



**Whitchurch Pre Submission Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2014  
to 2029**

**17<sup>th</sup> November 2015**



This Document is the Pre-Submission Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan intended Regulation 14 consultation.

*Disclaimer: every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is as accurate as possible but no responsibility is implied or taken for errors or omission.*

## CONTENTS

### Whitchurch Pre Submission Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2014 to 2029

1

Foreword.....	3
1. Introduction .....	6
2. The Neighbourhood Area.....	10
3. National and Local Planning Policy Context .....	20
4. Sustainability.....	24
5. Community Engagement.....	25
6. Vision and objectives .....	29
7. General Design .....	33
8. Traffic and Parking in Whitchurch .....	48
9. Infrastructure .....	59
10. Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Employment.....	65
11. Housing.....	77
12. Community Projects .....	94
Acknowledgements .....	98

## Foreword

This document represents the results of over two years of work by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (NPSC) to formulate a plan (The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan) for the development of the Parish of Whitchurch until 2029. It sets out policies, which amongst other things, allocates sites for housing and employment developments. It also identifies community projects which the community would like to see the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) support.

A Basic Condition of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) is that it must, in general, comply with the NPPF and the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) adopted and emerging Local Plan policies amongst other considerations. The Whitchurch Community, which also includes those working in the Parish, was consulted at a number of public events during the preparation of the WNP. The WNP was prepared as far as possible, within the above compliance constraints, to reflect the views of the community and in particular, its vision and objectives for the future of the Parish.

Problems caused by traffic and in particular heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) were identified as being of the greatest concern to the Community. The NPSC conducted extensive traffic surveys to assess the issue. Traffic generation and the ability to prevent an increase in the HGV traffic travelling through the Town was an important consideration in site allocation, for both housing and employment.

The site allocations were made following a comprehensive site selection process which is set out in the documents that supports the WNP. Policy SS5 of the BDBC emerging Local Plan required the Town Council to allocate sites for 200 homes. After deductions for granted planning permissions and planned rural exception schemes, there is the need for the WNP to allocate sites for just over 140 homes.

In compliance with the assessed Community wishes through the responses to the Community consultations the WNP allocates sites for homes on one site of approximately 100 homes east of Winchester Road and south of Testbourne School, and three small, previously developed, sites within the settlement boundary. The East of Winchester Road site will provide significant community benefits including three new football pitches with changing facilities and a school bus/car drop-off point to ease congestion on Micheldever Road.

Whilst the BDBC emerging Local Plan makes no allocation for employment land the community empowered the WNP to support the expansion of existing Whitchurch industry, small businesses and tourism to increase the prosperity of the Parish. The WNP confirms existing BDBC saved policy allocation with regard to the location of employment land adjacent to the Ardglen Road Industrial Estate north of the allotments. A policy aimed at ensuring that HGV traffic, generated by the development, uses the junction with the A34 north of the Town rather than travelling through the Town Centre has also been included.

The Community consultation responses included a desire to see a new focal point for the Town Centre with car parking, open space, retail/café developments and better access to the River Test. It was not possible to progress these concepts with the landowners during the development of the WNP, however policies and a process have been included to encourage such development going forward.

Whilst the BDBC emerging Local Plan contains a number of generic policies which require developers to ensure that their proposals do not adversely affect the Town and makes proper provision for social housing and other necessary infrastructure, the WNP includes policies which reinforce the standards set out in the Whitchurch Design Statement and includes provision for issues which are specific to Whitchurch.

The WNP supports the BDBC emerging Local Plan policy for the development of a station car park north of the railway station. It is unable however to support the construction of a major industrial park proposed to the north of the railway as there is little concrete evidence of need. It also represents a major incursion into the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in contradiction of the NPPF.

Given that the BDBC emerging Local Plan has not yet been adopted and that the BDBC housing land supply is inadequate, it is anticipated that there will be applications for development which depart from the allocations, policies and/or objectives as set out in the WNP. The NPSC is concerned that such applications, if granted, will create additional traffic congestion and the burden upon the infrastructure of Whitchurch which will adversely affect the quality of life. In particular it is recognised that development significantly greater in scale than that envisaged in the WNP could adversely affect the quality of the river Test which is the lifeblood of the Town.

.One benefit of the development of the WNP is that the Town Council will have the say in where future Community Infrastructure Levy monies are spent. The community consultation identified a number of projects, which they would like to see supported. These include a covered swimming pool for school and community use and improvements to traffic cyclist and pedestrian access and parking provision in the Town. Whilst the WNP is unable to directly deliver such projects, the WNP includes a process by which the Town Council will work with stakeholders to move such projects forward.

The WNP will now go out to consultation and then eventually to referendum. If supported by the community at referendum it will then have significant weight in planning decisions taken with regard to the future development of the Parish. I would like to sincerely thank all who contributed to the preparation of the WNP. Particular thanks to the Whitchurch Community the Town Council and the NPSC volunteers who worked tirelessly to produce this Plan.

David George    Chair Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNP or Plan) was prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 15(2) of the Localism Act 2011, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the European Directive 2001/42 on Strategic Environmental Assessment. This version of the WNP is a pre-submission Neighbourhood Development Plan intended for consultation under Regulation 14 of the Localism Act 2011. The WNP establishes a vision for the future of the town and sets out how that vision will be realised through planning for and controlling land use and development change. In this document the WNP sets out policies regarding the allocation of land for employment use and housing to be built in Whitchurch over the WNP period which runs from 2011 to 2029 in common with the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) emerging Local Plan. It also sets out specific policies for development of the Town Centre as well as more general policies to apply to transport, parking, the natural and historic environments of the area, and the infrastructure of the Town amongst other issues.
- 1.2. The WNP Area was designated by BDBC on the 23rd March 2013 and conforms to the Parish Boundary as shown on Figure 1.1. The area covered by the WNP extends from (but does not include) Litchfield in the north to Tufton in the south, and Egbury in the west to Freefolk in the east. The area outside Whitchurch Town is mainly farmland and woods with scattered farms and hamlets. Of the hamlets, Cole Henley to the north of Whitchurch consists of about a dozen dwellings, while about the same number are scattered along the Whitchurch - Kingsclere Road just before reaching Cole Henley as you travel north. Although Wells-in-the-Field is labelled as being part of Whitchurch on the road signs, a gap consisting of farmland separates the current boundary of the houses in Whitchurch from those in Wells-in-the-Field along the Basingstoke Road.
- 1.3. The WNP was prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (NPSC) which was established under terms of reference in June 2013 by the direction of and as a subcommittee of Whitchurch Town Council. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
- 1.4. The WNP is accompanied by the following documents which have been prepared by the NPSC and are integral to the WNP.
  - Consultation Statement (CS) which appends the Results of the “Have Your Say” Vision consultation.
  - Results of the “Where do the Houses Go” Consultation
  - Employment Survey results
  - Housing Site Selection Report (HSSR)
  - Employment Site Selection Report (ESSR)
  - Traffic Studies Report (TSR)
  - Whitchurch Historical and Archaeological Assessment (WHAA)
  - The Whitchurch Infrastructure Report (WIR).

The Consultation Statement will be updated to include the Regulation 14 consultation results before being formally submitted to BDBC.

1.5. The WNP is also accompanied by the following documents which have been prepared by others in relation to the WNP

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report for the WNP produced by EACOM
- Whitchurch Design Statement (WDS)
- BDBC Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Screening Report Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment produced by BDBC.

The WNP is also supported by an evidence base which has been compiled by the NPSC during the development of the WNP.

1.6. The WNP meets four Basic Conditions which as required under the Localism act 2011.

- It has regard to national policy and advice including the NPPF.
- It contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- It is in general conformity with strategic policies in the emerging local plan of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and saved policies of the adopted Local Plan.
- It is compatible with European Union (EU) obligations.

- 1.7. The Basic Conditions Statement which will accompany the WNP to Regulation 15 submission will detail how the policies described in the WNP conform to the relevant parts of the national, local and EU policies, and has also taken account of the need to contribute to the sustainable development of the area while having due regard for economic, social and environmental factors.
- 1.8. The BDBC emerging Local Plan is currently undergoing review and will not be adopted before the WNP is submitted for Regulation 14 Review. The WNP has therefore been prepared to conform to saved policies from the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Adopted Local Plan 1996 – 2011 Adopted July 2006 and to conform to our current understanding of the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan to the extent that they have an impact upon the WNP area. This includes Inspectors' Reports and BDBC Cabinet Decisions made public up to the date of this draft. Several meetings with BDBC have been conducted with BDBC during the preparation of the WNP to ensure that the WNP is in general compliance with the strategic policies contained within the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.9. Local residents and relevant external stakeholders including employers with businesses within the area were consulted at critical points during the formulation of the WNP. The Consultation Statement which accompanies the WNP gives details of who was consulted on the proposed WNP; how they were consulted; the main issues and concerns raised by the consultation, and how these issues were considered and addressed in the WNP.
- 1.10. The WNP designated area borders onto the surrounding parishes of St. Mary Bourne, Laverstoke, Wonston, Hurstbourne Priors, Litchfield and Woodcott, and Overton. The NPSC has met with the Chairs of adjacent neighbourhood plans. None of the Policies or allocations made in the WNP will have a direct material effect on any of the neighbouring parishes.

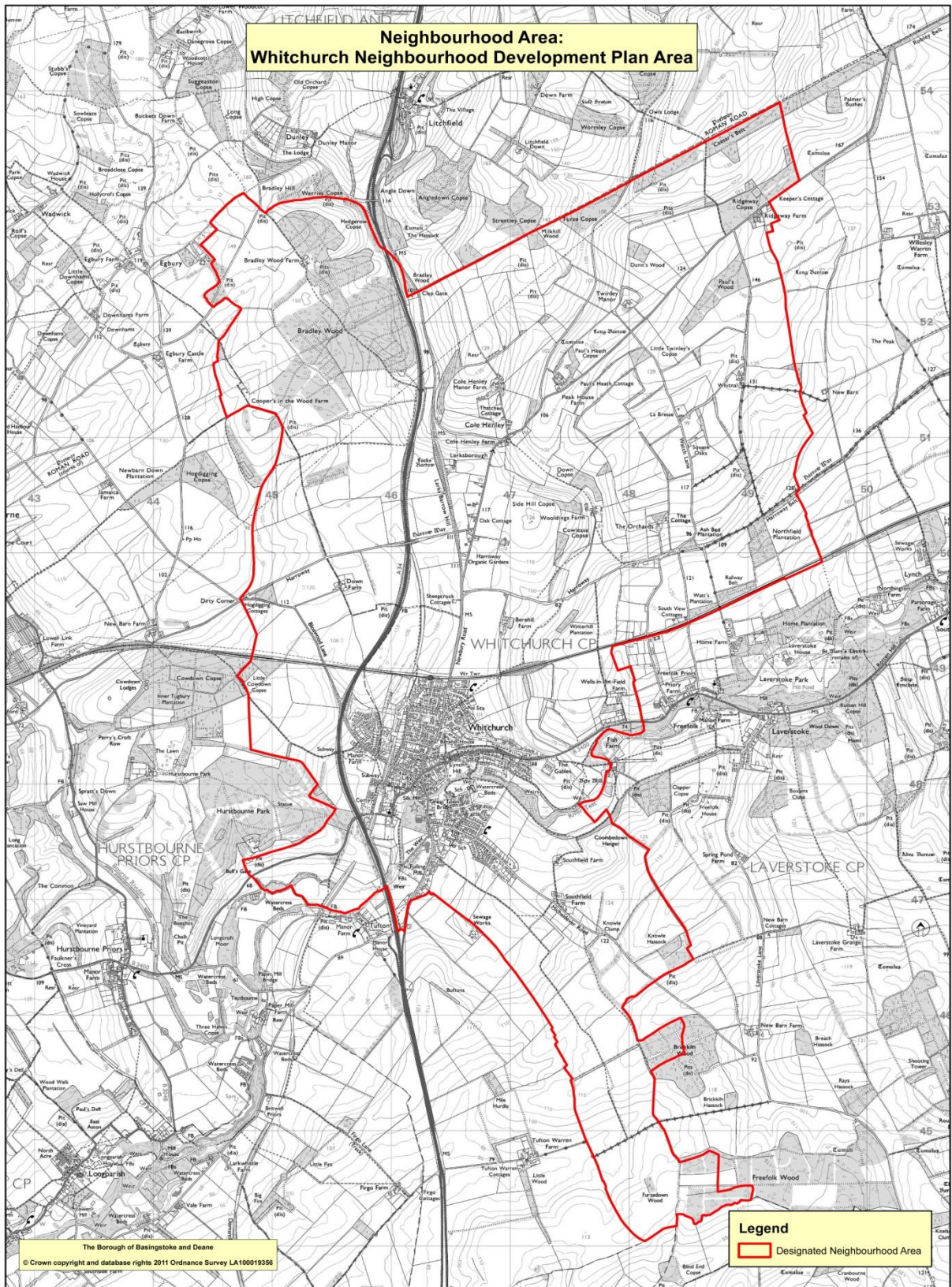


Figure 1.1 The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan Designated Area

## 2. The Neighbourhood Area

### 2.1. Introduction

Whitchurch is located within the North West Hampshire Parliamentary Constituency and the Basingstoke and Deane Borough of Hampshire. Whitchurch is a small, rural market town in the North West Hampshire, with a population of 5235 people (2011 Census). The Town is surrounded by beautiful countryside. The clear waters of the River Test flow through Whitchurch and turn the wheel at the Silk Mill, the town's unique tourist attraction.

### 2.2. Demographics

A detailed assessment of the demographics of the Town is included in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) document which accompanies the WNP. 95.3% of the population is white British, 2.8% is non-white British while the remainder is listed as mixed, Asian, black and other (2011 Census). There has been an increase in people in the age range 45+ of 10.5% between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, while there has been a decrease of 8% in the same period of people under 45. The median age of the town is 43 (all figures from the 2011 Census). Small Area Population Forecasts show that the overall population is expected to decline (-0.1%), whilst dwellings (+1.2%) and older people increase (+11.3%) (2011 Census). Whitchurch has 2290 dwellings (an increase of 9.4% since 2001) and two care homes housing 55 people. The average house had 6 rooms. 30.5% were detached houses and 29.1% semi-detached (2011 Census).

### 2.3. Employment

Whitchurch provides significant employment through small businesses, retail education and community services and industry. There are engineering and printing works amongst others on the Ardglan Industrial Estate.

44.4% of people aged 16-74 are in full time employment, this age group comprises about 72% of the population. Of this group 9.7% work from home and 43.5% use a car to get to work. 28.3% are not in full time employment. There were estimated to be around 2000 jobs in Whitchurch, mainly in manufacturing, education and construction (all figures from 2011 Census).

With the picturesque centre of Whitchurch, access (present and proposed) to the River Test, countryside walks, the Silk Mill and the close proximity of both Bombay Sapphire and Highclere Castle, there appears more than adequate scope to encourage activities which attract tourism to the area to mirror the recent success of the Silk Mill.

### 2.4. Town Facilities

There is one fire station, which is staffed by volunteers and one ambulance station. There is one Post Office in Whitchurch. There is a Church of England primary School and the Testbourne Community Secondary School.

There is no hospital in Whitchurch. The nearest A&E units are at Basingstoke and Winchester. There is a Minor Injuries Unit at Andover Hospital Trust. The nearest

maternity facilities are at Andover, Basingstoke and Winchester. There is a doctor's practice, which is NHS and two dental practices.

There are three public halls/community centres in the town. The Silk Mill is a weaving museum. Whitchurch has a small public library. There are four churches for different denominations in Whitchurch and two churches in the nearby villages of Tufton and Litchfield.

There are approximately 37 groups and clubs in Whitchurch and the surrounding area. There is a BMX track and a skateboard park. There is one swimming pool in the town, which is based at the Secondary school. It is an outdoor pool, so currently has limited use. There is one sports hall, based at the Secondary school. There are four outdoor sports pitches. There is a sports centre and football pitch which supports a local team. There is also a local cricket pitch and team.

## **2.5. Transport and parking**

There is one train station in Whitchurch, which is on the main line between Exeter and Waterloo. It is about an hour by train to London's Waterloo Station.

Whitchurch is served by busses which run between Basingstoke and Andover and Overton and Winchester. The services have recently been revised and run on a less frequent basis to Winchester.

The A34 cuts across the Test valley to the west of Whitchurch and has a significant noise, visual and air quality impact, particularly where it is raised above the valley floor. The whole of Whitchurch is, to some degree, exposed to traffic noise from the A34 bypass. Those areas adjacent to the A34 Whitchurch bypass are exposed to noise levels falling within category C of the noise exposure categories set out in Annex 1 of PPG24 27 before they were replaced by the NPPF.

The main roads (other than the A34) run along valley floors and lower valley sides. Minor roads are relatively infrequent and tend to cross the valleys at right angles.

Public paths and byways follow the same pattern as the roads. The Test Way long distance footpath follows the floor of the Bourne Valley for a short distance through St Mary Bourne. Footpaths are shown in Figure 2.4. The National Cycle Network can be accessed close by at St. Mary Bourne.

There are roughly 25 short-stay car parking spaces and 88 long-stay car parking spaces in the town. There are three disabled car parking spaces in the town. All of the major routes through the Town have on-street parking which is necessary but contributes to congestion.

## **2.6. Geology and hydrology**

The British Geological Survey Map of Hampshire (2003) shows superficial sand and gravel river terrace deposits in the Whitchurch area, surrounded and underlain by high purity chalk. River Test and the Bourne Rivulet rise from the underlying chalk beds and dissect the North Wessex Downs AONB area. The valleys cut through an underlying

geology of chalk beds, with small areas of clay deposits on higher ground. Alluvial loams and valley gravels have been deposited by the rivers in the valley bottoms.

There are no mineral reserves of any consequence which may impact the allocation of development sites in the WNP.

## **2.7. History and Conservation**

Whitchurch is mentioned in a Charter of 909AD and the Domesday Survey of 1086. The town was granted borough status between 1247 and 1249.

The Whitchurch Archaeological Assessment Document (WHAA) finds that within Whitchurch there are areas of high archaeological importance (remains either merit in situ preservation or archaeological recording) around the centre of the town, around the area of the church, the south side of Church Street between the church and town and the earthworks on the western side of the railway along the road towards Manor Farm. An Archaeologically Important Area (likely to require archaeological recording) exists on the north side of Church Street. An area of limited archaeological importance (may require archaeological recording) exists on the south side of Bell Street.

Most of the centre of the town is within a Conservation Area and there are numerous Listed Buildings in the town to preserve its special character and fine old buildings such as the Church of All Hallows, the Vicarage and Granary, the Baptist Church, the Town Hall, the White Hart Inn and the Silk Mill.

The Whitchurch Conservation Area was first designated in 1978 by the Borough Council in recognition of the town's special architectural and historic interest. An appraisal of the Conservation Area took place in 2003 and this was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 17 July 2003. It is understood that it is planned for the Conservation Area boundary to be reviewed in the near future.

The Whitchurch Conservation Area is comprised of two sub areas that contribute to its special character and appearance.

- Area 1: The Town and Lynch Hill - This area is characterised by the tight-knit arrangement of buildings along the main roads radiating from the Market Place, and the topography of the hillsides at Bere Hill and Lynch Hill. On a flatter terrain, Winchester Street, Bell Street and Church Street exhibit the same core features of narrow streets, formed by domestic buildings, leading to the commercial centre of town.
- Area 2: All Hallows and the River Test - All Hallows Church and the floodplain of the River Test to the south, form a distinctive part of the Conservation Area.

There are 73 Listed Buildings, among them the Town Hall and the Silk Mill. Hurstbourne Park is Listed Parkland.

Figure 2.1 shows the Conservation Area in relation to the Settlement Policy Boundary and features such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Figure 2.2 shows the locations of listed buildings and archaeological sites both within Whitchurch and the surrounding area.

Basingstoke and Deane BC; **'Countryside Design Summary'**; September (2008).

## **2.8. Landscape**

Whitchurch lies within the valley of the River Test, which flows through the town from the east before taking a southerly course from the centre of the Town. The valleys contain many woodland blocks and narrow woodland belts, which together with the sloping valley sides, form an enclosed landscape. The valleys widen and the landscape becomes more open, as the two rivers converge to the southwest of Whitchurch. Settlements are frequent along the valley floor and are characteristically linear in nature. The extent of the River Test floodplain is shown in Figure 2.3. Beyond the valley sides the land rises towards a series of ridges and high points which are more noticeable to the south and south east. Most of the settlement is located on the northern side of the valley and in parts, is characterised by strong vegetation cover within residential areas. The valley floor is narrow, becoming wider south of the Town Centre. The surrounding landscape is generally semi-enclosed chalkland, but is more open, with fewer copses, woods and shelterbelts to the south.

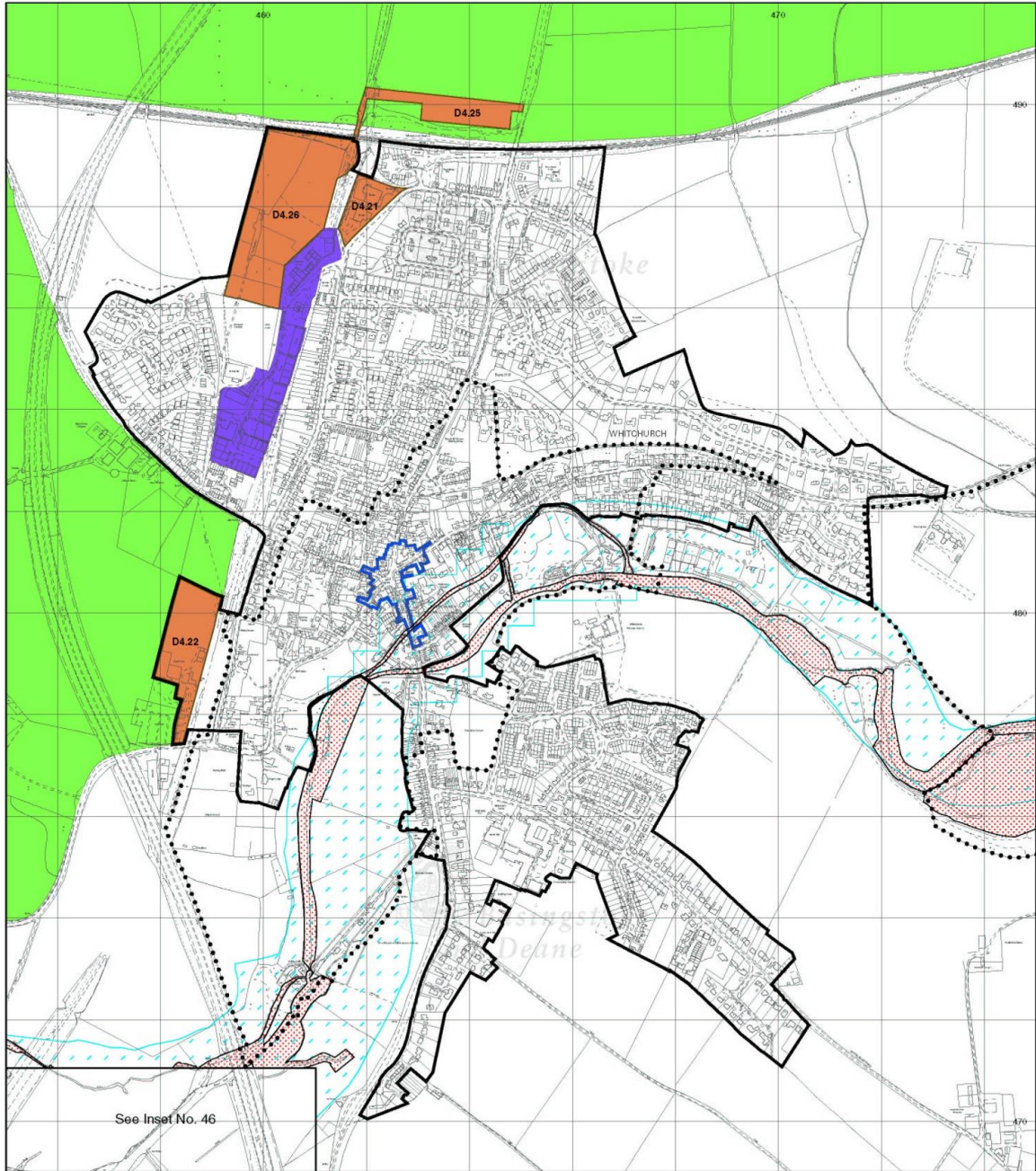
To the north, the London – Salisbury railway line, with wooded embankments, creates a significant barrier between the town and the countryside beyond. The wooded embankments reflect the nature of the vegetation pattern further north, which along with the landform reduces the impact of the settlement on the adjacent countryside.

The valley and its sides are a significant local feature, extending areas of green space into the town. The fields, paddocks and vegetation that make up this green space help to integrate the Town into the surrounding countryside. This is further reinforced by the steeper and more open valley sides to the southeast and south of the Town. These are visible from a number of places and emphasise the influence of the countryside on the local character.

### **Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan Review**

**Local Plan Inquiry**, Topic Paper 14 – Whitchurch, September (2004).

Basingstoke and Deane BC; **'Countryside Design Summary'**; September (2008).



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Bathurst & Deane Borough Local Plan  
The final Deposit of 20th November 2003

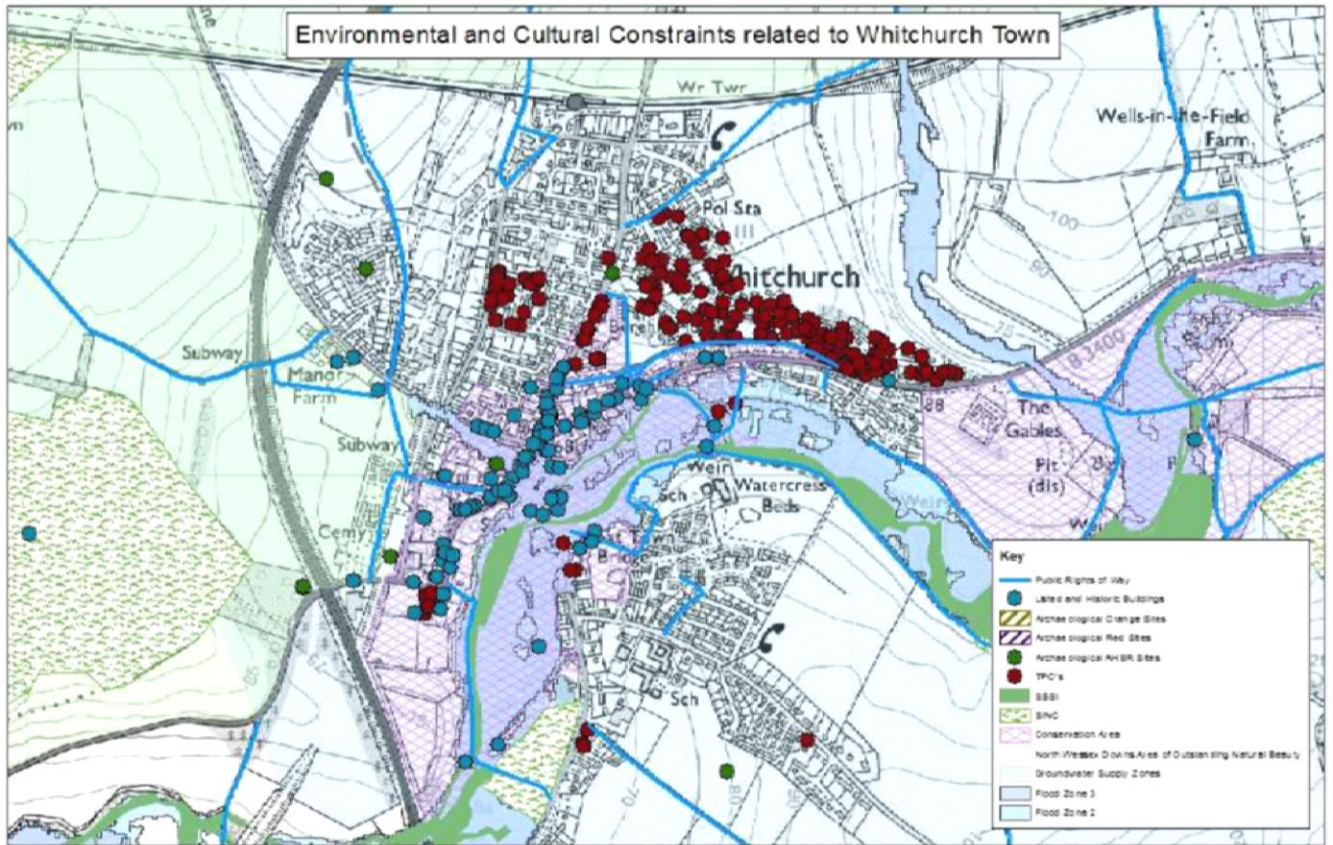
- Settlement Policy Boundary (Policy D7)
- North Wessex Downs: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Policy E6)
- Site specific allocation (Policy D4)
- Employment Area (Policies EC1-EC2)
- Conservation Area (Policy E3)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (Policy E7)

- Town/District Centre Boundary (Policy E6)
  - Floodplain (Policy E8)
- Policies Applying Throughout the Inset Map Area**  
D3, D6, E1, E2, E4-E8, EC4, EC6, C1-C6, C8-C10, A1-A7.
- Policies Applying Within the Settlement Policy Boundaries**  
D7, EC5, EC11, C7.
- Policies Applying Outside the Settlement Policy Boundaries**  
D8-D11, EC7, EC8.
- Note: Development proposals for areas of public or private open space (none of which are specifically identified on the proposals map) are subject to Policy C8.

- Documents where additional details can be found:**
- Areas of public and private open space - Council's Open Space Audit (Sept. 2000)
  - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) - SINC Schedule (produced by HCC)
  - Historic Parks and Gardens - Historic Parks and Gardens Register (produced by HCC in conjunction with Hampshire Gardens Trust)

**INSET No. 9**  
**WHITCHURCH TOWN**  
 1:5,000  
 0 100 200 metres

Figure 2.1. The conservation area in relation to AONB and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Areas marked for housing, employment and the Settlement Policy Boundary for Whitchurch relate to policies pertaining in 2000.



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Scale 1:12,500

Figure 2.2. Whitchurch listed buildings; protected trees; areas of SSSI and archaeological sites.

## 2.9. North Wessex Downs AONB

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Figure 2.1) lies immediately to the north and west of the town and is a significant constraint to development. The AONB was designated by the Countryside Commission in 1971 and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1972. The A34, which bypasses the western edge of the town, on a high embankment as it crosses the Test Valley, has separated a very small part of the AONB. The character of this part of the AONB is influenced by the character of the western edge of Whitchurch, which lies beyond the disused Didcot – Southampton railway embankment and Evingar Road. This land is allocated for housing development in the BDBC Emerging Local Plan.

## 2.10. Protected habitats and species

Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lie within the WNP area, those being the River Test and Bere Hill Meadows. There is one local nature reserve – the Millennium Meadow which along with the Meadows, Cowslip Bank and Clapper Copse are sites of importance for nature conservation. (SINC) (Whitchurch Healthcheck 2005). A further SINC lies to the west of the town at Hurstbourne Park.

Figure 2.2 shows Whitchurch and surrounding areas with the various features such as SSSI and SINC delineated.

Whitchurch has a good network of green spaces and reasonable biodiversity for a town. This biodiversity is important to the local community. The key biodiversity assets of Whitchurch are the disused railway corridor, Millennium Meadow, river test corridor and SSSI, and the Queen Elizabeth II field.

Watercress beds and water meadows form important open spaces such as the Millennium Meadow.

Mature trees and woodland is a particular feature within and around the settlements in the Test Valley.

Hedgerows contain chalk-loving species such as Dogwood, Wayfaring Tree, Spindle, Privet, Field Maple and Hazel. The sloping valley sides are mostly used for pasture and arable farming. Small blocks of woodland are found throughout, particularly on the steeper valley sides where Beech and Ash predominate. Next to the rivers, there are many linear bands of Willow and Alder, together with some commercial Poplar plantations. Larger woodland blocks are found in and around the listed parkland landscapes of Laverstoke Park and Hurstbourne Park. The valleys have flat floodplains with braided channels, watercress beds and water meadows used for grazing.

Gardens are an important characteristic in many parts of Whitchurch and add to the biodiversity forming an extensive network of habitats and wildlife corridors throughout Whitchurch.

**Neighbourhood Planning Screening Report – Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan'** (Final version - following consideration by consultation bodies); Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment; **Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council** September (2014).

## **2.11. Flood Risk in Whitchurch**

The Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Flood Risk Assessment summarises flood risk in Whitchurch as follows: 'Whitchurch is at risk of fluvial flooding from the River Test. There are two instances of flooding from the drainage system, both of which are close to the river so may be partly due to backing up at high water level. A potential susceptibility to groundwater flooding is indicated in the groundwater emergence maps.'

Fluvial flooding and groundwater flooding are issues for the Neighbourhood Area. This includes issues related to the presence of the River Test and the chalk aquifer present under the parish. The SEA Scoping Document predicts that winter rainfall will increase significantly as a result of climate change and when combined with high groundwater levels will result in increased risk of flooding in the future.

Whitchurch Town Council has initiated a risk assessment to address flood risk, and preliminary assessments are that while fluvial flooding is a potential issue upstream of key pinch points, the risk of groundwater flooding is reduced due to the presence of a mature, surface and sewerage drainage system. Key issues include obstructions by bridges and sluices when water levels are high on the River Test and the resultant backup of water during high water levels.

The Environment Agency (2015) map Figure 2.3 is of Whitchurch and the surrounding landscape showing the line of the River Test and the area at risk of flooding. The sites allocated for housing and employment in the WNP lie outside the area of likely flooding by surface water.

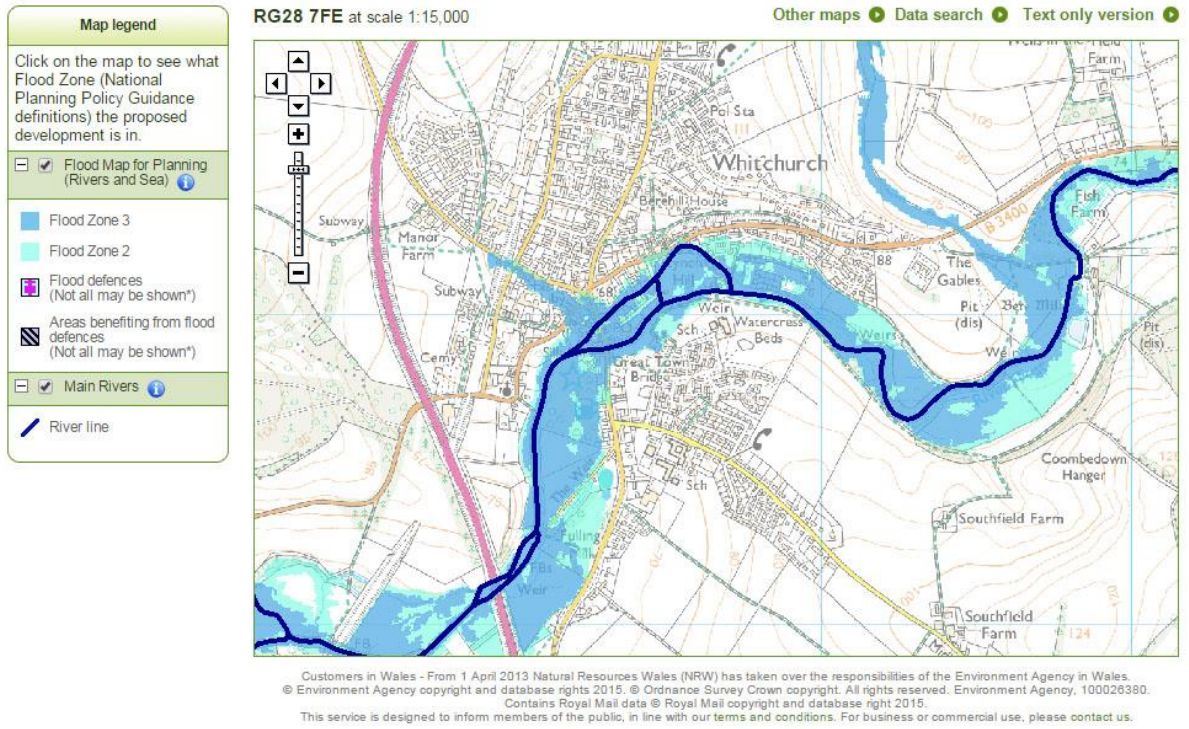


Figure 2.3. Whitchurch flood map.

## 2.12. Footpaths and Byways

Whitchurch is favoured by a significant number of footpaths and bridleways which provide good access to the Town Centre and countryside. These are shown on figure 2.4. BDBC have reduced their provision for maintaining these and as a result it is expected that some may fall into disrepair unless supported by the local community. The WNP includes policies to promote greater connectivity by cycle and on foot. The Community Projects identified in Section 12 of the WNP, which may be supported by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), include provision for improved cycle ways footpaths and access to the River Test.

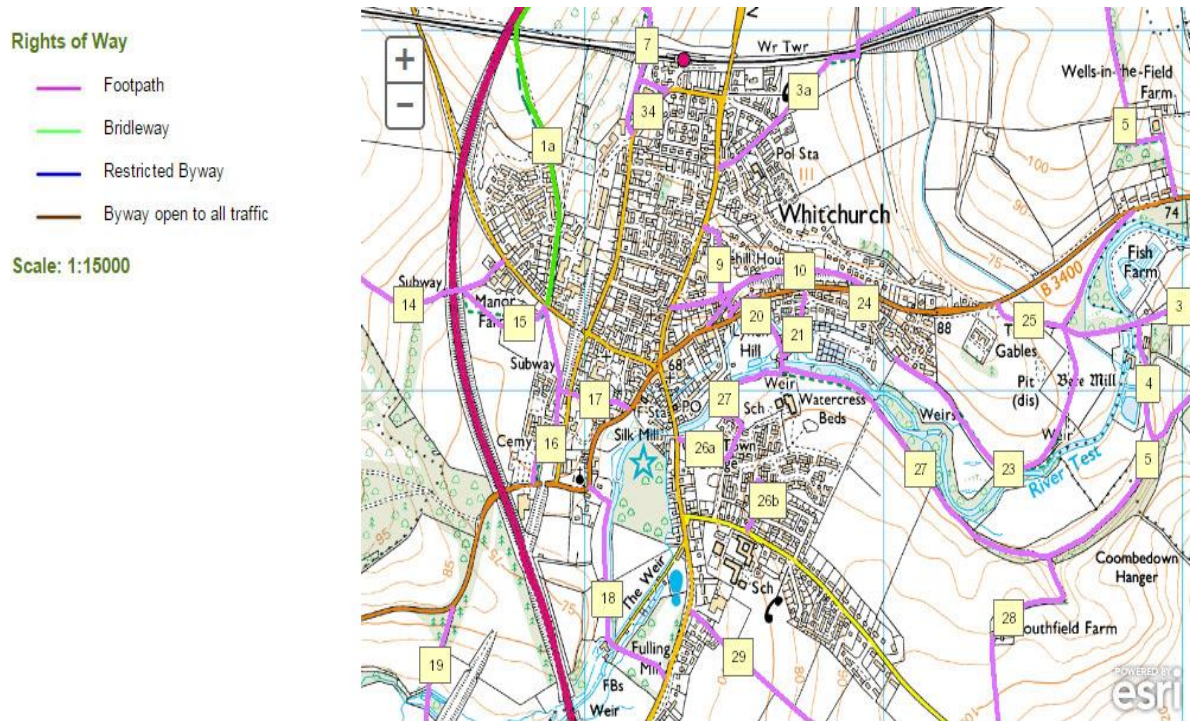


Figure 2.4. Footpaths and byways around Whitchurch.

### 3. National and Local Planning Policy Context

The WNP has been developed in general conformity with NPPF of March 2012. The principal planning considerations also include:

- The emerging Local Plan.
- policies that were saved from the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Adopted Local Plan 1996 – 2011.
- The NPSC was also mindful of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

All policies within the emerging Local Plan are considered by BDBC to be “strategic”, (Paragraph 1.13 of the Submission Local Plan), i.e. the policies will give the overall directions of what is to be achieved, rather than the details of how it is to be achieved. In conformance with the advice from BDBC, the NPSC has considered all of these policies in preparing the WNP.

In accordance with European Legislation the NPSC have also commissioned a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the WNP and the reasonable alternatives which it examined.

#### 3.1. National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF provides the basis not only in terms of policies which form the basis of the WNP but also in terms of setting out the basis for Neighbourhood Planning. The interaction between the WNP and the NPPF policies is given in the Basic Conditions Statement. The NPPF March 2012 states:

*The application of the presumption (in favour of sustainable development) will have implications for how communities engage in neighbourhood planning. Critically, it will mean that neighbourhoods should: “*

- *develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development;*
- *plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing developments that are consistent with their neighbourhood plan to proceed”.* (para.16)

In order to comply with this strategic approach the WNP supports sustainable development by meeting or exceeding the development policies and allocations specifically required of Whitchurch in the emerging Local Plan in relation to Housing and Employment land allocation.

### **3.2. Saved policies of the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Emerging Local Plan**

With regard to the Saved Policies of the BDBC 1996 Adopted Local Plan there are a number of policies which specifically relate to Whitchurch. These are summarised below:

- Policy D3.18 Industrial Premises, Evingar Road, Whitchurch
- Policy D3.19 Park View, Whitchurch
- Policy D3.20 Land North of Railway Line, Whitchurch
- Policy D3.21 Ardglen, Whitchurch

The Park view site Policy D3.19 has already been developed for housing.

With the exception of the Whitchurch Station Car Park, which is to be retained as emerging Local Plan Policy SS11, it is currently proposed that all other Whitchurch Specific Policies will be deleted as soon as the emerging Local Plan is adopted.

Non site specific saved policies are listed in the Basic Conditions Statement which will accompany the WNP.

Policies relating to the Saved issues are included in the emerging Local Plan with the exception of the following policies ,A4 Telecommunications Development; A5 Recycling; C6 Exceptions Policy for the Provision of Facilities within Settlement Policy Boundaries; EC5 Live / Work Units; and D4 Sub-division and Loss of Dwellings.

### **3.3. BDBC Emerging Local Plan**

During the formulation of the WNP the NPSC have communicated frequently with BDBC Planning department to ensure that the WNP conforms to the emerging Local Plan as set out in the Basingstoke and Deane Submission Local Plan 2011to 2029, and the various Inspectors Reports and Decisions of Basingstoke and Deane Cabinet, since the WNP draft was submitted for public consultations in April 2014 and October 2014. In particular the WNP conforms to the decisions of the BDBC Cabinet in relation to the site allocations to meet increases in housing numbers in March 2015 and in particular to the decision to keep the minimum number of homes to be allocated under policy SS5 of the Emerging Local Plan at 200 homes over the Local Plan period. The WNP has been developed on the basis that Whitchurch Town Council will identify sites for approximately 200 homes through neighbourhood planning, rural exception schemes or a review of Settlement Policy Boundaries.

### **3.4. BDBC Emerging Local Plan Polices Specific to Whitchurch**

The BDBC emerging Local Plan policies which are specific to Whitchurch are detailed in the Basic Conditions Statement and summarised below:

#### **Policy SS3.6 – South of Blosswood Lane**

This 12.5ha site lies to the west of the town of Whitchurch and will deliver 150 dwellings .

### **Policy SS5 – Neighbourhood Planning**

The Council will support parish/town council through the Neighbourhood Planning process to identify sites/opportunities for the development of approximately 200 homes in Whitchurch through neighbourhood planning, rural exceptions schemes, or a review of Settlement Policy Boundaries.

**Policy SS11 – Whitchurch Railway Station Car Park** This 1 hectare site, which lies to the north of the railway line at Whitchurch is allocated for the development of a new passenger railway station car park.

### **Policy EP2 – Employment Land and Premises (B-Use Classes)**

The Ardglen Road Industrial Estate will be protected for employment generating uses within the Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. (light and general industrial and warehouse uses).

### **Policy EP3 – Town, District and Local Centres**

Main Town Centre uses (such as retail, office, entertainment and leisure) will be permitted provided that they are designed at a scale and character which reflects the role, function and distinctive qualities of the centre. Any development that would harm the vitality and viability of a defined centre will not be permitted.

The WNP has been prepared in accordance with the above Whitchurch Specific Policies

## **3.5. BDBC Emerging Local Plan Non- site specific Policies**

The WNP has been formulated to conform to the emerging Local Plan non site specific policies. The relationship between the policies and objectives in the WNP and the emerging Local Plan is shown in the Basic Condition assessment.

## **3.6. Strategic Environmental Assessment**

In August 2014 the NPSC submitted a request to BDBC to conduct a screening opinion with regard to the likely proposals to be contained within the WNP. BDBC conducted a screening assessment which took into account the opinions of the three consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage).

In September 2014 BDBC published a SEA Screening Report and in October 2014 the BDBC published a screening opinion which concludes that, "in order to meet the 'basic conditions'<sup>1</sup> for neighbourhood planning, an Environmental Assessment is considered to be required to accompany the WNP but it would not need to be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment."

To meet the requirement for an SEA, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is being undertaken by independent consultants AECOM. The SA has been prepared in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>[1]</sup>. It also widens the scope of the

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<sup>[1]</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC

assessment from focussing on environmental issues to also include social and economic issues.

SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SA for the WNP seeks to maximise the emerging Neighbourhood Plan's contribution to sustainable development.

Comprising the first stage of the SA process, an SA Scoping Report was released for consultation to Natural England, Historic England and the Environmental Agency for a five week period in early April 2015. Following the receipt of consultation responses on the Scoping Report, a series of 'reasonable alternatives' were assessed for the SA relating to the size and form of new housing to be delivered through the WNP. The findings of this assessment were provided to the NPSC in a Technical Note in May 2015.

To accompany the Regulation 14 consultation, an SA Report has been prepared. The SA Report presents a range of information relating to the SA process undertaken to date, including the scoping information, the assessment of reasonable alternatives and an assessment of the current version of the WNP. The SA Report accompanies the WNP.

Prior to submission of the WNP to Basingstoke and Deane Council under Regulation 15, any revisions to the WNP following the current consultation will be assessed. The SA Report will then be updated and will accompany the submission version of the WNP.

The results of the SEA have been taken into account in the relevant sections of the WNP

### **3.7. Planning Constraints**

The constraints maps for Whitchurch are shown as Figures 2.1 – 2.2. The planning constraints identified include the following.

- The conservation area.
- Listed buildings.
- Flood risk (see below).
- Areas of SSSI.
- North Wessex Downs ANOB.
- Archaeological sites.
- Tree preservation orders (TPOs).
- Historic Park and Gardens.

These constraints have been taken into account in the site selection and allocation contained in the WNP.

## 4. Sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of the planning system and is about managing growth to achieve positive effects on the environment, economic viability and well-being of the community.

The information in this section is a commentary on how the WNP addresses the parts of the Scoping Report<sup>1</sup> that are particular to Whitchurch, while the way the WNP has addressed the other issues identified in the SEA is set out in the Basic Condition Assessment which will accompany the WNP once submitted under regulation 15. The work described in the Scoping Report was undertaken between February 2015 and May 2015.

The following issues; identified in the Scoping Report either have a local factor involved; show levels of sustainability that are lower than comparable areas; or are not addressed by the Local Plan or national guidelines and policies.

### 4.1. Water quality and biodiversity

A significant threat to the River Test SSSI is the Nitrates and Phosphates from sewage treatment works. The capacity of the groundwater and the River Test to accommodate the increased levels as a result of increased housing is of concern and may constrain the development of the Town. BDBC are cognisant of this and the NPSC understands that they are proposing to undertake modelling to establish that the number of homes allocated in the emerging Local Plan will be sustainable.

### 4.2. Renewable energy

The proximity of the river Test offers an opportunity for low head hydroelectric power and is covered in Section 9.

### 4.3. Sustainable travel

Despite good rail connections, Whitchurch has an unusually high level of car ownership and local travel is covered in Section 9 under Infrastructure, with the recognition that more sustainable forms of transport are only likely to grow if they are economically attractive to potential users.

### 4.4. Proximity to the Conservation Area and AONB

Both these factors have been taken into account in the Site Selection. No sites are being allocated for development in either the Conservation Area, or the AONB.

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<sup>1</sup> "Sustainability Appraisal of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan", Scoping Report March 2015. AECOM Infrastructure and Environment ("AECOM")

## 5. Community Engagement

- 5.1. The Consultation Statement is issued as a supporting document in conjunction with the WNP, and has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, Section 15(2) of part 5 . The following is a summary of that document.
- 5.2. The aims of the consultation process were to:
  - involve as much of the community as possible throughout all stages of Plan development, so that the WNP would be based on the views of residents and other stakeholders;
  - ensure that consultation events took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken;
  - engage with as wide a range of people as possible, using a variety of approaches and communication and consultation techniques; and
  - ensure that results of consultation were fed back to local people, through a range of means, as soon as possible after the consultation events.
- 5.3. Consultation was led by the NPSC. The NPSC planned the process to be as accessible as possible to all interested parties; its general meetings are open to the public, advertised in advance and the minutes published on the website.
- 5.4. A programme of continuous communication of progress was put in place, addressing residents, local businesses, developers, local government and community groups. Communication channels included:
  - the WNP website, [www.whitchurchplan.org](http://www.whitchurchplan.org), which contained:
    - an overview of the WNP;
    - news items on the progress of the WNP;
    - presentation material from consultation events and public meetings;
    - links to online surveys;
    - a variety of ways to contact the NPSC.

- The WNP Facebook page;
- postings on the news and events pages of the Whitchurch community website, [www.whitchurch.org.uk](http://www.whitchurch.org.uk)
- news updates in the monthly Whitchurch Parish Magazine;
- attendance at the largest public events of 2014, including the Whitchurch Parish Fete and Whitchurch Country Fair;
- a public noticeboard at the town's community hall, the Gill Nethercott Centre.

5.5. Detailed consultation took place during 2013 and 2014, at the following stages in the process:

- an initial series of launch meetings, to raise awareness of the WNP and recruit a Steering Committee and volunteers to support its production;
- "Have Your Say" events, to identify the most important issues that the WNP should address and develop the "Vision" for the town;
- a survey of businesses operating in the Neighbourhood Plan area, to understand the employment considerations that the WNP should address; and
- "Where Should the Houses Go?" events, to test reactions to the alternative development proposals and proposed community Infrastructure projects.

Where the preferences of residents and other stakeholders were constrained by factors such as Local Plan objectives, the NPPF or funding realities, these were explained during the consultation process.

5.6. The WNP was launched at two public meetings, on the evenings of 6 and 15 September 2013. The meetings:

- introduced interested parties to the concept of Neighbourhood Planning;
- conducted an informal survey of the important considerations for the future development of Whitchurch; and
- encouraged people to take part in the process.

5.7. The "Have Your Say" consultation events were held from 10am to 2pm on Saturday 1 and 8 March 2014, and from 5pm to 9pm on Wednesday 5 March, at Whitchurch Parish Hall.

5.8. The views of Whitchurch businesses and industry - from home based sole traders to companies employing over 20 people - were included through a separate online Business Survey during early 2014. Businesses were contacted by email, leaflet drop or personal visit to explain the business implications of the WNP and encourage participation in the Survey.

5.9. The *Where Should the Houses Go?* drop-in events to present housing options were held from 10am to 2pm on Saturday 11 and 18 October 2014, and from 5pm to 9pm on Wednesday 15 October 2014, at Whitchurch Parish Hall.

5.10. Details of how the events were publicised, the number of attendees, the questionnaires that were circulated and the responses to are provided in the Consultation Statement accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.11. The main issues and concerns raised by the various events were:

- Considering the scale of future housing developments, ‘1 medium site and several small sites’ came out as the most popular option, followed by ‘2 medium sites’. The least popular option was ‘1 large site’.
- Some clear preferences were identified amongst the nine specific housing sites:
  - two stood out as very unpopular (‘North of the Cricket Ground’ and ‘East of the Knowlings’);
  - the three most popular sites were the smallest (‘Dances Lane’, ‘Whitchurch Car Centre’ and ‘Evingar Road North’);
  - the four remaining sites ‘Bloswood Lane Extension’, ‘East of Winchester Rd’, ‘Northwest Whitchurch’ and ‘East of Bere Hill’ were similar to one another in popularity.
- People were also in favour of developments that fulfil the need for employment growth in line with population, but also allow for some expansion requirements of current local businesses.
- Of the three potential employment sites, the most popular was ‘North of the Railway’ followed by ‘North West Whitchurch’. ‘South of Bloswood Lane’ was considerably less popular.
- The most popular option for community infrastructure projects was a covered swimming pool, followed by improvements to foot/cycle paths and improved river access.

5.12. The NPSC used residents’ preferences to guide the recommendations of the WNP, taking account of relevant policies and planning constraints, and feedback from representatives of interested developers and landowners. In particular:

- Views on the Vision for Whitchurch were incorporated into the site assessment criteria in Sections 11 (Housing) and Section 10 (Employment) of the WNP.
- Views on the scale of housing development, and the individual development site options, were taken into account in the recommendations in Section 11 on which housing site options should be included in the WNP.
- Views on the growth and location of employment sites were taken into account in the recommendations in Section 10.
- The community infrastructure projects identified and prioritised in the consultations are discussed in Section 12.

5.13. Throughout the process, the results of the consultations were fed back to residents as quickly as possible, via the WNP website. Printed copies of the results were also made available at the Town's community hall, the Gill Nethercott Centre, and key charts were posted on the WNP noticeboard. The results were also shared with representatives of developers and landowners who attended the events. Finally, the draft Plan will be presented to all stakeholders as part of the Regulation 14 consultation once it has been approved by the Town Council. The Consultation Statement will be updated to include the results of the Regulation 14 consultation before being submitted to BDBC.

## 6. Vision and objectives

The Vision and Objectives for Whitchurch were generated from the “Have Your Say”, Vision public consultations, held in the spring of 2014. The results of the Vision consultation are appended to the Consultation Statement.

### 6.1. Residents' views

The “Have your Say” Vision consultation identified residents' views on the future development of the Town. It found that residents;

- like Whitchurch the way it is and would like to maintain the balance of community and feel of the Town into the future;
- recognise that some growth is inevitable, but want development to be:
  - at a modest rate;
  - integrated with the town;
  - supported by improvements to facilities;
  - not too large;
  - of sustainable design; and
  - include public open space.
- are particularly concerned about the current traffic and parking problems, with HGVs and noise from the A34 being of particular concern. Town Centre, Winchester Road and Micheldever Road are the worst affected areas, particularly during term time. Future developments should have as small an impact on traffic congestion and parking as possible;
- would like the Town Centre to be a larger part of community life, with better shops, cafes, meeting places and parking facilities. The town should be tidier, with more trees and green spaces;
- would like better access to the River Test, and better footpaths and cycle ways around the Town;
- would like the Town to become more prosperous, by retaining and modestly growing light industry and small businesses and increasing Town Centre retail. Tourism should also be encouraged, leveraging our cultural heritage, mills and riverside/countryside setting,; and
- expect improvements to our surgeries, schools and transport infrastructure to facilitate the development that does occur.

### 6.2. Whitchurch Vision Statement

As a result of the “Have Your Say” consultation, the NPSC developed a “Vision” for the Town as set out below;

*We love our town. We appreciate its setting in the Hampshire countryside, the variety of people who live here and the local facilities that support a self-contained community.*

*In the next 15 years, development of our town will take place at a steady pace, maintaining the variety of residents and respecting its existing architectural character.*

*Developments will be of an appropriate size, and well-integrated with the town. They will be designed to minimise the impact of traffic, parking constraints and road noise that detract from our current enjoyment of the town.*

*Business and industry will be encouraged to develop in line with the growth in housing to provide local jobs, shopping and tourism opportunities. Infrastructure and services will be expanded in lockstep with housing growth. The river will be even more visibly the heart of the town, as we take opportunities to improve access to it. The Town Centre will be cleaner, brighter, and more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and car users.*

*In 15 years' time, those of us living here today will be proud to say that Whitchurch has changed for the better.*

### 6.3. Objectives

To achieve this Vision, a number of the key objectives, consistent with the Basic Conditions and the objectives of the emerging Local Plan, were identified and policies to achieve these objectives were formulated. The Vision, and these associated objectives and policies, form the foundation of the WNP.

Objective	Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Related Policies (relevant Section)
O1	Maintain the current character and balance of countryside agriculture business, housing and retail facilities of Whitchurch as well as the community who live there.	ES1(7),ES3-5 (10) GD1, GD5 (7)
O2	Ensure high quality and locally distinctive design which responds to local character to create inclusive, well connected and safe neighbourhoods	LD1,GD1 (7) ES6 (10)
O3	Plan for the controlled development of Whitchurch of a type and design to meet the needs of Whitchurch Community such that today's character and feel is maintained.	GD1, GD5, LD2, LD3 (7) CP1 (12)
O4	In compliance with the emerging Local Plan Policy SS5 proposed requirement to allocate sites for 200 houses in addition to the site for 150 houses already allocated to be built in phases over the next 15 years. Provide new housing which incorporates a mix of tenure, size and type to enable accommodation for all,	HA1-5, HD1-3 (11)

	including older people, downsizers, smaller households and homes for younger people and young families and so counter the growing demographic imbalance.	
O5	Focus the provision for new housing within a number of smaller development sites around and well integrated into the Town which respond to local needs. Ensure that the design and location of new development is resilient to the effects of climate change and flooding. Ensure that new development is of high quality design, is built to a high sustainability standard and reinforces local distinctiveness.	HD1-2 (11), IP1 (9)
O6	Minimise our contribution to climate change through promotion of energy efficiency, low carbon technology and energy efficient design.	ES4 (10), HD2 (11)
O7	Reduce the need to travel and shorten the length and duration of journeys providing sustainable and accessible transport opportunities. Promote walking and cycling across the Town. Link all developments to the Town Centre with footpaths, where appropriate. Position development within easy walking distance of bus stops, the schools, the health centre, shops and other Town facilities.	GD1-2 (7), ES6(10)
O8	To position and promote infrastructure and new developments such that increased problems with traffic are minimised at the times and locations which currently are problematic. Promote the formulation and implementation of a traffic strategy for the Town to reduce the adverse impact of traffic upon the quality of lives of the community.	CS1, GD4 (7), TR1(8), ES4, ES6 (10) CP1 (12)
O9	Facilitate parking to meet the needs of the community including Whitchurch's commuters and promote parking for increased prosperity of the Town through visitors and Town Centre retail.	GD4, ES1 (7) TR1 (8)
O10	Strengthen Whitchurch's Town Centre's role as a location of choice, for residents, workers and visitors for retail, culture and leisure. Progress the "Town Centre Plan" to promote a vibrant and attractive Town Centre, while retaining the distinctive cultural and historic heritage	GD1, GD4-7, ES1 (7) ES2 (9)

O11	Protect and enhance our green open spaces and promote the inclusion of green spaces within developments which occur within the Town. Protect, enhance and conserve the AONB, landscape and views. Protect and where possible enhance access to the countryside for the community and visitors. Use land efficiently and to preserve high quality agricultural land. To seek opportunities for landscape, recreational and ecological gain whilst minimising the environmental impact of new development.	LD1-3, GD1 (7) ES5 (10) HA5 (11) CP1 (12)
O12	Maintain and enhance the quality and value of community, health, cultural, leisure and recreational facilities and open spaces that support and provide opportunities for participation in social and physical and good access to health services.	GD1-2, GD4, LD1 (7) CP1 (12)
O13	Facilitate increased access to the River Test for local residents and visitors for their enjoyment and education. Conserve the River Test and its Tributaries reducing the risk of flooding and consequences of pollution through partnership working, active flood management and appropriate mitigation approaches.	GD2, GD4 (7)
O14	Maintain the character and vitality of Whitchurch and enhance Whitchurch's position as a prosperous economic community with a diverse economy by supporting a range of employment sectors through the allocation of employment land for premises of the right quality, type, location and size to meet the future needs of existing businesses in Whitchurch.	ES1, GD5-6 (7) ES2 (9) ES3-5 (10)
O15	Preserve important Town assets and rich historic and built environment to maintain and enhance its quality and distinctiveness while accommodating change. Build on and promote Whitchurch's natural and built heritage to attract visitors to the Town.	GD1, GD3, GD5-7, CS1, ES1 (7) CP1 (12)
O16	Facilitate a well-educated and highly skilled local population and workforce with strong connections to the local business community. Provide local affordable housing for local employees.	ES2 (9), HD1-3 (11)
O17	Protect and enhance Whitchurch's locally distinctive character of our priority habitats and landscapes, such as the North Wessex Downs AONB.	ES1, LD1-3 (7) ES4-5 (10)

O18	Ensure that infrastructure is planned for prior to development and delivered alongside development to meet the changing needs of our residents and employers, including the broader infrastructure needs of an increasingly ageing population.	CS1, GD7 (7) ES2, IP1 (9)
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#### 6.4. Monitoring & Review

Policy SS5 of the emerging Local Plan provides for BDBC to identify opportunities to address any shortfall in the allocation of housing numbers required for Whitchurch if there is any shortfall by 2017. The WNP however fully meets the required allocation and therefore currently no such intervention is likely to be required. Progress against the WNP will be monitored by BDBC and Whitchurch Town Council on an annual basis. The focus of the annual reviews will be:

- progress in delivering housing and employment developments in line with the allocations made in the WNP;
- consistency of developments with the objectives and policies of the WNP; and
- application of Community Infrastructure Levy in line with the objectives and policies of the WNP and the community infrastructure priorities identified by the WNP in Section 12.

The Town Council will also work with BDBC to:

- update the Conservation area Appraisal for Whitchurch
- update the Design Statement for Whitchurch
- review the Policy Settlement Boundary.

## 7. General Design

This section sets out the design principles and policies which shall apply both to the Parish of Whitchurch in general and more specifically to the Town Centre as defined by the conservation area. The first part of this section covers the general principles and policies and the second part the policies which will apply to the Town Centre.

### 7.1. Guiding Principles

As well as conforming to the Basic Conditions as described in Section 1 the guiding principles are based upon the Vision and Objectives as set out in Section 6 of the WNP.

The WNP also incorporates through its Policies the Whitchurch Design Statement which was adopted by BDBC on 22nd July 2004 as supplementary planning guidance which must be used by all parties in the planning process as an active planning document when making or reviewing planning applications. This document is still relevant to future development of the Town and is entirely consistent with the Objectives of the WNP.

Reference is also made to the ‘Way Forward for Whitchurch’ Healthcheck dated 2005 This sets out in more detail the existing and anticipated future role and functions of Whitchurch and the Town Centre. This is summarised as:

*“Whitchurch aims to have a welcoming and attractive town square, be economically and socially self-sufficient and to satisfy the needs of all ages of residents. This can be achieved by residents having a feeling of pride in Whitchurch; having fewer lorry movements, thereby making the town more pedestrian friendly and safer; more activities for the youth; making sure that development does not outstrip the facilities and acting as a support to the hinterland.”*

This role is consistent with the finding of the community consultations conducted as part of the preparation of the WNP.

Policies below are aimed towards facilitating these ambitions and achieving the Vision and Objectives as set out in Section 6.

## 7.2. General Design Policies

In addition to all generally accepted Design Standards and Policies including those as set out in the emerging Local Plan all developments be expected to conform to the following design policies which are specific to Whitchurch. In order to support objectives O1-3, 7, 10, 11, 12 & 15 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

<p>Re-enforce the adoption of the Whitchurch Design Statement as supplementary guidance to be used in the planning process.</p>	<p>WNP Policy GD1</p>	<p>Proposed developments must demonstrate in a Design and Access Statement where required or in a visual Impact Statement that developments adhere to the design guidelines set out in the ‘Whitchurch Design Statement’ adopted as supplementary planning guidance by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in 2004 , or successor documents. Such demonstration shall include but not be limited to requiring that a development;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reinforces the character of the Town and is positively integrated into the existing grain of the Town.</li> <li>2. Responds to and retain views towards the Town Square, the Silk Mill and towards All Hallows Church.</li> <li>3. Where appropriate defines and provides new pedestrian routes south from Church Street towards the River Test and The Silk Mill.</li> <li>4. Is sympathetic and maintain open views towards the countryside, or across open spaces, paying particular regard to views from key existing routes within the Town.</li> <li>5. Provides open space in accordance with the Whitchurch Design Statement guidelines and interconnect these with other open spaces in the within the Town where possible.</li> <li>6. Makes proper provision for those with mobility</li> </ol>
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impairment this may include the widening of footpaths to allow better access to the Town Centre.

7. Respects conserves or enhances the riverside setting of the Town and listed buildings within the Conservation Area.
8. Creates a positive building frontage that reflects the character and scale of the surrounding areas.

### **7.3. Landscape and historic context of the Parish of Whitchurch**

The landscape and historic context of Whitchurch have been described in Section 2. Landscaping and planting schemes for new developments must conform to Policy EM5 of the emerging Local Plan which includes the BDBC Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013 or a successor document.

### **7.4. Footpaths, Cycle ways and access to River Test**

The river Test in Whitchurch is an important but relatively inaccessible and underused asset for the Town. Community consultation has highlighted better use and access to the river and associated green spaces as a key theme.

The river Test, flood channels and Mill Stream link the Town's network of green infrastructure providing a string of interconnected green spaces along the valley of the Test through the Town.

The river corridor is no longer managed strategically either as an environmental or amenity resource, the river bed and river banks are not managed optimally to ensure the river flows freely resulting in a danger of flooding to the Town Centre. The Town Council is working with the Environment Agency on a management plan to militate against future flooding of the Town Centre.

Public access to the river through the Town is at best intermittent with most river-bank access in private ownership. Consultation feedback suggests that local people see the river as an underutilised asset for recreation and wildlife and wish to see it opened up as an informal corridor for walking and cycling through the Town.

Current footpaths and byways are shown in Figure 2.4. Proposed future cycle routes are shown in Figure 7.1. In order to support objectives O7, 12 & 13 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Development of Pedestrian and Cycle Routes and improved access to the River Test

WNP Policy GD2

Wherever possible, new development will be expected to exploit opportunities to link in with the existing cycle and footpath network of the Town. New developments adjacent to the River Test or Test Mill Stream must dedicate land to the river frontage to facilitate future public access to a riverside walk along the River Test.

All developments should make proper provision for those with mobility impairment this may include the widening of footpaths to allow better access to the Town Centre.

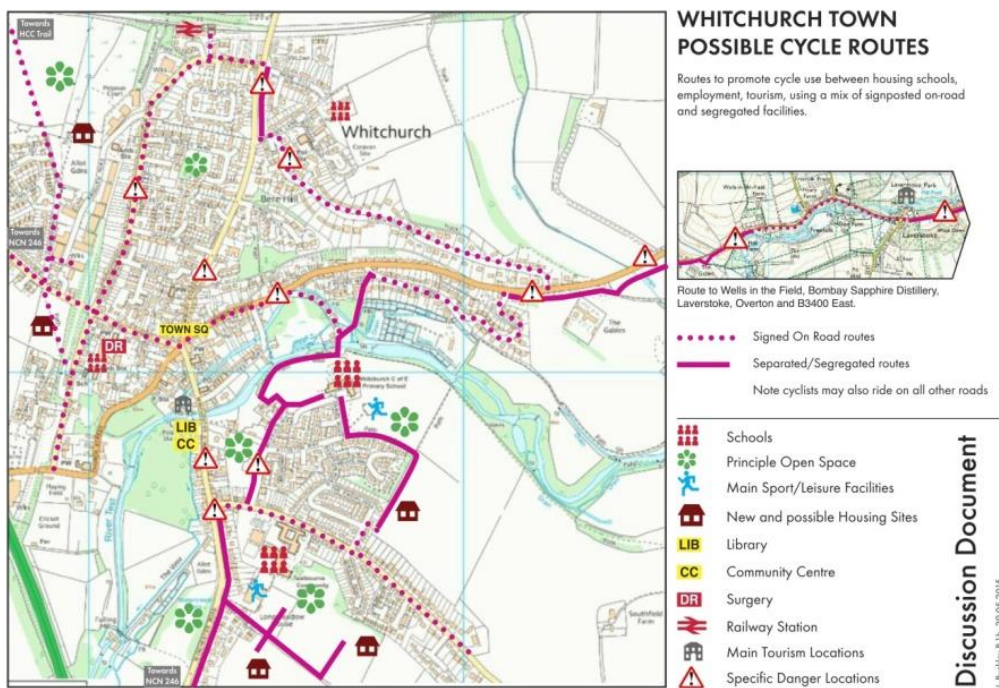


Figure 7.1. Cycle Routes Initiative

The consultation showed support for improving opportunities for sustainable living with access to local shops, public services and public transport. The Town Council has been working with the community to improve the provision and signage of cycle routes within and around the Town. It is intended that CIL and S106 monies from future developments would be used to support and implement this initiative as set out in Section 12 of the WNP.

### 7.5. Community Assets

Whitchurch has many Community Assets (described in Section 2) which it was clear from the community consultations the population of Whitchurch would like to see

protected. In order to support objective O15 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Protection of Communit Assets	WNP Policy GD3	Proposals for any changes to or replacement of a community asset must demonstrate that they will enhance the viability and or community value of any assets including but not limited to those described in Policy CN7 and CN8 of the BDBC Submission Local Plan and those designated by Whitchurch Town Council as Assets of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011. Unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the asyset, or the ongoing delivery of the community value of the asset, is no longer financially viable, proposals that result in either the loss of the asset or in significant harm to the community value of an asset will not be supported.
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The NPSC is cognisant of the fact that developments should not compromise the integrity of existing assets which have a high replacement value and could be important to the future development of the Town. The tunnels beneath the railway immediately west of the Whitchurch Railway Station could be very important as a future means of access to the town and for the movement of HGVs away from the town to access the A34 at Litchfield. Such railway crossings have a very high replacement value and its potential future use should not be compromised. In order to support objectives O8, 15 & 18 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Retention of functionality of Railway Tunnel for future benefit	WNP Policy CS1	Use of the tunnels under the railway line at or close to OS grid SU 46181 48936 immediately to the West of Whitchurch railway station or alternative vehicular access to Whitchurch will be considered a positive factor in any proposal. Otherwise, proposals that result in either the loss of access to the tunnel or in significant harm to the future ability to access the tunnel will be resisted.
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## 7.6. Public Open Spaces

WNP's objectives O11 is to protect and enhance existing open space and link existing and new spaces together to create a connected network of spaces.

The BDBC Green Infrastructure strategy for Whitchurch indicates that:

- There is no park in Whitchurch.
- There is good access to accessible natural green space within the distance threshold; this is supported by an extensive public rights of way network linking the town to the surrounding countryside, including good routes along the River Test corridor.
- There is generally good access to amenity green space within the distance threshold with only dwellings in the far south east and centre/west of the town outside the threshold.
- 

Public access to open spaces is described in the *Green Infrastructure Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane (2013 to 2029)*.



Figure 7.2. Map of Public Open Spaces in Whitchurch (Map 24 Green Infrastructure Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane (2013 to 2029)).

Whitchurch has a wealth of green open spaces (figure 7.2) throughout the Town providing valuable areas for outdoor recreation, but not for sports such as football. They provide many cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits and contribute positively to physical and mental health and a better quality of life.

Consultation with local sports clubs and other groups has indicated that there is a shortage of suitable facilities for sports participation in the Town. Everyone should have easy access to open space and the opportunity to participate in sport and outdoor recreation.

One of the WNP’s objectives is to provide public open space suitable for football, recreational and sporting use. New housing development provides the opportunity to create new public open space for recreational use for the benefit of both new and existing residents (figure 7.3).

In order to support objectives O11, 12 & 17 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Protection and retention of open spaces	WNP Policy LD1	<p>The Open spaces identified in Fig 7.2 and 7.3 will be protected and retained.</p> <p>Developers must provide publicly accessible open space in the locations required in the site-specific policies in Section 11. This open space must connect to other open spaces.</p>
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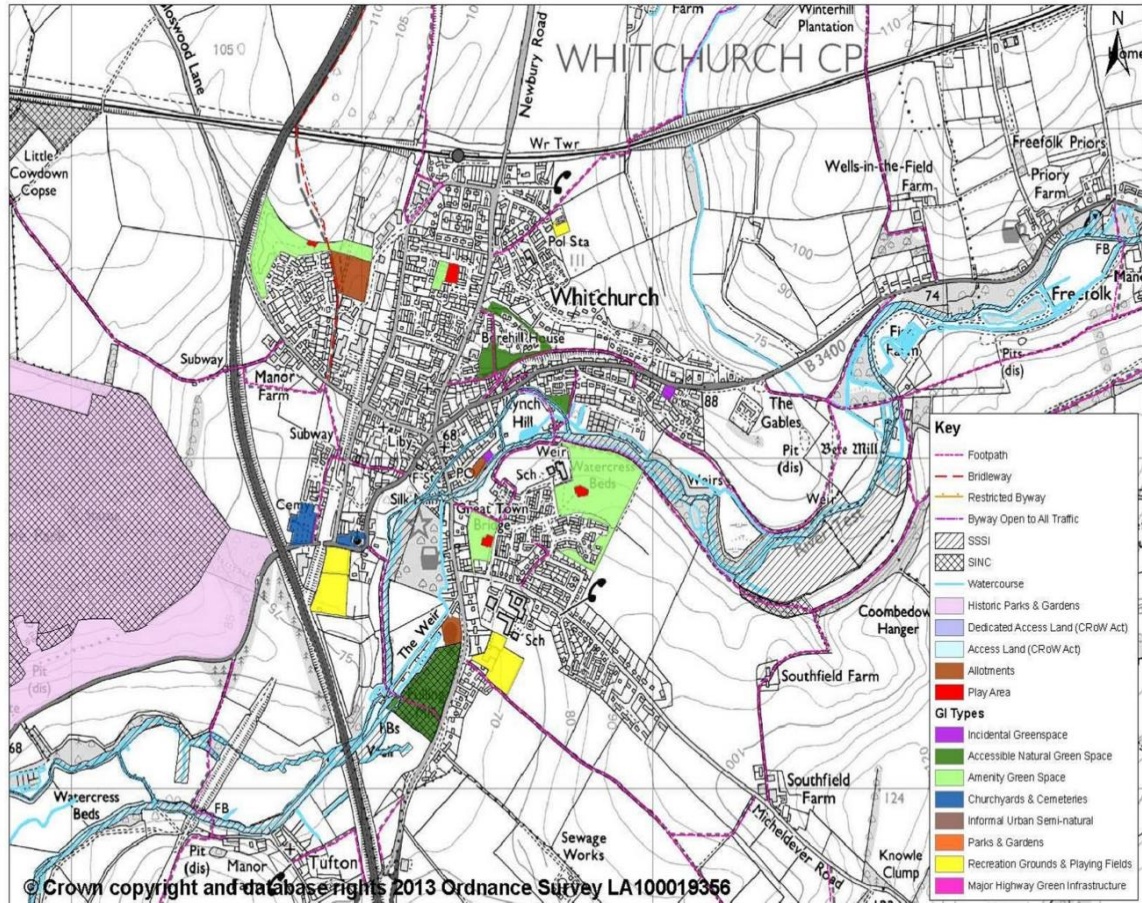


Figure 7.3. Map of Public Open Spaces in Whitchurch (Map 11 Green Infrastructure Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane (2013 to 2029)).

## 7.7. Biodiversity

Trees and hedgerows form a number of important roles in supporting biodiversity, providing attractive shade and shelter. Planting more street trees in strategic spaces is a key priority of the community. There are very few trees within the public realm of Whitchurch Town Centre; most mature trees are within private gardens. Gardens are an important characteristic of the Town forming an extensive network of habitats and wildlife corridors. Their importance to the diversity and richness of the Town landscape is often overlooked.

In order to support objectives O3, 11 & 17 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted:

Protection of private gardens	WNP Policy LD2	Development which results in the loss of or significant harm to the ecological or landscape value of private residential gardens will not normally be permitted
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In order to support objectives O3, 11 & 17 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Protection of trees and tree planting	WNP Policy LD3	Development that damages or results in the loss of mature trees or trees of good arboricultural or amenity value will not normally be permitted. Proposals should be designed to retain these trees and be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees within or adjacent to the boundary of the application site. The use of land adjacent to the public realm for tree planting as an improvement to the existing streetscape will be supported.
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Whitchurch has a good network of green spaces and reasonable biodiversity for a town. This biodiversity is important to the local community. The key biodiversity assets of Whitchurch are the disused railway corridor, Millennium Meadow, river Test corridor, and the Queen Elizabeth II field. The floodplain areas of the river Test are recognised as being nationally important with an SSSI designation.

In accordance with Policies EM4 and EM8 of the emerging Local Plan proposals which result in loss of biodiversity will not normally be permitted and development that is likely to have an adverse impact on local biodiversity importance should demonstrate that appropriate mitigation or compensation can be provided – where possible, achieving a net enhancement of the biodiversity in Whitchurch. Any future development and associated works (e.g. highway improvements, new lighting, and boundary treatments) will need to ensure that the character of these is not adversely affected.

## 7.8. Town Centre Design

The historic centre of Whitchurch is focused on the intersection of the old A34 Winchester to Newbury road and the B3400 Basingstoke to Andover Road at the Town Square. Many of the buildings are locally or nationally listed including the Town Hall (2\*) (see Figure 2.2). The Town centre is contained within the Whitchurch Conservation Area (refer to Section 2).

The NPSC commenced the identification of potential Town Centre development sites in Summer 2013. It identified viable sites and contacted landowners with land which might be suitable for development and improved public access to the River Test. In Autumn 2013,

the Steering Committee also advertised in the Parish Magazine and on its website for landowners or developers who may wish to have land considered for development.

A number of locations were identified by the NPSC. As with all town centre sites, these consisted of a number of interlinked developed and undeveloped sites in multiple ownership. Whilst consultation with all individual landowners had not taken place to determine deliverability, these potential sites were included in the scope of the Town Centre Consultation to assess the public view on future development options should these sites be made available by land owners.

### 7.8.1. Public Consultation and the Town Centre

The key community ambitions were identified in recent WNP public consultations. A number of these ambitions are beyond the scope of the WNP. Themes which are within the scope (Listed in order of occurrence as key theme) were:-

- **Better access to the river Test**
- **Introduction of a street market**
- **Better management of traffic congestion and HGV through traffic.**
- **Encouragement of visitors and provision shopper/visitors car-parking**
- **Increase in the range of shops**
- More green spaces and trees
- Better pedestrian access
- Improvements to town attractiveness
- Increased Tourism
- Better sports facilities

Topics in **bold** comprised the key theme in more than half of the responses made with many of them relating to the Town Centre.

There was no support or engagement by current land owners to develop any of these proposals for the benefit of the Town. Owners of listed buildings expressed concern over the impact of these proposals on the setting of these important buildings.

Whilst specific proposals for the improvement of the public realm and the future redevelopment of areas within the Town Centre are not described in the WNP , it is the intention of the Town Council to continue to work with Planning and Highways authorities, local landowners, and the local community to improve both the environment and facilities of the Town Centre and setting of the listed building whilst being guided by the policy objectives set out below.

### 7.8.2. Key Objectives for Town Centre

As a result of this consultation and the need for development proposals to be deliverable, the following aims were identified:-

- To make the Town Centre a more pedestrian friendly environment, whilst allowing local traffic to continue to flow freely through it.
- To promote independent retailing (promoting a street market) to enable people to source local produce and encourage visitors to the town.
- To safeguard community facilities
- To provide suitable facilities for new business to be incubated and grown in the Town to encourage greater local job creation (Section 10).
- To support sustainable living with opportunities for homeworking, cycle storage, access to local shops, cafes public services and public transport.

### 7.8.3. Pedestrian Friendly Town Centre

The public consultation highlighted the volume and speed of traffic passing through the Town at peak periods and the transit through the Town Centre of HGV traffic as the key problem, which often makes it difficult to cross the main roads easily and increases the vulnerability of pedestrians using narrow pavements in the Town Centre. This also gives the feeling of a thoroughfare which prioritises traffic at the expense of pedestrians. At times, the layout of on-street parking and public transport stops create conflict and congestion.

### 7.8.4. Public Car Parks

Concern over access to adequate public car parking adjacent to the Town Centre is a key outcome of the community consultation. Section 8 outlines proposals to work with the planning and highway authorities to make better use of existing on-street and public car parking provision in the Town Centre. In order to support objectives O8, 9, 10, 12 & 13 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Protection of Parking in the Town Centre	WNP Policy GD4	<p>Proposed developments should ensure that:</p> <p>Development involving the existing Bell Street &amp; Church Street public carpark must maintain at least the same number of existing public car parking spaces or provide equivalent provision within similar walking distance of the Town Square.</p> <p>Development proposals located between the River Test and Church Road conforming to Local Plan Policy will generally be supported if they provide a 'civic' open space shared with visitor's car parking which facilitates direct pedestrian access to the Silk Mill and River Test.</p>
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### **7.8.5. Town Centre Business**

Both the community consultations conducted by the WNP and 'Way Forward for Whitchurch' Healthcheck in 2005, identified the importance of the independent retail offer to the Town. The variety and vitality of these shops and small businesses is an essential part of the areas character. It is proposed to strengthen the current retail offer through sensitive small scale developments which complement the existing retail offer. In order to support objectives O1, 3, 10, 14 & 15 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

<p>Encourage new retail development and retain and enhance retail frontages in the Town</p>	<p>WNP Policy GD5</p>	<p>Proposed developments for new Town Centre retail development (use classes A1-A5) fronting the principal shopping streets of Church Road, Winchester Street, Newbury Street, Bell Street and London Street conforming to Local Plan Policy will generally be supported.</p> <p>To further protect the existing shop frontage retail uses in line with use class A2 steps will be taken to ensure that active shopping frontages will not be interrupted by additional financial and professional services. The Town Council will seek an Article 4 direction to restrict the permitted change of use within use class A2 to no more than 4% of the frontages listed above unless exceptional, it can be demonstrated that there is a need for additional A2 units to address a particular local need.</p> <p>Change of use from ground floor residential and/or employment to uses within A1-A5 conforming to Local Plan Policies will be generally be supported provided that the proposed use is compatible with nearby residential properties and the development forms part of a mixed use scheme providing residential accommodation above ground floor.</p> <p>Proposals for the development or redevelopment of sites, should the existing use become redundant, for retail, business or community uses located in the Town Centre adjacent to existing retail frontage and/or on primary pedestrian routes to public car parks which conform to Local Plan policy will generally be supported.</p>
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Sites have the potential, with appropriate development, to create active frontages enhance and support the vitality of the Town Centre. In order to support objectives O10, 14 & 15 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

<p>Redevelopment of Land for uses that supports the Town Centre.</p>	<p>WNP Policy GD6</p>	<p>Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of redundant land or the ground floor buildings in employment or service trade use to non-employment uses will only be permitted if the existing use is no longer economically viable and the site has been marketed for freehold or leasehold at or below the current market price for at least a year without restriction.</p>
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In order to support objectives O10, 15 & 18 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Encourage a diverse range of uses in the Town	WNP Policy GD7	Mixed Use proposals which support new residential use of accommodation on upper floors will be supported provided that such accommodation is not currently in employment use, and Residential use does not adversely affect the viability of any ground floor shop use.
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### 7.8.6. Tourism & Heritage Assets

Tourism is a very important part of the economy of Whitchurch, centred on the Silk Mill and Town Centre. The estimated number of visitors per year to Whitchurch Silk Mill is 16,000. The recently-opened Bombay Sapphire Distillery at nearby Laverstoke Mill<sup>2</sup>, is also relevant to the economy of the Parish.

With the picturesque centre of Whitchurch, access to the River Test, countryside walks, the Silk Mill and the close proximity of the Tourist destinations of Bombay Sapphire (Overton), Highclere Castle (Highclere) and Watership Down, there is scope to encourage additional tourism to the area. In order to support objectives O1, 9, 10, 14, 15 & 17 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Increasing prosperity by encouraging tourism	WNP Policy ES1	<p>Developments which conform to Local Plan Policy and promote Whitchurch’s unique historic and natural heritage to attract tourism to the Town, enhance employment opportunities and increase prosperity will generally be supported, provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the siting, scale and design has strong regard to the local character, historic and natural assets of the surrounding area;</li> <li>2. the design and materials are in keeping with the local style and reinforce local distinctiveness and a strong sense of place; and</li> <li>3. adequate coach drop-off points and coach and car parking are provided.</li> </ol>
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<sup>2</sup> Sources: Bombay Sapphire Distillery travel plan (December 2011), Whitchurch Silk Mill (March 2015)



Figure 7.5. Silk Mill and River Test

## 8. Traffic and Parking in Whitchurch

### 8.1. Traffic and parking

Traffic and parking were the most important issues identified by the community during the consultations which were completed during 2013. The issue of HGVs not being able to navigate the junctions particularly the London Rd/ Newbury Rd and Town Square is a key problem which has resulted in significant damage to the town infrastructure. Access to the A34 south of the Town is southbound only, which exacerbates the problems of northbound traffic from potential developments to the south of Whitchurch which have to traverse the already congested Town Centre.

The NPSC conducted a series of surveys to measure the flow of traffic through the town and better understand the problems to provide a basis for the selection of sites for allocation and the formulation of policies between November 2013 and September 2014.

- The method employed was a series of observations of the physical movements of vehicles of all types through the Whitchurch area generally during the morning peak time between 07:00 and 09:00 and in the afternoon between 15:00 and 18:00. The flow diagrams generated accompany this report<sup>1</sup> and complete details<sup>2</sup> of the observations and the complete set of data collected may be found in the traffic evidence base<sup>3</sup>. The diagram below (Figure 8.1) is a simplified version of those used to show vehicle numbers and directions of travel.

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<sup>1</sup>Figures 8.2-8.6

<sup>2</sup>Traffic Evidence Base files 1. Town Centre. 2. North. 3. West. 4. Schools. 5. South.

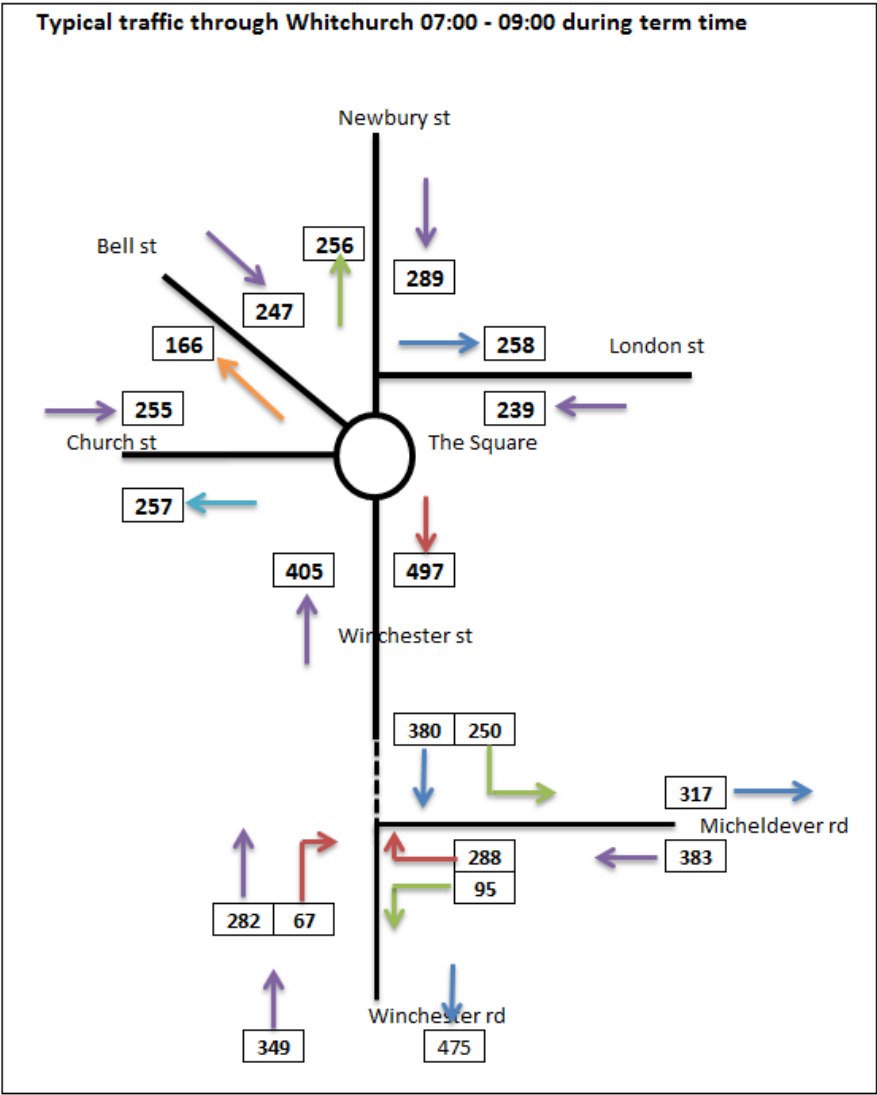


Figure 8.1. Morning traffic flows in Whitchurch

## 8.2. Summary of findings

- In general, it was found that Whitchurch does not have a major traffic problem, such as the delays and continuous queuing found in the larger towns nearby.
- There are specific parts of the town that do have traffic issues, generally during the morning peak time, between 07:00 and 09:00. For example, Traffic generally passes through The Square from all directions<sup>4</sup>, but especially if travelling to or from the South. There is no obvious afternoon peak (due to the spread of the various traffic flows between 15:00 and 19:00) unless the secondary school has after-school activities that require parents to drive to the school during the commuter peak.
- Large vehicles, whether HGVs or buses cannot easily negotiate the junction at The Square, and have difficulty at many other junctions. When these vehicles travel through the town during the morning peak, commuter traffic builds up around The Square, and especially between The Square and Micheldever road. The current on-street parking arrangements contribute to this, but the recent change to the time of the bin collection from 08:30 to 06:30 on Friday mornings has removed the hold-ups caused by the refuse lorries stopping at intervals along the route.
- During "peak times" approximately 50% of traffic through the Square travels southbound along Winchester Street, with the result that the section of road between The Square and Micheldever Road has been identified as 'The busiest street in Whitchurch' with nearly 1000 vehicles travelling in both directions through it in a typical two hour morning peak during school term-time<sup>5</sup>. This is approximately double the traffic encountered along any of the other routes through the square and represents almost half the traffic passing through The Square
- The worst contribution is that of traffic to and from the Secondary and Primary schools during the morning peak, largely caused by the buses delivering pupils from Bourne Valley, Oakley and Overton to Testbourne School. In addition, approximately 80 cars belonging to school staff are parked on the premises at both the secondary and primary schools during school and inset days, generally arriving at their schools between 08:00 and 08:30. Secondary school children living in Whitchurch have been surveyed and report that over 80% walk to

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<sup>4</sup> Figure 8.2. The Square

<sup>5</sup> Figure 8.3 The busiest street in Whitchurch

school, whichever part of town they live in and observation supports this. Primary school children tend to be dropped at school by car, many of which immediately return to the Winchester road junction.

- Parking is of concern to many people, and the current on-street parking arrangements are at the core of this as it affects the flow of traffic through the town. Parking in the town is to be considered as part of the Infrastructure Project that is described in another section. Speeding throughout the town is also an issue, especially since the introduction of the 20mph limit, which has not been enforced, and seems to be widely ignored. A Community SpeedWatch (CSW) group was formed, but not enough volunteers could be found to carry out the regular monitoring required. Neither parking nor speeding restrictions are regularly monitored nor enforced by the police or Local Authorities.
- Objectives O8 & 9 as set out in section 6.3 are addressed by the following policy.

### 8.3. Predicted Impacts of recommended developments

Mitigating the effect of increased traffic	WNP Policy TR1	<p>Development proposals should identify the realistic level of traffic it is likely to generate. All assessments should include a comparison of predicted traffic generation against traffic actually generated for recent developments in or around Whitchurch. Proposals must assess the potential impact of this traffic on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion within the parish and include measures to mitigate any impacts.</p> <p>Any development that will have a severe independent or cumulative impact on traffic congestion in the Town Centre (The Square), Winchester Street or Winchester Road during peak periods will not be permitted, unless the applicant can make a convincing case, supported by an independent traffic impact assessment, that measures can be put in place to mitigate its impact.</p> <p>Development that would give rise to unacceptable highway dangers will not be permitted.</p>
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- The observers measured existing traffic flows, including those from recently built estates and, using similar processes to those applied by developers, have enabled the NPSC to predict traffic flows due to the developments initially proposed.
- By considering the current numbers of vehicles and estimating the likely additional traffic generated, the impacts of each of the major proposed developments on traffic through the town can be predicted. These can be seen

in the flow diagrams, which show the likely changes in the three areas, north<sup>6</sup>, west<sup>7</sup> and south<sup>8</sup> of the Town Centre, due to developments considered as part of the WNP. The different colours used in the flow diagrams indicate whether existing and/or predicted additional traffic is considered reasonable or critical. Any development must not create a severe impact on existing traffic.

- The Northern part of town does not have major traffic problems, nor would the likely developments significantly change this. There could be an estimated increase of 20% in the number of cars travelling to the South along Evingar Road<sup>5</sup> if 100 houses are permitted in the NW of the town.
- The Western part of town is likely to be subject to an estimated 30% increase in traffic along Bell Street entering The Square during peak time from already the development off Bloswood lane, and more if the additional application is approved<sup>6</sup>. This could be considered a severe impact, but the development has already been approved.
- The Southern part of town already has the most traffic of any route. All developments in the area are likely to increase this, but the impact of additional vehicles may be moderated by the use of alternative routes around the North of the Town Centre, and the enforced use by HGVs of the northern junction with the A34.
- The planned development of 100 houses at the Winchester road site appears to have reasonable impact in the town<sup>7</sup>, but access is proposed via a 'T' junction on a part of Winchester road where the speed limit is currently 40mph and vehicle speeds are often higher to and from the A34 at Tufton. The developers are further proposing to create a drop-off point for secondary school buses and cars at the edge of the new estate, which should benefit traffic flow in Micheldever Road, especially when the primary school is expanded. Measures will need to be taken to manage traffic speeds, but to date there has been no agreement over responsibility for this.

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<sup>6</sup>Figure 8.4. North Junction

<sup>7</sup>Figure 8.5. West Junction

<sup>8</sup>Figure 8.6. South Junction

#### **8.4. Parking at the Railway Station**

Most rail commuters travel to/from the station well before the morning or after the afternoon peak times. Rail users generally seem to catch trains that arrive in London before 09:00, passing through the town between 07:00 and 07:30, when other traffic is light. Similarly, the working hours of the firms in or near the Ardglan estate mean that the northern part of the Town is generally free from significant traffic congestion, although on-street parking by rail commuters remains a major problem in the area.

For many years, there has been an identified need for an additional station car park at Whitchurch Station. A new station car park north of the railway is proposed in the emerging Local Plan Policy SS 11. This allocation is a saved policy from the adopted Local Plan but was not delivered. The Whitchurch Community supported the proposed new car park at the consultation held in October 2014 and the WNP supports this proposal.

#### **8.5. Transport Infrastructure Project**

- The results of the surveys have allowed the NPSC to recommend some developments that, as well as satisfying the major requirements of housing numbers, will have lower impact on traffic through the town.
  
- It is recognised by the NPSC that many of the existing traffic and parking Issues cannot effectively be dealt with in the WNP , and will be dealt with through the relevant authority. Borough Councillor Watts has obtained funding for a Transport Infrastructure Project that should lead to a long term strategy for management of traffic and parking in the Town.
  
- The key components of the project are:
  - To undertake a review of existing data sources in relation to traffic and transport in relation to Whitchurch, including existing and proposed flow data and parking levels from a range of sources including survey work undertaken to date, transport assessments undertaken to support proposals for development, and information held by the Borough and County Councils such as HGV flows and relevant travel plans.
  - 
  - Identify key pinch points and issues on the local transport network, including their cause and what the impact of these is on the accessibility of the town and key facilities.
  - 
  - Identify a series of short, medium and long term measures to address issues within the town, including approximate costings (where relevant), key partners to deliver such improvements, potential sources of funding and any key issues that would need to be considered in implementing such actions.

### Morning peak time traffic flow chart for The Square

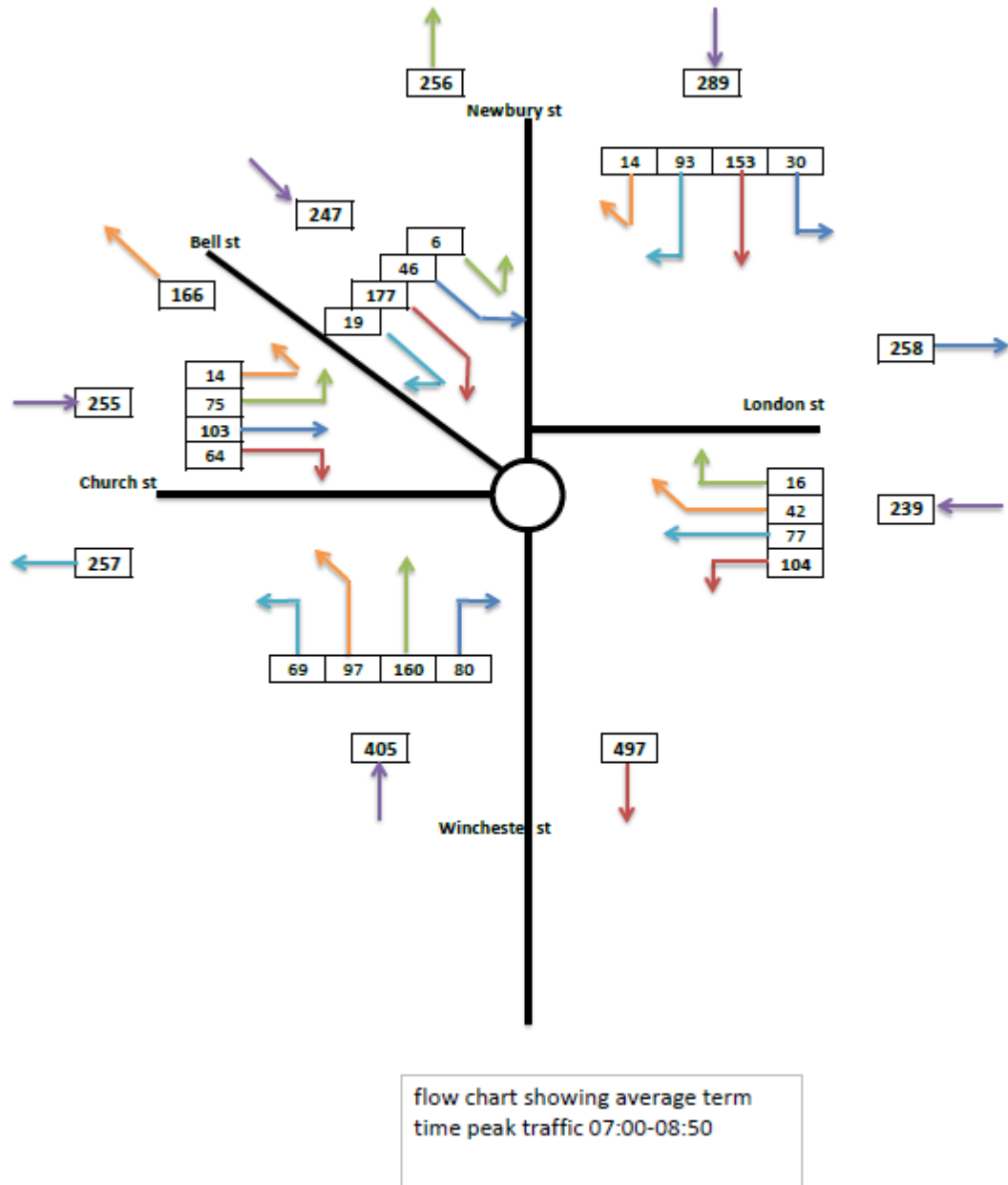


Figure 8.2. The volumes of traffic typically passing through The Square in the morning peak between 07:00 and 09:00. Approximately 40% of this travels down Winchester Street.

Peak time traffic flow chart for the busiest street in Whitchurch

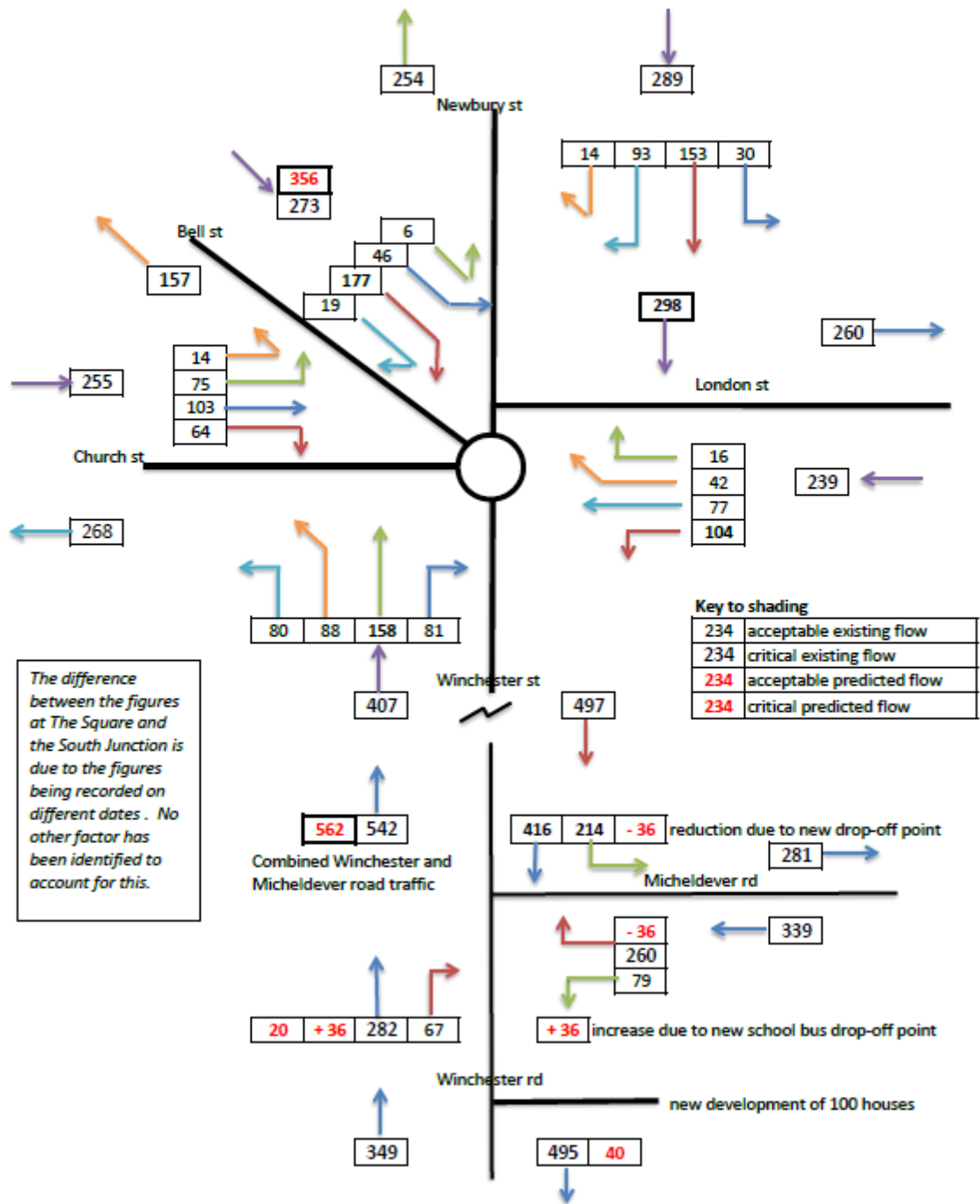


Figure 8.3. This shows the volumes of traffic travelling between The Square, Micheldever Road and Winchester Road during the morning peak on a normal School day.



### Peak time traffic flow chart for the West Junction

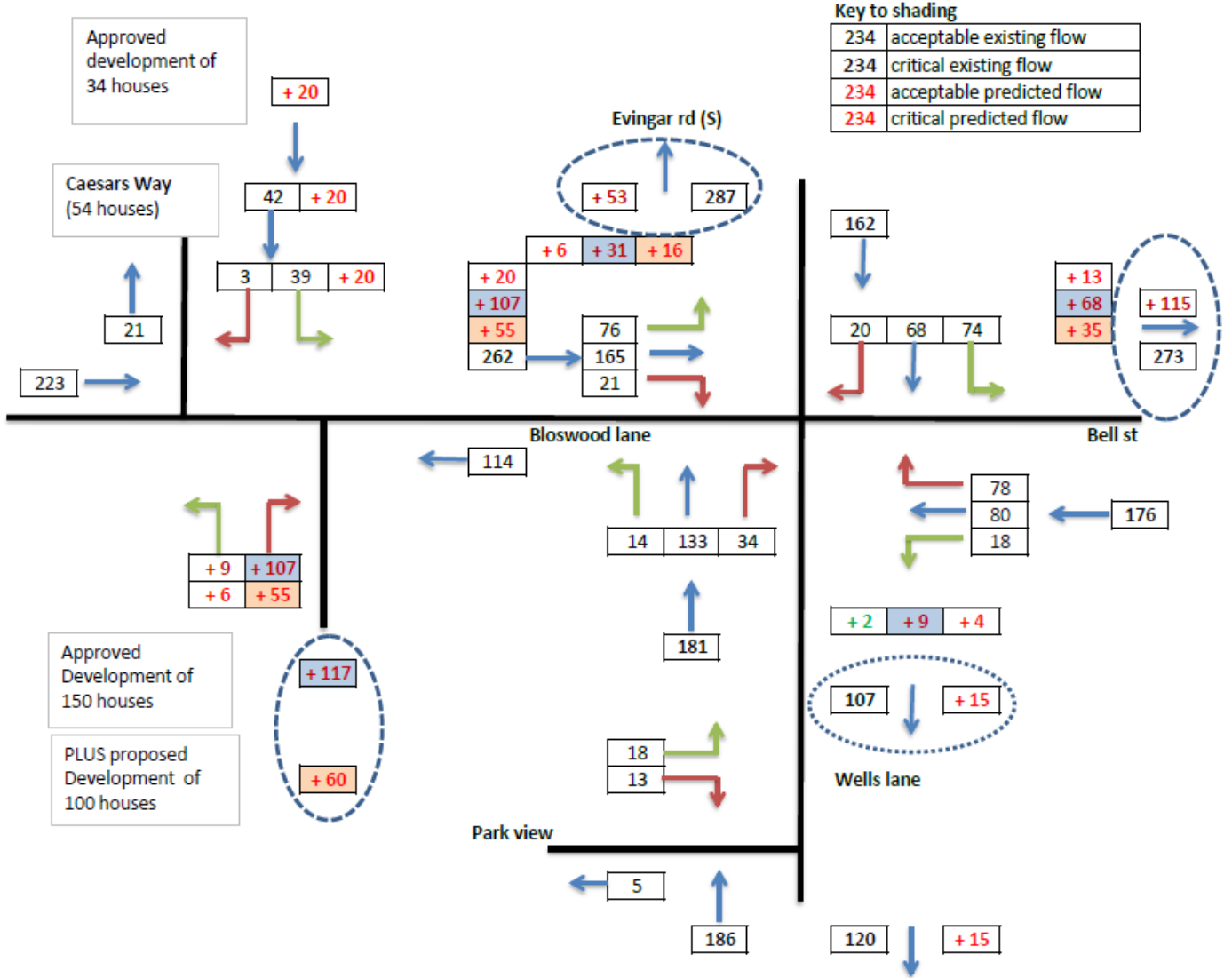


Figure 8.5. This shows the volumes of traffic typically found in the roads to the west of the Town Centre during the morning peak. The volume of traffic along Bell Street is predicted to rise by approximately 30% due to developments off Bloswood Lane.

### Peak time traffic flow chart for the south junction including new school bus drop-off area

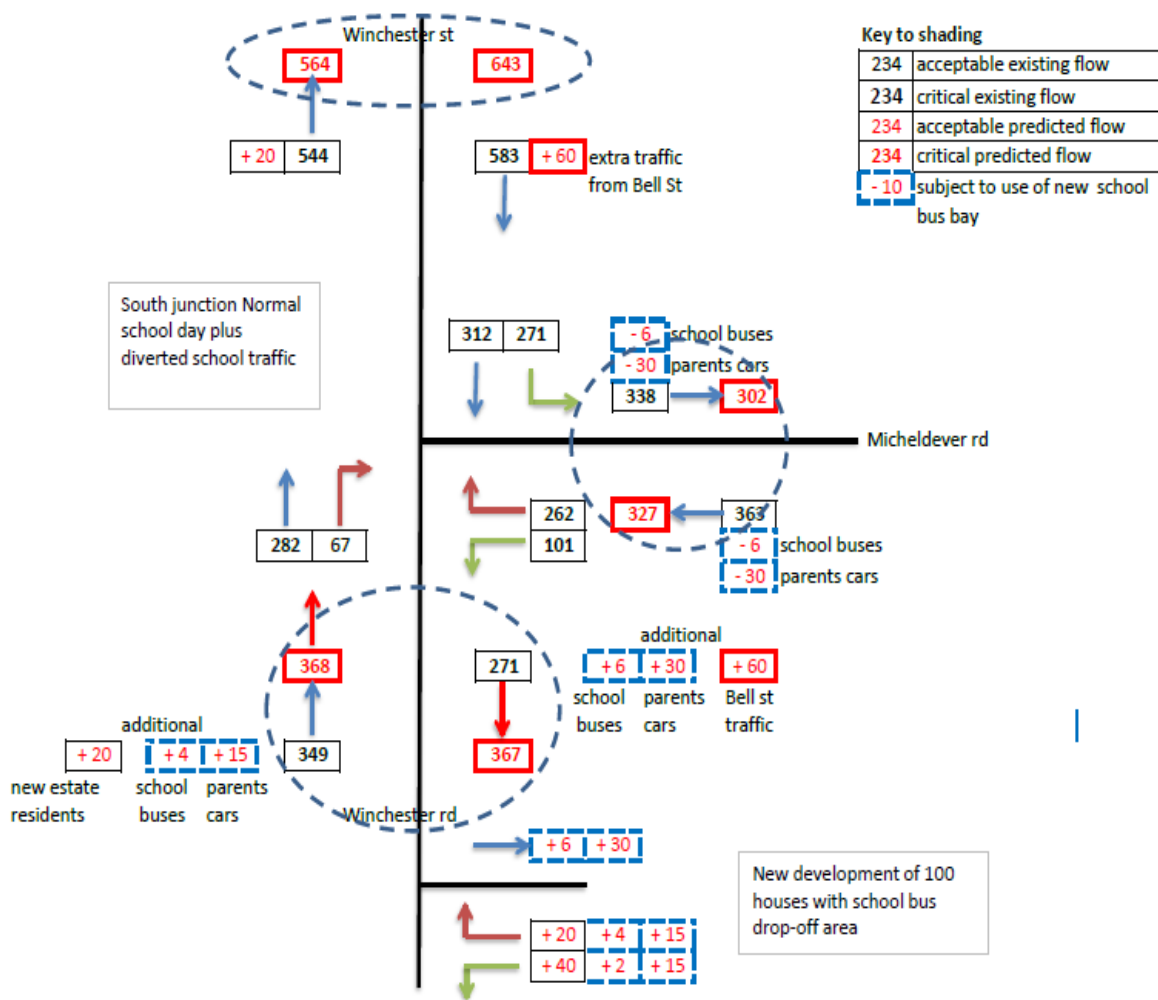


Figure 8.6. This shows the volumes of traffic typically found in the roads to the south of the town centre during the morning peak, with the already critical levels along Winchester Street. The proposed new school drop-off point in Winchester Road should reduce problems in Micheldever Road just as the primary school is due to expand. Details of traffic movements around the roads in the area between the two schools are to be found in the main evidence base.

## 9. Infrastructure

### 9.1. Section Introduction

Infrastructure covers those facilities that residents can reasonably expect to be present to service the community. This section is supported by a Whitchurch Infrastructure Report<sup>9</sup> which accompanies the WNP and has been written with reference to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>10</sup>. This has identified a number of constraints which apply to the future development of the Town. In general accordance with Policy CN6 of the emerging Local Plan development should be phased in tandem with the timely provision of infrastructure to help support sustainable growth.

### 9.2. Education

Hampshire County Council has developed plans to meet the growth of Whitchurch and it is envisioned that provision of one additional class-of-entry at Whitchurch Primary School and no expansion of secondary provision likely to be needed immediately. Whilst this increased primary capacity would initially be shared with Overton, the catchment area would be allowed to shrink over a ten year period and a greater proportion of Whitchurch pupils would attend. Testbourne Secondary School already takes significant numbers of pupils from Overton and other catchments and once again it is expected that this catchment will shrink with time. The largest impact envisaged for Whitchurch is the increase in traffic including staff and parents' cars associated with the Primary School expansion which will be generated on Winchester Street and Winchester Road and at the junction with Micheldever Road during peak hours term time. This will exacerbate the congestion at the most congested locations and times in Whitchurch (Section 8)

### 9.3. Utilities

With the exception of sewerage none of the utilities were considered to be a constraint on the allocations made in the WNP or a material consideration in the selection of sites for allocation.

#### 9.3.1. Electricity

Subject to detailed development plans, the overall capacity of the supply to Whitchurch seemed adequate for the planned housing numbers. The current 33kV supply passes through the North West Whitchurch site, including the allotment site granted on appeal, and would need to be routed underground. None of these electricity supply issues are considered material in relation to site allocation.

The emerging Local Plan Policy EM8 has addressed renewable energy generation at a commercial level and there is potential local opportunity for renewable power

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<sup>9</sup> Infrastructure Report for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan

<sup>10</sup> Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council,  
<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/34956/Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf>

generation. The use of renewable energy sources will be encouraged and Policy EM8 of the emerging Local Plan will be supported. Where feasible the use of low head hydro schemes and air or water source heat pumps will be encouraged as long as such proposals can demonstrate that the impact upon the River Test or its associated SSSI is acceptable.

Schemes which provide energy generating infrastructure using renewable or low carbon energy sources to serve individual properties or groups of properties will be supported provided that:

- The energy generating infrastructure is located as close as practicable and is in proportion to the scale of the existing buildings or proposed development it is intended to serve.
- The siting, scale and design of the energy generating infrastructure does not compromise public safety and allows continued safe use of public rights of way.
- Adjoining uses are not adversely impacted in terms of noise, vibration, or electromagnetic interference.
- Where appropriate, the energy generating infrastructure and its installation complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme.

### 9.3.2. Water supply, Gas and Telecoms

No detailed information regarding the overall capacity to supply these services was obtained. The overall capacity of the supply to Whitchurch seemed adequate for the planned housing numbers and they are not considered material issues in relation to site allocation. In order to support objectives O10, 14, 16 & 18 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Encouragement of good broadband connections.	WNP Policy ES2	High quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and community integration. New developments must ensure fast broadband connections are facilitated unless this would make a development unviable. A 'Connectivity Statement' must be provided with all applications for all new major developments, demonstrating compatibility with existing fibre or communications infrastructure and confirming the capacity of the backhaul systems.
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### 9.3.3. Sewerage

Recent local experience of emergency measures needed to avoid overflow of the sewerage system as it passes south of the Test reinforces the fact that the sewerage system in the town is at, or beyond capacity. Correspondence with Southern Water emphasises their requested change of wording to the Pre-submission Local Plan, where they ask that new connections be made to "the nearest point with capacity" and that the adequacy of that point be determined

by Southern Water. Suitable changes to this effect were made in the Submitted Local Plan. Any development north of the River Test will require storage tanks and pumping stations to a separate sewer across or under the Test to avoid over-stretching the existing system, before the sewage is pumped to the Water Treatment Works. The alternative may be to upgrade the current sewers through the Town which would cause considerable disruption. Provision of sewerage is therefore considered a material consideration in the allocation of sites with those situated close to the current sewage treatment works in the south of the town having more sustainable solutions.

In respect of the Whitchurch sewage treatment works, these discharge to the chalk aquifer in the South East River Basin instead of directly into the River Test. Groundwater quality for sites within the Test catchment is of concern. The groundwater body status of the River Test is currently poor and therefore the impact of additional development will need to be managed.

New development will need to connect to the sewerage system and the water distribution network at the nearest point of adequate capacity. This may require off-site infrastructure if capacity is insufficient in the immediate vicinity of the site. This off-site infrastructure would need to be provided by the development<sup>11</sup>. In order to support objectives O5 & 18 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Reducing the adverse impact of utility improvements on the Town	WNP Policy IP1	<p><b>Infrastructure readiness</b></p> <p>Proposals for development will be required to identify their likely impact on local infrastructure, services and facilities and to demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed. An infrastructure statement shall be prepared and submitted for all developments of 10 or more dwellings or 0.4Ha. Account should be taken of the cumulative impacts arising from the new development combined with other schemes that have planning permission.</p> <p>In particular the impact of the development upon the sewage system and treatment works including the impact of effluent upon the quality of water in the River Test shall be considered. The need for system improvements and upgrades shall be funded in accordance with the Local Plan. In accordance with the BDBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan proposals for new developments must identify the off-site infrastructure needed to connect to the nearest point of capacity, determined by Southern Water in the sewerage system. This off-site infrastructure, which would need to be provided by the development, must be identified in terms of scope and potential impact on the Town Centre and SSSI as part of the design statement supporting development proposals. Any new or replacement infrastructure shall be located, designed and constructed to minimise the impact of</p>
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<sup>11</sup> 33.9, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/34956/Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf>

#### **9.4. Health**

Members of the NPSC have attended meetings with the local Surgery in Bell Street. The Surgery is operated as an independent business unit and the role of the NP is limited to land use issues surrounding the surgery. The planned growth in Whitchurch population merits an increase in numbers of doctors of about one-half a doctor.

There is a small opportunity to allocate land for any necessary extension to the Surgery. The Town Council, working with the neighbouring parishes, will support the coherent provision of medical services to the community. Proposals for the extension of the existing doctor's surgery or additional or alternative healthcare facilities to meet the demands of the increased population will be supported.

#### **9.5. Leisure facilities**

**9.5.1.** A survey of local sports and leisure clubs was undertaken<sup>12</sup> and the results analysed along with relevant results from the consultation. This, along with representations from Whitchurch United Football Club and Whitchurch Cricket Club, form the basis for understanding the sports and leisure needs of the town that impact on land use.

**9.5.2.** Key findings are the strong desire for a covered swimming pool; opportunities for better cooperation between clubs and Testbourne School; and that there is a significant unmet demand for football pitches, both as practice grounds for Whitchurch United, but also for less formal teams – in particular floodlit ones for winter use.

**9.5.3.** There is an opportunity to enable expansion of more popular sports by allocating more sporting land use, either close to Testbourne School, or on a new site, or both. Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council is undertaking a Strategic Sports and Leisure review that needs interaction with the Town Council to identify up-and-coming activities that merit encouragement with facilities or money.

#### **9.6. Transport – Road, Rail & Bus**

**9.6.1.** Whitchurch is in the enviable position of having extremely good strategic transport infrastructure for access to the major neighbouring towns and

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<sup>12</sup> Sports Club Survey

London. The other unusual geographical attribute is that Whitchurch is almost equidistant between four major towns, Newbury, Basingstoke, Winchester and Andover. These factors make Whitchurch a desirable place to live and to perform business, but also have the disadvantages that less sustainable transport, such as cars, are the preferred form of transport and the ease of travel makes it attractive to shop or work in other places, leading to a less economically sustainable local economy.

**9.6.2.** The viability of additional bus and rail services may be supported by future population growth. While travel to Andover, Basingstoke and beyond is well served by the train, bus services to the other two towns in proximity either do not exist (Newbury) or are infrequent (hourly or less to Winchester). The prices of the bus journeys are comparable with the marginal cost of driving a car with a single occupant, so offer no positive reason to change from car usage for those who own one.

**9.6.3.** The Whitchurch rail station serves local settlements in the area as a commuting route to Basingstoke, Reading and London. But the commuters from nearby have to reach the station, and do so by car, leading to parking problems and stretching the capacity of the peak time trains.

## **9.7. Noise and Air Pollution**

**9.7.1.** The whole of Whitchurch is, to some degree, exposed to traffic noise from the A34 bypass. Correspondence with the Highways Agency confirms their policy that noise barriers may only be placed on developers' land, which would be away from the embankment, thereby negating any noise reduction in these circumstances.

**9.7.2.** The main input to air pollutants in Whitchurch is road traffic. The most significant source of air pollution is the emissions from the traffic on the A34 given the prevailing wind direction. However, air quality is currently generally good in the Parish with no significant issues. No locations in the parish are at risk of exceeding acceptable levels of air pollutants. As such, no locations are currently subject to air quality monitoring for air pollutants.

**9.7.3.** Whilst no significant air quality issues currently exist in the Neighbourhood Area, new housing and employment provision both within the parish and outside of the parish has the potential to have adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated emission of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide. Areas of particular sensitivity to increased traffic flows are likely to be within the more congested parts of the town and the routes with the largest congestion issues, such as the Town Centre, Micheldever Road, Winchester Street and London Street. This may be offset in part by factors such as measures implemented through the Hampshire Local Transport Plan to encourage modal shift from the private car and the improved fuel economy and efficiency of vehicles. The WNP has aimed to control the impact of air pollution by recognising the issues of traffic congestion at peak hours during term time and allocated development sites which will provide facilities to reduce congestion at the most affected areas of the Town.

## 10. Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Employment

### 10.1. Future Business Requirements

**10.1.1.** The initial consultation with Whitchurch residents recognised the need of local businesses to grow, to provide employment for the inhabitants of the town, including workers who will occupy the 350 new homes which are to be built over the next 15 years:

- 71% of respondents wanted Whitchurch to become more prosperous
- the top 5 ideas on how to achieve this were all related to business expansion, including the growth of shops and cafes, provision of space for new small businesses, and expansion of tourism; and
- only 26% of respondents opposed more commercial/industrial development.

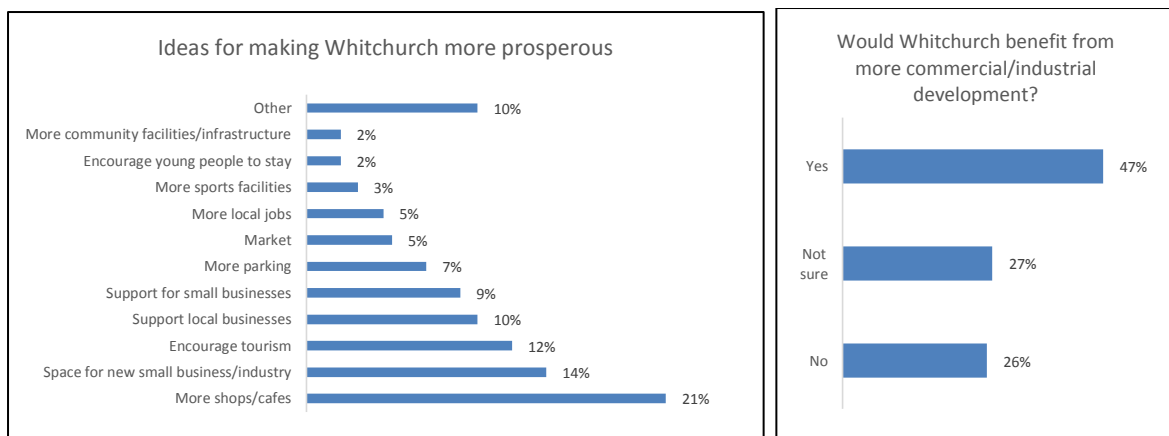


Figure 10.1. Whitchurch residents' views on business in the town

(Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Initial Consultation Survey, March-April 2014, 240 responses)

**10.1.2.** Future requirements of Whitchurch businesses were included in the Business Survey<sup>13</sup>. A total of 259 businesses - from home based sole traders to companies employing over 20 people - were identified, and as possible were contacted by email, leaflet drop or personal visit. The Survey was open from March to June 2014 and attracted responses from 42 (16%) of the businesses contacted, including:

- almost all (23 out of 26) of the businesses identified as being based in the Ardglan Road Industrial Estate; and
- 8% of the businesses based in the rest of the WNP area.

**10.1.3.** The Business Survey showed that:

- living locally, availability of suitable premises and road/rail links were the main reasons for businesses choosing Whitchurch;
- 62% of businesses expected to expand in the future. Of those, 9 out of 10 expected to expand in the next 5 years, and three quarters intended to expand whilst remaining in Whitchurch;
- the top three constraints on expansion cited by respondents were availability of space, location and planning permission.

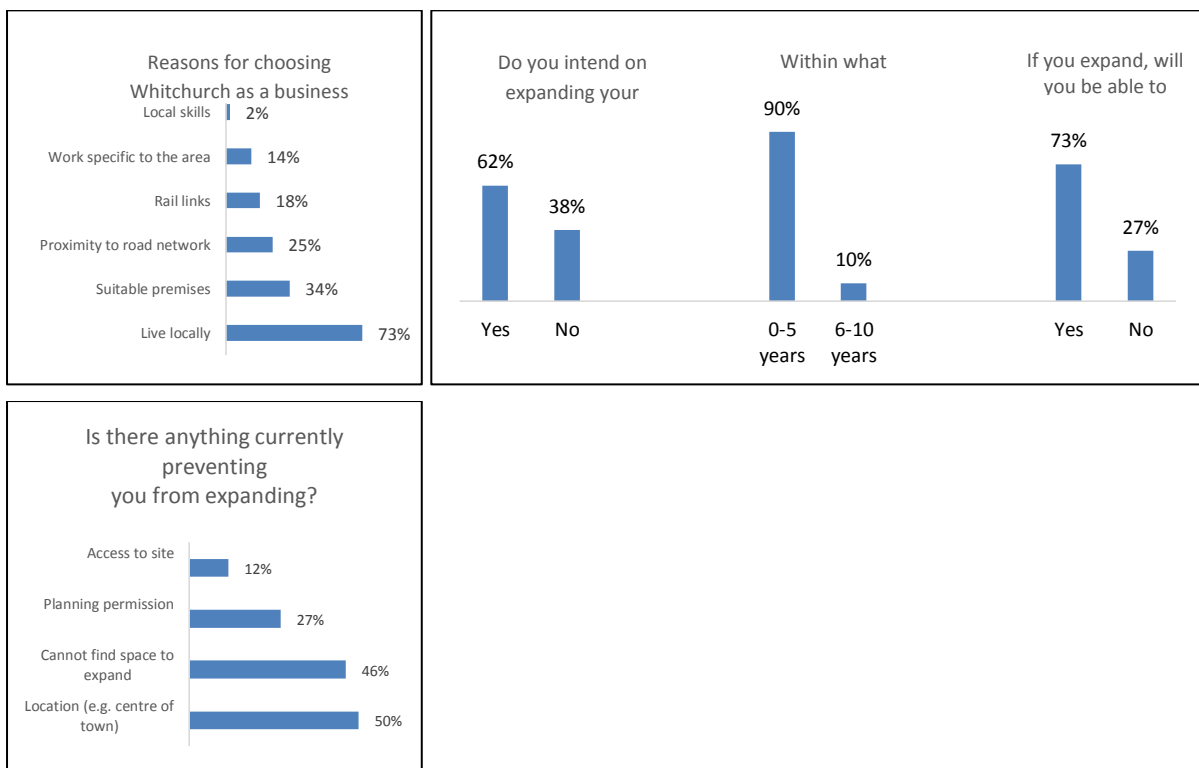


Figure 10.2. Businesses' reasons for choosing Whitchurch and future expansion plans  
(Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Business Survey, March-June 2014, 42 responses)

<sup>13</sup> See separate document WNP Business Survey.



**10.1.4.** The Business Survey suggests that there is a demand for industrial premises in Whitchurch, from established businesses seeking additional accommodation to enable them to expand their businesses. Units on the Estate range from 500ft<sup>2</sup> “nursery” units to properties of 10,000 – 15,000ft<sup>2</sup>. Demand is usually high, and vacant units tend to be quickly taken by companies already established there<sup>14,15</sup>. There is a requirement for larger units than at Ardglen Road Industrial Estate, as the current businesses are often spread over several units<sup>16</sup>. It has, however, proved difficult to determine the scale of demand which will need to be met over the WNP period. Estimates have ranged from 40,000 to a maximum of 160,000 square feet.

## **10.2. Growth of Whitchurch Employment**

**10.2.1.** Approximately 250 businesses trade in Whitchurch. These include shops located in the Town Centre; small businesses which are primarily home based; and larger industrial businesses. Whitchurch’s industrial companies, which are primarily located on the 4.1Ha Ardglen Road Industrial Estate, are an important part of the local economy. They employ approximately 400 people in B1/B2 type industries, and occupy approximately 95,000 square feet of buildings<sup>17</sup>. The premises are primarily in light industrial use, with ancillary storage and offices. Small businesses are very important to the prosperity of the Town. Proposals for small start-up units to stimulate the growth of Whitchurch’s small enterprises will be encouraged. Proposals for warehousing/storage (B8 uses) will be resisted as they create low levels of employment in relation to the floor space provided and the buildings have an adverse impact on their surroundings.

**10.2.2.** The Ardglen Road Industrial Estate is defined as a Strategic Employment Area under Policy EP2 of the emerging Local Plan, which will be protected for employment generating uses within the Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. The site benefits from being located approximately 700m from Whitchurch Town Centre and its associated services; however, accessibility is somewhat constrained by its dependence on relatively minor roads<sup>18</sup>.

It is considered important to protect and grow existing businesses in Whitchurch in conformance with the assessed views of the community.

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<sup>14</sup> Letter from London Clancy Property Consultants Ltd to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (25 September, 2014)

<sup>15</sup> Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Employment Land Review (February 2014)

<sup>16</sup> Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Employment Land Review (February 2014)

<sup>17</sup> Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan estimate, based on interviews with Ardglen Road Industrial Estate businesses (2014)

<sup>18</sup> Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Employment Land Review (February 2014)

In order to support objectives O1 & 14 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP policy ES3 is to be adopted, while objectives O1, 6, 8, 14 & 17 as set out in section 6.3 are to be addressed by policy ES4.

Protection of existing productive employment sites from redevelopment	WNP Policy ES3	<p>The existing employment sites and facilities will be protected recognising that they provide an important source of employment opportunities.</p> <p>Proposals for non-employment generating uses which would result in the loss of employment use will only be granted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the re-use of the site for employment use is no longer practicable. In order to demonstrate that the site is no longer practicable for employment generating uses the site must be marketed, for a minimum 12 month continuous period, at a reasonable price exclusively for employment use, and without any prohibitive sales agreement favouring priority to prospective developers or making the site unavailable to other prospective market purchasers. This reflects BDDC Local Plan Policy EP2.</p>
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Encouragement of new Employment Sites	WNP Policy ES4	<p>Proposals for development of sites for employment which conform to Local Plan Policies and will meet the expansion needs of industrial businesses currently located in Whitchurch Parish will generally be supported, provided that such developments;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. are in keeping with the character of the area, and suitable to the location.</li> <li>2. would not be detrimental to, and would be compatible with, surrounding land uses and not harm the operation of neighbouring businesses.</li> </ol> <p>Development proposals which restrict future expansion of employment adjacent to the Ardglan Road Industrial Estate will not be supported. Development proposals which could realistically result in nuisance complaints relating to existing employment sites will not be supported.</p>
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**10.2.3.** Immediately to the North West of Ardglan Road Industrial Estate is an area with unimplemented planning permission (allocated by saved Local Plan Policy D3.21) for a 4.9Ha employment site. However, the site was not developed during the last Local Plan period.

**10.2.4.** The Parish has an important rural economy associated with farming, horse breeding and field sports. In order to support objectives

O1, 11, 14 & 17 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Encouragement of Rural Employment	WNP Policy ES5	<p><b>Rural Employment Use</b></p> <p>Small scale employment uses appropriate to a rural area will be encouraged, especially those that contribute to the social fabric of the Parish, provided they do not impact on the character of the area or amenity of residents. The re-use of farm and rural buildings outside the settlements for business purposes will be supported, subject to the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the proposed reuse would not have significant adverse impacts on the surrounding rural landscape;</li> <li>b) the proposed reuse would not have adverse impacts on the local road network;</li> <li>c) the proposed reuse would not cause unacceptable conflicts with agriculture and other land based activities;</li> <li>d) the proposals would not have significant adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residents and other uses; and</li> <li>e) the buildings concerned would not require substantial rebuilding or extension.</li> </ul>
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### 10.3. Employment Site Options

Details of the options for Employment sites in the Parish and the site selection process followed by the NPSC are given in the Employment Site Selection Report which is included in the Supporting Documents and to which reference should be made.

**10.3.1.** The NPSC commenced the identification of potential employment sites in Summer 2013. It identified potentially viable sites and contacted landowners with land which might be suitable for development. In Autumn 2013, the Steering Committee also advertised in the Parish Magazine and on its website for landowners or developers who may wish to have land considered for development.

**10.3.2.** As a result, three potential employment sites were identified and screened against constraints maps (Figures 2.2 and 2.3) to ensure they were viable. No sites were rejected at this stage, although for some large sites the site areas were reduced to include the areas of the site most suitable for development. The sites identified are shown on Figure 10.3 and details shown on table 10.1. These sites were included in the scope of the options consultation.

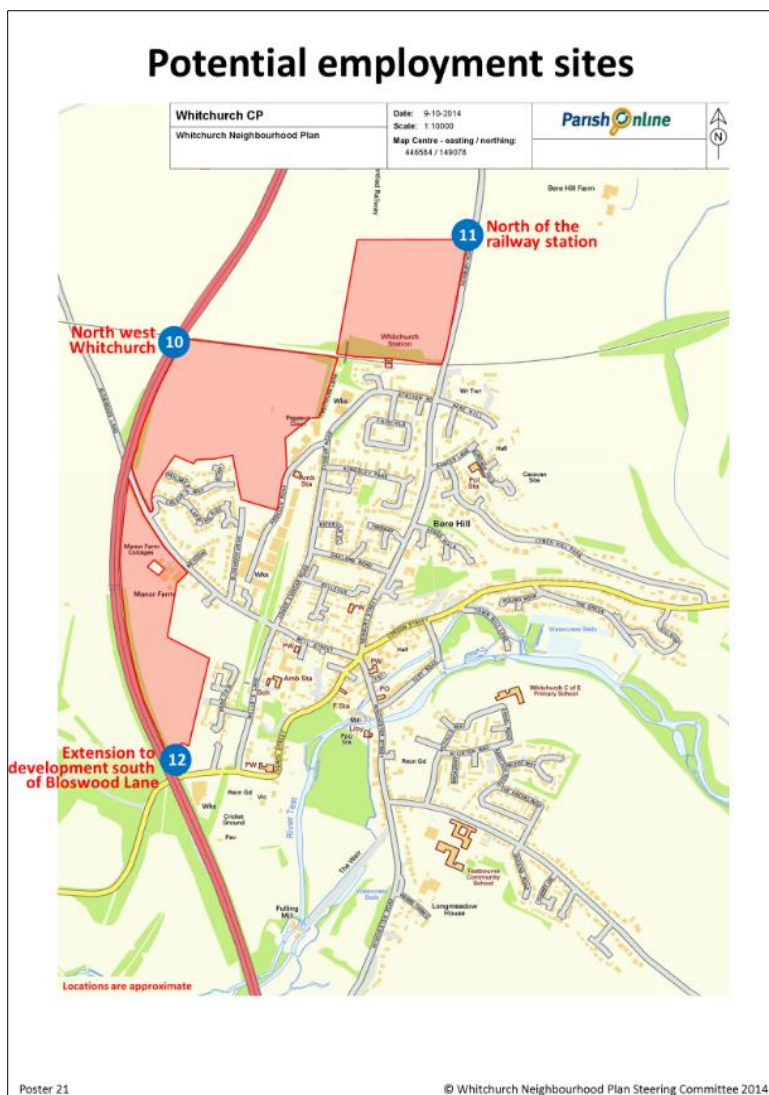


Figure 10.3. Employment site options presented at the “Where Should the Houses Go?” housing options events

Site option	Ownership	Site area (ha)	Current use/classification	Proposed use	Scale (,000 ft <sup>2</sup> )
North West Whitchurch	The Hospital of St Cross & Almshouse of Noble Poverty	1.2 as mixed use	Greenfield disused orchard. Allocated for industrial use in 2006 Local Plan	B1	35-50
North of the railway station	Zurich Assurance	4.0	Greenfield	B1, B2 and B8	120
Extension to development south of Bloswood Lane	Zurich Assurance	8.0	Greenfield	B1 only likely	120+

Table 10.1. Employment site options

**10.3.3.** Residents’ responses to the options consultation showed a preference to:

- include an allocation of employment land in the Neighbourhood Plan (the majority of respondents ranked “none” as their least preferred option); and
- allow growth of local businesses, above that for the future increase in population or attracting new businesses to the area.

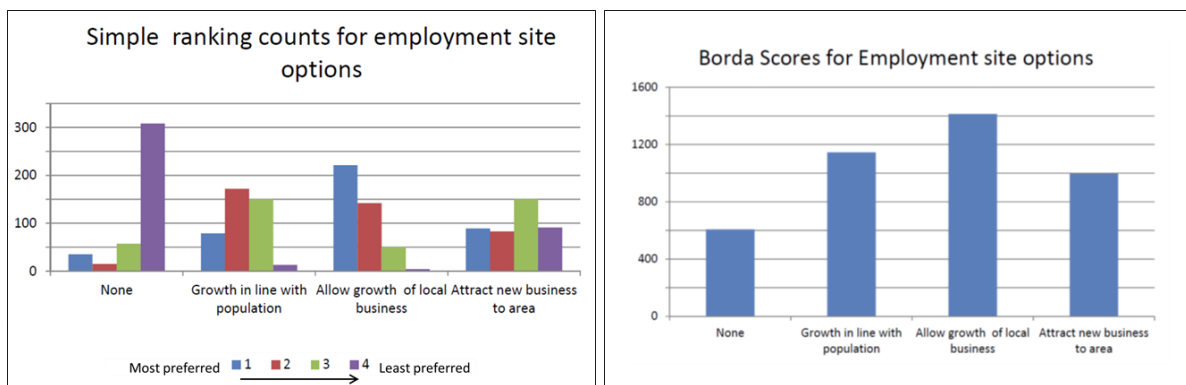


Figure 10.4. Whitchurch residents’ views on business growth in the town<sup>19</sup>  
 (Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Options Consultation Survey, October 2014, 512 responses)

**10.3.4.** Of the three potential employment sites, the most popular was ‘North of the Railway’ [site 11] followed by ‘North West Whitchurch’ [site 10]. ‘South of Bloswood Lane’ [site 12] was considerably less popular.

<sup>19</sup> The Borda Score is a form of preferential voting where voters rank options in order of preference and the rankings are converted into points. See <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/borda-count/#sthash.eEtYyG3Q.dpuf>

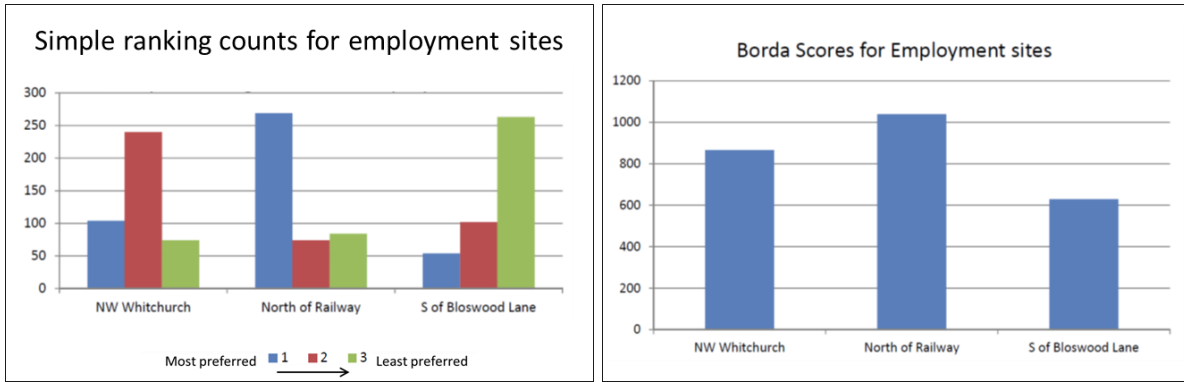


Figure 10.5. Whitchurch residents' – preferences on employment sites  
 (Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Options Consultation Survey, October 2014, 512 responses)

**10.3.5.** The most important concerns voiced by residents during the consultation process related to traffic and parking, with HGVs being singled out for particular concern. Sites for employment use south of the Town Centre are not considered viable, as HGV traffic generated would need to travel through the Town Centre to access some primary routes due to the lack of access to the northbound A34 from the south of the town. Employment sites north of the Town Centre were considered, as HGV traffic could be directed to the A34 junction north of Whitchurch at Litchfield, where both north and southbound access is available.

In order to support objectives O2, 7 & 8 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Protection of the Town Centre from employment related HGV traffic	WNP Policy ES6	<p><b>Employment-Related Traffic</b></p> <p>Proposals for development of sites for employment use north of the Town Centre will need to demonstrate that HGV traffic generated will be actively directed to the A34 junction north of the Town at Litchfield, avoiding the Town Centre. The direction of traffic will need to be practical and enforceable and the development will be required to provide for the direction and enforcement of the route through an appropriate mechanism. All applications will need to be accompanied by a Transport Statement and Traffic Management Plan.</p>
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**10.3.6.** Following residents’ the feedback from the Options Consultation, all three sites were ranked on the basis of the assessment criteria identified for both BDBC SHLAA site assessment and the WNP Vision criteria.

**10.3.7.** These assessments covered:

- planning criteria contained in the BDBC SHLAA;
- criteria which were established as important to the Community during the “Have Your Say” Vision consultation;
- conformance to the Basic Conditions which include the NPPF, strategic policies contained in the emerging Local Plan and legislation;
- deliverability of the sites;
- the results of the SEA screening exercise; and
- the potential benefits to the community which will be provided to the community, should the sites be developed.

**10.3.8.** North West Whitchurch and North of the Railway were the highest-ranked sites under the two assessments<sup>20</sup>. Blosswood Lane Extension was consistently the lowest-ranked site.

Assessment	Site 10: North West Whitchurch (Mixed Use)	Site 11: North of the Railway	Site 12: Blosswood Lane Extension
Ranking on SHLAA criteria	2	1	3
Ranking on WNP Vision criteria	1	2	3

Table 10.2. Results of the employment site assessments

The Blosswood Lane Extension site was poorly ranked by these assessments but the North West Whitchurch and North of the Railway sites had similar and higher rankings.

#### **10.4. Site selection for Employment Use.**

In considering the allocation of a site for employment use, the WNP has taken into account that:

No strategic need for industrial development in the Parish of Whitchurch has been identified by BDBC in the emerging Local Plan.

It has not proved possible to provide definitive evidence for the need from Whitchurch-based industries for an industrial development of more than 50,000 ft<sup>2</sup> or so over the

<sup>20</sup> Details of the ranking criteria and scoring methodologies, and the individual site assessments, for both the SHLAA and Vision ranking exercises, are available in the WNP Employment Site Selection Report.

next 15 years although it is recognised that predictions over the period of the WNP up till 2029 are difficult to make.

The North West Whitchurch employment development, as laid out in Policy D3.21 of the BDBC Local Plan 2006-2011 would be adequate to meet the needs of Whitchurch during the period of the WNP.

Allocation of an employment site north of the railway, in the North Wessex Downs Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), would therefore be unlikely to pass the “sequential test” necessary to justify an incursion into the AONB. Without this, North Wessex Downs AONB would not support the development<sup>21</sup>. Such an allocation would also be in contravention of NPPF paragraph 115 and 116.

In the absence of concrete evidence to show that the North West Whitchurch site is not deliverable, nor that more employment land is needed than can be provided by the North West Whitchurch site, the WNP supports the allocation of North West Whitchurch for employment developments, as laid out in Saved Policy D3.21 of the BDBC Local Plan 2006-2011. In supporting this Local Plan Allocation it is expected that the site will be accessed via the railway tunnel to the North of the site, and then directly onto Newbury Road north of the railway line and that in order to meet the expansion needs of existing Whitchurch industrial businesses the development will include use classes B1 and B2.

As this site is a current BDBC Policy it is not required for the WNP to allocate this site in this document.

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<sup>21</sup> Letter from Andrew Lord North Wessex Downs AONB (29 May 2012)

## **11. Housing**

### **11.1. Section Introduction**

The supporting document “Housing Site Selection Overview Report” provides a detailed assessment of the site selection process used for the allocation of sites for housing in the WNP. Reference should be made to this document. This Section provides a summary of the process together with the allocations made and the policies which are proposed for adoption.

### **11.2. Planning applications**

The following planning applications and permitted developments have been considered when preparing the WNP:

*Ref. No: 13/01522/OUT Land Adjoining Caesars Way Whitchurch Hampshire.* Outline planning application for the erection of up to 34 new homes with associated access, open space and landscaping and the change of use of adjoining land to provide replacement allotments and new community orchards (with ancillary car parking and storage buildings) and associated landscaping including access. The appeal against refusal was upheld in March 2015.

*Ref. No: BDB/77828 Land South of Blosswood Lane and Groves Orchard Blosswood Lane Whitchurch Hampshire* Erection of 83 residential dwellings, including affordable housing, access and associated open space, landscaping and infrastructure which was granted planning permission and form part of the site allocated under Policy SS3.6 of the emerging Local Plan as detailed above.

*Ref. No: 15/01104/GPDOFF Timesvalue Limited 52 Evingar Road Whitchurch Hampshire RG28 7EU .* Notification of proposed change of use of Class B1(a) office to Class C3 (dwelling house) consisting of 9 no. one bedroom apartments and 13 no. two bedroom apartments. This forms part of the Land North of Evingar Road site assessed for housing development in the WNP.

### **11.3. Housing allocation requirement**

The need for housing is set out in the emerging Local Plan. It requires a minimum of 350 dwellings be built in Whitchurch over the WNP Period 2011 to 2029.

A site for 150 dwellings at Blosswood Lane is allocated in the emerging Local Plan policy SS3.6. This site has been accepted by the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan leaving sites for approximately 200 houses to be allocated by Parish/Town Council through neighbourhood planning, rural exceptions schemes, or a review of Settlement Policy Boundaries in accordance with Policy SS5. The WNP has therefore been prepared on the basis that sites for approximately 200 dwellings will be identified in Whitchurch in accordance with Policy SS5 of the emerging Local Plan.

In March 2015 an appeal to build 34 dwellings on allotment land at Caesars Way was upheld, and these homes will count towards this total. In the spring of 2015, Whitchurch Town Council agreed the building of 25 Rural Exception dwellings on land East of the Knowlings which, in accordance with Policy SS5 of the emerging Local Plan, will also count towards the total.

Sites for approximately 141 dwellings are therefore being allocated by the WNP<sup>22</sup>.

#### 11.4. Housing Mix

Whitchurch needs to cater for the needs of an ageing population. This is to address the particular needs as identified in the public consultation and discussions with estate agents which have confirmed the need and demand for a proportion of bungalows/lifetime homes in the housing mix.

The WNP will conform to the emerging Local Plan Policy CN1 that all developments shall include 40% social housing.

In order to support objectives O4, 5 & 16 as set out in section 6.3 of these plan policies HD1 and HD2 are to be adopted. Objectives O4 & 16 as set out in section 6.3 are supported by policy HD3.

Housing Mix	WNP Policy HD1	Development will be permitted where the type and size of affordable homes meets the specific needs identified for Whitchurch. Housing developments of ten units or more should address the local need for older persons' housing. This can occur through the provision of bungalows or other suitable housing. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. Affordable dwellings for rent provided in the Parish will be subject to a s106 Legal Agreement and/or land title covenant between the housing provider and land owner ensuring that it remains available for local households in which one member is over the state retirement age or as an affordable dwelling for local people in perpetuity. Development proposals will be required to provide evidence, proportionate to the scale of development proposed, to justify the mix of housing proposed.
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<sup>22</sup> The Emerging Local Plan and WNP accepts that there will be continuing small scale development of 9 dwellings or less within the Settlement Boundary, but these do not count towards the numbers allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Adoption of housing design standards	WNP Policy HD2	<p><b>Housing Standards</b></p> <p>In addition to the requirement of policy CN3 of the emerging Local Plan. The LPA will apply 'Nationally described space standards' to new dwellings. These dictate the size of rooms.</p> <p>The LPA will apply a condition for a higher standard of water efficiency.</p> <p>The LPA will also ask for higher levels of accessibility so that people can adapt their homes for the future or, if the property is being built for a particular person, so that they have full access to the whole property.</p> <p>Footnote:</p> <p>New National Housing standards enforced via the Building Regulations are replacing locally proscribed standards.</p>
Providing affordable housing for those with Local Connections	WNP Policy HD3	<p>Notwithstanding the eligibility criteria which may be determined from time to time by the Borough Council, providers of affordable housing in the Parish shall ensure that before being offered to individuals and families in housing need in the Borough, all reasonable efforts are made to ensure that dwellings in Whitchurch are only be occupied by persons (and their dependants) whose housing needs are not met by the market and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) who have a minimum period of 10 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish; or</li> <li>b) who are not now resident in the parish or an adjoining parish but have a local connection with the parish including a period of permanent and continuous residence of 10 years or more within the last 20; or</li> <li>c) who have an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of 10 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish, the essential need arising from proven age or medical reasons; or</li> <li>d) who need to live close to their place of work in the parish or an adjoining parish.</li> </ul> <p>Where such a person cannot be found, an affordable house may then be occupied by persons (and their dependants) whose housing needs are not met by the market and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) who have a minimum period of five years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish; or</li> <li>b) who are not now resident in the parish or an adjoining parish but have a local connection with the parish including a period of permanent and continuous residence of five years or more within the last 10; or</li> <li>c) who have an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of five years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish, the essential need arising from proven age or medical reasons.</li> </ul>

## **11.5. Site Identification**

The WNP commenced the identification of potential housing in the summer of 2013. It identified and contacted the owners of land within and adjacent to Whitchurch Town and identified potentially viable sites. In the autumn of 2013 NPSC also advertised in the Parish Magazine and on its Website for Landowners or developers who may wish to have land considered for development.

As a result of this process nine potential housing sites were identified and screened against constraints maps to ensure they were viable and there were no immediate show stoppers. No sites were rejected at his stage.

The NPSC met on a number of occasions with the landowners and developers to explore the potential detail of their sites and invited them to present their proposals to “Where do the Houses Go” community consultation in October 2014.

### **11.5.1. Housing sites options identified**

The potential housing sites identified for the community consultation in October 2014 are shown in Figure 11.1 and Table 11.1 below.

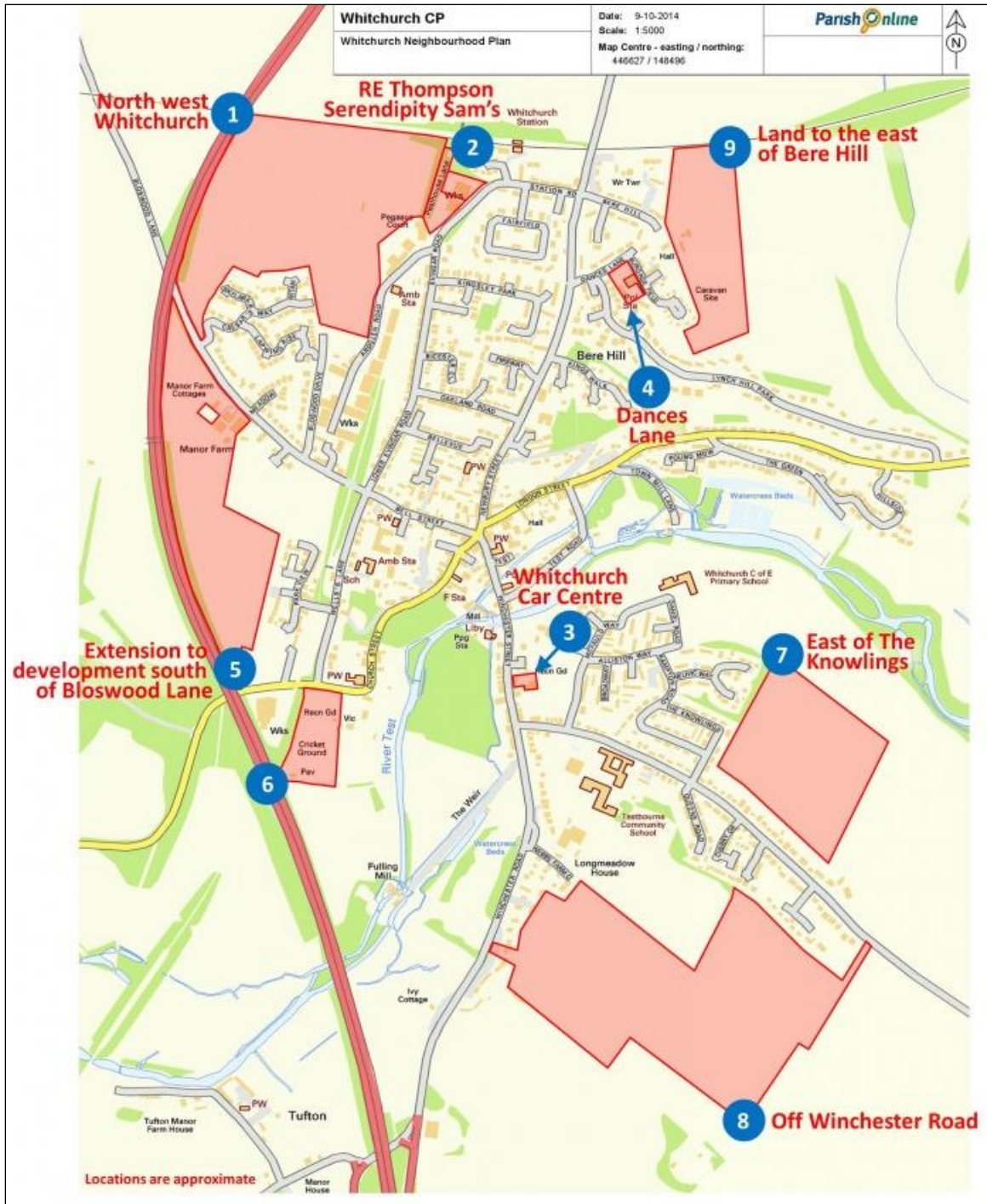


Figure 11.1. Housing site options presented to the housing options consultation in October 2014

Since this consultation, there have been a number of site divisions and changes to the site boundaries or housing numbers as a result of consultation with the site owners/developers or other assessments. In particular, the following changes have been made:

- Site 2 RE Thompson / Serendipity Sam's has been divided into its component sites, as a separate planning application was submitted for the Serendipity Sam's

site and it became apparent that different considerations for each of the components would be required to establish their suitability for allocation.

- Following discussions with the proposed developers, the number of homes on Site 8, East of Winchester Road, has been reduced to 100 and the site area reduced accordingly.
- The southern part of Site 1, North West Whitchurch, was the subject of a proposal and appeal for outline planning permission for 34 new homes. The appeal was upheld in late March 2015, leaving approximately 116 new homes proposed on the remainder of the site.
- Housing numbers on some of the small brownfield sites have been reduced following review by BDBC.

Table 11.1 gives some details of the sites including a nominal number of dwellings which could be built on the site as assessed by architects and planners on the WNPSC and presented at the community consultations. The number of houses proposed following subsequent evaluation and/or discussion with the landowners is shown in brackets. The site area is that as presented at the community consultations.

Site option	Ownership	Nominal number of dwellings	Approximate site area (ha)	Current site use/classification
Site 1: North West Whitchurch	The Hospital of St Cross & Almshouse of Noble Poverty	150 (now 116)	14	Allotments and greenfield old orchard allocated for Industrial
Site 8: East of Winchester Road	LillyBell	200 (now 100)	19	Greenfield SHLAA category 1
Site 2: R E Thompson / Serendipity Sam's	R E Thompson	20	0.4	Industrial allocated for residential in saved policies of LP
	Timesvalue Ltd	20 (now 16)	0.3	Industrial allocated for residential in saved policies of LP
Site 9: East of Bere Hill	Zurich Assurance	100	5.5	Greenfield SHLAA Category 2
Site 5: Blosswood Lane Extension	Zurich Assurance	100	8	Greenfield allocated for residential use
Site 7: East of the Knowlings	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	200	7.3	Greenfield disused agricultural SHLAA Category 1
Site 4: Dances Lane	Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire	20 (now 15)	0.4	Police Station
Site 3: Car Centre	Timesvalue Ltd	10	0.15	Developed site

Site 6: North of the Cricket Ground	The Hospital of St Cross & Almshouse of Noble Poverty	30	0.65	Greenfield, occasional use as car park
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Table 11.1. Housing site options

### 11.5.2. Site selection methodology

The objective of the site selection process was to identify the most sustainable housing sites. Where the planning considerations were broadly similar, potential benefits to the community and the likelihood of the allocation being supported by the community were taken into account.

This site selection took into account the:

- National Planning Policy Framework ;
- policies in BDBC’s emerging Local Plan;
- saved policies from the BDBC’s Adopted Local Plan 2006; and
- results of the “Where do the houses go” community consultation in October 2014.

The results of the Sustainability Appraisal “SEA scoping” and “assessment of reasonable alternatives” exercise were also considered.

All potential nine housing sites were ranked on the basis of the assessment criteria identified for both BDBC SHLAA site assessment and the WNP Vision. The Vision criteria, established during the “Have Your Say” Vision community consultation in March 2014, were:

- The development isn’t too large;
- The development can be delivered at a modest rate;
- The site would maintain the current community character;
- The site helps maintain the local employment base;
- The site is well integrated with the town;
- Any development will be able to include public open space;
- The development would not impact adversely on existing highways constraints;
- Any development could be well served by adequate parking;
- Any development would not generate significant HGV traffic;
- Any development would help improve the Town Centre;
- Any development will be able to provide recreational facilities; and
- The site will help provide better access to the river.

The BDBC SHLAA criteria were:

- Site status and deliverability
- Impact on landscape;
- Impact on heritage and landscape designations;
- Impact on agricultural land;
- Relationship with the settlement;
- Accessibility by sustainable modes of transport;
- Capacity of the local highways network;
- Presence of contamination;
- Ability to contribute towards open space;
- Ability to provide new local services;
- Proximity to noise emitting uses;
- Proximity to general 'bad neighbour' uses;
- Impact on biodiversity;
- Adequacy of local drainage and sewerage; and
- Impact on archaeological designations.

Full details of the site selection criteria, scoring methodology and results are set out in the supporting document "Housing Site Selection Overview Report".

### 11.5.3. Scoring results

The housing sites were ranked by the NPSC according to both the Vision and SHLAA criteria. In addition, Bell Cornwell LLP, an independent firm of town planning consultants, was instructed to carry out an independent ranking of the sites according to the SHLAA criteria.

The results of the site assessments are summarised in Table 11.2 below. The highest ranking indicates the most favoured site, according to the criteria, whilst the lowest ranking indicates the least favoured site.

Assessment	Site 1: North West Whitchurch	Site 2: Evingar Road North (Serendipity Sam's)	Site 2: Evingar Road North (RE Thompson)	Site 3: Whitchurch Car Centre	Site 4: Dances Lane	Site 5: Bloswood Lane Extension	Site 6: North of the Cricket Ground	Site 7: East of Knowlings	Site 8: East of Winchester Road	Site 9: Bere Hill
SHLAA criteria (NPSC)	5=	1=		3	1=	8	9	5=	4	5=
SHLAA criteria (Bell Cornwell)	7=	2=		2=	1	7=	9	6	4	5
Vision criteria (NPSC)	6=	3=	2	3=	1	5	6=	9=	9=	6=

Table 11.2. Housing site option rankings in the assessment process

## 11.6. Results of “Where do the Houses Go” Community Consultation.

The full results of this consultation are published in a separate document entitled “Results of the October 2014 Consultation” to which reference should be made.

### 11.6.1. Preferred size of sites

At the “Where do the Houses Go” community consultation, the most broadly accepted option for the allocation of housing was for *one medium and several smaller sites*. Of the two alternative options:

- use of *only small sites* was the second most popular option but, given the number of houses required, is not possible; and
- allocation of *one large site* was by far the least popular option.

The size of housing development sites was also considered in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the WNP undertaken by AECOM Infrastructure and Environment. The technical note<sup>23</sup> which addressed this issue ranked the one medium and several small sites as the best option.

The allocation of housing to one medium and several smaller sites has therefore been adopted by the NPSC.

### 11.6.2. Ranking of Potential Housing sites

At the “Where do the houses go” community consultation, respondents were asked to rank potential sites in order of preference. Unsurprisingly, there were a wide range of opinions about each site. Responses were therefore analysed using the Borda Count<sup>24</sup>, a form of preferential voting where voters rank options in order of preference and the rankings are converted into points. The higher the score, the more broadly acceptable the option is deemed to be.

The Borda Count scores, in Figure 11.2 below, show that the three most broadly acceptable sites are amongst the smallest:

- Site 4, Dances Lane;
- Site 2, Evingar Road North (RE Thompson and Serendipity Sam’s); and
- Site 3, Whitchurch Car Centre.

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<sup>23</sup>“Sustainability Assessment of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan: Appraisal of reasonable alternatives regarding an emerging spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan”, AECOM (12 May, 2015)

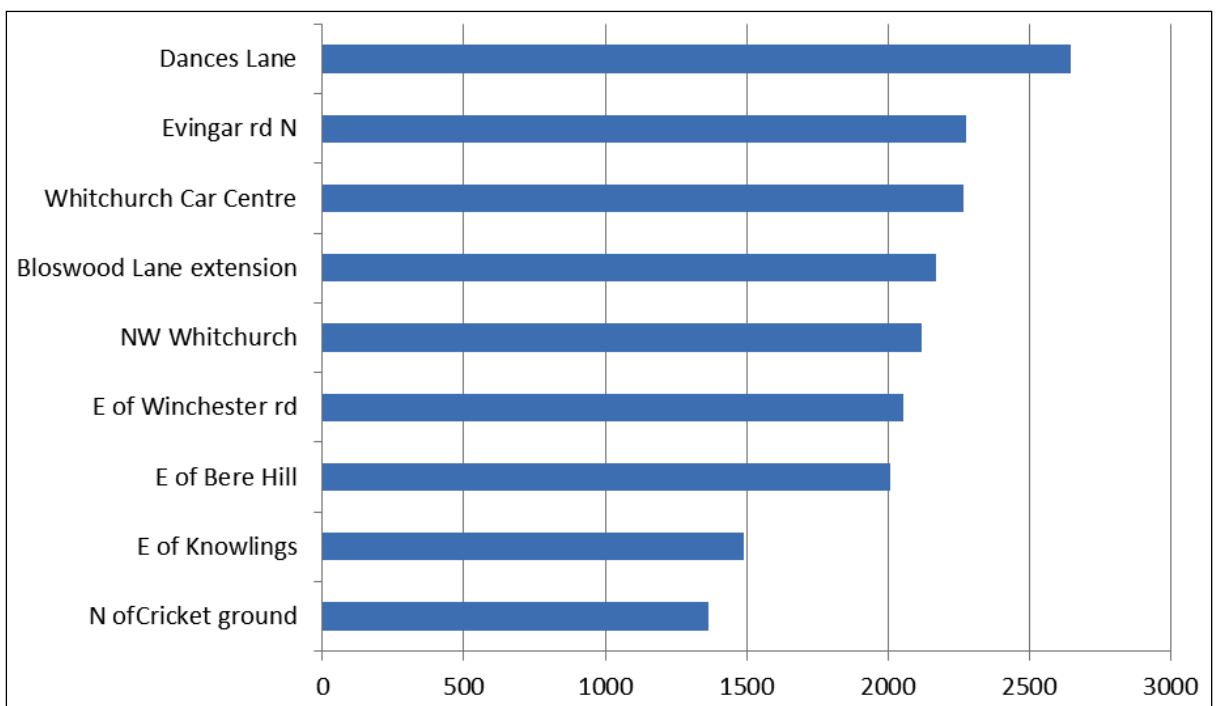
<sup>24</sup> See more at: <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/borda-count/> - sthash.eEtYYG3Q.dpuf

The most broadly acceptable of the larger sites are:

- Site 5, Blosswood Land Extension;
- Site 1, North West Whitchurch; and
- Site 8, East of Winchester Road.
- Site 9, Bere Hill

Two sites were significantly less broadly acceptable than the others:

- Site 7, East of the Knowlings; and
- Site 6, North of the Cricket Ground.



• Figure 11.2. Borda Count of respondents' rankings ranking of the Housing site options showing the most and least broadly acceptable options

### 11.7. Site allocation for housing development.

To meet the requirement for 141 additional dwellings in Whitchurch, the most sustainable solution, and most broadly acceptable to the residents of Whitchurch, is for one medium site and several previously developed smaller sites. The medium site with the best overall assessment, community benefits and acceptability to the community is Site 8: East of Winchester Road. This site is allocated in the WNP for approximately 100 homes. Three small, previously developed sites will also be allocated in the WNP. These are Site 4: Dances Lane, Site 2 Evingar Road North (Serendipity Sam's) and Site 3: Whitchurch Car Centre. These sites score well in the assessments, are ranked highly by the community and are considered to be sustainable. The allocated sites are shown in Figure 11.3.

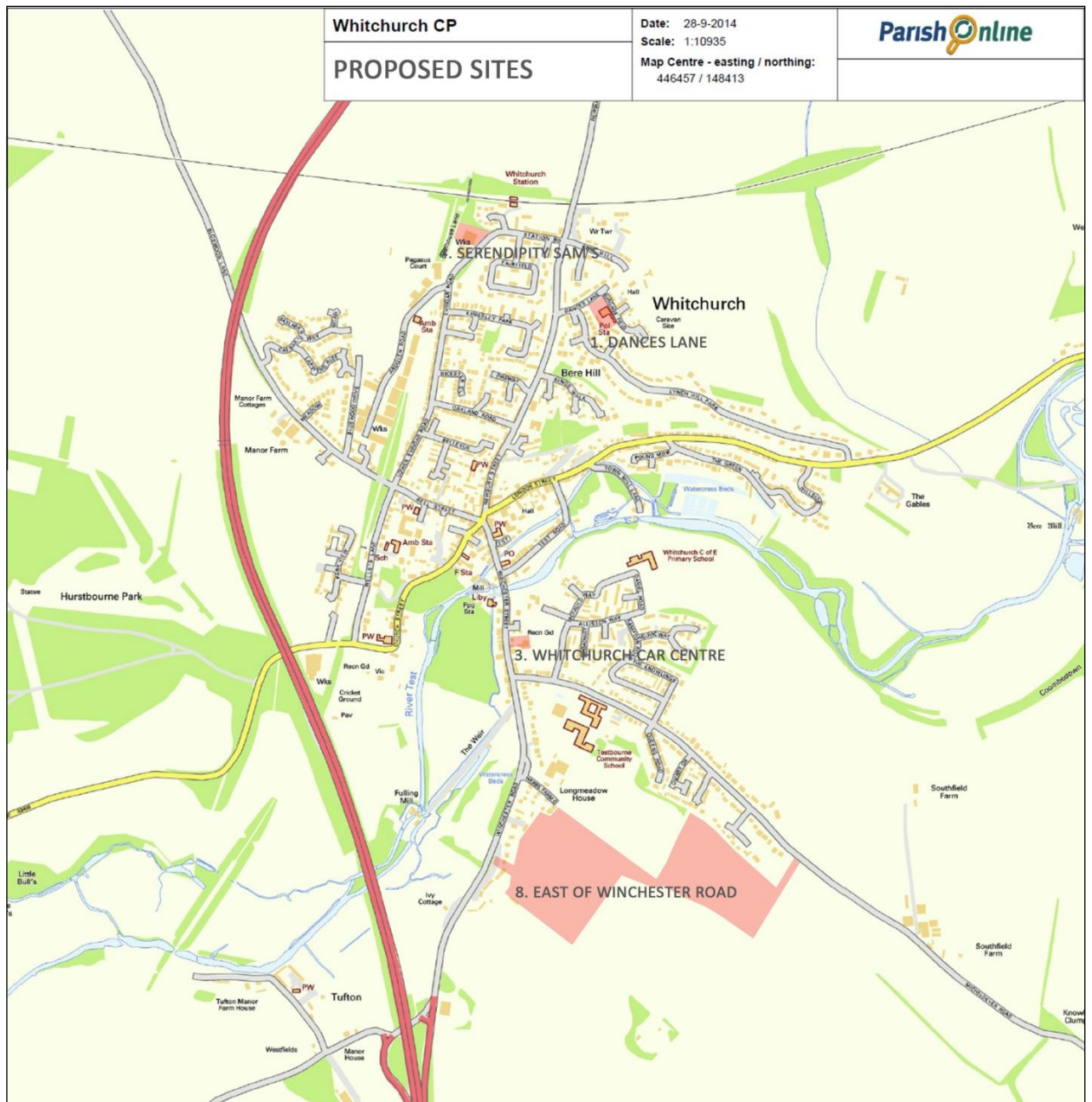


Figure 11.3. Proposed Housing Sites Selected for Whitchurch.

The policies below address the requirement of the WNP to provide sites for approximately 141 homes in the Parish of Whitchurch over the WNP period 2011 to 2029. In order to support objective O4 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP policies HA1-4 are to be adopted. Objectives O4 & 11 as set out in section 6.3 are supported by policy HA5.

<p>Allocation of Dances Lane for approximately 15 dwellings</p>	<p>WNP Policy HA1</p>	<p>The 0.4Ha site at Dances Lane (Figure 11.4) is allocated for housing development in the WNP and will deliver a high quality development that will make provision for approximately 15 dwellings.</p> <p>Utilising existing access from Dances Lane, development on this site will deliver homes in the period to 2029 in accordance with the requirement to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing.</p>
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Figure 11.4. Dances Lane site.

<p>Allocation of Serendipity Sams for approximately 16 dwellings.</p>	<p>WNP Policy HA2</p>	<p>The 0.3Ha site “Serendipity Sam’s” in Evingar Road (Figure 11.5) is allocated for housing development in the WNP and will deliver a high quality development that will make provision approximately 16 dwellings.</p> <p>Utilising the existing access from Evingar Road, development on this site will deliver homes in the period to 2029 in accordance with the requirement to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing.</p>
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Figure 11.5. Serendipity Sam site.

<p>Allocation of the Car Centre for approximately 10 dwellings</p>	<p>WNP Policy HA3</p>	<p>The 0.15 Ha site at the Whitchurch Car Centre (figure 11.6) is allocated for housing development in the WNP and will deliver a high quality development that will provide approximately 10 dwellings.</p> <p>Utilising the existing access from Winchester Road, development on this site will deliver homes in the period to 2029 in accordance with the requirement to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing.</p>
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Figure 11.6. Car Centre site.



<p>Allocation of East of Winchester Road for approximately 100 dwellings</p>	<p>WNP Policy HA4</p>	<p>The 12.12ha site east of Winchester Road (Figure 11.7) is allocated for housing development in the WNP. The western part of the site within the proposed settlement boundary will deliver a high quality development that will make provision approximately 100 dwellings. Development on this site will deliver homes in the period to 2029 in accordance with the requirement to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing. This site shall provide a development which will;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have a design and layout of high quality and character which respects locally distinctive features of Whitchurch (as detailed in the Whitchurch Design Statement SPD) and its location on the edge of the Town;</li> <li>2. Respond positively to the landscape characteristics of the area, providing an appropriate edge to the town;</li> <li>3. Include measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the local road network including improvements to the junction with Winchester Road, and to the junctions within the Town Centre;</li> <li>4. Include measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes, particularly to the centre of Whitchurch and ensure the ability to service the site by public transport;</li> <li>5. Include the provision of internal walking and cycle routes linked to existing external routes, and the maintenance and improvement of existing Public rights of way through the site;</li> <li>6. Avoid or mitigate direct or indirect adverse impacts on key species and habitats by mitigating and/or compensating any adverse impacts to ensure a net gain in biodiversity, including safeguarding parts of the site natural green space and boundary vegetation as adequate landscape buffer zone to adjacent open countryside;</li> <li>7. Incorporate and/or promote renewable energy technologies;</li> <li>8. Provide 15% lifetime homes.</li> <li>9. Include provision for public open space (to be laid out for football pitches) to meet local needs, in line with the councils adopted standards and FA Standards for Club Football.</li> <li>10. Provision of changing rooms of robust and secure construction for 4 teams in line with FA standards for club football.</li> <li>11. Provide an adequate car park for and adjacent to the changing rooms.</li> <li>12. Ensure adequate pedestrian linkage to Testbourne School in conjunction with the provision of a car and bus turning, drop off and collection point sized to meet the needs identified in the school travel plan and HCC capacity forecasts for the WNP period.</li> <li>13. In the light of the nearby sewage treatment works, ensure that acceptable odour standards can be met within homes and amenity areas through the preparation of a comprehensive mitigation assessment/strategy.</li> </ol>
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Figure 11.7. East of Winchester Road site with the proposed Settlement Policy Boundary shown as a blue dashed line.

### 11.8. Revision of the Settlement Boundary

The Town Council will work with BDBC to review the Whitchurch Settlement Policy Boundary to manage the future development of the Town. It is felt appropriate that the built areas of the site allocations in the WNP are included in the future revision of the Whitchurch Settlement Policy Boundary.

Revision of the Settlement Policy Boundary	WNP Policy HA5	The Settlement Policy Boundary for Whitchurch shall be extended as identified in Figure 11.7, to include the built areas of the sites allocated for housing and employment development by the WNP. Areas which are public open space or for recreational use shall not be included within the Settlement Policy Boundary.
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## 12. Community Projects

### 12.1. Community Infrastructure Levy.

**12.1.1.** The CIL is administered by B&DBC, with 25% going to Neighbourhood Plan areas for types of infrastructure defined by a Regulation 123 List. It is considered important that the CIL is used for projects which are supported by the Whitchurch Community and that there is a process by which CIL shall be allocated for the benefit of the community. It is recognised that the prioritised community infrastructure projects cannot be delivered directly by policy within the WNP however this Section sets out the assessed priority and number of processes by which such projects could be delivered.

**12.1.2.** In order to support objectives O3, 8, 11, 12 & 15 as set out in section 6.3 of the WNP the following policy is to be adopted.

Allocation of CIL revenues to Whitchurch Community Infrastructure projects	WNP Policy CP1	<p>Financial contributions will be required, as appropriate, from each developer to mitigate the impact of the development on essential infrastructure such as public utilities, libraries, policing, waste services and the highways network and other schemes identified here, or in the Basingstoke and Deane Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Regulation 123 List (when in draft, subsequent revisions or adopted) or until CIL is adopted through Section 106 agreements.</p> <p>Financial contributions will be required, as appropriate, from each developer to fund additional healthcare, education and leisure services within the town in accordance with the obligations detailed in the Basingstoke and Deane Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Draft Charging Schedule (or subsequent revisions or adoption). Community priorities in terms of additional local facilities to be provided as a result of new development are set out in the WNP.</p> <p>The Town Council will work with stakeholders to review and update the expenditure of CIL funding on Community Infrastructure Projects.</p>
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### 12.2. Whitchurch Infrastructure Projects arising from the WNP.

**12.2.1.** In September 2014 the NPSC asked the community to identify projects which it would like to be supported by CIL and received a number of proposals. The Whitchurch community consultation in October 2014 asked that respondents rank these projects and identify additional Infrastructure projects which they would like CIL to be spent on. The

results are contained in the Community Consultation Report which accompanies the WNP.

**12.2.2.** The highest ranked projects in order of priority were;

- covering of the swimming pool at Testbourne Community School;
- improvements to cycle and footpaths;
- improved access to the River Test;
- leisure Centre at Testbourne School;
- new car parking in the Town centre;
- Youth Project Clubhouse.

**12.2.3.** Additional suggestions in order of priority were;

- Traffic
- Sports and social
- Pedestrian and Cycling
- Parking

The additional suggestions were generally consistent with the projects previously identified.

To achieve these ambitions a number of projects have been identified which will be taken forward under the auspices of the Town Council and funded by CIL and other sources where appropriate

### **12.3. Covered Swimming Pool**

In the “Have your Say” and “Where do the Houses Go” consultations, a school and community covered swimming pool came top of the ranking of possible community projects. If financially viable, funds raised from the CIL will be put towards the provision of a covered swimming pool for joint community and schools use.

### **12.4. Additional Community Sports Facilities**

Other leisure opportunities were identified in by the survey of Sports Clubs, described in Section 9. These may lead to projects that need allocation of land, but are at a low level of maturity and need development by the Town Council and BDBC as sporting and leisure projects before they can be planned. The key findings from the survey are listed in Section 9. There may be major opportunities for land-use for leisure activities among those sites not selected by the WNP for housing or employment development. The Town Council and B&DBC will be asked to consider the Land East of the Knowlings owned by BDBC for expanding leisure activities in line with the increasing planned population of Whitchurch.

## 12.5. Transport Infrastructure Project for Whitchurch

The greatest concern from residents in the Consultations was over traffic congestion and effects. Whitchurch Town Council will work with BDBC, Hampshire County Council, the Highway Agency, public transport providers, local schools and developers and other stakeholders to a long term sustainable strategy for improvements to the highway network and the management of traffic and parking in and around Whitchurch. It is understood that funding has been allocated that should lead to a long term strategy for management of traffic and parking in the Town.

The key components of the project are:

- To undertake a review of existing data sources in relation to traffic and transport in relation to Whitchurch, including existing and proposed flow data and parking levels from a range of sources including survey work undertaken to date, transport assessments undertaken to support proposals for development, and information held by the Borough and County Councils such as HGV flows and relevant travel plans.
- Identify key pinch points and issues on the local transport network, including their cause and what the impact of these is on the accessibility of the town and key facilities.
- Identify a series of short, medium and long term measures to address issues within the town, including approximate costings (where relevant), key partners to deliver such improvements, potential sources of funding and any key issues that would need to be considered in implementing such actions.

It is envisaged that the project will include topics such as;

- the impact of traffic (particularly through HGV Traffic), and to monitor the impacts of change particularly around the schools.
- review on-street parking and location of PSV
- review regulation of short term parking to ensure space for visitors
- review possible weight/size limits / on HGV traffic through Town Centre
- traffic calming measures allowing for local access needs and the continued vitality of the Town Centre
- monitoring and management of HGVs to local shops.
- provision of safe and effective pedestrian and cycle routes through and around the town, including links to improved public access to the River Test.
- provision of appropriate additional cycle and short term parking close to shops and businesses.
- provision and effective management of residents parking in the Town Centre.
- provision of longer stay parking (including coach) for visitors to Whitchurch who wish to enjoy the Town, river Test and Silk Mill.

## **12.6. Improvement or cycle and pedestrian access and open space**

In line with the desire for more outdoor public meeting spaces expressed in the "Have our Say" Vision consultation: The Town Council will work with Hampshire County Council (Highway Authority), Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Developers and local organisations in Whitchurch on identifying opportunities for relocating street space to pedestrians and cyclists for movement of social activities.

- Activity to 'spill out' from buildings, for instance tables outside cafes and restaurants.
- Community events to take place outside Town Hall and other buildings.
- More generous pedestrian footways or crossings so that people can move around more easily and safely.

Improve the design of footway space to improve accessibility for people in wheelchairs or with buggies.

## **12.7. Tree Planting Project**

Whitchurch has a lower density of street trees than comparable areas, particularly in the Town Centre as identified by the "Have Your Say" Vision consultation. Development proposals which designate land adjacent to the public realm for tree planting as an improvement to the existing streetscape will be supported. The Town Council will work with stakeholders to improve the environment in Whitchurch Town Centre by new tree planting. Previous initiatives have identified that existing roads and footways are restricted by infrastructure cabling, so the project will concentrate on identifying frontage areas adjacent to the highway which can be planted as part of redevelopment proposals. Town Council will work with Hampshire County Council (Highway Authority), Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Developers and local organisations in Whitchurch on identifying sites for community led tree planting, accessing the Forestry Commission 'The Big Tree Plant' and other sponsorship funding.

## Acknowledgements

The NPSC are grateful to the members of the Community who have supported the preparation of the WNP either as members of the NPSC from time to time or volunteers. Particular thanks must go to:

Dave George (Chair)	Cllr Andrew Klemz (Vice Chair)	Cllr Andy Jordan (Treasurer)
Gareth Capner	David Gosling	Michael Thompson
Michael Palmer	Ian Jackson	Bevis Parker
John Clark	Stephanie Coleman	Mark Allinson
Hugh James	Linda Fletcher	Kay Owen
Phil Cooper	Graham Burgess	Cllr Keith Watts
Cllr John Buckley	Cam Allinson	Harriet Mercier

The NPSC was constituted as a subcommittee of Whitchurch Town Council. The NPSC acknowledge the close coordination during the preparation of the WNP and are grateful for the financial support given.

The “Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Logo” was designed by Juliette Barber of Testbourne Community School and thanks go to both her and the School for the competition and the excellent outcome.

The NPSC are also appreciative of the help and financial support given by Locality Planning Aid and CDF and for the assistance and encouragement provided by the Neighbourhood Planning Officers at BDBC.

Thanks are also given to the external consultants AECOM, Bell Cornwell and Alex Munro who contributed to the preparation and finalisation of the report.

The WNP could not have been completed without the contribution made by Whitchurch Community who attended our meetings and presentations and made their views known. The NPSC have made every effort to ensure that the views of the community have been reflected in the WNP.