

MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2018-2031

'MADE MA' 2019



MidCherwell
Neighbourhood Plan

This document, together with its accompanying Appendices, is the final version of the Plan.

The documents are also available to view online at:
www.mid-cherwell.org.uk/finalplan



c/o 52 Camp Road,
Heyford Park,
Oxfordshire
OX25 5HD

www.mid-cherwell.org.uk

CONTENTS

	Acknowledgements	1
	Foreword	2
1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Background	3
1.2	Origins of the Plan	5
1.3	Submitting Body	6
1.4	Neighbourhood Overview	9
1.5	Natural Environment	9
1.6	Built Heritage	11
1.7	RAF Upper Heyford	12
1.8	Population	13
1.9	The Community	15
1.10	Community Facilities	15
1.11	Housing	16
1.12	Community Engagement	17
2	OUR VISION FOR MID-CHERWELL	20
2.1	Analysis of issues	20
2.2	The Plan Objectives	21
2.3	How does the Plan deliver?	22
3	POLICIES	23
3.0	Approach	23
3.1	List of policies	23
3.2	Development policies	24
3.3	Housing policies	41
3.4	Transport	46
3.5	Community infrastructure policies	47
	Policy maps	51
4	IMPLEMENTATION	63
5	COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN	65
6	GLOSSARY	74

APPENDICES (separate volume)

A	CDC's DESIGNATION OF PLAN AREA
B	CONSTITUTION OF MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
C	VILLAGE SETTLEMENT AREAS
D	LOCAL GREEN SPACES
E	AECOM HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT
F	TRAFFIC IN VILLAGES
G	LISTED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES
H	<i>not used</i>
J	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LIST
K	AECOM HERITAGE AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
L	EVIDENCE BASE

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Fig.1	Map showing the regional location of Mid-Cherwell	8
Fig.2	Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan area	8
Fig.3	Conservation Areas and Registered Parks in the MCNP area	10
Fig.4	Population by age group	14
Fig.5	The MCNP area and its principal settlements	25
Fig.6	The road network in the Mid-Cherwell area	37
Fig.7	GP surgeries serving the MCNP area as at mid-2017	49
Fig.8	Landform map showing contours, protected skylines and church towers	51
Fig.9	Policy Map for Fritwell	52
Fig.10	Policy Map for Kirtlington	53
Fig.11	Policy Map for Steeple Aston	54
Fig.12A, B	Policy Maps for Lower Heyford and Caulcott	55
Fig.13	Policy Map for Middle Aston	56
Fig.14	Policy Map for Ardley with Fewcott	57
Fig.15	Policy Map for Duns Tew	58
Fig.16	Policy Map for Middleton Stoney	59
Fig.17	Policy Map for Upper Heyford	60
Fig.18	Policy Map for Heyford Park	61
Fig.19	Traffic "hot-spots" in the MCNP area	62
Table 1	Population by parish	13
Table 2	Rate of change of population	14
Table 3	SWOT analysis for Mid-Cherwell	20
Table 4	Important views and vistas to be protected	34
Table 5	Community Action Plan objectives	65
Table 6	Consolidated traffic issues	69

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful thanks are due to the following members of the various hard-working groups:

MCNP Executive

Jo Allen
Bill Champion (to September 2016)
John Coley
Emily Daly (Secretary) (from August 2016)
Placi Espejo (from March 2018)
Jack Goodman (Treasurer)
Martin Lipson (Chair)
Peter Maggs (to June 2016)
Sarah McCready (to February 2018)
Ella Rodwell (to February 2018)
Peter Stoddart (from September 2016)
Paul Weaver (Vice-Chair)

Development and Housing Working Group

John Coley (lead for housing)
Polly Foster
Peter Gregory
Emma Jewson
Simon Joyce
Martin Lipson (lead for development)
Peter Maggs
Christine Marsh
Paul Weaver

Community Infrastructure Working Group

Jo Allen
Edward Dowler
Polly Foster (lead)
Leigh McCarron
Helen Macbeth
Sarah McCready (to February 2018)
(the late Chris Mullineux)
Richard Preston
Barbara Weston

Health Working Group

Caroline Langridge (lead)
Edward Dowler
Sarah McCready (to February 2018)

Transport and Traffic Working Group

Kildare Bourke-Borrowes (to April 2017)
Bill Champion (to June 2017]
Stuart Ferguson
Carole Gother
Alan Hedges
Huw Jenkins
Leigh McCarron (lead to June 2017)
Helen Macbeth
(the late Chris Mullineux)
Ella Rodwell (to February 2018)
Simon van Zwanenberg
Alison Smith (from June 2017)

Secretary

Emily Daly

and all other members of the MCNP Forum, its constituent Parish and Residents' representatives, the Clerks to the Parish Councils, the staff of the Dorchester Group, and the many local people who have assisted along the way. Particular thanks to numerous individuals who have volunteered their help on planning issues, legal views and other matters.

The Forum members wish to specifically recognise the exceptional efforts of Martin Lipson, Chair of the Forum Executive, whose vision, expertise and sheer hard work were instrumental in producing this neighbourhood plan.

Thanks are also due to: Cherwell District Council officers and elected members, Pegasus Group, AECOM, Tony Allen of UniStartups, and Anna Allen, who have all provided expertise.

And finally, thanks to Locality for funding and technical support.



FOREWORD

The process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan is acknowledged to be a very labour-intensive one, involving many hours of voluntary effort from often a small group of people, over several years. The hope that keeps the group going is that it will all be worth it in the end, because we can help to shape development over time to the long-term benefit of the local community.

What is not so often acknowledged is that the process itself can bring enormous benefits to the community. In our case, where twelve local communities (in eleven parishes) have come together over a three-year period, some remarkable things have happened. Parish councils that had no previous reason to communicate with their opposite numbers in the same District have found common purpose with them. A new partnership has been forged around the table where the 28 members of the Forum have met dozens of times. Where councillors and their parishioners tended to think no further than the confines of their village or parish, now they consider the effects of increased traffic on the whole neighbourhood. Where once the importance of retaining the rurality of “our” village was the focus, now there is more awareness of the wider need for green infrastructure that links all the villages together in a common purpose, protected by the shared policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, yet ensuring that each village retains its own unique character and identity.

If sharing in the problems, issues and hopes of all the participating parishes has been the principal outcome of producing this Plan, it will have been worthwhile for that alone. In a world where there are many bigger and more important issues affecting our future, it is a result somehow all the greater that a good proportion of the 8,000 or so people in our Area now think more about their neighbours in other villages, and not just those in their street. That outcome is not one that can be claimed by every Neighbourhood Plan group, and we hope through our implementation phase to be able to keep alive the glow of a wider sense of community that we have fostered.

MCNP Executive

THIS DOCUMENT

This is the Referendum version of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan. It incorporates all the amendments and recommendations made by the Independent Examiner, Mr. Richard High, in his report of 2nd January 2019, a copy of which can be viewed at:

www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/221/neighbourhood-plans/400/mid-cherwell-neighbourhood-plan/5

The Submission version of the Plan, and other related documents, on which the Examiner based his report is also available to view, together with all the responses to the Regulation 16 consultation at:

www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/221/neighbourhood-plans/400/mid-cherwell-neighbourhood-plan/2

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 This initial section provides the context in which the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan has been developed, explains its overarching purpose, and the membership and structure of its organization.
- 1.1.2 The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) introduced a range of new rights and powers to enable local communities to shape new development in their community. The Act, amongst other provisions, provides for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans which allow local communities to define both general and specific planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood areas. This document is a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in the Act.
- 1.1.3 Neighbourhood Plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The following NPPF paragraphs are relevant:

- 183. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes and neighbourhood forums can use neighbourhood planning to:*
- set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications; and*
 - grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.*
- 184. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.*
- 185. Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non- strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation.*

- 1.1.4 It is a requirement of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions on planning applications under the planning Acts must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Accordingly, once adopted, the policies contained within the Mid-Cherwell NP must be considered alongside the policies of other adopted development plan documents when making decisions on planning applications within our neighbourhood plan area.
- 1.1.5 At the present time, the development plan comprises:
- the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 - Core Strategy, September 2017 (together with saved policies from 1996)
 - the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Part 1) which was adopted on 20th July 2015
 - saved policies from the Cherwell Local Plan (1996) - these are non-strategic
 - and three ‘made’ neighbourhood plans - for Bloxham, Hook Norton and Adderbury.
- The adopted Local Plan sets out the vision and strategic policies for land use development within Cherwell District through to the year 2031, focusing on matters such as housing, employment, retail, community and recreational land use.
- 1.1.6 The Council is also preparing Local Plan Part 2 which will focus on the specific locations of development and the general criteria against which all development proposals will be considered. Once adopted, the Local Plan Part 2 will also form part of the development plan. Also taken into account in the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan is the “Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford’s Unmet Housing need”. However, until adopted, the Reviewed Cherwell District Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2 do not form part of the development plan, but may be considered as a material consideration when considering planning applications. In addition, the HELAA originally published in August 2017 by Cherwell DC (revised February 2018) has been taken into account as part of the evidence base.
- 1.1.7 Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum (MCNPF) has liaised closely with Cherwell District Council (CDC) during preparation of its Neighbourhood Development Plan to ensure that it is both in general conformity with, and adequately reflects and accommodates the strategic policies, provisions and requirements of both Part 1 and the emerging Part 2 of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of key strategic Local Plan policies such as Policy Villages 1,2 and 5 which have a direct impact on the MCNP area.
- 1.1.8 This Plan is also subject to the findings and guidance of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014, which superseded an earlier SHMA report produced for Cherwell DC in 2012. The SHMA, which was produced as part of a nationwide strategic initiative, includes guidance on the numbers, scale and types of housing required to meet needs within the area.

1.2 ORIGINS OF THE PLAN

This Neighbourhood Plan has unusual origins; it is considered helpful to summarise them below.

- 1.2.1 The Plan arose from a meeting held in April 2014, initiated by the Dorchester Group. Dorchester are the owners of Heyford Park - the former RAF Upper Heyford air base - now being developed as a strategic site for housing and employment. Heyford Park sits at the heart of what has become the Mid-Cherwell neighbourhood, straddling several parishes, and affecting many others. 14 surrounding parish councils were invited to attend the meeting (12 of which attended).
- 1.2.2 Dorchester explained that they wished to act as facilitator for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan, engaging as many of the parishes surrounding its development as wished to join in. The proposal was presented as being mutually beneficial for both the developer and the local communities, as a way for the local communities to shape development within the Neighbourhood Plan area and for the developer to understand more about the needs and aspirations of the local communities. Eleven parishes agreed to take forward the idea.
- 1.2.3 A steering group was formed, and one of the parishes was nominated as “lead parish.” The Plan area was submitted in August 2014 and eventually approved by Cherwell District Council (CDC) as the Designated Area, in April 2015. The delay was caused largely by the fact that CDC was engaged in completing its own Local Plan at that time. The area has been defined as being the group of parishes that are most affected by development at the former RAF base, and have an interest in how approved development, and planned additional development, is implemented. The parishes share an interest in the impact of this development and how it might interrelate with their own needs, issues, constraints and opportunities.
- 1.2.4 Progress was nevertheless made towards a draft plan, with Dorchester providing support from Pegasus Group, their planning consultants, without charge to MCNPF. Several meetings of working groups on specific topics also took place, involving members of the parish councils and some other members of the local community. However, progress was somewhat hampered by a lack of leadership and effective project management. In July 2015, one of the parish councils initiated a review of the structure of the organization in order to remedy this. The result was that the organization agreed to move from its somewhat informal status as a body convened by the Dorchester Group to being an unincorporated association, the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Forum. A Constitution was drafted, with significant support from CDC’s legal department, and formally adopted at the body’s first AGM in early 2016. This nominated the parish councils as Full members of the Forum, and Dorchester and the Heyford Park Residents Association as Associate members. The Forum is managed by an Executive group, with named officers.
- 1.2.5 Two things were quickly recognized: firstly, that the progress made up to that point needed to be supplemented by a comprehensive process of wide community engagement: the idea of a Plan had not yet been tested on the wider community, and this was of course essential to confirm broad-based support, not only to meet the criteria for successful examination of the

Plan in due course, but also as the basis for a successful referendum. Secondly, the agenda for the Neighbourhood Plan was largely focused around issues arising from the development of Heyford Park, but it was going to be necessary to add to these some other issues identified by the local communities of the eleven parishes.

- 1.2.6 In February and March 2016 all the parishes held public meetings. Over 480 people attended and nearly 1600 written comments were received. Analysis of these and feedback from the meetings showed that there was very strong support for the process and the draft objectives, but that there were some additional issues of concern. Also, the weighting of issues from the community was different to those which the parish councils had assumed. Adjustments were made accordingly. By the time that a subsequent round of meetings and events were held in June 2016, it was clear that the direction of travel of the Plan now conformed much more closely with the wishes of the community. More detail on the Plan process is provided in the Consultation Statement.

1.3 SUBMITTING BODY

- 1.3.1 This Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) is submitted by Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP) Forum, of which Ardley with Fewcott Parish Council is the lead parish and the qualifying body as defined by the legislation. It should be emphasised that the Forum is not the qualifying body, and is not a “neighbourhood forum” as defined by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, for use where no parish council is involved.
- 1.3.2 The Plan covers an area of North Oxfordshire, and is represented by 11 Parish Councils and Meetings together with Heyford Park Residents Association and The Dorchester Group (the latter being owners of the former RAF and USAF Upper Heyford site, and representatives of the business community that constitutes part of Heyford Park). The background to this unusual collaboration has been supplied in section 1.2.
- 1.3.3 As the ‘relevant body’, Ardley with Fewcott Parish Council – the nominated lead body of the 13 participants - submitted an application to Cherwell District Council on the 8 August 2014, to designate the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Area. On the 7 April 2015, the Executive Committee of the District Council resolved to approve the formal designation of the specified Neighbourhood Area under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act (as Amended). The decision was promulgated on 14 April 2015. A copy of the minutes from the CDC Cabinet meeting confirming the area designation is included at APPENDIX A.
- 1.3.4 The CDC officers’ report to the Executive states: “.....in view of the close involvement of the developer, the parishes will need to ensure that the non-designated Neighbourhood Planning Forum is constituted, and transparent processes are established, to avoid any conflict between the Dorchester Group’s interests as a developer and those of the local communities which may not always be mutually compatible.”
- 1.3.5 After designation, the Forum was formally constituted, with legal advice from CDC, such that the Parish Councils and Meetings became Full Members, whilst the Residents Association and the Dorchester Group became Associate Members. An Executive group was created to

manage the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan, which has eight members, six of whom must be representatives of the Parish Councils. CDC have expressed satisfaction with these arrangements, which put community interests at the heart of the development of this Plan.

1.3.6 The Constitution of the Forum is at APPENDIX B.

1.3.7 The development of Heyford Park affects a wider area than that of Mid-Cherwell. Cherwell District Council (CDC), in approving the designation of the plan Area, noted that “the referendum into the Neighbourhood Plan, following Examination, may need to be undertaken over a larger area than the Neighbourhood Area itself. However, the Examiner will advise on this, and although there would be a larger administrative task, this is not considered to be an insurmountable concern.” Acknowledging this view, MCNP is however of the opinion that the eleven parishes reflect the main ‘sphere of influence’, and is a logical and coherent entity. Some other neighbouring parishes were originally invited to be involved, but declined to do so. The Forum therefore represents the parishes that feel themselves to be the appropriate grouping.

1.3.8 Fig. 1 shows the Neighbourhood Area in its regional context (see also Fig.5 which highlights the location of Heyford Park). Fig.2 shows that the Area comprises the following Parishes (in alphabetical order). The numbers in brackets after each name are the key to the numbered parishes shown on Fig.2.

- Ardley with Fewcott (5)
- Duns Tew (1)
- Fritwell (4)
- Kirtlington (including Northbrook) (11)
- Lower Heyford (including Caulcott) (9)
- Middle Aston (7)
- Middleton Stoney (10)
- North Aston (2)
- Somerton (3)
- Steeple Aston (8)
- Upper Heyford (6)

1.3.9 The villages in Cherwell District are categorised in the adopted Local Plan. Category A villages (service centres) in the Neighbourhood Plan area are: Fritwell, Kirtlington and Steeple Aston (shown coloured pink on Fig.2). There are also two Category B (satellite) villages: Lower Heyford and Middle Aston (coloured yellow). The remainder are Category C (other) villages (coloured green).

1.3.10 Each parish is represented on the Forum by its parish councillors or by the parish council’s nominees, apart from Middle Aston and North Aston which have annual parish meetings and where the representatives are chosen by the parish meeting chairman. In September 2017, Middleton Stoney parish council decided to discontinue its Forum membership, but agreed that the parish and its parishioners should nevertheless continue to be part of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan.

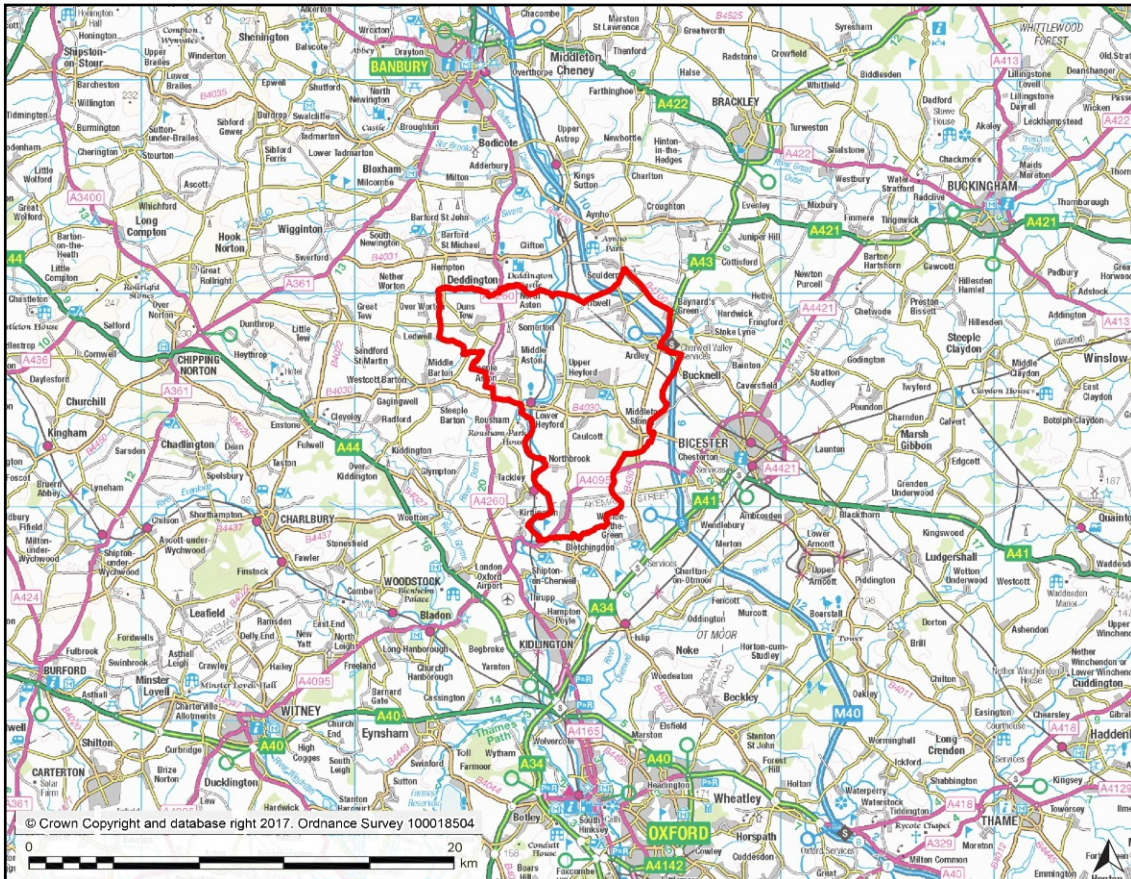


FIGURE 1: MAP SHOWING THE REGIONAL LOCATION OF MID-CHERWELL

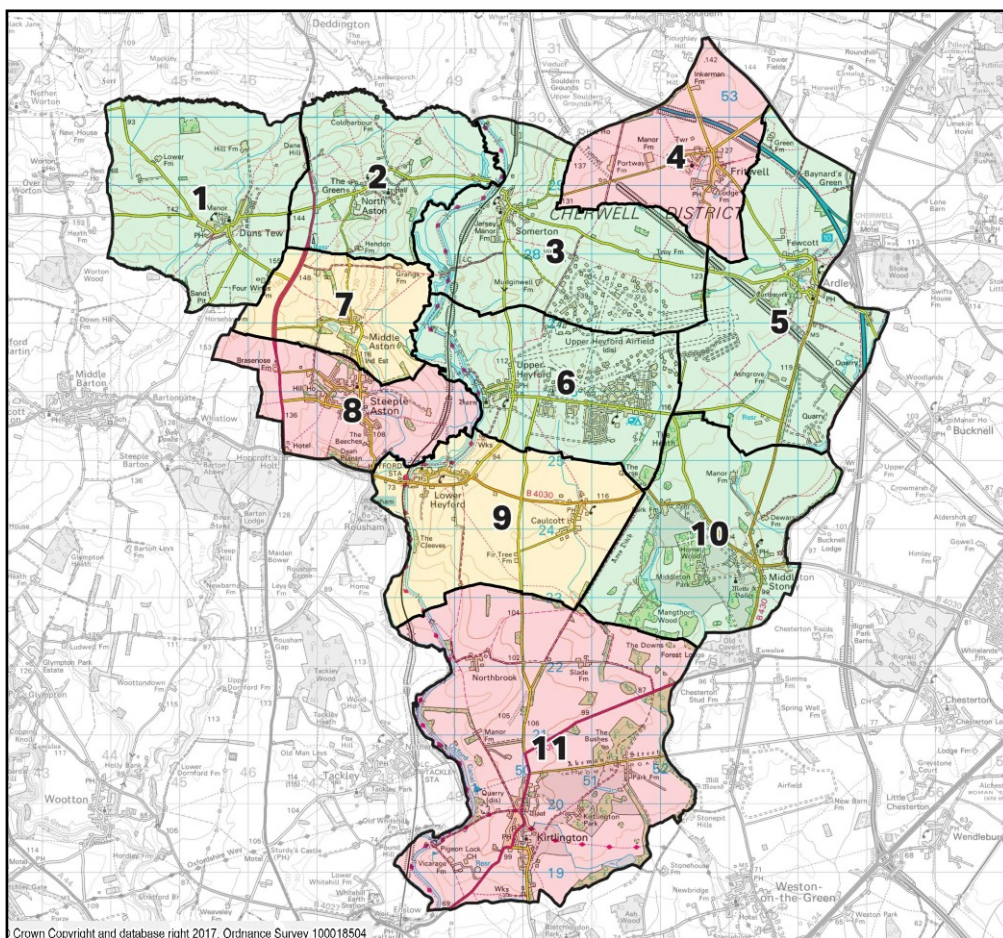


FIGURE 2: MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA - see p.7 for key to parishes

1.4 NEIGHBOURHOOD OVERVIEW - LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE

- 1.4.1 The designated area is an essentially rural part of Cherwell District in Oxfordshire, the closest town being Bicester, which is less than two miles away at its nearest point. Oxford is some ten miles away, and Banbury about six miles. The combined land area of the 11 parishes is approximately 7,800 hectares, roughly 13% of Cherwell District. The area is approximately seven miles across from east to west, and eight miles from north to south. The Neighbourhood Development Plan area is shown in Fig 2.
- 1.4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Area has as its most distinctive geographical feature the valley of the Cherwell River, which runs through the centre of the Area roughly on a north/south axis. Alongside it run the Oxford Canal and the Oxford – Birmingham railway, often in virtual parallel for much of the river's course. Other significant transport routes, which largely define the boundary of the Area, are the Oxford – Banbury Road (A4260), mostly to the west of the neighbourhood (apart from the parish of Duns Tew), the M40 motorway and the Bicester–Banbury railway line, which skirt the eastern boundary.
- 1.4.3 The River Cherwell, its flood plain and the higher ground on each side, where many of the eleven parishes lie, dominate the NP area. The landscape is very largely rural in nature, open rather than wooded; the only significant areas of woodland are associated with two of the three major country house estates in the neighbourhood area, namely Middleton Park and Kirtlington Park. The open land is predominantly arable with some pasture. There are over 30 active farms throughout the NP area together with their farmsteads and some isolated properties. Most of the villages are small and well-integrated into the landscape, although Kirtlington, Fritwell and Steeple Aston have small housing estates built in the C20th that have somewhat altered their historic character. The former RAF and USAF base at Upper Heyford, which sits in the centre of the NP area, is the only more “urban” site, although even here the majority of the land remains open and green (see further comments regarding the development at Heyford Park in 1.7 below)

1.5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 1.5.1 The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan area is part of a wider smoothly rolling landscape that is bisected by the Cherwell Valley on a north-south axis. The land generally falls gently from north to south across the area, with a high point of 155m above ordnance datum (AOD) in the north-west of the area, and a low point of approximately 69m AOD at the base of the Cherwell Valley in the far south of the area. The Cherwell Valley is a reasonably narrow valley that creates a sense of enclosure from its base, and the narrow width of the valley creates a sense of intimacy between the two valley sides. The valley is a more prominent feature in the north of the area, where its sides are more pronounced, rising steeply by approximately 70m from the base to the west, and by approximately 50m from the base to the east. In the south of the area the sides of the valley rise more gently. The primary watercourse through the area is the River Cherwell, which flows from north to south through the area within the Cherwell Valley. The Oxford Canal runs generally adjacent to the River Cherwell also on a north to south axis. At the western and southern ends of the Plan area, mineral extraction – principally sand and gravel – is an active industry, contributing significantly to heavy goods vehicle movements across the NP area.

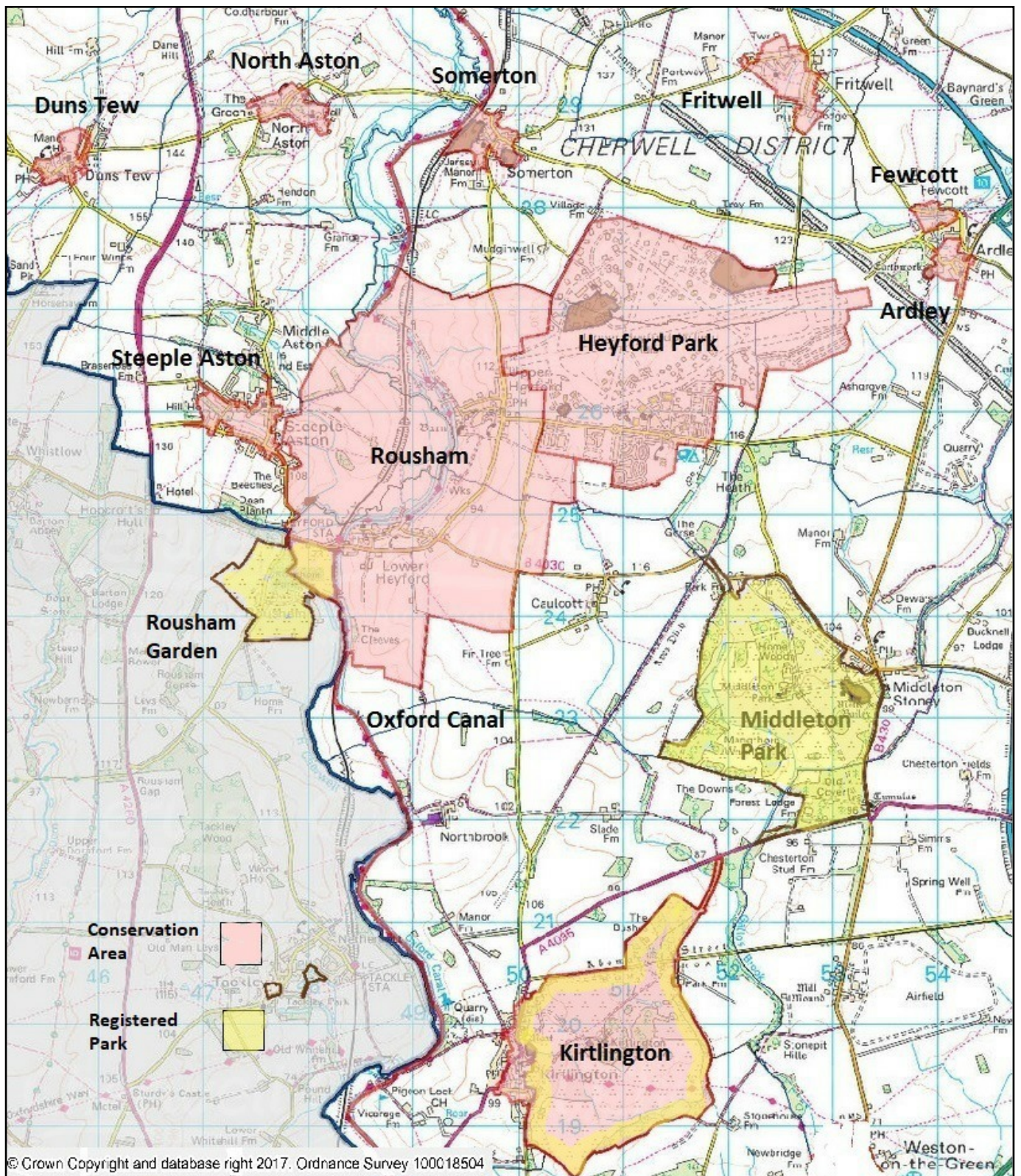


FIGURE 3: CONSERVATION AREAS AND REGISTERED PARKS IN THE MCNP AREA

- 1.5.2 The area is a rural landscape criss-crossed by public rights of way that promote access to the countryside and create usable natural green spaces out of landscape features such as the Cherwell Valley. There are limited areas of woodland, with the majority of the area comprising open farmed countryside. Large parts of the area are remnant historic parklands associated with the many manor houses in the area, however these areas are either not entirely publicly accessible or have restricted access to paying visitors. Many of the villages within the area include small village greens at their centre, or other small-scale green spaces that whilst not for public use, still form a key part of the identity and character of the village. There are typically playing fields at each of the villages located close to a village hall to serve the communities for a wide variety of local events beyond just play. A number of the villages also include other community green spaces such as allotments.¹
- 1.5.3 The MCNP area does not contain any European sites for nature conservation, but there are three listed Gardens (Middleton Park, Kirtlington Park and a part of Rousham Garden). The NP area also contains five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - two at Ardley and one each near Duns Tew, Somerton and Kirtlington (see [www.http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx)). Also contained within or partly within the NP area are four Conservation Target Areas and a number of Local Wildlife Sites. The locations are shown on Wild Oxfordshire's website: www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/ and on TVERC's website: www.tverc.org/cms/LWSLivingLists

1.6 BUILT HERITAGE

- 1.6.1 The villages themselves reflect the mainly traditional character of their agricultural origins in medieval times, with later additions from subsequent periods. All the villages except for Middle Aston and Middleton Stoney have Conservation Areas, and across the eleven parishes there is a total of 239 listed buildings; in addition, the Oxford Canal Conservation Area runs through the heart of the Neighbourhood Area. There are two important country house estates – Middleton Park and Kirtlington Park, each having protection as Registered Parks, and forming part of Conservation Areas. Although outside the designated MCNP area, another important house and garden at Rousham exerts an influence on the area in terms of protected views. It is of national importance, having been landscaped by William Kent in the early C18th and surviving relatively untouched.
- 1.6.2 The former RAF Upper Heyford is also designated in its own right as a Conservation Area, and is regarded as an important survival of Cold War heritage, containing both Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. The site straddles part of three of the parishes - Upper Heyford, Somerton and Ardley with Fewcott. There are no major archaeological sites within the neighbourhood, although a total of 173 finds are registered in the Historic Environment Record. Amongst these are Portway and Aves Ditch which are important ancient routes that survive in some form.
- 1.6.3 A map showing all eleven Conservation Areas and the listed Park is at Fig 3 below. A schedule of all the listed buildings and structures is shown in Appendix G. Conservation Area appraisals are available on CDC's website <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1672>.

1 Information mainly from AECOM Heritage and Character Assessment April 2017

1.7 RAF UPPER HEYFORD, LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

- 1.7.1 The former RAF Upper Heyford has had a major impact on the character and development of the neighbourhood. The base was in almost continuous use from 1918 through to 1994. Operated by the United States Air Force from 1950, it grew to be the largest NATO fighter base in Europe. At its peak the base hosted 14,000 people, of whom 4,000 lived on site - mainly airmen and their families, together with 1,000 MOD and contractor employees.
- 1.7.2 Many servicemen and women were housed in the nearby communities and their presence was a big factor in securing the viability of surrounding villages. Demand for housing ensured maintenance and some expansion of residential dwellings in the area and local schools benefited from the inclusion of service children. Indeed, many people from the locality were employed at the base which thus became a significant contributor to the economy of the neighbourhood through salaries, house rentals, use of pubs and shops and schools. Local residents were made welcome as guests on the base as well, resulting in many lasting transatlantic friendships and marriages. Following the closure of RAF Upper Heyford in 1994 the neighbourhood returned to its quieter, agricultural tradition.
- 1.7.3 The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 designates Heyford Park as a strategic site for development and employment. It is the only such site so designated outside the essentially urban areas of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.
- 1.7.4 Two planning decisions which pre-date the Local Plan initiated the comprehensive redevelopment of the former military base:
- 1.7.5 An outline planning permission (08/00716/OUT) for the formation of a new settlement of 1,075 dwellings (314 of which already exist on the site) with associated works and facilities including employment uses, community uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure. The scheme was allowed at appeal (APP/C3105/A/08/2080594) dated 11 January 2010.
- 1.7.6 A subsequent outline planning consent (10/01642/OUT) concerned only with that part of the base referred to as the 'New Settlement Area'. This permission provided for an amended new settlement of 1,075 dwellings including facilities as above. Planning permission was granted by Cherwell District council on 22 December 2011.
- 1.7.7 In addition, Conservation Area Consents were applied for and approved for the demolition/partial demolition of specific buildings across the site.
- 1.7.8 Local Plan Policy Villages 5 now provides for a further 1,600 dwellings including primary and secondary schools, community, recreational facilities, and employment uses to provide for up to a further 1,500 jobs. The new housing, employment opportunities, facilities and services will play a major role of provision within the NP area (for which a planning application 18/00825/HYBRID was submitted in May 2018).

1.8 POPULATION (2011 CENSUS FIGURES)

- 1.8.1 The population of the designated Area is 7,065, an increase from 2001 of over 7%. The NP area density of 0.85 persons per hectare is about one third of the figure of 2.4 for Cherwell District (data provided by Pegasus Planning Group), and represents about 5% of the population of the District.
- 1.8.2 The eleven parishes each have an average population of about 700. Only Upper Heyford parish has over 1,000 residents (and growing, on account of Heyford Park). The second largest parish is Kirtlington with 988 residents, and the smallest is Middle Aston with 110 residents. Table 1 below shows 2011 census populations for each parish.

Parish	Population
Ardley with Fewcott	751
Duns Tew	478
Fritwell	736
Kirtlington	988
Lower Heyford	492
Middle Aston	110
Middleton Stoney	331
North Aston	212
Somerton	305
Steeple Aston	947
Upper Heyford (incl. Heyford Park)	1,295

TABLE 1: POPULATION BY PARISH (2011 CENSUS)

- 1.8.3 The average age of the total population is 40.6, compared to the Cherwell average of 38.9.
- 1.8.4 Fig. 4 below shows the largest age group in Mid-Cherwell is ages 45-64, at 30%. This is much higher than the figures for Cherwell (26%) and England (25.4%). The proportion of all age groups between 16 and 44 is lower than both the Cherwell and England averages. The proportion of people aged 65-84 is higher in Mid-Cherwell (15%) than in Cherwell (13%) or England (14.1%). The proportion of people aged 85 and over in Mid-Cherwell (2%) is slightly below the local and national averages. Around 950 people in the neighbourhood (about 14%) are retired.

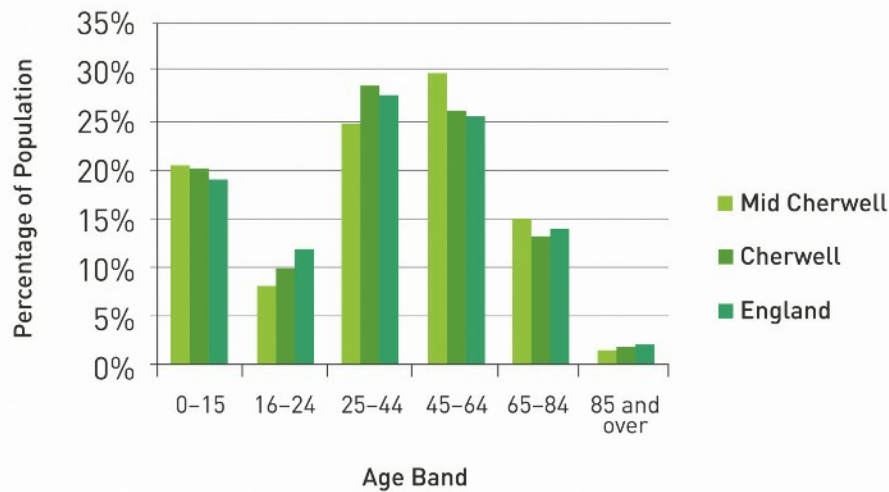


FIGURE 4 POPULATION BY AGE GROUP (SOURCE: AECOM HNA REPORT)

1.8.5 Table 2 below shows the rate of change of the population by age band. It shows that the proportion of people in the 65-84 age group has undergone a considerable increase in Mid-Cherwell between 2001 and 2011, especially compared to the local and national trends. The increase in the 45-64 age group is less than the local authority increase but greater than the national increase. There has been a large decrease in the 25-44 age group, greater than the decrease locally and at odds with the national increase, although there has been an increase in the 0-15 age group greater than the local and national trends. The increases in the 16-24 age group and the 85 and over age groups are smaller than the local and national increases.

Age group	Mid-Cherwell	Cherwell	England
0-15	6.3%	2.5%	1.2%
16-24	8.1%	9.5%	17.2%
25-44	-15.4%	-5.6%	1.4%
45-64	16.3%	17.0%	15.2%
65-84	23.6%	17.5%	9.1%
85 and over	15.1%	24.1%	23.7%

TABLE 2 RATE OF CHANGE OF POPULATION (SOURCE: AECOM HNA REPORT)

1.9 THE COMMUNITY (2011 CENSUS FIGURES)

- 1.9.1 74% of the population are employed or seeking employment; 56% of these are in full-time and 18% in part-time employment; 21% are self-employed; 3% are students and 2% are unemployed.
- 1.9.2 Historically, the community has its roots in farming and there are still over 30 active farms in our neighbourhood area, but today just 3% of residents work in the agricultural sector. The rest can be categorized as follows: 14% work in the retail sector and 13% in education; 10% are in health or social work, 9% in professional, technical and scientific work, and another 9% in manufacturing; 8% each in construction and public administration; and finally, 5% in information and communication.
- 1.9.3 As the new community at Heyford Park grows, the demographics of the NP area are probably changing, although there is no definitive data at present. Integration of new residents into established villages is relatively easy, while for greater numbers of “incomers” to large-scale new developments there are more challenges. However, the early provision of a new school at Heyford Park has already had a beneficial impact on this, and other planned amenities such as shops and restaurants will also serve a wider area and have a similar beneficial effect on community integration.
- 1.9.4 58% of households have two or more cars or vans; only 6% have no car. 71% of travel to work journeys are by private car or van; only 7% travel to work by public transport; 17% work mainly from home. Of those who travel to work, 9% work in the Neighbourhood area, while 35% work elsewhere in Cherwell and 20% in Oxford. 9% travel to London.

1.10 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 1.10.1 The neighbourhood currently has:
- 4 schools (one of which is a newly-opened all through Free school) and a pre-school
 - 16 meeting places – principally village halls and community centres.
 - 4 village greens, a market square, a further 30 recreational spaces, and 4 allotments
 - Play facilities for younger children in all villages except North and Middle Aston
 - A dearth of facilities for older children
 - 7 pubs; 4 hotels; various B&Bs
 - 12 places of worship
 - 10 cemeteries, many full
 - No GP surgeries, dentists or other health facilities
- 1.10.2 There are a number of annual festivities held in the neighbourhood, some of which regularly attract people from well outside the area. Among these are:
- The two Annual Shows of the Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Horticultural Society
 - Annual church or village fetes of most of the villages in the Neighbourhood Area
 - Annual Whit Races in Steeple Aston
 - Annual “Lamb Ale” feast, fair and Morris Dancing weekend at Kirtlington
 - Open Gardens in several villages during the summer
- 1.10.3 At the eastern end of the NP area is a regional facility for Waste management - the recently-opened Ardley energy recovery facility and an associated landfill site.
- 1.10.4 The above summary draws on a Social Infrastructure Survey assembled by a Forum working group, and is available to view (see Appendix L: Evidence Base).

1.11 HOUSING

1.11.1 Data from the 2011 Census, and from Cherwell District Council's published data, for the 11 parishes reveals the following:

- Dwellings: there were 2,992 in 2015
- Dwelling type: 43% of homes are detached, 39% are semi-detached and 12% are terraced. Only 4% of homes are flats (2011)
- Household size: 39% of households are 2-person, and 22% are single-person (2011)
- Tenure: 67% of homes are owned, and 32% are rented accommodation; ownership rises to 76% for the over 65s (2011)
- New homes: Between 2011 and March 2017, there were 64 new dwellings constructed in the villages, with permission granted for a further 24; in addition, 340 new dwellings were constructed at Heyford Park, with permission granted for a further 481. It is expected that Heyford Park will continue to grow at a rate of about 150 dwellings per annum, up to the projected total of 2,361 in 2031.
- Rate of increase: the total of permissions for construction of dwellings in the period 2011-2015 was for 841 dwellings - an increase of an average of 8% per annum in the number of dwellings in the neighbourhood.
- Waiting list: CDC's housing waiting list had 85 households in need of affordable housing (a snapshot as at February 2017), of which 72 households were in Heyford Park. Across the neighbourhood, 42 of those on the list wanted a one-bedroom dwelling, 23 wanted a two-bed dwelling, 13 wanted a three-bedroom dwelling, and only 7 wanted a four-bedroom dwelling.

1.11.2 In order to establish evidence of housing need in the Mid-Cherwell area, MCNP commissioned AECOM to undertake research and produce a report (at Appendix E). The report was completed in July 2016, and was submitted for comments to Cherwell District Council. While the findings were broadly accepted, concern was expressed that AECOM had drawn on evidence from the superseded Cherwell SHMA as well as the current Oxfordshire assessment. Whilst this is so, none of the policies in this neighbourhood plan depend on such evidence, and AECOM's report has not been amended. The main findings can be summarized as follows:

- *To meet the needs of the existing community, the MCNP area should have an average of 20 new dwellings per annum in the Plan period to 2031, excluding completions at Heyford Park.*
- *75 of these units over the Plan period should be Affordable housing; there will be an increasing need for Affordable housing in the Plan period.*
- *Housing mix for Affordable housing should reflect the housing waiting list data provided by CDC. [This was updated in February 2017 and indicates demand for 48% 1-bed dwellings, 27% 2-bed, 15% 3-bed and 8% with 4 or more beds]. However, the mix should be flexible to respond to changes in the need, especially if Heyford Park meets much of the affordability need towards the end of the Plan period.*
- *Market housing - Oxfordshire SHMA indicates a need in Cherwell for 6% 1-bed, 23% 2-bed, 46% 3-bed, and 25% 4 or more beds. The AECOM report recommends around 50% to be 3-bed and 25% to be 1 and 2 beds. Also that 5+ beds should be discouraged due to recent oversupply.*
- *There should be the strongest possible support for bungalows due to demand and under-supply. Although they exist at Heyford Park (and may be refurbished), Category A villages (see 1.3.10) could benefit from new bungalows too.*

- *Oxfordshire SHMA forecasts 92.5% increase in those with mobility problems.*
- *Any new 2-bed dwellings in the villages should be targeted at over 65s looking to live independently, as either bungalows or small houses.*
- *The Local Plan requires sites of 400+ dwellings to include 45 extra-care homes, and Local Plan Policy Villages 5 refers to a requirement for extra-care dwellings at Heyford Park because it will have suitable support facilities.*
- *We should conduct research into how many young people would form households if housing below market value were available in their home villages. This should also attempt to establish the demand for renting, Affordable housing, or market housing.*
- *Dwelling growth in Mid-Cherwell between 2001 and 2011 was 167 dwellings - around 17pa. If projected forward to 2031, a further 334 dwellings would be built.*
- *The Local Plan target for Cat A villages of 750 dwellings produces on a pro rata basis (based on 2011 census population), a need for 48 of these to be in the three cat A villages in the MCNP area. The other MCNP villages have a plan target of 0. (NOTE: The target of 750 has been revised downwards as a result of actual completions since the report was prepared.)*

1.11.3 Heyford Park is expected to reach a resident population of 8,068 by the end of 2031 (an estimate provided by the Dorchester Group in April 2017 using average occupancy per dwelling type using OCC ratios) when the current agreed development of the site by the Dorchester Group with 2361 new dwellings will be completed. A new extra care housing development of 45 one / two-bedroomed apartments with communal facilities is planned for Heyford Park.

1.12 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 1.12.1 A full record of all community engagement activities conducted during the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the separate Consultation Statement. Community engagement has been extensive and has informed policy throughout. Details of how each stage was conducted and how the draft Plan has been amended in response to points made is to be found in the Statement.
- 1.12.2 It is worth noting that several of the participating parishes have in recent years produced their own Parish Plans - for example those produced for Fritwell in 2008, Steeple Aston and Duns Tew in 2010, and in 2011 Kirtlington and Lower Heyford. Parish Plans had no statutory force and ranged across a wide spectrum of issues, many of them unrelated to land use and planning policy. Nevertheless, they have helped to inform and guide the thinking of parish councillors involved in the MCNP Forum; the local engagement process undertaken by the Forum in 2016/7 has often reflected long-standing issues in the community.

PHOTOS SHOWING CHARACTER OF NEIGHBOURHOOD, AND COMMUNITY





2 OUR VISION FOR MID-CHERWELL

2.1 ANALYSIS OF ISSUES

The drafting of a Vision statement started with an analysis of the strengths of the neighbourhood, its weaknesses, opportunities and threats as perceived by the eight members of the MCNP Executive and set out in the table below. A vision statement was then drawn from the issues mentioned most often by the members.

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attractive rural community• Conservation areas in most of the villages• Network of footpaths connecting various parts of the neighbourhood• Strong social and recreational life within the neighbourhood• Significant investment in infrastructure due to Heyford Park development (eg HP Free School)	<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognition that, after initial concerns, development of Heyford Park is now inevitable but can be guided in such a way to greater benefit the wider community• Strong community buy-in to developments if they are seen to benefit the Parish significantly• Achievable measures for improving Parish cohesion and improvements to amenities• To provide residents with the opportunity to meet their housing needs within the neighbourhood
<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate public transport• Lack of suitable recreational facilities in some of the villages• Parking problems in villages• Mismatch of housing mix provided by developers with that actually needed by the local community	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic volumes are increasing and may be exacerbated by new development• Large-scale development may significantly damage the character and sustainability of the neighbourhood• Popularity of the Free School at secondary level may affect intake to other local primary schools, as well as the possibility that school places will not match population growth.• Demands for new housing for the Oxford's unmet needs will dominate the agenda and adversely influence the Local Plan

TABLE 3 - SWOT ANALYSIS FOR MID-CHERWELL

OUR VISION STATEMENT:



In 2031 our Neighbourhood will still comprise vibrant, individual villages connected by unspoiled countryside, and our community will feel that its wishes have been heard and its rural way of life maintained; small-scale affordable housing will have been sensitively added, heritage and conservation respected, and road traffic mitigated; public transport will be well-used; the major new community at Heyford Park will have been successfully integrated into the neighbourhood, and a combination of central and local amenities will better provide for our community's needs.



2.2 THE PLAN OBJECTIVES

2.2.4 As stated in 1.2.6, engagement with the local community commenced in January 2016 with a series of meetings across the neighbourhood. The detailed process used is described in the Consultation Statement. The outcome was a set of prioritised objectives for the Plan, which were then published on the MCNP website, as follows:

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

- T1** To work with OCC, TVP and other bodies to develop strategies to protect against rising traffic volumes and the impact of increased development on the capacity of the rural road network serving the neighbourhood. This includes concerns about speeding, safety, and the impact of heavy goods vehicles.
- T2** To secure the future of bus services linking the neighbourhood's villages with each other and with Bicester; to influence train operators to improve currently inadequate services, especially as the local population rises and the need for travel to Oxford and elsewhere increases.

DEVELOPMENT

- D1** To strongly encourage the use of brownfield sites.
- D2** To resist the loss over time of the all-important countryside between villages, and to avoid the Mid-Cherwell area eventually becoming a suburb of Bicester.
- D3** To reinforce the sense of rurality that defines the neighbourhood, to protect against creeping urbanisation, and to maintain the character of the villages and the protection offered by their Conservation Areas.
- D4** To identify how much, if any, new development might be successfully located in or around the villages; to specify where any such development should occur, what form it should take, and to ensure that any new development enhances our communities.

AMENITIES

- A1** To identify and secure supporting facilities that can be improved or provided in the area, and in particular at Heyford Park, accessible to the wider Mid-Cherwell community. These should include additional leisure, recreation and sports facilities, as well as improved access to GP services and new cemetery provision.

HOUSING

- H1** In the case of the three villages identified by CDC as Category A (Steeple Aston, Fritwell and Kirtlington), to ensure that any new housing required also identifies the mix of the proposed homes, the density of development sites, the form of development and the quality of design.
- H2** To ensure that affordable housing is provided within any local developments that meets the needs in particular of the local community, especially young people and older residents.

TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- TC1** To raise concerns about technical infrastructure with the various service providers.

NOTE: Objective D1 was amended at Examination stage.

2.3 HOW DOES THE PLAN DELIVER?

- 2.3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to deliver the objectives through two main routes. First, through implementation of our **PLANNING POLICIES** (which follow in Section 3). These are essentially development management policies which will be applied by Cherwell District Council to all applications for planning permission affecting our Neighbourhood area after the date on which this Plan is operative. The wording of these Planning policies will have been subject to considerable scrutiny before the Plan comes into force, because they have to be in general conformity with strategic national and local policies, and be both reasonable and workable. Clearly, the application of such policies will not deliver the desired outcomes overnight: there will be a cumulative effect, and we cannot control the rate at which this occurs as it is entirely dependent on the number and scale of applications that are submitted by others.
- 2.3.2 However, there is a second and more pro-active way in which our Neighbourhood Plan can try to deliver the desired outcomes. Section 5 contains our **COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (CAP)**, where the aspirations of the community can be addressed through proposals for action by our parish councils and other bodies. These proposals, while lacking statutory force, are not so dependent on market forces for delivery, and are therefore just as important as the planning policies as vehicles for providing solutions.
- 2.3.3 As an example, one of our objectives is “to ensure that affordable housing is provided within any local developments that meets the needs in particular of the local community, especially young people and older residents.” Our planning policy PH3 aims to address this by making provision for affordable housing schemes on any rural exception sites that may come forward. However, in addition, the CAP contains a proposal that our parish councils should establish a Community Land Trust to initiate and deliver such schemes. This two-pronged approach - supporting schemes if and when they occur, while at the same time taking proactive steps to create such Schemes - is a characteristic of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3.4 There are a small number of cases where it has not been possible, after taking expert advice, and following the Independent Examination, to translate an agreed Objective into a Planning Policy. Some of the aspirations are not planning matters - for example Objectives TC1 on Technical Infrastructure and T1 on Traffic and Transport. Instead they have been addressed in the CAP. Others may be contrary to national planning policy - for example Objective D1 to develop brownfield land before greenfield (amended at Examination stage). These examples reflect the limitations of the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- 2.3.5 It is also the case that the extensive process of community engagement resulted in the addition of a few new policies that are not rooted in the early Objectives. As a result of the Healthcheck in April 2017, a number of policies were omitted as unworkable, leaving their Objectives to be addressed only through the Community Action Plan.

3 POLICIES

3.0 APPROACH

- 3.0.1 This section details those policies which specifically relate to development and the use of land. These are the policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan which will be examined formally and referred to in the referendum. Plan policies are prefixed with the letter P.
- 3.0.2 The policies are grouped into four topics - Development, Housing, Transport and Community Infrastructure. Each topic has an initial overview, which starts with the Plan Objectives that were derived from the initial public engagement meetings in February 2016, and subsequently tested in June 2016 at meetings, events and by questionnaire. Between 94% and 99% of respondents supported these objectives. However, as has already been noted, a few of the policies that were developed to support these objectives did not ultimately succeed in meeting all the requirements of good planning policy. The MCNP Forum remains committed to the objectives, which remain as they were, but there are some which are not translated into policies.
- 3.0.3 The initial overview is followed by the individual Policies. Each policy is followed by a rationale which explains the intent, and provides justification by reference to the National Planning Policy Framework and by demonstrating general conformity with the CDC Local Plan.
- 3.0.4 In considering whether a particular Neighbourhood Plan policy applies to a planning application, it should be noted that the application may also be subject to other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan: this statement is made here once and for all rather than being repeated in each policy (eg "See also policy xx").
- 3.0.5 Some detailed aspects of policies and supporting evidence for them are set out in a separate document of Appendices which are an integral part of the Plan. Appendix L is the Evidence Base, a record of data and documents that underpin the policies.

3.1 LIST OF POLICIES

PD1: DEVELOPMENT AT CATEGORY A VILLAGES

PD2: DEVELOPMENT AT CATEGORY B VILLAGES

PD3: DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO HEYFORD PARK

PD4: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS AND VISTAS

PD5: BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

PD6: CONTROL OF LIGHT POLLUTION

PD7: DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

PH1: OPEN MARKET HOUSING SCHEMES

PH2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

PH3: ADAPTABLE HOUSING

PH4: EXTRA-CARE HOUSING

PH5: PARKING AND GARAGING PROVISION

PH6: PARKING FACILITIES FOR EXISTING DWELLINGS

continued on next page

PC1: LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

PC2: HEALTH FACILITY

PC3: NEW CEMETERY

3.2 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Objectives

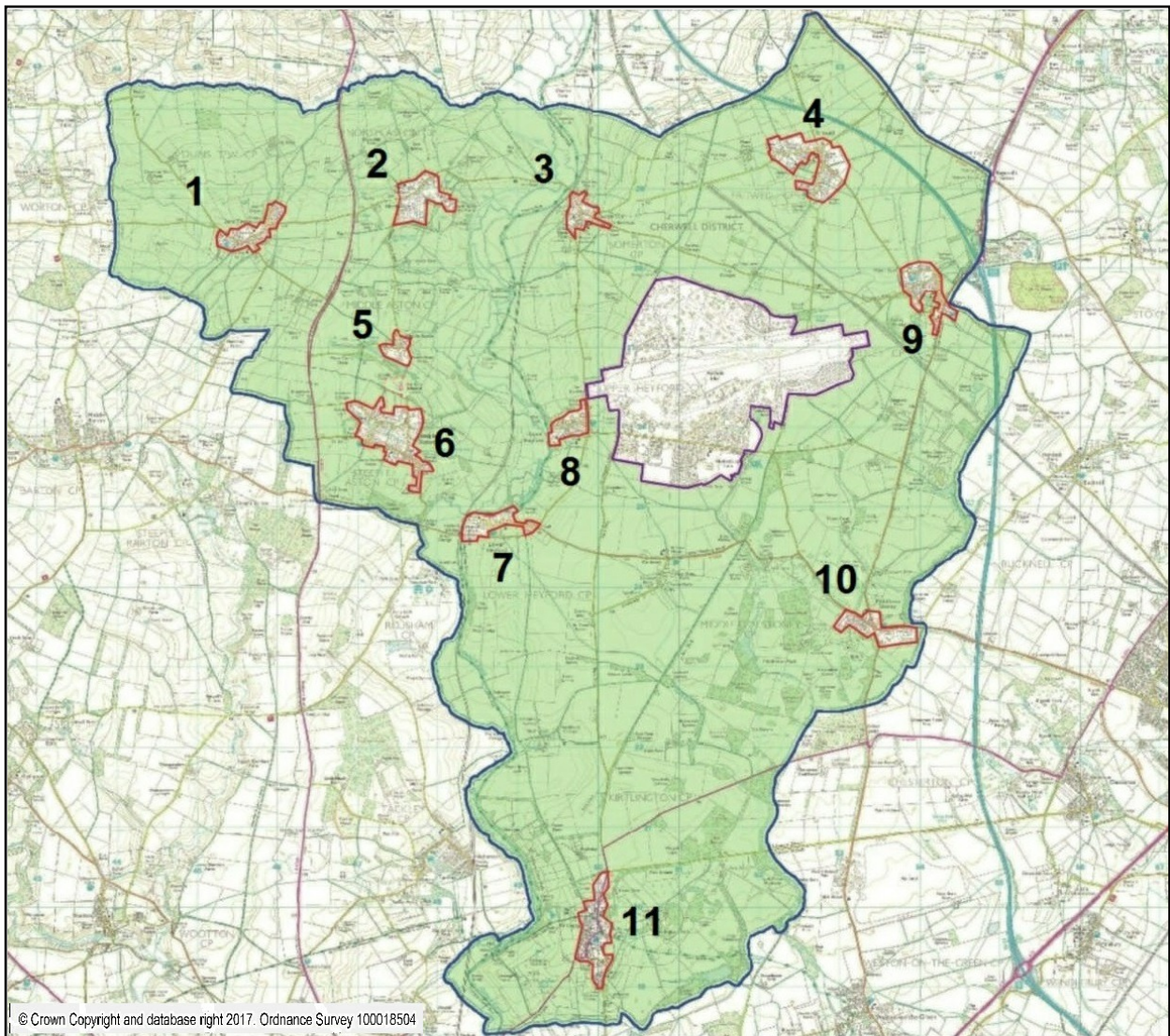
- D1** To strongly encourage the use of brownfield sites.
- D2** To resist the loss over time of the all-important countryside between villages, and to avoid the Mid-Cherwell area eventually becoming a suburb of Bicester.
- D3** To reinforce the sense of rurality that defines the neighbourhood, to protect against creeping urbanisation, and to maintain the character of the villages and the protection offered by their Conservation Areas.
- D4** To identify how much, if any, new development might be successfully located in or around the villages; to specify where any such development should occur, what form it should take, and to ensure that any new development enhances and does not damage our communities.

3.2.1 The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan supports sustainable development. The existence within the designated area of a large and growing residential development at Heyford Park, which may ultimately reach a total of 2,675 dwellings, as set out in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan policy Villages 5¹, is accepted and supported by the Neighbourhood Plan Forum. In addition, Local Plan policy Villages 2² require that the Category A villages accept an appropriate share of the 750 dwellings allocated to such villages across Cherwell District. This is also fully accepted, although substantial progress has already been made towards reaching that target. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to make its proper contribution to meeting housing need nationally, while providing protection to the essential character of the neighbourhood. This is in full accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)³ and national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁴. It is on that basis that the following policies - encouraging some types of development and restricting others, and promoting and protecting local green spaces - are proposed.

3.2.2 In accordance with Local Plan Policy Villages 1, only residential development comprising infilling and conversions will be supported in Category C villages: Ardley with Fewcott, Duns Tew, Middleton Stoney, North Aston, Somerton and Upper Heyford. These six villages have been designated by Cherwell District Council as capable of supporting only conversions and infilling because of their relative lack of community infrastructure. It is considered that no settlement area for these six villages is required, as Local Plan policy Villages 1 does not require Cat C villages to take minor development schemes, and therefore any definition of an area within or without which such development might take place would be without purpose.

1 p.254 of Adopted Local Plan
2 p.246 of Adopted Local Plan
3 Para 184 of NPPF
4 Para 40 of ID-41-040-20160211

3.2.3 One of the core elements of the strategy in the Neighbourhood Plan is to maintain the rurality of the countryside and to do this by ensuring there is only minimal and sustainable development outside of settlement areas, and to avoid the coalescence of one village with another. It is considered that paragraphs C.242, C.243 and C.247 of CDC Local Plan (Part 1), and policies ESD13, BSC2 and saved policy C15 provide good protection for the countryside between settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area, such that no additional policy specifically for Category C villages is required. Equally, a policy for managing development in the “open countryside” has been removed from the current version of the Plan on the grounds that it duplicated the provisions of Policy ESD13 of the adopted CDC Local Plan, and was therefore deemed unnecessary. However, Policy PD3 is retained as it refers to specific locations affected by development at Heyford Park.



- | | | |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------|
|  Settlements (indicative) | 1 Duns Tew | 7 Lower Heyford |
|  Open countryside | 2 North Aston | 8 Upper Heyford |
|  Heyford Park strategic site | 3 Somerton | 9 Ardley with Fewcott |
|  MCNP designated area | 4 Fritwell | 10 Middleton Stoney |
| | 5 Middle Aston | 11 Kirtlington |
| | 6 Steeple Aston | |

FIG.5 THE MCNP AREA AND ITS PRINCIPAL SETTLEMENTS

POLICY PD1: DEVELOPMENT AT CATEGORY A VILLAGES

Residential development proposals at Fritwell, Kirtlington and Steeple Aston in the form of infilling, conversions and minor development will be supported in principle within the settlement areas established and defined in Policy Map Figs. 9, 10 and 11 respectively.

Any residential development proposal which is outside the settlement areas of these three villages must have particular regard to all the following criteria:

- a) The site should be immediately adjacent to the settlement area
- b) The site should not be the best and most versatile agricultural land and the use of previously developed land is particularly likely to be acceptable.
- c) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the landscape.
- d) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation areas and the significance of other heritage assets (see Appendix K: Heritage and Character Assessment).
- e) The development should not give rise to coalescence with any other nearby settlement. This particularly applies to Steeple Aston and Middle Aston.

The total indicative number of additional dwellings permitted during the Plan period either within the settlement areas of these villages, or adjacent to them, shall be approximately 25 for Fritwell, 17 for Kirtlington, and 20 for Steeple Aston (as detailed on p.29).

Rationale for Category A villages policy

- 3.2.4 The purpose of defining settlement boundaries for these villages is to assist Cherwell District Council in the application of its Local Plan Policy Villages 1 (PV1), which refers to “residential development within the built-up limits of villages.” The settlement areas designated in this Neighbourhood Plan are intended to clarify the precise extent of the built-up limits of the villages in the NP area where PV1 is most likely to apply.
- 3.2.5 The areas defined are intended to have an in-principle presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement area, and a presumption which favours constraint against development outside it.

3.2.6 The Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management and Sites: Issues Paper states:

5.91 *“Some local authorities identify settlement boundaries for their villages, beyond which development would not normally be permitted. Cherwell District has not followed this approach in the past as it can lead to pressure for development within the boundary on land which is not appropriate, for example areas of open space. However, the definition of settlement boundaries can provide greater certainty as to the extent of the built-up area. This may become more important in the light of the government’s proposed changes to the NPPF (December 2015) which include a “presumption in favour” of development on small sites, provided they are within existing settlement boundaries.”*

3.2.7 Clearly, the amount and type of development in Mid-Cherwell should be carefully controlled to respect the largely rural character and setting of the villages and their natural environment. In the face of development pressures, the potential loss of rurality is a major concern, especially where the space between villages is concerned. The Neighbourhood Plan Forum takes the view that the balance of advantage favours defining settlement boundaries for the five Category A and B villages where minor development may occur. This policy of definition is compliant with Local Plan Part 1 in that it would provide the basis for applying Policy Villages 1, i.e. the area ‘within’ which the infilling, conversions and minor development would be acceptable in principle, subject to other Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

3.2.8 The Forum has considered the option of not defining settlement boundaries for these villages, instead leaving decisions about development “within the built-up limits” of villages to the District Council. However, the parish councils concerned have taken the view that their local knowledge about land use and buildings in the villages is best used to give effect to Policy Villages 1, in determining such applications.

3.2.9 The adopted Local Plan para. C254 refers to the provision of “small-scale development” within village categories A & B “typically but not exclusively for less than 10 dwellings.” Neighbourhood Plan Policies PD1 and PD2 refer to “minor development,” which is understood to have the same meaning.

3.2.10 Local Plan Policy Villages 2 provides for a further 750 dwellings ‘at’ category A villages across the Cherwell District, whereby ‘at’ is understood to mean both sites adjacent to the built-up limits of a village and also larger sites within a village. Of the 750 dwellings district-wide target, a large percentage has subsequently (since the baseline of 31/04/2014) been permitted or subject to a resolution to permit development. At the time of writing (February 2018) additional sites are being sought to deliver the residual amount of circa 86 dwellings (CDC Annual Monitoring Report 2017). The Forum has been advised by CDC that Local Plan Part 2 will allocate these on a site-by-site basis, and will not be based on proportioning out the remainder across the category A villages.

- 3.2.11 However, the Housing Needs Assessment commissioned from AECOM (see 1.11.2) did use a pro-rata methodology based on population, and arrived at a total figure of 48 dwellings for the three Category A villages in the MCNP area⁵. When sites are put forward they will be considered by CDC with regard to the ability of the category A village to sustain the scale of development, the site's availability and deliverability, and landscape and transport (amongst other) constraints. CDC have said that they will be mindful of those villages that have already made a contribution to meeting the 750 dwelling target. Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum and the parish councils concerned expect to engage constructively with Cherwell District Council when allocation of sites is being considered (expected to be in 2018).
- 3.2.12 The sustainability of the category A villages in the neighbourhood can be a fragile matter, and it can change almost overnight. Shops and pubs have closed in recent years, and one village school is currently under capacity, while the popularity of another village school greatly increases "school run" traffic through several villages at peak times. A village which is sustainable at its current population level could lose its sustainability for the future as a result of excessive population growth, whereas another village may need population growth to achieve the sustainability of its facilities.
- 3.2.13 Although there has been steady growth in all three villages during the period 2001-2011 (at rates of between 6% and 11% - 2011 census figures), the levels of sustainability in each village at the time of writing this Plan are significantly different from each other. Our policy on the appropriate level of sustainable residential development is therefore one that looks at the neighbourhood as a whole, balancing the encouragement of growth in some areas with less growth in others, an approach which conforms with that of the adopted Local Plan. The settlement areas for the three Category A villages have been re-examined and revised following the pre-submission consultation, and are explained in more detail in the box on p.29. More detail about the general criteria used for MCNP's settlement areas can be found in Appendix C.
- 3.2.14 The effect of policy PD1 is that the Category A villages could contribute a total of about 62 additional dwellings during the Plan period, contributing significantly to the approximately 86 still required across the District, and exceeding the assessment of 48 dwellings required on a pro-rata basis. It is considered that the use of the word "indicative" allows flexibility in permitting windfall development within the settlement areas. This Plan therefore, while taking a positive approach to provision of housing and sustainable development, sets reasonable targets for the villages concerned to ensure their sustainability.

FRITWELL

The settlement area was formally adopted at Fritwell Parish Council's meeting of 27th March 2017, and is shown in Fig.9. Here the school is under capacity by about 0.5 FE per annum; of the two pubs in the village, only one now remains and is currently closed. The parish council considers that about 25 new dwellings are needed to make existing facilities sustainable. There were 295 dwellings in the parish at 2011 Census, and 2 dwellings completed 2011-2015; there is an extant permission for a further 11 dwellings in the village, but there are uncertainties over its implementation. 25 new dwellings would represent an approximately 8 % increase in dwelling numbers. Fritwell developed from two manorial estates either side of open fields and the settlement area has been drawn to reflect this historic pattern; the open fields in the centre of the village are designated as an important Local Green Space FT1.

KIRTLINGTON

The settlement of Kirtlington has a traditional, essentially linear, pattern, north-south. The settlement plan (see Fig 10), formally adopted by Kirtlington Parish Council on 11th October, 2016, is limited on the eastern side by the listed historic park (designed by Capability Brown), while on the western side a well-defined boundary to the contemporary built area approximates closely the old Woodstock Way (clearly visible on 18th and 19th century maps and referred to by the Cherwell District Council Conservation Officer in opposition to a planning application west of that line in early 2017). Kirtlington Parish Council is very keen to maintain these eastern and western boundaries. To the south, the boundary is the 30mph sign, as development south of that point could lead to coalescence with Bletchington. The settlement is unique in the neighbourhood area in having two registered village greens. Within Kirtlington's settlement plan, as drawn, sites do exist for small-site 'windfall' new dwellings within even moderate sized gardens, as shown by recent proposals.

Cherwell District Council stated (at an Appeal hearing in 2015 into refusal of developers' applications in Kirtlington) that the appropriate share of the remaining Category A village load for Kirtlington would be 17 new houses. The Parish Council considers that this is a reasonable requirement. There were 440 dwellings at 2011 Census, of which 369 are in the designated settlement area. 22 dwellings were completed in 2011-2015, so the current parish total is 462 dwellings. 17 new houses would be an approximately 5% increase on the settlement size, which the parish council considers would be sustainable.

The school at Kirtlington is at full capacity with no physical space to expand as the playground is already at minimum size for the number of pupils. OCC Education envisaged busing overflow to the school in the next village. Kirtlington's small shop is well-used and often has queues. The village hall is already booked every weekday evening and at most weekends.

STEEPLE ASTON

An east-west stream runs in a valley through the settlement and gives it its particular character, with fairly steep hills and a green "heart" surrounded by dwellings and their gardens. The settlement has developed to the north-west and south-east of this rectangle in the twentieth century. The settlement area was formally adopted at Steeple Aston Parish Council's meeting of 16th January 2017 and is shown in Fig.11 .

The "green heart" is deliberately not included in the settlement area as it is the view of many local people consulted at engagement meetings, and of the Parish Council, that this important and historic feature of the village should be protected from development. This area of extended gardens and pasture land is unsuitable for nomination as a Local Green Space.

It is the view of the parish council that a reasonable limit, during the Plan period, is for growth to be permitted representing 5% of the number of dwellings in the village at the start of the Plan period (2018). There were 397 dwellings at 2011 Census and 21 dwellings were completed 2011-2017, making a current estimated total of 418 dwellings, of which 20 additional dwellings represent about 5%.

POLICY PD2: DEVELOPMENT AT CATEGORY B VILLAGES

Residential development proposals at Lower Heyford and Middle Aston in the form of infilling, conversions and minor development will be supported in principle within the settlement areas established and defined in Policy Map Figs. 12 and 13 respectively.

The total indicative number of additional dwellings permitted during the Plan period within the settlement areas of Middle Aston and Lower Heyford (and being the aggregate of infilling and minor development), shall be 5 per village.

Rationale for Category B villages policy

- 3.2.15 The two Category B villages, which are regarded as “satellites” of Steeple Aston, are Middle Aston and Lower Heyford. Local Plan policy Villages 1 applies equal status to Category B villages, in terms of housing development policy, to that for Category A villages. However, Local Plan policy Villages 2 (which allocates a number of new dwellings across all Category A villages) does not apply to Category B villages. The criteria used for MCNP’s settlement areas are set out in Appendix C, and more detail on the two Category B villages is given in the box below.
- 3.2.16 Nevertheless, these villages are prepared to play a role in meeting overall housing need, by allowing consideration of small-scale development within their settlement areas, contributing to provision of affordable housing in the area. This possibility is mentioned at para. C268 of the Local Plan.

LOWER HEYFORD

The settlement area of approximately 115 dwellings was formally adopted at Lower Heyford Parish Council’s meeting of 15th September 2016. It is considered possible that minor growth of the order of 5% over the plan period could assist sustainability of the village.

MIDDLE ASTON

The settlement area of Middle Aston currently comprises 50 dwellings. It is the view of the parish meeting that an increase of the order of 10% would be acceptable over the plan period. The settlement area was formally adopted at Middle Aston Parish Meeting’s annual meeting on 7th January 2017, and amended with support from a poll of residents held in June/July 2017.

POLICY PD3: DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO HEYFORD PARK

A zone of non-coalescence, defined on Policy Map Fig. 18, on the western boundary of Heyford Park shall prevent coalescence of any development proposals at Heyford Park with the village of Upper Heyford.

Within the zone of non-coalescence, the land should remain predominantly in agricultural use, but it may also accommodate:

- Ecological mitigation and appropriate visual screening arising from development at Heyford Park
- Footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways

Any development which is proposed adjacent to the designated strategic area of Heyford Park (as defined by Local Plan policy Villages 5) should not give rise to coalescence with surrounding settlements, to ensure that their separate identity and character are maintained.

Rationale for non-coalescence policy

- 3.2.17 The Neighbourhood Plan gives in-principle support to development at the Heyford Park strategic site, as set out in Local Plan Policy Villages 5. There is however a natural concern from the communities of surrounding villages that they should keep their discrete character, separated from Heyford Park by a significant gap of open countryside. Saved policy C15 (CDC Local Plan 1996) also addresses this issue of potential coalescence, and makes specific reference to Upper Heyford Village. Precedents exist in Local Plans and in “made” Neighbourhood Plans for “green gaps”, “buffer zones” and “zones of non-coalescence”. In many cases these zones are more extensive than that proposed here.
- 3.2.18 Policy PD3 provides more specific local detail in support of this saved policy, with particular reference to the impact of the Heyford Park development on the nearby village of Upper Heyford to the west. The designated Zone for Upper Heyford village is in conformity with CDC’s saved policy C15, and provides local detail and clarity on the extent of land between Heyford Park and Upper Heyford village where potential coalescence could occur. The land identified does not include any of the Heyford Park strategic site; it is however within the Rousham Conservation Area (as shown in Fig.3 on p.10). The Zone is intended to include a minimum 20 metre buffer zone where necessary to protect Upper Heyford village from the visual intrusion of any development. This green buffer zone (including the reinstatement of the historic Portway footpath) has been agreed between the owners of Heyford Park and Upper Heyford Parish Council. Protection from coalescence here is further supported by designation in policy PD7 of adjacent land in this area as Local Green Space (sites UH4 and UH5).
- 3.2.19 The other settlements in parishes adjacent to the strategic development site of Heyford Park include the hamlet of Caulcott, and the villages and farms of Somerton and Ardley. Policy PD3 aims to ensure that the separate identity of each of these settlements is maintained in the event that consideration is being given for any development application that would extend the strategic site of Heyford Park. Adopted Local Plan policy ESD13 states that all development should respect and enhance local landscape character, and policy PD3 seeks to apply locally specific detail to that CDC policy.

3.2.20 The aspects of landscape character that could be adversely affected by the encroachment of further development extending the current boundary of Heyford Park include the following:

- visual intrusion into the open countryside
- loss of tranquility
- harm to the historic and archaeological context of the countryside
- loss of access to the countryside for the inhabitants of the settlements (an issue that would grow in importance as a result of an expanded development). In particular, threat to the retention of local public footpaths (some of which provide walks with excellent views across the Cherwell Valley of its open landscape character, or of the Upland topography of the landscape to the north of the strategic site).
- harm to the setting and rural character of the settlements, including adverse impact on Conservation Areas and listed buildings. Some areas of settlement close to Heyford Park do not benefit from being located in village Conservation Areas.

POLICY PD4: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS AND VISTAS

Development proposals within the plan area must demonstrate sensitivity to the important views and vistas described in Table 4 and illustrated by photographs in the documents referred to in that Table, by including an assessment of the significance of the views and the effect of the proposed development on them. Proposals which cause significant harm to any of these views will only be acceptable where the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any harm.

Development proposals must also be designed such that there is no adverse impact on the sensitive skylines identified in Fig. 8 and referenced in Table 4.

Applicants for development in or adjacent to a Conservation Area must demonstrate in a Heritage Impact Assessment that they have taken account of the appropriate Conservation Area Appraisal, and of the Heritage and Character Assessment at Appendix K, and demonstrated that the proposal causes as little harm to an identified view as possible and that any harm is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal. The development should not harm the Conservation Area and its setting, other heritage assets, or historic street and village views and longer distance vistas.

Rationale for Protection of Important Views and Vistas policy

- 3.2.21 Local Plan Policy ESD15⁶ states that development will not be permitted if it causes “undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.” CDC’s Countryside Design Summary 1998 also refers to vistas in relevant character areas, as does the draft Cherwell Design Guide SPD (2017).
- 3.2.22 The underlying landform, historic landscape elements, and notable landmarks within the landscape make views an important characteristic within the Mid-Cherwell area. The Cherwell Valley provides opportunities for far-reaching and panoramic views from along the valley sides, and more intimate views from within the base of the valley. Along the Cherwell Valley the strong rural characteristics of the landscape are apparent, including the small-scale isolated settlements dispersed along the valley, most notable in views as a result of their churches standing tall above surrounding woodland. Views within the Cherwell Valley are more open from the eastern side of the valley than the west, which is more wooded and has slightly greater enclosure. Fig.8 on p 51, shows the contours and highlights the sensitive skylines of high ground on each side of the Cherwell Valley that are to be protected.
- 3.2.23 There are important views recognised in Cherwell District Council’s Conservation Area Appraisals for many of the villages, which are referenced in Table 4 on p.34. Some of the land nominated as Local Green Spaces (policy PD7) plays a significant role in important views that are listed. Across the area the most prominent recurring landmarks are the churches at the many small villages within Mid-Cherwell, and the historic water tower (currently due for demolition) and other structures at the former RAF Upper Heyford. The churches are often framed within the landscape by surrounding vegetation, and are often the first indicator of the location of a settlement. The views between church towers along the Cherwell Valley, and the setting of these views, are a particularly characteristic feature. The neighbourhood plan Forum together with AECOM has identified a number of views and vistas within the neighbourhood plan area which are of particular importance to its history and character. These views and vistas have been used as a reference point in producing the Heritage and Character Assessment (Appendix K), and are referenced in Table 4 on p.34.

3.2.24 In the experience of the parish councils involved in this neighbourhood plan, applicants often do the minimum necessary to demonstrate that there will not be harm to Conservation Areas and other heritage assets. Local Plan policy makes no mention of the value of Heritage Impact Assessments in this context. Policy PD4 requires that such a document must be prepared and submitted by applicants in cases where harm could be done (a judgement that will have to be made by Cherwell District Council in responding to the application). It is believed that such a document, properly prepared, will bring to the surface issues (for example through the inclusion of accurate montages of the likely impact of a proposal) that might otherwise not be recognised. Where potential harm is apparent, applicants will be expected to show whether mitigation could be achieved in order to allow approval to be considered.

TABLE 4: IMPORTANT VIEWS AND VISTAS TO BE PROTECTED

A) Views of all church towers in the MCNP area, as seen from numerous viewpoints including those shown in photos referred to in c) below, and as shown in Fig.8 on p.51.

B) All the vistas and views referred to in the following CDC Conservation Area Appraisals, or in updated versions of these documents:

Ardley 2005: para 4.12 and Table p.11-12; church views on p.27

Fewcott 2008: para 6.11 and Fig.7

Duns Tew 2005: Table 1 and Fig.8

Fritwell 2008: Paras. 6.11, 7.11, 8.7, 9.10 and 10.11 and Figs. 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16

Kirtlington 2011: p.33-34, and Fig.13

North Aston 2015: Para 12.2 and Fig.12

RAF Upper Heyford 2006: Para 6.4 and Figs 9,10 and 11

Steeple Aston 2014: Paras. 8.1.3, 8.1.4, 8.2.1 and 8.3.3, p.26 and Fig.14

Rousham 1996 (in course of being updated)

Somerton 1996 (to be updated)

Oxford Canal 2012: para 6.69 - 6.76

C) With reference to Appendix K (AECOM Heritage and Character Assessment), all the vistas and views referred to on p.22, 23, 76 and 90, and those referred to below, together with the relevant photos on those pages:

Fritwell: p.35; Kirtlington: p.43; Lower Heyford: p.51; Middle Aston: p.57;

Steeple Aston: p.65, and Upper Heyford: p.72

NOTE: Part 2 of APPENDIX K covers only Category A and B villages and Upper Heyford; other Category C villages were excluded from AECOM's study because of funding limitations affecting the scope of the work.

POLICY PD5: BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

New development should be designed to a high standard which responds to the distinctive character of the settlement and reflects the guidelines and principles set out within the Heritage and Character Assessment (see Appendix K). Development proposals should have full regard to the following criteria:

- a) Proposals should wherever possible include appropriate landscape mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the built form, to ensure that development is in keeping with the existing rural character of the village, and to provide a net gain in biodiversity.
- b) Development affecting existing traditional stone walls should identify them on proposals drawings, and wherever possible retain and/or repair them using traditional forms and materials.
- c) Proposals for minor development schemes (excluding infill and conversions) of new housing will be required to provide new or improve existing footpaths and cycle ways to ensure that new residents of all ages and mobility have safe access to village amenities such as the school, bus stops, shop and green spaces. Where new routes are proposed to meet this requirement, the development proposals shall contain full details of all associated materials and infrastructure.
- d) The section on Managing Change on p.76 -77 of the Heritage and Character Assessment (see Appendix K), which sets out general principles and specific recommendations for villages highlighted in the document.

NOTE 1: This policy does not apply to development within the area covered by CDC's policy Villages 5, where site-specific design and place-shaping standards are already set out.

NOTE 2: Part 2 of APPENDIX K covers only Category A and B villages and Upper Heyford; other Category C villages were excluded from AECOM's study because of funding limitations affecting the scope of the work.

Rationale for Building and Site Design policy

3.2.25 Para. 58 of the NPPF encourages local and neighbourhood plans to "develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics." This policy strongly supports paragraphs 56 and 57 of the NPPF: "56. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. 57. It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes." In addition, the design of new housing development was given additional weight in the Housing White Paper of 2015.

- 3.2.26 Policy PD5 adds a local perspective to adopted Local Plan policy ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment. In development management terms, the appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are fully recognized by Government as material planning considerations. See also CDC's Countryside Design Summary 1998, and the draft Cherwell Design Guide SPD (2017).
- 3.2.27 However, this neighbourhood plan recognises that the settlements should not appear to be set in aspic. There is an acceptance of the need for change and renewal in the villages, as has always been the case. This should be done with careful thought, skill and craftsmanship. The policy states that new development should have a high standard of design, which is regarded as including the following:
- authentic traditional building is encouraged, using materials and forms found locally.
 - thoughtful contemporary design is also welcomed, if it is capable of integrating well into its particular surroundings.
 - discouragement of pastiche housing design, which deliberately imitates traditional forms but succeeds only in achieving inauthenticity.
 - discouragement of features that are un-neighbourly, discordant, monotonous or inappropriately prominent.
- 3.2.28 The landscape mitigation policy (criterion a) allows for offsite planting where it might not be possible to accommodate new trees or other planting on an application site. This policy aims to ensure that there is no net loss of natural habitats and, wherever possible, a net gain in biodiversity. CAP 5.4 (see p.74) also addresses this issue.
- 3.2.29 Stone walls as boundaries to fields and properties are a characteristic and traditional feature of the neighbourhood. There is strong community support, as expressed in local engagement meetings, for their retention and protection. Some of these walls are in a poor state of repair, and others have virtually disappeared from view in undergrowth. This policy encourages their repair and re-emergence where the opportunity to do so arises.
- 3.2.30 New buildings should wherever possible incorporate special bricks or boxes designed for swifts, and care should be taken in the repair of traditional buildings not to remove existing opportunities for birds to nest in eaves and other traditional locations.
- 3.2.31 To allow for residents to access facilities easily and safely all efforts should be made to improve and enhance the existing network of footpaths and cycle tracks throughout the Neighbourhood. This is supported by Local Plan policy PSD1 and its sustainability objective SO13. Fig.8 in Appendix K shows a map of existing footpaths in the neighbourhood area.
- 3.2.32 A major community objective is to maintain the rural character of the neighbourhood. Given the scale of growth in both residential and commercial traffic it is critical that effective plans are put in place to route traffic entering or leaving the neighbourhood along designated routes, minimizing disruption to the rural road network and communities. Given the proximity of the M40 and major conurbations in Oxford, Bicester and Banbury the impact of traffic transiting

the neighbourhood also has to be considered. Traffic and transport issues are also addressed in the Community Action Plan in Section 5.

3.2.33 The Cherwell Neighbourhood area contains nine conservation areas and a listed park. Road improvement and routing policy should strive to minimize any changes to these important environments (see Fig.3). There are numbers of roads in the NP area that are either single-track or where passing is difficult. These rural lanes are an essential part of the character of the neighbourhood and are unsuited to increasing volumes of traffic that new development will generate. Their protection is a key part of this policy. Local Plan policies ESD13 and ESD15 support this policy. In addition Local Plan policy ESD16 emphasises the importance of the Oxford Canal which traverses the MCNP area.

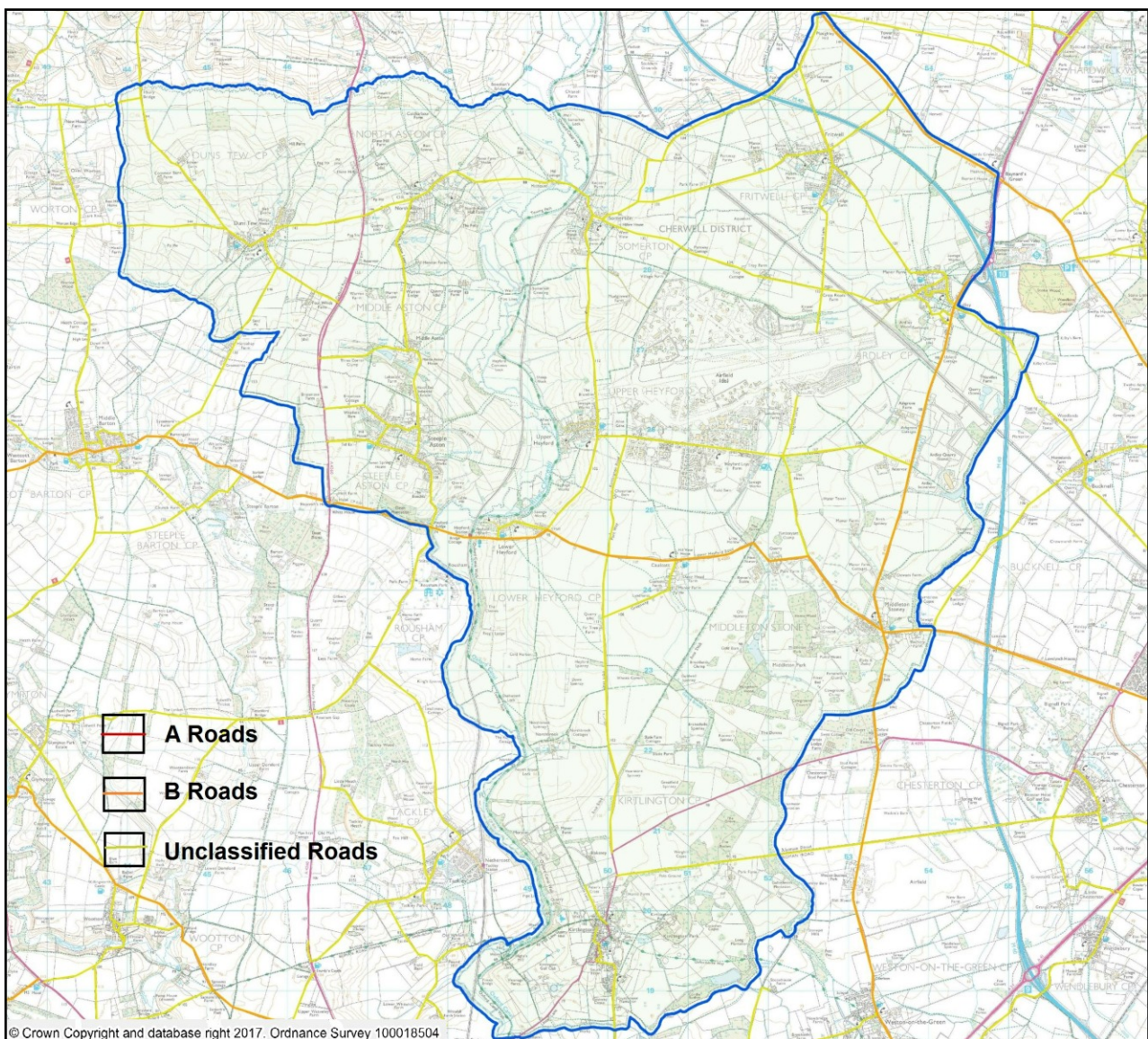


FIGURE 6. THE ROAD NETWORK IN THE MID-CHERWELL AREA

POLICY PD6: CONTROL OF LIGHT POLLUTION

The design of external and street lighting in all new development should minimise the risk of light spillage beyond the development site boundary. Proposals should ensure that the installation of all external lighting satisfies the following criteria:

- a) elevations of buildings, particularly roofs, should be designed to limit light spill;
- b) proposals should not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of surrounding occupiers;
- c) proposals should not have a significant adverse impact on the character of a village and its setting or of the wider countryside;
- d) proposals should not be detrimental to an area of nature conservation interest.
- e) particular care should be taken to avoid light pollution where the development is in a remote rural location, or where it might adversely affect the setting of the Oxford Canal.

Rationale for Control of Light Pollution policy

3.2.34 CDC's Local Plan policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built Environment states that new development proposals should "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation." Policy PD6 addresses a concern expressed by a significant number of people at local engagement meetings and in responses to questionnaires. Commercial users at Heyford Park already present a challenge to this policy because their night-time requirements for lighting are substantial. The night-time glow of light above the former Base is already significant, and is increasing, with a detrimental effect on the sense of rurality in the neighbourhood area. The Community Action Plan can also attempt to address this. In the meantime, a policy controlling light pollution from new development will stop the problem from getting worse.

3.2.35 The participating Parish Councils and their communities hold strong views about the proliferation of street lighting in traditional villages where there is either none or a very limited amount at present. Such proliferation is seen as damaging to the character of these villages. Any proposals to include new street lighting should therefore be discussed with the appropriate Parish Council or Parish Meeting, if possible prior to submission of planning applications. This issue is addressed in para 5.1.8 of the Community Action Plan.

POLICY PD7: DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Local Green Spaces listed below are designated in accordance with NPPF requirements, as shown in Policy Map Figs. 9 to 18 and as further detailed in Appendix D. Development on the designated Local Green Spaces which does not relate to or complement their importance to the community will only be considered acceptable in exceptional circumstances.

PARISH	REF NO	LOCATION
Ardley with Fewcott	AF1	Ardley with Fewcott Playing Field
	AF2	Old Quarry Field
	AF3	The Knob Green
	AF4	Fewcott Green
Duns Tew	DT1	Duns Tew Play Area
Fritwell	FT1	Church View
	FT2	Recreation ground and play area
Kirtlington	KT1	The Allotments
	KT2	Square green in the centre of Dashwood Mews
	KT3	The Recreation field, etc
	KT4	Small green within Gossway Fields' housing
Lower Heyford	LH 1	The meadow abutting Oxford Canal
	LH2	Paddock adjacent to Ivy Close in The Lane
	LH3	Paddock on South Street, Caulcott
Middle Aston	MA1	Middle Aston House front lawn
Middleton Stoney	MS1	Children's Playground
Steeple Aston	SA1	Robinson's Close, Fir Lane
	SA2	Allotments. Fir Lane
	SA3	Field adjacent to Paines Hill
Upper Heyford	UH1	The Common
	UH2	High Street Allotments
	UH3	The meadow abutting Allen's Lock
	UH4	Upper Heyford Recreation Ground
	UH5	Poors Allotments Somerton Road

Rationale for Local Green Spaces policy

3.2.36 There are a number of important green spaces within the neighbourhood's villages which it is proposed should be afforded protection from development. Government policy on this is set out in the NPPF as follows:

76. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

78. Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

There is additional information about suitability of nominations in NPPF Guidance.⁷

3.2.37 Local Plan policy BSC10 supports the designation of Local Green Spaces, although actual designation is deferred to Local Plan Part 2. Also see CDC's Open Space Update 2011.

3.2.38 Each participating Parish Council and Parish Meeting has made an assessment of local green spaces in or close to their settlements and proposed nominations accordingly. A common system of assessment was used to ensure that each nomination met the NPPF requirements, and in particular had sufficient evidence of being "special to the local community." The designations proposed in Policy PD7 have detailed justifications set out in Appendix D. Policy Maps showing their locations are Figs.9 to 18. Across the neighbourhood area there is a total of 24 nominations, an average of about two per parish.

3.2.39 A number of potential nominations have been excluded on the basis of expert advice received. These include Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Village Greens, which have been deemed to have a high level of protection from development that would not be improved by designation as Local Green Spaces.

3.3 HOUSING POLICIES

Objectives

H1 To ensure that any new housing required is small-scale, on suitable sites, and with an approved mix of proposed types and sizes of homes, form and density of development, and quality of design.

H2 To ensure that within any local developments affordable housing is provided that meets the needs in particular of the local community, especially young people and older residents.

- 3.3.1 Responses to community engagement events have shown there is an appetite to see some new housing outside of Heyford Park (a strategic site to which the above Objectives do not apply). Evidence of housing need in the Neighbourhood Plan area is provided in the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment at Appendix E.
- 3.3.2 Reflecting community engagement responses, the neighbourhood plan policies seek to ensure that new housing will integrate well into its surroundings. The policies will also help to achieve the provision of affordable housing and a mix of housing types and sizes known to be required by the community.

POLICY PH1: OPEN MARKET HOUSING SCHEMES

Where other policies permit such development, any new market housing should favour homes with a smaller number of bedrooms. The mix of housing will be determined having regard to the evidence of housing need in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, or more up to date published evidence, and the characteristics of the location and site. On the basis of the 2014 SHMA, in developments of 10 dwellings or more the indicative mix should be: 30% 1 or two bedrooms, 46% 3 bedrooms and no more than 24% with 4 bedrooms or more. Smaller schemes should aim for a similar mix where possible.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to the affordable housing element of such schemes or developments affected by Policy Villages 5 of the Local Plan.

Rationale for Open Market Housing Policy

- 3.3.3 This housing strategy is directed towards improving the sustainability of Mid-Cherwell as a demographically mixed and balanced community. In particular, the Oxfordshire SHMA states at Table 65 that 29% of the new dwelling (market sector) requirement for Cherwell District should be one and two-bedroom dwellings, while 46.2% should have three-bedrooms (a significantly higher percentage than recommended for Oxfordshire as a whole - 42.9%).

There are very few dwellings of 1 bedroom in the rural parts of Cherwell, and a relatively higher level of homes of 4+ bedrooms. CDC's Local Plan notes a need for smaller homes.⁸

- 3.3.4 This policy therefore aims to redress a current housing imbalance in the Plan area, which may over time be subject to change, measurable through collection of evidence. CDC Local Plan policy BSC4 requires the mix of housing to be negotiated having regard to up-to-date evidence. This is compatible with the aims of Policy PH1, but goes further in order to reflect the particular circumstances of the Mid-Cherwell area.

POLICY PH2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

Support will be given to small-scale affordable housing schemes on Rural Exception Sites within or immediately adjacent to villages, to meet specific needs within the Plan area which cannot be met by other sites allocated for housing development. This type of housing is supported particularly where it will redevelop brownfield land.

Rural Exception Site schemes must ensure that dwellings continue to be affordable and made available to meet local needs in perpetuity. The number of affordable dwellings on rural exception sites shall not exceed that evidenced by local housing needs surveys.

Rationale for Rural Exception Sites Policy

- 3.3.5 Our strategy provides for rural exception sites for affordable housing where the development meets an identified local need and is supported or initiated by the relevant Parish Council. Subject to proven local need, a limited amount of affordable housing could be provided within the Plan Area on small rural exception sites, adjacent to the edge of the built area of the village, where proposals for housing would not normally be permitted.
- 3.3.6 Policy Villages 3: Rural Exception Sites supports small scale development within/adjacent to villages to meet local housing needs and provides for restrictions on occupancy and limits market housing to criteria stated. All the proposals contained in Local Plan Policy Villages 3 are supported. The occupancy of this type of housing will need to ensure that the houses continue to meet local needs in perpetuity.
- 3.3.7 The problem with the definition of Affordable housing (see 3.3.8) is that it does not take into consideration inflated house prices, levels of income or housing benefit. Since 1994 the number of council houses available to rent in Oxfordshire has decreased by more than 75%. Housing association stock has grown, but not enough to meet demand. 54% of people in Oxfordshire can only afford social housing rent or below - or in other words, they cannot afford so-called Open Market Affordable Housing at all. Market rent across Oxfordshire is about double the national average. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find private landlords accepting housing benefit as payment. To purchase a property requires an annual household income of around £60,000 on average. Less than a quarter of Oxfordshire households have an income at this level. ⁹
- 3.3.8 It is the intention of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum and its member parish councils to seek ways of providing genuinely affordable dwellings on rural exception sites (following local housing needs surveys) through establishment of community-led housing schemes including a Community Land Trust (see Section 5: Community Action Plan).

9 "Oxfordshire Uncovered" – Report by Oxfordshire Community Foundation 2016

POLICY PH3: ADAPTABLE HOUSING

Housing development will be favoured that is designed with features that enable residents to live there throughout different phases of their lives, and be capable of internal and external adaptation to help achieve this aim. Such housing should be built amongst other homes to mitigate isolation and loneliness.

Support will be given to new houses being constructed to Building Regulations Part M (4) as amended). In addition, where possible, dwellings that are on one level should be included, to meet the need for such accommodation in particular for older people and those with disabilities.

Rationale for Adaptable Housing Policy

- 3.3.9 Oxfordshire has an ageing population. Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, the number of over-65s grew from 14.5% to 16% of the population. This trend is likely to continue, with the number of people aged over 85 projected to double over the next two decades.
- 3.3.10 Demographics indicate that there will be a higher than average need for housing provision for the elderly in Mid-Cherwell, evidenced within the AECOM Report (see Table 18)¹⁰. Many residents are content to continue into retirement in their current homes; others seek nearby alternative housing for those who wish to downsize and for surviving partners. According to local estate agent Hamptons (reported in the AECOM report), the stock of smaller houses has been much reduced over the last few years. Recognising the relatively older profile of the population, Hamptons note that one dwelling type that is significantly under-supplied is bungalows. Downsizing from the Mid-Cherwell villages and other rural areas drives demand for bungalows, particularly in nearby towns with good pedestrian access to services and facilities, such as Deddington and Bicester. Likewise, Heyford Park would likely be a settlement large enough to offer the range of services and facilities needed by older people within walking distance, and as such there would probably be a very strong demand for the existing bungalows, and for possible future ones here as well. The need is generally for a two-bedroom, high specification dwelling, predominantly single storey and with a modest garden.
- 3.3.11 The “Lifetime Homes” standard can offer benefits to everyone. Through design features that increase ease of access such as level thresholds and wider doorways, lit and covered entrance ways and good accessibility throughout the home, most people find it easier to enter, exit and move around in their properties without physical barriers in the way such as steps and narrow areas. However, this standard is not currently enforceable through planning legislation, so the policy is one of encouragement to meet these desirable outcomes.

POLICY PH4: EXTRA-CARE HOUSING

If the number of extra-care homes proposed at Heyford Park is insufficient to serve demand during the Plan period from the population of the MCNP area, then support will be given for additional dwellings in Fritwell, Kirtlington and Steeple Aston to meet demonstrable need.

In addition, applications to provide extra-care housing at the Category A villages will be supported where they meet the requirements of other Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Rationale for Extra-Care Housing policy

- 3.3.12 Local Plan policy BSC4 requires housing sites of at least 400 dwellings to provide a minimum of 45 self-contained extra-care dwellings as part of the overall mix. Provision of suitable dwellings for older people is one of the key objectives of this neighbourhood plan. CDC's policy requires such provision at Heyford Park because it is regarded as a suitable location in terms of accessibility, facilities and other support arrangements, and is seen as the only such location in the neighbourhood area. However, the numbers specified relate to the community being developed at that location, which may initially have low demand for extra-care housing there. Some of the needs of the wider community can also be met at this location.
- 3.3.13 Extra-care housing covers a range of levels of care. Some housing in this range could be successfully developed at Category A villages, where some of the necessary support arrangements are in place, or could become so during the plan period. This policy therefore allows for the possibility that small-scale extra-care developments, possibly associated with the larger scheme at Heyford Park, could be permitted.

POLICY PH5: PARKING, GARAGING AND WASTE STORAGE PROVISION

Unless it is clearly impractical, garages, covered or open parking areas should be built in direct association with the houses whose inhabitants may be expected to use them. These are preferred to rear or separate parking courts. They must be spacious enough to accommodate modern cars and bicycles.

All dwellings should have well-designed and adequate facilities for the storage of waste bins to avoid less able residents having to haul heavy bins from unsuitable locations to the front of properties.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to development within the area covered by CDC's policy Villages 5, where site-specific design and place-shaping standards are already set out.

Rationale for Parking and Garaging Policy

- 3.3.14 Although residents cannot generally be prevented from parking at the roadside, all future housing developments should have adequate car and cycle parking facilities for both residents and visitors, in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's standards. This will help to foster use of driveways instead of parking on verges or roadsides. This policy supports Local Plan policy ESD15. Reference should also be made to CDC's emerging Design Guide SPD 2017.

POLICY PH6: PARKING FACILITIES FOR EXISTING DWELLINGS

Applications to alter or extend an existing dwelling that would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall parking provision retained on site is satisfactory and will not exacerbate existing difficulties with on-street parking in the locality.

Rationale for Parking Policy for existing dwellings

- 3.3.15 Many of the villages in the neighbourhood plan area suffer from parking congestion, because so few traditional dwellings have dedicated parking spaces or garages and so parking occurs at the roadside in locations which were never intended for such a use. This causes well-documented inconvenience to pedestrians and other drivers alike. This policy supports Local Plan policy ESD15. Reference should also be made to CDC's emerging Design Guide SPD 2017.

3.4 TRANSPORT

Objectives

- T1** To work with Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police and other bodies to develop strategies to protect against rising traffic volumes and the impact of increased development on the capacity of the rural road network serving the neighbourhood. This includes concerns about speeding, safety, and the impact of heavy goods vehicles.
- T2** To secure the future of bus services linking the neighbourhood's villages with each other and with Bicester; to influence train operators to improve currently inadequate services, especially as the local population rises and the need for travel to Oxford and elsewhere increases.

- 3.4.1 Traffic issues were numerically the largest in terms of community concerns about the neighbourhood. They are also, unfortunately, amongst the most difficult to address, especially in respect of development control policies suitable for a neighbourhood plan. In considering the objectives, it is important to consider traffic impact both on Heyford Park and its immediate environs, and the wider plan area. Measures need to be taken to minimize the commercial traffic moving through or generated within the neighbourhood.
- 3.4.2 Frequent full-time bus services are essential for people who cannot travel by car. They may also help to relieve pressure on the road network. The 250 service serving Oxford and Bicester through Heyford Park and neighbourhood villages is crucial. In the 2016 Heyford Park traffic and transport survey, 17% said they use bus services as a mode of transport compared to 5% in the area-wide 2011 census. Routes need to be expanded to provide a service covering all neighbourhood villages and to link with Heyford Rail Station and Banbury. There is evidence from local engagement responses that more people would use the train service from Heyford if timetables were more favourable, and if parking space at the station were to be expanded. The Community Action Plan addresses these aspirations.
- 3.4.3 New residents, particularly those at Heyford Park, tend to rely on private cars. Policy PC03: Connected Development encourages provision of new cycleways and footpaths to provide alternatives for some journeys, to reduce vehicle traffic and improve well-being.

Transport issues in the Community Action Plan

- 3.4.4 Policy PT1 relating to Travel Plans was deleted at the examination stage, but transport issues are addressed through the Community Action Plan (see section 5).
- 3.4.5 Fig.19 has been prepared with detailed input from all participating parishes, and co-ordinated by the MCNP Forum's Traffic and Transport working group. The issues and concerns mapped there represent current views, but as traffic is the issue of possibly the highest concern in the neighbourhood area, work continues. This activity is noted in the Community Action Plan (Section 5). The principal outcome of this work will be to identify traffic mitigation projects, to prioritise them, and then seek community support and funding to implement them. The initial results of this work are also indicated on Fig.19 as "Junctions identified for mitigation".

3.5 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

Objectives

A1 To identify and secure supporting facilities that can be improved or provided in the area, both in the villages and at Heyford Park, accessible to the wider Mid-Cherwell community. These should include additional leisure, recreation and sports facilities, as well as improved access to GP services and new cemetery provision.

3.5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area is destined to grow by an order of magnitude, particularly because of the development of Heyford Park to accommodate 2,675 homes, up from a base of 300 homes, and the creation of an additional 1,500 jobs. This scale of development is not sustainable in terms of the quality of life unless the supporting amenities that such a community requires are also enhanced.

POLICY PC1: LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Continued commercial use of premises providing local employment within the neighbourhood area or otherwise benefiting the local economy will be encouraged.

Proposals for the establishment of new small businesses will be considered favourably where they:

- a) provide diverse employment opportunities for people living in the neighbourhood area or otherwise benefit the local economy, or enhance agricultural production.
- b) do not have an adverse affect on the surrounding built, natural or historic environment that is not clearly outweighed by the economic benefits of the development.
- c) are unlikely to generate a volume of goods traffic that would have a significantly harmful effect on road safety or congestion or cause unacceptable noise and disturbance for local residents or to the rural environment and would not adversely affect on-street residential parking.

Rationale for Local Employment Policy

3.5.5 Employment opportunities within the Plan area are very limited. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan¹¹ states that less than a quarter of the rural population of Cherwell work within 5km of home. To help the neighbourhood become more sustainable and minimize traffic congestion it is proposed that all efforts be made to encourage the development of work opportunities and apprenticeships for local people in the neighbourhood area.

3.5.6 The encouragement of applications to establish new businesses that are unlikely to generate goods traffic includes support for working from home, so long as this does not in itself exacerbate parking or related problems for neighbours. The availability of fast broadband services is a factor in the success or otherwise of this policy.

11 P.38 para B13 of CDC Local Plan

POLICY PC2: HEALTH FACILITY

A Health facility at Heyford Park serving the residents of Heyford Park and those residents within the NP area most suitably served by such a new service, will be supported. A new-build health facility at Heyford Park would also be supported if combined with other appropriate services or uses, such as community facilities or private dentistry, in order to increase viability.

Rationale for Health Facility Policy

- 3.5.7 The position on Primary Care for the residents of the NP area is that at present not one primary care centre is located in the neighbourhood plan area. Deddington Health Centre is, however, only a mile or so outside the MCNP boundary. It claims to offer services to people living in a 200 square mile area, covering a very large area from Bodicote in the north, Ardley in the east, Tackley in the south and Heythrop in the west. Not all Health Centres have maps on their websites but it is clear that all centres cover quite large areas overlapping with other practices as, unlike in Education, they do not appear to operate strict catchment area policies (see Fig 7 below showing the current location of GP services serving the area). Spare capacity may be illusory as a number of villages responding to our survey complained of 7 day waits to make an appointment to see the GP at Deddington. This may just reflect a temporary problem or be an indicator that they are overstretched.
- 3.5.8 The average list size of GP practices in Oxfordshire is 9,600 but the situation is very dynamic. For example, Deddington Health Centre now has 10,767 (September 2017), a significant increase in the last two years. New patients will be added to their lists during 2017/18 as large numbers of new dwellings in and close to Deddington are completed. All seven Health Centres shown on the map below (Fig 7) say on their websites that they are currently willing to accept new patients. However, most of them serve a much wider area than MCNP so there may not be as much spare capacity as this would imply, especially in relation to the three remaining practices based in Bicester following the recent Closure of North Bicester surgery, which resulted in 4,500 registered patients needing to be reallocated to another practice. The map information may well be already out-of-date and reflect a changing picture. The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group is currently investigating the growth potential for existing clinics. Their preference is for larger clinics serving c.10,000 patients. With the loss of one Surgery in Bicester and growth outside the neighbourhood plan area it is clear that existing clinics are approaching capacity.
- 3.5.9 There is ample scope for the creation of additional GP practices in the area covered by the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, particularly in respect of Heyford Park, which has the virtue of potentially offering space for a significant improvement in primary and community care facilities in the neighbourhood. Local Plan policy Villages 5 includes the following reference to Health: *A neighbourhood centre or hub should be established at the heart of the settlement to comprise a community hall, place of worship, shops, public house, restaurant, and social and health care facilities.* Local Plan policy BSC8 also supports this policy.

- 3.5.10 The proposed new Health facility would be expected to serve 9,064 people living in Upper Heyford parish and Heyford Park by 2031, and include providing health support to the local schools and other employees / users of Heyford Park. Oxford Health Foundation Trust which provides community health services may also be attracted to using the facility to base some local community health services. Whilst it would be ideal for the proposal to include a dispensing facility, the inclusion of a pharmacy in the proposed village centre would be equally acceptable.
- 3.5.11 This policy allows for the possibility of supplementing Heyford Park residents with a further 3,882 people from other parishes within three miles of the likely location of the new health facility, who might choose to register there rather than travelling outside the area. Public transport links in the area are not good, and increased use of private cars to reach existing health centres is unsustainable. Re-registration would not necessarily create problems for other current centres serving the area as even with the already planned new developments, there are more than enough patients to go around. CDC's SPD on Community Infrastructure Levy (adopted February 2018) uses a threshold of 8,000 new residents to trigger a requirement for developer contributions towards an on-site GP service.
- 3.5.12 An online survey of Heyford Park residents was carried out by the Heyford Park Residents Association on behalf of MCNP in August/September 2016. Residents were asked if they would consider moving from their existing health practice to a new one at Heyford Park if that were possible. 147 voted in favour, and 13 said they would not move.

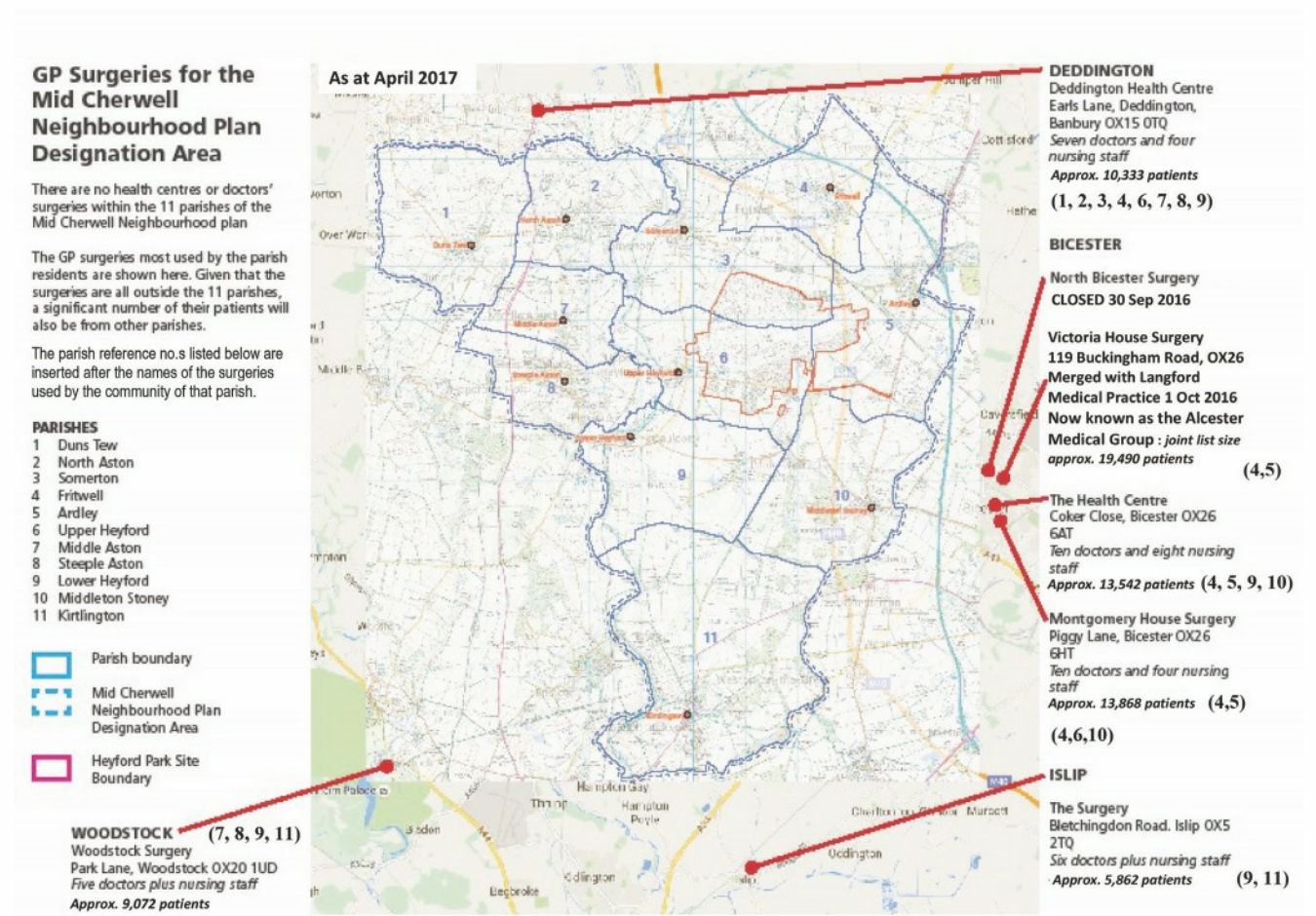


FIGURE 7. GP SURGERIES SERVING THE MCNP AREA AS AT MID 2017

POLICY PC3: NEW CEMETERY

Subject to the suitability of the site having regard to Policy Villages 5 of the Cherwell Local Plan and other development plan policies, an application for the provision of a cemetery or green burial facility at or adjacent to Heyford Park, will be supported.

Rationale for Cemetery Policy

- 3.5.13 A review of local amenities within the MCNP area has highlighted that cemetery space within the MCNP area is in need of forward planning as a good proportion are nearing capacity. For example, Upper Heyford village cemetery will only be able to sustain its own small village community (158 homes) but not an emerging community of up to 8,000 residents at Heyford Park. Therefore, it is critical for Heyford Park to provide its own cemetery/green burial provision. A cemetery is as vital to a community as are shops, community halls and recreation spaces.
- 3.5.14 Local Plan policy Bicester 9 can be considered relevant to this need. Although it identifies the North-West Bicester eco-town as a suitable site for a new cemetery, it is intended as the sole location to serve the very large increases planned for the population of the town, as set out in the Bicester Policies of the adopted Local Plan. Heyford Park offers potential within the strategic site of Policy Villages 5 for a cemetery site to be found that would not compromise the other requirements of that policy. Sites adjacent or close to the strategic site might also be considered suitable.

NOTE: There are no MCNP policies relating to Technical Infrastructure objectives, as explained at para. 2.3.4

POLICY MAPS

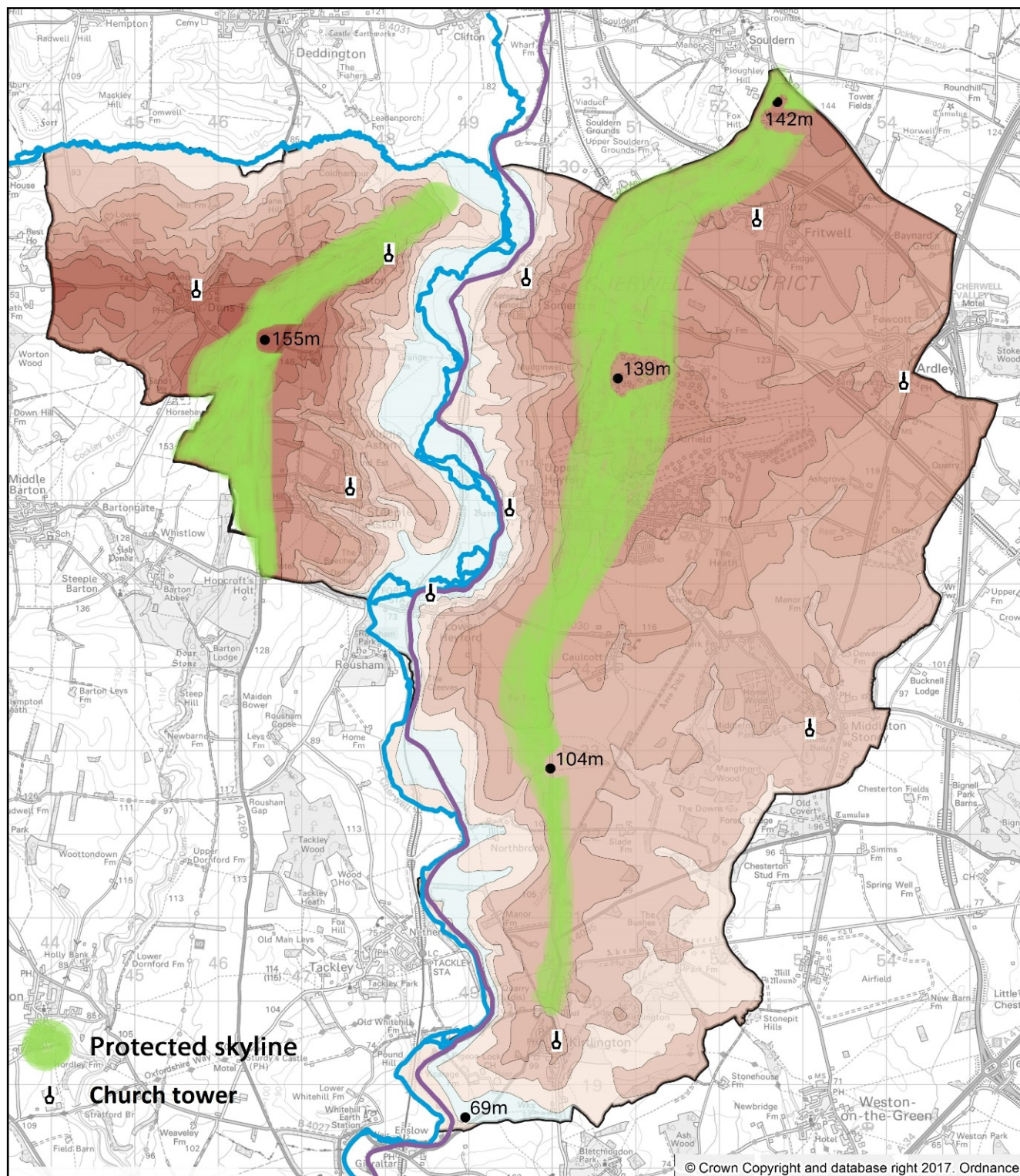


FIGURE 8 LANDFORM MAP SHOWING CONTOURS, PROTECTED SKYLINES AND CHURCH TOWERS

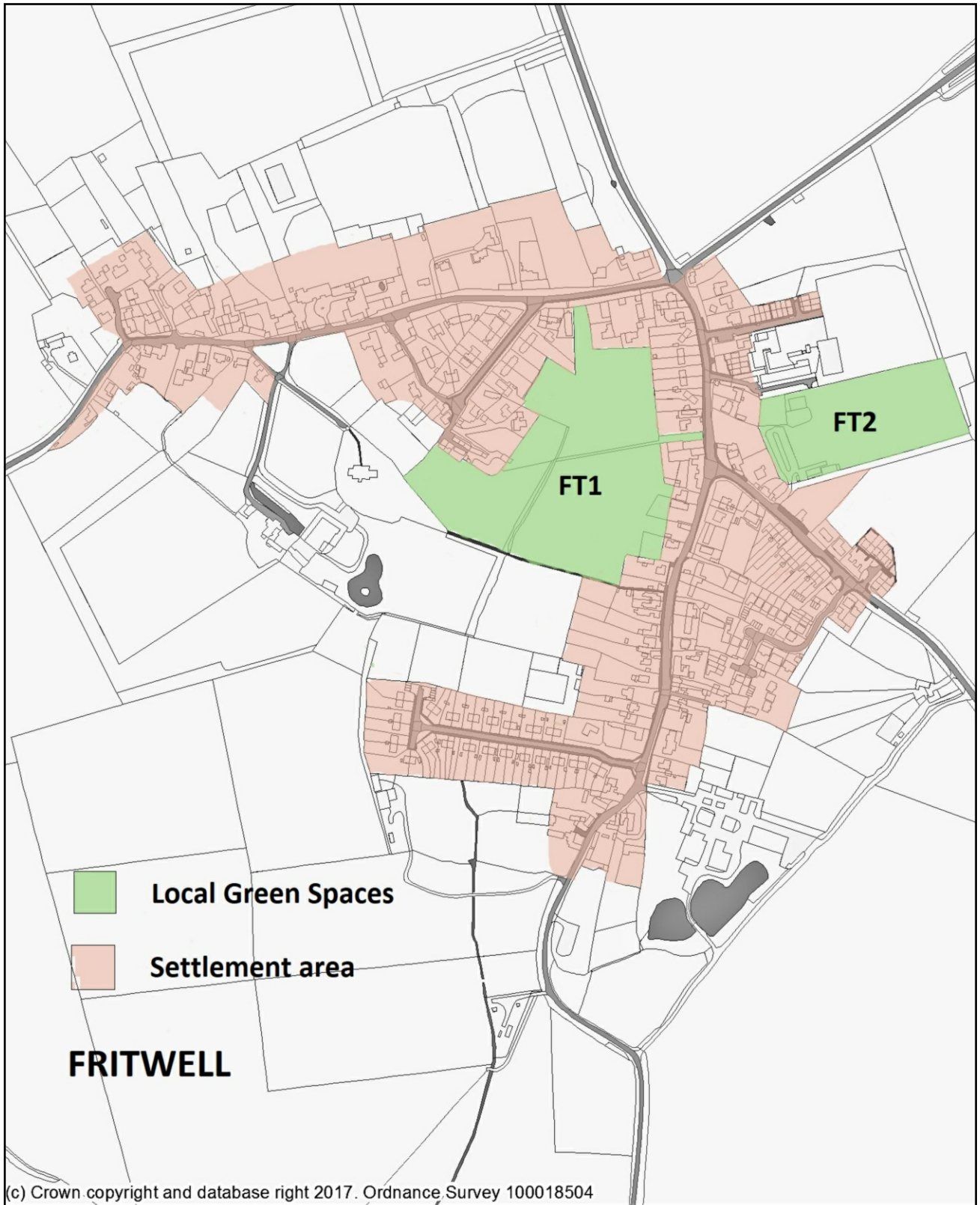


FIGURE 9 POLICY MAP FOR FRITWELL VILLAGE

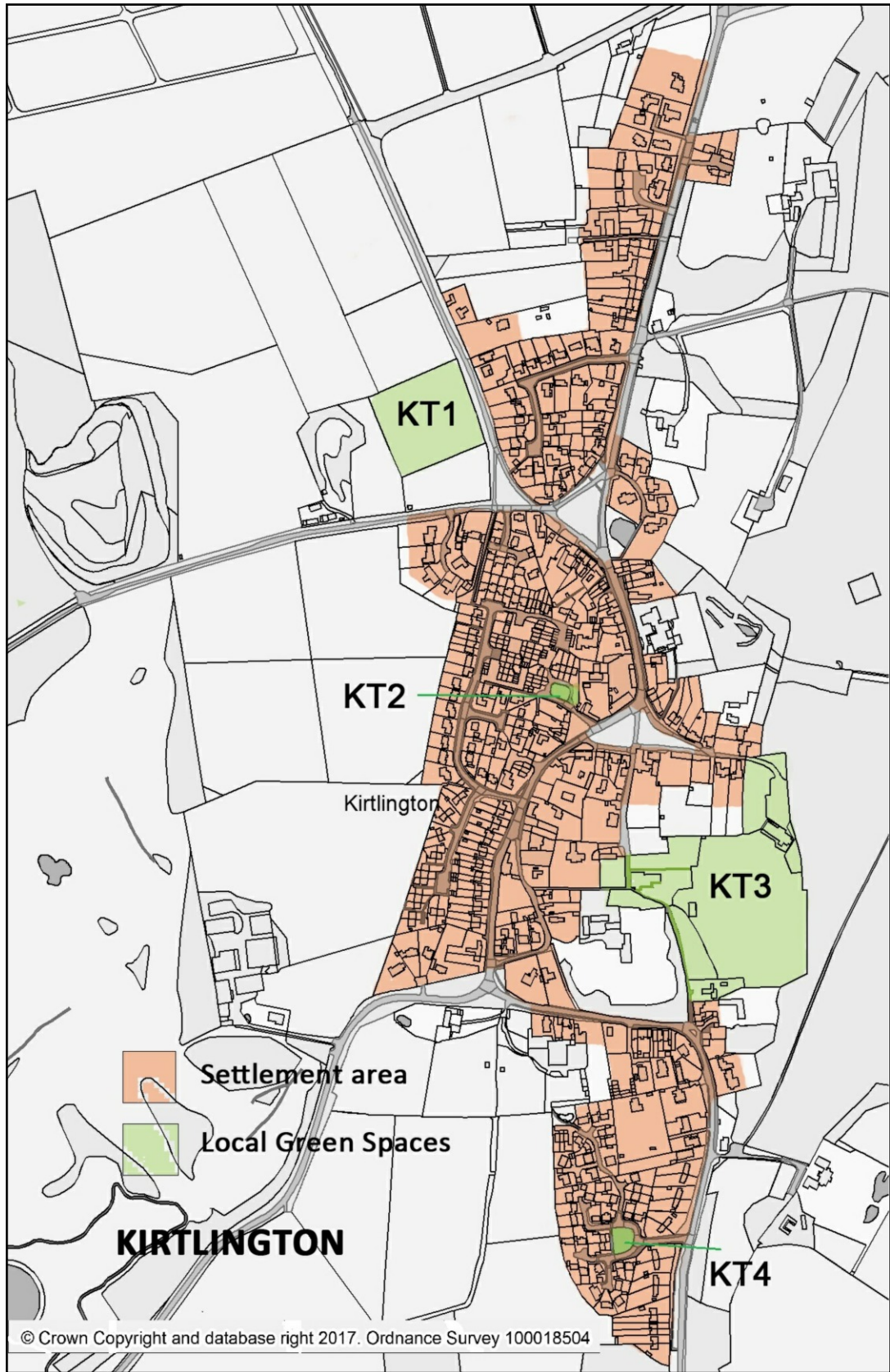


FIG.10 POLICY MAP FOR KIRTLINGTON VILLAGE



FIG.11 POLICY MAP FOR STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE

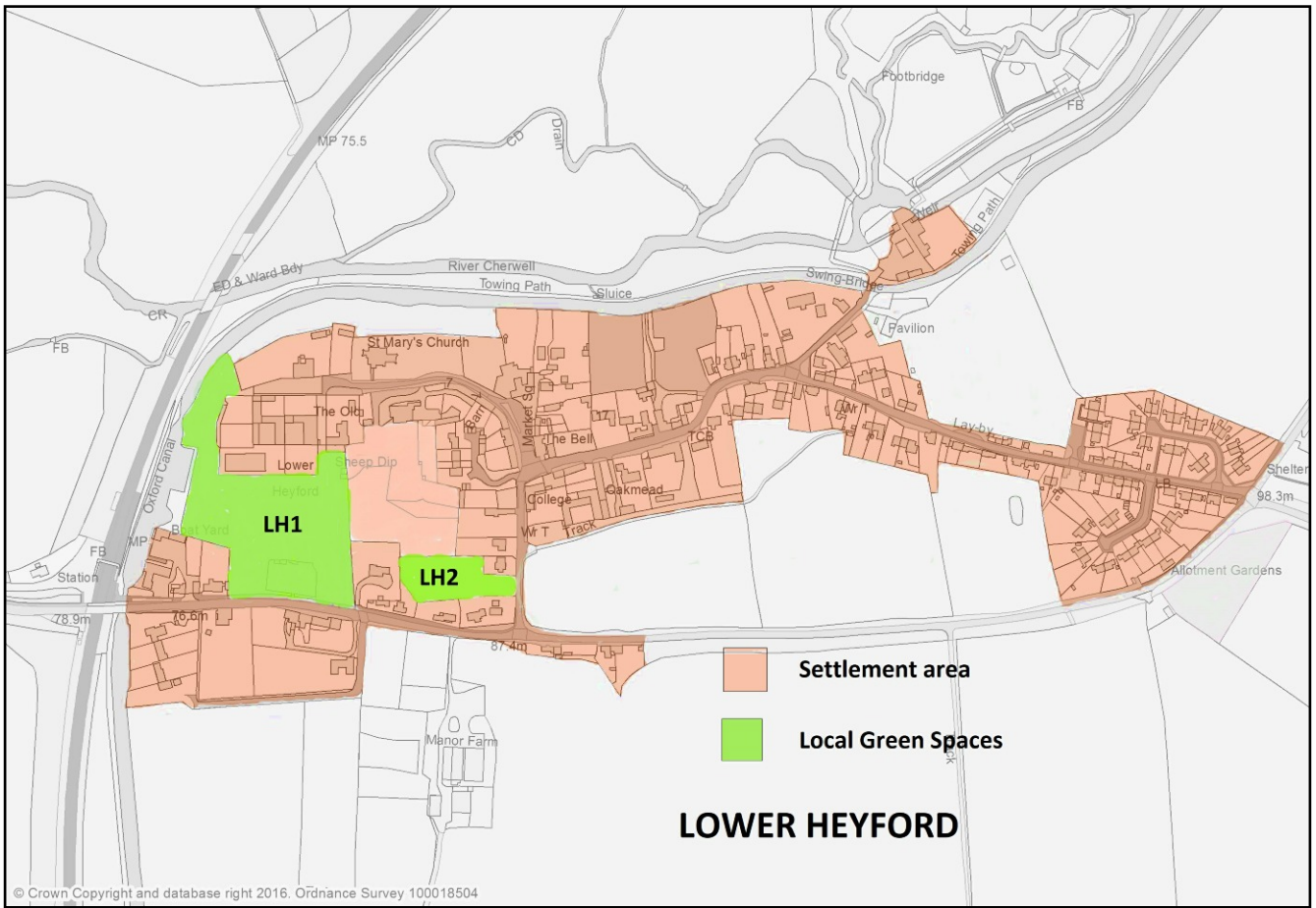
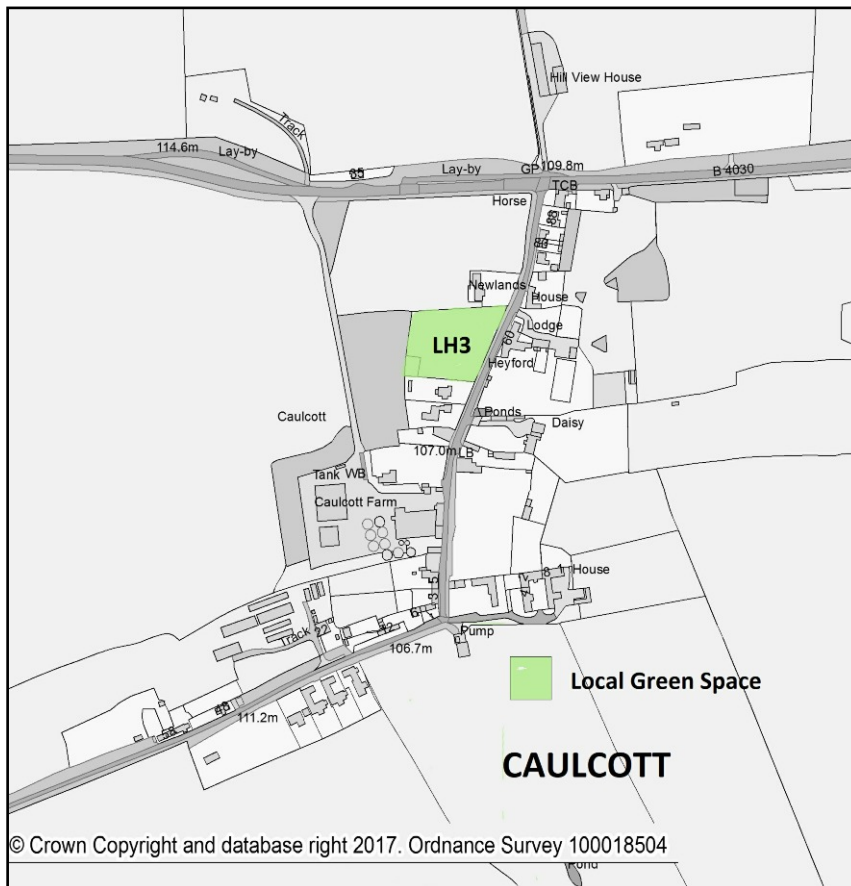


FIG.12A POLICY MAP FOR LOWER HEYFORD VILLAGE (TOP) AND FIG.12B FOR CAULCOTT (BOTTOM)



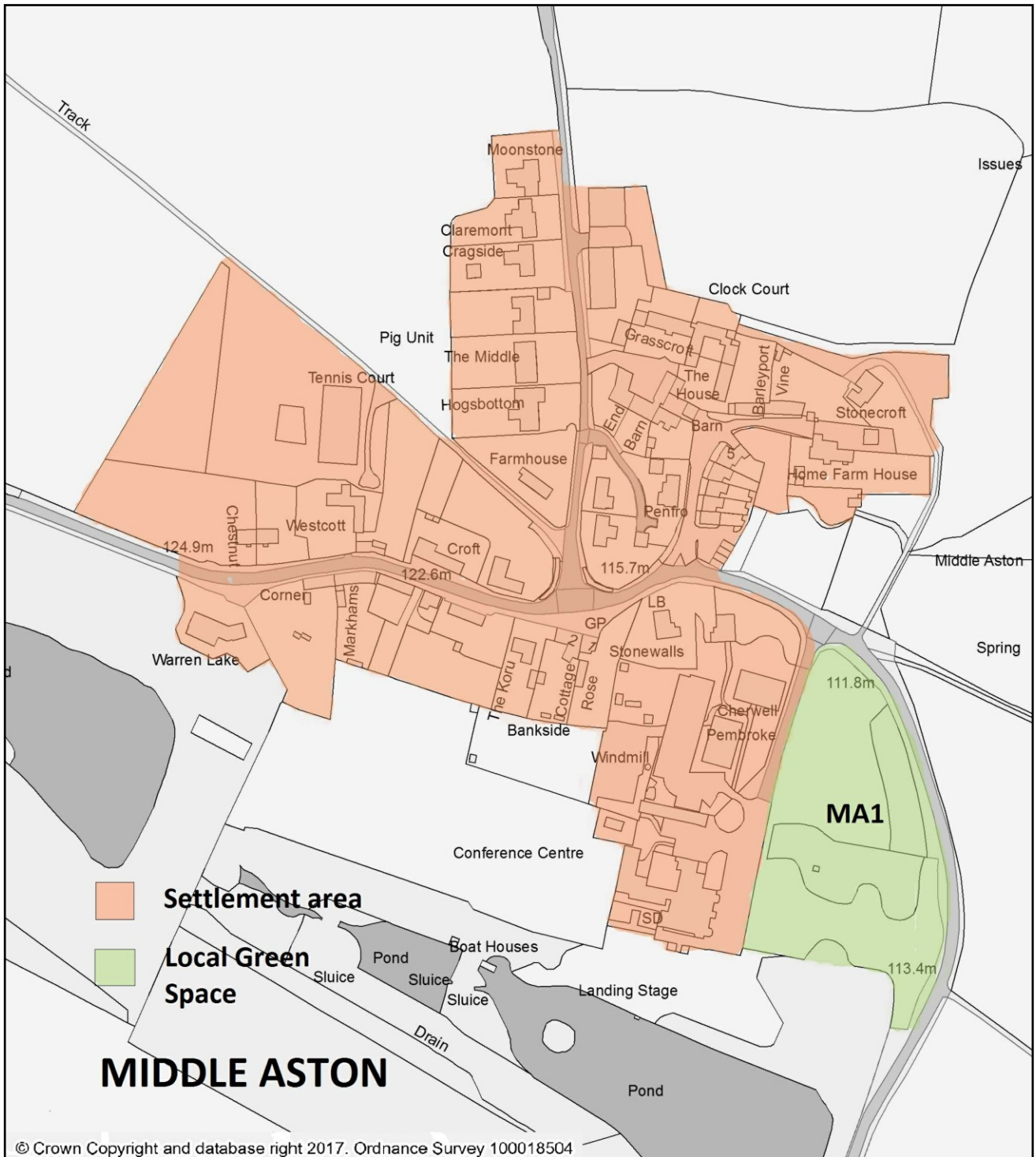


FIG.13 POLICY MAP FOR MIDDLE ASTON VILLAGE

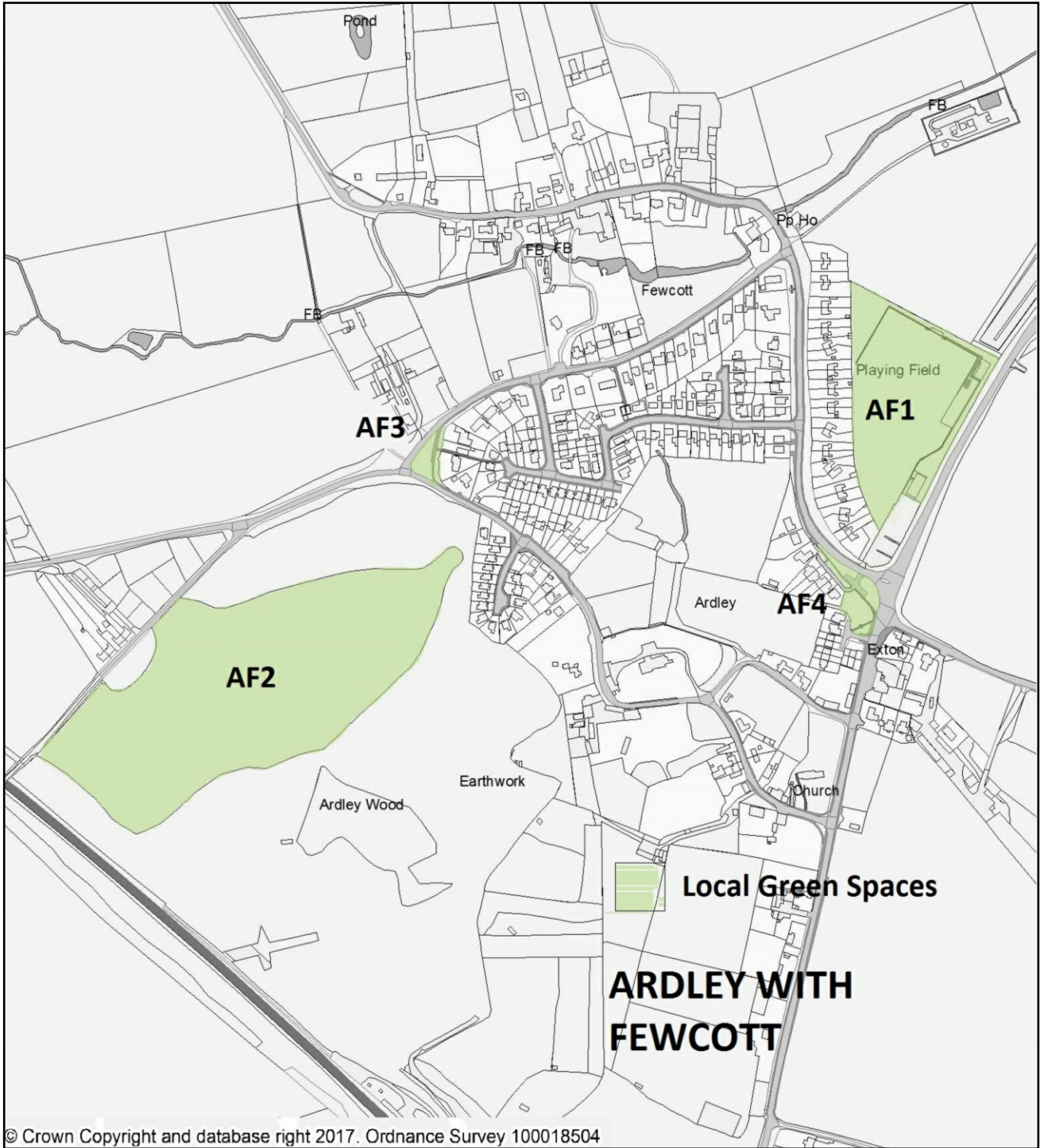


FIG.14 POLICY MAP FOR ARDLEY VILLAGE AND FEWCOTT

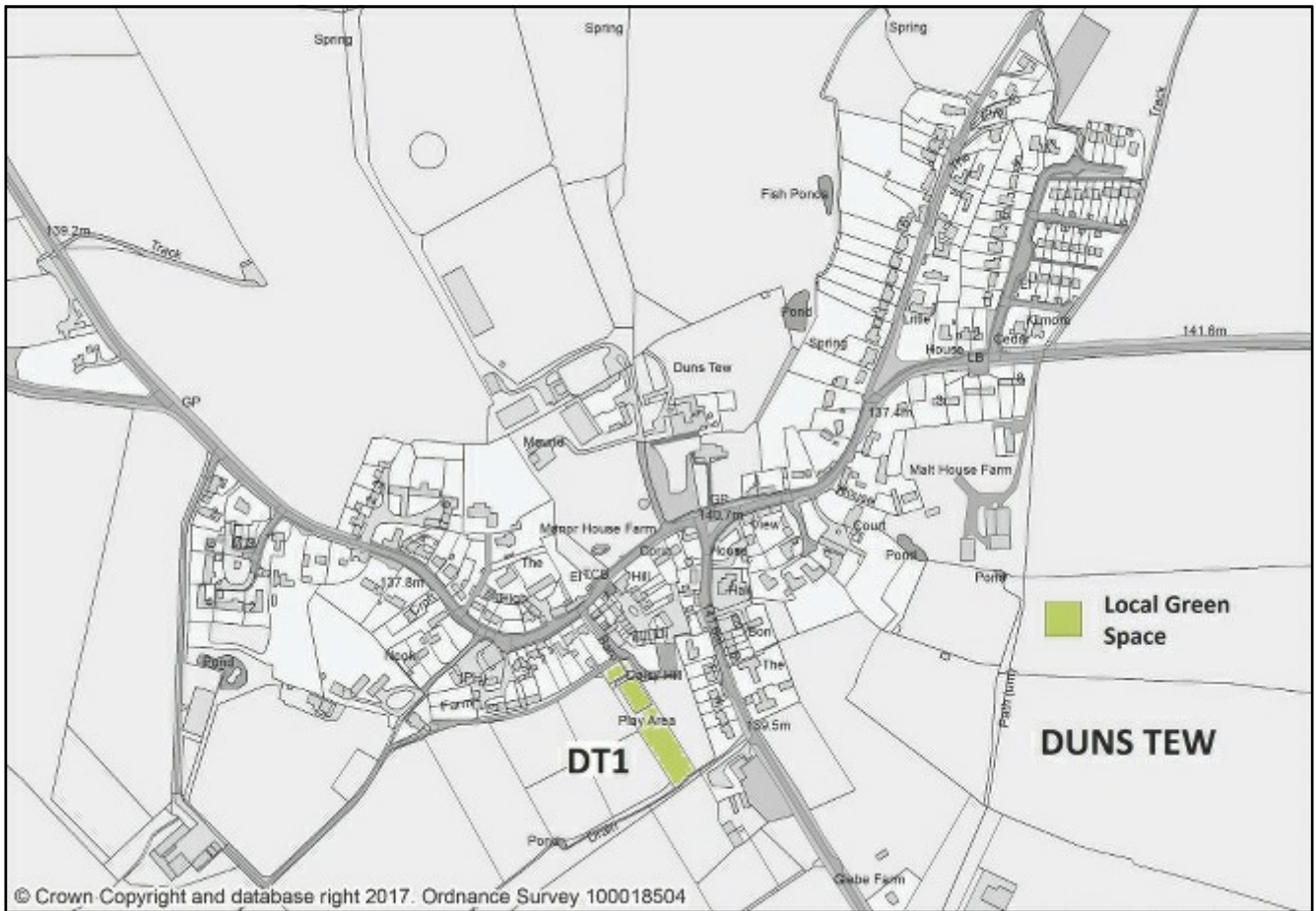


FIG.15 POLICY MAP FOR DUNS TEW VILLAGE

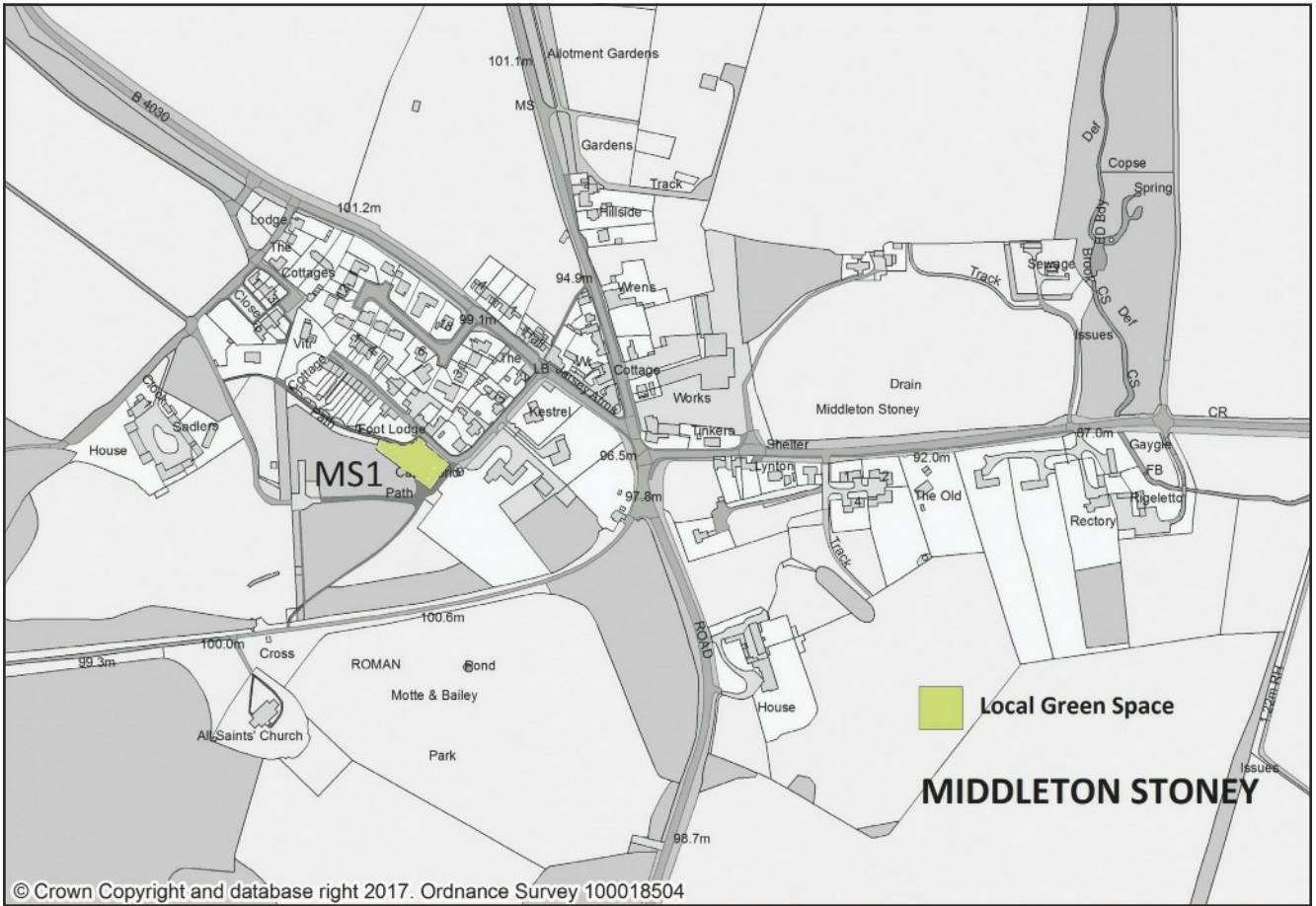


FIG.16 POLICY MAP FOR MIDDLETON STONEY VILLAGE

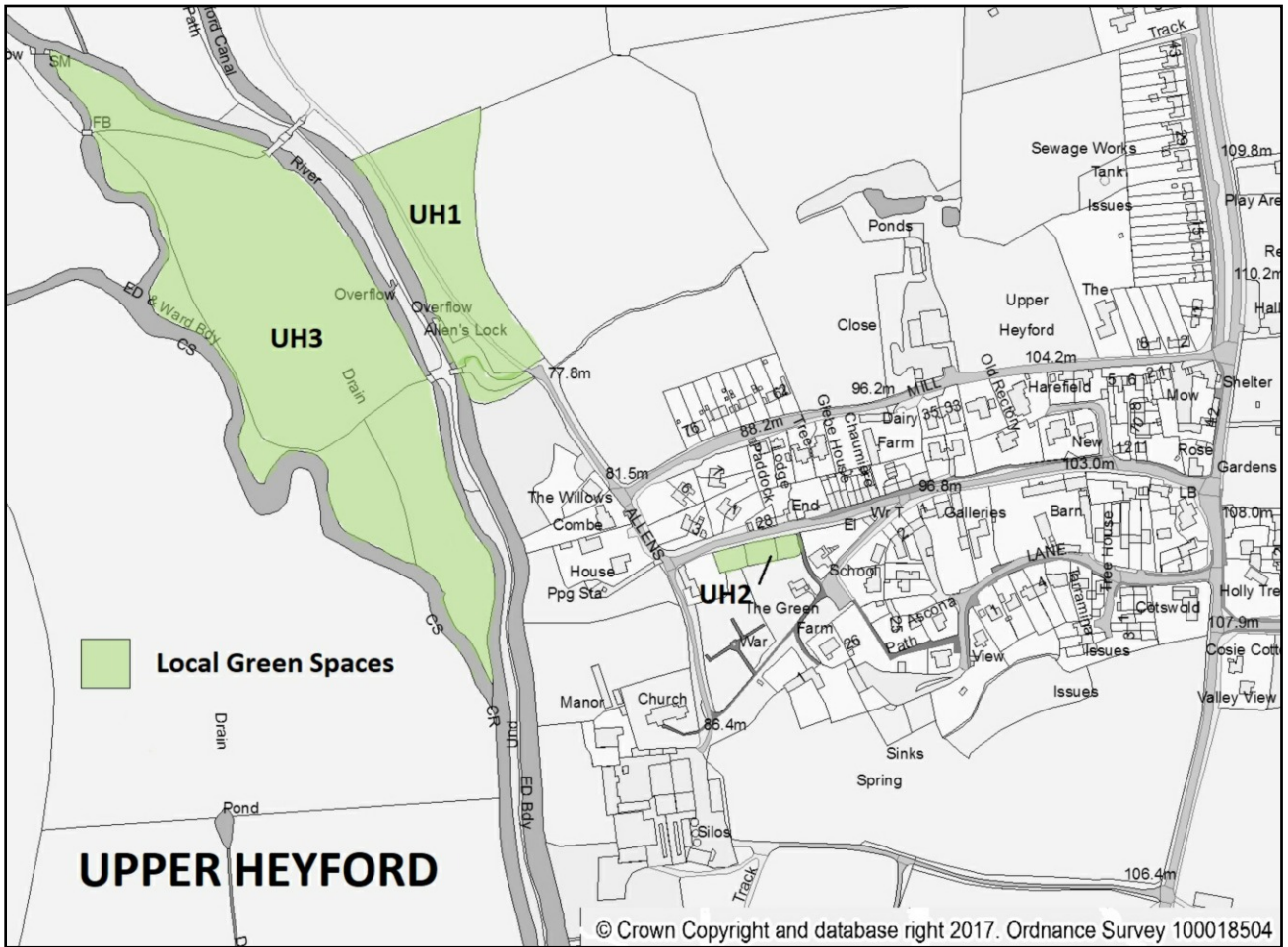


FIG. 17 POLICY MAP FOR UPPER HEYFORD VILLAGE

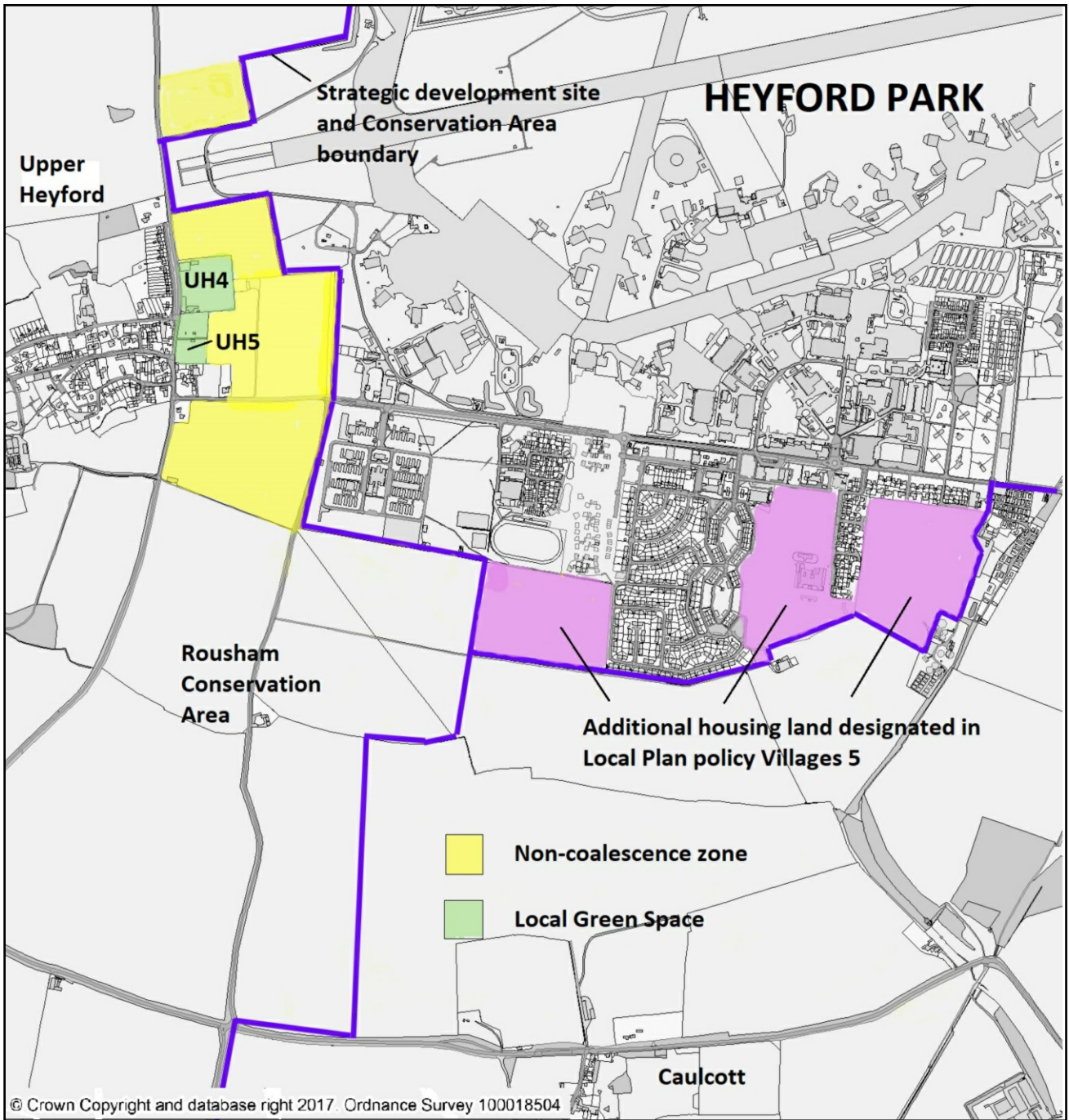
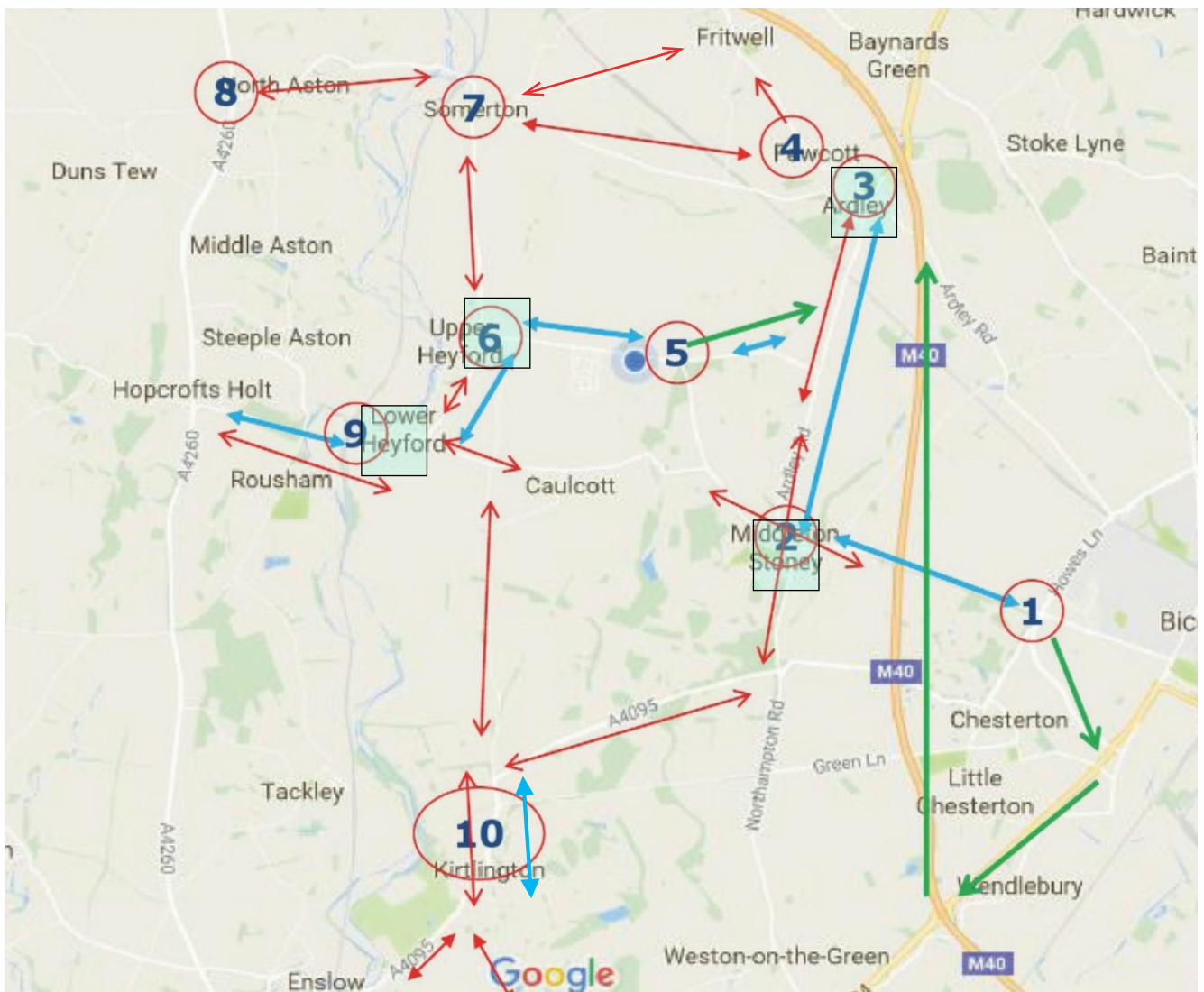


FIG. 18 POLICY MAP FOR HEYFORD PARK

Traffic increases

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Bicester | 6. Upper Heyford |
| 2. Middleton
Stoney | 7. Somerton |
| 3. Ardley &
Fewcott | 8. North Aston &
Duns Tew |
| 4. Fritwell | 9. Lower Heyford |
| 5. Heyford Park
(strategic dev) | 10. Kirtlington |

Junctions selected for mitigation



Key:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| HGV route concerns | Desired routing agreements | Traffic route concerns | Focus Hotspots |
| → | → | → | |

FIG.19 MAP SHOWING TRAFFIC “HOT-SPOTS” AND ISSUES IN THE MCNP AREA.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 PLAN PERIOD

- 4.1.1 The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan will run concurrently with the Cherwell District Council Local Plan, and will be in force until it expires in 2031, or is superceded.

4.2 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.2.1 The District Council will remain the planning authority for the neighbourhood and as such will determine planning applications using the adopted Local Plan together with the Planning Policies contained in this Neighbourhood Plan. The Community Action Plan will be the responsibility of MCNP Forum and its Parish Councils to take forward.
- 4.2.2 It is envisaged that, once the Plan is “made,” a series of projects relating to specific policies will be devised and implemented by a purposely constituted Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group, working with various existing sub-committees of the MCNP Forum. The Implementation Group will meet in open session and participation will be sought from members of the public. The timing and execution of these projects will be determined by the Forum; it is likely that these will be phased to take place over the first decade of the plan period. Additional working groups may be constituted as and when required to address specific topics and themes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.3 PLAN MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 4.3.1 This Neighbourhood Plan is a reflection of the needs and aspirations of the local community as currently understood. However, it is fully appreciated that the challenges and current concerns are likely to change over the Plan period. As such, MCNP will therefore be responsible for periodically reviewing and, where required, updating the Plan, to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate to the community to which it relates.
- 4.3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed in outline by the Forum annually. The output and conclusions of the review will be documented in the meeting minutes and presented to the community at the annual Parish Meetings.
- 4.3.3 A full review of the Plan will be conducted at least every five years to confirm its relevance and appropriateness. This will be overseen by the Parish Councils with anticipated participation from members of the public.

4.4 PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

4.4.1 Prior to commencement of the first five year review of the Plan period, the Parish Councils will put in place one or more policies defining the circumstances under which the Plan would require amendment, and the procedures to do so. It is anticipated that minor amendments to the Plan will be conducted without requiring extensive consultation with the Parish, whereas more significant changes, for instance in response to emerging concerns or ambitions of parishioners, would require a wider approach. Any changes or amendments to the Planning policies contained within the Plan will require it to undergo further public and statutory consultation, and subsequent examination. Amendments to community policies, being in the purview of the Parish Councils, will require a lower level review process.

4.5 CO-ORDINATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

4.5.1 It is recognized that the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan does not, and will not sit, in isolation from other current and future regional, national and international (where appropriate) policy Frameworks. Any and all future reviews will include a brief appraisal of the policy landscape in existence at that time, to confirm the Plan's adherence to and alignment with any and all relevant programmes and initiatives, and in particular those of Cherwell District Council.

4.5.2 It is further anticipated that Plan review activity may require occasional engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders and interested parties outside the neighbourhood area. Of particular relevance will be those neighbouring parishes which, at the time of publishing this version of the Plan are preparing their own Neighbourhood Plans. It is recognized that a number of policies specified in the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, for instance that pertaining to Transport, could be significantly enhanced in effectiveness if they were mirrored by and coordinated with similar policies in neighbouring parishes.

4.6 FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

4.6.1 A Project Plan with outline costings covering all policies detailed in the Community Action Plan will be prepared by the Implementation Group on its inception. It is anticipated that, for those policies which relate to the development/construction of infrastructure, a phased approach be adopted with key priorities identified.

4.6.2 It is recognized that implementation of certain elements of the Community Action Plan is contingent on funds being raised from a variety of sources. Some work has already been done in terms of identifying prospective sources of funding. Again, the Implementation Group will, in parallel with the preparation of the Project Plan, conduct a thorough review of funding options.

5 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Some of the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan cannot be achieved through planning law. Instead, we aim to deliver them over time through our Community Action Plan, which will be the responsibility of the parish councils and the Neighbourhood Plan Forum. **None of the actions identified in the Community Action Plan have the status of development plan planning policies.**

The Action Plan will continue to evolve, but at this stage it includes the following:

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE
TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT		
See also section 5.1 and Table 6	Negotiating with local businesses that make extensive use of heavy goods vehicles to try to reduce flows on certain roads.	Many of the roads through our rural villages are unsuitable for heavy goods traffic and they would pose a danger to residents, and would cause excessive deterioration of the roads. Designated routes for HGV traffic should be established and enforced through consultation with local businesses, appropriate signage and enforcement initiatives.
	Developing an acceptable mitigation plan with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) that will deal with the worst of Our highways and traffic problems.	The increase in overall traffic in our neighbourhood will be considerable as new housing comes on line. Many of our roads are not capable of sustaining high traffic loads and the traffic will pose a danger to residents and erosion of the rural nature of our villages. See 5.1 below for more detail.
	Campaign for improved bus services for the 250 to and from Heyford Park for surrounding villages, transport hubs and the Oxford Hospitals from the neighbourhood area.	With the planned increase in housing development and amenities at Heyford Park and increased volume of residents from Heyford Park wanting to use public transport an improved timetable is needed for the 250. The increased amenities there require an assessment of further public transport links with the surrounding villages
	Work with Friends of Lower Heyford station for improved parking provision to support the growing needs of the increasing population and support the needs of those local to the station.	Heyford Station parking currently has limited scope to support an ever-increasing demand driven by Heyford Park development. Current projections by Great Western Railways believe capacity of trains and parking is sufficient.
	Ensure that highway plans from OCC and developer contributions include plans for cycle paths and footways	Cycle ways and footpaths will encourage healthy alternatives to driving and will contribute to minimizing vehicle traffic growth.

TABLE 5 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

DEVELOPMENT		
	Campaigning to stop unwanted development of greenfield sites.	Building on greenfield sites within our neighbourhood will degrade the rural nature of our communities and lead to coalescence of rural villages. Building should not take place on greenfield sites when appropriate brownfield options are available.
	Identifying local amenities such as shops and pubs that may need protection from conversion to dwellings, by designating them as Assets of Community Value.	To ensure that essential amenities are not lost to the villages. Designation would give the parish an opportunity to purchase the building concerned and to attempt to run a community business in place of the previous one.
	Seeking to reduce light pollution from existing users	To complement policy PD6 in respect of established users of excessive lighting.
HOUSING		
	Actively encouraging developers to build to the Lifetime Homes Standard.	The Lifetime Home Standard will allow the purchasers of new houses to remain in the property throughout their life and will make accessible new housing available to those with disabilities.
See also section 5.2	Persuading Cherwell District Council to adopt a housing allocations policy that gives priority to families already living in the village where homes become available.	The absence of affordable housing in rural villages forces local families to leave their community and relatives. People with local family connections should have priority for available affordable housing. This issue has been highlighted by Parish Councils and through MCNP community engagement events.
	Supporting Open Market housing schemes with one- and two-bedroom dwellings for entry to the market, designed to be genuinely affordable for first-time buyers, affordable by people on salaries that are average for Cherwell District.	This policy aims to address the need for starter homes in the area, pitched at prices that some young people may be able to afford. The Government promises to address this national problem.
	Establishing a Community Land Trust to develop our own affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites.	Establishment of Land Trusts is an effective way of delivering affordable housing for local people on rural exception sites.
	Approaching local landowners with a view to identifying and purchasing such sites.	This initiative will facilitate the establishment of Land Trusts and designation of rural exception sites.

TABLE 5 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE		
See also section 5.3	Prioritising the provision of secondary school places at Heyford Park Free School for those within the Plan area.	Secondary school students in our neighbourhood should not have to travel to outlying towns for school. Local provision will help maintain the viability of our rural neighbourhood.
	Ensuring the delivery of a full-service health centre at Heyford Park through ongoing consultation with the Health Authority and developers.	The growth in population in our neighbourhood will warrant a local health centre.
	Responding to consultation on changes to local health services being led by the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG).	Changes to local health services and the centralisation of services in Oxford could result in significant transport problems for local people in accessing services.
	Seeking to create new permissive or definitive rights of way to improve connectivity between villages within and beyond the NP boundary for non-motorised users, creating social, recreational, and health benefits.	Opportunities for improved recreation and leisure facilities, particularly for young people, should be sought.
ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY		
	See section 5.4 for more detail.	
TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE		
See also section 5.5	Developers to provide evidence of responses from utility providers – water, drainage, electricity, gas - that their existing networks have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development without negative impact on existing users. In the event that providers are unable to provide such confirmation, applicants to provide impact studies of the extent, cost and timescale for any required works of upgrading.	There is concern about the impact of increasing population on electricity supply, sewage and drainage capacity, mobile phone coverage, and other related services.
	Any proposed improvements to mobile telephone coverage and planning applications for new or improved mobile telephone and broadband infrastructure should not adversely affect the surrounding built and natural environment, including the setting of heritage assets and important views.	

TABLE 5 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

A number of the objectives set out above are covered in more detail in the sections that follow:

5.1 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Context

- 5.1.1 The traffic and transport group working group has accepted that MCNP policies are intended to mitigate future traffic issues, and can do very little to influence existing traffic and transport conditions.
- 5.1.2 This section of the Community Action Plan (CAP) is therefore aimed at influencing the broader debate Parish by Parish and will need to influence the relevant authorities to take action on the widespread concerns about speeding and safety across the area. In addition, the CAP will need to influence the relevant bodies on the provision of bus and rail services serving the area to reduce traffic volumes and to ensure that appropriate public transport services are provided.

MCNP Traffic Mitigation Plan Summary

- 5.1.3 Table 6 on the next page gives a consolidated view of Traffic and Transport issues arising from the parishes of the MCNP area - current at the time of writing. The parish councils are continuing to work on these issues.
- 5.1.4 Fig.19 has been prepared with detailed input from all participating parishes, and co-ordinated by the MCNP Forum's Traffic and Transport working group. The issues and concerns mapped there represent current views, but as traffic is the issue of possibly the highest concern in the neighbourhood area, work on collecting and analysing data continues. The principal outcome of this work will be to identify traffic mitigation projects, to prioritise them, and then seek community support and funding to implement them.
- 5.1.5 In May 2017 MCNP commissioned Hamilton-Baillee Associates to produce a report on possible approaches to traffic mitigation that would be particularly suitable for a rural context. This report, delivered in June 2017, can be found in the MCNP Evidence Base, and will form the basis for further work.

Deleted policies

- 5.1.6 MCNP will aim to influence the Highway Authority in respect of the following policies deleted at Examination:
- 5.1.7 (from Policy PD5): Proposals involving alterations and additions to the existing highway network and associated infrastructure should seek to prevent damage to the rural character of the roads affected, preserving instead the identified characteristics of the area (see Appendix K) whilst striving to achieve good and safe design.
- 5.1.8 (from Policy PD6): Street lighting should only be included where essential.

	Consolidated points
CAP T01: Traffic volume	<p>Traffic Assessments and Plans to mitigate exacerbating car and HGV traffic volumes on the following routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North and South between Ardley / Middleton Stoney and A4095 to Kirtlington • East and West from North Bicester for traffic using Middleton Stoney as a cut-through for M40 at Ardley • Somerton, Ardley & Fritwell to Banbury using B430 and B4100 as rat runs • Heyford Park residential and HGV traffic impacting villages within the MCNP especially Upper Heyford, Somerton, Lower Heyford and Kirtlington routes • East and West along the B4030 through Lower Heyford and over Rousham Bridge • Rousham Bridge: impact –weight limit? • Create local jobs for local people, commercial uses to have less haulage/warehousing
CAP T02: Junction improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to any additional feeder roads to Heyford Park Junction improvements at: • Sensible changes to lights to manage traffic volume from all directions at Middleton Stoney • Camp Road and B430 improvements to aid traffic flow away from Middleton Stoney • Mini roundabout in Somerton at Ardley Road/Water Street/Heyford Rd and another at top of Church Street, would create some speed reduction • Ardley cross roads with Bucknell road/Fritwell Road and B430 • Improve A34/M40 junction 9 to mitigate traffic using B430 and A4095 as a cut through • Supports Chilgrove Drive taking HGVs off of Camp Road
CAP T03: Speed control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junction of Somerton /Duns Tew roads and A4260 near North Aston <p>The following proposals are being reconsidered following advice from traffic mitigation consultants that other more innovative measures may be more effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White gates on entry to villages - Improved LED speed limit signs and traffic and speed counters in villages - 30 mph limits introduced in following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A4260 Somerton Road; b. between Steeple to Middle to North Astons; c. along the B4030 at Caulcott; d. where villages go from National speed limit to 30mph, stage the slow down to 40 then 30 to mitigate traffic speed into villages e.g. B430 Ardley with Fewcott, Somerton Road north/south at Upper Heyford, Ardley Road from Somerton (75% of vehicles in excess of 40mph) - Chicanes in high risk areas - Upper Heyford, Fritwell and Heyford Park - 20 mph introduction in villages - Upper Heyford, Heyford Park, Ardley with Fewcott, Somerton Kirtlington, North Aston, Duns Tew, and Caulcott - Speed camera requests where possible - Road markings to prevent dangerous overtaking on the B4030 at Caulcott
CAP T04: Environment	<p>Avoid any ‘road improvements’ which look too urban (widening, hard verges, roundabouts, white lines, powerful lighting etc) in order to preserve the vital rural character of the villages and their countryside.</p> <p>Air quality monitoring to be put in place due to increased volumes expected.</p> <p>Introduction of an environmental weight limit at Rousham Bridge.</p>

TABLE 6 CONSOLIDATED TRAFFIC ISSUES

5.2 HOUSING

- 5.2.1 In addition to the complement of planning policies covering new housing development, it is envisaged that initiatives led by the MCNP Forum, Parish Councils or Parish meetings could propose setting-up of a Community Land Trust.

SELF-BUILD

- 5.2.2 All efforts are to be made to identify demand for self-build within the neighbourhood area. Where sufficient demand is established, measures are to be taken to identify appropriate sites for self-build in the area, and to direct parishioners interested in such activities to appropriate resources and information.

HOMES FOR ENTRY TO THE MARKET

- 5.2.3 Efforts will be made to persuade any developers of Open Market housing schemes to include one- and two-bedroom dwellings in accordance with policy PH1, with a significant proportion of these to facilitate entry to the market, designed to be genuinely affordable for first-time Buyers.

DELETED POLICY

- 5.2.4 MCNP will aim to influence CDC in respect of the following policy deleted at Examination: (from Policy PH2): use of Local Letting Plans will also be supported so that 100% of the affordable homes that are provided can go to those from the MCNP area in the first instance, and then to those with a local connection. The MCNP Forum and its constituent Parish Councils and Parish Meetings should be involved in the drafting of these Local Lettings Plans.

5.3 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

LEISURE FACILITIES

- 5.3.1 The neighbourhood is relatively well-provided with indoor recreational places (such as Village Halls), although some facilities used for such activities are in need of updating or expansion. Outdoor recreation facilities, however, are poorly provided for. The Community Action Plan seeks to support and improve leisure facilities in the neighbourhood for all ages; making it a place where more residents, current and new, can enjoy recreational and leisure facilities.

HEALTH

- 5.3.2 Residents of the 11 parishes making up Mid-Cherwell are well served in terms of access to hospitals in the NHS. The 4 hospitals making up the Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust offer world class services particularly in the fields of cancer, heart and neurosurgery where access to acute health services is complemented by an excellent academic medical research base. In addition, Cancer Research UK is based in Oxford which it has designated as one of its key sites for investing in research. This means that we are more likely than other areas to be able to access ground breaking clinical trials and access to the latest research findings.

- 5.3.3 We are also lucky in being able to access district general hospital services at the Horton, which provides good day to day access to less specialised services. In addition, the OCCG has recently consulted on centralizing Acute Stroke and Acute Critical Care Services and Consultant-led Maternity Services in Oxford thus reducing acute services at the Horton. The closure of maternity Services at the Horton in Banbury will also have a knock-on effect on Children's services with Acute Paediatric beds being centralized in Oxford. Although the OUH Trust says it is also planning to consult on enhancing the range of day care services and outpatient clinics at the Horton, this is unlikely to compensate for the removal of other services currently provided there. As part of discussions on delivering clinical excellence, the Trust says it is developing a specific vision for the Horton General Hospital, with the aim of developing healthcare facilities and services fit for the 21st century.
- 5.3.4 As part of the broader vision to develop Oxfordshire's Strategic Transformation Programme, OCCG is considering whether all services currently offered at hospital sites in Headington need to take place there, looking at options to develop capacity at the Horton and deliver more day care and out-patient services in Banbury to improve accessibility.
- 5.3.5 Initial indications are that there may be potential to double the number of patients treated at the Horton and reduce the number of patients treated at Headington hospitals by 10%.
- 5.3.6 We are sceptical as to whether this will happen, given the huge financial pressures on the OUHT and the OCCG. However, the significant increase in the planned population of MCNP means we must keep the provision of local health services under review.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

- 5.3.7 At the time of writing (March 2017), considerable changes are now being proposed for secondary health care services in Oxfordshire leading to the potential loss of some in-patient care services at the Horton, with more care being centralized at the John Radcliffe and Churchill Hospitals in Oxford. This is not the place to argue for the merits or demerits of proposed health changes in North Oxfordshire; however, the consequences of more residents having to travel to Oxford to access secondary health care are profound.
- 5.3.8 Most residents have no choice but to use their own car transport as there are very few public transport links from North Oxfordshire to Headington where both the JR and the Churchill Hospitals are located. The best route is to travel by bus to the Water Eaton Park and Ride facility and pick up the number 700 bus which travels between Water Eaton / Somertown / JR / The Churchill Hospital. This is likely to involve a journey time of at least 1 hour 30 minutes according to survey evidence collected by Victoria Prentis, local MP.
- 5.3.9 Some villages in the MCNP area have sought to partially overcome these problems by setting up voluntary car transport services but this is not really a satisfactory long-term answer. The increase in travel times to access care in Oxford is significant, with journeys by private car or indeed blue light ambulances currently taking at least 50 minutes. For private cars, at least 20 minutes' additional time is needed to find a car parking space, park the car and walk to the relevant hospital department or ward.
- 5.3.10 What is needed is a proper response from the statutory authorities to this problem. Most of the plans to make changes to local health services are based on making significant cuts in the cost of local health care, but in the absence of policies to improve local transport services to and from our hospitals, all this does is to reduce access and shift costs onto local residents. This is not acceptable.

- 5.3.11 MCNP will want to ensure that hospital developments recognise the significant increase in population in the North of the County since the OUHT's last Strategic Plan, and put forward a strong case for improved services at the Horton Hospital. MCNP will also continue to make the case for the provision of increased dedicated bus services between the hours of 8am and 10pm to transport local residents from the North of the County to and from the Headington Hospitals.

DELETED POLICY.

- 5.3.12 MCNP will aim to influence OCCG and other bodies in respect of part of policy PC2: Health Facility, which was deleted at Examination stage, namely: The facility should provide, as a minimum, full-time general practitioner services, nursing and administrative support, with a full range of clinics appropriate to local need.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES.

- 5.3.13 Prioritising the provision of secondary school places at Heyford Park Free School for those within the Plan area. There are currently four schools in the Neighbourhood area. The three state primary schools generally feed secondary schools outside the area, but the all-through Free school at Heyford Park is different. Children attending the Free school's primary phase automatically get places in the secondary phase, and this is affecting the popularity of at least one of the state primaries, from which travel distances to other secondaries are considerable. This problem may well be exacerbated as time goes on, and could affect the other local schools.
- 5.3.14 The Neighbourhood Plan Forum has attempted to address this problem by establishing a Schools' working group, bringing together representatives of all the schools to discuss the issues. The resulting policy is that the secondary phase of the free school at Heyford Park must be reconfigured to accommodate children from the whole of the Neighbourhood area, a matter which will need to be agreed with the Education Authority.
- 5.3.15 Approximately 12 children per year who live within the Neighbourhood area, but do not live at Heyford Park, are currently indicating that a secondary place at Heyford Park would be their first choice, and Heyford Park would also be their nearest secondary school place. It is the desire of the MCNP Forum to ensure expansion at Heyford Park Free School is approximately 0.5 Form Entry larger than the population need that is being generated purely from Heyford Park. The MCNP Forum recognise that this will be dependent on securing additional developer contributions ahead of OCC's requirements, and may also require the approval of the Department for Education or Regional Schools Commissioner rather than Oxfordshire County Council.

5.4 ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.4.1 Over time, opportunities will be sought to create linkages between existing green infrastructure - fields, hedges, woodland, footpaths and bridleways.

BIODIVERSITY

- 5.4.2 The Forum will try to ensure that development proposals protect and enhance biodiversity. Any loss or degradation of habitats arising from new development will need to be offset by, for example, funding environmental improvements elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

ENHANCEMENT OF WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITAT

- 5.4.3 Efforts will be made to enhance the natural environment both in and around the villages through the installation of appropriate artificial nest sites for bird, animal and insect species, habitat improvements etc.

WILDFLOWERS

- 5.4.4 Efforts will be made to promote native wild flower growth at appropriate locations in and around the villages (e.g. the village greens, roadside and pathway verges etc.), employing measures such as the 'staggered cut' of grasses.

NATURE RESERVES

- 5.4.5 All efforts will be made to establish Nature Reserves, additional wildlife ponds, and small-scale native woodlands in the neighbourhood area for the benefit of local fauna and flora.
- 5.4.6 Efforts will be made to preserve and enhance the various local green spaces, possibly through the establishment of formally designated nature reserves.

5.5 TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.5.1 The Forum will raise concerns as necessary about technical infrastructure with service providers.

- 5.5.2 Para. 162 of the NPPF stresses the need to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demand. Adopted Local Plan policy INF1: Infrastructure sets out a strategy to support sustainable development in the District.

- 5.5.3 Views expressed by members of the local community in questionnaire responses and at engagement meetings have suggested that certain types of infrastructure serving the MCNP area are close to or at their limits. There is particular concern regarding the adequacy of foul drainage in some parishes. In the case of utility providers, it is usual practice for developers to be requested to provide details of proposals so that the providers can make assessments about capacity. However, there is circumstantial evidence that developers do not always engage with the utility providers..

- 5.5.4 Paras. 42-46 of the NPPF support high quality communications infrastructure as essential for sustainable economic growth. Numerous responses to community engagement questionnaires have referred to the poor quality of mobile phone signals available in the neighbourhood area, and there have also been comments regarding the availability and performance of the broadband network.

6 GLOSSARY

Adaptable Housing	Housing designed to be capable of internal and external adaptation to suit residents as they age.
Adoption	The final confirmation of a development plan or local development document status by a local planning authority (LPA).
Affordable Housing	Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing (including shared ownership and low-cost purchase), provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
Brownfield Land	Land which has been previously used for any type of permanent building and can be reused.
Community Action Plan	A set of objectives identified by the community as being important but not subject to planning law. Parish Councils/ Meetings and the Forum implement the plan.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.
Community Land Trust	Community Land Trusts are a form of community-led housing, in which local organisations - set up and run by ordinary people - develop and manage homes as well as other assets. The CLT's main task is to make sure these homes are genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, for now and for future occupiers.
Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA)	CAAs help define the special architectural and historic interest of an area to clarify why it merits 'designation'. An appraisal also identifies the character of the area, and features which should be enhanced or conserved
Conservation Area	Areas designated by the Local Council as special for its architectural or historic interest, where the character or appearance is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Extra-Care Housing	Self-contained accommodation to suit people who want to live as independently as possible but who need extra care provided.
Green Infrastructure	A network of green spaces and other environmental features designed and managed as multi-functional resources providing a range of environmental quality of life benefits for the local community. This can include parks, open spaces, woodlands, nature reserves, playing fields, allotments and other natural assets.
Heritage and Character Assessment	A report which identifies the key characteristics of an area in terms of landscape, setting, and heritage.
Heritage Impact Assessment	A study to evaluate what impact the proposed development will have on the heritage resource(s) and to recommend a conservation strategy.
Heritage Asset	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Infill Development	Small scale development filling a gap within an otherwise built up frontage.
Lifetime Homes	Homes carefully designed to incorporate 16 design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each of the criteria adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life, from raising children through to coping with reduced mobility or illness in later life.

Local Green Space	An area which is reasonably close to the community and where it is demonstrably special due to its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity, or richness of wildlife.
Local Plan (LP)	Cherwell District Council's statutory planning document which will guide and determine development through to 2031.
'Made' Plan	When a neighbourhood plan is adopted by the District Council and becomes their formal responsibility.
Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP)	This Neighbourhood Plan, covering 11 Parishes around the Cherwell Valley.
Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum	The body responsible for the MCNP, consisting of representatives from the 11 Parishes, a Residents Association and Developer.
Most Versatile Agricultural Land	Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The Government's policy on all matters affecting the planning system and to which the Neighbourhood Development Plan must conform.
OCCG	Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
OHFT	Oxford Health Foundation Trust
Policies	Those parts of the Plan which must be taken account of by anyone proposing development in the parish and which will be used by the District Council to help them decide planning applications in the parish.
Rural Exception Site	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
Section 106 Agreement	Section 106 (1990 Town & Country Planning Act) agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.
Settlement Area	The line that distinguishes between those parts of a settlement where development is acceptable in principle and those parts outside the settlement where more restrictive policies towards development apply.
Sustainable Development	Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Traffic Impact Assessment	A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

