

EYE AND DUNSDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Sonning Eye · Playhatch · Dunsden Green

PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT

2011-2035



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EYE AND DUNSDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP
ON BEHALF OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

IN CONJUNCTION WITH BLUESTONE PLANNING LLP

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?.....	4
1.2. WHAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?.....	4
1.3. STATUTORY CONTEXT - BASIC CONDITIONS.....	5
1.4. STATUTORY CONTEXT - DESIGNATION	5
1.5. PLAN PERIOD, MONITORING & REVIEW	6
2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	7
2.1. NATIONAL POLICY	7
2.2. LOCAL PLAN	8
2.3. OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN.....	10
2.4. JOINT LOCAL PLAN 2041	12
3. THE PARISH	13
3.1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION	13
3.2. PARISH PROFILE	16
POPULATION	16
HOUSING	17
EMPLOYMENT	18
4. VISION & OBJECTIVES	18
VISION	18
4.1. DETAILED OBJECTIVES.....	19
5. LAND USE POLICIES	20
5.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICIES	20
LIST OF THEMES AND POLICIES	20
5.2. LANDSCAPE, BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	21
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	21
5.3. KEY VIEWS AND VISTAS.....	30
PLCA1 – KEY VIEWS	33
PLCA2 – KEY VIEWS	33
PLCA3 – KEY VIEWS	33
PLCA4 – KEY VIEWS	33
5.4. FORMER MINERAL EXTRACTION SITES.....	35
5.5. LOCAL GREEN GAPS	39

5.6.	BIODIVERSITY	42
5.7.	GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE.....	46
5.8.	LOCAL GREEN SPACE	51
5.9.	FLOODING AND DRAINAGE	55
5.10.	POLICIES FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.....	59
	DESIGN PRINCIPLES	59
5.11.	CHARACTER AREA 1: SONNING EYE	62
	NEW DEVELOPMENT.....	63
	KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES.....	63
5.12.	CHARACTER AREA 2: PLAYHATCH	64
	KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES.....	65
5.13.	CHARACTER AREA 3: DUNSDEN GREEN AND SURROUNDING AREA.....	66
	DUNSDEN GREEN	66
	SURROUNDING AREA	66
	KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES.....	66
5.14.	HERITAGE.....	78
5.15.	HOUSING	82
5.16.	CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS.....	87
	TRANSPORT WITHIN THE PLAN AREA	87
	TRAFFIC PRESSURES FROM READING BOROUGH.....	89
5.17.	ROAD SAFETY AND JUNCTIONS	90
5.18.	PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY	94
5.19.	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	98

Appendices

I.	Settlement Character Appraisal & Design Code	V3.3 Nov 2023
II.	Landscape Character Assessment	v12:26 April 2022
III.	Heritage Assets Evidence Base	V2.0
IV.	Local Green Spaces Assessment	V2.2 Aug 2023
V.	Green Corridors in Eye and Dunsden	V1.0 16.09.2023
VI.	Biodiversity Report contains TVERC documents	V1.0
VII.	Non-designated Heritage Assets List	31.03.2023
VIII.	Flooding in Sonning Eye	V2.0
IX.	Community Aspirations Schedule	Rev03
X.	Parish Profile (OCSI – Local Insight)	2021
XI.	Not used	
XII.	List of Native Trees and Hedgerow Plants	From Design Code - V3.3 Nov 2023
XIII.	Parish Amenities Schedule	V1.0

Chairman's introduction

As Chairman of Eye & Dunsden Parish Council it gives me great pleasure to introduce our new Neighbourhood Plan. The project has been four years in the making and is the result of a great deal of hard work and much time freely given by a team consisting of Suzanne Abraham; Richard Berkley, David Breeze, Howard Crews, Ian Dick, Nick Marks, Robin Page, John Plumer (Chair) Deborah Simmons, and David Woodward. According to the 2012 regulations, 'Neighbourhood planning seeks to enable communities to come together to shape the and growth of their local area through the production of a neighbourhood development plan'. This has been a truly collaborative process, working with members of the public and local businesses and with our consultants. The finished document and its appendices form part of local planning policy which must be referred to by South Oxfordshire District Council when it decides new planning applications in the Parish. It has two other functions. The first is to provide guidance to those considering developments as to what kind of development the community considers appropriate, both in terms of style and location. The second is to provide a definitive statement of community aspirations for the future. The document is an evolving one which will be periodically reviewed as directed by the current legislation. Our thanks to all who have contributed. We hope you will find our Neighbourhood Plan both interesting and useful.

David Woodward
Chairman of Eye & Dunsden Parish Council

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1.1.1. A Neighbourhood Plan (NP) can bring a community together to influence future development in their area and provide and respond to the specific needs of their local area. The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance website explains that “Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community’s needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.”¹
- 1.1.2. Not only does it allow for appropriate development to be brought forward, greater influence can be given to what new development should look like and how to preserve and enhance landscape and townscape quality and character.

1.2. What can be included in a Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1.2.1. An adopted or ‘Made’ Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the wider statutory Development Plan for the area. It deals solely with the development and use of land. In this regard any decisions relating to applications for development must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate to the contrary².
- 1.2.2. Whilst the policies are restricted to land use planning matters, there is also the ability to look at wider Parish matters, which often become clear during public consultation. Such matters must be clearly identified as separate community aspirations within the Neighbourhood Plan. This provides the community with a clear overall vision of what has been identified as a priority and how these aspirations and land use planning matters may be linked together in an overall vision for the future. These are clearly identified in each section of this Plan.
- 1.2.3. The survey and consultation work carried out from the outset of the Neighbourhood Plan process has highlighted a variety of land use planning issues that are of concern to the local community. This includes the management of development within the Parish and the need for a consistent approach to decision making. In particular there have been numerous issues relating to the impact that development has on the character of the area and the wider landscape. This often relates to the form and appearance that new development should take, the need to protect and enhance the natural assets in Eye and Dunsden Parish and the effect new development will have on the existing social and community infrastructure. There is also an expressed desire to preserve the separation of the settlements both within the Parish and those in the surrounding area.
- 1.2.4. The Eye and Dunsden Parish Council (the “Parish Council”) has reflected the concerns and views of residents in developing a vision for the future of the Parish with a comprehensive set of objectives for the future planning of the area. These are set out in Section 4.

¹ MCLG, ‘Planning Practice Guidance’ Last Updated 01-10-19, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20190509. Revision date: 09 05 2019

² Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

1.3. Statutory Context - Basic Conditions

- 1.3.1. Under the terms of the governing legislation³, neighbourhood plans must comply with what are known as 'Basic Conditions'. These Basic Conditions are as follows:
- a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).
 - b) The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - c) The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
 - d) The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
 - e) Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).

1.4. Statutory Context - Designation

- 1.4.1. The Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the preparation of the neighbourhood plan and ultimately, they will submit the plan to the District Council for examination. The term 'qualifying body' is defined by the Localism Act 2011, meaning it is the body with responsibility for neighbourhood planning in the designated neighbourhood area.
- 1.4.2. The Parish Council made a formal application to designate a Neighbourhood Plan Area and this was confirmed on the 20 July 2021.

³ Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

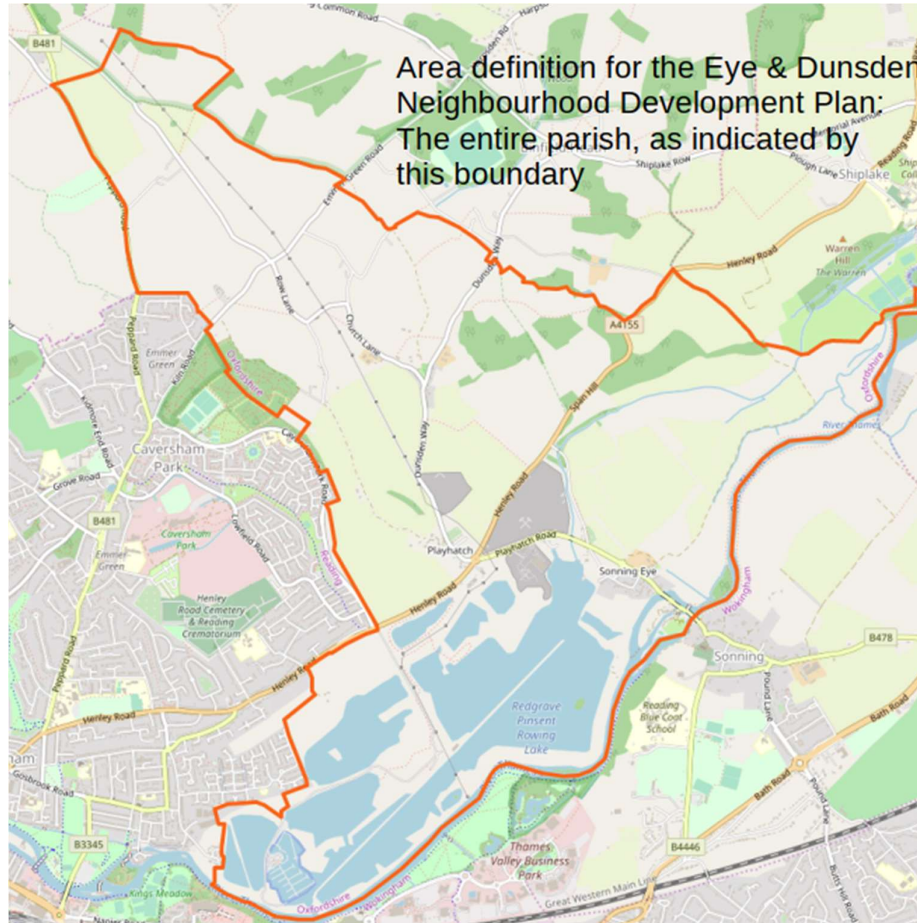


Figure 1 Extent of the Neighbourhood Plan Area as Designated - Plan prepared by South Oxfordshire District Council

1.5. Plan Period, Monitoring & Review

- 1.5.1. This Neighbourhood Plan has been produced to cover the period up to 2035, which corresponds with the plan period for the South Oxfordshire District Local Plan. Following the adoption of the Joint Local Plan in the future, the Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed and updated accordingly in order to ensure that its policies are up to date.
- 1.5.2. Regardless of this, the members of the Steering Group are also committed, in co-operation with the local community and Parish Council, to monitor the effectiveness of this Plan and its supporting documents from the moment it is 'made'. This is usually undertaken on a yearly basis at the Parish Council Annual General Meeting and recommendations for appropriate changes are highlighted as necessary.
- 1.5.3. When it is determined that substantial changes are required, then these are likely to require full public consultation and examination. Partial reviews will also need to go through the same process. When changes are considered to be minor, then scope for a more limited review process, that will nonetheless involve both the local community and the South Oxfordshire District Council, will be sought by the Parish Council Steering Group.

2. Planning Policy Context

2.1. National Policy

- 2.1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published by the government in 2018 and revised in July 2021⁴, is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. It sets out the Government’s policy in relation to land use planning matters.
- 2.1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate that it has had regard to and is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF as a whole. The relevant paragraphs of the NPPF are set out alongside the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan in Section 5.
- 2.1.3. As stated in the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs as set out in Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly⁵.
- 2.1.4. The planning system has three overarching objectives described in the NPPF (paragraph 8), these have been related to the Plan area:
- a) **an economic objective** – this NP seeks to provide policies which assist in building a strong, rural economy. Through public consultation and talking to business owners this NDP seeks to assist with the future needs in the Parish.
 - b) **a social objective** – Eye and Dunsden is a Parish with a number of disconnected settlements, but retains a good community spirit with a dispersed range of services and facilities. The aim of the Plan is to ensure that Parish is better and safely connected via appropriate infrastructure, maintains and enhances its service provision to all residents and to enable the type of homes to be provided within the parish which meets the needs of the community rather than the current focus on substantial ‘executive style’ dwellings.
 - c) **an environmental objective** – being partly within and on the edge of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (which is currently under consideration for further extension), it is imperative that our natural environment is at the heart of our Plan and improving biodiversity is an important focus.
- 2.1.5. The Parish has a wide variety of built and historic environments, which have been assessed in the Settlement Character Appraisal and Design Code (Appendix I). It is considered that where appropriate, all development should make effective use of land, which should be in keeping with the context of the area.
- 2.1.6. Development must make best use of natural resources and policies seek to minimise waste and pollution. In this era of a climate change emergency, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and reducing carbon emissions is becoming a greater challenge. In this regard, we have opted for policies which not only meet the development needs of the area as identified through our Parish surveys, but have been worded such that they can be focused on future sustainability requirements with flexibility to evolve and adapt to more stringent future requirements.
- 2.1.7. The NPPF acknowledges that local circumstances need to be taken into account in the policies and planning for strategic area, this NP has been prepared to add further local information to

⁴ The National Planning Policy Framework 20th July 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>

⁵ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 42/187. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development <http://www.un-documents.net/a42r187.htm>

the strategic policies of South Oxfordshire Local Plan and to reflect the local context, character, needs and opportunities of the individual parish.

2.2. Local Plan

2.2.1. Eye and Dunsden parish is located within the Local Planning Authority area of South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). The overall planning strategy for the District as described in the adopted Local Plan, is to principally focus development on a number of large-scale strategic sites. With regard to housing in particular, these are on the whole found closer to Oxford or around the larger settlements in the District or on brownfield sites.

2.2.2. At the lower levels in the settlement hierarchy (of which the parish settlements are designated as being), the focus of development is to allow limited amounts of housing and employment, to enhance and protect the rural character of the open countryside and the Chilterns Area of Natural Outstanding Beauty (AONB). The Overall Strategy diagram extract from the Local Plan below highlights the approach taken.

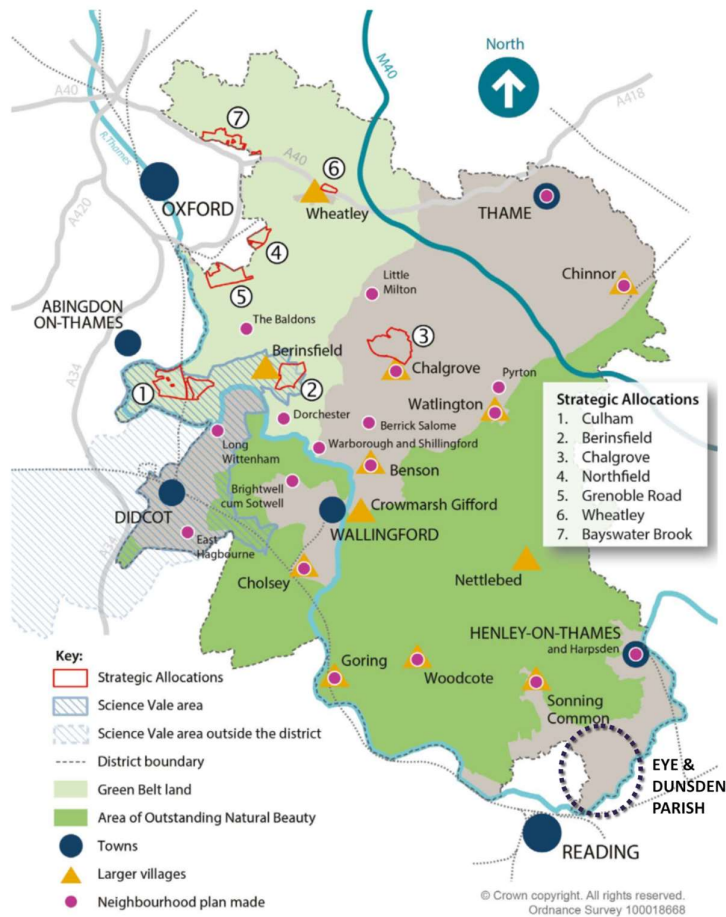


Figure 2: Spatial Strategy Diagram of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan

2.2.3. As befits its rural location adjacent to the River Thames, the Parish is subject to a number of environmental designations:

- a) Northern part of the Parish is within the Chilterns AONB (Policy ENV1)

- b) There are several areas of ancient woodland (Policy ENV2)
 - c) Sonning Eye is designated as a Conservation Area (Policy ENV8)
 - d) The southern part of the Parish is a Minerals Safeguarding Area (Policy EP5)
 - e) A large area is affected by flooding from the River Thames (Policy ENV4 and EP4)
- 2.2.4. The Local Plan does not include any housing or employment site allocations within parish boundaries. Although the neighbouring Reading Borough puts forward strategic and large-scale proposals which may impact on the Plan Area (see below).
- 2.2.5. The strategy Policy STRAT1 lists Playhatch as a ‘Smaller Village’ within the settlement hierarchy, with both Sonning Eye and Dunsden Green are classified as ‘other villages’. In such circumstances acceptable development is considered to be that which supports *“Smaller and Other Villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services;”*
- 2.2.6. More specifically, smaller villages policy H8 confirms that SODC will support development within smaller villages in accordance with policy H16. Whilst this can include Neighbourhood Plan allocations, Policy H16 also explains that within smaller villages development should be limited to infill and the redevelopment of previously developed land. Infill is defined in policy H16 as *“...the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location.”*
- 2.2.7. It is considered that the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan will build upon the strategic policies in the Local Plan and provide detailed, locally specific information to ensure that future development proposal to be assessed appropriately.
- 2.2.8. With part of the Chilterns AONB located in the Plan Area, its setting and the wider landscape around the River Thames landscape, it is imperative that a significant proportion of the Plan considers the how best to protect these assets of considerable value to the community. Notwithstanding this however is the need to ensure that the local community itself continues to thrive.
- 2.2.9. All of these policies tie back into the strategic and non-strategic policies of the development plan whilst also echoing the principles set out in the NPPF, thus ensuring that the basic conditions concerning the need to have regard to national policy, to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and to be in general conformity with the strategic policies are all met. Further details on this specific matter are set out in the Basic Conditions Statement that accompanies the submission draft Neighbourhood Plan.

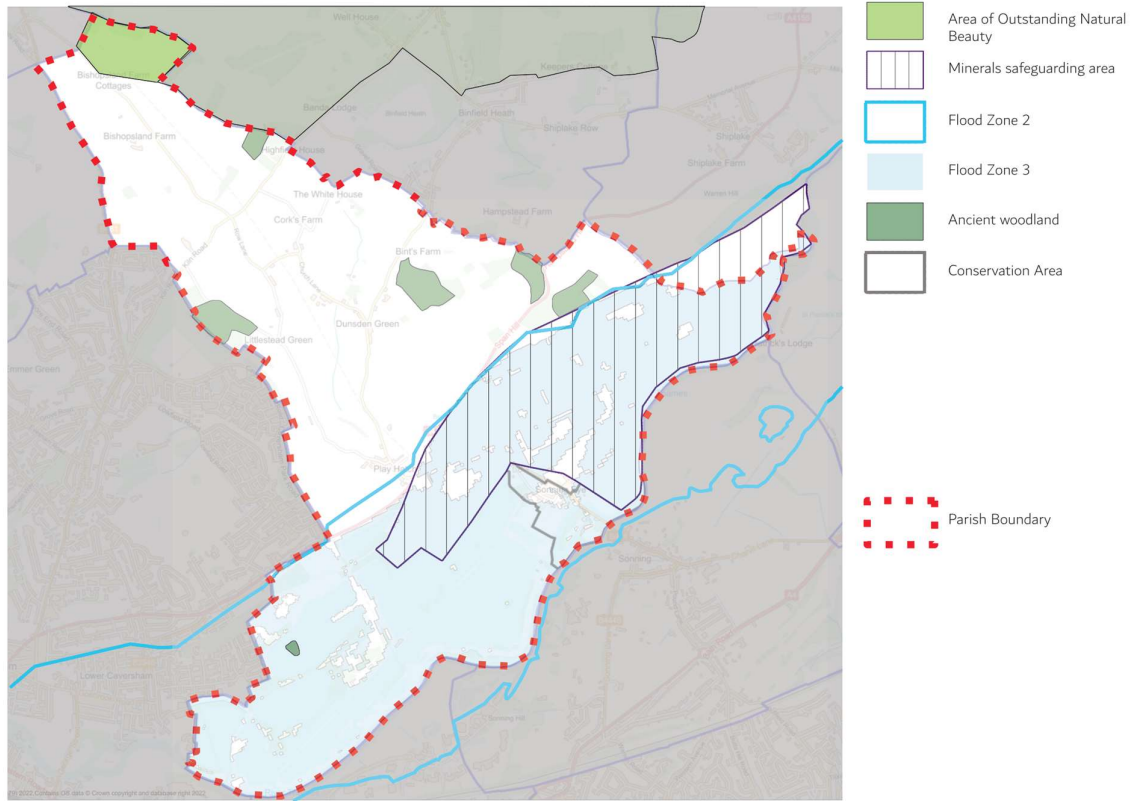


Figure 3: Statutory designations and Potential Issues affecting the Parish (taken from the Parish Character Appraisal)

2.3. Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 2.3.1. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy was adopted on 12th September 2017 and sets out the vision, objectives, spatial planning strategy and policies for meeting development requirements for the supply of minerals and the management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2031.
- 2.3.2. With the varied water-based land uses in the Parish relating to the River Thames, wildlife lakes, recreation lakes, continued mineral extraction and natural spring, there are policies in the Plan focusing upon the issues specifically. This covers not only landscape elements, but biodiversity and matters of flooding.
- 2.3.3. There are two areas within the Plan area that are referred to in this plan and these are the Caversham Lakes and the quarry at Playhatch. Their locations can be seen in Figure 4 and 5 below.



Figure 4: Active Mineral Workings and Site – Caversham depicted as an extraction site for sharp sand and gravel



Figure 5: Construction, Demolition and Excavation Sites – Playhatch Quarry depicted as a CDE Recycling Facility

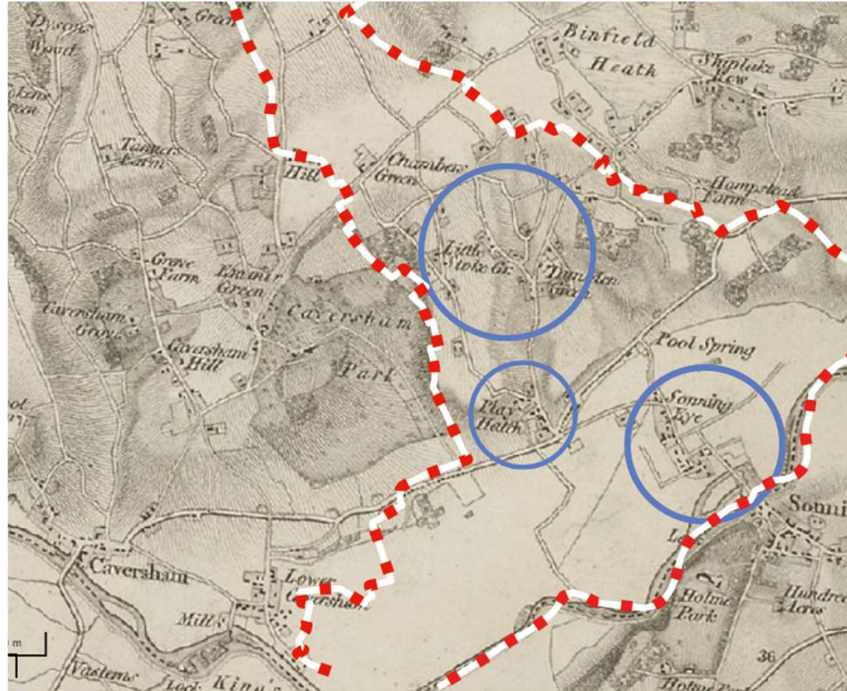
2.4. Joint Local Plan 2041

- 2.4.1. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have committed to prepare a Joint Local Plan, which will replace the current adopted Local Plan and will form part of the Development Framework and will identify locations for housing, retail and employment land as well as the infrastructure required to support the growth within the district.
- 2.4.2. The Joint Local Plan is currently at an early stage, and therefore no development policies have been published. At the time of writing, the most recent update states that the Preferred Options’ consultation document is to be published in Summer 2023.

3. THE PARISH

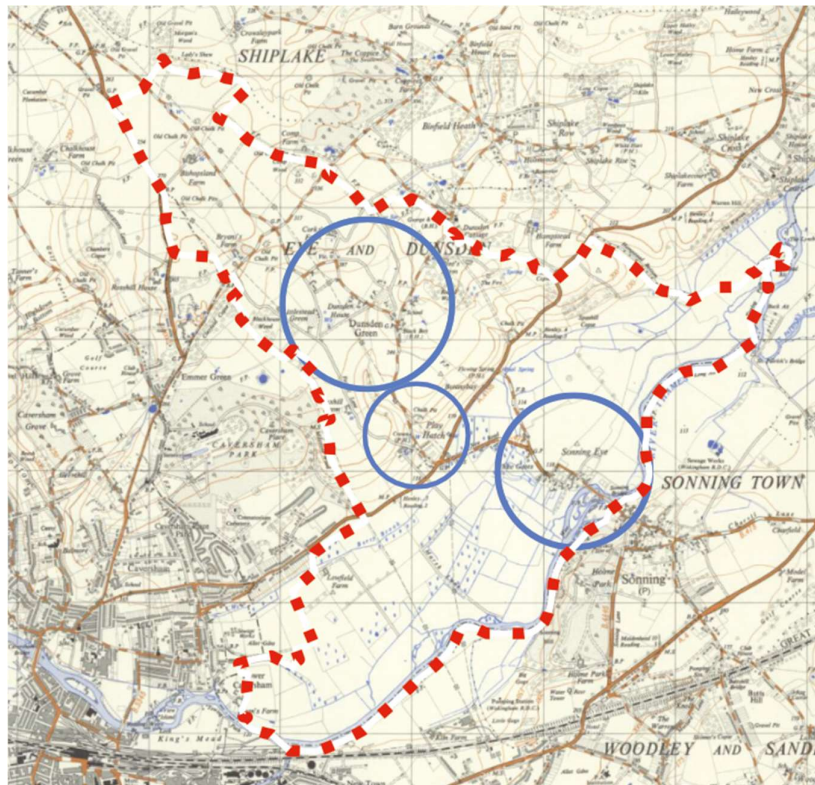
3.1. General description

- 3.1.1. Eye and Dunsden Parish consists of 1040 hectares of land lying to north east of Reading, near to the suburb of Caversham, and to the south west of Henley-on-Thames. It has an attractive and unique appearance and although it is situated on the edge of the densely developed urban area of Reading, it has managed to retain a distinctive, open rural character formed of two main landscape components, the Chiltern Hills and the Thames River Valley.
- 3.1.2. The adjacent urban areas are in steep contrast to the rural nature of the Parish which largely comprises agricultural land, woodland and current/disused gravel pits. Many of the urban areas are effectively screened from view by woodland at Clayfield Copse, Blackhouse Wood and Milestone Wood or the vegetation alongside the lakes to the south of the parish.
- 3.1.3. The eastward flowing River Thames forms the southern boundary of the Parish, which is also characterised by the extensive area of lakes relating to gravel extraction. These extraction works are gradually ceasing, with the area now used for both water-based recreation purposes, as well as quieter areas designated for wildlife. There are currently issues however with the recreation uses increasing in scale to such an extent that the wildlife areas are being adversely impacted upon.
- 3.1.4. The terrain is undulating and gains height from the river. Ancient woodland is located in the Chiltern Hills and a part of the Parish is within the designated Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 3.1.5. Whilst a lowly populated Parish, the area contains three distinctly different settlements:
 - Sonning Eye
 - Playhatch
 - Dunsden Green
- 3.1.6. The wider open countryside which is interspersed by small pockets of development including Littlestead Green, where development is usually related to farmsteads.
- 3.1.7. The Parish was created in 1894 and was originally formed part of the wider Sonning township. There have been numerous changes over time to the parish in terms of boundary alterations, with the final change in 2003, which saw the western half of the village of Binfield Heath removed from the Parish, thus giving today's parish of Eye and Dunsden.
- 3.1.8. The Parish's historical development has been influenced by its natural setting, with the River and wider landscape of river meadows, open fields, enclosures, woodland and commons.
- 3.1.9. The parish was historically dominated by its main tenant farmers, with manor landowners such as the Bishop of Salisbury based in Sonning.
- 3.1.10. The settlement pattern was, and still is, characterised by scattered settlements, which historically formed separate communities.
- 3.1.11. The earliest settlement of Dunsden (meaning 'Dyne's valley') is included in the Domesday Book. In the 13th Century, when Eye, meaning 'island', was recorded. It is thought that Sonning Eye and Playhatch existed in medieval times, as did clusters of houses on the edge of commons and isolated farmsteads. Many of these farmsteads still exist today. The maps highlight Corks Farm, Bishopsland Farm, Comp Farm, Bryants Farm and Row Lane Farm.
- 3.1.12. Larger farms dominated intensive mixed arable farming in the 16th to 18th centuries, with the construction of impressive farmhouses, associated with the farmstead above.



Parish Map 1840 - the limited development in and around Caversham is apparent as are the road connections . The present A4155 is clearly visible

Figure 6: Old historic Parish map from 1840



Parish Map 1947 - the Parish itself remains largely unchanged in terms of settlement form, but show the Reading, Caversham and Woodley areas expanding

Figure 7: Old historic Parish map from 1947

- 3.1.13. Road changes have been most evident as has the introduction of the railway. Development pushing out from Reading has caused coalescence with many former villages and hamlets. The historic maps above highlight the extent of the growth.



Figure 8: Caversham Lakes

- 3.1.14. The large-scale 20th-century gravel extraction substantially altered the southern parish, with the flooded workings now form recreational lakes and a nature reserve.
- 3.1.15. The parish was historically connected by road from Wallingford to Henley via the Caversham Bridge. The route from Reading and Caversham (the modern A 4155) was turnpiked from 1768 to 1881, and passes through the southern part of Playhatch. Here a large urban roundabout was built at the junction with the Sonning road in the 1990s. This road improvement including urban street lighting however visually altered the character of the previously rural area. This is now a frequently used, busy route which links to Shiplake and Henley beyond. The route is also an accident blackspot with significant numbers of reported road traffic incidents at each junction and entrance.
- 3.1.16. There are numerous lesser routes serving the parish's hamlets and scattered farms, which are also long established. Amongst these are the north-south roads linking Sonning Eye and Dunsden Green with Sonning Common. These remain rural in character with limited paved footways
- 3.1.17. Within Sonning Eye, the Playhatch Road (B478) was rerouted and a mini-roundabout constructed around 1980. Although the location is on the edge of the Conservation Area, such works radically detract from the character of the area with the introduction of modern lighting and signage.
- 3.1.18. Pressure from modern traffic flows particular through Reading has led to considerable debate over the last few decades, with regard to the need for a third river crossing to serve Reading. The final location of a proposed crossing could include land forming part of Eye & Dunsden parish

3.2. Parish Profile

Population

- 3.2.1. A full Parish profile is included in the Evidence Base documents (Appendix X), of key importance in terms of this Neighbourhood Plan is the change to the population and housing.
- 3.2.2. The population of Eye and Dunsden was recorded to be 421 (Census 2021). This is an overall increase of 15% between 2011 and 2021, which is slightly higher than the overall annual population change that was recorded for the district (11.1%).

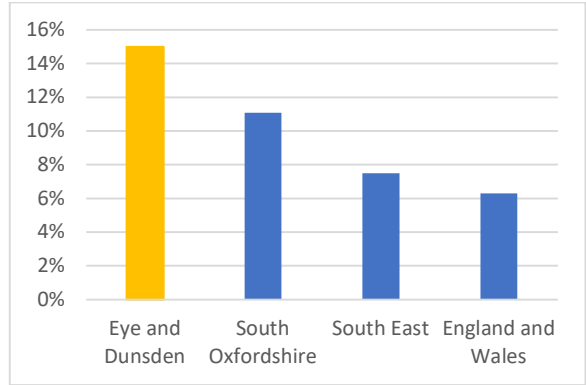


Figure 9: Percentage of Population change between 2011 and 2021 - Source: UK Officer for National Statistics – Census 2021

- 3.2.3. The age structure of the population of Eye and Dunsden can be seen in Figure 10. It is evident that the Parish has the largest percentage of people aged between 15 to 64 years (67.5%). This is considerably higher than the percentage that was recorded for the district.

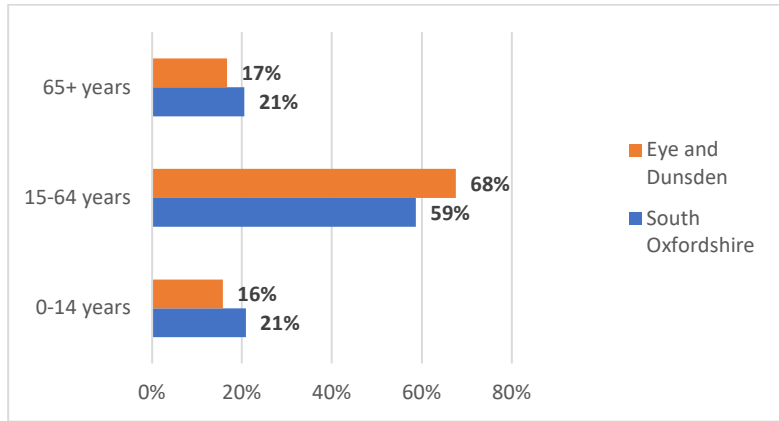


Figure 10: Percentage of Age Structure of the population of Eye and Dunsden in 2021 - Source: UK Officer for National Statistics – Census 2021

Housing

3.3.1. Figure 14 demonstrates that the largest percentage of people living in Eye and Dunsden reside in detached buildings. This percentage is significantly higher than the one reported for the district (35.2%).

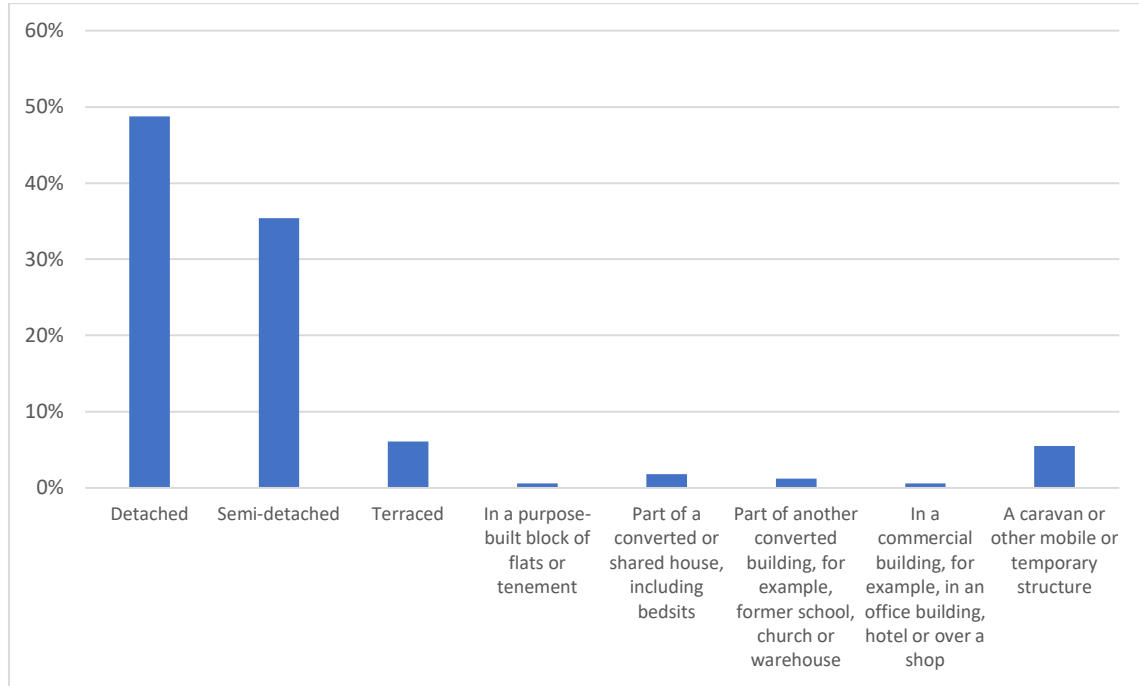


Figure 11: Percentage of the type of buildings residents of Eye and Dunsden occupy

Source: UK Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

3.3.2. As it can be seen from the graph below, 35.6% of the residents of Eye and Dunsden live in a property, which they own outright. This is similar to the percentage that was reported for the district (37.7%). 23.9% appear to have reported that they rent their properties, which is significantly higher than the figure that was recorded for the district (12.9%).

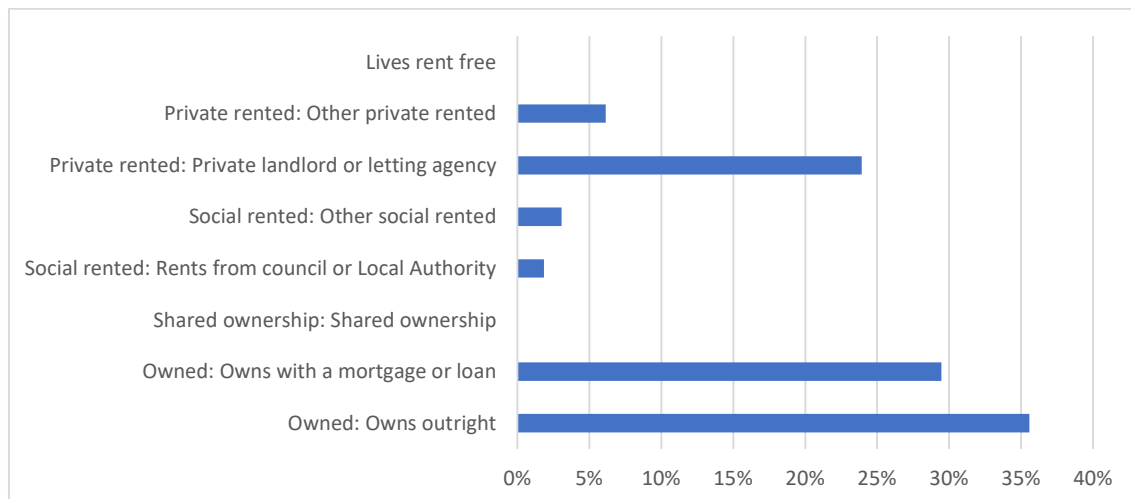


Figure 12: Percentage of household tenure in Eye and Dunsden

Source: UK Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Employment

3.4.1. According to the 2021 Census, 71.3% of people aged 16 years and over are economically active. This percentage is slightly higher than the average for the district (65.1%).

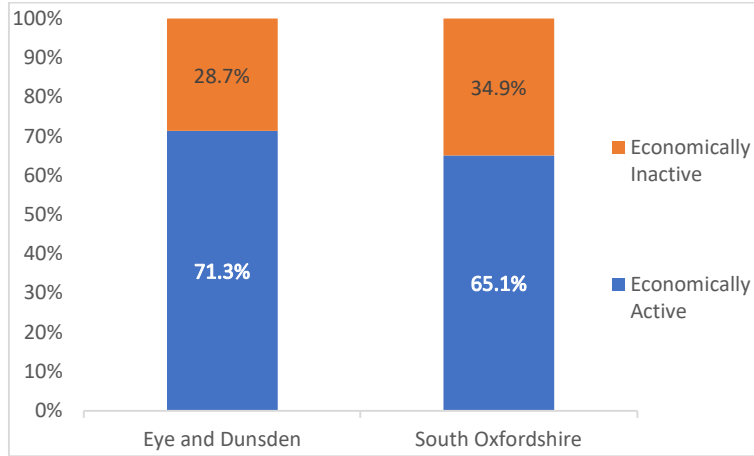


Figure 13: Percentage of Economically active and inactive residents of Eye and Dunsden in 2021

Source: UK Officer for National Statistics – Census 2021

3.4.2. Most of the economically active people living in Eye and Dunsden are managers, directors and senior officials (31.1%), which is significantly higher than the average for the whole district (17.6%). Approximately 4% of people in the Parish are also in administrative, secretarial and elementary occupations or work as plant and machine operatives, which is similar to the district average.

4. VISION & OBJECTIVES

Vision






4.1.1. The vision and objectives below were derived from the community responses to our residents' surveys and community consultation events. These have been further refined throughout the process.

VISION

To address the climate emergency and loss of natural environment by maintaining and enhancing the rural character, environment and landscape of the parish; to maintain and improve pedestrian/non-motorised vehicular accessibility between communities and into the surrounding countryside while supporting sustainable development that is of an appropriate scale, character and design to the benefit of the local community.

4.1.2. The following are specific and detailed objectives focused upon different topic areas as raised by the community.

4.1. Detailed Objectives

Environment, Flooding & Sustainability		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify, encourage, and promote environmental sustainability by considering the current and future effects of climate change and the provisioning for energy efficiency and carbon offset in activities within the parish. Require the use and installation of renewable energy in any new/modified residential dwellings and commercial, leisure and community developments. b) Conserve, enhance and protect the existing wildlife sites/habitats including local nature reserves, sites of specific scientific interest and tree preservations. c) Understand and conserve biodiversity within the parish and enhance natural habitats where possible d) Ensure all new development including mineral extraction/restoration schemes maximises the enhancement of the capacity of the flood plain in the parish. e) Require all new developments (residential or commercial) to enhance biodiversity within the parish through measures such as additional planting, green infrastructure, and eco-friendly maintenance.
Character of the Built Environment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conserve and enhance the essential rural character of the parish and its settlements. This will include, where appropriate, sustainable infill residential, commercial, leisure and community development that allows for natural growth within the settlement boundaries. Creep or elongation of the settlements into the open countryside will be discouraged. b) Ensure new development respects the form and function of existing settlements in the parish and that it is designed to a high quality, consistent with the NP design codes and compatible with the local vernacular and the Conservation Area as appropriate. c) Identify, protect, and enhance the parish’s heritage assets including listed buildings and the Conservation Area.
Landscape Character		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sustain the sensitive landscape setting of the parish’s settlements including preserving and enhancing the area of natural landscape and agricultural land existing between settlements, neighbouring parishes, and larger urban areas. b) Conserve and enhance the existing network of trees, hedgerows, wetlands, public spaces, and rights of way. c) Maintain the rural character of approaches to the parish. d) Ensure mineral extraction restoration schemes provide for new public realm and that the terms of historic restoration agreements are honoured.
Local Travel and Safety		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To preserve, enhance and where possible expand pedestrian/non-motorised vehicular modes of transport within the parish by promoting improvements to the existing foot and bridle path network including its links with the Chilterns AONB and the River Thames. b) Improve pedestrian/non-motorised vehicular accessibility between settlements in the parish. c) Encourage traffic calming measures where appropriate to reduce the speed of vehicles travelling through the parish and to reduce air and noise pollution. d) Preserve and enhance public transport services through the parish. e) Minimise the likelihood of flooding and surface water drainage overflows. f) Continue to remain engaged in working towards a sustainable solution to traffic congestion across the River Thames including the possibility of a further river crossing, provided it does not have a negative impact on the parish
Community Spirit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To seek opportunities wherever possible to maintain and enhance the social and economic vitality of the parish by supporting and expanding the range of services and facilities it provides for the benefit of the community. b) Engage with the parish’s communities at all stages of the development and implementation of the NP to ensure the Plan meets their different needs and expectations, thereby enhancing its sense of community.

5. LAND USE POLICIES

5.1. Introduction to the Policies

- 5.1.1. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies based on themes of particular importance to the Plan’s objectives. The text accompanying the policy, sets out how each contributes to one or more objectives, how it relates to national and local policy, with an overview of the evidence base to support the policy and where to find more detailed information.
- 5.1.2. All policies should be read in conjunction with the entire Development Plan and in this regard, development should comply with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP), the Waste and Minerals Local Plan (WMLP) and other relevant policies of this Neighbourhood Plan (the “Plan”).
- 5.1.3. Where there are non-land use planning based community aspirations, these have been highlighted separately in each section and are distinct from the Neighbourhood Plan policies. These show the direction in which the Parish wish to proceed in the future.

LIST OF THEMES AND POLICIES IN THE NP

<p>Valued Landscape Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •POLICY ED-VL1 Landscape Character and Valued Landscapes •POLICY ED-VL2 Important Views •POLICY ED-VL3 Former Mineral Extraction Areas •POLICY ED-VL4 Settlement Identity and Prevention of Coalescence
<p>Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •POLICY ED-BGI1 Biodiversity •POLICY ED-BGI2 Trees and Hedgerows •POLICY ED-BGI3 Use of the Lakes •POLICY ED- BGI4 Local Green Spaces
<p>Flooding and Drainage Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •POLICY ED-FR1 Flooding and Drainage
<p>Design and Historic Environment Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •POLICY ED-DH1 General Design Principles •POLICY ED-DH2: Heritage
<p>Housing Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •POLICY ED-H1 – Housing Development
<p>Highways & Infrastructure Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •POLICY ED-CI1 Transport and Highways •POLICY ED-CI2 Quiet Lanes •POLICY ED-CI3 Public Rights of Way
<p>Community and Employment Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •POLICY ED-CE1 Community Facilities and Services •POLICY ED-CE2 Rural Buildings and Commercial Development

5.2. LANDSCAPE, BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Landscape Character

5.2.1. A small part of the north-western Parish falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), to the north of Bishopsland Farm. It is also worthy of note that the Parish is actively being considered for an extension to the AONB. At the time of writing, consultants have been commissioned by Natural England to review the boundary of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as part of Natural England’s Landscape Designation Programme. and, Eye & Dunsden Parish Council are part of the Joint Parishes AONB Group (JPAG) who are a collaborative working group of neighbouring parishes making and supporting the case for an extension to the southern boundary of the AONB that would include the whole of the parish of Eye & Dunsden.

5.2.2. Although the remainder of the Parish is afforded no formal landscape designation. Historically however in previous iterations of the Local Plan (South Oxfordshire District Council Rural Areas Local Plan, Adopted July 1992), the area outside the AONB (apart from the area around the lakes in the south-west) was afforded an Area of Great Landscape Value designation⁶. The Council at the time sought to “...conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape and to protect it from development which is likely to have an adverse effect on its character and appearance.” This also included “control in relation to the design and siting of buildings and the use of land generally.”

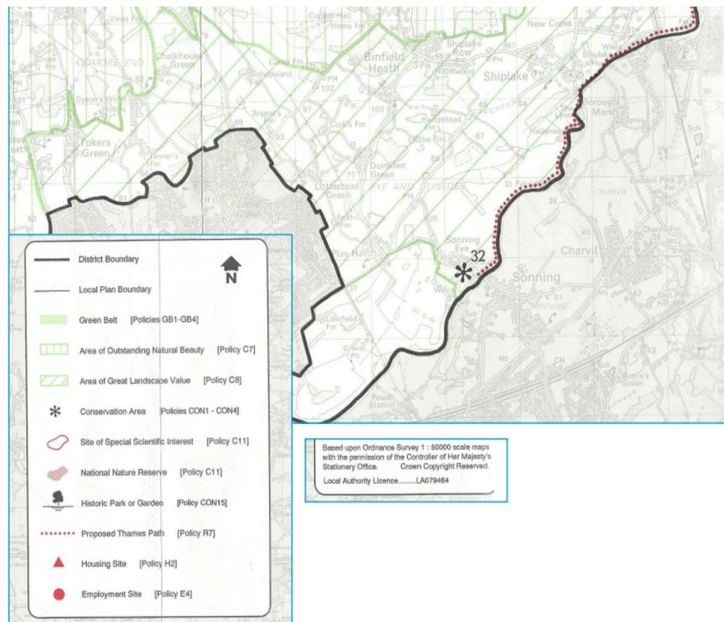


Figure 14 -Extract from the South Oxfordshire District Council Rural Areas Local Plan map, Adopted July 1992 (see Landscape Character Assessment)

5.2.3. The designation dated back to the 1954 County Development Plan, but carried through in time, as the area was considered as being of high landscape value. Whilst this designation no longer exists in the current Local Plan, it is considered by the community however that little has changed in this time in relation to the quality of this landscape.

5.2.4. To further this, the Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment⁷ (LCA - Appendix II), and analysis of the open land within the parish was prepared to understand whether or not areas within the Parish were considered to be a ‘valued landscape’ and to carry greater weight in landscape terms.

5.2.5. The following section contains a number of plans and extracts from the Landscape Character Assessment, with the full text found in Appendix II.

⁶ See Appendix XI for extract from South Oxfordshire District Council Rural Areas Local Plan, Adopted July 1992

⁷ Liz Allen CMLI (Environmental Planning Landscape Architecture) August 2020 as appointed by Eye & Dunsden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) on behalf of Eye & Dunsden Parish Council

- 5.2.6. This report builds on published landscape character studies most notably the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017 (in support of the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034), the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment 2017, and data sources from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC).
- 5.2.7. The parish lies mainly within the National Character Area NCA110: Chilterns and with a small section to the south within National Character Area NCA115 Thames Valley. The Chilterns NCA includes the Chilterns AONB but covers a wider area and is defined, amongst other things, by the close relationship between the Chiltern Hills and the Thames Valley.
- 5.2.8. The National Character Areas are further refined into District-wide landscape character areas. The parish falls within the Chilterns Plateau with Valleys (LCA10) and the Thames Valley and Fringes Landscape Character Area (LCA11).
- 5.2.9. The Parish has been further subdivided into individual parish character areas.

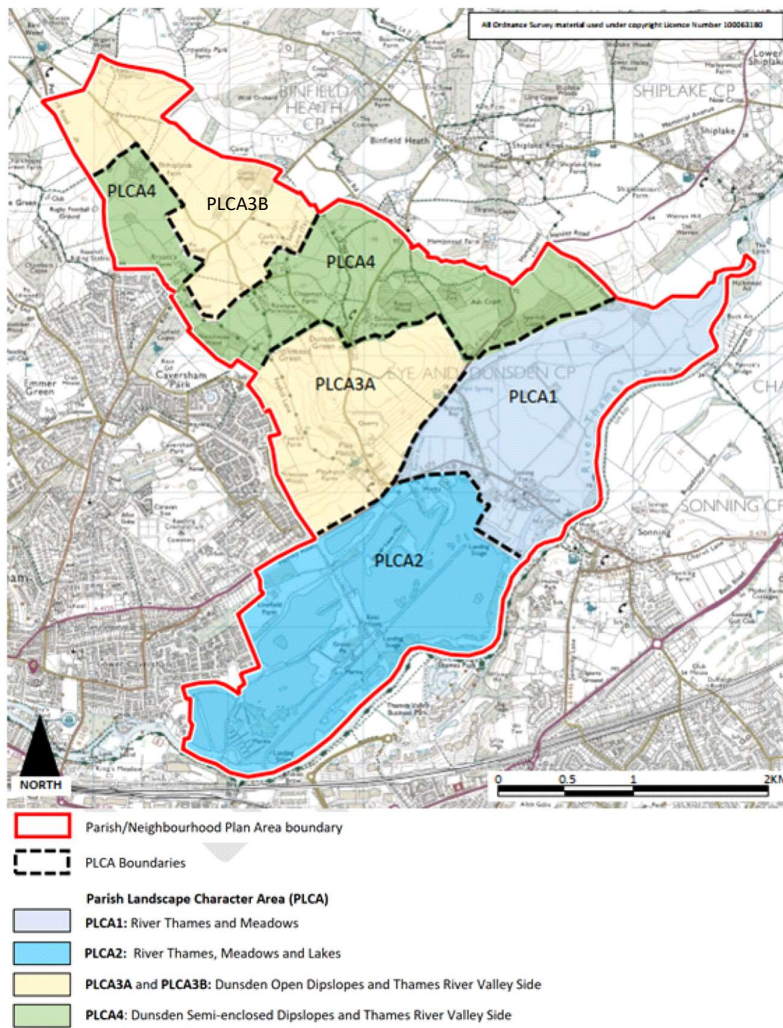


Figure 15 Eye and Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCA)

5.2.10. These were then assessed according to Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, which clarifies aspects in more detail in relation to assessing landscape value outside national designations. A summary of each area and why it is considered to be a ‘Valued Landscape’ and well above ‘ordinary’ countryside has been set out in tables below for each area.

PLCA1: River Thames Meadow, River Cliff and Terraces	
Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced	
Landscape quality (condition)	<p>A distinctive character area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the River Thames and its largely development free associated floodplain both enclosed by the undeveloped river cliff and terraces The patchwork of fields, woodlands and robust hedgerows and Sonning Eye Conservation Area and Listed buildings further enhance this character area Originally part of the ‘Area of Great Landscape Value’ as set out within South Oxfordshire DC Rural Areas Local Plan 1992
Scenic quality	<p>High scenic quality,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous views of the River Thames and to the undeveloped river cliff and terraces
Rarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Thames and associated undeveloped floodplain, enclosed by undeveloped river cliffs. An undeveloped length of the River Thames with a strong rural character in close proximity to urban areas Sonning Eye as an early river crossing retaining its compact nucleated settlement form
Representativeness	<p>Unique example of the River Thames</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> as a meandering river on a floodplain as found within the Chilterns AONB
Conservation interests	<p>Sonning Eye Conservation Area 13 Listed Buildings</p>
Recreation value	<p>High value for recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thames Path – National Trail which provides complete access to the River Thames along the edge of the river bank Access to River Thames by boat slipway The French Horn Public House and restaurant
Perceptual aspects	<p>High levels of tranquillity and the sense of remoteness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Thames Path (National Trail) provides access to areas with high levels of tranquillity and the sense of remoteness - see also extract (6.27) from ‘Three men in a boat’
Associations	<p>River Thames – extensive within history, art and literature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An extract from the book ‘Three Men in a Boat’ by Jerome K. 1889 describes a section of the River Thames between Shiplake and Sonning Eye

Table 1 PLCA1 Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced



Figure 16 PLCA1 Long framed views to the south across the River Thames to pasture fields and wooded horizons

PLCA2: River Thames and Lakes	
Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced	
Landscape quality (condition)	<p>A distinctive character area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These include the River Thames, water bodies and lakes with the maturing riparian vegetation on adjacent land • Views out to the adjacent undeveloped river cliff and terraces.
Scenic quality	<p>High scenic quality,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous views across the lakes
Rarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • largely undeveloped section of the River Thames and associated area of lakes provides a unique area of water bodies adjacent the River Thames
Representativeness	<p>Unique example of the River Thames</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a meandering river on a floodplain as found within the Chilterns AONB
Conservation interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Span Hill Chalk Pit (an existing Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site)
Recreation value	<p>High value for recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a number of lakes and waterbodies for a range of different water-based activities, including; sailing, fishing, water skiing, rowing and open water swimming • Permissive paths • Access to Local Wildlife Sites from permissive paths
Perceptual aspects	<p>A high level of tranquillity and the sense of remoteness due to the well wooded character of the riparian vegetation</p>
Associations	<p>River Thames – extensive within history, art and literature.</p>

Table 2 PLCA2 Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced



Figure 17 - PLCA2 A view from the south and the Thames Valley Park, where the vegetation and development free skyline provides a rural backdrop to this park and a rural setting for the river

PLCA3A & 3B : Dunsden Open Dipslopes and Thames Valley Sides.	
Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced	
Landscape quality (condition)	<p>Many landscape features of value in their own right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River cliff topography with dry valleys and valley spurs. • Robust hedgerows, hedgerow trees, small woodlands and discreet roads. Panoramic views, PRoW and lanes providing good accessibility and quiet recreation • Originally part of the ‘Area of Great Landscape Value’ as set out within South Oxfordshire DC Rural Areas Local Plan 1992
Scenic quality	<p>Outstanding views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long views to the west and east further into the Chilterns AONB • To the south, the PRoW and lanes provide wide and framed views across the Thames River Valley to far horizons
Rarity	<p>The unspoilt rural character is rare in such close proximity to a large urban area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides an important contribution to the rural setting of the Thames Valley and River Thames. • makes an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB
Representativeness	<p>Unique example of the River Thames</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a meandering river on a floodplain as found within the Chilterns AONB
Conservation interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Span Hill Chalk Pit (an existing Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site)
Recreation value	<p>High value for recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High value, with PRoW within the AONB and leading further into the Chilterns AONB. PRoW leading down the valley side, down onto the Thames Valley floodplain

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playhatch: Potential Local Green Spaces
Perceptual aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high level of tranquillity and the sense of semi-remoteness such as Foxhill Lane with its semi enclosed character providing areas of semi-remoteness. • Elevated character with few visual detractors and well • concealed urban edge enhances rural experience
Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains part of the Wilfred Owen Trail a WW1 celebrated poet

Table 3 PLCA3 Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced



Figure 18 PLCA3 Mature oak trees create focal points within this elevated landscape, often marking old chalk quarries, as seen to the right. Long views to wooded horizons to the NW and NE within the Chilterns AONB. An isolated dwelling sits low in the landscape, barely conspicuous.

PLCA4: Dunsden Semi-enclosed Dipslopes, River Cliff and Terraces

Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced

Landscape quality (condition)	<p>Many landscape features of value in their own right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodlands, mature trees, mature tree lined roads, mature tree belts and a pattern of fields of grassland and arable enclosed by robust hedgerows. Topography which contributes to an intimate semi-remote landscape. • Originally part of the 'Area of Great Landscape Value' as set out within South Oxfordshire DC Rural Areas Local Plan 1992
Scenic quality	<p>High scenic value with a range of diverse views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of diverse views to a variety of landscape elements • Contributes to the landscape setting of the Thames Valley • Makes an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB and provides a link from the AONB across and down to the River Thames
Rarity	<p>An intact area of countryside in close proximity to the urban area</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient woodlands, Ancient enclosures, rural hamlets and farmsteads
Representativeness	Much of this LCA is indistinguishable from the landscape of the Chilterns AONB
Conservation interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site: Blackhouse Wood inc proposed adjacent extension into Clayfield Copse. • Spanhill Chalk Pit is also proposed as an Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site • High number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed Buildings • Ancient Woodlands. • Areas of Ancient enclosure
Recreation value	An extensive network of PRoW and lanes linking to the Chilterns AONB and down to the River Thames Valley
Perceptual aspects	Quiet, intimate landscape - strong sense of enclosure contrasting with the long panoramic views across the Thames River Valley and beyond
Associations	Wilfred Owen WW1 poet wrote and lived in the parish

Table 4 - PLCA4 Key Valued Landscape Characteristics to be conserved and enhanced



Figure 19 PLCA4 Occasional long view out beyond the parish boundary, framed by woodlands towards Bowsey Hill

- 5.2.11. The above considerations make it clear that these different Landscape Character Areas possess a range of key ‘Valued Landscape’ characteristics to be conserved and enhanced, which set it apart from ordinary countryside.
- 5.2.12. The LCA makes a number of recommendations to either protect or enhance the character of each the different Character areas, these are set out in the table below. These recommendations form the basis of policy ED-VL1 (2) Landscape Character and Valued Landscapes.

Recommendations to either protect or enhance the character of each the different Character areas	PLCA1: River Thames and Meadows (<i>Inc Sonning Eye</i>)	PLCA2: River Thames, Meadows and Lakes	PLCA3A: Dunsden Open dip slope (<i>Inc Playhatch</i>)	PLCA3B: Thames River Valley Sides	PLCA4: Dunsden Semi-enclosed dip slope River Cliff and Terraces (<i>Inc Dunsden Green</i>)
Landscape Character					
Conserve permanent pasture	++			++	+
Conserve large scale open flood plain	++				
Restore Gravel extraction areas to a landscape in keeping with the floodplain	++	+			
Conserve rural character – limit areas of extensive building, car parking, hard surfacing, urban boundary treatment (close board and panel fences), urban features	++	+	++	++	++
Enhance any intermittent hedgerows and retain existing hedgerows particularly alongside field boundaries and roadsides	++	+	++	++	++
Retain and improve the wooded character	+	++		++	++
Conserve irregular river banks with, intermittent groups of trees and riverside riparian vegetation	++				
Conserve the meandering river form along the floodplain and wooded belts		++			
Restore and enhance the alignment of Berry Brook and its associated riparian character		++			
Avoid over engineered solutions for tributaries which would detract from the rural character of the area	+	++			
Preserve Dark Night Skies				++	++
Preserve tranquillity				++	++
Historic & Settlement Character					
Historic Farmsteads and / or traditional buildings	++		++	++	++
Common land and / or areas of focal open space				++	
Sonning Eye Conservation Area	++	+			
Retain rural setting and separate identity of each settlement	++		++		++
Retain character of sparsely developed area	+	++	++	++	++
Roads and Paths					
Avoid road improvements such as pavements, street lighting, signage, gateway entrances etc which would urbanise this area	++	++	++	++	++
Conserve narrow, rural and sunken lanes			++	++	++
Land Uses					
Quarry and other large-scale use - Avoid overstating entrances to sites with unsuitable and suburban boundary fencing and treatment	++		++		
Minimise visual impact of intrusive uses	++	++	++	++	++
Recreation use / water-based sports – any increase needs to be balanced with adverse impacts such as traffic, noise, ecology etc		++			

Table 5
Recommendations to either protect or enhance the character of each of the different Character areas

ED-VL1 Landscape Character and Valued Landscapes

The individual Parish Landscape Character Areas as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment¹ (Appendix II), are identified as valued landscapes as set out below and in Tables 1-4:

- a) PLCA1: River Thames and Meadows
- b) PLCA2: River Thames, Meadows and Lakes
- c) PLCA3A and PLCA3B: Dunsden Open dip slope and Thames River Valley Sides
- d) PLCA4: Dunsden Semi-enclosed dip slope River Cliff and Terraces

The landscape of the Parish and its setting, should be preserved and enhanced, in line with recommendations in the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix II), Settlement Character Appraisal and Design Code (Appendix I) as summarised for each Parish Landscape Character Area in Table 5 above.

Their valued qualities, should be protected and where possible enhanced, in terms of:

- the historic pattern of fields,
- watercourses* and wetlands (as identified on figure 26),
- network of trees, copses, hedgerows and boundaries (hedgerows, trees, walls etc.),
- Ancient woodland (including Spanhill Copse, Ash Copse, Round Wood, Comp Wood, Lady's Shaw, and Blackhouse Wood,
- identified wildlife and strategic wildlife green corridors (shown in figure 26),
- highways and public rights of way; and recreational open space and public spaces, and
- the contribution that the landscape makes to the distinctive character and identity of the settlements within the Plan area.

Opportunities should be sought where appropriate to minimise the adverse impact of any intrusive or intensive land uses and to reintroduce and enhance traditional orchards and deciduous woodland, grassland, watercourses, wetland areas, and allotments.

**A watercourse is defined by the Environment Agency to be: any natural or artificial channel above or below ground through which water flows, such as a river, brook, beck, ditch, mill stream or culvert.*

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 117, 118, 170, 171, 172

- **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
- ENV4: Watercourses
- ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Development
- ENV11: Pollution
- EP5: Minerals Safeguarding Areas

- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

- M1: Recycled and secondary aggregate
- M3: Principal locations for working aggregate minerals
- M4: Sites for working aggregate minerals
- M5: Working of aggregate minerals
- M8: Safeguarding mineral resources
- M9: Safeguarding mineral infrastructure
- M10: Restoration of mineral workings

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

5.3. Key Views and Vistas

- 5.3.1. The topography and landform are a key characteristic of the parish. The parish lies on the dip slope of the Chiltern Hills which descend down to the River Thames floodplain. At its highest point towards the north eastern boundary, the parish sits at 102m AOD on the southern side of Comp Wood, from here the landform falls south-eastwards as a gently undulating landform to around 70m AOD, where the landform then descends more steeply forming part of the Thames River valley side down to around the 40m AOD contour. At this elevation the landform then flattens out and forms part of the floodplain for the River Thames at around and below 35m AOD as shown below. This is depicted in Figure 20.
- 5.3.2. Each of the Parish Landscape Character Areas has been individually assessed for key views. Full details are found within the LCA, however the views are shown collectively on the Figure 21 and described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

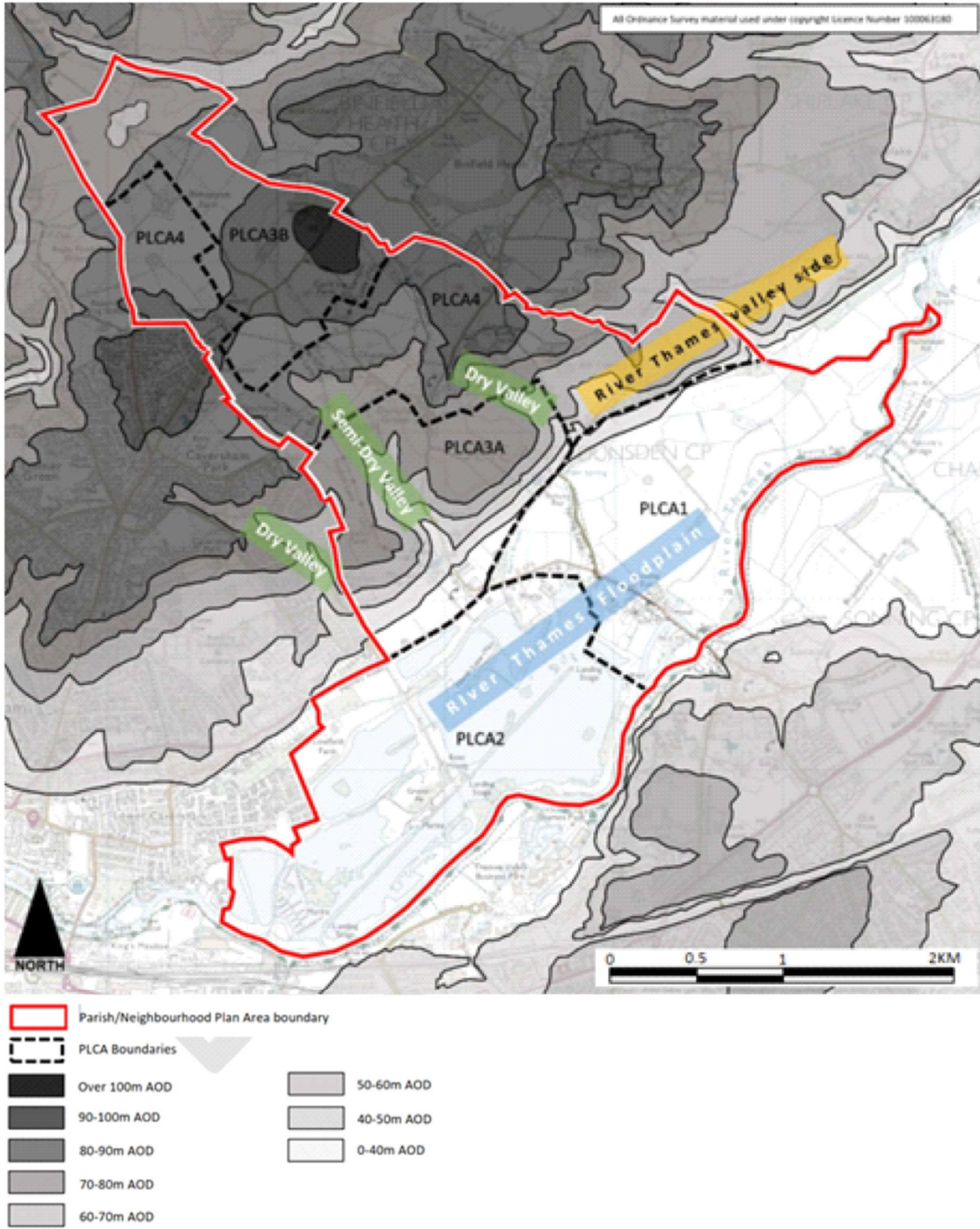


Figure 20 - Topography and Landform of the Plan area

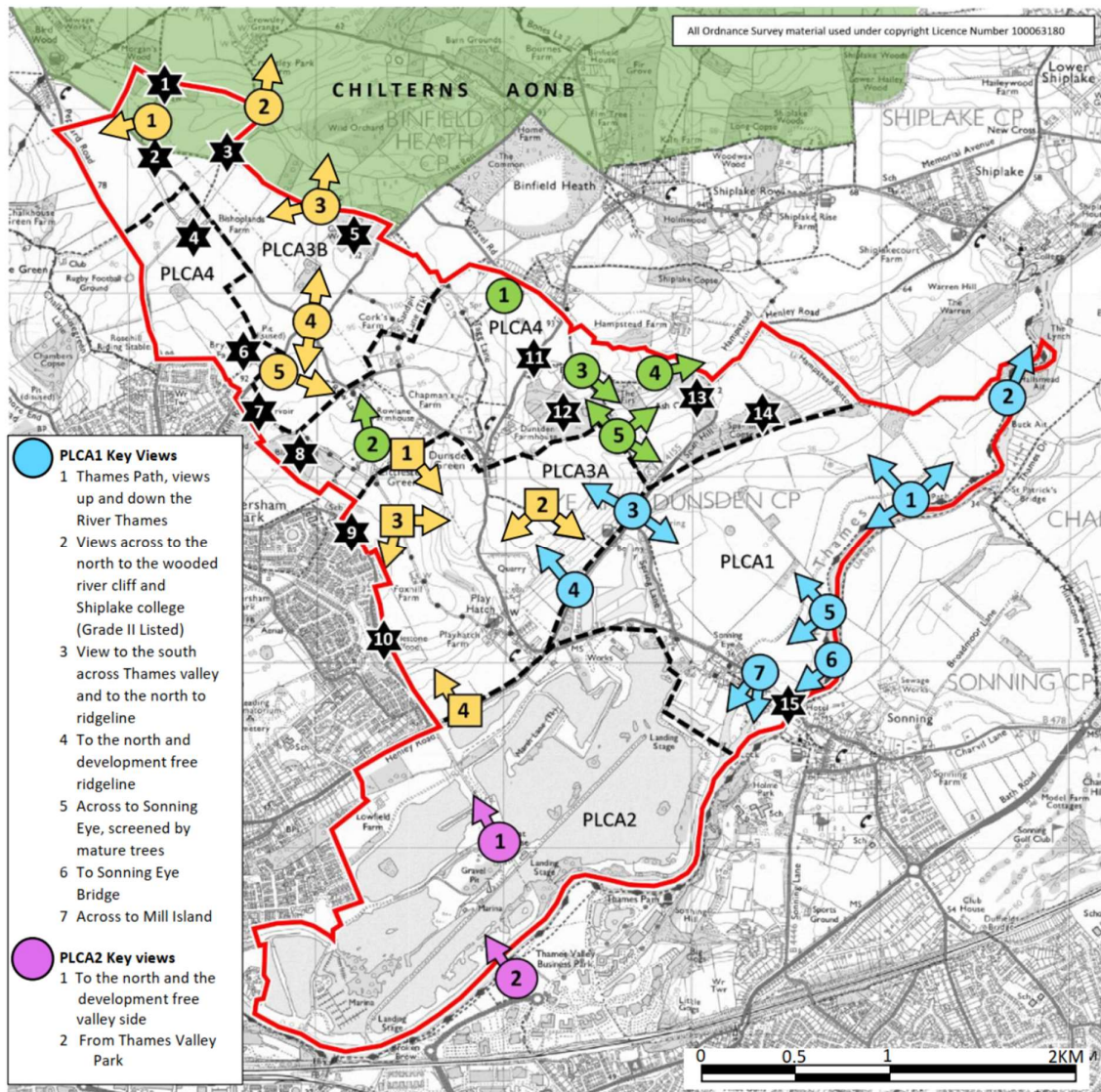


Figure 21 Important Views identified in PLCA1, PLCA2, PLCA3 and PLCA4

PLCA1 – Key Views

- 5.3.3. Key views in the River Thames and Meadows area include those looking up and down along the River Thames and its associated floodplain as well as those out of the parish at the opposite side of River Thames bank and the intervening wooded islands. Many of these views are multi-directional.
- 5.3.4. There are numerous key views, some of which are long distance views. In particular, the dry and semi dry valleys on the river valley side have created an undulating wooded skyline, which can be appreciated from views from the floodplain.
- 5.3.5. There are also a number of views into the Sonning Eye Conservation Area, some of which are more glimpsed in summer months due to the mature trees on periphery, however the cluster of Farm buildings on the northern edge are visible. There are also clear views of Sonning Bridge from the Thames Path.

PLCA2 – Key Views

- 5.3.6. The views identified in the PLCA2 are more restricted due to the more limited level of public access and wooded character around the edges of the area. However, the Thames Path (National Trail) on the southern river bank of the River Thames gives a long-range view across the river and into the lakes within the Neighbourhood Plan area, as well as views north towards the prominently defined Thames Valley sides. The riverbank on the Parish side is a well-wooded riparian feature where no buildings/activities within the main part of this PLCA are visible.

PLCA3 – Key Views

- 5.3.7. PLCA3B contains The Chilterns AONB and its setting. There are numerous views into and out of the AONB particularly from the PRoWs in this area. Other views include far reaching and open views across the dip slopes towards the River Thames. Views to Milestone Wood and adjacent woodlands, which align the western parish boundary and acts as a buffer/screen to neighbouring Caversham, in addition to Blackhouse Wood to the west within PLCA4.

PLCA4 – Key Views

- 5.3.8. Key views into PLCA4 are afforded from the footpath leading south east from Bryant's Farm across an open field to Row Lane and from Row Lane, there are views to Dunsden Church and the Grade II* listed Rowlane Farmhouse, these views then extend further to far horizons to the south.
- 5.3.9. Key views out of PLCA4 to the PRoW leading south from Dunsden Way provide views south across the Thames Valley floodplain to southern wooded horizons. The PRoW leading to Ash Copse provides views across the parish boundary to Hampstead Farm and then beyond to the wooded horizon of Bowsey Hill. From the PRoW leading from Dunsden Green to Littlestead Green, there are views across to Milestone Wood on the edge of Caversham and out to the south across the open arable field of PLCA3A to the wooded Thames Valley below including PLCA1 and PLCA2.
- 5.3.10. The policy below combines the recommendations in the LCA and the Settlement Character Appraisal and Design Code (Appendix I) and proposes the following important views which should be preserved and enhanced where possible.

POLICY ED-VL2 Important Views

Development proposals should preserve the views of moderate and significant value as defined on the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (Appendix II), and Settlement Character Appraisal and Design Code (SCADC) (Appendix I) and listed below:

PLCA1 Key Views

1. Thames Path, views up and down River Thames
2. Views across to the north to the wooded river cliff and Shiplake college (Grade II Listed)
3. View to the south across Thames valley and to the north to ridgeline
4. View to the north and development free ridgeline
5. View across to Sonning Eye, screened by mature trees
6. View to Sonning Eye Bridge
7. Those views within Sonning Eye as set out in the SCADC (Appendix I) and highlighted in figure 21.

PLCA2 Key views

1. View to the north and the development free Thames Valley River Slope
2. View from Thames Valley Park

PLCA3A Key Views

1. View from the AONB across to the west
2. View from within the AONB across to the east
3. View from the edge of the AONB across to the east and west
4. Elevated view across to Caversham woods to the west, Comp Wood to the east
5. View to the east towards Dunsden church, the Grade II* Row Lane Farmhouse and to far horizons

PLCA3B Key Views

1. View to the south dry valley and far wooded horizons/ wooded edge to Caversham to west
2. View to the west towards Milestone Wood, to the south far wooded horizons
3. Partly enclosed with views to the west: Milestone Wood and to the east open arable landscape
4. View from the A4155 view north up to undeveloped ridgeline

PLCA4 Key Views

1. Intimate enclosed views of local rural landscape
2. Dunsden Church and Row Lane Farmhouse
3. To the south between woodlands down to the Thames Valley
4. To the east towards Bowsey Hill in Wargrave
5. To the north to Round Wood, the east Ash Copse and to the south the Thames

Valley

6. From the Village Hall south across an open agricultural landscape to far horizons

Development proposals which would have a significant adverse impact on an identified view will not be supported.

Particular attention should be paid to those areas which are located on rising topography or are visible in the longer distance.

• **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 120, 174, 175, 176

• **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV1: Landscape and Countryside

• **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

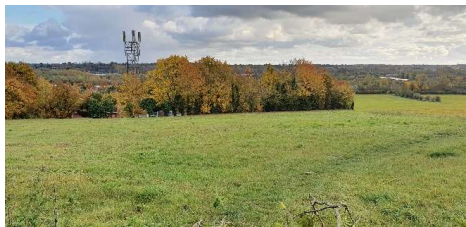


Figure 22 Open significant views identified in the Playhatch Character Area

5.4. Former Mineral Extraction Sites

5.4.1. Minerals and Waste policy is controlled by Oxfordshire County Council (as shown on figure 23 below) and cannot be considered in this Neighbourhood Plan until the land is no longer required or has been fully restored in accordance with any planning permission. This policy looks at land solely within these circumstances and seeks to further enhance its landscape, heritage, floodplain capacity and biodiversity quality for the future.

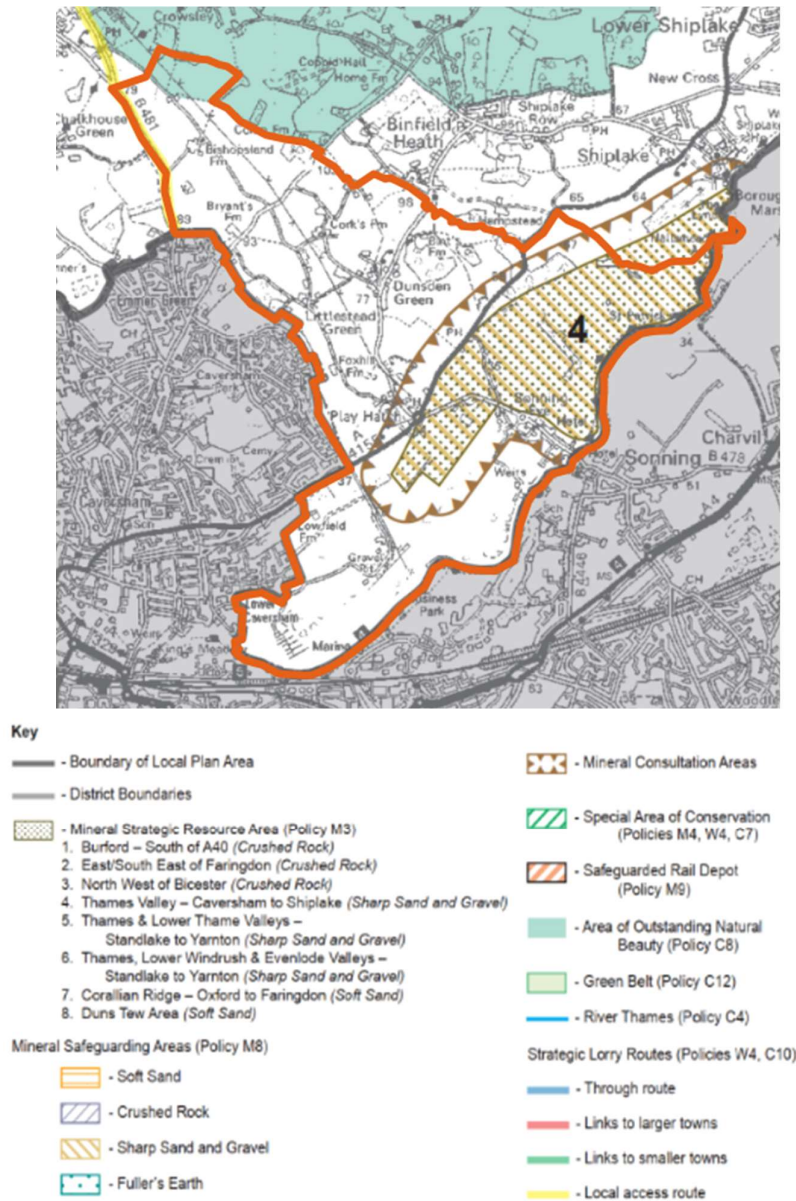


Figure 23 - Minerals and Waste Policy Map

- 5.4.2. Where matters cannot be dealt with as a land use policy, it is set out as a community aspiration below with regard to the aims and objectives of the Parish.
- 5.4.3. The current mineral extraction areas are as shown on figure 23. The Caversham gravel works also known as the Sonning Works and is divided into 3 phases.
- 5.4.4. Phase A is the original works, started in the 1930s. This first gravel extraction area comprises the land south of the B478 to the west of Sonning Eye. It is occupied by the various lakes and the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake (shown as lakes on the plan below).
- 5.4.5. Phase B (Caversham Phase B on the plan below) consists of the triangle of land to the north of B478 and is bounded by Spring Lane and the Henley Road.
- 5.4.6. Phase C, the current workings, stretches east from Spring Lane.

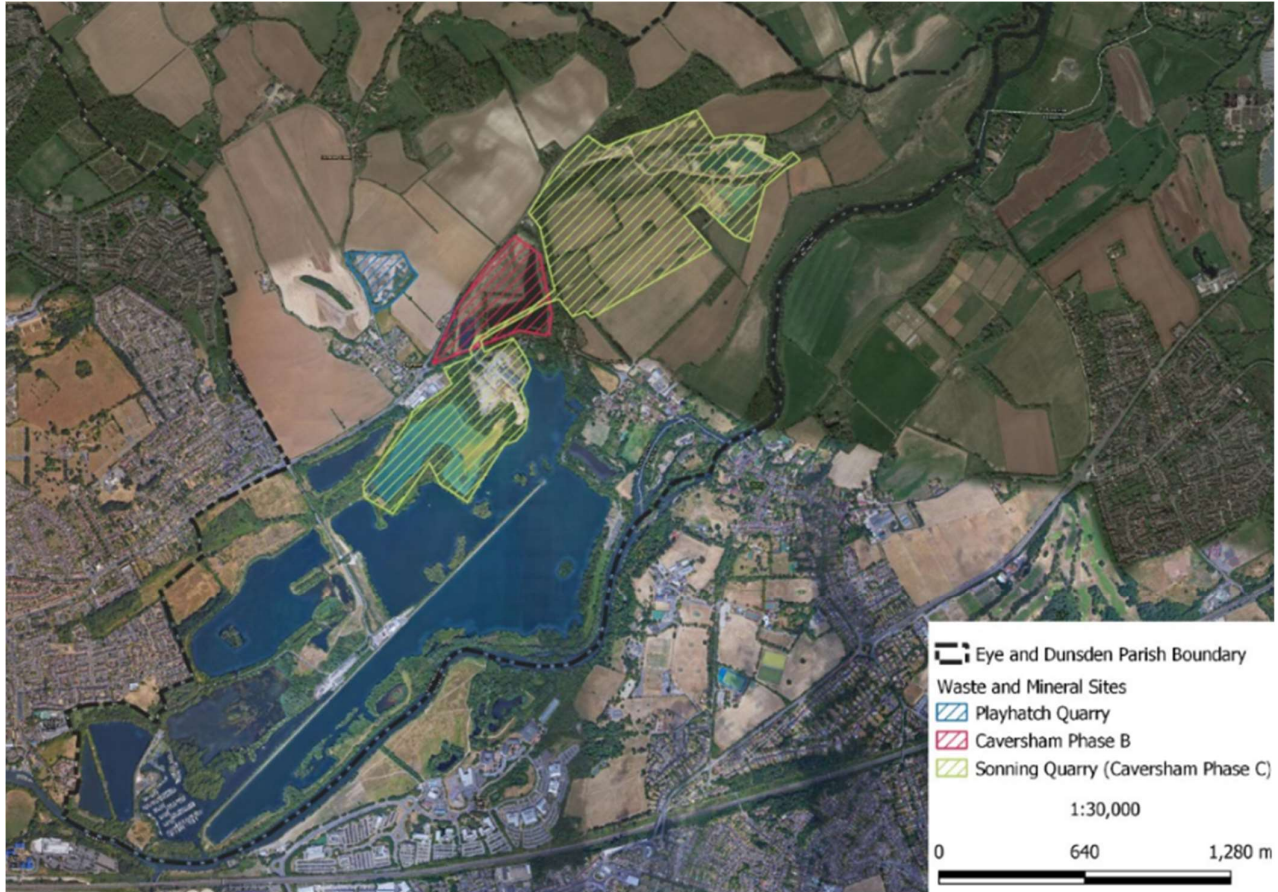


Figure 24 Mineral Extraction Areas in the Plan area

- 5.4.7. The sites are understood to be subject to a legal agreement to determine how the land is managed and restored following cessation of the Gravel Workings/Extraction. Whilst the restoration conditions relating to the planning permission cover 5 years post completion, the legal obligation runs for a period of 20 years.
- 5.4.8. For further information on Minerals and Waste matters within the Parish please see refer to Oxfordshire County Council for both policy and applications⁸.
- 5.4.9. This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy ED-BG13 Use of the Lakes and the information contained within paragraphs 5.7.3 – 5.7.14.

POLICY ED-VL3 Former Mineral Extraction Areas

Land that has been the subject of mineral extraction but has been fully restored and completed its aftercare period / confirmed as having changed use and would therefore no longer be a County Matter, will continue to be maintained in accordance with the agreed restoration proposals comprising a mix of agriculture, woodland, quiet and low-key informal recreation and nature conservation.

On the former mineral extraction sites proposals for the following will be supported where it

⁸ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-policy>

involves:

- the provision of appropriate planting and natural screening,
- the raising of the capacity of the flood plain in conjunction with the provision of a site-specific flood risk assessment for development in Flood Zone 2 and 3, incorporating appropriate mitigation and management measures,
- the enhancement of natural conservation which results in a net biodiversity gain of at least 10%,
- the provision of safe and appropriate highway, pedestrian and cycling access within and into the site,
- provision for tree planting and/or re-wilding to permit a net increase in carbon capture within the parish.

Any future restoration proposals should maximise the current floodplain capacity by allowing free drainage from one area to another and in the future, keep any excavation remaining as open water as per the provisions of M10 (*Mineral Working Restoration Local Plan*).

• **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 120, 174, 175, 176, 210,

• **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
- ENV4: Watercourses
- ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Development
- ENV11: Pollution
- EP5: Minerals Safeguarding Areas

• **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

- M1: Recycled and secondary aggregate
- M3: Principal locations for working aggregate minerals
- M4: Sites for working aggregate minerals
- M5: Working of aggregate minerals
- M8: Safeguarding mineral resources
- M9: Safeguarding mineral infrastructure
- M10: Restoration of mineral workings

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

Community Aspiration

The Parish Council are seeking to:

work with both Oxfordshire County Council and the landowners and operators of these sites to ensure that the legal agreements and management plans are adhered to.

In addition, the Parish Council believe it is key to ensure all new development, (including mineral extraction/restoration schemes) maximises the enhancement of the capacity of the floodplain in the Parish. In addition to policy matters below, the Parish Council are keen to ensure that all ditches and gullies are regularly maintained, particularly prior to peak flooding periods.

- 5.4.10. Whilst this NP does not seek to alter the established minerals sites or their legal agreements during the above timeframe, further enhancement would be welcomed, particularly in line with the relevant Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA). Any new sites not currently considered or in operation, should also be considered in the same regard.
- 5.4.11. At present there is real concern that the nature conservation elements of the management plans are being eroded, particularly by new recreation and leisure proposals (see paragraph 5.7.6 onwards, which relates to current unauthorised uses). The aforementioned balance between public access and wildlife conservation objectives is a considerable problem.
- 5.4.12. In particular the restored lakes area which are confirmed as having changed to water-based recreation following a series of consents from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) are covered by the policy below.
- 5.4.13. Therefore, the policy only applies to those already restored areas acknowledging that minerals and waste matters fall outside the scope of this Plan.
- 5.4.14. On this basis the policy below refers to long term uses for the site after restoration. It does not directly address issues which might prejudice general minerals and waste matters or compliance with planning conditions affecting this particular area.

5.5. Local Green Gaps

- 5.5.1. The community consultation to date has highlighted that it is essential to sustain the sensitive landscape setting of the Parish's settlements including preserving and enhancing the area of natural landscape and agricultural land existing between settlements, neighbouring parishes, and larger urban areas.
- 5.5.2. The main objective sets out that where appropriate, sustainable residential infill, commercial, leisure and community development that allows for natural growth within the settlement boundaries (see ED-DH1) will be supported. Creep or elongation of the settlements into the open countryside will be discouraged.
- 5.5.3. The Parish's independent Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix II), sets out the following recommendations to maintain settlement Identity:

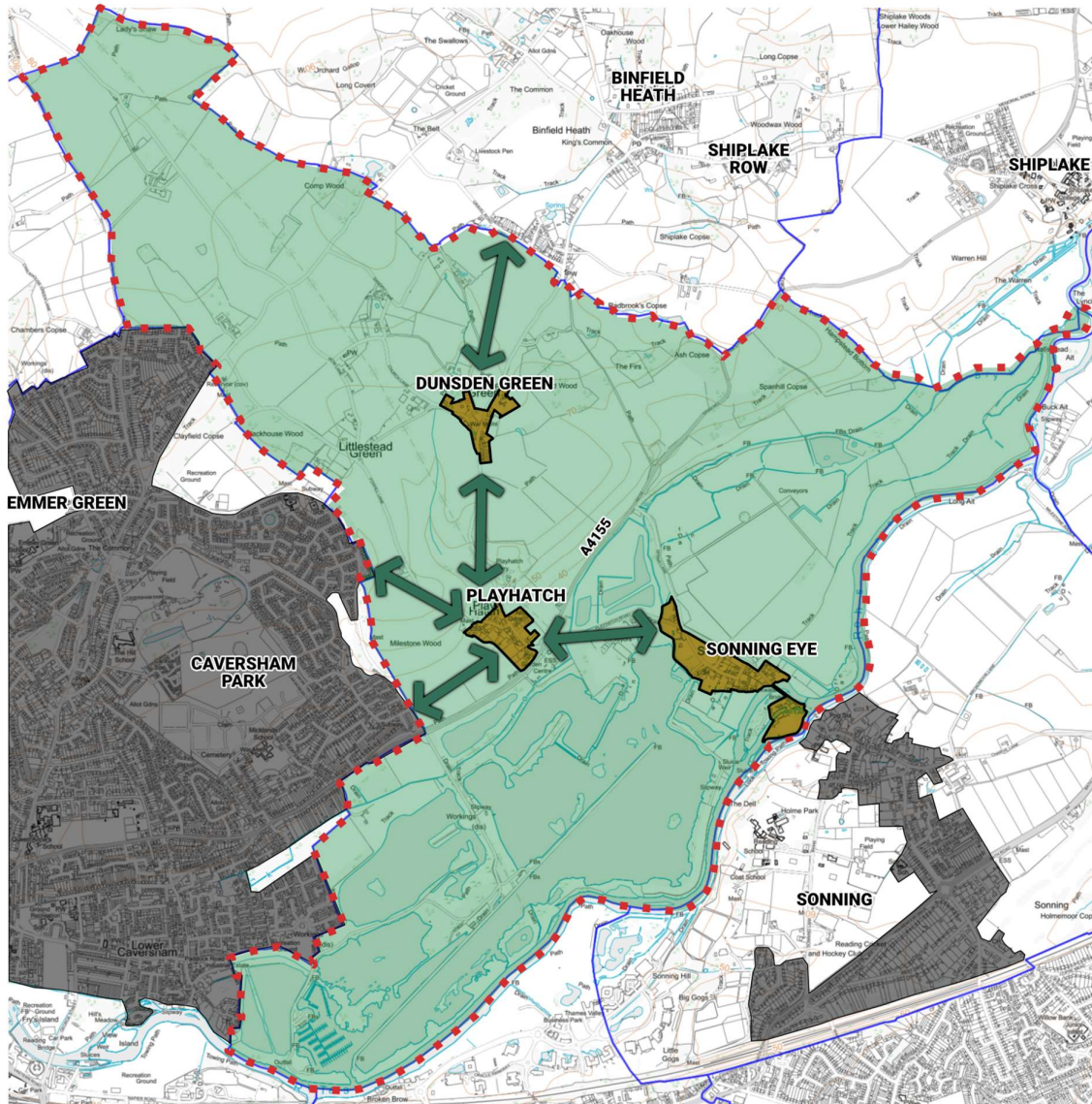


Figure 25 Location of settlements and important gaps

ED-VL4 Settlement Identity and Prevention of Coalescence

The Plan Area consists of open countryside interspersed with small settlements and pockets of development as (shown in figure 30), and including:

- Playhatch (classified as a Smaller Village)
- Dunsden Green (classified as an Other Village)
- Sonning Eye (classified as an Other Village)

The relevant settlement boundaries are contained in Policy ED-DH1.

Development proposals should demonstrate both generally, and in their Design and Access Statements in particular, how they would preserve or enhance the features which positively define the character of the Parish, and the ways in which they have addressed the relevant recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix II), and Settlement Character Appraisal (Appendix I) including those recommendations in Table 5.

Existing separation between settlements, in terms of openness and scale, should be maintained between:

- Playhatch and Caversham Park Village,
- Playhatch and Sonning Eye,
- Dunsden Green and outlying houses in open countryside,
- Littlestead Green and Caversham Park Village,
- Dunsden Green and Binfield Heath,
- Emmer Green and Sonning Common, and
- Emmer Green and Dunsden Green.

Proposals for appropriate uses should not, either individually or cumulatively, detract from the openness and the scale of the gap between settlements.

Proposals in the gap between settlements for agriculture and forestry-related development, mineral extraction*, playing fields, allotments and other open land uses that benefit local communities will be supported, subject to demonstrating how they:

- preserve the separation between these settlements,
- retain individual settlement identities, and
- sustain and enhance the sensitive landscape and agricultural setting of the Parish's settlements.

*As covered by the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and outside the remit of this Plan.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**
 - 8, 9, 80, 120, 174, 175, 176
- **Adopted SODC policies –**
 - ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

5.6. Biodiversity

5.6.1. NPPF paragraphs 120 and 179 – 182 deal with the effects of development on the landscape and biodiversity, establishing a wide range of criteria against which development will be assessed and also defining the means by which policies in development plan documents can protect these important assets. The adopted Local Plan policy ENV2 (Biodiversity - Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species) looks at the hierarchy of designations including European and National designations, but also highlight that Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Priority Habitats, Ancient Woodland and veteran trees and species listed in the national and local Biodiversity Action Plan should be afforded the level of protection and mitigation proportionate to the status of the habitat or species and its importance individually and as part of a wider network.

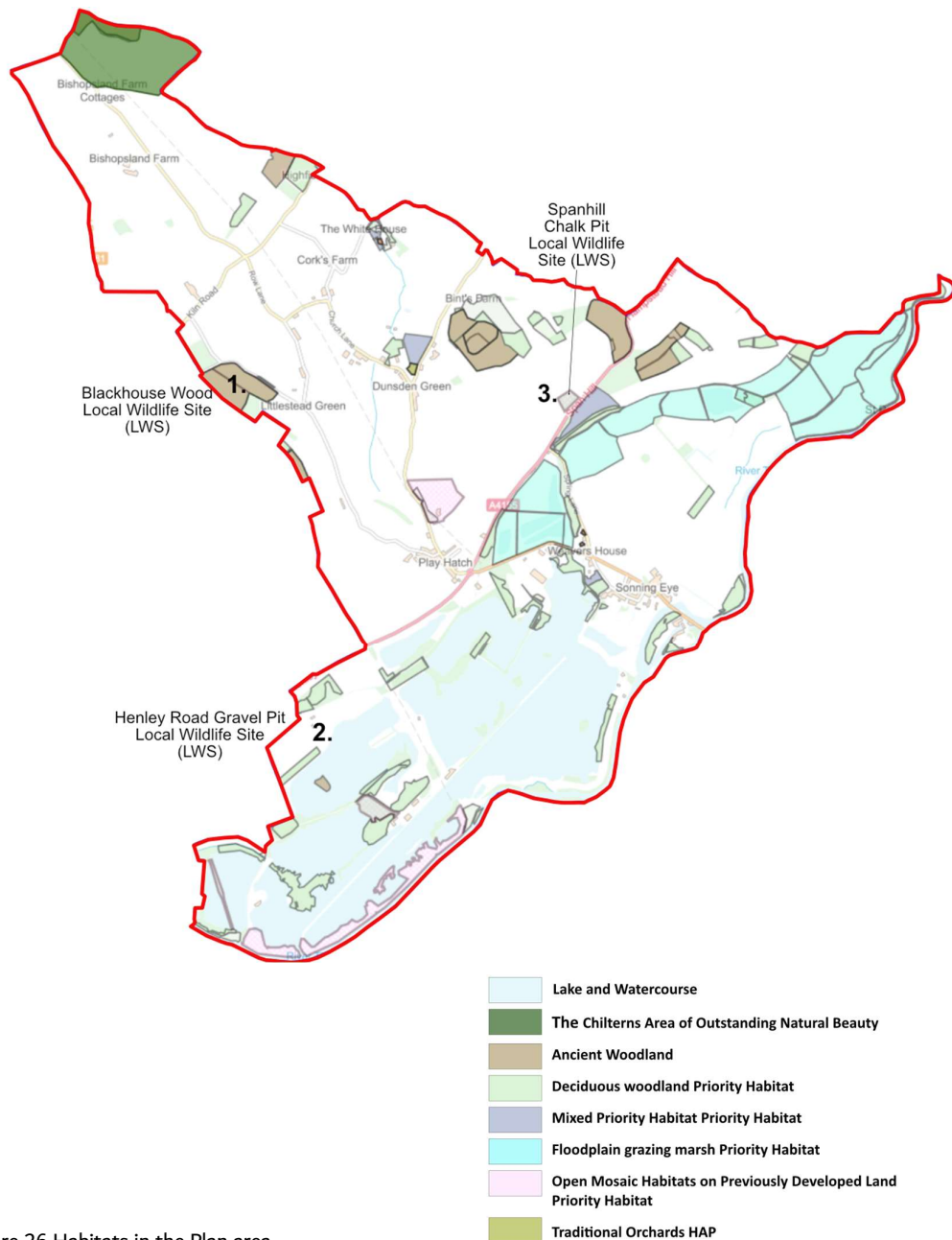


Figure 26 Habitats in the Plan area

- 5.6.2. A Biodiversity Report has been produced for the Parish (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, 2021 - Appendix VI). Although the Plan area borders the River Thames, which is significant and is considered a highly important natural feature, there are no national, European or internationally designated sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The nearest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is Hartslock Wood, some 9.5km away. The nearest SSSI is the Harpsden Wood SSSI which is located approximately 2.7km to the north of the Plan area and the entire Neighbourhood Plan area therefore falls within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zone.
- 5.6.3. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) have no statutory designation but are recognised as being areas of high wildlife value in terms of species, habitats or both. A Local Wildlife Site, known as Blackhouse Wood (shown as 1 on figure 26) is situated to the west of Littlestead Green on the border with Caversham Park. The site links into the adjacent Local Nature Reserve of Clayfield Copse, which is outside the Plan Area.
- 5.6.4. The Henley Road Gravel Pit is also a LWS comprising 53.7 hectares including an extension to the north (shown as 2 on figure 26).
- 5.6.5. The Spanhill Chalk Pit is also proposed as an Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site (shown as 3 on figure 26)
- 5.6.6. There are numerous areas of Ancient Woodlands and semi-natural woodland including Deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland and a traditional orchard Priority Habitats. Other priority habitats include Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh alongside the Thames (see figure 26)
- 5.6.7. Woodlands are a feature of the Plan Area and can be found towards the northern parish boundary, where they then become more concentrated beyond the parish boundary around Binfield Heath. Woodlands within this area include Lady's Shaw Wood (which is within the Chilterns AONB), Comp Wood, Round Wood, The Firs, Ash Copse and Spanhill Copse (see figure 27).
- 5.6.8. Woodland also forms a linear feature along the western edge of the parish, which includes Blackhouse Wood and areas of woodland adjacent Caversham Park Road leading down to Milestone Wood. A number of these woodlands are Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland.
- 5.6.9. Throughout the Plan Area, but particularly within the north, small woodland copses, often isolated within large arable fields mark the location of small redundant chalk pits. A good example can be seen north west of Bryant's Farm.
- 5.6.10. The policy below highlights the main features as set out above and on the adjacent plan and to deliver a biodiversity net gain.

POLICY ED-BGI1 Biodiversity

Development proposals should maintain and enhance the local biodiversity of the Plan area, including the maintenance and creation of wildlife corridors, designated or proposed local nature sites/reserves and Local Wildlife Sites of which the principal sites are:

- the chalk spring off Spring Lane,
- Blackhouse Wood,
- Spanhill Chalk Pit,
- Henley Road Gravel Pit, and
- North Lake

(as shown in figure 26)

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, all development proposals should seek to deliver biodiversity net gain of at least 10% and, where practicable, this should be delivered on-site.

As part of any proposals, consideration should be given to:

- Priority Habitat⁹, Ancient Woodland¹⁰ and Nature Recovery network plans¹¹ (figures 26 / 27 see TVERC information in Appendix VI),
- requirements of the Habitats Regulations/ their successor, in particular the need to carry out an 'Appropriate Assessment' where development is likely to have a significant effect, and
- sites identified in the TVERC Green Corridor Study (Appendix V) and their extension where possible.

Proposals should be accompanied by surveys which assess the impact of the development on local biodiversity.

Opportunities to enhance habitat provision, for example through hedgehog corridors, bat boxes and bird boxes and other similar measures shall be supported.

⁹ A list of habitats and species which are of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41(41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act.

¹⁰ Areas of woodland that have persisted since 1600 in England and Wales and 1750 in Scotland.

¹¹ A national network of wildlife-rich places to increase and restore nature, and the role of the delivery partnership and management group

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 8, 153, 174, 179, 182, 185,

- **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV2 Biodiversity – Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species
- ENV3 Biodiversity
- ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Developments
- EP4: Flood Risk
- DES1: Delivering High Quality Development
- DES9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**
- C7 Biodiversity and geodiversity
- M10: Restoration of mineral workings

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

Community Aspiration

The Parish Council will explore:

opportunities that will result in more rewilding of land within the Parish where possible. The aim is to restore nature, fight climate change, and grow healthy food in a sustainable manner. The community orchard in Dunsden Green is one such example and the Parish Council are committed to exploring more ways in which to further this aspiration

5.7. Green and Blue Infrastructure

5.7.1. Green and Blue infrastructure is a term which covers a planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystems and enhance quality of life and environmental benefits for communities.

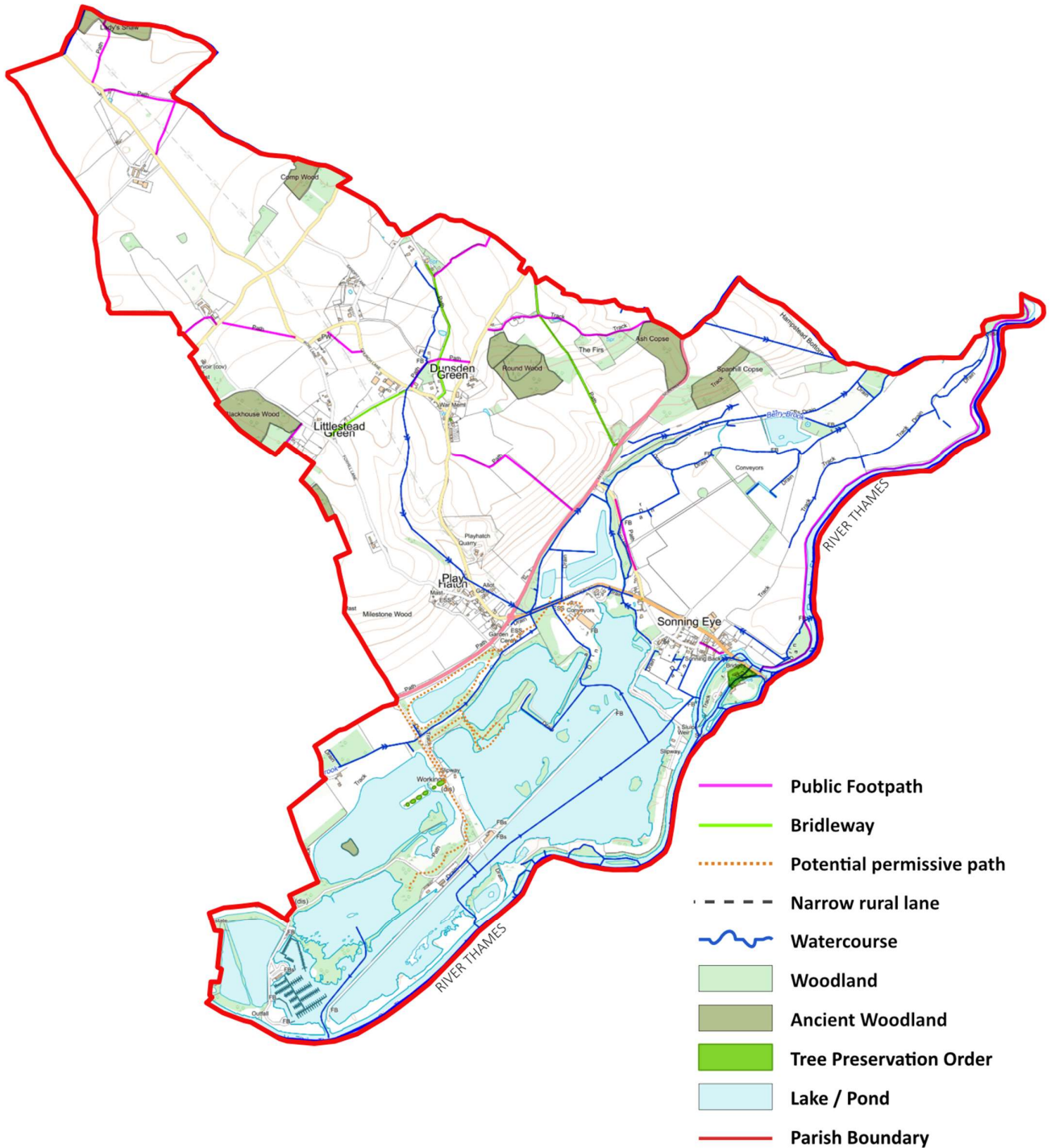


Figure 27 Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Plan area

ED-BGI2 Trees and Hedgerows

Development proposals should refer to the recommendations for the appropriate Parish Landscape Character Area as set out in figure 27 above.

Ancient, veteran and/or mature trees and hedgerows, which provide amenity and ecological value, those subject to Tree Preservation Orders and those which otherwise contribute to or provide green corridors in the Plan area, or have been noted as having significance to the community should be retained.

Proposals which affect trees and hedgerows should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of affected trees and hedgerows.

Where trees must be lost as a result of development or disease, these must be replaced at a ratio of at least 3:1 within the site (see Appendix VI), with a preference for local native species and fruit / nut trees. Hedgerows should be similarly treated.

Where it is practicable to do so, infill development proposals should incorporate new trees using larger planting stock (8-10 cm) girth at 1m above ground level. The new trees should consist of a mix of broadleaf and coniferous tree species with no more than 20% of any genus and no more than 10% of a particular species on the site.

Proposals which include appropriate native tree and hedgerow planting (see Appendix XII) or schemes that provide enhanced carbon capture absorbing and reducing air pollution will be supported subject to compliance with other Development Plan policies.

Any appropriate proposals will require a landscape management plan which is appropriate to the surrounding area, both in terms of species, but also density and scale, in order to retain the distinctive character of the local built environment.

Any ongoing management plan should ensure continuing compliance with the original planning permission until the landscaping becomes fully established.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 20, 34, 92, 161, 175, 186

- **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
 - ENV3 Biodiversity
 - ENV4: Watercourses
 - ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Development

- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies**

-

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

- 5.7.2. The Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix II), makes a number of different recommendations relating to the provision of trees, hedgerows, rivers and waterbodies in the Plan Area. These have been divided into the various Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCAs). Further details of each area are accompanied by a more detailed plan highlighting the elements numbered below.
- 5.7.3. The former mineral extraction sites in the Plan area are considered to have formally completed their aftercare requirements and are no longer allocated within the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. As such they can now be covered within the Eye and Dunsden Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.7.4. As previously set out, the lakes shown in figure 28 are subject to legal agreements. These require the landowner to manage nature conservation and provide permissive paths on-site until 2025 / 2027, which is within the Plan period.
- 5.7.5. The areas of restored former gravel workings in the Plan Area are an ecological haven, and therefore are considered for designation as Local Wildlife Sites (as shown on figure 26). Their habitats (including designated veteran trees with TPOs) and biodiversity should be preserved.



Figure 28 Map of the various restored workings - now lakes in the Plan area

- 5.7.6. Since 2020, the wildlife lake in particular has been in unlawful use as a leisure facility with retrospective planning applications submitted to regularise the use. The latest planning application was submitted and refused in October 2022, with the decision notice stating:
- “The proposal does not demonstrate that the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed use and its ancillary activities can be safely accommodated by the existing road network, without adverse impacts upon highway safety.”*
- 5.7.7. Two Enforcement Notices were served on 1st March 2023, which required the operators to stop using the land for water-based sport and recreational use, along with their ancillary activities, the serving of food and drink, playing of live and amplified music, organised events, camping, fireworks displays etc.
- 5.7.8. The second notice related to the removal of development and engineering operations including the introduction of sand to make artificial beaches, a gravel parking area, buildings, a bridge and fences. It required the replanting of native hedgerows and meadow grass.
- 5.7.9. As can be seen from the Notices, the extent of the works to the lake and its surroundings, is significant.
- 5.7.10. This habitat is listed as being of ‘principal’ importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The reference for the habitat states that the site is important for overwintering wildfowl, including species of conservation concern. Therefore, any harm to the special ecological interest of the proposed Local Wildlife Site (pLWS) and the value of the site to European protected species will not be considered acceptable.
- 5.7.11. The latest aerial images available online from Parish Online (data from 2022) suggests that there have been extensive works all around the area, which includes habitat clearance and the introduction of artificial surfaces and material on site. This resulted in a net loss of biodiversity, when compared to the lawful ecological baseline of the site.
- 5.7.12. Furthermore, it is also significant to consider impacts from adverse anthropogenic disturbance from noise, light etc – use of areas of the site for music events, night-time events and firework shows, all of which are likely to have an adverse ecological impact as well as impact upon the amenities of nearby residents.
- 5.7.13. To ensure that the S106 legal agreements dated 25th September 1995 and 17th January 2007 associated with mineral extraction planning permission P08/E0367/CM (MW.002/08) dated 6th May 2008), which require 20 years of long-term management for nature conservation and the provision of permissive paths within part of the water sports/recreation application site are adhered to.
- 5.7.14. It is clear from the summary above and the restoration plans, that there is a need for greater guidance as to what can and cannot be undertaken within the Lakes Area.

ED-BGI3 Use of the Lakes

Following restoration, further long-term nature conservation management that increases habitats and results in net biodiversity gain is supported where it:

- maintains and enhances the open space network, public rights of way and the use of permissive paths,

- encourages native waterside planting appropriate to the area. Where there is a loss of vegetation and a reduction in the effectiveness of landscaping or screening, appropriate replacement planting should be provided, in accordance with policy ED-BGI2 (trees and hedgerows),
- does not lead to adverse visual impact to the character of the Lakes, as set out in the Settlement Character Appraisal (Appendix I) and Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix II),
- provides appropriate general landscaping and/or screen, in accordance with xx (list of appropriate planting),
- uses boundary treatments in the form of trees and hedgerows and preserve open views wherever possible (close boarded fences and panel fences should be avoided),
- does not lead to detrimental impact on floodplain capacity, to this end impermeable hardstanding areas or synthetic surfaces should be avoided,
- does not lead to the loss of important recreational areas, permissive paths or open spaces (as defined in figure 32), without appropriate equivalent alternative provision; and does not lead to a negative impact on the local road network, and
- rewilds or otherwise enhances carbon capture.

The recreational, sporting, tourism and other after uses of the Lakes (as shown on figure 36), including marinas for boating, fishing and water sports should be sensitive to the site's high ecological value and the designation of Local Wildlife Sites as appropriate.

Any proposed use should:

- lead to an appropriate balance between recreation and nature conservation,
- not lead to an intensification of recreational use or tourism uses, which would be detrimental to biodiversity or quiet recreational enjoyment,
- not generate unreasonably excessive vehicular traffic which may:
 - e) represent a significant and adverse impact on the enjoyment of the area as a quiet recreational and nature conservation space, or
 - f) have a severe adverse impact on highway safety including those junctions and roads listed in Policy ED-CI1 Transport and Highways and ED- CI2 Quiet Lanes, and
- not have a negative noise impact on neighbouring residents and properties.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 20, 34, 92, 161, 175, 186

- **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
- ENV3: Biodiversity
- ENV4: Watercourses
- ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Development

- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

- C7 Biodiversity and geodiversity
- M10: Restoration of mineral workings

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

5.8. Local Green Space

5.8.1. The NPPF states in paragraph 101 that:

“The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.”

5.8.2. The NPPF sets out specific criteria for assessment, which can be seen on the flow chart below, which highlights the process for identification and potential designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS).

5.8.3. These criteria form the basis of the assessment that has been undertaken for each potential Local Green Space and which is detailed in the Local Green Spaces Assessment, May 2022 evidence document. This document evaluated the following sites for potential designation as Local Green Spaces, which fall into one (or more) of four distinct categories:

- a) Those (generally small) areas of Eye and Dunsden’s “built environment” which are considered most vital.
- b) Those sites used for sports and other recreational activities.
- c) Those on the immediate periphery of the settlement with public access and in regular use by those on foot.
- d) Those which (without necessarily offering public access) fulfil a specific function (from the NPPF list) to the local community, that is reflected in the aspirations and policy objectives of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

Local Green Spaces

Considerations for potential Local Green Space Designations

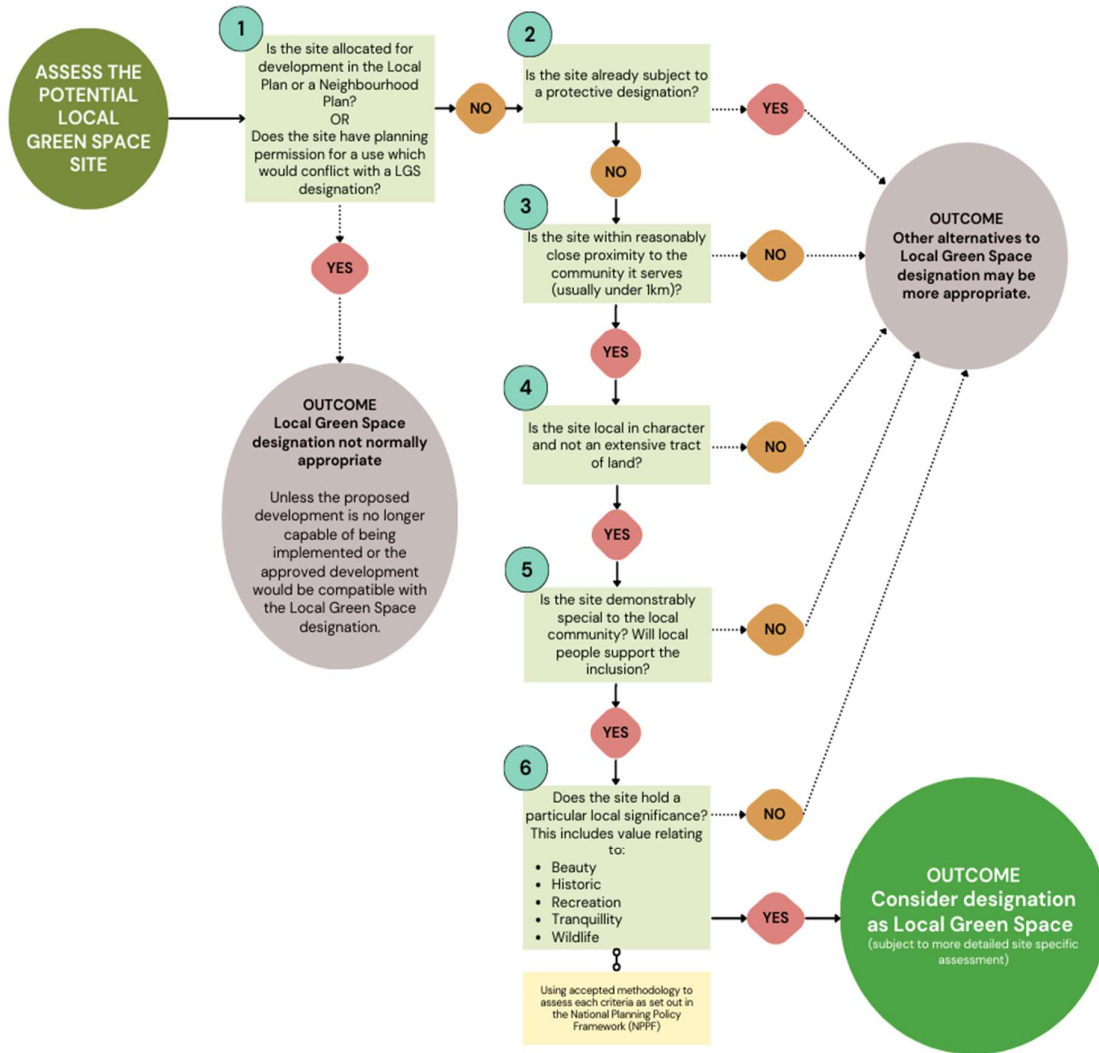


Figure 29 Process for Designating Local Green Spaces

- 5.8.4. From this assessment, a conclusion was reached as to whether spaces should be designated. It should be noted that whilst many open spaces are considered important to residents, not all qualify for Local Green Space status. Some spaces were considered for different reasons, but failed the NPPF tests. It should also be noted that some areas were deemed to be sufficiently protected by other designations, such as certain recreation facilities. In this instance it was considered that designation as a Local Green Space was not the most appropriate approach to take.
- 5.8.5. It should be noted that anLGS enjoys protection akin to that of Green Belt, where there are defined exceptions which are considered to be ‘very special circumstances’. Designation on agricultural land for example imposes no new restrictions or obligations on landowners. Land within the control of the highway authority where engineering or highway works are later

required, would not be inappropriate. Any designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over that which exists at present. A full list of exceptions is set out in paragraph 149 of the NPPF.

5.8.6. Those Local Green Spaces which were considered suitable for designation are set out in the policy overleaf and highlighted in figure 30 below.

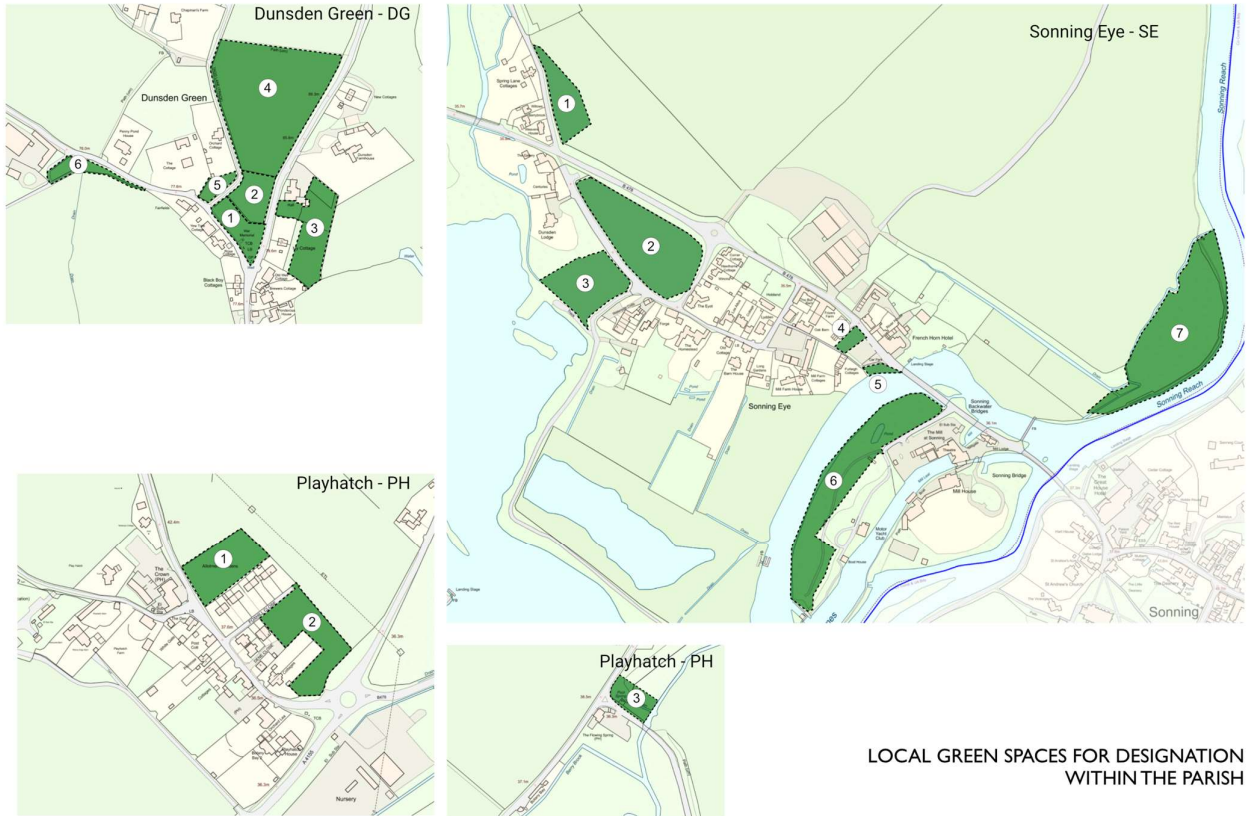


Figure 30 Designated Local Green Spaces

POLICY ED- BGI4 Local Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces (shown in figure 30 and Appendix IV in Local Green Space Assessment) will be protected and enhanced for their biodiversity and, as appropriate, for public access and recreational use:

Dunsden Green

- DG1 - Dunsden Green,
- DG2 - the Community Orchard,
- DG3 - The field below Dunsden village hall
- DG4 - Land between Orchard Cottage and Dunsden Farmhouse (Dunsden Green) – north of the Community Orchard
- DG5 - Land to the south of Orchard Cottage, adjacent to Tagg Lane
- DG6 - Land at the junction of Dunsden Green Farm (the old cartwash)

Sonning Eye

- SE1 – Sonning Eye Allotment Gardens
- SE2 - The triangle of land in Sonning Eye alongside the B478 between The Gallery and The Eyot
- SE3 - The land to the south of Dunsden Lodge
- SE4 - The green space between the French Horn car park and the listed barns at Frizer’s Farm in Sonning Eye
- SE5 - Sonning Eye riverside Furleigh Bank
- SE6- Mill Island
- SE7- Poplar Wood

Playhatch

- PH1 - The Allotment Gardens in Playhatch
- PH2 - Land to the rear of Dene Close, Playhatch
- PH3 - Land at the junction of the A4155 and Spring Lane

There will be a presumption against any development on Local Green Space, except in very special circumstances.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**
 - 98, 99, 101-103,
- **Adopted SODC policies –**
 - ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

5.9. Flooding and Drainage

- 5.9.1. The NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. It is the aim, in future, to minimise the likelihood of flooding and drainage overflow problems by all practical means; particularly to prevent new developments from exacerbating the situation.
- 5.9.2. Plans including Neighbourhood Plans (where the Local Plan is silent or does not contain sufficient locally specific information), should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change.
- 5.9.3. The River Thames is one of the key features of the Plan Area with its extensive floodplain containing drainage ditches and minor tributaries including Berry Brook which aligns along the foot of the valley side. There is also a loose line of springs along the base of the valley side, with Pool Spring identified on the OS map and also providing a name for an adjacent minor road: Spring Lane.
- 5.9.4. Community consultation to date (see Appendix IX) provides a clear indication that flooding is a key issue for a substantial area of the Plan Area, with respondents to surveys stating that all future developments should include more detailed flood-prevention measures to reduce the impact of a flood.
- 5.9.5. The Environment Agency (EA) flood risk maps (Figure 32) below show the predicted 1 in 100-year (Flood Zone 3) and 1 in 1000-year (Flood Zone 2) flood outlines.
- 5.9.6. This area has experienced flooding, with events recorded in 1947, 2003, 2007 and 2014 (see figure 31). The most recent flooding has taken place this year and photos of the current extent of the flooding are highlighted.
- 5.9.7. Evidence of local flooding has been provided from residents' observations and recordings. This information is not recorded on the Environmental Agency flood maps, but has been gathered by the Parish Council and Steering Group (see Appendix VIII).
- 5.9.8. Whilst generally new residential development is limited within flood zone 2 and 3, there may be circumstance where non-residential development is proposed. Therefore, any new development must be designed to take the extent of the local flood risk into account. Features designed to allow flood water to pass will be required.
- 5.9.9. The area affected by the potential River Thames flooding covers all of Sonning Eye and part of Playhatch and all of the land between. The majority of this land is in Flood Zone 3 and much of this area experiences flooding every year. In addition to this, the level of surface water flooding is considerable in many areas (as shown in Figure 32 /33).
- 5.9.10. In order to minimise the risk and impact of flooding in areas highlighted in Figure 32 / 33, and ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere, development should accord with the requirements set out in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy EP4. Site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required for development in Flood Zones 2 and 3, and in Zone 1, as detailed in Policy EP4.
- 5.9.11. The aim of the policy over and above that of the District policy, is to provide locally specific information on areas affected by flooding and to ensure that surface water issues are highlighted.



Figure 31 Views of flooding from the River Thames in Sonning Eye in 2021

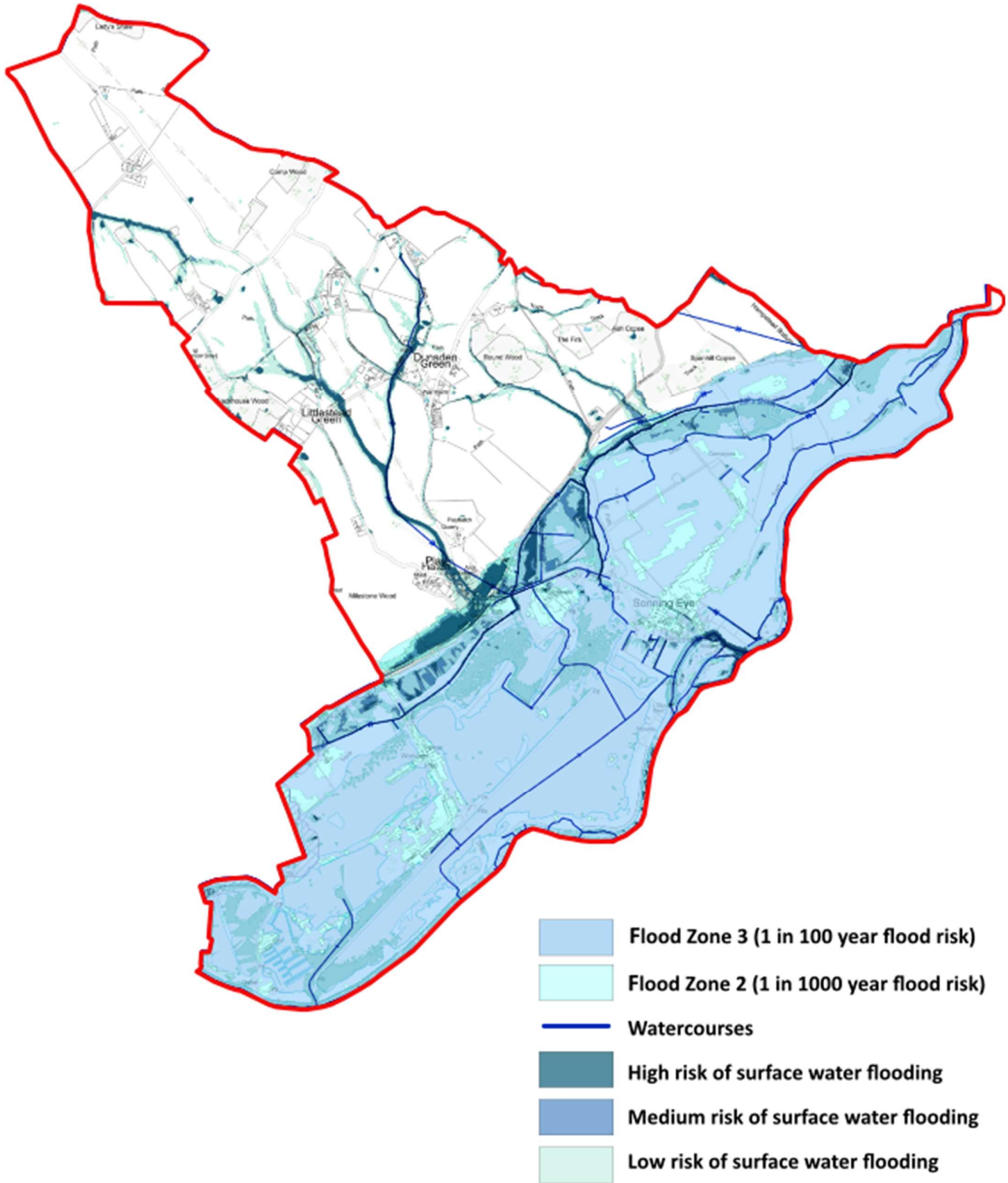


Figure 32 River and Surface Water Flood Risk

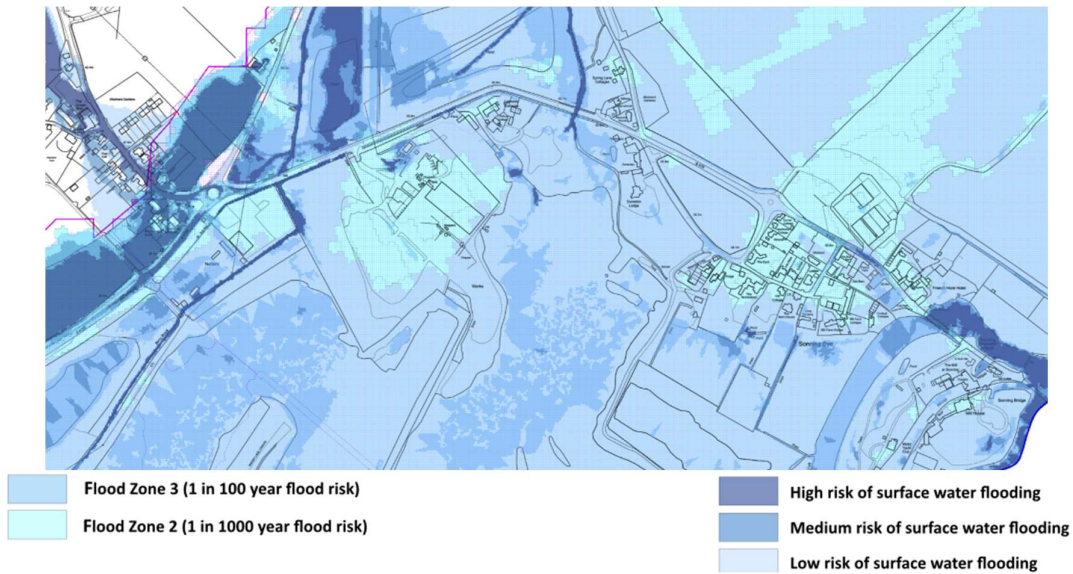


Figure 33 River and Surface Water Flood Risk in higher risk areas in Playhatch and Sonning Eye

POLICY ED-FR1 Flooding and Drainage

Large parts of the Plan Area are located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 (as shown in figure 32 and figure 33). The risk of fluvial flooding covers the entirety of the village of Sonning Eye.

There is also a high risk of surface water flooding within the Plan area (as also shown in detail on figures 32 and 33). In particular there is a high risk of surface water flooding within southern Playhatch, Playhatch Road and the B478 in Sonning Eye, to the east of Dunsden Green Farm, Church Lane, Row Lane, Dunsden Green.

Development will be supported where it is demonstrated that surface water drainage will not add to the existing site runoff or cause any adverse impact to neighbouring properties and surrounding environment.

Adverse impact on floodplain capacity should not occur, to this end impermeable hardstanding areas should be avoided.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into schemes and be designed to contribute towards landscaping and biodiversity on-site. Provision should be made for their future maintenance.

Any schemes which can be identified which would reduce surface water run-off should be encouraged and supported.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**
 - 159-169
- **Adopted SODC policies –**
 - EP4: Flood Risk
- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies**

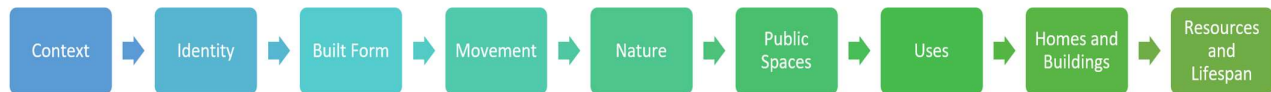
**National and
Local Policy
Alignment
with NPPF and
Local Plans**

5.10. POLICIES FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Design Principles

- 5.10.1. A Parish-wide Settlement Character Appraisal and Design Code (CADC), which forms Appendix I, was undertaken by Bluestone Planning LLP in conjunction with the Steering Group and the local community. It is based on the National Design Guide which was published in 2019.

Ten characteristics which underpin good design



As set out in the National Design Guide 2019

- 5.10.2. The National Model Design Code was published in July 2021 and expands on the ten characteristics of good design as set out above. It goes on to provide clear design parameters to help local authorities and communities decide what good quality design looks like in their area. This document has also been referenced in the preparation of the CADC.
- 5.10.3. Design guidance is also set out in the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 and the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide SPD 2010.
- 5.10.4. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD (originally adopted in 2016) has recently been superseded by a joint Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Design Guide (adopted June 2022). The Design Guidance website provides detailed advice on the Council's expectations for high quality development and how the design policies should be interpreted. It identifies how designs can respond and complement the existing local character and identity of the District.
- 5.10.5. Where relevant to the Plan Area, both the Chilterns Guides and the District Design Guidance have been extracted and incorporated into the CADC.
- 5.10.6. The purpose of the Settlement Character Appraisal (Appendix I) is to establish the special interest, character and appearance of the various elements in the Plan Area and to highlight its local distinctiveness and identity.
- 5.10.7. The assessment defines the character of the Plan Area's settlements as a series of character areas. Each area is described against a series of common physical characteristics. The identification of these important issues shapes the content and direction of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.10.8. The locally specific Eye & Dunsden Design Code is intended to be used as a development management tool to secure better quality development appropriate to its surroundings. Such a document can be used by residents and developers when preparing a planning application, or for anyone wishing to comment on a current planning application.
- 5.10.9. The above principles have been translated into the relevant NDP policies below.

POLICY ED-DH1 Design Principles & Code

Appropriate development should respect, maintain and enhance the character of the Plan Area, and support will be given to proposals which comply with the Design Code (on pages 69-76).

- respond positively to the identified key settlement views, features and open spaces (as shown on figures 36, 37 and 39), scale, mass, density, plot ratios, landscaping and design of the immediate area and the settlement context as set out in the Design Code and in the Settlement Character Appraisal (Appendix I),
- ensure development does not dominate adjacent buildings, the setting of heritage assets and private amenity spaces, and preserves the amenity of nearby properties,
- on the edge of settlement locations, acknowledge the form of the settlements and are sensitive to the introduction of built form (including inappropriate hard surfacing) to the rural character of the landscape,
- sympathetically introduce high quality design in appropriate locations and enhance the built environment,
- utilise locally distinctive features and materials as set out in the Character Appraisal and in the Design Code (on pages 69-76),
- include appropriate hard and soft landscaping to reduce the impact of development, incorporating locally native species where possible, as described in the Design Code (on pages 69-76),
- retain and enhance existing natural features, such as mature trees, hedgerows, streams and watercourses,
- reduce actual or perceived opportunities for crime, for example using natural surveillance of the public realm by residents and visitors,
- enhance floodplain capacity through natural landscaping, reduction of non-permeable surfacing throughout the Plan Area and improved drainage features, and
- create accessible buildings and opportunities for a well-integrated development with accessible links to surrounding green and blue infrastructure.

• **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 150, 151, 161, 175

• **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
- ENV3: Biodiversity
- DES1: Delivering High Quality Development
- DES2: Enhancing Local Character
- DES7: Efficient Use of Resources
- DES9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- DES10: Carbon Reduction
- INF4: Water Resources

• **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment
with NPPF and
Local Plans**

5.10.10. The Plan Area has been divided into various zones which are defined by differing characters (see figure 33). Understanding the character areas will be key to the successful integration of any future windfall and infill housing development which sits comfortably beside its context.

5.10.11. It should be noted that where a hamlet or small group of houses in the countryside is denoted as being within the same character area as a larger settlement, this merely denotes that there

are common unifying elements in these areas. Settlement boundaries are clearly defined in Policy ED-DH1.

5.10.12. The following section sets out extracts from the CADC relating to each Character Area and it merely highlights the main points relating to the policy. For full details including historical development over time, please see Appendix I.

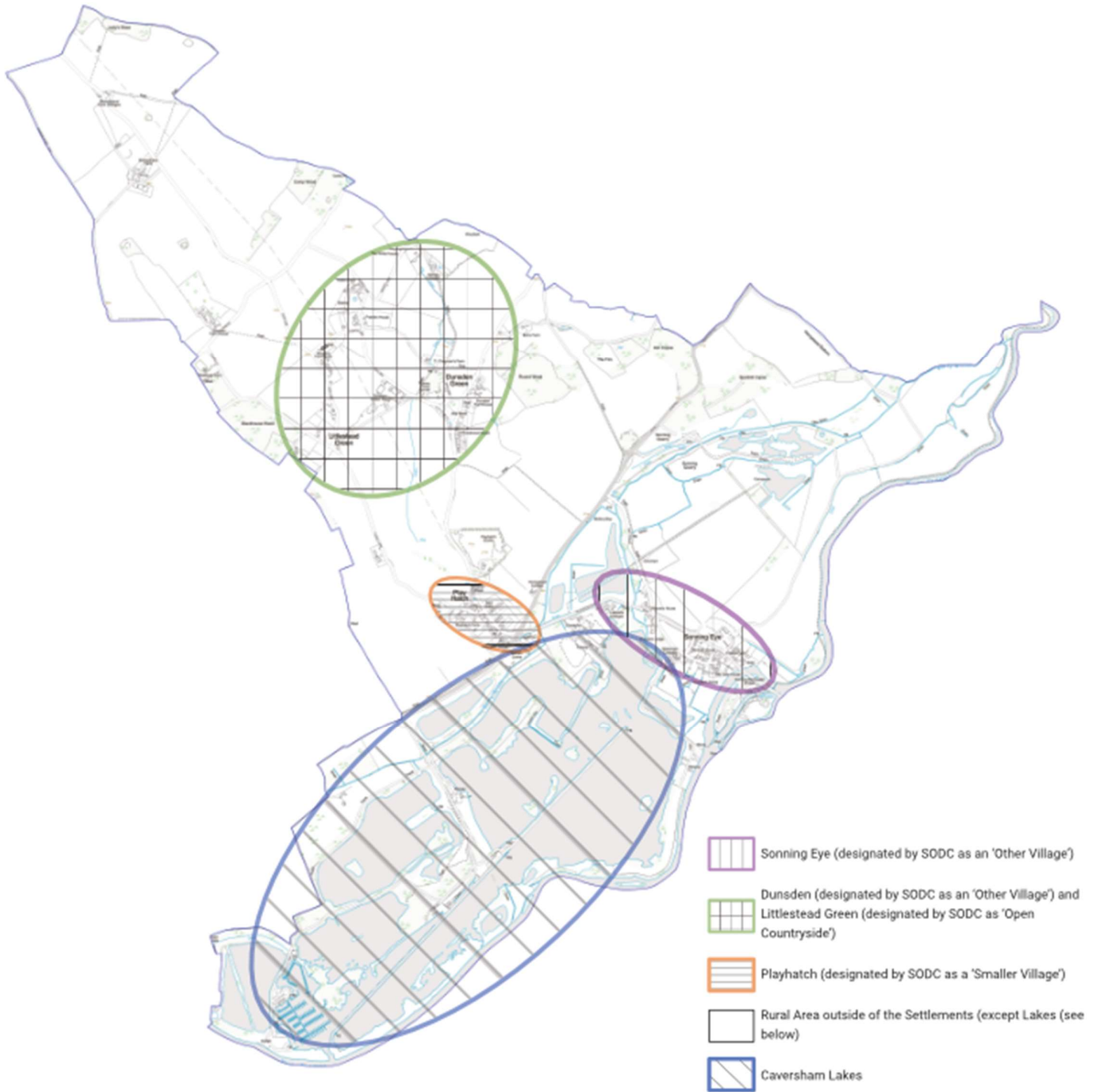


Figure 34 Character area zones within the Plan Area

5.11. Character Area 1: Sonning Eye



Figure 35 Individual characteristics that define the Sonning Eye Character Area

- 5.11.1. This character area is defined by its historic origins, with buildings forming a clear building line with the exception of some former farmhouses, which are often set deeper in their plots. The result is a loose knit, urban grain containing buildings framed by vegetation or former agricultural outbuildings within good sized plots alongside the lanes.
- 5.11.2. The main focal point of the village is the River Thames and the views to and from the bridges. The River defines the settlement and divides into three separate elements, with the mill race forming the middle branch.
- 5.11.3. The character area encompasses all of the Conservation Area and properties around Spring Lane and those adjacent, but not including the quarry.

New Development

5.11.4. Infill plots can alter the character of the settlement if not carefully designed. There is limited scope within Sonning Eye for infill development due to the NPPF’s presumption against development within the floodplain. There may however be opportunities for replacement dwellings or extensions to buildings (particularly where they are not vulnerable to flooding).



Figure 36 Building features, views and open spaces identified within the Sonning Eye Character Area (taken from the Character Appraisal)

Key Issues and Objectives

- 5.11.5. Sonning Eye has a very distinctive character and new development should seek to provide either a traditional or well considered contemporary approach based on a character analysis of the area.
- 5.11.6. The area suffers substantially each year from flood water, with roads, gardens and properties subsumed by water. Any new development is likely to exacerbate this situation.
- 5.11.7. Renovation of existing properties should consider designing in flood resilience and mitigation measures.
- 5.11.8. Access to the River is popular with residents and visitors alike. This can cause problems with visitor numbers, parking and unloading of boats and water sports equipment. Properties close to the river should consider such matters in any redevelopment proposals.
- 5.11.9. The relevant section from the Design Code relating to the Character Area is set out at the end of this section, with full details including Settlement Character Appraisal in Appendix I.

5.12. Character Area 2: Playhatch

- 5.12.1. Playhatch is mentioned from the 13th Century onwards. Today it contains 35 dwellings which is a significant increase from the 18 houses in 1841. Growth took place in the 1930s with the construction of Foxhill Close and presently at Dene Close with 5 new properties of a generic design. It is currently designated as a ‘Smaller Village’ in the Adopted Local Plan.
- 5.12.2. The original settlement pattern is a much looser grain and a lower density than the urban area of Caversham Park to the west. Playhatch has its own identity and is separated by a distance of some 500 metres. Whilst the landscape is characterised in a separate evidence base document, it is clear that a narrowing of the gap between settlements is likely to lead to coalescence and the loss of this village with its distinct rural character.

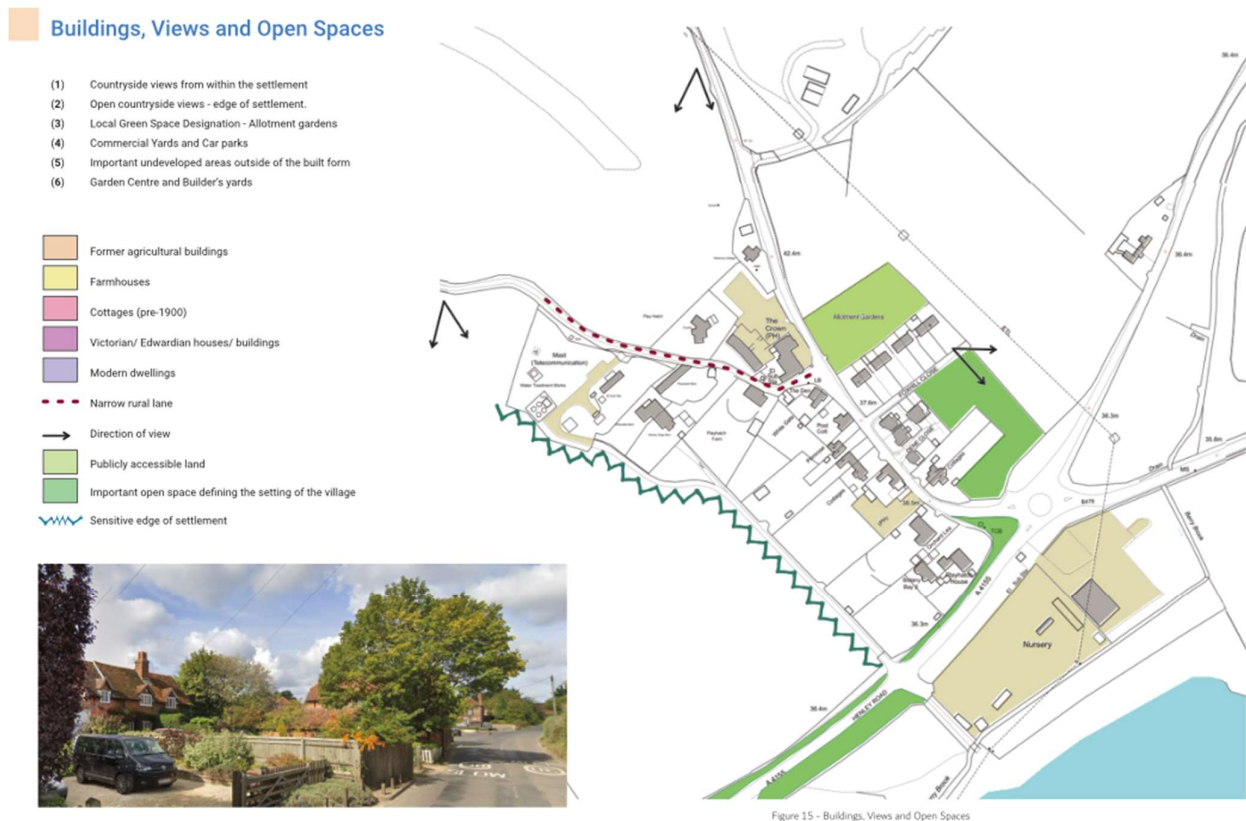


Figure 37 Building features, views and open spaces identified within the Playhatch Character Area (taken from the Character Appraisal)

- 5.12.3. The buildings historically adhere to a local red/orange brick palette and roofs tend to be covered with plain clay tiles. The dwellings are a mix of simple cottages and larger farmhouses. Evidence of some of the commercial uses of certain properties is still in existence.
- 5.12.4. This character area includes modern properties, which typically do not conform to the architectural style or historic character of the settlement or wider area. Generic house types and plan forms are rarely appropriate. The area is at risk of losing its individual identity should this

trend continue as such housing does not draw on local influences or respond positively to the landscape in which it is set.



Figure 38 Building characteristics identified in the Playhatch Character Area

Key Issues and Objectives

- 5.12.5. Modern buildings and structures, utilise red or red/brown multi, machine made bricks. These materials are generic and not locally specific and generally do not enhance the local identity and character of the area.
- 5.12.6. Modern generic house types, which are not designed based on an understanding of the local context are to be avoided. There has been recent development in the settlement which has not been consistent with good design principles set out in the previous version of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. The siting and layout has not been consistent with the linear nature of the village. Gardens have been permitted to be substandard in size, with windows positioned to overlook other properties. Extensive urbanising block paving and close board fencing is also prominent. It is considered that this development should not be allowed to set a precedent for future development schemes.
- 5.12.7. To ensure any new development follows the local vernacular set out in the Design Code. The siting and layout of new residential properties should front the existing historic patterns of lanes and routes. Appropriate courtyard development, conversion of existing farm or other outbuildings in particular are more likely to be supported.
- 5.12.8. Where any development takes place, it should not result in a hard, urban edge and must be sufficiently screened by native vegetation. The approach to the village from all directions is subject to open views as highlighted in the Landscape Appraisal.

5.13. Character Area 3: Dunsden Green and Surrounding Area

Dunsden Green

- 5.13.1. The character area contains the main settlement of Dunsden Green, with the cluster of houses at Littlestead Green to the west. Policy ED-DH1 proposes a settlement boundary for Dunsden Green, however Littlestead Green is considered to be open countryside (see further details in policy ED-DH1). There are also further farmsteads are found to the north and west, which again are considered to be sited in open countryside. It is an unusually dispersed settlement area characterised by the significant gaps between the settlements and farmsteads. The quiet, rural character of this area is markedly different to the urban edge of Caversham and Reading to the west, particularly given the proximity.
- 5.13.2. Dunsden Green itself has seen some development with the construction of Ash Copse, but there has been little significant change over time. New residential properties have largely been the result of a few infill plots and the conversion of agricultural buildings and other residential outbuildings.
- 5.13.3. The focal point for Dunsden Green is the village green itself, which has now been extended by the creation of the community orchard to the north. The old maps of the area clearly highlight that the area was originally a single parcel of land extending up to the public right of way. Buildings cluster around the Green and it is their main focal point.
- 5.13.4. Development in the settlement follows a linear form alongside the connected lanes with no in-depth development found except for conversion of existing farm or other outbuildings. Any development in-depth would set a precedent which would be out of keeping with the character of the area.
- 5.13.5. The majority of modern properties are 2 storey buildings. Older cottages are generally 1.5 storey, with farmhouses at 2 storeys; 2.5 storeys are not commonplace. Many buildings are small cottages which have often been amalgamated and extended over time. Whilst many buildings have the original wide frontage and narrow depth form, this has sometimes been lost through additions and renovation.

Surrounding Area

- 5.13.6. Littlestead Green is a small cluster of dwellings in the open countryside, entirely separated from Dunsden Green. There has been minimal change from the mid-1800s where properties were centred around Littlestead Green Farm. Today there are seven dwellings, with the smaller cottages having been combined into single dwellings.
- 5.13.7. All Saints church is situated to the northwest of the village and was built in 1842. Due to the date of construction it is unlisted, but remains a locally important building. A further cluster of houses exists here and includes the vicarage, which is also considered a locally important building. To the southwest is the imposing Grade II* Listed Row Lane Farmhouse (as discussed in the heritage section). Corks Farm further north with its Grade II Listed farmhouse has latterly had the associated agricultural barns converted to dwellings.
- 5.13.8. For planning purposes, the Littlestead Green area and the area around the Church is designated as open countryside by SODC, whereas Dunsden Green is classified as an ‘Other Village’.

Key Issues and Objectives

- 5.13.9. The clear gaps between dwellings allow views through to the countryside beyond. There is a clear building line, with only farm buildings being the notable exception. There is a risk through

the infilling and development of garden land, that this very low-density historic form could be lost. The gaps between buildings should be retained.

- 5.13.10. Properties are set in large plots as can be seen overleaf, with few exceptions. Where the rear garden is more limited in depth, it is often compensated for by a larger front or usually a side garden area. Such gardens are well landscaped and contained by hedgerow planting with little evidence of formal fencing. Any new development should not be compromised by inferior levels of garden space.
- 5.13.11. As set out in the community aspiration in the Heritage section, the community are keen to see the area designated as a Conservation Area. There is a historic core of properties which have an important relationship with the village green and its setting. Any development in the area should be considered carefully as it could have a significant adverse impact on the spatial setting and interrelationship between built form and open space. Where there are currently gaps between buildings, these are either covered in mature / veteran trees, offer important views or gaps for planting to soften built form.
- 5.13.12. The numerous mature trees, particularly around the Village Green and Church Lane are of considerable amenity value and should be retained where possible and ideally be considered for Tree Preservation Orders.
- 5.13.13. The pressure to redevelop older properties, build outbuildings and to extend smaller properties in the area is apparent. The key to successful extension, renovation and erection of outbuildings is to ensure that new elements remain subservient to the host building, such that the original can clearly be seen. The CADC provides specific advice which should be followed to ensure new development makes a positive impact upon the area.

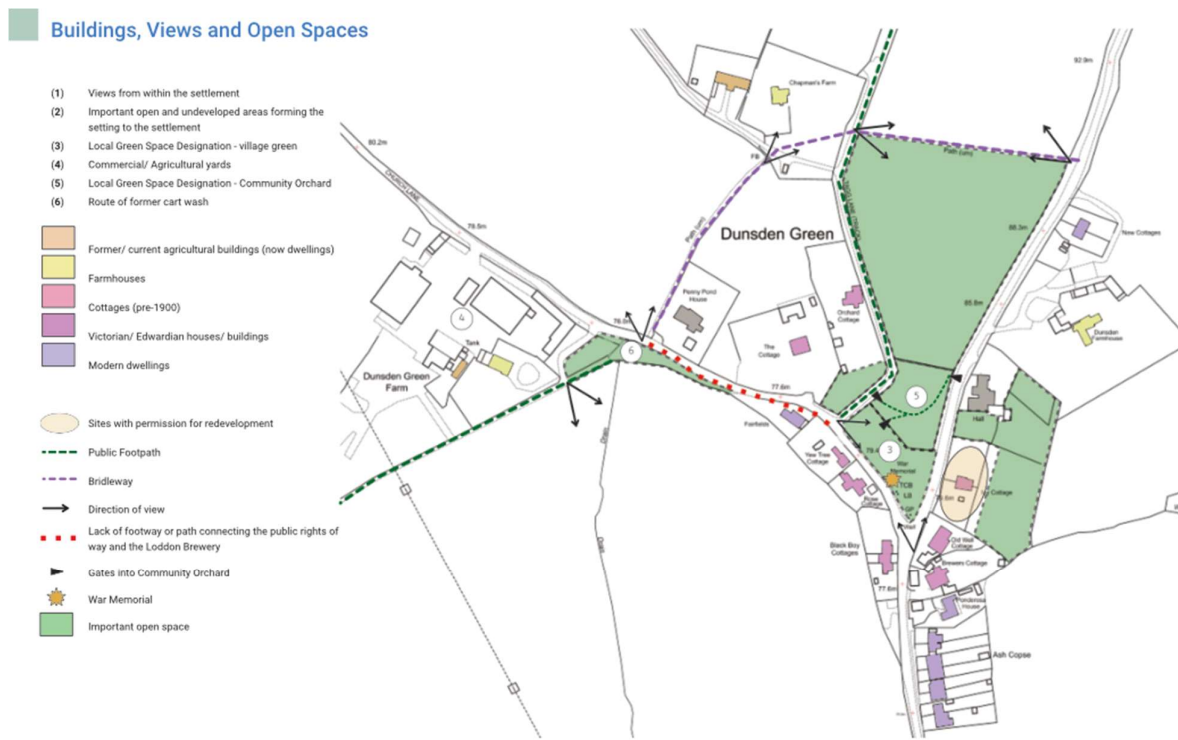


Figure 18 - Buildings, Views and Open Spaces

Figure 39 Building features, views and open spaces identified within the Dunsden Green Character Area (taken from the Character Appraisal)

- 5.13.14. Modern buildings and structures, utilise red or red/brown multi, machine made bricks. These materials are generic and not locally specific and generally do not enhance the local identity and character of the area. There is some render often on original brickwork as well as painted brick.
- 5.13.15. The Design Code for the Plan Area and for each individual area can be found overleaf.

Parish Wide Design Code including the Rural Area outside of the Settlements (also see individual areas for further details)

PW1.0 - Appearance

New building frontages should propose a level of detail based on the detail used on existing original buildings within the area. Where period details are proposed it is advised they are based on a local historical precedent.

PW2.0 - Replacement dwellings

Replacement dwellings can alter the character of a village if not carefully designed. Care should be taken to ensure:

- The scale of development is in keeping with the street and appropriate to the size of the plot.
- There is a positive relationship between the building and the street.
- Reference should be taken from the local vernacular to determine the most appropriate proportions for the replacement dwelling.

Where replacement dwellings are proposed, these should be as a proportionate replacement to the plot size, with plot coverage in accordance with this character area.

Additional dwellings - In exceptional cases, it may be appropriate to replace with a small group of dwellings - each application is to be assessed individually.

PW3.0 - Restoration

Restoration of existing buildings of non listed, historic buildings in the Parish is preferable to demolition and replacement. Where buildings are modernised, it is advised existing proportions of doors and windows should be considered.

Use appropriate materials and techniques for extensions. A mix of modern and traditional materials can be appropriate and allows for greater innovation in design.

PW4.0 - Scale, Height, Massing

New development will be more likely to integrate successfully with the settlement, if the scale, height and massing of new buildings demonstrates consideration for the context of the original buildings within the area.

Buildings should not be designed in isolation.

Whether they are of traditional or contemporary design, buildings should be part of a design concept for the whole site. This will need to be explained in a Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application.

PW5.0 - Natural Surveillance

Natural surveillance takes place when people can see what is happening where they live. Crime rates are lower in locations where people believe they are being watched. Maximise opportunities for new development to become self-policing.

PW6.0 - Parking

The design of parking areas should be appropriate to the scale and location of the residential development, but should not be a dominant feature. Parking areas should be surfaced using a permeable material to provide adequate natural drainage

PW7.0 - Accessibility

Small scale developments that enhance accessibility through the settlement, incorporate enhancements to the public realm or provide communal green space should be encouraged.

Create pedestrian and cycle friendly environments to reduce the need to travel by car.

PW8.0 - Public realm & Street furniture

Public realm enhancements or communal green space should be provided in new development to contribute to the provision or enhancement of open space in the area.

Avoid open spaces that lack character or purpose Identify opportunities to make a positive contribution to character

Street furniture such as benches and bins required for public realm should complement the local vernacular. Design and location should be carefully considered.

Seating areas encourage people to gather and as a result should provide adequate space.

PW9.0 - Storage

Provide secure storage for cycling equipment to encourage ease of access and greater use.

Cycle and bin stores should be integrated into the garden and screened from the street.

PW10.0 - Green Infrastructure

New development should reinforce the well-managed network of grass species rich verges, hedgerows and woodland lining the routes through the area, which are characteristic of the rural landscape.

Native vegetation can be used to blend buildings into their surroundings and draw the natural landscape into the settlement.

PW11.0 - Trees

Mature trees should be retained where possible or replaced at a ratio of 3:1 in line with Woodland Trust guidance. Any tree lost to development should be replaced with an appropriate species.

Retention of all trees and hedgerows, especially along property boundaries is vital. If trees and hedges need to be removed, they should be replaced on the site.

PW12.0 - Windows and Doors

Windows in new buildings should complement the vertical and horizontal pattern and scale of windows reflected in local architectural detailing.

Doors can be noticeable features and, as with windows, they can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a property.

In more traditional designs, the positioning of windows within their reveals is important to add visual interest. See design palettes below and for each area.

Use doors that reflect the design approach see design palettes below. Doors should be simple and well proportioned. A pastiche of historical designs should be avoided.

PW13.0 - Materials and Detailing

A typical palette in Eye and Dunsden Parish includes:

- red/ orange bricks,
- red/ orange hanging tiles,
- Contrasting door and window surrounds with brick quoins.
- Decorative brick banding, details and bonds
- timber framing with brick infill,
- timber painted windows and doors,
- Plain clay roof tiles, with some decorative features
- Plain ridge tiles with decorative ridges and finials on focal buildings,
- External porches
- Timber clad barns on brick plinths
- Prominent chimneys

Materials used for the repair or alteration of buildings, for new buildings, and for surfacing and boundaries shall complement the existing high quality palette of materials that typifies the character of the area.

Proposals for innovative and complementary material options should also be encouraged, but must be well justified as to why they are appropriate. Materials that are durable, high quality and easy to maintain are preferable. See materials palette below

Differing materials on an extension or a different design approach may result in a development appearing incongruous. Whilst, exceptionally, an extension may intentionally be designed to be contrasting, such an approach will need to be carefully justified and its success will rely on a high quality design.

Sonning Eye - Design Code

New Development

Infill plots can alter the character of the settlement if not carefully designed. There is limited scope within Sonning Eye for infill development due to the floodplain. There may however be opportunities for replacement dwellings. Where any development opportunity exists the following factors should be taken into account.

S1.0 - Siting and Layout -

The siting of new buildings should respect the existing building line along the street or rural lane (figure x). In this instance only those properties along the Playhatch Road have a defined building line, whereas the remainder of dwellings are set well back into their plots and often surrounded by outbuildings which form the boundary. Buildings are either detached or semi-detached, with few terraces (these usually relate to older cottages often converted to single dwellings).

Gaps between buildings are of key importance (figure x). There is a clear distinction between buildings lining the main road to that of the rural lanes. In the former, buildings enclose the road with minimal gaps between properties, forming a clusters of continuous built form. Within the rural lanes, it can be seen that dwellings have significant, visible gaps between each allowing views through the boundary treatments.

S2.0 - Density

The density level of the character area has been defined as approximately 12 dwellings per hectare, such density should be respected. A higher density may be accommodated, but only where buildings can be successfully subdivided without appearing too dense and discordant. A property giving the appearance of a single dwelling, could be dividing internally into apartment blocks for example. The key to successful development in this regard is to look at the ratio of built form to plot size and to ensure that the proposal remains in keeping with the surroundings.

S3.0 - Building Heights

New dwellings that respect the existing height and follow the roofline and form of adjacent houses should be encouraged. Similarly proposed extensions are more likely to be successful if they remain subordinate to the height of the original building.

S4.0 - Roof Form and Detailing

Roof forms should be designed to reflect the streetscene and wider context (see page x for building form and design). The majority of buildings are of relatively simply form and have gable ends, particularly those dating from



Victorian period. These can be steeply pitched with decorative barge boards (1,8,15). Earlier properties often have more simple brick detailing under the gable (4,14). The majority have plain clay tiles.

Careful attention should be paid to roofing materials, pitch, eaves and verge details and the inclusion of chimney stacks or other features that project above the ridge line. Prominent and decorative chimneys are a feature of the area (6,11,13,15).

Dormer windows are commonplace and usually set on the eaves line or wholly within the roof (2,3,11,15). Prominent gable features are usually associated with Victorian properties (1).

S5.0 - Appearance and Detailing

Building details should take reference from existing properties.

Buildings should be constructed using the local Berkshire red/orange brick, clay tiles (also can be used vertically), reclaimed where appropriate to provide differing tones and colours as demonstrated on the materials palette (1,2,4,5,7,8,9). Generally the elevations of buildings should adhere to the local colour palette, bonds and course detailing.

For developments of multiple homes, detailing will be key to ensure successful

integration and variation. Whilst Victorian properties have some limited paint and render to the front elevation, this is not commonplace.

S6.0 - Windows and Doors

Window surrounds should have minimal detailing on cottages and are often contained within the timber frame (2,3,9,10,15). Arched brickwork and decorative features of Victorian properties using the vernacular material palette will be acceptable (8,9).

Window frames should be painted white, black or neutral coloured and preferably include multi-paned glazing. Cottage casements and sash windows are prevalent (1,2,3,8,9,10,11,15).

S7.0 - Scale and Massing

The proportions of proposed houses should match adjacent houses of the same building type. Prominent farmhouses and Victorian Villas can be up to 2.5 storeys in height, with timber frame cottages at 1.5 storeys. Modern generic house types are generally not appropriate in this setting as they do not accord with the traditional form of buildings within the area unless these reflect the plan form of surrounding dwellings (see page x for building form and design).

S8. - Garages and Outbuildings

Garages, cycle stores and bin stores are a feature of modern living, and should be included as an integral part of the overall design from the outset. Numerous outbuildings are found within this character area and it is commonplace to have them along the frontage or along the side of plots forming boundary walls (20,21,22,24). The design of outbuildings and storage area should be subordinate to the dwelling and reflect the rural character of the area. Timber clad barns in natural colours with brick plinths are commonplace (12,20).

S9. - Gardens - Front and Rear

Gardens and the mature native vegetation within should be retained where to ensure that each building has an attractive, verdant setting (15,16). In a domestic setting, front gardens should not be dominated by car parking. Where sufficient space exists they should be provided native planting and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street. Proposals that provide SuDS solutions and permeable paving are preferable. Planting within the setting of private front gardens should be in keeping with the rural context of the character area.

S10. - Parking

Parking should be provided for all dwellings on plot and should be located to the side or the rear of properties to reduce the visual impact of vehicles on the street, unless it relates to parking within an outbuilding or courtyard reflecting the surrounding agricultural character(17,21).

S11. - Boundary Treatment

Where development affects the boundaries of a property, new development should consider boundary treatments which are common or complimentary to the character area. Boundary treatments such as garden walls timber post and rail fences and formally maintained hedgerows are common (18,19,25,27). Walls are usually in a brick style to match the dwelling, although flint is also commonplace. A modern interpretation that complements the street scene will also be encouraged provided it is in context with the local vernacular (19). A careful balance needs to be struck between gated entrances providing security and dominating the street scene. Traditional timber gates site well with the former agricultural related buildings. Gates which do not offer a view through into a site, can often be oppressive and overbearing, to pedestrians (22,26). Overly decorative metal gates can suit Victorian properties (23), but less so in more agricultural related settings (24).



S4.1 - ROOFING:



Plain Clay tiles - red / orange
Concrete tiles are inappropriate due to poor colour match, form and variety

Simple roof forms - gables and half hipped

S9.1 - REAR & FRONT GARDENS

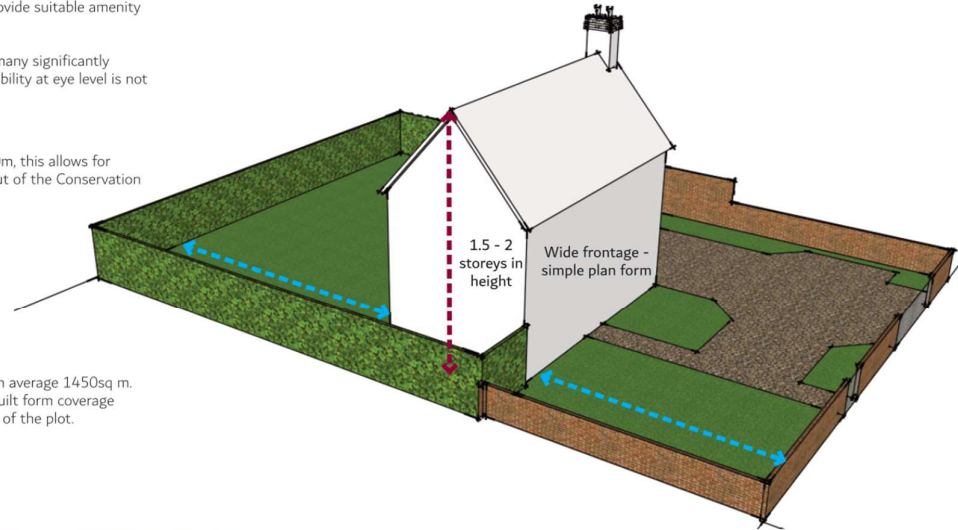
Rear gardens over 12 metres in depth

Size of garden should relate to the property and provide suitable amenity space for occupants.

Deep front gardens - average 5+ metres although many significantly larger. Well contained from roads and lanes, but visibility at eye level is not restricted.

SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS:

Historically, gaps between buildings were approx 10m, this allows for sufficient space for landscaping and views in and out of the Conservation Area.



S2.1 - PLOT SIZES, COVERAGE & DENSITY:

Plot sizes should reflect those in the wider area - on average 1450sq m. There are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 18.1% coverage of the plot. The average density in the area is 6.2 dph

S6.1 - WINDOWS:



Timber windows - painted white or other muted colours.

Cottage casement windows predominate - triple pane, double pane - arch topped. Windows should be proportionate and detailed. Large single panes are not appropriate.

S6.2 - DORMER WINDOWS:



Small cottage casement dormer windows, generally set into the roof with some cutting of the eaves line. Simple form detailing or decorative bargeboards

S7.1 - SCALE, MASS AND FORM:

There is an equal occurrence of small 1.5 storey dwellings as there are 2 storey buildings. Any 2.5 storey buildings are rarely found and only as landmark properties.

Older properties are laid out in traditional forms relating to their intended use. Farm workers cottages for example are generally simple in layout, one or two rooms deep and often with wide frontages. Gable features should be subordinate.

Whilst farmhouses are generally more complex buildings with different subservient elements and extensions, many are found within a traditional courtyard of other outbuildings.

These outbuildings have then often later been converted to a residential use.

S5.1 - WALLING:



Decorative brickwork detailing

Decorative and plain hanging tiles - red / orange

Decorative brickwork detailing, quoins/ dressings



Handmade facing brickwork - red / orange

Light painted render

handmade local red/orange brick predominate. Other colour bricks are used decoratively.

Exceptions to this are some modern buildings and structures, where red or red/brown multi, machine-made bricks are often used and are often discordant features.

Bricks are used as infill within timber framing. There is limited render, but a number of brick properties are painted. Timber cladding is found on converted agricultural buildings and outbuildings.

S10.1 - PARKING & DRIVEWAYS

Off street parking in parking courtyards or driveways to the side of the property



hedged front boundary

GARAGES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Car barns or garage outbuildings to be separate and form boundary walls to reflect the agricultural nature of the area



Walled front boundary - brick or brick/ flint - red orange

S11.1 - BOUNDARIES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Bounded by walls or hedgerows.

Gates to reflect the agricultural character



Agricultural gated entrances

Playhatch - Design Code

New Development

New development within the settlement boundary can alter the character of the settlement if not carefully designed. This has been evident from modern development within Playhatch (4,5).

P1.0 - Siting and Layout

The siting of new buildings should respect the existing building line along the street. Although in-depth development has been permitted, this is clearly an incongruous feature and linear development is in keeping with settlement pattern (5).

Properties along the road running through Playhatch have a defined building line to be retained (3), whereas the remainder of dwellings are set well back into their plots and often surrounded by outbuildings, walls, fencing and planting which form the boundary. Gaps between buildings are of key importance.

There should be a clear distinction between individual and groups of buildings.

P2.0 - Density

Infill dwellings - In exceptional cases, it may be appropriate to replace with a small group of dwellings - each application assessed individually.

The density level of the character area has been defined as approximately 8 dwellings per hectare, such density should be respected, but where a higher density may be appropriate, buildings could also be built to look like a single larger building which is then subdivided into apartments for example. The key to successful development in this regard is to look at the ratio of built form to plot size and to ensure that the proposal remains in keeping with the surroundings.

P3.0 - Building Heights, Form, Scale and Massing

New dwellings that respect the existing height and follow the roofline and form of adjacent houses should be encouraged. Similarly proposed extensions are more likely to be successful if they remain subordinate to the height of the original building. Large or dominant front gable features are not in keeping with the local character and generally relate to more modern generic house types, which are not designed based on an understanding of the local context.

In the same regard, roof forms should be designed to reflect the streetscene and wider context.

Careful attention should be paid to roofing materials, pitch, eaves and verge details and the inclusion of chimney stacks or other features that project above the ridge line.

The proportions of proposed houses should match adjacent houses of the same building type.

P4.0 - Garages, Outbuildings & Parking

Garages, cycle stores and bin stores are a feature of modern living, and should be included as an integral part of the overall design from the outset.

Numerous outbuildings are found within this character area and it is commonplace to have them along the frontage or along the side of plots forming boundary walls (1). The design of outbuildings and storage area should be subordinate to the dwelling and reflect the rural character of the area. Brick or timber clad barns in natural colours with brick plinths are commonplace.

P5.0 - Gardens - Front and Rear

Gardens and the mature native vegetation within should be retained where to ensure that each building has an attractive, verdant setting.

In a domestic setting, front gardens should not be dominated by car parking. Where sufficient space exists they should be provided native planting and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street. Proposals that provide SuDS solutions and permeable paving are preferable.

Planting within the setting of private front gardens should be in keeping with the rural context of the character area.

P6.0 - Boundary treatment

Where development affects the boundaries of a property, new development should consider boundary treatments which are common or complimentary to the character area.

Boundary treatments such as garden walls, picket fences softened by planting and formally maintained hedgerows are common (1). Close board fencing is urbanising and should be avoided where possible (4).

Walls are usually in a brick style to match the dwelling, although flint is also commonplace. A modern interpretation that complements the street scene will also be encouraged provided it is in context with the local vernacular.

Traditional timber gates site well with the former agricultural related buildings and cottages (2). Gates which do not offer a view through into a site, can often be oppressive and overbearing to pedestrians.

P7.0 - Appearance and Detailing

Building details should take reference from existing properties. Buildings should be constructed using the local Berkshire red/orange brick, clay tiles reclaimed rather than concrete to provide differing tones and colours as demonstrated on the materials palette (P25). Generally the elevations of buildings should adhere to the local colour palette, bonds and course detailing.

For developments of multiple homes, detailing will be key to ensure successful integration and variation.

P8.0 - Windows and Doors

Window surrounds should have minimal detailing on cottages. Arched brickwork and decorative features of Victorian properties using the vernacular material palette are acceptable. Window frames should be painted white or neutral coloured and preferably include multi-paned glazing. Cottage casements and sash windows are prevalent.

Windows should not overlook other properties. Where this is not possible they should be obscured glazed and non-opening.



P7.1 - ROOFING:



Roofing materials should be plain Clay tiles - red / orange or slate. Concrete tiles are inappropriate due to poor colour match, form and variety. Any other material would need to be sufficiently justified as an exception.

P8.2 - DORMER WINDOWS:



Dormer windows should be small in scale - preferably cottage casement in style, generally set into the roof with or cutting the eaves line. Simple form detailing or decorative bargeboards. Flat roof dormers are only appropriate as part of a justified contemporary scheme

P5.1 - WALLING:



Timber frame with brick infill | Painted peddledash and render | Handmade facing brickwork - red / orange with grey/ blue/ burnt

Local red/orange bricks are preferable. Other colour bricks are used decoratively. Red or red/brown multt machine-made bricks are often used on modern buildings and are discordant features not to be replicated.



Decorative brickwork detailing, quoins/ dressings | Light painted render

P9.1 - REAR & FRONT GARDENS

Rear gardens should be over 12 metres in depth, where rear gardens are less than 12 metres, the overall level of amenity space on plot should be considered.

Size of garden should relate to the property and provide suitable amenity space for occupants.

Front gardens should be deep with an average 10+ metres. They should be well contained from the roads and lanes.

P1.1 - SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS:

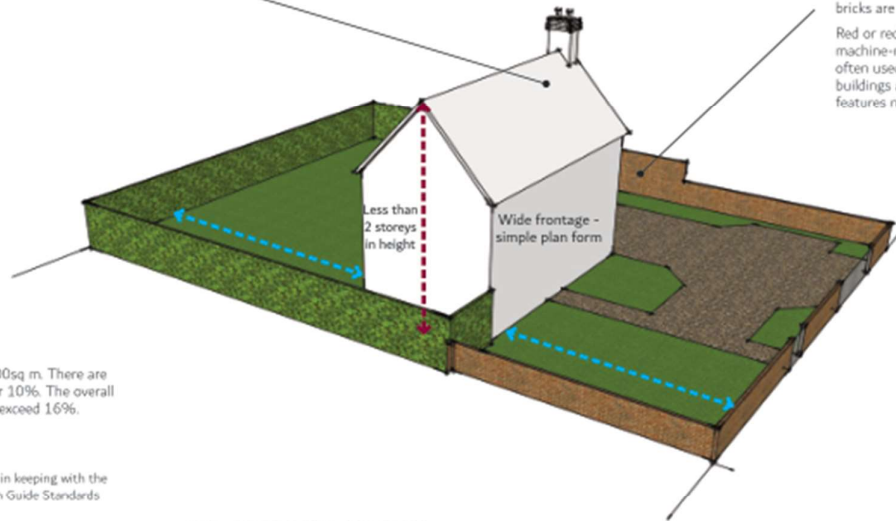
Development to be loose knit, with sufficient space between dwellings to allow for landscaping to screen and soften, in addition to enable sufficient privacy and prevent overlooking.

P2.1 - PLOT SIZES, COVERAGE & DENSITY:

Plot sizes should reflect those in the wider area - on average 1200sq m. There are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 15.5% coverage of the plot. Plot coverage should not exceed 16%.

The average density in the area is 7.7 dph.

*Please note this does not include Dene Cl as it is not considered to be in keeping with the character of the area and did not confirm with the original SODC Design Guide Standards when approved.



S7.1 - SCALE, MASS AND FORM:

Buildings to be 2 storey maximum. Any 2.5 storey or dominant scale buildings are rarely found and only as landmark properties such as Playhatch House and Playhatch Farm. It is unlikely that any new development would be of landmark quality, but would need to be justified.

Cottages are in keeping and are generally simple in layout, one or two rooms deep and often with wide frontages. Gable features should be subordinate. Simple roof forms - gables and half hipped.

Farmhouse style properties are common and are generally more complex buildings with different subservient elements and extensions, many are found within a traditional courtyard of other outbuildings.

The conversion of farm and other outbuildings should be sympathetic to the original form and appearance.

Modern generic house types, which are not designed based on an understanding of the local context are to be avoided.

S8.1 - WINDOWS:



Timber windows are preferable including cottage casement windows - triple pane/ double pane - arch topped and sliding sash windows. Lighter paint colours are preferable. Contemporary metal and timber windows and high quality UPVC with slim profiles.

P4.1 - PARKING & DRIVEWAYS

Off street parking in landscaped gardens or driveways to the side of the property

Open plan parking and driveways without enclosure are not appropriate. To be enclosed by walls or hedgerows.

P4.2 - GARAGES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Car barns or garage outbuildings to be set back behind the main dwelling and subservient in scale, form and appearance.

S6.1 - BOUNDARIES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Bounded by walls or hedgerows.

Gates to reflect the agricultural character

Close board fencing is suburban in nature and is not appropriate. Limited fencing may be acceptable with sufficient planting to screen



Gated entrances with boundary walls. Open rural gates are preferable along the frontage | hedged front boundary | Walled front boundary - brick or brick/ flint - red orange

Dunsden Green - Design Code

D1.0 - New Development

Dunsden Green and Littlestead Green and surrounding area are rural in character. In accordance with the Adopted Local Plan, only Dunsden Green is considered to have limited scope for development as an 'Other Village'. It is likely that development will relate to house extensions, building conversions and a small number of infill plots. Infill plots can alter the character of the settlement if not carefully designed. These should reflect the simple cottages and agricultural buildings of the locality.

D2.0 - Siting, Layout and Density

The siting of new buildings should respect the existing building line along the street. In-depth development is not a feature of the village and would be out of keeping with the settlement pattern.

Dwellings are set well back into their plots and often surrounded by outbuildings and hedgerow planting which forms the boundary.

Gaps between buildings are of key importance. There is a clear distinction between individual and groups of buildings and countryside views are clearly visible.

The density level of the character area has been defined as approximately 6 dwellings per hectare, such density should be respected, but where a higher density may be appropriate, buildings could also be built to look like a single larger building which is then subdivided into apartments for example.

The key to successful development in this regard is to look at the ratio of built form to plot size and to ensure that the proposal remains in keeping with the surroundings.

D3.0 - Building Heights, Form, Scale and Massing

New dwellings that respect the existing height and follow the roof line and form of adjacent houses should be encouraged. Similarly proposed extensions are more likely to be successful if they remain subordinate to the height of the original building.

Plan forms should be largely simple for cottages and relate to the type of property proposed. On larger farmhouses and other important buildings, projections and dominant front gable features are in evidence, but only where these are key focal buildings such as Glebe House.

Modern generic house types, which are not designed based on an understanding of the local context are to be avoided.

Careful attention should be paid to roofing materials,



pitch, eaves and verge details and the inclusion of chimney stacks or other features that project above the ridge line.

The proportions of proposed houses should match adjacent houses of the same building type. The wider street scene should be considered and proposed dwellings should be well integrated.

The majority of dwellings are two storeys in height except for landmark buildings. It is unlikely that any infill plot would satisfy requirements for a focal building.

D4.0 - Garages, Parking and Outbuildings

Garages, cycle stores and bin stores are a feature of modern living, and should be included as an integral part of the overall design from the outset.

Numerous outbuildings are found within this character area and it is commonplace to have them along the side of plots forming boundary elements. Siting along the frontage is likely to be overly dominant in the street scene. The design of outbuildings and storage area should be subordinate to the dwelling and reflect the rural character of the area. Timber clad barns in natural colours with brick plinths are commonplace.



D5.0 - Gardens - Front and Rear

Gardens and the mature native vegetation within should be retained where to ensure that each building has an attractive, verdant setting.

In a domestic setting, front gardens should not be dominated by car parking. Where sufficient space exists they should be provided with native planting and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street. Proposals that provide SuDS solutions and permeable paving are preferable.

Planting within the setting of private front gardens should be in keeping with the rural context of the character area.

D6.0 - Boundary treatment

Where development affects the boundaries of a property, new development should consider boundary treatments which are common or complementary to the character area.

Boundary fences should be low key and softened by planting. Where possible native hedgerows are preferable. Close board fencing is urbanising and should be avoided where possible.

Walls are less commonplace as boundaries, but should be in a brick style to match the dwelling. The often link outbuildings to a dwelling. Front boundary walls should be low level and soften by planting.

Traditional timber gates site well with the former agricultural related buildings and cottages. Gates which do not offer a view through into a site, can often be



oppressive and overbearing. These also restrict views through to the countryside beyond.

D7.0 - Green infrastructure

New development should reinforce the hedgerows lining the routes through the area, which are characteristic of the rural landscape. Vegetation can be used to blend buildings into their surroundings and draw the natural landscape into the settlement.

Any opportunity to enhance the footpath network here, particularly between the village green and the Loddon Brewery should be encouraged, since there are currently no paved footways.

It should be noted however that any new paths should be rural in character and new urbanising paved footways are not supported. It is recommended that new permissive paths could be accommodated inside existing field boundaries and hedge lines, without any formal surfacing.

Where a formal path is proposed, this could be accommodated in the form of bound gravel or appropriate loose surfacing similar as shown adjacent.



D8.0 - Appearance and Detailing

Building details should take reference from existing properties. Buildings should be constructed using the local Berkshire red/orange brick, clay tiles reclaimed rather than concrete to provide differing tones and colours as demonstrated on the materials palette (P25). Generally the elevations of buildings should adhere to the local colour palette, bonds and course detailing.

For developments of multiple homes, detailing will be key to ensure successful integration and variation.



D9.0 - Windows and Doors

Window surrounds should have minimal detailing on cottages. Arched brickwork and decorative features of Victorian properties using the vernacular material palette are acceptable. Window frames should be painted white or neutral coloured and preferably include multi-paned glazing. Cottage casements and sash windows are prevalent.

D8.1 - ROOFING:



Roofing materials should be plain Clay tiles - red / orange or slate. Decorative tiles used to highlight Concrete tiles are inappropriate due to poor colour match, form and variety. Any other material would need to be sufficiently justified as an exception.

D5.1 - REAR & FRONT GARDENS

Rear gardens should be over 15 metres in depth. where rear gardens are less, the overall level of amenity space on plot should be considered. Side gardens can be appropriate where this is in keeping with the general pattern of development.

Size of garden should relate to the property and provide suitable amenity space for occupants.

Front gardens should be deep with an average 5+ metres. They should be well contained from the roads and lanes.

D2.1 - SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS:

Development to be loose knit, with sufficient space between dwellings to allow for landscaping to screen and soften, in addition to enable sufficient privacy and prevent overlooking.

Gaps between buildings should allow for countryside views to be maintained

D2.2 - PLOT SIZES, COVERAGE & DENSITY:

Plot sizes should reflect those in the wider area - on average 1200sq m. There are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 14.9% coverage of the plot. Plot coverage should not exceed 15%.

The average density in the area is 6.5 dph.

D9.1 - WINDOWS:



Timber windows are preferable including cottage casement windows - triple pane/ double pane - arch topped and sliding sash windows. Lighter paint colours are preferable. Contemporary metal and timber windows and high quality UPVC with slim profiles.

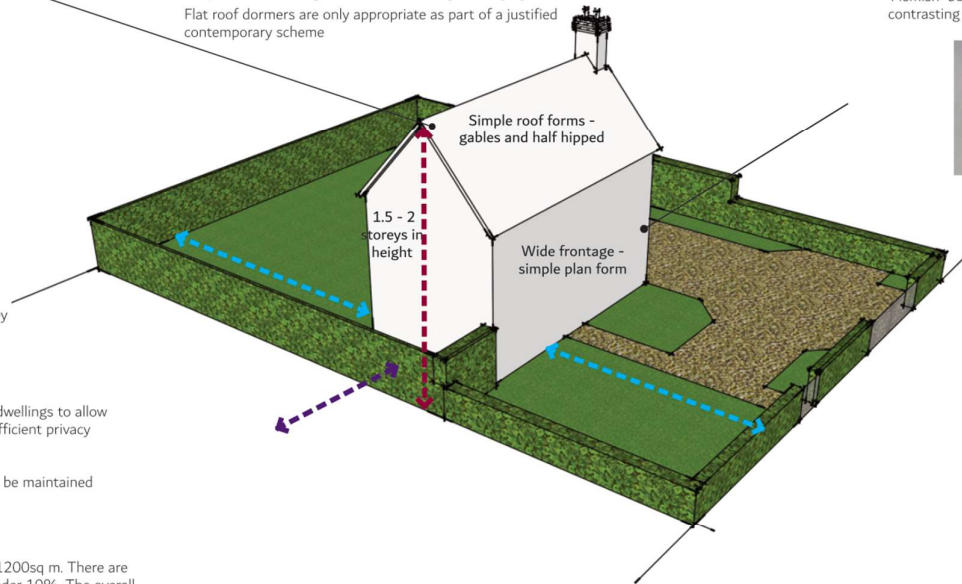
D9.2 - DORMER WINDOWS:



Dormer windows should be small in scale - preferably cottage casement in style, generally set into the roof with or cutting the eaves line.

Simple form detailing with timber cladding or hanging tiles

Flat roof dormers are only appropriate as part of a justified contemporary scheme



D3.1 - SCALE, MASS AND FORM:

Buildings to be 1.5 to 2 storey maximum. Any 2.5 storey or dominant scale buildings are rarely found and only as landmark properties It is unlikely that any new development would be of landmark quality, but would need to be justified.

Cottages are in keeping and are generally simple in layout, one or two rooms deep and often with wide frontages. Gable features should be subordinate. Simple roof forms - gables and half hipped.

Farmhouse style properties are common and are generally more complex buildings with different subservient elements and extensions, many are found within a traditional courtyard of other outbuildings.

The conversion of farm and other outbuildings should be sympathetic to the original form and appearance.

D8.2 - WALLING:

Local red/orange bricks are preferable. Other colour bricks are used decoratively. Red or red/brown multi, machine-made bricks are often used on modern buildings and are discordant features not to be replicated.



Flemish bond with contrasting headers
Decorative brickwork detailing, quoins/ dressings. Flint infill
Handmade facing brickwork - red / orange
Painted render
English bond
Contrasting brickwork bands
Decorative brickwork

D4.1 - PARKING & DRIVEWAYS

Off street parking in landscaped gardens or driveways to the side of the property

Open plan parking and driveways without enclosure are not appropriate.

To be enclosed by or hedgerows.

Extensive hard surfacing is not appropriate

D4.2 - GARAGES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Car barns or garage outbuildings to be set back behind the main dwelling and subservient in scale, form and appearance. They can form boundary walls to reflect the agricultural nature of the area

D6.1 - BOUNDARIES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Bounded by walls or hedgerows.

Gates to reflect the agricultural character

Close board fencing is suburban in nature and is not appropriate. Limited fencing may be acceptable with sufficient planting to screen



Gated entrances
Walled front boundary - brick or brick/ flint - red orange
Post and rail fence only usually found in farms
hedged front boundary are commonplace

Design Code - The Lakes

TL 1.0 - Design and Appearance

From a visual context and design perspective, it is key that uses are granted which provides facilities or services that have a direct lake use function for recreation which are not detrimental to the landscape and character of the area.

TL 1.1 Scale, Siting, and Design

The scale, siting, and design of the development should enhance or maintain the character of the lake and its lake shore location, including undeveloped stretches of lake shore. .

Applications should be accompanied by sufficient information by which to assess any visual impact concerns.

TL 1.2 Appearance

The appearance of any proposal should not dominate the existing surroundings or introduce uses which would result in wholesale change in the character of the area.

Any proposals including built structures, temporary features or proposed planting can be functional in appearance befitting their use, where this would be appropriate in a rural and waterside setting.

Poorly designed and sited car parks, large boat houses and sheds, for example are likely to have an adverse impact on the surrounding area.



TL1.3 Planting

The use of non-native planting species is not supported, particularly in close proximity to the Local Wildlife Site.

TL 2.0 Urbanising Features

Avoid any development which proposes or would lead to urbanisation, including pavements, tarmac car parks, street lighting, unnecessary signage, formal built gateway entrances, inappropriate surfaces etc. Any hard landscape proposals should be in keeping with the character of the area and be necessary for functional and or safety reasons.

TL3.0 Quiet Enjoyment

Any development which would result in an adverse impact on the tranquil character of the area would not be supported.

Any increase in usage, including recreational and water-sports based uses needs to be balanced with ecological impacts and the encroachment into nature reserve areas (both physically and through noise and other pollution such as traffic).

The retention of this area as a quiet space is key to its underlying character.

TL4.0 Access and Design of Permissive Paths

Where existing or permissive routes around the lakes area are implemented or proposed, Public access to the site shall be restricted to the marked routes as shown in the legal agreement appended to the NDP. This is to ensure sensitive wildlife areas remain undisturbed. Such paths are required to be kept relatively informal by mown way marked routes. Any attempts to formalise or surface these routes or upgrade them further will not be supported as this would result in urbanisation.

TL 5.0 Floodplain Capacity

Any new development must be designed with consideration for appropriate drainage capacity from the outset. Due to flooding constraints, it is essential that floodplain capacity is increased where possible and new mitigation measures are incorporated. Non permeable surfaces and not supported.



5.14. Heritage

- 5.14.1. The Plan Area contains 32 listed buildings and structures, 30 are listed as Grade II, with Eyot House and Row Lane Farmhouse listed as Grade II*.
- 5.14.2. The strength of the local vernacular as highlighted within the Sonning Eye Conservation Area (designated in 1981). It is essential to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets as well as the individual settlement identity as a whole, particularly where there is a threat of cumulative erosion by inappropriate development creating precedent for further low-quality buildings.
- 5.14.3. To ensure that this does not take place or continue, the Parish Design Code identifies the features of local vernacular, built form and natural features which require protection in order maintain this distinctive character.
- 5.14.4. Playhatch has five listed Buildings as well as Playhatch Farm House, which is considered to be a Locally Important Building due to age, appearance and historical value within the Plan Area.
- 5.14.5. Dunsden and the cluster of houses at Littlestead Green have seven listed Buildings. The Village Hall, Dunsden Green Farmhouse, Church and the former vicarage are all considered to be a Locally Important Buildings within the Plan Area largely due to age, appearance and cultural/historical value.
- 5.14.6. A separate Heritage Assets Evidence base document contains full detail of each designated heritage asset as well as the locally important buildings. This can be seen in Appendix III.
- 5.14.7. Where development proposals involve designated or non-designated heritage assets and their setting, specialist conservation advice should be sought and justification of choice of materials submitted with any application.
- 5.14.8. Setting is not merely just land within the same ownership or the curtilage of a dwelling, but the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. It may also potentially cover the historically setting as well as the present day. Therefore, the setting may include a much wider area than immediately apparent.

Policy ED-DH2: Heritage

The Plan Area’s designated and non-designated historic heritage assets and their setting, including archaeological sites and listed buildings, (as shown on plans 40-42 and described in Appendix III, will be conserved and enhanced in relation to their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets and the setting in the Plan area (as shown on figures 40-42 and in Appendix III), will be considered, taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Support will be given to development proposals which remove inappropriate and unsympathetic materials (as described within the Parish Settlement Character Appraisal and Design Code, (Appendix I)) from such assets and their setting.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**
 - 185, 193-196, 202
- **Adopted SODC policies –**
 - ENV6: Historic Environment
 - ENV7: Listed Building
 - ENV8: Conservation Area
 - ENV9: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments
- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

Community Aspiration

The Parish Council wishes to:

To engage in discussions with Conservation Officers to promote the designation of Dunsden Green as a conservation area.

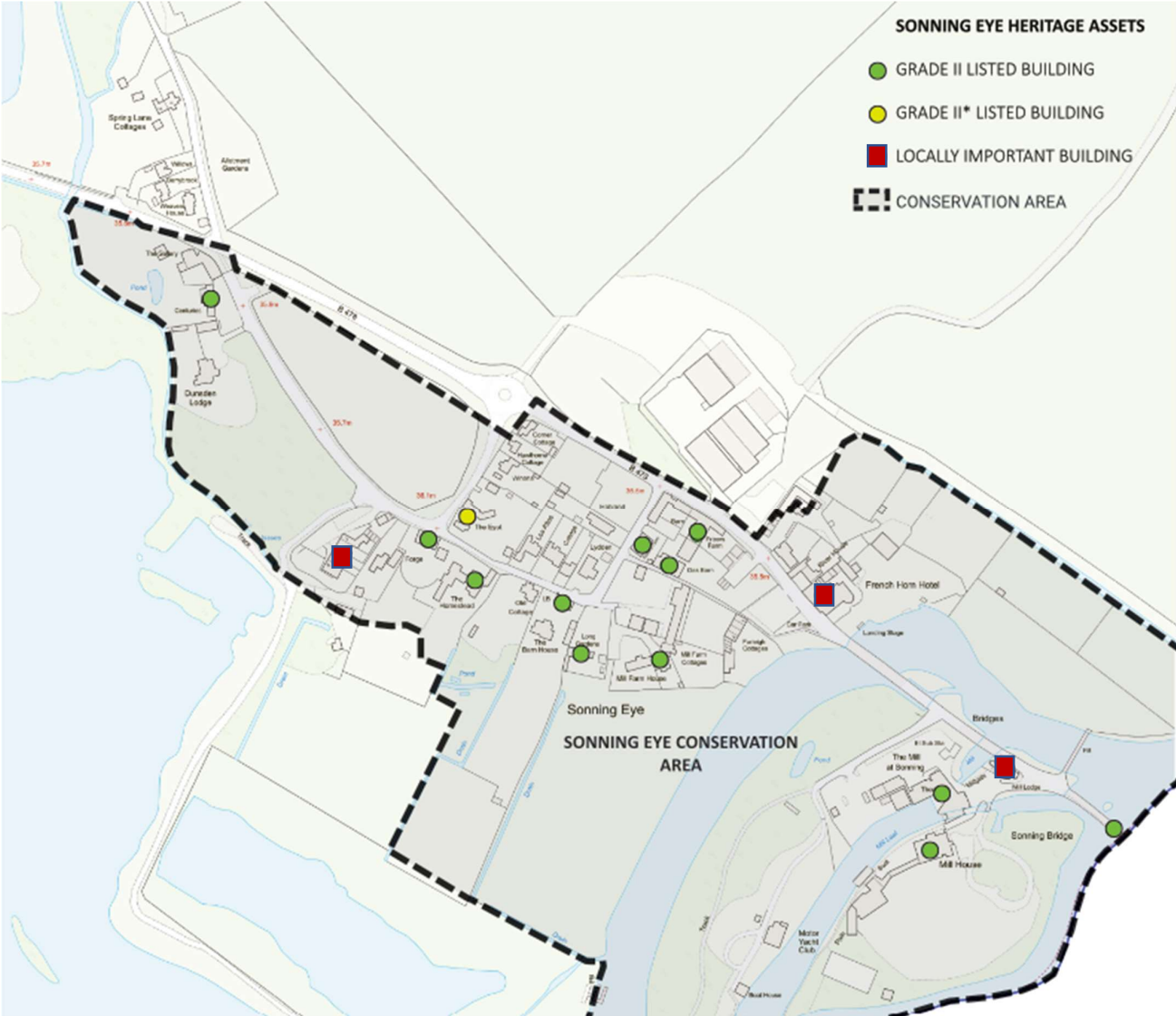


Figure 40 Location of designated and non-designated heritage asset in Sonning Eye

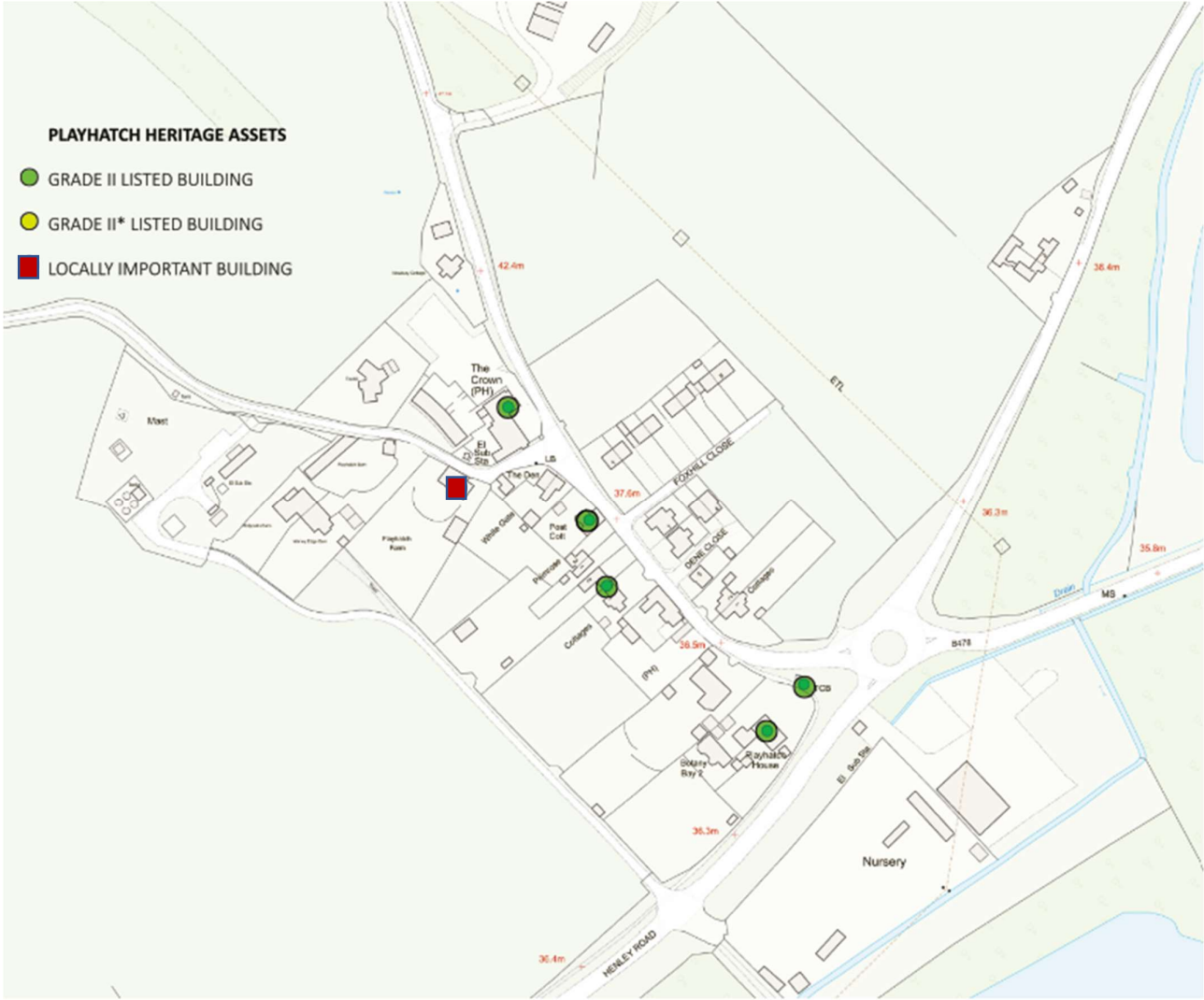


Figure 41 Location of designated and non-designated heritage assets in Playhatch

- 5.15.5. Equally, at paragraph 4.39 with regard to ‘Other Villages’, it is stated that: “It is not generally expected that those settlements classified as “Other Villages” will provide a significant source of housing supply.”
- 5.15.6. The Local Plan Inspector in his Preliminary Conclusions letter of the 28th August 2020 also helpfully set out (paragraph 37) that for unclassified settlements, Neighbourhood Plans can “seek to restrict new development in hamlets and very small settlements to avoid a proliferation of new buildings in the countryside and additional traffic on country lanes.”
- 5.15.7. With this in mind and the pressure that much of the Plan Area experiences from the proximity to Reading and the considerable traffic generated already as a result, it is considered that the quality of life in the settlements could further and unacceptably deteriorate from inappropriate additional development outside of the settlements.
- 5.15.8. The rural character of the settlements is fragile as it is slowly being eroded by more urban forms of development and features. Major or cumulative development of this type is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the settlements. As such, it is considered that only development (notwithstanding permitted development rights), which would reinforce the character of the settlement as described in CADC is considered appropriate to the Plan Area.
- 5.15.9. The following settlement boundaries overleaf have been considered for each of the three main settlements as shown below. These are based on the Character Appraisal of each settlement and public consultation on the extent of the boundaries.

Proposed Dunsden Green Settlement Boundary

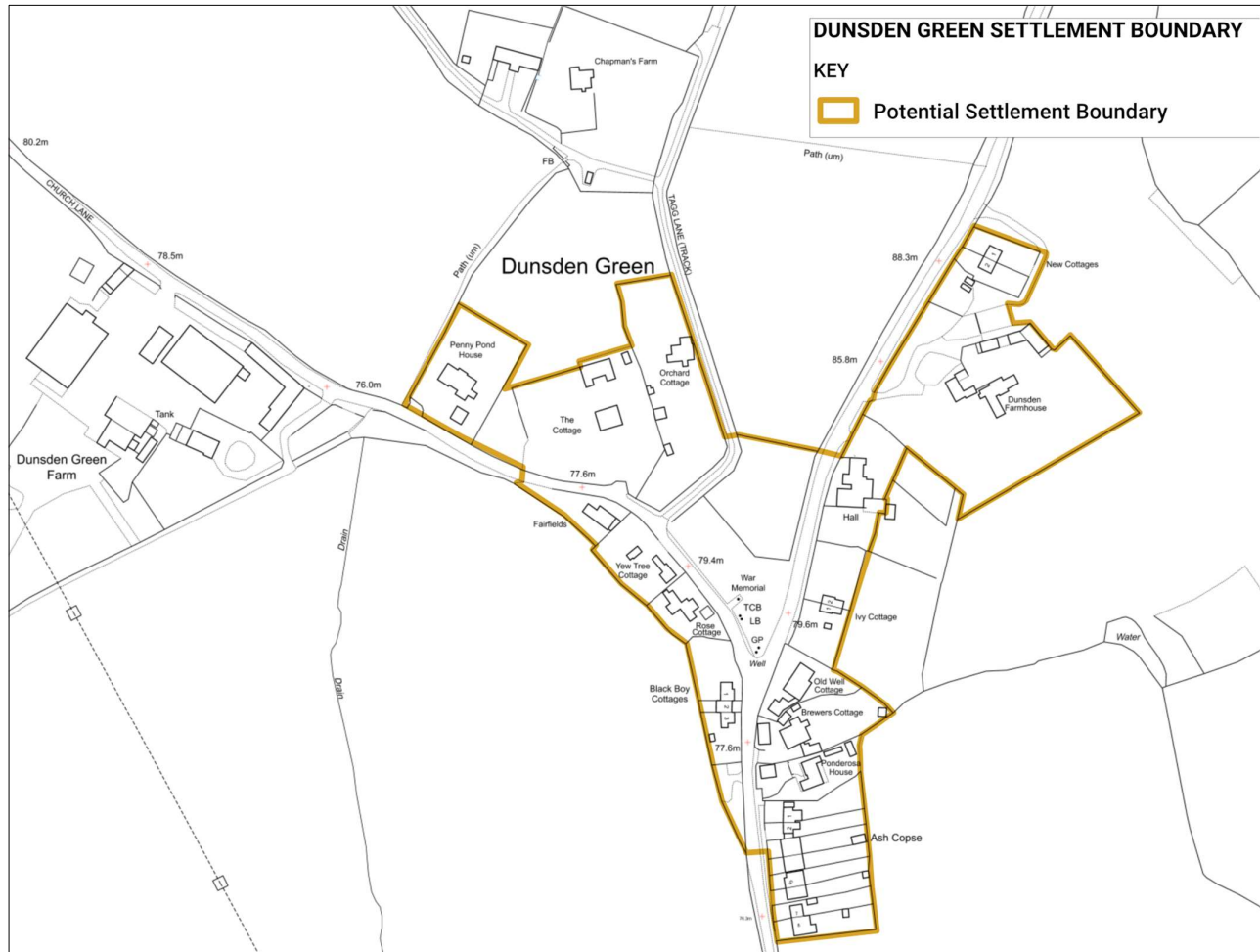


Figure 45 - Dunsden Green Settlement Boundary

Policy ED-DH1 – Housing Development

Sonning Eye, Playhatch and Dunsden Green are covered by settlement boundaries (as shown in figure 43-45), where infill development and redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings will be supported, subject to specific site constraints and the application of other relevant Development Plan policies.

The individual settlements have been analysed in detail within the Parish Settlement Character Appraisal (Appendix I), as highlighted in policy ED-DH1 and any new development must be in accordance with the design principles and code as set out in Appendix I.

In particular, it is essential that development should not undermine the gaps between the settlements as set out in policy ED-VL4 Settlement Identity and Prevention of Coalescence.

Where development takes place within, but on the edge of settlements, proposals must incorporate sufficient landscaping to reduce any adverse impact upon the countryside and important views as defined in policy ED-VL2 Important Views.

Outside of settlement boundaries, land will be treated as open countryside.

• **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 59-63, 66, 77-79, 84, 118

• **Adopted SODC policies –**

- H1 Delivering New Homes
- H8 Housing in the Smaller Villages
- H9 Affordable Housing
- H10 Exception Sites and Entry Level Housing Schemes
- H11 Housing Mix
- H12 Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing
- H13 Specialist Housing for Older People
- H16 Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment
- H18 Replacement Dwellings
- H19 Rural Workers’ Dwellings

• **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

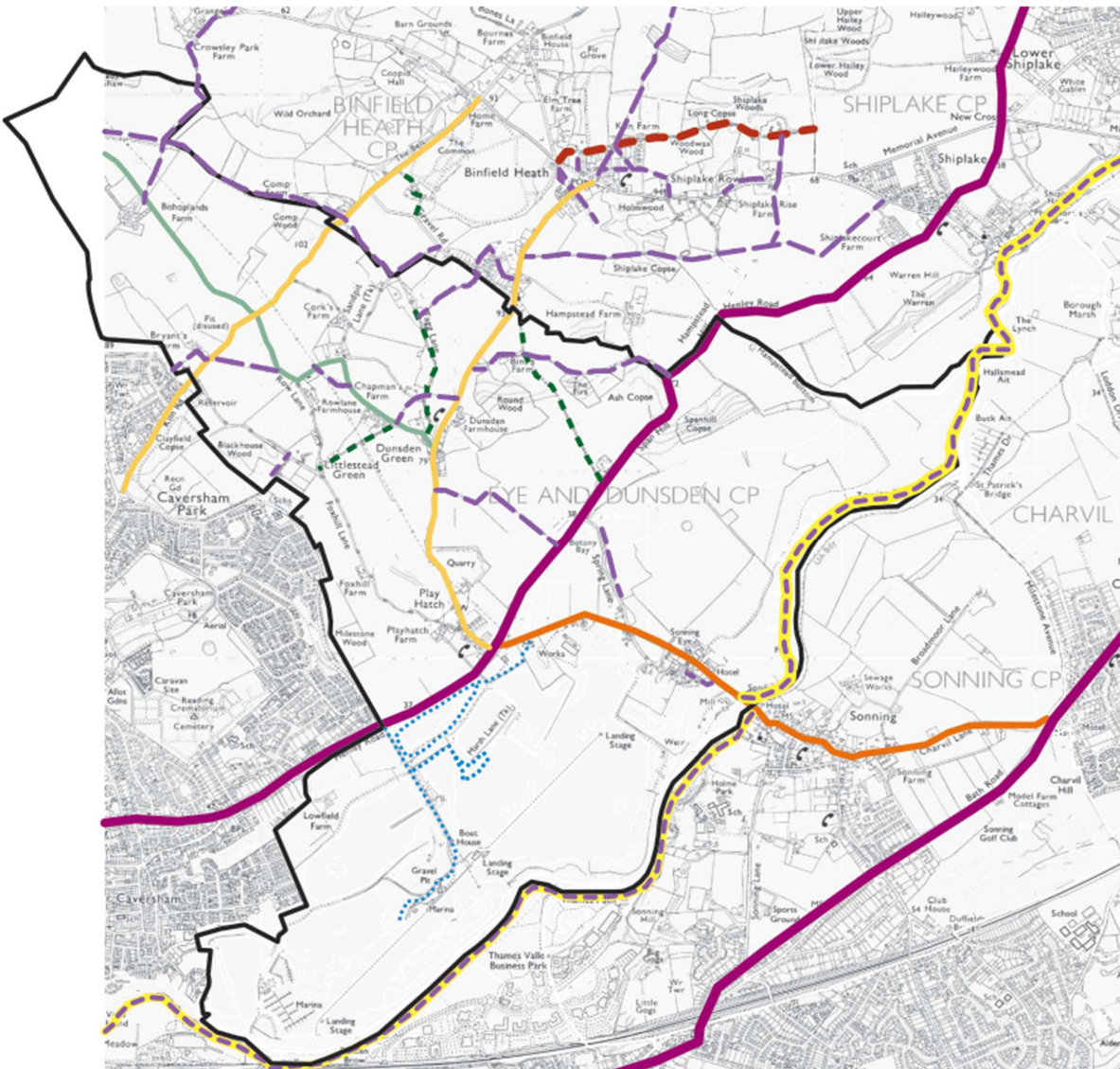
**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

5.16. Connectivity Improvements

Transport within the Plan Area

- 5.15.10. There is a level of dependency on the car in many locations in the Plan Area, particularly those areas to the north west. The area is adversely impacted by its close proximity to Reading and residents using the area as a short cut or to circumvent traffic queues. Without a realistic alternative public transport option, this results in the high volume of traffic movement on the B478 from Sonning, as well as the A4155 Reading to Henley Road.
- 5.15.11. Crossing the Thames presents a considerable issue. In particular, the road from Sonning Eye to Sonning includes one of the main road bridges, with the others being Reading and Caversham Bridges to the south and Henley to the north. The limited crossing points means that congestion in Sonning Eye is considerable.
- 5.15.12. The Sonning Bridge is especially a congestion point during peak rush hour times, where the narrow traffic light-controlled bridge causes long tailbacks.
- 5.15.13. Given the volume and nature of traffic in the NDP area (including those associated with Gravel extraction), there are often significant issues between pedestrian, cyclists and HGV movements, where the proximity of vehicles, particularly on narrow lanes make walking and cycling along the road intimidating.

5.15.14. The movement network can be understood within a hierarchy as set out in figure 46 below. Each route has different characteristics and functions and along with associated impact on the surrounding area.



- Main A Road
- Primary B Road
- Minor C Road
- Rural lanes
- Public Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Byway
- Long Distance Path
- Permissive Path

Figure 46 - Road Classification and Public Rights of Way in the Plan area

Traffic Pressures from Reading Borough

- 5.16.1. There is the potential for a new River Thames crossing as discussed previously, which would be raised to cross the Lakes area. There are significant traffic issues and congestion within the wider Reading area, and with the growing pressure from residents within the Borough and those who use the roads in general, that a solution must be found. In this regard, there is substantial concern from residents within the Plan Area, a solution will be at the expense of Eye and Dunsden Parish, with severe adverse impact to Parish residents as a consequence.
- 5.16.2. Three different options for a river crossing were considered by Reading Borough Council in 2016
- Option 1: Western Option, between A4074 (north) to Oxford Road (south);
 - Option 2: Central Option, between A4155 (north) to Thames Valley Park (south); and
 - Option 3: Eastern Option, between A4155 (north) to Sonning A4 (south).
- 5.16.3. Following public consultation at that time, the central option was considered preferable by Reading BC, with the proposed route shown on the extract from the New Thames Crossing Strategic Outline Business Case document by WSP, highlighted below in figure 47. Further work is still taking place on a Transport Strategy 2040 to support the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) for the Borough of Reading. At the time of writing, this has not been published, although further consultation took place in 2019. The results of which highlighted that residents of Reading supported an additional river crossing to ease traffic congestion.

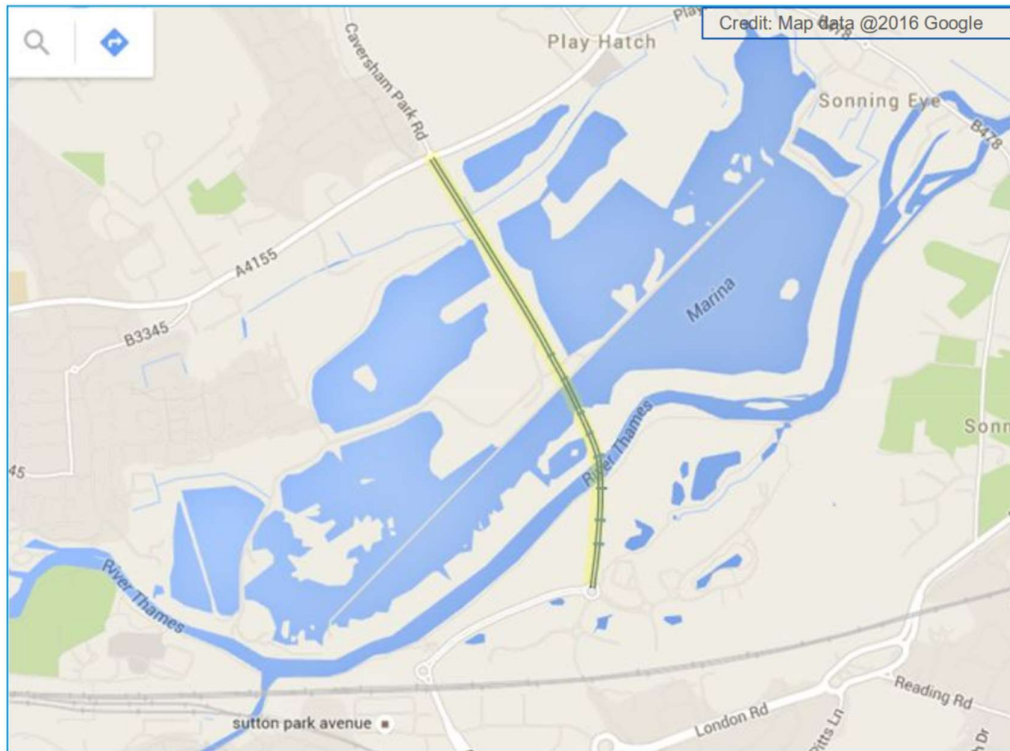


Figure 47 Proposed alignment of the New Thames Crossing east of Reading

- 5.16.4. Whilst both South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council are opposed to a new bridge, it has (at the time of writing) not been ruled out, although a new business case is

required due to the passage of time. Should such a proposal fall within the time period for this Neighbourhood Plan, it is likely that this would trigger a review, such that the implications could be fully explored and considered.

- 5.16.5. Whilst it has now been some considerable time since the options were investigated, it is still of grave concern to residents of the Plan Area and such a crossing would have a fundamental adverse impact on the Plan Area.
- 5.16.6. There are also other proposals which could significantly alter parts of the Plan Area in the future. Of significant concern is the potential for new Park and Ride sites located within the Plan Area in open countryside area, but adjacent to the edge of Reading Borough (as shown on the figure 48). The figure below superimposes such potential infrastructure proposals onto a map of the Plan Area .

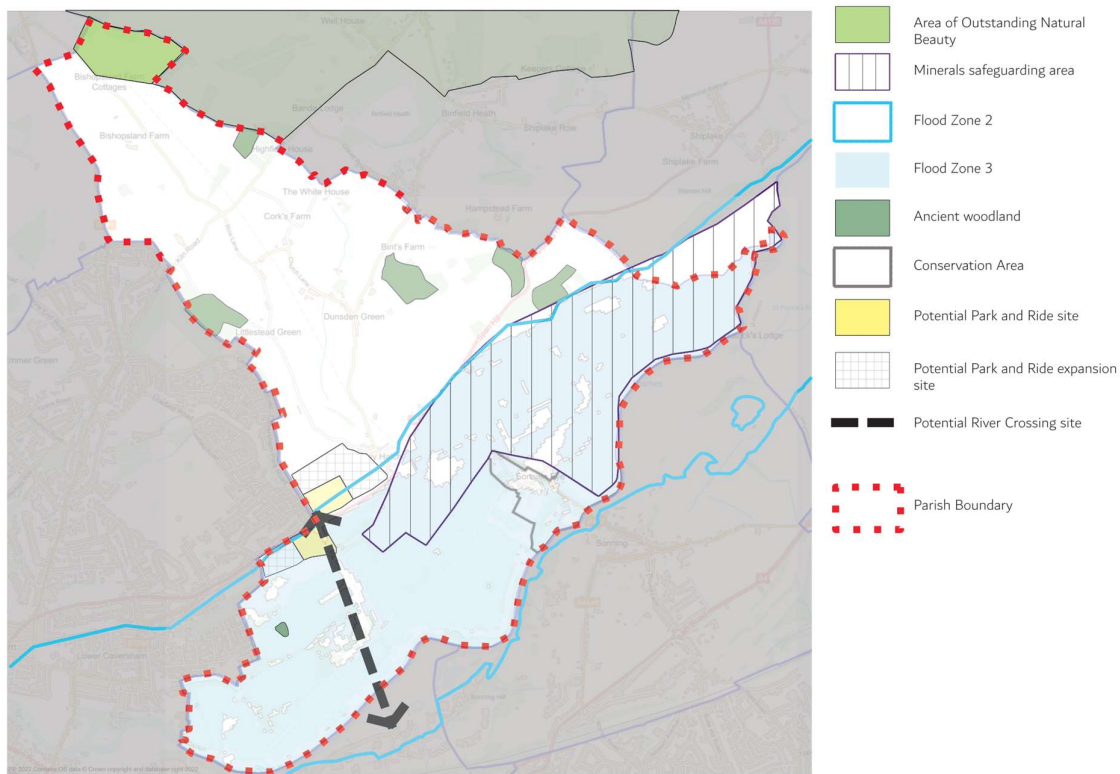


Figure 48 - Potential Major Development Proposals Relating to Reading Borough

5.17. Road Safety and Junctions

- 5.17.1. Throughout community consultation, concern has been raised in relation to road safety. Such concerns are fully supported by the accident statistics. The plan below (see figure 49) highlights the number of reported road traffic incidents in the ten years from 2000 to 2021. As can be seen, there were numerous reported accidents on the Henley Road and its junctions within the Plan Area. It should be noted that the junction from the Lakes recreational areas exits just outside the parish boundary within Reading Borough and is of significant concern on highway safety grounds.
- 5.17.2. This area is of particular concern, as it is becoming the most problematic. In particular, the unauthorised use of the former wildlife lake (which continues at the time of writing) currently known as an Aqua Park and outdoor activity centre is increasing vehicle movements of this junction.

- 5.17.3. Although the previously mentioned Enforcement Notices have been served, the details above highlight the concerns relating to inappropriate development in this area. In particular in relation to highways matters, residents also have concerns relating to the impact of the proposed development on the Access Road/ Henley Road/ Caversham Park Road junction. Both Reading Borough Council's and Oxfordshire County Council's Highways Officers have also expressed similar concerns.
- 5.17.4. From survey data provided to the Parish Council, this junction is at or near its capacity in peak hours. It is therefore considered that accommodating further traffic generating development in this area could cause significant adverse highway safety issues and is reflected in the policy wording below.
- 5.17.5. It should also be noted that although not a matter for the NDP, that excess traffic speed is also a general issue and when combined with increased junction usage, this may have serious implications (as discussed below in Community Aspirations).

Road Traffic Incidents* and Constrained Junctions / Routes

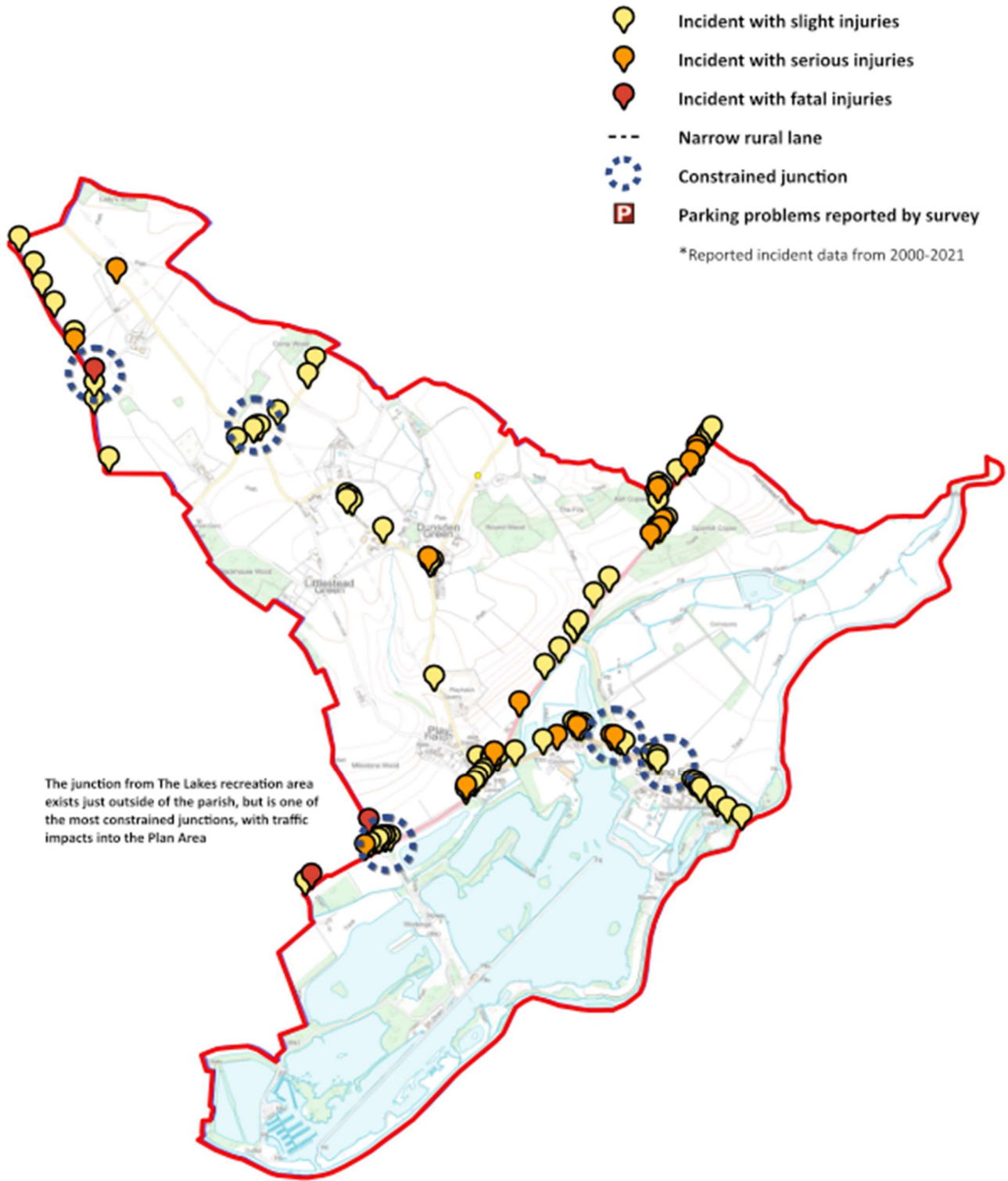


Figure 49 - Road Traffic Incidents and Constrained Junctions / Routes

5.17.6. The policy below however, deals with present day circumstances and focuses on promoting sustainable forms of transport ensuring that new development does not exacerbate the current highways concerns.

ED-CI1 Transport and Highways

Sustainable modes of travel through the provision of secure cycle facilities, improved connectivity, and expansion of bridleways, footpaths and cycle network will be supported.

Proposals should:

- improve the route network within and between the settlements, without causing adverse visual impacts or harm or significant urbanising features,
- not result in severe highway impacts on junctions on to:
 - a) the A4155 Henley Road,
 - b) the B478 between Sonning Eye and the Playhatch Roundabout,
 - c) the Quiet Lanes highlighted in Policy ED-CI2,
- not cause a severe adverse impact on narrow lanes,
- include sufficient information to demonstrate how pedestrian and cycle safety has been taken into consideration, particularly on heavily trafficked routes including the B478 and the A4155 Henley Road, as well as the lanes with no separate pedestrian footways,
- Protect the associated landscape and heritage aspects of the road and Rights of Way network, as highlighted in Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix II), and Parish Settlement Character Appraisal (Appendix I),

Any development proposals should incorporate the following:

- sufficient parking for occupiers and service vehicles to ensure that overspill on-street parking does not occur, particularly on narrow rural lanes and the aforementioned congested roads,
- loose aggregate, permeable parking surfacing (with adequate boundary containment), that does not increase flood risk or harm the character of the area, as identified in the Parish Settlement Character Appraisal, and
- safe access with no obstructions to the highway / Public Rights of Way, particularly onto the highlighted narrow country lanes.

• **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

• 98, 100, 104-106, 110-113

• **Adopted SODC policies –**

• ENV1: Landscape and Countryside

• ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Development

• TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

• **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

5.18. Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 5.18.1. In terms of connecting the Plan Area with the surrounding countryside, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are abundant and important in maintaining this relationship with the wider landscape. The long-distance Thames Path National runs through the Neighbourhood Area to the north of Sonning Road Bridge before crossing to the opposite side of the bank and following the river outside of the Plan Area, but with views across the Thames and to the lakes beyond.
- 5.18.2. There are no dedicated cycleways within the Plan Area, whilst some routes such as the informal path alongside the Henley Road is used by cyclists, it is not suitable for such usage.
- 5.18.3. Routes from Caversham to Dunsden Green, particularly to the Loddon Brewery along route 205/17/10 (see Oxfordshire County Council footpaths map¹²) is also popular, but again these routes are not formally designated and connections are not direct and conjoined.
- 5.18.4. Funds raised from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) may be used to contribute to the costs of maintaining and improving the network of footpaths and other paths. Developer contributions towards these costs will be sought in appropriate cases.

ED-CI3 Public Rights of Way

As appropriate to their nature and scale, development proposals on land that lies within or adjoining the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network (as defined on figure 27 and 46) should incorporate landscaping schemes, layouts, public open space provision and other amenity requirements arising from the development.

New pedestrian and cycle routes which will contribute to or where practicable improve its connectivity and maintenance and maintain or enhance the visual characteristics and biodiversity of the Network, will be supported over those which have an urbanising impact on the landscape.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**
 - 98, 100, 104-106, 110-113
- **Adopted SODC policies –**
 - ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
 - ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Development
 - TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
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**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

¹² <https://publicrightsofway.oxfordshire.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx>

Community Aspiration

The Parish Council wishes to:

- request that the above routes are considered as ‘Quiet Lanes’ by the Highway Authority.
- explore new speed limit strategies – to seek a 20mph in Playhatch, Dunsden Green, and Sonning Eye ([in line with new policies being introduced for unlit speed reduction by OCC)

As highlighted by the SODC Local Plan Examiner in paragraph 5.19.6, rural lanes can be adversely affected by the proliferation of new buildings in the countryside. The CADG and the Landscape Character Appraisal both highlight the character of the narrow rural lanes within the Parish. These are situated to the northwest of Dunsden Green as shown on figure 51 below. There is already pressure on these lanes as an alternative to using the Reading and Caversham routes. Therefore, the Quiet Lanes policy below seeks to ensure that development in the area would not have an adverse impact on these routes either directly or indirectly.

As a Community Aspiration, this approach will be combined with a request to the Highways Authority that the routes are formally designated as a ‘Quiet Lane’.

The Highway Code sets out that: *‘Home Zones and Quiet Lanes. These are places where people could be using the whole of the road for a range of activities ... You should drive slowly and carefully and be prepared to stop to allow people extra time to make space for you to pass them in safety.’*

In combination, it is considered that the approach will preserve these lanes and give priority to sustainable transport modes.

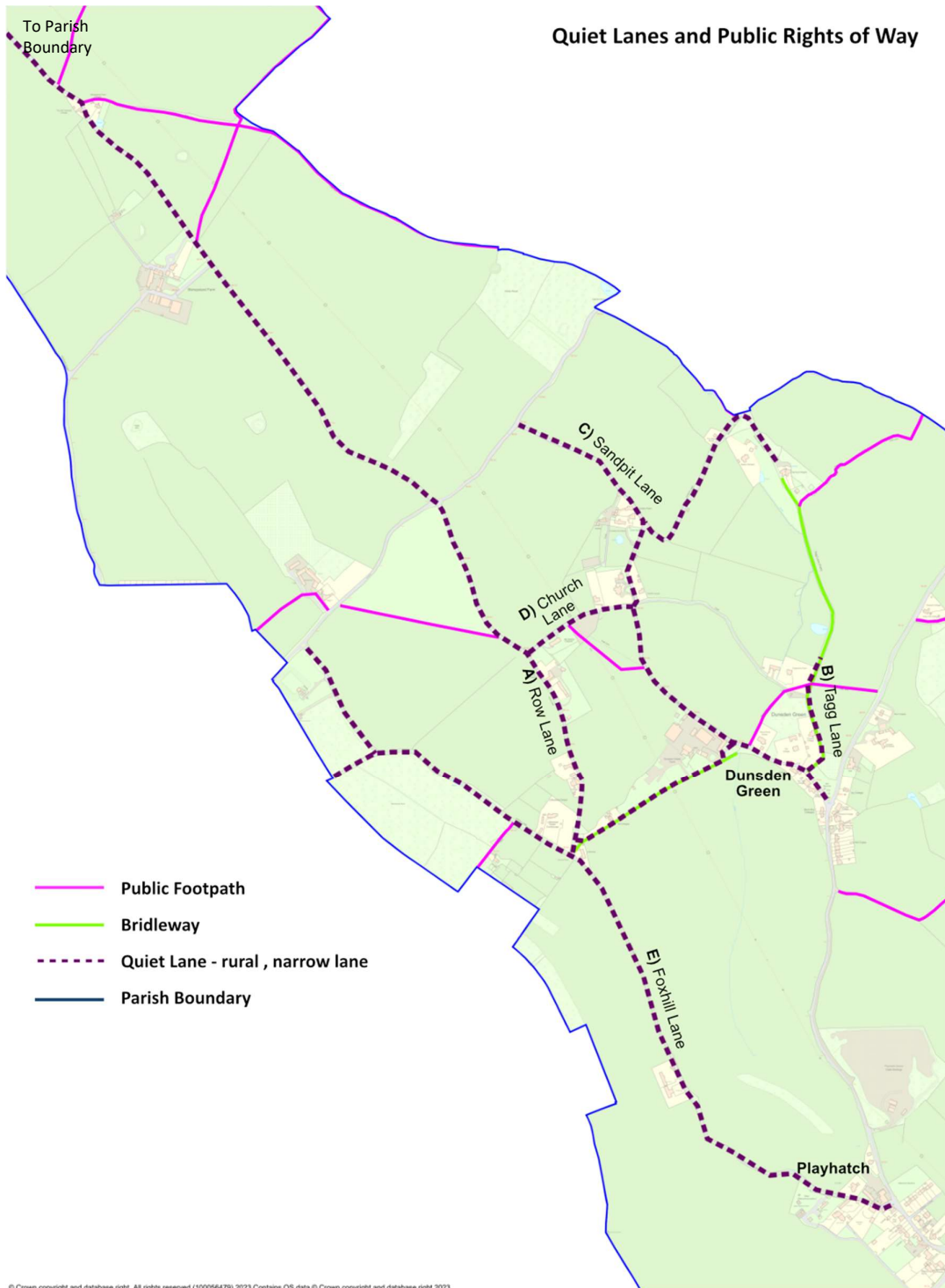


Figure 50 - Quiet Lanes and Public Rights of Way (in the north west of the Parish)

ED- C12 Quiet Lanes

Development proposals should preserve and enhance the rural nature and character of the lanes as identified in Figure 50 and as set out below.

Any development must not result in the physical and/or visual separation of settlements being undermined or the rural quiet nature of the road links between settlements being diminished.

The following lanes are identified as ‘Quiet Lanes’:

- a) Row Lane
- b) Tagg Lane
- c) Sandpit Lane
- d) Church Lane
- e) Foxhill Lane

• **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 98, 100, 104-106, 110-113

• **Adopted SODC policies –**

- ENV1: Landscape and Countryside
- ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Development
- TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

• **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
Local Policy
Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**

Community Aspiration

The following highway matters are considered to be important Community Aspirations which are to be pursued by the community and Parish Council as appropriate:

A) To have a joint policy with Sonning Parish Council and its NP to address high speeds and congestion on the B478

B) Continue to be support the one bus route that operates in the Parish and ensure that the route continues to serve Dunsden Green so as to provide a sustainable alternative to private vehicles

C) To support measures which discourage idling engines (particularly those in queuing traffic)

D) To investigate the potential for non-humped traffic calming strategies

E) Discourage urbanising street lighting where it would be detrimental to the rural character of the settlement

F) Encourage well connected sustainable routes and paths linking the settlements. Isolated paths and pavements will not be encouraged where they do not connect in a meaningful way to the existing pedestrian route network

G) To review and survey the existing road, PRow and bridleway networks and any other routes of communication that pass through the Parish, the forms of transport using those routes and to endeavour to establish the volume of use by each form of transport.

H) To identify any weaknesses or lack of capacity in the existing route network within the Parish. These deficiencies are to be identified through engagement with as many Residents within the Parish as possible.

I) To gather and present the opinion and wishes of Residents as to how any limitations in the existing route network can be improved, or at least mitigated, for the improvement of transport and communication links within the Parish

5.19. Community Facilities and Economic Development

5.19.1. The Key facilities that have been identified in the Plan area are the following:

Table of Community Facilities	
1. The Flowing Spring PH	2. The French Horn Hotel and Restaurant
3. The Shoulder of Mutton PH	4. The Crown PH
5. The Tap Room at the Loddon Brewery	6. The bar at the Mill at Sonning
7. The Mill	8. All Saints, Dunsden
9. Eye and Dunsden Village Hall	10. Dunsden Village Green
11. Community Orchard	12. Allotments in Playhatch and in Sonning Eye
13. Furleigh Bank and public car park, including its public slipway and river access	14. Reading Sailing Club
15. Fishing Lakes	16. The Marinas
17. Isis Water Ski Club	

5.19.2. It is intended that the range of service and facilities within the Plan Area should be retained where possible subject to the following policy.

ED-CE1 Community Facilities and Services

Proposals for the extension, adaptation or redevelopment of community facilities (as identified in (the above table), will be supported, only if the new facilities improve the level of provision are appropriately designed and would not harm neighbouring amenity or otherwise adversely impact other facilities or conflict with other Plan objectives such as habitat preservation or the minimising of flood risk.

Development proposals that would result in either the loss of or significant harm to a community facility will not be supported, unless it can clearly be demonstrated that the operation of the existing asset is no longer financially viable, or the existing asset is not valued by the community.

Proposals that improve the quality and provision of the following facilities and local infrastructure proposals (listed in Appendix XIII) in the Plan area will be supported:

- local sport and recreation facilities and pitches,
- community buildings and facilities,
- sustainable transport initiatives,
- pedestrian and cycle safety, and/or new or improved permissive paths, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways.

•NPPF – Relevant Paras

- 92-99

•Adopted SODC policies –

- CF1: Safeguarding Community Facilities
- CF2: Provision of Community Facilities and Services
- CF3: New Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

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- 5.19.3. As previously highlighted in the Parish profile, there are a relatively low number of businesses in the area, with a considerable number relating to food, drink, entertainment and leisure / recreation. There are however also a number of small business units largely based in former agricultural buildings which are scattered throughout the Plan Area.
- 5.19.4. Small business proposals are to be supported where they are in appropriate locations, which do not impact upon the amenity of local residents. In this regard, former agricultural buildings are likely to be suitable, but these may not be sustainable, particularly if they generate significant traffic volumes. A travel plan should accompany such proposals with realistic solutions.
- 5.19.5. As set out above, quiet recreation is supported within the Lakes area, where it does not adversely impact upon wildlife. Any tourism related development should be mindful of the balance between biodiversity value and recreation as highlighted by the previous planning permissions and legal agreements.
- 5.19.6. In all cases, the priority should be on sustainable transport and where such proposals include improvements to the PRow network, this would be welcomed.

ED-CE2 Rural Buildings and Commercial Development

Proposals to develop new businesses and extend existing businesses will be supported, provided they are located at existing business sites, based in farms or other rural establishments with economic activity, are appropriate to the locality including the Conservation Area, AONB, Local Wildlife Sites and other special designations.

Proposals should have regard to the other requirements of the Plan, and meet the criteria below:

- the proposed reuse would not unacceptably harmful impacts on the surrounding rural landscape,
- have no severe adverse impacts (including through traffic increase) on the local road and footpath network including Quiet Lanes (figure 50),
- have no unacceptable conflicts with agriculture and other land-based activities,
- have no significant harmful impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residents including in terms of noise, dust or other environmental hazard, and
- contribute to achieving a transition towards zero carbon activity by the appropriate use of solar panels and other forms of energy generation, better insulation of buildings, installation of charging points for electric vehicles and fibre broadband to the edge of the premises.

Where the proposal involves the reuse of farm and rural buildings, these will be supported subject to the following additional criterion to those above:

- buildings concerned are structurally sound and would not require substantial rebuilding or extension.

Commercial proposals located within residential areas must be compatible with and not harm the amenity of those areas. Where appropriate, businesses must enable reversion to residential use upon cessation.

- **NPPF – Relevant Paras**

- 81-85

- **Adopted SODC policies –**

- EMP1: The Amount and Distribution of New Employment Land

- EMP2: Range, Size and Mix of Employment

- EMP3: Retention of Employment Land and Strategic Sites

- EMP10: Development in Rural Areas

- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies –**

**National and
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Alignment with
NPPF and Local
Plans**