



2020 – 2040

Submission Plan

PUBLISHED BY

Whitchurch Parish Council for Pre-Submission consultation
under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations
2012 (as amended).

MARCH 2023

GUIDE TO READING THIS PLAN

Of necessity, this Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this page is to explain the structure and help you find your way around the plan.

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This section explains the background to this Neighbourhood Plan and how you can take part in and respond to the consultation.

2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

This section details many of the features of the designated area.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This rather technical section relates this Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning policies of Buckinghamshire Council.

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

This section explains the community involvement that has taken place.

5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

This key section firstly provides a statement on the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives. It then details Policies which are proposed to address the issues outlined in the Foreword and in Section 4. These Policies are listed in Table 1. There are also Policy Maps at the back of the plan.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and future development guided and managed. It suggests projects which might be supported by the Community Infrastructure Levy which the Parish Council will have some influence over. Finally, it deals with a number of issues which although relevant are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

FOREWORD

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FOREWORD

The historic medieval village of Whitchurch in North Buckinghamshire lies in the Quainton to Wing hills Area of Attractive Landscape along the route of the busy A413 running from Aylesbury to Buckingham. It has experienced significant housing development since 2013. When the Neighbourhood Plan group was formed in 2019 it was clear that there was a considerable sense of frustration within Whitchurch about ongoing approval of new developments and the lack of influence that residents felt they had over numbers, locations and types of new houses. It was however also clear that there were concerns about the lack of smaller more affordable homes, and the difficulty for the offspring of residents or downsizers to stay in and live in the village. During consultations residents showed understanding that further development would happen, but that with a Neighbourhood Plan the village could regain meaningful control over the planning process. When the NP Group polled the village in 2019 to ask if a Neighbourhood Plan was wanted there were 227 total responses representing more than 30% of the residents on the electoral roll and with 87% approving the pursuit of a Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan that follows is supportive of controlled housing development within the village which is seen as essential to allow the village to thrive and evolve. It sets out policies over numbers, locations and types of new houses, including allocation of sites and seeks to protect important green spaces and the wish for the village to retain its rural character. We are confident that this plan is in accordance with the majority view within the village and we recommend it. We would like to thank all who have been involved in its creation, for your patience during Covid and for hundreds of residents who have engaged in the process and informed the plan.

Charlotte Lincoln, Chair Whitchurch Parish Council

Keith Armour, Chair Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1. Whitchurch Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council (Buckinghamshire Council), in November 2020. The area coincides with the parish boundary (see Plan A on page 4). The plan is being prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).

1.2. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to March 2040. The Plan will form part of the development plan for Buckinghamshire, alongside the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013-2033, and the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan 2040 (Buckinghamshire Local Plan) which has the same end of the plan period.

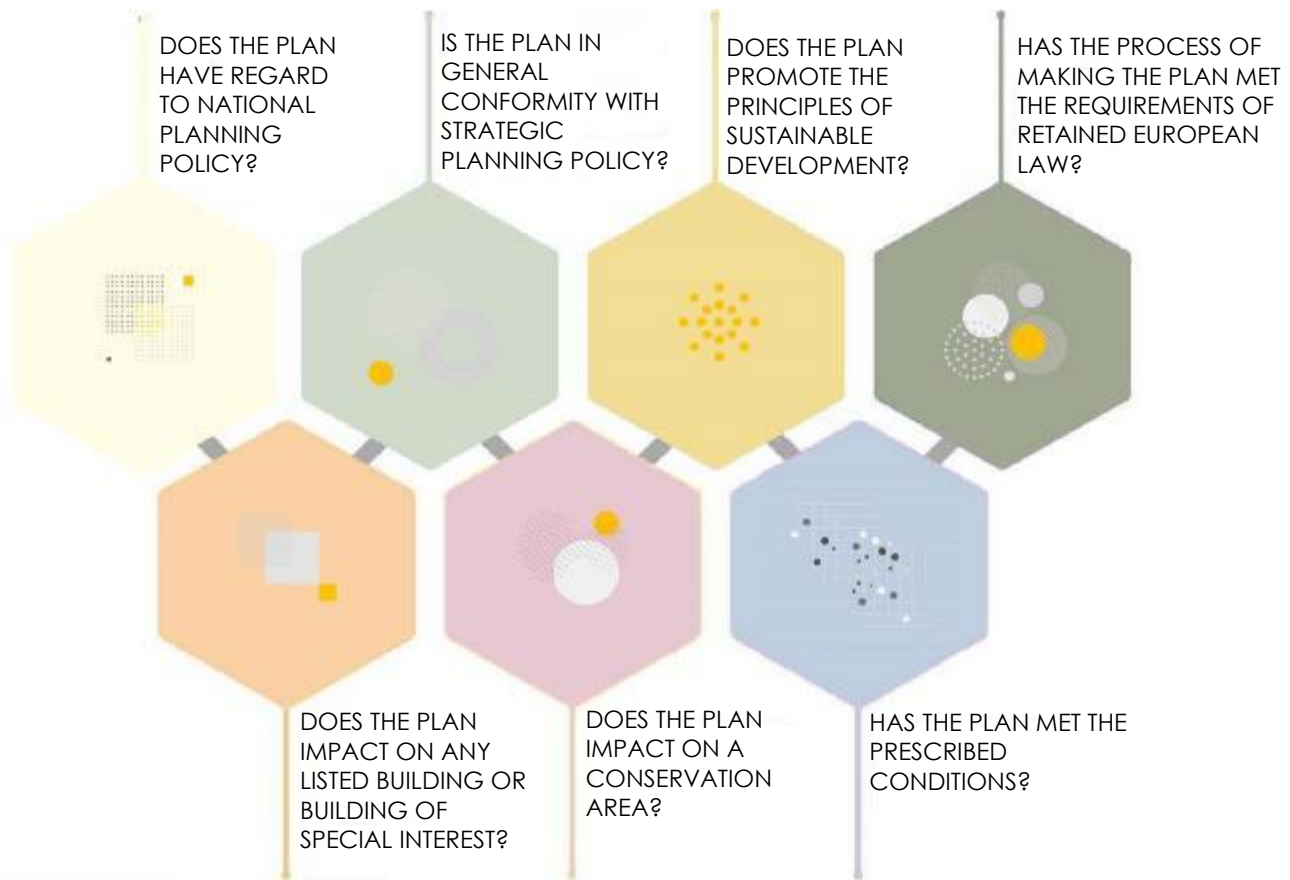
1.3. Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to manage the quality of development of their areas. Once approved at a referendum, the Plan becomes part of the Council's statutory development plan and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided in the neighbourhood area. Plans must therefore contain only land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Plan if they are not directly related to planning. Although there is scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet all of the relevant basic conditions (see Figure 2 overleaf).

1.4. In addition, the Parish Council will need to demonstrate to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community and stakeholders in preparing the Plan. If the examiner is satisfied that it has, and considers the Plan meets the above conditions, then the Plan will go to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority (over 50%) of the turnout votes in favour of the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the neighbourhood area.

THE SUBMISSION PLAN

1.5. A draft ('Pre-Submission') Plan was published for consultation in December 2022 in line with the Regulations. The Parish Council has reviewed the comments received from the local community and other interested parties, including Buckinghamshire Council, and have made changes to this final version.

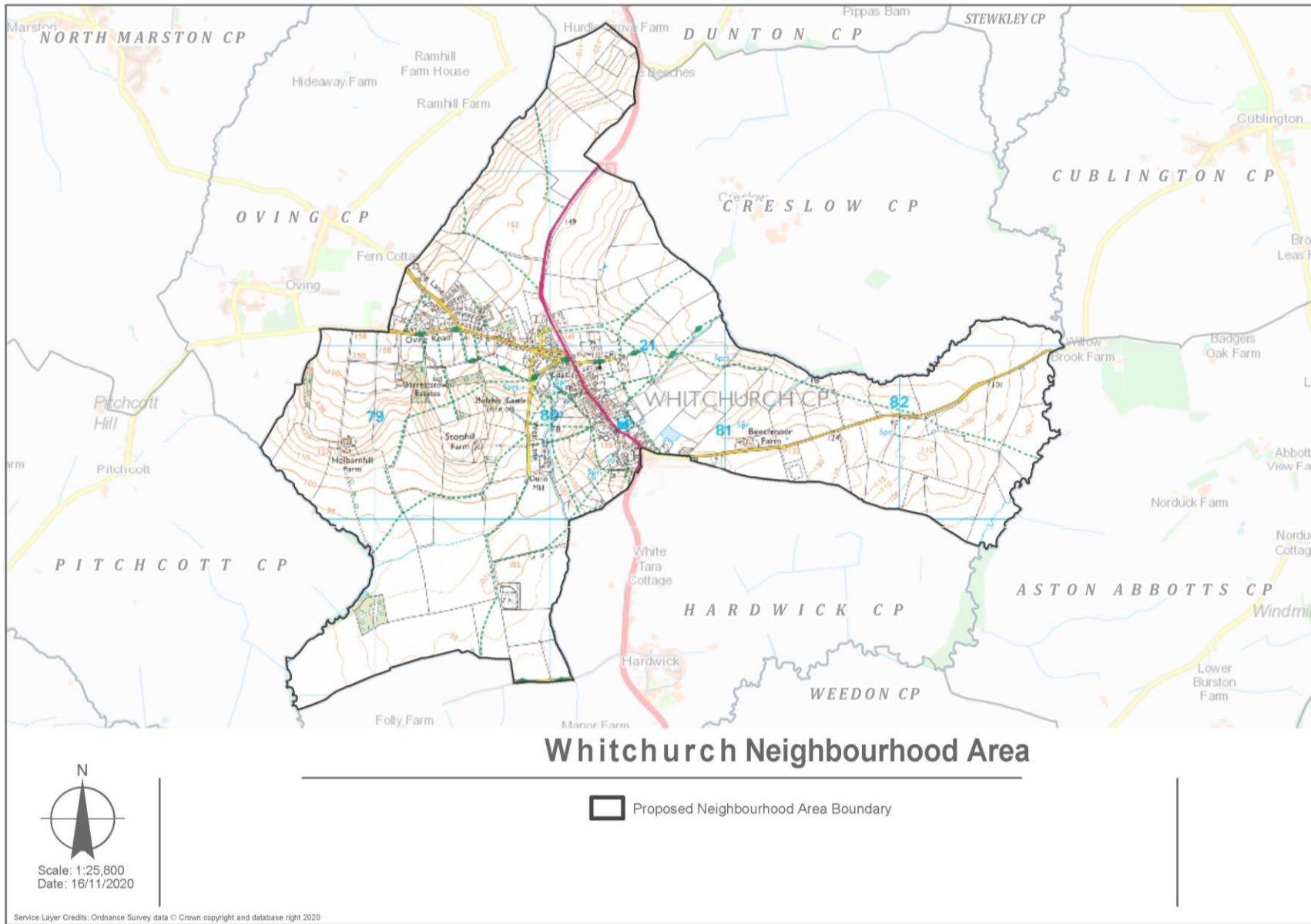
1 Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions



STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & THE HABITATS REGULATIONS

1.6. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) assesses the environmental implications of a proposed policy or plan. It allows for the cumulative effects of development and policies to be assessed and addresses any identified issues at an early stage alongside economic and social considerations. The Parish Council and Buckinghamshire Council agreed early on in the project that an SEA would be required, and this was confirmed by the statutory consultees. A framework to assess the plan has been agreed and a SEA Report is published alongside this Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended).

1.7. The SEA confirms that there are no international or nationally designated sites within or adjacent to the neighbourhood plan area. The closest internationally designated site, the Chilterns Beechwood SAC, is over 25km away to the east which is far enough away for this Neighbourhood Plan to have no impact. The Parish Council therefore considers that the Neighbourhood Plan does not need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment as per the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Parish Council invites Buckinghamshire Council and Natural England to confirm this position in its response to this consultation.



Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area

Plan A: Designated Neighbourhood Area

2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

2.1 Whitchurch Location and Description

The village of Whitchurch lies approximately 5 miles North of the town of Aylesbury, 6 miles South of Winslow and 12 miles South of Buckingham. The village forms a crossroads on the busy A413 leading North / South between Buckingham in the North & Aylesbury to the South, and the smaller, rural route East / West between Wing & Leighton Buzzard to the East and Waddesdon & Bicester to the West. Smaller, narrow rural roads connect Whitchurch with its smaller neighbours of Oving and North Marston, and the larger market village of Winslow. Bus route X60 serves the village between Aylesbury and Buckingham & Milton Keynes, while the less frequent 60 Service connects Whitchurch with the smaller villages to the North. Train services reach London via Aylesbury into Marylebone or via Leighton Buzzard into Euston Station. Travel times are between 40 minutes to 1 hour. A new station is due to open in nearby Winslow on the East West Rail route, offering more flexible travel options between Oxford in the West and Milton Keynes & Cambridge in the East. The village has a primary school, a GP surgery, Post Office, petrol station with a general store. In addition a thriving farm shop, pub and hairdressers as well as a number of small, specialised businesses serve the needs of residents. Further afield, Aylesbury, Buckingham and Milton Keynes offer wider shopping options. The small town of Winslow offers a range of independent shops, bars, take-aways and restaurants. Being so well provided with these amenities, Whitchurch has been classified for the purposes of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan as a large village despite a relatively small population.

2.2 Village Neighbours

The village of Oving is Whitchurch's closest neighbour on the boundary to the West. Hardwick lies 1 mile to the South and Cublington 2 miles to the East. The school in Whitchurch, and the GP surgery, now merged with neighbouring Wing & Winslow GP groups, both provide essential support to residents in these and other neighbouring villages. The main town of Aylesbury is closest for supermarkets and general shopping with Milton Keynes being the closest main shopping centre at 15 miles away.

2.3 Population and Households

The most recent 2011 census identified 932 residents and 394 households and there has been some steady growth since then. Compared to averages for Aylesbury Vale and England as a whole, the demographic profile of Whitchurch shows a higher proportion of people aged 45-64 and a slightly lower proportion aged 16-44. The village also has a higher than average proportion of people aged 65 – 84. Between 2011 and 2019 there has been a further increase in the 65-84 age group. Taken together these census results show a trend towards an aging population. This is also evident in the declining percentage of children on the school roll who live within the parish. Currently less than 60% of children at the school live in Whitchurch. The village housing stock is made up of predominantly larger homes. 85% of the population live in dwellings with at least one or two extra bedrooms and only 13%

have no extra bedrooms¹. This reflects the general affluence and appeal of the village. Average household income in 2018 was £59.6k which is above average. However with median house prices in 2020 at £368,500 any potential house purchasers need an income 60% higher than the current national average to afford to buy a home in Whitchurch.

2.4 Geography and Parish Boundaries

Whitchurch sits in an elevated position on the Wing – Quainton ridge, an Area of Attractive Landscape, at an altitude of 130 metres. From all sides, the village offers wide ranging views of the Chiltern ridge, Ivinghoe Beacon, Waddesdon Hill, the Vale of Aylesbury and North Buckinghamshire towards Stowe House and gardens. The wider Parish boundary covers 1,717 acres, an area significantly larger than the built-up area of the main village settlement. Most of the parish lies on a line of gently sloping low hills and ridges, but on the south side the Parish slopes steeply down to Aylesbury vale. There are no remarkable physical features denoting the Parish limits. Curiously the parish boundary to the east of the village on Bushmead Road heading towards Cublington is characterised by the fact that houses on the north side are in Whitchurch but houses on the south side are officially within the neighbouring Hardwick parish. To the west of Whitchurch the Parish boundary has houses that are within 20 metres of the nearest houses in nearby Oving leading to some blurring of the perception of who is in Whitchurch and who is in Oving. To the East and South the parish boundary is characterised by flood plain. There are no significant water courses in the parish today, however there are some significant features that arise from the geography of the area, being typically a clay soil over a chalk / limestone bedrock. The village at one time had a productive water mill, Dunn Mill at Weir Lane, and there are 2 historically important springs which are famously reported to have never frozen over and never run dry: Fair Alice Spring on the Bolebec Castle site and the spring at Whittle Hole which rises just off the High Street next to Tudor House. These large springs merge with others at Dunn Mill to form the larger Whittle Brook, which makes its way to the Thames. The ridge on which the village sits is on the watershed between the Anglian and Thames Valley river systems. Many small streams lie just below ground level. The clay & chalk combination of the soil around the village frequently results in poor drainage particularly at the upper end of the village on the Oving Road.

2.5 Village History

There is evidence for a Roman settlement in Whitchurch from archaeological finds of coins dating to 275CE. A Saxon church was built about the year 1000CE with a circular tower; this was the only church in the district built of stone, and it is assumed this is how White Church or Whitchurch Parish got its name. Not long after, the settlement at Whitchurch is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1081CE – A grant of land to Hugh de Bolebec from William I begins a long association of the Manor of Whitchurch with the families of Gyffard, De Bolebec, De Vere, and the Earls of Oxford. The motte & bailey Bolebec Castle was built around 1105, the parish settlement grew. The castle was in use until 1610 when records tell

¹ Whitchurch Housing Needs Assessment, AECOM, January 2022

us it has fallen into disrepair. During the English Civil War in the 1640s Cromwell's army kept 40 horses in the church before a battle against Royalists from Aylesbury and surrounding towns. It is generally thought that the castle was finally destroyed during this time, and the distinctive white stone used to build and repair other houses in the village. The remaining earthwork of Bolebec Castle is now protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Whitchurch was granted a Market Charter in 1245, and the right to an annual fair on the Feast of St John the Evangelist in May. These were significant rights granted by the King. Both were held on Market Hill, though neither of these traditions survive. In the 1300s the distinctive church was substantially rebuilt. In 1360 a court house was built, which later served as a priory, attached to Woburn Abbey. The elegant building on the High Street survives today, having been in use during the 20th century as a hotel and now an office. During the Medieval and Tudor periods the village continued to be a significant settlement, with many remarkable buildings from that period still surviving. Today the historic core of Whitchurch, along the High Street and up Oving Road is protected by a Conservation Area with 47 listed buildings many with Medieval, Tudor and Georgian significance.

Employment in the village has historically been dominated by farming, having some of the best quality agricultural land. Crops, sheep and cattle were sent to markets in London. Today the village is still characterised by productive farmland, alongside a great deal of equestrian activity – at least 8 properties within the village boundary are used for stabling horses, both privately and commercially, and riders are often seen on the roads and lanes. By 1816 the A413 had become a major coaching route between Birmingham and London. Supported by that trade and the growing population, at its peak the village offered five inns, of which just one remains, The White Swan. From 1838, silk weaving, plait weaving and lace making had become an important part of village industry and supplied the London court. These were centred around Little London to the south of the village. This distinctive area of the village retains many characteristics of the Victorian development of that time. In 1897 an old farmhouse house known as The Firs was demolished and replaced with an elegant and distinctive Victorian villa. During WWII this building was taken over by the Ministry of Defence and used for highly secret weapons design/testing. Directed at the highest level by Winston Churchill it became known as Winston Churchill's Toyshop. After the war it reverted to private ownership and has been used as offices and workshops. The main house is currently being redeveloped into 'heritage' apartments.

2.6 Businesses and Community Facilities

Well into the 20th Century the High Street supported a butcher's shop, a baker, grocer, an abattoir, a post office and telegraph office (in Post Office Lane). Today the commercial activity of the village is centred on the Petrol Station & general store, the Beechmoor Farm Shop and the White Swan. Recently a gift shop, an antique shop and a beauty salon on the High Street have closed, as have the business units in The Firs. New commercial units are opening at Manor Farm at the North end of the High Street, supporting a Pet Shop, a Shooting School and & Kitchen Design business. Many former businesses & community buildings have been converted to residential use. The original doctor's surgery at Quenington House on the High Street was eventually replaced with a new purpose-built

facility on Oving Road. The Old Schoolhouse, once in the Methodist Church and later in White Horse Lane, was replaced with a newer school in the 1970s. The original school in White Horse Lane, is now a residence. The former vicarage is now a private residence, with the Vicar living in a new Rectory on Oving Road. The former St John's Church Hall has been replaced by the Diocese with a modern community building - an important and much used village asset. The Methodist Church and Hall is still in use by the congregation and the community as a whole. The British Legion Hall, which was gifted to the Whitchurch and Oving Youth Club on lower Oving Road, is now owned by a religious community. There continue to be a number of businesses on Whitchurch High Street. Many residents work locally in and around Aylesbury or commute to London, Milton Keynes and other parts of Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. There are also numerous small businesses and/or residents working from home/online.

2.7 Housing Growth since 1900

The village 100 years ago was heavily centred around the historic core, now protected by the Conservation Area: Little London, the High Street, Market Hill, Castle Lane and the Oving Road up to "Two Hoots". It would have seemed a much more compact and well-planned village than today, although the housing along Oving Road already gave an element of linearity. There have been a number of significant housing developments over the last Century, mostly characterised by infill/change of use or redeveloped agricultural sites. Some examples are the small cul-de sac developments such as Swan Close and Firs Close at the South of the village, and redeveloped farm buildings in and around the centre of the village, such as Rickyard Close, Beech Court and Park House Farm. The recently completed development at The Old Brickyard on Bushmead Road at the South of the village is the largest of these. However, the growth that has arguably most changed the village geography has been the significant linear extension of the village out along the Oving Road westwards towards Oving and north towards North Marston. A major social housing development at Ashgrove Gardens in the 1950's was followed by properties of a similar era on North Marston Lane. The Meadows development next to the recreation ground and most recently the "Holt's Field" development, which is still being built, further extend the village to the North & West. 1950's and 1960's housing development followed along the north side of Oving Road including Green Acres Close until, in the 1990's, houses were built right up to the village boundary that left only a very narrow buffer between the village of Whitchurch and neighbouring Oving. The recent linear development known as Chandlers Field on Oving Road mirrors this growth and was completed in 2021. These latter very urban style developments have contributed to a shift in the village "centre of gravity", beginning with the modern doctors' surgery and the school centred on the junction of the North Marston Lane and Oving Road. These developments have created a more linear layout than the "centred" village that would have been experienced 100 years ago.

2.8 Creating the Defined Neighbourhood Area

The Neighbourhood Plan area is defined by the existing parish boundary. It is a settled, distinct village community, with a strong identity and sense of place and history. However, it

has seen significant attention from developers in the last 10 years, with a number of speculative and excessively large proposals being put forward. This was driven partly by the delayed adoption of the Aylesbury Vale Local Development Plan, and partly by the village's attractive geographical position between Aylesbury, Winslow, Buckingham, Milton Keynes. Village residents at the Neighbourhood Plan consultations expressed a common view that ad hoc, market led, large scale development will irreversibly damage the rural village setting and identity.

2.9 The Whitchurch Conservation Area

Whitchurch has a rich diversity of buildings and views. As a result, an extensive conservation area has been in place since 1971 and incorporates all 47 listed buildings in the village. Some of the Grade II* properties in the village include the Church of St. John the Evangelist, The Old House together with its walled gardens in Church Headland Lane and The Priory (The Old Courthouse) on the High Street. The conservation area covers many village homes including 18th and 19th Century homes in Little London in the south, several large 16th and 17th century homes along the A413 High Street and west along the Oving Road. Castle Lane with the remaining castle mound, and Market Hill create a historic core at the site of the early village market (see Plan B). It is easier to describe the areas of the village which are not within the conservation area; predominantly the 20th Century homes on Oving Road beyond "Two-Hoots" and North Marston Lane to the west of the village, and homes on Bushmead Road to the south-east of the village. The extent of the conservation area leads to a great deal of civic pride in the built environment but also has the practical effect that development within the conservation area is extremely carefully controlled.

2.10 More on Whitchurch's Very Special Buildings

The remains of the motte and bailey of Bolebec Castle are listed as an Ancient Monument and may be easily viewed from Castle Lane, Weir Lane or the nearby public Footpath. but please note that the mound itself it is in private ownership and not accessible. The Castle is partly included in the garden of Bolebec Place. The remains cover about 4 acres and consist of a natural hill which was modified to form the defences of the mound, with a triangular shaped bailey on the north, now separated from the mound by the road. Stones from the ruined castle were removed after Oliver Cromwell's Civil War victory, and are said to have been used for parts of existing buildings and walls in the village. It is rumoured that tunnels run from the castle ruins to various properties in the village.

The Church of St. John the Evangelist's present building dates from the early 13th century, at that time it consisted of a small chancel and a nave of the present size. The chancel was rebuilt and the tower erected early in the 14th century. Later in the 14th century the aisles were added; first on the south with its nave arcade and then on the north. In the 15th century the south arcade of the nave was probably repaired and the clerestory added, the walls of the chancel were raised and the whole building reroofed. The 15th century also saw the erection of the south porch, the renewal of some of the windows, and probably the rebuilding of the upper part of the tower. The porch was reroofed in 1657 and the roof

of the south aisle restored in 1681. The church was extensively restored in 1911 and remains in active use today.

The Old House, Church Headland Lane, is of 15th century origin, but was considerably altered during the middle of the 17th century with a one storey addition at the end of the east wing, and again in the 18th century when many sash windows were also inserted. The house is interesting on account of the traces of medieval work.

The Old Courthouse (The Priory) was built as a Courthouse in the late 15th century on a rectangular plan. The large 15th century truss in the roof is especially noteworthy. The use of the property was later given over as a Priory, attached to Woburn Abbey. In the 20th century it was developed as a smart boutique hotel. Today it is privately owned and used as business premises.

2.11 Whitchurch Following Enclosure and During the Agricultural Revolution

The Enclosure Acts of 1700 - 1801 are considered to be among the positive causes of the British Agricultural Revolution. The Acts allowed wealthy landowners to buy land and improve their farming practices to increase their profits. As a result Whitchurch's landscape is today a patchwork of mostly grazing land separated by the established hedgerows and fences which subdivided the larger area of the Cottesloe Hundred. The hedges, trees and ditches not only provide safe areas to keep grazing animals and to separate crops, but they also provide habitat and corridors for wildlife, insects, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Land around the neighbouring hamlet of Creslow had been enclosed prior to the year 1517, and some Whitchurch land was enclosed before 1620. Together this area represented 42% of the local land. The remaining 58%, equalling 366 acres of land in Whitchurch around Dunn Mill (Weir lane), North West to Oving and Winslow and east along Bushmead field, was enclosed by hedge, tree and fence boundary by 1801.

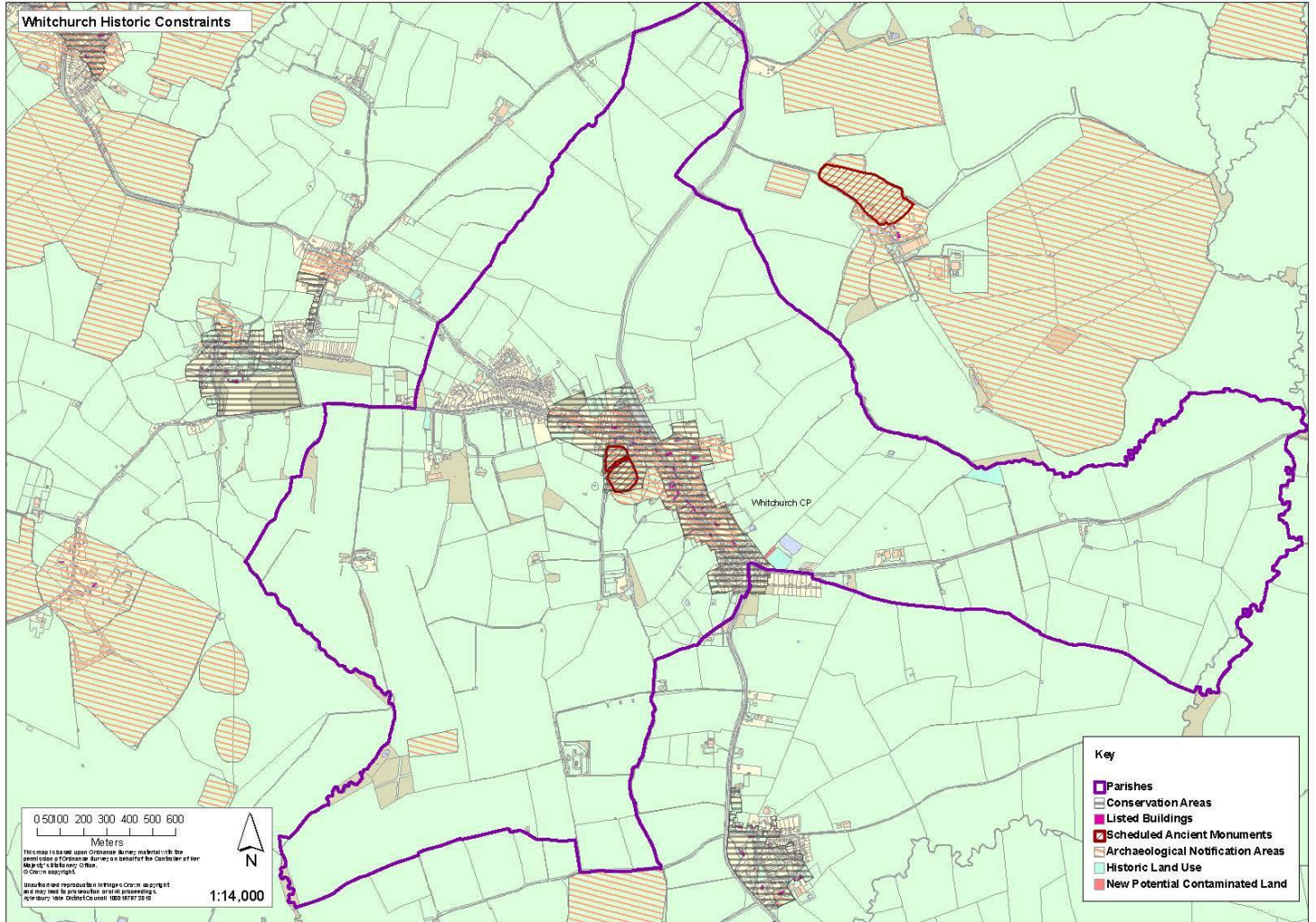
2.12 Flooding Risk

Whitchurch is naturally a low flood risk area. Due to its hilltop location above natural floodplains there are no flooding constraints. The area along Oving road however has very low drainage capacity and suffers Surface Water Flooding when rainfall has been heavy. During heavy rainfall there have been incidences of water running down the Oving Road and High Street resulting in limited flooding at the bottom of Market Hill. On occasions excessive rainwater entering the sewers in the High Street has contributed to the flooding of low lying properties to the south-west of the High Street. Therefore any new housing development will need to demonstrate that that excess water mitigation measures and sewer capacity will be in place to cope and not cause repeat of the previous issues. No areas are still used for extracting resources from the ground. The Old Brickworks housing development site off Bushmead road has a new housing development on its site together with a large pond which aids drainage and attracts Wildlife.

2.13 Biological Notification Sites

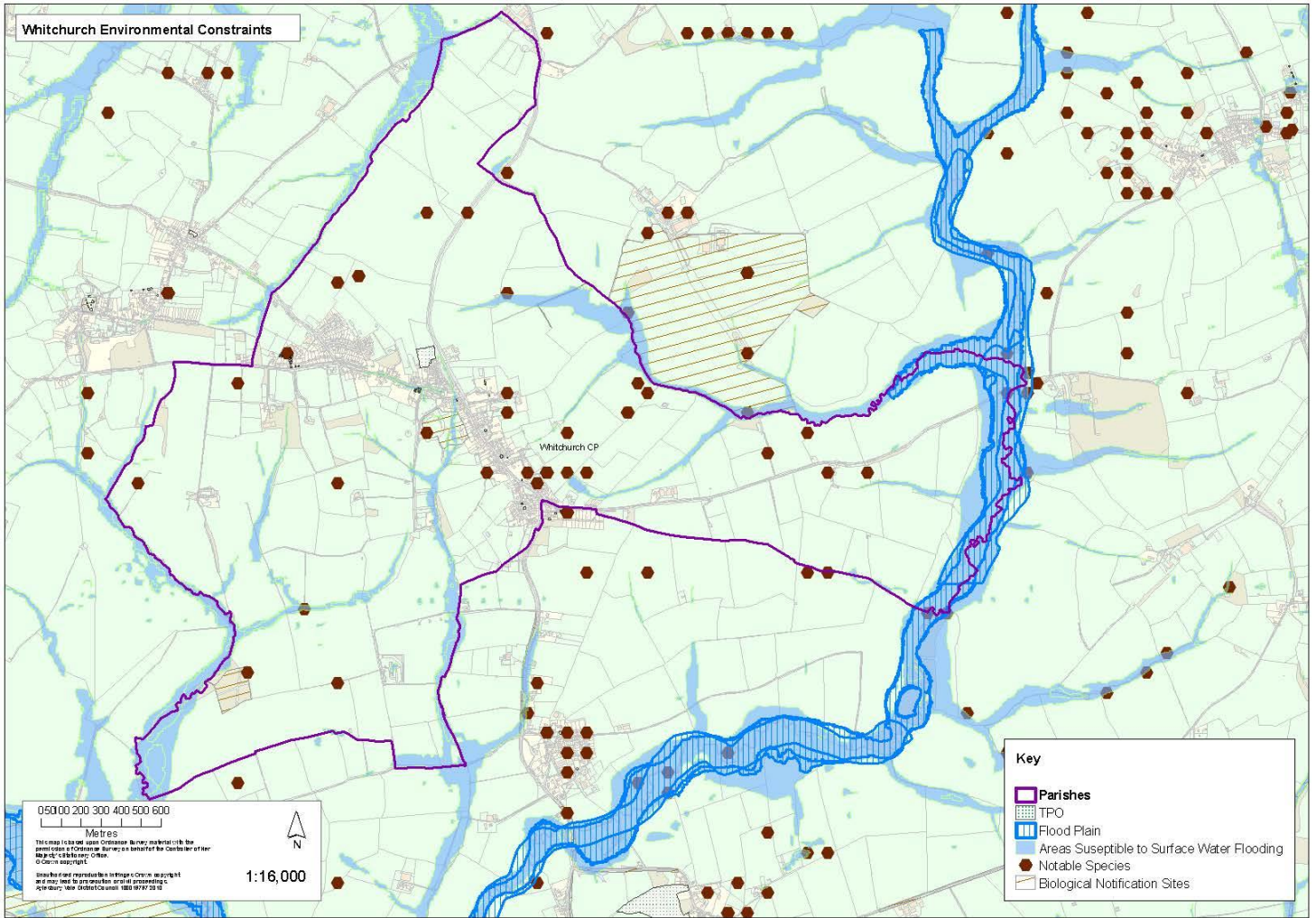
A Biological Notification Site (BNS) exists between Castle Lane and the High Street and these sites preceded Local Wildlife sites as a local non-statutory designation (see Plan C). All BNS are in the process of being resurveyed and assessed under local Wildlife Site criteria.

Whitchurch does not have any specific Wildlife or Nature Reserves but has Wildlife Community areas at the Recreation Area and Orchard located behind "The Meadows". There are also three designated Wildflower areas in the village maintained by the Community WVEG. The locations are Oving Road bank, Bushmead Path and Weir Lane Seat. These areas would not be affected by any of the proposed sites in the Neighbourhood Plan.



Plan B: Whitchurch Heritage Constraints Plan

Source: The Vale of Aylesbury Plan Whitchurch Fact Pack 2011



Plan C: Whitchurch Environmental Constraints Plan

Source: The Vale of Aylesbury Plan Whitchurch Fact Pack 2011

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Parish lies within the Aylesbury Vale situated in the county of Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Council is the local planning authority for the area.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The following paragraphs of the latest NPPF version published in July 2021 are considered especially relevant:

- Neighbourhood planning (§28 - §30)
- Rural housing (§78 - §79)
- Healthy and Safe Communities (§92)
- Community facilities (§93)
- High quality design (§128)
- The Natural Environment (§174)
- The Historic Environment (§190)

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan which primarily comprises *the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)*. It identifies Whitchurch as a 'large village' in the settlement hierarchy of the District (*S3 Settlement hierarchy and cohesive development*), where the village housing requirement of 130 homes will be met by completion and commitments (which includes the VALP allocation of 22 new homes at Newman Close). Beyond them the VALP makes clear that development in the countryside should be avoided.

3.4 The VALP does not itself adopt settlement boundaries on its Policies Maps but *D3 Proposals for non-allocated sites at strategic settlements, larger villages and medium villages* includes a worded definition that serves that same purpose to provide guidance for how small-scale infill development and other larger scale development should be located and designed to fit in larger villages where there is no made neighbourhood plan.

3.5 The key strategic policies which have guided the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan are:

- *S2 Spatial Strategy for Growth*
- *S3 Settlement Hierarchy and Cohesive Development*
- *D3 Proposals for non-allocated sites at strategic settlements, larger villages and medium villages*
- *H1 Affordable Housing*
- *H6a Housing Mix*

- *T5 Delivering transport in New Development*
- *T7 Footpaths and Cycle Routes*
- *BE2 Design of New Development*
- *NE4 Landscape Character*
- *I1 Green Infrastructure*
- *I3 Community Facilities*

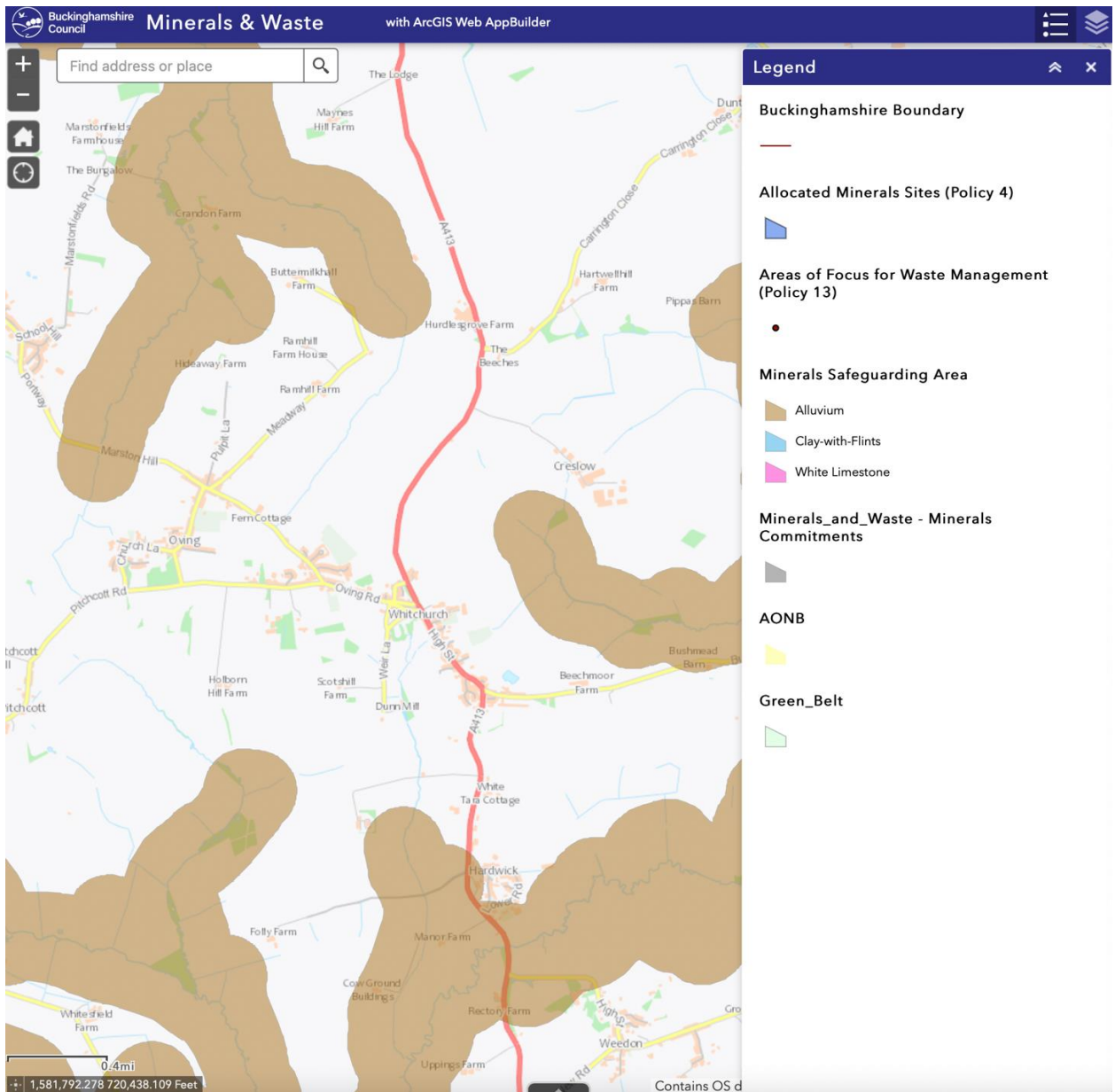
3.6 Other development management policies cover a wide range of planning matters. The housing policies set out the general requirements for affordable housing and housing mix and continue to allow for 'rural exception sites'. The design and heritage policies have special relevance to the Whitchurch Conservation Area and its variety of listed buildings. And its landscape, green infrastructure and transport policies are important in shaping the location and design of site proposals.

3.7 The new Buckinghamshire Council will be obliged to prepare and adopt a new statutory strategic policy framework by 2025. It is currently anticipated that this Plan will cover the period to 2040. As this Neighbourhood Plan makes housing proposals that exceed the provisions of the VALP it is justified to extend the plan period to 2040 to cover the same plan period as the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan. The Buckinghamshire Local Plan is in its very early stages of preparation. The Parish Council has therefore discussed and agreed with Buckinghamshire Council that the neighbourhood plan will allocate and reserve suitable sites taking into consideration additional completions and commitments, the potential for additional infill development, its status as a large village, as well as its environmental constraints, in line with Planning Practice Guidance ([Paragraph 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20190509](#)).

3.8 The Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (MWLP) also forms part of the development plan that apply in the Parish. There are Minerals Safeguarding Areas in and adjacent to the parish (see Plan D). Given its distance from the main village settlement, it is not considered that the provisions of the MWLP are relevant in this Neighbourhood Plan.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING POLICY

3.9 There is a large proportion of made neighbourhood plans in the wider area. The neighbouring parish of Aston Abbots is currently the only adjoining parish also preparing a neighbourhood plan which is in its early stages of preparation.



Plan D: Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Source: Adopted MWLP Policies Map ([link](#))

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 Residents of Whitchurch have been regularly consulted before and during the process of Neighbourhood Plan development. Whitchurch has been the location of a number of bitterly contested planning applications in the last ten years and the topic of new house development is an emotive issue. A questionnaire was circulated in both hard copy and digital version in 2019, village groups were communicated with and all households were contacted to elicit maximum engagement with the questionnaire. 227 responses were received, equating to 30% of residents on the electoral roll, but in reality, views reflected a much higher proportion of residents as most responses were completed at household level. All village postcodes were represented in the returns and a diverse range of property types from single occupancy through to multiple children living at home took part. Residents were strongly in favour of the development of a Neighbourhood Plan with 87% expressing support the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Whitchurch.

4.2 Residents were asked to rank their key priorities from 1 to 5 in terms of importance and the results were as below, again number of new homes and location of new homes being the main issues alongside volumes and speed of traffic.

Issue	Score out of 5
• Access to the countryside	4.1
• Concerns about future development	4.1
• Protection of our green spaces	4.3
• Concern about volume and speed of traffic	4.4
• Location of new homes within the village	4.4
• Number of new homes	4.7

4.3 The next consultations that could be conducted were post-covid restrictions in July 2021 and again in November 2021. Residents were shown initial sites that had been put forward in July and those that had remained in the process along with indicative sketch plans of design, layouts and numbers of houses in November. Consultations were well attended. Residents were asked to give feedback on preferred and least preferred sites along with general comments on planning issues that the Neighbourhood Plan group should be focused on.

4.4 Traffic was a recurring theme, particularly on the Oving Road. Concerns were raised regarding the capacity of existing infrastructure and services to cope with increased population. There was 87% agreement with the premise, based on the initial questionnaire, that new housing should be smaller and more affordable with some provision for those wishing to downsize and remain in the village. There was 85% agreement that new homes should be built using traditional materials and be sympathetic in style to the existing built environment. When it came to discussion of possible sites for development, the linear geography of Whitchurch is such that there was a degree of polarisation around preferred

sites depending on where people live. However, there was a general consensus around the suitability of the two sites that have been selected for development in policies W2 & W3. At both village consultations these were viewed as sites that fulfilled the requirements of the emerging plan and crucially they were sites where development could be supported by the village.

4.5 Throughout the process the Neighbourhood Plan group has kept the community apprised of development via the monthly village magazine, *Whitchurch News*, delivered to all homes and available online. In addition, progress has been provided to the Parish Council at their monthly meetings and covered in the minutes.

4.6 The Steering Group reflected extensively on the feedback provided by Whitchurch residents during the consultation process. There were a variety of views expressed, but it was clear from feedback, questions and comments, combined with questionnaire results, that there is widespread understanding that a Neighbourhood Plan for Whitchurch will not be an anti-planning “no more homes here” plan, but rather that it would facilitate controlled development focused on the needs and wishes of the village. Excessive volume of new homes was the no1 concern as residents highly value the rural village nature of Whitchurch and fear the merging of villages and homes seen for example south of Aylesbury, with the corresponding loss of identity and “sense of place” that this can create. However, house prices, lack of smaller and more affordable homes, absence of downsizing opportunities and offspring having no choice but to move away from the village were strong balancing themes.

4.7 Volume and speed of traffic was the joint second concern (alongside location of new homes). Speed of traffic passing through the village was mainly a concern for the A413 High Street, but volume of traffic was more regularly discussed in the context of the Oving and North Marston Roads with their multiple “pinch points”. Whilst the NP group were very aware that a neighbourhood plan cannot directly address such issues, we nonetheless realised that to secure widespread village support, future locations for new homes in Whitchurch needed to consider traffic issues when allocating sites and the plan seeks influence over volume and pinch points in particular.

4.8 The strong sense of place and recognition of the rural environment has also informed our housing design guide with a focus on use of materials and designs which reflect the historic nature of a village like Whitchurch. Likewise, in response to residents' desire to maintain the sense of place has meant that the Neighbourhood Plan has considered key green spaces and views that help to define the character of the village so that the plan is about more than housing.

VISION

In 2040: “The village of Whitchurch has grown but the required growth has conserved and enhance the special character and heritage of the village, the surrounding countryside and protected our most valued green spaces. New homes have helped address local needs and sustained the demand for community facilities and services. Safer routes for pedestrians have reduced reliance on cars.”

OBJECTIVES

To provide affordable homes for local people, particularly for those looking to downsize and young people wanting to stay in the parish.

Securing a more appropriate mix of housing in new developments which recognises the need for a balanced community.

Conserving and enhancing the special heritage character of the village and its landscape setting.

To sustain community facilities and services that are essential to community life.

To encourage measures that will make the parish's roads safer for all users.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE POLICIES

5.1 The following policies relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area of Whitchurch. They focus on specific planning matters that are of greatest interest to the local community.

5.2 There are many parts of the Parish that are not affected by these policies, and there are many other policy matters that have been left to the adopted VALP and forthcoming Buckinghamshire Local Plan to cover. This has avoided unnecessary repetition of policies between this Neighbourhood Plan and the adopted VALP, though they have a mutual, helpful inter-dependence.

5.3 Each policy is numbered and titled, and it is shown in bold italics. Where necessary, the area to which it will apply is shown on the Policies Map attached to the document. After each policy is some supporting text that explains the purpose of the policy, how it will be applied and, where helpful, how it relates to other development plan policies.

THE LAND USE POLICIES AND SUPPORTING TEXT

POLICY W1: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan defines a settlement boundary for Whitchurch, as shown on the Policies Map.**
- B. Proposals for development within the settlement boundary will be supported provided they accord with other relevant policies of the development plan.**
- C. Proposals for development outside of the settlement boundary will only be supported if they accord with development plan policies managing development in the countryside.**

5.4 The policy is intended to distinguish between the built-up area of the main village settlement of Whitchurch and the surrounding countryside in order to manage development proposals accordingly. A settlement boundary has been drawn that is principally derived from the definition of the existing developed footprint in the VALP at Policy D3:

"The existing developed footprint is defined as the continuous built form of the settlement, and generally excludes remote individual buildings and

groups of dispersed buildings. The exclusion covers former agricultural barns that have been converted, agricultural buildings (but does not preclude permitted development for converting agricultural buildings to residential – Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended – Class Q) and associated land on the edge of the settlement and gardens, paddocks and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings on the edge of the settlement where the land relates more to the surrounding countryside than to the built-up area of the settlement.”

5.5 Its purpose is to clearly translate this definition to the Policies Maps in respect of the Whitchurch village settlement. The boundary has also included new developments which have been recently completed, are underway or have planning permission, includes land that has been proposed for the allocation of housing in Policies W2 and W3 below, and allows for the continuing growth of the village through suitable infill sites, which may deliver another 3-10 homes in the plan period. As a 'larger village' in the settlement hierarchy, and no marked difference in the provision of services which led to that conclusion, the village is presented as a sustainable location for development.

5.6 The policy simply refines VALP Policy D3 by defining a settlement boundary to give effect to its provisions on small scale development and infilling and larger scale development proposals within a defined settlement boundary and VALP Policy S3 on development in the countryside. Outside the defined settlement boundary, development will only be supported if proposals accord with policies managing development in the open countryside to provide certainty to applicants and the community and to recognise the valued function of the countryside.

POLICY W2: HOUSING ALLOCATION – LAND AT KEMPSON HOUSE WEST

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Kempson House West, as shown on the Policies Maps, for residential development. Proposals will be supported provided they accord with the following site-specific requirements alongside other relevant policies of the development plan;

- i. The scheme delivers approximately 23 new homes comprising a mix of open market and affordable homes in accordance with Local Plan policies, including the interim position statements on the provision of First Homes (or successor policies) or any subsequent update with an emphasis on one, two and three bedroom homes suitable for first time buyers, those looking to rent their first home and downsizers and as guided by the Whitchurch Housing Needs Assessment;
- ii. The scheme demonstrates safe and convenient access for pedestrians to services and facilities off the A413, including to public transport services;
- iii. Vehicular access is made from a single access point off the A413 in a location which is acceptable to the Highways Authority, balanced with minimising the loss of thick hedges and mature trees;
- iv. The scheme provides for traffic management measures that are required by the Highways Authority in connection with the development of this site;
- v. Proposals have full regard to all the relevant provisions of the Whitchurch Design Guidelines and Codes Report unless Development Management policies indicate otherwise;
- vi. Proposals have full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on preserving, and where possible enhancing heritage assets in responding to the location of the land adjoined to the Whitchurch Conservation Area;
- vii. The scheme sustains and where possible enhances the significance of the Grade II listed building Kempson House which the site is in close proximity to and other nearby listed buildings to the west of High Street;
- viii. A landscape strategy is prepared, and the layout and heights of buildings have regard to Local Plan policy requirements on landscape character and the location of the land within an Area of Attractive Landscape and on the retention of trees and hedgerows where possible;
- ix. A biodiversity strategy is prepared that delivers a measurable net gain in biodiversity having full regard to Local Plan policy requirements, national policy requirements and the Environment Act 2021 on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity;
- x. A sustainable drainage strategy is prepared, which seeks to maximise the use of sustainable drainage systems in the design of the scheme and approved by the local planning authority to address the effects of surface water run-off within the land, or as such surface water run-off from the land might impact elsewhere within the village.

5.7 The policy allocates land adjacent to the A413 on the north eastern edge of the village for a total of approximately 23 new homes. The land is in single ownership and has been made available for housing development in line with the provisions of the policy. The policy will deliver a number of homes that exceed the requirement of the VALP in the period to 2033 and together with Policy W3 plans for a potential eventuality that the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan may require additional homes for the period beyond that.

5.8 The Whitchurch Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) included in the evidence base identifies the need for affordable housing in the parish, particularly smaller, low-cost housing and housing available to meet the needs of those wishing to downsize from larger family properties. The opportunity to provide affordable housing within the existing built-up area of Whitchurch is extremely limited and the site presents an opportunity to deliver a range of new homes across a number of open market and affordable tenures.

5.9 The identification and selection of this site, and the specific key development principles, are detailed in the Site Assessment Report and SEA published alongside this Plan. The site comprises paddock land and the evidence shows that it is possible to avoid or mitigate any significant adverse environmental effect by making a series of requirements in this allocation policy. The landowner has agreed, subject to exploring available options and agreement with the Highways Authority, to provide a suitable pedestrian crossing across the A413 to satisfy part of Clause ii of the policy. Some of the requirements set out in the policy are already required by national planning policy and/or the adopted local plan but are included as the community will otherwise raise them as an issue.

POLICY W3: RESERVE SITE – LAND AT MANOR FARM NORTH

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan reserves land at Manor Farm North, as shown on the Policies Maps, for residential development but only in the event that the strategic policies of the development plan require the Parish to supply new homes in the plan period. Such proposals will be supported provided they accord with the following site-specific requirements alongside other relevant policies of the development plan:
- i. The scheme delivers approximately 35 new homes comprising a mix of open market and affordable homes in accordance with Local Plan policies, including the interim position statements on the provision of First Homes (or successor policies) or any subsequent update with an emphasis on one, two and three bedroom homes suitable for first time buyers, those looking to rent their first home and downsizers and as guided by the Whitchurch Housing Needs Assessment;
 - ii. The scheme demonstrates safe and convenient access for pedestrians to services and facilities off the A413, including to public transport services;
 - iii. Vehicular access is made from a single access point off the A413 in a location which is acceptable to the Highways Authority, balanced with minimising the loss of thick hedges and mature trees;
 - iv. The scheme provides for traffic management measures that are required by the Highways Authority in connection with the development of this site;
 - v. The location and type of access the routes and mitigation measures or improvements agreed should have full regard to the location of this site providing a new village gateway;
 - vi. Proposals have full regard to all the relevant provisions of the Whitchurch Design Guidelines and Codes Report unless Development Management policies indicate otherwise;
 - vii. Proposals have full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on preserving, and where possible enhancing heritage assets in responding to the location of the land adjacent to the Whitchurch Conservation Area;
 - viii. A landscape strategy is prepared, and the layout and heights of buildings, having full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on landscape character and the location of the land within an Area of Attractive Landscape and on the retention of trees and hedgerows where possible;
 - ix. A biodiversity strategy is prepared that delivers a net gain in biodiversity having full regard to Local Plan policy requirements, national policy requirements and the Environment Act 2021 on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity;
 - xi. A sustainable drainage strategy is prepared, which seeks to maximise the use of sustainable drainage systems in the design of the scheme and approved by the local planning authority to address the effects of surface water run-off within the land, or as

such surface water run-off from the land might impact elsewhere within the village.

- B. The reserved land will be released for development in the event that the proposals are made after April 2033 for delivery in the period to 2040 and the housing policies of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan are deemed out of date, or the housing supply policies of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan require the provision of new homes in the Parish after the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan is made.**

5.10 The policy reserves land adjacent to the A413 on the northern edge of the village for a total of approximately 35 new homes. The land is in single ownership and has been made available for housing development in line with the provisions of the policy. The policy plans for a potential eventuality that the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan may require additional homes for the plan period. In such eventuality no other site would be considered if this site can be delivered. Should the Buckinghamshire Local Plan not require additional homes, the Manor Farm North site is only reserved, and the policy will be monitored in subsequent reviews of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan to determine if its release for development is warranted.

5.11 The identification and selection of this site, and the specific key development principles, are detailed in the Site Assessment Report and SEA published alongside this Plan. The development of this site also provides an opportunity to create a new 'gateway' to the village. The site comprises vacant agricultural land with a number of constraints, but the evidence shows that it is possible to avoid or mitigate any significant adverse environmental effect by making a series of requirements in this allocation policy. There are also other matters which, although already a requirement of national or local planning policy, the community would expect to see form part of the policy.

POLICY W4: DESIGN CODES

- A. Development proposals will be supported provided they have full regard to the essential design guidelines and codes, where applicable relevant to the character area typologies within which they are located, as shown on the Policies Maps, and set out in the Whitchurch Design Guidelines and Codes Report attached as Appendix A.**

- B. Development proposals should conserve and enhance the historic environment, particularly the special architectural and historic significance of the designated Whitchurch Conservation Area and its setting. Features identified as positive characteristics of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting are defined in the Whitchurch Design Guidelines and Codes Report attached as Appendix A, to which all proposals must have full regard.**

5.12 There are distinctive features of Whitchurch that shapes its character. These features are set out in the Whitchurch Design Guidance and Codes attached at Appendix A. The Code is an integral part of the policy but is extensive and the document is therefore attached as an appendix for representational purposes only. Its content is given full effect through the provisions of the policy by placing additional local emphasis to the design quality principles of VALP Policies BE2 and BE1 in respect of the particular characteristics of the Whitchurch Conservation Area. It therefore carries the full weight of the development plan in decision making and is not subordinate or supplementary guidance carrying lesser weight.

5.13 The policy requires that applicants should demonstrate that they have full regard to the design principles and guidance the Code contains as relevant to the location of their proposals. The policy does not advocate pastiche or historic solution; however, it is important that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making. Where a proposal does not follow the requirements of the Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made.

POLICY W5: MANAGING TRAFFIC

- A. Key locations, as shown on the Policies Map, have been identified as areas where public realm improvements and traffic mitigation measures are required to enhance the active travel environment and improve residential amenity and highway safety. Proposals which deliver such public realm improvements and traffic mitigation measures at Key Locations will be supported.**

- B. New development proposals that will generate an increase in traffic in the Parish demonstrated in a Transport Assessment submitted as part of the application will be required to make a direct and proportionate contribution to public realm improvements and traffic mitigation measures at Key Locations.**

5.14 The policy seeks to encourage safe, accessible and convenient means of movement and travel through the parish. By doing so it refines VALP Policy T1 Delivering the sustainable transport vision which seeks to promote opportunities for sustainable travel through pedestrian, cycle, public transportation and public realm improvements to make sustainable travel more attractive, convenient, direct, safe, secure and easy-to follow. The steering group has identified a number of key locations, which are identified on the Policies Maps, which would benefit from such improvements which include:

- a. Improvement of the existing but neglected path on top of the verge next to Church Headland in keeping with the rural character of this historic bank to provide safe access to the bus stop;
- b. Surface improvements for pedestrian access to White Horse Lane, including the addition of street lighting to village amenities of Church and Church Hall, which should be mindful of the historic and rural character in the design installed;
- c. Dropped kerbs at Swan Close junctions to improve pedestrian access;
- d. Construction of a footpath behind the hedge to the farm shop village amenity;
- e. Re structure of soil bank next to bus stop at Weir Lane corner to improve pedestrian access;
- f. Improved parking places at Oving Road;
- g. Steps and a safe path to be built to safely walk footpath 28;
- h. Construction of a footpath on North Marston Lane to the new residence known as the Olde Barns.

5.15 The policy therefore seeks to ensure that new development does not harm the delivery of these opportunities but sustains and where possible enhances it. The policy also seeks additional development contributions for improvements where appropriate.

POLICY W6: ESSENTIAL COMMERCIAL, BUSINESS AND SERVICE USES

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies essential commercial, business and service uses, as shown on the Policies Maps, and listed below:

- i. Whitchurch Surgery, Oving Road;**
- ii. Petrol Station, High Street;**
- iii. Village Shop and Post Office, High Street;**
- iv. Vastech Car Repairs, High Street;**
- v. Simonds Car Repairs, High Street;**
- vi. Manor Farm business units, Buckingham Road;**

B. Development proposals which would affect the use of the identified essential facilities and businesses will be determined against the provisions of the adopted VALP Policy D7.

5.16 The policy refines existing development plan policy on essential facilities and businesses by identifying the few that remain on the Policies Map to protect them from unnecessary loss. The identified facilities and businesses play a vital role in providing the local community with convenience and local services that reduce their dependence on travelling to larger centres.

5.17 It is recognised that some changes of use do not now require planning permission and new permitted development rights enable future changes of use from what are now Class E (commercial, business and service) uses to residential uses. The Parish Council hopes that Buckinghamshire Council will make an Article 4 Direction for essential facilities and businesses to remove those rights with effect from August 2023, enabling such changes to remain in planning control and the Parish Council will submit a formal request for this following the referendum of this Neighbourhood Plan. The petrol station and car repair services are sui generis uses which will continue to require planning permission to change to residential uses and will therefore be subject to the provisions of adopted VALP Policy D7.

5.18 In the meantime, proposals made at the defined locations will require Prior Approval. For those that lie within the Conservation Area, such approval will require the consideration of any harmful effects to the character of the Conservation Area from the loss of such a ground floor use. Although the Neighbourhood Plan policy (as part of the development plan) is not engaged in a Prior Approval determination by way of S38(6) of the 1990 Planning Act, together with Policy W4 it has identified the essential facilities and business uses as playing an important part of its distinct function and character and could therefore be a legitimate reason for refusing approval for proposals that will diminish the provision of these local essential facilities and businesses in the village.

5.19 Agricultural buildings which are being used to provide flexible commercial uses, such as Beechmore Farm and Shop and Hampden Vets, continue to be important to the local community, but the Parish Council recognises that these services are supplementary to the general vitality and viability of commercial, business and service uses in and around the village centre. It should be noted, as per the Regulations, if an agricultural building has been changed to provide flexible commercial uses through permitted development rights, then the use of the site becomes a sui generis use which means any change of use will continue to require planning permission to change to residential uses and will therefore be subject to the provisions of the development plan, including policies in this neighbourhood plan.

POLICY W7: LOCAL COMMUNITY USES AND PUBS

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following, as shown on the Policies Maps, as community facilities:

- i. St John's Village Hall;**
- ii. St John's C of E Church;**
- iii. Methodist Church and Hall;**
- iv. The White Swan Public House;**
- v. The Cricket Ground;**
- vi. The Meadows Recreation Area;**
- vii. Whitchurch Combined School**

B. Development proposals which would affect the use of the identified community facilities will be determined against the provisions of the adopted VALP Policies D7 and I3.

5.20 The policy identifies local community uses and pubs (buildings and land) in the Parish that will be protected from change of use in line with the provisions of VALP Policies D7 and I3. These facilities are valued by the community and offer a valuable resource to support community life, and therefore warrant protection of policies in the VALP, and any future replacement Buckinghamshire Local Plan. The location of the facilities are shown on the Policies Map. In some cases, the facility is included in Policy W8 as a Local Green space as it will also be a key open space in the village.

POLICY W8: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

A. The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following Local Green Spaces, as shown on the Policies Map:

- i. Duck-End Pond**
- ii. Mount Pleasant Mound**
- iii. Grass Bank Kempson House/Old House**
- iv. Grass Bank and Verges Market Hill**
- v. Wildflower Bank, Oving Road**
- vi. Green circle Ashgrove Gardens**
- vii. The Meadows Recreation Area**
- viii. The Meadows Orchard Area**
- ix. Jubilee Tree Triangle**
- x. Whittle Hole Spring and Stream**
- xi. Allotment Land Ashgrove Gardens**

B. Proposals for development in a Local Green Space will only be supported in very special circumstances.

5.21 The policy designates a series of Local Green Spaces in accordance with §101 - 103 of the NPPF. A designation has the policy effect of the equivalence of the Green Belt in terms of the definition of 'inappropriate development' consistent with paragraph 101 and 143 of the NPPF and of the 'very special circumstances' tests in the NPPF when determining planning applications located within a designated Local Green Space.

5.22 A review of all open land within and adjoining the village settlement has been completed, informed by the qualifying criteria in the NPPF. The land is considered to meet those criteria and is therefore worthy of designation as illustrated and justified in the Local Green Space report in the evidence base. In the Parish Council's judgement, each designation is capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period having regard to NPPF §136. The owners of these sites were notified of the proposed Local Green Space designations during the preparation of the Plan.

5.23 The policy has been reviewed in relation to the consideration in the Court of Appeal (2020 EWCA Civ 1259) of an equivalent policy in a neighbourhood plan in Mendip District. Policy W7 follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by Buckinghamshire Council. It will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy.

POLICY W9: IMPORTANT VIEWS

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies Important Views on the Policies Map.**
- B. Development proposals should preserve or enhance the local character of the landscape and through their design, height and massing should recognise and respond positively to the various Important Views.**
- C. Development proposals which would have a significant adverse impact on an identified Important View will not be supported.**

5.24 The policy, and Policies Maps, identifies a series of views from public vantage points in and beyond the edge of the village that are considered in the Important Views report, published in the evidence base, as especially important in defining the relationship between the village and its rural hinterland. A summary of the assessment is duplicated below:

View	View Name	Location	Direction and description of View	Key characteristics
1	Waddesdon View	At the stile, on the western boundary of the wind turbine field	Looks west towards Waddesdon but also takes in views beyond Berryfields and across to the Chilterns and Stokenchurch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited impact from built urban development • Panoramic views over meandering valley floor • Tranquil and remote
2	Village View	At the stile, on the eastern boundary of wind turbine field	Looks east towards the middle and southern section of the village and beyond to Weedon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddocks in association with village margins • Landmark church tower
3	Whistlers View	At the top of the field, east of Weir Lane and accessed through the stile where Castle Lane meets Weir Lane	Looks south towards the Chilterns, encompasses Wendover Woods and Coombe Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immortalised in Whistler's Painting • Limited impact from built urban development • Panoramic views over meandering valley floor • Tranquil and remote
4	Castle View	Half way along the footpath that runs from the top of Weir Lane, behind Moat Cottage towards Fair Alice Spring.	Historic lookout from the Castle Mound south toward Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns. NB: <i>As the actual Mound is in private ownership please view from the footpath</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited impact from built urban development
5	Bolebec View	Through the right hand stile at the end of Keinches Lane	Looks north west back towards Bolebec Castle mound, also taking in Scotts Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited impact from built urban development • medium scale mixed woodlands
6	Chilterns View	Through the stile facing you at the end of Keinches Lane	Looks south and takes in Berryfields and beyond to Aylesbury and the Chilterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited impact from built urban development

7	Vale View	By the 'broken down tree' where the footpaths meet in the field accessed by the footpath from Keinches Lane and from Little London	Looks south and west across the Aylesbury Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited impact from built urban development
8	Creslow View	At the far end of The Butts where the footpath divides	Looks east towards Creslow and also beyond Cublington/Aston Abbots ridge to the Dunstable Downs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panoramic views over large open, predominantly arable fields forming part of the Creslow 100 • Limited impact from built urban development
9	Recreation View	At the northern end of the Recreation Field	Looks north from the mound towards Buckingham, northwest to the Mursley Water Tower and south east to the Dunstable Downs where the Whipsnade Lion is visible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited impact from built urban development • Panoramic views which extend in excess of 5/10 miles

5.25 The policy does not seek to prevent any development lying within a view but requires that proposals recognise and take account of these in their design. In each case, only the minimum area of land necessary to define the view has been identified.

POLICY W10: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- A. Development proposals within the vicinity of green infrastructure assets of Whitchurch must respect its existing character, setting and purpose.**
- B. In the event that the loss or harm to any part of the green infrastructure assets of Whitchurch is demonstrated to be unavoidable, then provision must be made for suitable mitigation and replacement features.**

5.26 The policy refines adopted VALP Policy I1 on Green Infrastructure by identifying the importance of protecting the green infrastructure of Whitchurch. Green infrastructure can be broadly defined as a network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity in both rural and urban settings. This includes parks, public open spaces, allotments, watercourses, play areas, playing fields as well as informal open land and associated features such as trees, hedgerows, ponds, green roofs and green walls.

5.27 Whitchurch's greatest asset is its myriad footpaths that cover many miles within the parish and link into the Aylesbury Ring. Keeping access to these rights of way easy and unrestricted is of paramount importance for the high percentage of residents (and indeed non-residents) who use them. There are currently no bridleways or cycle paths in

Whitchurch Parish. Horse riders ride on the roads to other bridleways outside Whitchurch. Whitchurch's green spaces primarily include the Recreation Ground, with its outdoor gym, fitness trail, and children's play area. There is a recently created Community Woodland and Orchard with fruit trees. It has also benefited from the addition of a wildlife pond and a wildflower area. There is also the cricket field which is on private ground adjacent to the Glebe field. The Parish is interspersed with Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats and there are many opportunities for habitat re-creation, new habitats or restoration to encourage nature recovery.

5.28 The village has many trees, green verges and hedges which are kept tidy in the main areas of the village. Hedgerows provide a connecting habitat across the countryside and rural settlement. There are bat boxes located around the area. Whitchurch has several important springs, which were the reason for its establishment - Whittle Hole and Fair Alice which are both said to have healing properties to the sick. Early risers will frequently see Chinese water deer and muntjac in the fields around the village, and the trees and farmland provide a - positive habitat for birds, particularly red kites in several locations. Whilst there are many badger setts and fox dens, rabbit holes are plentiful, hedgehogs are rarely seen. The village questionnaire carried out in 2019 flagged up the importance to villagers of Whitchurch's green spaces and access to footpaths and open country. The Parish Council plans to prepare a comprehensive Green Infrastructure Strategy and map of the Parish as a future project.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for development in the Parish by Buckinghamshire Council.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

6.2 The planning authority will use a combination of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the Parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by Buckinghamshire Council. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

6.3 Where necessary, the Parish Council may seek to persuade the Secretary of State to call-in a planning application that it considers is in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan but which the planning authority has deemed to consent. Similarly, it may also seek to persuade the Secretary of State to recover an appeal of a refused application, where the conflict with one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies has been important in the reasons for refusal. In both cases, the Parish Council will do so if it considers matters of national policy significance (for neighbourhood planning) are raised.

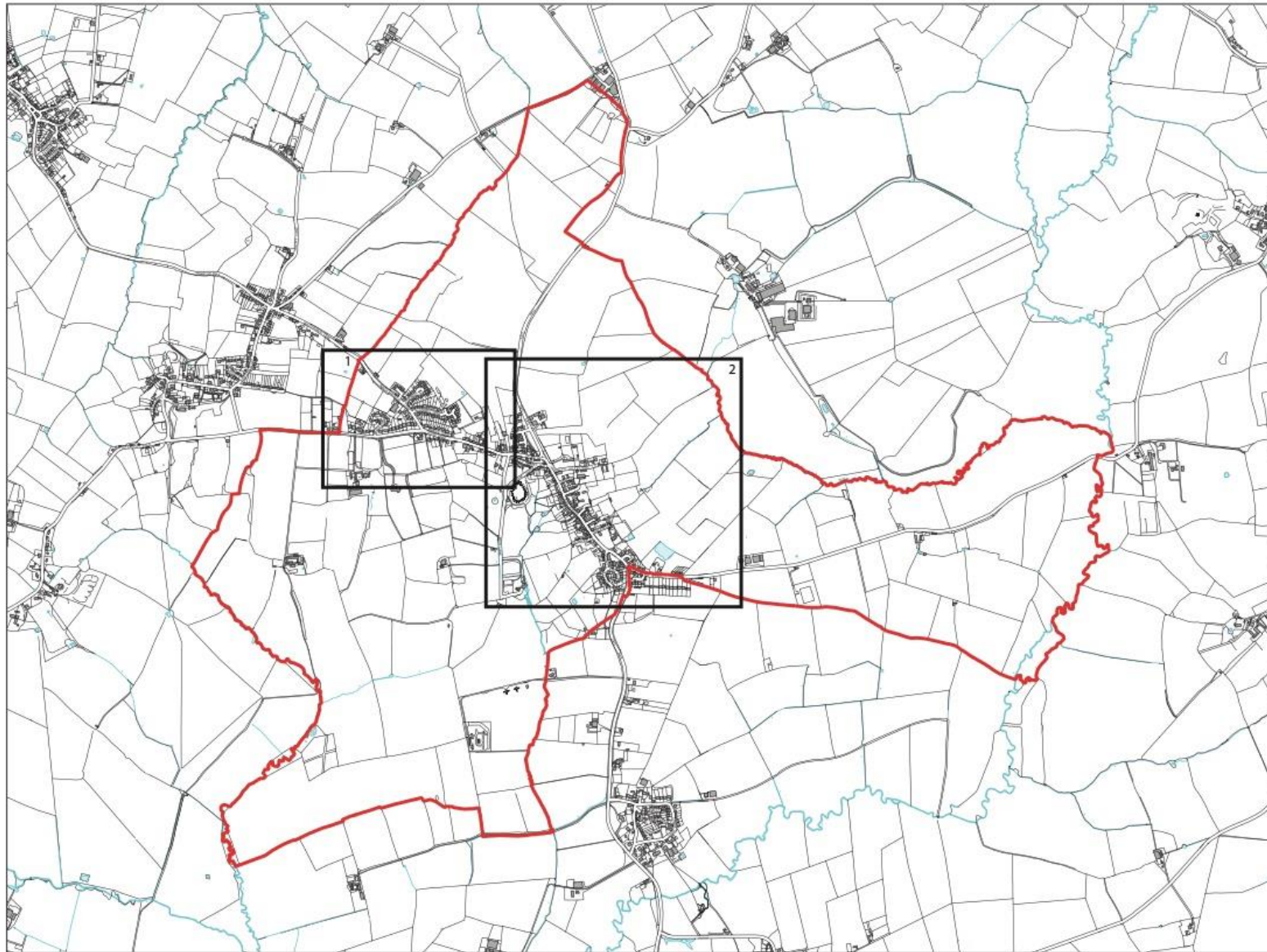
LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

6.4 Where opportunities arise through S106 agreements (or through the Community Infrastructure Levy) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. Should an opportunity arise, the Parish Council will review the evidence base and community consultations for the neighbourhood plan to inform its view in liaising with Buckinghamshire Council. This is in addition to the infrastructure projects that are proposed to be delivered through site specific policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

OTHER NON-PLANNING MATTERS

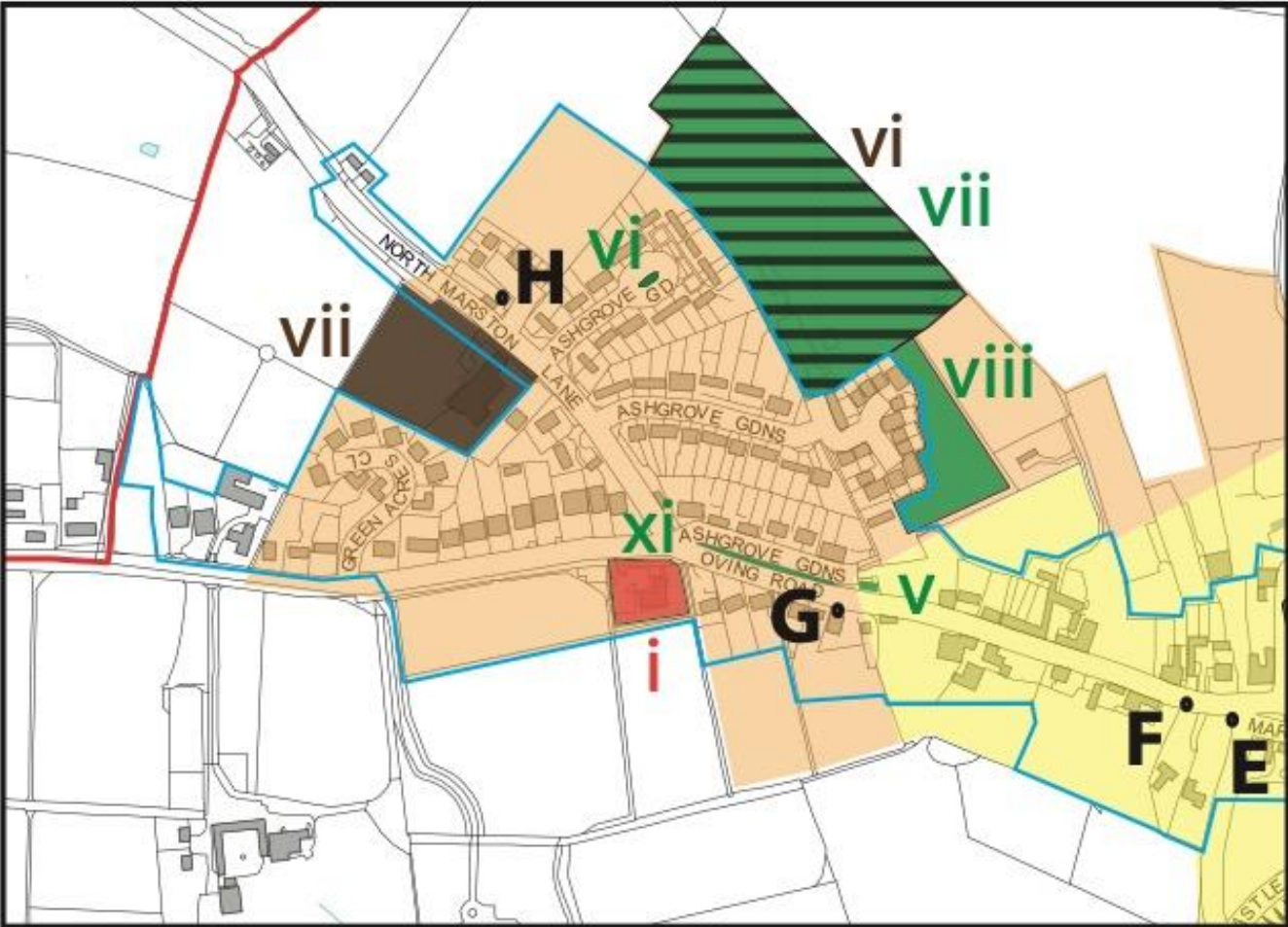
6.5 During the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, there have been many ideas for improving or addressing current problems in the parish that lie outside the scope of the land use planning system to control. The Parish Council has noted these issues and will take them forward through its day-to-day business and in partnership with the local community and relevant parties, as well as part of its work on the Community Plan.

**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map
March 2023**



- Parish Boundary
- Insets

**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map
Inset 1 (Western Side of Village)
March 2023**



-  Parish Boundary
-  W1 Settlement Boundary

W4 Design Codes

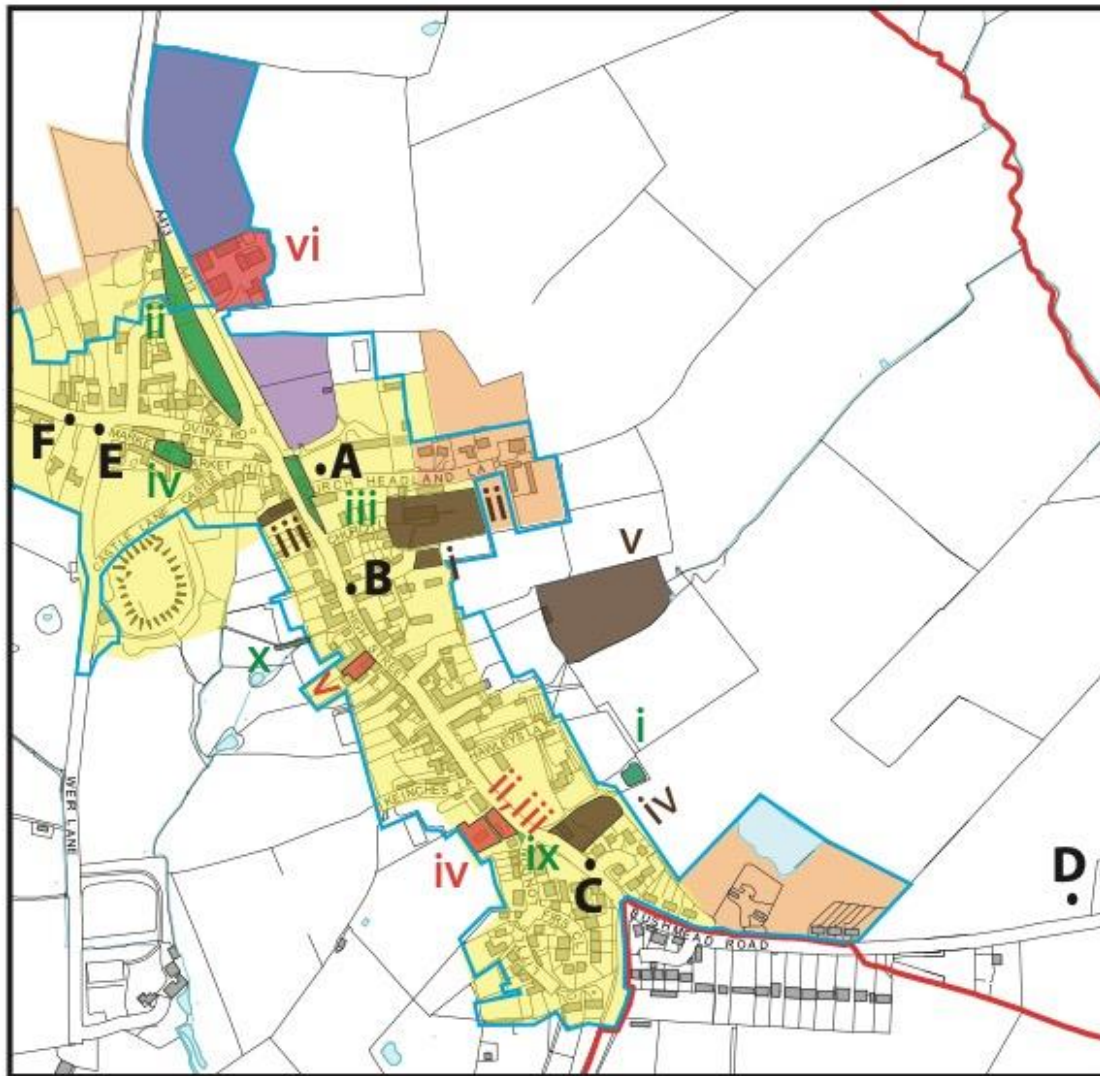
-  Conservation Area
-  Outside Conservation Area

Key Locations

-  W6 Essential Commercial, Business and Service Uses
-  W7 Local Community Uses and Pubs
-  W8 Local Green Spaces

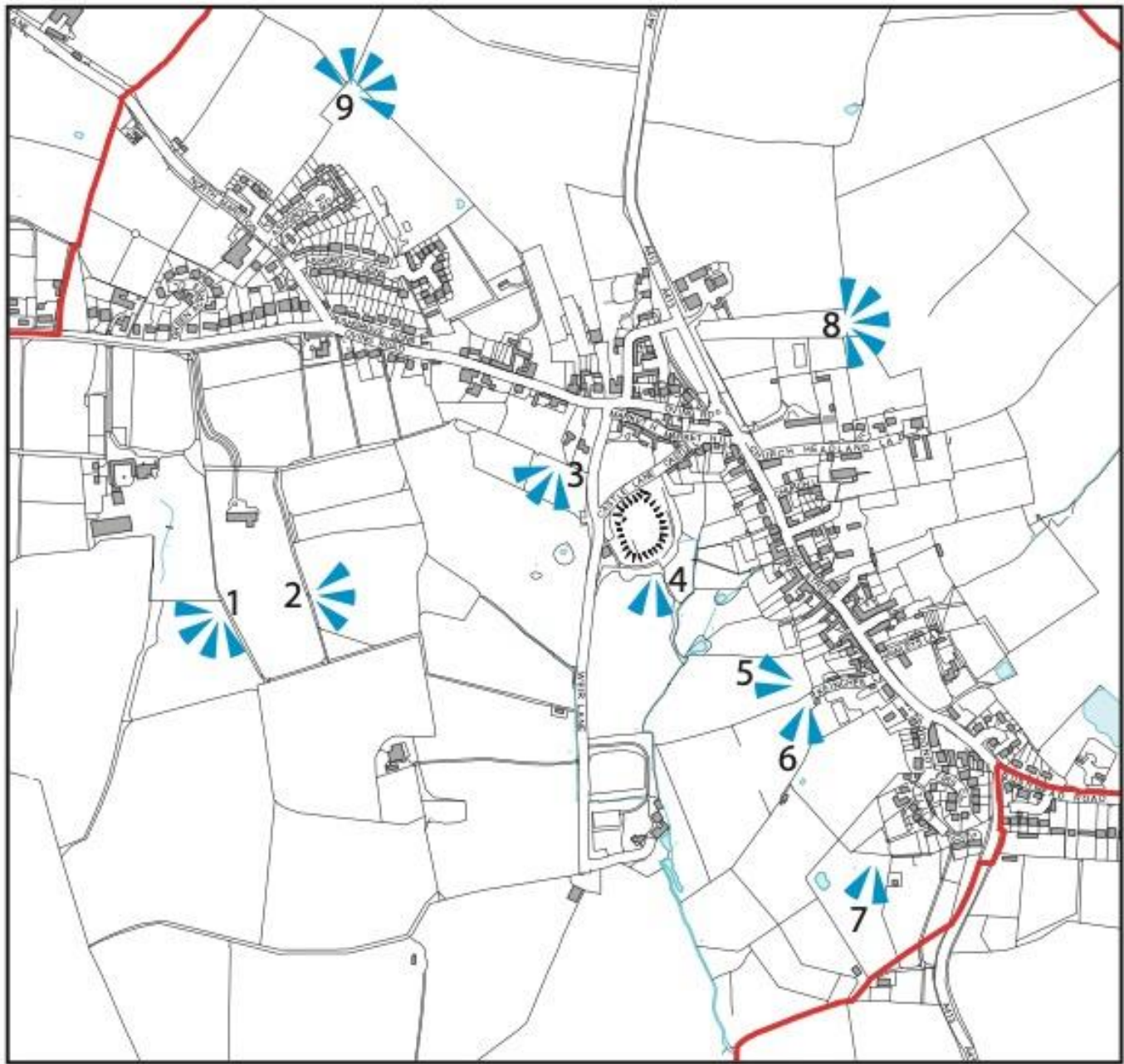
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**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map
Inset 2 (Central and Eastern Side of Village)
March 2023**



-  Parish Boundary
-  W1 Settlement Boundary
-  W2 Housing Allocation - Land at Kempson House West
-  W3 Reserve Site - Land at Manor Farm North
- W4 Design Codes**
-  Conservation Area
-  Outside Conservation Area
-  Key Locations
-  W6 Essential Commercial, Business and Service Uses
-  W7 Local Community Uses and Pubs
-  W8 Local Green Spaces

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**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Important Views Map
March 2023**

-  Parish Boundary
-  Important Views

APPENDIX A - WHITCHURCH DESIGN GUIDELINES AND CODES REPORT