

Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan 2014 to 2029



Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2014 to 2029

Version for Regulation 15 Submission

January 2017

This document is the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan intended for submission under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (As Amended).

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.

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Foreword

This document represents the results of over three years of work by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (NPSC) to formulate the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) 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 support.

A Basic Condition of the WNDP is that it must have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the BDBC adopted Local Plan. The Whitchurch Community, which also includes those working in the Parish, was consulted at a number of public events during the preparation of the WNDP. The WNDP was prepared to reflect as far as possible the views of the community and in particular, its vision and objectives for the future of the Town. The WNDP has been drawn up in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (BDBC) Local Plan which was adopted on 26 May 2016.

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 a significant 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 support the WNDP. The BDBC Local Plan requires the Whitchurch Town Council to allocate sites for a minimum of 200 homes together with a widely accepted contingency of 10%, giving a target of 220 homes which have been allocated in this Plan.

In compliance with the assessed Community wishes voiced through the responses to the Community consultations the WNDP allocates sites for homes on one site of approximately 100 homes east of Winchester Road and south of Testbourne School, and one site for 94 homes in North West Whitchurch as part of a mixed use scheme. The Plan also allocates two small, previously developed, sites within the settlement boundary for housing development or as reserve sites. 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. The North West Whitchurch site will provide community benefits including a car park close to the railway station and large area of public open space, and community orchards.

Out of this allocation one site for 100 homes East of Winchester Road has been granted outline planning permission and one site East of Caesars Way (the allotments site) has been granted planning permission on appeal for 34 homes. These homes are included within the allocations made within this Plan.

Whilst the BDBC Local Plan makes no allocation for employment land, the community consultation empowered the WNDP to support the expansion of existing Whitchurch industry, small businesses and tourism to increase the prosperity of the Parish. The WNDP has allocated land for approximately 4000m² of employment development adjacent to the Ardglen Road Industrial Estate north of the allotments as part of the North West Whitchurch mixed use scheme. A policy aimed at ensuring that HGV traffic generated by the development uses

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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 WNDP, however policies and a process have been included to encourage such development going forward.

Whilst the BDBC 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 affordable housing and other necessary infrastructure, the WNDP includes policies which reinforce the standards set out in the Whitchurch Design Statement and includes provision for issues which are specific to Whitchurch.

The WNDP supports the BDBC 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 which has been proposed to the north of the railway as there is little concrete evidence of this level of local need. It also represents a major incursion into the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in contradiction of the NPPF.

The WNDP has been formulated to ensure that current proposals can be produced with the minimum of disruption to Whitchurch. The NPSC is concerned that any additional applications, if granted, will create additional traffic congestion and a burden upon the infrastructure of Whitchurch which will adversely affect the quality of life. Consequently, the NPSC would oppose any development which goes beyond the WNDP. The NPSC is particularly concerned about the impact of any additional development upon the quality of water in the River Test.

One benefit of the development of the WNDP is that the Town Council will have the say in where a proportion of any future Community Infrastructure Levy monies, raised by developments, 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 flow, cyclist and pedestrian access and parking provision in the Town. Whilst the WNDP is unable to directly deliver such projects, the WNDP includes a process by which the Town Council will work with stakeholders to move such projects forward.

The WNDP will now go for independent examination and then eventually to referendum. If supported by the community, it will then have significant weight in planning decisions taken with regard to the future development of the Parish. It will also help to resist any unsustainable planning applications which may be made during the Plan period.

I would like to sincerely thank all who contributed to the preparation of the WNDP. Particular thanks go 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

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP or Plan) was prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 15(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the European Directive 2001/42 on Strategic Environmental Assessment. This version of the WNDP is the submission Neighbourhood Development Plan under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012 (as amended). The WNDP 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 WNDP sets out policies regarding land for employment use and housing to be built in Whitchurch over the WNDP period which runs from 2014 to 2029, and which is consistent with the period of the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) 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 Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan which includes the Adopted Local Plan of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council as well as the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.3 The WNDP is accompanied by the following documents which have been prepared by the NPSC and are integral to the WNDP.
- Basic Conditions Statement.
 - Consultation Statement (CS)
 - Results of the “Have Your Say” Vision consultation.
 - Results of the “Where do the Houses Go” Consultation
 - Employment Survey results.
 - Housing Site Selection Overview Report (HSSR) together with Addendum
 - Employment Site Selection Overview Report (ESSR) together with Addendum
 - Traffic Studies Report (TSR)
 - Whitchurch Historical and Archaeological Assessment (WHAA)
 - The Whitchurch Infrastructure Report (WIR).
- 1.4 The WNDP is also accompanied by the following documents which have been prepared by others in relation to the WNDP and have to be considered when assessing proposals.
- Whitchurch Design Statement
 - Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (prepared by BDBC)
 - Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) Scoping Report (prepared AECOM)

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- SA/SEA Environmental Report to accompany the Regulation 14 consultation version of the WNDP (prepared by AECOM)
 - SA/SEA Environmental Report to accompany the Submission version of the WNDP (prepared by AECOM).
- 1.5 The WNDP 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 WNDP 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.
- 1.6 The WNDP 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.
- 1.7 The WNDP is also supported by an evidence base which has been compiled by the NPSC during the development of the WNDP.
- 1.8 The WNDP meets four Basic Conditions 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 Local Plan of the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
 - It is compatible with European Union (EU) obligations.
- 1.9 The Basic Conditions Statement which accompanies the WNDP details how the policies described in the WNDP 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.
- 1.10 The BDBC Local Plan was adopted on 26 May 2016 and this Plan has been prepared in general accordance with the strategic policies contained within the Local Plan. The Regulation 14 version of the WNDP contained references to saved policies from the previous BDBC development plan which have now been removed from the current document.
- 1.11 Local residents and relevant external stakeholders including employers with businesses within the area were consulted at critical points during the formulation of the WNDP. The Consultation Statement which accompanies the WNDP gives details of who was consulted on the proposed WNDP; how they were consulted;

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the main issues and concerns raised by the consultations, and how these issues were considered and addressed in the WNDP.

- 1.12 The WNDP designated area borders onto the surrounding parishes of St. Mary Bourne, Laverstoke, Wonston, Hurstbourne Priors, Litchfield and Woodcote, and Overton. The NPSC has met with the Chairs of adjacent neighbourhood plans. None of the Policies or allocations made in the WNDP will have a direct material effect on any of the neighbouring parishes.

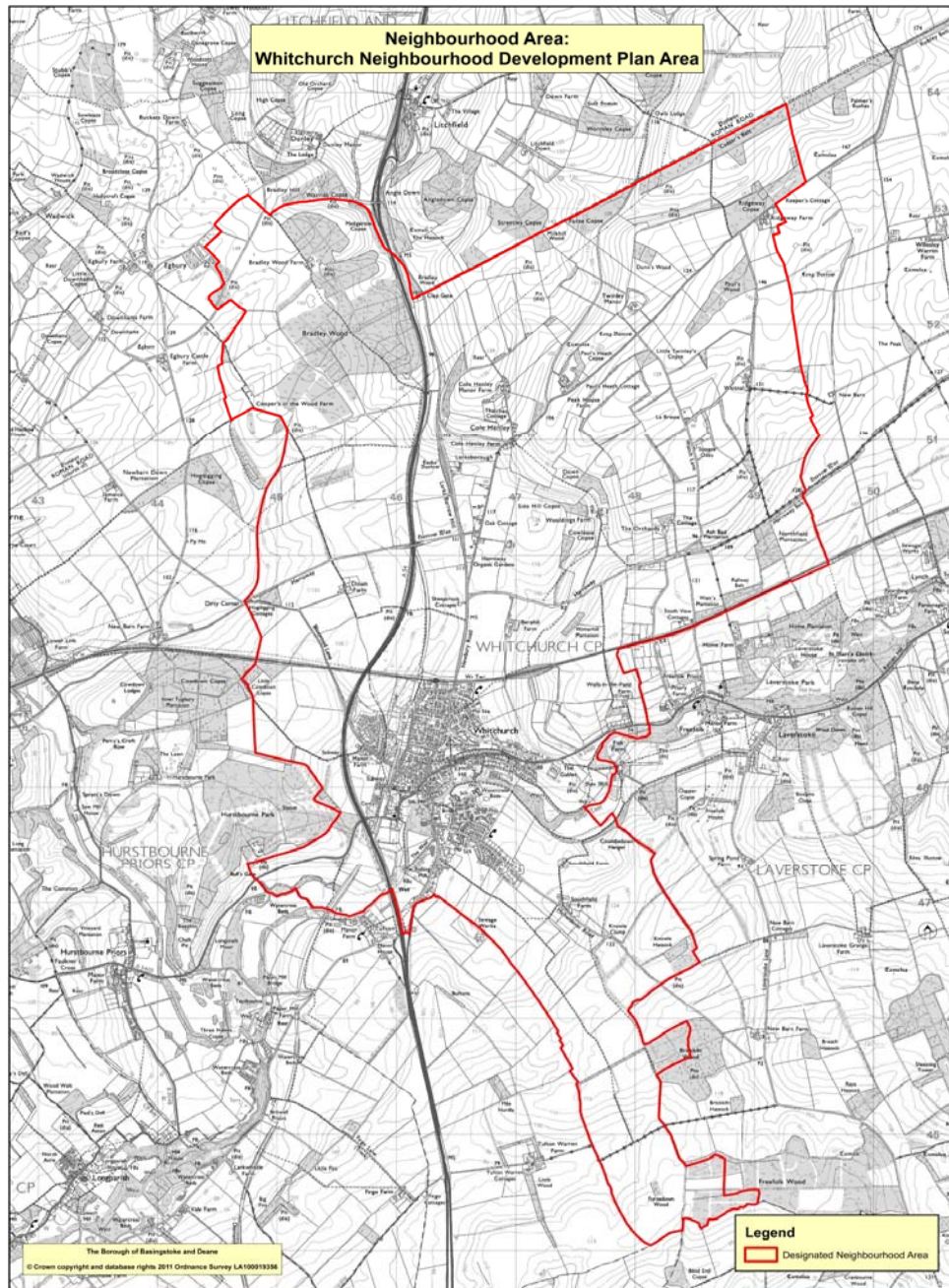


Figure 1.1: The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan Designated Area

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2. The Neighbourhood Area

Introduction

- 2.1 Whitchurch is located within the North West Hampshire Parliamentary Constituency and the Basingstoke and Deane Borough of Hampshire. Whitchurch is a small, rural town in the North West Hampshire, with a population of 4870 people (2011 Census for Whitchurch Parish). 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.

Demographics

- 2.2 A detailed assessment of the demographics of the Town is included in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) document which accompanies the WNDP. 95.3% of the 4870 population (2011 census) is white British, 2.8% is non-white British while the remainder is listed as mixed, Asian, black and other. 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. 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%). 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-detached¹.

Employment

- 2.3 Whitchurch provides significant employment through small businesses, retail education and community services and industry. There are engineering and printing works amongst others on the Ardglen Industrial Estate.
- 2.4 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 construction¹.
- 2.5 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.

¹ All figures from the 2011 Whitchurch Parish Census, as published at http://www3.hants.gov.uk/factsandfigures/population-statistics/census_pages/census_2011.htm

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Town Facilities

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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 which has four outdoor sports pitches. There is a private sports club and football pitch which supports a local team. There is also a local cricket pitch and team.

Transport and Parking

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 Whitchurch is served by busses which run between Basingstoke and Andover and Overton and Winchester. The services have recently been revised and now run half hourly to Andover and Basingstoke and on a less frequent basis to Winchester.
- 2.12 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 before the categories were replaced by the NPPF.
- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 There are roughly 25 short-stay car parking spaces and 88 long-stay car parking spaces in the town. There are four disabled car parking spaces in the town. All of
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the major routes through the Town have on-street parking which is necessary but contributes to congestion.

Geology and Hydrology

- 2.16 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. The 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.
- 2.17 Neighbourhood Plan policies do not cover minerals and waste. These aspects of the development plan are to be found in the Minerals and Waste Plan (HMWP) of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Planning Authority. A Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in 2016. Contact with the County Council's Strategic Planning team may be made via the email address: planning.policy@hants.gov.uk.
- 2.18 There are no quarries that are required to be safeguarded in accordance with policy 15 of the HMWP. There are no identified mineral reserves of any consequence which may impact the allocation of development sites in the WNDP, although superficial mineral deposits do exist within the area and are safeguarded through **Policy 15: Safeguarding – mineral resources** of the HMWP. There are superficial sharp sand and gravel deposits at the access to the housing site east of Winchester Road.

History and Conservation

- 2.19 Whitchurch is mentioned in a Charter of 909 and the Domesday Survey of 1086. The town was granted borough status between 1247 and 1249.
- 2.20 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.
- 2.21 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.
- 2.22 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

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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 to be reviewed in the near future.

- 2.23 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.
- 2.24 There are 73 Listed Buildings, among them the Town Hall and the Silk Mill. Hurstbourne Park is Listed Parkland.
- 2.25 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.

Landscape

- 2.26 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.
- 2.27 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.
- 2.28 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

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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.

- 2.29 The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the north of the Town is a salient fact in the broad description of the landscape (Figure 2.1).

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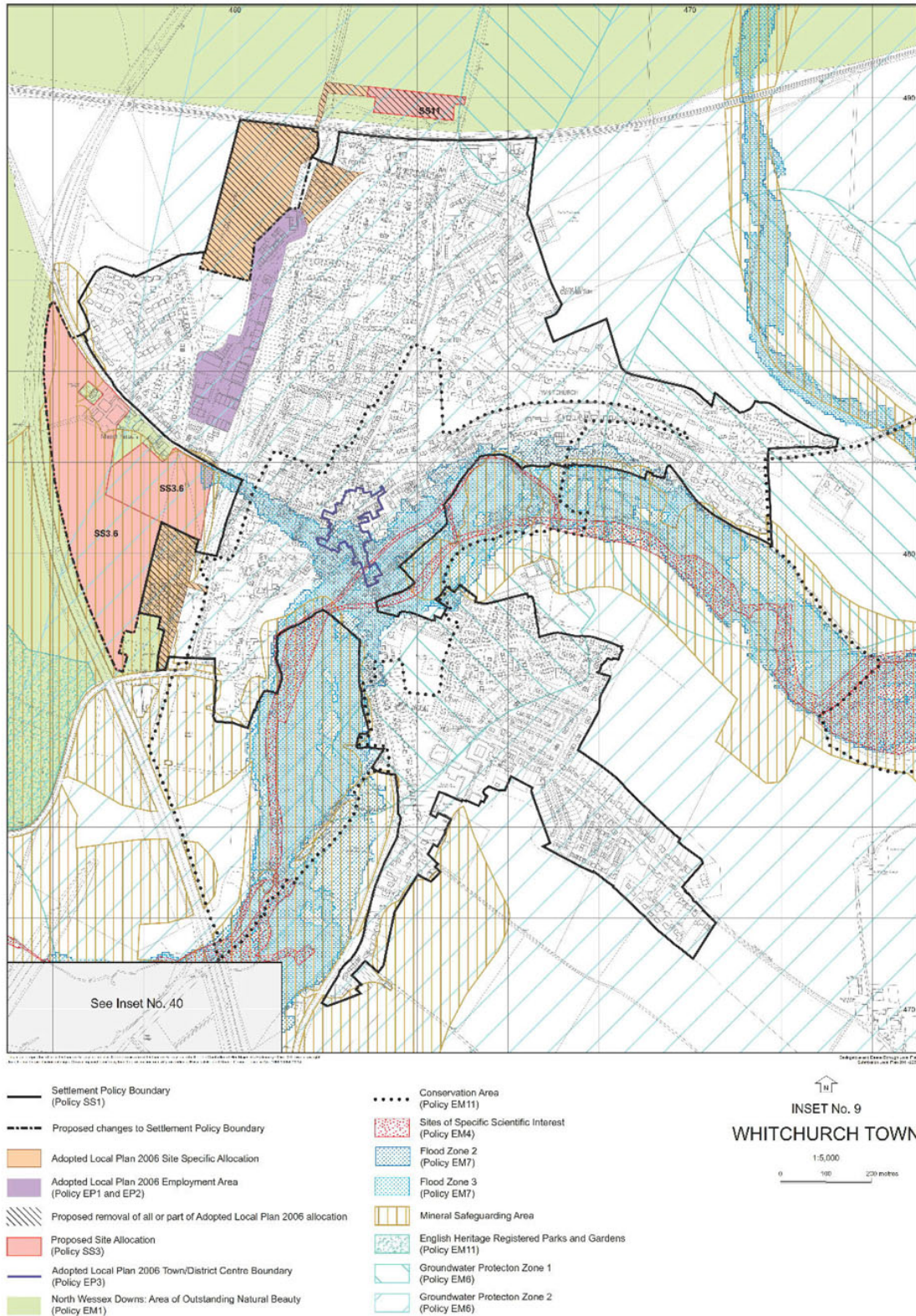
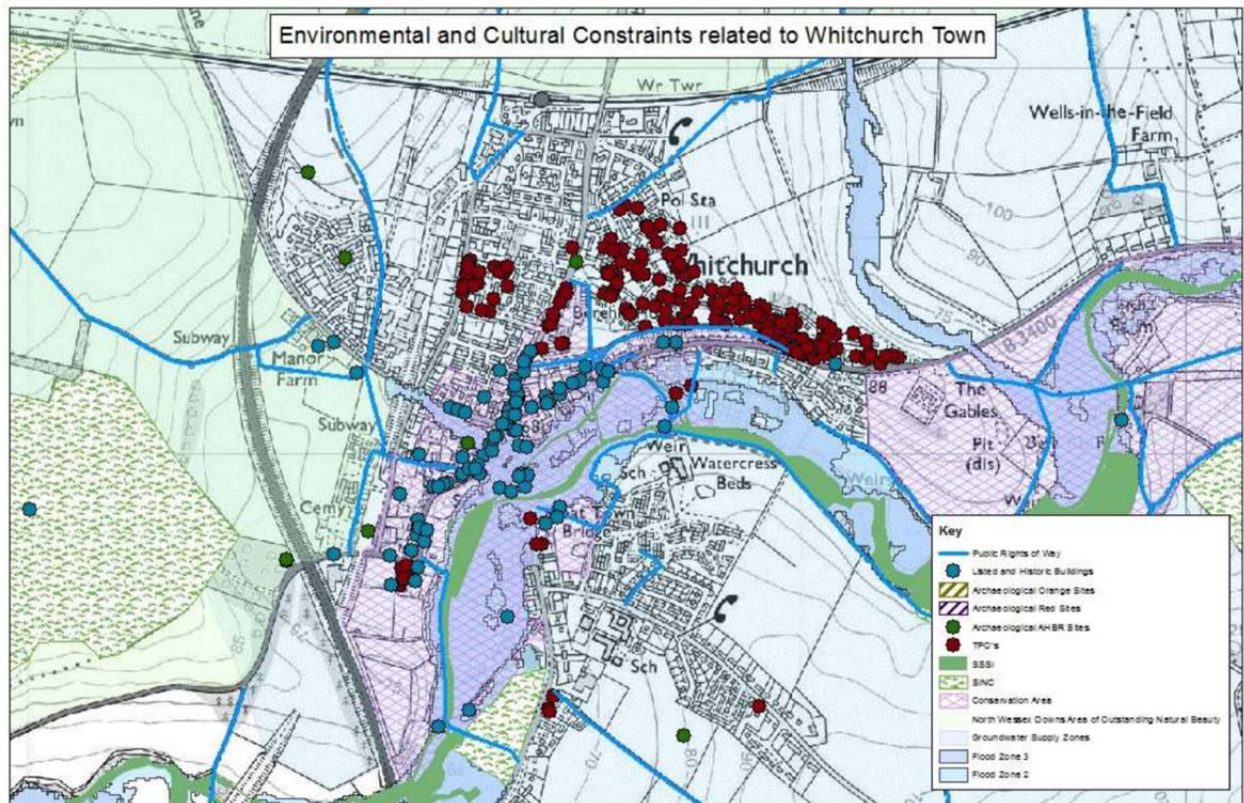


Figure 2.1: The BDBC Local Plan policies map, showing the conservation area in relation to AONB and Sites of Special Scientific Interest

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Scale 1:12,500

Figure 2.2: Whitchurch listed buildings, protected trees, areas of Special Scientific Interest and archaeological sites

- 2.30 Figure 2.2 refers to the situation in 2013, and may have changed since its publication. Applicants and decision makers should ensure that proposals reflect the situation at the time the application is being submitted/determined.

Protected Habitats and Species

- 2.31 Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lie within the WNDP 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). A further SINC lies to the west of the town at Hurstbourne Park.
- 2.32 Figure 2.1 shows Whitchurch and surrounding areas with the various features such as SSSI and SINC delineated.
- 2.33 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.

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- 2.34 Watercress beds and water meadows form important open spaces such as the Millennium Meadow.
- 2.35 Mature trees and woodland are a particular feature within and around the settlements in the Test Valley.
- 2.36 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.
- 2.37 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.

Flood Risk in Whitchurch

- 2.38 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.'
- 2.39 Fluvial flooding, overflow of the drainage system 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 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.
- 2.40 A risk assessment has been initiated 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 in the River Test and the resultant backup of water during high water levels.
- 2.41 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 main sites allocated for housing and employment in the WNDP lie outside the area of likely flooding by surface water. A small part of the reserve site (Section 12 and Policy HA3) does lie within this area.

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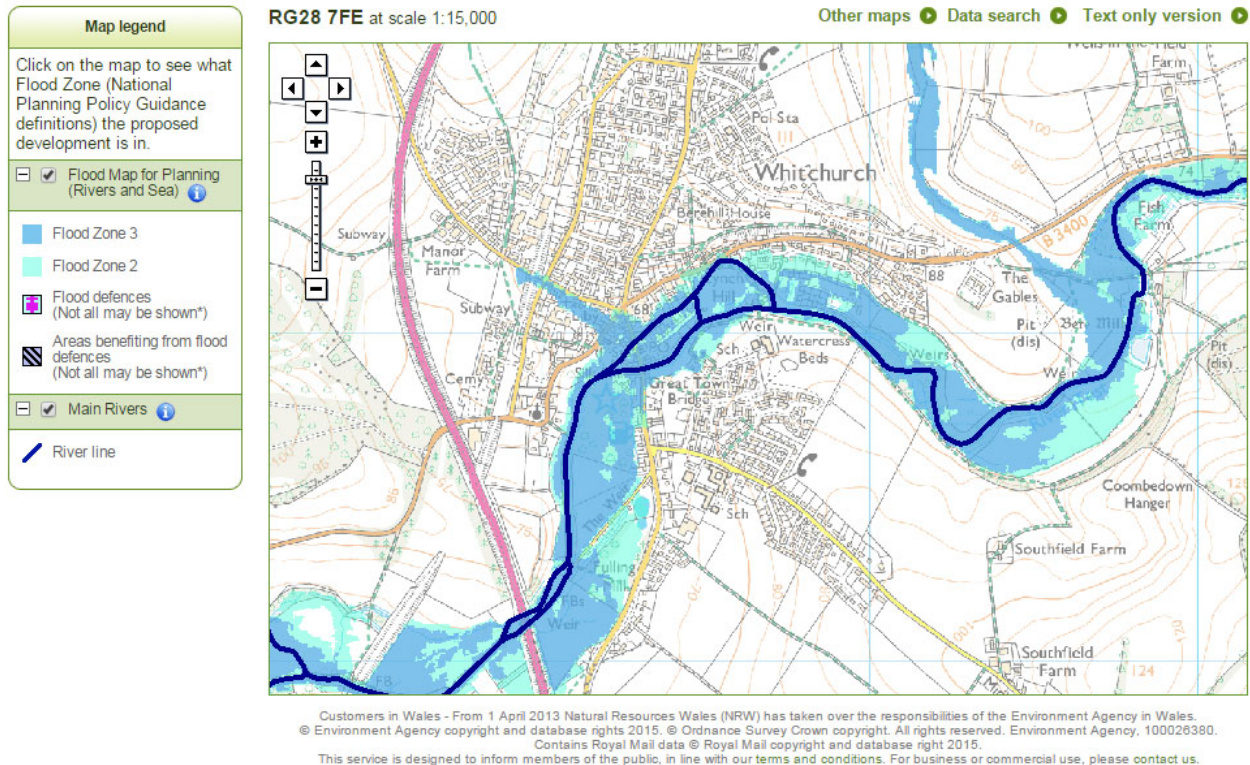


Figure 2.3: Whitchurch flood map

Footpaths and Byways

- 2.42 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. HCC Countryside Service has 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 WNDP includes policies to promote greater connectivity by cycle and on foot. The Community Projects identified in Section 12 of the WNDP, which may be supported by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), include provision for improved cycle ways footpaths and access to the River Test.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

3. National and Local Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 The WNDP has been developed in general conformity with NPPF of March 2012. The principal planning considerations are also in conformity with:
- European Legislation, to which end the NPSC have also commissioned a Sustainability Appraisal of both the WNDP and any reasonable alternatives to the Plan.
 - Policies from the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 2011 to 2019.
 - The NPSC was also mindful of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 3.2 All policies within the BDBC Local Plan are considered by BDBC to be “strategic”, (Paragraph 1.13 of the 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 WNDP.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.3 The NPPF provides the basis not only in terms of policies which form the basis of the WNDP but also in terms of setting out the basis for Neighbourhood Planning. The interaction between the WNDP and the NPPF policies is given in the Basic Conditions Statement.
- 3.4 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)
- 3.5 In order to comply with this strategic approach, the WNDP has been devised to support sustainable development by meeting or exceeding the development policies and allocations that will be specifically required of Whitchurch in the BDBC Local Plan in relation to housing and employment land allocation.

Local Plan

- 3.6 During the formulation of the WNDP the NPSC has communicated frequently with BDBC Planning Department to ensure that the WNDP conforms to the Local Plan. The WNDP has been developed on the basis that Whitchurch Town Council will identify sites for at least of 200 homes through neighbourhood planning, rural exception schemes or a review of Settlement Policy Boundaries as set out in Policy SS5 of the Local Plan.

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Local Plan Policies Specific to Whitchurch

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

Policy SS3.6 – South of Boswood Lane. This 12.5ha site lies to the west of the town of Whitchurch and will deliver approximately 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 at least 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 Ardglenn 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.

- 3.8 The WNDP has been prepared in accordance with the above Whitchurch Specific Policies contained in the BDBC Local Plan.

Local Plan Non-Site Specific Policies

- 3.9 The WNDP has been formulated to conform to the Local Plan non site specific policies. The relationship between the policies and objectives in the WNDP and the Local Plan is shown in the Basic Condition Assessment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.10 The development of the WNDP has been informed and influenced by a Sustainability Appraisal process.
- 3.11 In August 2014 the NPSC submitted a request to BDBC to undertake a screening opinion with regard to whether the WNDP required a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). BDBC subsequently conducted a screening assessment which took into account the opinions of the three consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage).
- 3.12 In September 2014, BDBC published a SEA Screening Report and in October 2014, BDBC published a screening opinion which concludes that, “in order to meet the ‘basic conditions’ for neighbourhood planning, an Environmental Assessment

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

is considered to be required to accompany the WNDP but it would not need to be subject to Habits Regulations Assessment.”

- 3.13 To meet the requirement for an SEA, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been 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). It also widens the scope of the assessment from focusing on environmental issues to also include social and economic issues.
- 3.14 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 WNDP seeks to maximise the emerging Neighbourhood Plan’s contribution to sustainable development.
- 3.15 Comprising the first stage of the SA process, a SA Scoping Report was released for consultation to Natural England, Historic England and the Environment 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 and employment to be delivered through the WNDP. The findings of this assessment were provided to the NPSC in a Technical Note in May 2015.
- 3.16 To accompany Regulation 14 consultation undertaken in November 2015, an SA Report was prepared. The SA Report presented 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 Regulation 14 consultation version of the WNDP.
- 3.17 To reflect changes made to the plan in response to Regulation 14 consultation, an updated SA Report has been prepared. The updated SA Report accompanies the current Submission version of the WNDP.
- 3.18 The SA process has therefore been a key element during the development of the WNDP.

Planning Constraints

- 3.19 The planning constraints for Whitchurch are shown in Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2. and figure 2.3. The planning constraints identified include:
 - the conservation area;
 - listed buildings;
 - flood risk;
 - areas of SSSI and SINCs;
 - the North Wessex Downs AONB (which protects the special qualities of the landscape);
 - archaeological sites.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs); and
- Historic Parks and Gardens.

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

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4. Sustainability

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The information in this Section is a commentary on how the WNDP addresses the parts of the Sustainability Assessment (SA)² that are particular to Whitchurch, while the way the WNDP has addressed the other issues identified in the SEA is set out in the Basic Condition Assessment which accompanies the WNDP.
- 4.3 The following key issues are identified in the Sustainability Assessment. This response focuses on where there is either a local factor involved; the SA shows levels of sustainability that are lower than comparable areas; or are not addressed by the Local Plan or national guidelines and policies.

Biodiversity

- 4.4 The designated SSSIs are key resources to support biodiversity in the area. Water quality has been assessed as “unfavourable, no change” and Nitrates and Phosphates remain a significant threat despite adherence to environmental discharge standards from the 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. The NPSC understand that BDBC propose to undertake modelling to establish that the number of homes allocated in the Local Plan will be sustainable.
- 4.5 While the SA identifies all of the medium sized potential housing sites as within the Impact Risk Zone for the SSSIs, more local examination suggests that the potential impact of the East of the Knowlings site is significantly greater than the others due to the unimpeded slope directly to the River Test.
- 4.6 Within the built area policies to protect mature trees and gardens, and to protect, link and enhance Green Spaces have been developed which all aid biodiversity.

Climate Change

- 4.7 Most aspects of adaptation to climate change are beyond the local scope of this WNDP. Nature conservation under the impact of climate change can be enhanced by the same policies that augment biodiversity.
- 4.8 The proximity of the River Test offers an opportunity for low head hydroelectric power, which is covered in Section 9.

2 “Sustainability Appraisal of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan”, SA Report 2016. AECOM Infrastructure and Environment

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Historic Environment and Landscape

- 4.9 Any development has the potential to negatively affect character of the Conservation Area or AONB. In making site allocations these factors have been taken into account and had a significant impact on the choices. No sites allocated for development in the WNDP lie in either the Conservation Area or AONB.
- 4.10 The SA has a single negative measure of likely adverse effect on landscape. Local examination suggests that the North of the Cricket Ground (housing) and North of the Railway (employment) would have significantly greater landscape impact than the single level indicated.
- 4.11 The effect of traffic is a high priority emerging from the public consultation and studies performed in the preparation of this Plan.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

- 4.12 Development on any of the potential medium sized housing sites would lead to loss of good agricultural land and this has been assessed in the site selection process.
- 4.13 Sewerage systems at capacity in the town have been identified as needing significant infrastructure to accommodate the connection of new development where it is not on the same side of the river as the water treatment works.

Population, Community, Health and Wellbeing

- 4.14 Growth in essential services such as schools and medical facilities has been considered in the preparation of the Plan.
- 4.15 Acquisition of new community assets, in particular playing fields, has been a key objective to meet both new and existing demand.

Transportation

- 4.16 Despite good rail connections, Whitchurch has an unusually high level of car ownership; local travel is covered in Section 8, with the recognition that more sustainable forms of transport are only likely to grow if they are economically attractive to potential users.
- 4.17 HGV traffic is a top priority for the public and the WNDP incorporates measures to minimise future impact as a result of the allocated developments.

Economy and Enterprise

- 4.18 Both the desire to allow business growth established during the public consultation and the identification of requirement for business expansion has led to policy aimed at allowing expansion of employment within the Parish.

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Sustainability Conclusion

- 4.19 In conclusion on Sustainability, the WNDP has considered all aspects identified in the SA. In some areas the key issues have been addressed with more detailed local knowledge and consideration.

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5. Community Engagement

- 5.1 The Consultation Statement is issued as a supporting document in conjunction with the WNDP, and has been prepared to fulfill 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 WNDP 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 WNDP website, www.whitchurchplan.org, which contained:
 - an overview of the WNDP;
 - news items on the progress of the WNDP;
 - presentation material from consultation events and public meetings;
 - links to online surveys; and
 - a variety of ways to contact the NPSC.
 - the WNDP Facebook page;
 - postings on the news and events pages of the Whitchurch community website, 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 Town Hall the town's Parish Hall, and the Gill Nethercott Centre.
- 5.5 Detailed consultation took place between 2013 and 2016, at the following stages in the process:
- an initial series of launch meetings, to raise awareness of the WNDP and recruit a Steering Committee and volunteers to support its production;

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- “*Have Your Say*” events, to identify the most important issues that the WNDP 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 WNDP should address;
 - “*Where Should the Houses Go?*” events, to test reactions to the alternative development proposals and proposed community Infrastructure projects;
 - presentations of and consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the WNDP; and
 - presentation of and consultations on the principal changes to the WNDP as a result of the adoption of the Local Plan and Regulation 14 consultations.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 The WNDP 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.
- 5.8 The “*Have Your Say*” consultation events were held from 10am to 2pm on Saturday 1 and 8 March, and from 5pm to 9pm on Wednesday 5 March 2014, at Whitchurch Parish Hall.
- 5.9 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 WNDP and encourage participation in the Survey.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 Consultations were held on 6 and 12 December 2015 to present the Regulation 14 WNDP. Details of how the events were publicised, the number of attendees, the questionnaires that were circulated and the responses to the questionnaires are provided in the Consultation Statement accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.12 The main conclusions with regard to land allocation voiced at 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:

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- 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 fulfill 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, replacing the existing open air pool, followed by improvements to foot/cycle paths and improved river access.
- 5.13 The NPSC used residents' preferences to guide the recommendations of the WNDP, 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 Section 11(Housing) and Section 10 (Employment) of the WNDP.
 - 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 WNDP.
 - 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.
- 5.14 Throughout the process, the results of the consultations were fed back to residents, via the WNDP 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 WNDP noticeboard. The results were also shared with representatives of developers and landowners who attended the events.
- 5.15 On 6 and 12 December 2015, the draft Plan was made available to all stakeholders as part of the Regulation 14 consultation. Feedback was obtained from various sources including BDBC, the Whitchurch Town council, Bell Cornwell, AECOM, the Environment Agency, Natural England and some 15 individuals who are not from either the Whitchurch Town Council or the Committee responsible for the WNDP.
- 5.16 The Plan has been updated to reflect the results of this Regulation 14 consultation before being submitted to BDBC under Regulation 15. Consequently, changes can

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be seen between this version of the WNDP and that produced for the Regulation 14 publication³.

- 5.17 On 19 and 23 July 2016, a public presentation was made of changes to the Plan resulting from the following:
- On May 26th 2016 BDBC “adopted” the Local Plan which changes the number of houses to be allocated by the Town Council and removes the BDBC allocation of Employment Land.
 - The 25 affordable homes proposed by Hyde Housing Association have been postponed indefinitely.
 - There have been a number of planning applications and decisions relating to housing and employment.
 - There have been comments by residents and other stakeholders that required action in respect of the draft Plan submitted in December.
- 5.18 The presentations identified the key changes it was proposed to make to the Regulation 15 version of the WNDP with regard to housing and employment land allocations. All comments received were reviewed, and the Plan documents were amended where appropriate.
- 5.19 A further public presentation of changes to the Plan was made from 29 October to 3 December 2016:
- Posters explaining the Plan and the latest changes, and the draft Plan documents, were available in the Town Hall during normal weekday opening hours, and a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee was available at the Town Hall every Saturday, from 9am to 2pm, to explain the presentation and answer questions.
 - Copies of the posters, and the draft Plan documents, were also made available at the Town’s community hall, the Gill Nethercott Centre, and on the WNDP website.
 - Residents could submit comments via a comments form at the events, or online.
- 5.20 Following all Consultations and update events, comments received were reviewed, and the Plan documents were amended where appropriate. Details of how Consultations and events were publicised, the comments received and the responses to them, are provided in the Consultation Statement which accompanies this version of the Plan.

3 Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 637. TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, ENGLAND. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

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6. Vision and objectives

6.1 The Vision and Objectives for Whitchurch were generated from the “Have Your Say” public consultations, held in the spring of 2014. The results of the consultation accompany the WNDP.

Residents’ Views

- 6.2 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 school 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.

Whitchurch Vision Statement

6.3 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.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

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.

Objectives

- 6.4 To achieve this Vision, a number of the key objectives, consistent with the Basic Conditions and the objectives of the 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 WNDP.

WNDP Objectives	WNDP Related Policies
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.	GD1, GD5, GD8 ES1, ES2, ES4 HA2
O2 Ensure high quality and locally distinctive design which responds to local character to create inclusive, well connected and safe neighbourhoods.	GD1 ES3
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 CP1
O4 In compliance with the Local Plan Policy SS5 proposed requirement to allocate sites for a minimum of 200 houses in addition to the site for 150 houses already allocated for Whitchurch in the Local Plan 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, including older people, downsizers, smaller households and homes for younger people and young families and so counter the growing demographic imbalance.	HD1, HD2 HA1, HA2, HA3, HA4, HA5
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.	IP1, IP3 HD1

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O6	Minimise our contribution to climate change through promotion of energy efficiency, low carbon technology and energy efficient design.	IP1 ES2
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, GD2 ES3
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 TR1 ES2, ES3 CP1
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, GD8 TR1
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, GD5, GD6, GD7, GD8 TR1 IP2
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. Seek opportunities for landscape, recreational and ecological gain, whilst minimising the environmental impact of new development.	GD1 LD1, LD2, LD3 ES4 HA5 CP1
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, GD2, GD4 LD1 CP1
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
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	GD5, GD6, GD8 IP2 ES1, ES2, ES4 HA2

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land for premises of the right quality, type, location and size to meet the future needs of existing businesses in Whitchurch.	
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, GD7, GD8 CS1 CP1
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.	IP2 HD1, HD2
O17 Protect and enhance Whitchurch's locally distinctive character of our priority habitats and landscapes, such as the North Wessex Downs AONB.	LD1, LD2, LD3 GD8 ES1, ES2, ES4 HA2
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 IP1, IP2, IP3

Monitoring and Review

6.5 Policy SS5 of the 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 WNDP however fully meets the required allocation and therefore currently no such intervention is likely to be required. Progress against the WNDP 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 WNDP;
- consistency of developments with the objectives and policies of the WNDP;
- application of Community Infrastructure Levy in line with the objectives and policies of the WNDP and the community infrastructure priorities identified by the WNDP in Section 12.

6.6 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.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

7. General Design

- 7.1 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.

Guiding Principles

- 7.2 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 WNDP.
- 7.3 The WNDP also incorporates through its Policies the Whitchurch Design Statement⁴ 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 WNDP.
- 7.4 Reference is also made to Whitchurch Healthcheck 2005⁵. 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."

- 7.5 This role is consistent with the finding of the community consultations conducted as part of the preparation of the WNDP.
- 7.6 Policies below are aimed towards facilitating these ambitions and achieving the Vision and Objectives as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP.

General Design Policies

- 7.7 In addition to all generally accepted Design Standards and Policies, including those as set out in the Local Plan, all developments will be expected to conform to the following design policies which are specific to Whitchurch in order to support objectives O1-3, O7, O10-12 and O15 as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP.

4 Whitchurch Village Design Statement, 2004 (<http://wds.whitchurch.org.uk/>).

5 "The way Forward for Whitchurch - Healthcheck and Town Action Plan Report", August 2005 (<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/whitchurchwayforward.pdf>)

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 7.8 When decisions are made on planning applications, Supplementary Planning Guidance, including the Whitchurch Design Statement, is a material consideration, with consideration given as to whether a proposal will do material harm to the character of the place. Such decisions can be informed by the planning authority requiring applications to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, a Heritage Statement, and/or a Visual Impact Statement.
- 7.9 Design and Access Statements may not be required for small extensions such as house extensions. A Heritage Statement is needed in the assessment of proposals that affect Heritage Assets such as listed buildings, to avoid substantial harm, and to seek conservation and enhancement of the Whitchurch Conservation Area. A Visual Impact Statement may be needed to assess the impact of development on the characteristics of the landscape and townscape and to maintain views, vistas or panoramas within or from the built environment or open space, or in the countryside.
- 7.10 Opportunities for creating or improving routes and spaces in the built environment where development is proposed can promote ease of movement that is safe, convenient and efficient for all users. Areas of the Town where barriers to movement can be overcome will be more permeable. Making new connections between parts of the Town can enhance the interaction of people and places.
- 7.11 The Whitchurch Design Statement has guidelines for the built environment, for roads and footpaths and for open spaces, including the setting of the River Test where public access is encouraged. Guidelines include retention of the visual asset of the variety of street frontages, many of which are continuous, while giving priority to pedestrians by allowing for wider pavements.

WNDP Policy GD1

Re-enforcement of the adoption of the Whitchurch Design Statement as supplementary guidance to be used in the planning process

Planning applications for proposed developments must demonstrate, where required by the Planning Authority, in a Design and Access Statement, Heritage Statement 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.

- 7.12 Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which accord with the following requirements (where they are relevant to the proposal being considered):
- 1) It reinforces the character of the Town and is positively integrated into the existing grain of the Town
 - 2) It responds to and retains views towards the Town Square, the Silk Mill and towards All Hallows Church
 - 3) Where appropriate, it enhances permeability and connectivity within the Town and in particular defines and provides new pedestrian routes south from Church Street towards the River Test and The Silk Mill

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 4) It maintains open views towards the countryside, or across open spaces, paying particular regard to views from key existing routes within the Town and using design of architecture and landscaping that is sympathetic to their rural character
- 5) It provides open space in accordance with the Whitchurch Design Statement guidelines and interconnects these with other open spaces within the Town where possible
- 6) It takes opportunities in external spaces for provision for those with mobility impairment including the widening of footpaths and footways to allow easier and safer access to the Town Centre
- 7) It respects conserves and enhances the riverside setting of Whitchurch and the Conservation Area.
- 8) It retains or creates a positive building frontage that reflects the character and scale of the surrounding areas
- 9) It respects conserves and enhances the river Test, with particular regard to the ecological value of the river and the biodiversity of the SSSIs.

Landscape and Historic Context of the Parish of Whitchurch

- 7.13 The landscape and historic context of Whitchurch have been described in Section 2.
- 7.14 The BDBC Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013 - 2029 aims to:
- manage, protect and restore existing green infrastructure; and
 - expand and reconnect green infrastructure where there is an identified deficit or where housing growth is planned and additional provision is needed.
- 7.15 The vision underpinning that strategy is to provide a planned and managed network of Green Infrastructure across Basingstoke and Deane which:
- provides residents with adequate local access to a network of high quality parks, open spaces, green links and corridors;
 - protects the health and attractiveness of our natural environment, enhancing those areas which can make a positive contribution to biodiversity; and
 - allows the natural environment to thrive alongside the built environment.
- 7.16 Not only will this be a consideration for decisions on open spaces, landscape proposals and planting schemes for new developments, but also where opportunities are sought, related to or supported by development, that enhance wildlife habitats. Within the built areas of the Town, and in the wider countryside, linking habitats will create corridors for the migration of species.

Footpaths, Cycleways and Access to the River Test

- 7.17 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 Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 7.18 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.
- 7.19 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 mitigate future flooding of the Town Centre.
- 7.20 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.
- 7.21 Current footpaths and byways are shown in Figure 2.4. Proposed future cycle routes are shown in Figure 7.1. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council adopted a Cycling Strategy in March 2016. Footpath/cycle routes are currently subject of a feasibility study (BDBC2066).
- 7.22 In order to support objectives O7, O12 and O13, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted.

WNDP Policy GD2

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

Wherever possible, new development will be expected to exploit opportunities to link in with and improve the existing cycle and footpath network of the Town in accordance with the map set out in Figure 7.1.

New developments adjacent to the River Test or Test Mill Stream should seek opportunities to dedicate land to the river frontage to facilitate future public access to a riverside walk along the River Test.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

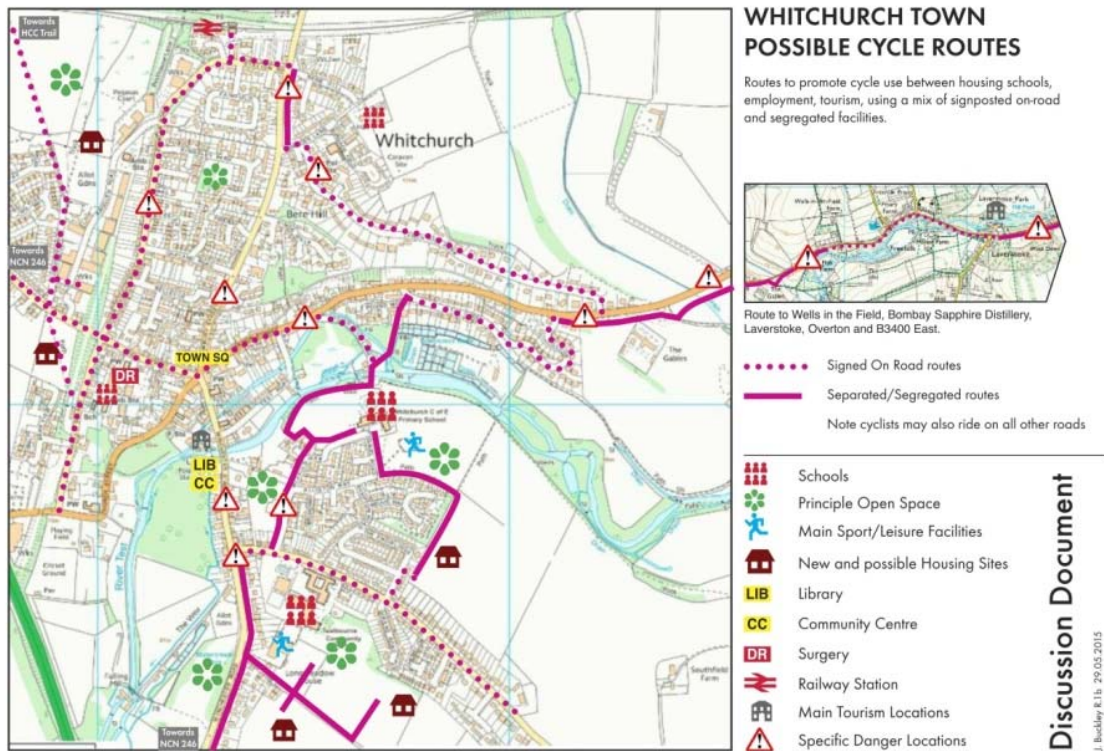


Figure 7.1: Proposed Future Cycle Routes

- 7.23 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 some CIL and S106 monies from future developments would be used to support and implement this initiative, as set out in Section 12 of the WNDP.

Community Assets

- 7.24 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. The following policy supports objective O15, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

WNDP Policy GD3

Protection of Assets of Community Value and other Community Facilities

Proposals for any significant changes to, or replacement of a community asset or facility must demonstrate that they will either enhance the viability and/or community value of any assets designated by Whitchurch Town Council as Assets of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011, or provide a similar type of enhancement of any community facilities.

Unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the asset/facility, or the ongoing delivery of the community value of the asset/facility, is no longer financially or technically viable, proposals that result in either the loss of the asset/facility or in significant harm to the community value of an asset/facility will not be permitted.

- 7.25 The NPSC is cognisant of the fact that developments should not compromise the integrity of existing assets or facilities 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, O15 and O18, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted.

WNDP Policy CS1

Retention of functionality of Railway Tunnel for future benefit

Use of the two tunnels under the railway line (one previously for track, now disused, and one for pedestrians) 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 tunnels or in significant harm to the future ability to access the tunnels will be resisted.

Open Spaces

- 7.26 WNDP's objective O11 is to protect and enhance existing open space and link existing and new spaces together to create a connected network of spaces.
- 7.27 The BDBC Green Infrastructure Strategy for Whitchurch indicates that:
- There is no park or area suitable for football pitches 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.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 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.
- 7.28 Public access to open spaces is described in the *Green Infrastructure Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane* (2013 to 2029).
- 7.29 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.
- 7.30 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.
- 7.31 One of the WNDP'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 7.2).
- 7.32 In order to support objectives O11, O12 and O17, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted.

WNDP Policy LD1

7.33 Protection and Enhancement of Community Leisure and Cultural Facilities, and Open Spaces

7.34 Community, Leisure and Cultural facilities and the open spaces as shown in Figure 7.2 will be protected and retained.

7.35 Developers must provide publicly accessible open space and other community facilities of the type, size and in the locations required in Policies HA2 and HA4 of this Plan.

Developments should connect new open spaces to other existing or proposed open spaces by means of footpaths, cycle paths and green corridors where possible.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.



Figure 7.2: Open Spaces in Whitchurch (updated from the Whitchurch Design Statement)

- 7.36 Figure 7.2 shows the two distinct green corridors linking the parish with the town of Whitchurch: the disused railway line and the Test valley. These areas are very important for both the community and the natural environment, because they provide a wide range of wildlife habitats, tree cover and footpath links. They are particularly highly valued as they provide continuous corridors that are separated from the disturbance associated with buildings and traffic. It is essential to retain the un-spoilt character of these two corridors and to encourage and reinforce footpath links throughout.
- 7.37 There are also many informal open spaces throughout the town and parish which have not been maintained or managed in any way, providing abundant tree cover with scrubby under-store. Every effort should be made to retain these important areas as they provide a wide variety of important habitats for birds and other wildlife and contribute significantly to the 'country character' of Whitchurch.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Biodiversity in the Built Environment

7.38 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 interconnected habitats and wildlife corridors. Their importance to the diversity and richness of the Town landscape is often overlooked.

7.39 In order to support objectives O3, O11 and O17, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy LD2

Protection of Biodiversity

Residential (private garden) development will be permitted provided that proposals avoid, or minimize loss of or significant harm to, the ecological or landscape value of private residential gardens.

Where proposals are likely to lead to significant harm, the local planning authority may require survey evidence of habitats, species of wildlife, trees and hedgerows.

7.40 In order to support objectives O3, O11 and O17, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy LD3

Protection of Hedgerows, Trees and Tree Planting

Development that damages or results in the loss of hedgerows, mature trees or trees of good arboricultural or amenity value will not be permitted unless appropriate mitigation is agreed with the planning authority. Within the Conservation Area, development should be justified in the context of the 2004 Whitchurch Conservation Area Appraisal Map "Whitchurch Townscape Appraisal April 2001" which defines "Vista" as an "important general view especially of the wider landscape setting", and "Viewpoint" as relating "to an important building or group of buildings".

7.41 Proposals for non-householder development be are to be accompanied by a survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees within or adjacent to the boundary of the application site, details appropriate mitigation for any loss, and takes whatever opportunities are available in order to make provision for tree planting and other appropriate soft landscaping adjacent to the public realm.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 7.42 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.
- 7.43 In accordance with Policies EM4 and EM8 of the 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.
- 7.44 Where planning permission is sought for new buildings on existing gardens, other than smaller householder development (such as extensions or garden buildings and sheds), and where vegetation could be lost, there is a need to avoid significant harm to the landscape character of the built environment and the wildlife corridors of the Town. The cumulative effect of loss of garden habitats can create barriers to the migration of wildlife.

Town Centre Design

- 7.45 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 (Grade 2*) (see Figure 2.2). The Town centre is contained within the Whitchurch Conservation Area (described in Section 2).
- 7.46 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.
- 7.47 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.

Public Consultation and the Town Centre

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

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- **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

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

7.50 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.

7.51 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 WNDP, 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.

Key Aims for the Town Centre

7.52 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 provide access to adequate car parking.
- 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.

7.53 And as a longer term desirable aim:

- To create a central space with access to the Town's main tourist features.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Pedestrian Friendly Town Centre

- 7.54 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.

Public Car Parks

- 7.55 Concern over access to adequate public car parking adjacent to the Town Centre is a key outcome of the community consultation. Section 12 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.

Access to the Silk Mill and the River Test

- 7.56 Engagement of stakeholders and residents has confirmed a strong aspiration that between the River Test and Church Road there should be the creation of a central space that would be a focus of activities in the Town related to parking for visitors' vehicles, including coaches, and a new pedestrian/cycleway access to the Silk Mill and River Test avoiding main roads, which would be an advantage for visitors and residents. This concept and its feasibility will be considered in detail when potential sites become available and in the process of review of this Neighbourhood Plan. An alternative step to achieve this space and related uses could be to work with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to consider an Area Action Plan or Supplementary Planning Document, such as a Development Brief, to be included in a future Local Development Scheme.
- 7.57 In order to support objectives O8, O9, O10, O12 and O13, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy GD4

Protection of Parking in the Town Centre

Proposed developments involving the existing Bell Street & Church Street public car parks should ensure that:

- 1) Development maintains at least the same number of existing public car parking spaces or provides equivalent provision within similar walking distance of the Town Square
- 2) Provision is made for coach parking
- 3) Opportunities for a 'civic' space and direct pedestrian / cycleway access to the Silk Mill and River Test are taken.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Town Centre Business

- 7.58 Both the community consultations conducted by the WNDP and the '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 area's character. It is desirable to strengthen the current retail offer through sensitive small scale developments which complement the existing retail offer.
- 7.59 Many town high streets have tended to suffer from a loss of small, independent retail units due to an increase of financial and professional services. In recent years, Whitchurch Town Centre has not experienced that trend having recently lost its only bank and building society branches. Shops and premises for food and drink serving residents and visitors have survived and thrived.
- 7.60 In order to support objectives O1, O3, O10, O14 and O15, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy GD5

7.61 To Encourage New Commercial Development, Retain Economic Vibrancy and Vitality and Enhance Frontages in the Town Centre

Proposed developments for new Town Centre retail, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments and hot food take-aways (use classes A1-A5) fronting and adjacent to the principal shopping streets of Church Road, Winchester Street, Newbury Street, Bell Street, London Street and/or on primary pedestrian routes to and from car parks, will be permitted provided that:

- 1) additional financial and professional services (use class A2) are limited at street level to 30% of current shop frontages
- 2) changes of use from ground floor residential and/or employment to uses within A1-A5 are compatible with nearby residential properties and the development forms part of a mixed use scheme providing residential accommodation above ground floor.

- 7.62 Vacant sites and buildings in the Town Centre that were formerly providing employment have the potential, with appropriate re-use, to maintain or create active frontages and enhance and support the vitality of the Town Centre. In order to support objectives O10 and O14, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

WNDP Policy GD6

Redevelopment of Land or Buildings for Uses that Support the Town Centre

In the Town Centre proposals for the development of redundant land or buildings; parts of buildings; or change of use of parts of buildings that formerly provided a commercial use will be permitted provided that:

- 1) the proposed use provides employment, or
- 2) if a non-commercial use is proposed, it can be demonstrated that the former use is no longer economically viable, and
- 3) that wherever possible active frontages at ground floor level are provided in redeveloped buildings.

To demonstrate the building is available for redevelopment it has to:

- 4) remain vacant for a period of at least 6 months and
- 5) have been marketed at a reasonable value for at least 6 months with no interest from prospective buyers/tenants.

The reasonableness of the asking price will be judged using information from similar premises that are currently being marketed and the quantity of floor space available within the local area.

7.63 In order to support objectives O10, O15 and O18, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy GD7

Encourage a Diverse Range of Uses in the Town

Mixed Use proposals which support new residential use of accommodation on upper floors will be permitted 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.

Tourism and Heritage Assets

7.64 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 Mill⁶, is also relevant to the economy of the Parish.

7.65 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

6 Sources: Bombay Sapphire Distillery travel plan (December 2011), Whitchurch Silk Mill (March 2015).

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Sapphire (Overton), Highclere Castle (Highclere) and Watership Down, there is scope to encourage additional tourism to the area.

- 7.66 Indeed, it has been observed that both in and adjacent to the Town Centre, an increasing number of tourists and other visitors is being experienced that will benefit economic activity, but will also require the maintenance and enhancement of facilities for those attracted to the heritage and character of the Conservation Area and the surrounding countryside. These facilities include specialist shops catering for tourists, cafés, hotel and other tourist accommodation and the setting of heritage attractions such as the River Test, Silk Mill and Town Hall.
- 7.67 In order to support objectives O1, O9, O10, O14, O15 and O17, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy GD8

Increasing Prosperity by Encouraging Tourism

Developments that promote Whitchurch's unique historic and natural heritage to attract tourists and other visitors to the Town, that enhance employment opportunities and that increase prosperity will be permitted, provided that:

- 1) the siting, scale and design has strong regard to the local character, the historic and natural assets and the surrounding area
- 2) the design and materials are in keeping with the local style and reinforce local distinctiveness and a strong sense of place
- 3) adequate coach drop-off points and coach and car parking are provided.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

8. Traffic and Parking

Traffic and Parking

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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 that describe peak time traffic flows through Whitchurch may be found in the Whitchurch Traffic Report⁷, and complete details of the observations and the complete set of data collected may be found in the traffic evidence base⁸. Figure 8.1 provides a summary of the morning peak vehicle numbers and directions of travel.

7 Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Traffic Report, to be submitted with Regulation 15 version of the WNDP

8 Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan evidence base, to be submitted with Regulation 15 version of the WNDP

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

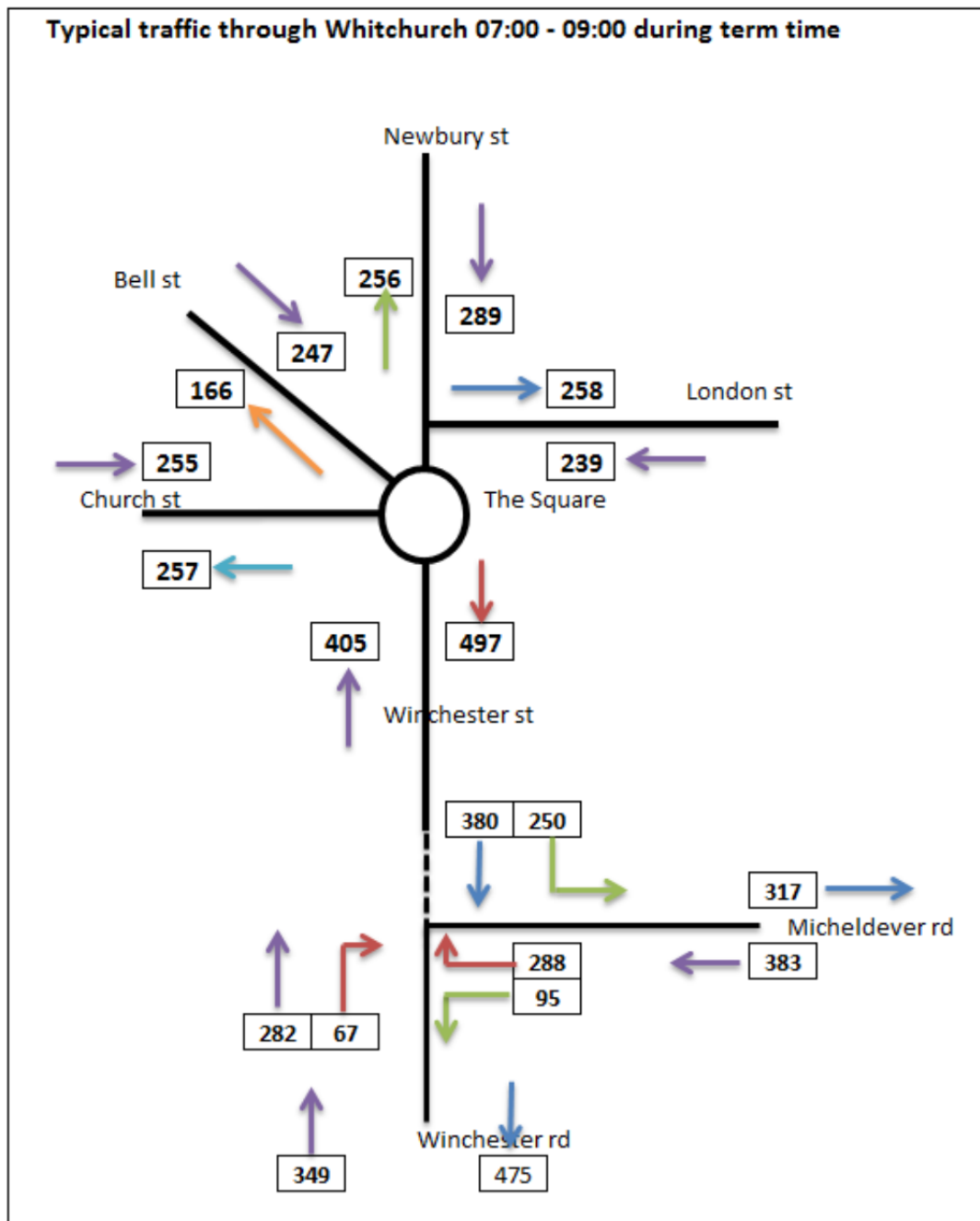


Figure 8.1: Morning traffic flows in Whitchurch

Summary of Findings

- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 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, but especially if travelling to or from the southern junction of the A34 at Tufton.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 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 eased the hold-ups caused by the refuse lorries stopping at intervals along the route. On-street parking affects the flow of traffic through the town at all times, and may be a positive influence on vehicle speeds, which, despite the introduction of a 20mph limit, remain too high, even around the school areas.
- 8.8 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. 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.
- 8.9 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 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.

Predicted Impacts of Recommended Developments

- 8.10 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 proposed developments.
- 8.11 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. The only part of town which is likely to experience severe traffic impacts is between The Square and the Tufton junction of the A34.
- 8.12 The Northern part of town does not have major traffic problems, nor would the likely developments significantly change this.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 8.13 Traffic along Bell Street to The Square is likely to increase by 30% due to already approved plans for Blosswood Lane, and will increase further if more houses are approved in the NW of town.
- 8.14 Winchester Street and Road already carry the most traffic of any road in town. All developments are likely to increase this, but the impact of additional commuter traffic may be moderated by the use of alternative routes around the North of the Town Centre, and the enforced use by large vehicles (including HGVs) of the northern junction with the A34, rather than the Tufton Junction.
- 8.15 The planned development of 100 houses at the Winchester Road site appears to have a reasonable predicted impact on the town. In addition, the developers are 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, although the Secondary school has yet to commit to the use of this drop-off point by school buses, which could continue to use Micheldever Road.
- 8.16 The frequently excessive speed of traffic along Winchester Road heading both towards and away from the Tufton A34 Junction will require traffic management around the entrance to the new development, especially during the morning peak, but at present, there is no commitment from the constabulary to control speeding anywhere in the town, including the 20mph zone. A Community Speed Watch scheme is however currently being organized.

Parking at the Railway Station

- 8.17 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 Local Plan Policy SS 11. The Whitchurch Community supported the proposed new car park at the consultation held in October 2014 and the WNDP supports this proposal.
- 8.18 Objectives O8 and O9, as set out in Section 6, are addressed by the following policy:

WNDP Policy TR1

Traffic and Parking Policy

Any development(s) 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 successfully mitigate its impact.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

9. Infrastructure

Introduction

- 9.1 Infrastructure covers those facilities that residents can reasonably expect to be present to service the community. This Section is supported by a Whitchurch Infrastructure Report⁹ which accompanies the WNDP and has been written with reference to the BDBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan¹⁰. This has identified a number of constraints which apply to the future development of the Town. In general accordance with Policy CN6 of the Local Plan development should be phased in tandem with the timely provision of infrastructure to help support sustainable growth.

Education

- 9.2 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 is 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 term-time peak hours. HCC have advised that a half entry year group expansion (75 instead of 60 pupils) has been approved for the school with a building opening date of 2019. This will exacerbate the road congestion at the most congested locations and times in Whitchurch (see Section 8).

Utilities

- 9.3 While sewerage for sites North of the Test was considered a partial constraint, none of the utilities were considered to be an overriding constraint on the allocations made in the WNDP.

Electricity

- 9.4 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 which has been granted on appeal, and would need to be routed underground.

9 Infrastructure Report for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan, to be submitted with Regulation 15 version of the WNDP

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

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None of these electricity supply issues are considered material in relation to site allocation.

- 9.5 The Local Plan Policy EM8 has addressed renewable energy generation at a commercial level and there is potential local opportunity for renewable power generation. The following policy will apply in order to support objectives O5, O6 and O18, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP:

WNDP Policy IP1

Electricity Supply

The use of renewable energy sources will be encouraged. 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 and/or its associated SSSI is acceptable.

Schemes of less than 100Kilowatts peak generating capacity which provide energy generating infrastructure using renewable or low carbon energy sources to serve individual properties, groups of properties, industrial facilities or other land uses will be permitted, provided that:

- 1) 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
- 2) 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
- 3) Adjoining uses are not adversely impacted in terms of noise, vibration, or electromagnetic interference
- 4) Where appropriate, the energy generating infrastructure and its installation complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme.

Water Supply, Gas and Telecommunications

- 9.6 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.
- 9.7 High quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and community integration. Availability of higher broadband speeds is improving. However, both download and upload speeds are variable, particularly in rural areas. It is important that broadband service providers demonstrate to users the speeds that the level of service can provide. This could be by means of a Broadband Connectivity Statement that explains the means of connection to the global network and the speeds to be achieved. Where proposals for major development of 10 dwellings or more, or housing sites over 0.5 hectares, or for floorspace of non-residential use of over 1,000 m² or on sites of more than

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1 hectare, the following policy will apply in order to support objectives O10, O14, O16 and O18, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP:

WNDP Policy IP2

Encouragement of Good Broadband Connections

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 available fibre or communications infrastructure and confirming the capacity of the backhaul systems.

Sewerage

- 9.8 Recent local experience of emergency measures needed to avoid overflow of the sewerage system as it passes south of the Test during heavy rainfall reinforces the fact that the sewerage system in the town is not designed to take water which should be dealt with by appropriate land drainage. However the WNDP suspects that improvements in land drainage may not be immediate. Correspondence with Southern Water emphasises their requested change of policy wording to the Local Plan, where they ask that new connections be made to the 'nearest point with capacity' and that the location of that point be determined by Southern Water. Suitable changes to this effect were made in the Local Plan. Precise sewerage solutions will need to be considered when development proposals come forward. Any development north of the River Test may require storage tanks and pumping stations to a separate sewer across or under the Test to avoid exceeding the capacity of 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.
- 9.9 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.
- 9.10 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 development¹¹. In order to support objectives O5 and O18, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

¹¹ Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council,
<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/34956/Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf>

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

WNDP Policy IP3

Reducing the Adverse Impact of Utility Improvements on the Town

New and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community.

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 of areas of 0.4ha or greater. Account should be taken of the cumulative impacts arising from the new development combined with other schemes that have planning permission.

In particular, the impact of the development upon the sewerage system and treatment works including flood risk which could adversely impact the quality of water in the River Test shall be considered. Proposals for new developments must identify and deliver any 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 implementation on the town businesses and traffic using the Town.

Health

- 9.11 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 WNDP 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.
- 9.12 There is scope to extend the Surgery premises and such an approach is supported in principle. 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 also be supported.

Leisure Facilities

- 9.13 A survey of local sports and leisure clubs was undertaken¹² and the results analysed along with relevant results from the consultation. This, along with representations from Whitchurch United Football Club and Whitchurch Cricket

¹² Sports Club Survey, included in the WNDP Evidence Base

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Club, form the basis for understanding the sports and leisure needs of the town that impact on land use.

- 9.14 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 – particularly floodlit ones for winter use.
- 9.15 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. Interaction between the Town Council and the Borough to identify up-and-coming activities that merit encouragement with facilities or money will be informed by the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 to 2029 (October 2015)¹³ and the BDBC Built Sports Facilities Strategy 2015 to 2025 (draft October 2015)¹⁴ that have provided further evidence of existing facilities and proposals. That includes:
- The need to improve facilities for youth football where lack of suitable pitches is an inhibitor to team growth.
 - To retain at Longmeadow the existing supply of squash courts and indoor bowls facilities.
 - To improve access to pool provision west of Basingstoke by means of swimming developer contributions received for (inter alia) Whitchurch.

Road, Rail and Bus Transport

- 9.16 Whitchurch is in the enviable position of having extremely good strategic transport infrastructure for access to the major neighbouring towns and 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.
- 9.17 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.

¹³ "Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 to 2029", BDBC, October 2015
(<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/41521/BDBC%20Playing%20Pitch%20Strategy%202015%20to%202019%20-%20Final%20Report%20October%202015.pdf>)

¹⁴ "Built Sports Facility Strategy 2015 to 2025", BDBC, August 2015 (Draft)
([https://democracy.basingstoke.gov.uk/Data/Community,%20Environment%20and%20Partnerships%20Committee/201509161830/Agenda/\\$Sports%20Facilities%20Appendix%201%20-%2010858.doc.pdf](https://democracy.basingstoke.gov.uk/Data/Community,%20Environment%20and%20Partnerships%20Committee/201509161830/Agenda/$Sports%20Facilities%20Appendix%201%20-%2010858.doc.pdf))

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- 9.18 The Whitchurch rail station serves local settlements in the area as a commuting route to Basingstoke, Reading and London. However, 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.

Noise and Air Pollution

- 9.19 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 largely negating any noise reduction in these circumstances.
- 9.20 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.
- 9.21 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 WNDP has aimed to control the impact of air pollution by recognising the issues of traffic congestion at peak hours during school term time and allocated development sites which will provide facilities to reduce congestion at the most affected areas of the Town.

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10. Employment

Employment in Whitchurch

- 10.1 Businesses are very important to the prosperity of Whitchurch. Approximately 250 businesses trade in the Parish, including shops located in the Town Centre; small businesses which are primarily home based; and larger industrial businesses.
- 10.2 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 9,500m² of buildings¹⁵. Units on the Estate range from 50m² "nursery" units to properties of 1,000 – 1,500m². Demand is usually high, and vacant units tend to be quickly taken by companies already established there^{16,17}. There is a requirement for larger units than at Ardglen Road Industrial Estate, as the current businesses are often spread over several units¹⁷. The site benefits from being located approximately 700m from Whitchurch Town Centre and its associated services, although accessibility is somewhat constrained by its dependence on relatively minor roads¹⁷.
- 10.3 Immediately to the North West of Ardglen Road Industrial Estate is an area formerly with planning permission (allocated by previous Local Plan Policy D3.21) for a 4.9ha employment site. However, the site was not developed during the last Local Plan period.
- 10.4 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. The consultation results showed that;
 - only 26% of respondents opposed more commercial/industrial development; and
 - the top 5 ideas on how to make Whitchurch more prosperous were all related to business expansion, including the growth of shops and cafes, provision of space for new small businesses, expansion of tourism, and support for local businesses in general and small businesses in particular.

15 Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan estimate, based on interviews with Ardglen Road Industrial Estate businesses (2014)

16 Letter from London Clancy Property Consultants Ltd to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (25 September, 2014)

17 Employment Land Review, BDBC, February 2014
([http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/26084/Employment%20Land%20Review%20\(2013\).pdf](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/26084/Employment%20Land%20Review%20(2013).pdf))

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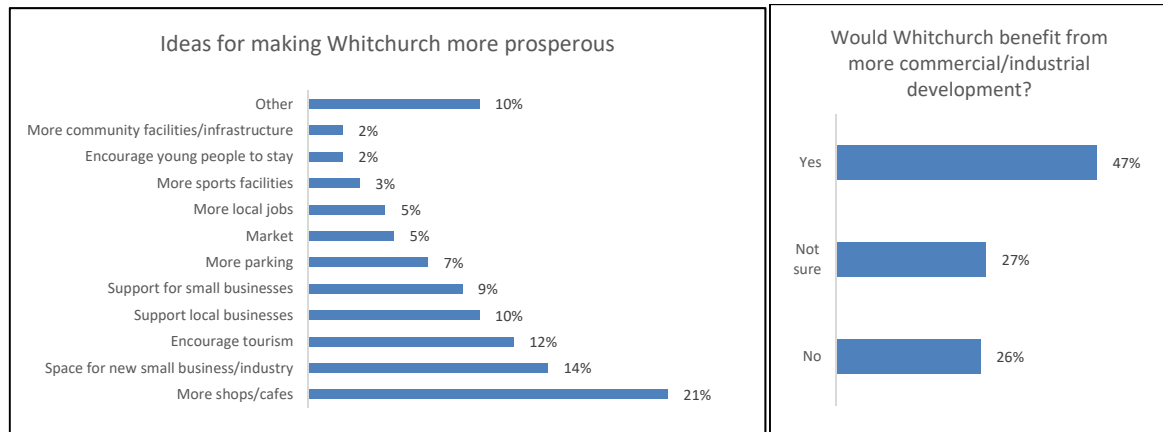


Figure 10.1: Whitchurch residents' views on business in the town
(Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Initial Consultation Survey, March-April 2014, 240 responses)

10.5 Residents' responses to the subsequent 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, preferring growth in line with population, rather than attracting new businesses to the area.

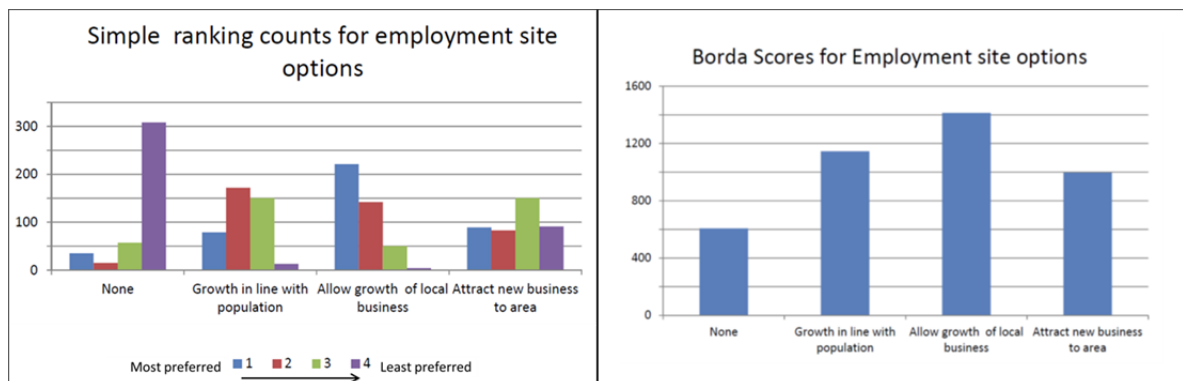


Figure 10.2: Whitchurch residents' views on business growth in the town¹⁸
(Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Options Consultation Survey, October 2014, 512 responses)

¹⁸ 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>

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

10.6 Future requirements of Whitchurch businesses were included in the Business Survey¹⁹. The Survey 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 Ardglen Road Industrial Estate; and
- 8% of the businesses based in the rest of the WNDP area.

10.7 The Survey showed that:

- 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.

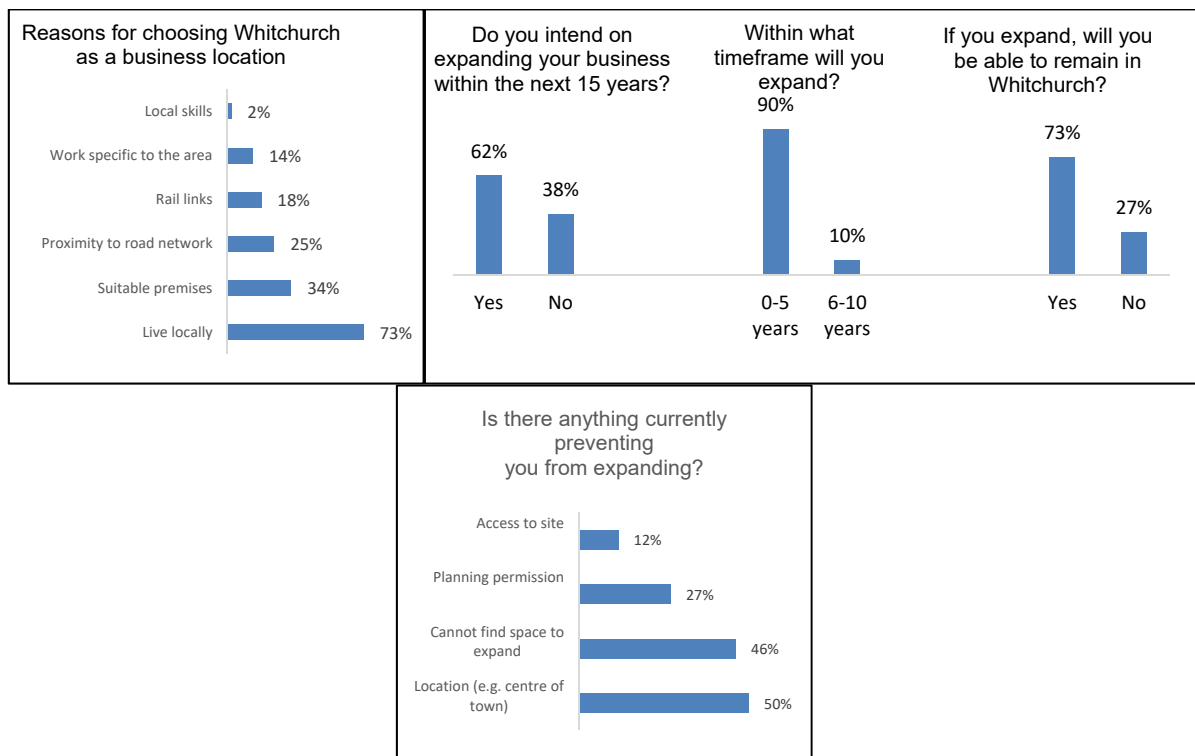


Figure 10.3: Businesses' reasons for choosing Whitchurch and future expansion plans
(Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Business Survey, March-June 2014, 42 responses)

10.8 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. It has, however, proved difficult to determine the scale of demand which will need to be met over the WNDP period. Estimates have ranged from 4000m² to a maximum of 16000m².

¹⁹ Whitchurch Business Survey, to be submitted with Regulation 15 version of the WNDP.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 10.9 Calculations by the NPSC suggests that in the region of 3-4000m² would be required to accommodate the additional workforce generated by the increase in housing numbers required over the plan period with the same proportion of the population being employed locally.

Employment Site Options

- 10.10 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 and the Addendum to this document, which is included in the Supporting Documents to which reference should be made. The Addendums were produced as a result of changes to the Development Plan resulting from the adoption of the BDBC Local Plan on 26 May 2016, comments received under Regulation 14 consultation and planning decisions made between the version of the WNDP submitted under Regulation 14 and this Plan. This plan amends the allocation for employment made in the Regulation 14 version.
- 10.11 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 NPSC also advertised in the Parish Magazine and on its website for landowners or developers who may wish to have land considered for development.
- 10.12 As a result, three potential employment sites were identified and screened against constraints maps (Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2 and Figure 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 10.4 and in Table 10.1. These sites were included in the scope of the options consultation.

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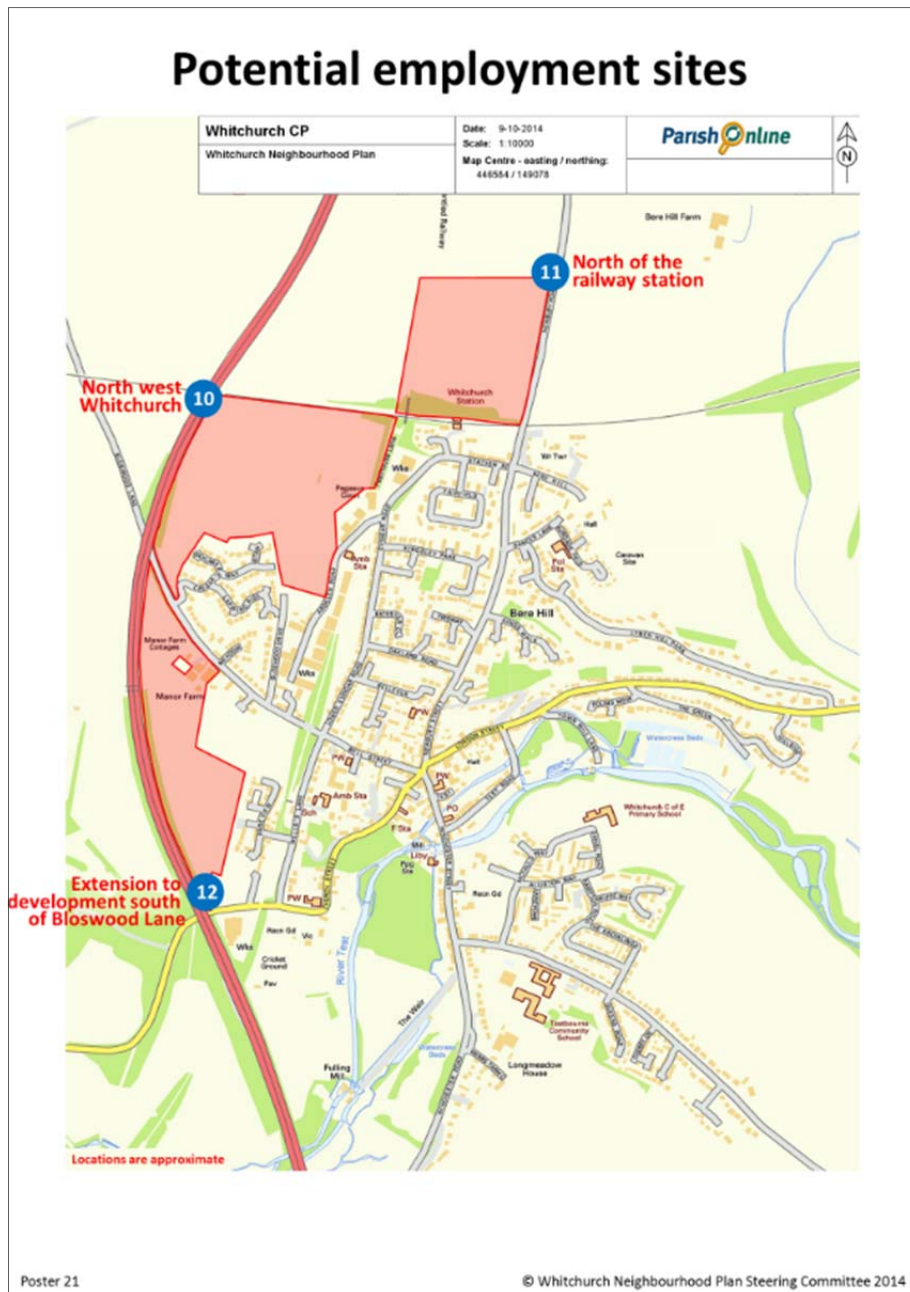


Figure 10.4: Employment site options presented at the “Where Should the Houses Go?” housing options events

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Site option	Ownership	Site area (ha)	Current use/classification	Proposed use	Scale (1,000 m ²)
North West Whitchurch	The Hospital of St Cross & Almshouse of Noble Poverty	1.2 as mixed use	Greenfield disused orchard.	B1	3.5-5.0
North of the railway station	Zurich Assurance	4.0	Greenfield	B1, B2 and B8	12
Extension to development south of Boswood Lane	Zurich Assurance	8.0	Greenfield	B1 only likely	12+

Table 10.1: Employment site options

10.13 Of the three potential employment sites, the most popular based upon the results of the “Where do the Houses Go” consultation was ‘North of the Railway’ [site 11] followed by ‘North West Whitchurch’ [site 10]. ‘South of Boswood Lane’ [site 12] was considerably less popular.

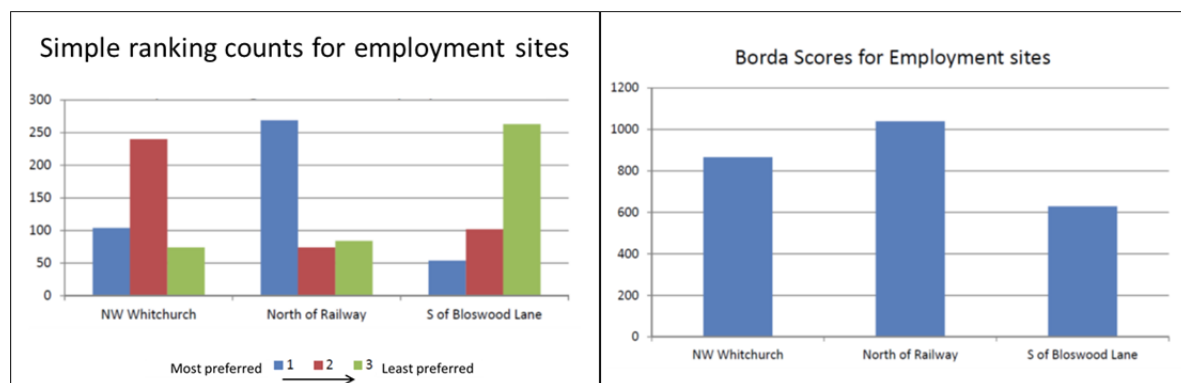


Figure 10.5: Whitchurch residents' – preferences on employment sites
 (Source: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Options Consultation Survey, October 2014, 512 responses)

Site Selection for Employment Use

10.14 Details of the site selection process are set out in the Employment Site Selection Report which was prepared to support the Regulation 14 version of the WNDP and the Addendum to the Employment Site Selection Report which sets out the basis of changes subsequently made.

10.15 Following residents' feedback from the Options Consultation, all three sites were ranked on the basis of the assessment criteria. These assessments covered:

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- planning criteria contained in the BDBC Housing Site Assessment Material (HSAM);
- 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 Local Plan and legislation;
- deliverability of the sites;
- the results of the assessment undertaken as part of the SA process; and
- the potential benefits to the community which will be provided to the community, should the sites be developed.

10.16 North West Whitchurch and North of the Railway had similar and highest-rankings under the HSAM and Vision assessments²⁰. 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 HSAM criteria	2	1	3
Ranking on WNDP Vision criteria	1	2	3

Table 10.2: Results of the employment site assessments

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

- No strategic need for industrial development in the Parish of Whitchurch has been identified by BDBC in the 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 5,000m² or so over the next 15 years although it is recognised that predictions over the period of the WNDP up till 2029 are difficult to make. The NPPF (in paragraph 22) seeks to avoid policies that protect, for the long term, land that has potential for employment use.
- The North West Whitchurch employment development, as laid out in Policy D3.21 of the previous BDBC Local Plan 2006-2011, would have been more than adequate to meet the needs of Whitchurch during the period of the WNDP. However, Policy D3.21 was not retained in the recently adopted Local Plan 2011-2029.
- Allocation of an employment site north of the railway, in the North Wessex Downs AONB, would be unlikely to pass the “sequential test” necessary to justify an incursion into the AONB. Without this, North Wessex Downs AONB

²⁰ Details of the ranking criteria and scoring methodologies, and the individual site assessments, for both the HSAM and Vision ranking exercises, are available in the WNDP Employment Site Selection Report, to be submitted with Regulation 15 version of the WNDP.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

would not support the development²¹. Such an allocation would also be in contravention of the NPPF (paragraphs 115 and 116).

- 10.18 Consultation with the Whitchurch community demonstrated broad support for developments which enable employment to grow in line with population growth, and also allow for the expansion requirements of current local businesses. Developments which deliver such employment growth will be supported, provided they do not have detrimental impacts on the existing residents of, and businesses in, the Parish. In addition, proposals for small start-up units to stimulate the growth of Whitchurch's small businesses will be encouraged. However, proposals for warehousing/storage (B8 uses) will not be supported, as they create low levels of employment in relation to the floor space provided, they generate high levels of movements of large vehicles that could penetrate the Town Centre and the scale of larger storage buildings tend to have an adverse visual impact on their surroundings.
- 10.19 The WNDP has allocated land for up to 4000m² of business development (classes B1 and B2) as part of a mixed use scheme on the site North West Whitchurch as set out in Policy HA2 in the Housing Chapter (11) of this Plan. The WNDP has made this allocation to reflect the expressed wishes of the Whitchurch Community as a local requirement in the absence of a specific allocation of a site or requirement in the BDBC Local Plan.

21 Letter from Andrew Lord, North Wessex Downs AONB, 29 May 2012.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

10.20 Objectives O1, O14 and O17 listed in Section 6 are supported by Policies ES1 and HA2:

WNDP Policy ES1

Encouragement of New Employment Sites within the Settlement Boundary (see Policy HA5 for boundary definition)

Proposals for development of sites for economic activities, for both start-up businesses and the expansion of existing businesses will be permitted, provided that such developments:

- 1) are visually attractive, compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and include necessary screening and be of a scale, design and finish appropriate to the locality, particularly where the development can be viewed from main roads or other heavily used areas, including high ground
- 2) do not cause detriment to valuable areas or features of nature conservation or man-made heritage
- 3) do not exacerbate flooding and deal satisfactorily with waste, emissions and effluent
- 4) include adequate internal roads (where applicable), parking, loading/unloading, servicing and manoeuvring areas. Junctions with the outside adopted road network are to be of current highway design standards
- 5) retain trees and hedgerows and seek to include additional planting and landscape management
- 6) have outside storage areas which are adequately screened from public view, including from neighbouring residential properties
- 7) have appropriate treatment of boundaries, and means of enclosure and surfacing within the site
- 8) have no unduly adverse effect on residential amenity.

In proposals for developments that support employment, being adjacent to the Ardglen Road Industrial Estate will be considered a positive factor.

10.21 If a change from business use is proposed for an existing light industrial employment site, evidence would be needed to demonstrate that the site is unsuitable for future employment uses. Sites will need to have been marketed at a reasonable value for at least 6 months with no interest from prospective buyers / tenants²².

10.22 Feedback shows that the Whitchurch community values the generation of jobs in most employment use classes: A1 shops, A2 financial and professional services, A3 restaurants and cafes, A4 drinking establishments, A5 Hot food takeaways, B1 offices and B2 General Industrial, C1 hotels, boarding houses and guest houses and C2 residential institutions.

²² Planning Policy Guidance paragraphs 016 -018 and 021, Revision date 06 March, 2014.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

10.23 Objectives O1, O6, O8, O14 and O17 as listed in Section 6 are supported by Policy ES2:

WNDP Policy ES2

Protection of Existing Productive Employment Sites from Redevelopment

Existing sites that are in light industrial use and associated facilities (such as those on the Ardglan Road Industrial Estate) will be protected, recognising that they provide an important source of employment opportunities.

Proposals for changes of use from employment which would result in the loss of existing jobs will only be granted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the re-use of the site for employment purposes is no longer viable.

The layout of both housing and employment sites shall be designed to avoid the juxtaposition of homes adjacent to B2 Industries wherever possible. Development proposals which could realistically result in nuisance complaints relating to existing employment sites or development that could result in an unacceptable impact on the amenity of new homes will not be permitted.

Employment–Related Traffic

10.24 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 are considered viable, as HGV traffic could be directed to the A34 junction north of Whitchurch at Litchfield, where both north and southbound access is available.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

10.25 In order to support objectives O2, O7 and O8, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy ES3

Protection of the Town Centre from Employment–Related Traffic and HGV Traffic

Planning applications that generate significant traffic should be accompanied by a Transport Statement and Traffic Management Plan.

Proposals for employment developments north of the Town Centre that would generate HGV traffic will need to demonstrate, by means of a Transport Statement or Transport Management Plan, 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 of and compliance with a route by means of appropriate mechanisms funded by the developer, such as a Traffic Regulation Order, and effective directional signing and improvements to the junctions within the Town Centre.

Proposals for employment developments south of the Town Centre that would generate HGV traffic that would travel through the Town Centre to travel north shall not be permitted.

Rural Employment

10.26 The Parish has an important rural economy associated with farming, horse breeding and field sports. In order to support objectives O1, O11, O14 and O17, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy ES4

Rural Employment

Outside the settlement policy boundary, well designed new buildings, re-use of farm buildings and other rural buildings, for business and enterprise purposes will be permitted, subject to the following criteria:

- 1) the proposals would not have an unacceptable detriment to the surrounding rural landscape
- 2) the proposals would not have adverse impacts on the local road network
- 3) the proposals would not cause unacceptable conflicts with agriculture and other land based activities
- 4) the proposals would not have significant adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residents and other uses; and
- 5) re-used buildings would not require substantial rebuilding or extension.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

11. Housing

- 11.1 The supporting document “Housing Site Selection Report” and the Addendum to this document provides a detailed assessment of the site selection process used for the allocation of sites for housing in the WNDP. Reference should be made to this document. The Addendums were produced as a result of changes to the Development Plan resulting from the adoption of the BDBC Local Plan on 26 May 2016, comments received under Regulation 14 consultation and planning decisions made between the version of the WNDP submitted under Regulation 14 and this Plan. This plan amends the allocation for housing made in the Regulation 14 version. This Section provides a summary of the process together with the allocations made and the policies which are proposed for adoption.

Housing Allocation Requirement

- 11.2 The need for housing is set out in the BDBC Local Plan. It requires a minimum of 350 dwellings to be built in Whitchurch during the period 2011 to 2029. Of these, 150 have been allocated by BDBC to an area south of Boswood Lane, leaving sites for at least 200 to be allocated by Whitchurch Town Council in accordance with Policy SS5 of the Local Plan.
- 11.3 During the development of the WNDP, several major planning applications have been submitted to BDBC. Two have received outline permission for a total of 134 homes. These sites are East of Winchester Road (100 homes) and the Allotments site adjoining Caesars Way (34 homes), which is part of the North West Whitchurch site described in this Plan. These are included in the overall allocations within the WNDP. The Local Plan specifies a *minimum* number of 200 dwellings to be allocated by the Town Council. The NPSC, in discussion with Whitchurch Town Council, decided that it was prudent to identify where a small number of additional dwellings could be allocated. The WNDP has therefore included provision for a further 20 dwellings, either as additional allocations or in reserve sites, in the event of the main sites allocated below being unable to provide the number of dwellings assumed in the WNDP.
- 11.4 The WNDP has allocated sites for 220 dwellings, as shown in Table 11.1, which includes the sites for 134 homes for which planning permission has been granted and the 20-home contingency identified above²³.

23 The Emerging Local Plan expects that there will be continuing “small scale” development of sites of nine or fewer dwellings within the Settlement Policy Boundary. These developments do not count towards the numbers allocated by the WNDP.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

	Number of dwellings	Comment
BDBC Local Plan requirement	350	Current total minimum requirement
Allocated South of Boswood Lane by BDBC in the Local Plan	150	Allocated for Boswood Lane in the Local Plan, under policy SS3.6. Includes 83 dwellings for which approval has been granted (planning application BDB/77828)
Outline planning approval granted for land between Winchester Road and Micheldever Road	100	Planning application 15/03693/OUT Site 8: East of Winchester Road in the WNDP site assessment process – see Table 11.2
Outline planning approval granted for land adjoining Caesars Way	34	Planning application 13/01522/OUT Part of Site 1: North West Whitchurch in the WNDP site assessment process – see Table 11.2
Already approved or allocated	284	
Minimum number to be further allocated by the WNDP	66	
Contingency for additional dwellings	20	Contingency to ensure the WNDP delivers the Housing numbers required in the ALP.
Total to be further allocated in the Regulation 15 WNDP	86	

Table 11.1: Calculation of the total number of dwellings to be allocated through the WNDP.

Housing Mix

11.5 The WNDP caters for the housing needs of all Whitchurch residents, through:

- providing appropriate housing for older people, downsizers, smaller households, younger people and those with young families; and
- providing local affordable housing for local employees.

11.6 The current definition of affordable housing (set out in Annex 2 to the National Planning Policy Framework) includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

11.7 Policy CN2 of the BDBC Local Plan states (inter alia) that the level of affordable housing provision may vary depending on the specifics of the site, but that BDBC's intended starting point for negotiations will be 40 per cent.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- 11.8 Other local planning authorities, such as neighbouring Winchester, have adopted plans that require that 40 per cent of all new housing developments must be affordable homes.
- 11.9 In order to support objectives O4, O5 and O16, as set out in Section 6 of this plan, policy HD1 is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy HD1

Housing Mix

Applications for development of market housing which are not exempt under Planning Policy Guidance will be permitted providing that:

- 1) 40 per cent of the dwellings are affordable homes
- 2) The type and size of affordable homes meet the specific needs identified for Whitchurch by the Housing Association/Affordable homes development partner
- 3) Developments address the local need for older persons' housing. All dwellings are to be accessible in accordance with Building Regulations Approved Document M Volume 1, 2015 edition and 10% of dwellings are to be designed to the Lifetimes Homes standard to meet the need for housing designed for the needs of elderly or infirm residents
- 4) Affordable homes are well integrated with market housing
- 5) Development proposals provide evidence, proportionate to the scale of development proposed, to justify the mix of housing proposed.

- 11.10 Allocation of housing is possible through Rural Exceptions for Affordable Housing Policy of a local plan, with a Section 106 agreement that ensures that the homes remain available in perpetuity to people with local connections. On the basis that the homes are not sold on to those who may make financial profit, philanthropic landowners are willing to offer the land at a discount to the housing provider. It is also possible under Section 106, and with the agreement of the Local Authority Housing Department, for such homes to be offered to those who have a local connection. As well as under Rural Exceptions Policy housing, such an agreement could also be applied to sites, whether or not allocated in the Development Plan, which are to be for affordable housing only. Objectives O4 and O16, as set out in Section 6, are supported by policy HD2.
- 11.11 BDBC has a Housing Allocation Policy which is published on its website (www.basingstoke.gov.uk/housingallocations). This policy is supported by an Allocations Scheme²⁴ which sets out the basis on which affordable housing is allocated in the Borough (the Scheme).

²⁴ www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/48364/Allocations%20Scheme%20-%20revised%206%20Dec2016.pdf

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

11.12 The Scheme recognises the specific need of rural areas and provides for the “shortlisting” of individuals who qualify for the housing register and have a “local connection”. BDBC has confirmed that Whitchurch qualifies as a rural area for the purpose of the Scheme. Discussions with BDBC have resulted in clarification that “shortlisting” will be interpreted as “prioritisation”. The term “Local Connection” is however not defined in the rural area context and therefore BDBC Policy is not clear as to whom such “prioritisation” will apply. Whitchurch is located close to Test Valley Borough Council and in particular Andover where, according to reports from Whitchurch Borough Councillors, individuals who are unable to find accommodation in Whitchurch are often temporarily relocated. Under the current BDBC Allocation Scheme such individuals (who would otherwise qualify) would not be eligible for prioritisation even though they have a strong and sometime long family connection. To address this local need, Policy HD2 sets out the local connection criteria which are specifically relevant to Whitchurch.

WNPD Policy HD2

Providing Affordable Housing for those with Local Connections

Providers of affordable housing shall ensure that before being offered to individuals and families in housing need in other parts of the Borough, all reasonable efforts are made to ensure that dwellings in Whitchurch are offered to persons (and their dependents) whose housing needs are not met by the market; and who meet the requirements of the Basingstoke Borough Council Allocations Scheme, other than the Borough residency criteria; and

- 1) Who have a minimum period of 3 years out of the last 10 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish; or
- 2) 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 years; or
- 3) 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
- 4) who need to live close to their place of work in the parish or an adjoining parish; or
- 5) who have close relatives (parents, siblings, or children) who have lived in the parish for the last 5 years or more.

Housing Site Options

11.13 The WNPD 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. The NPSC met on a number of occasions with landowners and developers to explore the potential of their sites.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

11.14 As a result of this process nine potential housing sites were identified and screened against constraints maps to ensure they were viable and had no immediate “show stoppers”. The sites identified are summarised in Table 11.2 and Figure 11.1.

Site option	Ownership	Nominal dwellings (W NDP allocation)	Site area (ha.)	Current site use/classification
Site 1: North West Whitchurch	The Hospital of St Cross & Almshouse of Noble Poverty	150 (94, 34 of which with planning permission)	14	Allotments and greenfield old orchard allocated for a mix of housing and Industrial use by W NDP. Planning permission for 34 homes on allotments
Site 2: R E Thompson / Serendipity Sam’s	R E Thompson & Co. (Vacuum) Ltd	20 (0)	0.4	Industrial Use
	Timesvalue Ltd	20 (0)	0.3	Formerly Industrial disused but classified for Industrial use
Site 3: Car Centre	Timesvalue Ltd	10 (10)	0.15	Developed site – allocated to be held in reserve for residential use by W NDP
Site 4: Dances Lane	Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire	20 (15)	0.4	Police Station allocated for residential use by W NDP
Site 5: Boswood Lane Extension	Zurich Assurance	100 (150 already allocated)	8	Greenfield allocated for residential use by BDBC Local Plan
Site 6: North of the Cricket Ground	The Hospital of St Cross & Almshouse of Noble Poverty	30 (0)	0.65	Greenfield, occasional use as car park
Site 7: East of the Knowlings	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	200 (0)	7.3	Greenfield disused agricultural HSAM Category 1
Site 8: East of Winchester Road	Lilybell Ltd	200 (100 – outline planning permission given)	19	Greenfield HSAM category 1, allocated by W NDP and with planning permission for residential use
Site 9: East of Bere Hill	Zurich Assurance	100 (0)	5.5	Greenfield HSAM Category 2

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Table 11.2: Housing site options

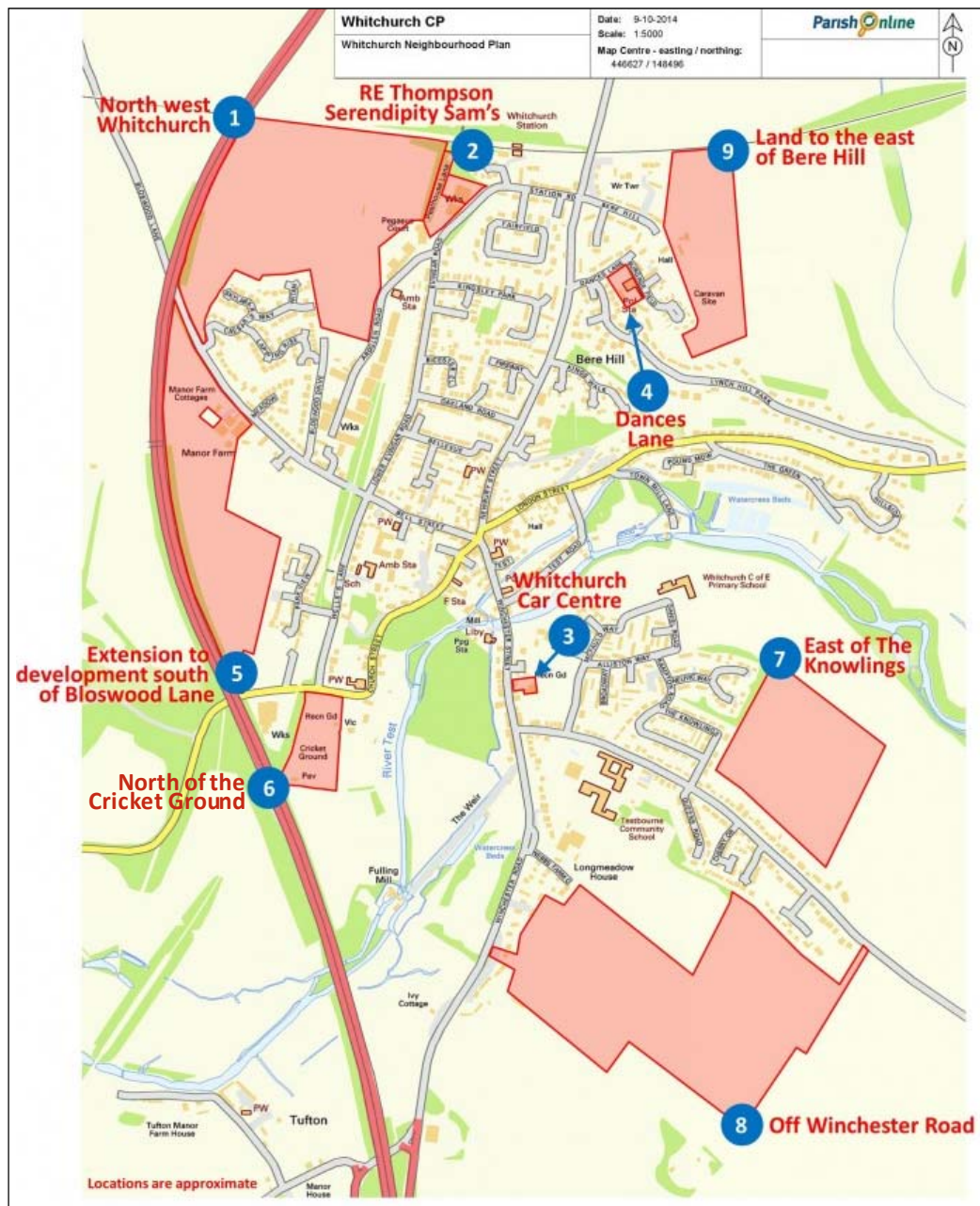


Figure 11.1: Housing site options presented to the housing options consultation in October 2014

11.15 All these sites were assessed against the development criteria identified by residents at the initial community consultation. It was clear that the smallest sites, with room for 10 to 30 dwellings, were most compatible with residents' vision for the future of Whitchurch. However, these small sites can only accommodate 100 or less of the minimum of 350 dwellings allocated by BDBC to Whitchurch during 2011 to 2029.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

11.16 As a result, all nine sites were presented to residents in a second consultation, and also assessed against formal planning criteria. The sites were then further assessed post Regulation 14 and the results included in the Addendum to the Housing Site Selection report.

Results of the “Where Should The Houses Go?” Community Consultation

11.17 The full results of this consultation are published in a separate document entitled ‘Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan “Where Should The Houses Go?” Community Consultation’, October 2014, to which reference should be made. In this Consultation (pages 9-10) small sites were defined as having 50 or fewer houses, medium sites were between 51 and 100 houses, and large sites were over 100 houses.

11.18 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.

11.19 The size of housing development sites was also considered in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the WNDP undertaken by AECOM Infrastructure and Environment. The SA²⁵ also identified one medium and several smaller sites as the best option.

11.20 Given the changes to the required housing numbers identified in the Local Plan and the loss of one Rural Exception Site of 25 homes it was necessary to revise the site allocation from that in the Regulation 14 version of the WNDP. The allocation of housing on two medium sized and several smaller sites has therefore been adopted by the NPSC as the best option.

11.21 At the “Where Should 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, a form of preferential voting where voters rank options in order of preference and the rankings are converted into points²⁶. The higher the score, the more broadly acceptable the option is deemed to be.

11.22 The Borda Count scores, in Figure 11.2 below, show that two sites were significantly less broadly acceptable than the others:

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

25 “Sustainability Assessment of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan: Appraisal of reasonable alternatives regarding an emerging spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan”, AECOM, 12 May 2015

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

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

11.23 The three remaining small sites were the most broadly acceptable:

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

11.24 The most broadly acceptable of the medium sites are:

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

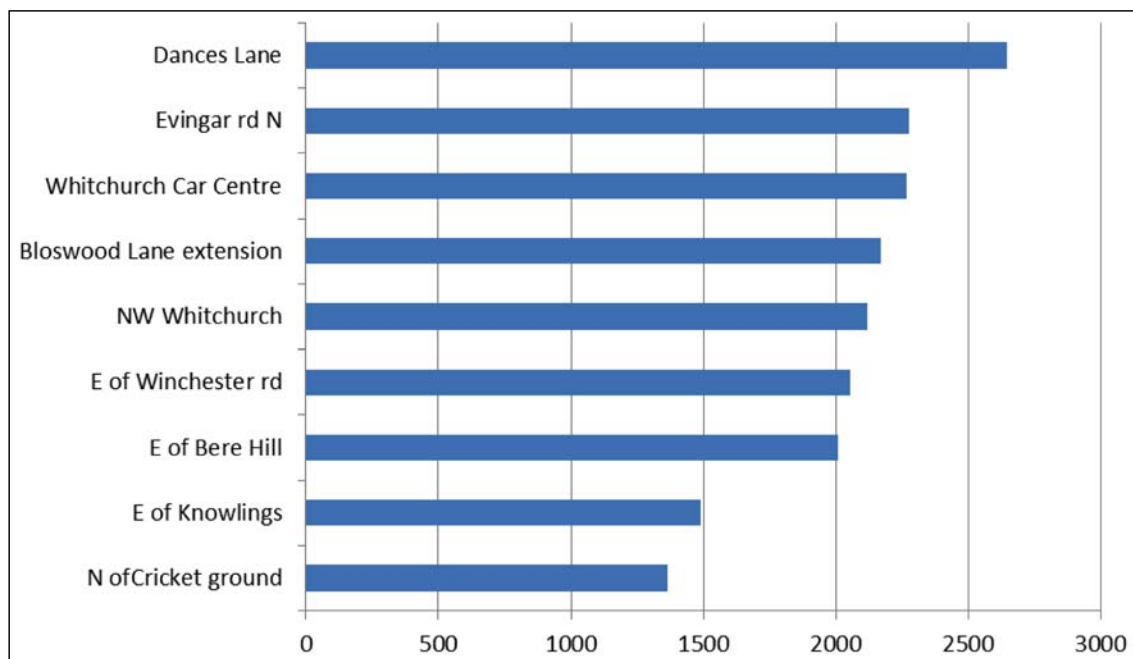


Figure 11.2: Borda Count of respondents' rankings ranking of the Housing site options showing the most and least broadly acceptable options

Housing Site Assessment, Using BDBC Housing Site Assessment Material (HSAM)

11.25 In addition to consulting the community on the most acceptable sites, the NPSC used BDBC planning criteria, known as Housing Site Assessment Material (HSAM), to determine how the sites compared on planning grounds. Sixteen criteria were used, as summarised in Table 11.3.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Housing site assessment criteria

• Site Status (brownfield / greenfield / AONB) • Capacity of landscape to accommodate development • Impact on heritage and landscape assets • Impact on agricultural land • Form of development, and its relationship to the existing settlement • Transport links • Impact on existing transport infrastructure • Site contamination	• Contribution to local open space/green infrastructure • Opportunity to provide new transport infrastructure • Opportunity to provide new local services • Affected by noise pollution • Affected by unneighbourly uses • Biodiversity • Impact on sewerage infrastructure • Archaeological interest
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Table 11.3: Housing site assessment criteria

11.26 The housing sites were assessed by both the NPSC and – separately – by Bell Cornwell LLP, an independent firm of town planning consultants. The two assessments came to similar conclusions, as summarised in Table 11.4 below. The highest ranking indicates the **least favoured** site, according to the criteria, whilst the lowest ranking indicates the **most favoured** site.

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

Table 11.4: Housing site option rankings in the HSAM assessment process

Site Allocation for Housing Development in the Regulation 15 WNDP

11.27 To meet the requirement for a minimum of 86 dwellings beyond those already allocated or have outline planning permission (Table 11.1), the most sustainable solution, and most broadly acceptable to the residents of Whitchurch, is for two medium site and several smaller sites.

11.28 Three sites were ruled out by the NPSC because they were the least broadly acceptable in the community consultation, and/or scored poorly in the HSAM and Vision assessments.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- Site 6, North of the Cricket Ground;
- Site 7: East of The Knowlings; and
- Site 5, Blosswood Lane Extension.

11.29 Three small, previously developed sites were considered by the WNDP, as they are broadly acceptable to the community, ranked highly in the HSAM and Vision assessments, and are considered to be sustainable:

- Site 4, Dances Lane;
- Site 2, Evingar Road North; and
- Site 3, Whitchurch Car Centre.

11.30 Site 4, Dances Lane is considered one of the most suitable for development by the surveys carried out in Whitchurch. Consequently, it has been selected as one of the smaller sites which is suitable to meet the future housing needs of Whitchurch and has been allocated for approximately 15 dwellings.

11.31 Site 2, Evingar Road North, was separated into its two component parts, as different issues apply to each:

- Serendipity Sam's comprises an unused building and surrounding paved areas, which has not been used for industrial or other business purposes for many years. The site has recently been refused planning application for conversion into residential units and is located immediately next to an active employment site which potentially contravenes policy ES2 of this Plan. This site has not therefore been allocated for housing in this Plan.
- R E Thompson is in productive use as an employment site. Allocating the site for housing would not be consistent with Policy ES3 of this Plan, which protects existing productive employment sites from redevelopment.

11.32 Site 3, Whitchurch Car Centre has been designated as a reserve site for approximately 10 homes (probably in the form of flats) to be used in the case of increased future requirements by BDBC or if other development sites were found to take less housing than expected (i.e. the total housing falls below the minimum number specified in the WNDP).

11.33 Of the three remaining sites:

- Site 8, East of Winchester Road, has already received outline planning permission for 100 homes. Extending this site to meet the increased number of homes would breach the strong view of the community that the houses should not be built on one large site. It is also considered that traffic generated by a larger number of homes would unacceptably increase congestion along Winchester Road which is Whitchurch's peak hour most congested blackspot. It was not considered for further development beyond the 100 home allocation.
- Site 9, Bere Hill was the least broadly acceptable of the remaining sites in the consultations, offers fewer on-site community benefits and has the greatest landscape impact.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- Part of Site 1, North West Whitchurch, has received outline planning permission for 34 dwellings on the part of the site currently occupied by allotments; and been identified as a possible employment site (see Chapter 10).

11.34 Allocating an additional 60 dwellings to this site will improve the likelihood deliverability industrial development which is supported by the community but has been undelivered in the 15 years of the previous BDBC Local Plan.

11.35 Consequently, Site 1, North West Whitchurch has been allocated in the WNDP for 60 dwellings in addition, in addition to the 34 dwellings for which outline planning permission have already been granted.

11.36 The allocated sites are shown in Figure 11.3 and listed in Table 11.5. The land for approximately 85 homes has been considered sufficient to meet the requirements of the Local Plan considering that this total includes a 20 home contingency.

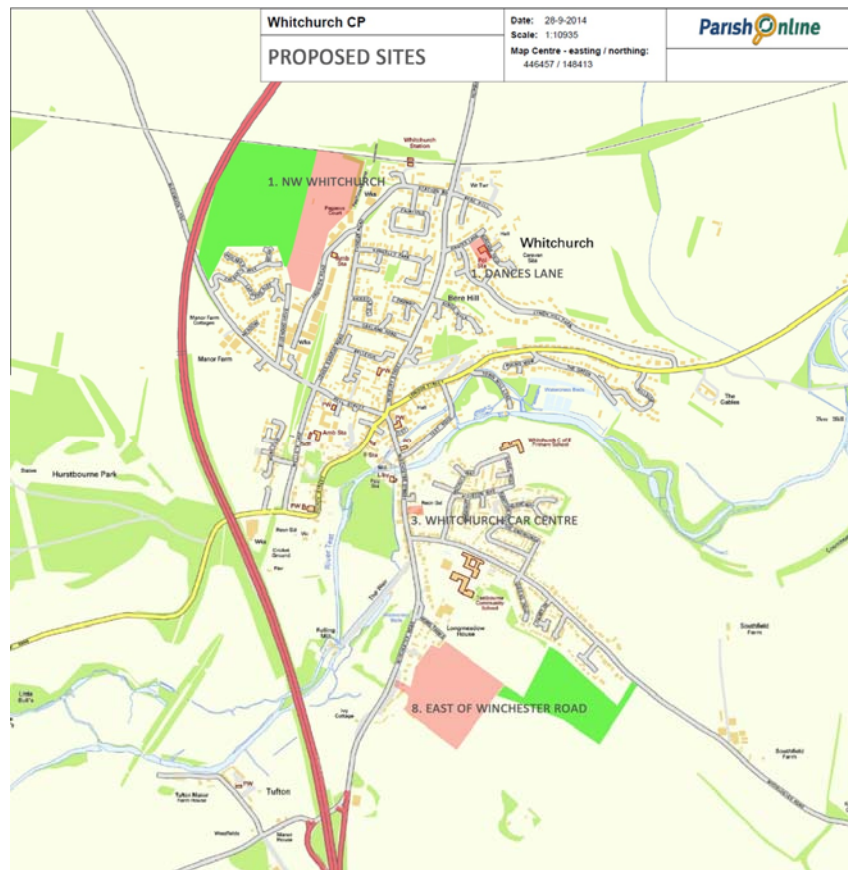


Figure 11.3: Housing site options selected for the WNDP

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

W NDP housing development allocation	Number of dwellings	Comment
Site 4: Dances Lane	15	
Site 3: Whitchurch Car Centre	10	To be held in reserve
Site 1: North West Whitchurch	60	In addition to 34 dwellings already approved on the allotments part of the site
Total	85	Minimum number of additional dwellings allocated for the Regulation 15 W NDP

Table 11.5: Sites in addition to those either already allocated or for which planning permission has been obtained

W NDP Housing Policies

11.37 The policies below address the requirement of the W NDP to provide sites for 85 additional homes in the Parish of Whitchurch over the W NDP period 2011 to 2029. Also policy HA4 reaffirms the conditions for building on the East of Winchester Road site for which outline planning permission has been obtained. It should be noted that the NW Whitchurch site (policy HA2) has an additional 34 houses for which outline planning permission has also been granted. It should also be noted it deals with mixed businesses and housing and supports objectives O1, O4, O14 and O17 in Section 6. In order to support objective O4, as set out in Section 6 of the W NDP, policies HA1 and HA3-4 are to be adopted. Objectives O4 and O11, as set out in Section 6, are supported by policy HA5.

Allocation of the Dances Lane Site for Approximately 15 Dwellings

W NDP Policy HA1

Allocation of the Dances Lane Site for Approximately 15 Dwellings

The 0.4ha site at Dances Lane (Figure 11.4) is allocated for housing development in the W NDP and will deliver a high quality development that will provide for approximately 15 dwellings.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.



Figure 11.4: Dances Lane site

11.38 The Police Commissioners have confirmed to The NPSC that this site will cease to be used for its present purpose and will be available for housing development within the Plan Period.

Allocation of Land West of Evingar Road (North West Whitchurch) for up to 94 Dwellings and up to 4000m² of Business Development

11.39 Development on the NW Whitchurch site will deliver approximately 94 dwellings (including 34 granted Outline Planning Permission) in the period 2018/19 – 2023/24 that will contribute to the 5-year housing supply that the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan is required to deliver.

11.40 The site provides significantly more community benefits than other sites of a similar size that have been assessed. Community benefits include:

- a new free car park for the railway station (approximately 70 cars) with footpath links to the north and southbound platforms
- a large area of managed open space on the higher land near the A34 and adjacent to Caesars Way
- a community orchard
- car parking for the allotments.
- the provision of a car park for approximately 70 cars is required to replace likely losses in car parking spaces currently available but which are likely to be lost as a result of proposed developments adjacent to the railway station and possible loss of on- street parking on Evingar and Station Road. They are not intended to replace the car parking which may be provided by policy SS11 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan.

11.41 The site is the preferred option for employment site development in the WNDP. The use of this site for mixed housing and business would allow for the future expansion of existing Whitchurch businesses on the Ardglen Industrial Estate.

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WNDP Policy HA2

Allocation of Land West of Evingar Road (North West Whitchurch) for up to 94 Dwellings and up to 4000m² of Business Development

The part of the 14 ha site to the east of the Proposed Settlement Policy Boundary at North West Whitchurch (Figure 11.5), which includes the Land adjoining Caesar's Way (13/01522/OUT) which has outline planning permission for up to 34 homes, is allocated for a mixed housing and business development. The site will deliver a high quality development that will make provision for up to 94 homes (class C3) and up to 4000m² of business development (classes B1 and B2).

This site shall provide a development which will:

- 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
- 2) Respond positively to the Wessex Downs AONB and landscape characteristics of the area, providing an appropriate edge to the town.
- 3) Include measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the local road network including the protection of the Town Centre from employment related Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic as set out in WNDP policy ES3
- 4) Include the design of a new access road and junction designed to restrict HGV traffic turning south on Evingar Road, and improvements to the junctions within the Town Centre and to seek financial contribution from the developers to cover the costs of implementing a Traffic Regulation Order
- 5) 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
- 6) 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
- 7) Comply with WNDP policy CS1 including designing the development, road layout and amenity space so as not to prevent the potential future use of the old Newbury to Winchester Railway tunnel as an HGV route to the A34 Newbury Road
- 8) Avoid or mitigate direct or indirect adverse impacts on key species and habitats by ensuring a net gain in biodiversity. Safeguard parts of both the existing and proposed sites' natural green spaces and the boundary vegetation for an adequate landscape (and over time, natural acoustic) buffer zone to the adjacent A34 road and railway embankments
- 9) Incorporate and/or promote renewable energy technologies
- 10) Have dwellings that are accessible in accordance with M4(2) of the Building Regulations 2015 or any subsequent government standard.
- 11) Make land available by a planning obligation for public open space (for recreation, re-located allotments, orchard and car parking) to meet local needs (see Figure 11.5)
- 12) The developer agrees with the Planning Authority on a managing organisation for the proposed and existing adjacent (Caesars Way) open space. Developer to prepare a landscape and ecological master plan for the community open space

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areas of the site and ensure that an ecological management plan is in place and funded in perpetuity to maintain this public asset

- 13) Make land available by a planning obligation for the provision of a minimum 70 space public car park located to the north east corner of the site and to ensure good pedestrian linkage to Whitchurch Station. Work with adjoining landowners Network Rail and HCC to provide step free pedestrian access from the car park to the London bound platform via the existing pedestrian tunnel
- 14) In the light of the nearby B2 Industrial uses in Ardglan, adjacent A34 Trunk Road and active railway (Salisbury to Waterloo Line), ensure that acceptable noise reduction standards can be met within homes and business premises through the preparation of a comprehensive mitigation assessment/strategy. In particular the layout of the site shall be designed to avoid the juxtaposition of homes adjacent to B2 Industries wherever possible
- 15) Complete the provision of external and internal road and services infrastructure for the business employment part of the site prior to the occupation of the first dwelling.

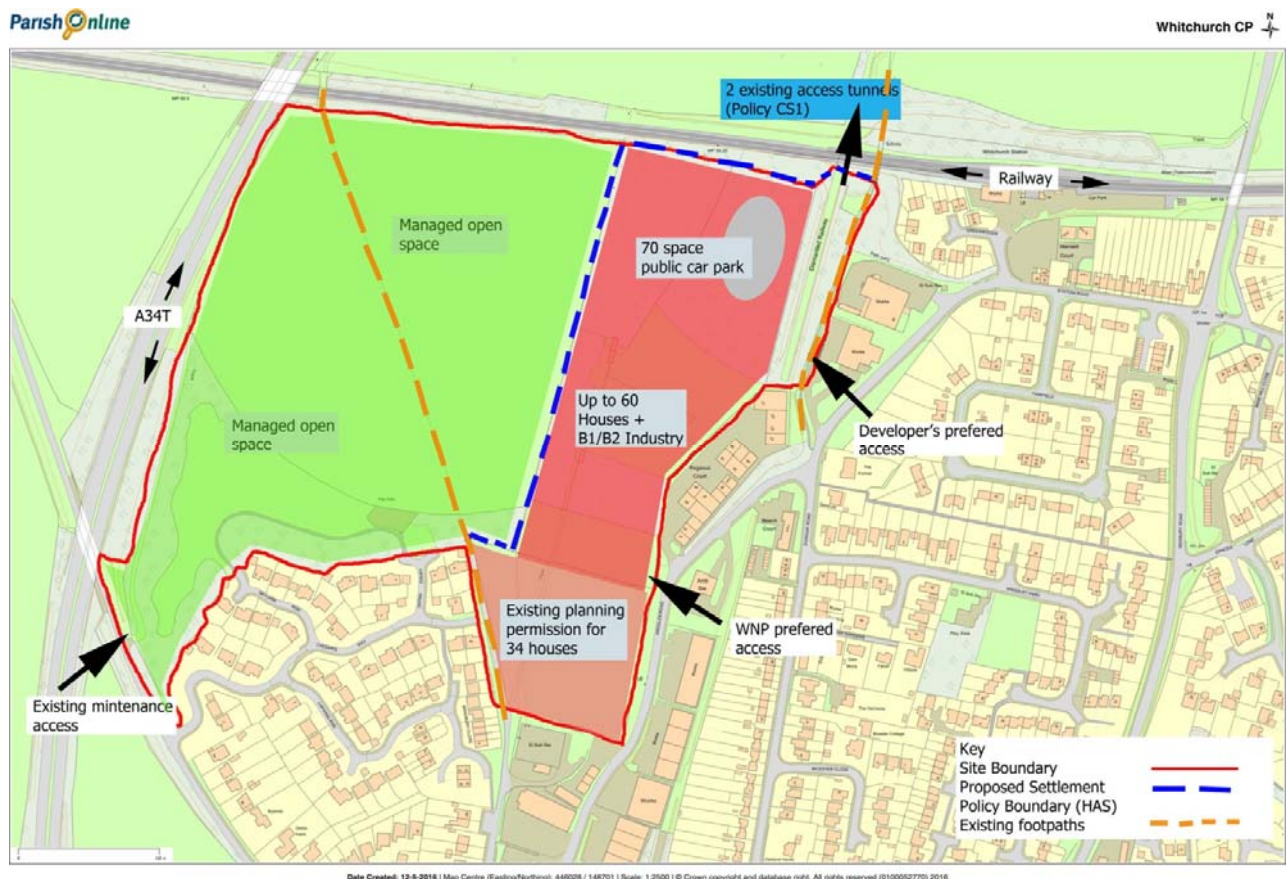


Figure 11.5: North West Whitchurch site

11.42 The site owners have confirmed in writing to the NPSC that they will submit a revised planning application for this site which will conform to policy HA2. This application was submitted in 2016 and a decision expected in early 2017.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Allocation of the Whitchurch Car Centre Site as a Reserve Site for Approximately 10 Dwellings

WNDP Policy HA3

Allocation of the Whitchurch Car Centre Site as a Reserve Site for Approximately 10 Dwellings

The 0.15 ha site at the Whitchurch Car Centre (figure 11.6) is allocated as a reserve site for housing development in the WNDP and will deliver a high quality development that will provide approximately 10 dwellings, likely to be in the form of flats.

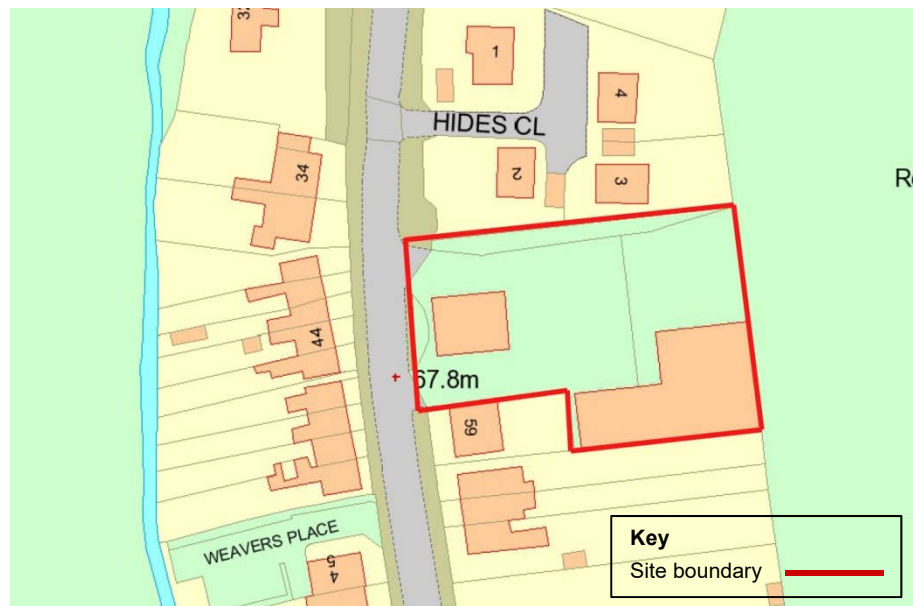


Figure 11.6: Whitchurch Car Centre site

- 11.43 The owners of the site have confirmed to the NPSC that this site would be available for housing development.
- 11.44 It is recognised that a small part of the frontage of this site is in flood zone 2 and whilst this is unlikely to affect the viability of the site any development will need to suitable provision for this.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Allocation of the East of Winchester Road Site for Approximately 100 Dwellings

WNDP Policy HA4

Allocation of the East of Winchester Road Site for Approximately 100 Dwellings

The 12.12ha site east of Winchester Road (Figure 11.7) is allocated for housing development in the WNDP and outline planning permission has been given. The western part of the site within the proposed settlement boundary will deliver a high quality development that will make provision for approximately 100 dwellings. This site shall provide a development which will:

- 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
- 2) Respond positively to the landscape characteristics of the area, providing an appropriate edge to the town
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 6) Avoid or mitigate direct or indirect adverse impacts on key species and habitats by ensuring a net gain in biodiversity. Safeguard parts of the site's natural green space and the boundary vegetation as an adequate landscape buffer zone to adjacent open countryside
- 7) Incorporate and/or promote renewable energy technologies
- 8) Have dwellings that are accessible in accordance with Building Regulations Approved Document M Volume 1, 2015 edition
- 9) Make land available by a planning obligation for public open space (for football pitches, associated changing rooms and car parking) to meet local needs, in line with the council's adopted standards and FA Standards for Club Football – see Figure 11.7
- 10) 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 WNDP period
- 11) 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.

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Figure 11.7: East of Winchester Road site

11.45 This site has outline planning permission for development in conformance with the above policy and the reserved matters application is currently under consideration by BDBC Planning Department.

Settlement Policy Boundary

11.46 This Plan proposes that the built areas of the site allocations are included in the Whitchurch Settlement Policy Boundary:

WNDP Policy HA5

Revision of the Settlement Policy Boundary

The present Settlement Policy Boundary for Whitchurch shall be extended, as identified in Figure 11.5 and Figure 11.7, to include the built areas of the sites allocated for housing and employment development by the WNDP. Adjacent or contiguous areas which exist as, or are proposed to be, public open space or for recreational use shall not be included within the Settlement Policy Boundary.

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12. Community Projects

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 12.1 The CIL is administered by BDBC, with 25% going to Neighbourhood Plan areas for types of infrastructure that support the development of the area. 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 WNDP however this Section sets out the assessed priority and number of processes by which such projects could be delivered.
- 12.2 In order to support objectives O3, O8, O11, O12 and O15, as set out in Section 6 of the WNDP, the following policy is to be adopted:

WNDP Policy CP1

Allocation of CIL Revenues to Whitchurch Community Infrastructure Projects

Developers will be required to mitigate the impact of the development on infrastructure such as public utilities, libraries, policing, waste services and the highways network, healthcare, education, leisure services and other schemes identified here, or in the Basingstoke and Deane Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Regulation 123 List. Section 106 agreements will be used to secure contributions where appropriate and until the borough council implements a CIL.

Financial contributions will be required through CIL and/or planning obligations, as appropriate, from each developer to fund infrastructure within the town. Community priorities in terms of additional local facilities to be provided as a result of new development are set out in the WNDP.

The Town Council will work with stakeholders to review the expenditure of CIL funding on Community Infrastructure Projects, will keep the list of priorities up to date and manage expenditure in line with community priorities.

Whitchurch Infrastructure Projects Arising from the WNDP

- 12.3 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 Consultation Statement and "Where Should The Houses Go?" Consultation Report which accompanies the WNDP.
- 12.4 The highest ranked projects in order of priority were;

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- 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; and
- Youth Project Clubhouse.

12.5 Additional suggestions, in order of priority, were for improvements to:

- traffic;
- sports and social;
- pedestrian and cycling; and
- parking.

12.6 The additional suggestions were generally consistent with the projects previously identified in paragraph 12.4.

12.7 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

Covered Swimming Pool

12.8 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.

Additional Community Sports Facilities

12.9 Other leisure opportunities were identified 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 WNDP for housing or employment development. The Town Council and BDBC 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.

Whitchurch Transport Infrastructure

12.10 The greatest concern from residents in the Consultations was over traffic congestion and its effects.

12.11 Community consultations traffic surveys and the analysis of these results has identified the following topics of importance for the town:

- the impact of traffic (particularly through HGV Traffic), and to monitor the impacts of change particularly around the schools.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

- review on-street parking and location of Public Service Vehicle parking
- 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.

12.12 The Whitchurch Transport Infrastructure Project is being undertaken by BDBC. A report was commissioned from consultants Odyssey Markides 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.
- Where necessary, to identify any gaps in the information available and to identify a means of providing this and its subsequent collection.
- 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.

12.13 With the support of Whitchurch Town Council, the project will proceed to evaluate the feasibility and cost of the consultants' proposal to revise on street parking to improve the flow of traffic through the Town, subject to compatibility with the current policies of the Highway Authority, Hampshire County Council.

12.14 It is proposed that Whitchurch Town Council will work with BDBC, Hampshire County Council, the Highways England, public transport providers, local schools and developers and other stakeholders to deliver a long term sustainable strategy for improvements to the highway network and the management of traffic and parking in and around Whitchurch and the safety of the A34.

Improvement of Cycle and Pedestrian Access and Open Space

12.15 In line with the desire for more outdoor public meeting spaces expressed in the "Have Your Say" Vision consultation, the Town Council will work with Hampshire County Council (Highway Authority), Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council,

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Developers and local organisations in Whitchurch on identifying opportunities for reallocating 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.

Tree Planting Project

12.16 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.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.

Acknowledgements

The NPSC are grateful to the members of the Community who have supported the preparation of the WNDP 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
Phil Turner	Cllr Sharon Egan	

The NPSC was constituted as a subcommittee of Whitchurch Town Council. The NPSC acknowledge the close coordination during the preparation of the WNDP 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.

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The WNDP 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 WNDP.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan as set out in paragraph 1.2.