



Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

2016 – 2031

Consultation Report



blewburyneighbourhoodplan.org
19 May 2016

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In autumn 2013 Blewbury decided to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, and a steering group for the project was formed. Steering group members are volunteers with a broad mix of skills and experience, including planning, public consultation, and design of both modern and historic buildings.

The Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan ('the Plan') is produced in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the associated Regulations, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012. This legislation required Blewbury to carry out a formal public consultation on the Plan for a minimum period of six weeks before submitting it to the Vale of White Horse District Council ('the Vale'), which is able to bring the Plan into force following independent examination and a referendum.

The Vale designated the area to be covered by the Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan on 28 February 2014, and consultation with the public began at a launch event in Blewbury Village Hall on 8 March 2014. Following the launch event, the steering group met monthly in meetings available to the community.

This Consultation Report:

- summarises the consultation history; and
- describes the Regulation 14 (pre-submission) consultation process, the responses received, and consequent changes to the Plan.

1.2 Scoping consultation

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community project, and must derive its authority and policies from the community. Communication, feedback and consultation have played a major part in developing our Plan.

We knew from experience that the residents of Blewbury would respond to open meetings, and that one of the key means of communication would be via the village's monthly magazine, the Blewbury Bulletin. To broaden coverage, we set up a website and a Facebook group page. We also included more intimate opportunities for focused discussion. All of these were key to achieving a high profile for the Plan and ensuring as many people as possible were involved.

A summary of the process undertaken is as follows:

- Minutes of all meetings of the steering group were published on our website: blewburyneighbourhoodplan.org.
- Feedback was obtained through our website, Facebook group page, and individually to members of the and the steering group.
- We facilitated an open meeting in the Village Hall on 28 February 2014 to discuss ideas and concerns, and to begin to shape the key concepts for the Plan.
- Our Housing Needs Survey was conducted in the Autumn of 2014 (see further details below).

- Between May and July 2015 we undertook focus groups with residents to develop policies on key areas such as infrastructure and design, which involved 18 individuals who had specific expertise in these areas.
- On 21 July 2015 we held a focus group discussion with nine children and young people, aged 11 to 16, to understand their concerns and priorities, and to explore what they value about living in the village.
- We hosted another open event at the Village Hall on 22 November 2015 to present the findings of our Housing Needs Survey and Landscape Character Assessment, and to discuss the implications and emerging priorities.
- Display boards with headline findings from the Housing Needs Survey and Landscape Character Assessment were also included at other village events during the period of the Plan's development.
- On 7 February 2016 we hosted our final open event at the Village Hall to provide an update on the policies and to explain the approval process.
- Updates and notification of consultation opportunities were included regularly in the village's monthly magazine, the Blewbury Bulletin, which is delivered to every household, as well as on our website and via Facebook.



Figure 1: Village meetings on 8 March 2014 (top left), 28 February 2015 (top right), 22 November 2015 (bottom left) and 7 February 2016 (bottom right)

Each of our public events (see Figure 1) attracted on the order of a hundred people or more, and in total 168 individuals attended some or all of these meetings.

In addition the steering group, supported by 21 volunteer helpers, undertook a comprehensive survey of housing needs and village opinion. Although we refer to this as a Housing Needs Survey, it was broadened to provide opportunities for respondents to make general comments and answer questions designed to help establish priorities for the Plan. The survey was carried out in autumn 2014; the results were then analysed and made available from January 2015. The survey had 467 responses (61% of households), with 258 written responses to open questions (34% of households). The general nature of this survey, and the number and quality of the responses, were such that the steering group has used it as a key part of the evidence base for this Plan.

A summary of key findings from our Housing Needs Survey is provided in Section 5 of the Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan, and full findings are provided in Appendix B to that document.

2 Pre-Submission Public Consultation

2.1 Consultation approach

The draft of the Plan was reviewed by the village in a six-week public consultation that ran from 0900 on Monday 1 February until 12.00 noon on Monday 14 March 2016, giving residents exactly six weeks to respond.

The consultation proceeded along two lines: consulting the community within the Parish, and consulting the bodies referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (the statutory bodies).

In support of the process, from 1 February until 14 March 2016 the steering group, with the help of volunteers:

- Hand delivered an information sheet, a letter from the Chair of the Parish Council, and a summary of the Plan to every house in the village (see Appendix A below).
- Made electronic copies of the full Plan and its appendices available on our website: blewburyneighbourhoodplan.org.
- Included notification of the consultation period and process in the Blewbury Bulletin.
- Made printed copies of the Plan available at a number of accessible village locations such as the Post Office, The Red Lion, and Savages Farm Shop and Tea Rooms.
- Produced a 'frequently asked questions' document to respond to common themes that were raised regarding the Plan and the process it must go through, made available on the website and on paper at the locations described above. (see Appendix A below)
- Promoted and conducted a formal public meeting in the Village Hall on 7 February 2016 to present the draft Plan and allow for open discussion, as well as three events for informal discussion. Comments could be submitted online or on paper, and all comments were very carefully documented.
- Followed up a number of comments, by email, phone or in person, in order to clarify the points being made. In some cases we then discussed changes we proposed to make to the Plan in response to the comments, and in others we explained why changes proposed in the comment were not within our remit.

2.2 Response from public

In response to the public consultation, a total of 41 comment forms were submitted on paper or online by residents. (The form is in Appendix A.) Many simply said they supported the draft Plan, while others made one or more specific comments. Ten of the comments concerned specific policies and a further 17 concerned the text of the Plan apart from policies.

2.3 Response from statutory bodies

We consulted the bodies identified in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and five material responses were received. The following bodies had been notified of the Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan and asked to comment:

- Highways England (see Appendix B)
- Historic England (see Appendix B)

- Natural England (see Appendix B)
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council (comments were sent as annotations in the draft Plan)
- Thames Water Utilities (see Appendix B)
- All neighbouring Parish Councils

3 Overview of Pre-Submission Consultation Responses

3.1 Summary

A complete list of the pre-submission consultation responses, together with the replies of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group, is provided in Section 5, below. Four key messages emerge:

- All of the parishioners who responded to the consultation process support the Plan and its policies.
- Parishioners highlighted the scope of the consultation process and the range of opportunities to be involved in the development of the Plan.
- There is overwhelming support for the character of the village and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within which it is located to be maintained and preserved.
- The statutory bodies have raised no objections to the Plan, nor have raised any matters of concern relating to the Plan meeting the basic conditions.

The local planning authority (the Vale) has been closely engaged in early policy drafts and technical evidence analysis, and commented in detail on a number of occasions during December 2015 – May 2016. Its officers have confirmed they believe the Plan as drafted meets the basic conditions.

3.2 Policies

The Plan proposes 18 policies, summarised as follows:

Policy no.	Policy title	Plan page
P1	Location of residential development	59
P2	General principles for development	60
P3	Housing mix	61
P4	Internal space in new dwellings	62
P5	Provision of affordable housing	62
P6	Allocation of affordable housing	63
P7	Design and aesthetics: new development	63
P8	Design and aesthetics: new development, alterations, or extensions to historic buildings	64
P9	Amenity: new development	65
P10	Natural environment	65
P11	Sustainable development	66
P12	Water management	66
P13	Drainage and flooding	67
P14	Access and movement	67
P15	Highways and traffic principles	68
P16	Retail space, business services, restaurants and cafes	68
P17	Public houses	69
P18	Community assets	69

4 Changes to the Plan

In consideration of the comments from the pre-submission public consultation, we made a number of changes to wording of the pre-submission draft and also added a small amount of additional information. This was done for reasons of clarity. No significant changes have been considered necessary to the body of the plan or to the 18 policies.

Details of the changes made as a result of the consultation, and responses from the steering group, can be found in the Public Consultation Matrix in Section 5 below. This includes our responses to submissions from statutory bodies as well as from the community.

5 Pre-submission Public Consultation Results

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Analysis

- Every feedback form and written response was recorded, in order of date received, by a member of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group.
- Individual comments were grouped by respondent and given a unique reference number (URN).
- Feedback was discussed in detail at a meeting of the steering group on 30 March 2016, with responses to each comment logged and follow-up face-to-face meetings held with two respondents and written replies to two others.
- Feedback details, together with the steering group's responses, were then collated into the Public Consultation Matrix below.
- Each comment can be mapped to the original feedback form if required.

5.1.2 Plan response

- Comments such as those agreeing with a policy, a statement or other part of the Plan are deemed to need no change to the Plan and are marked as 'noted' in the right hand column of the matrix.
- Comments falling outside the scope of the Plan are marked accordingly.
- Where comments resulted in a change in the Plan's text the details of the section/page/policy references are logged.

5.1.3 Layout of the tables

Section 5.2.1 covers comments from the community that did not specifically refer to individual policies. Section 5.2.2 contains comments from the community that directly concerned policies. Finally, Section 5.3 has the response from statutory bodies.

5.2 Public Consultation Matrix

5.2.1 General public comments

Respondent URN	Plan section	Plan pages	Comment	Support or comment?	Steering group response
7	5, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4	pp.34, 35, 38, 39	<p>We fully support the policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. It is a professional and comprehensive document. There are however a few points that we think should be addressed.</p> <p>There is an over-emphasis on the “demographic imbalance” related to an ageing population. We agree that new housing should be for mainly for first-time buyers and younger families, however using D1 as justification allows developers (e.g. the proposal for the west side of Bessel’s Way) to argue for major new housing sites on the edge of the village. Paragraph 4.4 Fig. 11 shows a “healthy balance” with 40.6% being in the 30–45 age range. How does this compare with other villages in the Vale e.g. Upton, West Hagbourne etc? We think this would be a fairer comparison than the district average figure quoted in 5.4 which includes urban areas such as Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Comment</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Email exchange clarifying the reason for using district average as a benchmark. Accepted by respondent.</p>
7		Fig. 45	We appreciate that the Vale do not support having a “red line” boundary to the village but a plan showing the “urban core”, i.e. a single coloured plan in the same form as Fig. 45 together with a strong policy against development outside the area, would be stronger than a description of the village boundaries.	Comment	Email explaining that this ends up the same as having a red line. Accepted by respondent.
7		Photos	On a minor point: the village photos are excellent but we feel that they give the wrong impression – i.e. of a village made up of listed buildings. Blewbury’s strength come from being a balanced community with several significant modern developments e.g. Grahame Close, Bridus Mead, Eastfields, Westbrook Green – and that photos of these areas should be included together with those of traditional detached houses.	Comment	New photos added and others of modern housing enlarged.

9	4.8 Policy 16	p.24	I would like to thank everyone who has put so much effort into formulating this plan. We believe it represents a coherent strategy for sustainable development of our village in its unique setting of outstanding natural beauty.	Support	Added this in Policy 16 (also see Section 5.2.2).
			We consider that the section on business and services is very important. We would hope that a neighbourhood plan would not only support the retention of existing services but that it might also encourage the development of new businesses and services. For example, could the plan indicate that it would welcome new retail/restaurant development within the village? Perhaps this could be reflected in Policy P16?	Comment	
10			I think that the team have done a good and difficult job. Blewbury is a beautiful village with a unique character. Its mix of old and new houses and open spaces is very important. Because of its central part linked by footpaths it has a very friendly atmosphere, and people are welcomed at the numerous clubs and societies.	Support	Noted.
			My late husband, John Richards, produced the first Village Plan with the help of some representatives from various parts of the village. We were then in Berkshire and they were very pleased to have it and officially accepted it as an advisory document. It was updated several times when we moved into Oxfordshire, by John and other villagers when he was on the Parish Council and the Village Planning Committee. It is very important to have a plan which maintains the charm of the village and the friendly inclusive atmosphere. I congratulate the present team who have worked so hard on this very important plan.	Comment	Noted.
15	9.1	p.67	I largely agree with all policies - these are just comments which spring to my mind and may not be suitable for inclusion - I know the parking issue is particularly awkward as the PC has written pointing out that current standards do not meet the current reality of many vans and large cars. However worth a mention.	Comment	Not within the remit of the Plan.
16			Considerable efforts have been put into the development of the Plan. Particular attention has been given to the circulation of	Support	Noted.

			information at each stage from its inception, stages of information gathering and the current activity of circulation and feedback. The Plan is clearly presented and clarifies many of the issues needing careful consideration as Blewbury grows and evolves.		
17			A well constructed Plan. A good and comprehensive consultation process. Thank you to all those involved.	Support	Noted.
18			In my opinion the draft Plan is excellent – comprehensive, detailed and professional, as well as being easy to understand. Thank you to everyone who worked hard to produce it.	Support	Noted.
19			What additional housing quota is there for Blewbury? 100/500 etc.?	Comment	There are no fixed quotas established in the Plan.
20	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4	pp.35–39	Really agree with the need for diverse housing types – facilities/amenities for more elderly and disabled (parents), and need for young people to be able to afford to live here.	Support	Noted.
23			What sanctions will there be against any developer agreeing to constraints on development and then ignoring them?	Comment	Pertinent question: the Plan will have influence but there is no guarantee.
27			I'm not sure whether there is a place for this in the Plan, but when considering housing, current electricity supplies should also be taken into account. The engineer (I think from SSE), who came out several times for the frequent power cuts we suffered on Bridus Mead, told us there was an acknowledged fault in the substation there. But that a wholesale overhaul was being put off as it would be very expensive and disruptive. We were there for 10 years and experienced around a bi-monthly power cut of several hours at a minimum. Adding more houses' electricity supplies to the same substation would inevitably cause issues.	Comment	Not within the remit of the Plan.
30	3.1	p.13	This is a good and clear document and the team has done an excellent job. I do have some observations. It's stretching it to say that all the developments listed in 3.1 have taken place over 'recent years', except in so far as they can be contrasted with the Iron Age fort at Blewburton.	Support Comment	 Added the decades within which these developments were built.
30	8.1.2	p.54	The growth strategy section helpfully supports a view that the policies in the plan are consistent with meeting local housing needs. This seems to me at least optimistic and possibly complacent. I	Comment	Discussion between Chair of the steering group and the respondent:

		<p>accept that there is no requirement to meet these needs, but I suspect that there is going to be more tension between local demand and new supply over the whole period of the plan than is acknowledged, even if you are right about the next 5 years.</p> <p>Specifically: How much less than 74 additional houses does 'significantly less' mean? What happens after 5 years?</p> <p>Won't the market determine who gets the new housing (other than social housing)? It won't necessarily go to those in the housing needs survey wanting to move within the village.</p> <p>How much of the need for affordable or social housing will be met by unallocated plots within the built area? If we are serious about this, we will we need development outside the built area?</p>	<p>He accepted that building outside the built area in the AONB would not be desirable and, given the compact nature of the space within the built area, large sites could not reasonably be allocated for future housing. He therefore accepted that future development would largely be infill. Because of these constraints he understood why our policies are focused on trying to ensure that the new houses to be built meet the perceived requirement for smaller houses which do not harm the existing character of Blewbury</p> <p>We thought that net internal demand would be less than half of the 74 houses. However, this was a rough estimate and therefore not referred to in the Plan. We thought that the combination of existing planning consents and likely new applications would generate enough houses to meet the estimated internal demand during the Plan period.</p> <p>Yes the market will of course determine who buys new houses in the village. We needed to analyse internal demand in order to establish whether there was significant internal pent up demand which might have supported a more aggressive growth strategy.</p> <p>It is unlikely that many new affordable houses will be developed through infilling. For that reason we think that rural</p>
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			<p>How much of the need for smaller houses will be met by unallocated plots within the built area? Policy P3 determines the proportion of smaller houses in developments over a certain size, but how many developments of these sizes will there be within the built area, particularly as P8 requires views and open spaces to be protected? Perhaps the team has done some analysis of potential development plots to support the views in the plan, but – quite sensibly – is not clarifying where they might be.</p> <p>Overall, over the plan period as a whole, I suspect that something will have to give; we won't meet local needs or we'll develop a slacker definition of the built area.</p>		<p>exception housing provides the best chance of more social housing being provided in the village.</p> <p>We can't say how many new infill plots will be forthcoming over the plan period but we believe that the rate of development is likely to be similar to that experienced over the last 10 years.</p> <p>We don't think anything "has to give" although we suspect that the definition of the built area will result in more development than the hard "red line" which most villagers seemed to prefer.</p>
31			<p>This draft plan is an excellent document, so very well done team.</p> <p>My only observation is about parked cars. The plan suggests new properties should have more parking so that the problem does not get worse. However I think it is already so bad that we should be recommending that something is done to bring about an improvement. Maybe this is an issue for others to tackle, but the plan could articulate villagers' views more forcefully.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Comment</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Not within the remit of the Plan..</p>
32			Well done!	Support	Noted.
33			An excellent piece of work forming a comprehensive basis to guide the village as it develops in the future. Most grateful for the time and effort put in by the steering group.	Support	Noted.
40	5.3, 5.4	pp.39–40	I would prefer to see “infilling” with smaller size houses in the village, rather than a larger mixed development. We need variety but not excessive growth. There is not much difference between the amount of people coming to the village and those leaving it,	Comment	Refer to majority feedback on Housing Needs Survey and growth strategy.

	4.8	<p>therefore there is not at the present time the NEED for extra housing development.</p> <p>The map of the original “envelope of the village” is inaccurate (1970): 3 chalet houses in Church End were included in it prior to 1990 because New Haven put on an extension to the west and the architect spent a lot of time and money renegotiating plans just because we were included in the conservation envelope of the village in 1987. Many hoops had to be jumped through!!!</p> <p>As I have run a health clinic since 1986 for the benefits of Blewbury residents and others it would have been nice to have mentioned in the amenities/facilities/businesses section. Most people may consider health as important as leisure in their priorities of life in a village.</p>	<p>Comment</p> <p>Comment</p>	<p>Email correspondence explaining choice of map and asking respondent for any further clarification. None received.</p> <p>Email correspondence explaining that we have an estimated 171 self-employed people living in the village, 95 of whom work from home providing a range of specialisms and services – decorators, plumbers, consultants, therapists – so we singled out the key businesses (Red Lion, Savages) that provide employment opportunities and have the most significant footfall.</p>
41		A thoroughly good job of which I approve.	Support	Noted.

5.2.2 Public comments on policies

Respondent URN	Policy number	Comment	Steering group response
3	P1	Surprised that areas 7 and 8 in the Landscape Character Assessment are not the same result as areas 5 and 9 given the views.	This is the view of our professional advisers.
4	P11	Would like to see a stronger environmental mandate.	Not within the remit of the Plan.
8	P9	Disagree with including communal green spaces of sufficient size for children to play freely and safely, with added safeguarding provided by adjacent housing overlooking green space.	Clarified with respondent who had misunderstood the wording.
9	P16	As set out below we wondered whether there is scope withing this policy to encourage the development of new businesses within the village?	Added to policy P16.
15	P2, P4, P7	P2: No positives in this policy, it is all about keeping things the same. Detrimental impact is in the eye of the beholder and I am afraid this policy is constraining and limits new design or ideas. P4: Would like to see encouragement to use new design/building methods to create more flexible space. P7: Instead of the caveat at the end I would like to see encouragement to use new building materials, innovative and adventurous design especially to meet needs of growing family and home working.	Discussion between Chair of the steering group and the respondent. Principal concern was the restrictive tone of Policy P2. In general she would have liked to have seen more positive encouragement to the use of modern, innovative, creative and efficient designs. She liked the space standards and the emphasis on smaller, more affordable developments. It should be noted that the plan does encourage flexibility when "exceptional innovative designs are proposed" (P7). No change to the policies required.
22	P14	Suitable number of parking spaces should reflect actual number of cars in rural area with limited (or no) public transport and many small business owners – not just county standards.	Not within remit of the Plan.
23	P15	I would not want to see speed humps and traffic calming devices. My observation is that they do not have the desired effect – they slow me down and damage my car but don't seem to have any effect on fast drivers. I would tone down the policy to include "where appropriate" in reference to traffic calming.	Not within remit of the Plan.
23	P12	If the existing wastewater and water infrastructure are not adequate, how can any development not add to these problems?	See the response from Thames Water in support of policies P12 and P13..

5.3 Comments from statutory bodies

Statutory body	Section or policy	Comment	Steering group response
Highways England	4.11.3, p.25	Draws attention to work on improving the A34.	Noted.
Thames Water Utilities	Policies P12 and P13	Support for both policies.	Noted.
Vale of White Horse	Pp.24 and 51	Suggested word alterations to sections 4.8.4 and 7.2.4	Advice taken and wording altered.
Natural England	Policy P10	Proposed more emphasis on conservation and biodiversity	Advice taken, also added to Aims and Objectives and Policy 10
Historic England	Policy P8	<p>We would encourage the Parish Council to consider whether they might add certainty to decision making by drawing out further from the [Village Character Appraisal]...what key positive features of character are expected to be sustained or enhanced within proposals for new development, as, at present, the policies add little in themselves to this consideration.</p> <p>Whilst reference to the [VCA]...is secured through the policies it will be the policies themselves that have the greatest weight in decision making. A clearer presumption in favour of the preservation of the village's cob boundary walls, for example, would appear to be justified.</p> <p>Whilst the key views into and out of the village conservation area are identified, a separate policy addressing this feature might provide greater clarity about what it is in the views that should be protected in particular. Is it open views of fields and the wider rural setting that contributes to the special quality of views out, for example.</p>	<p>In response to these points, Policy P8 was strengthened by adding statements requiring new developments – along with alterations or extensions to historic buildings – to retain and enhance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open areas in the village; • public views into and out of the village; • thatched and tiled cob boundary walls; • informal paths and lanes running through the village; • historic enclosure walls and boundaries; • the dark visual ambience of the village via minimal external illumination. <p>Policy P8 was further clarified with a statement about the requirement to preserve or enhance the character of traditional buildings, whether listed or not.</p> <p>An earlier decision not to pick out particular views for protection was reconsidered by the steering group, with advice from Dr. Kathy Davies, author of the VCA. Following Dr. Davies' experience of work to protect views in the city of Oxford, it was agreed that a general statement about the importance of the manifold views into and out of the village would provide better protection in future.</p>

Historic England	9.4, p.68	With regard to the [VCA's] conclusion that it would be advantageous to include Mock Beggar's Hall and Farm within the Conservation Area, it would be feasible to identify either the area as an area of special character, or one or more of the buildings as buildings of local interest by including a policy within the plan stating that they are considered to be so, and to provide some immediate recognition of the importance of the area or buildings through the plan. This would not preclude development within the area but, depending on the policy wording used, should establish that the character of the area is considered to be of particular importance and should be sustained within development proposals. By designating either the buildings or areas as locally listed heritage assets in this way, the plan would also help draw the Council's attention to the area's historic or architectural interest when they come to review the existing conservation area.	A new sentence was added to section 9.4 <i>Village Character</i> about the VCA's recommendation regarding Mockbeggar's. This states: "The conservation area boundary should be extended to include the site of Mockbeggar's Hall and Farm, which is of special heritage interest as it is adjacent to the site of the early manor house and contains early watercourses. It is possible that there is considerable archaeological potential on the site."
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Appendix A: Pre-submission Consultation Documentation

Consultation information sheet

Circulated to all households

Letter from Chair of Blewbury Parish Council

Circulated to all households

Summary of Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

Circulated to all households

Frequently asked questions

Available online or at same locations as printed copies of the Plan

Consultation comments form

Available online and on paper; could be sent in by email or submitted on paper



**Blewbury
Neighbourhood
Development
Plan**

Village consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan – information

The official six-week village consultation on the draft Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan will run from **Monday 1st February to Monday 14th March 2016**.

Along with this information sheet and a **letter** from Chris Lakeland, chairman of the Parish Council, we have included a **summary of the draft Plan**. We've tried to avoid obscure planning jargon and legalisms in writing the summary.

The draft Plan is now available via our website – blewburyneighbourhoodplan.org together with its appendices, a form that you can use to give us your comments on the Plan, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) covering the Plan and the process we have to go through before the Plan can come into force.

Printed copies of the Plan and the Frequently Asked Questions will be available at:

The Post Office*

Blewbury Primary School* and the **Pre-school***

Doctor's surgery

The **Melland Room** at the Rec

The **Benefice Centre** near the church

The **Red Lion** and the **Blueberry**

Style Acre

Dibleys Office*

Ladycroft Park Office*

* You will be able to sign for a copy kept at the starred places* to borrow for 24 hours.

Everyone in the village has a chance to review and discuss the proposed Plan, and to offer comments and suggestions. We can then update the draft based on your feedback before it is submitted to the Vale of White Horse District Council to be examined.

**There will be a public event to discuss the Plan in the Village Hall on
Sunday, 7th February from 2–5 pm**

We'll have a brief presentation of the Plan at 3 pm with open discussion. There will be posters, and time for plenty of informal questions before and after; come at any time.

In the following weeks we will be holding informal events to answer your questions, explain the complex rules that the Plan has to follow, and above all listen to your opinions and suggestions. These informal events will be publicised on our website, Facebook, on posters around the village, and the Bulletin's "Stop Press" email service.

All comments and suggestions regarding the Plan are very welcome! Comments can be submitted using the consultation forms at the public events, or you can download the form from our website or pick it up and submit it at the Post Office.

If you have any questions regarding the consultation or the Plan in general, please email us at blewburyndp@outlook.com.

Remember, this is your Plan and it will only be adopted if a majority agree to it in the village referendum, so please take the time to read it and to have your say.

28 January 2016

Dear Fellow Residents,

I am very pleased to endorse the attached summary of the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan for Blewbury. This Plan has been prepared by a steering group of volunteers commissioned by the Parish Council and is based on detailed feedback from you, the residents of Blewbury.

The main purpose of publicising the Plan at this stage is to make sure that we have understood your views and to give you an opportunity to comment on the Plan. The steering group will make a record of all comments received, and after the six-week statutory consultation period let you know what changes have been made to the Plan.

If adopted, the Plan will provide criteria against which future planning decisions will be made. It is therefore fundamental to the future development of our village.

The full Plan and Frequently Asked Questions can be seen on the Plan website blewburyneighbourhoodplan.org and in printed copies at the places listed overleaf.

A public event is being held in the Village Hall on Sunday, 7th February from 2–5 pm to present the draft Plan. There will be a short presentation at 3pm but please call in at any time to view the exhibition and ask questions.

Over the following month there will also be informal events to answer your questions and listen to your comments. These will be publicised on our website, on posters around the village and via the Bulletin “Stop Press” service.

All comments and suggestions regarding the Plan are welcome! Comments can be made at the public events, via our website, or by filling in a form at Blewbury Post Office.

Please remember, this is **your** Plan and it will only be adopted if a majority of those voting agree to it in the village referendum agree to it after the Vale has examined it.

So please take the time to read it and to have your say.

Yours sincerely

Chris Lakeland

Chairman, Blewbury Parish Council



A Short Summary of the Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

The draft Neighbourhood Plan is now available for everyone to read. You can find it on our website (blewburyneighbourhoodplan.org) and there are printed copies at a number of sites in the village. There is also a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs). We welcome and need comments to make sure it represents the views of the village. If you don't have the time or inclination to read the entire document (which runs to 71 pages), this is a summary of what it says, in plain English rather than the more legalistic language we have to use for parts of the Plan document.

The main purpose of our Neighbourhood Plan is to establish policies that can be used in deciding planning applications in Blewbury, and therefore in shaping the future development of our village and parish. *All* of the conclusions reached so far have been based on feedback received from the community. The Plan is still a draft, and we are running a six-week village consultation to gather views from as many people as possible. This consultation is a mandatory part of the approval process, and we are required to keep a careful record of all comments we receive. At the same time, we have to consult certain official bodies such as Oxfordshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England (formerly English Heritage).

After the village consultation we will revise the Plan in the light of your responses and those of the statutory bodies. It will then be examined for the Vale of White Horse District Council by an independent inspector. If it is approved at this stage it will then be voted on in a referendum of the entire parish. The Plan can only take effect after being passed by the referendum.

If approved, the Plan will have significant weight in the planning process, as part of the Vale's statutory Development Plan. As a result the Plan must not be in conflict with either the existing policies of the Vale's previous Local Plan 2011 or their proposed Local Plan 2031. This has greatly limited our flexibility but should result in a Plan with significant legal standing.

When considering your comments on the draft Plan, please remember that we are only allowed to write policies concerned with land use and housing development – and *nothing else*. However, feedback from the village has raised many other issues people are concerned about, for example road safety. We can't write policies about these, but Chapter 9 of our Plan records all these community issues, for future attention from the Parish Council and local government.

What's in the Plan?

Like many other long documents, it starts with an **Executive Summary** of what's in the Plan.

Chapter 1 (Background) and **Chapter 2 (Summary of Process)** describe the background and what we needed to do to develop the Plan.

Chapter 3 (Aims and Objectives) starts with our overall vision:

Our vision is to safeguard the unique character of this ancient village, to protect the beautiful landscape that surrounds us and to ensure sustainable development that meets the needs of residents at different stages in their lives, now and in the future.

On the basis of this vision, and feedback received at our launch and from the Housing Needs Survey, we prepared aims and objectives. These were fine-tuned when the Vale's draft Local Plan 2031 was published and as we heard views from you, the residents of the village, during the course of the project.

The overall aims, and the objectives to achieve them, are listed in the following table. The P numbers show which policies support each item; we describe each policy on pages 3 and 4.

Aim	Objectives
1: To retain, maintain and enhance the physical character of the village.	To integrate new housing into Blewbury so that the current village aesthetic and character is maintained. P1, P2, P7, P8, P10
	To ensure that new development is of high quality design, is built to high sustainability standards and complements local distinctiveness. P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	To preserve and maintain important village assets, such as green spaces and views. P1, P2, P10
2: To retain and develop the sense of community and vitality associated with the village.	To provide homes for younger people and young families, and so counter any demographic imbalance that exists or may develop. P3, P5
	To provide a mix of housing types, including smaller homes for singles, couples and older villagers wishing to downsize, and appropriately sized homes for families. P3, P5
	To give preferential access to some affordable homes for people with a strong local connection. P6
3: To provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a suitable home appropriate to their requirements.	To provide a greater range of smaller houses for local and Blewbury residents. P3, P5, P6
	To ensure that new houses are built to comply with appropriate minimum space standards. P4, P9
4: To minimise the impact of new development on the village, surrounding countryside, landscape and ecosystems.	To protect, enhance and conserve the AONB, landscape and views. P1, P2, P7, P8, P10
	To retain the nucleated and compact nature of the village. P1, P2
	To protect and enhance the historic character of the village. P1, P2, P8
5: To address infrastructure issues relating to traffic, car parking, water supply and drainage, and shops and pubs.	To ensure that new development does not exacerbate and where possible mitigates current problems with parking and road safety. P9, P14, P15
	To ensure that new development does not exacerbate and where possible mitigates the existing water, drainage and sewage problems. P12, P13
	To ensure the continued existence of shops and pubs. P16, P17, P18

Chapter 4 (Our Village) paints a picture of life in the village. Blewbury is a unique, attractive village due to its heritage, layout and surrounding landscape. With a population of about 1600, it is a relatively prosperous community with an ageing population. It is a strikingly sociable village (40 clubs and societies) with a great sense of community. The chapter describes many aspects of life in the village, including good features and some of the problems and things that could be improved. Problems regarding drainage, sewage and flooding are also described in more detail in **Appendix A (Drainage, Sewer Overflows and Groundwater Flooding in Blewbury)**.

Chapter 5 (Housing Needs Summary) briefly presents the main results of the Housing Needs Survey of the village that was carried out in autumn 2014. There was a strong 61% response rate. A significant result is the need for new houses to be smaller and more affordable, and for provision for people with local ties to be able to live here. The separate **Appendix B (Housing Needs Survey)** gives a complete breakdown of the responses to all the questions in the survey.

Because of Blewbury's historic and rural setting – most of the village is a conservation area and the entire parish is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – we commissioned both a Landscape Character Assessment and a Village Character Assessment to provide evidence and help us formulate our development policy.

Chapter 6 (Landscape Character Assessment) summarises the landscape assessment, which divides the parish landscape surrounding the village into 11 character areas. Each area is rated for how much development it could support without harming the landscape. The entire parish is in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so possibilities for development are very limited. None of the areas has a

development capacity rating higher than 'low', meaning no more than 10 new houses in the entire area, and the majority were rated 'negligible' (no houses at all) or 'negligible to low' (zero to 10 houses). **Appendix C (Landscape Character Assessment)** contains the full report, complete with extensive maps and photographs.

Chapter 7 (Housing Design and Village Character Assessment) starts with a brief survey of housing design in the village over the years. Then we summarise the Village Character Assessment, which focuses on the village itself, both inside and outside the conservation area.

Blewbury's charm and character are due to its distinctive form: a ring of roads, originally with cottages either side, around a core of paddocks, orchards and ponds, interlaced by streams and footpaths. The village contains 71 listed buildings or structures (including cob walls), and on the downs there are eight scheduled ancient monuments, including Blewburton Hill and some barrows. The assessment stresses that the qualities of the village do not depend only on individual buildings, green spaces and views, but on how they create a unique atmosphere, so proposals for new development must be very carefully evaluated. **Appendix D (Village Character Assessment)** contains the full report. The chapter ends with a short section on repairs and insulation of historic buildings.

The results of the two assessments, when combined with feedback so far received, the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011 and the proposed policies of the Local Plan 2031, indicate that there is little scope for further development in or around the village. In this context it should be noted that in 2015 planning permission was granted for an additional 40 houses in Blewbury.

Chapter 8 (Land Use Policies) contains the policies resulting from the evidence described in previous chapters, together with short preambles to explain why they are needed. In the light of the limited scope for further development we have focused our attention on trying to ensure that new houses are targeted, as far as possible, at directly meeting the needs of the community. This is the *most important part* of our Plan – the formal guidelines that planners and developers have to follow.

Policies (please refer to the draft Plan for the full policy wording)

- P1 Location of residential development** – Outside the built area of the village, development is only permitted if allocated in the Local Plan, or for a Rural Exception Site to provide affordable housing. In defining the built area we were strongly discouraged by the Vale from using a red line on a map, so we now use words; this allows flexibility but can be ambiguous.
- P2 General principles for development** – Sets out the conditions, based on the Landscape and Village Character Assessments, that must be met by any planning proposals. New development must preserve the character of the village and landscape, and not harm heritage assets or views.
- P3 Housing mix** – Developments should favour smaller dwellings. Specifies minimum percentages of one, two and three bedroom homes.
- P4 Internal space in new dwellings** – New development must meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space Standard, which sets the minimum size for rooms, storage and floor-to-ceiling height.
- P5 Provision of affordable housing** – Developments must provide 'affordable' housing as required in the Local Plan. This must be distributed around the site and be indistinguishable from market housing.
- P6 Allocation of affordable housing** – 20% of new affordable housing is reserved for people with a strong local connection.
- P7 Design and aesthetics: new development** – Specifies good quality design that respects the qualities of the immediate area and uses suitable materials.
- P8 Design and aesthetics: new development in the conservation area and alterations or extensions to historic buildings throughout the village** – New development in the

conservation area must be sensitive to historic qualities and open spaces. Alteration or extensions to historic buildings anywhere in the village must respect the building's character, materials and historic plot boundaries. Open spaces and views must be retained and enhanced.

- P9 Amenity: new development** – New development must minimise noise, odour and light pollution. Sufficient outdoor storage space for refuse, recycling and parking of cars and bicycles must be provided. Developments of 10 dwellings or more must include communal green space for children's play.
- P10 Natural environment** – New development must preserve and improve landscaping. Where possible, boundaries should be native or wildlife-enhancing hedgerows. Fencing and walls should reflect traditional rural styles; high fences or walls restricting views are discouraged.
- P11 Sustainable development** – New housing is encouraged to be Home Quality Mark-rated to three stars or above. It should have provision for high-speed broadband or similar. Boxes for technology, services and utilities should be unobtrusive, with cables buried if possible.
- P12 Water management** – Requires adequate wastewater drainage and fresh water capacity.
- P13 Drainage and flooding** – Requires adequate, sustainable drainage systems to avoid flooding problems. (Policies P12 and P13 have strong support from Thames Water.)
- P14 Access and movement** – New development must provide sufficient parking, integrated into the landscape to avoid dominating the street scene. Safe pedestrian access to bus stops, schools and other facilities must be provided, allowing for use of pushchairs, mobility scooters, etc. Developments should be open to the public, to facilitate social integration in the village.
- P15 Highways and traffic principles** – New development must not impact unduly on infrastructure and road safety. Traffic calming measures are encouraged. New roads should be designed to encourage low vehicle speeds and respect the rural nature of the village. Street furniture, such as signs and waste bins, should be minimised and be of modest scale.
- P16 Minimising the loss of retail space, restaurants and cafes** – Any loss of retail, restaurant or cafe space is only permitted after the site has been marketed for one year with no viable offers, or if an equivalent replacement is provided elsewhere in the village.
- P17 Public houses** – Change of use or redevelopment of the village pubs will be refused unless there is robust evidence to show that the pub is not economically viable and no longer required.
- P18 Community assets** – There will be a planning presumption against any proposals that would lead to a loss of any asset of value to the community.

Chapter 9 (Community Issues) highlights a list of issues that came up time and again in our consultations but which can't be covered by policies because they do not directly concern planning. They include traffic and pedestrian safety (lack of footpaths, traffic calming, crossing London Road), street lighting (not wanted by the majority surveyed), transport (bus service and cycle paths), village character (cob wall, footpath and bridge maintenance; designating unlisted heritage assets and possibly extending the conservation area), and climate change and energy issues (encouraging low-carbon building, renewable energy, and conservation of energy and water).

At the end we have a **Glossary**, where the various planning, heritage and legal words and phrases we've had to use are defined.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why have a neighbourhood plan?

Blewbury's Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Vale of White Horse's Local Plan, so the policies it contains will be central to the planning decisions in our area. This kind of influence on planning decisions has not been available to communities before. While many groups have prepared or contributed to parish plans, community plans or supplementary planning documents in the past, none of these have the same legal clout as a neighbourhood plan.

What is the relationship between the Vale's Local Plan and Blewbury's Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Vale's Local Plan. Locally, this means that Blewbury's Plan must be in general conformity with the Vale's Local Plan 2031, which is currently under examination by an expert Inspector as part of its approval process. If that plan has not been adopted before our plan has been finalised, we have to conform with the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011.

Can neighbourhood plans contain less development than is allocated in the Vale's Local Plan?

No! Neighbourhood planning is about shaping the development of a local area in a positive manner. It is not a tool to stop new development proposals; it must also reflect local and national policies. Neighbourhood plans and orders may not promote less development than set out in the local plan or undermine its strategic policies.

What makes a good policy for inclusion in the Plan?

The government's guidance states that: *'A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision-maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It can only relate to the development of land, and should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared.'* The golden rule is that the policies in our Plan should be clear, positive, relevant and capable of being delivered. They need to be based on evidence – our policies cannot conflict with government policy, or challenge the strategic elements of the Vale's planning policies.

Why are there not policies on every possible topic?

The Plan working parties have looked at lots of different planning issues in Blewbury, and attempted to shape our policies according to those needs. We welcome your feedback where you think there might be omissions or insufficient clarity. However, the finished policies must be evidence-based and capable of being delivered – they cannot be based solely on our aspirations. While there is no limit to the number of objectives or policies that can be included, we have been advised that it is best to focus on the issues where our Plan can add most value.

How will the Plan work in practice to prevent a development?

Whilst the plan cannot prevent any particular development on its own, it adds considerable weight when planners come to make their decisions.

Some examples of what a neighbourhood plan can (and can't) do...

Can it influence the design of new houses? Yes!

Can it influence the location of development? Yes!

Can it influence the nature of those houses? Yes!

Can it improve the local bus service? No! You will have to lobby our bus company, Oxfordshire County Council and our local MP.

Can it introduce a 20mph zone? No! – speed limits are a matter for the Highways Authority, but traffic management in relation to new development is for planning policy.

Can it control the conversion of an existing shop into another business? No! This is currently 'permitted development' and so not subject to planning policy.

How would the plan work in practice to prevent a large unwanted edge-of-village development such as Woodway or Chailey House?

It will further strengthen the existing statutory planning policies – including those on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which Blewbury is located – that guide the Vale in their decision-making. The proposed Plan is clear on what we currently believe is – and isn't – acceptable: there are specific policies protecting the landscape, views and green space within the village and on its edge. The Plan would undoubtedly add weight to counter any unwanted development.

Is our Plan already influential?

Until the Plan is adopted by the village, it cannot be used to counter applications by developers anywhere in Blewbury. However, the Plan has increasing influence as soon as it is submitted for examination by the Inspector.

Why can't the Plan require zero-emission homes such as the Passive House?

A Neighbourhood Plan is only able to deal with planning matters. Carbon emissions arising from energy use in buildings are dealt with under the English Building Regulations, over which our plan has no influence.

How will we be able to use our Plan to ensure new housing is in keeping with the existing village?

Blewbury is architecturally unique, and a large number of houses and other features are already nationally protected (through listing and our conservation area). The policy in the Plan relating to building materials and styles takes into account the preferred use of vernacular materials, and asks for high-quality design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings. However, being too prescriptive about the style of new buildings will not encourage interesting, good-quality new architecture in the village. *'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes'*. (From National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 60.)

How much is our Plan costing?

We received £10,000 from the Vale, and £12,000 from an organisation called Locality (www.locality.org.uk), which is a national network of community-led organisations. We do not expect anything will have to be paid from village funds.

Will the plan be used as a reference document in considering planning applications by the Parish Council or by the Vale, or both? How will this work in practice?

Both organisations will be required to refer to our Plan when considering planning applications. The Plan will form a legal part of the Vale's Local Plan. On a number of occasions neighbourhood plans have been challenged by local authorities, and the neighbourhood plan has normally prevailed. However, a neighbourhood plan does not give any powers to force a change in statutory designation, such as getting a building listed or extending the conservation area.

Why does it take so long to produce a neighbourhood plan?

Neighbourhood plans take between two and four years to complete. Having formally commenced in February 2014 it is estimated that Blewbury's Plan will be ready by summer 2016. It takes this long because it can only be produced by frequent consultation with the community; its pace is determined by the involvement of local volunteers and their own commitments. There are statutory phases of the plan such as a formal endorsement of the plan area, a village consultation, an examination by an independent inspector and finally a referendum.

How have residents been consulted for their views of what the Plan should include? Have village organisations and businesses been consulted?

The neighbourhood plan process provides numerous stages for consultation. Residents were initially consulted via the launch meeting on 8th March 2014 and the community Housing Needs Survey in the autumn of 2014. A public meeting for feedback on the Housing Needs survey and the Landscape Assessment was held on 28th February 2015. We also consulted different focus groups, including a group of teenagers. Comments and feedback have been received through the website and personal contact throughout the process. There will be a full six-week consultation on the draft Plan during which everyone will be entitled to comment, and as a result of these comments it is almost certain that changes will be made to the Plan. Finally, following the examination by an independent expert, there will be a referendum (see below).

How does the referendum work?

Community support is essential before any neighbourhood plan is adopted and used in planning decisions. If our Plan is found to be satisfactory at examination then the Vale will arrange for a referendum to take place. At referendum, members of the community will have the final say by voting for or against the Plan. If the majority of those who vote support the document, the Plan is 'made' and the Vale is required to adopt it.

What is an examination, and who examines the plan?

All neighbourhood plans are submitted to an independent examination. The examination determines whether the plan meets the necessary criteria and accords with national and local policy. The inspector will be a person with a good understanding of the planning system, such as an academic, a planning officer from a different planning authority or a planning inspector appointed by the Vale. Examinations are only expected to consider whether a plan complies with basic conditions and legal requirements, and aligns with national and local policy. Any significant problems should have been resolved through the support offered by the Vale before the examination begins. The examination process is likely to take at least six weeks.

What role do the Parish Council and the Vale have?

The legislation in the Localism Act stipulates that a neighbourhood plan must be the subject of a request by a qualifying body – in our case Blewbury Parish Council – to the district or county council (in our case the Vale), for permission to carry out a neighbourhood plan. Local volunteers, with the full support of the Parish Council, formed the steering group. The Vale has been very supportive in assisting throughout the process.

How long will the Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan last?

Our Plan is intended to last until 2031, the same time-frame as that covered by the Vale's new Local Plan. A neighbourhood plan can and probably would be reviewed within that period.

How will the presumption in favour of sustainable development relate to our Neighbourhood Plan?

The presumption in favour of sustainable development is principally a means of ensuring that local plans and neighbourhood plans are put together in a way that reflects an evidence-based assessment of the social, economic and environmental needs of an area. Recent planning reforms strengthen the role of neighbourhood plans and local plans in decision making. The presumption makes clear that planning applications that are in line with both local and neighbourhood plans should normally be approved.



Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

Reference No.		Date		Office Use only
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Draft Neighbourhood Plan: Public Consultation Response Form

Dear resident,

(paper(web))

To make your comments on the Draft Plan please:

- 1) Download this form, print it and complete it manually
- 2) Return it to the Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group by
 - a) Handing it in to the Post Office, or
 - b) Handing it to a member of the Steering Group at a consultation event, or
 - c) Scanning the form in and attaching it to an email to blewburyndp@outlook.com
- 3) Complete the Personal Details section in full: any responses that do not have Personal Details will be logged but not considered (we are required to do this).
- 4) Note that all forms must be available for public inspection

Thank you for your involvement in this public consultation.

All comments must be returned by noon on Monday 14 March 2016

Personal details	
Name	
Address	
Are you a Resident, agent, or organisation? <i>(please specify)</i>	
If responding as an agent please specify the name of your client	
Your email address <i>(not mandatory)</i>	

Has the Draft Plan identified the important aspects, both good and bad, of living in Blewbury? <i>(please choose yes or no, and add any comments at the end of this form)</i>	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Overall, do you support the Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan? <i>(please choose yes or no)</i>	Yes	No
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Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan – Draft Plan, Consultation Form
IF USING ADDITIONAL PAGES PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME AT THE TOP OF EACH AND STAPLE ALL OF THEM TOGETHER. Thank you.
 page 32 of 2



Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

If you would like to comment on a particular policy please state the policy number in the first column below, say whether you agree or disagree in the second column, and then add your comments and/or suggested changes in the third column:

Policy number	Do you agree or disagree?	If you disagree, what changes would you suggest we make?

Additional comments

Closing date for comments: noon on Monday 14 March 2016

Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan – Draft Plan, Consultation Form
IF USING ADDITIONAL PAGES PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME AT THE TOP OF EACH AND
STAPLE ALL OF THEM TOGETHER. Thank you.

page 33 of 2

Appendix B: Replies from statutory bodies

Highways England

Historic England

Natural England

Thames Water Utilities

Highways England

From: Johnson, Zoe [mailto:Zoe.Johnson@highwaysengland.co.uk]
Sent: 03 March 2016 11:14
To: 'ian.bacon@blewburtonpartners.com' <ian.bacon@blewburtonpartners.com>
Cc: Blake, Patrick <Patrick.Blake@highwaysengland.co.uk>; Gonet, Teresa <Teresa.Gonet2@highwaysengland.co.uk>
Subject: FAO Ian Bacon: Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation

Dear Mr Bacon,

Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation

Thank you for inviting Highways England to comment on the Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation.

Highways England has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such Highways England works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

We will therefore be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case the A34.

We note your comments within the Neighbourhood Development Plan in section 4.11.3 in relation to the A34. We are working closely with Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and other partners to identify a transport package to mitigate the impact of growth in the Science Vale and Didcot area. You will be aware improvements on the A34 at Milton and Chilton junctions are currently being constructed by Oxfordshire County Council. We are also planning to deliver a package of technology on the A34 to improve traffic management and driver information.

I hope the above information has been useful, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Zoe Johnson

Area 3 Spatial Planning and Development Control Assistant Manager

Highways England | Bridge House | Walnut Tree Close | Guildford | GU1 4LZ

Tel: +44 (0) 300 470 1381

Web: <http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk>



Historic England

blewburyndp@outlook.com

By email only

Our ref:

Your ref:

Telephone

2016.03.18 Blewbury NP Pre-submission

HE RLS Comments

01483 252028

25th March 2016

To whom it may concern

Re: Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan Pre-submission Version

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the pre-submission version of the Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood planning is primarily an opportunity for the community to set the agenda for planning in their own area. As the government's advisor on planning for the Historic Environment we are pleased to support communities by sharing our experience of the preparation of planning documents and policies that support the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including our heritage assets. You can find our published advice online at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/>.

Having reviewed the neighbourhood plan we do not have any issues with the proposed policies or direction and are pleased to note the positive use and integration of both the landscape and townscape character assessments which are excellently produced documents. We would encourage the Parish Council to consider whether they might add certainty to decision making by drawing out further from these assessments, what key positive features of character are expected to be sustained or enhanced within proposals for new development, as, at present, the policies add little in themselves to this consideration. Whilst reference to the assessments is secured through the policies it will be the policies themselves that have the greatest weight in decision making. A clearer presumption in favour of the preservation of the village's cobb boundary walls, for example, would appear to be justified. Similarly, whilst the key views into and out of the village conservation area are identified a separate policy addressing this feature might provide greater clarity about what it is in the views that should be protected in particular. Is it open views of fields and the wider rural setting that contributes to the special quality of views out, for example.

With regard to the conclusion that it would be advantageous to include Mock Beggar's Hall and Farm within the Conservation Area, it would be feasible to identify either the area as an area of special character or one of more of the buildings as buildings of local interest by including a policy within the plan stating that they are considered to be so and to provide some immediate recognition of the importance of the area or buildings through the plan. This would not preclude development within the area but, depending on the policy wording used, should establish that the character of the area is considered to be of particular importance and should be sustained within development proposals. By designating either the buildings or areas as locally listed heritage assets in this way the plan would also help draw the Council's attention to the area's historic or architectural interest when they come to review the existing conservation area. We would be happy to further discuss this process if it can be of assistance to the Council

We hope these comments, however, brief, are of assistance to the parish council. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries relating to them or if there is any further information we can provide to assist you.

Yours faithfully

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Historic Places Adviser (South East England)

Historic England

Guildford

Tel. 01483 252028

E-mail: Robert.Lloydsweet@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Date: 24 March 2016
Our ref: 178970



FAO: Ian Bacon,
BNDP Steering Committee
U-No-Who
Bessels Lea
Blewbury
Oxon
OX11 9NW

Customer Services
Hombeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Bacon,

Planning consultation: Blewbury Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Location: Blewbury, Aylesbury Vale.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 15 February 2016.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) (as amended)
Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981 (As amended)

Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan

Many thanks for consulting Natural England on the Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan. Having taken a look at the plan itself it is clear that given the plan isn't proposing allocations for new housing developments that the main issue will be ensuring any windfall development doesn't impact the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The main point that should be noted is that there should be a better defined policy mentioning biodiversity enhancements and protections, at present this is very light touch and could be seen as skirting around the issue. This point is backed up by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states in paragraph 115 that biodiversity should be conserved and enhanced wherever possible. Policy P10 should be amended to include more specific mention of biodiversity and conserving and enhancing it.

The main constraint is the impact on landscape given the village sits entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB. This has been recognised very effectively within the landscape capacity assessments for the village and its surrounding countryside. Any windfall development which comes through should include sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) where possible in order to better accommodate heavy rainfall events in future and to help deal with climate change in years to come.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Piotr Behnke on 0300 060 1963. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely,

Piotr Behnke
Sustainable Development and Regulation
Thames Valley Team



Thames Water Utilities Ltd

Sent by email: blewburyndp@outlook.com

Contact Carmelle Bell
Phone 0118 952 0503
E-Mail thameswaterplanningpolicy@savills.com

21 May 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

Vale of White Horse – Blewbury draft Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for consulting Thames Water Utilities (Thames Water) regarding the above. Thames Water are the statutory sewerage undertaker for the Vale of White Horse area and are hence a “**specific consultation body**” in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2012.

We have the following comments on the draft Neighbourhood Plan:

Policy P12 – Water Management (page 62)

Thames Water would like to support Policy P12 and its requirement for developers to demonstrate that there is adequate wastewater and fresh water supply capacity both on and off the site to serve the development, and that it would not lead to problems associated with water supply and/or sewerage overflows for existing or new users.

Policy P13 – Drainage and Flooding (Page 63)

Thames Water would like to support Policy P13 and its requirement for development proposals to demonstrate that they will not exacerbate surface and groundwater drainage and flooding problems.

I trust the above is satisfactory, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark Mathews", written in a cursive style.

Mark Mathews
Town Planning Manager
Thames Water Utilities Ltd.