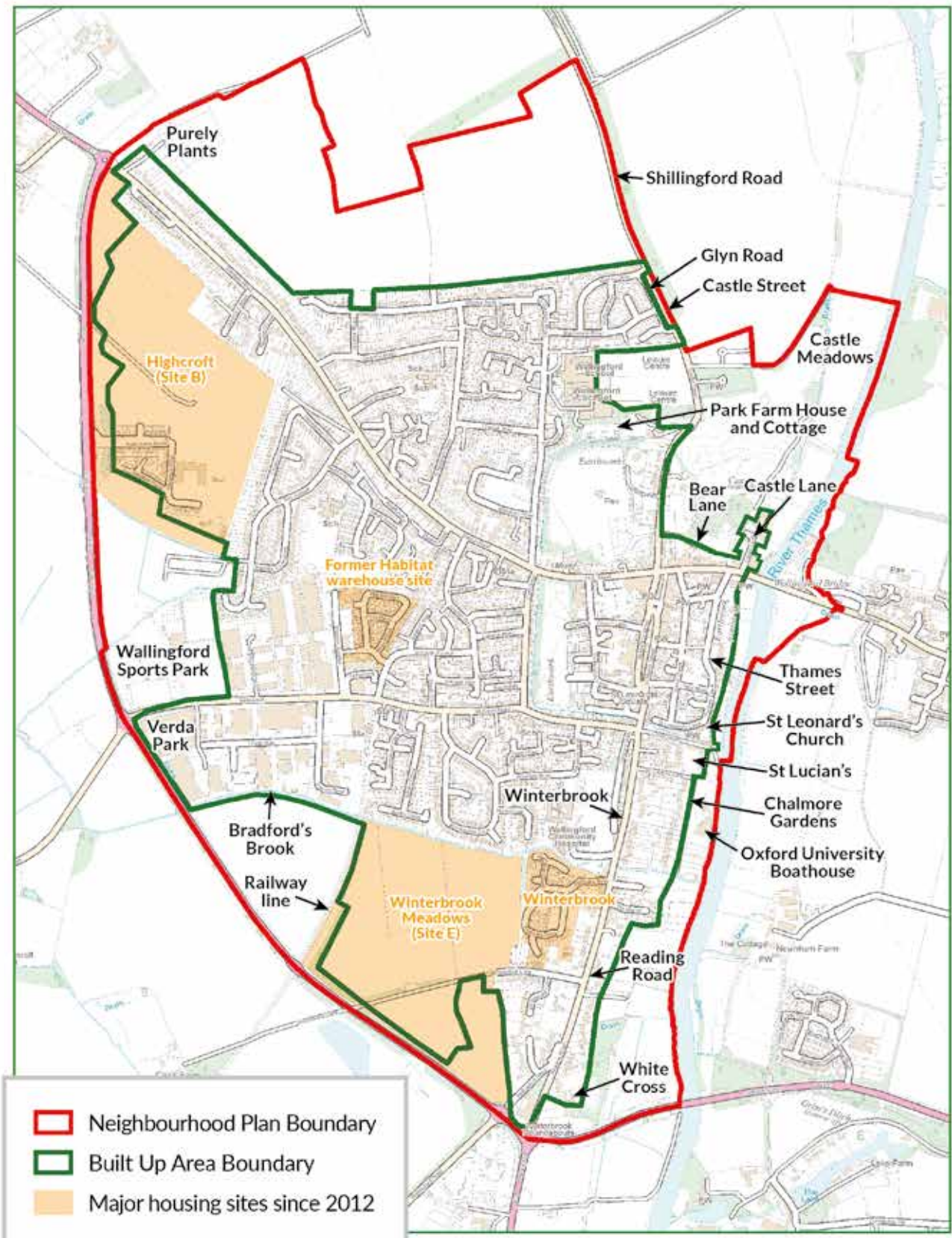
PURPOSE

- H1 This document sets out a methodology for setting the Built-Up Area Boundary that will define the built up area of the town where new development will be supported and the countryside and other areas where new development would be inappropriate and will be resisted.
- H2 Even with the apparent fairly clear boundaries around the town, proposals have been brought forward on land adjacent to the town which have caused considerable concern to residents. We believe that the neighbourhood plan is a suitable forum to set out the communities' view on this important issue and to identify a Built-Up Area Boundary.
- H3 This Appendix sets out criteria for determining what is "built-up", and therefore forms part of a settlement area, and what is not. It then applies those criteria to Wallingford.
- H4 We have looked at guidance published by East Cheshire and Herefordshire Councils and referred to the practice adopted in successfully compiling neighbourhood plans at Benson, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Cholsey and Crowmarsh – all parishes that abut Wallingford.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING THE SETTLEMENT

- H5 Paragraphs 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 of the Neighbourhood Plan set out clear criteria on which we have based the areas included or excluded from the Built-Up Area Boundary defined in the plan.
- H6 Guidance places emphasis on the strength and permanence of existing boundaries, and the physical and functional relationships between buildings and the features and land around them. It also notes the need to take account of outstanding planning permissions.
- H7 Other local parishes have interpreted the guidance according to context, with Crowmarsh and Cholsey taking particular account of functional relationships and tightness to the built form where landholdings are extensive.
- H8 We have identified the following detailed criteria as appropriate to Wallingford:
1. Wallingford is a clearly nucleated settlement, the boundaries of the existing built form and proposed new development are used for the built-up area. The boundary generally follows the outer line of gardens, particularly where there is a clear hedge or fence line. Where gardens are particularly large or extend beyond the main pattern of settlement, those parts that appear visually as part of the countryside or riverside setting, and/or that have few or no buildings are excluded, without prejudice to their status as residential curtilage. There are few areas of dispute.
 2. Strong geographical and physical features are used e.g. the River Thames, where we have used the widest extent of the river i.e. land within flood zone 3 but recognising that some homes already exist within this area. In such cases the homes are included within the Built-Up Area Boundary but gardens and outbuildings are excluded. Extracts from the EA floodzone maps which demonstrate the rationale for much of the boundary alongside the River Thames are included below.
 3. Where the settlement is bounded by a road or footpath the boundary follows the near edge.
 4. Areas of open agricultural fields, paddocks or other open countryside that adjoin the settlement are not included unless they form part of sites allocated for development as part of this Plan.
 5. Green amenity space that is confined within the settlement is included as part of the settlement. Green space that is on the edge of the settlement e.g. the Local Green Space at Wilding Road, informal green spaces at Highcroft and Winterbrook Meadows, and that contributes to the countryside setting of these developments are excluded.
 6. All housing that forms part of the clear pattern of growth of the settlement, and that lies within the major physical boundaries referred to above are included. Incidental and outlying houses that stand alone or in small groups outside the above boundaries are excluded.

Appendix H Map 1



HOW THE CRITERIA APPLY TO WALLINGFORD - See Appendix H Map 1

Northern boundary

- H9 The northern boundary over most of its length is a very strong boundary clearly defined by the rear garden line of existing houses. This tree/hedgerow rear garden line has been followed right to the north west corner leaving the polytunnels, considered to be temporary structures, and buildings associated with Purely Plants outside the built-up area. The horticultural business is a rural use adjacent to the built-up area. To extend the boundary around Purely Plants would lead to encroachment into the countryside at this point which is particularly prominent from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and would encroach into an area of minerals safeguarding.
- H10 The Wilding Road Green Space is already safeguarded and is excluded from the built up area.

Eastern Boundary – North East

- H11 The eastern boundary along the Shillingford Road provides a distinctly rural approach to important historical areas of Wallingford. The greenspace between Glyn Road and Castle Street with its mature trees maintains the rural feel and has been excluded from the built-up area together with the school playing fields and very substantial front gardens of Park Farm House and Park Farm Cottage in Castle Street.
- H12 The boundary then follows Castle Street south excluding the cemetery, The Coach House and two adjacent houses and the Castle Meadows and Gardens on the East side which are important historical areas seen in their rural setting. Along the southern edge of the Castle Gardens the boundary turns west and follows Bear Lane and the rear gardens of houses almost to the river and turning south at Castle Lane. The boundary is tightly drawn around existing houses particularly along Castle Lane where any proliferation would impact the historic setting of the castle grounds, the adjacent National Landscape, the riverside setting and flood zone 3.
- H13 Our view is that this boundary is in general very clear and distinct and provides strong support for the historical context of the north east part of Wallingford.

Eastern Boundary - South East

- H14 The boundary turns south along Castle Lane and follows as closely as possible to the flood zone 3 boundary alongside the Thames. This means it closely follows the rear line of the houses along Thames Street to St Leonard's Church and the footpath to St Lucian's where it cuts across to follow Chalmore Gardens. This excludes gardens onto the river, part of the grounds adjacent to St Lucian's, and the Oxford University Boathouse and grounds. This excluded area is partly within the Conservation Area and setting of the Chilterns National Landscape, it is zone 3 floodplain land and forms part of the 10m protected zone adjacent to the river. It is in our view unsuitable and inappropriate for further development.
- H15 St Lucian's and attached former Maltings at St Lucian's, Lower Wharf are a group of buildings that form an important part of Wallingford's history. They are Grade II* listed by Historic England and date from mid-16th and 17th century. They are entirely within the Wallingford Conservation Area.
- H16 South of Chalmore Gardens the flood zone 3 land widens out to reach the rear of homes along the East side of Winterbrook and Reading Road, many of these houses have very large gardens extending to the river. This area forms part of the setting of the Winterbrook Conservation Area and the Chilterns National Landscape, the riverside water-meadows provide an important rural setting for the town when seen from the Winterbrook Bridge and Thames Path National Trail. The general rear building line of properties which equates closely with flood zone 3 is a logical Built-Up Area Boundary for south east Wallingford and excludes land where it would be inappropriate to undertake any development; this includes the Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area.

South and West boundary

- H17 From White Cross the last house on the south east side of Winterbrook the boundary follows the line of existing development or that with planning permission. On both Winterbrook Meadows and Highcroft development sites known landscape buffer zones have been excluded and the Built-Up Area Boundary follows the agreed line of new development. North West of Winterbrook Meadows it follows the railway line and Bradford's Brook which also form the rear boundary of the Hithercroft Industrial area including Verda Park. Wallingford Sports Park and the adjacent allotments north of Hithercroft Road are excluded.
- H18 This boundary whilst appearing wavy follows very clear boundary lines to existing and proposed development.

Challenges to the proposed Boundary

- H19 Two areas of contention have been raised:
1. St Lucian's- St Lucian's Lane in the South East section. We acknowledge that the Built-Up Area Boundary in the Regulation 14 consultation document was very tightly drawn and included a small area at St Lucian's which does not fall within Flood Zone 3 land. This in part results from representing the information at such a small scale. We have also taken the view that where an existing house exists, even if it is in flood zone 3, it should be included within the Built-Up Area Boundary. In these cases the boundary is tightly drawn to exclude garden areas and outbuildings. In reality this will make little difference to future proposals as flood zone 3 will preclude development or further housing. Our view is nevertheless that the protection of the riverside environment and Chilterns National Landscape setting from further encroachment is an important and justifiable reason for the precise boundary.
 2. Purely Plants – north of Wantage Road

Two planning applications P23/S0872/O⁹ and P23/S3067/O¹⁰ on this site were refused on 8 June 2023 and 16 January 2024 respectively. The following reasons for refusal demonstrate why the site is excluded from the built up area of Wallingford:

1. The proposed development would comprise new residential development beyond the existing built-up area of Wallingford in the open countryside on land that is not previously developed and is currently in an agricultural open countryside use. The principle of development on the site is not accepted and the proposal is contrary to the overall spatial development strategy and locational policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. The proposed development is contrary to Policy STRAT1 (Overall Strategy), Policy STRAT2 (Housing Requirements), and Policy H1 (Delivering New Homes) of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, and Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Policy WS1 (Local Strategy for Wallingford) and Policy WS3 (Development Within the Built-up Area).
2. The proposed development is located beyond the existing built-up area of Wallingford in the open countryside within the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. The proposed new buildings are not sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise impacts on the AONB and would have an adverse impact on the landscape, neither conserving or enhancing the natural scenic beauty of the AONB (National Landscape). The proposal would extend the built-up limits of Wallingford into open countryside and would harm the landscape and rural character of the area and have an adverse impact on public views. As such, the proposed development will not visually enhance or complement its surroundings and does not respond positively to the site or surrounding area. The proposed development is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside), Policy DES1 (High Quality Development), Policy DES2 (Enhancing Local Character) of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Policy HD1 (Design).

⁹ https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=2303623664&CODE=A41C7AAC59FC1DF52485CC6D73737EA5

¹⁰ https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=2304274935&CODE=9E2F8B6391B26AAA8E9381AE7FDA2C42

3. The proposed development would not be served by an access that would be safe and convenient for all users to the highway network. The application fails to properly assess the traffic impacts of the proposed development, the potential delays on the local highway network and the resulting impact on highway safety. The proposed development would not provide sufficient safe and practical accessibility by sustainable transport modes. As such, the proposed access, parking and overall highway impact of the proposal is contrary to Policy DES1 (High Quality Development), Policy TRANS2 (Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility), Policy TRANS4 (Transport Assessments and Travel Plans), and Policy TRANS5 (Development Proposals) of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and WNDP Policy WS1 (Local Strategy for Wallingford) and Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Policies MC1 (Transport Statement and Travel Plan Statement), Policy MC4 (Safe Travel) and Policy MC5 (Vehicle Parking).
4. The submitted application has not demonstrated that the development outweighs the economic and sustainability considerations relating to the mineral resource. The submitted application does not propose mineral resource would be extracted prior to the development taking place or alternatively provide reasons for why it would not be contrary to minerals and waste policy. Therefore, the County Council object to the proposed development on the grounds as there is no evidence to demonstrate potential future mineral extraction will not be prevented or otherwise hindered by the development. The minerals and waste authority advise the proposal is contrary to Policy M8 (Safeguarding) of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EP5 (Minerals Safeguarding Areas) of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

Extracts from EA Flood Zone Maps¹¹



Flood zone map north



Flood zone map south

¹¹ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

