

SHIPLAKE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

'Making Shiplake a Better Place'



2011-2035 VOL1

MADE VERSION - SEPTEMBER 2022

Prepared by Shiplake Parish Council in conjunction with

Bluestone Planning LLP

1. FOREWORD

1.1. Neighbourhood Development Plans come out of the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the planning decisions which affect them.

1.2. The Shiplake Villages Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to establish a vision for the parish of Shiplake to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the plan period to 2035. It follows on from the success of the Shiplake Villages Plan 2014 (SVP) which began the process of determining how the wishes of the village residents might be best served and promoted.

Neighbourhood Plan Committee (July 2019 - Present)

Emer Bollinghaus	Fred Maroudas
Richard Curtis	Chris Penrose
James Dalzell	David Pheasant
Roger Head	Joanne Stone
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Steering Group (Jan 2017 – July 2019)

David Bartholomew	Susan Mann
Emer Bollinghaus	David Pheasant
Peter Boros	Michael Reid
James Dalzell	Will Stevens
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1.3. Unlike the Shiplake Villages Plan, upon which it builds, this Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document that will be incorporated into the district planning framework and be used by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) in the determination of planning applications. It supports the delivery of the strategic policies in the development plan and contains policies for the development and use of land¹.

1.4. Wider community aspirations do not form part of the statutory development plan but are referred to separately in Section 7.

1.5. The Parish Council initially established a Steering Group to create a plan in accordance with the Government's Neighbourhood Planning process. In July 2019, the Steering Group was reconstituted as a formal committee of the Parish Council. Our plan has been produced by local residents and every effort has been made to ensure that it reflects the views of the residents. The Parish Council has consulted with and listened to the community and local organisations on a wide range of issues that will influence the well-being, sustainability and long-term preservation of our rural communities.

1.6. A Neighbourhood Plan has many benefits. The Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan has been developed by volunteers from the villages to:

- Ensure that appropriate developments provide affordable housing
- Protect the villages from uncontrolled, large-scale, or poorly located development;
- Manage development proposals so that they come forward in sustainable locations where they can best take advantage of the services and facilities that are located in the village cores;
- Ensure that development is sympathetic to, and where possible enhances, the look and feel of the villages;
- Protect and minimise the loss of greenfield sites by encouraging the redevelopment of previously developed sites;
- Give the villages the potential to access Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to improve village facilities; and
- provide a road map following on from the SVP 2014 of additional actions to improve the villages facilities, services and local environment and to address issues beyond the scope of the original SVP.

¹ MHCLG, 'Planning Practice Guidance' Last Updated 25-10-20, Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 41-004-20190509 (Revision date: 09 05 2019), < <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> > [accessed 01 April 2021]

1.7. Residents' wishes and preferences were identified through a parish-wide survey during the summer of 2017. We received over 700 separate responses to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire representing the views of more than 750 local residents.

1.8. We also received over 260 separate responses to the ideas that were presented to the residents and others in a public exhibition held on 3rd and 4th November 2017, attended by some 330 people. The responses to the survey and exhibition form a very significant part of the evidence base that informed the drafting of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

1.9. The Steering Group commenced consultation on the pre-submission (Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Landscape Character Assessment and the Character Appraisal on the 29th February 2020. Initially planned for a period of six weeks, this consultation period was extended to over 19 weeks due to the Covid crisis, and it finally ended on 14th July 2020.

1.10. All of the consultation documentation, questionnaires and other relevant materials were made available on the Parish Council's website (www.shiplakevillages.com) during this period. Hard copies of the consultation documents were made available for the community to read at key locations in the Parish. Posters were placed on all parish notice boards and 650 notifications were hand delivered at the start of the consultation exercise. The Parish website Forum was used extensively by the Parish Council in promoting the plan. This, coupled with direct emails to the 600+ registered users, was the primary means for inviting resident consultation responses, with links to the consultation documentation and responses via an online questionnaire. A very small number of additional comments was received by direct responses to the parish clerk.

1.11. Open meetings to discuss the draft Neighbourhood Plan with residents were initially scheduled for March 2020 but these were postponed due to Covid and were eventually held on the 1st and 7th July 2020, with 40+ residents taking part on each occasion. 58 statutory and local business/institutions were also contacted directly.

1.12. This consultation exercise elicited approximately 186 resident responses including 16 responses from statutory and local businesses/institutions.

1.13. The Parish website Forum received 31 original posts, 65 responses and over 5,000 viewings. Over 200 questionnaires were received plus additional comments via direct mail (approximately 20 of the questionnaires were duplicate responses).

1.14. These collective responses have led to the Plan and supporting documentation being reviewed with a view to finalising the Plan for submission to SODC for examination. As part of the review process the Steering Group has revisited each of the consultation documents and met with SODC to discuss the approach to supplementing evidence where necessary, and revising key policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.15. An electronic copy of the (Regulation 16) submission draft Neighbourhood Plan documentation and associated evidence base can be found online at: www.shiplakevillages.com.

1.16. Shiplake Parish Council would like to thank the members of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, the Steering Group and all other residents who have contributed to preparing this submission draft plan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shiplake Parish Council welcomes neighbourhood planning legislation which for the first time gives the community of Shiplake the opportunity to shape development in the parish.

The Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan has now been 'made'.

The Parish of Shiplake is located in South Oxfordshire, about two miles south of Henley-on-Thames. It extends west from the banks of the river Thames across the A4155 up to its boundaries with the parishes of Eye & Dunsden, Binfield Heath and Harpsden.

Shiplake comprises two distinct and physically separate settlements:

- Shiplake Cross (which includes both the historic village of Shiplake east of the A4155, centred on the church, and the more recent settlement of Shiplake Cross, west of the A4155); and
- Lower Shiplake, which has grown up around Shiplake station and includes the historic farms and mill of Lashbrook.

For planning purposes, Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake are both designated as small villages by SODC.

In this Neighbourhood Plan, to avoid confusion we have used "Shiplake" to refer to the whole parish and "Shiplake Cross" to refer to the combined village of Shiplake and Shiplake Cross.

In the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, three key goals were initially identified:

- to support development which is sustainable and appropriate to the needs of the community;
- to ensure that development to be delivered over the period of the Neighbourhood Plan is geared towards smaller, affordable dwellings of which there is a shortage in both Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake; and
- to preserve the rural nature of the parish, focusing future development on previously developed land, to ensure that the villages grow in a sustainable way, respecting the character and quality of the surrounding countryside and

preserving the character of the villages.

The second of these goals has effectively now been addressed through the recent planning permissions for in excess of 200 dwellings in or adjacent to the settlements and it is therefore no longer a component of the Neighbourhood Plan strategy moving forward. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)- recently updated in July 2021- establishes planning policy on sustainable development and identifies the economic, environmental and social objectives which will form the basis of the determination of applications and appeals during the life of this Neighbourhood Plan. Policies have been crafted to reflect these national policy objectives at a local level, and to ensure that future development in the villages achieves the highest possible standards, contributing positively to their character and the quality of life for those living in the villages.

Over a period of more than three years, the Parish Council liaising with the NP Steering Group / NP Steering Committee has:

- Spoken at length with local residents and also major landowners / organisations who have a substantial stakeholder role in relation to the future development of the villages.
- Designed, circulated and analysed questionnaires to highlight and draw out the true wishes of the residents in relation to the future evolution of the villages and the emerging policies of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Created a 'vision' of what we believe captures the aspirations of the residents for the development of the villages and associated high level objectives (these are set out in section 5).

² Section 7 to Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

The key recommendations arising from this extended period of work are as follows:

- A. to move away from a site allocation approach and instead to develop a criteria and design-led Neighbourhood Plan. This move results from changes to national and local planning policy and follows a public consultation exercise in the summer of 2019;
- B. development should be within the existing built parts of the villages wherever possible;
- C. development outside the existing built area of the villages should conform with the policies in the development plan and national policy;
- D. criteria-based policies should address the key concerns of residents in the villages, covering landscaping, environmental matters, the setting of the villages and river and associated matters;
- E. affordability and the size of accommodation was perceived to be an issue but this has now effectively been addressed as a result of the recent planning permissions for sites on the edge of the settlements in the Plan area which address this requirement;
- F. residents wish to see the open countryside surrounding the villages and their rural character maintained through appropriate measures to manage the way in which future development occurs;
- G. residents have identified certain key themes as requirements sought in the area. These are to be covered by policies which control the location, character, form and nature of future development in the villages.

The Parish Council intends to monitor and update the plan at regular intervals. Section 7 also paves the way for further exploration of the feasibility of future projects in and around the parish. These projects are not matters of policy within this Plan, but are ‘pointers’ towards possible solutions for issues that the villages currently face. They are referred to as ‘aspirations’ and the policies that deal with them are found under the ‘Infrastructure’ heading.

This Neighbourhood Plan takes these high-level recommendations and creates a framework of evidence-based policies for the future determination of planning applications in the parish. This will assist residents and land owners in bringing sites forward for development in an acceptable form and at acceptable locations.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Introduction to the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

2.1.1. A Neighbourhood Plan aims to give local people more say and influence about how their local area evolves and develops. Through Neighbourhood Plans, parish councils are able to inform what new development should look like and what infrastructure should be provided and to introduce measures to preserve and enhance landscape and townscape quality and character. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance website explains that *"Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area."*³

Land Use and Non-Land Use Issues

2.1.2. Neighbourhood Plans must deal with the development and use of land⁴. This is because once a Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' (i.e. it passes a referendum and becomes part of the statutory development plan), decisions about whether development should go ahead must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate to the contrary⁵. This means that development proposals must follow policy unless there are good reasons not to.

2.1.3. Although this is a fundamental principle of neighbourhood planning, a number of other issues have been raised during the various public consultation exercises which are not necessarily land use based but which are nevertheless very important to the local community. These are identified in Section 7.

2.1.4. The survey and consultation work carried out from the very beginning of the Neighbourhood Plan process has highlighted a number of land use issues that are of concern to the local community, including the management of development within Shiplake, the impact that development may have on the character of the area and the landscape, the desire to preserve

the separation of the settlements from each other and from surrounding settlements, the form and appearance new development should take, the need to protect and enhance the natural assets in Shiplake and the effect new development will have on the existing social and community infrastructure.

2.1.5. The Parish Council has reflected the concerns of residents in developing a vision for the future of Shiplake and a comprehensive set of objectives for future planning in the parish. These are set out in section 5.

Basic Conditions

2.1.6. Under the terms of the governing legislation⁶ Neighbourhood Plans must comply with what are known as 'Basic Conditions'. These Basic Conditions are as follows:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or Neighbourhood Plan)
- The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area)
- The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations as incorporated into UK law
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) – in this case the relevant 'prescribed condition' is that the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which set out the habitat regulation assessment process for land use plans, including consideration of the effect on habitats sites

³MHCLG, 'Planning Practice Guidance' Last Updated 25-10-20, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20190509. Revision date: 09 05 2019

⁴Section 19(1B-1E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

⁵Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

⁶Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2.1.7. Schedule 4B (8(6)) also indicates that it is necessary to consider whether the neighbourhood plan is “compatible with the Convention rights”. The interpretation section (s.17) in Schedule 4B confirms that “the Convention rights” has the same meaning as in the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.2. Submitting Body and Designated Area

2.2.1. The Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore they are responsible for submitting the plan to the District Council for examination. The term ‘qualifying body’ is defined by the Localism Act 2011, meaning it is the body with responsibility for neighbourhood planning in the designated neighbourhood area. The Plan period is 2011-2035. This corresponds with that of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

2.2.2. The Parish Council made a formal application

to designate a Neighbourhood Planning Area on the 7th April 2017. Following consultation, the area designation application was approved by SODC on 25th July 2017 with a slight modification to the boundaries of the area (which excluded houses lying to the north of Woodlands Road).

2.2.3. On 23rd January 2019 a further application was made by the Parish Council to amend the designated area to include a part of the parish at the time included within the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan area. This further application was approved by SODC on 3rd May 2019.

2.2.4. SODC confirmed in a letter of 17th May 2019 that “... the amended Shiplake neighbourhood area does not affect the continuation in force of the joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan, in part of the parish of Shiplake, even though as a result of the modification the plan now relates to two neighbourhood areas.”

2.2.5. The Neighbourhood Planning Area is the area depicted in Figure 1 below:

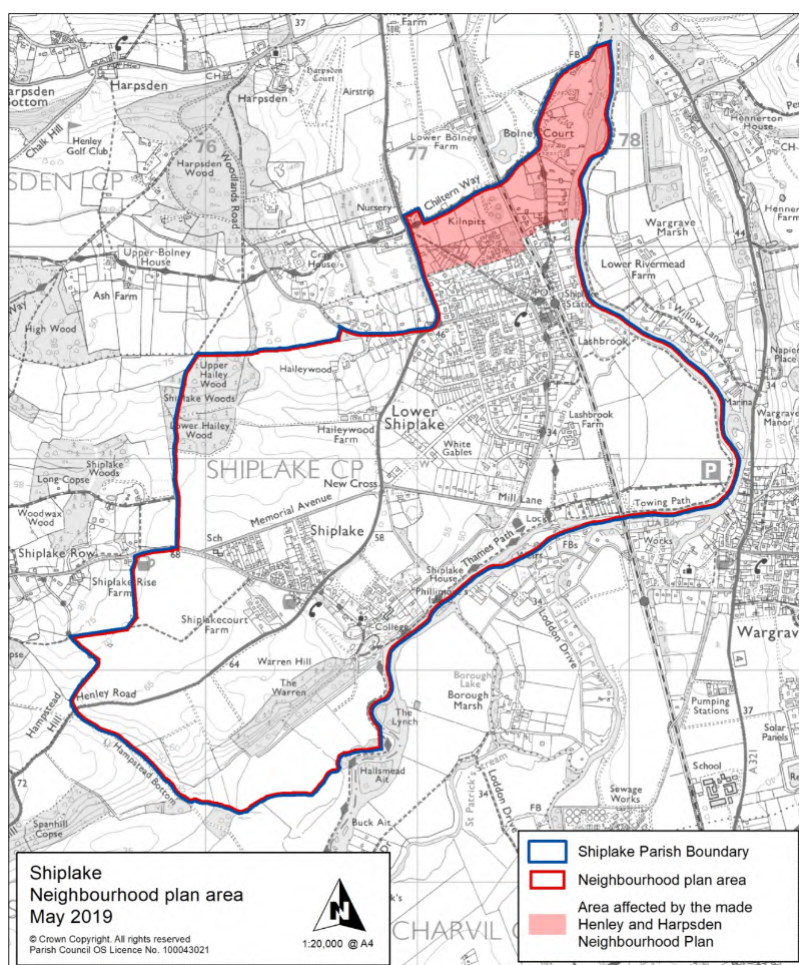


Figure 1. - Neighbourhood Plan Area Designated May 2019

2.3. Relationship with the Development Plan

2.3.1. The 'development plan' for the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 which was adopted in December 2020. Now it has been 'made' (i.e. approved following a referendum) this Neighbourhood Plan also forms part of the development plan.

2.3.2. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 replaced the policies in the Local Plan 2011 (adopted 2006) and the Core Strategy (adopted 2012). The adopted Local Plan contains the strategic policy framework for development in the parish.

2.3.3. The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan will complement the strategic policies in the development plan and, as noted above, one of the Basic Conditions of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan. Neighbourhood Plans deal with non-strategic planning matters.

2.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

2.4.1. SODC confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment was not required in a letter dated 29th November 2019.

2.5 Planning Policy Context

National Policy

2.5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published by the government in 2018 and revised in 2019 and again in July 2021, is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and Neighbourhood Plans. It sets out the Government's policy in relation to land use planning matters.

2.5.2. The Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate that it has had regard to / is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF 2021 as a whole.

2.5.3. The following paragraphs of the NPPF 2021 are especially relevant to the issues addressed by this Neighbourhood Plan:

- Supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 84)
- Good design (paragraphs 126-136)
- Protecting healthy communities (paragraphs 8, 92)
- Protecting local green spaces (paragraphs 101-103)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraphs 174-188)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraphs 189-208)
- Neighbourhood planning (paragraphs 12-14, 28-30, 37, 66, 67, 70)

Local Policy

2.5.4. SODC is the planning authority for Shiplake. The essence of the overall planning strategy for the district as described in the adopted Local Plan is to principally focus development on a number of strategic sites close to Oxford, and at the lower levels in the hierarchy, to focus development at 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.

2.5.5. Shiplake does not lie within an area planned for significant growth. Both Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake are classified as 'smaller villages'. In such locations policy H8 confirms that SODC will support development within smaller villages in accordance with policy H16. Policy H16 explains that within smaller villages development should be limited to infill and the redevelopment of previously developed land. Infill is defined in policy H16 as *"...the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location."*

2.5.6. The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan will provide the non-strategic framework against which future applications for housing development in the Plan area will be judged. These policies deal with matters of principle (e.g. rural housing development, conversion of buildings, extensions, replacement dwellings etc) and detailed matters, drawing upon the characteristics of the settlements and the landscape that surrounds them, to provide a detailed set of criteria that will be used to determine the appropriateness of future housing development in the plan area. The topics these criteria-based policies

are concerned with include building materials and styles, layout, relationship with surrounding development, consistency with character and density of development.

2.5.7. The adopted Local Plan seeks to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued community facilities through policies CF1 and EMP10. This provides an opportunity for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify those community facilities in Shiplake that warrant specific protection from these policies. The parish has produced a list of community facilities which are listed in Policy SV18.

2.5.8. In this regard, the Neighbourhood Plan contains policies that deal with enabling development as well as the encouragement of the provision, and protection, of community facilities.

2.5.9. The presence of the AONB and River Thames within and adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area, and the general quality of the landscape, all signal the importance of developing a suite of policies that provide the opportunity to protect that which is of greatest value to the community whilst at the same time encouraging development to respect and where possible enhance the special qualities and characteristics of the landscape within the plan area.

2.5.10. The suite of policies in this Neighbourhood Plan allows for appropriate development but reinforces the importance of ensuring all development proposals respect the special landscape character as well as the qualities afforded by the dark skies that may be found across the plan area.

2.5.11. This Neighbourhood Plan contains policies promoting the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure assets including open countryside, particularly Valued Landscapes and also designated Local Gaps designed to prevent the coalescence of neighbouring settlements. Such assets are especially important in defining the character and in the functioning of the villages and wider plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to bring forward specific proposals to protect and improve these existing assets.

2.5.12. Finally, the Neighbourhood Plan contains policies that seek to protect and enhance the rights of way and cycle network within the plan area, to deliver

biodiversity benefits, to preserve important views and manage riverside-related development effectively.

2.5.13. All of these policies tie back into the strategic and non-strategic policies of the development plan whilst also echoing the principles set out in the NPPF 2021, thus ensuring that the basic conditions concerning the need to have regard to national policy, to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and to be in general conformity with the strategic policies are all met. Further detail on this specific matter are set out in the Basic Conditions Statement that accompanies the submission draft Neighbourhood Plan.

2.6 Plan Period, Monitoring & Review

2.6.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced to cover the period 2011 – 2035, the same timeline as South Oxfordshire District Council's adopted Local Plan. Although the Neighbourhood Plan will apply until 2035, it is intended to be a response to the evolving needs of the residents of the plan area and it will therefore be a dynamic plan that will change over time through the review process.

2.6.2. The Parish Council will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the plan to ensure relevance and to monitor timely delivery. The intention is to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan on a yearly basis, and to review the plan as necessary. This will be overseen by the Parish Council with anticipated participation from members of the public. Where changes (for example revised national or District planning policies) indicate that major alterations to the Neighbourhood Plan policies will be necessary, these are likely to require full public consultation and examination, as with the current Neighbourhood Plan.

2.6.3. Partial reviews will also need to go through the same process. However, where changes are minor in nature and relate only to the supporting text or community aspirations there may be opportunities for a more limited review process to be undertaken in conjunction with the community and SODC.

2.7 The Stage This Plan Has Reached

2.7.1. The Neighbourhood Plan was approved at Referendum in July 2022, and has been ‘Made’. It is now part of the development plan for the area and will carry full weight in how planning applications are determined.

2.7.2. SODC has consulted on a draft of this Neighbourhood Plan for a minimum six weeks. All comments were then collated and passed to the Examiner for their consideration as part of the examination process. A visual representation of the Neighbourhood Plan stages is shown below at Figure 2:

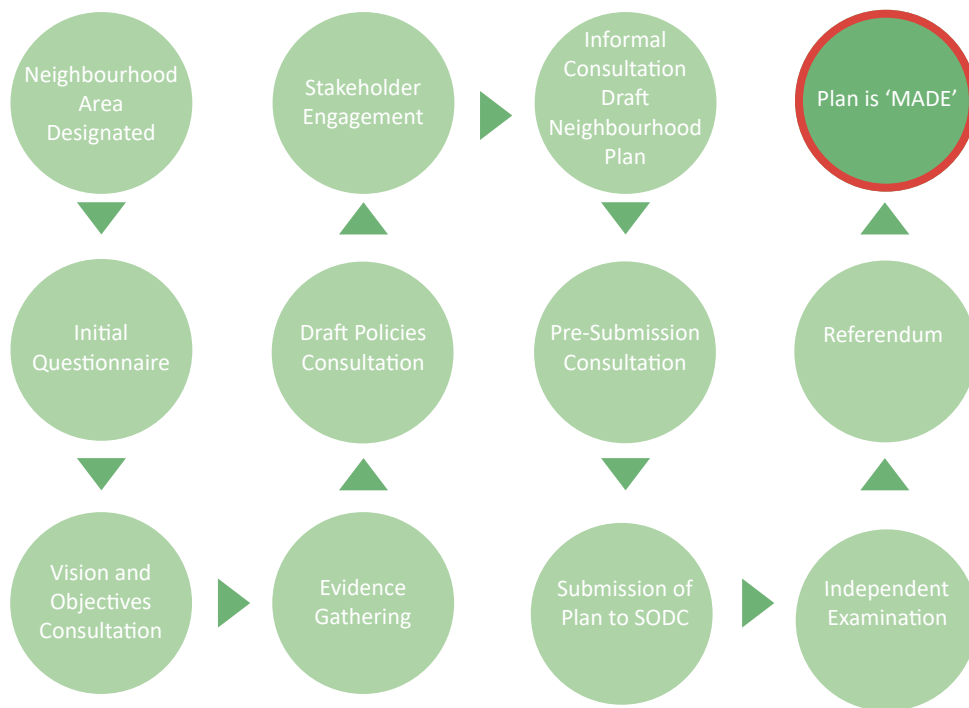


Figure 2. Neighbourhood Plan Process

2.8 Bibliography and Evidence Base

2.8.1. The bibliography of documents referred to in compiling this Neighbourhood Plan, as well as the location of evidence base documentation, is set out in detail in Appendix 1 to this Plan.

3. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

3.1 General Description of the Area

3.1.1. The Parish of Shiplake extends from the banks of the river Thames across the A4155 up to its boundaries with Eye & Dunsden, Binfield Heath and Harpsden. It is located in South Oxfordshire, about two miles south of Henley-on-Thames. Shiplake comprises two distinct and separate 'small villages' (and designated as such by SODC): Shiplake Cross (which includes the historic village of Shiplake) and Lower Shiplake.

3.1.2. The name Shiplake was in use by 1216 and most likely stems from 'stream where sheep are washed (sheep lake) but could also refer to the final resting place of a Viking ship (ship loss) as the river was too shallow to navigate above Shiplake.

3.1.3. Until the early part of the last century, Lower Shiplake was known as Lashbrook. It is recorded, together with its mill, as Lysbrook (swamp by the stream) in the Domesday Book (1086) when it was part of the Binfield Hundred. The area was later named Lachebroc and the neighbouring settlement to its north west Bolchede, later Bolney. The Lashbrook and Bolney names still exist today in street names.

3.1.4. According to tithe records, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul dates from at least the 12th Century. Major restoration work took place in 1822, and in 1869 the chancel, north aisle and parts of the south aisle were rebuilt. Alfred Lord Tennyson married a cousin of the vicar's wife, Emily Mary Sellwood, here in June 1850.

3.1.5. Some of the larger estates with land holdings in the parish at the time included the Crowsley, Baskerville, Phillimore and Mardons estates.

3.1.6. It is likely that the Lashbrook Chapel building was originally the store for the nearby paper mill. The mill closed in 1907. In June 1914 the store was referred to as the Parish room and daily services were held there. The last service at the chapel was held on 27th October 2002.

3.1.7. Shiplake Court dates back to the 12th Century, but was rebuilt in the 14th Century by the Englefield family and was acquired by the Plowden family until 1691 when they sold it to pay for their son to get a commission in the army of King James I. It

passed through many other landowners, notably Henry Constantine Jennings. It was rebuilt in 1905, finally becoming Shiplake College in 1958.

3.1.8. Education in Shiplake Parish has a long history. The primary school originated in 1847 from the Mission school 'for the education of the poor' and a new school, known as the Victorian school, was built at Shiplake Cross in 1870. By the 1950s it was in poor repair so a third school with two classrooms was built next to it in 1963. The Victorian school was then demolished to provide the school playground. Since then there have been numerous extensions with the existing school boasting seven classrooms, including the ARK – a fully equipped technology and music facility.

3.1.9. There has been significant housing development over the past 50 years within and on the edge of the villages. Some of these have been in the neighbourhood area and others outside. Between 1960 and 2013, more than 170 new houses were built in the villages. Part of the Baskerville estate was developed into Badgers Walk / Brocks Way, and the horticultural fields off Northfield Avenue Manor Wood Gate and Brampton Chase. More recently, further dwellings have been permitted. The vast majority are outside but adjacent to the neighbourhood area, on the edges of the villages at sites such as Thames Farm, Mount Ida and the former Wyevale Garden Centre.

3.1.10. Unlike many rural villages, the parish still boasts many amenities including two pubs (the Plowden Arms is closed at the time of writing), a shop, a post office, a butcher, a garage, a church, a primary school, a nursery and good bus and rail links. Most of the commercial premises are located in Lower Shiplake, whereas a village hall, playing fields and church are located in Shiplake Cross.

3.1.11. There are a large number of clubs, groups and societies involved in many sporting, cultural and interest activities and the facilities to support these are well used. There is a very successful village newsletter and also website which gives details of events and notices of importance:

<http://shiplakevillages.com/>

3.2 Parish Profile

3.2.1. The Parish extends from the banks of the river Thames across the A4155 up to its boundaries with the parishes of Binfield Heath, which was until 2003 part of Shiplake parish, Eye & Dunsden and Harpsden.

3.2.2. The parish is one of six (Harpsden, Shiplake, Binfield Heath, Eye & Dunsden, Sonning Common and Kidmore End) embracing several smaller villages between Henley-on-Thames and the major conurbation of Reading, both of which have acknowledged issues of unsustainable highways infrastructure and severe concerns over environmental factors. The greenfield rural area of the parishes between the two has significant amenity value in maintaining the physical and visual separation of the settlements. The AONB to the north and the Thames flood plain to the south are limiting factors for housing development opportunities.

3.2.3. Shiplake itself has approximately 680 dwellings with a population of approximately 2000, based on 2011 Census (1954 people) and the Community Insight Profile for the Parish created in January 2021 (2019 people). According to the electoral role about 80% of electors live in Lower Shiplake and 20% in Shiplake Cross.

3.2.4. Social housing in Lower Shiplake is provided within a small estate (estimated 9 of 21 units) of smaller affordable houses at Westfield Crescent and the SOHA accommodation of 12 units, a project strongly supported by the parish council. Both have easy pedestrian access to the post office and shop, the pub, local butcher and train services.

3.2.5. The housing in Shiplake Cross is largely clustered close to the primary school, church and Plowden Arms and generally comprises smaller houses, including a post war development of council houses, many of which have been bought by residents over the years but still retains an element of affordable rental accommodation.

3.2.6. Because of its rural environment, proximity to the river and the Thames Path, rail transport links and local school, Shiplake is considered a desirable place to live. It is also an attraction for visits by ramblers, runners, cyclists, rowers and tourists from nearby communities and further afield. The density of housing reflects this desirability with significant

developments between 1960 and 2003, adding more than 170 houses in Lower Shiplake – an increase of 56% in the number of dwellings since 1970- and resulting in a population density of 4.4 persons per hectare, one of the more densely populated smaller villages in South Oxfordshire with its average population density of 2 persons per hectare. It seems likely that with the recent permissions for 200+ dwellings around the edges of the settlements in the Plan area this density will have further increased.

3.2.7. These factors, alongside national trends and policy, particularly with regard to ‘backland’ development, have led to expensive housing stock and the gradual conversion of smaller more affordable 2/3-bedroom homes into larger 4/5-bedroom homes.

3.2.8. In recent years, the Parish Council sponsored the production of The Shiplake Villages Plan (SVP) Report 2014, which reflected the views of residents in terms of what they valued about Shiplake, how they would want to see the villages develop and provided a more up to date insight into local demographics. This was done with the guidance of and was subsequently highly commended by SODC.

3.2.9. Education levels are high in the Parish. Those with degree level qualifications number approximately 45% based on 2011 Census data⁷. This compares with 36.7% in South Oxfordshire and a figure of 27.4% for England. Pupil attainment at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 is consistently higher than the Oxfordshire and England averages.

3.2.10. 63.7% of residents are economically active, as compared with 75.2% for South Oxfordshire and 69.9% for England. This reflects an older than average population – in Shiplake the proportion of over 65s is 27.8% whereas the England average is 18.4% and the South Oxfordshire average is 21.1% based on the ONS 2019 Mid Year Estimates (NB these are updated compared with the 2011 census figures depicted elsewhere in this Plan).

3.2.11. Of those in employment, 65.5% are in managerial, professional or associated professional occupations as compared with 41.2% for England.

3.2.12. The largest employment sector for Shiplake residents is professional, scientific and technical (14% all employed residents) followed by education (13%) and retail (12%).

⁷OCSI , ‘Local Insight profile for ‘Shiplake’ area’, (Report created 21 January 2021), page 46

3.2.13. 7.8% of those living in Shiplake have no car (England = 25.8%; South Oxfordshire = 11.6%). The higher than average levels of car ownership reflect the fact that the average road distances to some key services and facilities is greater than the England average (eg GP surgeries, Job Centre, Secondary School etc – see page 57 of Insight profile).

3.2.14. The general perception of living in Shiplake is positive. In response to the 2008 Place Survey (carried out at a District level) the following responses were obtained:

- “People from different backgrounds get on well together in the local area” = 83% (81% Oxfordshire; 76% England)
- “People who feel that they belong to their Neighbourhood” = 64% (59% Oxfordshire; 58% England)
- “People who are satisfied with local area as a place to live” = 91% (87% Oxfordshire; 79% England).

3.2.15. 12.6% of people in Shiplake have a limiting long-term illness compared with 17.6% across England, and the overall crime rate is lower than the average across England, both of which factors contribute positively to well being and quality of life for residents (1.5 crimes (all crimes) reported per 1,000 population in August 2020; England = 9.7 crimes per 1,000 population over same period).

3.3 Landscape Character

3.3.1. According to the Landscape Character Assessment report commissioned by the Parish Council⁸, the area has the following landscape characteristics (paragraphs 3.1-3.21):

“The Parish lies between the River Thames to the east and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty to the west, with a small part of the AONB (Shiplake Wood) within the Parish. To the north, separated by Harpsden Parish, lies the town of Henley-on-Thames. To the south lies the Parish of Eye and Dunsden which extends up to the Caversham borders.

The Parish contains just two ‘Smaller villages’ (ref: SODC Local Plan 2035): Lower Shiplake in the north and Shiplake Cross in the south. These form two distinct settlements separated by open countryside. In 2019 planning permission was granted for a Retirement Village on land between Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross. At the time of writing this scheme had not been implemented.

The topography is a key characteristic of the Study Area. The Parish lies on the dipslopes of the Chiltern Hills which descend down to the River Thames floodplain. At its highest point the Study Area sits at around 75m AOD within the AONB, falling south-eastwards in a gently undulating landform to the River Thames at around 40m AOD. The undulating landform includes shallow dry valleys as at Haileywood Farm and flatter local plateau, west of Shiplake Farm.

The terraces and undulations create local skylines as for example at Warren Hill when viewed from the Thames or Haileywood when viewed from New Road. However, a main feature of the Parish is the extensive views eastwards to the skyline of the hills above Wargrave and across the river valley to the wooded horizons extending across to Bowsey Hill and also to Bracknell.

The flat River Thames floodplain and meadows are a distinctive feature of the Parish for example east of Lower Shiplake and south of Warren Hill.

⁸ Kirkham Landscape Planning Limited / The terra firma Consultancy Ltd Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Assessment s (April 2021)

West of the valley floor are to be found the raised river terraces forming a local landform feature, often wooded, as at The Warren and Shiplake College, levelling out across Lower Shiplake with these steeper slopes moving westwards in the north of the Parish to the Haileywood area.

The River Thames is a key feature of the Parish. It has an extensive floodplain (see Figure 4) which includes the land east of Mill Road, Lower Shiplake and the land south of The Warren. Lash Brook historically ran into the Thames near to Shiplake Station. Streams follow the base of The Warren to flow into the Thames next to Shiplake College.

The higher open arable landscape has dry valleys and no streams.

The Study Area topography is therefore typical of the AONB dipslopes and their inter-connectivity with the River Thames floodplain.

The Parish is largely under arable farmland in a mix of large, medium and small fields, with pockets of pasture mainly found around the settlements.

Woodland is not extensive in the Parish but the groups of woodlands in the AONB known as Shiplake Woods are Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (ASNW). Woodland covers the terraces rising above the valley floodplain and is associated with the parkland around Shiplake College; and area south of Woodlands Road. Other areas are either deciduous broadleaved woodland; or a mixed broadleaved and ornamental trees as at Haileywood. However, the eastern part of the Parish has a more wooded appearance due to the many small copses and lines of mature trees along roadsides, within gardens and on field boundaries.

Extensive wetland floodplain meadows characterise the Shiplake side of the River Thames extending up to the wooded terraces.

Hedgerows vary from mature deciduous boundaries to the settlements, along the roadsides and around the smaller fields to the rather gappy remnants within the open arable

fields. There are some conifer belts next to settlements but these are not a key feature of this area.

The Study Area vegetation pattern is therefore typical of the AONB dipslopes.

The history of the development of the two settlements lies outside of the scope of this Study.

Oxfordshire County Council published its Historic Landscape Character Assessment for the whole of the County in 2017. This shows that the Study Area has a number of distinguishing historic landscape patterns including the above ASNW; surviving pre 18th century 'ancient enclosure' east of the ASNW; and pre 1881 post medieval planned enclosure alongside the River Thames.

Shiplake College contains a number of listed buildings and is the oldest settled part of the Parish. The main Grade II Shiplake College and Shiplake House buildings sit on the raised terrace overlooking the river, a common feature of large properties along the River Thames corridor. Shiplake Memorial lying at the junction of Reading Road/Woodlands Road/Station Road is Grade II listed and together with its landscape setting forms a landmark feature. The Grade II* listed Church of St Peter and St Paul forms part of the important group around Shiplake College.

The Parish has no Registered Parks and Gardens but the grounds of Shiplake College extending eastwards as far as the Lodge on Mill Lane are noted as Parkland. Features of the surviving parkland include large old Planes along the river (possibly Veteran Trees), tree plantings and the alignment of routeways to the two lodges.

There are no Conservation Areas in the Study Area.

The Henley Railway Branch line into Twyford runs along the eastern side of the Study Area until it crosses the River Thames west of Wargrave. A railway crossing and station lie within Lower Shiplake close to the river. As it passes through the Parish the line is enclosed by dense tree cover and rarely visible. Apart from the level crossing,

there is an underpass along the Mill Lane Byway and under the Thames bridge along a footpath bordering the river across the gardens of properties on Mill Lane. The railway bridge over the River Thames is a local landmark.

The river bank is mostly rural in character except where it meets Lower Shiplake. Shiplake Lock is a local landmark located south of Mill Lane.”

3.3.2. The quality of the landscape and its appearance are highly significant elements which contribute to the overall character and experience of Shiplake.

3.3.3. The role of the countryside is all the more important given that the percentage of formal greenspace coverage in the Parish is only 0.5%, with 0% coverage public parks and gardens (England averages for the equivalent figures are 2.2% and 0.8% respectively) according to data presented in the Local

Insight report for Shiplake (2021) and based on Ordnance Survey data⁹ for green spaces likely to be accessible to the public.

3.4 Environment & Heritage

3.4.1. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within Shiplake itself, although the Harpsden Wood SSSI is just to the north of the Plan area. Consequently, much of the Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

3.4.2. There are no National Nature Reserves, Special Protected Areas or Special Areas of Conservation within the Plan area, the nearest being the Chiltern Beech Woods 7.9km to the north east and Hartslock Wood SAC 13km to the west.

3.4.3. An area of Ancient Replanted Woodland is located in the north west of Shiplake consisting of Upper and Lower Hailey Woods. There is also one very small area of natural Ancient Woodland at

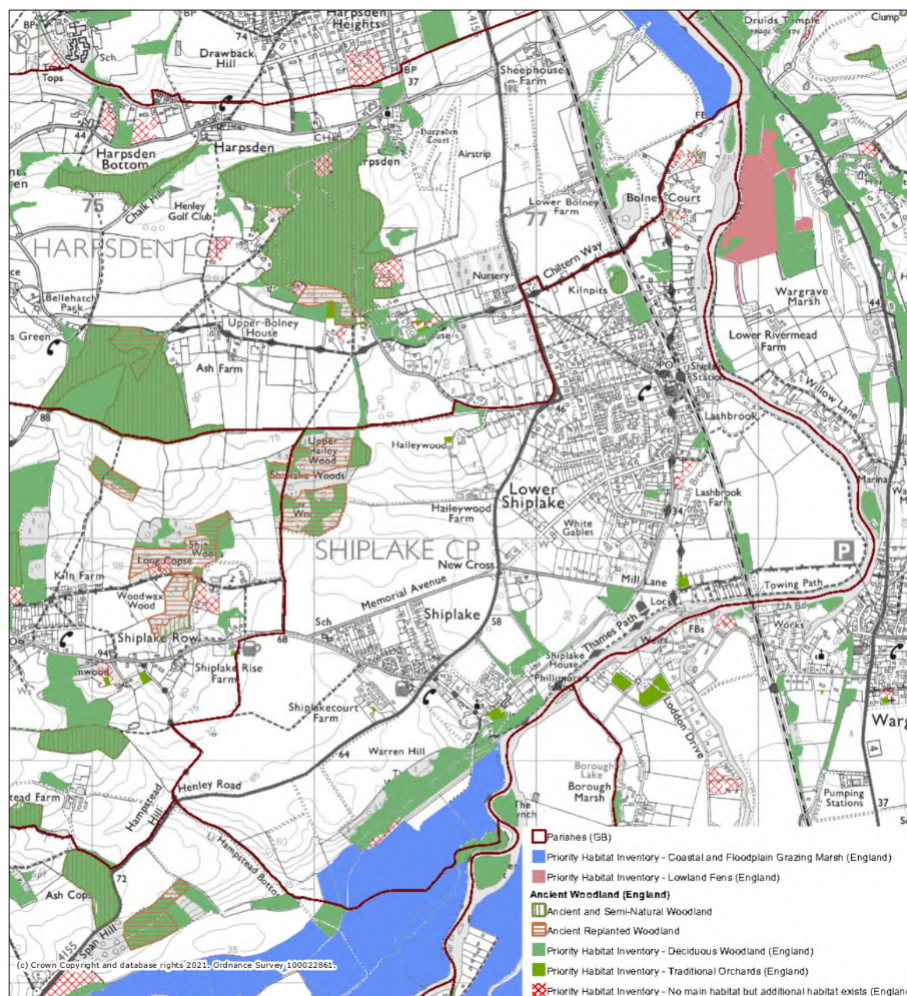


Figure 3. Habitats ⁽¹⁰⁾

⁹Source: OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2017

¹⁰DEFRA ‘Magic Database’ extract. <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> [accessed 8 April 2021]

Kiln pits south of Bolney Lane just outside the northern boundary of the Parish. There is a large area of Priority Habitat Floodplain and Grazing Marsh in the southern part of the Parish (see figure 3).

3.4.4. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) have no statutory designation but provide recognition for areas of high wildlife value in terms of species, habitats or both. There are two Local Wildlife Sites within Shiplake, according to the ‘living list’ of LWS maintained by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre. These are located at Warren Wood and Shiplake Marsh. Crowsley Park is identified as being within the parish but the LWS itself lies outside the Parish boundary.

3.4.5. Statutorily protected heritage assets in the Plan area are limited in number. The listed buildings and other assets are detailed at Appendix 3 to this Plan. The assets are also depicted in the figure 4.

3.4.6. In total there are 10 listed buildings, nine Grade II and one Grade II* (Church of St Peter and St Paul).

3.4.7. Park Place and Temple Combe, a Grade II* Historic Park and Garden, is located across the Thames adjacent to the northern boundary of the Parish.

3.4.8. Other heritage assets are identified in figure 5 overleaf, which records archaeological finds in the area.

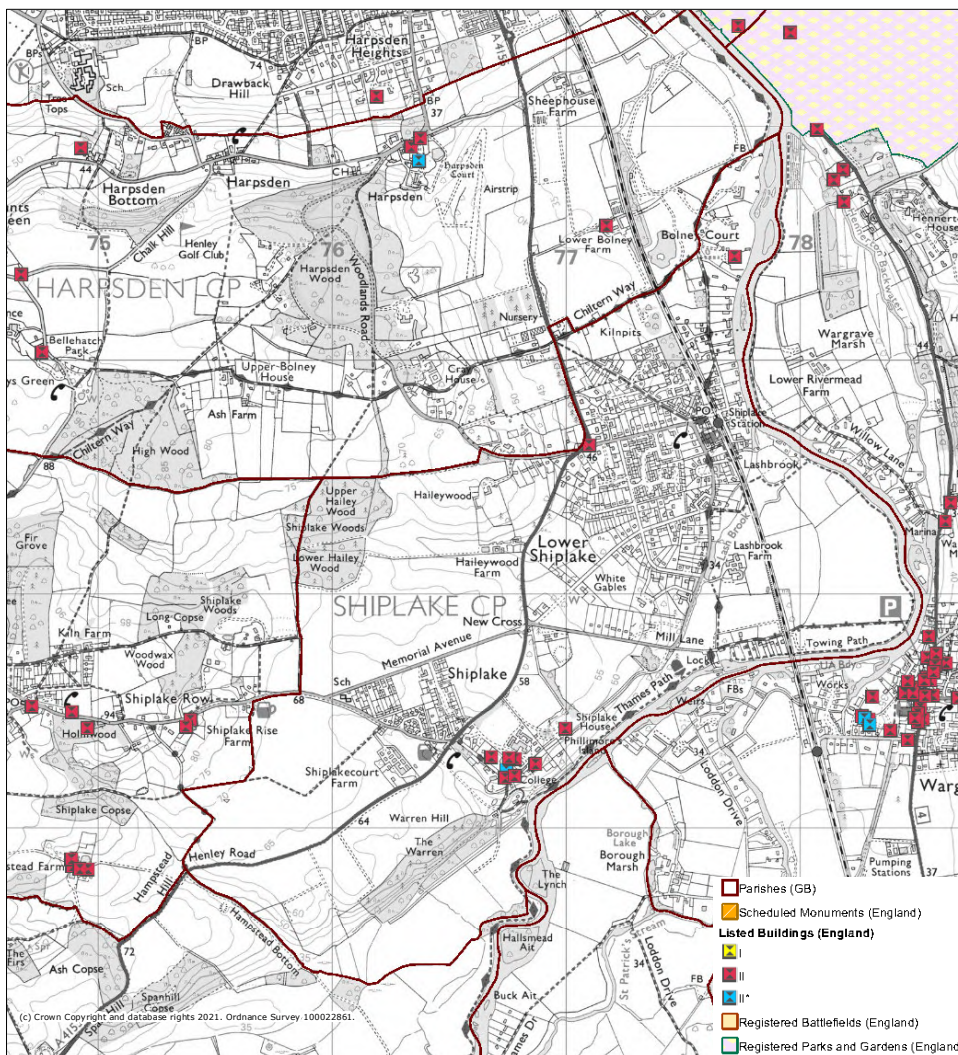


Figure 4. Heritage Assets ⁽¹¹⁾

¹¹DEFRA ‘Magic Database’ extract. <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> [accessed 8 April 2021]

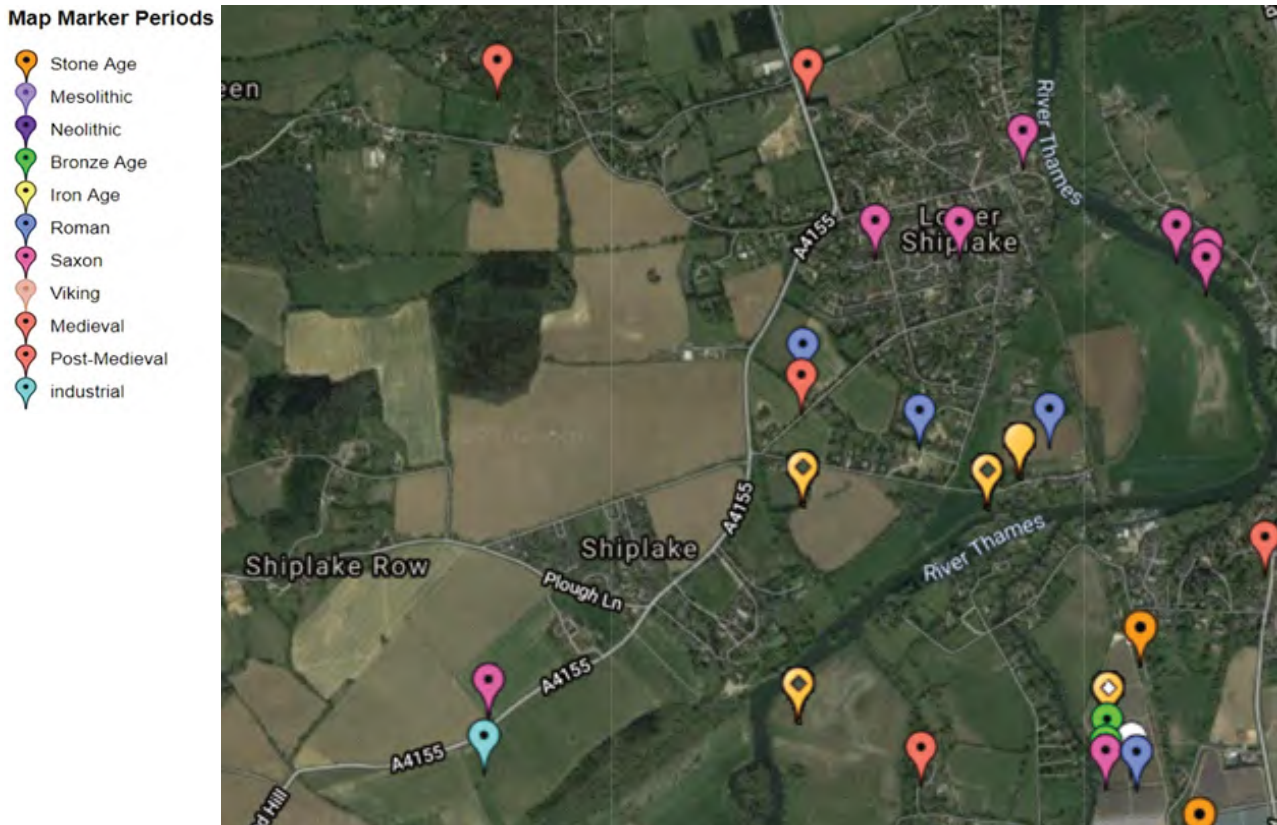


Figure 5. Archaeological Finds as at 8 April 2021 ¹²

3.4.9. Aquifer information on the Government’s Magic.gov website¹³ indicates that the Plan area is underlain by a Principal bedrock aquifer and areas of secondary (A) Superficial Drift aquifer. The Plan area is also underlain by areas of medium high to high soluble rock risk (groundwater vulnerability).

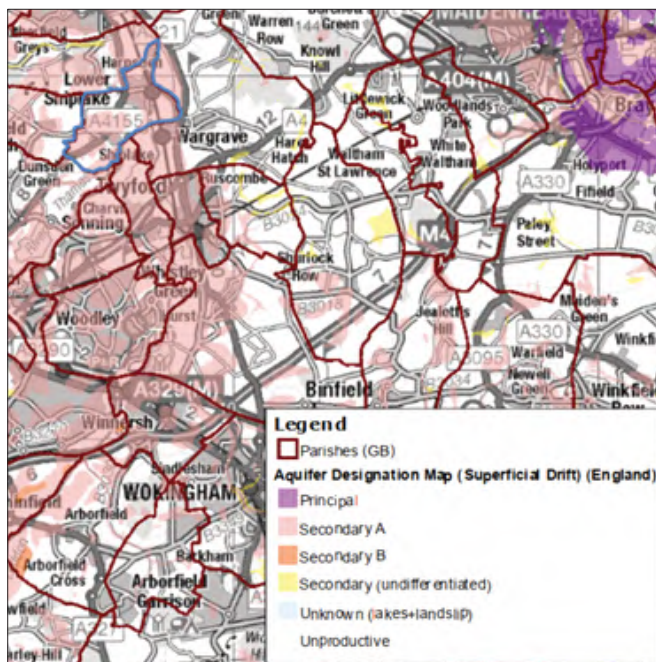


Figure 6. Aquifer Designation Map (superficial drift) ¹³

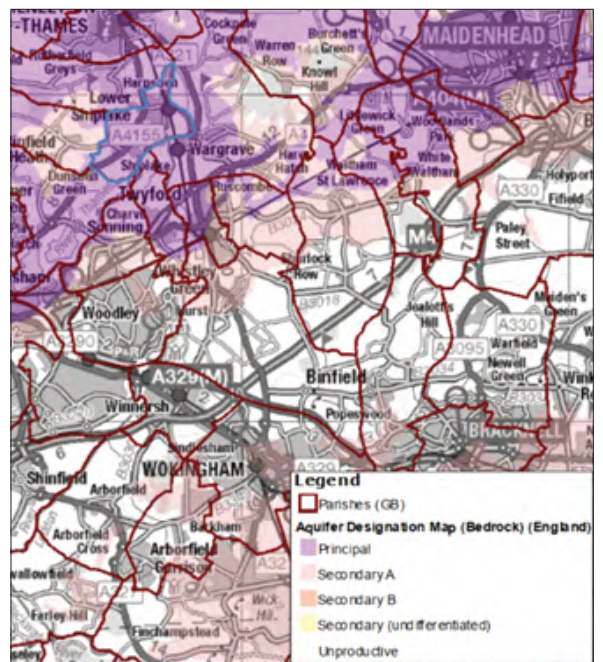


Figure 7. Aquifer Designation Map (bedrock) ¹³

¹² <https://www.archiuk.com/>

¹³ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

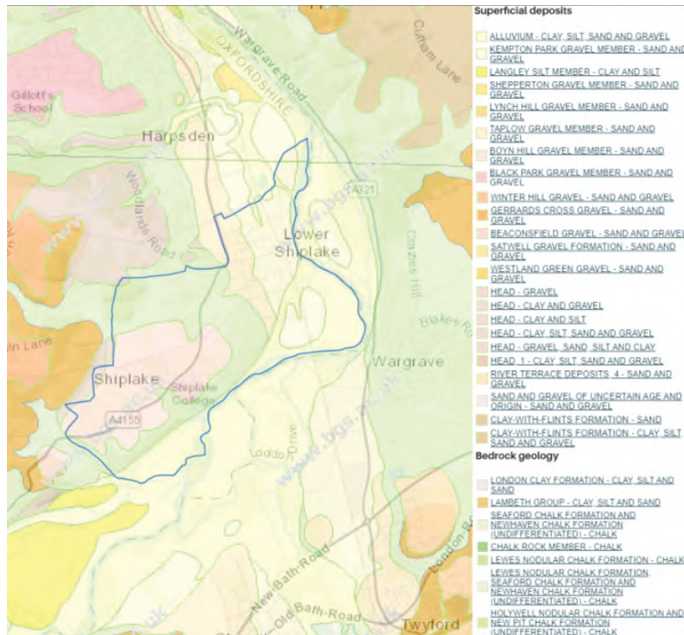


Figure 8. – British Geological Society Map viewer as accessed 26 April 2021 ¹⁴

3.4.10. The British Geological Society Map Viewer¹⁴ confirms that the bedrock geology of the Plan area comprises predominantly Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation. The superficial geology comprises Kempton Park Gravel member, Taplow Gravel Member and Alluvium.

3.4.11. The Soilscape map viewer confirms the soils of the Plan area to contain freely draining slightly acid loamy soils across much of the Plan area, slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage in the far west of the Plan area, loamy and clayey floodplain soils with naturally high groundwater along the river corridor and a small area of freely draining lime-rich loamy soils to the south of the Henley Road west of Shiplake College.

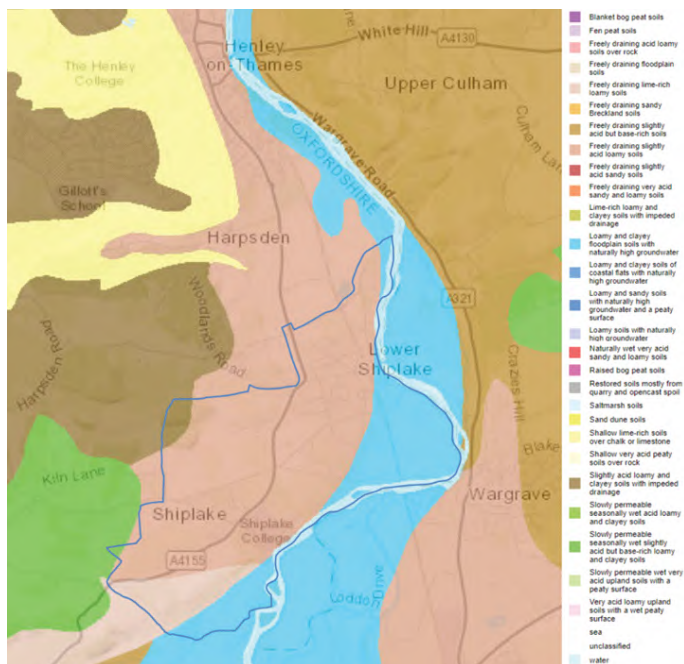


Figure 9. – Soilscape Map viewer as accessed 26 April 2021 ¹⁵

3.4.12. Recent data provided for the Thames Farm site has indicated that that site is underlain by “...deep seated disturbed ground across the site associated with karstic solution voids within the underlying Chalk, and shallow weak/disturbed ground” (see paragraph 1.2.1 of the JBA Technical Note on the Shiplake Parish Council website dated January 2021) ¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/>

¹⁶ <https://www.shiplakevillages.com/page-content/documents/1613039080-2020s1712%20-%20Thames%20Farm,%20Shiplake%20-%20Hydrogeological%20review%20FINAL.pdf>

3.4.13. The parish contains areas of land lying within flood zones 1, 2 and 3 (the areas most likely to flood being within zone 3, adjacent to the Thames river corridor).

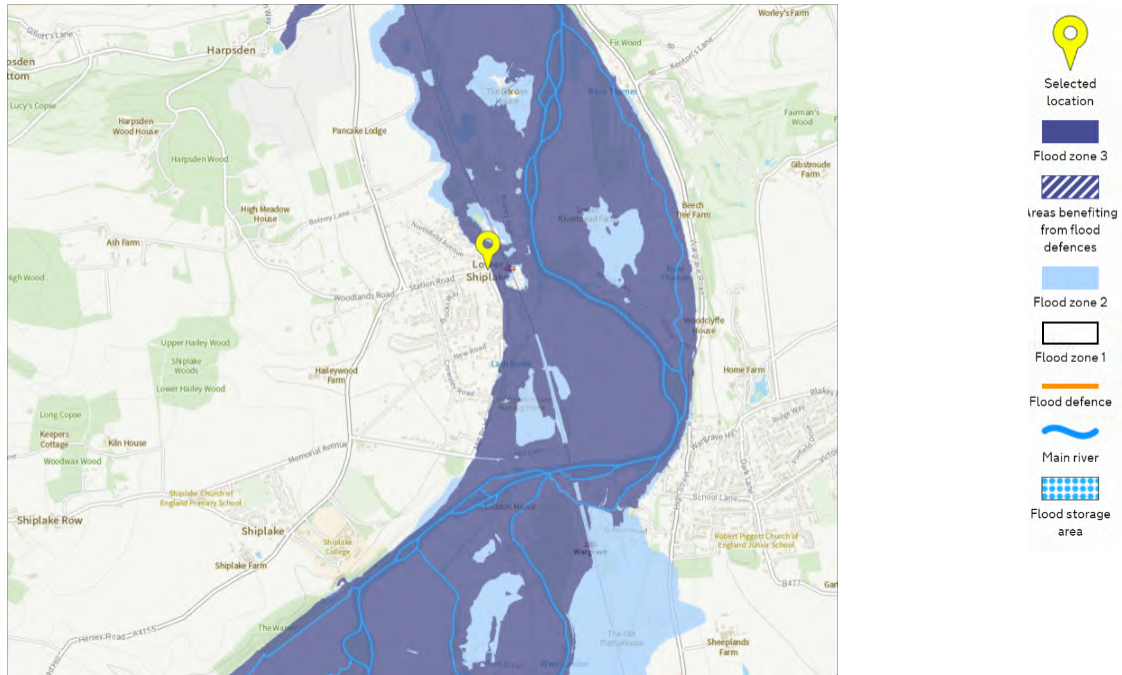


Figure 10. - River Flood Zones ¹⁷

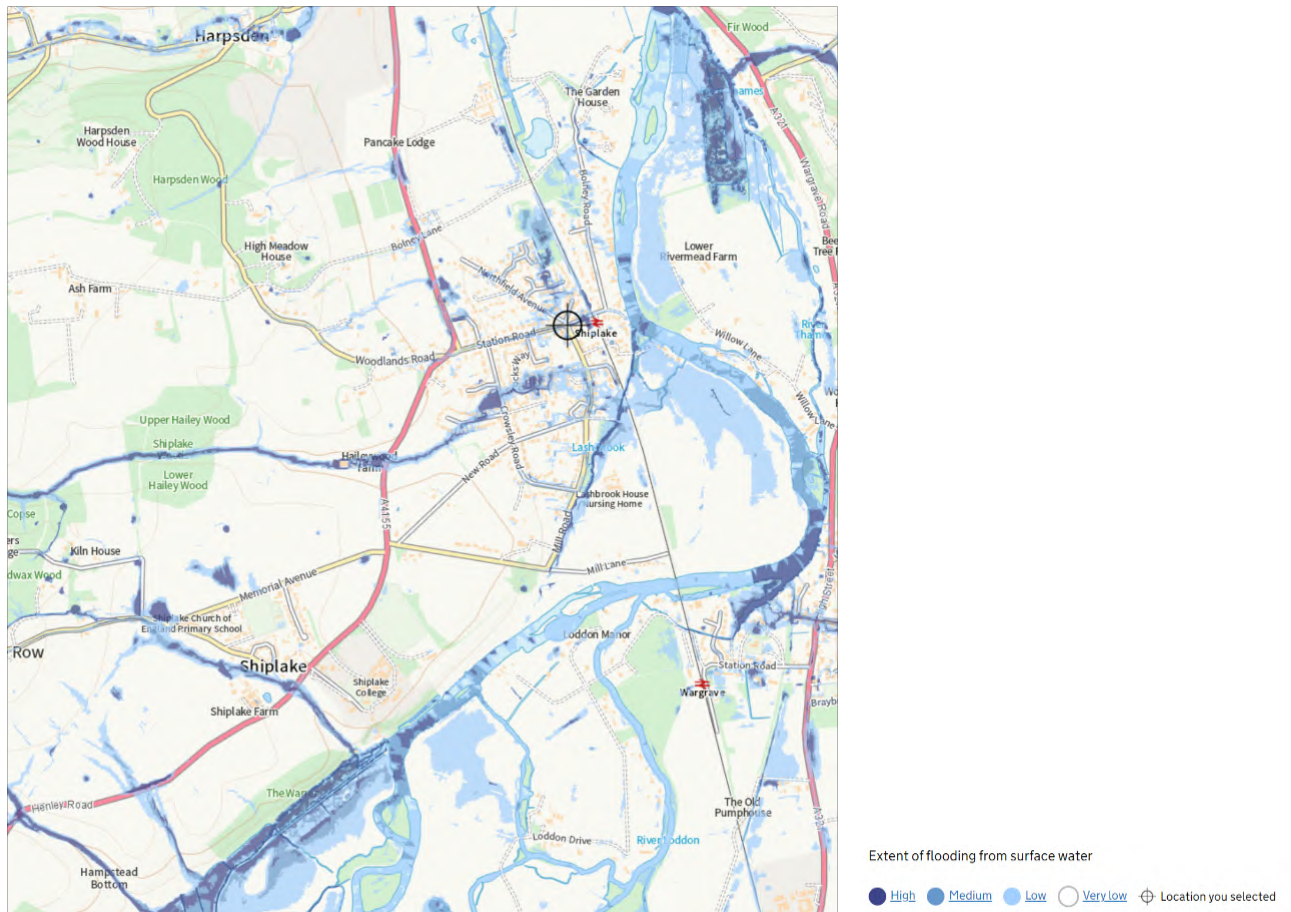


Figure 11. – Surface Water Flooding Risk ¹⁸

¹⁷<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

¹⁸<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/>

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1.1. The key issues that this Plan seeks to address are identified in terms of ‘themes’ which feed into the Vision Statement and Objectives in Section 5 below.

4.1.2. The evidence that had been gathered from the villages survey and subsequent exhibition has been augmented with further research on design and character, landscape and housing, in order to properly understand the issues that the Parish faces and will face over the lifetime of the Plan.

4.1.3. The ‘themes’ that emerged as a result of this further evidence gathering are as follows:

4.1.4. These themes are reflected in the Vision and Objectives set out in Section 5.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ‘THEMES’

- The Development Strategy

- Housing

- Landscape & Biodiversity

- Living in Shiplake

- Character & Design

5. VISION STATEMENT & CORE OBJECTIVES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. The overriding feeling of the community within the Parish of Shiplake is that it is a place that you never leave once you have arrived! The 2017 community survey revealed that a third of respondents have lived in the villages for more than 25 years and a further quarter have been residents for between 16 to 24 years.

5.1.2. Demographically, the population of the villages is predominantly middle-aged to elderly (27% in the 45-64-year age group, and 18% in the 65-84 age group¹⁹). It should be noted these figures, taken from the 2011 Census, are at variance with the data gained from the 2017 community survey.

5.1.3. We have a strong sense of identity and community. The overwhelming view of residents is that change and development of the villages must be managed carefully. Residents recognise, however, that improvements to community infrastructure and facilities and a different housing profile are needed in order to create an environment that makes it easier for older residents to stay in and younger generations to move into the parish.

5.1.4. The two villages in the Parish of Shiplake are close enough to have strong links but are separated by a good area of natural landscape and agricultural land. As a result, each village very much has its own sense of place and identity. There was in the survey an overwhelming desire for the landscape between the two villages to be maintained, with 85% in favour and 57% of residents wanting new housing development to be kept within the boundaries of the main settlements of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake. The remainder expressed the view that development should, if required, take place on the edge of the settlements. These three combined requirements are considered to be most important of all to the residents and have shaped the content of the Plan.

5.1.5. Both communities strongly value the space and 'greenness' we enjoy and want it to be retained, with 86% wanting inclusion of policies to protect the landscape and 78% wanting to retain the open spaces

we have now. The plan therefore seeks to provide policies to protect them both from inappropriate development.

5.1.6. Importantly, although we enjoy a common identity as Shiplake, the two villages are different and distinct. Both communities value their independence and the survey indicated that there are some differences in requirements and preferences for housing profile and community facilities between the two: for example, 29% of residents surveyed in Shiplake Cross wanted affordable housing against only 5% in Lower Shiplake. However, there is also an overwhelming and common desire across both settlements to maintain the look, feel and character of the villages as described above.

5.2 The Vision

5.2.1. Our vision for the villages is:

- to sustain and nurture what we have now and manage future development so that it positively contributes to the area;
- for a carefully managed evolutionary approach that facilitates sustainable growth in the villages whilst maintaining the high-quality landscape between and around the villages and the wider character of the plan area;
- to support the development of community facilities and infrastructure for the benefit of all; and
- to manage biodiversity and green infrastructure resources to maintain and enhance the character and quality of the plan area.

5.2.2. The vision reflects residents' views as stated in the Villages Survey completed in the Summer of 2017, responses to the exhibition of November 2017 and subsequent consultations.

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) '2011 Census Table KS102EW Age Structure', <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks102ew> [accessed 19 October 2019]

SHIPLAKE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN VISION TO 2035

“To preserve Shiplake as a rural parish containing two separate and distinct village settlements set within open countryside; to conserve and enhance the character of Shiplake and its villages in a way that allows the community to evolve whilst sustaining and improving core vital services and village attributes”

5.3 The Core Objectives

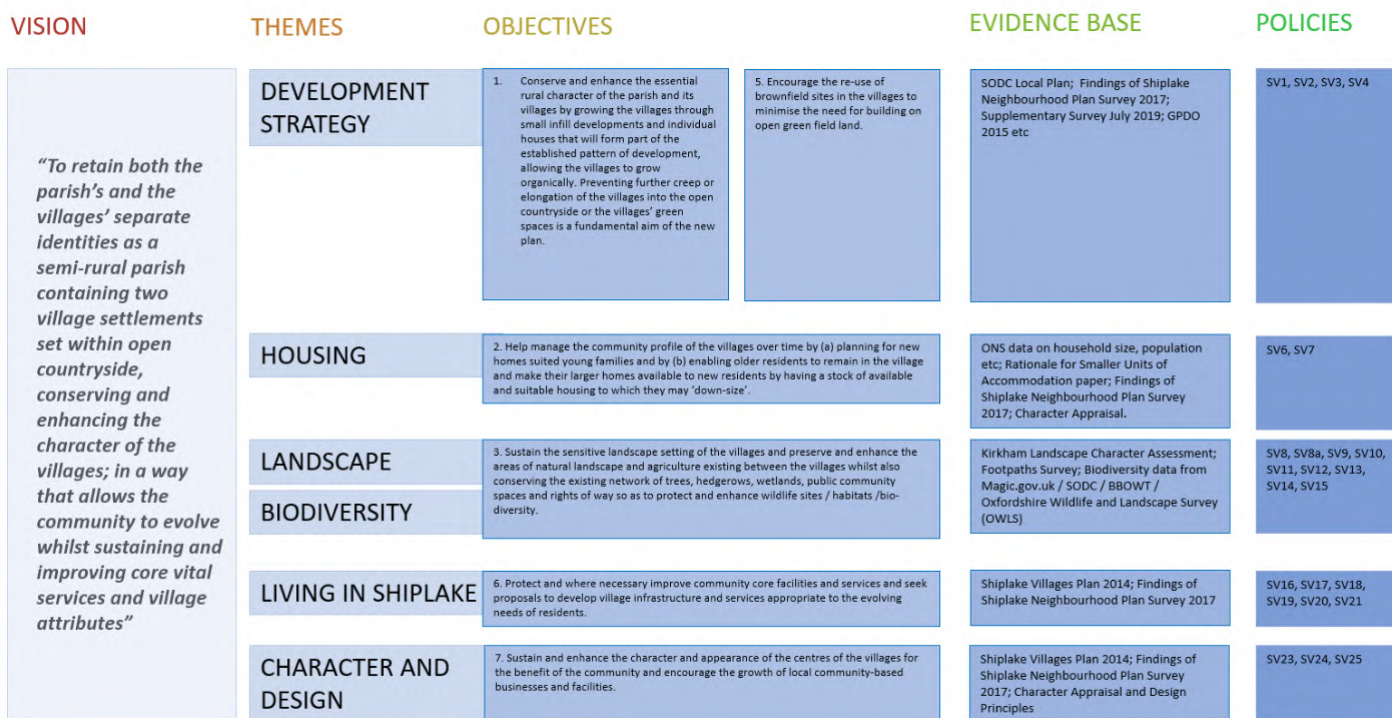
5.3.1. To achieve this vision, seven key objectives have been identified as follows (Source- 2017 Survey Results Report):

SHIPLAKE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CORE OBJECTIVES

1. Conserve and enhance the essential rural character of the parish and its villages by growing the villages through small infill developments and individual houses that will form part of the established pattern of development, allowing the villages to grow organically. preventing further creep or elongation of the villages into the open countryside or the villages’ green spaces is a fundamental aim of the new plan. (Source: Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 of 2017 Survey Results Report)
2. Help manage the community profile of the villages over time by (a) planning for new homes suited to young families and by (b) enabling older residents to remain in the village and make their larger homes available to new residents by having a stock of available and suitable housing to which they may ‘down-size’ (Source: Sections 4.3, 4.4)
3. Sustain the sensitive landscape setting of the villages and preserve and enhance the areas of natural landscape and agriculture existing between the villages whilst also conserving the existing network of trees, hedgerows, wetlands, public community spaces and rights of way so as to protect and enhance wildlife sites/habitats/bio-diversity. (Source: Section 4.5)
4. Provide a catalyst for inappropriate and non-conforming type uses (uses that impact adversely on the character and/or amenity of the centre) in the centre of Lower Shiplake to be released for residential-based development that accords with the other plan objectives (Source: Sections 4.5, 4.6)
5. Encourage the re-use of brownfield sites in the villages to minimise the need for building on open green field land (Source: Sections 4.4, 4.5)
6. Protect and where necessary improve community core facilities and services and seek proposals to develop village infrastructure and services appropriate to the evolving needs of residents (Source: Sections 4.5, 4.6)
7. Sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the centres of the villages for the benefit of the community and encourage the growth of local community-based businesses and facilities. (Source: Sections 4.5, 4.6)

5.3.2 As noted already, Objective 2 has now effectively been addressed as a result of the recently permitted schemes at Thames Farm, the retirement village, Wyevale, Mount Ida and others.

5.3.3 The way the Vision and Objectives interact with the policies and evidence base that informs each policy is shown in the following diagram:



6. PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Overview

6.1.1. The policies that have evolved from this process of identification of key themes, vision and objectives are described in the following sections of this Neighbourhood Plan.

6.1.2. Below is a summary table of all of the policies, grouped by theme:

Table 1 – List of Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan

POLICY REFERENCE	POLICY HEADING
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY THEME	
Policy SV1	Infill Development
Policy SV2	Rural Housing
Policy SV3	Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside
Policy SV4	Employment Development
HOUSING THEME	
Policy SV5	Dwelling Extensions
Policy SV6	Replacement Dwellings
LANDSCAPE & BIODIVERSITY THEME	
Policy SV7	Settlement Character
Policy SV8	Separation of Settlements
Policy SV9	Valued Landscapes
Policy SV10	Riverside Related Development
Policy SV11	Important Views
Policy SV12	Dark Skies and Lighting
Policy SV13	Biodiversity Net Gain
Policy SV14	Landscaping and Greening of the Environment
Policy SV15	Preservation and Replacement of Trees
LIVING IN SHIPLAKE THEME	
Policy SV16	Memorial Hall Enabling Development
Policy SV17	Infrastructure / Community Facilities
Policy SV18	Infrastructure / Community Aspirations
Policy SV19	New Development and Highway Safety
Policy SV20	Protection of Existing Rights of Way and Cycle Network
Policy SV21	Cycle Network, Rights of Way, Footpaths and other Routes
CHARACTER & DESIGN THEME	
Policy SV22	Village Centre Improvements
Policy SV23	Special Character Areas
Policy SV24	Building Materials / Design / Density / Layout

6.2 Development Strategy Theme

KEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES:

1. Conserve and enhance the essential rural character of the parish and its villages by growing the villages through small infill developments and individual houses that will form part of the established pattern of development, allowing the villages to grow organically, preventing further creep or elongation of the villages into the open countryside or the villages' green spaces is a fundamental aim of the new plan. (Source: Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 of 2017 Survey Results Report)
5. Encourage the re-use of brownfield sites in the villages to minimise the need for building on open green field land (Source: Sections 4.4, 4.5)

Development Strategy: Evidence Base

6.2.1. Through the Neighbourhood Plan Survey (2017) the residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area made clear that development should take place in preference within the built settlement areas rather than the open countryside; this was further echoed in the findings of the pre-submission consultation exercise conducted in 2020.

Housing Development

6.2.2. 57% of residents felt the best location for new housing to be within the existing boundaries of the main settlements of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake.

6.2.3. The March 2017 survey confirmed that the preference of residents was for the reuse of previously developed sites where possible for new development.

6.2.4. The 2020 pre-submission consultation exercise highlighted how strongly residents felt about development already happening within and outside, but on the edge of, Shiplake parish. Typical comments received included:

"...we do not agree with subdivision of properties and plots. In recent years this has

already happened, resulting in a higher population density, and disproportionately higher levels of traffic for the size of the village."

"...the need for smaller and affordable properties is being met"

"Sadly think the damage to our village is already done - having seemed to be powerless to stop Thames Farm, Engbers, and a residential complex for seniors."

"It makes no difference if we agree or not. Large developers (as we have seen here over 2019/2020) will literally bulldozer any applications through and build another several hundred 'dwellings'."

"Sub-division of houses, or greater density of housing, likewise should not be encouraged as the original target has been exceeded many times over..."

"Permissions has already been granted for 223 units at Thames Farm, Retirement Village, Wyevale, Mount Ida and elsewhere. Many of these units are smaller properties, 'affordable' homes and retirement apartments, thus the original objective of the NP has already been met seven times over."

6.2.5. These and many other responses demonstrate the depth of feeling around the capacity of the Plan area to accommodate further development. This is the most significant issue raised in the recent consultation exercises and it is symptomatic of a general feeling of the area being put under immense pressure from speculative and ad hoc development that is already irreversibly changing the character and form of the settlements. Concerns have also been expressed about the capacity of the villages' facilities to support ongoing large scale development and indeed the recently permitted development (e.g. schools, railway, roads, parking etc).

6.2.6. The community have made clear that a scale of development that is, in their opinion,

disproportionate to the size of the settlement, and far in excess of the growth scenario envisaged in the draft Local Plan (“...expected to be around a 5% to 10% increase in dwellings above the number of dwellings in the village in the 2011 census (minus any completions since 1 April 2011)” – extract from Local Plan 2011-2035 policy H8) has already been experienced, leading to great concern that the development plan is / has been unable to respond to pressure from housebuilders, often as a result of the planning appeal process, implying that these targets are of little if any value.

6.2.7. The NPPF 2021 promotes the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes (section 5) whilst recognising the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment (sections 15 and 16).

6.2.8. Rural housing and conversion of buildings is addressed at paragraphs 78-80, whilst the reuse of previously developed land is considered at paragraphs 120-121.

6.2.9. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan (adopted December 2020) supports the re-use of previously developed land as part of its strategy for the delivery of houses in South Oxfordshire within and adjacent to the existing built-up areas of towns, larger villages and smaller villages (policies H1/ H16).

6.2.10. Support is also given for infill housing development within smaller villages and other villages (policy H16). The policy is quite clear that such development can only take place within the smaller villages and other villages, and not on the edge of or outside those villages.

6.2.11. Rural exceptions housing is also supported (policies H1 / H10), as are redevelopment proposals albeit on a case-by-case basis (policy H1). Rural exception housing is supported by the NPPF 2021 at paragraphs 78-80.

6.2.12. This approach builds upon the approach set out in paragraph 5.14 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (adopted January 2006) and Core Strategy (adopted December 2012).

6.2.13. The re-use of rural buildings for residential purposes is supported in the NPPF 2021 at paragraph 80.

6.2.14. Subdivision of dwellings is controlled by Local Plan policy H17 subject to criteria concerning the impact of the subdivision on the amenity of occupants nearby, and scale/layout/parking/access/private amenity space.

6.2.15. Replacement dwellings outside the built-up limits of settlements are controlled by Local Plan policy H18. Within settlements replacement dwelling applications will normally be determined having regard to matters such as amenity, environmental and traffic considerations. Extensions to dwellings are covered by Local Plan policy H20, again giving consideration to scale, amenity space and parking.

6.2.16. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) establishes circumstances where permitted development rights exist to convert buildings into dwellings. Classes M and N allow the conversion of retail, takeaway and sui generis uses to dwellings; Class O allows the conversion of offices to dwellings; Class Q allows the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings; and, from 1st August 2021, Class MA will allow the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E (commercial, business and service) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellings).

6.2.17. The locally-relevant evidence base for the conversion of buildings is found in the Shiplake Landscape Character Appraisal (LCA) and the Shiplake Villages Character Assessment (CA) documents (see eg PLCAs 3 & 4 of the LCA document and Character Area 11 of the CA document).

Commercial Development

6.2.18. Planning for employment is addressed in section 6 of the NPPF 2021. Paragraph 84 supports the expansion of all types of businesses in the rural areas, through conversion of buildings and well-designed new buildings, agricultural diversification and sustainable rural tourism and leisure

6.2.19. Paragraph 85 explains that planning policies should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.

It explains that the use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

6.2.20. South Oxfordshire Local Plan policy EMP10 supports proposals for the reuse of rural buildings for employment use.

6.2.21. The Lichfields South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review 2015 (Addendum August 2017) notes (paragraphs 2.9-2.10) that:

“The overall net floorspace requirements that have been estimated by the scenarios range from 96,760sq.m (under the ‘baseline’ labour demand scenario) to 173,085sq.m (under the labour supply scenario) from 2011 to 2033. This implies a need for between 17.3ha and 32.6ha of employment land in net terms. In most cases, the majority of this spatial requirement relates to office (B1a/B1b) and distribution (B8) space.”

Applying a 10% buffer or margin to these net figures – to provide an illustration of indicative gross land requirements – increases this range to between 19.0ha and 35.9ha.”

6.2.22. It is therefore clear that there is a significant demand for employment land in the District and this is primarily in the B1 Use Class which is for employment activities that can operate without harm to residential amenity.

6.2.23. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) establishes circumstances where permitted development rights exist to convert buildings into commercial uses. For example, Class R allows conversion of agricultural buildings to flexible commercial uses; Class S allows conversion of agricultural buildings to a state-funded school or nursery; and a whole range of other commercial uses may be permitted as a result of a change of use by other parts of this Order.

6.2.24. The 2017 community survey found that over a quarter (26%) of respondents definitely or probably wanted allocation of land for a business hub for those who normally work alone at home or elsewhere. 23%

felt there should be allocation for food and restaurant use. As this is a non-allocating Neighbourhood Plan the approach advocated is not now being followed, but the support for commercial uses is nevertheless clear.

6.2.25. The following three occupation categories account for the greatest proportion of residents, according to the 2011 Census in Shiplake²⁰:

- Professional (or associate) occupations (26%);
- Managers, directors and senior officials (22.8%);
- Associate professional & technical operations (16.2%)

6.2.26. 65% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area work in the three highest occupational tiers, a significantly higher proportion than at district (50.4%), regional (44.8%) and national (41.2%) levels. This reflects the high proportion of highly qualified residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area and the high rate of home ownership.

6.2.27. The Shiplake villages are generally thriving, in part helped by community facilities and by well-supported local commercial amenities. The community facilities are centred in Shiplake Cross, with the church, the Memorial Hall and playing fields, the village nursery, primary school and tennis and bowls clubs. The commercial centre is in Lower Shiplake where there is a local shop and Post Office, a butcher, a garage (Shiplake Motors) a pub (The Baskerville Arms) all located at, or very close to, the central crossroads. There is another pub at Shiplake Cross (The Plowden Arms). Additionally, there are various home based (‘click economy’) businesses that benefit from the Post Office services, local rail and road transport links and the high-speed Broadband connection available. Together these meet residents’ basic needs, and residents also benefit from the full range of commercial enterprises located nearby in Reading and Henley-on-Thames.

6.2.28. There is little historic evidence of tourists specifically visiting Shiplake – apart perhaps from walkers passing through the villages – but there is a spill over of tourists going to Henley-on-Thames in particular during events such as the Henley Royal Regatta, the Henley Festival and Rewind, when they pass through or stay in Shiplake rather than Henley.

²⁰ Office for National Statistics (ONS) ‘Census 2011: ‘Occupation 2011’ (Table KS608EW)’, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks608ew> [accessed 19 October 2019]

The Baskerville Arms provides accommodation, there is a very small number of B&Bs and some houses offer Airbnb facilities. Of note however, during the recent Covid 19 crisis the community has experienced a very significant increase in visitors to the villages to use the river and local green spaces. This has provided added pressure on the local roads due to visitor traffic and parking demand and is something that will need to be taken account of in future planning applications.

6.2.29. The following indicates the residents' wishes for Commerce and Tourism (Source 2017 Survey Analysis Section 4.6):

- The vast majority of residents in both villages did not want manufacturing (82%) or small business units (64%) located in the villages;
- There was some support for encouraging tourism (36%) and marketing of the village (53%) and significant support for cycling routes that would help this (82%);
- A majority of residents supported more B&B accommodation in the villages (60%);
- A significant majority of residents supported the relocation of Shiplake Motors to free up land for new housing (70%)
- 45% of residents of Shiplake Cross compared with 27% of residents of Lower Shiplake wanted more employment opportunities

6.2.30. There were various suggestions for commercial enterprises that would improve quality of life for residents. This wish-list included: doctors' surgery; pharmacist; dentist; hairdresser; bakery; café; deli; more restaurants, pubs and shops; swimming pool; and gym. All have merit but most are outside the mandate of this plan and beyond the scope of village management and sustainability, unless possibly joined with other existing uses. Moreover, most have significant land-use implications which whilst desirable, would be difficult to plan for through the medium of a Neighbourhood Plan. It is also worth noting that many of these are available in nearby Henley and its suburbs.

6.2.31. Existing commercial operations and community facilities generally meet resident's needs.

However, within the context of developing better community facilities and also resolving some of the congestion issues, an imaginative solution for the centres of both villages may have merit.

Development Strategy: Policy Principles

6.2.32. The desire to see most development take place within the built settlement areas is a broad concern, but within that broad concern there are a number of principles that it has been determined are important to address. These principles are:

- The need to encourage the relocation of non-conforming land uses in residential areas within the villages to suitable relocation sites in close proximity thereby ensuring retention of jobs and services and enabling the relocated businesses to flourish with their existing sites being redeveloped
- Acknowledging the SODC support for infill development in the Neighbourhood Plan's settlements, but ensuring that all applications for infill development must meet other development plan policy requirements
- The need to manage any housing development that takes place in rural locations outside the villages, including managing the conversion of buildings in the countryside
- Support for employment development and protection of existing employment facilities

Development Strategy: Policies

6.2.33. These policies are intended to distinguish between the built-up areas of the main village settlements and their surrounding countryside, in order to manage development proposals accordingly. They should be read in conjunction with the landscape policies in the following sections of this Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2.34. Policies SV2 and SV3 deal with rural housing outside the built-up area of the villages (the built-up areas are defined by the boundaries of permanent, non-agricultural buildings located around the edge of the village settlements, where such properties are

directly connected to the village's main settled parts), and address specific needs (subdivision, conversions, agricultural workers' dwellings, permitted development and redevelopment of PDL) that are not addressed in other Neighbourhood Plan policies. This definition is consistent with the approach in Local Plan policy H16 which supports infill development *within* smaller villages and other villages (ie not on the edge of those villages, or outside those villages). Policy SV2 of the Plan has a very specific development management function. At the same time, it cross-references with policies elsewhere in the Plan and refines the approach taken towards the landscape character assessment (Policy SV9) and the Shiplake villages' character appraisal and design guide (Policy SV23).

6.2.35. Conversion of buildings including buildings of heritage value (which would include non-designated heritage assets where they are identified by the Local Planning Authority or Parish Council in the future) will require sympathetic treatment.

6.2.36. In defining the built-up area above (as referred to in policy SV1), applicants and the local planning authority will have certainty when preparing and determining planning applications respectively. The built-up areas are shown on Figure 12.

6.2.37. Consistent with the SODC Local Plan 2011-2035, new development will be supported in principle within the built-up areas of the villages, subject to it being appropriate in terms of its design, landscaping, layout, access and impact on amenity. This approach extends to infill housing, as well as new shops, businesses and other commercial activities that are appropriate in scale to a 'small village' with a limited road network, public transport / other services.

6.2.38. Landscapes on the fringes of settlements are particularly vulnerable to change and special attention should be paid to reduce the urbanising influences of development on adjacent countryside and to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

6.2.39. Consistent with Local Plan policy H16, policy SV1 supports infill development and redevelopment of Previously Developed Land (PDL) sites within the built-up parts of the villages. Relevant Development Plan policies include local plan policies H1, H8 and H16.

6.2.40. Policy SV3 provides flexibility for new commercial and recreational development to be supported where that development would be in accordance with local plan policies EMP10, EMP11, CF2 and CF3.).

6.2.41. This Neighbourhood Plan has not made provision for specific additional employment, community or retail sites on the edges of the villages. However, applications for appropriate community-enhancing uses will be considered on their merits.

6.2.42. Local communities and economies benefit from the activities of a vibrant local small business sector. However, small villages are not sustainable locations for the release of greenfield land for schemes of this type of development. The focus of policy SV4 is on supporting the improvement of the existing business locations in the parish and adjacent to it and enabling new development in the Plan area where and when suitable in all other respects.

6.2.43. Employment development that is located close to residential areas should be capable of being operated without harm to the amenity of residents. This generally restricts such employment development to activities in former Use Class B1 (offices / light industry / research and development) which has now been incorporated into the new Use Class E (commercial, business and services). That is the reason that policy SV4 specifically supports the development of such uses, because it is intended that new development of the type proposed should be capable of operating in locations near residential development. These are the areas that are most likely to be available for further employment development including through the conversion of buildings to employment use. The loss of all types of employment need to be justified as required by the final part of policy SV4.

6.2.44. We also intend to further explore the feasibility of enhancing the centres of the villages. The aim will be to help the village centres remain vibrant and able to meet the needs of the community and local businesses, to improve parking facilities for short term local use and to create a more inviting setting with planting where pedestrians will be encouraged to stop and interact. We will also consider the historic role played by the churchyard as a centre of village life.

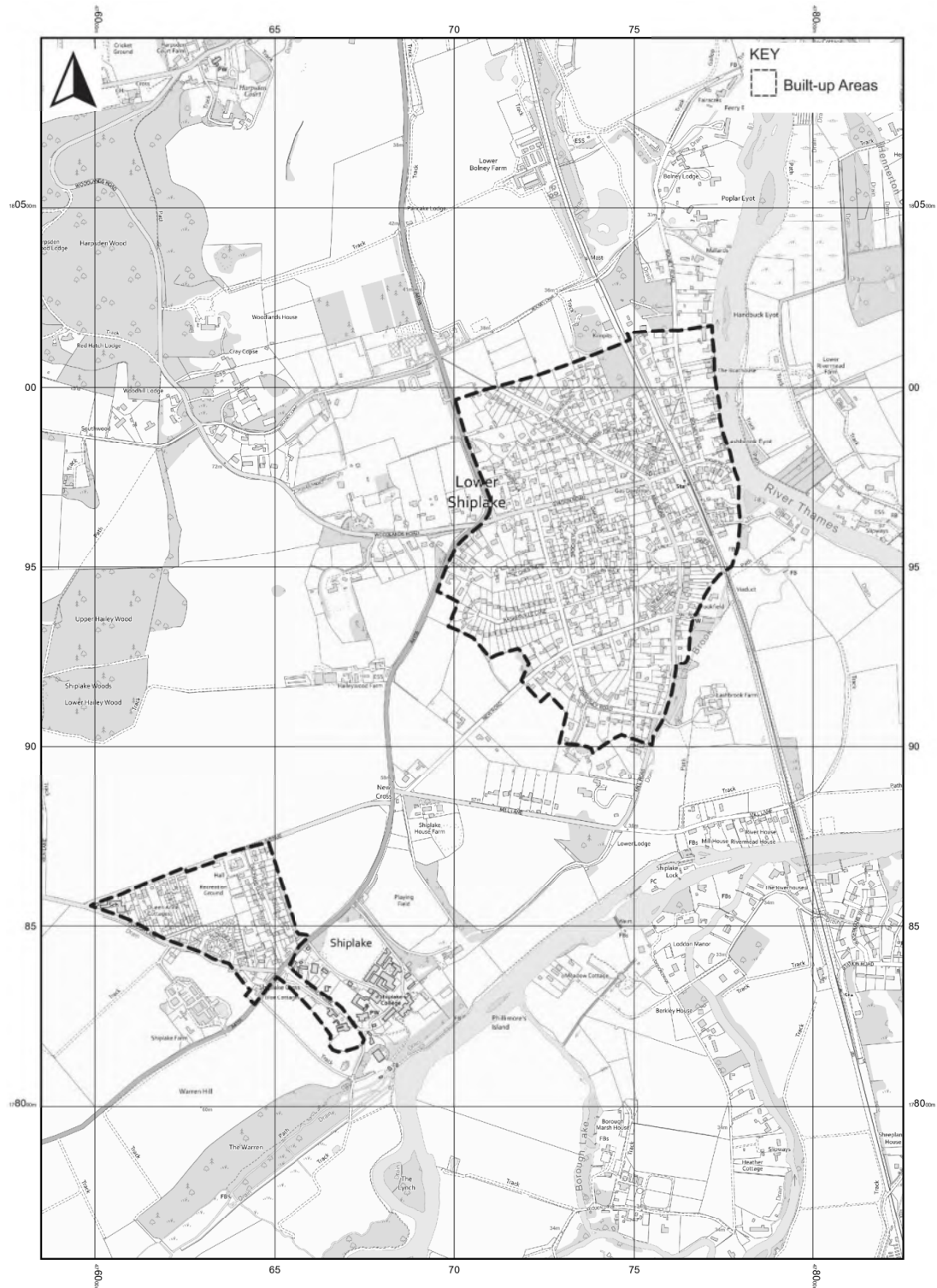


Figure 12 - Map of The Built up Area of the Villages

Policy SV1 - Infill Development

Within the built-up area of the villages, infill development and redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings will be supported, subject to compliance with other applicable policies including those in the Development Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy SV2 - Rural Housing

The development of additional dwellings in the open countryside will only be supported if they are necessary or suitable for a countryside location, consistent with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district and appropriate as defined in the NPPF from time to time, including where:

1. The development constitutes permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended or replaced); or
2. The purpose is to divide a larger existing dwelling into two or more smaller dwellings; or
3. The development involves the redevelopment of redundant or disused buildings and would not adversely affect the landscape or rural character of the countryside or area of valued landscape in which it is located; or
4. The development would deliver a rural worker's dwelling which meets the relevant tests; or
5. The development facilitates the future protection of a heritage asset (either through reuse or where such development would represent enabling development); or
6. The development would deliver a dwelling that is exceptional in terms of its design, and which respects the character of the locality, significantly enhancing the local landscape setting.

Policy SV3 - Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

Where planning permission is required, conversion of buildings outside the built-up area of the settlements, including works necessary to facilitate the conversion, should be sympathetic to the existing form, scale and character of its location and be appropriate to its rural context. Opportunities to better reveal any historic fabric

or traditional building form and layout will be supported. Proposals should respond to the character of both the built and natural environment.

Where the building is a building of heritage value, proposals which sustain or enhance the significance of the building will be supported. Proposals which would have a harmful impact on the significance of the building should demonstrate how the benefits would outweigh the loss or harm.

Policy SV4 – Employment Development

Proposals for uses offering local employment opportunities within Use Class E will be supported where:

- they do not unacceptably harm the residential amenity of dwellings in the immediate locality of the site concerned;
- they respect the character, appearance and landscape quality of the area;
- there is sufficient capacity in the local highway network to accommodate the vehicular traffic generated by the proposed development; and
- satisfactory access and car parking arrangements can be achieved.
- they accord with the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, in particular those dealing with the location of development and maintenance of the physical and visual separation of the settlements.

Proposals for the change of use of any employment facilities to non-employment uses will be supported where the proposal demonstrates compliance with the employment policies of the Development Plan.

6.3 Housing Theme

KEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES:

1. *Conserve and enhance the essential rural character of the parish and its villages by growing the villages through small infill developments and individual houses that will form part of the established pattern of development, allowing the villages to grow organically, preventing further creep or elongation of the villages into the open countryside or the villages' green spaces is a fundamental aim of the new plan. (Source: Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 of 2017 Survey Results Report)*

2. *Help manage the community profile of the villages over time by (a) planning for new homes suited young families and by (b) enabling older residents to remain in the village and make their larger homes available to new residents by having a stock of available and suitable housing to which they may 'down-size' (Source: Sections 4.3, 4.4)*

Housing: Evidence Base

6.3.1. The NPPF 2021 addresses the delivery of affordable housing²¹ both within and on the edge of settlements (paragraphs 64-67, 72 and 78). Good design is addressed in section 12 of the NPPF 2021 (paragraphs 126-135) and the effect of development on the surrounding areas is covered by many sections of the NPPF 2021, including sections 14, 15 and 16 (flood risk, the environment and heritage) in particular.

6.3.2. Local Plan policy H10 provides for the delivery of rural exception housing sites within or adjoining villages provided certain criteria are met. The general approach to development and the need for good quality development is set out in Local Plan policies H1 (delivering new homes), TRANS5 (transport

issues), ENV1-12 (environment) and DES1-10 (design).

6.3.3. Policies H18 and H20 are particularly relevant to policies SV5 and SV6 below; they establish detailed criteria against which replacement dwellings and extensions to dwellings will be assessed.

6.3.4. Policies H9, H10, H12 and H13 address the need for affordable housing and meeting specific housing needs in the Plan area (e.g. self-build and specialist housing for older people). Policies DES8, DES9 and DES10 deal with sustainable design, renewable and low carbon energy and carbon reduction respectively.

Housing Data

6.3.5. The 2011 Census reveals important data about the age structure in Shiplake parish as shown in table 2 below.

6.3.6. There are contrasts between the age structure of the Neighbourhood Plan area and the age structure found at district, regional and national levels. This is most apparent in the 25-44 age bracket which represents the smallest group in Shiplake but the largest for all other geographies. Correspondingly there are a greater proportion of both younger and older residents in Shiplake with 35.8% aged 24 or under compared with 28.5% in South Oxfordshire, 30.2% in the South East and 30.8 in England and 49.3% aged over 45 compared with 45.6% in South Oxfordshire, 43.3% in the South East and 41.7 in England.

6.3.7. The latest Office for National Statistics mid year population estimates (2019) suggest that the age profile has changed with the 60+ age group percentage for Shiplake increasing from 29.5% to 33.6%, the 25-44 age group falling from 14.9% to 11.1% and the 45-59 age group increasing from 19.8% to 21.8%.

Table 2 – Age Structure (2011)

Age	Shiplake	South Oxon	South East	England
0-15	23.6%	19.4%	19%	18.9%
16-24	12.2%	9.1%	11.2%	11.9%
25-44	14.9%	25.9%	26.5%	27.5%
45-59	19.8%	21%	19.9%	19.4%
60+	29.5%	24.6%	23.4%	22.3%
Total Population	1,954	134,257	8,634,750	53,012,456

²¹ Affordable Housing is defined in the NPPF 2021 Annex 2 as “Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions”: Affordable Housing for Rent; Starter Homes; Discounted Market Sales Housing; Other Affordable Routes to Home Ownership (eg shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy).

6.3.8. The Neighbourhood Plan area is located within two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Shiplake Cross falls within the South Oxfordshire 019B LSOA, code E01028660. Lower Shiplake and Shiplake College fall within the South Oxfordshire 019C LSOA, code E01028661.

6.3.9. Both LSOAs register many scores within the least-deprived 20% of LSOAs across England including several domains within the least-deprived 10%. This reflects the Neighbourhood Plan area’s relative affluence and is consistent with other similar indicators of affluence such as levels of home ownership and car ownership.

6.3.10. Despite this general trend both LSOAs register two domains/sub-domains within the top 20% most deprived. These are the ‘Barrier to Housing and Services’ domain plus the ‘Geographical Barriers’ subdomain and the ‘Indoors’ sub-domain. These domains and sub-domains measure issues such as physical proximity of local services and access to housing (including affordability). Typically, rural communities, even ones which other indicators suggest are relatively affluent, score weakly on these domains and sub-domains given their relative distance from larger service centres and their relative lack of affordability.

6.3.11. Table 3 below shows that there is a high rate of home ownership in the Neighbourhood Plan area. 78.5% of residents in Shiplake own their homes, a higher proportion of home ownership than at district, regional and national levels.

6.3.12. Correspondingly there is a small rental sector in the village with only 16.4% of residents in rented accommodation with 9.6% in the social rental sector and 6.8% in the private rental sector.

6.3.13. The 2017 Neighbourhood Plan Survey

focused in great part on the housing needs of the Parish. It revealed a significant demand for housing of mixed tenure and greater affordability. Some of the key findings were:

- 37% of respondents saying that their current home didn’t meet their needs felt their property was too large, with 11% saying it was too small. One in ten wanted to live independently.
- Those respondents wishing to move in the next ten years wanted detached private houses of three or fewer bedrooms (34%) or detached private houses with four or more bedrooms (25%). 22% would be interested in an apartment. Those living in Shiplake Cross (29%) were more likely to want affordable homes against a figure of 5% for Lower Shiplake.
- 28% of these residents believe there is an adequate choice of this housing type and size locally that will meet their needs, 72% did not believe this.
- The greatest demand for specific dwelling sizes were (in order of greatest demand)
 - detached private homes with three or fewer bedrooms (71%)
 - small semi-detached/terrace homes up to two bedrooms (70%)
 - larger semi-detached or terraced houses with three or more bedrooms (56%)
 - small bungalows with up to two bedrooms (55%)
 - sheltered accommodation for the elderly (50%)
 - detached private homes with four or

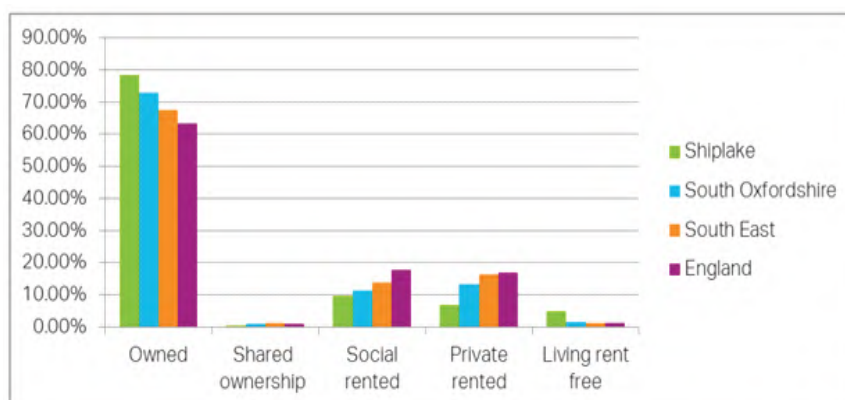


Table 3 – Tenure by Household ²²

²² Office for National Statistics (ONS) ‘Census 2011: Tenure-Households 2011 (Table QS405EW)’ <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs405ew>> [accessed 19 October 2019]

more bedrooms (45%)

- larger bungalows (39%)
- apartments (26%)
- houses of multiple-occupancy (4%)
- 63% would definitely or probably want owner-occupied only tenures and 49% were in favour of shared ownership. There was less encouragement for private and social rented tenures. 58% definitely or probably want a combination of the tenures listed.
- 53% of respondents definitely or probably wanted an affordable home (owned or rented).

6.3.14. Appendix 3 to the Neighbourhood Plan contains an assessment of the justification for the housing policies based upon recent planning permissions, National, District and Housing Market Area data and Development Plan policies.

6.3.15. Revealingly, it explains that in Shiplake Parish, 69.2% dwellings are detached, whereas the England average is 22.3% and the Oxfordshire average, 28.7%²³. In contrast, terraced and semi-detached properties are represented in numbers well below the Oxfordshire and England averages.

6.3.16. Only 1.8% of all dwellings in Shiplake are in Council Tax band A, 1.7% in band B and 2.4% in band C²⁴. This contrasts with the equivalent England figures of 24.2%, 19.6% and 21.8% respectively.

6.3.17. In affordability terms Shiplake has a ratio of 14.88 (median house prices as a ratio of median incomes²⁵) compared to the England average of 5.5.

6.3.18. Median house prices²⁶ for dwellings, semi-

detached and terraced dwellings in Shiplake are as follows:

6.3.19. The table indicates that there is a significant premium for all forms of dwelling types in the Neighbourhood Plan area, adversely affecting affordability. As Appendix 3 notes, in reference to migration patterns affecting the Parish, *“There would appear to be an exodus of families with teenagers and also young adults leaving, and middle-aged adults returning or moving in. Such a pattern of movement supports the affordability point viz, that accommodation is large and expensive locally and occupied on the whole by older and wealthier people.”*

6.3.20. Support has been expressed locally (as evidenced from some responses to the pre-submission consultation exercise in 2020) for housing for those who are on lower incomes, such as health care workers.

Housing Design & Character

6.3.21. The evidence supporting policies SV5 and SV6 is contained primarily in the Character Appraisal document which contains detailed analyses of the qualities and characteristics of the built form within the villages.

6.3.22. In particular the Character Appraisal document has highlighted that in a number of areas in the parish (see the key findings and design guidelines for areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9), inappropriate extensions to dwellings may have a number of adverse impacts on the overall character of the area.

6.3.23. As a whole, the Parish is largely comprised of

Table 4 – Median House Prices

Dwelling Type	Median House Price January 2021 (South Oxfordshire)	Median House Price January 2021(UK)
Detached	£712,362	£382,964
Semi-detached	£ 428,776	£241,084
Terraced	£ 353,023	£ 203,170
Flat	£ 244,004	£ 208,960

²³ Office for National Statistics ‘Census 2011 (table KS401EW)’ < <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks401ew>> [accessed online 19 October 2019]

²⁴ OCSI Local Insight Profile for Shiplake dated 21st January 2021. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/districtdata/downloads/file/1334/2020_shiplake_parish_report [accessed 06 April 2021]

²⁵ OCSI Local Insight Profile for Shiplake dated 21st January 2021. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/districtdata/downloads/file/1334/2020_shiplake_parish_report [accessed 06 April 2021]

²⁶ Land Registry, ‘House Price Index’ (2020-2021) [https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/compare?in=avg&location\[\]=K02000001&location\[\]=E07000179&st=det&lang=en](https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/compare?in=avg&location[]=K02000001&location[]=E07000179&st=det&lang=en) [accessed 06 April 2021]

loose knit development with substantial gaps between buildings, often framed by significant landscaping. It is a key theme running throughout the majority of the individual character areas. Whilst the Character Appraisal looks at these individually, it is essential that any extension to dwellings must preserve the existing built form to plot size ratio of the area it is in.

6.3.24. Extensions should be subservient to the original building and reflect the palette of materials and details set out in the Character Area section of the Appraisal to which it relates.

6.3.25. The removal of important vegetation to enable development will not be considered acceptable, particularly in the majority of areas which do not have the street scene dominated by the built environment. Where it is deemed necessary to remove planting, suitable replacement planting should be proposed and undertaken.

6.3.26. Contemporary development is welcomed where it is adequately supported and justified within a Design and Access Statement, having undertaken a contextual analysis as part of the design process.

6.3.27. Over time, many of the smaller dwellings within the Parish have been redeveloped for much larger properties. Whilst many replacement dwellings have clearly been successful in design terms, there appear to be a number which are designed solely in response to a client brief as opposed to being in keeping with site and its surroundings.

6.3.28. Where replacement dwellings are proposed, the key findings and design guidelines of the specific character area in which the site is located should be followed.

6.3.29. In many areas where there is a consistent appearance or style of building which predominates, developers should carefully consider how a replacement building will sit in its surroundings, taking note of adjacent properties.

6.3.30. Where redevelopment is taking place on many of the substantially sized plots, there is often no one single theme or consistent design in an area (such as areas 3 and 6 for example). In this instance, there is further opportunity for the creation of high quality,

individual dwellings. In all instances however, the design should be rooted in an understanding of the context of the site. Contemporary development is welcomed where it is adequately supported and justified within a Design and Access Statement, having undertaken a contextual analysis as part of the design process.

6.3.31. A key factor in the replacement of any dwelling will be the built form to plot size ratio, which should remain consistent with other dwellings in the area.

6.3.32. Important gaps between buildings should not be diminished, nor should key vegetation be removed, particularly in areas 3 and 6, which are contained by their landscape.

6.3.33. Buildings which are currently concealed or partially visible in the landscape on the edge of the settlement, such as those in areas 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 11, should not be replaced by buildings which are more visually intrusive. Development must respect the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment and not adversely impact on key views identified, valued landscapes and the AONB and its setting.

Heritage Evidence

6.3.34. The Neighbourhood Plan area contains ten listed buildings of which one, the church of St Peter and St Paul, is Grade II* and the other nine are Grade II. Eight of these are clustered in the area around Shiplake College. The remaining two listed buildings are in Lower Shiplake although as one of these is the war memorial that leaves The White House as effectively the only listed building in Lower Shiplake. This reflects the evolution of Shiplake as a dispersed settlement as the village was historically focused around the Shiplake College site with Lower Shiplake growing much later with the advent of the railway.

6.3.35. The National Heritage List for England²⁷ records no scheduled monuments in the Neighbourhood Plan area²⁸. There are no designated historic parks and gardens and no Conservation Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

6.3.36. Since 2008, Historic England has released an

²⁷Historic England 'National Heritage List for England' (2019) <<http://list.historicengland.org.uk>> [accessed 19 October 2019]

²⁸Historic England, 'Registered Parks and Gardens' (2019) <<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/whats-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>> [accessed 19 October 2019]

annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I, Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. The 2020 Heritage at Risk Register for the South East²⁹ does not record any historic features within the Neighbourhood Plan area as being at risk.

6.3.37. The map of listed buildings in the Plan area is found on page 24 of the Character Appraisal and is reproduced below and the corresponding schedule of listed buildings is found at Appendix 2 to this Plan.

6.3.38. Key features and landmarks of cultural and



- 1 no. Grade II* Listed Buildings - The Church
- 9 no. Grade II Buildings and structures including a number of school buildings, Shiplake House, structures around the church including the memorial and wall and gate.



Figure 13 -Map of Designated Heritage assets in the Parish (with Shiplake College inset)

²⁹ Historic England, 'Heritage at Risk 2017 Register – South East' (2020), <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2020-registers/lon-se-har-register2020/>> [accessed 04 April 2021]

heritage value are also included in the Landscape Character Assessment (fig 6). This figure is reproduced below:

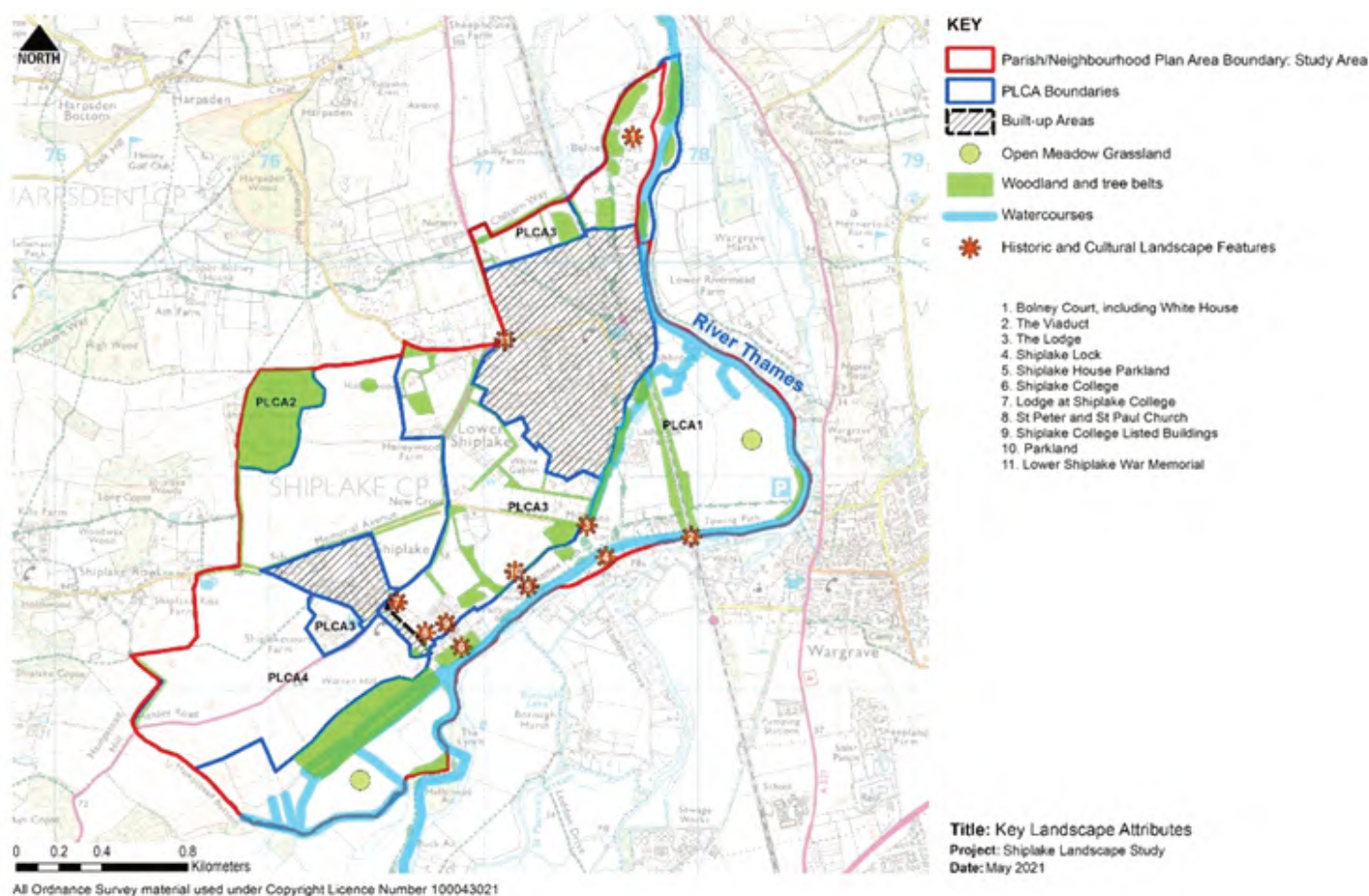


Figure 14 – Historical, Cultural and Landscape Features (including Green and Blue Infrastructure)

Housing: Policy Principles

6.3.39. This evidence is clear in justifying a policy approach that ensures development helps to meet the needs of the community over the life of the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.3.40. The evidence has led to a range of policy principles:

- Where land becomes available for residential development, to encourage the construction of suitably sized and priced dwellings of a design and size that shall be affordable to younger families and those seeking to down-size from larger accommodation, whilst remaining within the local area/parish.
- The need to encourage applicants to

demonstrate how their development meets the needs of the local community

- The need to avoid the creation of overly-large dwellings as a result of extensions
- The need to manage the size of replacement dwellings within their plot

Housing: Policies

6.3.41. Policy SV5 deals with the need to have regard to the Character Appraisal and Design Code that supports this Neighbourhood Plan. Further information is provided in Section 6.6 below.

6.3.42. Policy SV6 deals with the replacement of dwellings and the need to manage their size and potential for impacts on residential amenity effectively. This is particularly important given the propensity for smaller dwellings to be replaced by larger dwellings leading to a reduction in the space between dwellings and a proliferation of larger dwellings with associated impacts on the amenity of neighbours and the character of the area. Used effectively, the policy will deliver a form of development that is consistent with the prevailing character of the area.

Policy SV5 – Dwelling Extensions

Proposals for extensions to existing dwellings will be supported where they respond positively to the guidance in the Character Appraisal and Design Principles. Such proposals should not lead to over-development of the site.

Policy SV6 – Replacement Dwellings

The replacement of a dwelling will be permitted provided that the dwelling to be replaced:

- is not a building of heritage value, unless the scale of any harm or loss and the degree of significance of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits; or
- is not considered to contribute positively towards the landscape character or built environment in which it is located.

Replacement dwellings should contribute towards enhancing the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan policies SV7, SV23 and SV24.

Replacement dwellings should be designed and positioned to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residential properties. In particular they should seek to maintain the previous amount of separation to either side of the new dwelling. The inclusion of additional planting between the replacement dwelling and its neighbouring properties will be particularly supported provided it does not lead to an unacceptable loss of daylight or it creates overshadowing for any of the properties concerned.

³⁰ DCLG, 'Nationally Described Space Standards', (2015) <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf> [accessed 10 October 2019]

6.4 Landscape/Biodiversity Theme

KEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES:

1. *Conserve and enhance the essential rural character of the parish and its villages by growing the villages through small infill developments and individual houses that will form part of the established pattern of development, allowing the villages to grow organically, preventing further creep or elongation of the villages into the open countryside or the villages' green spaces is a fundamental aim of the new plan. (Source: Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 of 2017 Survey Results Report)*

3. *Sustain the sensitive landscape setting of the villages and preserve and enhance the areas of natural landscape and agriculture existing between the villages whilst also conserving the existing network of trees, hedgerows, wetlands, public community spaces and rights of way so as to protect and enhance wildlife sites/habitats/bio-diversity. (Source: Section 4.5)*

Landscape and Biodiversity: Evidence Base

6.4.1. NPPF 2021 paragraphs 120 and 174 – 182 deal with the effects of development on the landscape and biodiversity, establishing a wide range of criteria against which development will be assessed and also defining the means by which policies in development plan documents can protect these important assets.

6.4.2. Policies of key importance in relation to the policies under this theme include Local Plan policies ENV1 (landscape and countryside), DES1 (delivering high quality development) and DES2 (enhancing local character).

6.4.3. Other policies that are critical in informing the policies below are the biodiversity policies ENV2 and ENV3. Policy ENV1 protects the landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames, its tributaries and flood plains.

6.4.4. Policies ENV1 and ENV4 deals with the effects of development on the landscape and in particular the Chilterns AONB and River Thames corridor respectively. Policy ENV3 seeks to achieve a net

biodiversity gain and policy ENV2 provides the policy framework for the protection of sites and habitats of importance. Policy ENV5 seeks to enhance the green infrastructure network within the District.

6.4.5. Through the Neighbourhood Plan Survey (2017) and subsequent feedback in the 2020 pre-submission consultation exercise, the community in Shiplake Parish has made clear their concerns in a number of areas:

- The villages should remain distinct and separate settlements
- The areas of open countryside between the villages should remain, representative of a rural environment (85% of respondents made this point in the 2017 survey)
- Development should be quite limited in its extent and scale
- Development should take place in preference within the built settlement areas rather than the open countryside
- Dark star-lit skies are important to residents (75% all respondents made this point in the 2017 survey)
- 86% of respondents in the 2017 survey definitely or probably wanted the inclusion of a policy to enhance the protection of the landscape
- 82% of respondents in the 2017 survey wanted the positive management of the varied local wildlife
- 81% of respondents in the 2017 survey sought the enhanced protection of historic and natural features

6.4.6. The policies below have been developed to respond to these issues and other issues arising from the review of evidence.

Landscape Evidence

6.4.7. The Chilterns AONB intersects with a small part of the north west corner of the Neighbourhood Plan Area where AONB designation extends to Upper and Lower Hailey Wood. Although the majority of the rest of the area is separated from the AONB by parts of neighbouring Binfield Heath Parish and Harpsden

Parish, parts of the Plan area fall within the setting of the Chilterns AONB.

6.4.8. The Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the Chilterns National Character Area (NCA). National Character Areas (NCAs) are landscape areas which share similar characteristics, following natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Developed by Natural England, NCA profiles describe the natural and cultural features that shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character.

6.4.9. The following key characteristics of the Chilterns NCA are of particular relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan area ³¹.

- Although part of the Chilterns, the area is dominated by the River Thames and its floodplain rather than the Chiltern Hills with the river providing a focus for settlement and recreation
- The character of the area is strongly informed by a landscape which is “extensively wooded and farmed” with countryside featuring “a patchwork of mixed agriculture with woodland, set within hedged boundaries”
- The Chilterns dip slope, with the character of a plateau, falls gently to the south-east, cut by a series of branching valleys
- Extensive rights of way provide access to the countryside

6.4.10. The 2017 South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment ³² found that much of the Plan area, including Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake, is located within a character area of ‘semi-enclosed dip slope’. This is characterised by sloping ground and minor valley featuring a mixture of medium and smaller scale fields and a predominantly rural character. Shiplake College area was found to be in a character area of ‘parkland and estate farmland’ characterised by a well-managed and unspoilt parkland character with formal features and a more enclosed character. There are also two separate areas of ‘flat floodplain pasture’ adjacent to the Thames

characterised by flat, low-lying farmland with a pastoral character.

6.4.11. The Parish Council appointed Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd /The terra firma Consultancy Ltd to undertake a Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Assessment; and to make recommendations, based upon good landscape evidence, of the need (or otherwise) for Valued Landscapes. The Landscape Character Assessment can be found at Appendix 4 to this Plan.

6.4.12. Overall the Landscape Character Assessment provides a transparent, consistent, and objective approach to understanding the sensitive and valued landscape and visual attributes of the Parish and to provide the Parish and Local Planning Authority officers with evidence of valued landscapes where the potential landscape and visual impacts would be greatest.

6.4.13. The Landscape Character Assessment defines four Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCAs) which highlight unique combinations of elements and features (characteristics) that make these landscape areas valued and distinctive. These PLCAs are:

- 1. River Thames Meadows and Terraces**
- 2. Shiplake Woods (AONB)**
- 3. Shiplake Semi-Enclosed Dipslopes**
- 4. Shiplake Open Dipslopes**

6.4.14. They are highlighted in figure 15 overleaf.

6.4.15. Both the Landscape Character Assessment and the Character Appraisal set out a summary of development principles and guidelines appropriate to each area. Below is a brief overview of the findings of these documents and how they have been used to inform Neighbourhood Plan policies

6.4.16. The Parish lies between the River Thames to the east and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty to the west, with a small part of the AONB (Shiplake Woods) lying within the Parish.

6.4.17. Although only a small part of Shiplake falls within the AONB, the above figure shows that the

³¹ Natural England, ‘NCA Profile 110: ‘Chilterns’, (2013), <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697?category=587130>> [accessed 01 November 2019].

³² South Oxfordshire District Council, ‘Landscape Character Assessment – Final Draft Report’, (2017), <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=788092192&CODE=4650A3652852911819269B1BB795E501> [accessed 01 November 2019]

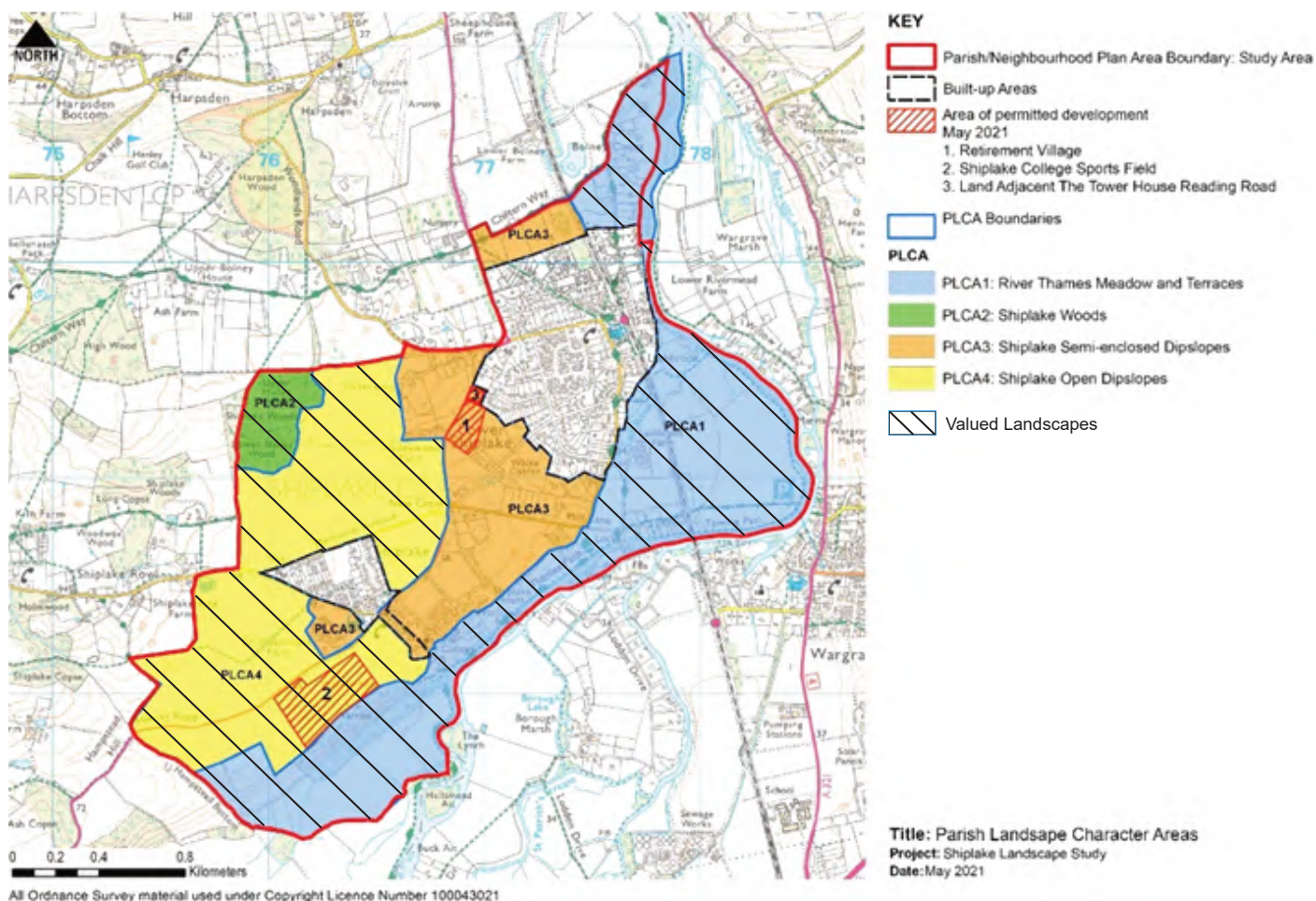


Figure 15 – Map of Parish Landscape Character Areas and Valued Landscapes

Study Area falls within the setting of the AONB. There is a high level of intervisibility between the edge of AONB and the Parish with views from the edge of Shiplake Woods over Shiplake to the Thames Valley and views from Shiplake up the open farmland to the AONB edge.

6.4.18. Paragraphs 176-177 of the NPPF 2021 explains that:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in ... Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues..... The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.....Permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances...."

6.4.19. The Chilterns Conservation Board put forward an application for a boundary review of the Chilterns

AONB in 2013. Such an extension could see further land within the Plan area designated as AONB, which is supported by Shiplake Parish Council. In May 2018 the government asked for an independent review into whether the protection for National Parks and AONBs are still fit for purpose. In particular, what might be done better, what changes will help and whether the definitions and systems in place are still valid. Shortly after, the AONB board also submitted a request that the National Park status be considered. The publication of the final report (also known as the Glover Review) took place in September 2019 and recommended that the Chilterns becomes a National Park. At this point in time, the AONB boundary review application is still pending, but could be overtaken by events in response to the Glover review. The implications of this however are important in that it highlights the potential for a National Park designation within the Plan area or a greater AONB area.

6.4.20. Outside of the AONB, the NPPF 2021 paragraph 174 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local

environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.....”

6.4.21. The Landscape Character Assessment carefully examines these landscapes and in addition to those areas identified as AONB, it also assesses whether those areas outside the AONB are valued (i.e. as falling within NPPF 2021 definition) in terms of those features shared with the AONB or identified as worthy of conservation and enhancement.

6.4.22. Following assessment, landscape character areas 1,2 and 4 have been found to be valued landscapes as set out in the NPPF 2021 (with more details set out in the relevant section of the Landscape Character Assessment) or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6.4.23. In general, however, the areas are found to:

- Make an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB;
- Be subject to a landscape strategy to ‘conserve’, an indicator of landscape value under the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) by the Landscape Institute and I.E.M.A.;
- Contain many landscape features of value in their right – as set out above; and
- Be set well above an ‘ordinary’ countryside.

River Thames Meadows and Terraces

6.4.24. This area (highlighted in blue in figure 15above) contains a number of landscape types which run alongside and are connected by the River Thames. These include flat open areas of floodplain under pasture, wooded river cliffs and terraces and the remnant parkland associated with riverside residences taking advantage of higher ground and views.

6.4.25. The area is considered to contribute to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements by making a major contribution to the riparian character of the eastern edge of the built up area of Lower

Shiplake, with its open meadows, Lash Brook, and tree enclosed railway line.

6.4.26. There are a number of key development and visual guidance principles (which are illustrated on page 15 of the Character Appraisal):

- a. Conserve the largely development free large-scale open floodplain
- b. Conserve and enhance the riverside character of the area around adjacent to the open floodplain. This is to be achieved by:
 - Avoiding over-development of plots (retention of vegetation and gaps between buildings).
 - Avoid dominant buildings along the river bank
- c. Maintain the undeveloped wooded character of the river islands (including setting);
- d. Retain and improve access to the River Thames including the Tow path adjacent the river through rear gardens;
- e. Avoid the expansion of the domestic curtilage of Andrew Duncan House and improve the boundary edge treatment to the wider floodplain;
- f. Avoid urbanising of low density, well vegetated plots on the edge of PLCA1 including residential entrances and garden boundaries in particular along Mill Lane and Mill Road.
- g. Maintain identified important views
- h. Avoid development which would harm the setting of the Heritage Assets at Shiplake College

Shiplake Woods

6.4.27. Shiplake Woods (highlighted in green in figure 15 above) includes Upper Hailey Wood and Lower Hailey Wood (both ancient woodland). It is located on the middle Chiltern Dipslopes within the Chilterns AONB. The wood has an unspoilt rural landscape character and includes areas of ancient woodland.

6.4.28. There is a public right of way along the western edge of the area, with permissive paths crossing throughout in addition to one running alongside the eastern edge. This makes it popular for informal recreation.

6.4.29. It is a prominent feature in the landscape and can be seen from both Memorial Avenue, Upper Cross and Shiplake Cross itself. Therefore, any development between the two areas would need to be carefully considered to ensure that it does not have an impact on the setting of the AONB.

6.4.30. The area is considered to contribute to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements through the open landscape above Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake, which forms the undeveloped setting for Shiplake Woods along its eastern edge. The woods are visible from the edge of Shiplake Cross (Memorial Avenue) and provide a strong visual link from this area to the Chilterns AONB.

6.4.31. There are a number of key development and visual guidance principles (which are illustrated on page 16 of the Character Appraisal):

- a. Resist any built features or development including modern boundary treatments (fences etc.) and vehicular access tracks due to impact on AONB;
- b. Maintain permissive footpaths (throughout and along eastern edge) links to Shiplake Cross and the wider Chilterns AONB.
- c. Maintain irregular eastern edge of woodland;
- d. Maintain open rural setting to the woods;
- e. Maintain open rural views to screened Lower Shiplake and beyond to the hills above Wargrave due to impact on the setting of the AONB.

Shiplake Semi Enclosed Dipslopes

6.4.32. The area (highlighted in orange in figure 15 above) is a small-scale landscape with a mix of small to medium sized fields under pasture and arable farmland, in addition to the extensive grounds to Shiplake College. Within the landscape are also semi-rural individual houses, with heavy tree and mature hedgerow cover.

6.4.33. It is considered to be an interesting example of where this AONB landscape type extends down into the Thames Valley and creates a pastoral, rather than wooded setting, to the river landscape.

6.4.34. The area is distinguished by its role in wrapping around the two settlements and Shiplake College retaining a distinct pastoral and domestic landscape setting to these villages. The landscape strongly contrasts with the adjoining settlement built form, even where there is very low density development as off Mill Lane. These are also clearly separated from the built-up areas by the mature boundaries which reflect the historic pattern of tree lines in the area. They ensure that Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross retain their distinct settlement pattern and 360° rural setting. The fields closest to the villages retain strong connectivity, both visually and physically with their rural neighbours, whilst the openness of the pastoral fields contribution equally to the rural character as the mature tree and hedgerow boundaries.

6.4.35. There are a number of key development and visual guidance principles (which are illustrated on page 17 of the Character Appraisal):

- a. Maintain the open views of the river Thames corridor from the edge of the river terraces, in particular from Shiplake College;
- b. Avoid any development within the area that would impinge of the rural character of the views from Shiplake Woods and the open dipslopes eastwards over the area to the river corridor and hillsides to the east.
- c. Special regard to be had to the views from the edge of the Chilterns AONB;
- d. Avoid any development that would detract from the semi-rural character of views from the River Thames Meadow and Terraces PLCA1 to PLCA3. In particular avoid development that would introduce inappropriate development in the terrace skyline;

- e. Retain the sense of visual enclosure created by mature tree lines and hedgerows (see important trees and hedgerows within figure 14 above in addition to the tree lined roads plan below (figure 20);
- f. Maintain the visual separation of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake;
- g. Conserve and enhance the semi-rural character of the area around New Road/Mill Lane/Mill Road, including the pattern of large properties in large grounds with extensive tree cover and mature tree and hedgerow boundaries;
- h. Conserve and enhance the special character of Shiplake College, retaining its pattern of open grounds and tree cover, and conserving the well landscaped setting to the listed buildings;
- i. Conserve and enhance the wooded and tree covered character of the housing along Woodlands Road;
- j. Maintain the physical open countryside separation of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake;
- k. Maintain the rural character of the minor lanes and the Reading Road by retaining roadside tree lines, native hedgerows and grassed verges;
- l. Avoid features such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanise the area;
- m. Provide substantive native tree and hedgerow buffers (through retention and new planting) between any approved expansion of either settlement and the wider landscape to screen the development and integrate the new settlement edge into its landscape setting;
- n. Redevelopment of any land in existing residential, agricultural or commercial use should maintain the current mass and scale of built form, protect the current very low-density pattern of built form and the dominance of open space and tree/hedgerow cover within the plots of land;
- o. Conserve the rural approach to Shiplake Cross from the west along the Reading Road by retaining the agricultural character of Shiplake Farm and its agricultural setting;

- p. Avoid any development around Shiplake Cross which would urbanise the rural setting of Shiplake College;
- q. Retain the pastoral character of the rural approach to Lower Shiplake from Henley.

Shiplake Open Dipslopes

6.4.36. The area (highlighted in yellow in figure 15 above) forms part of the open farmed plateau above the Thames valley river cliff and below the wooded Chilterns to the north-west. It has a strong rural character with limited views of the settlement edge of Shiplake Cross and limited views of the buildings within Lower Shiplake.

6.4.37. There are long views to the east and south east and across the Thames River valley to the wooded Bowsey Hill; with open rural settings of the farmsteads Shiplake Farm and Haileywood Farm.

6.4.38. This is an open landscape with strong visual and landscape links to the adjacent Chilterns AONB/ Shiplake Woods.

6.4.39. Woodlands form part of the boundaries to the character areas and provide a sense of enclosure and separation.

6.4.40. There are a number of key development and visual guidance principles (which are illustrated on page 21 of the Character Appraisal):

- a. Conserve the rural approach to Shiplake Cross from the west along the Reading Road by retaining the agricultural character of Shiplake Farm and its agricultural setting;
- b. Avoid any development around Shiplake Cross which would urbanise the rural setting of Shiplake College and Reading Road;
- c. Avoid features such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanise the area.
- d. Conserve the open long views across the Thames valley to Wargrave and Bowsey Hill;
- e. Maintain the open uninterrupted views to local woodlands: Shiplake Woods (within the Chilterns AONB) and The Warren;
- f. Maintain the contrast of open undeveloped landscape to developed village as gateways to Shiplake Cross;

g. Maintain the undeveloped open rural settings to the farmsteads Shiplake Farm and Haileywood Farm.

Separation of Settlements

6.4.41. The Landscape Character Appraisal (LCA) also includes an analysis of the contribution of the open land to the separation of the settlements.

6.4.42. The LCA explains that the two villages in the Plan area have a distinctive character, which is experienced in transition passing along the road network: Henley Road, Mill Road, Mill Lane and Mill Road. It is also appreciated in views from the edge of the Chilterns AONB, the public rights of way and permissive path network within the area

6.4.43. It specifically sets out in paragraph 6.2 that:

“Currently there is no intervisibility between properties on the edge of the settlements due mainly to intervening vegetation with some benefits from the local landform, which enhances the perception of separation.”

6.4.44. With regard to the settlements themselves and the open countryside around them, paragraph 6.3 of the LCA states:

“The prevailing built form character is sub-urban, and rural outside of the main two villages and there is a total absence of urban form and any visual detractors such as pylons, services and other such urban fringe uses or features. This absence makes a positive contribution to the rural character and appearance of the area. The railway line is well integrated into the landscape and does not impinge on the wider landscape. Although the Henley Road carries heavy volumes of traffic at certain times of the day, it still retains its rural character, winding around the landform, with green verges, mature hedgerow and tree boundaries, no footways nor lighting.”

6.4.45. There are pockets of rural housing outside of the settlements such as those along Mill Lane and Woodlands Road. The LCA concludes that these are

very low density and rural in character. Of key importance is that the *“ratio of built form to the very extensive open grounds with a high tree cover is not eroded through redevelopment.”*

6.4.46. The LCA specifically assesses the contribution that the countryside to the north of Lower Shiplake makes to the character of the village and considers in paragraph 6.5 that it makes

“an important contribution to the character of the village, as experienced in approaching the village passing along the Henley Road and in views from the Chilterns Way.”

6.4.47. Equally, the land to the west of Shiplake Cross has been assessed. It is considered that:

“...the setting to the village extends westwards up to close to the AONB, reflecting the unity of this area, the links between the Chilterns AONB and the River Thames landscapes, and the extent of the setting of the AONB as described in section 5. The open landscape is appreciated approaching the village along Henley Road and the local footpath network and enables long views to the south. The Setting of the village is distinguished by its lack of built form, with the exception of the rural buildings at Shiplake Farm”.

6.4.48. During the course of the Plan preparation period, there have been a number of planning approvals within and outside of the Plan area. These have taken place within the PLCA3 (with the exception of the approval for Shiplake College sports pitches in PLCA4 (see figure 14 in the Character Appraisal and figure 1 of the LCA). These permissions have allowed development for a much higher density than found in either village. Full details are set out in the LCA from paragraph 6.9 onwards. With the exception of the redundant Wyevale Nursery site, which is a brownfield site, the other sites are considered to result in a significant change to the character of the area eroding the rural aspect and creating a much more urban form.

6.4.49. It should be noted however that there were numerous individual circumstances involved in the granting of each permission and these were not straightforward. It should be noted that given the

circumstances, the development of these sites should not be used to justify further intrusion into the landscape which defines the villages (as confirmed within the LCA paras 6.11 – 6.13).

6.4.50. The LCA sets out in summary (para 6.15) that with regard to the open landscape outside of the settlements that there is a

“clear riparian landscape continuity between these landscapes and the wider setting of woodland, small pastoral fields and the open agricultural landscape, forming an interlinked landscape of high value, intrinsic beauty and distinctive character, contributing to the setting of the AONB and that of a rural section of this River Thames.”

6.4.51. It is considered that there is a need to ensure that the rural character of the landscapes which butt up to the villages (PLCA1, PLCA3 and PLCA4) is retained. To ensure that the contribution to the separation of settlements is maintained, it is essential that the open landscapes serve the following functions:

- To maintain the open rural landscape character between the settlements;
- To prevent the loss of the distinctive and separate character and identity of the settlements;
- To avoid incremental extensions to either village which would erode their separate character and identity;
- To contribute to conserving the historic open landscape setting to the listed buildings at Shiplake College;
- To protect the surviving area of Ancient Enclosure east of Haileywood (see LCA figure 3);
- To protect the setting of the Chilterns AONB, the River Thames and the Ancient Semi-natural woodland;
- To strengthen the clear distinction between the settlements by conserving and enhancing the tree and mature hedgerow cover to the outer edges of and between the settlements;

- To conserve the openness of the landscape within PLCA4, allowing for the improvement to hedgerows as recommended in Section 5;
- To contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the open landscape links between the River Thames and the Chilterns Hills;
- To conserve and enhance the sense of continuity of character of PLCA1 with the wider River Thames Meadows and Terrace landscape;
- To conserve the lack of intervisibility between the built form of the settlements; and
- To retain well defined boundaries on the ground.

Dark Night Skies

6.4.52. The Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by a lack of street lighting and whilst certain parts of the area do have limited lighting (e.g. around the railway station and within the grounds of Shiplake College, as well as occasional lighting columns in parts of The Chestnuts, Mill Road, Nos 7-14 Memorial Avenue and Plowden Way) it is generally dark at night. The atmosphere and character remain tranquil and rural during the evenings. This adds to the feeling of 'remoteness' when passing through the Parish on the A4155 Reading Road or approaching from Shiplake Row.

6.4.53. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan area offers residents and visitors the opportunity to see stars clearly at times without excessive skyglow from nearby Henley or Reading.

6.4.54. Evidence from the www.lightpollutionmap.info website shows a relatively good level of visibility at night time with radiance levels typically between 0.9 and 2.6 nanowatts/cm²/steradian. This is to be contrasted with Henley (20 nanowatts/cm²/steradian) and central Reading (60 nanowatts / cm² / steradian). Figure 16 below demonstrates the general levels of light pollution compared to the nearest large settlements:

6.4.55. Evidence from the CPRE's online mapping website, England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies, echoes this, indicating that Shiplake Parish as a whole enjoys moderate levels of light pollution (between 0.5 and 4 nanowatts / cm² / steradian and

consequentially enjoys relatively dark skies at night, especially in the western parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area, as Figure 17 demonstrates:

6.4.56. Dark night skies are highly beneficial to professional and casual astronomers as well as stargazers. Dark skies also contribute to the character of the Parish at night. Those who live in a 'dark environment' often notice the cycles of the Moon and the influence this has on the ability to navigate footpaths and pavements etc at night more keenly.

6.4.57. The 2017 Shiplake Parish survey asked the community the question 'Q.25 Are there areas where more street lighting would be beneficial?' The answers were revealing (see table 5 overleaf):

6.4.58. This desire to protect the rural character of the area was further emphasised with 85% respondents saying they would like Shiplake to remain as villages with a rural character and not that of a suburb (Q.22). Almost as many respondents (75%) of respondents said a dark, starlit sky is important to them (Q.24).

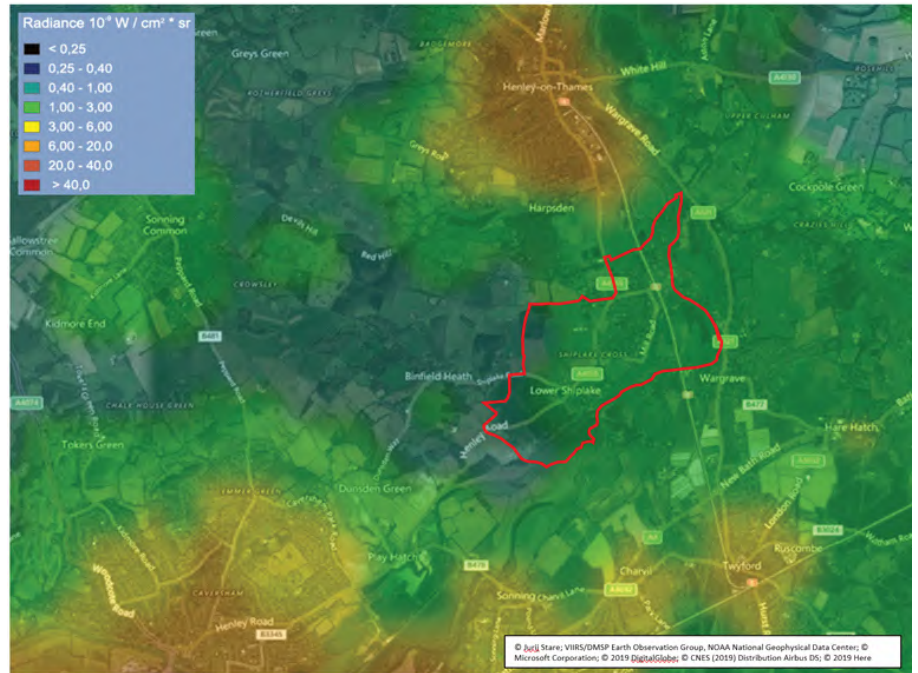


Figure 16 - Light Pollutions Levels (source: www.lightpollutionmap.info)

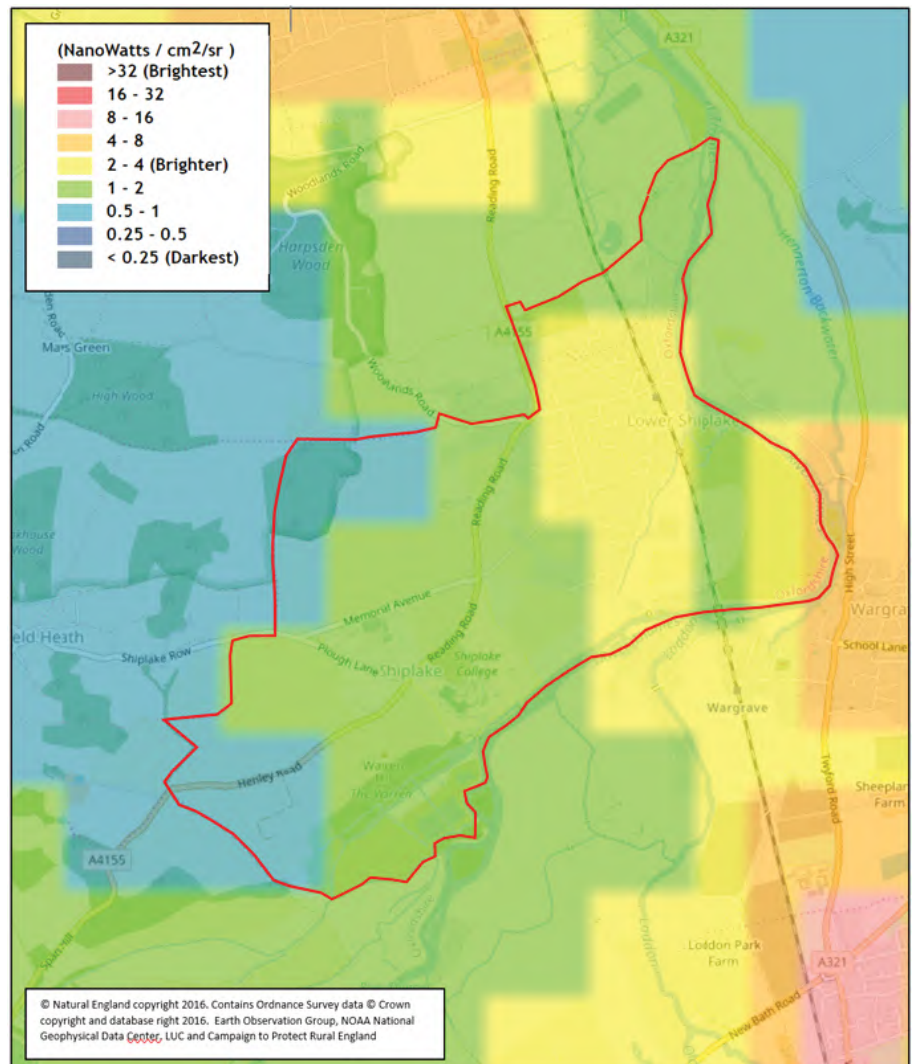


Figure 17 - Dark Sky Map for Shiplake Parish

Table 5 – Street Lighting Requirements

RESPONSE Respondents	Number of
None	258
Station Road	54
Mill Road inc. Toast Lane	20
Northfield Avenue	9
Major Roads – A4155	8
Memorial Avenue	6
New Road	6
Plowden Way/Plough Lane	5
Primary School Area	4
Crowsley Road	4
Bolney	4

Biodiversity Evidence

6.4.59. Although the Plan area borders the Chilterns AONB and River Thames corridor, which themselves are significant and ecologically highly important natural features, there are no European or internationally designated sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

6.4.60. Figure 18 below shows the location of the various biodiversity features within and adjacent to the Plan area:

6.4.61. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within the Neighbourhood Plan Area itself, although the Harpsden Wood SSSI is just to the north of the Plan area. Consequently, much of the Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

6.4.62. An area of Ancient Replanted Woodland is located in the north west of the Neighbourhood Plan area consisting of Upper and Lower Hailey Woods. There is also one very small area of natural Ancient

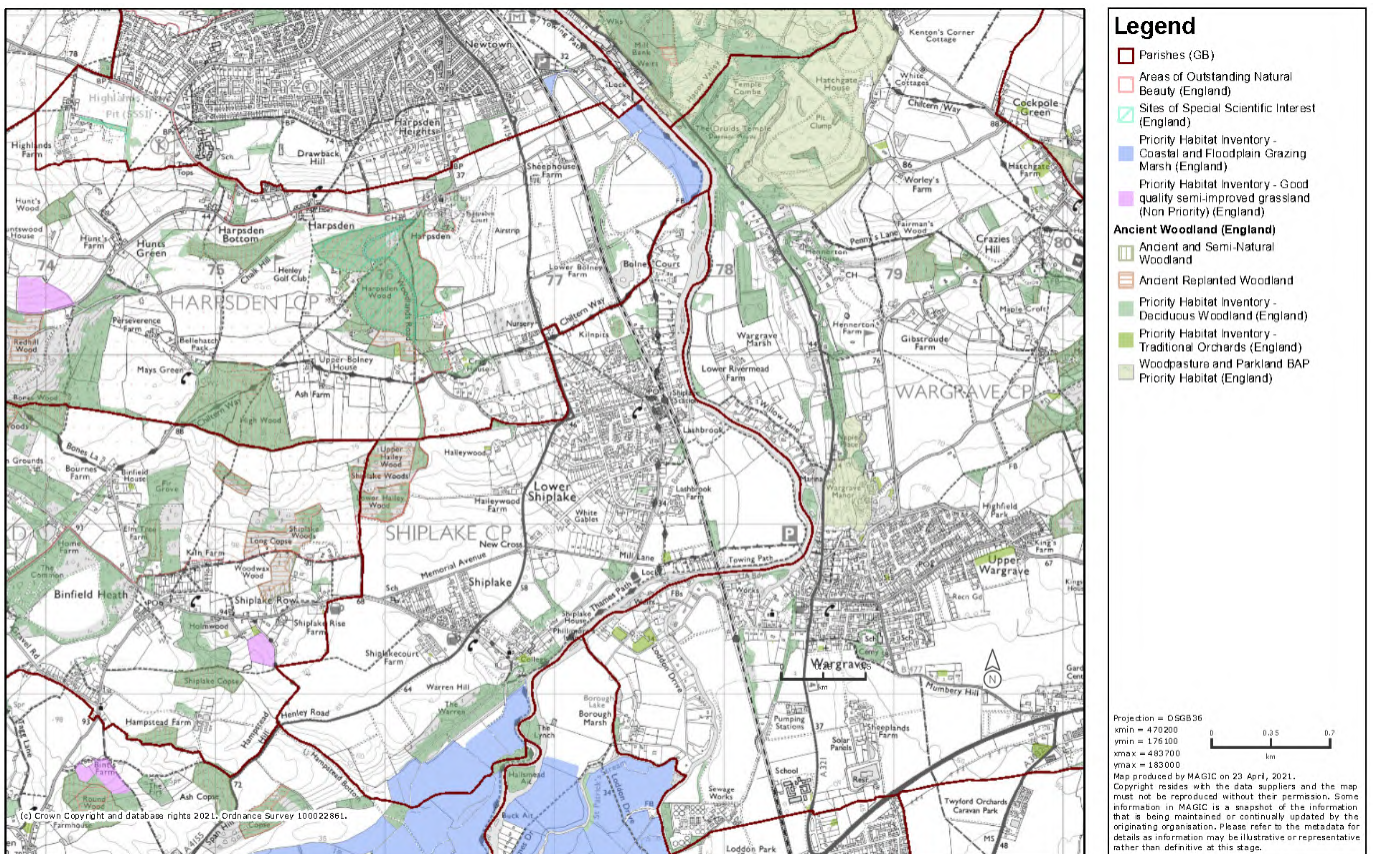


Figure 18 - Biodiversity Plan as set out on <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> accessed 23 April 2021

Woodland at Kiln pits south of Bolney Lane just outside the northern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

6.4.63. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) have no statutory designation but provide recognition for areas of high wildlife value in terms of species, habitats or both. There are two Local Wildlife Sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are Warren Wood and Shiplake Marsh.

6.4.64. UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types. The following Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats are located within the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- Various areas of Deciduous Woodland throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area with the greatest concentration in the north west.
- A large area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh extends across the south of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Three small areas of Traditional Orchard are dispersed across the Neighbourhood Plan area, one at Shiplake College, one in the grounds of Haileywood and one north of Mill House on Mill Lane.

6.4.65. These habitats are critical elements of the mosaic of natural and semi-natural habitats found in the Plan area.

6.4.66. In addition to these habitats there are significant numbers of trees of landscape and ecological value and small areas of non-designated vegetation and hedgerows throughout the Plan area which together form important local wildlife oases and corridors connecting larger areas of biodiversity importance such as the Chilterns AONB woods. The Neighbourhood Plan area also benefits from a significant number of trees / woodland blocks that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). An extract from the District Council’s GIS database below (Figure 19/20) depicts the location of the TPO-protected trees and woodlands.

6.4.67. There are a number of key elements here of importance including the River Thames and its wooded islands (also known as eyots) and associated watercourses, Shiplake Woods, woodland at The Warren. Structural woodland planting alongside the

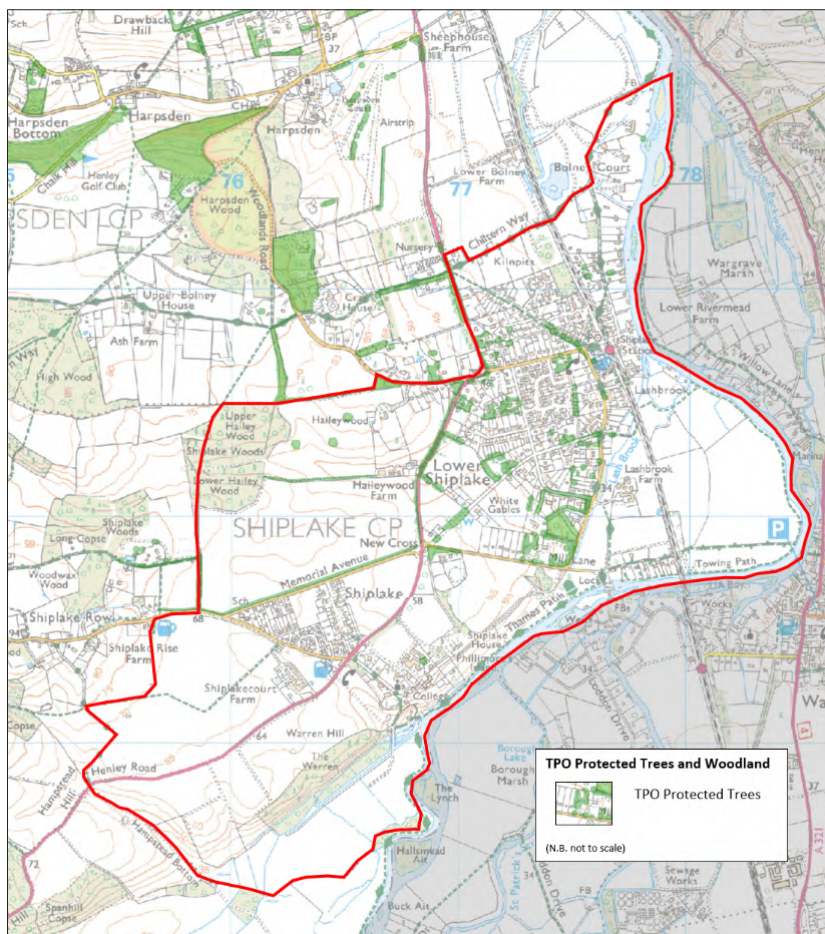


Figure 19 TPO-Protected Trees and Woodland (source: <http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/gis/?cat=appl&ref=5>)

railway viaduct, pockets of woodland in relatively open landscape views such as those to the north of Haileywood Farm and to the south of Mill Lane.

6.4.68. There are also a number of roads within the parish which are heavily defined by woodland planting and/ or dominated by vegetation, which either conceals or only partially reveals built form beyond. These are shown on figure 20 and noted to be:

1. Bolney Road/ Lane
2. Lashbrook Road (south)
3. Mill Road
4. Mill Lane
5. New Road
6. Crowsley Road
7. Woodlands Road
8. A4155 (partially)
9. Memorial Avenue
10. Shiplake College Driveways

6.4.69. Such planting is a key feature of the parish which significantly softens and enhances the built form. The Character Appraisal identifies each character area which benefits from significant planting and development recommendations have been put forward to ensure that the special qualities of these areas are retained.

6.4.70. Further key features and landmarks are illustrated on the plan on pages 12, 13 and 23 of the Character Appraisal with following photographs on subsequent pages. Key landmarks are shown on figure 21 below are considered to be:

1. River Thames Wooded Islands (eyots)
2. The White House
3. The Viaduct
4. Shiplake Lock and Island
5. Shiplake College
6. St Peter and Paul Church
7. Shiplake College Listed buildings
8. Shiplake Farm house and buildings
9. Shiplake War Memorial
10. River Thames
11. Shiplake Woods (AONB)
12. Memorial Hall
13. Cliffs below Shiplake College
14. Plowden Arms
15. Baskerville Arms
16. Lodge at Shiplake College
17. Shiplake House and Parkland

6.4.71. The list represents the wide variety of built form and natural landscape features, which are important to the Parish. New development adjacent to or within the setting of such features should include a detailed analysis of how proposals will impact upon them.

6.4.72. These features are critical elements of the landscape and are much valued by the residents of the Plan area. Their protection and enhancement is of great importance to the local community.

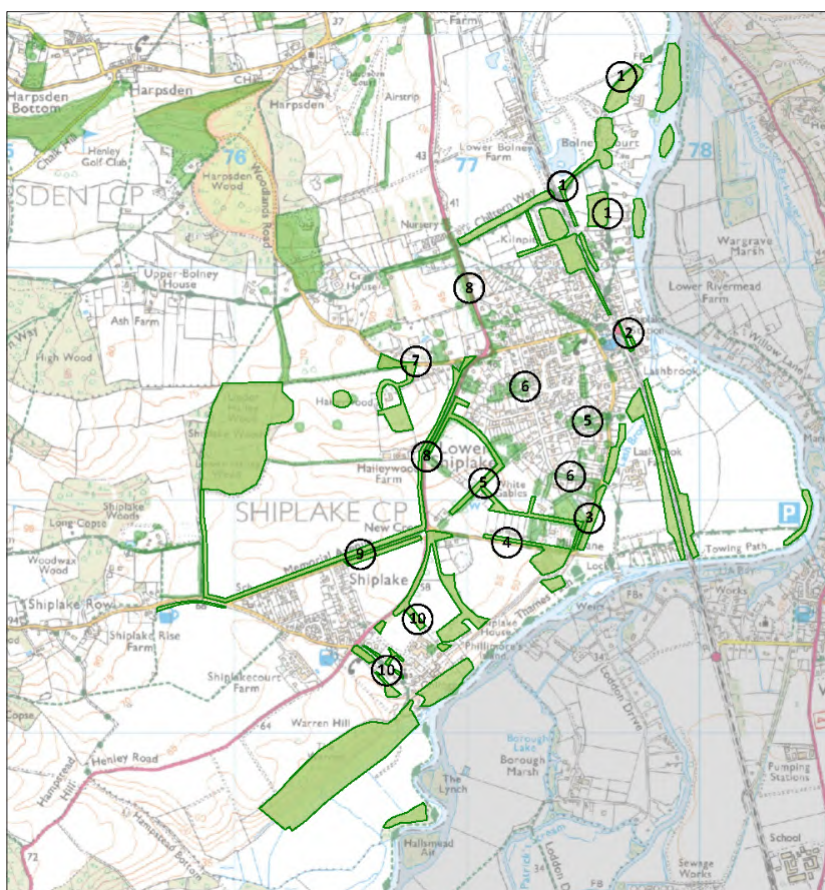


Figure 20 Plan of tree lined roads overlaid with TPO-Protected Trees and Woodland (source: <http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/gis/?cat=appl&ref=5>) and Landscape Character Assessment

6.4.73. Management of surface water drainage through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is a recognised way of enhancing biodiversity and delivering net gains. In Oxfordshire the Lead Local Flood Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) has developed guidance on the employment of SuDS in developments.

6.4.74. Developers are asked to follow the surface water disposal hierarchy which reflects Part H of the Buildings Regulations (December 2010). This hierarchy is that surface runoff must be discharged to one or more of the following in order of priority:

- An adequate soakaway or some other adequate infiltration system; or, where not reasonably practicable
- A watercourse; or, where not reasonably practicable
- A sewer

6.4.75. The higher up the hierarchy the greater the prospect of achieving a net biodiversity gain through new development.

Landscape and Biodiversity: Policy Principles

Landscape Policy Principles

6.4.76. The evidence from the parish survey of 2017 and the subsequently commissioned Landscape Character Assessment report has led to the need to draft a series of policies which reflect the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives whilst addressing the key matters to come out of the evidence that has been gathered.

6.4.77. The following issues have been determined as being critical to the community in the development of this Neighbourhood Plan:

- Maintaining the rural character and setting of the villages
- The need to manage development to maintain the rural landscape surrounding and between the villages, including the defined valued landscapes
- Maintain the physical and visual separation of the settlements in the Plan area
- Protecting the uniqueness of the River Thames corridor and recognising the wide range of factors that development can impact upon including recreation, biodiversity, navigation, flooding, landscape setting
- Seeking to maintain and enhance key views within, to and from the villages and within the surrounding landscape
- Where possible, maintaining dark night skies by carefully managing new development and the impact associated lighting will have on the tranquillity of the Neighbourhood Plan area

Biodiversity Policy Principles

6.4.78. Within the core objectives of this Neighbourhood Plan one of the most important ambitions is to conserve the existing network of trees, hedgerows, wetlands and public and community spaces and wildlife sites/habitats/biodiversity.

6.4.79. The evidence gathered as part of the earlier stages of the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan (including the SEA scoping work and other evidence set out in this document) has indicated that whilst there is a limited number of statutorily and local sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the wider mosaic of features and habitats in the area is of critical importance to the local community, who have indicated they wish to positively manage the varied local wildlife and enhance the natural features of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Consequently, the key principles that have emerged and which have informed the development of policies are:

- Achieving a net biodiversity gain through a variety of alternative approaches to managing the impact of development on species, areas of ecological value and habitats
- Landscaping and greening the environment through management of the green and blue infrastructure network and the public rights of way that pass through the network
- Encouraging tree and hedgerow planting
- Ensuring the replacement of vegetation and habitat lost through development
- Managing surface water run-off

Landscape: Policies

6.4.80. These policies seek to protect the essential countryside character of the key areas between the settlements of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake and between the Shiplake villages and Henley-on-Thames and Binfield Heath and other settlements, in order to maintain the attractive tracts of landscape between these settlements and also to protect their distinctive individual character and setting and their physical and visual separation. In doing so, it will conserve the setting of the villages within the surrounding landscape, retaining the fields between Lower Shiplake and Shiplake College and Shiplake Cross and the main settlement of Lower Shiplake, preferably as working farmland, in order to maintain what is a highly attractive farmed and wooded landscape situated between the River Thames corridor to the east and the Chilterns AONB to the north west.

6.4.81. The valued landscapes are described in detail above. Each valued landscape makes a significant contribution to maintaining the individual character of their adjoining settlements. The Evidence Base includes the Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Assessment which describes each valued landscape in greater detail and the particular contribution and value that it makes. Policy SV9 provides the framework for determining applications and appeals located in or within the valued landscapes.

6.4.82. The main villages of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake are inward looking settlements with few opportunities to view open countryside. At the core of the villages however is a small network of green infrastructure assets, including informal open space, grass verges, hedgerows, trees, green spaces, private gardens, playing fields, College grounds (and playing fields), informal assets of biodiversity value, children's play areas, footpaths, and cycleways.

6.4.83. 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 large proportions of the villages due to its open nature and rural character. 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 twin villages.

6.4.84. Our policies do not seek to prevent development, rather they set out to ensure that any development does not cause harm to the rural character of the village settlements, thereby according with the policies of the South Oxfordshire District Local Plan 2011-2035.

6.4.85. Policies SV7, SV9 and SV11 have been developed to provide a means of ensuring that development which takes place in the Neighbourhood Plan area over the life of the Plan respects and where possible enhances the setting of the villages, the attractive landscape that surrounds them and the important views into and out of the settlements.

6.4.86. Policy SV7 has been developed to ensure that new development applications should be accompanied by evidence which demonstrates that the needs of Shiplake Parish in design terms have been accommodated. This must comprise an opportunities and constraints plan to inform the design, including the wider and immediate site context. It should identify the following elements within the site and beyond the site boundary as appropriate:

1. existing networks of natural features, including watercourses, trees, hedgerow, green spaces, field patterns, habitats and public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, etc.);
2. the landscape character, natural features and topography highlighting visually prominent areas. This includes existing landscape features, water features, trees and hedges, views and skyline;
3. attractive and/or sensitive views (both of and from built and natural features) into, out of and within the site;
4. buildings and structures of historical importance including listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeological remains;
5. potential barriers to development such as railway lines, utilities, pipelines, noise, pollution, major roads, land contamination, etc.;
6. the land uses adjacent to the site and how these will impact on the design/treatment of the edges of the development- identify how each edge of the development site will address the adjacent uses;

7. the settlement structure of the site and surrounding area: including the historical development of the settlement, the existing connections, the structure and hierarchy of streets and spaces, the townscape, the place identity, density, gateways, nodes, plot and block sizes (as appropriate to the scale of development);
8. the streets and public spaces surrounding the site;
9. the enclosure of streets and public open spaces, the layout and form of spaces and the public and private interface;
10. the built character: the scale, form and massing of the built environment, treatment of building frontages and boundaries, building types and materials
11. Plot size, density and plot coverage in addition to the space between buildings when compared to surrounding properties.

6.4.87. Policy SV10 provides a framework within which development proposals that affect, or are likely to affect, the river Thames corridor within the Neighbourhood Plan area must be designed to promote and enhance the use of the river and the riverside, taking into account the existing waterside character, heritage value and landscape setting, to ensure that the biodiversity of the area is protected, and to manage recreational use of the area is carefully managed and enhanced where appropriate without adversely affecting flood risk and navigation on the river.

6.4.88. The latter part of the policy explains when development may be required to contribute towards improving the quality of the riverside environment including river infrastructure, open spaces, biodiversity, rights of way, and links to the riverside from the surrounding area through the use of planning obligations (and only where the legal tests for such contributions are satisfied – known as the CIL Regulation 122 tests).

6.4.89. Policy SV12 introduces a graded hierarchy of light pollution minimisation or avoidance, against which all development proposals will be assessed. Reduction or total avoidance of light pollution is the goal of the policy, but it reflects the fact that this may not always be possible, albeit it should be the over-arching objective in every instance. The policy provides the necessary degree of futureproofing in the event that the Institute of Lighting technical guidance is updated within the Plan period.

Policy SV7 – Settlement Character

Development proposals should demonstrate both generally, and in their Design and Access Statements in particular, how they would preserve or enhance the features which positively define the character of the Parish, and the ways in which they have addressed the relevant recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment and Character Appraisal.

Policy SV8 – Separation of Settlements

New development should respect the rural landscape setting of the neighbourhood area and preserve the distinctive separation between the settlements of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake (formerly Lashbrook).

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for agricultural development, allotments and other open land uses that would preserve the physical and visual separation between settlements and the retention of their individual identities will be supported.

Development proposals for other land uses on the land between the two settlements should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment which demonstrates that the proposal will not unacceptably detract from the physical or visual separation of the settlements.

Policy SV9 – Valued Landscapes

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of valued landscapes on figure 15 (Parish Landscape Character Areas) as follows:

- River Thames Meadows and Terraces (PLCA)
- Shiplake Woods (PLCA)
- Shiplake Open Dipslopes (PLCA)

Development proposals should ensure the characteristics which define the landscapes as valuable are reflected in the proposals, including:

- The retention of the distinct rural character of each of the valued landscapes
- the role they play in providing a setting to the AONB
- the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside
- the important contribution the landscapes make to the distinctive character and identity of the settlements of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake

Proposals for development appropriate to a countryside location will be supported where they do not adversely impact on the purpose or qualities of the valued landscapes.

Policy SV10 – Riverside Related Development

Development proposals adjacent to the River Thames should protect and enhance the waterside character, heritage value and setting, and will provide physical and visual links with the surrounding areas (including views along the river).

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should promote and enhance the use of the riverside by:

- Maintaining the low key and informal nature of infrastructure and facilities for boat users including jetties, private and public moorings, slipways, steps and stairs;
- Supporting opportunities to improve the quality of and links to the riverside rights of way;
- Protecting and enhancing the Thames River Corridor as a valuable resource for biodiversity and wildlife
- Demonstrating the proposals will not lead to harm to the setting or landscape character of the riverside;
- Ensuring that there will be no unacceptable impact upon navigation and flood risk.

Major development within the defined riverside corridor (highlighted in blue on figure 15) shall be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment which demonstrates that proposals will not give rise to adverse landscape and visual effects.

Policy SV11 – Important Views

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following Important Views on Figures 21 and 22 of the Neighbourhood Plan and as listed below:

- PLCA1 -1 The open views of the river Thames corridor from the edge of the river terraces, in particular from Shiplake College in particular where development may breach the skyline;
- PLCA1-2 Views to the Lock, Lodge, and parkland
- PLCA1-3 Views of wooded terraces with glimpses of Shiplake Cross
- PLCA3-1 Henley Road approach looking south east
- PLCA3-2 Memorial Avenue and across to Shiplake Woods (AONB)
- PLCA3-3 Mill Lane looking south and southeast
- PLCA3-4 River Thames from the College
- PLCA3-5 Gap between Henley and Lower Shiplake
- PLCA3-6 The views from Shiplake Woods and the open dipslopes eastwards over the area to the river corridor and hillsides to the east.
- PLCA2 - The views from the edge of the Chilterns AONB;
- PLCA4-1 Henley Road approach to Shiplake Cross looking north-east to Shiplake Court Farm and south east over Warren Hill to hills east of the River Thames

Development proposals should preserve or enhance the local character of the landscape and through their design, height and massing should recognise and respond positively to the various Important Views.

Development proposals which would have a significant adverse impact on an identified Important View will not be supported.

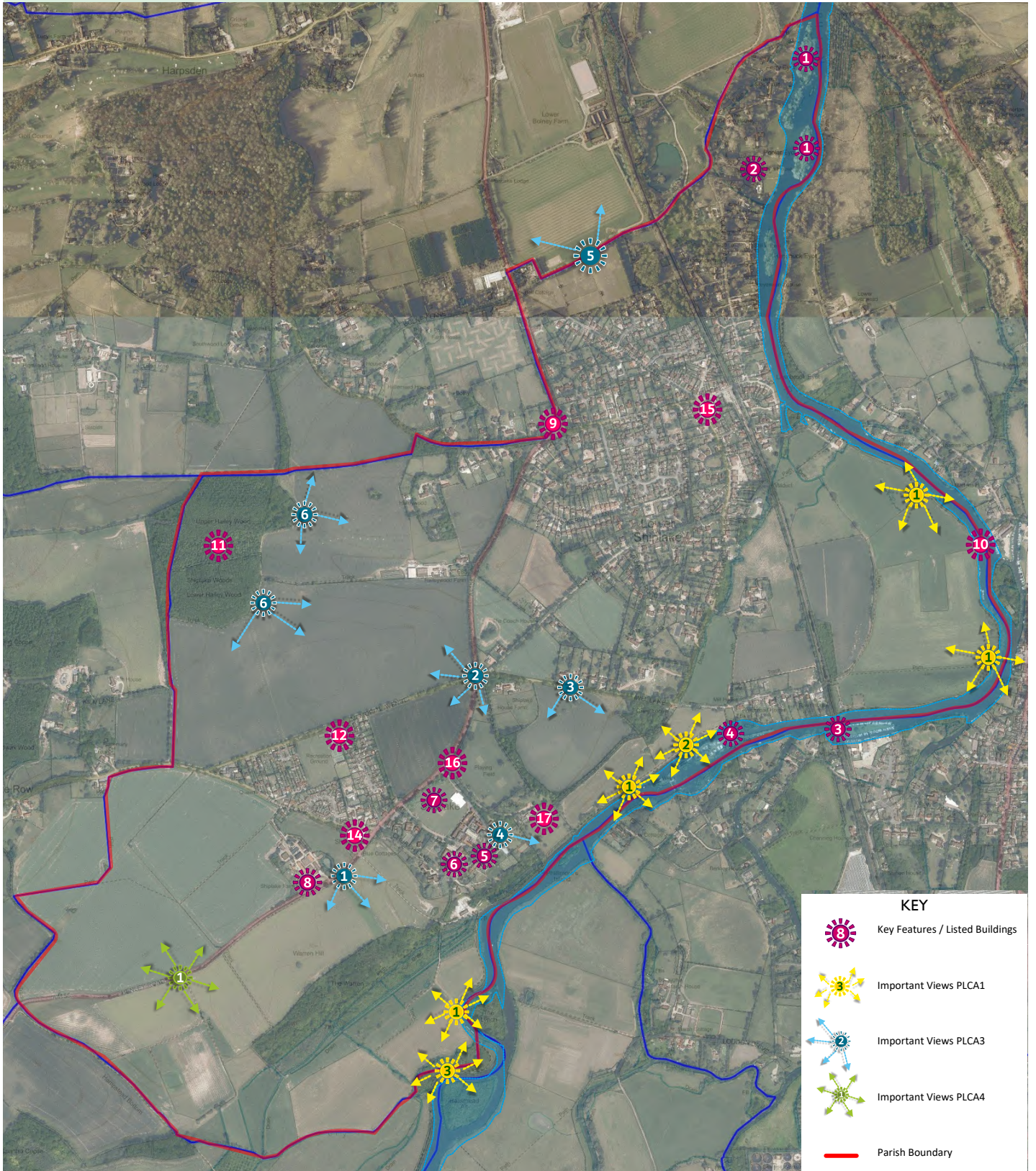


Figure 21 - Key Views, Features and Landmarks (taken from the Character Appraisal based on Landscape Character Assessment)

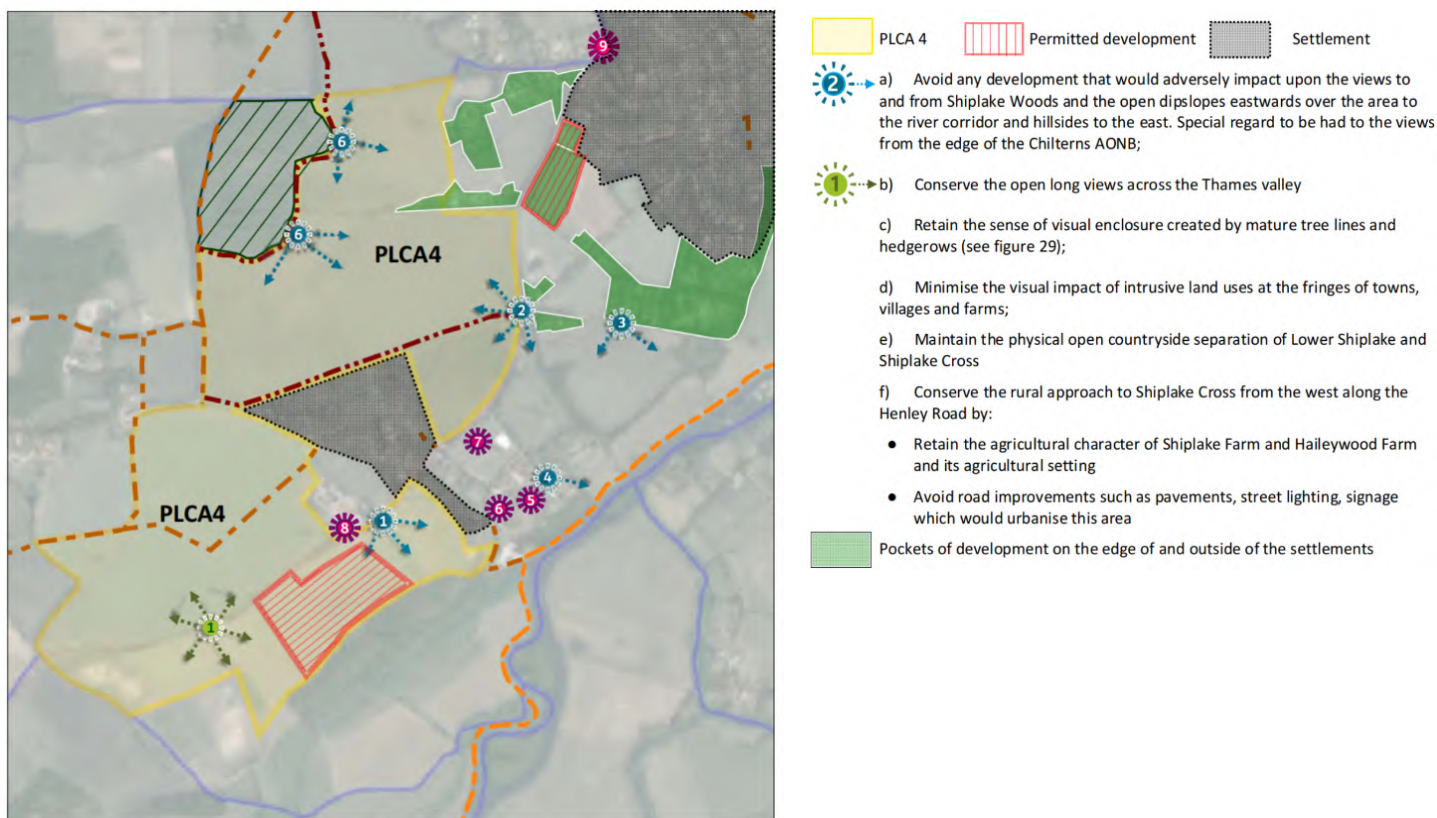


Figure 22 - Key Views to and from the AONB and River Thames (drawing taken from the Shiplake Villages Character Appraisal)

Policy SV12 - Dark Skies and Lighting

Development proposals should conserve and enhance relative tranquility 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 have regard to the following hierarchy:

- a. The installation of lighting is avoided;
 - b. If lighting is installed it is necessary for its intended purpose or use and any adverse impacts are avoided; and
 - c. If it is demonstrated that (a) or (b) is not achievable, then adverse impacts are appropriately mitigated.
2. Development proposals which include lighting should ensure that:
- a. The measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not reduced;
 - b. Lighting is not unnecessarily visible in nearby designated and key habitats;
 - c. The visibility of lighting from the surrounding landscape is avoided; and
 - d. Building designs should avoid large areas of glazing which would result in light spillage into rural and unlit areas.

Biodiversity: Policies

6.4.90. The following policies have been developed in response to the need to carefully manage the more 'natural' areas, network of green and blue corridors, areas of informal habitat as well as formal Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and species within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Central to the theme is the requirement to achieve a 'biodiversity net gain', an approach to development that is likely to become enshrined in legislation should the Environment Bill, introduced to Parliament on the 15th October 2019, receive royal assent.

6.4.91. Central to this strategy is Policy SV13 which sets out the core requirement to achieve a biodiversity net gain, describing a variety of ways in which this can be achieved. The requirement to deliver a biodiversity net gain is already a matter of planning policy (see paragraphs 8, 174, 179-180 of the NPPF 2021) and accords with the requirements set out in Section 40(3) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the 2019 Environment Bill. The Bill, which has yet to receive Royal Assent at the time of writing, requires delivery of at least a 10 per cent improvement in 'biodiversity value' (established using one of the recognised calculators), which is commonly referred to as 'net gain'.

6.4.92. The first part of the policy focuses on wildlife corridors and biodiversity hotspots (often hedgerows, orchards and mature or veteran trees) which are particularly valuable to local biodiversity. These are distinct from other vegetation and trees which are protected through Policy SV15.

6.4.93. The remainder of the policy describes other opportunities to deliver biodiversity net gains through watercourse / wildlife corridor / habitat / roosting / nesting enhancements.

6.4.94. Policy SV14 establishes a requirement that development proposals involving, or located adjacent to, the green and blue infrastructure network will maintain or enhance the visual characteristics and biodiversity of the network. Proposals to improve connectivity with and between elements of the network are also encouraged in the policy.

6.4.95. Finally, Policy SV15 provides clarity over the approach to the replacement of trees and woodland harmed as a direct result of development. Details are provided for re-planting ratios and guidance is given on the location of replacement planting. The ratios come

from Woodland Trust guidance³³. Planting at a density spacing of one 30-60cm sapling every 3 metres in amenity areas (approximately 1100 saplings per hectare) provides for a good level of coverage (one per 2-2.5m spacing gives good woodland cover at 1600-2500 saplings per hectare). This policy deals with the general approach to the replacement of trees and woodland, whereas Policy SV13 deals with the specific approach for the replacement of biodiversity hotspot / wildlife corridor vegetation.

6.4.96. The respect for and desire to enhance the existing verdant setting of the Neighbourhood Plan area is reflected in the principles of the Tree Charter and the principles enshrined in the Charter are embodied in policy SV15.

Policy SV13 – Biodiversity and Wildlife

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should seek to deliver biodiversity net gain.

In addition, and as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respond positively to the following matters:

- a. The avoidance of the unnecessary loss of mature and veteran trees, hedgerows, orchards or other form of wildlife corridor and biodiversity concentration. Any loss should be mitigated on site or in an approved alternative location in accordance with a planting scheme which should accompany the application for planning permission;
- b. The inclusion of measures to provide wildlife corridors in order to maintain, retain and secure connectivity of the wider network;
- c. Where the loss of scrubland is unavoidable, the retention of sufficient areas of vegetation on the site linked to adjacent habitats, wildlife corridors or hotspots to allow wildlife to pass around or through the site;
- d. The provision of one or more of the following: Owl boxes; bat boxes; and bird boxes (particularly suited to their use by swifts, swallows and house martins) should be installed as an integral part of any new or replacement dwellings;

³³ Woodland Trust, 'Creating Small Scale Native Woodlands' (undated) <https://www.sitesplus.co.uk/user_docs/1140/File/creating-small-scale-native-woodland.pdf> [accessed 01 November 2019]

- e. Culverted watercourses should be re-opened where practicable and linked to wetland creation.

Policy SV14 - Landscaping and Greening of the Environment

As appropriate to their nature and scale, development proposals on land that lies within or adjoining the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network (as defined on figure 14) should incorporate landscaping schemes, layouts, public open space provision and other amenity requirements arising from the development (such as pedestrian and cycle connections) which will maintain or enhance the visual characteristics and biodiversity of the Network and will contribute to or where practicable improve its connectivity and maintenance.

Proposals which maintain or enhance the existing Green and Blue Infrastructure Network will be supported, particularly where they encourage the planting of native trees or encourage biodiversity and enhance habitats of protected species.

Proposals to create new Green and Blue Infrastructure and associated new pedestrian and cycle routes will also be supported.

Policy SV15 – Preservation and Replacement of Trees

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

- a) Avoid unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodlands during or as a result of development;
- b) Be supported by adequate tree survey information as part of planning applications;
- c) Include a comprehensive landscaping scheme to secure a wide range of tree planting.
- d) Be designed to provide sufficient space for planting to be accommodated, and demonstrate that trees that die or are diseased will be replaced for the first five years following planting.
- e) Ensure that trees not to be retained as a result of the development are replaced at a ratio of at least 2:1; and
- f) Provide for additional, new, native trees to be planted at a minimum of:
 - i. Five saplings at a density of 1,100 saplings/ hectare for each dwelling for residential development; or
 - ii. For non-residential development, whichever is the greater of five trees for each parking space; or two trees per 50m² of gross floorspace

Where it is practicable to do so, infill development proposals should incorporate new trees using larger planting stock (8-10 cm) girth at 1m above ground level. The new trees should consist of a mix of broadleaf and coniferous tree species with no more than 20% of any genus and no more than 10% of a particular species on the site.

6.5 Living in Shiplake Theme

KEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES:

3. Sustain the sensitive landscape setting of the villages and preserve and enhance the areas of natural landscape and agriculture existing between the villages whilst also conserving the existing network of trees, hedgerows, wetlands, public community spaces and rights of way so as to protect and enhance wildlife sites/habitats/bio-diversity. (Source: Section 4.5)

6. Protect and where necessary improve community core facilities and services and seek proposals to develop village infrastructure and services appropriate to the evolving needs of residents (Source: Sections 4.5, 4.6)

7. Sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the centres of the villages for the benefit of the community and encourage the growth of local community-based businesses and facilities. (Source: Sections 4.5, 4.6)

Living in Shiplake: Evidence Base

6.5.1. The NPPF 2021 contains a range of policies that seek to protect rights of way (paragraph 100), open space, sport and recreation (paragraphs 98-99), community facilities (paragraphs 92-93), schools (paragraph 95) and highway safety / parking (paragraphs 106-108 and 110-112).

6.5.2. The Local Plan contains several policies of relevance including policies TRANS2 (sustainable travel), TRANS5 (consideration of development) and the safeguarding of existing / provision of new community facilities, rights of way, open space, sports and recreation facilities (policies CF1 to CF4).

6.5.3. For this Neighbourhood Plan to be relevant it must address the wider aspects of living in the parish. Key aspects include the residents' concerns, wishes, values, culture and way of life, as well as opportunities for improvement open to us.

6.5.4. The villages and their surrounding environment are much loved by the residents and, unsurprisingly, the typical comment is "don't mend what doesn't need mending". Nevertheless, most recognise that progress brings with it change, not everything is perfect and there is scope for improvement and a need to evolve.

6.5.5. The villages are close enough to Henley-on-Thames, Reading, and Central London for the residents to enjoy and use the facilities available, but far enough away to have their own sense of community and independence. The things that people value about the villages broadly revolve around the community, the rural nature of the local environment, accessibility and transportation, leisure and open-air facilities and the quality of the housing stock and nearby education facilities.

6.5.6. The wider 'living' issues considered in this Neighbourhood Plan come under four broad but important themes:

- Getting Around and Traffic
- Leisure and Wellbeing
- Education
- Environment and Sustainability

6.5.7. The following sections summarise residents wishes, preferences and concerns captured from the 2017 Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan Survey and the results of the public consultation exercises following this including the Neighbourhood Plan exhibition of 3rd and 4th November 2017.

Getting Around & Traffic

6.5.8. The Parish lies on a very busy road (A4155) connecting Reading to Henley-on-Thames and many commuters use the station located in Lower Shiplake, bringing their vehicles into the village. Consequently, traffic, and especially parking and congestion have been the main sources of residents' concerns and complaint over recent years. Although various initiatives including cycle paths, parking restrictions and traffic calming have been explored and implemented to improve this situation, these have arguably had only limited impact/benefit. Consequently, getting around and traffic continue to be significant areas of concern for the residents, but which due to the scale of the villages and the resources required to make a radical difference are matters not easily resolved.

6.5.9. - *Cycle Path to Henley*- Local residents have been campaigning for a safe cycling route into Henley for many years. Such a route was first examined in the mid-1990s as part of the ultimately doomed 'Millennium Bridge' project, which aimed to create a

cycle path alongside the railway between Henley and Wargrave. The project was cancelled when costs for the proposed bridge escalated and agreement could not be reached with the railway authority of the time.

6.5.10. Plans to create a safe cycling route again emerged in 2012 as the Shiplake Villages Plan commenced. Between 2012 and 2016, the Parish Council and County Councillor David Bartholomew examined three cycle path options connecting Henley and Shiplake, in depth. These were:

- **Route alongside the railway line** - Extensive contact, including multi-party meetings and submission of proposals, took place with Network Rail over a three-year period. Initially Network Rail was supportive of the concept, but ultimately, they refused to commit due to uncertainty over the requirements for the planned electrification of the line. There is no realistic possibility of them changing their stance in the foreseeable future given the uncertainty of the situation subsequent to the cancellation/deferment of electrification.
- **Route alongside the A4155** - County Council officers undertook an outline design study in order to estimate costs for full design and then delivery of the project. This resulted in costs for the design being estimated in the tens of thousands of pounds, and the actual delivery in excess of £1 million, excluding land purchase. This option was discounted on the basis of the known costs, before land purchase (compulsory or otherwise) was even taken into account. It is possible that this option may be resurrected if unknown development proposals emerge impacting the relevant land albeit that this land has the dual function of buffering Henley from Lower Shiplake and vice versa, hence considered to be quite unlikely.
- **Route alongside The Thames** - Many cyclists currently use the towpath alongside The Thames to cycle to and from Henley, despite such use not being legal. In addition to the legal issues, there are practical problems such as the quality of the path and regular flooding in the winter months (and occasionally the summer months). Upgrading the path to the appropriate quality and gaining planning permission for the change of use would require the permission of all the landowners across whose land the existing path runs. At the time of writing, at

least one (a major landowner) has refused to give permission, rendering this option null and void, pending a change of heart by the landowner, a change of ownership/control, or a significant development proposal carrying with it sustainability issues.

6.5.11. For these reasons the provision of a safe cycle path does not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan. It does, however, remain a long-term aspiration. Central and Local Government continues to promote cycling as environmentally-friendly and desirable for a healthy lifestyle, so the funding situation could improve in the future. And, as mentioned previously, the ownership of land or attitude of owners could change, facilitating the Thames towpath option.

6.5.12. - **Cycle Path to Reading** - The only feasible option would be alongside The Thames. The barriers against bringing this into being are the same as for the route alongside The Thames to Henley and the conclusions are the same.

6.5.13. - **Parking** – Parking and especially commuter parking has been a controversial topic in the villages for many years. In an attempt to manage the problem, a 'yellow-line' controlled parking scheme was introduced in Lower Shiplake in 2013. This has had some limited success, but deflection of parking to adjoining roads has created new issues, as has a lack of adequate policing, given the expense of enforcement.

6.5.14. There is concern that providing additional parking will simply attract more cars into Lower Shiplake. This is reflected in the survey where the highest result for things that residents 'probably or definitely don't want' was more public car parking at 46%.

6.5.15. What is desired, however, is short-term parking for customers of the corner shop and butcher. This would prevent dangerous and illegal parking on the corner outside the shops. Enforcement of waiting times or 'no parking' areas remains the responsibility of the police. Other parking issues experienced in the villages include parking associated with the Primary School.

6.5.16. - **Pedestrian access between the Villages**- Currently, there is no footpath connecting the two villages and enthusiasm for changing this situation is limited, with 57% of residents wishing to see improved

pedestrian linkages between the two villages, compared to 43% who do not. Furthermore, there are substantial problems in relation to a crossing point at the Mill Lane/A4155/Memorial Avenue staggered crossroads. In this context, and given the high costs involved, there are no plans to progress such a footpath as part of this Neighbourhood Plan.

6.5.17. - **Safety – Crossing the Main Road**- A recommendation of the Shiplake Villages Plan was to create a pedestrian crossing at the Mill Lane / A4155 / Memorial Avenue staggered crossroads. This was subsequently examined in detail by the Oxfordshire County Council Highways department.

6.5.18. As a consequence of road width, protected turning lanes and visibility issues relating to the hill, it was ruled that the crossing would have to be positioned well to the south of the crossroads. This would mean that the crossing would be little used, as it would not be consistent with the pedestrian 'desire line' (i.e. going straight over the road rather than taking a detour). For this reason, coupled with an estimated cost of £50,000, the project was not pursued. At the request of the Parish Council the potential crossing was re-examined in early 2017 and the same conclusions were reached.

6.5.19. The Parish Council remains committed to exploring the possibility of installing safe crossings across the A4155. This is because the volume of movements to and from the college, by the Primary School accessing the Church and also to and from existing and new residences in Shiplake Cross is likely to increase the risk for accidents in an area that already has a large number of children and parents crossing the busy road to reach the area's recreational, historic, educational and community facilities.

6.5.20. It should also be noted, that there are now the Thames Farm planning obligations to create a crossing of the A4155 near to the War Memorial on Reading Road.

6.5.21. Appendix 5 of this Plan contains a Footpath Survey which provides a snapshot of the state of the various rights of way and paths within the Plan area.

6.5.22. - **Street Lighting** – As noted above, three-quarters of respondents to the 2017 Neighbourhood

Plan survey said a dark, star-lit sky is important to them. Any additional street lighting would run contrary to this clear wish and is therefore not proposed, indeed Policy SV12 introduces a framework for controlling the nature, form and luminance levels of future lighting in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

6.5.23. In summary, the underlying issues impacting on 'Getting Around and Traffic' in the villages are not easily resolved and, in many cases, solutions lie outside the provisions of this Neighbourhood Plan being non-land use planning matters, and will only be resolved over a very considerable time span or as part of a larger/wider proposal. Nevertheless, it is important that this plan reflects and records these issues and residents wishes and concerns as they do impact on other parts of the Neighbourhood Plan, especially, housing, the environment, and leisure and wellbeing.

Leisure and Wellbeing

6.5.24. Leisure and Wellbeing (L&W) encompasses a range of factors including leisure and community activities, community facilities, and environmental and quality of life factors. The context for L&W derives from the demographics of the villages. The community of Shiplake Parish is fairly evenly balanced male and female (52.8% and 47.2% respectively) according to the Office for National Statistics 2019 population mid-year estimates, and age-wise, based on the 2011 Census data, it is skewed towards middle-aged and seniors as shown below ³⁴, and the trend appears to be increasingly the case.

- 31% of residents are between 15-44 years of age (28.7% in the 2019 mid-year population estimates so the figures have changed very little)
- 46% of residents are in age group 45-84 of which 18% are between 65-84 years old (for comparison, 55.35% of all residents are 45 years or older according to the 2019 mid-year population estimates)

6.5.25. Shiplake residents participate in a wide range of activities including sports and interest clubs, and community support groups which are typically well supported and much appreciated. A selection of these

³⁴ Office for National Statistics '2011 Census Table KS102EW Age Structure' < <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks102ew> > [accessed 01 November 2019]

is listed below. These are organised and run by a mix of volunteers and elected representatives.

- Bowls, Tennis, Badminton, Football, Rowing clubs
- Angling, Gardening, Book, Bridge, Walking clubs and Arts Group
- WI, Royal British Legion, Scouts/Cubs
- Fitness/Yoga/Pilates/Tai Chi classes
- SHADDO (am-dram), Church, Choir and Bell-ringing groups
- Villages summer party and fun run
- Neighbourhood Watch, Support Groups (Rosemary Club, Carers Oxfordshire, Age UK Community Information)
- Nursery, Baby and Toddler Group
- Book exchange (located in old telephone box)

6.5.26. Additionally, the community has an excellent website and newsletter provided by volunteers. All of these contribute very positively to the quality of life and Leisure and Wellbeing in the villages and represent the needs, interests and concerns of Shiplake residents.

6.5.27. The villages enjoy use of various facilities that contribute to L&W and these are used extensively. However, the facilities are spread disproportionately between the two villages and, apart from the Memorial Hall, there are currently no community meeting places. The Memorial Hall is of particular significance to the community, having been established in 1927 as a memorial to *"those who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918"*. It is of an age where its upkeep is increasingly costly and as with many village halls, the revenue from hire costs and other income does not cover the major maintenance costs that a building of this age is likely to require.

6.5.28. The Hall at Shiplake Cross operates independently as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (a 'CIO') with the official title of 'Shiplake Memorial Hall'. The CIO has five trustees, including one from each of Shiplake and Binfield Heath Parish Councils. The Hall is for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parishes of Shiplake and Binfield Heath and the surrounding area and owns the adjoining playing field, tennis courts, bowling green and children's play park. The tennis courts and bowling green are run by their respective clubs under long leases and are responsible for their own pavilion and clubhouses.

The play park is licenced to Shiplake Parish Council.

6.5.29. Other important community facilities comprise: Plowden Arms; Church and Church Hall (including The Ark) located at Shiplake Cross; village shop and post office (located in Lower Shiplake); the Baskerville Arms; butchers and a small playground in Lower Shiplake. The Memorial Hall and playing field are regarded as crucial facilities for the village in terms of sporting facilities / open spaces for the school and for other village events to be held.

6.5.30. Residents have suggested some areas for improvement which are reflected in the following section of this Plan, but there is a strong desire to protect and retain the status quo. *"Despite all my criticisms, Shiplake is a fabulous place to live in"* (Source: 2017 Survey Appendices and free-form commentary). Residents clearly wish the existing quality of life enjoyed in the villages to be preserved, the essential character of the villages retained, its existing facilities protected, some additional community and sports facilities be created and as far as possible the demographic imbalance be resolved as well as detracting issues such as traffic.

6.5.31. In the 2017 Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan survey, residents commented on the importance of retaining the things that make Shiplake a great place to live, are essential for the existing quality of life, create a sense of wellbeing and underpin the character of the villages. Key themes were:

- Open Spaces, Rural Life, Trees and Greenery, Views, River and Lock
- Community spirit, Family Friendly, Safety, Low Crime
- Preservation of villages' margins and character
- Protection of existing infrastructure (Church, shops, pubs, Memorial Hall)

6.5.32. On the other hand, they also pointed out a number of things that could/should be addressed to improve quality of life, including:

- Aircraft noise, traffic and parking, cycling safety
- Spread and Development (*"we want a village not a miniature town. Don't turn it into a second Sonning Common"*)
- Growing numbers of residents straining capacity of clubs, activities and facilities

6.5.33. Many of these are considered in other parts of this Plan but are highlighted here as they are important constituents of ‘Wellbeing’ and impact on land use and future development of the villages.

6.5.34. For L&W specifically, residents advocated that the Neighbourhood Plan should promote leisure and recreation facilities, facilities for young people and facilities for old people. There was a clear demand for: a community centre or facility to enhance social cohesion and community spirit; a meeting place for casual and informal gatherings; additional sports facilities and improvements to existing facilities; and an overwhelming desire to retain the open spaces of the villages. These matters have clear implications for land use planning and are consequently key elements of this Neighbourhood Plan. However, we are mindful that some could be created by imaginative use of existing village facilities.

6.5.35. Residents also suggested a wish-list of facilities and improvements. Many have merit but fall outside the mandate of this plan and some, if enacted, would significantly detract from the residents’ desire to retain the existing character of the villages. A summary of the suggestions includes:

- Doctors/Surgery/Pharmacy/Dentist
- Hairdressers, Bakery, Cafe, Deli, Shops, Restaurant
- Gym and /or outdoor exercise gym area, Swimming Pool
- Youth centre/Youth club, Faith Centre
- Picnic benches, more litter and dog waste bins

6.5.36. The following, from the resident’s survey (Survey Results Report Section 3) summarise the focus, balance, and weight of support for the resident’s vision and wishes for L&W facilities and arrangements.

6.5.37. This Neighbourhood Plan should promote:

- Leisure & Recreation Facilities (41% for, 15% against)
- Facilities for Young People (56% for, 9% against)
- Facilities for Old People (53% for, 8% against)

6.5.38. Facilities Needed:

- Community centre (36% for, 28% against)

- Meeting Place/Cafe (48% for, 20% against)
- Sports Facilities (44% for, 19% against)
- Open spaces (78% for, 3% against)

6.5.39. These have been captured in the policies that are set out below, which seek to ensure that existing community facilities and infrastructure is protected and where possible enhanced.

Education

6.5.40. The two villages that make up the parish have between them an independent nursery, a Church of England primary school and an independent school.

6.5.41. - **Shiplake Village Nursery** - The independent Shiplake Village Nursery was established in 1966 and has occupied its current site in Shiplake Memorial Hall since 1990. The nursery caters for a maximum of 20 children, aged from two years to school age, preparing them for the transition to primary school. The nursery is managed by the primary school. The facility, including secure play area, is rented from the Memorial Hall.



6.5.42. - **Shiplake Primary School** - Shiplake C of E Primary School is a Voluntary Aided Church of England school and was founded in 1871, moving to its current one- acre narrow triangular- shaped site in 1963. The school comprises a classroom for each of the seven classroom year groups on one single floor, a hall and three smaller learning areas. There are also two temporary, wooden buildings on the site, used as teaching areas. The school has a resource centre, which is used as both the ICT Suite and School Library. There are 24 full and part-time staff and, due to limited space, most staff are required to park their vehicles along the two narrow roads joining the site or at the Memorial Hall car park.

6.5.43. Outside space is limited for the size of the school. The school has no onsite facilities for sporting activities and uses the Memorial Hall playing fields for these activities.



6.5.44. The primary school needs help with:

- Encouraging younger families to move into the catchment area of the school
- More affordable local housing to help attract and retain teaching staff at the school
- Provision of parking near the school for both parents and staff
- Identifying suitable outdoor spaces and playing fields for the use of the school.

6.5.45. The 2017 residents’ survey results and comments stated that the Neighbourhood Plan should promote improvement and / or expansion of the school facilities on a new site (58% for, 13% against) and that the current site should be used for additional housing. This is an issue that lies beyond the scope of this Plan.

6.5.46. - *Shiplake College* - Founded in 1959, Shiplake College is an independent CofE boarding and day school. It occupies 45 acres, has c 470 pupils (boys aged 11 to 18 and girls aged 16 to 18), including 140 boarders. The college caters for the educational needs of both boys and girls from Lower School up to Sixth Form. Much investment and development of the school facilities has taken place over recent years, along with greater academic rigour.



6.5.47. The main buildings are centred around the Grade II listed Victorian manor house, Shiplake Court, built in 1890. Other buildings include the Lower School and Gilson buildings, which both opened in 2009. The main teaching areas are the Goodwin Building and Bevan Block. The John Turner Building opened in September 2014, which includes a tiered seating Lecture Theatre for up to 140 people.

6.5.48. The College has a fully-equipped gymnasium, three large sports fields on-site and a modern cricket pavilion, along with extensive rowing facilities, two boathouses and its own stretch of water for rowing. Some facilities and sporting grounds are leased by the College.

6.5.49. The College is the largest employer in the Parish, employing a total of 139 full time staff (including 72 teachers) and 58 part-time staff (including 13 subject teachers), many of whom live locally in and around the district.

6.5.50. There is no post-primary state education provision within the villages. This provision is catered for by Gillotts School (co-educational secondary school with academy status) and Henley College (Sixth Form), based in Henley-on-Thames, a bus, train or car journey away.

Environment and Sustainability

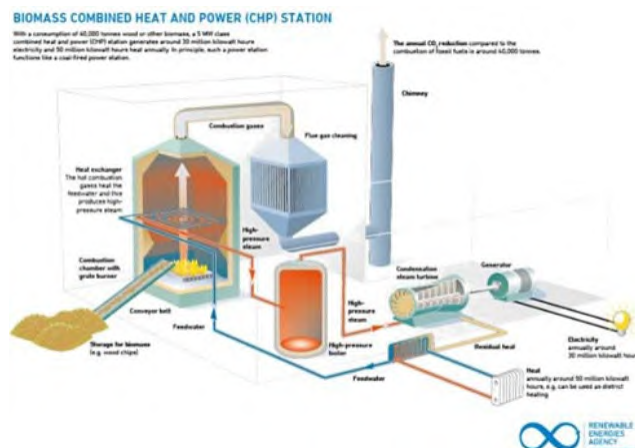
6.5.51. Over the remaining 14-years of this Neighbourhood Plan period (which extends up to 2035), many changes are expected to impact our lives. A number of emerging technologies look set to provide huge opportunities to improve air quality, reduce pollution, and create a more sustainable way of life for everyone. Almost all residents appreciate the rural nature of the villages, the nearby Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the river, and our natural resources. Most will sign up to a cleaner environment, and improved natural habitats.

6.5.52. But such aspirations can only be achieved if people are prepared to leave the car at home from time to time, and walk, cycle, scoot or skateboard to their destinations. A willingness to reduce car journeys, especially within the villages, will do as much to improve our sustainable way of life as any of the ideas outlined here.



6.5.53. - **Energy**- Many public organisations and institutions across the country – Reading University, and Royal Berks Hospital are local examples – have invested in some form of district energy configuration. Such schemes can provide electricity and heating across a local geographic area, produce energy that is more sustainable and ecologically sound than that provided by the National Grid, and at a considerable cost saving.

6.5.54. We may consider a district energy scheme in a future iteration of the Neighbourhood Plan if they become viable in the context of small villages.



(source: <https://cleangreenenergyzone.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/biomass-energy-converting-full.jpg>)

6.5.55. - **Sustainability** – This is a cornerstone of both national and local planning policy and in a rural setting also provides one of the key yardsticks to measuring where development should and should not occur.

6.5.56. This Plan has considered this issue very carefully and the policies within it are designed to respond to the drive for more sustainable and also accessible housing development.

6.5.57. - **Air Quality**- White gates at the entrance to villages are a cheap, easy, and effective way of reducing emissions and improving safety by promoting the reduction of vehicle speeds.

6.5.58. Electric vehicles will become commonplace over the next 15 years. Some studies predict fossil-fuelled vehicles will become a small minority in this timescale.



(source: https://static.wixstatic.com/media/d8be6e_80b4e2b237c54e55a2c3f0876a0a3209~mv2.jpeg/v1/fill/w_173,h_173,al_c,q_80,usm_0.66_1.00_0.01/d8be6e_80b4e2b237c54e55a2c3f0876a0a3209~mv2.jpeg)

6.5.59. Self-driving electric cars will offer life-changing options, especially for people with limited mobility.

6.5.60. It is not the intention of the Parish Council to provide public charging points at this stage. Future reviews of the Neighbourhood Plan will review the demand and potential locations within the villages.

6.5.61. - **Water and Waste Water** - Thames Water have indicated to the authors of this Plan that developers need to consider the net increase in water and waste water demand to serve their developments and also any impact the development may have off site further down the network, if no/low water pressure and internal/external sewage flooding of property is to be avoided.

6.5.62. Thames Water encourage developers to use their free pre-planning service (<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/preplanning>). This service can tell developers at an early stage if there will be capacity in the water and/or wastewater networks to serve the development, or what Thames Water will do if there isn't sufficient capacity.

Living in Shiplake: Policy Principles

6.5.63. The evidence leads to a number of principles upon which the policies have been built:

- To secure the implementation of safe cycle routes and rights of way enabling residents and visitors to have a genuine alternative choice in

modes of transportation locally

- Protect existing rights of way and cycle routes
- Promote community ethos and quality of life through encouraging the protection of community facilities and infrastructure including meeting places, play and sports areas and the open spaces and green aspects of the villages
- Secure the provision of additional community facilities and funding to support existing facilities to mitigate impacts of development, including a community centre or facility to enhance social cohesion and community spirit; a meeting place for casual and informal gatherings; additional sports facilities and improvements to existing facilities
- Ensure that the Memorial Hall remains a viable and useful facility to the community
- Provide sufficient parking and ensure road safety is not adversely impacted as a result of new development

6.5.64. Not all of the principles identified are land use based however; those that are not are nevertheless important to the community and these are rightly referred to as Community Aspirations and are identified in section 7 of this Plan. Some of the aspirations include:

- To ensure that pavements are maintained in good serviceable order and are provided to facilitate safe pedestrian access around and between the villages
- Examine the feasibility of a pedestrian crossing of the A4155 Reading Road
- Enhance parking facilities in the commercial centre of Lower Shiplake
- Support the schools in the Plan area
- Monitor the role that the Plan can play in future in relation to the provision of a district energy scheme, managing air quality and sustainable development more generally
- Ensure that the centre remains a vibrant and thriving destination for residents and visitors alike
- Encourage greater social interactions so far as possible by providing a vibrant and inviting central area to the commercial centre of the parish

Living in Shiplake: Policies

6.5.65. In consideration of the above, a number of policies have been developed to address the key areas of concern.

6.5.66. Policy SV16 addresses one of the key concerns of the community, the desire to ensure the longevity of the Memorial Hall. However, it is recognised that maintaining the Hall is costly and cannot be covered from existing income sources or grant funding alone.

6.5.67. Consequently, the policy has been developed to provide a context within which proposals can come forward for the improvement of the Hall. Funding for such improvements could be secured from a variety of sources. This may include the Parish Council's use of the local element of any monies secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy. At this stage no specific proposals are being considered. However, there is the potential that the Hall could be directly supported through 'enabling development'. Historic England defines 'enabling development' as:

"Enabling Development in context of the historic environment is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring heritage benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved"³⁵.

A typical example would be the construction of houses where planning policy would normally prohibit them, the profits from which would pay for repairs to a heritage asset."

6.5.68. It goes on to define heritage assets: "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)."

6.5.69. There are strict rules applied in cases of enabling development and these would apply with respect to any proposals funding or partially funding the long-term future of the Hall.

6.5.70. Policies SV17 and SV18 provide the framework within which existing community facilities may be protected (SV17) and where the impacts of development on existing resources and infrastructure is appropriately mitigated (SV18).

6.5.71. Policy SV19 seeks to address concerns over parking provision in new developments, and the impact development can have on highway safety within the Plan area.

6.5.72. Finally, Policies SV20 and SV21 address the well-rehearsed concerns of the community to ensure that existing rights of way and cycle routes are protected where development is proposed or where traditional routes are threatened by additional traffic (eg the upper section of New Road) (SV20), and that new routes and opportunities for enhancement will be strongly supported, using developer or CIL contributions where appropriate to fund improvements (SV21). Examples of new routes that have been suggested in recent consultation exercises include a footpath / cycle path into Henley. Strong encouragement of the promotion of walking to school, improvements to pavements and generally encouraging more walking around the villages has been demonstrated through these consultation exercises.

³⁵ Historic England, Definition of Enabling Development' (2019), <<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/decisionmaking/ed/>> [accessed 01 November 2019]

Policy SV16 – Memorial Hall Enabling Development

Insofar as planning permission is required proposals for the improvement of the Memorial Hall will be supported.

Policy SV17 – Infrastructure / Community Facilities

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for the redevelopment of a building or land that comprises or accommodates a community facility will not be supported unless it can be shown that the facility:

- is no longer viable; or
- is no longer needed; or
- can successfully be relocated within the relevant settlement.

The facilities this policy applies to are:

- Primary school
- Memorial Hall and playing fields
- Tennis courts, bowling green and children’s playpark at the Memorial Hall
- St Peter and St Paul Church
- Church room
- Village shop
- Post office
- The Baskerville
- The Plowden Arms
- Playground in Lower Shiplake

Policy SV18 – Infrastructure / Community Aspirations

Active support will be given to development which is consistent with the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan where it secures the provision or funding of infrastructure that directly mitigates the effects of the development.

A list of the priorities is set out in Section 7.1 of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy SV19 – New Development and Highway Safety

New development in the Neighbourhood Area should allow for sufficient off-road parking in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council standards and not have an unacceptable impact on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

Development should ensure that:

- a. It will not lead to an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or a situation where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe;
- b. There is adequate off-road parking to serve the development in accordance with adopted parking standards;
- c. There is safe access, egress and appropriate visibility to serve the development;
- d. Vehicles can enter and exit the site in forward gear with sufficient space for turning within the site; and
- e. Existing on-street parking problems are not exacerbated by the development.

Policy SV20 – Protection of Existing Rights of Way and Cycle Network

Development proposals which affect rights of way or the cycle network in the Plan area will be determined having regard to the following criteria:

- a. Proposals which would result in the obstruction or urbanisation of a public footpath, bridleway or cycle way will not be supported.
- b. Proposals which would unacceptably harm the following characteristics of existing public rights of way and the cycle network will not be supported:
 - Safety;
 - Directness;
 - Access and Connections;
 - Attractiveness; Convenience;
 - Associated and adjacent landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.
- c. Proposals for development adjoining a public footpath or bridleway should ensure that the rural character of the footpath or bridleway is maintained.

Policy SV21 - Cycle Network, Rights of Way, Footpaths and other Routes

Proposals which enhance the network of public rights of way, cycle ways, footways and footpaths 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.

Proposals should seek, where practicable, to create cycle paths so as to provide safe and effective routes across the parish and where possible join up with National Cycle Ways

6.6 Character & Design Theme

Character & Design: Evidence Base

6.6.1. Section 12 of the NPPF 2021 deals with the delivery of high-quality design. Paragraph 130 in particular requires policies to ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; that they are visually attractive; that they are sympathetic to local character, history and landscape setting; that they help to maintain a sense of place; that they optimise the potential of sites ; and that they create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

6.6.2. Pre-application engagement is strongly supported at paragraphs 39-46 of the NPPF 2021.

6.6.3. The elements of good quality design and designing for amenity, privacy, crime and access are covered by Local Plan policies DES1 (Delivering High Quality Development), DES2 (Enhancing Local

Character), DES3 (Design and Access Statements), DES5 (Outdoor Amenity Space) and DES6 (Residential Amenity). Policies ENV11 and ENV12 protect recipients from environmental pollution due to noise, smell, light, air pollution, dust and other contaminants.

6.6.4. Good quality design is of paramount importance in national and local planning policy and this has influenced the development of the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

6.6.5. The Shiplake Villages Character Appraisal is the main evidence base to support the policies in this section. It is important in the context of the national policy at paragraphs 127-129 of the NPPF 2021. The Character Appraisal and Design Guide recommendations can be found at Appendix 6 to this Plan. In order to successfully plan for the future growth and development of the parish it is imperative that there is a clear understanding of the character of the Parish and what makes it unique.

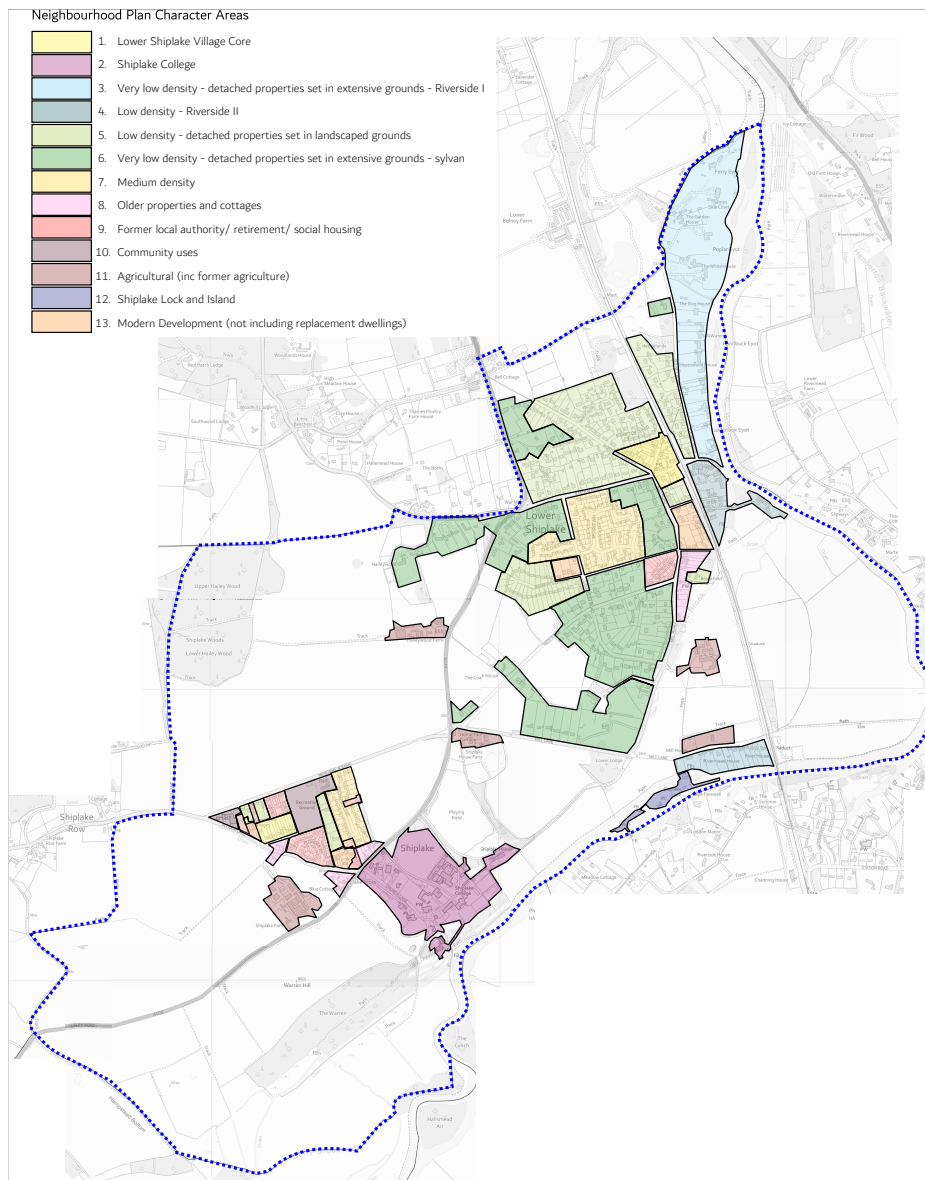


Figure 23- Parish Character Areas (from NP Character Appraisal)

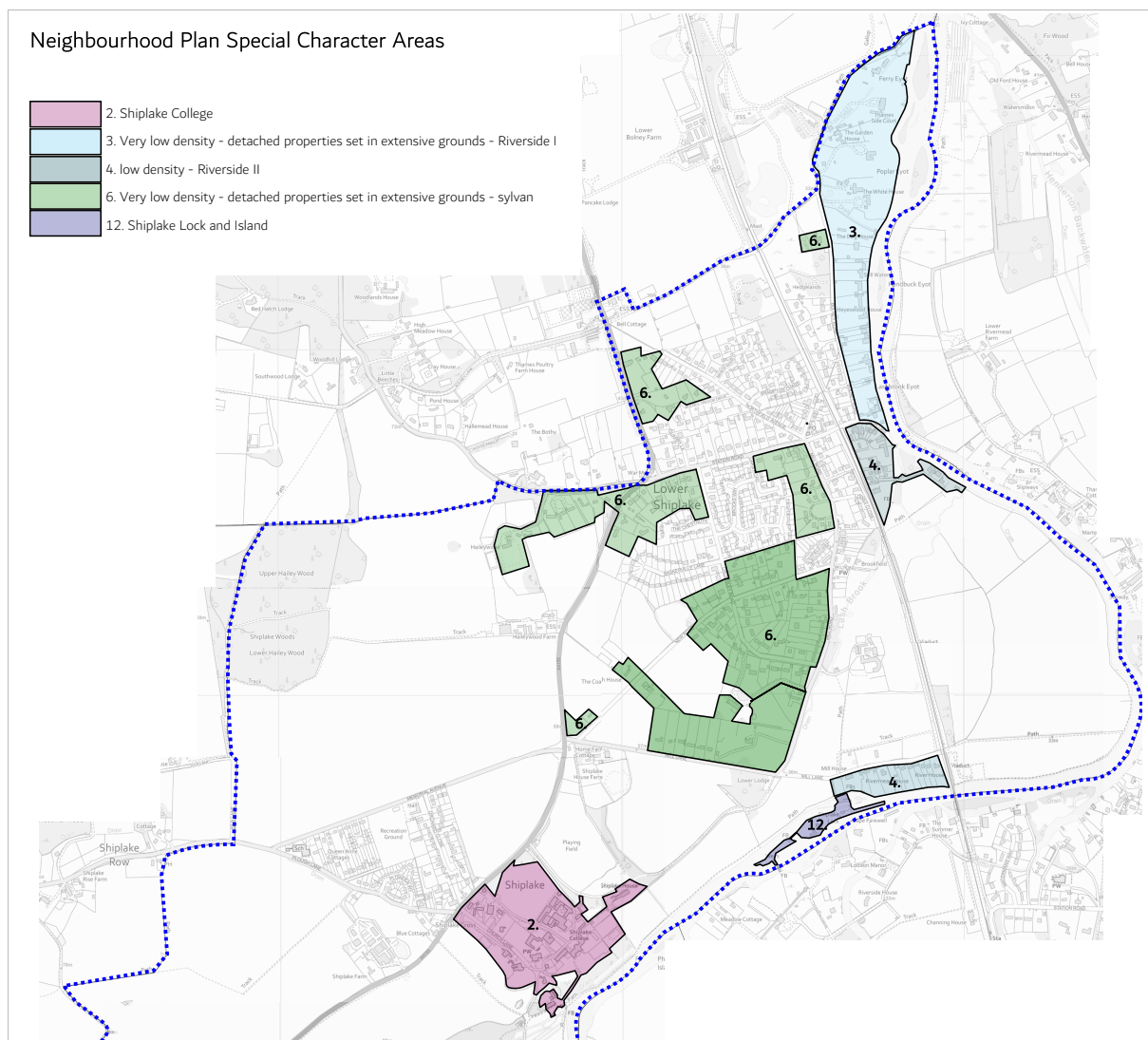


Figure 24- Special Character Areas (from Parish Character Appraisal)

6.6.6. Those character areas identified in the Character Appraisal as being special character areas are defined as such because they contain features, characteristics or elements which are particularly distinctive to the Neighbourhood Plan area. Figures 23 and 24 depict the individual character areas and special character areas (policy SV23) identified within the Character Appraisal. In the Special Character Areas landscape planting will be particularly important and will focus on the use of native species where appropriate.

6.6.7. Evidence is provided within the National Design Guide and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, which both provide further guidance and in the case of the latter, a series of checklists which each relate to high quality design, contextual analysis and key design principles.

Character & Design: Policy Principles

6.6.8. From a full analysis of the built form within the Parish a number of key issues have arisen which have led to a range of policy principles being established. It should be noted that many of these relate to individual character areas and are not parish wide. The following principles are taken from the Shiplake Villages Design Guide:

- The need to ensure that proposals for *redevelopment, infill development and replacement dwellings* will be accompanied by a Design and Access statement which includes a contextual analysis to highlight how the design has taken into account the characteristics of the site and its surroundings.
- Support for development in *the centre of Lower Shiplake* which resolves issues due to the impact

of the railway and other commercial uses, which are not necessarily compatible in close proximity to residential properties should be given. Where any such use comes forward during the Plan period, opportunities, constraints and key principles for development should be taken into consideration in any future redevelopment.

- Support should be given for proposals which resolve *on street parking problems* in general as well as those generated from the station parking overflow. This problem dominates the surrounding streets, particularly during working hours. Where on-plot parking is proposed, this should not dominate the frontage.
- Large areas of the parish suffer from *flooding and drainage issues*, any future development should not exacerbate this problem and design should take this into consideration.
- A number of *character areas* in the Parish are considered to warrant further protection due to their unique or special characteristics, which could be adversely impacted upon by inappropriate development either on a large scale or cumulatively by smaller piecemeal development.
- The average *density* of the parish is 4.4 persons per hectare. This is relatively high for South Oxfordshire's smaller villages (where the average is 2 persons per hectare) but low generally across the country. Recently permitted large scale residential development sites and other developments (e.g. replacement dwellings, extensions and infill developments) have not always respected the density of the area in which they are located. This has led to incongruous modern development which is dominant and discordant in the street scene. New proposals must demonstrate how they are in keeping with surrounding densities. When assessing any new development proposals, plot size should reflect that of surrounding properties, but more importantly plot coverage. The level of built form on a plot should be consistent with neighbouring dwellings and over-development of plots should be resisted.
- Maintaining the mature, *syvan landscaped setting* is key to the identity of the parish. Unsympathetic modern development has led to the removal of key vegetation, this is particularly a problem where the built form is contained by the

landscape and its reduction reveals a hard, urban edge which is out of keeping with the remaining verdant character. New development should minimise the removal of vegetation, particularly in areas where it is identified as a key characteristic in the character appraisal. It is important that the cumulative removal is also considered as whilst individually proposals may have a limited effect, the overall impact as part of the wider area must be considered.

- *Gaps between buildings* are to be maintained where these are a key feature of the area (as identified in the Character Appraisal). Such gaps enable the retention of landscaping to soften built form and allow views through to the countryside beyond, which are all key features within the settlements.
- Any proposals for *Shiplake College* to expand on its current site and maintain its buildings to meet future demand should be carefully considered, but balanced with respect for the historic and waterfront location including the identified important views. In addition to the impact any expansion will have on local businesses, the community and the environment as a whole.
- Many of the residential roads are characterised by verdant *planting*, where development is not the dominant feature (see figure 20). *Accesses and driveways* give glimpsed views through to built form and are often low key. Where new driveways and accesses are proposed, dominant gated driveways, particularly where imposing, built structures are discordant with an otherwise soft, well vegetated approach are not supported. Equally large areas of hard surfacing are not encouraged, particularly within flood zones 2 and 3.
- The impact of built development as viewed from the *River Thames* and surrounding Public Rights of Way should be minimised. Care must be taken, that there is no proliferation of riverside development (including substantial boathouses), which would present a harder, less landscaped edge to the waterfront.
- The identified and unifying *riverside character* (as set out in the Character Appraisal) which impacts upon the setting of the floodplain meadows, the wooded river cliffs and terraces as well as the parkland should be maintained.

- **Older properties and cottages** make a positive and distinctive contribution to the parish. Their use of traditional building, forms, materials and detailing are key to this. Where possible, new development should be encouraged to retain features of interest, original building forms and materials. New development should allow for the original building to still be read and understood.
- The parish contains a number of **historic farms** which are still in use or the former buildings retain many agricultural elements. There are some redundant farm buildings however. These are often converted under permitted development (where appropriate), it is essential that the key features of the building should be retained in any development proposal. The introduction of urbanising features would not be appropriate, as would the loss of key vegetation.
- Any new development should not contribute to a significant increase in built form within these prominent farmsteads, which would damage important views or the low key nature of built form in this wider area.
- **Shiplake Lock and island** has its own unique character, which could be subject to development pressure, particularly from recreational and tourism uses. The site is an important feature in the landscape and in the key views. It is highly visible from the Thames Path. Any redevelopment should be sensitively designed as it would have the potential to fundamentally alter the character of this area and should be considered carefully for its impact on both the river frontage and the open landscape views to the west.
- **The land between settlements** of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross in addition to Lower Shiplake and Henley contain limited pockets of built form and are considered open countryside. These are usually relating to farm buildings and cottages, which are considered appropriate to the rural context. These should remain rural in appearance and the plots not developed to such an extent which would lead to visual or physical coalescence of settlements.
- New development should maintain the **open rural landscape character** and not lead to cumulative erosion of character and identity.
- Any recent permissions within the existing gap should not be used to justify **expansion of either settlement**, particularly where it would lead to urbanisation, removal of vegetation or have an adverse impact on the setting of the AONB or the valued landscape views.
- On **the edges of the settlements**, modern development on the edge of the built-up areas of the settlements must be contained by the landscape. Any development in these areas should not lead to a hard, built form edge or loss of important vegetation. This is particularly important in Special Character Areas and where vegetation is identified as a key characteristic. Important rural views over of the wider landscape must also be maintained.

Character & Design: Policies

6.6.9. Policy SV22 responds to the issues facing the settlements at present and seeks to support development which would resolve these issues.

6.6.10. Policy SV23 has been developed due to the identification of a number of character areas in the Parish which are considered to warrant further protection due to their special characteristics (see figure 24 above). These include:

- **Area 2 – Shiplake College** – this area has the highest concentration of designated heritage assets in addition to a parkland setting and the Thames River frontage. It is considered to be a unique environment which brings together a number of highly valued local landmarks, features and landscapes.

- **Area 3 - Riverside Development I (Bolney Road)** - The area benefits from a mature, sylvan landscaped setting along Bolney Road where densities are less than 2dph and gaps between dwellings are significant. Dwellings are often individual and of architectural merit. These are entirely contained by the landscape and often concealed from this aspect. Conversely, properties are highly visible from the Thames, where an entirely different perspective is gained. Many dwellings have prominent and significant boat houses which in culmination overall, give this area a unique character.

- **Area 4 - Riverside Development II** - Dwellings in this character area have a clear riverside influence, not only due to the fact that they are raised off the ground to account for the level of flooding which exists, but their design and appearance which reflects the riverside character (including boathouses). Dwellings are set into landscaped grounds but have a visible presence on the street. The gaps between buildings are also a key feature and densities are low at less than 7dph.

- **Area 6 - Properties set in Extensive Sylvan Grounds**

- The character of this area is distinctive, with the emphasis on the landscape containing the development. Particularly where the character areas border agricultural fields, the impression is of glimpsed views of buildings. The ratio of built form to plot size is extremely low and densities are less than 3dph. The area contains pockets of development outside of the main settlement areas which have limited visibility due to the level of landscaping. The area is particularly sensitive to new development which could individually or cumulatively erode this character. Any recently permitted development in this area should not be used to justify further built form, as this is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the character of the area and potentially disrupt important views.

- **Area 12 – Shiplake Lock and Island** - A unique feature of Shiplake is the lock on the Thames and the central Shiplake Island, which is used as a campsite, with a number of moorings around the area. These are highly visible to the public and partly accessible from The Thames Path and represent a key feature for the Parish. The lock dates from 1773, with the island originally used by mills. The current uses and have not changed overly in form or layout since the 1930s.

6.6.11. Whilst areas 2 and 12 are not specifically residential, these are also to be afforded additional protection to maintain their unique character and to ensure that future development does not erode this.

6.6.12. Areas 3, 4 and 6 are primarily residential in nature. New development should maintain this character and draw on such influences, with any deviation adequately justified in the Design and Access statement as to why it is not appropriate.

6.6.13. Policy SV24 sets out development principles to ensure that new development is in keeping with its

surroundings and does not present any significant adverse impacts.

6.6.14. It is essential that plots within these areas are not overdeveloped. When proposing new development, the existing ratio of built form to plot size must be considered and evidence submitted to support any application in this regard. Proposals should be in keeping with average ratio of the area in which it is situated. It should be noted that if undertaken sensitively, this can allow density to increase where appropriate, without an adverse impact on the overall character.

6.6.15. Significant vegetation should not be removed within the plot or along the frontage, particularly in roads which are defined by their level of vegetation cover.

6.6.16. The above character areas generally contain plots with substantial gaps between buildings. These should not be substantially diminished either comprehensively or cumulatively in a piecemeal fashion to ensure that the prevailing character is not eroded over time. New developments should minimise the impacts of the construction arrangements on the amenity of local residents by way of lorry movement, deliveries, working times, lighting, parking of contractor's vehicles, wheel washing provision and street cleaning. In some cases, this can be achieved through the agreement of a Construction Management Plan.

6.6.17. The following paragraphs provide a framework for positive early (pre-application) engagement between developers and the Parish Council / Local Planning Authority for developments that are significant.

6.6.18. In order to ensure a positive and structured Pre-Application engagement, potential applicants bringing forward significant development proposals are encouraged to undertake early discussions with the Parish Council and Local Planning Authority covering the following (where applicable):

- Landscaping
- Overall character
- Building design
- Design of aspects such as paths, landscape, signs, street lamps/ lighting
- Choice of materials
- Housing densities / plot coverage

- Parking standards
- Traffic impacts- on / off-site, including safety
- Public transport links
- Footpath / cycle routes adjacent to/ on-site
- Provision of amenities such as open space, play areas, meeting rooms etc.
- Wildlife and ecological impacts
- Noise and nuisance
- Sensitivity to historic buildings and conservation- Known archaeological features
- Views in and out
- Overshadowing and loss of light
- Flooding/surface runoff

6.6.19. Significant development proposals are defined as being:

- On a site allocated in the Development Plan
- Or any application for more than 10 new homes
- Or an employment site likely to have 5 or more employees

Policy SV22 – Village Centre Improvements

As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals in the identified village centres should maximise opportunities to:

- improve parking provision, highway safety for pedestrians, cyclists and road users;
- create spaces that encourage social interaction and access to local shops and public houses.

Proposals shall have regard to the guidance and Design Principles for the village centres as set out in the Character Appraisal.

Policy SV23 – Special Character Areas

Where planning permission is required, development (including extensions, alterations and redevelopment) within Residential Areas of Special Character as identified on figure 24 will be supported provided that the development's size, scale, layout, type, siting, detailed design and appearance are compatible with the special character of that Area in terms of the features, characteristics or elements which are particularly distinctive to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Development proposals should better reveal key features or landmarks as identified in figures 13, 14 and 21 of this Plan and where possible enhance the roadside landscape without reducing personal security or privacy.

Development proposals should use native species green hedges that reflect the character of the area, where boundary demarcation is a key characteristic.

Development proposals should avoid the loss of frontage trees or hedgerows in an identified Area of Special Character.

Policy SV24 – Building Materials / Design / Density / Layout

New development, extensions, alterations and replacement dwellings should be to a high standard of design, in keeping with the character of the area and should demonstrate how regard has been given to the Shiplake Villages Character Appraisal at Appendix 6 to this Plan. Where the proposed development is significantly different from the surrounding identified character, appropriate justification should be provided to support the proposal.

In accordance with the identified character areas, new development should demonstrate careful consideration has been given to:

- the height of proposed buildings, which should not normally exceed two storeys (as set out within the Character Appraisal)
- appropriate massing, scale, layout, appearance and landscaping of proposals;
- how the proposal integrates with its surroundings in terms of plot size, density and built form coverage;
- the setting of designated heritage assets in the schedule at Appendix 2 to this Plan

- the impact upon important views as described in policy SV11 and the Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd / The terra firma Consultancy Ltd Landscape Character Assessment at Appendix 4 to this Plan
- the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of levels of light, noise, air or water pollution;
- connecting walking and cycling routes;
- promotion of sustainable development and energy efficiency;
- provision of open / play space; and

Support will be given to development which reflects local building styles and detailing, and which uses traditional materials as described in the Character Appraisal, especially within the setting of heritage assets. Proposals should comply with the Design Principles in the Character Appraisal for the character area within which the site is located.

Proposals which incorporate the removal or replacement of unsympathetic structures and materials will be supported where there is a net benefit to the character area.

7. COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1. A number of desirable community aspirations have emerged as a result of producing this Neighbourhood Plan, several of which are detailed in section 6.5 above, under the theme 'Living in Shiplake'. In particular the following aspirations have emerged from the various conversations with the community over the last two years:

- Ensure that pavements are maintained in good serviceable order and are provided to facilitate safe pedestrian access around and between the villages
- Examine the feasibility of a pedestrian crossing of the A4155 Reading Road
- Creation of a footpath / cycle way to Henley
- Improving connectivity between the villages
- Concept of a shared space in the centre of Lower Shiplake (dependent on the nature of traffic and pedestrian safety factors)
- Enhance parking facilities in the commercial centre of Lower Shiplake
- Support the schools
- Manage air quality and sustainable development more generally
- Ensure that the centre remains a vibrant and thriving destination for residents and visitors alike
- Encourage greater social interactions so far as possible by providing a vibrant and inviting centres to both Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake
- Reduce speed and air pollution from vehicles entering the villages, possibly by installing white gates at the entrance to Lower Shiplake
- Look at relocation of non-conforming uses
- Doctors/Surgery/Pharmacy/Dentist

- Hairdressers, Bakery, Cafe, Deli, Shops, Restaurant
- Gym and /or outdoor exercise gym area, Swimming Pool
- Youth centre/Youth club, Faith Centre
- Picnic benches
- More litter and dog waste bins

7.1.2. These are all important to the community and a number have the potential to be delivered outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process. Not all may be consistent with the overall strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan but all are worthy of recording.

8. DELIVERY STRATEGY

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1. To be effective, the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan must be deliverable and be capable of being monitored. This chapter sets out the delivery and monitoring strategy and plans that support the Neighbourhood Plan and its delivery over time. It also sets out guidance for the regular review of the Neighbourhood Plan from time to time.

8.1.2. Neighbourhood Plans are a relatively new feature of the planning framework in England and Wales, and as such there are no hard and fast rules in place as to how the various responsibilities and initiatives identified and the policies may be implemented and managed. From those plans that have gone before us in the SODC region where this relates to villages, by and large the responsibilities have been identified as remaining primarily with the executive of SODC. Some larger towns have taken on more planning responsibilities and indeed some have invested financial resources to achieve this.

8.1.3. This document therefore must be seen as work in progress and will no doubt develop and evolve as the key responsibilities are formally allocated. However, following initial dialogue with the Parish Council, it wishes to continue taking a highly proactive approach in monitoring delivery of the policy objectives.

8.1.4. What is clear however, is that implementing the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan, monitoring the success, reviewing the Plan and ensuring issues are addressed and followed up will require resources. Whether those are new resources or the redeployment of existing resources is as yet unknown as also is the matter of volunteer and unpaid resources as compared to contracted/paid for resources. The Parish Council has however indicated that if necessary, it will enhance its Planning Advisory Group with more skilled resources and if necessary, would be prepared to hire resources as and when needed.

8.2 Ongoing Policy Management/Review & Monitoring

8.2.1. The table overleaf sets out the proposed arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, as well as details of those best placed to undertake the monitoring. This will rely upon sharing of data between the District Council and Parish Council in order for the monitoring and review process to operate efficiently.

POLICY	POLICY HEADING	HOW POLICY IS TO BE MONITORED	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC); Shiplake Parish Council (SPC))
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY THEME			
Policy SV1	Infill Development	Planning history records	SODC / SPC
Policy SV2	Rural Housing	Planning history records	SODC / SPC
Policy SV3	Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside	Planning history records	SODC / SPC
Policy SV4	Employment Development	Planning history records	SODC / SPC
HOUSING THEME			
Policy SV5	Dwelling Extensions	Delegated reports for applications	SODC / SPC
Policy SV6	Replacement Dwellings	Delegated reports for applications	SODC / SPC
LANDSCAPE & BIODIVERSITY THEME			
Policy SV7	Settlement Character	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV8	Separation of Settlements	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV9	Valued Landscapes	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV10	Riverside Related Development	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV11	Important Views	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV12	Dark Skies and Lighting	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV13	Biodiversity Net Gain	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV14	Landscaping and Greening of the Environment	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV15	Preservation and Replacement of Trees	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC

POLICY	POLICY HEADING	HOW POLICY IS TO BE MONITORED	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC); Shiplake Parish Council (SPC))
LIVING IN SHIPLAKE THEME			
Policy SV16	Memorial Hall Enabling Development	Site by site assessment as applications are submitted	SODC / SPC
Policy SV17	Infrastructure / Community Facilities	Site by site assessment as applications are submitted	SODC / SPC
Policy SV18	Infrastructure / Community Aspirations	Site by site assessment as applications are submitted	SODC / SPC
Policy SV19	New Development and Highway Safety	Site by site assessment as applications are submitted	SODC / SPC
Policy SV20	Protection of Existing Rights of Way and Cycle Network	Rights of way and cycle way updated survey (bi-annually)	SPC
Policy SV21	Cycle Network, Rights of Way, Footpaths and other Routes	Rights of way and cycle way updated survey (bi-annually)	SPC
CHARACTER & DESIGN THEME			
Policy SV22	Village Centre Improvements	Assessment of applications directly triggering this policy	SPC
Policy SV23	Special Character Areas	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC
Policy SV24	Building Materials / Design / Density / Layout	Review validation assessment / officer reports / applicant submissions	SODC / SPC

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