

**West Hanney**

**Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 to 2031**

Made Version October 2021

*Prepared by:*

***West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee***

*On behalf of West Hanney Parish Council*

## Table of Contents

1.	Introduction .....	3
2.	The West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan.....	3
2.1.	How the WHNDP fits into the Planning System .....	3
2.2.	Designation.....	4
2.3.	Community engagement .....	4
2.4.	Draft Plan Creation .....	5
2.5.	Strategic Environmental Assessment .....	5
2.6.	Submission, Examination and Referendum.....	5
3.	The Parish of West Hanney development context .....	5
3.1.	West Hanney Location and Brief History.....	6
3.2.	Planning and Development Context.....	9
3.3.	Our sustainability challenges.....	11
4.	Vision, Themes, Objectives and Policies .....	14
4.1	Theme 1: Rural Setting .....	15
	POLICY RS1- Village Character and Design .....	15
	POLICY RS2- The Hanney Gap .....	18
	POLICY RS3- Location of Development.....	21
4.2	Theme 2: Infrastructure and Facilities.....	22
	POLICY INF1- Community Infrastructure and Facilities .....	22
5.	Implementation and monitoring.....	25
5.1.	Implementation.....	25
5.2.	Monitoring.....	25
6.	List of Appendices .....	25

## 1. Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level.

West Hanney Parish Council is a “qualifying body” and authorised to lead in the preparation of the West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan (WHNDP). To produce the Plan, the Parish Council appointed the West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, which includes parish councillors and community volunteers, with support from Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) and Vale of White Horse District Council (LPA).

The WHNDP sets out a plan for a sustainable future for the village. It presents objectives and policies that will be used in shaping the future development of the parish. These have been established through public consultation and are underpinned by both statistical information and local knowledge. The aims and objectives of the WHNDP relate principally to planning matters but also have relevance to other issues important to the community. The Plan policies are compatible with the Development Plan for the District - Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 - Parts 1 and 2.

This document has been derived from the pre-submission version of the WHNDP that West Hanney Parish Council submitted for comment to the District Council and other statutory consultees, the community and other interested stakeholders for a statutory seven-week consultation. The statutory consultation period of seven-weeks ran from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019 until 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

Following the pre-submission consultation process, comments were analysed and used to refine the document.

## 2. The West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan

### 2.1. How the WHNDP fits into the Planning System

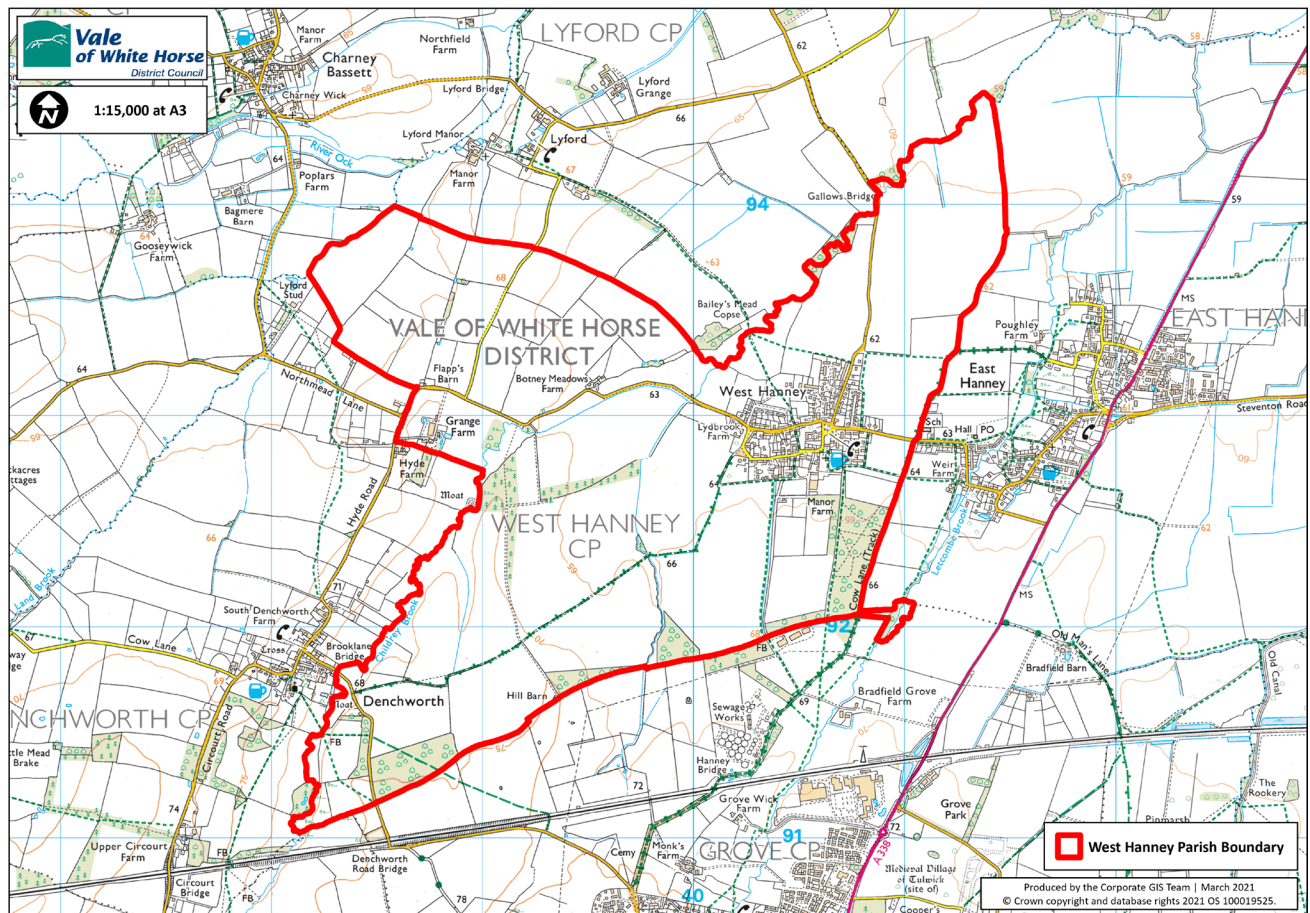
Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011 and allows local people a say in how development is shaped within their local areas. Neighbourhood Plans must have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Guidance and the development plan for the Vale of White Horse District which consists of:

- Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 - Part 1
- Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 - Part 2
- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan

## 2.2. Designation

In accordance with regulations, Vale of White Horse DC publicised the Neighbourhood Plan application from West Hanney Parish Council and advertised an 8-week consultation period ending on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The Head of Planning at Vale agreed to designate the whole area of West Hanney Parish (shown enclosed by the red line below) as the West Hanney Neighbourhood Area on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The Plan period is 2016 to 2031.

Figure 1: West Hanney Parish Boundary



## 2.3. Community engagement

From 17 April 2016, when the community was first consulted about the WHNDP, until the submission stage, the Steering Committee followed a community consultation strategy and encouraged community involvement through open meetings, via newsletters, the website, and more comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire (Appendix B), which assessed housing need and other key issues for the village.

At each stage in the Plan process, elements such as the Plan objectives, Vision and draft Policies have been refined in response to feedback from residents.

The extensive community consultation process is comprehensively documented in the Consultation Statement.

## **2.4. Draft Plan Creation**

The Steering Committee (SC) drafted policies to meet the WHNDP objectives. In this task, the SC had input from Community First Oxfordshire, the District Council and an independent planning advisor.

## **2.5. Strategic Environmental Assessment**

A SEA Screening Opinion produced by the Planning Department at the Vale of White Horse District Council on 6th August 2018 advised that a SEA would not be required on the WHNDP. For more details on the SEA opinion, please refer to 'West Hanney SEA Screening Statement' in Appendix E.

## **2.6. Submission, Examination and Referendum**

This document is the made version of the WHNDP. West Hanney Parish Council submitted the pre-submission version for comment to the District Council and other statutory consultees, the community and other interested stakeholders for statutory consultation. That consultation period ran from Friday November 1 2019 to Friday December 20 2019 for a period of seven weeks.

Following the pre-submission consultation process, comments were analysed and used to refine the document. The final submission version of the WHNDP was submitted to the District Council in February 2021, together with all the supporting documentation, including a Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement setting out who had been consulted, how the consultation had been undertaken and how the representations have informed the Plan.

Vale of White Horse District Council then consulted for a further minimum period of six weeks, before the plan was subjected to an Examination by an Independent Examiner. The examiner confirmed in June 2021 that, subject to specified amendments, the Plan meets the 'basic conditions' and should proceed to a local referendum. As the plan was supported by a majority vote at the referendum, the Plan has been 'made' by the District Council. This means that the policies of the WHNDP have full material weight (like the policies of the District-wide Local Plan 2031) when Vale of White Horse District Council determines planning applications in the NDP area.

# **3. The Parish of West Hanney development context**

The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 classifies West Hanney as a smaller village within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area. The Local Plan 2031 seeks to ensure that growth will have helped to maintain or enhance West Hanney's local services and that local needs will continue to be catered for. Development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily to meet local needs.

Limited development may be appropriate within the existing built up area of West Hanney. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are in keeping with local character and are proportionate in scale and meet local housing needs, and/or provide employment, services and facilities. The WHNDP does not allocate development sites.

### 3.1. West Hanney Location and Brief History



The Buttercross and Castleacre – perhaps West Hanney's oldest house

#### The Village

West Hanney is a rural village built on a low gravel platform slightly above the wider landscape of the Ock Valley, about 3 miles north of Wantage. The name Hanney is thought to derive from the Saxon 'hanena-ey', meaning 'the island frequented by wild cocks'. Several villages in the area are similarly located and are still referred to as the 'island villages'. This elevation spares them from most floods. Causeways still raise vulnerable village paths and form a link to East Hanney along School Road.

This separation of the two villages is still a critical part of their history and character. The 'Hanney Gap' has been eroded but still offers a definite feeling of openness with wide views to north and south. The Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire (NPCQ) published in 2017 stated that 90 % of villagers valued this space and wanted to protect it.

West Hanney is centred around the church and manor, with a nucleated east–west axis. The roads surround a central area of higher ground, opposite the nearby rise upon which the church stands. This street pattern is still clear today. East Hanney, separated by lower fields and Letcombe Brook, is a more linear agglomeration of at least two settlements and several manors, spread along the old Roman road. The development boundary for West Hanney has been set to allow some infilled plots but also to protect the present character and shape of the village and the gap in particular.

West Hanney also has a definite focus around its main green. This forms the centre of the current conservation area. It also has a smaller western green, the site of an old pond. In the last 10 years there has been considerable new building with the construction of 34 houses with planning permission for a further 15 houses.

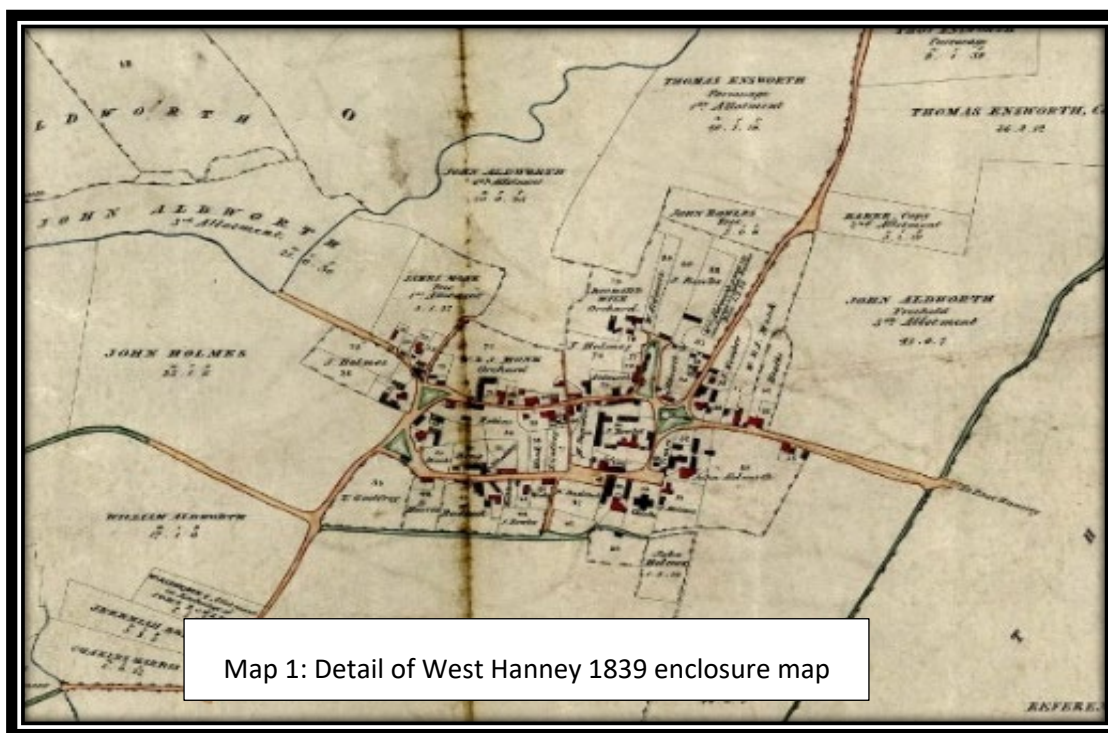
#### The History



The recent discovery of Neolithic pottery in the fields between the Hanneys confirms the early habitation of this fertile area. These early hunter-gatherers were followed by Bronze Age and Iron Age tribes and then the Romans and Saxons. Finds in both Hanneys indicate the use of the current Wantage to Oxford route as a Roman road. There was certainly some settlement to support this road and the local farms. There have been many finds of pottery, and also some burials, from the Bronze Age to the Roman period but no dwellings that link with the current layout of West Hanney. The Saxon Hanney brooch, found in 2009, is the most significant recent archaeological discovery. It was found on a raised burial position between Hanney and Denchworth. It is dated 600AD and is of a pattern found elsewhere in the Thames Valley. The village was almost certainly a Saxon site of worship. The first documentary record of the Hanneys, before its inclusion in the 1086 Domesday Book, is in a charter of Abingdon Abbey of AD 956.

Although East Hanney had a small chapel before the reformation, West Hanney church would have served both villages from then until St James the Less was consecrated in 1856. The Norman church of St James the Great is large for a small village and may have been a minster church, acting as an evangelical centre. It is sited on Church Street, the old main road from East Hanney to Denchworth. This road west was later superseded by the current Main Street. These two roads now encircle a central area upon which most of the main buildings of the pre-1945 West Hanney stood. This oval pattern is evident from the enclosure map overleaf. It is about 500 yards long and formed the nucleus for much of the old village housing. It was surrounded by at least four farms and had several large houses and farmhouses on its outer edges. The farms linked to the rich fields that surrounded the 'island' village. The layout suggests a possible Iron Age settlement here, although there is no solid evidence to support this. The village still is centred on this area, both historically and socially. It contains the church, the village pub, most of West Hanney's 27 listed buildings, the village greens and the sites of the old ponds.

The history of Hanney in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is little known. The Civil War would have seen troop movements but there were no known local skirmishes. West Hanney House was rebuilt from about 1722. The local agricultural economy adapted to the enclosures of the early 1800's. The new turnpikes straightened the old road, which is now the A338. Its opening in 1776 brought custom to the tradesmen and inns along its route. East Hanney, with the stronger millstream of Letcombe Brook, was always the main milling centre and had at least three mills at one point. The beginning of the nineteenth century gave promise of prosperity. The village was linked to the canal system and in 1840 the railways followed. This allowed the export of milk and fruit to London and its markets by express train. Many orchards were established and are clearly seen on the early OS maps.



Map 1: Detail of West Hanney 1839 enclosure map

Hanney's prosperity and population has fluctuated with England's economy over the last two centuries. Farming was still an important part in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Village populations grew and old farmhouses were divided into tenements into which were squeezed large families. The Agricultural Depression later in the century caused a Government Report of 1893 to comment on the very poor living and working conditions and the high incidence of disease and the high mortality. They highlighted East Hanney as one of the poorest in the area. Owners could not afford to repair houses and many old timber-framed cottages were lost. James Holmes of East Hanney was a noted philanthropist in both villages and rebuilt several cottages. The census results show the depopulation that occurred, probably from the combined effects of disease, poverty and migration to the cities. Positive things did happen, such as the opening of the village school in the 1840s and the provision of village allotments by a benevolent landowner. Twenty-seven men and boys from the two parishes died in the First World War. This affected the economy and the birth rate. The village population was static. A little building took place between the wars and some council houses were built in School Road and Church Road in about 1942. The main influx was after 1950. There was a need for housing to support the Harwell and Culham science areas. Hanney was a good choice for those who wanted a rural setting rather than a town estate. Sadly, the housing fashions then were not always perfect additions to the local vernacular style.

### The Future

Population has until recently remained fairly level, with smaller and ageing households offsetting the small increase in houses. Villagers find little work on the farms or elsewhere in the Hanneys today and the villages can sometimes seem more like a feeder colony for Oxford and Didcot Parkway rather than a living community. These economic links bring benefits but excessive change threatens the character of West Hanney; the gradual organic growth that the village has enjoyed over many years has now accelerated in a way that is difficult to control.

West Hanney's history is reflected in the village layout, its key buildings and the rural atmosphere it enjoys. Outside the rush hour, the village still has a peace and remoteness that is significant and worthy of protection. On approaching Hanney from the West, one enters the village with almost surprise at the gentle transition from fields to streets. It still has the sense of being a Vale farming village, which is what it still is. Mechanisation has replaced most of the agricultural labourers, but the fields are still easily accessible, and



the Nigel Eady Community Wood has created a safeguarded wooded space in part of the Gap. Hopefully those who drew the enclosure map would be pleasantly surprised at how relatively unspoiled it all is, and how easy it still is to find your way round. Our current custodians have a significant duty to keep it so.



**West Hanney from the old Denchworth road**

### **3.2. Planning and Development Context**

#### **Planning context**

As well as being consistent with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, the WHNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area, as required by the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

West Hanney parish lies within the Vale of White Horse District in the County of Oxfordshire. Currently, the development plan in Vale of White Horse consists of:

- Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 - Part 1.
- Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031- Part 2
- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan

Neighbourhood Plans must also be in line with European regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations. In addition, Neighbourhood Plans must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

#### ***Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 1***

West Hanney falls within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area, where it is identified as a Smaller Village.

The most relevant policies to the NDP are listed below:

- **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** - as a smaller village, West Hanney has a 'low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily to meet local needs.'
- **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Needs**- sets out district strategy for meeting district housing needs. In relation to West Hanney:  
'At the Smaller Villages, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements, or if it is allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are in keeping with local character and are proportionate in scale and meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities.'
- **Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**- sets out requirements for new development to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal.
- **Core Policy 8: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area**- has no strategic housing allocation for West Hanney.
- **Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness**- sets out a series of key design principles for development in the District, which will be informed by the proposed Vale of White Horse Design Guide.
- **Core Policy 39: The Historic Environment** recognises and supports the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment in the district such as conservation areas, listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments.
- **Core Policy 44: Landscape**- sets out the key features that contribute to the nature and quality of the Vale of White Horse District's landscape will be protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced.
- **Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure** - resists a loss of green infrastructure.
- **Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity** – seeks the conservation and improvement of biodiversity.

#### ***Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2***

The key focuses of Local Plan 2031 Part 2 regarding the West Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan are: policies and locations for the new housing to meet the Vale's proportion of Oxford's housing need and detailed development management policies to complement the strategic policies as set out in the Local Plan Part 1.

In this regard, the most relevant policies to the WHNDP are listed and briefly summarised below:

- **Core Policy 8a: Additional Site Allocations for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area** - No additional sites are allocated in the parish of West Hanney.
- **Development Policy 21: External Lighting** - consideration of impact on the amenity of the surrounding area regarding the use of external lighting.
- **Development Policy 23: Impact of Development on Amenity** - Development proposals should demonstrate that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses.
- **Development Policy 24: Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Developments** - Development proposals should be appropriate to their location.

- **Development Policy 25: Noise Pollution** - Noise-generating development that would have an impact on environmental amenity or biodiversity will be expected to provide an appropriate scheme of mitigation.
- **Development Policy 29: Settlement Character and Gaps** - Development proposals will need to demonstrate that the settlement's character is retained, and physical and visual separation is maintained between settlements.
- **Development Policy 37: Conservation Areas** - Proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must demonstrate that it will conserve or enhance its special interest, character, setting and appearance.

### Development context

In the last 8 years housing development in West Hanney has experienced a spike in activity with several developments within the existing built-up area of the village. This has included 14 houses at Elderberry Close, 6 houses at St. James Way, 6 houses at Walnut Court, 8 houses on The Old Orchard and planning application approved in August 2016 for 15 houses north of School Road. Including all these housing projects in the last 8 years West Hanney has seen a growth in housing numbers of approximately 21%.

The West Hanney NDP Steering Committee decided against identifying or allocating potential sites for future development in the WHNDP for the following reasons:

- there is no expectation or requirement in the adopted Local Plan 2031 to allocate additional housing
- there has been and is likely to continue to be adequate development within the village through limited infill to meet local needs.
- the immediately adjacent community of East Hanney has two sites (80 and 50 dwellings) allocated in Local Plan Part 2.

### **3.3. Our sustainability challenges**

The WHNDP has considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by West Hanney in the SWOT analysis found in Appendix C. The SWOT analysis is also summarised below.

#### **Community Facilities**

At first glance for its size, it would seem the village is well-provided for in terms of community facilities, including those shared with East Hanney. The Hanneys have a well-established successful primary school, pre-school, a village hall, church, small community run shop with post office and a sports field with children's play area, and a community pub, restaurant and church located in West Hanney. Except for the school, which is academy funded, these facilities are however, considered to be economically vulnerable and/or dependent upon community volunteers. In our Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire (NPCQ) carried out in early 2017, residents expressed a desire for additional facilities and activities for teenagers, village based medical facilities and a daytime social facility such as a café.

The Hanneys may need land for future expansion of community facilities such as the Hanney War Memorial Hall and the Hall car park. The highly compact and constrained nature of the village settlements means that suitable sites for such development are difficult to identify.

#### **Traffic, Transport and Parking**

As Grove and Wantage expand, the road network particularly Main Street, Winter Lane and School Road are experiencing increasing levels of through traffic and the speed of some of the vehicles is considered to be

particularly problematic as commuters use the village as a “rat-run” to avoid congested main roads such as the A338 and A420. In addition to these problems, the quality of the roads approaching the village are poor. In particular, access is constrained by the road from Denchworth that is frequently impassable through flooding on average two or three times a year and on several occasions in the last six years, flooding in East Hanney has also closed School Road leading to the closure of St James Primary School leaving sole access to the village via Winter Lane.

West Hanney benefits from its proximity to the Didcot Parkway mainline station, as many residents commute. However, with no access to bus services, car usage has continued to increase. Parking within the village, particularly close to village assets such as the school/pub/church, is limited and on street parking can cause local congestion.

It was considered problematic to address these issues via Neighbourhood Plan policies. Nevertheless, because they emerged in consultation as very important for West Hanney residents and it is important that the WHNDP makes reference to them and sets out how the parish council intends to seek to address them.

While campaigning and making representations to the relevant local authorities and infrastructure providers regarding the improvement of traffic, transport and parking infrastructure (and associated issues) has long been undertaken by the Parish Council, a specific community project – Campaigning for Traffic, Transport and Parking improvements - has been included at Appendix F to emphasise the importance of community efforts to engage with these issues.

### **Coalescence with East Hanney**

West Hanney residents greatly value their small village status and recent planning applications have threatened the independent existence of the village as buffer land between the two settlements of West and East Hanney comes under threat of development. Residents wish to protect the important landscape (i.e. the fields) that forms the gap between West and East Hanney.

### **Environmental Issues**

The loss of farmland which provides the setting to the historic village and some of which has clear evidence of ancient “ridge and furrow” farming is of particular concern to villagers as expressed in the NPCQ. As climate change progresses it is expected that flood risks on land adjacent to Childrey Brook, from field run-off, and from inadequate storm water capacity are likely to increase.

### **Housing needs**

It is recognised that the community has specific and likely ongoing housing needs. For example: The NPCQ identified a strongly held perception that the village has a surplus of 4-bed plus houses and a relative lack of small (2-3 bed) homes, bungalows and specialist elderly accommodation to fit the needs of an ageing population wishing to downsize and remain in West Hanney and to provide greater opportunities for first time buyers. However, the NP does not allocate housing sites for development - which may have helped meet some local need- for reasons set out in section 3.2.

Nevertheless, despite the absence of a specific housing needs policy in the WHNDP, this issue is of importance to the community. Therefore, a specific project ‘Meeting our local housing needs’ has been included at Appendix F, to emphasise the importance of this issue and how the parish council intends to seek to address it, for example through regular surveys of parish housing need, regular consideration of potential Rural Exception Site development to meet affordable housing need, and making representations, where necessary, regarding any future housing developments where local needs may potentially be met.

In summary, West Hanney has a number of key challenges for the future:

- Controlling traffic at times of peak use
- Controlling the risk of flooding
- Maintaining the distinction and land gap between East and West Hanney
- Maintaining the farmland setting of a small rural village
- Achieving the correct housing mix for an ageing population and for first-time buyers

Despite the fact that the village is a thriving and active community, it also lacks a number of core services including expansion opportunities for the village hall and village school, public transport and only offers a minimum amount of employment within the village. The lack of these core services means that the village does not provide a sustainable basis for further growth in its current form. Therefore, the village is identified within the VoWHDC strategy as a smaller village not suitable for a housing allocation. The role of the village within the VoWHDC planning strategy is considered in more detail later in the Plan.

To investigate and seek responses to these challenges we have prepared an evidence base which is outlined in the Appendices.



## 4. Vision, Themes, Objectives and Policies

The following vision, themes, objectives and policies were derived from the results of the NPCQ and the subsequent public consultation meetings.

### VISION

To conserve West Hanney as an attractive Lowland Vale parish, to promote a sustainable and thriving social environment and to develop a coherent strategy of land use and village infrastructure that will maintain the character and current level of community spirit that exists in the village.

### THEMES

- 1- Rural Setting
- 2- Infrastructure and Facilities

### OBJECTIVES

1. To set out the basis for future development in the village
2. To protect the historical heritage and retain the agricultural and rural character of the village
3. To ensure all new development conserves and enhances the rural, historic and landscape character of the village.
4. To cater for existing and future residents' needs and infrastructure.
5. To seek to improve the quality of life, retain and enhance the sense of community and vitality associated with the village

### POLICIES

1. RS1- Village Character and Design
2. RS2- The Hanney Gap
3. RS3- Location of Development
4. INF1- Community Infrastructure and Facilities

## 4.1 Theme 1: Rural Setting

### POLICIES

1. RS1- Village Character and Design
2. RS2- The Hanney Gap
3. RS3- Location of Development

### RELATED OBJECTIVES

1. To set out the basis for future development in the village
2. To protect the historical heritage and retain the agricultural and rural character of the village
3. To ensure all new development conserves and enhances the rural, historic and landscape character of the village.

### SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

1. Village character assessment – Appendix A

## POLICY RS1- Village Character and Design

### RATIONALE:

The protection and enhancement of the character of West Hanney has strong community support. For example, over 75% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire strongly valued the open spaces, rural landscape and the distinctive village identity; 75% of respondents would like to see trees and hedges used to soften the edge of developments and that any development should provide a net gain in trees; 80% of respondents saw low levels of light pollution as important.

Since the character of the village and its rural setting are very important to the residents of West Hanney the WHNDP has placed considerable emphasis on the importance of protecting our built and natural environment and its character. The vision for the neighbourhood plan is to conserve West Hanney as an attractive Lowland Vale parish and maintain the character and current level of community spirit that exists in the village. The scale, density, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to sustain and enhance the distinctive character of each part of West Hanney and its setting.

At present, the Vale of White Horse Development Plan, contains policies relating to the historical environment, design, conservation areas and archaeology which guide proposals for future development. These include: Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness; Core Policy 39: The Historic Environment; and Core Policy 44: Landscape. In addition, Vale of the White Horse adopted a Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2015. Development proposals should take account of this SPD, the intent of which is to help ensure that 'housing developers build high-quality, well-designed homes and neighbourhoods... so we can make sure the larger new communities that are being planned will be designed to a high quality.'

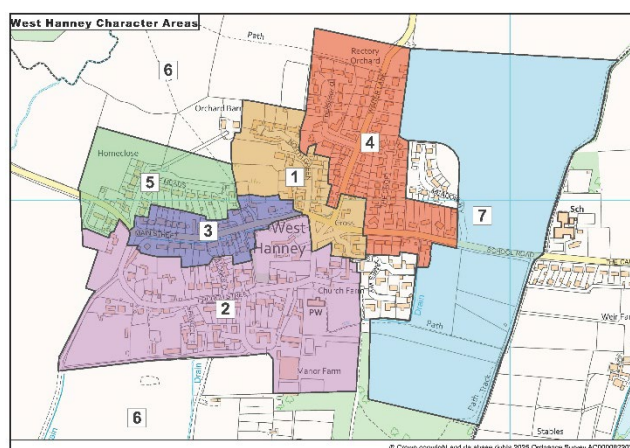
Additionally, however, there are certain features of the historic core of the village which are special to the area which should be closely considered in development proposals.

In order to objectively demonstrate and document what makes our village special, a Character Assessment (Appendix A) was undertaken, which analyses the key urban and natural features that create our unique environment. The character assessment provides locally specific detail with the intention of adding greater clarity to the policies of the development plan as they relate to the character of West Hanney. It should

therefore be used as a design tool to help prospective developers meet the requirements of the development plans policies on character, whether for extensions to existing structures, small infill development or larger schemes.

The Character Assessment identified 7 distinctive village areas, which are broadly linked by common characteristics or geography:

1. West Hanney Green
2. Church Green and Church Street
3. Main Street
4. The Post War Developments
5. The Western Approaches
6. The Wider Parish
7. The Hanney Gap



Following Historic England Methodology, heritage values were attached to the character areas under the following headings: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value and communal value. The assessment of the character of each area encompassed, for example, building type and scale, density, streetscape, distinctive features etc. It also considered open green spaces, spaces in between buildings, topography and landscape, gardens and planting, grass verges etc. Important community views were also considered.

**Table 1. Summary of Character Assessment Conclusions**

Village Area	Conclusion – in order to enhance or preserve the character of the village:
West Hanney Green	Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid blocking open views to the south and the north and use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address other summary conclusions presented in the assessment (particularly the conservation area statement) in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.
Church Green and Church Street	Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid blocking views to the south and avoid damaging hedges and spaces, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address other summary conclusions presented in the assessment in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.
Main Street	Any proposal for planning permission would need to use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address other summary conclusions presented in the assessment in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.
The Post War Developments	Any proposal for planning permission should avoid blocking views to the west, north and the Hanney Gap, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address other summary conclusions presented in the assessment in any planning statement. Infill development should be limited and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.

The Western Approaches	Any proposal for planning permission should avoid blocking views to the western approaches to the village, avoid damaging hedges and spaces, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address other summary conclusions presented in the assessment in any planning statement. Infill development should be limited to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area and avoid impacting on the soft approaches to the open countryside.
The Wider Parish	Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid encroaching on open countryside, to avoid impacting on views to the lowland Vale, and avoid damaging hedges and spaces.
The Hanney Gap	Any proposal for planning permission should avoid encroaching on the Gap, avoid impacting on views to the south and north, avoid a reduction in the strong sense of openness to the Gap, avoid increased coalescence between East and West Hanney and address other summary conclusions presented in the assessment in any planning statement.

#### **POLICY RS1- VILLAGE CHARACTER AND DESIGN**

In addition to the other policies of the development plan, proposals for new residential development within the built-up areas of the village will be supported provided that:

- A. They preserve or enhance local character by way of their scale, density, height, landscape design, layout and materials, making particular reference to the West Hanney Character Assessment;
- B. They minimise impacts on the natural environment of the parish and provide net gains for biodiversity;
- C. They do not result in the unnecessary loss of trees that:
  - i. have high amenity value and are important to the character of West Hanney; and
  - ii. are valuable assets in terms of their natural capital and contribution to wellbeing.
- D. They take care to prevent unacceptable harm to and retain the heritage value of both designated and non-designated heritage assets;
- E. They do not result in unacceptable impacts on noise, odour, air pollution and light pollution;
- F. They provide sufficient outdoor storage space for refuse, recycling and parking of cars and bicycles.

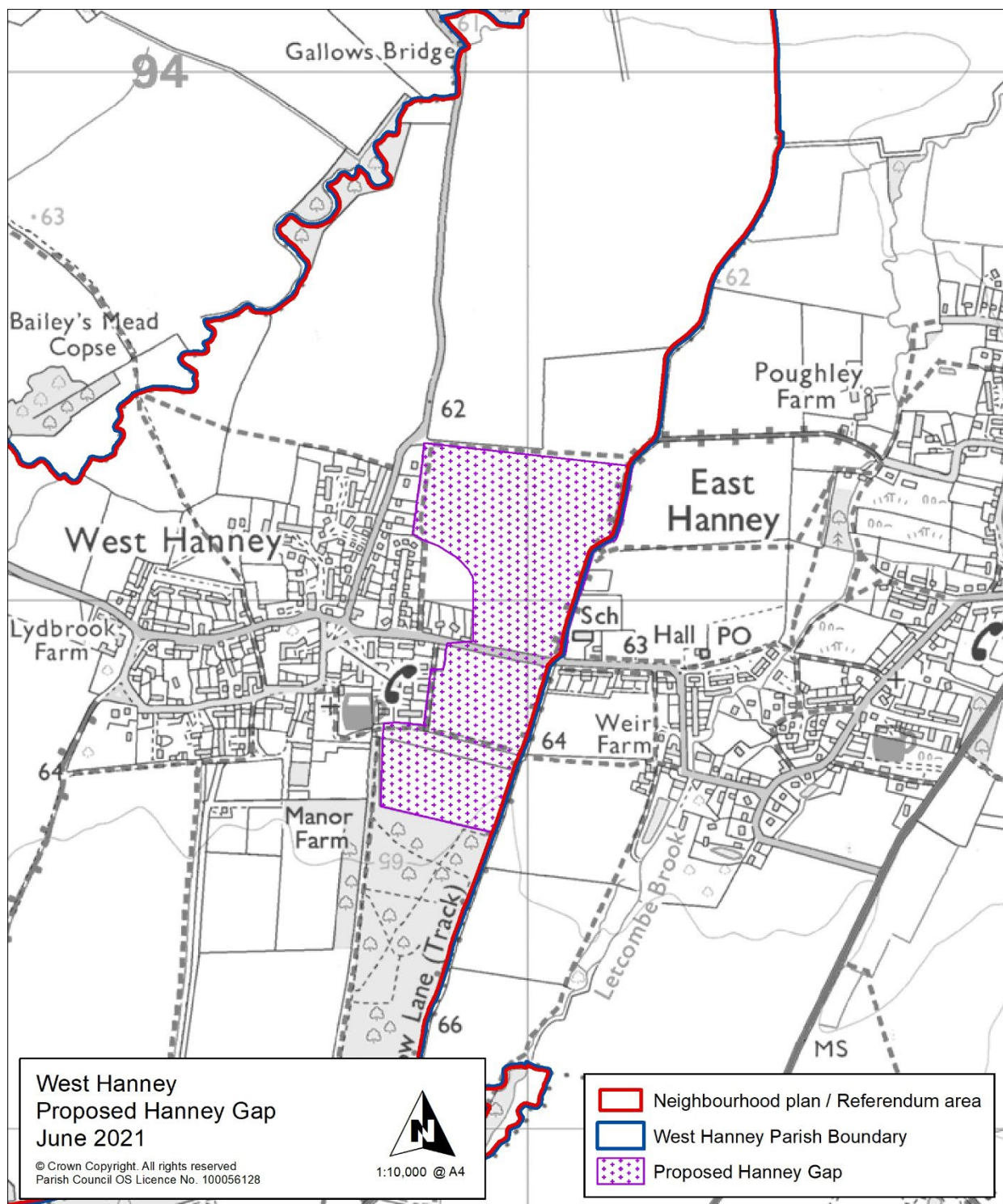
Proposals that require the establishment of a new property boundary should incorporate, where possible, boundary features consisting of native or biodiversity-enhancing hedgerow species and schemes. The use of fencing and walls, where required, should reflect the traditional, rural context of the village and be of a height that preserves open views within the village.

## POLICY RS2- The Hanney Gap

### RATIONALE:

For centuries the 'Hanney Gap' has helped maintain the distinctive identities of West Hanney and East Hanney. Neighbourhood Plan consultation has shown the strength of feeling with regard to the Gap, which the NP wishes to address via a policy which adds detail to relevant provisions in the Vale Local Plan 2031.

**Map 2 – The Hanney Gap** (purple hatched section)





The National Planning Policy Framework does not refer specifically to local gap policies, but a principle of national policy, outlined in NPPF Para 130 is that 'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments... are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. In addition, paragraph 174 states that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes....'

Additionally, the concept of local gaps is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Vale of the White Horse Local Plan. Local Plan Part 2, Development Policy 29: Settlement Character and Gaps states that 'Development proposals will need to demonstrate that the settlement's character is retained, and physical and visual separation is maintained between settlements.' Also, one of the three main strands of the Local Plan Part 1 Spatial Strategy is to 'promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.'

There is therefore strong support in both national policy and the Vale of the White Horse Development Plan for the principle of protecting the distinct landscape character of a settlement and the maintenance of separation. However, a recent decision to grant planning permission in August 2016 for 15 houses in the Hanney Gap (see planning application P15/V2887/FUL) caused concern amongst residents.

Therefore, it is felt an additional safeguard is required to protect this historically established landscape feature which plays such an important role in the maintenance of a distinct local identity. Policy RS2 provides specificity to complement the more general provisions of the Development Plan. It does not seek to prevent development or open land uses that may otherwise be suited to a countryside location, but to ensure that proposals do not result in the integrity of the Hanney Gap being undermined by drawing attention to its special and particular characteristics and value as explored below.

West Hanney has a very strong feeling of local identity. This is related strongly to a sense of distinctiveness in relation to the neighbouring, larger village of East Hanney. This can be evidenced by the following:

- Historically, West and East Hanney were in separate administrative Hundreds.
- West and East Hanney have been referred to as distinct communities ever since the Domesday book.
- They are each in separate civil parishes.
- Each village used to have its own church (the church in East Hanney has been deconsecrated).

The physical separation of the two communities has been vital to retaining the established distinctiveness of the two communities. West and East Hanney have always been physically separated by the open fields of the Gap, which is shown on Map 2.

The Character Assessment (see Appendix A) describes the significant evidential, historic, aesthetic, and communal value of the Hanney Gap. The Gap is formed of open agricultural land between East and West Hanney and is the historic natural 'border' between the two villages. It is only a few hundred metres wide but was likely much wider in the past. Its loss would cause coalescence between the villages. The West Hanney Gap as defined for planning purpose in the Plan is not as extensive as that identified in the Character Assessment. The Gap identified in the Plan is that part of the wider Gap where the potential for built development to erode the gap between West Hanney and East Hanney is at its greatest.

It is well-used locally by residents of both West and East Hanney, particularly by walkers using the inter-village paths and Cow Lane, which forms the eastern boundary. The community woodland forms a major part of the southern view from the causeway, with the woodland also used extensively by residents of both villages.

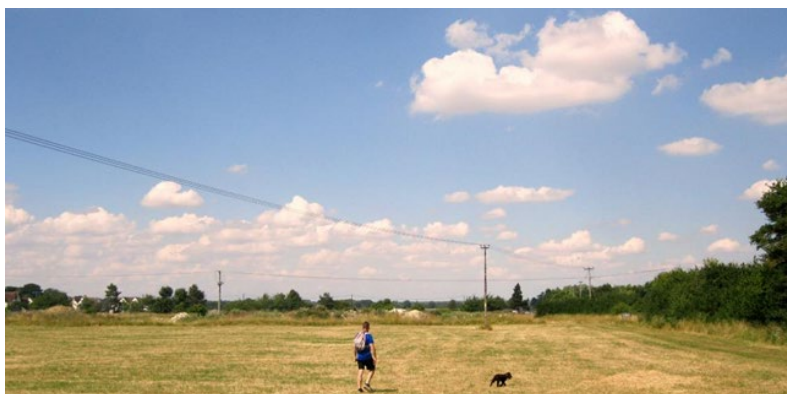
The value of the gap is particularly related to its spatial character. There is a significant sense of openness and 'big skies' in the flat landscape, particularly to the north but also to the south. In the north, there is no

visible obstruction for several miles, whereas the trees of the community woodland limit the southward view although it remains an open vista.

The strength of community feeling with regard to the maintenance of the Hanney Gap was expressed both at Neighbourhood Plan community events and in the Neighbourhood Plan community questionnaire, which found that 90% of West Hanney respondents (and 89% of East Hanney respondents) thought this gap should be maintained.

#### **POLICY RS2 – THE HANNEY GAP**

Any proposals for development within the Hanney Gap (as shown in Map 2) should not, either individually or cumulatively, unacceptably detract from the character and/or the scale of the remaining gap between West Hanney and East Hanney and should conserve the open and tranquil character of the landscape and its views.



The Gap: looking north from the edge of the community woodland adjacent to Cow Lane. This forms the boundary between the two parishes. The Gap spans between the right-hand house in the group of former council houses to the left and the right-hand group of telegraph poles by the extension of Cow Lane hedge. A temporary developer's road crosses the field.



Looking south from School Road towards the Community Woodland, with Cow Lane hedge to the left.



Looking South east from the graveyard corner in West Hanney

## POLICY RS3- Location of Development

### RATIONALE:

West Hanney is a small rural village surrounded by agricultural land in the typical Lowland Vale landscape. The Lowland Vale landscape is celebrated for the contribution it makes to distant views from the high land to the north and south.

The Lowland Vale is also distinctive and valued for its own quality. It is also important to maintain this landscape setting and/or enhance the form and character of the village and to ensure that new development does not compromise this and is 'modest' in scale (Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1, Core Policy 3- Settlement Hierarchy).

The policy does not restrict development on the edge of the built-up area if this is in keeping with village character. In addition, limited infill development (Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1, Core Policy 4- Meeting Our Housing Needs) within the built-up area may be appropriate provided it conforms to other policies in the Plan.

Policy RS3 sets out an overarching strategy for the neighbourhood area. It focuses new development within built-up areas. Development outside these areas will only be supported where it is consistent with a countryside location. These development principles overlap with the key elements of village design (Policy RS1).

The built-up area is defined by the boundaries of permanent, non-agricultural buildings located around the edge of the village, where such properties are directly connected to the village's main, singular form. The built-up area therefore does not include: -

- Individual buildings or groups of dispersed buildings that are separated by farmland or paddock land from the continuous built-up area of the settlement;
- Large gardens, paddocks and other undeveloped land in the curtilage of buildings on the edge of the settlement, where they provide a transition between the surrounding countryside and the built-up areas of the settlement;
- Agricultural buildings and associated land on the edge of the settlement;
- Outdoor sports and recreation facilities and other formal open spaces on the edge of the settlement.

### POLICY RS3 – Location of Development

Proposals for new development of an appropriate scale for a smaller village, as defined in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031, will be supported where they are within the built-up area of the village and accord with the policies of this Plan and the development plan for the District.

## 4.2 Theme 2: Infrastructure and Facilities

### **POLICIES**

1. INF1- Community Infrastructure and Facilities

### **RELATED OBJECTIVES**

1. To cater for existing and future residents' needs and infrastructure.
2. To seek to improve the quality of life, retain and enhance the sense of community and vitality associated with the village

### **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:**

1. Community Infrastructure Report – Appendix D
2. Community Project List – Appendix F

## **POLICY INF1- Community Infrastructure and Facilities**

### **RATIONALE**

West Hanney's village life is supported in particular by the following community facilities: Hanney War Memorial Hall, St. James the Great Church, community shop and Post Office. However, as set out in the Community Infrastructure Report (Appendix D), some of these facilities are operating at or near capacity, while some are in need of physical improvement. A summary of this report is presented in Table 2. Developers and decision makers should pay due regard to the priorities set out in this Report and in negotiating any contributions to existing facilities which may arise from new development.

The Vale of White Horse District Council Town and Villages Facilities Study (2014), part of the Local Plan Part 2 Evidence Base, collated information on the services and facilities available in West Hanney and gives what could be described as a 'sustainability score.' West Hanney's score of 7 was the joint-lowest for smaller villages (average was 9.4).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that new development makes appropriate contributions to the improvement or enhancement of community infrastructure to help meet the needs of new and existing residents. However, given that future development in the village is likely to be modest, it is recognised that the scale of potential contribution may likewise be modest.

**Table 2 – Community Infrastructure and Facilities**

Hanney War Memorial Hall	Located in East Hanney, the Hanney War Memorial Hall it is used by 87% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire at least 2-3 times per year. It is meeting place for many clubs and community events.
St James the Great Church	According to the Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire more than 75% of respondents use St. James the Great church facilities at least two to three times per year. The church is a very historic building that needs to be protected and conserved.
Community shop and post office	According to the Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire, the community shop is used by 62% of respondents more than once per month. The long-term future of the shop is of some concern as it is run by volunteers and serves a narrow range of products. 71% of respondents would like to see a wider range of products and the area potentially extended to include an area for coffee or tea.
Hanney Community Pub, The Plough	Purchased and owned by over 170 residents who are shareholders in Hanney Community Pub Ltd, who manage The Plough strategically as an asset for the community. The Plough is now one of about 130 community pubs in the country, the last remaining pub in West Hanney, which according to the NPCQ is used at least 2-3 times a year by 87% of respondents. It is a very attractive Grade II listed, 17th century thatched pub with a bar, open fire and separate dining area, with tables in the rear garden during the summer. The Plough hosts Aunt Sally and darts and village events, and is a meeting place for clubs and societies, helping to bring the community together.
Footpaths and bridleways	Footpaths are extensive through the village connecting both East and West Hanney and providing walks around the surrounding countryside including the Nigel Eady Community Woodland. 94% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire value the network of footpaths with 73% view easy access to country walks as very important.
The Nigel Eady Community Woodland	West Hanney Parish Council are trustees for 25 acres of mixed deciduous woodland planted by Nigel Eady over 25 years ago and the ownership of this woodland was gifted to the community in 2014. The community woodland is used extensively and is maintained by the community. 90% of respondents to the NPCQ use the community woodland at least 2 or 3 times a year.
Church Farm Meadow	West Hanney Parish Council were gifted the ownership of 7 acres of improved grassland and 0.5 acres of woodland planting, the latter as a habitat creation scheme, in 2017. Church Farm Meadow is situated immediately to the north of the community woodland. There is an aspiration to increase the biodiversity of this habitat over the next few years with the help and support of the community.
St James C of E Primary School	The school is a valuable community asset; however, the traffic and parking generated by the parents and guardians cause considerable disruption and safety concerns. The capacity of the school has recently been increased and there is a real concern the traffic created by a larger school will overwhelm the parking infrastructure.
Wastewater mechanisms	The unseen infrastructure, because of the Hanneys vulnerability to flooding issues, is of particular local concern. Highlighted by arguably antiquated pumping mechanisms there is a need to upgrade and ensure the capacity meets the need.



Consultation with the community highlighted a number of issues of interest and concerns that cannot be the subject of formal policies in a Neighbourhood Plan because they do not directly relate to land use. National guidance recommends that community actions of this nature are included in a separate part of the Plan.

Accordingly, these projects - some of which relate to the facilities discussed in Table 2- are presented at Appendix F, Community Project List. The projects relate to local transport, traffic speeding and footways and cycleways. Projects identified and discussed in Appendix F are based on current circumstances and priorities. These may change and the appendix will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

The approach taken in Policy INF1 has been designed to take account of national policy (as currently set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations) on the relationship between a proposed development and the need or otherwise for it to make contributions to community or other local facilities.

<b>POLICY INF1 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
Where it is necessary to do so, residential development proposals should contribute towards the improvement and/or enhancement of existing community infrastructures as detailed in Table 2 of the Plan.

## 5. Implementation and monitoring

### 5.1. Implementation

Implementation of the WHNDP will be ongoing. Responsibility for determining planning applications rests with Vale of White Horse District Council.

### 5.2. Monitoring

West Hanney Parish Council will monitor the Neighbourhood Plan and the implementation and effectiveness of its policies as detailed below. The review schedule will also be amended if there are changes to national or local policies that have an impact on the Plan.

#### Twelve-month review

WHNDP will be reviewed after one year after its adoption at community referendum by the Parish Council and the reconvened Neighbourhood Plan steering committee or their representatives.

The purpose of the review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan objectives have been implemented in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting those objectives; and secondly to rectify any errors and omissions.

#### Five-year review

WHNDP will be reviewed every five years thereafter. Review of policies will be led by West Hanney Parish Council. The purpose of the review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan objectives have been implemented in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting those objectives; and secondly to rectify any errors and omissions.

Where significant amendments or additions are needed that cause significant public concern, a public consultation will be undertaken to be sure that 50% or more of respondents to the consultations with residents accept the changes.

#### End of plan review

At least two years prior to the expiry of the WHNDP, a full review will be undertaken to gauge the success of the Plan in meeting its objectives and to put in place a succession plan.

## 6. List of Appendices

- Appendix A Character Assessment
- Appendix B Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire Report
- Appendix C SWOT Analysis – West Hanney
- Appendix D Community Infrastructure Report
- Appendix E SEA Screening Statement
- Appendix F Community Project List