



Whitchurch,
Buckinghamshire,
Neighbourhood Plan, June
2023

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

Published by the Whitchurch Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning
(General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

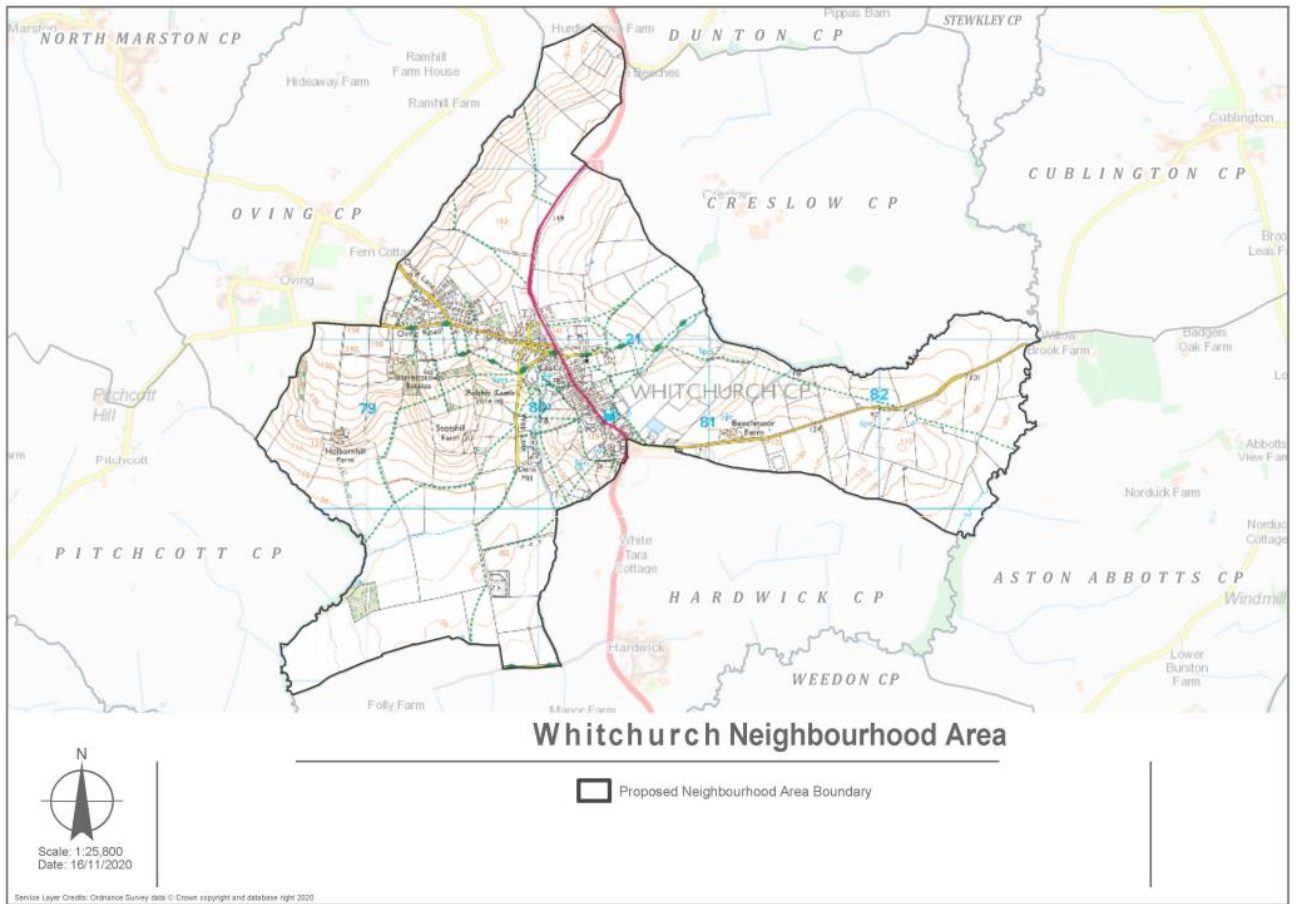
**Whitchurch Parish
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION
STATEMENT June 2023**

1. INTRODUCTION

- This consultation statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) in respect of the Whitchurch Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023 – 2040. The legal basis of this Statement is provided by Section 15 (2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which requires that a consultation statement should:
 - Contain details of the persons and bodies that were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan;
 - Explain how they were consulted;
 - Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
 - Describe how those issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation

- Whitchurch Parish Council ('the Parish Council') has prepared a Neighbourhood Development Plan ('Whitchurch NP) for the area designated by the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council, in June 2023 (see Plan A below).



Plan A: Whitchurch Designated Neighbourhood Area

2. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Timeline of events

- The timeline of events below demonstrates the evolution of the Whitchurch NP.
- Communications and feedback have been undertaken through regular updates via face to face meetings, the Whitchurch and Creslow Parish News (published monthly and distributed to all Whitchurch residents and Facebook. The Parish Council has received and noted minutes and mostly monthly update from its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Minutes of Steering Group (SG) meetings are published on the Parish Council website and can be found at <https://whitchurchpc.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan> . At the same location can be found a significant communication evidence base including Whitchurch News articles, Flyers, FAQ's and village meeting presentation materials.

2018

- In May debate was underway within the Parish Council about the benefits, limitations and potential support for a Neighbourhood Plan with residents to be invited to a meeting to gauge public views (confirmed in July).
- Public meeting held in October attended by approximately 60 residents who also heard from AVDC and Oving PC who were underway with a Community Plan.
- At the Parish Council meeting on December 10th it was agreed that a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (SG) would be established and its remit was approved.

2019

- January was the first meeting of possible candidates to join a Steering Group and was established on the 22nd with a chair voted and two Parish Councillors on the SG.
- In May 2019 a Questionnaire was distributed with the Whitchurch News to all village residents to poll the wish within the village for an NP. This showed overwhelming support.
- The results were presented to the Parish Council in July 2019 who approved a decision to proceed to create a Whitchurch NP.
- Discussions were held with AVDC planning (Allan Bennet) to secure advice and input to the SG.
- In November O'Neill Homer were appointed as consultants to the Parish council and SG. A "vision" meeting held to drive awareness and understanding of NP process and potential objectives.

2020

- Covid-19 arrives in March causing great disruption to the SG and challenges to working effectively
 - Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan brand established to aid recognition
 - Neighbourhood Plan area was agreed in May to follow exact boundary of the Parish.
-

2021

- “Call for Sites” was made in March to all landowners adjoining the built area.
- In April two Neighbourhood plan update meetings were held during Covid via Zoom attended in total by twenty residents.
- Whitchurch NP Informal Consultation meeting held in St Johns Hall on July 22nd and July 25th attended by 115 village residents and District Councillors. Meeting was promoted via insert in Whitchurch News sent to all residents. Visitors advised about all sites that had been put forwards by location and size but without plans for each site. A simple questionnaire asked for ranking of most favoured four sites, least favoured four sites and open comments box. 128 questionnaires were returned.
- Conclusions of the July meetings as regards most acceptable sites can be seen later in this document and all written comments made by residents are captured. This gave valuable input to key village concerns.
- Following the July meetings all landowners who had responded positively to the call-for-sites were asked to prepare sketch-plans for a further round of consultation meetings with village residents. At this point three sites, D, E and K chose not to proceed further.
- On November 4th and 7th four new consultation meetings were held at which village residents were presented with sketch plans for all sites and asked for their viewpoint on the Steering Groups initial thinking (concluded from HNA and village feedback in July) on Housing Types and Styles, Site Allocation, Green Spaces and “other comments”. Residents were provided with an A5 booklet (see attachment 5) and questionnaire (see attachment 6). Total attendees were approximately 90.

2022

- The Steering Group continues to meet and prepare policies for the Whitchurch NP throughout the year and identifies evidence gaps, with particular focus on Green Spaces, Important Views and village accessibility.
- In July Rachael Riach (Bucks NP co-ordinator) visited the village and walked all potential sites with group members and was able to discuss the groups views and the evidence base regarding the most favourable new development sites and approach to be taken.
- Draft pre-submission plan was provided to statutory consultees and village residents on December 21st
- December 21st Regulation 14 pre-submission plan published. Statutory bodies invited to review as well as publication on village website for residents review and comment.
-

2023

- Saturday Jan 14th, “turn up and ask” displays in St Johns hall to update Whitchurch residents on the contents of Regulation 14 Consultation and to answer any queries. Attended by approximately 40 residents and SG.
- February- Deadline for Regulation 14 feedback extended to Feb 27th at request of Buckinghamshire Council.
- March, individual responses provided to all local residents who responded with comments during Regulation 14 consultation.
- March/ April pre-submission plan updated to reflect inputs from residents. SG walked entire Settlement Boundary to confirm suggested changes from residents and to identify any obvious errors not previously advised. Several revisions made

to Settlement Boundary as a result prior to Regulation 15

Public and Stakeholder Consultation

- The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been keen to ensure that the plan provides local residents with a voice as to how their community should grow and be sustainable, whilst continuing to be the strong and vibrant community that exists today.

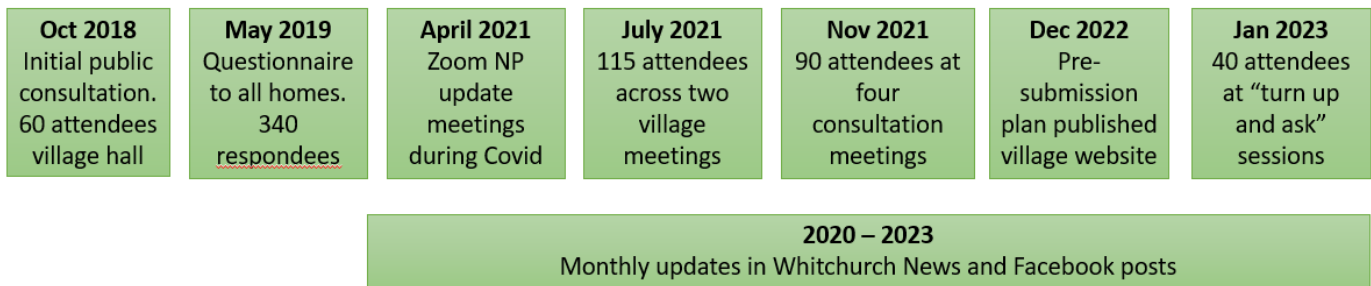
- Engaging with the community included:
 - Holding local events
 - Regular updates in the Whitchurch Parish News (distributed to all households and in local shops)
 - Speaking to local groups such as Whitchurch Combined School, Whitchurch WI and Stitch-In
 - Paper surveys
 - Regular Steering Group Meetings
 - Regular updates to the Parish Council
 - Limited face to face meetings with

AVDC

- Social media ; Facebook (three village groups)
- Whitchurch Village website
- Flyers/Posters on noticeboards
- Flyers/Posters posted through every door (480 households)
- Parish Council Meetings
- Banners displayed throughout the parish (see photograph below)



- The Steering Group’s approach to community engagement can be broadly summarised as shown below:



May 2019 Village Questionnaire analysis

- 227 responses in total 30% of 754 residents on the electoral roll
- 168 unique complete addresses were given and 34 responses withheld their full address
- Most responses were completed on behalf of all occupants of a particular property, based on the number of adults included in such returns the maximum number of 18+ included in the results could be as high as 476 which is 63% of the electoral roll.
- Responses covered households with single occupancy through to those with multiple children present
- Responses covered all village postcodes
- 180 respondees wanted an NP and a Community Led Plan. 17 wanted an NP only meaning that 86% of respondees supported a Neighbourhood Plan for Whitchurch.

10 aspects of village life that most resonated with residents

The following questions and answers scored an average of 4 or above out of 5 from the 227 responses

Question 1. What is most important to you about living in Whitchurch?	
Easy Access to the countryside	4.1

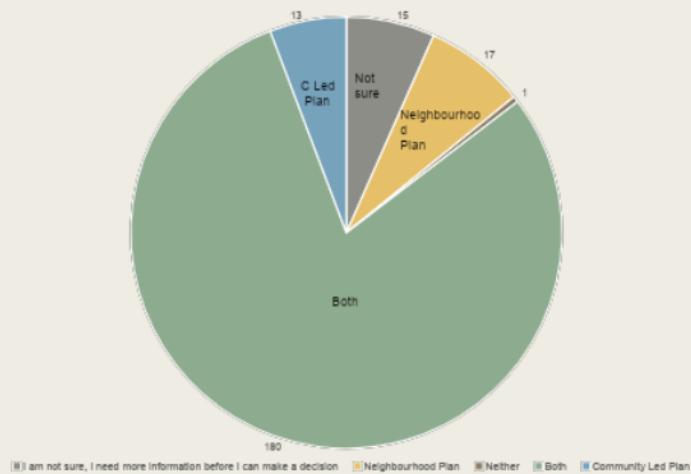
Qu 3. What are your concerns, if any, about the future of Whitchurch?	
Future Development	4.1
Loss of existing facilities (pub, shops etc)	4.1
Traffic	4.4
Protection of Green Spaces	4.3
Protection of historic and listed buildings	4.1

WHITCHURCH

Qu. 8 What is most important when considering future housing for Whitchurch?	
Provision of additional services (eg GP access, school places)	4.3
Energy efficiency	4.1
Location of new homes	4.4
Controlling the number of new homes	4.7



What do residents want?



The July 2021 consultation meetings. Analysis and “raw feedback”.



July 2021 Informal Village Consultation: Feedback on sites offered by Landowners for Development :

The expectation is that Whitchurch may consider development suitable for 20-30 homes. Now that you have seen the sites offered by landowners for possible future inclusion in a Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan as a development site please rank your most and least favoured sites as below :

Most favoured Sites	Site Letter A-L
1	
2	
3	
4	

Please rank 1 to 4 (where 1 is best)

Least favoured sites	Site Letter A-L
4	
3	
2	
1	

Please rank 4 to 1 (where 4 is the worst)

Please add any comments or thoughts below :

WHITCHURCH

Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

**Please come and have your say in the plan
for our village.**

We would like to invite all those who live and work in Whitchurch to find out more about how the Neighbourhood Plan is progressing and to make their views known on the sites that have been put forward for consideration.

Your feedback is an essential part of the process in deciding which sites are selected and ultimately put to the residents for their approval.

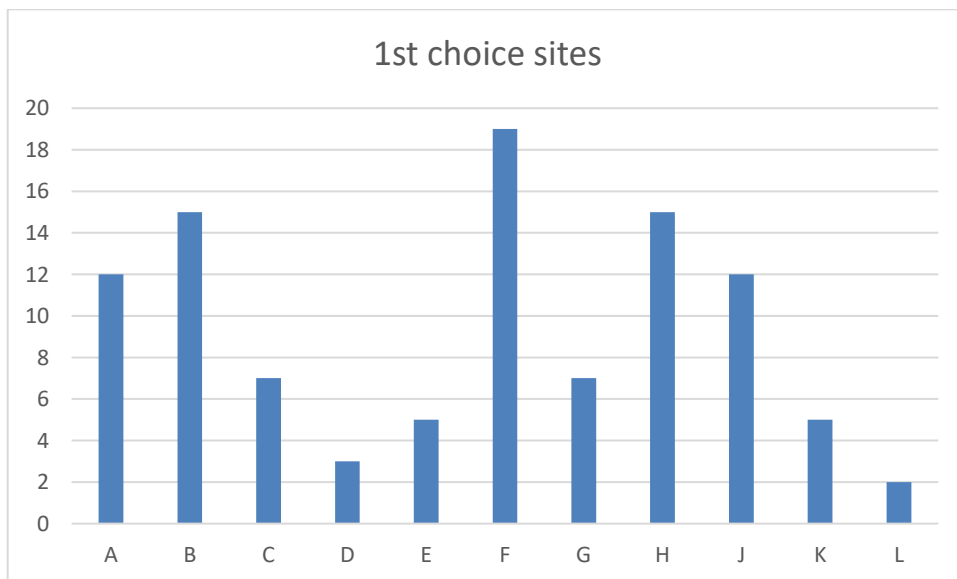
Information will be on display and volunteers from the Neighbourhood Plan group will be on hand to answer questions and gather your comments.

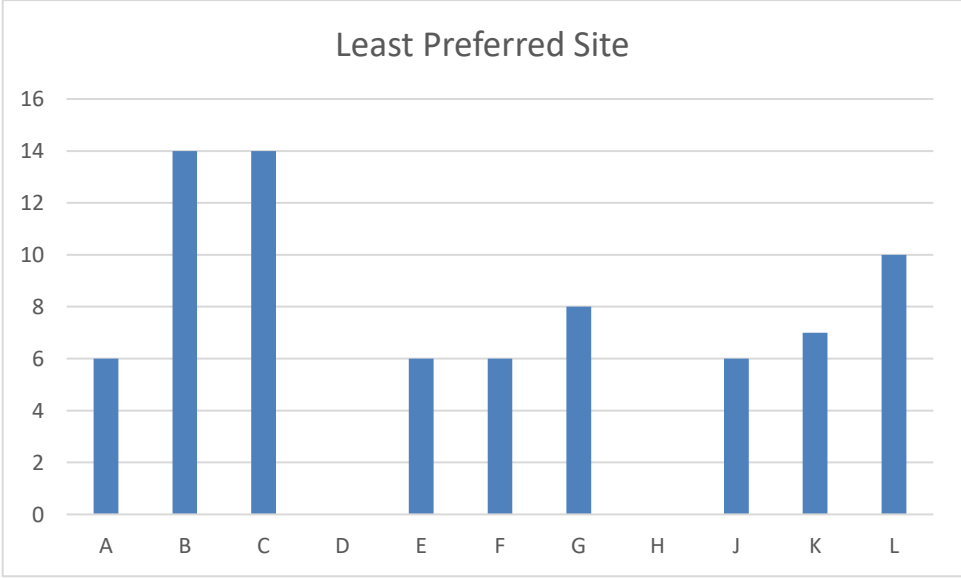
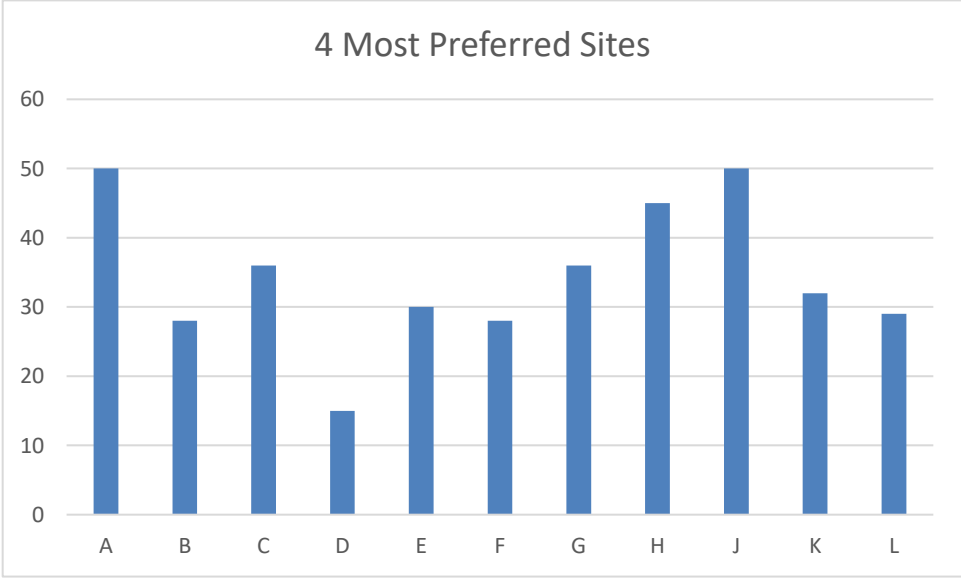
**When: Wednesday July 22nd 6-9pm
& Sunday July 25th 1-4pm**

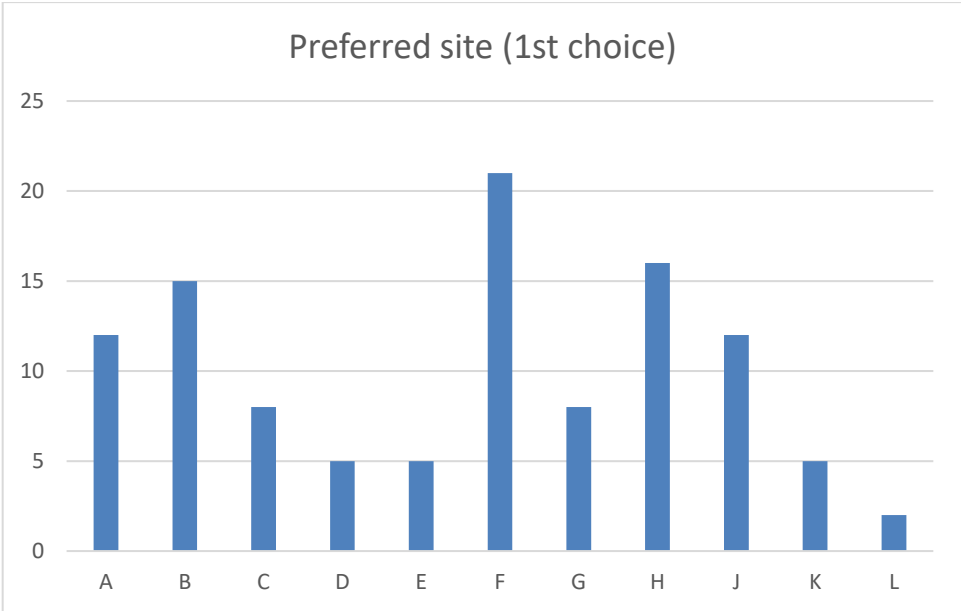
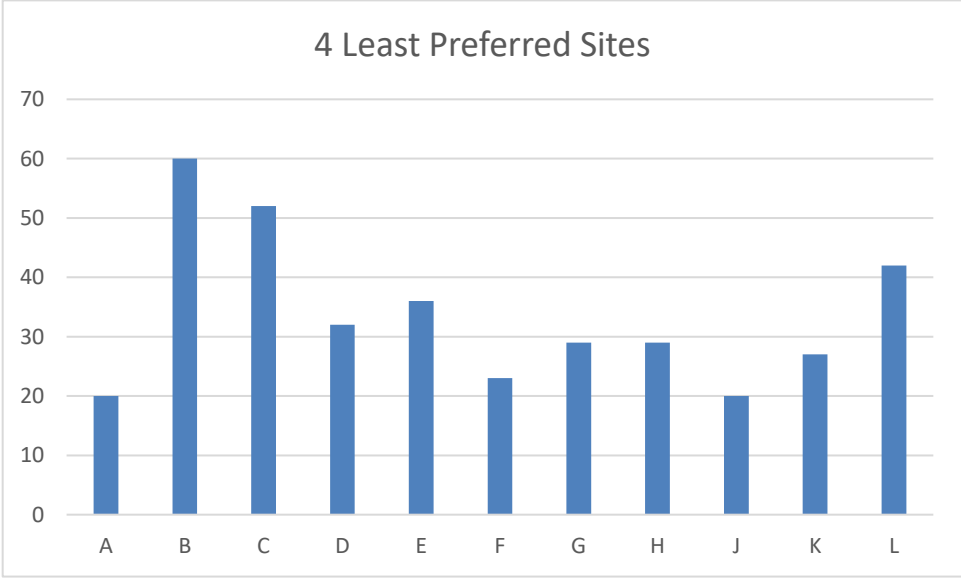
Where: St John's Hall Whitchurch

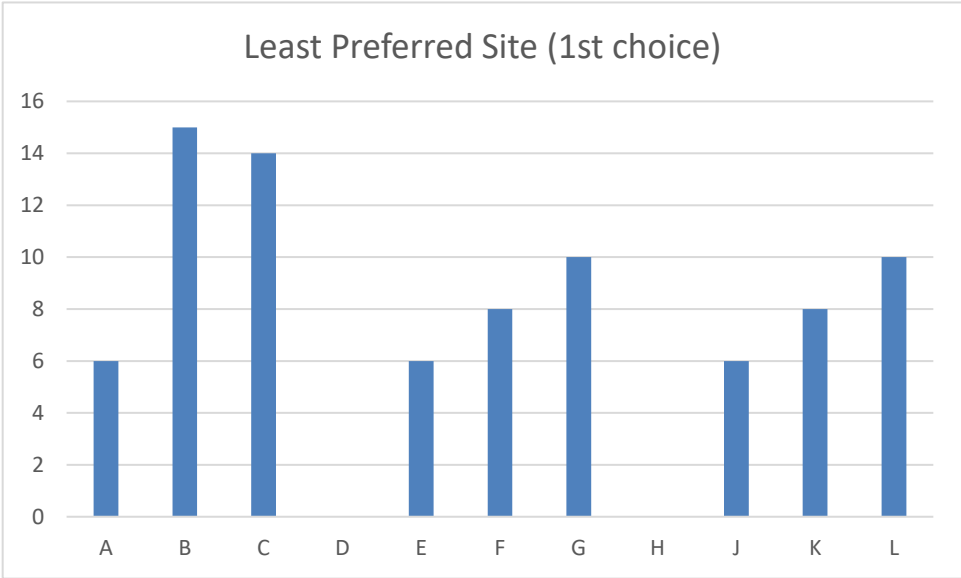
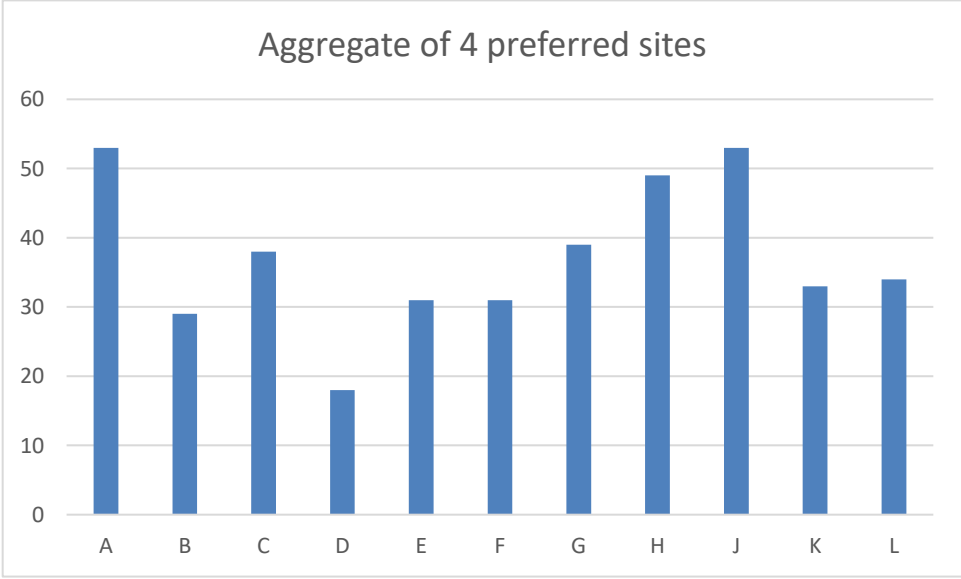
Questionnaire Analysis

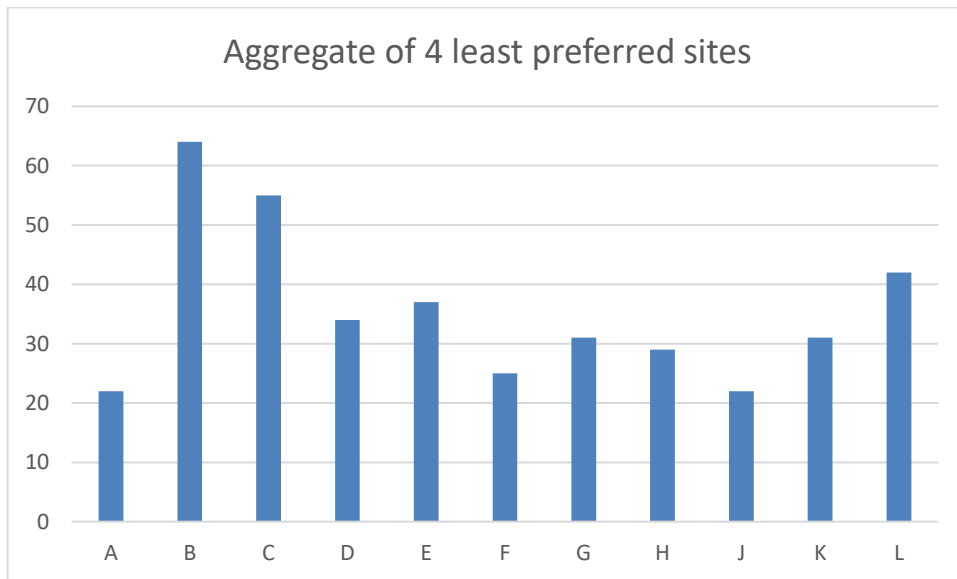
July 2021 Informal Consultation











Contents and Findings

Comments detailed were taken both from the post-its placed on the board and left at the end of the feedback questionnaire. All comments have been included as they were written.

Comments have been grouped under the following headings:

- Location
- Housing type
- Traffic
- Services and Amenities
- Environment

Location

There was a divide in opinion between those wishing to see infill and the boundary of the village preserved and those wishing to see new development on the outskirts of the village.

Housing Type

There appeared to be consensus around the need for more affordable housing suitable for single people, retired people and young families. This reinforces the findings of our 2019 survey. No comments were in favour of large homes or large developments. The needs of local people were highlighted. A number of comments referred to sustainable, environmentally friendly, eco design of new houses and others mentioned sympathetic design to the existing built environment.

Traffic

Traffic was the most commented on aspect – speed and volume on both A413 and Oving Road. Residents views needed to be heard and responded to with clarity as to what is within the control of the PC and what is a Buckinghamshire Highways issue.

Services and Amenities

Concern re school and GP capacity are the key issues raised. Currently we know the school has a significant proportion of children coming in from out of catchment; over time if there were more young children in the village this would change. The GP surgery would look to expand if the demand and associated finances warranted this.

Environment

Comments here again reiterated what we found in the 2019 survey. Residents of Whitchurch place a high value on the rural landscape, on the footpaths that are used, on the trees and the wildlife that surround the village. The work on identifying habitats, special green spaces, trees etc can be used to good effect to reassure the village that these considerations will be central to the decision-making process.

Locations – Written resident comments

Support building outside village centre so less impact

The development outside the villages is my preferred option as it has less impact on the original residences

Little London – is unsuitable for an increased volume of traffic as it is narrow in places. Already refuse and emergency services can have problems gaining access. There is insufficient parking space for existing residents in Little London, some of whom have to park elsewhere. Delivery vehicles often block access to homes. Parked cars have blocked our drive.

Manor Farm – access and development would probably be easier off the main road and not adversely affect the amenities of existing properties unlike 'backland' development B&C because they do not extend borders of the village and add balance

Infill sites relatively ok, building on fields is bad because it alters the rural nature of the village (and creates developments of disproportionate size)

Would prefer developments within existing village boundary

No site is really acceptable as green fields are being lost

Hasn't capacity for new development been reached? Surrounding villages take their share

Infill within village boundary acceptable, extension of village build line not acceptable

Reluctant to extend outside current village boundary

No more houses around Barretstown please – already looks too much

Develop where there is development already such as Barretstown, don't go for 'new new' sites

Approaching views/character of the village should be maintained

Infilling should be preferable to large areas increasing the size of the village

Access to site K is an issue

Worry about access to J

There is enough development done already, level of traffic and noise already too high. Added level of infrastructure not existing. On all counts this is a bad idea! If you have to what about near to Parrots?

Like many, I think it is sad that the village must expand like this. If it does have to though. I think the development should be on the outskirts of the existing village but not on a site that eats into the countryside in a significant way.

Sheer scale of some sites – threaten village character

Drainage infrastructure not adequate

Infill/brownfield much better than extending the village – need to protect the boundary with Oving

Don't destroy outline of the village

Housing Type - Written resident comments

We need more affordable housing for village inhabitants especially young ones.

Housing needs to be compatible with the village housing stock – not large ugly modern developments

Need more smaller, family houses – maybe Housing association owned? Affordable in this area is an oxymoron

Newman's Close is a sensible development catering for village residents

House design is important – see Swanbourne for good example

Infill is ok. Don't want to extend the boundaries/buildings beyond current area

Environmentally friendly homes, design of houses important

Environmentally responsible housing

Landscape design/green spaces

Affordable properties for youngsters from village

Houses for the young and retirement properties

Affordable housing for the local population

Affordable housing

Environmentally responsible development

Smaller homes for families

No ugly large houses e.g. McMansions

Bungalows

Smaller houses for older/single people

Affordable housing for people who grew up here

Stop greedy large build developers

No more large developments

No more building

Eco friendly houses

Need to attract more young couples/families, don't need any more executive homes

Stop greedy large build developers

Traffic - Written resident comments

Concerns regarding traffic down Oving Road to mini roundabout

413 and Oving Road already unsafe with the amount of traffic.

Traffic needs controlling

Aylesbury bypass needed, Cycle route Whitchurch - Aylesbury

Aylesbury bypass needed, Cycle route Whitchurch – Aylesbury

The access off Little London would be catastrophic – tiny road

Need a weight limit on Oving Road to stop large HGVs

Traffic calming on Oving Road and High Street

Any development will add to traffic density through Whitchurch High Street which is far too much already

Traffic is already difficult on the Oving Road due to parked cars and any development must have cognisance of the traffic situation

Will traffic management be taken into account when new development is proposed?

Oving Road is already prone to long traffic jams in the morning and evening

Can village cope with the extra traffic? Speed

Traffic calming urgently needed, speed cameras at all entry points to the village

Adequate road provision needed

Traffic provisions needed

Main concerns – traffic build up and extra congestion on 413

Road improvements – traffic calming, speed cameras, new roundabouts at bottle necks

Traffic calming issues

Road traffic (speed, noise, air pollution)

Better speed control

Reduction in traffic

Parking!

Traffic calming

We need proper traffic calming

Average speed check on A413

Yet more traffic racing down and clogging up Oving Road

Increase in traffic

Roads too small for increased traffic

Parking needs addressing badly

Better traffic/speed control on main roads

Existing traffic is too much already

Community car park

Retain village – too much traffic speeding through

Roads congested already – no more building

Volume and speed of traffic on A413

Amount of traffic on A413 – safety aspects

Services and Amenities - Written resident comments

infrastructure not in place.

The amenities within the village will need to be upgraded – bigger shop, school, GP

Important that local services are improved to match number of new residents e.g. schools, doctors

Any scheme will necessitate an additional school and surgery, plus???

Doctors, schools?

School and surgery x 6

Sporting facilities

Would need bigger surgery, school and better buses.

Existing facilities stretched – doctors, school

Demand on health care/surgery access

More amenities to cope with the expansion

More sports facilities

Better wifi (Broadband) connection

Opportunity to secure more amenity facilities

More allotments

Better broadband

More 'green' and leisure

School and surgery will be overwhelmed

GP surgery

School and surgery overwhelmed

Secondary school availability and access to them by public transport

Environment - Written resident comments

How many trees will be removed?

No site is really acceptable as green fields are being lost

No compromising biodiversity

Wildlife is a key part of the village. Important trees to maintain countryside

Please try to avoid footpaths and sites such as The Butts which is a village amenity

Preserve the natural environment, introduce wildlife corridors throughout the village, improve and protect footpaths. Protect ponds. Expand the conservation area to include wildlife areas to protect our beautiful, green quiet village.

Loss of wildlife

Protect wildlife

Preserve wildlife

Need to be sensitive to habitat and to environment

Unhappy at prospect of building on fields/farmland

Protect rural landscape and access to it

Miscellaneous - Written resident comments

Employment opportunities are very limited in the village

Thank you for all the work you have done and are doing. Very helpful displays etc

Great presentation, well structured

We need more time to consider but generally have worries because the infrastructure won't take further development

Thank you for your efforts

Thank you for the useful information

Moved from a built-up area to experience a village life. Would love to keep the historic feel to the village

Isolation of elderly, less safe roads and access

Future pandemics likely, population needs to distance and avoid further hotspots of disease due to overcrowding

Business starter units

What is happening to the village we love? All rubbish

November 2021 Consultations.

- Residents were asked to comment on the broad themes that arose from the July consultations. Specifically they were asked to comment on the SG initial thinking with the questionnaire below to be completed.



November feedback: please circle YES or NO to questions 1 & 2

1. Housing types and styles

Based on research and feedback received from residents since the start of the NP process we propose that:

New homes should be built using traditional materials, sympathetic to the existing built and rural environment of Whitchurch. Whilst eco/sustainable homes are a preference in practice we know that these costs on small houses can make them uneconomic for developers and add significantly to the costs for buyers. This may change in the lifetime of the NP

Do you agree? YES or NO

Again, based on research and previous feedback it is planned that new homes in Whitchurch will *mainly* fall into the following categories:

- affordable (as defined by the first homes scheme)
- smaller (suitable for couples and young families)
- appropriate for people looking to downsize

Do you agree? YES or NO

2. Site Allocation

Selecting sites for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan involves reviews by independent experts looking at all aspects of each site. In addition, the views of the community are essential. We think the following are important considerations:

- Safe pedestrian and vehicle access
- Site access that avoids adding excess traffic to known pinch points in the village
- That development proposed is proportionate to the size of the site and in keeping with the rural nature of the village
- That valued village green spaces are protected as far as possible

Do you agree? YES or NO

3. Green Spaces

We know how important the rural setting, the views, the tree, plant and animal life and the myriad of footpaths are to Whitchurch residents. The NP allows us the opportunity, in a limited way and subject to a regulatory framework, to extend the protection afforded to green spaces.

Thinking about Whitchurch's green spaces which do you consider to be the single most important space to give extra protection to:

4. Putting together a Neighbourhood Plan, as you can imagine, is a complex task with a great deal of information and many views to take into account. Based on what you have seen and heard in the consultations held to date are there any other comments that you think should be taken into account as we move into the final stage of the process?



Thank you for your engagement with the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan

November Consultation Summary

Circa 95 people attended one of the 4 sessions
63 questionnaires returned (7 electronically), most reflecting views of couples

Housing Types and Styles

85%+ agreement with our emerging policy of new homes should be built using traditional materials and should be sympathetic in style to fit in with existing built environment of Whitchurch. Eco/sustainable important to a small minority.

87% + agreement re focus the importance of affordable/smaller homes, a handful of comments that houses should be of a variety of sizes – not all small/affordable which in reality will be the case.

Site allocation

93%+ agreed with the emerging criteria for site selection

Green Spaces

Recreation Ground and Cricket pitch most cited specific sites.

Others mentioned specifically were:

- Below Little London
- Little London to Castle Mound
- Area between The Butts and the White Swan
- Chandlers Field (cited by residents of Chandler's Field)
- The Butts

Additional Comments

No particularly strong themes, comments generally around:

- Traffic
- Resilience of infrastructure
- Requirement for sufficient parking spaces to be included in all plans
- Need for car park
- Particular lobbying against further development on Chandler's Field or around Little London – all appear to be from residents who live close to each site

Pre-Submission Consultation Process

- The Pre-Submission Plan was published as per the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Regulation 14 (a), through the village website and promoted in the Whitchurch News and village Facebook groups, and to the list of organisations as per Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Regulation 14 (b) – as listed here. Oving Parish Council, Hardwick Parish Council, Unitary Councillors Bond, Blamires and Cooper, The Homes and Communities Agency, Natural England, The Environment Agency, English Heritage, Network Rail, Highways England, CCG Comms Integrated Care Board, National Health Service Commissioning Board, UK Power Networks, Anglian Water, Thames Water, SGN Gas, Rapid Rural, Ecom Limited, Buckinghamshire Disability Service, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, MobileUK.org.
- Copies of the Pre-Submission Plan were sent to Buckinghamshire Council as per Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Regulation (c).
- The consultation period lasted for 8 weeks. 40 residents attended the “Turn up and Ask” sessions in St Johns Hall in January. Only 6 Whitchurch residents provided feedback or comments.

3. PRE-SUBMISSION FEEDBACK SUMMARY

3.1 The Pre-Submission Plan consultation generated comments from a number of organisations, including Buckinghamshire Council, Councillor Cooper and the local community. The local community enthusiastically supported the main objectives of the plan during the January consultation with a single objector listened to.

3.2 The Steering Group considered resident responses and each was written to individually. Resident comments have not challenged the fundamental principles of the Plan, with the most significant issues being corrections to the Settlement boundary to more accurately reflect curtilage and a request from a resident in neighbouring Hardwick Parish, but effectively a Whitchurch resident to secure voting rights on the Whitchurch NP. This has been discussed and will be managed during the Regulation 16 process.

3.3 The SG consulted with its consultant O'Neill Homer Ltd to review the main body of comments which came from Buckinghamshire Council as listed below. All of these comments have been reflected in the revised submission plan.

Buckinghamshire Council Reg 14 Comments Reflected in Submission Plan

- Ecology Officer comments on clause ix of Policy W2 and W3 about biodiversity:
 - o *It is welcoming to see Biodiversity Net Gains are mentioned within the policy point ix however, it is required to mention that these gains should be measurable using the most up to date techniques. This is to be in accordance with the Environmental Act 2021 and NPPF.*
- Senior Heritage Officer comments on Policy W2 clause vii about the Kempson House Grade II Listed Building
 - o *Suggest the paragraph is amended as below –*
 - o *The scheme sustains and where possible enhances the significance and setting of the Grade II listed building Kempson House in close proximity to the site which the site is in close proximity to and other nearby listed buildings to the west of High Street.*
- Principle Planning Officer comments on the wording of clause b of Policy W4 and W5
 - o *Policy W4 (b) the policy should use 'conserve' rather than 'sustain' to show consistency with the NPPF Section 16 and VALP BE1.*
 - o *Policy W5 (b) - We recommend that the policy states how an increase in traffic will be measured, for example through the Council's consideration of a submitted Transport Assessment by the developer. Any contributions for Section 106 will need to be justified according to the tests of a developer contribution in the CIL regulations (see paragraph 56 of the NPPF).*
- Principle Planning Officer comments on the policies maps
 - o *Policies W6 and W7 - It would be helpful to users of the plan to name the facilities on the policies maps, as well as colouring in the sites for the relevant designation as has been done.*
- Senior Heritage Officer comments about street lighting in the supporting text of Policy W5
 - o *Suggest the addition of street lighting should be mindful of the historic and rural character of the area in the design of the street lighting installed.*
- Development management comments about one of the important views in Policy W9
 - o *Check and clarify the location of Important View 9.*
- Development management comments about the policies maps
 - o *Possible inconsistency between the Policies Map 'Local Green Spaces' designation and the outline identified in the Green Spaces Report*
 - o *The Policies map appears to include the rear gardens of 58 and 59 Ashgrove Gardens*