



BECKLEY AND STOWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2011-2035 MADE VERSION OCTOBER 2024



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Quotations from external documents are in italics in blue

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Beckley and Stowood Parish Council

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BECKLEY AND STOWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION – THE PARISH OF BECKLEY AND STOWOOD

Beckley and Stowood is a rural parish situated to the north east of Oxford, spreading from the outskirts of Oxford City at Barton into the countryside. The whole parish was in the Green Belt, but since the adoption of the SODC Local Plan 2035 (Local Plan) in December '20 the southernmost part of the parish at Lower and Wick Farms have been removed from the Green Belt to enable the strategic development site in the Local Plan, Land north of Bayswater Brook [LnBB] to go ahead. The very attractive main village is Beckley, the centre of which is a Conservation Area, with more recent surrounding areas of housing. Outside this there are a few farms, some houses and farm land with Wick Farm and Lower Farm nearer Oxford. Wick Farm has a mobile home park and old farm buildings, some housing and small businesses. Approximately 20% of the parishioners live at Wick Farm.

The Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan, led by the Steering Group, and backed by the Parish Council, started back in January 2016. The Parish Council wanted the people of Beckley and Stowood to have a say in all aspects of the future of the parish, but most importantly it wanted local people to decide how the parish would develop, rather than leaving this decision to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC).

Beckley and Stowood's Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the area that reflects the thoughts and feelings of local people with a real interest in their community. The Plan is relatively simple compared with others for larger towns as it was all 'washed over' by [within] the Green Belt, so there is no development target for new homes. The SODC Local Plan 2035 has removed the area destined for strategic development - Land north of Bayswater Brook, from the Green Belt. This includes the southern part of the parish at Wick Farm and Lower Farm.

The Parish Council is committed to developing and strengthening the contacts and groups that have evolved as a result of the Neighbourhood Planning process. It believes that by working together to implement the Plan it will make Beckley and Stowood Parish an even better place to live, work and enjoy.

1.1. HOW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FITS INTO THE PLANNING SYSTEM

The Neighbourhood Plan must meet the Basic Conditions –

The basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The basic conditions are:

a. having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).

d. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development

e. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area)

f. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

g. prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).

- This Plan when 'made' will run from 2011 until 2035 in line with the SODC Local Plan

1.2. WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING?

The official Government definition ¹ – Guidance Neighbourhood Planning - From: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - Published 6 March 2014, Last updated 25 September 2020

What is neighbourhood planning?

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community’s needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.”

What can communities use neighbourhood planning for?

Local communities can choose to:

set planning policies through a neighbourhood plan that forms part of the development plan used in determining planning applications.

grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.

Neighbourhood planning is not a legal requirement but a right which communities in England can choose to use. Communities may decide that they could achieve the outcomes they want to see through other planning routes, such as incorporating their proposals for the neighbourhood into the local plan, or through other planning mechanisms such as Local Development Orders and supplementary planning documents or through pre-application consultation on development proposals. Communities and local planning authorities should discuss the different choices communities have to achieving their ambitions for their neighbourhood.

What are the benefits to a community of developing a neighbourhood plan or Order?

Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals. This is because unlike the parish, village or town plans that communities may have prepared, a neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the local plan prepared by the local planning authority. Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the local plan and the neighbourhood plan, and any other material considerations.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#what-is-neighbourhood-planning>

Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 10, 15, 20 years in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people. They can put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision or grant planning permission for the development they want to see.

To help deliver their vision communities that take a proactive approach by drawing up a neighbourhood plan or Order and secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25% of the revenues from the Community Infrastructure Levy arising from the development that takes place in their area, where their authority collects contributions using this method.

Communities without a parish or town council can still benefit from this incentive. If there is no parish or town council the charging authority will retain the Levy receipts (where it is charged) but should engage with the communities where development has taken place and agree with them how best to spend the neighbourhood funding. Charging authorities should set out clearly and transparently their approach to engaging with neighbourhoods using their regular communication tools e.g., website, newsletters, etc. The use of neighbourhood funds should therefore match priorities expressed by local communities, including priorities set out formally in neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood planning is part of a new approach to planning introduced by the Localism Act 2011. The new system is designed to be more collaborative and gives communities more powers to shape the future of the places where they live and work.

Neighbourhood Planning is the government's initiative of trying to empower local communities to help make and take forward planning proposals at a local level. The idea being that local people will drive, and then help to shape, how their local communities grow and develop over the next coming years.

Neighbourhood Plans can only be made by one of two groups, towns/parishes or neighbourhood fora. As our area has parishes, town and parishes will take the lead in pushing them forward.

Neighbourhood Development Plans set out a vision, aims, policies and proposals for the future development of a neighbourhood. If adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the statutory development plan for the area in question.

The local authority and planning inspectors will have to take the plan into account when making planning decisions. This gives the plans more weight than some types of plan, such as parish plans or community plans.

It gives us the opportunity to influence the future of the place where we live or work.

How is development managed if we don't have a Neighbourhood Plan? Planning applications will be determined in accordance with the up to date 'development plan' for the area. Adopted Neighbourhood Plans will form part of the development plan for their area.

1.3. HOW THIS PLAN IS ORGANISED

This Neighbourhood Plan and two Appendix documents is supported by two Evidence Base documents which do not form part of the Plan and are not being submitted for examination.

Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan which contains the reason for developing the Plan, Consultations, the Vision and Policies.

The Evidence Bases – (supporting documents not being submitted for examination)

1. Sets out a brief description of the Parish today – the History, Environment, Geology and issues that have influenced the vision.
2. The Character and Heritage, Opportunities and Threats, Consultation and Community Engagement, Background to policies

Appendices A and B. There is a large amount of background information that has helped in producing the Plan. The Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan Appendices are available in two separate documents. A contains appendices 1-11 and B 12 – 24. This provides an overview of key parts of the Evidence Base, as well as explaining what options were considered for the future of Beckley and Stowood.

In addition, there are a number of separate reports –

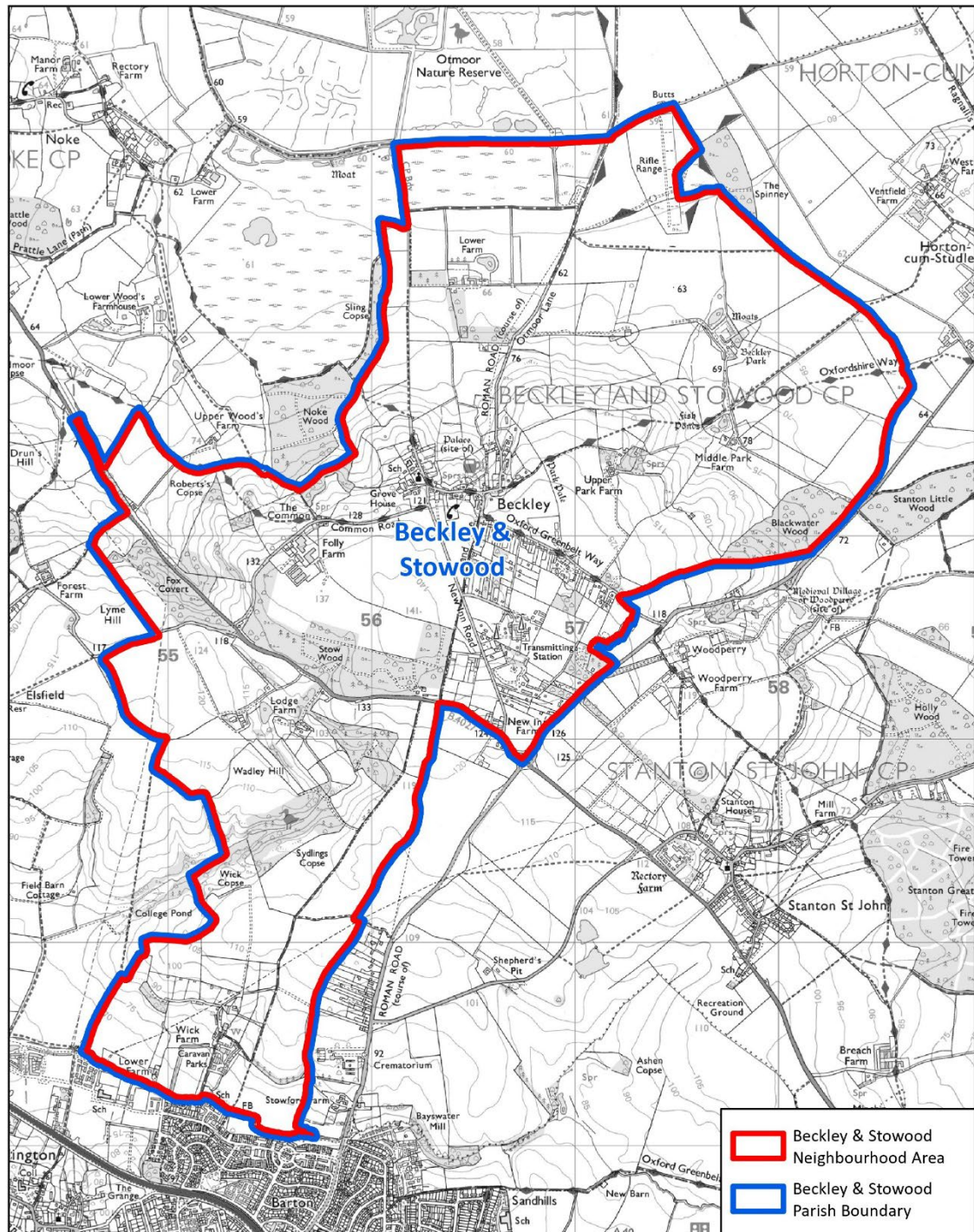
- **A Consultation Statement/Report**
- **A Strategic Environmental Assessment Report**
- **A Basic Conditions Statement**

This Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) is submitted by Beckley and Stowood Parish Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

1.4. HISTORY OF THE BECKLEY AND STOWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- January '16 – Inaugural meeting
- June '16 – Designation of Neighbourhood Plan Area – the whole parish
- February '18 – Parish Consultation
- September '18 – Consultancy Advice
- January '20 – Grant from Locality for Consultancy Advice
- February '20 – Consultancy Bluestone – development new & revised policies
- April '21 - SODC demands a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- June '21 – Grant Application for SEA
- March '22 – Technical Support Granted for SEA from Locality
- March '22 – Working with new consultant on new SEA & revised policies
- June '22 – SEA Report Completed and sent to SODC
- July '22 – Neighbourhood Plan submitted to SODC
- July '22 – SODC advised a new Regulation 14 consultation would be required
- 1st Aug-14th Sept '22 – Second Regulation 14 Public Consultation of Plan and Sea
- December '22 – Neighbourhood Plan submitted to SODC for Independent Examination

2. BECKLEY AND STOWOOD PARISH



Map 1 - Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan Area – The Whole Parish

2.1. ABOUT BECKLEY AND STOWOOD

The parish of Beckley and Stowood borders the Barton estate on the outskirts of Oxford in the south, where the Bayswater Brook forms the Parish boundary and formerly that of the Oxford Green Belt. To the north, the bridleway around Otmoor forms the parish boundary. To the west, the boundary follows a jagged course along field boundaries, incorporating the village of Beckley and Robert's copse to the north of B4027 and Wick and Sydlings copses to the south of that road. To the east, the parish boundary encompasses the MOD rifle range on Otmoor in the north, going around Beckley Park to the Horton Road at Blackwater Wood, then following this road one field in to the north west until it reaches Jubilee House, the guide building, where it then follows the Horton Road to its junction with B4027. It follows the B4027 for a short distance west and drops south following the line of the Roman Road across fields parallel with the Bayswater Road. It then goes behind the houses and crematorium along the Bayswater Road until it reaches the Bayswater Brook at Wick Farm.



Figure 1. BECKLEY HIGH STREET

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Designated Area comprises the historic villages of Beckley and Stowood (the latter has now disappeared) situated in a rural area of open farmland with copses of trees, predominantly oak. Beckley sits on an escarpment overlooking Otmoor and the RSPB Otmoor Wetland Reserve, while Stowood and the land toward the city slope gently down to the Bayswater Brook. This seemingly rural setting is very near Oxford - between two and half miles from the south to seven miles from the north of the parish. It is used by many both inside and outside the Neighbourhood Area for hiking, cycling, horse riding, bird-watching, and other outdoor pursuits. The elevated land tends to be arable and the low-lying land more suitable for summer grazing. The whole Parish of Beckley and Stowood, the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area, was in the Green Belt. However, the southernmost part of Wick and Lower Farms, abutting Barton, has now been removed from the Green Belt for the strategic development of Land north of Bayswater Brook [LnBB] in the SODC Local Plan. The oldest part of the village of Beckley is a Conservation Area.

Beckley and Stowood has approximately 250 dwellings and the 2011 census showed the total population of 606.

3. CONSULTATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Neighbourhood Plan has been developed with our local community to reflect their aspirations of how we want to see the parish of Beckley and Stowood develop. Here is a list of the consultations and dates. These are contained in a separate, detailed, Consultation Statement/Report.

1. Inaugural meeting	Meeting	January 2016
2. Initial Survey	Survey	June 2016
3. Criteria - development sites and design	Meeting	October 2016
4. Design criteria	Survey	November 2016
5. Local businesses and organisations	Survey	March 2017
6. Regulation 14 Consultation	Survey and meeting	December 2017
7. Cycleway Survey	Survey	March 2020
8. Second Regulation 14 and SEA survey	Survey	August 2022

3.1. INAUGURAL MEETING

At the very first meeting of Parishioners in January 2016 the issues identified that the Neighbourhood Plan should cover were -

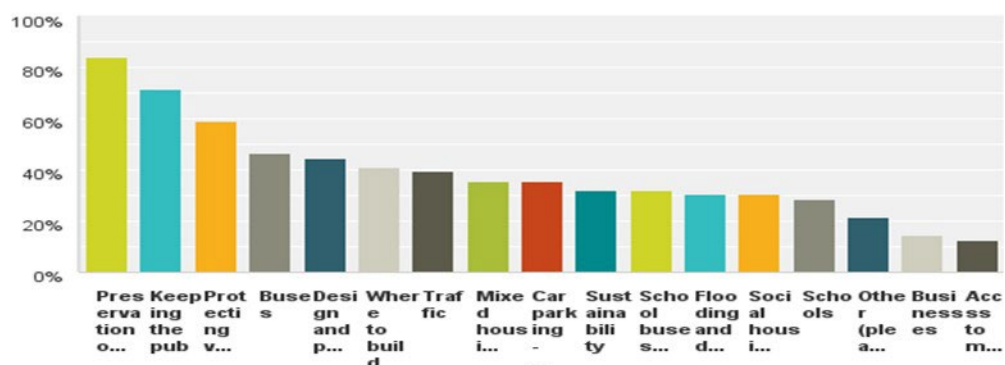
- ***Preservation of the Green Belt***
- ***Traffic***
- ***Buses***
- ***Schools***
- ***Where to build***
- ***Design***
- ***Flooding and drainage***
- ***Keeping the pub***
- ***Businesses***
- ***Sustainability***
- ***Social housing, affordable housing***
- ***Mixed housing - housing for those who wish to downsize and remain in the village***

3.2. VISION FOR BECKLEY AND STOWOOD – INITIAL SURVEY RESULTS

This initial survey of parishioners was carried out in June 2016. The issues identified in the inaugural meeting were ranked in order of importance in the initial Parish survey.

Q23 A number of issues have been identified to be included in the neighbourhood Plan. Please could you indicate the most important to you and add others not already included below.

Answered: 56 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Preservation of the Green Belt	83.93% 47
Keeping the pub	71.43% 40
Protecting views from the village	58.93% 33
Buses	46.43% 26
Design and planning	44.64% 25
Where to build	41.07% 23
Traffic	39.29% 22
Mixed housing – (housing for those who wish to downsize and remain in the village)	35.71% 20
Car parking - school, RSPB	35.71% 20
Sustainability	32.14% 18
School buses and buses	32.14% 18
Flooding and drainage	30.36% 17
Social housing/ affordable housing	30.36% 17
Schools	28.57% 16
Other (please specify)	21.43% 12
Businesses	14.29% 8
Access to main gas	12.50% 7
Total Respondents: 56	

Aspirations for the Next 15 Years

43% of respondents would like to attract younger people to the Parish and as the age profile is older this would change the complexion. 30% would like more small houses with 21% wanting more bungalows and houses suitable for the elderly. 21% wanted more mixed housing while 27% thought it should remain as it is. Although aspirations are clearly mixed there is a clear wish to attract more young people, while providing more mixed housing, including smaller homes for older people.

Issues for the Neighbourhood Plan

A list of issues for the Neighbourhood Plan were identified in the initial public meeting and views were sought about this original list and the answers ranked.

The most important issue for the Neighbourhood Plan was preservation of the Green Belt [84%], since there had been a number of threats to build on Wick Farm and other fields south of the B4027. This was closely followed by keeping the pub [71%] and protecting the views from the village [59%].

Design and planning, where to build, mixed housing and social/affordable housing were also high in the ranking and are issues that the Neighbourhood Plan can address.

Buses, traffic etc. are issues that the Plan cannot address, but could try to help alleviate with design and site criteria.

A more detailed summary can be found in Evidence Base 2. Page 64. The full survey results can be found in Appendix 19.

3.3. SITE CRITERIA RESULTS

A meeting for the whole Parish was held on Monday 10th October 2016 at the Jubilee Hall. Approximately 40 parishioners attended a meeting to discuss this. The outcome was –

Local Development Site Criteria

- Infilling is acceptable – “Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location.” (SODC Local Plan Policy H16: Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment Point 2.) Views from public places both to and from the village should be protected. New development that does not detract from the view of the skyline would be preferred.
- Developments should provide adequate parking spaces to meet residents’ needs, to ensure that as far as possible parking on the road is unnecessary.
- A review of flood risk, including springs and water run-off is required for potential development sites.
- Gardens are a very important feature in Beckley and provision of a garden in proportion to the house size is an important criterion to the character of the village – *[Refer to Parish Character Assessments]*

- Generally, building with local materials including stone will be strongly preferred. Building materials of brick, rendered blockwork, timber or tile cladding and natural stone with roof covering of tiles or slate will be accepted. uPVC and other synthetic cladding materials will be discouraged
- Minimising paved and hard standing areas is strongly encouraged to minimise flooding and run off.
- Building of smaller houses is encouraged to help to ensure that local people have the opportunity of affordable housing or to downsize and stay in the village and maintain the vibrancy and vitality of the village

Further details are included in Evidence Base 2 4.2. page 64 Appendix 20. gives further details of the meeting outcome.

3.4. DESIGN CRITERIA RESULTS

Following the design and development site criteria voted upon at the meeting in October '16 the whole parish was consulted in a survey on the outcome of the meeting, in November '16. An on-line consultation was carried out and widely publicised.

Summary of Design Criteria Consultation Survey Results

83% of respondent agreed with the development and environment criteria. The individual responses can be found in the appendix. There were several comments about the desirability of parking on a house driveway, rather than congesting roads further.

The views that were felt particularly important were those to and from Beckley across Otmoor, from Woodperry Road to Brill, from Common Road across Otmoor from Stowood across to Didcot and the M40 Stokenchurch cutting. Views within Beckley village that are valued are all the roads in the Conservation Area – Church Street, High Street and Otmoor Lane.

92% of respondents wanted to preserve the grass verges as an important feature in the village. Parking around the school was mentioned as a problem.

Design attributes that people would like to encourage are stone or brick construction, pitched roofs, a garden with sufficient space around the house at each side, two-storey and traditional in nature, blending with surrounding houses.

Details can be found in Evidence Base 2 4.2. page 64 and full results in Appendix 21.

3.5. LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS

This consultation was carried out by on-line survey in March 2017 and publicised in the Beckley Newsletter.

The issues that concerned most were transport and commuting of staff and linked to that the availability of staff and affordable housing, presumably again for staff. There was a small

concern expressed for the availability of business premises, but commuting was the main concern.

3.6. FIRST REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

The consultation was carried out between 1st December 2017 and 24th February 2018.

The responses were all analysed and considered, and remedial action taken where it was thought necessary. As there was considerable concern about some issues including the proposed settlement boundary from a number of respondents the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee decided to apply for a grant for consultancy support and advice to review the Plan and policies.

3.7. CYCLEWAY SURVEY

A survey was carried out of Beckley residents on the demand for a cycleway during March 2020. It was publicised in the Beckley and Stowood newsletter that is delivered to all households in the Parish and by e-mail to Beckley and Wick Farm/Barton residents.

The detailed results can be found in Appendix 9.

3.8. REGULATION 14 AND SEA CONSULTATION

The consultation was carried out between 1st August and 14th September 2022.

Only 12 responses were received in total with an additional 2 with no comments on the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultation, responses and actions taken are covered in full in the separate Consultation Report.

A VISION FOR BECKLEY AND STOWOOD

4. VISION STATEMENT AND CORE OBJECTIVES

The Vision Statement and Core Objectives were developed with the local community at a series of community engagement events. They form the foundation of the Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish has two main settlements, the village of Beckley positioned high on a limestone ridge overlooking Otmoor to the north and dropping down to the south to Wick Farm and Lower Farm near Oxford. Other houses and farms are interspersed with farmland, woods and the important Sydlings Copse and College Pond, a SSSI. The area has very important heritage to be preserved and was once part of a royal hunting forest stretching to Bernwood Forest and Shotover. The whole Parish was ‘washed over’ (within) the Green Belt, an important protection from the encroachment of Oxford, but since the adoption of the SODC Local Plan 2035 the southernmost part of the parish around Wick and Lower Farms has been removed from the Green Belt.

Our Parish is already an outstanding place to live.

Our vision –

The character of our parish should be conserved and even improved for the present and future generations of its inhabitants.

We will endeavour to accomplish this by means of the following positive actions by the community:

- Preserve, maintain, nurture and enhance our environmental assets and biodiversity, particularly ancient woodland, SSSIs and the important setting of the village and settlements in the surrounding countryside.
- Conserve and enhance our heritage and the rural character of the village and settlements
- Maintain the important views from Beckley village, Stowood and towards the Parish from Oxford, Otmoor, Brill and beyond and maintain our dark sky.
- Enable the sustainable modest growth of housing numbers within the village boundary while ensuring design is compatible and in keeping with surrounding houses.
- New developments should be built to the highest energy conservation standards and retrofitting of existing buildings is encouraged, working towards conserving energy being carbon neutral
- Encourage a mix of size of housing to enable residents to downsize and encourage young families

CORE OBJECTIVES

Objective 1. Preservation of the Green Belt

The preservation of the Green Belt in our Parish is vital to maintaining the environment, biodiversity and the setting of the village and dwellings.

Objective 2. Conserving and Enhancing Our Heritage and Rural Character

It is important to conserve our heritage and the setting in which it is found, along with the countryside and fields that make up the Parish.

Objective 3. Maintaining Views and Dark Skies

The Parish is within the Oxford heights area and rises from Bayswater Brook in the south to 140 metre limestone ridge and Stowood and Beckley village. This gives rise to many extraordinary views and vistas for many miles in all directions, which, alongside the dark night skies, must be maintained.

Objective 4. Sustainable Growth and Compatible Design

Provide for sustainable levels of residential development within the Settlement Boundary and avoid houses *“that are out of character with the rest of the village”*.

Objective 5. Sustainable New Development

To achieve the highest standards of energy efficiency and carbon neutrality with new development wherever possible.

Objective 6. Encouraging Housing Mix

A housing mix is desirable to accommodate young families wishing to move into larger houses and older resident wishing to downsize.

4.1. PRESERVATION OF THE GREEN BELT

This objective came top in both the inaugural meeting and subsequent initial consultation, with 84% support see section 3.2 Evidence Base 2. Page 64. The full survey results can be found in Appendix 19.

As discussed in Evidence Base 2 3.1.1. all five purposes of the Green Belt are important to preserve the Parish of Beckley and Stowood. As stated in the initial survey [3.1.]

“We do not want to become part of greater Oxford”.

4.2. CONSERVING AND ENHANCING OUR HERITAGE AND RURAL CHARACTER

Beckley and Stowood Parish enjoys a rich history with heritage from Roman Times, see Evidence Base 1 Section 2.3 History. The Parish has 45 listed buildings, two of which are of considerable historic importance and listed Grade I - the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Beckley Park, see Evidence Base 2 - 2.11.3. It is important to conserve our heritage and the setting in which it is found, along with the countryside and fields that make up the Parish set out in character assessments of the four parts of the Parish – see Evidence Base 2 2.11.4-8 and Appendices 12-15. The recommendations from the Oxford Heights Landscape Assessment 2017 are summarised in Evidence Base 2 2.2.1. and can be found in Appendix 2.

4.3. MAINTAINING VIEWS AND DARK SKIES

The range of wonderful views and vistas afforded within and towards the Parish are described in Evidence Base 2 2.11.1. These must be maintained. There is also very little lighting in the Parish see Evidence Base 2 2.11.2. and a clear desire emerged from consultation exercise in October 2016 to prevent light pollution (see Evidence Base 2 4.3. and Appendix 21) and maintain dark skies in the Plan area.

4.4. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND COMPATIBLE DESIGN

As the Parish lies within the Oxford Green Belt (apart from the southern edge which has now been removed for the strategic development of Land north of Bayswater Brook) there is little opportunity for new development apart from infilling within the main ‘settlement’ or village boundary. As this has not been formalised it is subject to change at any time. This issue is to be addressed as it affects where there can be any new development see Evidence Base 2 3.1.3. Feedback from community consultations on design see Evidence Base 2 4.3., states that residents wished to avoid *“houses that were out of character with the rest of the village and houses that are overly large and modern.”* The Beckley Design Guide was developed through community consultation to promote compatible design in keeping with surrounding dwellings.

4.5. SUSTAINABLE NEW DEVELOPMENT

The Parish Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019, in response to local concern see Evidence Base 2 2.10. As part of this initiative residents wish to promote sustainable new

development to the highest standards of energy efficiency to become carbon neutral. This objective also extends to existing houses to encourage them to retrofit and introduce new energy generation such as solar panels and supporting sustainable transport such as cycleways.

4.6. ENCOURAGING HOUSING MIX

The community consultations showed that many residents have lived in the Parish for a long time – over 21 years. 30% would like more small houses with 21% wanting more bungalows and houses suitable for the elderly so they could downsize and remain in the community they have lived with for so long – see Evidence Base 2 4.1. and Appendix 19. With land values being so high many small bungalows are being demolished and replaced with considerably larger houses. A housing mix is desirable to accommodate young families wishing to move into larger houses and older resident wishing to downsize.

4.7. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND RESIDENTS FROM NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT AT LAND NORTH OF BAYSWATER BROOK

An overwhelming number (84%) of residents responding to the first survey put ‘Protecting the Green Belt’ as their first priority, with comments –

“We do not want to become part of greater Oxford”.

Residents and the Parish Council therefore have considerable concerns about the development of the strategic site ‘Land North of Bayswater Brook’, which was in the Green Belt. This site includes Wick Farm and Lower Farm, along with much agricultural land and Lower Elsfield in the adjoining Parish of Elsfield. Approximately 20% of Beckley and Stowood parishioners live at Wick Farm and Lower Farm, in the middle of this proposed development. All the local parishes and communities worked together during the SODC consultations and Examination in Public until the Local Plan was approved. They continue to do so during developer consultations, future planning applications and beyond. Please see Evidence Base 2 3.2.6.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment required by SODC has also identified a number of issues concerning the Land north of Bayswater Brook development, that are likely to have a negative impact, and which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to improve -

Population and Human Health - *“The health of existing residents is likely to slightly worsen”*
Air & climatic factors – *“the new homes planned at Land North of Bayswater Brook, and the traffic and congestion they would bring, is likely to worsen air quality overall”* The report goes on to say- *“However overall air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the parish will increase as a result of new development”* [Section 3.2]
Biodiversity – *“Development at Land North of Bayswater Brook is likely to have significant negative impacts on hedges, Sydlings Copse etc.”* The report goes on to say – *“The condition*

of the SSSI unit in the parish is 'unfavourable recovering'".² It adds "Development at Land North of Bayswater Brook could negatively affect Sidling's Copse SSSI through increased recreational use and reduced air quality: many fens are susceptible to acid deposition, including from vehicle emissions"³ [Section 3.3.]

Landscape – *"The new development will change the southern part of the parish from farmer's fields to urban development, and it will be visible from much of the parish."* The report goes on to say *However development at Land North of Bayswater Brook will have a significant impact on the landscape at the southern end of the parish. That land is expected to change from open agricultural fields to an urban landscape, and at night the currently-dark area would be much more lit-up."* [Landscape page 25]

There are also serious concerns about transport infrastructure, as local roads, and the Northern Ring Road and Headington roundabout are at capacity at peak times. This leads to excessively long queues and journey times for local residents commuting into Oxford or using these roads. The additional traffic generated by the LnBB development needs to be alleviated adequately and is a requirement of the Local Plan. Improvements to transport infrastructure are required to ensure journey times are not made longer, but will be expensive. However, roads and transport infrastructure fall outside the Neighbourhood Plan and most of the roads likely to be affected are outside the parish, so this Plan is unable to address these significant concerns.

² <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1000378&SiteName=College%20Pond&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=>

³ 16 www.apis.ac.uk/acid-deposition-fen-marsh-and-swamp

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

These policies have been developed in consultation with all the Parishioners of Beckley and Stowood. As Beckley is a small village completely ‘washed over’ [within] the Green Belt no specific development sites can be designated. However, some have been suggested.

The policy themes have deliberately been kept simple and few in number. They are –

1. Definition of the Village
2. Preservation of Our Environment and Biodiversity
3. Preservation of Our Heritage
4. Development Criteria
5. Beckley and Stowood Design Guide
6. Climate Change Policies and Community Aspirations
7. Protection of the Peaceful Environment
8. Redundant Farm Buildings
9. Actions for The Parish Council to Review

5.1. DEFINITION OF THE VILLAGE – SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

The NPPF states that the construction of new buildings is generally inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include “limited infilling **in villages**” (NPPF paragraph 154 e). NPPF paragraphs 82, 83 and 84 cover rural housing.

The southernmost end of the parish, including Wick Farm and Lower Farm are within the strategic development site from the SODC Local Plan of Land north of Bayswater Brook and will be surrounded by the proposed new development. When the Local Plan was approved and adopted in December 2020 the land for all strategic development sites in the Green Belt were removed. Therefore, Wick Farm and Lower Farm could not be included in the policy on settlement boundaries.

South Oxfordshire District Council has not historically defined the edge or boundary of its smaller villages and officially SODC Planning Officers state that there is no ‘main settlement boundary’ for Beckley village. However, in practice they have opposed infill development or redevelopment outside the Conservation Area except for the rows of houses on the west side of Roman Road and the south side of Woodperry Road and their gardens. This approach has been broadly confirmed by the District Council in correspondence with the NP steering group dated 10th February 2017. See Appendix 17. In order to properly define the area within which development and redevelopment will be supported in principle, it is proposed to define a

settlement boundary for the purposes of Policy H8 Housing in smaller villages, Policy H16 Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment and paragraph 154 of the NPPF - (e) limited infilling in villages. These policies show the importance of defining a 'village' and in determining the settlement boundary for Beckley. The relevant parts of the policies are copied below –

NPPF 154. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

*(e) limited infilling **in villages**;*

(g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
- not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*

Policy H8: Housing in the Smaller Villages

1. The Council will support development within the Smaller Villages in accordance with Policy H16. Where a Parish Council wishes to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan and make housing allocations within it to support further growth, the Council will support this.

2. Those Neighbourhood Development Plans will need to demonstrate that the level of growth they are planning for is commensurate to the scale and character of their village, and this is expected to be around a 5% to 10% increase in dwellings above the number of dwellings in the village in the 2011 census (minus any completions since 1 April 2011).

3. Neighbourhood Development Plans allocating sites on greenfield sites in these locations should consider how development can meet the bespoke needs of their village, including housing mix, tenure and the amount of affordable housing

Infill Development [SODC Local Plan 2035]

Policy H16: Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment

*1. Within Smaller Villages and Other Villages, **development should be limited to infill and the redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings.***

*2. Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap **in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage** or on **other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location.***

3. Where a proposal encompasses residential development of land behind an existing frontage or placing of further dwelling/s behind existing dwelling/s within the existing site, the proposals should demonstrate that:

- i) the privacy of existing and future residents will be protected;*
- ii) means of access can be appropriately secured; and*
- iii) development would not extend the built limits of the settlement*

This policy also supports and conforms with the following SODC Local Plan policies - Redevelopment Policy EMP 10 - Development in Rural Areas and Policy CF1 Safeguarding

Community Facilities, CF2 Provision of Community Services and Facilities and rural transport, Policy ENV8: Conservation Areas.

Policy VB 1. is intended to distinguish between the built-up area of the main village and the wider surrounding areas in order to manage development proposals accordingly. In defining the boundary on the Policy Map, applicants and the local planning authority will have certainty when preparing and determining planning applications respectively. This approach is considered to be both consistent with the NPPF in dealing with villages and Green Belt villages in particular, as well as - Policy STRAT 6 The Green Belt, H8 Housing in smaller villages, Policy H16: Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment Policy EMP 10 Development in Rural Areas and Policy CF1 Safeguarding Community Facilities, CF2 Provision of Community Services and Facilities and rural transport which seek to encourage sustainable forms of development in the rural areas.

The Neighbourhood Plan for Beckley and Stowood Parish defines the settlement to include most of the Conservation Area of Beckley village, excluding fields and paddocks, and an area to the south east of Beckley village Conservation Area bounded by Woodperry Road to the north and the rear of the gardens to the south. Please see the map below.

NB On Map 10 - Where the red outline of the Conservation Area and blue line of the Settlement Boundary are shown side by side, they are actually contiguous, following exactly the same line i.e., the Conservation Area boundary. Deviations from the Conservation Area boundary are discussed in detail below. Generally, gardens have been included in the settlement boundary unless they are extensive e.g., in areas of the Conservation Area 3 and 4.

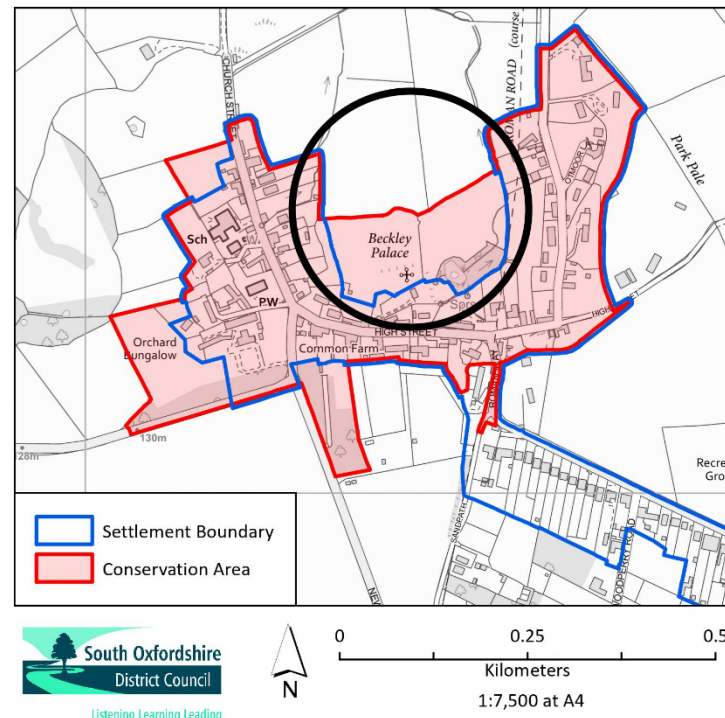
Conservation Area

The excluded parts of the Conservation Area have not been included in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt and the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to this. It is considered that development outside the defined settlement boundary would be harmful to the Green Belt. SODC Planning Officers have advised excluding the fields in the Conservation Area behind the houses in the High Street, Church Street and Otmoor Lane. In addition, important views need protection from unwanted development in such sensitive viewing points. There is detailed information on important views in Evidence Base 2 2.11.1. They consist of –

1. To the north of the High Street around the site of Beckley Palace, shown encircled in Map 2 below, the fields are used for grazing and the site of Beckley Palace is of archaeological interest. There are some of the most important views in the village across Otmoor. The views towards this area and the High Street from Otmoor Lane, Church Street, the houses on both these roads and further away from Otmoor are also very important and to be protected.

Beckley and Stowood Settlement Boundary

Produced by the Corporate GIS Team July 2024



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Map 2 – Settlement Boundary – North of Beckley High Street



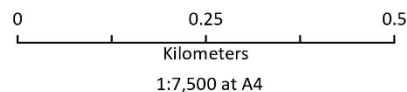
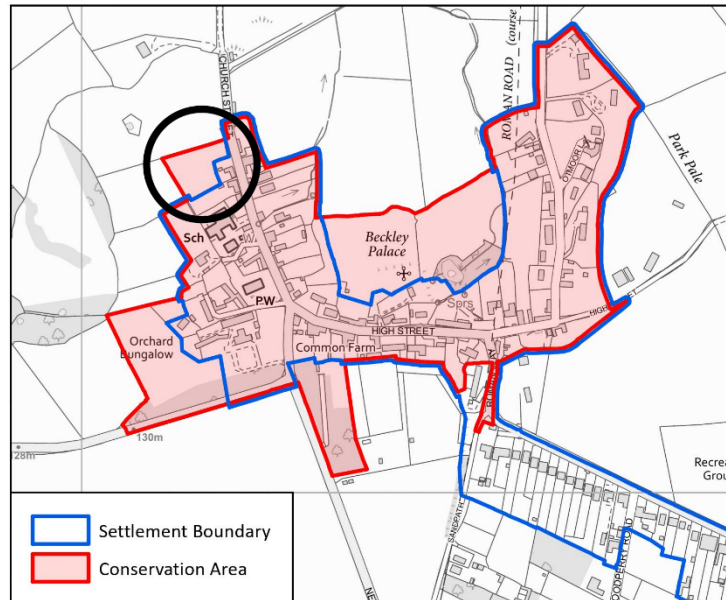
Figure 2. View from the High Street Across Otmoor

2. To the north west at the end of Church Street the field that is now used as a playing field for

the school, shown encircled in Map 3 below is excluded to protect views across Otmoor and from development and retain the field for school use. It is not possible to take photographs from the field itself as it is used by the school, but this view is adjacent to it taken from the public footpath and the views are similar.

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Map 3 – Settlement Boundary – Playing fields north of Church Street

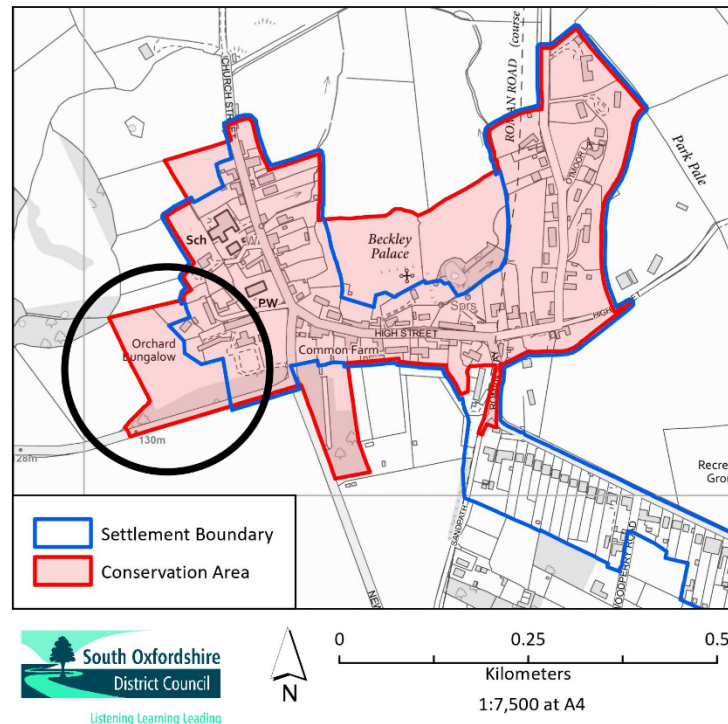


Figure 3. View across Otmoor from Church Street

- To the west of Grove House to protect from development, shown encircled in Map 4 below. This land is high on the limestone ridge and important to the openness of the Green Belt. Development of this land would be harmful to the Green Belt and the Conservation Area of the village and to setting of Grove House itself, a Grade II listed building.

Beckley and Stowood Settlement Boundary

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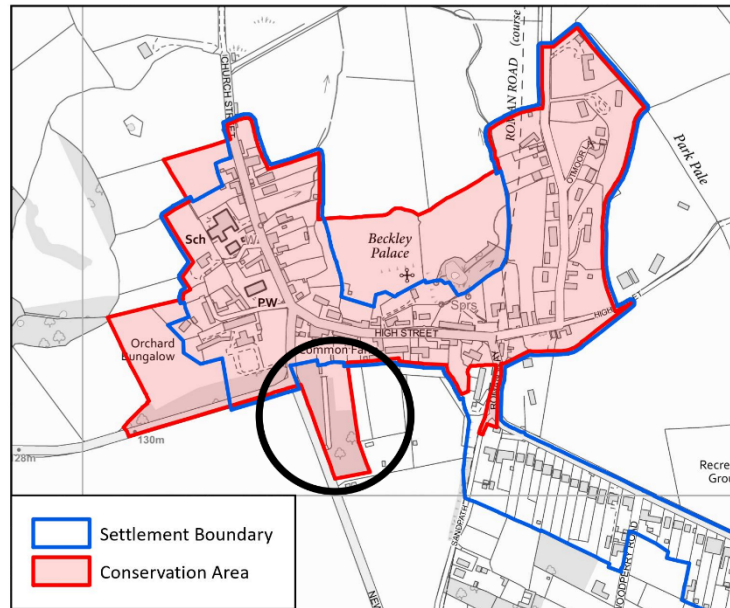
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Map 4 – Settlement Boundary – Fields and Garden surrounding Grove House

- To the south of Beckley High Street, a garden running along New Inn Road which juts out south to protect from development, shown encircled in Map 5 below. This is an attractive woodland garden and its development would not only be harmful to the Green Belt, Conservation Area and other adjacent houses particularly on the south side of the High Street, but also to the local environment and biodiversity. The settlement boundary, apart from this area then follows the southern boundaries of gardens and Conservation Area.

Beckley and Stowood Settlement Boundary

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Map 5. – Settlement Boundary – Wooded garden running south along New Inn Road



Map 6 – Settlement Boundary – Aerial view showing gardens of Grave House and another along New Inn Road

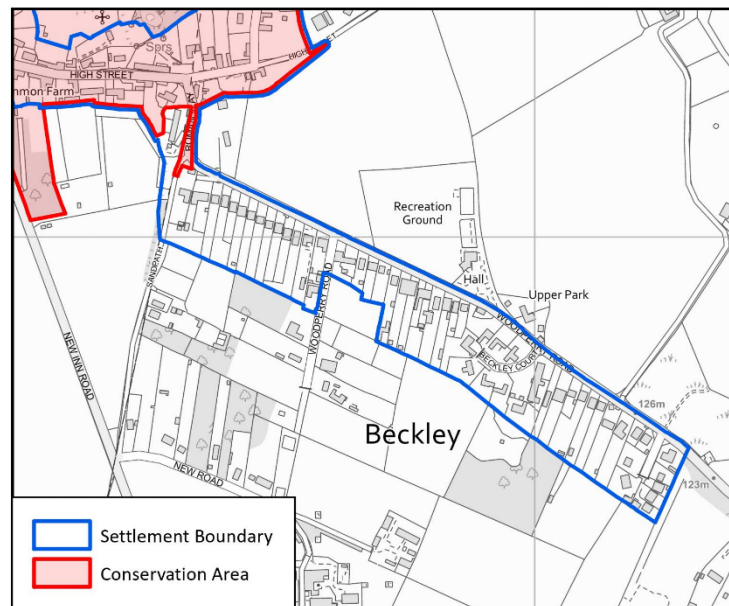
Woodperry Road Area

In addition to the Conservation Area the settlement boundary also includes an area to the south east of the Conservation Area bounded by a small section of Roman Road/Sand Path to the west and along the south side of Woodperry Road. This has a “continuous built-up frontage” [SODC Local Plan Policy H16] and includes the bungalows on Roman Way along the back-garden boundaries of the existing houses.

The south side of Woodperry Road is built up and continuous with the Conservation Area of Beckley, shown in Map 7 below. There are no gaps. To the east in Woodperry Road the boundary continues along the back-garden boundaries and includes Bungalow Close. This is depicted on the Policies Map that accompanies this Plan which is shown below. This Woodperry Road area has been included as to the north it is bounded by the road and is an important landscape feature. It represents the edge of the limestone ridge with important views to the north, north east towards Brill and open countryside (See Evidence Base 2 2.11.1 and photographs copied below).

Beckley and Stowood Settlement Boundary

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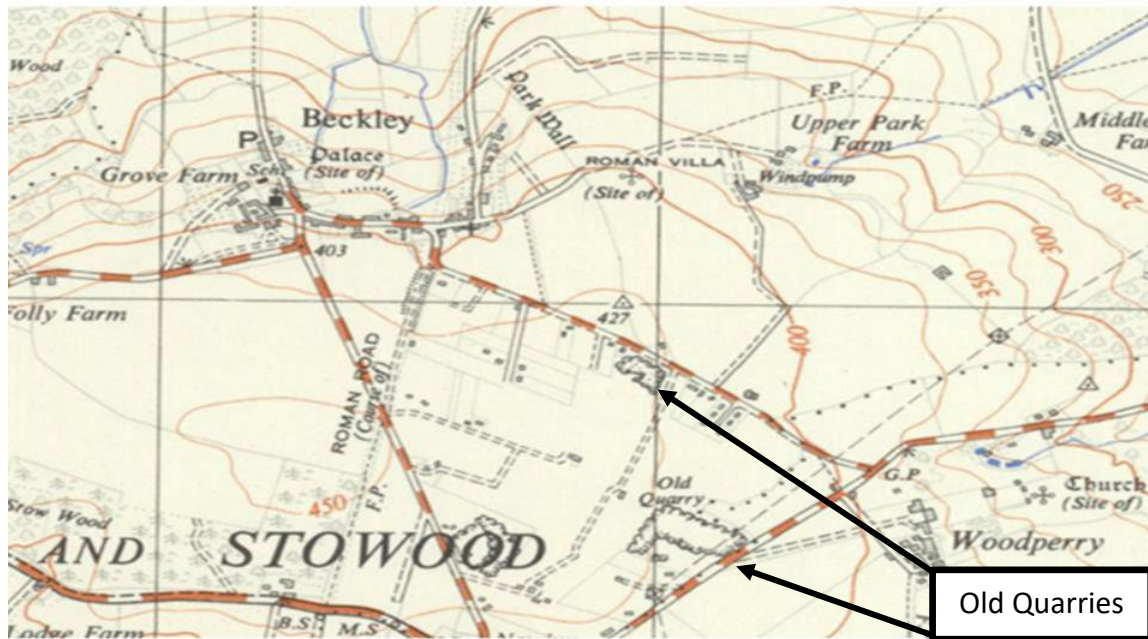


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Map 7 – Settlement Boundary – To the south of Woodperry Road

To the south it is bounded by an old field boundary that forms the backs of the gardens of houses facing Woodperry Road. The width of the boundary is much shorter to the east of the track running south from Woodperry Road (part of Woodperry Road) i.e., there is an indent as shown on the map above. This is because the gardens are much shorter here and behind them is a field, shown below as an original field boundary. This is not included in the Settlement Boundary. See old Ordnance Survey map 1937 below with field boundaries –



Map 8. – Ordnance Survey Map 1937

Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

It is also the current view of SODC Planning Officers that this is within the settlement - *“We have held a longstanding view that Woodperry Road is within the settlement as it is connected to the main body of the village by a continuous built up frontage.”* See Appendix 17. Letter from SODC Planning Officer dated February 2017.

The north side of Woodperry Road is not included within the settlement Boundary. It does not form “a continuous built-up frontage” with the Conservation Area. There are gaps in the High Street with the village pond; Roman Way where there is only one house on the east side and significant gaps of fields between the few buildings on the north side of Woodperry Road. There are only three areas of building on the north side of the Woodperry Road – Sandy Acre, the village hall and a pair of semi-detached houses. All are interspersed and surrounded by Green Belt fields. The western end of Woodperry Road is elevated high above the Conservation Area of Beckley village and dominates Roman Way and the High Street in particular, and overlooks nearby properties.

There are very important views from Woodperry Road towards Brill and to Otmoor.



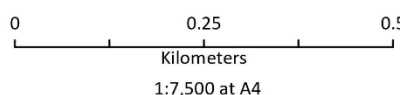
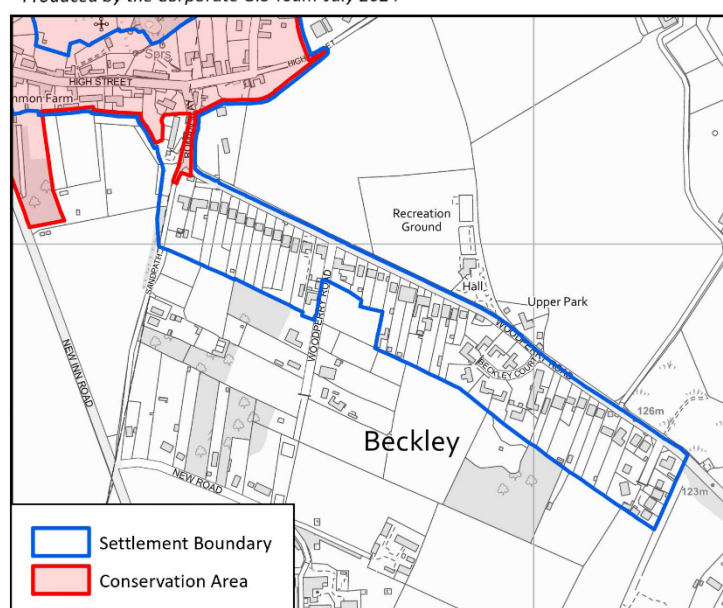
Figure 4. View across Otmoor from Woodperry Road



Figure 5. Misty View from Woodperry Road to Brill

Beckley and Stowood Settlement Boundary

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Map 9 – Settlement Boundary – Showing no continuous built-up frontage with conservation area for the north of Woodperry Road.

In the view of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group inclusion of any section of the north part of Woodperry Road would not be compliant with NPPF 154 on the Green Belt in that it should -

- *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
- *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*

Further details including details of relevant planning appeals can be found in See Evidence Base 2 3.1.3.

The introduction of a settlement boundary does not in itself provide any greater likelihood of development occurring than might otherwise occur under policy H5. No allocation sites have been included in this Neighbourhood Plan.

The policy also deals with situations where residential proposals affect areas outside the settlement boundary, but where Green Belt policy, and the location, sustainability and accessibility of those areas does not support such development other than in exceptional circumstances as set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

Development proposals outside the settlement boundary which meet one of the Green Belt exceptions should be designed to ensure that they respond as appropriate to other policies in the wider development plan. Particular attention should be given to the prevailing character of the area in terms of the impact of new development on built form, density, and landscape quality, and that the location, sustainability and accessibility of the site is acceptable having regard to the principles of sustainable development.

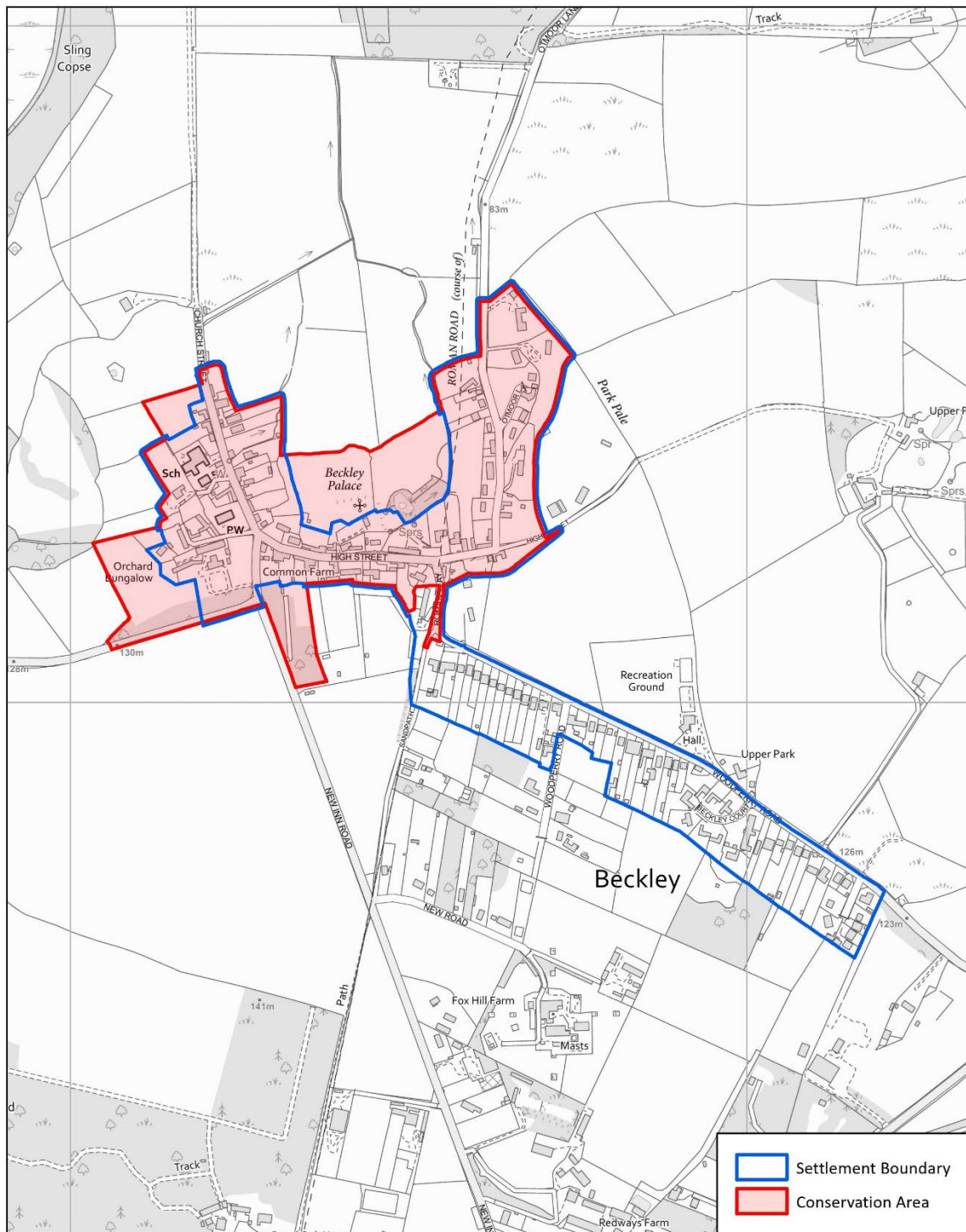
POLICY VB 1. SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the settlement boundary as set out in Map 10.

Proposals for limited infill and the redevelopment of previously-developed land within the defined settlement boundary will be supported provided they accord with development management policies.

Development proposals outside the settlement boundary and outside the land north of Bayswater Brook strategic allocation will only be supported where they are appropriate for a Green Belt location as identified in Section 13 of the NPPF and have regard to the principles of sustainable development. Proposals for inappropriate development will not be supported except in very special circumstances.

Map 10 – Policy Map – Beckley Settlement



BECKLEY VILLAGE HOUSING DENSITY - Table 1					
	Number of houses	Hectares	Acres	Houses per Hectare	Houses per Acre
Village Centre					
Church Street	24	3.61	9.45	6.65	2.54
High Street	33	3.91	9.66	8.44	3.42
Otmoor Lane	22	4.68	11.56	4.70	1.90
Woodperry Road	59	7.33	18.11	8.05	3.26
Total	138	19.53	48.78	7.07	2.83
New Inn Road	12	3.35	8.29	3.58	1.45
Horton Road	10	7.01	17.32	1.43	0.58
Common Road	7	0.52	1.28	13.46	5.47
Wick Farm	65	2.48	6.13	26.21	10.60
Lower Farm	5	0.3	0.74	16.67	6.76

5.2. PRESERVATION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

The importance of the area for achieving nature conservation priorities is reflected in the identification of a number of Biodiversity Priority Habitats / BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) sites and two Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) within the plan area – see two maps depicting these (Map 11 and 12) below. There is also considerably more evidence on the Environment and Biodiversity in Evidence Base 2 - 2.9.

This policy conforms with national policies in the NPPF - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - Paragraphs 180-184, Habitats and biodiversity – 184-188, NPPG - Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 32-006-20191101 and local policies in the SODC Local Plan - Policy ENV2: Biodiversity - Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species, Policy ENV3: Biodiversity.

Beckley and Stowood lies in an area of high biodiversity importance in the County. Most of the Parish was once covered by ancient forest used for hunting and it stretched across the Parish and included Bernwood Forest, Stowood, Blackwater Wood and Shotover. Both Sydlings Copse and College Pond SSSI and Otmoor SSIs lie within the Parish, there are also numerous priority habitats including ancient woodland. Sydlings Copse is not only an Ancient Woodland and BBOWT reserve, but is also designated as Sydlings Copse & College Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its nationally important nature conservation interest. Similarly, Otmoor is not only an important RSPB reserve but parts of the site are also nationally designated as a SSSI.

The Parish also includes several Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within its boundary, i.e., Beckley Pasture LWS, Constable's Piece LWS, Upper Park Farm LWS, Cookes Copse LWS, and adjacent to the Parish boundary, Noke Wood & Sling Copse LWS and Otmoor LWS.

The parish has considerable biodiversity. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre has produced a very detailed report on Beckley and Stowood Parish and this can be found in Appendix 10. It shows detailed lists of protected and notable species found in the parish. These include –

- Amphibians – great crested and other newts, toads and frogs
- Over 100 species of birds
- Nearly 100 species of "higher flowering plants"
- 14 invertebrates – see, ants, sawflies and wasps
- 27 beetles
- Over 60 species of butterflies and moths and many other invertebrates
- 6 species of bats
- Mammals including hedgehogs, polecats, otters and badgers
- Water voles, brown hares, lizard, slow-worm and grass snake

A very comprehensive report on the ecology of Otmoor was prepared by Beckley residents for submission to Highways England on the Oxford Cambridge Expressway (Appendix 11.)

In addition, the Strategic Environmental Assessment states –

“Otmoor is an RSPB reserve. It is a large bowl-shaped area of land on the floodplain of the River Ray. The area of special scientific interest represents the core of what was, until recent times, an extensive area of wetland which was flooded in winter and was traditionally managed as rough grazing marsh. Much of the land outside the core area has been drained and converted to arable or improved pasture. The site contains a wide range of habitats with many species of nationally uncommon plants and animals. Otmoor was once renowned as an outstanding site for over-wintering wildfowl and waders, and is still of high regional value for birds with over sixty breeding species recorded in recent years. The condition of the SSSI units in the parish is ‘unfavourable recovering’ and ‘favourable’⁴.

The other very important and fragile SSSI in the parish is Sydlings Copse and College Pond partly owned and wholly managed by BBOWT. This site is situated near the strategic development site of Land north of Bayswater Brook.

Reports were prepared for the SODC Local Plan on this SSSI – by AECOM and Prof David Rogers. These are both discussed fully in the evidence for mitigation policies for the SSSI Evidence Base 2 – 5.4 and Appendices 23 and 24.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment also includes (3.3 Biodiversity, flora, fauna) an assessment of this SSSI -

*“Sidling’s Copse (also spelled Sydling’s Copse) consists of a mosaic of several habitats including calcareous fen, carr, broadleaved woodland scrub, reedbed, open water and acid and limestone grassland, lying in close proximity in and around a steeply sloping valley. It hosts over 400 plants including several uncommon species. Twenty-eight species of butterfly, 149 species of moth and several uncommon molluscs have been reported. The site has a long history of recording and was well known to early Oxford naturalists such as Gerard, Cole, Ashmole and Druce. **The condition of the SSSI unit in the parish is ‘unfavourable recovering’.**”⁵*

And goes on to say - *Biodiversity is plummeting nationally and internationally as a result of land take, habitat fragmentation, climate change, poor habitat management and other trends. The condition of the two SSSIs in the parish is broadly good. Woodland in the parish may be negatively affected by poor management. Development at Land North of Bayswater Brook could negatively affect Sidling’s Copse SSSI through increased recreational use and reduced air quality: many fens are susceptible to acid deposition, including from vehicle emissions* “⁶

In Appendix 1 - South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – Oxford Heights discusses Landscape and Development issues (page 20) and Figure 8.2 shows a strategy where most of the parish should be repaired.

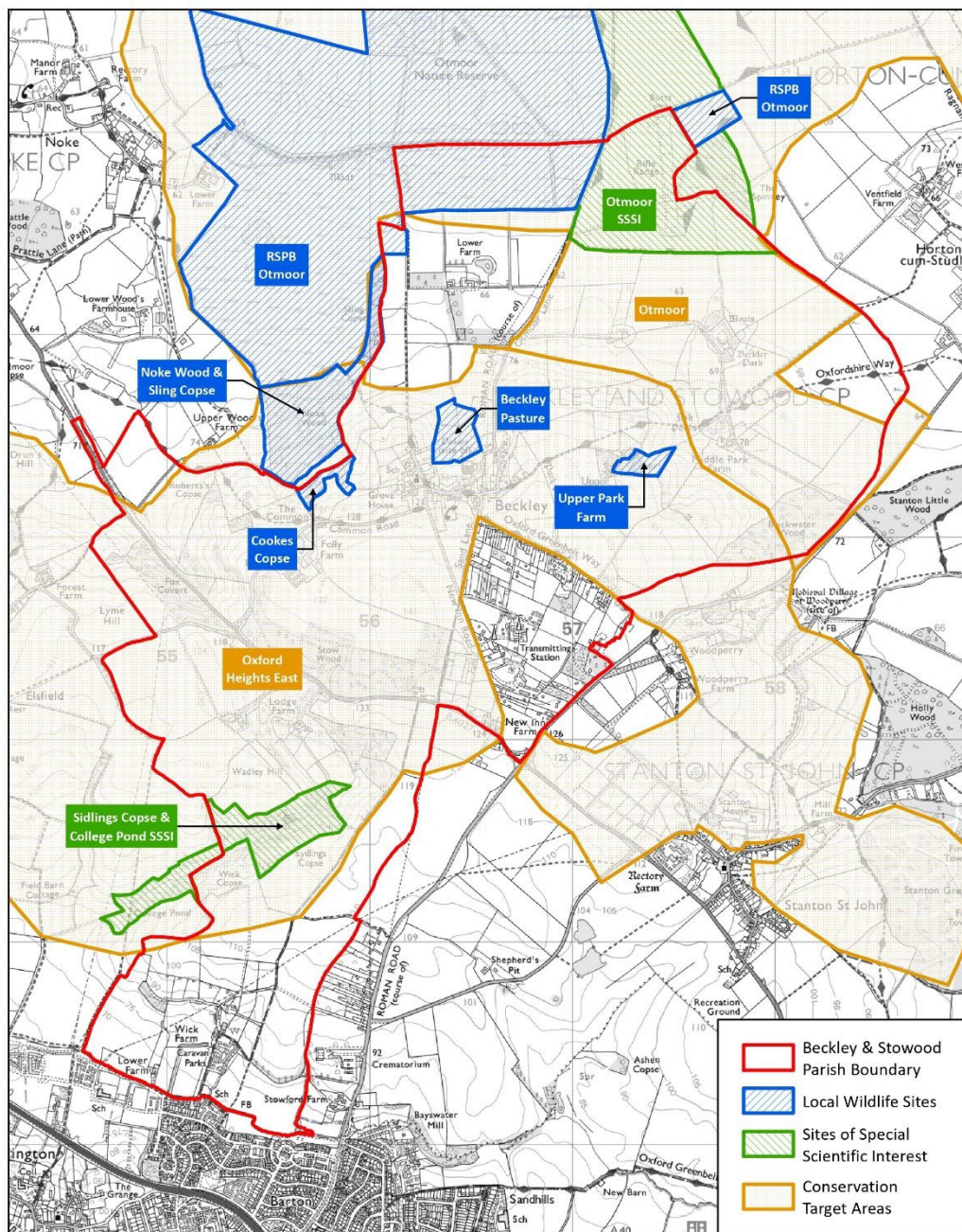
In Appendix 2. Updated Management Plan South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 2017 Lepus Report there are a number of recommendations to protect hedgerows, plant trees and protect the landscape.

⁴ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1002962&SiteName=Otmoor&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

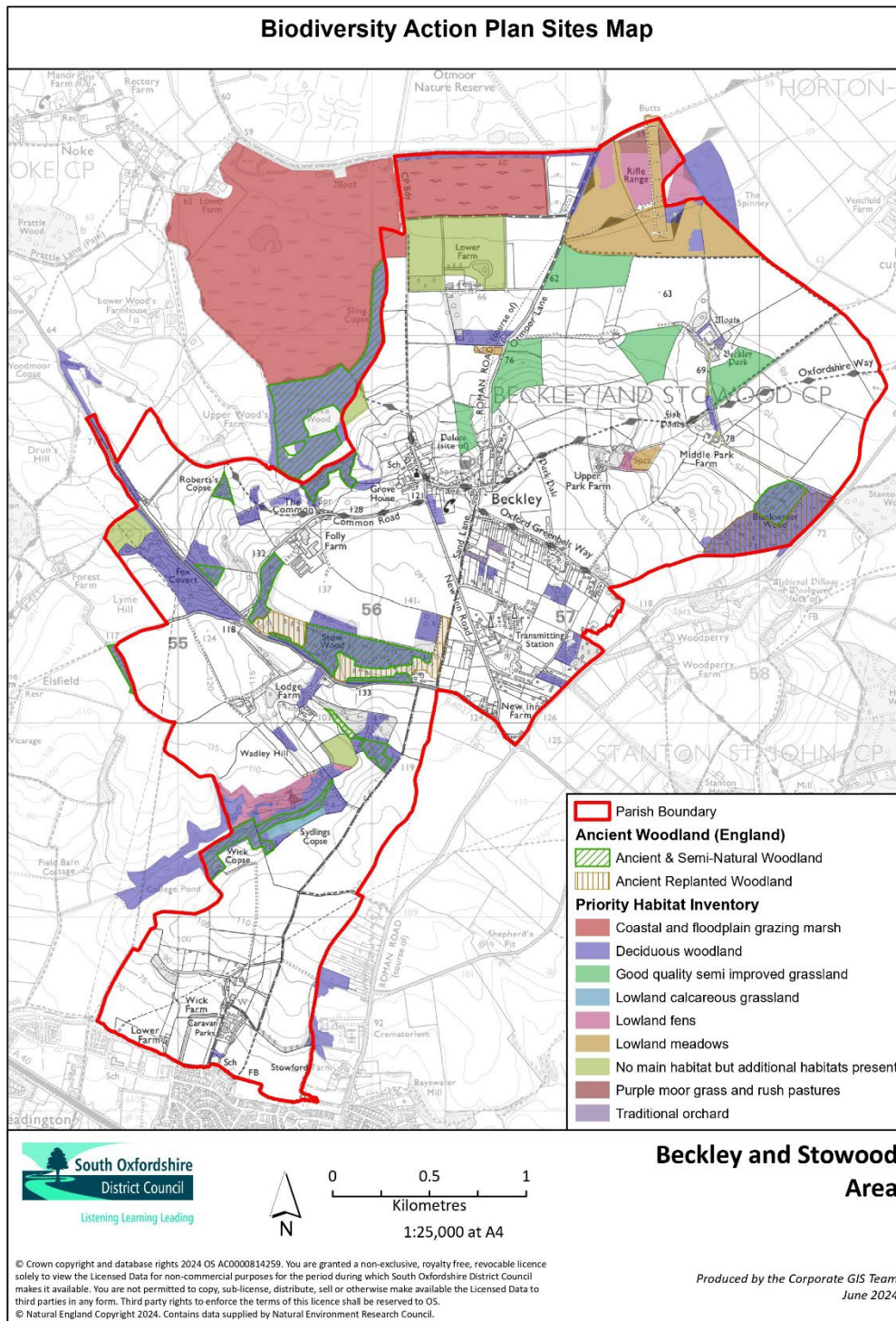
⁵ [https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1000378&SiteName=College %20Pond&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1000378&SiteName=College%20Pond&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=)

⁶ www.apis.ac.uk/acid-deposition-fen-marsh-and-swamp

Map 11 - Beckley and Stowood Designated Wildlife Sites Map



Map 12 – Biodiversity Action Plan Sites in Beckley and Stowood



In April '22 The Neighbourhood Planning team requested a report on the parish from the Oxfordshire Treescap Project. ⁷ Appendix 24.

“This report is intended to give a broad indication of the natural capital benefits that treescapes can bring to Beckley and Stowood parish and of the opportunities to increase them. The report can be used as the basis for creating a land or neighbourhood management plan that can help you develop policy and access funding opportunities. CAG [Community Action Groups] Oxfordshire can support you in creating that plan and applying for funding.”

This report gave valuable information on the opportunities for the parish. The recommendations –

“We recommend working with CAG Oxfordshire to create a long-term land management plan for your parish identifying the interventions that are easiest to deliver, that bring the greatest benefits and that are in line with your preferred long-term use for the land. Our maps can be used as a basis for that plan.

As part of that plan, it may prove valuable to set targets for establishing treescapes between now and 2050. This table summarises the elements that would need to be added to the site to reach the targets outlined in our Scenarios Report. We have set separate targets for woodland and grassland but you may want to consider one single target for these as a whole.

Scenario 1 is drawn from the targets that the Climate Change Committee says we must reach by 2050. Scenario 2 sets a more ambitious target in which Oxfordshire sets a standard for other counties to follow.”

Treescape	Scenario 1 target	Scenario 2 target
Woodland	14% of site area	17% of site area
Species-rich grassland	0% of site area	9% of site area
Total woodland or grassland	14% of site area	26% of site area
Hedgerows	66% of all field boundaries	80% of all field boundaries
Agroforestry	10% of site area	20% of site area
Community Orchards	1 in the Parish	2 in the Parish

There would also be value in increasing the number of trees in parks, streets and other open spaces in your parish.

“Achieving the recommendations set out in the previous slide would require establishing the following treescapes between now and 2050:

7

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/zhwchp9ouvoee15/ID89%20Beckley%20and%20Stowood%20Parish%20Treescap e%20Report%20%28003%29.pdf?dl=0>

Treescape Targets	Current (ha/km)	Scenario 1 (ha/km)	Increase 1 (ha/km)	Scenario 2 (ha/km)	Increase 2 (ha/km)
Woodland	117.1	128.4	11.4	156.0	38.9
Species-rich grassland	91.1	0.0	0.0	82.6	0.0
Total Woodland or Grassland	208.2	128.4	0.0	238.5	30.3
Hedgerows	39.5	64.1	24.6	77.7	38.1
Agroforestry	0.0	91.7	91.7	183.5	183.5

The precise natural capital benefits that establishing these treescapes will deliver depends on where they are sited. This can be determined in your land use management or neighbourhood plan, which CAG Oxfordshire can help you devise.

The following tables in this report are designed to give you an overall sense of the degree of benefit each treescape opportunity can bring, and what to consider when creating your land use plan.

It is important that any development within the Parish not only protects biodiversity, but also seeks the protection of existing habitats, species and features of nature conservation interests and also to require development to deliver a net gain in biodiversity as required by national policy and the SODC planning policy.

There is a large network of footpaths and bridleways through the Parish, connecting it to Oxford, Otmoor, the countryside and other villages. They are enjoyed by many walkers and wildlife enthusiasts locally and from far afield – see Evidence Base 2- 2.7 for a map.

There has been a recent call for a cycleway from Beckley and the neighbouring village of Stanton St John to access Oxford, Headington, the hospitals and other areas of Oxford such as Cowley. A new Greenways project similar to the one in Cambridge has just been set up to develop the infrastructure of cycleways and lobbying for one for Beckley is being undertaken. An initial residents survey on the demand for a cycleway has been undertaken and the results are shown in Evidence Base 2- 2.8.8. and details of the survey in Appendix 9.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Report states –

“There are few existing environmental problems in the parish. The main ones are: high housing prices and low housing affordability; poor public transport, leading to heavy use of private vehicles; high water stress; and the need for good agricultural management to protect water quality.”

In the section on Landscape (page 24) it goes on to say – *“Likely future without the plan: Most of the parish landscape is unlikely to be significantly affected in the absence of the neighbourhood plan. However, development at Land North of Bayswater Brook will have a significant impact on the landscape at the southern end of the parish. That land is expected to change from open agricultural fields to an urban landscape, and at night the currently-dark area would be much more lit-up.”*

POLICY E 1. BIODIVERSITY

Development proposals which show a biodiversity net gain and conserve and enhance the environmental and landscape assets, including areas of designated Ancient Woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, RSPB reserves, Conservation Target Areas, Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats and Local Wildlife Sites (including BBOWT reserves) will be supported.

Development proposals should demonstrate how they will conserve local assets such as mature trees, hedgerows, grass verges along the roads and woodland edges, and where possible secure the provision of additional habitat areas for wildlife.

Proposals which encourage and promote additions and enhancements to wildlife corridors and air quality improvements as identified within the treescape project map will be supported.

*“In particular, in land given the designation NRN [Nature Recovery Network] Recovery Zone, **there is a need to complete links in wildlife corridors to enhance the role of Sydlings Copse by maximising its links to newly created biodiverse areas close to the City boundary**, and to create new and stronger links with woodland/substantial hedge within developed and undeveloped parts of this parish and towards adjoining parishes, thus linking Sydlings Copse, Stow Wood, Noke Wood, Otmoor NRN Core Zone and The Spinney, Blackwater Wood, and onwards towards Stanton Little Wood and the Bernwood NRN Core Zone. Similarly, every opportunity to form new links between pastureland, especially that which is recommended to be enhanced to Species Rich Grassland in and around Beckley must be promoted and supported. See maps 30, 31, 32.*

*Therefore, it makes good sense to apply the strictest possible planning controls in areas marked for Biodiversity potential and especially in parts of the parish shown as Multiple Benefit Areas (Maps 47, 48, 49) in order to realise the goals, set for this Parish. Given the clear need for measures to improve Air Quality in the south east part of Beckley Parish that reaches towards Oxford, and the ability of this land to provide such necessary health benefits for existing homes in Oxford City, **it is vital that any new development should not increase air pollution, and that any development will not trap polluted air due to the height of buildings, or funnelling, but will instead provide the quantity and positioning of woodland, hedge and trees within the area shown on Map 42 to reduce Air Pollution.**”* Link to Appendix 24 -

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/zhwchp9ouvoee15/ID89%20Beckley%20and%20Stowood%20Parish%20Treescape%20Report%20%28003%29.pdf?dl=0>

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION - BIODIVERSITY

Existing areas of hedgerow, woodland and meadow corridors will be identified, protected and enhanced. The Parish Council will work with landowners to take action to increase areas within the Parish which would be favourable as a habitat and /or wildlife corridor, as required of us as a Parish with key wildlife corridors and largely identified as a Nature Recovery Network [NRN] Recovery Zone, with areas of Oxfordshire NRN Core Zones. In line with that, a long-term land management plan for Beckley Parish will be prepared, as advised by Oxfordshire Treescape Project.

5.3. PRESERVATION OF OUR HERITAGE

This policy conforms with the following national planning policies - NPPF - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - 180 to 184, NPPG- Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 18a-002-20190723, Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 18a-003-20190723, Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 18a-005-20190723 and policies in the SODC Local Plan - "Policy ENV6: Historic Environment, Policy ENV7: Listed Buildings, Policy ENV8: Conservation Areas, Policy ENV9: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments, Policy ENV10: Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes"

Beckley has developed for over 3,500 years with first settlements being noted in the Bronze Age. Please see Appendix 1 - South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – Oxford Heights. There is a considerable amount of important heritage including 45 listed buildings in the Parish and the older part of the village of Beckley is a Conservation Area. Among the listed buildings are Grade I listed buildings of Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Beckley Park. There is also one scheduled monument and one Grade II* Registered Historic Park and Garden. These are discussed in more details in the Evidence Base 1 -History 2.3 and Character and Heritage Evidence Base 2 - 2.11.3. Detailed assessments of the Conservation Area and the three other areas of the parish are to be found in the Character Assessments for each area in Appendices 11-15. It is important that we preserve our heritage.

The majority of the listed buildings are within the Conservation Area of Beckley village. There are additional listed buildings at Wick Farm, which was an important farm near Headington. The most important buildings, listed Grade I are the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which has Norman origins and Beckley Park a triple moated brick built Medieval Hunting Lodge. The oldest houses both in the Conservation Area and scattered around the Parish were built of local materials – mainly limestone rubble with originally mainly thatched roofs and wooden lintels. There is a list of the listed buildings in Appendix 4.

The older houses in the Conservation Area, are mainly stone, while more recent ones are mainly of brick. The Woodperry Road area was built starting in 1930s along what was a track to Woodperry House. They started mainly as bungalows, but many have been replaced by an eclectic mix of larger houses. New Inn Road has many bungalows and has a lower housing density than the Conservation Area and Woodperry Road. The houses on the Horton Road

have very large gardens. The B4027 was an important coaching road to Worcester and has a number of houses which served both as farmhouses and inns. Wick Farm (the farmhouse, barn and gate posts are listed Grade II and the Well House Grade II*) is in the south of the Parish nearer Oxford has a mobile home site and provides the only affordable housing in the Parish. See Evidence Base 2- 2.11.4 and Appendix 14.

Appendix 3 South Oxfordshire District Council - Landscape Assessment Update 2018 – Extract Covering Beckley and Stowood Parish a map showing Historic Landscape Characterisation for the whole parish and the strategic development site of Land north of Bayswater Brook and assesses the impact on the historic and landscape character.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment – Heritage (page 22) states – *“Likely future without the plan: Given the current planning regime, and the limited amount of development likely to take place in most of the parish, most of these heritage assets are likely to remain in their current state. The key exception is Wick Farm in the south of the parish, where the Wick Farm Wellhouse is on the Heritage at Risk register. South Oxfordshire Local Plan’s Policy STRAT13 states that, as part of the Bayswater development, a schedule of works must be agreed with the council for the repair of Wick Farm Wellhouse; a landscape buffer must be put in place between the development and Wick Farm; and high quality design must be incorporated to preserve or enhance the listed buildings and their settings.”*

POLICY H 1. PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE

The parish’s designated historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

The effect of a development proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the planning application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be taken having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

There is currently no list of non-designated assets for the parish such as the old telephone box in Beckley High Street.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION – DEVELOPMENT OF A LIST OF NON-DESIGNATED ASSETS

The community will develop a list of non-designated assets.

5.4. DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

In addition to National Planning Policy Framework, The South Oxfordshire District Local Plan 2035, future development sites within the Neighbourhood Plan Area of Beckley and Stowood Parish should have regard to the following suite of policies which have been designed to manage the way in which development comes forward.

The approach to development within and outside the settlement boundary is dealt with under policy VB1 above.

5.4.1. Protecting Important Views

The Parish has an important number of views and vistas that need to be maintained and enhanced against future development especially from the top of the hill where Beckley and Stowood village is built, but also not forgetting the views of the countryside from within Oxford city. There are spectacular views from Beckley ridge north towards Otmoor from the Conservation Area and to Brill and towards Aylesbury from Woodperry Road and from Stowood to the Stokenchurch cutting. These views are. important and are shown within the Parish in Map 13 and must be preserved at all costs.

The importance of views and vistas is discussed in more detail in Evidence Base 2 - 2.11.1 Views and Vistas. Please also see Appendices 1,2,3,12, 13,14 and 15 and the detailed character assessments for each of the four areas of the parish – Evidence Base 2 -2.11.4.

This policy conforms to national policies - NPPF - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - 180, Achieving well-designed places – 131 and SODC Local Plan policies - Policy ENV1: Landscape and Countryside 2. viii) important views and visually sensitive skylines.

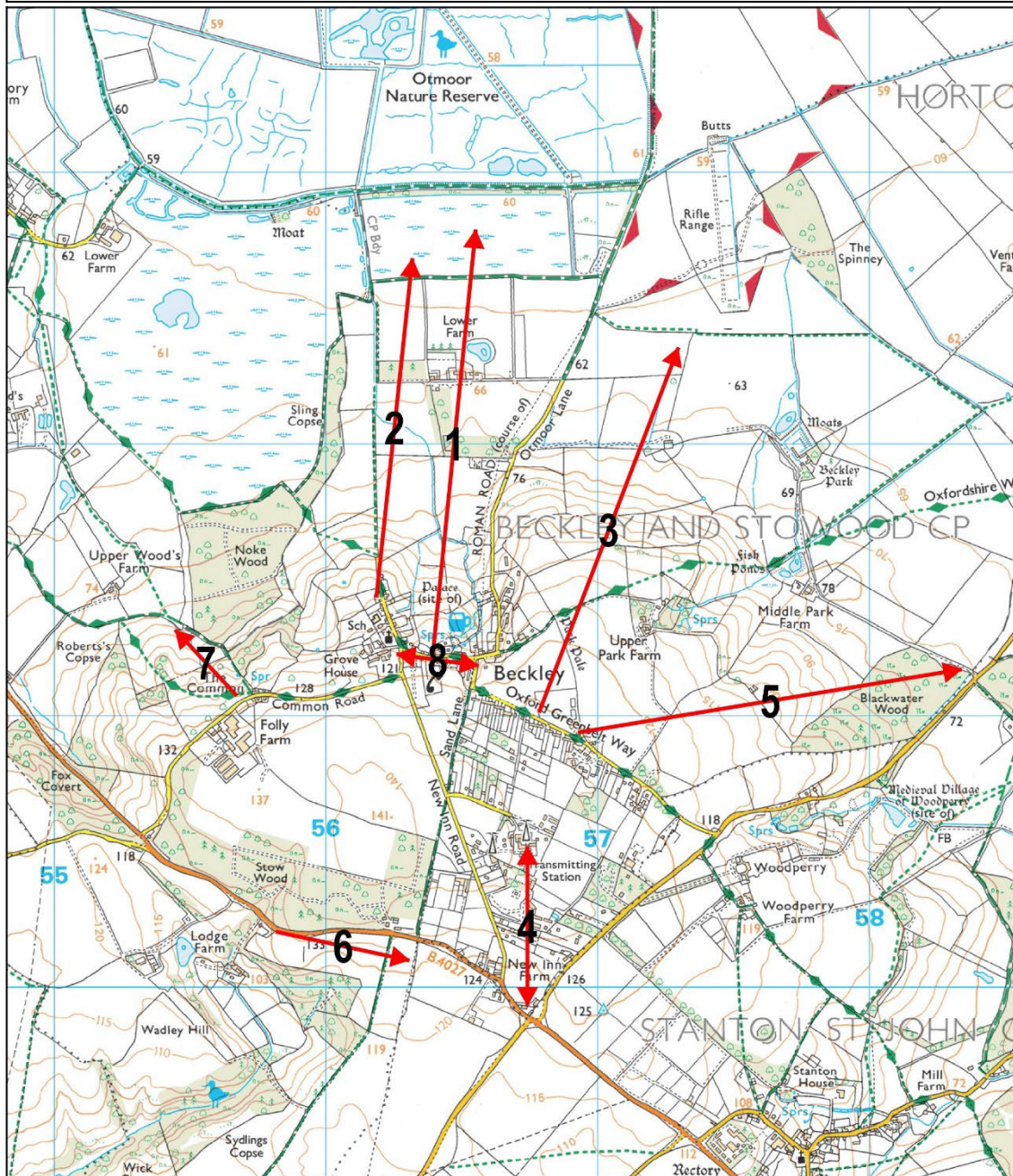
POLICY DS 1. IMPORTANT VIEWS

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following Important Views as shown on Map 13.

- View 1. From the High Street Across Otmoor
- View 2. Across Otmoor from Church Street
- View 3. Across Otmoor from Woodperry Road
- View 4. Beckley from Shotover showing Beckley Transmitter
- View 5. From Woodperry Road to Brill
- View 6. From Stowood to Stokenchurch Cutting
- View 7. Across Otmoor from Common Road
- View 8. High Street Beckley

Development proposals should preserve or enhance the local character of the landscape and through their design, height and massing should recognise and respond positively to the various Important Views. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on an identified Important View will not be supported.

Map 13 – Beckley and Stowood Views Map confined to the parish boundaries



5.4.2. Parking

NPPF 111 states - *111. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:*

(a) the accessibility of the development;

(b) the type, mix and use of development;

(c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;

(d) local car ownership levels; and

(e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

The NPPF 112. States - *Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.*

Parking standards from the Oxfordshire County Council were being reviewed in September and October '22 and were decided at the November cabinet meeting ⁸. These contain maximum numbers of parking spaces per bedroom and particular policies for 'edge of Oxford developments. These policies aim to restrict parking spaces and therefore car ownership and usage. This policy is very suitable for new large developments such as Land north of Bayswater Brook and is copied below -

Table 3: Edge of Oxford City Sites Car Parking Standards

Development Type	Parking Provision
1-2 bedroom dwellings	Up to 1 space per dwelling to be provided within the development site.
3-bedroom dwelling	Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
4+ bedroom dwelling	Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site.
Wheelchair accessible or adaptable houses and flats.	1 space per dwelling to be provided within the curtilage of the dwelling (must be designed in accordance with Part M of Building Regulations)
Student accommodation	0 spaces per resident room. Operational parking and disabled parking to be considered on a case-by-case.
Motorcycle and powered two-wheeler parking	1 space per five dwellings.

⁸ <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/b21161/Addenda%20Tuesday%2018-Oct-2022%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=9> page 27

The report to the cabinet in September '22 states – “*2.3. The NPPF also describes the plan-making system which includes local and neighbourhood plans that guide local communities to develop and shape their own surroundings. These plans often contain policies on car and cycle parking.*”⁹”

The County Council Standards on Parking have not been through examination.

The draft standards do concede that some villages have little or no public transport and therefore limited opportunity to reduce car usage. Such is the case of Beckley village. The parking standards for villages such as Beckley are copied below -

7.0. Residential Car Parking Standards for all areas of Oxfordshire (other than Oxford City and Edge of City sites)

7.3. It is recognised that for development proposals that are located in rural areas of Oxfordshire, such as villages and hamlets, access to frequent public transport services and high standards of direct pedestrian and cycle connections is not always available (unless it is provided by a new development). This tends to mean that the range of facilities and services expected to accommodate a reduced level of car parking provision is not always possible without causing indiscriminate carriageway parking and highway safety issues. On this basis, the parking standards in Table 4(b) are appropriate to use. When such standards are used a justification will be required within a transport submission.



Table 4(b): Car Parking Standards for the rest of Oxfordshire (Villages & Hamlets)

Rural Oxfordshire	Parking Provision
1-bedroom dwelling	Up to 1 space per dwelling to be provided within the development site.
2-bedroom dwelling	Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
3 – 4-bedroom dwellings	Up to 2 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site
5+ bedroom dwelling	Up to 3 spaces per dwelling to be provided within the development site.

⁹ WORKING THIRD DRAFT (August 2022): Parking Standards for New Developments Service Improvement Programme

https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s62138/CA_SEP2022R11%20Annexe%201%20-%20Vehicular%20and%20Cycle%20Parking%20Standards.pdf

The aim of the parking policy for Beckley and Stowood Parish outside the strategic development site of Land north of Bayswater Brook is to reduce congestion on village roads by encouraging off road parking within the curtilage of the new house. This policy arose from the very first community meeting for the Neighbourhood Plan and has persisted throughout the consultations as being very important. For clarity Policy DS2 does not apply to the strategic development site of Land north of Bayswater Brook. The parking requirements for that site should meet the most up to date Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards.

There is no regular public transport or cycleway in the parish, so travel by car is the only option for most households and most households need one car per adult householder.

Evidence Base 1 - 2.8. Getting Around – Transport discusses the provision of public transport and all modes of transport. The north of the parish Beckley village and the countryside has access to very little public transport. The H5 bus from Bicester to the John Radcliffe hospital stops on the B4027 every hour. However, the bus stop is 30-45 minutes' walk from Beckley village and there is nowhere to leave a cycle. The Parish Council funds another bus, the Otmoor Flyer 2 days per week, which leaves Beckley at around 10.30 a.m. to central Oxford, returning at lunch time. There are no cycleways. Some drive to Barton to catch a bus and leave their cars parked in the roads there, but there are plans to make Barton a controlled parking zone, so this may not be possible in future.

Evidence Base 1 - 2.8.5. Traffic In Beckley Village and Wick Farm describes the severe traffic congestion in Beckley village, especially at the beginning and end of the school day, when the bus and parents mix with cars parked in the High Street and Church Street sometimes leading to gridlock. Further evidence is shown in Evidence Base 1 -2.8.6. – Parking, on the need to reduce parking on the village roads to reduce congestion.

In addition, car ownership in the parish has been analysed from 2011 census data and is shown in Evidence Base 2 -5.3.4. with a table showing average car /van ownership in Beckley is 1.77 per household.

Implementing the new car parking standards (4b) for Beckley is very unlikely to reduce car ownership or the number of cars, but will just encourage more to park in the narrow village roads causing greater congestion. This has been reported to have happened at the new development at Barton Park where parking is restricted with notices for people to park elsewhere i.e., in surrounding roads on the Barton estate rather than locally.

The Royal Horticultural Society provides advice on designing front gardens with cars, ¹⁰ planting front gardens¹¹, and porous driveways to diminish water runoff. ¹² These guides are helpful in showing how driveways and front gardens can be designed to allow for the parking of cars 'in-plot' whilst allowing front gardens to continue to perform a valuable role in supporting local biodiversity.

¹⁰ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=879>

¹¹ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=877>

¹² <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=878>

POLICY DS 2. PARKING

Development proposals should make provision for parking within the overall site, in accordance with the provisions of the most up-to-date Oxfordshire County Council standards.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should incorporate parking provision which:

- is provided off-road wherever practicable;
- responds positively to the contents of the Design Guide and minimises the impact of the private car on the street scene; and
- reflects the character and appearance of the immediate locality as set out in the Character Assessments at Appendices 12 and 13

5.4.3. Flood Risk

This policy is in conformity with national policies - NPPF - 11, 157, NPPG - Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 34-019-20140306 and SODC Local Plan policies - Policy ENV4: Watercourses, Policy EP4: Flood Risk, DES 1, (particularly 1 vi) and EP4.

As described in Evidence Base 2 - 2.2.2. Water Courses and Flooding, regular flooding occurs in both the north of the parish near Otmoor and in the south at the Bayswater Brook. There are a series of springs from the middle of Beckley village down Church Street, High Street and Otmoor Lane onto Otmoor. Springs at Upper Park Farm flow down the hill to Middle Park Farm and near Beckley Park. Flash flooding also occurs from the top of the limestone ridge down Otmoor Lane and in gardens nearby.

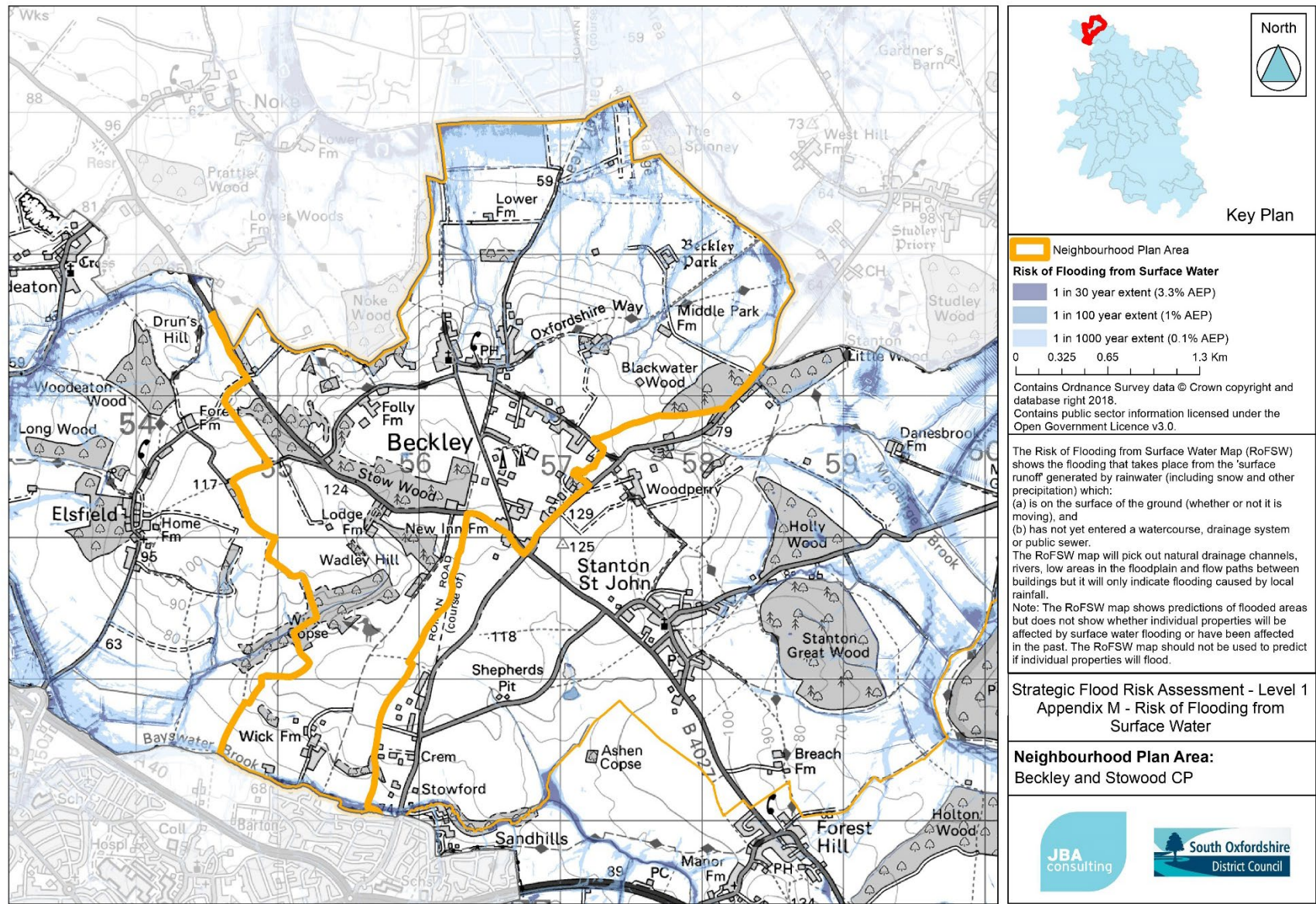
In addition, there is usually a stream down Otmoor Lane from the village pond, even in summer, from springs near and above the pond.

The map on the next page shows some of the springs and the flood risk.

The Bayswater Brook near Wick Farm and Lower Farm floods regularly, mainly from water run-off. This is a danger that this could be greatly exacerbated by the development at the development of Land north of Bayswater Brook.

POLICY DS 3. FLOOD RISK AND DEVELOPMENT

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should minimise the use of paved and hard-standing areas and utilise porous driveways and planting to reduce the risk of flooding and run off.



Map 14 – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Beckley and Stowood

5.4.4. Dwelling Size

This policy is in conformity with national policies - NPPF - 63, 69, 152 and SODC Local Plan policies Hii, H20, DS2.

ONS Census data [2011] for the Parish of Beckley and Stowood shows that the average household size is 2.6 people, average number of rooms per household is 6.9 and bedrooms 3.3 see Evidence Base 2- 2.5. However, in the initial residents' survey (Evidence Base 2-2.5.2) 66% of respondents had 4 bedrooms or more. 20% of those who expressed a wish to move said their house was too large. This reflects the fact that many residents have lived in the Parish for a long time and wish to continue to do so, but in a smaller house with a smaller garden, as they get older.

Green Belt policy (NPPF paragraph 154 (c and d)) restricts replacement buildings so that they are not materially larger than the one they replace. The 40% rule of thumb, Policy H20 Extensions to Dwelling in the Local Plan 2035 on a maximum volume that can be added [see Evidence Base 2- 3.1.1.] is important in ensuring that replacement buildings do not become overly large and dominate the landscape and surrounding dwelling. However, permitted development rights have successfully been used to increase the volume of a replacement building over the existing in the Green Belt.

The responses to the initial residents' survey see 3.2._noted, under the heading Aspirations for the Next 15 Years that:

30% would like more small houses with 21% wanting more bungalows and houses suitable for the elderly. 21% wanted more mixed housing while 27% thought it should remain as it is.

In the details of responses Appendix 19 - The 10% who said they might move of these 20% said their house was too large. 7% too small, 13% wanted to live independently 7% wanted to live closer to relatives. Most were trying to downsize either house or garden, which reflects the ages of the respondents. 7% felt their house too small. If moving the ideal sized house for 35% of those who responded was 2 bedrooms, 29% 3 bedrooms and the same percentage with 4 bedrooms.

Asked about the provision of affordable housing 96% did not want it and only 2 respondents [3.6%] wanted affordable housing and only 1 person wanted housing with support services provided.

POLICY DS 4. SMALLER HOMES

Development proposals which deliver smaller homes (1-3 bedrooms) will be supported where they otherwise comply with the policies in the development plan.

5.5. BECKLEY AND STOWOOD DESIGN GUIDE

A consultation was carried out with local residents on 'Design Criteria' in December 2017 first by public meeting and then by survey publicised in the Beckley and Stowood Newsletter delivered to all houses in the Parish. The results can be found in the Consultation Report Sections 3 and 4 and Appendices 20 and 21 and Evidence Base 2 - sections 3.3. and 3.4 and details in the Appendices 19- 21. This has come to be known as the Beckley Design Guide and was originally based on the SODC Design Guide.

In section Evidence Base 2 -3.1.2. Sympathetic Design in Keeping with Surroundings the NPPFs on design are discussed particularly NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) in its section 12. Achieving Well-Designed Places contains a number of policies 131 - 141 seeking to enhance design and remain in keeping with the surroundings. A number of planning applications are cited where it appeared that greater weight was given to 'Innovative design' – former NPPF 134 b and current NPPF 139 b than to being in keeping with surroundings NPPF 132, to 135 b-d, particularly 135. Examples of a number of designs that were felt inappropriate and not in keeping were cited as being undesirable.

In Evidence Base 1 Sections 2.1 and 2.2 and Appendices 1, 2 and 3 the landscape features are discussed in detail and the design guide draws some of the policies from these.

In Appendix 2. Updated Management Plan South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 2017 Lepus Report recommendations include supporting – minimising the impact of tall buildings and burying underground cables, which supports the Beckley Design Guide.

In Evidence Base 2 Section 2.11, especially the character assessments for each of the four parish areas 2.114-8 and their respective appendices 12-15 give detail of how the buildings look and informs what should be preserved and enhanced.

There could be a potential conflict between policies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions which support climate change policies and conservation policies. Recent developments in technology have improved the appearance of double-glazing units, so it is now difficult to tell if a window is single or double glazed and also improved the visual aspects of solar panels, by either mimicking roofing tiles or considerably reducing their visibility. Conservation Officers, while protecting heritage should be more flexible in allowing listed buildings to employ these new technologies to reduce energy consumption.

These policies are in conformity with national policies - NPPF - Achieving well-designed places - 131-141, NPPG - Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 26-005-20191001, Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 26-008-20191001 and SODC Design Guide and SODC Local Plan policies, DES 1 (particularly 1 vii), 1 xiii), 1 xv), DES 2.

POLICY DG 1. BECKLEY DESIGN GUIDE

As appropriate to their scale, development proposals outside the strategic allocation at land north of Bayswater Brook should respond positively to the following design principles and the character and vernacular of the part of the parish in which they are located as described in the character assessments at Appendices 12-15 and the Conservation Area appraisal for Beckley:

- new buildings should be compatible with the size and character of existing buildings in the immediate locality;
- power cables shall wherever possible be located underground and minimise the visual impacts associated with new development;
- building heights should be in keeping with that of the surrounding buildings and should not extend beyond three storeys;
- the design of new buildings should avoid appearing over-bearing by comparison with the neighbouring buildings, having regard to their height, massing and general scale;
- extensions to buildings should be subservient to the original building and should appear a natural evolution of the buildings which respects its character and appearance;
- porches and canopies should be in keeping with the character, appearance and design of the dwelling;
- external landscaping proposals should respect the character of the village and the landscape of the immediate surroundings;
- wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate open fencing, railings and hedging that relate sensitively to the open countryside;
- the design of new buildings or extensions should incorporate traditional pitched roofs;
- TV dishes and aerials should generally be kept away from the principal elevations and should not be visible on any silhouette elevations.
- large box-type dormer windows should be avoided;
- wherever practicable, solar panels should face the rear of the property, located in hidden valleys and away from principal elevations. Consideration should be given to the use of designs such as panels without frames, or those which blend into the roofing colour and design of the host building.

The following additional design principles will apply in the Conservation Area:

- the use of vernacular materials such as limestone rubble with quoins, well-modelled brickwork, wooden lintels and either wooden window casements or high-quality double-glazed units;
- roofs pitches should be covered in tile, slate or thatch; and
- solar panels should mimic roof tiles and/or have minimal visual impact

Development proposals shall also demonstrate how they will maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements, and promote the use of building materials to maintain vernacular style and a scale of development which is in keeping with and appropriate to the Oxford Heights landscape character area.

5.5.1. Night Sky/Lighting

The Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by a lack of street lighting and the darker areas of night sky are noticeably more obvious towards the north of the Parish, north of the limestone ridge and adjacent to Otmoor, which has virtually no illumination at night. The atmosphere and character are very tranquil and leads to a strong feeling of remoteness during the evenings. See Evidence Base 2- 2.11.2. There is very little street lighting in Beckleyvillage and none outside the village centre.

Dark night skies are highly beneficial to professional and casual astronomers as well as stargazers. Dark skies also contribute to the character of the Parish at night and to the welfare of wildlife, where their circadian rhythms can be disturbed by lighting at night. Those who live in a 'dark environment' often notice the cycles of the Moon and the influence this has on the ability to navigate footpaths and pavements etc. at night more keenly.

In the community consultation on the Beckley design guide 77% of respondents agreed that "Outside lighting on buildings should be fully shielded to direct light downwards to prevent light pollution" (question 12.) see 3.3. and 3.4. and Appendix 21.

Evidence from the www.lightpollutionmap.info website shows a relatively good level of visibility at night time with radiance levels typically between 0.25 and 1.5 10^{-9} W / Cm² sr, in the northern part of the Parish and in the region of 10 10^{-9} W / Cm² sr in the far south on the edge of Oxford. Figure 6 below demonstrates the general levels of light pollution to the rural north east of Oxford:

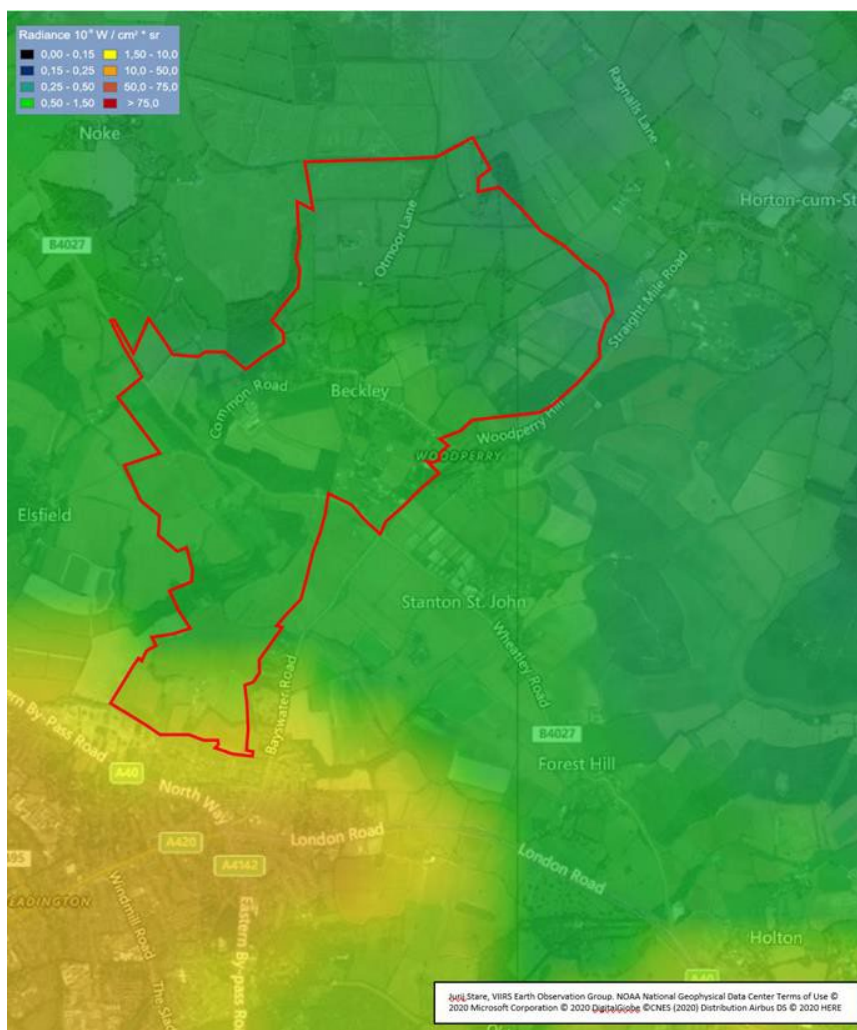


Figure 6. Light Pollutions Levels for Beckley and Stowood Parish¹³

Reducing light pollution particularly from Oxford will also contribute to saving energy and climate change targets. It is noted that Oxfordshire County Council recently tried to develop a policy on this.

The SEA report states *“A very positive policy which helps to protect views of the night sky, people’s ability to sleep well, and biodiversity”* (page 48).

The policy is in conformity with the following national policies NPPG - Light pollution - Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 31-001-20191101, Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 31-002-20191101, Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 31-003-20191101, Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 31-004-20191101, Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 31-005-20191101, Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 31-006-20191101 and SODC Local Plan policies - DES1, DES2, DES6.

¹³ source: www.lightpollutionmap.info)

POLICY DG 2. NIGHT SKY/LIGHTING

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for external lighting should incorporate design features and mitigating measures to ensure that the lighting is at the minimum level for its intended purpose.

Lighting proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential properties in the immediate vicinity or on the wider rural character of the countryside and biodiversity will not be supported.

5.6. CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Please see Evidence Base 1 - 2.10 Climate Change where this policy background is covered in much greater detail.

In the words of the United Nations, *'Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment'*. Listing risks to food production, rising sea levels, and catastrophic flooding as examples, the UN continues *'Without Drastic Action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.'*

- In May 2019 the UK parliament declared a Climate Change Emergency. They have committed to a reduction in Greenhouse gas emissions by 50% on 1990 levels by 2025, and by 80% by 2050.
- Both Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire have declared a Climate Change Emergency.
- In October 2019 SODC agreed to become carbon neutral in the operations by 2025, and to be a carbon neutral district by 2030.

In October 2019 the Ministry of Housing started a consultation on 'Future Homes Standards' which closed in February 2020. Approved Document L - Conservation of fuel and power was published and circulated on October 2019 as part of the consultation¹⁴ Published at the same as part of this revision was – "Ventilation and indoor air quality in new homes"¹⁵ and "Research into overheating in new homes" – parts 1¹⁶ and 2¹⁷ At the same time a new National Design Guide¹⁸ was published which advocates reduction in energy consumption -

¹⁴

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835547/ADL_vol_1.pdf

¹⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835208/Research_-_ventilation_and_indoor_air_quality.pdf

¹⁶

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835240/Research_into_overheating_in_new_homes_-_phase_1.pdf

¹⁷

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/845483/Research_into_overheating_in_new_homes_-_phase_2.pdf

¹⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf

House building of itself creates greenhouse gases, so this impact should be taken into account when a planning application is considered. In his Spring Statement in 2019 the Chancellor declared that the new Future Homes Standard aims to make all new build homes 'more energy efficient and to future proof them in readiness for low carbon heating systems' by 2025.

In June 2019 Beckley Parish Council also recognised the Climate Change Emergency –

"Beckley declares an environment and climate emergency, to recognise the current environmental and climate crisis in decisions made locally and to see what we can do about it as a community"

In Beckley, the main production of carbon is by transport (particularly car use) and household heating. House building also creates carbon, as does major changes in use of land.

The SEA report comments on this policy are – *"A very positive policy in terms of climate change and the climate emergency; also indirectly for human health (reduced energy cost, reduced fuel poverty) and biodiversity (impacts of climate change). The additional costs of sustainable construction will slightly increase the cost of housing during construction, but will reduce operational costs. Some of the energy efficiency measures – solar panels, heat pumps etc. – are likely to have a negative impact on the landscape. This should ideally also apply to retrofits Retrofits included as a community aspiration."*

This policy is in conformity to national policies - NPPG - Climate Change - Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 6-001-9-20140306, and SODC Local Plan policies - Policy DES8: Promoting Sustainable Design, Policy DES9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, Policy DES10: Carbon Reduction.

POLICY CC 1. NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

New dwellings should be built to the highest standards in terms of energy and materials efficiency to meet the standards in Policy DES10 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, or subsequent standards as they emerge in Local or National Policy. The provision of the following sustainability features, where appropriate. will be supported:

- Alignment of dwellings - south facing where possible to give passive solar heating and to maximise solar roof panels.
- Maintenance - ensure minimum maintenance in all design features.
- High level of energy generation on site utilising solar panels, ground source and air source heat pumps as appropriate.
- High level of insulation.
- Sustainable water systems including drainage (driveways) and storage.
- the provision of electric vehicle charging points for all new dwellings.

The Government has concluded a national consultation on 'Future Homes Standards' and at the same time published a new National Design Guide which advocates reduction in energy consumption. The Energy Saving Trust advocated by SODC recommends a number of renewal energy projects and generating electricity at home from solar power, and the use of ground and air source heat pumps [Evidence Base 2- 2.10]

A European Strategy for low-emission mobility includes "Moving towards zero-emission vehicles" and The Energy Saving Trust recommends the use of greener vehicles [Evidence Base 2- 2.10].

There are a number of Government initiatives being implemented locally to promote more walking and cycling. There is involvement in the Greenways project to provide a cycling infrastructure with local lobbying to have this extended to Beckley and Stanton St John. A local survey of the demand has been carried out [see Evidence Base 2- 3.5. and Appendix 9.] There was no regular public transport serving Beckley village, but action by a local resident has ensured that the H5 bus from Bicester to the John Radcliffe Hospital makes one stop on B4027 every hour between approximately 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Residents of Wick Farm can use a regular bus service to and from Barton [see [Evidence Base 2- 2.8]

The SEA report comments were – *"This policy would have very positive impacts for air quality and climatic factors, and for people's health. The main development to which this is likely to apply is Land North of Bayswater Brook."*

This policy is in conformity with national policy - NPPF 111 and SODC Local Plan policies - "Policy DES8: Promoting Sustainable Design, Policy DES9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, Policy DES10: Carbon Reduction, Policy TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility".

POLICY CC 2. LOW CARBON TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

Development proposals which deliver low carbon transport solutions, including new cycle ways, safer walking, and increased use of buses where possible will be strongly supported.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION - RETROFITTING EXISTING HOUSES

Existing housing stock owners should be encouraged to retro fit more sustainable heating systems such as air pumps and solar panels, as well as being encouraged to participate in schemes offering insulation etc. Fitting of Electric vehicle charging points is also encouraged

5.7. PROTECTION OF THE PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT

While sport in the Green Belt and in the Parish is encouraged, residents feel that the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their homes is a value to be preserved. There is already an MOD rifle range at the end of Otmoor Lane and the noise from it can be heard not only across the Parish, but also in adjoining ones, depending on the wind direction. There is also a shooting range in New Inn Road, which although much less noisy than the MOD rifle range can be heard nearby.

5.8. REDUNDANT FARM BUILDINGS

Two sites have been identified for future development and while inclusion in this Plan does not ensure their future development, as this decision must be made by the land owner, it may facilitate it. The two brown field sites are –

- Wick Farm listed barn which is very dilapidated and neglected
- Royal Oak Farmyard

Wick Farm Barn

There is development potential to convert and renovate the large barn at Wick Farm and some of the old farm buildings. There was a planning application in 2012 to convert the large barn behind Wick Farm House into a house.¹⁹

The application was withdrawn and it is believed that this may have been due to the fact that it was likely to be refused.

Conversion of this large barn and other barns would save the buildings and make useful housing, a medical centre or commercial premises. It is the responsibility of owners of listed buildings to keep them in good repair or the local authority can step in with a repair order or intervene to protect buildings. The owners of Wick Farm are encouraged to redevelop the listed barn to preserve it.

Royal Oak Farmyard

Royal Oak Farm no longer runs as a farm, as the land has been sold, but the former farmyard is currently used for a number of small businesses. There was a successful farm shop, but traffic flow at weekends and the evenings on B4027 has diminished making it less attractive for businesses needing passing custom. The area is approaching an acre and there is an existing building, which could be converted into a house and sufficient land for several new houses.

¹⁹

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P11/W2263/LB#exactline>

5.9. ACTIONS FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL TO REVIEW

Areas for Improvement as recommended by the Conservation Area Assessment and elsewhere –

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – OTHER PARISH ACTIONS

1. To lay underground cable instead of overhead wiring. The neighbouring village of Stanton St John did this and it improved the appearance of the village considerably.
2. A coordinated scheme for the design, painting, fixing and siting of street furniture should also be considered.
3. A tree management scheme needs to be discussed with landowners in order to restore this important part of the character of the village.
4. Regular maintenance of the village pond to cut back overgrown trees and remove weeds. Possibly considering placing a seat nearby.
5. The use of traditional materials and detailing can have considerable effect in enhancing an area's character. With Planning and Conservation Officers encouraging owners of historic or important houses to remove unsympathetic modern materials such as concrete tiles, u.P.V.C. windows and plastic rainwater goods, and reinstating traditional materials such as clay tiles, softwood windows and cast-iron guttering.
6. Lobbying and involvement in the Greenways Project to build a cycleway to Beckley and Stanton St John.

Figure 7. Spring Bluebells in Stowood

