



# Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

Modified Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2011 – 35

# Brightwell-cum-Sotwell MODIFIED NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2011-2035

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**Brightwell cum Sotwell**  
Neighbourhood Plan





The main village of Brightwell cum Sotwell looking south across the A4130 towards Mackney

## Foreword

People have lived and worked in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell for over 3000 years, each generation shaping the landscape in their own way. Today, the landscape is varied and includes the River Thames floodplain, the ridge of the Sinodun Hills, the gravel terraces and former marshland to the south. Agriculture still dominates the scene. Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is a rural parish that consists of six separate settlements. The largest is formed by the merged communities of Brightwell and Sotwell that nestles in a hollow below the Sinodun Hills. The main settlement is separated from the outlying hamlets of Mackney, Shillingford Hill, Clapcot and Sires Hill by a patchwork of fields, orchards, woods and meadowland. The main settlement, together with Mackney is collectively referred to in this plan as ‘the village’.

The parish retains many facilities such as a shop (with a post office), a school, the village pub, village hall, a riverside hotel, several garages and an award winning vineyard. Mixed farms, the Island Donkey Sanctuary and Sotwell Manor Fruit Farm are a reminder of the area’s agricultural past whilst the Earth Trust’s facilities at North Farm provide a site of high nature conservation interest. Footpaths criss cross the parish offering excellent walking opportunities linking the settlements with the countryside that notably provided the inspiration to the artist Paul Nash. The parish is unfortunately cut in two by the busy A4130 road that runs between the main settlement and the Sinodun Hills.

In the village itself, dotted along the narrow lanes are the picturesque thatched cottages that are so typical of South Oxfordshire. These traditional buildings mix with new developments that on the whole blend seamlessly into the rural scene. Streams and orchards, hedges and mature trees characterise much of the village and help to provide a very strong sense of place. There is a strong community spirit in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell with all manner of events taking place throughout the year, and a variety of clubs and societies to belong to. The parish forms a desirable place to live although with an ageing population and identified housing need. To meet the parish’s housing needs and to guide sustainable development, it was agreed in 2013 at the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Meeting to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

The neighbourhood plan was made in October 2017, to date 31 houses allocated in the plan have been delivered plus windfall sites. The 2017 neighbourhood plan was informed by the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan that was published in August 2014. The Parish Plan set out community aspirations for a range of issues that are of importance to Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, its residents, businesses and community groups. The Parish Plan was developed in a way that it could provide much of the background and community views that underpin this Neighbourhood Plan although these assumptions were re-tested and modified as the neighbourhood plan progressed. In 2015 a Housing Needs Survey was carried out and a series of public meetings / workshops have ensured that the evidence base that underpins this report continued to reflect the views of local residents and current trends.

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council has updated the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan in 2023.. The modified plan does not include any further allocations as those sites allocated in the made plan have been, or will be, implemented within the plan period, with little or no prospect of under-delivery. The modified plan replaces or refines some policies to clarify policies regarding design and biodiversity. In this way the modified plan introduces a design code and contains new polices regarding Local Nature Recovery, dark skies and natural flood management but not to the extent that it is considered would change the nature of the plan. The BCSNP has made account of comments submitted during the Pre Submission consultation, including feedback received during public consultation events and from the Steering Group. Generally, the Plan has been well received by local people. This report forms the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan Review 2011 – 2035.

## List of Policies

BCS1	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Village Boundary
BCS2	Land at Bosley's Orchard
BCS3	Land at Thorne's Nursery
BCS4	Slade End Green including; Slade End Farm, Strange's Nursery, Slade End South to West of Green Lane
BCS5	House Types and Tenures
BCS6	Design Codes
BCS7	Assets of Local Heritage Value
BCS8	Local Green Spaces
BCS9	Local Gaps
BCS10	Landscape Character and the Villages
BCS11	Dark Skies
BCS12	The Green Heart
BCS13	Local Nature Recovery
BCS14	Natural Flood Management
BCS15	Footpaths & Bridleways
BCS16	Renewable Energy
BCS17	Community Facilities
BCS18	Tourism Facilities
BCS19	Natural Burial Ground



**Our vision is:**

***“To retain our separate identity as a rural parish set within open countryside, conserving the character of the various settlements; in a way that allows the community to evolve whilst sustaining our core vital services”***



Views to Brightwell Barrow are enjoyed in many locations across the village

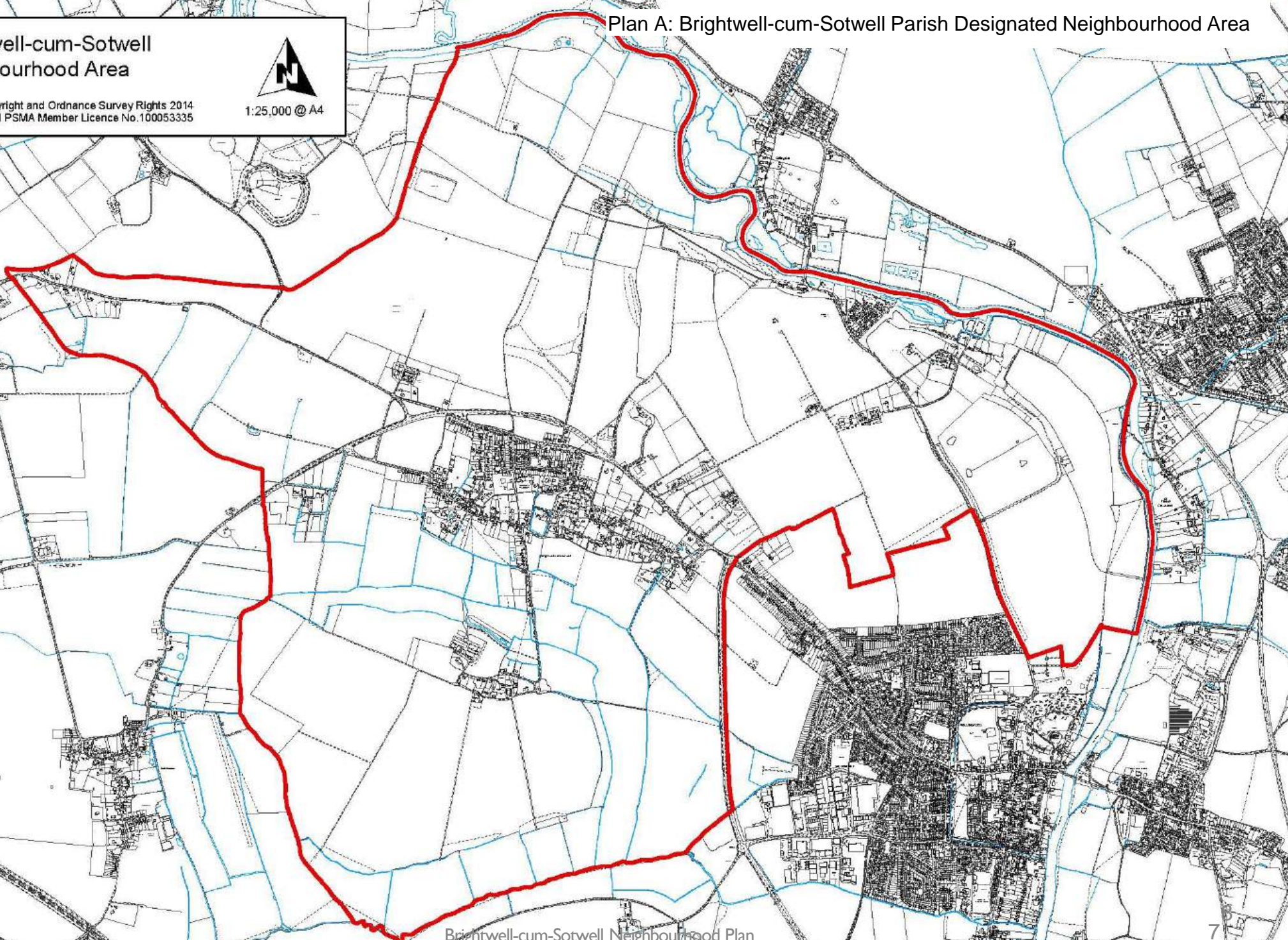


# Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Area

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## Plan A: Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Designated Neighbourhood Area



# I. Introduction & Background

1.1 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council has updated the Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The designated area is shown in Plan A opposite.

1.2 The purpose of the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Modified Neighbourhood Plan (BCSMNP) is to make planning policies that can be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to March 2035. Its policies aim to positively plan for the growth of the main village but to do in ways that will protect and enhance the special character of the Parish.

1.3 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to shape the future development of their areas. Once approved at a referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes a statutory part of the development plan for the area and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided.

1.4 Neighbourhood Plans can therefore only contain land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are more important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan if they are not directly related to planning.

1.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some 'basic conditions'. These are:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations, as incorporated into UK law;
- prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the neighbourhood plan.

1.6 In addition, the Parish Council must be able to show that it has properly consulted local people and other relevant organisations during the process of modifying its Neighbourhood Plan and has followed the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (as amended).

1.7 These requirements will be tested by an independent examiner. The examiner will also determine whether the modifications change the nature of the plan and this will determine whether the BCSMNP will be subject to a referendum. The Modification Statement published alongside the BCSMNP explains why, in the Parish Council's opinion, the modifications do not change the nature of the plan. SODC has informally agreed with this position. If the examiner agrees then the BCSMNP will not be subject to another referendum. If requirements are satisfied, the examiner will recommend that SODC should adopt the BCSMNP as formal planning policy for the area, so long as the plan does not breach EU regulations. A Modification Proposal and Statement contained the draft proposals and was consulted on during March – May 2022. This exercise demonstrated a majority of local community support for the proposed modifications and the general support of the District Council and other statutory bodies. Only those land interests that have not been favoured by the Plan have made objections. Some minor modifications have been made to this final version of the Modified Plan to ensure its policies meet the basic conditions.



1.8 The Parish Council has received a screening opinion from SODC, which established that the modifications to the BCSNP are unlikely to have significant environmental effects. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) under the EU Directives 42/2001 and the 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (as amended) has therefore not been required. As the BCSNP was subject to an SEA and the Parish Council chose to prepare a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) (SA/SEA), the Parish Council chose to consult on a separate Draft SA/SEA addendum alongside the Modification Proposal to demonstrate that the modifications contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Changes have been made to reflect the final version of the BCSMNP.

1.9 The screening opinion also determined that the modifications to the BCSNP is unlikely to have significant effects on the National Site Network (formerly Natura 2000 sites) and so no Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would be required as per the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and under the EU Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC.

## **2. The Neighbourhood Area**

2.1 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is located in the County of Oxfordshire, and is 2.2 miles away from Wallingford and 3.6 miles from Didcot. The population of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is currently 1,550. This Parish covers 1,320 hectares and was formed by the merger in 1948 of Sotwell and Brightwell, including the Liberty of Clapcot. The hamlets at Mackney, Shillingford Hill and Sires Hill also fall within the parish, which has been part of South Oxfordshire District Council since the 1974 local government reorganisation when North West Berkshire was transferred to Oxfordshire.

2.2 The main village evolved from a number of small hamlets spread out along the spring line located on The Square, the Red Lion, the Priory Farm, Bakers Farm/Sotwell Manor and at Slade End. Over the centuries the 'gaps' in between have been developed; although this settlement pattern still predominated until after WWII. Several large Victorian properties are located on high ground north of the High Road.

2.3 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell was within living memory a predominantly rural community where agriculture dominated, with arable farming on the higher ground, grazing on the surrounding marshland and Thames floodplain and orchards around the settled areas. By the 1940s, the main village was still a mosaic of farmsteads, cottages and small manor houses, separated by orchards and smallholdings. Between 1945 and 1990, two large building developments, Greenmere and Kings Orchard were constructed south of the High Road. Greenmere was planned as a model estate to house former agricultural workers who had previously lived in tied cottages across the village. The estates were separated from the historic core of the village by a strip of field and orchard but linked by the footpath network. During the 1970s and 80s; a private housing estate were constructed at Monks Mead. Elsewhere small clusters of family houses and bungalows appeared, typically one property deep. These flanked the lanes between the older properties, but preserved boundaries of historic enclosures. At Shillingford Hill the post WW II breakup of the Rush Court Estate led to the establishment of the residential Home Park site and former farm cottages becoming private homes. The estate house has become the Elizabeth Finn Trust home.

2.4 The parish Facilities include The Churches (St. James and St. Agatha's), the Village School (and Pre-school), the village stores, post office, Red Lion pub, village hall and the Rec and Pavilion.

2.5 In 2014, the parish council published its ten-year vision in the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan. This report updated the Vital Villages Report of 2004.

2.6 Transport links include First Great Western Trains providing a fast link to Oxford, Reading and London from Didcot, while Cholsey has local stopping services. In terms of bus routes the Wallingford-Didcot service passes through the main settlement of Brightwell and Sotwell.

2.7 There are two conservation areas – the largest covering most of the village of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and the other covering Mackney. There are 49 listed buildings in the Parish, which is a relatively high concentration in a small area, and their prominence and cumulative effects play a very significant role in defining the character of the Parish.

2.8 The Parish is set around the east-west ridge of the Sinodun Hills running from Wittenham Clumps across Brightwell Barrow towards Wallingford. To the south is a flat area of farmland and to the north, the River Thames forms the parish boundary as it meanders through its floodplain. Sotwell and Brightwell are linear villages stretching 2km along the southern flank of the hills. The A4130 skirts the settlement on three sides but from every aspect views of the settlement are mainly of surrounding farmland, with only a few village buildings and mature trees showing. Even at the four entrances to the village off the A4130, the settlement blends so well into the landscape they could easily be missed. The Parish is situated just west of the River Thames and is also surrounded by the Mill Brook and Kibble Ditch, which are both susceptible to flood risk and there is therefore land that falls within flood zones 2 and 3 (as shown on the Environment Agency mapping). The same mapping also shows there are some areas susceptible to surface water flooding in the Parish.





### 3. Planning Policy Context

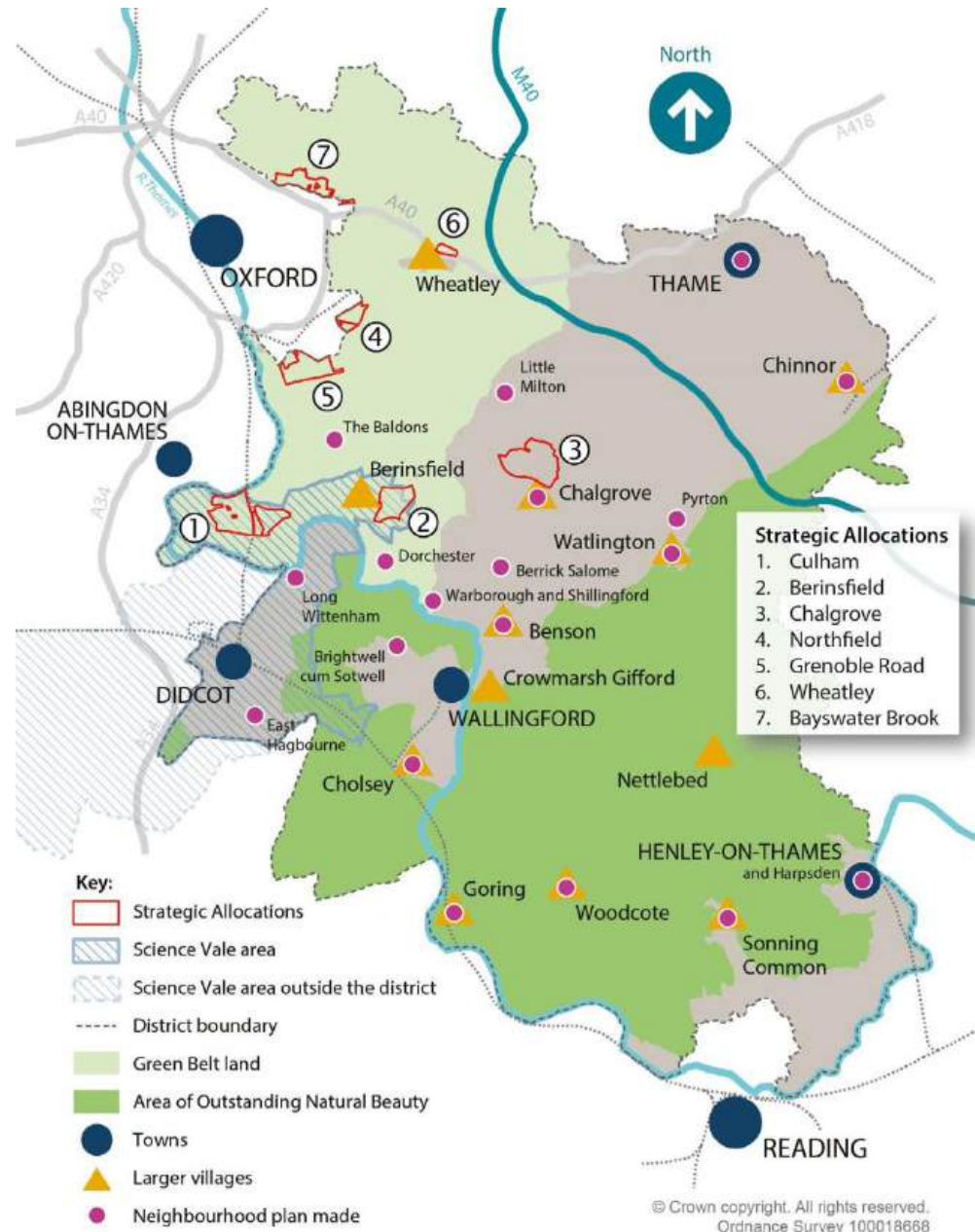
3.1 The Parish lies within South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) in the County of Oxfordshire.

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) originally published by the government in 2012, subsequently updated in 2018, 2019 and 2021, is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The BCSMNP must demonstrate that it is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF as a whole. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are especially relevant to the issues addressed by the BCSMNP:

- Supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 84)
- Good Design (paragraph 127)
- Protecting healthy communities (paragraph 92)
- Protecting local green spaces (paragraph 101)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 74)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 90)
- Neighbourhood planning (paragraph 28 - 30)

3.3 The development plan for the Parish currently comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. SODC and the Vale of White Horse District Council have come together to work on a new joint Local Plan. The emerging Joint Local Plan 2041 is currently within its early stages. An Issues consultation took place during May to June 2022. It continues to strongly advocate the preparation of neighbourhood plans and confirms that the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041 will set the overall context for future neighbourhood plans.

3.4 The essence of the overall planning strategy for the District has been to focus development on the main towns and larger villages of the District and to maintain the rural character of the open countryside that makes up the majority of the area. The Parish does not lie within an area planned for significant growth and is currently considered a ‘smaller village’.



Plan B: South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Key Diagram

3.5 Although the whole parish was considered for its development potential, it is considered that the main village is the most sustainable place for new housing and as such the spatial strategy has focused new housing development in this location. A housing needs survey was carried out in the preparation of the BCSNP to help inform local housing need. Policy H8 of the adopted Local Plan 2035 ('Housing in Smaller Villages') guides housing development in Smaller Villages – allowing for growth of up to 10% in the housing stock. Its supporting text (§4.37) also makes it clear that Smaller Villages are not required to contribute towards delivering additional housing to meet the Objectively Assessed Need of the District. The BCSMNP retains policies and allocations which have not yet been built allowing for growth of roughly 10% of the 612 homes identified at the 2011 census, without taking into account windfall completions in the parish since 2011. The BCSMNP therefore continues to contain policies and allocations that meet (in fact exceed) the identified housing requirement for the neighbourhood area.

3.6 The Parish Council will continue to engage with the Joint Local Plan 2041 preparation process and respond to any additional requirements in a future review of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that growth remains plan-led and consistent with its spatial objectives for the village and supported by the community. As the quantum of new homes is spread over the next 13 years, there will be sufficient time for such a review without undermining the contribution the Plan makes to the District's five year supply of housing land.

3.7 The affordable housing policy framework is well-established and is not likely to change in respect of the proportion of overall numbers required per scheme. However, the Government has set out a requirement for the provision of First Homes in a Written Ministerial statement on 24 May 2021. These requirements were subsequently incorporated into National Planning Practice Guidance and SODC has published an interim guidance note on how this applies to South Oxfordshire. The BCSMNP therefore takes the opportunity to respond to these changes (see Policy BCS5 House Types and Tenures).

3.8 The policies of the Local Plan 2035 have informed the spatial plan and other policies of the BCSMNP. There are other policies in the Local Plan 2035 that may be relevant, including:

- H1 Delivering New Homes
- H10 Exception Sites and Entry Level Housing Schemes
- H11 Housing Mix
- ENV1 Landscape and Countryside – given the presence of the AONB in parts of the Parish.
- ENV2 and ENV3 Biodiversity
- ENV4 Watercourses – given the presence of the River Thames in parts of the Parish.
- ENV5 Green Infrastructure in new developments – promoting the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure assets. Such assets are especially important in defining the character and in the functioning of the village and wider Parish.
- ENV6 Historic Environment – reinforcing the importance of proposals having full regard to heritage assets, whether formally designated or not.
- ENV7 Listed Buildings – The Parish generally, and the village specifically, contains a significant number of listed buildings, as well as two Conservation Areas.
- ENV12 Pollution
- DES1 Delivering high quality development
- DES2 Enhancing local character
- CF1 Safeguarding community facilities – to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued community facilities. This provides an opportunity for the BCSNP to identify those community facilities in the Parish that warrant protection from these policies.
- CF4 Existing open space, sport and recreational facilities – as above.



## 4 Community Views on Planning

4.1 The decision to update the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan was made in November 2021 by Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council. The need for the update was identified in order to refine the environmental and design policies included in the plan primarily through the production of a Design Code. This provided an opportunity to carry out a views analysis and an inventory of local heritage assets. The modifications are intended to aid a more effective implementation and include some additional policies. The Parish Council has also used the update as an opportunity to bring up to date some policy wording to reflect the most recent iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of July 2021 and the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) in December 2020. Some allocation policies may also now be deleted as schemes have now been approved and built. Both the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority, South Oxfordshire District Council consider that the proposals represent material modifications to the Made Plan, but they are not considered so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Made Plan. It is therefore more in the nature of a material update, which can be made without a referendum in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017/1243.

4.2 The decision to prepare a neighbourhood plan was taken by Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council and agreed at the Parish Meeting in spring 2013. A sub-group for this project was formed by Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council in the winter of 2013. Steering group members are volunteers with a broad mix of skills and experience. Several members of the group are also parish councillors. The parish council submitted its application to South Oxfordshire District Council to designate the area to be covered by the BCS Neighbourhood Development Plan in 2014. A decision from SODC was delayed due to an issue concerning Slade End Fields to the east of the parish that had recently been designated in the local plan as a site for the development of 555 houses. It was proposed to transfer this land from Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish to be included in Wallingford under the Boundary Commission changes 2015. The NP area was agreed in 2015.

4.3 In August 2014, the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan was published. This plan followed two years of intensive community consultation that had been designed from the onset so that it could provide a strong evidence base for the neighbourhood plan. The 2014 Parish Plan updated the 2004 Vital Villages report – one of the first community led plans in the UK. The 2014 Community Led Parish Plan set out to define what is special about Brightwell-cum-Sotwell - who lives in the parish, why people live in the parish, what is valued about living in the parish and what would be changed. In essence it was a statement of how the parish viewed itself in 2014 and how parishioners would like to see Brightwell-cum-Sotwell evolve over the next ten years. To inform the plan, a two year process of consultation had taken place. Parishioners were asked to have their say about what their priorities were, what they liked about living here and what would they improve. This included a doorstep survey of every household in the parish, 'Have your Say' survey, drop-in sessions and pop up displays at numerous local events. Eight working groups were established to investigate specific topics including: community and facilities; business and economy; crime and safety; young people; landscape and built heritage; wildlife; sustainability; and housing.

In October 2013 every adult over the age of 16 was offered the opportunity to fill in a detailed Parish Questionnaire. This included 143 separate questions and was used as evidence to inform the report. Younger people were targeted at a series of special events. In total 64% of households completed and returned the Parish Questionnaire. In addition, 130 young people either completed a Have Your Say form or returned their Parish Questionnaire.

The Parish Plan established the general principles for the neighbourhood plan to follow. It identified the general needs of the community and the wider issues such as landscape, facilities, views and heritage which are important and should be accounted for in the neighbourhood plan. The Parish Plan included a comprehensive action plan for delivery. Action BCS 1 concerned the BCS Neighbourhood Plan setting out the issues that should be addressed. The 2014 Parish Plan also included an updated Village Design Statement. The general nature of this report, and the quality of the consultation process was such that the sub group has used it as a key part of the evidence base for this Plan.

4.4 The neighbourhood plan is a community project, and must derive its authority and policies from the community. Communication, feedback and consultation have played a major part in developing our Plan. The consultation process included:

- The steering group met as needed either in person or online.
- Minutes of these meetings are available on the parish council website
- Updates were provided in the village magazine and on the village Facebook page and a Poster campaign on village notice boards and telegraph poles
  
- One to one meetings with interested groups, landowners and residents.
- Updates to the Parish Council and the steering group.
- Stalls at village events such as the annual fete, public workshops to establish design principles and community views on where development should go.
- Leaflet drop to every household in the village with an opportunity to have their say by post or email (2017 plan).
- Special public meetings – some of which have been attended by over 150 local residents.

4.5 In addition, three important projects were undertaken to provide additional evidence needed for the Plan.

- In 2015, an independent Housing Needs Survey was commissioned by the parish council and carried out by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. The Housing Needs Survey provided opportunities for respondents to make general comments and answer questions designed to help establish priorities for the Plan whilst testing some of the key findings assumed by the Parish Plan 2014. The results were then independently analysed and made available to the parish council. The parish council has no reason to believe that this plan is out of date particularly considering the construction of Little Martins (31 new houses with 40% social provision).
- A Landscape and Green Spaces Study was carried out by the sub-group for the preparation of the 2017 plan. This short report included a desk top review of the findings of the Village Design Statement, the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and appropriate landscape reports. It also used the findings of the Parish Plan and feedback from workshops / meetings / leaflet drops that had been carried out to inform the neighbourhood plan.
- A Site Assessments Report was carried out to provide a summary of site assessments for background information and input in to the spatial and housing allocation policies for the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan (BCSNP).

4.6 A qualified planning consultant was appointed to guide the neighbourhood plan subcommittee and to ensure that the draft neighbourhood plan met the basic conditions.

4.7 The pre submission report and its supporting evidence was made available on the Parish Council website with links to this site on the parish website and Facebook page. Posters were placed around the village advertising the 7-week public consultation and every household in the village was leafleted to inform them on how to have their say. To allow for those without access to the web, printed copies were made available at a number of accessible village locations. A public meeting was held with two drop-in sessions for residents to have one to one meeting with the sub-committee. At the same time, the Parish Council consulted a full list of the statutory bodies such as the County Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England and Thames Water.

4.8 A sub-group of the parish council was established in December 2021 that has steered the review of the neighbourhood plan, meeting when needed – both in person and on-line during Covid lockdown periods. The community has been kept informed through the parish newsletter and at regular meetings. Where necessary more detailed consultation has been carried out, such as letters to those householders whose property would be designated an asset of local heritage value. The feedback from the Reg. 14 consultation has been taken into account and this submission version of the plan changed accordingly.







## 5. Vision, Objectives & Land Use Policies

### 5.1 Vision

The Vision for Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is:

“To retain our separate identity as a rural parish set within open countryside, conserving the character of the various settlements; in a way that allows the community to evolve whilst sustaining our core vital services”

### 5.2 Objectives

To achieve this vision a number of key objectives have been identified as follows:

- Conserve and enhance the essential rural character of the Parish and its settlements by growing the main village in small places that form part of the established pattern of development and by conserving the existing network of trees, hedgerows, wetlands and wildlife sites
- Sustain the sensitive landscape setting of the main settlement and the intrinsic relationship between ‘village’ and ‘working farmland’ by avoiding harmful development in the AONB and by preventing any further elongation of the settlement into the countryside or precious village green spaces
- Encourage the use of well-located, non-productive, agricultural or horticulture land on the periphery of the main village to minimise the need for building on open green field land
- Sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas and other heritage assets of the Parish and their settings
- Protect the remaining community core facilities and services from unnecessary loss and encourage proposals to sustain and improve their viability
- Rebalance the community profile of the main village to help sustain the core village facilities by planning for new homes suited to first time buyers and young families and by enabling older residents to remain in the village and to make their larger homes available to new residents.

## Land Use Planning Policies

5.3 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged in terms of their design, access etc.

5.4 The purpose of these policies is to either encourage planning applications to be made for things the local community wants to see happen or to discourage applications for developments that they do not want to happen. Policies must be clearly written so they can be easily applied when considering planning applications.

5.5 The plan deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key development issues in the area. For all other planning matters, the national and local policies of other planning documents – the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the South Oxfordshire development plan documents - will continue to be used. The BCSMNP also looks to the reasoning and evidence of the emerging Joint Local Plan where possible given its infancy.

5.6 Set out below are the proposed policies of the Plan. Each policy has a number and title and the policy itself is written in bold italics for ease of reference. There is also a short statement explaining the intention of the policy and any other relevant background information. At the end of this document are the Policies Map – where a policy refers to a specific site or area then it is shown on the Maps.

## Spatial Strategy

### Policy BCS1: Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Village Boundary

5.7 This policy is intended to distinguish between the built up area of the main village and its surrounding countryside in order to manage development proposals accordingly. In defining the boundary on the Policies Map, applicants and the local planning authority will have certainty when preparing and determining planning applications respectively. This is consistent with a number of Core Strategy and Local Plan policies to encourage sustainable forms of development in the rural areas. It operates in conjunction with Policy BCS7 which relates to the appearance of development; this policy relates to the effects of the use of and to that may otherwise be suitable in its appearance.

5.8 Most new development will be acceptable in principle within the defined Boundary, subject to it being appropriate in terms of its design and access arrangements. This may be on infill or redeveloped housing plots, as well as new shops, businesses and other commercial or community uses that are appropriate in scale to a small village with a limited road network and public transport services. The proposed design will be judged using the new Design Code of Policy BCS7. The suitability of proposed access will be judged by the planning and highways authorities in the normal way.



## **Policy BCS1: Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Village Boundary**

**The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Village Boundary, as shown on the Policies Map.**

**Proposals for development within the boundary will be supported, provided they are of a use that is suited to the village and they have full regard to the local design code of Policy BCS6 and other relevant policies of the development plan including this Modified Neighbourhood Plan.**

**Proposals for development outside the boundary, including within the settlement of Mackney, will only be supported if they are appropriate to a countryside location and they are consistent with other relevant policies of the development plan including Policies BCS9 and BCS10 of this Modified Neighbourhood Plan.**

5.9 The policy requires that development proposals outside the defined Boundary are appropriate to a countryside location and are consistent with relevant policies of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in respect of retaining the physical extent of the defined Local Gaps and protecting the local landscape and character of the natural environment, most notably Policy EMP10 Development in Rural Areas of the Local Plan and policies BCS9: Local Gaps and BCS10: Landscape Character of the Village of the Modified Neighbourhood Plan. This recognises the valued function of the countryside and working farmland in shaping rural character and its contribution to the identity of the main village settlement. In some places, there are paddocks, fruit farms, recreational facilities, agricultural units and dwellings in open countryside or on the edge of village extending into the countryside beyond. The policy does not seek to prevent the improvement and extension of such uses. It requires that such proposals can demonstrate that they have acknowledged the provisions of Policies BCS9 and BCS10 and other relevant development plan policies in the design of their schemes. In addition, the third paragraph of the policy provides flexibility for new sustainable economic growth to be supported where that development would be in accordance with development plan policies. These may include Policies EMP10 Development in Rural Areas of the Local Plan where proposals avoids conflict with the provisions of Policies BCS9 and BCS10 of this Modified Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan's spatial strategy is reflected in paragraph 5.11. It is on this basis that housing proposals are planned to be delivered within or defined Boundary and without needing to take up land in the surrounding countryside.

5.10 The Boundary has been drawn to reflect the present observable, developed edge of the village and makes provision for the proposed development schemes of policies BCS2, BCS3, and BCS4. As such, it is the outcome of the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village, having been tested in the Sustainability Appraisal against a variety of alternative strategies.

5.11 The preferred strategy presents a coherent combination of sites that effectively complete the opportunities to infill the village envelope without requiring incursions into the surrounding countryside. It is therefore considered the best way to deliver the vision and objectives of the BCSMNP and manage change in the village. As a result, the Boundary accommodates land for approximately 60 new homes across the allocated sites, which exceeds the indicative scale of growth advised by the District Council but should ensure the village will not be vulnerable to unplanned, harmful development for the plan period.

5.12 The preferred strategy has not made provision for additional employment or retail land on the edges of the village. The parish already supports a surprising number of businesses including local traders (builders, roofers, plumbers and electricians), farms, garages, people working from home, joiners and other craftsmen, Shillingford Bridge Hotel, Frogs Island, a micro brewery, the donkey sanctuary and Brightwell Vineyard. Local communities and economies

benefit from the activities of a vibrant local small business sector. The focus of this policy is on supporting the improvement of the existing business locations in the Parish and enabling new infill development within the Boundary if it is suitable in all other respects.

## **Site Allocation Policies**

### **Policy BCS2: Land at Bosley's Orchard**

#### **Policy BCS2: Land at Bosley's Orchard**

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Bosley's Orchard, as shown on the Policies Map, for a development scheme comprising up to 20 dwellings. The scheme will be supported provided:

- i. There is an emphasis on 2-3 bedroom homes in the housing mix including at least two serviced self-build plots;
- ii. Affordable housing is provided in accordance with development plan policy;
- iii. Vehicular access is via High Road only with a minimal loss of the existing hedgerow;
- iv. The access scheme contains measures to improve safety for vehicular access turning into the site;
- v. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for a minimum 25m wide buffer bordering Style Acre footpath to form a publicly accessible open space to include a community orchard, through which a pedestrian access is provided;
- vi. There is a minimum loss of existing mature trees and hedgerows including the mature trees to the south of the site, the mature
- vii. hedgerow to the east and;  
That the design and layout provides an appropriate buffer zone for properties along Bell Lane through the retention of existing scrub
- viii. to the rear of properties on Bell Lane;  
The design of buildings includes a variety of architectural styles, materials and forms that reflect the distinctive rural character of buildings seen elsewhere in the village;
- ix. There is no street lighting, the road layout being designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village without pavements and
- x. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement.

5.13 This policy allocates land for a housing scheme on a site that is well-related to the main built up area of the village. It is a former orchard bordered on three sides by existing village development. Most of the fruit trees have been cut by the landowner in recent years although there is diverse hedge line to the north and east of the site alongside the public footpath that should be retained and a row of mature trees to the south of the site that provide a valuable contribution to the townscape and a nesting site for buzzards and red kites. This may reduce the net developable area.

5.14 Several applications have been submitted by the landowner that have all been refused due to access and consideration that the site is outside the established line of settlement. However, the principle of access to High Road is now agreed for at least ten houses and if mitigating measures are delivered under s278 up to a maximum of 20 houses would be acceptable. The Neighbourhood Plan has reviewed the most sustainable edges of the village to plan for new homes.

5.15 The location is suited to a mix of housing types including homes of 2 or 3 bedrooms; and some houses suitable for downsizing. A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment will be required and should demonstrate how a landscape scheme for the site will be successfully delivered. A green buffer is required around the perimeter of the site, together with a publicly accessible open space alongside the public footpath. This could form a new community orchard, retaining the heritage of the site providing a valuable wildlife habitat in the green corridor that links the remaining orchards in the village with the orchards to the north of the High Road. It would also retain the rural character of the adjoining Style Acre footpath and the rural character to the north at this key gateway to the village. The design needs to be in keeping with the tradition found elsewhere in the village with a mix of housing types, with no street lighting. The road layout should be designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village with shared surfaces, few pavements, providing eclectic verge side boundary treatments and varying road widths to minimise the impression of an 'estate build'.

The 2017 BCS NP allocated 31 houses at Little Martins that included a new public open space





## Policy BCS3: Land at Thorne's Nursery

### Policy BCS3: Land at Thorne's Nursery

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Thorne's Nursery, as shown on the Policies Map, for a development scheme comprising 4 dwellings using the entire site. The scheme will be supported provided:

- i. The homes are 4+ bedroom houses that with the exception of any landscape or wildlife strip and the extension to the Village Hall car park occupy the entire site;
- ii. Vehicular access is via Old Nursery Lane only;
- iii. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for a minimum 10m wide wildlife buffer along the eastern boundary of the site to help mitigate the loss of scrub and to conserve the setting of nearby listed building on Little Lane; and for landscaping along Old Nursery Lane;
- iv. Land is provided and laid out as an extension to the adjoining village hall car park, as indicated on the Policies Map for use as a car park and open space;
- v. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement;
- vi. That as much existing vegetation is retained in the scheme as possible and
- vii. There is no street lighting; and
- viii. Any sustainable drainage scheme forms a wetland area linked to the opening of culverted watercourses

5.16 This policy allocates land for a small housing scheme within the main village area. It is a former nursery site with a long planning history. The site has been left empty for 40 years and has now scrubbed over in places. Several applications have been refused due to access – it now seems clear that only a scheme of up to four houses on the entire site would be possible for this reason. The landowner has informed the Parish Council that this will now be acceptable in principle including the provision of land to extend the Village Hall car park.

5.17 The redevelopment of this land will be beneficial in two key ways: it will make better use of redundant horticultural land on a site close to the village services; and it will create an opportunity to extend the currently limited village hall / community car park on its southern boundary. Together with a wildlife buffer around the perimeter of the site next to Brightwell Stream, these benefits justify the allocation.

5.18 The policy requires that the scheme proposes improvements to Old Nursery Lane that sustain the special historic character of the Grade II listed Woodley's Cottage and Orchard Cottage; whilst the buffer to the east of the site will help to minimise the effect of development to the listed buildings on Little Lane. In practice, these enhancements and the future responsibilities regarding the maintenance of the road will need to be agreed with local residents before any planning application is submitted. Similarly, the maximum retention of mature trees on the site will be important and there should be no street lighting. It is recommended that proposals should be submitted as full planning applications. A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment will be required and should demonstrate how a landscape scheme for the site will be successfully delivered.

## **Policy BCS4: Slade End Green**

5.19 This policy allocates three sites for housing and business development at Slade End, the combination of which is intended to recreate one of the earliest parts of the village at Slade End Green; one of the original nucleus of settlements in the village. The Green formed a small medieval hamlet distinct from the rest of the village known as Bishop's Sotwell or East Brightwell. The hamlet was focused on the manor house and farm with a number of small cottages (most now lost and replaced by more modern developments or left undeveloped). The site is in three separate ownerships and the intention of the policy is to bring these together under one holistic vision.

5.20 The vision for the land is to bring back the idea of Slade End Green by designing any development around a central area located on Green Lane. To realise that vision in practice requires the policy to be implemented either through a single planning application covering all three sites or the prior agreement of a masterplan to which subsequent planning applications will adhere. The sites are in different land ownerships, so the policy does not make for unreasonable requirements in terms of legal agreements or land value equalization. It also acknowledges that it may take some time for all the proposals to come forward, but the Parish Council has secured the agreement of all three landowners that this approach meets with their expectations for their individual sites. The masterplan process will be co-ordinated by the Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan in due course.

5.21 The development will need to respect the setting of the nearby listed buildings and to preserve or enhance the conservation area. This may best be achieved by buildings of a more traditional appearance and form.

5.22 The land includes a former farm belonging to Slade End House. It now comprises two 18th century barns used for domestic storage associated with Slade End House and two large blocks of 20th century pig and turkey sheds used for storage and workshops. A strip of land between the redundant farm yard and Green Lane includes scrub and two derelict cottages. On the opposite side of Green Lane is a former nursery site now derelict and overgrown with scrub and a third small triangular plot of land that includes some utility service buildings. The removal of the remaining structures to the east of the lane and their replacement with new buildings will need to enhance the listed buildings, the conservation area and their settings. The scheme should be designed in a way that its layout, building massing and orientation and materials are appropriate in order to achieve this.

5.23 Improvements to Green Lane will be required in order to facilitate safe access. This could be through a shared surface. It is important that the special historic character of the Grade II listed cottages on Chapel Lane and the setting of Slade End House, its listed barns, Peacock Cottage and Triangle Cottage are protected or improved. For example, it may be important to establish a sufficient distance between the schemes and these older buildings, so as not to undermine their structural integrity, as well as to sustain their visual contribution to the village scene. Areas of scrub have emerged on the derelict land that is a valuable habitat for wildlife – measures will need to be taken to create similar habitat within the area covered by the masterplan, with appropriate landscaping to the remainder of the area.

5.24 The significant trees on the land should be retained where possible and street lighting should be avoided in order to retain the rural character of the lane. There is a history of surface water flooding in the area and this needs to be resolved as part of any development on any of these sites.

**Policy BCS4: Slade End Green**

***The Neighbourhood Plan supports the redevelopment of land at Slade End Green, as shown on the Policies Map, for three housing schemes and at Slade End Farm for business use. Proposals will be supported providing they are either made as one planning application for all three sites or they are made as separate applications that each adhere to a previously approved masterplan covering all three sites .***

**BCS4A: Slade End Farm**

5.25 This first site is a former farmyard, with former pig and turkey sheds being used for storage and workshops with a strip of scrubland alongside Green Lane that contains the ruins of two former cottages (last used as a scout hut).

5.26 The policy encourages development which will enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area by removing the existing unsightly structures that currently detract from its character. In doing so, the policy seeks to improve the setting of the listed buildings, to enhance the Conservation Area and to preserve the setting of the Conservation Area. It sets out the principles for a small development scheme consistent with the published guidance of English Heritage/Historic England. The scheme includes housing and business uses. As with the other two schemes, the policy requires works are undertaken to upgrade Green Lane.

5.27 The site referred to in the policy forms part of the larger Slade End House site that includes two Grade II listed, 18<sup>th</sup> Century stone and timber barns. Outside of this policy and through a separate planning application, the owner is proposing to restore the listed barns, reinstate the enclosure of the old farmyard with a new building for garages, garden equipment and home office and enhance the appearance of the section of farmyard this surrounds for the private use of Slade End House.



#### **BCS4A: Slade End Farm**

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates up to 6 houses and additional business use at Slade End Farm, provided:

- i. The homes are a mix of 2 – 3 - 4 bedroom houses;
- ii. The former derelict bungalow on Green Lane is demolished, replacement housing being designed in agreement with the wider vision for Slade End Green;
- iii. The modern Slade End farm buildings are demolished and the area is improved with the provision of 6 tourism units and associated business premises in agreement with the wider vision for Slade End Green;
- iv. That the business use is for tourist accommodation with supporting communal buildings, parking and landscaping;
- v. The development needs to respect its context in proximity to Slade End House, Triangle Cottage, Slade End House Barns listed buildings and their setting;
- vi. The layout, orientation and massing of the development has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement;
- vii. There is satisfactory vehicular access agreed in the masterplan;
- viii. Green Lane should be improved; and
- ix. There is no street lighting, the road layout being designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village (where they have few pavements or raised curbs).

#### **BCS4B: Strange's (Slade End) Nursery**

5.28 This policy allocates land for a small housing scheme as part of the holistic vision for Slade End. It is a former nursery site with a long planning history. The site has been left empty for 20 years and has now scrubbed over. Several applications have been refused due to access and consideration that the site lies outside the edge of settlement. The landowner has confirmed that the site remains available for this purpose.

5.29 The redevelopment of this land will be beneficial in two key ways: it will make better use of redundant horticultural land on a site close to the village; It will form an essential part of the wider scheme to restore the Slade End Green each side of Green Lane – an area of the village that has been derelict for many years. The policy requires that the scheme proposes minimal improvements to the Croft Path in order to sustain the special historic character of the Grade II listed cottages on Chapel Lane including the setting of Honeysuckle and Cappaslade Cottages. Similarly, the maximum retention of mature trees on the site will be important and there should be no street lighting. An innovative design is welcome that reflects the sites shape, setting and constraints.

#### **BCS4B: Strange's (Slade End) Nursery**

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates up to 6 houses at Strange's (Slade End) Nursery, provided:

- i. The homes are a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses including some as serviced self build plots;
- ii. Vehicular access is off Green Lane only;
- iii. A financial contribution is made to fund works to improve Green Lane from Slade End to the site access to the minimum adoptable standard;
- iv. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for an appropriate boundary along the Croft;
- v. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to the significance of the setting to the adjacent listed buildings and their setting;
- vi. The layout, orientation and massing of the houses has full regard to sustaining the character of the setting to the adjoining Conservation Area and the semi-rural entrance to the village as set out in the BCS Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Village Design Statement;
- vii. The development provides for a biodiversity net gain for the parish;
- viii. The scheme provides an innovative solution that respects the sites unusual shape and the setting of the Croft footpath; and There is no street lighting, the road layout being designed in a way that follows the traditional 'lane' type found elsewhere in the village with few pavement or raised kerbs.

#### **BCS4C: Slade End South to West of Green Lane**

5.30 The third site is also derelict agricultural land adjoining an active electricity substation and water pumping station. Its redevelopment will contribute to the recreation of Slade End Green. The policy requires that the scheme includes an effective buffer to the utility facilities and that the design of the home reflects the location of the site in the setting of the Conservation Area and the wider vision for Slade End Green.

#### **BCS4C: Slade End South to West of Green Lane**

Proposals for a housing scheme of a single house on the triangular piece of land to the west of Green Lane will be supported, provided:

- i. Vehicular access is off Green Lane only;
- ii. A financial contribution is made to fund works to improve Green Lane from Slade End to the site access to the minimum adoptable standard;
- iii. The landscape scheme and layout make provision for a buffer along the boundary to the adjacent pumping station;
- iv. The house is designed in agreement with the wider vision for Slade End Green;
- v. The layout, orientation, design and massing of the house has full regard to the significance of the setting to the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Conservation Area; and
- vi. There is no street lighting.







## BCS5: House Types and Tenures

### Policy BCS5 : House Types and Tenures

Proposals for First Homes Exception Sites will be deemed appropriate if:

- i. **At least one of the site boundaries entirely adjoins the defined Village Boundary of Policy BCS1 and does not lie within the Green Heart of Policy BCS12;**
- ii. **The scheme is supported by robust evidence of demonstrable local needs;**
- iii. **The scheme is of an appropriate scale and density relative to the existing settlement character and surrounding pattern of development;**
- iv. **It can be demonstrated that the scheme:**
  - **Respects the historic envelope of the village, its relationship with the open countryside, and the way in which the edge of the settlement does not extend to the A4130;**
  - **Will not diminish the physical extent of a defined Local Gap, and/or the visual separation of settlements;**
  - **Access is fully integrated within the village settlement through direct connections to existing streets and paths avoiding a single point of access away from the village settlement;**
  - **Will not cause unacceptable harm to identified Key Views; and**
  - **Have full regard to the Design Code of Policy BCS6.**

5.31 This policy serves two housing purposes in respect of managing proposals for First Homes and for Specialist Accommodation for Older People. Planning Practice Guidance allows for First Homes Exception Sites to come forward on unallocated land outside of a built up area. A First Home is defined as discounted market housing for first time buyers that must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value in perpetuity and its first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 after the discount has been applied. This policy therefore sets out the criteria to guide First Homes Exception Site proposals in the Parish as provided for by the Guidance. The policy directs First Homes Exception Site proposals to Brightwell-cum-Sotwell as Mackney is not a defined settlement.

Policy H8: Housing in the Smaller Villages allows for a level of growth commensurate to the scale and character of the village, expected to be around a 5% to 10% increase in dwellings above the number of dwellings in the village in the 2011 census during the plan period, taking into account their facilities and local environmental constraints. It also recognises the allocations of the made BcSNP totalling 67 net new dwellings, a figure way beyond this expectation and definition of growth for smaller villages. The made BcSNP allocations either have already, or is expected to, deliver new affordable homes in the village.

3.32 Given these considerations, the availability of local facilities and local environmental constraints, the policy sets out a series of criteria with which any such proposal should comply. Key elements are that any such sites should have a boundary with the Village Boundary (as defined in Policy BCS1) and be of an appropriate scale and density relative to the existing settlement character and surrounding pattern of development. The approach also reflects the way in which the NPPF defines proportionate in size at paragraph 72b and the corresponding footnote 35.

5.33 In essence the policy reflects the spirit and intention of SOLP Policy H10 for Rural Exception Sites which allows for small scale “affordable” housing schemes to meet local rural needs in the parish and will continue to operate in the parish alongside this policy. It also accords with the Parish Council’s desire to promote future developments that will address the imbalance of affordable housing in the parish. A minimum 30% discount on market value homes, capped at £250,000 on its first sale, ought to allow smaller and more affordable homes to start to rebalance the housing mix in the Parish. Given the high rate of owner occupier dwellings in the Parish, proposals may be supported which deliver other types of affordable housing for rent which meet local need as provided for by Planning Practice Guidance.

## **BCS6: Design Code**

### **Policy BCS6: Design Code**

**Development proposals in the Parish will be supported provided they have full regard to the essential design considerations and general design principles set out in the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Design Code attached as Appendix A.**

5.34 There are distinctive features of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell that shape its character. In the main village this does not just include the buildings. Mature trees; the absence of street lighting, hedgerows, gardens, open spaces and country lanes all make a significant contribution to the unique and special character. These assets are set out in the new Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Design Code, which has been derived from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (BCS CACA) and in the BCS Village Design Statement (BCS VDS). The Code encapsulates the key design principles within the Conservation Area, its setting and beyond and is set out in a formal that integrates with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and is consistent with the National Model Design Code of 2021.

## **BCS7: Assets of Local Heritage Value**

5.35 This policy identifies buildings and structures highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Village Design Statement as having some local architectural and/or historic interest to the extent that they can be defined as ‘non designated heritage asset.. The NPPF § 203) gives weight to such ‘assets’ in decision making in accordance with the nature of their interest, as does Policy ENV6(3) of the adopted Local Plan.

**Policy BCS7: Assets of Local Heritage Value**

**A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following buildings and structures, as shown on the Policies Map, as Assets of Local Heritage Value by way of their local architectural or historic interest:**

**BRIGHTWELL HISTORIC CORE**

- B1 School House**
- B2 Brick outbuildings at Purbrook**
- B3 Stranger's Place**
- B4 St Cecilia**
- B5 Fairlight House and wall**
- B6 Stewart Village Hall**
- B7 1-2 Fairthorne Memorial**
- B8 Lilicot**
- B9 Thistledown**
- B10 2-3 The Square**
- B11 Old Forge**
- B12 Woods Cottage**
- B13 Swan Cottage**
- B14 The Old Rectory**
- B15 1-2 Meadow View**
- B16 High Barn Cottage**
- B17 1-2 The Almshouses**
- B18 Stewarts Memorial**
- B19 Japonica Cottage**
- B20 Chestnut Cottage**
- B21 Allnuts**
- B22 Stores Cottage**
- B23 The Croft**
- B24 Homewood**
- B25 The Telephone Box (The Red Box Gallery)**

- B26 The Post Box**
- B27 Brightwell/Sotwell Joining Stone**
- B28 The Vine House Orchard**

**SOTWELL HISTORIC CORE**

- S1 Mount Vernon**
- S2 North Barn**
- S3 South Barn**
- S4 Old Woodlands House**
- S5 Blackstone House**
- S6 1-2 Sotwell Manor**
- S7 Little Barn**
- S8 New Barn Court**
- S9 Hazel Cottage**
- S10 Old Barn**
- S11 The Granary Barn**
- S12 Rose Cottage**
- S13 White Cottage**
- S14 South Cottage**
- S15 Meadowcroft**
- S16 Barncroft**
- S17 Pleasant Cottage**
- S18 Honeysuckle Barn**
- S19 Red House (West, Centre, East) including wall**
- S20 Brightwell Free Church**
- S21 St James's House**



**S22 Post Box**  
**S23 Rainbow House**

**SLADE END**

**SE1 Elmleigh**  
**SE2 Cappaslade Cottage**  
**SE3 Coombe House**  
**SE4 Slade End Cottage**  
**SE5 Slade End Sarcen Stone**

**GREEN HEART**

**G1 Spring Cottage**  
**G2 1, 3,4 Wellsprings**  
**G3 Paddock behind Sotwell House**

**PREDOMINENTLY CONTEMPORARY**

**P1 Woodbine Cottage**  
**P2 Little Thatch**  
**P3 Pound Cottage**  
**P4 1-7 High Road**

**DESIGNED ESTATES**

**D1 Datchet Green**  
**D2 Greenmere The Greens**

**MACKNEY**

**M1 The White House**  
**M2 Granary Barn at White House**  
**M3 Outbuilding at Ashley**  
**M4 Sherwood Farm Wall**  
**M5 Mackney Post Box**

**M6 Black Barn at Sherwood Farm**  
**M7 Elm Cottage**  
**M8 1 Sherwood Cottage**  
**M9 3,4 Sherwood Cottages**  
**M10 Sherwood House inc. wall**  
**M11 Malthouse Cottages**  
**M12 Mackney Court Farm Barn**  
**M13 Granary Barn Sherwood Farm**

**COUNTRYSIDE**

**C1 Workmans Cottage Mackney Lane**  
**C2 Wilkins Cottage Mackney Lane**  
**C3 Hope Cottage Mackney Lane**  
**C4 Shillingford Bridge Hotel**  
**C5 The Lodge Clapcot**  
**C6 Barn Cottage Clapcot**  
**C7 Rush Barn**  
**C8 Severalls Farm House**  
**C9 Saxon Barn**  
**C10 Meadow View Barn**  
**C11 The Bothy**  
**C12 Severall Farm Hay Barn**  
**C13 The Stables**  
**C14 Severalls Farm Cottages**  
**C15 Pillbox FW2/28A west of Benson Lock**  
**C16 Haddon Close**  
**C17 North Farm**  
**C18 North Farm Barn**  
**C19 1-2 North Farm Cottages**  
**C20 The Highlands**  
**C21 Thames Conservancy Markers Shillingford Point**

**B. Proposals that will result in harm to, or unnecessary loss of, an Asset of Local Heritage Value will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that there is a public benefit that outweighs the harm or loss.**







## **Policy BCS8: Local Green Spaces**

5.36 This policy proposes six important green spaces in and on the edge of the village are protected from development by their designation as Local Green Spaces in accordance with §101 and §102 of the NPPF. The policy has the effect of managing development proposals in line with the NPPF provisions in the Green Belt.

In each case, the green spaces play an integral part in the enjoyment of the Parish and are therefore special to the local community. A fuller description of each site, and the justification for its designation, was provided in the 2017 Landscape & Local Green Space Study report and addendum.

5.37 In a future review of the BCS Neighbourhood Plan, it would be prudent to explore the possibility of including the two new public open spaces created by the Parish Council (as part of the Little Martins development) Little Martins Meadow and Little Martins Green.

### **Policy BCS8: Local Green Spaces**

**The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following locations as Local Green Space, as shown on the Policies Map:**

- i. Millennium Wood**
- ii. Kings Meadow Playing Field**
- iii. Wellsprings Footpath and stream**
- iv. The Recreation Ground**
- v. Swan Allotments**
- vi. Swan Wilderness and Community Orchard**

**New development will not be supported on land designated as Local Green Space except in very special circumstances.**



## Landscape Policies

5.38 A Landscape and Green Space study has been prepared for the BCSNP.

5.39 The parish is set around an east-west ridge of low hills running from Wittenham Clumps across Brightwell Barrow towards Wallingford. To the south is a flat area of farmland and to the north, the River Thames meanders through its floodplain. Brightwell-cum-Sotwell has four distinctive landscape types:

- The Thames floodplain
- The chalky-marl ridge of the Sinodun Hills that extends from Shillingford Hill in the east of the parish and to Sires Hill in the west. The main settlement of Brightwell and Sotwell following the spring line on a gravel terrace
- The flat former marshland area that wraps around Mackney island to the south of the main village

5.40 The defining landscape feature of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is the ridge of the Sinodun Hills that can be seen from many places around the parish. The tree capped hills including the iconic Brightwell Barrow sweep up from the River Thames to the north and from the flat valley floor around Mackney to the south, rising through open countryside, framed by the orchards and gardens of the village. From the hills themselves, long rural views across the main settlement are enjoyed across open farmland towards The Chilterns and Berkshire Downs.

5.41 The Sinodun Hills and the Thames floodplain are situated in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The merged villages of Sotwell and Brightwell stretch for 2km along the southern flank of the Sinodun Hills immediately to the south of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the edge of which follows the route of the old A4130 (the village was bypassed in 1974).

5.42 The A4130 bypass cuts across ancient tracks and old field boundaries, skirting the settlement on three sides, but from every aspect views of the settlement are mainly of surrounding farmland, with only a few village buildings and mature trees showing. Even at the four entrances into the village off the bypass, the settlement blends so well into the landscape it could easily be missed with open fields and orchards extending the countryside across the busy road to the village. In this way the A4130 does not form an artificial and hard edge to the settlement.

5.43 All developments proposals that could have an impact on the AONB or its setting should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to support any planning application.

5.44 In 2014 the BCS CLPP identified that the overwhelming perception by the community was that Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is a rural parish and should strive to remain so. 98% of respondents indicated that the rural character of the parish is important. The CLPP identified that the number one concern of local residents was a perceived loss of rural character and the prospect of the main settlement being joined to Wallingford at Slade End. As Wallingford continues to expand westwards there is only one field separating the village from the town. Another important gap between settlements was identified between the main village and Mackney. In both cases working farmland performs a valued function, preventing the coalescence of distinct settlements.

5.45 The CLPP set out to identify the specific landscape features that are important in order to define the landscape character of the parish that is set out in a Design Statement. This was tested through a series of consultation events including 'The Village Questionnaire' and has been used to inform the NP.

5.46 Views play a key role in how local people relate and interact with their surrounding environment. These may be 'big sky' views on open farmland in Mackney, sweeping panoramas across the Thames Valley from the top of the Sinodun Hills or shorter views within settlements terminating on a particular feature.

5.47 Although the main village is surrounded by working farmland it offers few glimpses to open countryside. Gaps in the settlement boundary and glimpses from footpaths that afford long country views are of particular importance to residents; linking the historic core of the village with its wider rural landscape.

5.48 At the centre of the main village is a large area of open space that is of considerable landscape significance. The open space adds to the rural character of the main settlement, is rich in wildlife and is a much used and cherished part of village life. This open space is identified on the policies map and is located to the south of Greenmere and Kings Orchard, to the east of Church Lane, to the north of The Street and to the west of Monks Mead. The open space is connected to open countryside via the garden of Vine House, the Croft fields and The Swan Allotments and Wilderness.

## **Policy BCS9: Local Gaps**

5.49 This policy seeks to protect the essential countryside character of two key areas between the settlements of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Mackney and between Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Wallingford ('the Slade End Gap'), in order to prevent coalescence between these separate settlements and to protect their distinctive individual character and setting both during daylight and at night. In doing so, it will conserve the way that the main settlement sits invisibly in the landscape, retaining the fields between Slade End and the bypass and between Mackney and the main settlement preferably as working farmland in order to keep a clear 'rural' buffer between settlements. It operates in conjunction with Policy BCS1 which relates to the use of land within and outside the village boundary.

5.50 The gaps are shown on the Policies Map and have been drawn to include only the minimum essential area to achieve the policy objective. They each make a significant contribution to maintaining the individual character of their adjoining settlements. The Evidence Base includes the Landscape & Green Spaces Study which describes each gap in greater detail and the particular contribution that it makes. This policy does not seek to prevent any development but to ensure that the scale, massing and height of proposals do not result in the integrity of a gap being undermined.

### **Policy BCS9: Local Gaps**

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following Local Gaps on the Policies Map:

- i. **Brightwell-cum-Sotwell - Mackney Local Gap; and**
- ii. **The Slade End Local Gap.**

Development proposals should retain the physical extent of defined Local Gaps and the visual separation of the settlements concerned. Proposals for the extension of agricultural and forestry-related buildings and minor extensions to existing dwellings will be supported where they would have full regard to the design code of Policy BCS6, avoid unnecessary harm to key views of Policy BCS10, accord with Policy BCS11 on avoiding night-time coalescence through light pollution, preserve the separation between the settlements concerned and retain their individual identities.

### **Policy BCS10: Landscape Character & the Villages**

5.51 This policy seeks to ensure that all development proposals have understood and responded to the special landscape character of the Parish, and how that character, often best enjoyed in a number of key views and/or alongside the dark night sky, plays such an important role in shaping the character of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Mackney especially. The policy does not seek to impose a blanket restriction on development around or inside the villages but highlights development proposals should not harm parish character (for example, the impact of street lighting that could affect the night time character of the parish).

5.52 The topography of the main village is important in maintaining the landscape character in that the shape of the village is hidden in its landscape as set out in the Landscape and Green Spaces Study. Development in that part of the Parish within the AONB is already managed by policies of the NPPF and development plan. This policy aims to complement those policies by identifying as special the ridge of the Sinodun Hills sweeping up from the flat valley floor, rising through open countryside to the tree capped hilltop at Brightwell Barrow. This is the defining landscape feature of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and together with the River Thames landscape is special to the local community with its open character, recreational value, flood storage capacity and wildlife potential. The policy also identifies a small number of key views on the Policies Map, and directs applicants to policies protecting the dark night skies, that are integral to defining that special character.

### **Policy BCS10: Landscape Character & the Villages**

Development proposals within and around the villages of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Mackney should demonstrate:

- i. **how they have taken account of the contribution made to the character of the villages by the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and especially the Sinodun Hills;**
- ii. **that they do not obstruct or have an unacceptable adverse impact on a Key View shown on the Policies Map;**
- iii. **they have full regard to the design code of Policy BCS6 and Policy BCS11 in minimising the occurrence of light pollution.**



## Policy BCSI I: Dark Skies

5.53 There is continued concern of night time coalescence between Brightwell and Wallingford and Didcot. The strategic allocations and transport schemes in and adjacent to the parish has already had a major impact on existing lighting levels. The brightest levels can already be seen to be straying into the village's night sky (see the following plan). Many councils across England support measures to protect and enhance the dark night sky. The policy reflects the purpose and objectives of policies ENVI 1 and ENVI 2 on Pollution of the SODCLP. To help achieve these objectives the policy is designed to guide decisions on new and replacement lighting and help private householders and businesses make the right lighting choices. For all proposed developments, factors that will be considered when deciding the appropriateness of artificial lighting, include the location, the hours of operation, the quantity of lights proposed, brightness and control, and direction of the beam. Appropriate mitigation and control measures secured by planning conditions to prevent unnecessary light pollution include:

- a. The use of 'curfew hours' through automatic timers, and night time dimming;
- b. The use of proximity infrared motion sensors, timers or any additional shielding or coving, including angling the front surface of lights to below the horizontal;
- c. The use of different surface types to reduce the amount of reflectivity;
- d. Screening or shielding to reduce the impact of reflectivity; and
- e. Reflect the latest best practise guidance on light types in terms of lumens, wattage, angle, height, colour, warmth, etc.

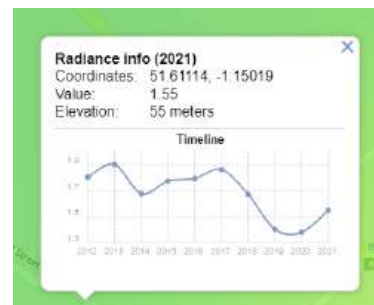
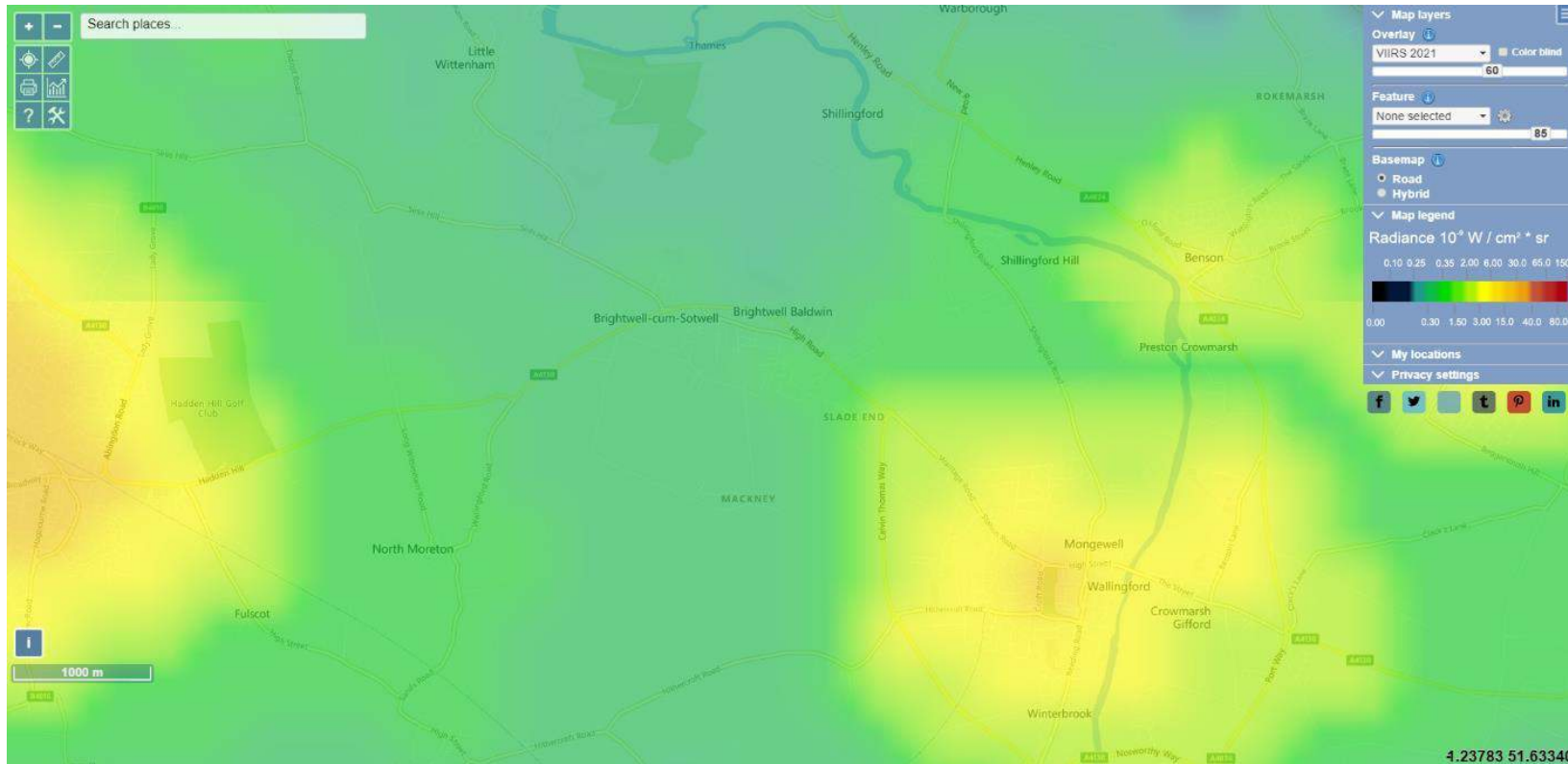
### **Policy BCSI I: Dark Skies**

**Development proposals should conserve and enhance relative tranquillity in relation to light pollution and dark night skies.**

**Development proposals should also demonstrate that they meet or exceed the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance and other relevant standards or guidance (CIE 150:2003 Guide on the Limitation of the Effects of Obtrusive Light from Outdoor Lighting Installations), or any equivalent replacement/updated guidance for lighting within environmental zones.**

**Development proposals which include lighting should ensure that:**

- **the measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not reduced;**
- **the lighting concerned is not unnecessarily visible in nearby designated and key habitats;**
- **the visibility of lighting from the surrounding landscape is avoided; and**
- **building designs should avoid large areas of glazing which would result in light spillage into rural and unlit areas.**



- Source: Light Pollution Map Info VIRRS 2021 ([Link](#))
- Radiance information –Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Conservation Area (Brightwell)
- Radiance information –Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Conservation Area (Sotwell)
- Radiance information –Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Conservation Area (Slade End)
- Radiance information –Mackney Conservation Area

## Policy BCS12: The Green Heart of the Village

### Policy BCS12: The Green Heart of the Village

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Green Heart formed by a connected sequence of open spaces within the village, as shown on the Policies Map.

Development proposals on land that lies within the Green Heart will be supported where they:

- i. demonstrate how they sustain or enhance the visual characteristics, the function and biodiversity of the land; and
- ii. have regard to how their landscape schemes, layouts, access and public open space provision and other amenity requirements may contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the Network; and
- iii. Demonstrate that they will not cause unacceptable harm to identified Key Views.

5.54 The main village of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is an inward looking settlement with few opportunities to view open countryside. At the core of the village however is a network of green infrastructure assets, including informal open space and Local Green Spaces, allotments, private gardens, playing fields, a school playing field, assets of biodiversity value, children's play areas, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways. Although much of this network is enclosed, being situated within the settlement boundary, it provides a different function to the rest of the built area in giving a countryside feel to a large proportion of the village due to its open nature and rural character, since at least 1971 in the Village Plan. Views from lanes and footpaths across public and private open spaces are particularly important, whilst the open spaces help to define and reinforce the separate identity of the historic twin villages of Brightwell and Sotwell. This policy does not prevent development, rather it sets out to ensure that any development does not cause harm to the Green Heart.





Views out of the Green Heart of the village add much to their character



## Heritage and Design Policies

5.55 There are distinctive features of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell that shape its character. In the main village this does not just include the buildings. Mature trees; hedgerows, gardens, open spaces and country lanes all make a significant contribution to the unique and special character. These assets are set out in the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Conservation Area Character Appraisal (BCS CACA) and in the BCS Village Design Statement (BCS VDS) that forms part of the BCS Community Led Parish Plan (2014). The Design Statement is a formal record of residents' views, addressing aspects of the landscape and settlement that are central to the parish's identity and sense of place. The first Design Statement was published in 2004 and following public consultation was updated in 2014 for inclusion in the BCS CLPP. The Design Code is informed by all of these documents.

5.56 A major feature that shapes the character of Sotwell, Mackney and Brightwell is that these settlements have been bypassed since medieval times by the old High Road, now in turn replaced by the A4130. Without the need to have accommodated through traffic for over 500 years, internal movements are still largely via unimproved lanes and old trackways with few pavements or raised kerbs. These narrow and winding lanes help create a very strong and special sense of place. It is a village that is naturally unfriendly towards vehicular traffic, with an internal network of ancient footpaths that encourages pedestrian movement.

Curving streets of varying widths, flanked by combinations of banks, cottage gardens, hedges, old barns and traditional walls maintain the rural character and on the whole do not dominate the buildings beyond, but are in scale with the style, period and setting of any given location. This character also has a natural speed calming function slowing vehicular traffic down. Most of the village has recently been designated as a 20 mph zone.

5.57 Street lighting has been resisted in most parts of the parish adding greatly to the rural identity, with particular advantages for nocturnal wildlife – owls, bats and stag beetles are a common sight during the summer. In the Village Questionnaire 77% of people indicated that they liked not having street lighting. A further 88% felt a dark night time sky was important in shaping character. Badly designed exterior house lights, in particular the installation of flood lamps that are not attached to sensitive light sensors detract from this character.

5.58 Off-street parking is common and should be encouraged. The design of access to driveways from the highway is an important consideration; there being a strong vernacular that adds much to the rural village character. Many properties have old barns or detached garages that fit in well with the village scene. Open plan frontages to properties with large car parking areas are not in keeping and have begun to alter the character of the village – particularly outside of the conservation area.

5.59 There is a very wide range of materials, styles and type of building in the main settlement including lime washed timber framed cottages, old barns, converted farmsteads and modern detached dwellings that generally fit well into the character of the village. Thatch, slate and clay tile roofs sit happily next to each other. The height, scale and density of properties vary greatly and change rapidly although due to careful conservation planning and the retention of historic curtilage boundaries, with well-treed gardens and remnants of old orchards much of the charm of the village can be found in this variation; the village retaining a very strong character and identity. Simply because there is not a single characteristic village style, there is no excuse for the introduction of anonymous architecture however. Whether new development is in a traditional style or is more modern; it is the quality of design, use of materials, scale, density and landscape details that is important.

New developments and extensions need to suit the character and scale of their immediate setting. Careful matching of building style and scale that use traditional materials and locally distinctive details should be sought. The way that the development fits in to the streetscape is important with sensitive boundary treatment and landscaping that respects the local vernacular. There is a growing concern that new works are failing to reflect the proportions of nearby properties, being out of context with their setting.

5.60 While the earliest record of two villages of Brightwell and Sotwell date from the Saxon period the Parish has archaeological evidence showing human activity from prehistoric times through to WWII as set out in the Historic Environment Records. Inevitably there will be the potential for archaeology to be present on any of the development sites and this will need to be allowed for in any development proposal.





## Green Infrastructure Policies

5.61 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is rich with wildlife with a variety of different habitats that support a diverse range of species. To the north of the parish on the floodplain of the Thames the Earth Trust has recently created a large area of wetland through its River of Life project and a Site of Special Scientific Interest at Wittenham Clumps is located immediately to the west of the parish.

5.62 Surrounding the settlements is a patchwork of fields, orchards, woods and meadowland. To the south of the parish is a network of stream and ditches draining the land towards the Mill Brook, flowing through an environment that despite being predominantly agricultural does contain a good number of species although it could be improved through more wetland habitat creation possibly linked to environmentally sensitive drainage enhancements. The area given over to woodland in the parish has increased significantly over the past 50 years and the destruction of hedgerows now ceased. Around the margins of many fields, strips are left for wildlife.

5.63 Deer and badger are a common sight in the parish. Many garden song birds have declined over the past decade whereas other species have increased. The red kite and buzzard are now common and nest in the village. Orchards once dominated the main village and a good number survive although many are in a poor state. Their wildlife importance is only now being recognised with Natural England recently supporting their conservation through new legislation. Brightwell-cum-Sotwell's old orchards are our most unique and special habitat and should be conserved. Many fruit trees are found in our hedgerows providing an ample supply of fruit for homemade jams and drinks and add significantly to the character. Street lighting has been resisted in most parts of the parish having advantages for nocturnal wildlife.

5.64 Native hedges and flower-rich verges are found in many garden boundaries and along the lanes. Many of these hedges follow historic enclosure lines and provide a distinct local vernacular. They are an essential part of the natural cycle that sustains the countryside, providing food for our hungry pollinators and other wildlife such as birds and mammals; and a vital element in the green corridors that wildlife moves about in. The Village Environment Group has surveyed the hedgerows and many of the publicly owned verges and hedgerows are now managed by the Parish Council as a wildlife asset. Scrub is an important habitat in the village particularly on redundant nursery sites. Measures to off-set its loss will be needed as these sites are redeveloped.

5.65 Streams and wet areas in the main village have a considerable positive effect on character, being important to 94% of residents. Many public footpaths follow the course of these streams. Measures to open up (both physically and through improved access) other water features in and around the parish should be explored.

5.66 Private and public space seems to be an important element in shaping our place. Within the village, large gardens are common and provide a valuable habitat for wildlife. Public open space is important including the churchyards, the two recreation grounds, the Swan Wilderness and the Millennium Wood all adding much to the character of the village.

5.67 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell has a good network of footpaths both in the main village and in the countryside that are cherished by many local people. A variety of routes connect the parish and connect us with our neighbouring settlements at Wittenham, Wallingford and Moreton. With 88% of parishioners regularly walking around the parish, our network of paths is the most used asset. In total, 97% of villagers use a footpath at least once a month.





The community orchard



Of particular significance is the network of paths at the centre of the village (in the area known as the green heart) and the three village footpaths that pass through open countryside or adjacent to old orchard sites (Croft, Style Acre and Waterman's Lane). It is important that the character of these rural footpaths do not become alleyways between new developments.

5.68 The River Thames floods periodically, naturally filling its floodplain. The Mill Brook catchment (including the Kibble Ditch) that drains farmland around Madkney also floods regularly with low lying agricultural land being left unproductive for a period after the flood water has receded. Surface water has flooded several sites in the main village at Sade End, Sotwell Street and around the War Memorial, that has been washed (by passing cars) into nearby properties.

As climate changes it is predicted that rainfall patterns will evolve and more flood events will become the norm associated with long periods of drought. This will affect our parish in several ways. Springs and streams may dry whilst at other times surface water flooding will continue to increase. Drainage ditches may not be able to cope with increased rainfall and larger areas of agricultural land will flood causing disruption to agricultural activity and blocking public rights of way. It is anticipated that the River Thames will flood more often.

5.69 This policy complements the provisions of SODC Local Plan Policies ENVI-ENV5 on the natural environment in setting out how development proposals should address biodiversity matters as relevant to the nature and scale of the proposal. Not all of these principles will be relevant to each proposal. For the most part, they can be dealt with as part of the proposed landscape scheme as a means of ensuring any potentially harmful effects of the development can be satisfactorily mitigated. Whilst this policy does not require formal biodiversity offsetting it is the Parish Council's intention as set out in Section 6 to prioritise biodiversity projects in the parish. This will help to compensate for the unavoidable loss of some biodiversity value due to the development proposals in this plan.

5.70 The policy supports, and refines, the provisions of SODC Local Plan Policies ENVI ENV5 on the natural environment. This variety of habitats should not be considered as a 'natural shield' to lighting. Linear lighting can be a barrier for commuting to feeding grounds, for example, the impact of street lighting on main roads, particularly the Wallingford bypass, has had a negative effect in terms of light spill. Consideration should be made to shield or remove lighting that spill into sensitive habitats, particularly if nocturnal species are present which include bats and stag beetles in the Parish. The policy therefore refines SODC Local Plan Policy ENVI 1 to highlight the impact of light pollution on the natural environment in the Parish. More generally, recent data analysis by the Bucks Berk & Oxon Wildlife Trust to inform local nature recovery initiatives in its area has indicated the potential of land in the Parish to deliver such initiatives. As the provisions of the Environment Act 2021 are enacted so this policy may enable the Parish to contribute to wider strategies in the future.

5.71 The Oxfordshire Treescape Project is also a useful data source which has informed the modifications in this Plan. The project involved extensive research in finding ways in which landowners can increase tree cover on their land. The output is an accessible online map which provides an overview of the opportunities available. A more detailed report can be requested for free or at a low cost.

5.72 The Environment Group, working with the Parish Council intends to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Plan for the Parish identifying existing green infrastructure assets and opportunities for improvement drawing on these resources and local knowledge and expertise. For further clarification regarding biodiversity net gain and offsetting priorities please refer to section 6.7 of the plan.



## **Policy BCS13: Local Nature Recovery**

### **Policy BCS13: Local Nature Recovery**

**As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should contribute to the recovery of local nature in the Parish and respond positively to the following matters:**

- i. Avoid the unnecessary loss of mature trees, hedgerows or other form of wildlife corridor, either as part of a landscape scheme and layout or as part of the construction works of a development scheme;**
- ii. Where the loss of a mature tree or hedgerow is unavoidable, the proposals must make provision on site for replacements that are of a similar type to those lost and preferably native species having full regard to the design code of Policy BCS6;**
- iii. Wherever possible developments should seek to have a biodiversity net gain for the parish as part of a validated approach to local nature recovery using the latest biodiversity metric;**
- iv. Where the loss of scrubland is unavoidable, the proposals must retain one or more wildlife strips of scrub linked to adjacent areas of open space wherever possible;**
- v. For new or replacement lighting schemes, ensure no unacceptable impact upon wildlife habitats, migration and feeding behaviour;**
- vi. For new homes, an owl box, bat box and/or bird boxes (particularly suited to their use by swifts, swallows and house martins) should be installed as an integral part of any house design;**
- vi. Wherever possible, piped water courses should be re-opened in new developments linked to wetland creation; and**
- vii. Proposals that result in run off of surface water into the stream network of the village should ensure the water flows through an appropriate sustainable drainage system**

The Parish Council is aware that the Earth Trust is willing and keen to support biodiversity net gain offsetting options, including use of the Trust's land for such measures. In addition to its biodiversity actions, the Parish Council will support the designation of new land in the Parish that is considered to have the essential biodiversity features of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

These may be based on linear features such as hedgerows and stream networks, or they may be old orchards or the river corridor

## Policy BCS14: Natural Flood Management

5.73 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell lies on a springline and thus is at the head of a small catchment that feeds the Millbrook prior to its confluence with the Thames at Wallingford. Spring water is fed from the Sinodun Hills above the village, the low lying flatlands at Mackney are particularly prone to flood risk. In the main settlement and Mackney itself, surface water flooding is a concern – particularly following heavy rain showers that are becoming more frequent as climate changes. As such there are likely to be opportunities to carry out improvements to the channels, including the creation of reedbed treatment areas on the streams flowing from the village. These would likely form part of a catchment wide strategy giving further opportunity for Local Nature recovery and Sustainable Drainage Systems ( SuDS ) which would be supported by this Plan. Natural flood management (NFM) helps manage flood risk. It does this by protecting, restoring and emulating the natural processes of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts.

### Policy BCS14: Natural Flood Management

Development proposals should have regard to existing natural flood management processes and should include measures relevant to the nature, scale and location of the proposals including:

- a. planting trees, wetlands and hedges to absorb more water, catch rainfall, slow the flow of water on the ground surface when there is excess rainwater and filter out diffused pollution, historic nitrates and phosphates;
- b. covering the ground with plants to reduce water pollution and surface water run off;
- c. diverting high water flows and creating areas to store water;
- d. creating leaky barriers to slow water flow in streams and ditches.



Surface water flooding

## **Policy BCS15: Footpaths & Bridleways**

### **Policy BCS15: Footpaths & Bridleways**

**Proposals for development adjoining a public footpath or bridleway should have regard to maintaining the rural character of the footpath or bridleway.**

**Proposals to create new pedestrian and cycle links from adjoining development schemes to a public footpath or bridleway will be supported, provided they avoid or minimise the loss of mature trees and hedgerows and use materials that are consistent with a rural location.**

5.75 This policy aims to prevent development from undermining the established and popular network of rural footpaths and bridleways. The main settlement is criss-crossed by many well used footpaths and bridleways. Their functionality and character should be maintained so that they do not become alleys between new developments. In particular, the network of paths in the green heart of the main village and the three village footpaths or bridleways that pass through open countryside (Croft, Style Acre and Waterman's Lane) should retain their rural character.

## **Policy BCS16: Renewable Energy**

5.76 This policy supports in principle the development of renewable energy for the Parish to contribute to global measures to tackle climate change. However, it acknowledges that there are parts of the Parish where the scale and the visual impact of such development would need to be appropriate to any nationally and locally designated landscapes. Elsewhere, a solar array or other types of renewable energy generation may be suitable provided the potential for negative landscape and amenity effects can be satisfactorily mitigated.

### **Policy BCS16: Renewable Energy**

**Proposals for a solar energy array or other forms of renewable energy generation will be supported provided:**

- i. they are located and designed to respect the character of the local landscape;**
- ii. they are effectively screened and do not cause unacceptable harm to the visual enjoyment of the local landscape;**
- iii. it will not cause unacceptable harmful noise or light pollution;**
- iv. They will not cause unacceptable harm to a designated heritage asset;**
- v. They will not cause unacceptable harm to an identified Key View.**





Wellsprings Footpath



## Local Facilities and Service Providers

5.66 A community facility is a facility that is judged by our community to be essential if we are to ensure a sustainable community. In Brightwell cum Sotwell these are:

- The Churches (St. James and St. Agatha's)
- The Village School (and Pre School)
- The Village Stores
- The Post Office
- The Red Lion public house
- The Village Hall and parish car park
- The Recreation ground and Pavilion
- Kings Meadow

## Policy BCS17: Community Facilities

5.77 This policy seeks to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued local community facilities. In doing so, it refines Policy CFI of the adopted Local Plan. It applies to this Parish. Policy CFI share the same purpose by defining 'essential community facilities' in relation to the 2021 Use Class Order, but allows for facilities to be lost without considering the ongoing community value of their established use of the land. This policy identifies 'essential community facilities' in this village and addresses these weaknesses by ensuring that those making proposals provide clear evidence that the location, as well as the current facility operations, is no longer viable for community use before its change of use and redevelopment are supported. However, it does allow for the relocation of established uses without this test being passed, provided the relocation proposal benefits local people by being within or adjoining the village, and is not lost to other parishes.

The policy allows for a partial change of use of a facility, if this is intended to help secure its longer term viability. This may be an important way of putting to economic use floorspace that is no longer needed, but which can make a financial contribution to sustaining the community facility. However, such changes must be shown not to undermine the community functions of the use. The policy also seeks to encourage proposals for new facilities, including new business, commercial or service (Class E) uses that like the Village Stores, Post Office and Red Lion pub have a strong community as well as commercial purpose.

5.78 This policy encourages tourism and leisure development in the most appropriate parts of the Parish that preferably would help to support the Parish's local facilities.

## **Policy BCS17: Community Facilities**

**The Neighbourhood Plan defines the following buildings and their ancillary land, as shown on the Policies Map, as essential community facilities:**

- 1. The Churches (a. St. James and b. St. Agatha's)**
- 2. The Village School (and Pre School)**
- 3. The Village Stores**
- 4. The Post Office**
- 5. The Red Lion public house**
- 6. The Village Hall and parish car park**
- 7. The Recreation ground and Pavilion**
- 8. Kings Meadow**

**Proposals that result in the loss, or harm to the viability, of an essential community facility, through change of use or redevelopment will not be supported, unless:**

- i. it would lead to the significant improvement or the replacement of an existing community facility within the defined Village Boundary of Policy BCS1 and with equivalent or improved facilities; or**
- ii. it has been demonstrated by appropriate, detailed and robust evidence that not only is the existing facility no longer**

**Proposals to change the use of part of a facility that is shown to be surplus to requirements will be supported, provided the change will not undermine the viability of the primary community use.**

**Proposals to create new community facilities, as well as new business, or commercial and service uses will be supported, provided they are located within the Village Boundary defined by Policy BCS1; they have full regard to the local design code of Policy BCS6; and the nature and scale of their use are of a character that will maintain the residential amenity of the immediate area**





## **Policy BVS18 Tourist Facilities**

5.79 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell has a good tourist offer. There is excellent walking, rolling countryside, the River Thames, the Sinodun Hills and the picture postcard village lanes and cottages. The parish is located only 45 miles from London, is midway between Henley and Oxford and is firmly within the 'Midsomer' Trail.

The parish benefits from the Shillingford Bridge Hotel (with open air Thameside swimming pool), excellent B&Bs, the Earth Trust, Brightwell Vineyard, Frog's Island Donkey Sanctuary and the internationally renowned Dr Bach Centre that attracts many overseas visitors. Cultural connections with artists such as Paul Nash and DR Bach bring further visitors to the parish. Visitors can help to sustain core services such as the pub and Village Stores.

Much of the Parish is already attractive to visitors because of its landscape beauty, Thames riverside, cultural associations and historic buildings. It may therefore be suitable for future tourism and leisure development. In which case, the policy seeks to ensure that such development is properly located so as not to undermine the special character, which is the main source of visits in the first place.

### **Policy BCS18: Tourism Facilities**

**Proposals for tourist and leisure facilities will be supported, provided:**

- i. they are located and designed to suit the character of the local landscape; and**
- ii. they do not harm the special scenic beauty of the AONB or the special character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.**

## **Policy BCS19: Natural Burial Ground**

5.80 This policy supports in principle the establishment of a natural burial ground, for which there is anecdotal demand in the wider area and no current supply.

### **Policy BCS19: Natural Burial Ground**

**Proposals for the development of a natural burial ground, including any necessary, permanent ancillary structures for the management of burial arrangements, will be supported, provided they are located and designed to suit the character of the local landscape.**



## **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE: SUSTAINABLE BUILDING**

5.81 To reduce the impact of development on climate change, achieving the highest environmental building standards in all new building is essential and was a key goal during the early stages of this neighbourhood plan. The Joint Design Guide, now adopted, by SODC encourages this approach and these policies have therefore been removed from the neighbourhood plan. The Parish Council will also continue to engage in the preparation of the emerging Joint Local Plan. This said, the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan would encourage all applicants in the design of their development to ensure that:

- All standalone new-build development is 'zero carbon ready' by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon. SODC 'zero carbon ready' toolkit can be found here: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/urban-design/net-zero-carbon-toolkit/>
- Where an identified heritage asset (including listed buildings, conservation areas, areas of outstanding natural beauty and scheduled ancient monuments) is not significantly harmed, all buildings are encouraged to be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year as set out in the SODC Joint Design Guide here: [https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/SAV/Climate-and-sustainability\\_4.html#gsc.tab=0](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/SAV/Climate-and-sustainability_4.html#gsc.tab=0)
- All buildings are encouraged to demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted.
- Schemes are encouraged to have undertaken a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life as set out in the SODC Joint Design Guide here: [https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/SAV/Climate-and-sustainability\\_5.html#gsc.tab=0](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/SAV/Climate-and-sustainability_5.html#gsc.tab=0).

## **Monitoring & Review Policy**

5.82 The BCSMNP will be monitored primarily by the Parish Council (and with assistance by the District Council on more strategic elements) using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity but other data collected and reported at a scale relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the BCSMNP will be formally reviewed by the Parish Council on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the review of the development plan.

## **6. Implementation**

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of the District Council's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish, and through steering public and private investment into a series of infrastructure proposals contained in the plan.

## **Development Management**

6.2 Most of the policies contained in the Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers. In preparing the Plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable. Whilst the local planning authority will be responsible for the development management, the Parish Council will use the BCSMNP to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with the District Council to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy**

6.3 The South Oxfordshire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been effective since April 2016. The CIL is a levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new development in their area. The money raised can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure to support growth set out in the adopted Core Strategy, including schools, transport, flood defences, and community, leisure, and health and social care facilities.

6.4 In this part of the District, the CIL charges new housing development £150/sq.m. and retail development £70/sq.m. The Regulations require the District Council to pass on a proportion of the revenues from CIL receipts to the parishes within which the chargeable development took place. Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan will receive 25 per cent of the revenue from the CIL development that they choose to accept – and parishes without a plan will receive 15 per cent of the levy revenue, subject to a cap of £100 per existing council tax dwelling per year. This money must be spent on infrastructure. To ensure transparency both the council and any community in receipt of CIL must report annually on how this money has been spent.



6.5 There are no major infrastructure schemes affecting this parish (and included on what is known as the 'Regulation 123 List'). But, there will be opportunities to invest CIL funds and it is proposed to prioritise investment in new biodiversity projects like hedgerow replanting. In the absence of the District Council operating a formal biodiversity offsetting scheme, these projects will help compensate for the acknowledged loss of some biodiversity value as a result of the site allocation policies of the BCSMNP (as detailed in Policy BCS123).

6.6 In addition, should there be sufficient CIL collected over the plan period, the following have been suggested:

- Village Hall
- School
- Kings Meadow play area
- Recreation Ground play area
- Little Martins Meadow
- Extension of St. Agatha's Graveyard
- Footpath repair / accessible gates and styles
- The Village Stores
- Starting a fund to buy a community asset should it fail such as the pub
- New cycle ways to Didcot
- New footpaths to Earth Trust / Sires Hill and Ridgeway
- Tree / hedge planting to the High Road (Chestnut Tree to Style Acre) and to the west of Calvin Thomas Way to reinforce the rural gap between Wallingford and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell
- Interpretation panel near pub

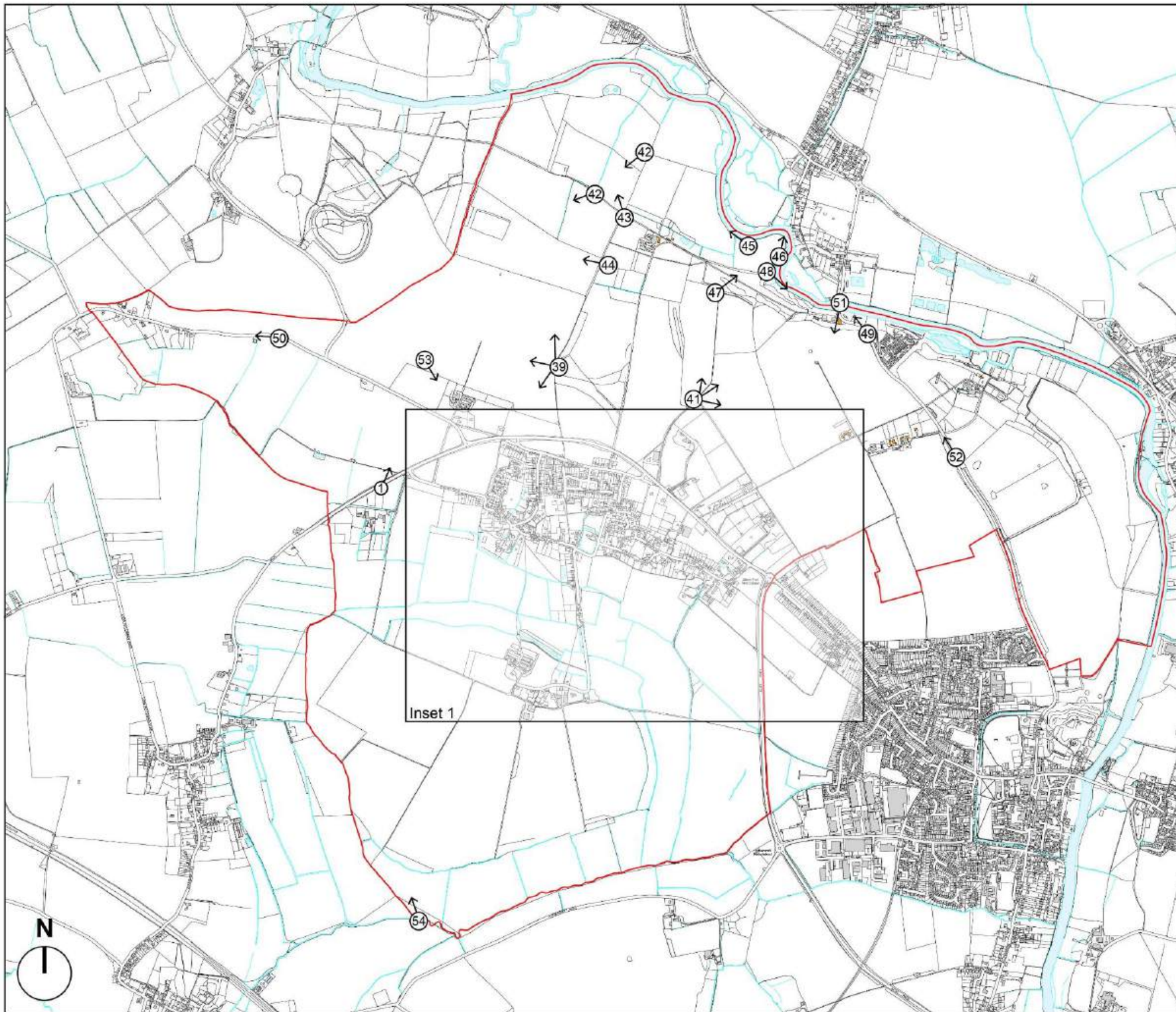
## **Biodiversity**

6.7 The Parish Council is aware that the Earth Trust is willing and keen to support biodiversity net gain offsetting options, including use of the Trust's land for such measures. In addition to its biodiversity actions, the Parish Council will support the designation of new land in the Parish that is considered to have the essential biodiversity features of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

These may be based on linear features such as hedgerows and stream networks, or they may be old orchards or the river corridor.

**Brightwell cum Sotwell  
Modified Neighbourhood Plan  
Policy Map  
November 2022**

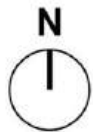
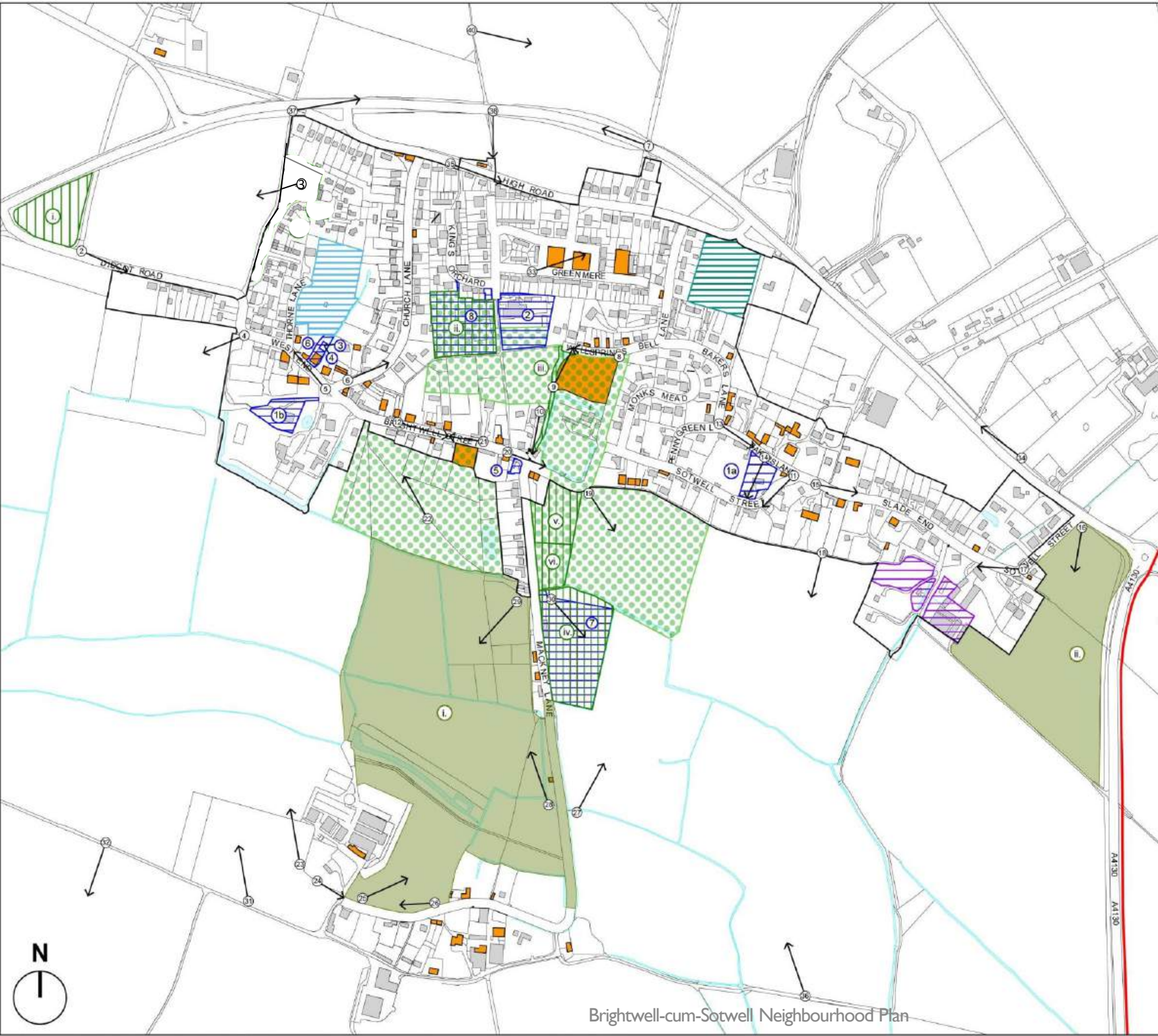
- Key**
-  Parish Boundary
  -  BCS7 Assets of Local Heritage Value
  -  BCS10 Key Views

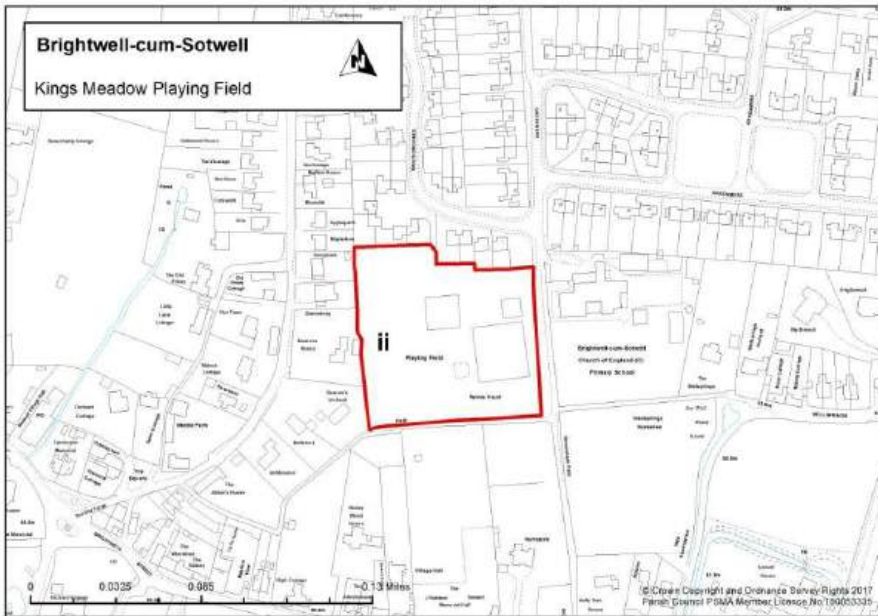
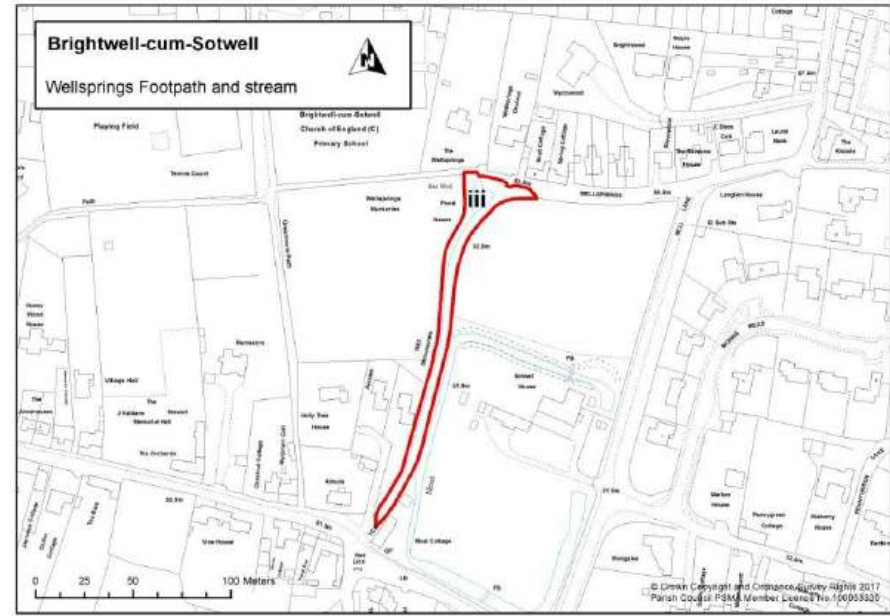
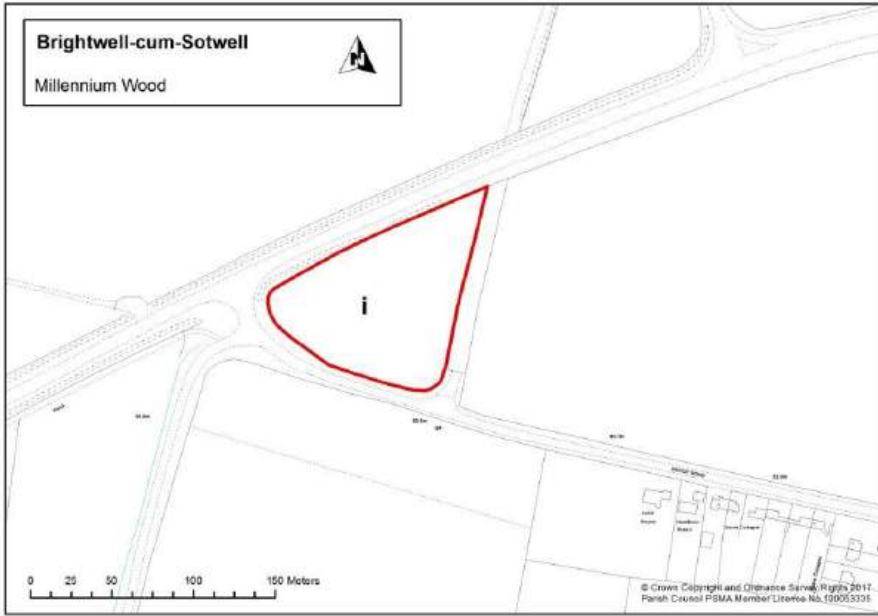




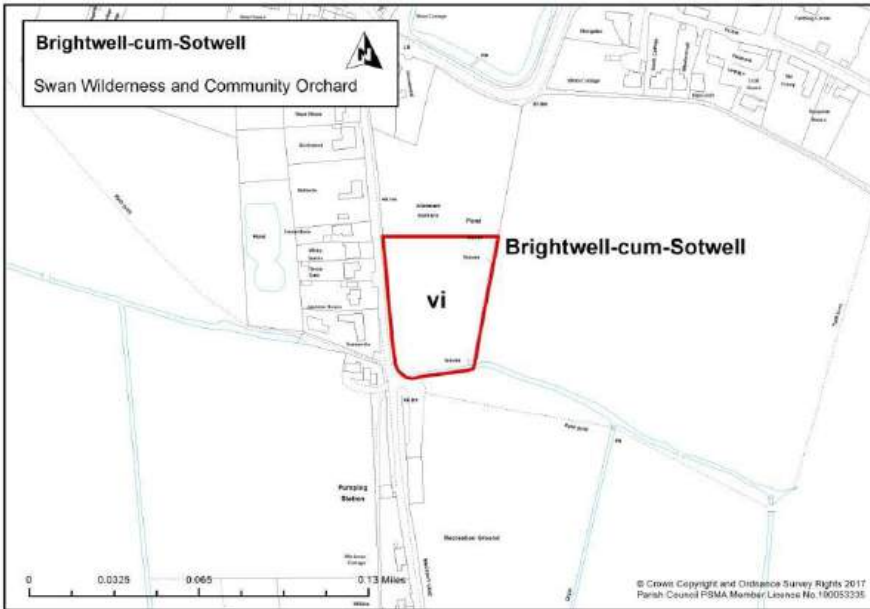
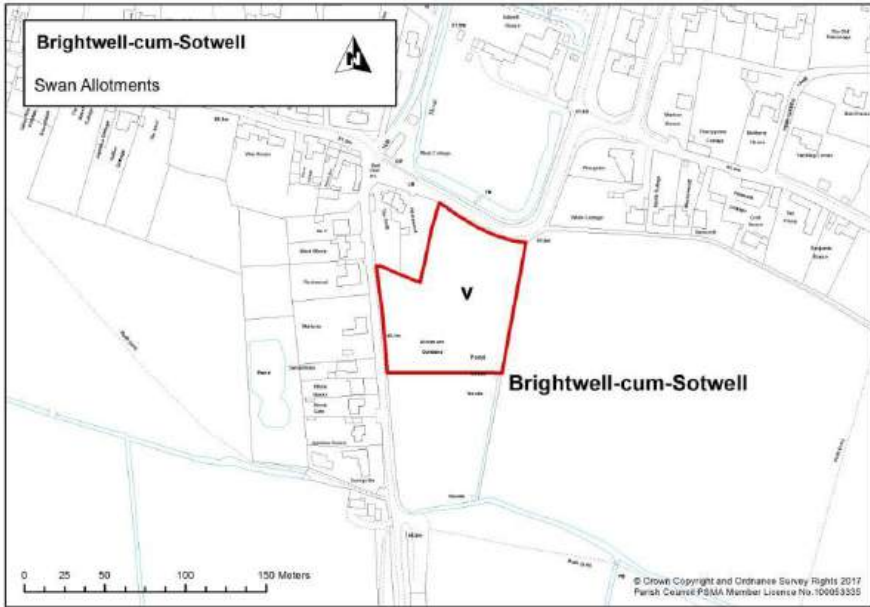
**Brightwell cum Sotwell  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Modification Proposals Policies Map  
Inset 1  
September 2022**

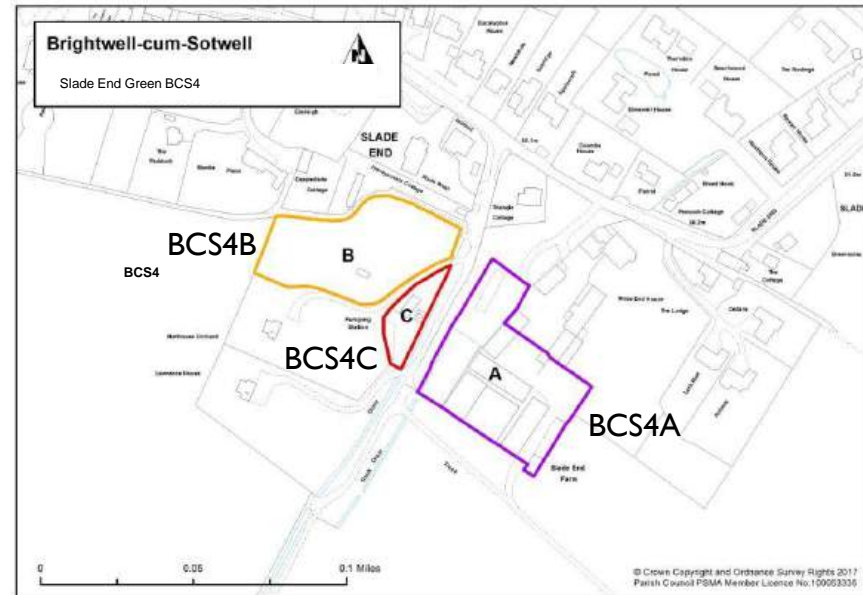
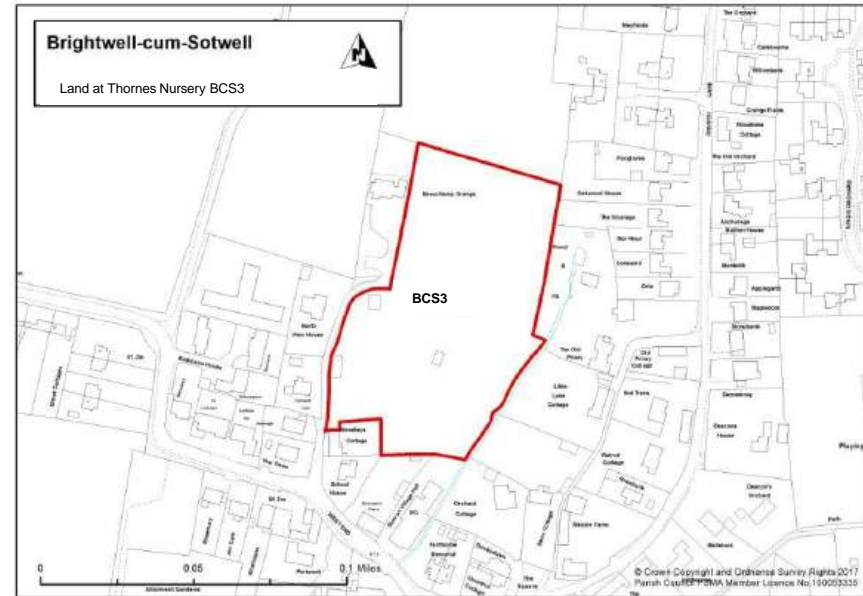
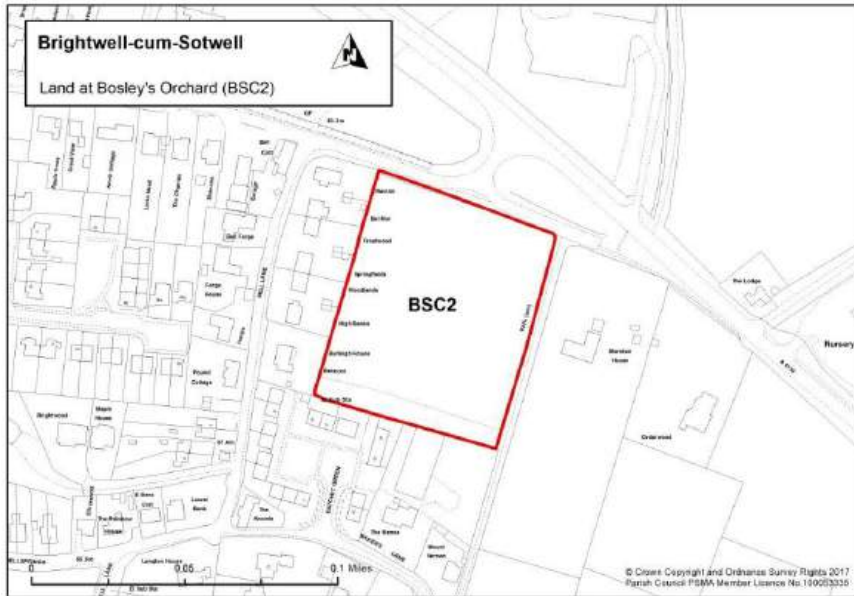
- Key**
- Parish Boundary
  - BCS1 Village Boundary
  - BCS2 Land at Bosley's Orchards
  - BCS3 Land at Thorne's Nursery
  - BCS4 Slade End
  - BCS7 Assets of Local Heritage Value
  - BCS8 Local Green Spaces
    - i. Millennium Wood
    - ii. Kings Meadow Playing Field
    - iii. Wellsprings Footpath and stream
    - iv. The Recreation Ground
    - v. Swan Allotments
    - vi. Swan Wilderness and Community Orchard
  - BCS9 Local Gaps
    - i. Brightwell cum Sotwell - Mackney Local Gap; and
    - ii. The Slade End Local Gap.
  - BCS11 Key Views
  - BCS12 The Green Heart
  - BCS17 Community Facilities
    - 1. The Churches a. St. James and b. St. Agatha's
    - 2. The Village School (and Pre School)
    - 3. The Village Stores
    - 4. The Post Office
    - 5. The Red Lion public house
    - 6. The Village Hall and parish car park
    - 7. The Recreation ground and Pavilion
    - 8. Kings Meadow



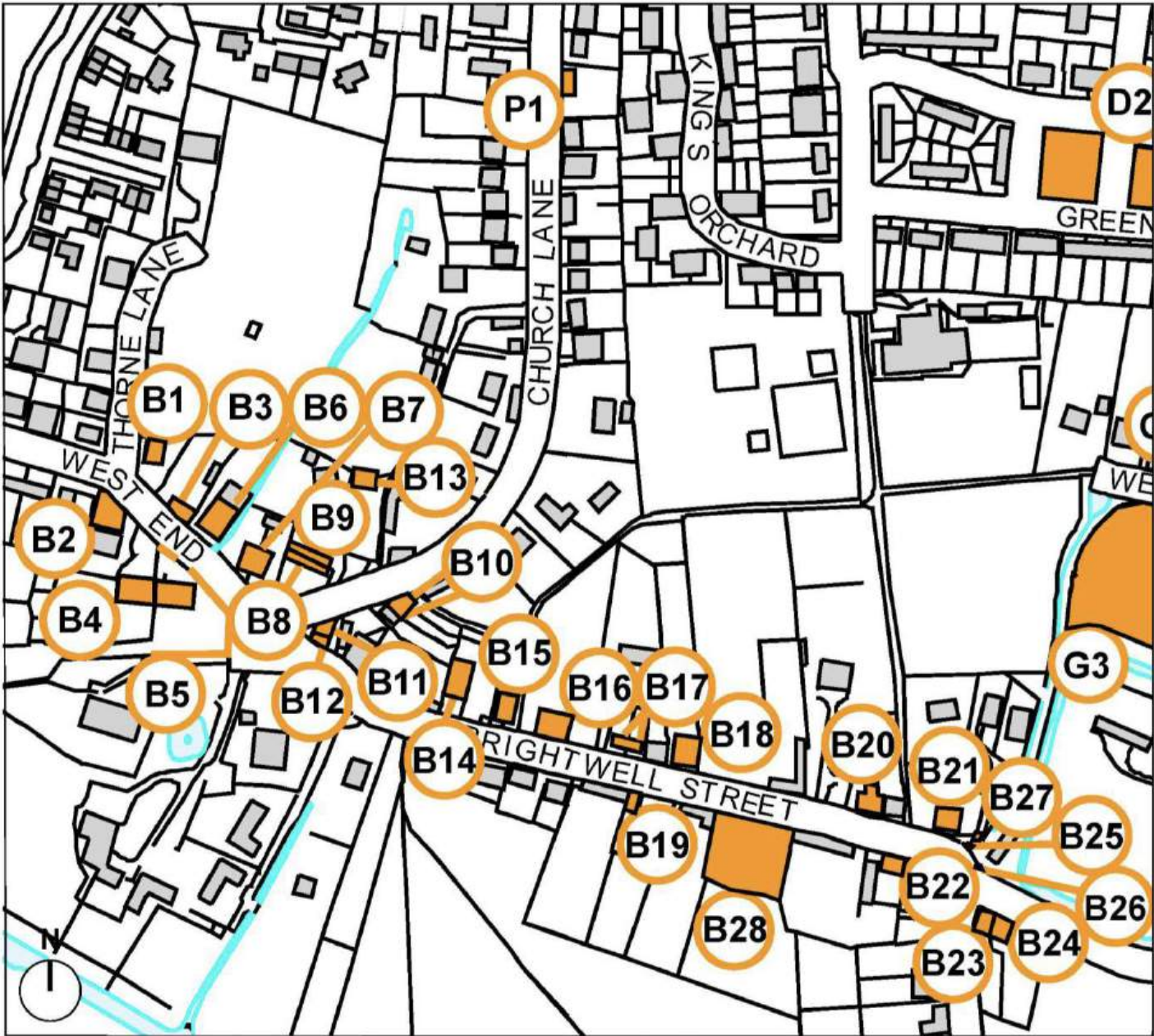












- Assets of Local Heritage Value
  
- 1 BRIGHTWELL HISTORIC CORE**
- B1 School House
- B2 Brick outbuildings at Purbrook
- B3 Stranger's Place
- B4 St Cecilia
- B5 Fairlight House and wall
- B6 Stewart Village Hall
- B7 1-2 Fairthorne Memorial
- B8 Lilicot
- B9 Thistledown
- B10 2-3 The Square
- B11 Old Forge
- B12 Woods Cottage
- B13 Swan Cottage
- B14 The Old Rectory
- B15 1-2 Meadow View
- B16 High Barn Cottage
- B17 1-2 The Almshouses
- B18 Stewarts Memorial
- B19 Japonica Cottage
- B20 Chestnut Cottage
- B21 Allnuts
- B22 Stores Cottage
- B23 The Croft
- B24 Homewood
- B25 The Telephone Box (The Red Box Gallery)
- B26 The Post Box
- B27 Brightwell/Sotwell Joining Stone
- B28 The Vine House Orchard
  
- PREDOMINANTLY CONTEMPORARY**
- P1 Woodbine Cottage

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Brightwell cum Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan  
Modification Proposal

 Assets of Local Heritage Value

SOTWELL HISTORIC CORE

- S1 Mount Vernon
- S2 North Barn
- S3 South Barn
- S4 Old Woodlands House
- S5 Blackstone House
- S6 1-2 Sotwell Manor
- S7 Little Barn
- S8 New Barn Court
- S9 Hazel Cottage
- S10 Old Barn
- S11 The Granary Barn
- S12 Rose Cottage
- S13 White Cottage
- S14 South Cottage
- S15 Meadowcroft
- S16 Barncroft
- S17 Pleasant Cottage
- S18 Honeysuckle Barn
- S19 Red House (West, Centre, East) inc wall
- S20 Brightwell Free Church
- S21 St James's House
- S22 Post Box
- S23 Rainbow House

GREEN HEART

- G1 Spring Cottage
- G2 1, 3,4 Wellsprings
- G3 Paddock behind Sotwell House

DESIGNED ESTATES

- D1 Datchet Green
- D2 Greenmere The Greens

PREDOMINANTLY CONTEMPORARY

- P3 Pound Cottage







Brightwell cum Sotwell  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Modification Proposal

 Assets of Local Heritage Value

SLADE END

- SE1 Elmleigh
- SE2 Cappaslade Cottage
- SE3 Coombe House
- SE4 Slade End Cottage
- SE5 Slade End Sarcen Stone

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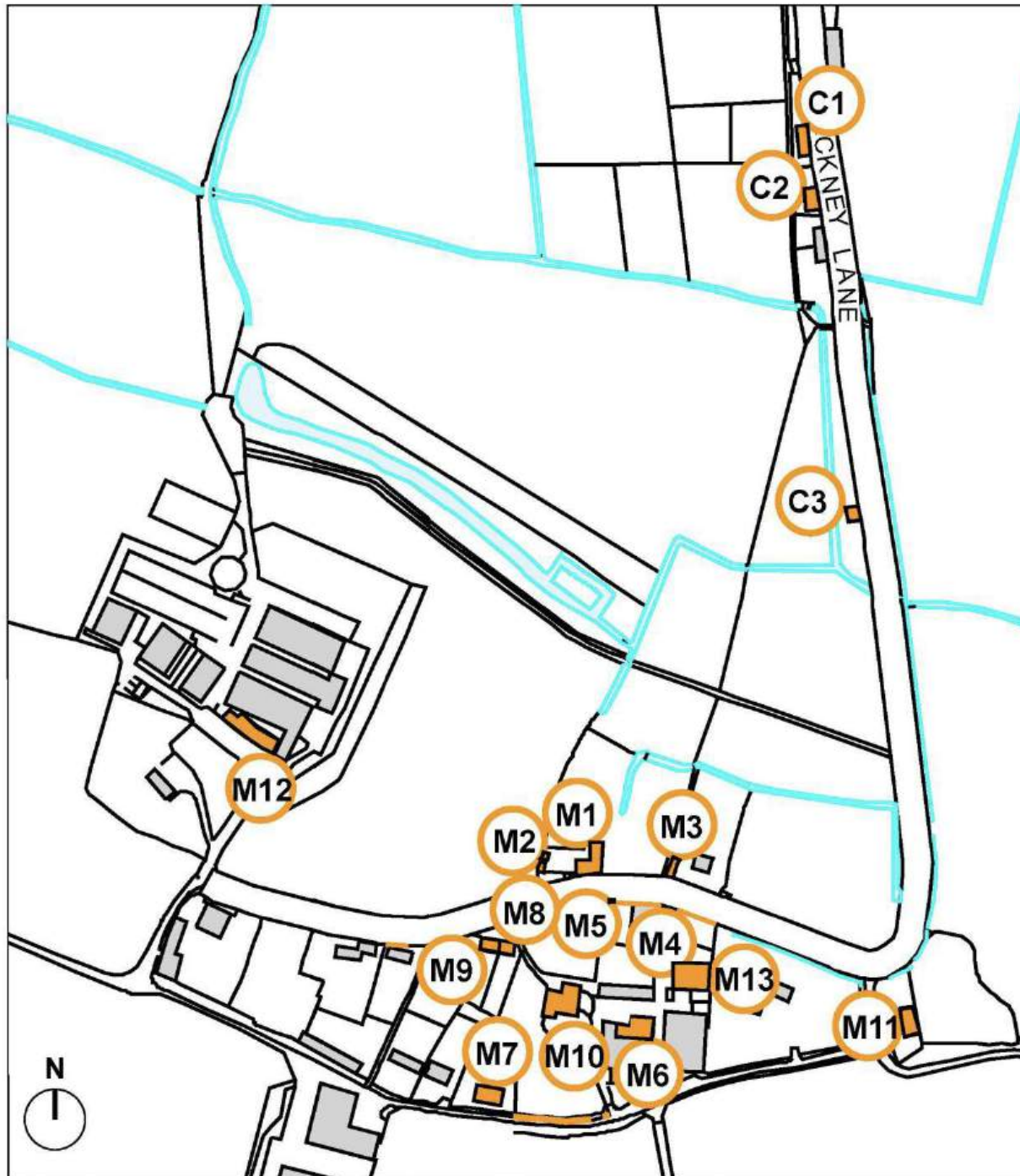
 Assets of Local Heritage Value

**MACKNEY**

- M1 The White House
- M2 Granary Barn at White House
- M3 Outbuilding at Ashley
- M4 Sherwood Farm Wall
- M5 Mackney Post Box
- M6 Black Barn at Sherwood Farm
- M7 Elm Cottage
- M8 1 Sherwood Cottage
- M9 3,4 Sherwood Cottages
- M10 Sherwood House inc. wall
- M11 Malthouse Cottages
- M12 Mackney Court Farm Barn
- M13 Granary Barn Sherwood Farm

**COUNTRYSIDE**

- C1 Workmans Cottage Mackney Lane
- C2 Wilkins Cottage Mackney Lane
- C3 Hope Cottage Mackney Lane



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Brightwell cum Sotwell  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Modification Proposal

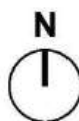
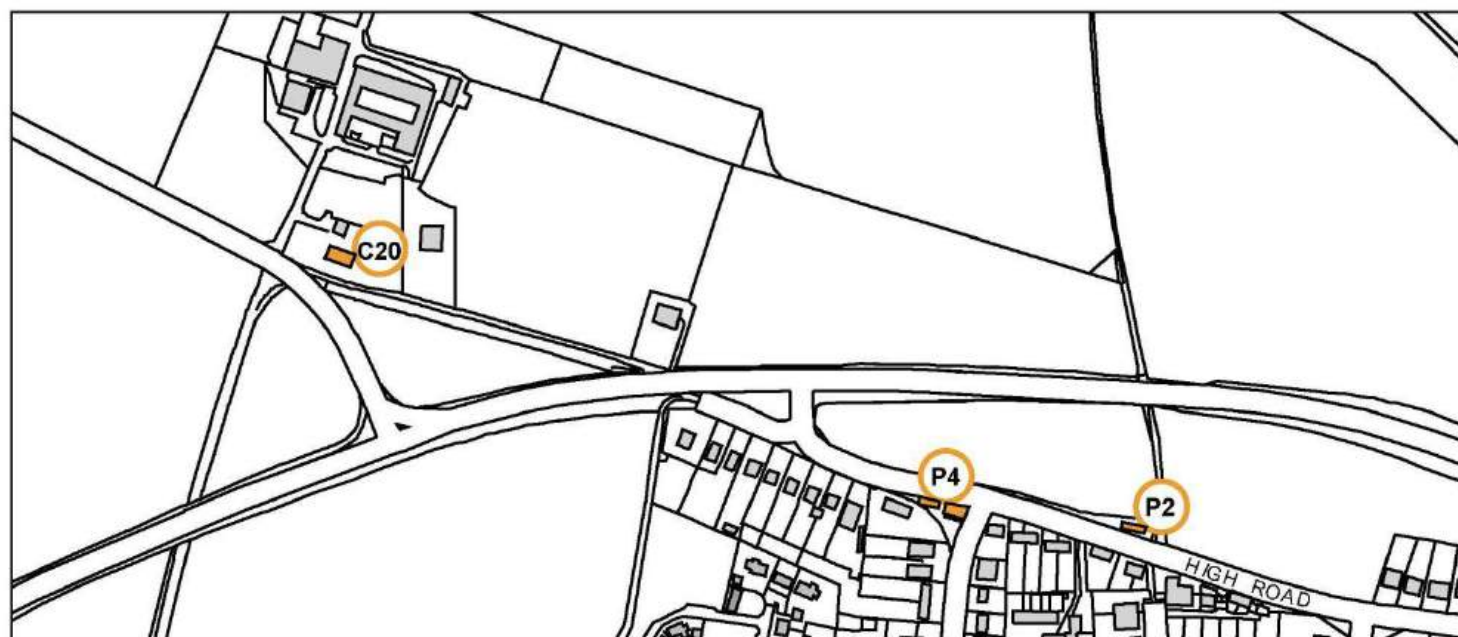
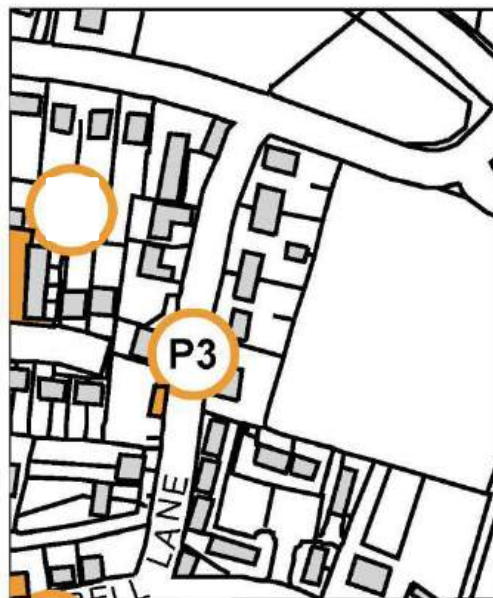
 Assets of Local Heritage Value

PREDOMINANTLY CONTEMPORARY

- P2 Little Thatch
- P3 Pound Cottage
- P4 1-7 High Road

COUNTRYSIDE

- C15 Pillbox FW2/28A west of Benson Lock
- C16 Haddon Close
- C20 The Highlands



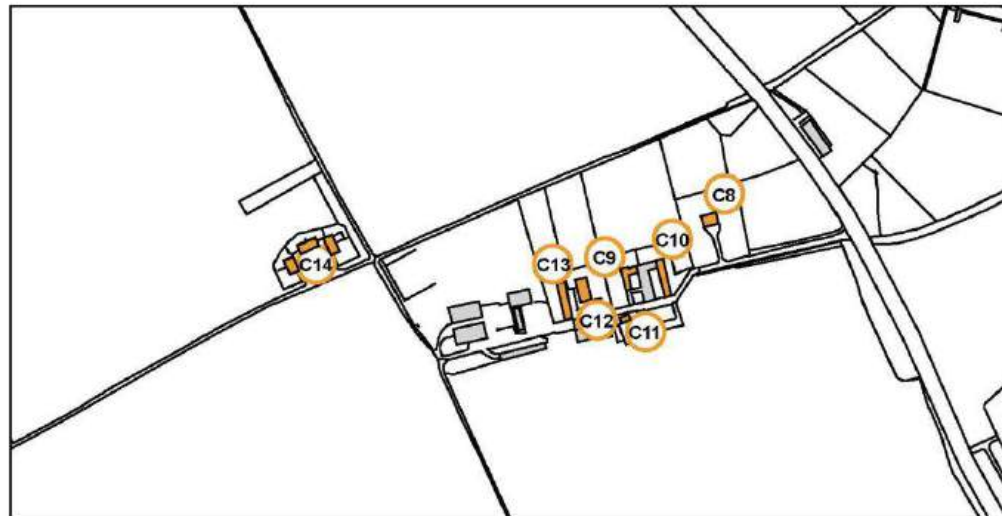
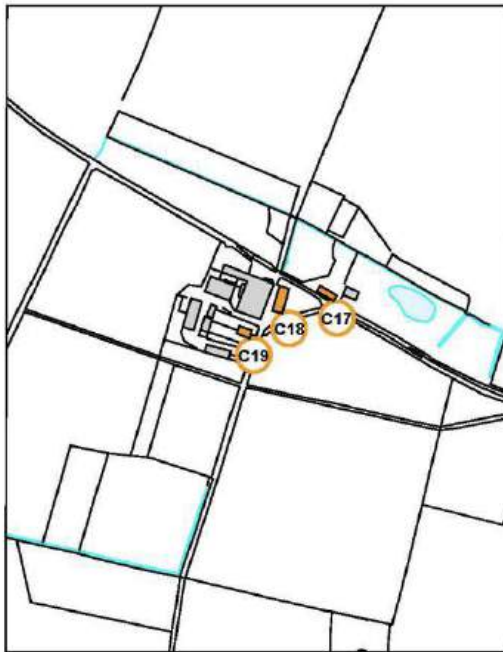
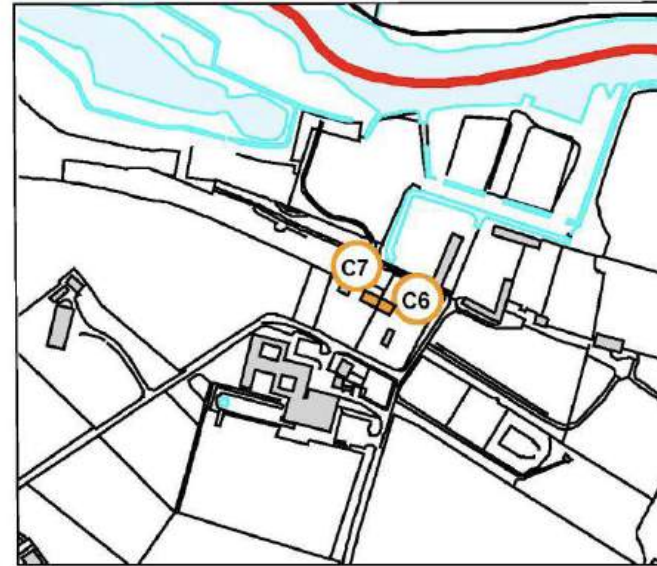
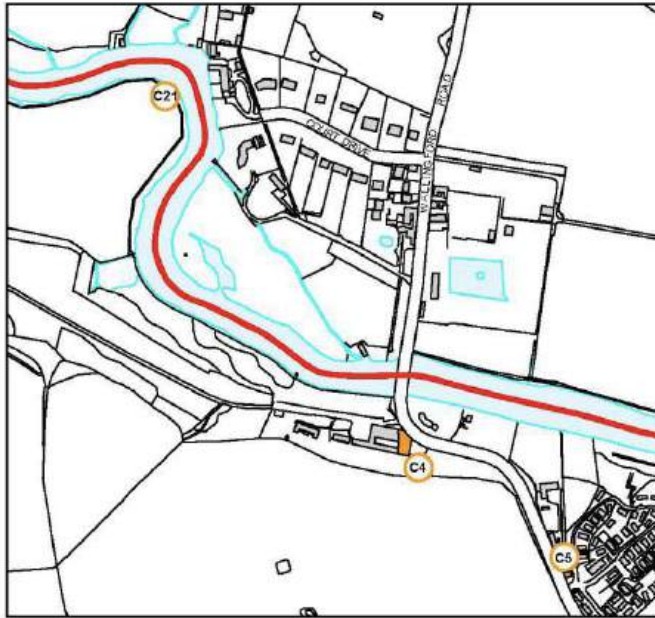
 Assets of Local Heritage Value

COUNTRYSIDE

- C4 Shillingford Bridge Hotel
- C5 The Lodge Clapcot
- C6 Barn Cottage Clapcot
- C7 Rush Barn
- C8 Severalls Farm House
- C9 Saxon Barn
- C10 Meadow View Barn
- C11 The Bothy
- C12 Severall Farm Hay Barn
- C13 The Stables
- C14 Severalls Farm Cottages

- C17 North Farm
- C18 North Farm Barn
- C19 1-2 North Farm Cottages

- C21 Thames Conservancy Marker  
Shillingford Point





# APPENDIX

## Design Code

(including)

- Inventory of Assets of Local Heritage Value
- Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Views Analysis 2022



Innovative new development at Sires Hill





**BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL  
MODIFIED NEIGHBOURHOOD  
PLAN 2011-2035**

**Brightwell cum Sotwell  
Neighbourhood Plan**

Cover Image by Anna Dillon