

# MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2024-2042

Regulation 15 SUBMISSION VERSION  
SEPTEMBER 2025





## **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE RESULT OF TWO REGULATION 14 CONSULTATIONS ON THE REVIEW OF THE MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, ORIGINALLY MADE IN MAY 2019.

THE FIRST CONSULTATION WAS CONDUCTED IN JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024.

SUBSEQUENTLY HEYFORD PARK PARISH COUNCIL, ONE OF THE MEMBER PARISHES OF THE MCNP, APPLIED TO CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL (CDC) FOR THE PARISH TO BE DESIGNATED AS A SEPARATE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA. THIS WAS AGREED BY CDC ON 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024. AS A CONSEQUENCE, CDC THEN REQUIRED US TO REPEAT THE REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION WITH SUITABLY REVISED DOCUMENTATION. THIS SECOND CONSULTATION WAS CARRIED OUT IN APRIL-MAY 2025.

ALTHOUGH HEYFORD PARK IS NO LONGER IN THE MCNP DESIGNATED AREA, IT REMAINS A POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON THE NP AREA, AND NUMEROUS REFERENCES TO IT THEREFORE REMAIN IN THE INTRODUCTORY SECTIONS AND IN POLICY RATIONALES.

THE DRAFT POLICIES IN THE SECOND CONSULTATION WERE ALSO REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE PUBLICATION IN DECEMBER 2024 OF THE DRAFT CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 2042, REGULATION 19 VERSION, AND A NUMBER OF CHANGES WERE MADE.

SOME OF THE TECHNICAL APPENDICES ACCOMPANYING THIS DOCUMENT HAVE NOT BEEN AMENDED TO REFLECT THE OMISSION OF HEYFORD PARK, OTHER THAN THE ADDITION OF NOTES TO CLARIFY THE POSITION, WHERE NECESSARY. THIS IS DUE TO RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS.

THE CONSULTATION STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS FULL DETAILS OF BOTH CONSULTATIONS.

This document, together with its accompanying Appendices, is the Regulation 15 (Submission) version of the Reviewed Plan.

The documents are also available to view online at:

[www.mid-cherwell.org.uk/reg15](http://www.mid-cherwell.org.uk/reg15)

**Scan the QR code below to go there now.**

It is also available on [www.cherwell.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans)

where Cherwell DC is undertaking its own formal consultation, prior to Examination and Referendum.



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## APPENDICES (see separate documents)

### PREVIOUS APPENDICES from MCNP 2031 (as revised for MCNP 2042)

- A CDC's DESIGNATION OF PLAN AREA
- B CONSTITUTION OF MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
- C VILLAGE SETTLEMENT AREAS
- D LOCAL GREEN SPACES
- K AECOM HERITAGE AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (separate document)
- M VILLAGE TRAFFIC MITIGATION REPORT

### APPENDICES to this document

- 1 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - SCOPING DOCUMENT
- 2 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - 2025 final version
- 3 HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT
- 4 LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT'S REPORT
- 5 TREESCAPES BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES REPORT
- 6 HOUSING SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT - September 2025
- 7 HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT - KIRTLINGTON

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful thanks are due to the following members of the MCNP Forum:

## **MCNP Executive**

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## **Development Task Team**

Martin Lipson (lead)  
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Cover photo: Catriona Renk

And finally, thanks to Locality for funding and technical support.



# FOREWORD

The process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan is acknowledged to be a very labour-intensive one, involving many hours of voluntary effort from often a small group of people, over several years. The hope that keeps the group going is that it will all be worth it in the end, because we can help to shape development over time to the long-term benefit of the local community.

What is not so often acknowledged is that the process itself can bring enormous benefits to the community. In our case, where twelve local parishes have come together, some remarkable things have happened. Parish councils that had no previous reason to communicate with their opposite numbers in the same District have found common purpose with them. A new partnership has been forged: where councillors and their parishioners tended to think no further than the confines of their village or parish, now they consider the effects of increased traffic on the whole neighbourhood. Where once the importance of retaining the rurality of “our” village was the focus, now there is more awareness of the wider need for green infrastructure that links all the communities together in a common purpose, protected by the shared policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, yet ensuring that each locality retains its own unique character and identity.

If sharing in the problems, issues and hopes of all the participating parishes has been the principal outcome of producing this Plan, it will have been worthwhile for that alone. In a world where there are many bigger and more important issues affecting our future, it is a result somehow all the greater that a good proportion of the people in our Area now think more about their neighbours in other villages, and not just those in their street. That outcome is not one that can be claimed by every Neighbourhood Plan group, and we hope that the initial implementation, and now this Review, of the Plan will keep alive the glow of a wider sense of community that we have fostered. Of the 3,000 or so neighbourhood plan groups in England, we believe MCNP to be unique in having so many parishes working together.

Since the Plan was made in 2019, it has been effective in shaping development in the area in quite a number of ways. MCNP Forum has submitted written comments on numerous planning applications, and Cherwell DC officers have applied our policies alongside its own (and national policies). In many cases the MCNP has influenced the outcome. Applicants have in some cases withdrawn their applications or made beneficial changes. The “success rate” of outcomes that aligned with MCNP policies in those that we have analysed was 89%; we have worked with Council officers, but on occasions we have had to speak at Planning Committees, persuading elected members to go against officer’s recommendations (both to reject and to approve). We have been invited to give evidence on neighbourhood planning to Ministers and their Departmental staff. We are making a difference.

*Martin Lipson, Forum Chair*

# OUR VISION FOR MID-CHERWELL

## OUR VISION STATEMENT:

In 2042 the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood's 11 parishes will still have vibrant individual villages connected by unspoiled countryside, and its communities will have successfully adapted to the challenges and opportunities of change whilst maintaining their essentially rural character. Affordable housing will have been sensitively added, heritage and conservation respected, and road traffic mitigated. Public transport will have been improved and will be well-used, and digital connectivity enhanced; local amenities will better provide for the needs of our communities. The natural environment will have been protected, enhanced and cared for, biodiversity increased, and carbon reduction measures



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 This initial section provides the context in which the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan has been developed, explains its overarching purpose, and the membership and structure of its organization.

1.1.2 The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) introduced a range of new rights and powers to enable local communities to shape new development in their community. The Act, amongst other provisions, provides for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans which allow local communities to define both general and specific planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood areas. This document is a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in the Act.

1.1.3 Neighbourhood Plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The following paragraphs from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF December 2024) are relevant:

29. *Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.*

30. *Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.*

31. *Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.*

1.1.4 It is a requirement of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions on planning applications under the planning Acts must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Accordingly, once adopted, the policies contained within the Mid-Cherwell NP must be considered alongside the policies of other adopted development plan documents when making decisions on planning applications within our neighbourhood plan area.

1.1.5 At the present time, the development plan comprises:

- the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2042, adopted in December 2022
- the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031, which was adopted on 20th July 2015 and subsequently subject to a Partial Review dealing with Oxford's Unmet Housing Need.
- saved policies from the Cherwell Local Plan (1996) - these are non-strategic
- and six 'made' neighbourhood plans - MCNP, Bloxham, Hook Norton, Adderbury, Weston-on-the- Green, and Deddington.

- 1.1.6 The Council is now preparing its Local Plan 2042 which at the time of writing has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, and has been taken into account in the preparation of this Review of the MCNP as a material consideration. In addition, the HELAA published in December 2024 by Cherwell DC has been taken into account as part of the evidence base, and in considering site assessments.
- 1.1.7 Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum (MCNPF) has liaised closely with Cherwell District Council (CDC) during preparation of its Review to ensure that it is both in general conformity with, and adequately reflects and accommodates the strategic policies, provisions and requirements of the current Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of key strategic Local Plan policies which have a direct impact on the MCNP area.

## **1.2 ORIGINS OF THE PLAN**

- 1.2.1 This Neighbourhood Plan has unusual origins: the Plan arose from a meeting held in April 2014, initiated by the Dorchester Group. Dorchester are the owners of Heyford Park - the former RAF Upper Heyford air base - now being developed as a strategic site for housing and employment. Heyford Park originally sat at the heart of what became the Mid-Cherwell neighbourhood, straddling several parishes, and affecting many others. 14 surrounding parish councils were invited to attend the meeting (12 of which attended).
- 1.2.2 Dorchester explained that they wished to act as facilitator for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan, engaging as many of the parishes surrounding its development as wished to join in. The proposal was presented as being mutually beneficial for both the developer and the local communities, as a way for the local communities to shape development within the Neighbourhood Plan area and for the developer to understand more about the needs and aspirations of the local communities. Eleven parishes agreed to take forward the idea.
- 1.2.3 A steering group was formed, and one of the parishes (Ardley with Fewcott) was nominated as "lead parish." The Plan area was submitted in August 2014 and eventually approved by Cherwell District Council (CDC) as the Designated Area, in April 2015. The delay was caused largely by the fact that CDC was engaged in completing its own Local Plan at that time.
- 1.2.4 Progress was made towards a draft plan, with Dorchester providing support to working groups on specific topics, involving members of the parish councils and some other members of the local community. In July 2015, one of the parish councils initiated a review of the structure of the organization in order to remedy a lack of progress and leadership. The result was that the organization agreed to move from its somewhat informal status to being an unincorporated association, the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Forum. A Constitution was drafted, with significant support from CDC's legal department, and formally adopted at the body's first AGM in early 2016. This nominated the parish councils as Full members of the Forum, and Dorchester and the Heyford Park Residents Association as Associate members. The Forum is managed by an Executive group, with named officers.

1.2.5 Two things were quickly recognized: firstly, that the progress made up to that point needed to be supplemented by a comprehensive process of wide community engagement: the idea of a Plan had not yet been tested on the wider community, and this was of course essential to confirm broad-based support, not only to meet the criteria for successful examination of the Plan in due course, but also as the basis for a successful referendum. Secondly, the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan was largely focused around issues arising from the development of Heyford Park, but it was going to be necessary to add to these a number of other issues identified by the local communities of the eleven parishes.

1.2.6 In February and March 2016 all the parishes held public meetings. Over 480 people attended and nearly 1600 written comments were received. Analysis of these and feedback from the meetings showed that there was very strong support for the process and the draft objectives, but that there were some additional issues of concern. Also, the weighting of issues from the community was different to those which the parish councils had assumed. Adjustments were made accordingly. By the time that a subsequent round of meetings and events were held in June 2016, it was clear that the direction of travel of the Plan now conformed much more closely with the wishes of the community.

1.2.7 Grants and technical support provided through Locality enabled the work to proceed through to Referendum in March 2019. The turnout was 25% and 90% of the votes cast were in favour of adopting the Plan.

### **1.3 SUBMITTING BODY AND PLAN REVIEW**

1.3.1 This Neighbourhood Development Plan is submitted by Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP) Forum, of which Ardley with Fewcott Parish Council is the lead parish and the qualifying body as defined by the legislation. It should be emphasised that the Forum is not the qualifying body, and is not a “neighbourhood forum” as defined by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, for use where no parish council is involved.

1.3.2 The Plan covers an area of North Oxfordshire, and is now represented by 11 Parish Councils and Parish Meetings, together with The Dorchester Group. The creation in 2019 of a new parish for the growing settlement of Heyford Park, which was formed by changing the boundaries of three of the surrounding parishes, initially increased parish membership to 12. However, the designated area of the MCNP has been altered by the decision in June 2024 to approve Heyford Park as a separate neighbourhood plan area.

1.3.3 Each parish is represented on the Forum by its parish councillors or by the parish council’s nominees, apart from Middle Aston and North Aston which have annual parish meetings and where the representatives are chosen by the parish meeting chairman.

1.3.4 The Constitution of the Forum is at [APPENDIX B](#).

1.3.5 Fig. 1 shows the Neighbourhood Area in its regional context (see also Fig.5 which highlights the location of Heyford Park). Fig.2 shows that the Area comprises the following Parishes (in alphabetical order).

- Ardley with Fewcott
- Duns Tew
- Fritwell
- Kirtlington (including Northbrook)
- Lower Heyford (including Caulcott)
- Middle Aston
- Middleton Stoney
- North Aston
- Somerton
- Steeple Aston
- Upper Heyford

1.3.6 The villages in Cherwell District are categorised in the adopted Local Plan. Category A villages (service centres) in the Neighbourhood Plan area are: Fritwell, Kirtlington and Steeple Aston. There are also two Category B (satellite) villages: Lower Heyford and Middle Aston. The remainder are Category C (other) villages.

1.3.7 The emerging Local Plan 2042 proposes changes to this categorisation. The Reg. 19 Consultation document asks whether a revised classification of villages should be adopted, as set out below. The policies in this Review of the MCNP have been influenced by this emerging Local Plan policy.

MCNP Settlement	Proposed category
Ardley with Fewcott	C
Caulcott	C
Duns Tew	C
Fritwell	C
Kirtlington	B
Lower Heyford	B
Middle Aston	B
Middleton Stoney	B
North Aston	C
Somerton	C
Steeple Aston	A
Upper Heyford	B

## REVIEW OF THE PLAN

1.3.8 The policies of the MCNP were conceived in the period 2016-2018 and are therefore considered to be ready for review, as a result of changes in national planning policy and concerns about climate change that have become more urgent.

1.3.9 The Review was commenced in September 2022, with the help of a further grant from Locality, which enabled consultants to be appointed to assist with the work. Technical support has also been provided once again with the help of Locality's framework programme.

1.3.10 The Forum established a Review Team, which in turn created two Task Teams - one looking at Development policies, and the other at Environment policies. The work of the Development Task Team was significantly expanded by the decision, taken in January 2023, to allocate housing sites in the two potential "large villages" identified in the Local Plan 2040 consultation document published around that time (and which was subsequently withdrawn). The parish councils of Steeple Aston and Kirtlington supported the proposal, and identified representatives to take part in site assessment in each of the two villages. This work proceeded from May until November 2023, and involved public meetings in both parishes specifically to receive community feedback on the sites and on the proposed policy anticipating additional housing. Planning policy officers at Cherwell DC agreed at a meeting in July 2023 that MCNP Forum would be including allocation policies in the revised MCNP. The report detailing the site assessment process in both villages is available on request.

1.3.11 The Review was significantly delayed by discussions with CDC following the withdrawal of Heyford Park from the designated area, which resulted in the need to undertake a further Reg 14 consultation with revised documentation. While this work was under way, CDC published a revised Local Plan to 2042, with changes to rural housing policy and village classification. The MCNP Review was therefore delayed once again to take account of these significant changes. In particular, the allocation of potential housing sites across the MCNP area, rather than just in two of the villages, was commenced. This resulted in a new site assessment report (Appendix 6).



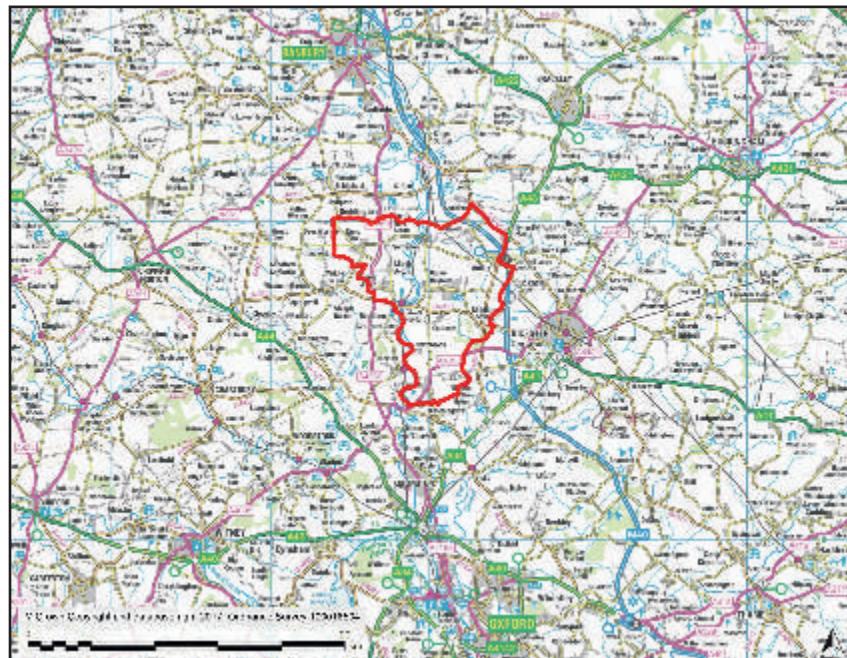


FIGURE 1: MAP SHOWING THE REGIONAL LOCATION OF MID-CHERWELL

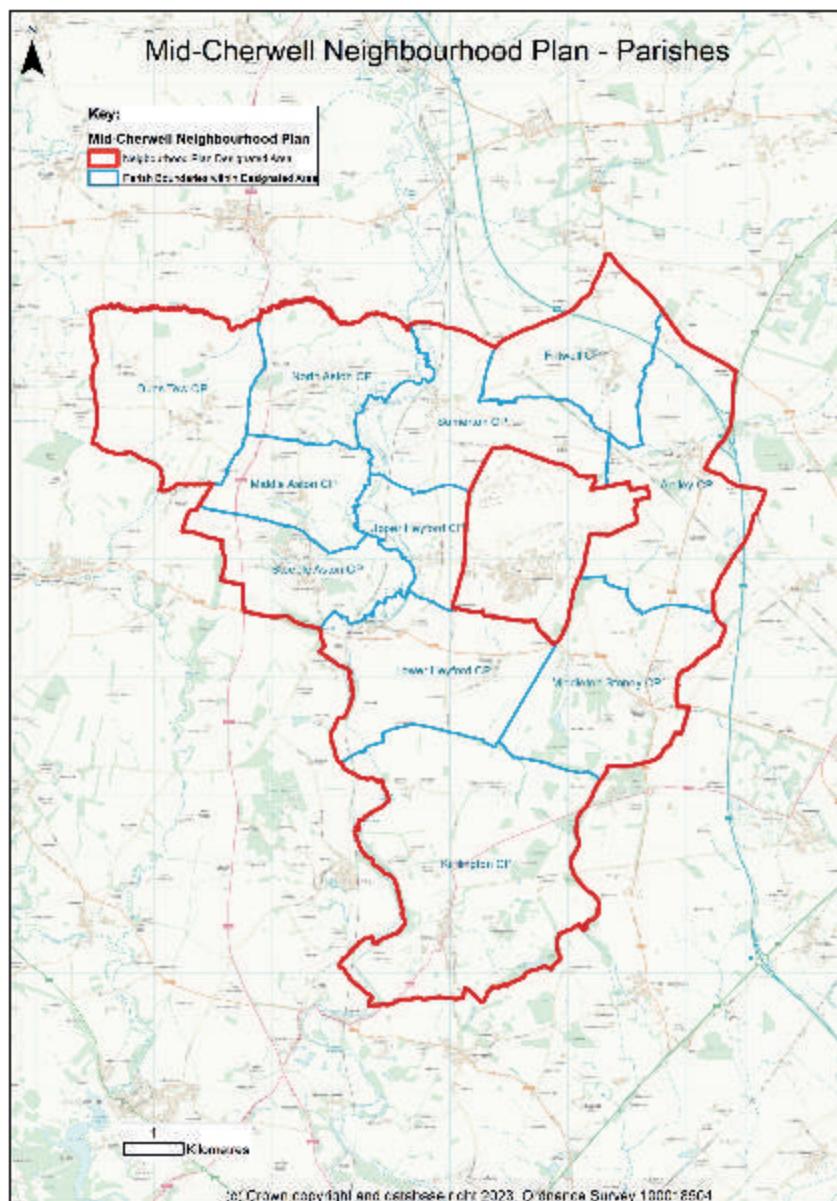


FIGURE 2: MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA AND ITS PARISHES

## **1.4 NEIGHBOURHOOD OVERVIEW - LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE**

1.4.1 The designated area is an essentially rural part of Cherwell District in Oxfordshire, the closest town being Bicester, which is less than two miles away at its nearest point. Oxford is some ten miles away, and Banbury about six miles. The combined land area of the 11 parishes is approximately 7,100 hectares, roughly 12% of Cherwell District. The area is about seven miles across from east to west, and eight miles from north to south. The Neighbourhood Development Plan area is shown in Fig 2.

1.4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Area has as its most distinctive geographical feature the valley of the Cherwell River, which runs through the centre of the Area roughly on a north/south axis. Alongside it run the Oxford Canal and the Oxford – Birmingham railway, often in parallel for much of the river's course. Other significant transport routes, which largely define the boundary of the Area, are the Oxford – Banbury Road (A4260), mostly to the west of the neighbourhood (apart from the parish of Duns Tew), the M40 motorway and the Bicester– Banbury railway line, which skirt the eastern boundary.

1.4.3 The River Cherwell, its flood plain and the higher ground on each side, where many of the eleven parishes lie, dominate the NP area. The landscape is very largely rural in nature, open rather than wooded; the only significant areas of woodland are associated with two of the three major country house estates in the neighbourhood area, namely Middleton Park and Kirtlington Park. The open land is predominantly arable with some pasture. There are over 30 active farms throughout the NP area together with their farmsteads and some isolated properties. Most of the villages are small and well-integrated into the landscape, although Kirtlington, Fritwell and Steeple Aston have small housing estates built in the C20th that have somewhat altered their historic character. The former RAF and USAF base at Upper Heyford (now called Heyford Park and removed from the NP area) is the only more “urban” site within the locality, although even here the majority of the land remains open and green (see comments on the development at Heyford Park in 1.7 below).

## **1.5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

1.5.1 The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan area is part of a wider smoothly rolling landscape that is bisected by the Cherwell Valley on a north-south axis. The land generally falls gently from north to south across the area, with a high point of 155m above ordnance datum (AOD) in the north-west of the area, and a low point of approximately 69m AOD at the base of the Cherwell Valley in the far south of the area. The Cherwell Valley is a reasonably narrow valley that creates a sense of enclosure from its base, and the narrow width of the valley creates a sense of intimacy between the two valley sides. The valley is a more prominent feature in the north of the area, where its sides are more pronounced, rising steeply by approximately 70m from the base to the west, and by approximately 50m from the base to the east. In the south of the area the sides of the valley rise more gently. The primary watercourse through the area is the River Cherwell, which flows from north to south through the Cherwell Valley. The Oxford Canal runs generally adjacent to the River Cherwell. At the western and southern ends of the Plan area, mineral extraction – principally sand and gravel – is an active industry, contributing significantly to heavy goods vehicle movements across the NP area.

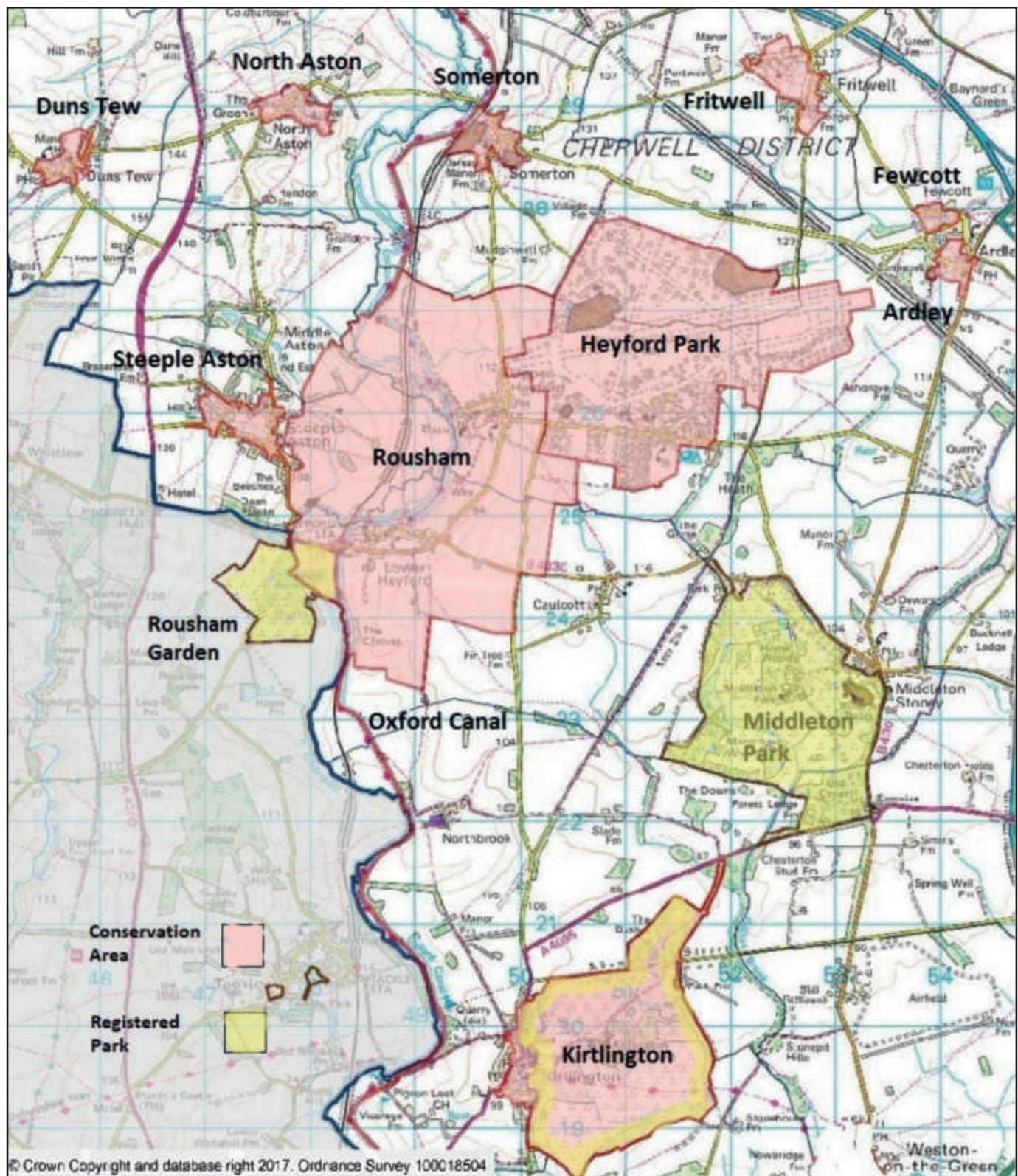


FIGURE 3: CONSERVATION AREAS AND REGISTERED PARKS IN THE LOCALITY

*NOTE: Heyford Park parish is excluded from the MCNP, but the impact of its Conservation Area remains significant.*

1.5.2 The area is a rural landscape criss-crossed by public rights of way that promote access to the countryside and create usable natural green spaces out of landscape features such as the Cherwell Valley. There are limited areas of woodland, with the majority of the area comprising open farmed countryside. Large parts of the area are remnant historic parklands associated with manor houses; however these areas are either not entirely publicly accessible or have restricted access to paying visitors. Many of the villages within the area include small village greens at their centre, or other small-scale green spaces that whilst not for public use, still form a key part of the identity and character of the village. There are typically playing fields at each of the villages located close to a village hall to serve the communities for a wide variety of local activities and events. A number of the villages also have other community green spaces such as allotments.

1.5.3 The MCNP area does not contain any European sites for nature conservation, but there are two listed Gardens (Middleton Park and Kirtlington Park) and Rousham Garden is adjacent to the MCNP area. The NP area also contains five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - two at Ardley and one each near Duns Tew, Somerton and Kirtlington (see <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>). Also contained within or partly within the NP area are four Conservation Target Areas and a number of Local Wildlife Sites. The locations are shown on Wild Oxfordshire's website: [www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/) and on TVERC's website: [www.tverc.org/cms/LWSLivingLists](http://www.tverc.org/cms/LWSLivingLists)

## 1.6 BUILT HERITAGE

1.6.1 The villages themselves reflect the mainly traditional character of their agricultural origins in medieval times, with later additions from subsequent periods. All the villages except for Middle Aston and Middleton Stoney have Conservation Areas, and across the twelve parishes there is a total of 239 listed buildings; in addition, the Oxford Canal Conservation Area runs through the heart of the Neighbourhood Area. The two country house estates – Middleton Park and Kirtlington Park also form part of Conservation Areas. Although outside the designated MCNP area, another important house and garden at Rousham exerts an influence on the area in terms of protected views. It is of national importance, having been landscaped by William Kent in the early C18th and surviving relatively untouched.

1.6.2 There are no major archaeological sites within the neighbourhood, although a total of 173 items are registered in the Historic Environment Record. Amongst these are Portway, Akeman Street and Aves Ditch which are important ancient routes that survive in some form.

1.6.3 A map showing all the Conservation Areas and the listed Parks is at Fig 3. Conservation Area appraisals are available on CDC's website: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/directory/34/conservation-and-heritage>

## **1.7 RAF UPPER HEYFORD, LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENT**

- 1.7.1 Although no longer part of the designated MCNP area, the former RAF Upper Heyford has had a major impact on the character and development of the neighbourhood. The base was in almost continuous use from 1918 through to 1994. Operated by the United States Air Force from 1950, it grew to be the largest NATO fighter base in Europe. At its peak the base hosted 14,000 people, of whom 4,000 lived on site - mainly airmen and their families, together with 1,000 MOD and contractor employees.
- 1.7.2 Many servicemen and women were housed in the nearby communities and their presence was a big factor in securing the viability of surrounding villages. Demand for housing ensured maintenance and some expansion of residential dwellings in the area, and local schools benefited from the inclusion of service children. Indeed, many people from the locality were employed at the base which became a significant contributor to the economy of the neighbourhood through salaries, house rentals, use of pubs and shops and schools. Local residents were made welcome as guests on the base as well, resulting in many lasting transatlantic friendships and marriages. Following the closure of RAF Upper Heyford in 1994 the villages largely returned to their quieter, agricultural tradition.
- 1.7.3 The Cherwell Local Plan 2031 designated Heyford Park as a strategic site for development and employment. It is the only such site so designated outside the essentially urban areas of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.
- 1.7.4 Two planning decisions which pre-date the Local Plan initiated the comprehensive redevelopment of the former military base:
- 1.7.5 An outline planning permission (08/00716/OUT) for the formation of a new settlement of 1,075 dwellings (314 of which already exist on the site) with associated works and facilities including employment uses, community uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure. The scheme was allowed at appeal (APP/C3105/A/08/2080594) dated 11 January 2010.
- 1.7.6 A subsequent outline planning consent (10/01642/OUT) concerned only with that part of the base referred to as the 'New Settlement Area'. This permission provided for an amended new settlement of 1,075 dwellings including facilities as above. Planning permission was granted by Cherwell District council on 22 December 2011.
- 1.7.7 In addition, Conservation Area Consents were applied for and approved for the demolition/partial demolition of specific buildings across the site.
- 1.7.8 Local Plan Policy Villages 5 provides for a further 1,600 dwellings including primary and secondary schools, community, recreational facilities, and employment uses to provide for up to a further 1,500 jobs. The new housing, employment opportunities, facilities and services play a major role of provision within the NP area (for which a further planning application 18/00825/HYBRID was submitted in May 2018 and approved in 2020). In the last few years, a "village centre" with shops, hotel and other facilities has opened, and house-building has continued at a steady pace. This policy remains as a saved policy in the LP2042, and no additional housing at Heyford Park is proposed in the Local Plan.

## 1.8 POPULATION (2021 CENSUS FIGURES)

1.8.1 The population of the revised designated Area in 2021 was 5,641, probably a small increase from 2011 (no figures are available to make direct comparison possible). The population of the designated area represents about 3.5% of that of the District as a whole.

1.8.2 The eleven parishes around Heyford Park each have an average population of about 700 (while Heyford Park parish itself now has well over the 2,622 recorded in 2021). The largest parish in the designated area is Kirtlington with 986 residents, and the smallest is Middle Aston with 133 residents. Table 1 below shows 2021 census populations for each parish.

Parish	Population
Ardley with Fewcott	751
Duns Tew	474
Fritwell	712
Kirtlington	986
Lower Heyford	453
Middle Aston	133
Middleton Stoney	306
North Aston	190
Somerton	304
Steeple Aston	978
Upper Heyford	354
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,641</b>

FIGURE 4: POPULATION OF PARISHES IN THE MCNP AREA (2021 Census)

1.8.3 The proportion of people in Mid-Cherwell aged between 16-64 is 60% of the total population, whereas the figure for Cherwell as a whole is 65%. In addition, when compared to Cherwell, Mid Cherwell has a significantly higher proportion of its population aged over 65 (23% against 15%), and a smaller proportion aged under 15 (17% against 19%).

## 1.9 HOUSING

1.9.1 Data from the 2021 Census, and from Cherwell District Council's published data, for the 11 parishes reveals the following:

- **Dwellings:** there are 2,331 households in Mid Cherwell (2021 Census).
- **Dwelling type:** 50% of homes are detached, 34% are semi-detached and 12% are terraced. Only 4% of homes are flats
- **Household size:** 25% are single-person households, 39% two-person households, and 36% three or more person households.
- **Households:** non-dependent children (adult children living at home, or students still calling home their primary residence despite living for most of the year near to university) shows a marked increase in numbers since 2021. This can be taken to indicate the relative unaffordability of entry-level homes, where young people are financially unable to move out and form their own households. This category grew by 34% between 2011 and 2021 in the MCNP area, a rate of growth which is much higher than Cherwell district (21%) and national (4%) averages.
- **Tenure:** 77% of homes are owned or in shared ownership, 14% are privately-rented accommodation, and 9% social rented.
- **New homes:** Between 2011 and 2022, it is understood that there were 111 new dwellings constructed in the villages, with permission granted for a further 46 (of which at least 10 were completed in 2023).

1.9.2 In order to establish evidence of housing need in the Mid-Cherwell area, MCNP commissioned AECOM to undertake research and produce a report (at [Appendix 3](#)). The report was completed in March 2023 and the main findings are summarized on the next page. This report apparently relies on the findings of the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA). The OGNA was a piece of evidence prepared to support the then emerging Oxfordshire Plan. Work on this stopped in August 2023. It has not been possible to commission further work on this evidence; however, the housing evidence for the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review provides more up-to-date information. The removal of Heyford Park from the MCNP area may affect the detail of some of the report's findings on the next page, but it is considered that these are not material to the policies in this revised Plan.

*Continued.....*

- there is a lack of diversity in the NP area housing stock: detached and semi-detached dwellings cumulatively account for 82% of the overall stock. In turn there is a lower proportion of terraced dwellings and flats.
- In terms of size, the NP area has a higher proportion of larger 4+ bedroom properties than can be typically found in Cherwell and nationally. There is a correspondingly smaller proportion of smaller 1-bedroom homes.
- To accommodate the future population of Mid Cherwell and to diversify its housing mix, AECOM's modelling suggests prioritising the provision of smaller 1 to 3 bed dwellings. This obviously does not reflect the preferences of individuals or their potential desire to live in larger dwellings than they 'need'. For this reason, it may not be advisable to restrict future housing delivery too strictly to only smaller dwelling sizes. However, 1-2 bedroom dwellings can be successfully incorporated in housing schemes, often as flats, carefully designed to integrate with the existing historic character and density of the built environment.
- Currently, the median house price in Mid Cherwell is £412,500, having grown by 20% since 2012. The average household income in Mid Cherwell is estimated to be £58,333 (in 2018). There is a clear issue regarding the affordability of housing in Mid Cherwell, with the median house price requiring an income of £106,071, which is 82% higher than the average income. Moreover, both entry level and new build homes are generally out of reach for the average earning household.
- Affordability is seemingly better in the rental market, with average rents accessible to households on average incomes. However, rental properties still present issues of affordability to households on lower incomes.
- The HNA would suggest a tenure mix in Mid Cherwell of 60% affordable rented and 40% affordable ownership accommodation. This is due to the particularly acute levels of unaffordability in the MCNP area; an increase in the supply of social/affordable rental homes would respond to the most acute affordability pressures.
- Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments. However, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are other, more proactive routes available for its provision. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts.
- The projected growth in the older population points to 329 new households inhabited by persons aged 75+ over the current Neighbourhood Plan period to 2031. Estimates of future need in Mid Cherwell produce a range of 104 to 133 specialist accommodation units that might be required during the Plan period. These estimates are based on the projected growth of the older population, assuming that today's older households are already well accommodated. If this is found not to be the case, it would justify aspiring to exceed the range identified here.

## **1.10 THE COMMUNITY**

1.10.1 Deprivation is slightly lower in Mid-Cherwell than across Cherwell, and slightly more people are economically active than across Cherwell.

1.10.2 Historically, the community has its roots in farming and there are still over 30 active farms in our neighbourhood area, but in 2021 just 3% of residents worked in the agricultural sector. The rest were categorized as follows: 14% work in the retail sector and 13% in education; 10% are in health or social work, 9% in professional, technical and scientific work, and another 9% in manufacturing; 8% each in construction and public administration; and finally, 5% in information and communication.

1.10.3 61% of households have two or more cars or vans; only 6% have no car. (15% across Cherwell). 71% of travel to work journeys are by private car or van; only 7% travel to work by public transport; 41% work mainly from home: this is a huge increase from the 17% recorded in 2011, in the immediate aftermath of the COVID pandemic of 2020/21.

## **1.11 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

1.11.1 The neighbourhood currently has:

- 3 schools and a pre-school
- 13 meeting places – principally village halls and community centres.
- 3 village greens, a further 28 recreational spaces, and 4 allotments
- 2 community orchards (with a third opening in 2024)
- A variety of musical, cultural, social and sports groups in many of the villages
- Play facilities for younger children in all villages except North and Middle Aston
- A dearth of facilities for older children
- 8 pubs; 3 hotels; various B&Bs
- only 2 grocery shops
- A “yurt” restaurant located in a large plant centre, and a new coffee shop in Middle Aston
- A variety of small businesses offering services to the community, including canal boat hire
- 11 places of worship
- 10 cemeteries, many full
- 4 community magazines, and other web-based information sources
- No GP surgeries
- A ground-source district heating system for many dwellings in North Aston, and another planned for Upper Heyford village

1.11.2 There are a number of annual festivities held in the neighbourhood, some of which regularly attract people from well outside the area. Among these are:

- The two Annual Shows of the Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Horticultural Society
- Annual church or village fetes of most of the villages in the MCNP Area
- Whit Races in Steeple Aston
- Annual “Lamb Ale” feast, fair and Morris Dancing weekend at Kirtlington
- Open Gardens in several villages during the summer

1.11.3 At the eastern end of the NP area is a regional facility for Waste management, the Ardley energy recovery facility and an associated landfill site.

## **1.12 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

1.12.1 A full record of all community engagement activities conducted during the preparation of the original Neighbourhood Plan (to 2031) can be found in the separate Consultation Statement of 2019. Community engagement was extensive and informed policy throughout. Details of how each stage was conducted and how the draft Plan was amended in response to points made are to be found in the Statement.

1.12.2 The 2022/23 Review of the MCNP also included extensive community engagement alongside the initial Reg. 14 consultation phase in Spring 2024. Details of that and other community engagement associated with this revised plan will be presented in the Reg. 15 stage documentation in 2025, in a further Consultation Statement.

1.12.3 It is worth noting that several of the participating parishes have in recent years produced their own Parish Plans - for example those produced for Fritwell in 2008, Steeple Aston and Duns Tew in 2010, in 2011 Kirtlington and Lower Heyford, and currently, Middleton Stoney. Parish Plans, however, have no statutory force and range across a wide spectrum of issues, many of them unrelated to land use and planning policy. Nevertheless, they have helped to inform and guide the thinking of parish councillors involved in the MCNP Forum: the local engagement process undertaken by the Forum in 2016/7 reflected long-standing issues in the community.



PHOTOS SHOWING CHARACTER OF NEIGHBOURHOOD, AND COMMUNITY



# 2 OBJECTIVES

## 2.1 THE PLAN OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 As stated earlier, engagement with the local community commenced in January 2016 with a series of meetings across the neighbourhood. The outcome was a set of prioritised objectives for the Plan, which have been revised as follows:

### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

- To work with OCC, Thames Valley Police and other bodies to develop strategies to protect against rising traffic volumes and the impact of increased development on the capacity of the rural road network serving the neighbourhood. This includes concerns about speeding, safety, and the impact of heavy goods vehicles.
- To secure the future of bus services linking the neighbourhood's villages with each other and with local towns; to influence train operators to improve currently inadequate services.

### DEVELOPMENT

- To strongly encourage the use of brownfield sites.
- To resist the loss over time of the all-important countryside between villages, and to avoid the Mid-Cherwell area eventually becoming a suburb of Bicester.
- To reinforce the sense of rurality that defines the neighbourhood, to protect against creeping urbanisation, and to maintain the character of the villages and their historic environment, together with the protection offered by their Conservation Areas.
- To identify how much, if any, new development might be successfully located in or around the villages; to specify where any such development should occur, what form it should take, and to ensure that any new development enhances our communities.

### AMENITIES

- To identify and secure supporting facilities that can be improved or provided in the area, accessible to the wider Mid-Cherwell community. These should include additional leisure, recreation and sports facilities, as well as improved access to GP services and new cemetery provision.

### HOUSING

- To identify potential housing allocation sites and ensure that requirements identify the mix of the proposed homes, the density of development sites, the form of development and the quality of design.
- To ensure that affordable housing is provided within any local developments that meets the needs in particular of the local community, especially young people and older residents.

### TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- To raise concerns about technical infrastructure with the various service providers.

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## ENVIRONMENT

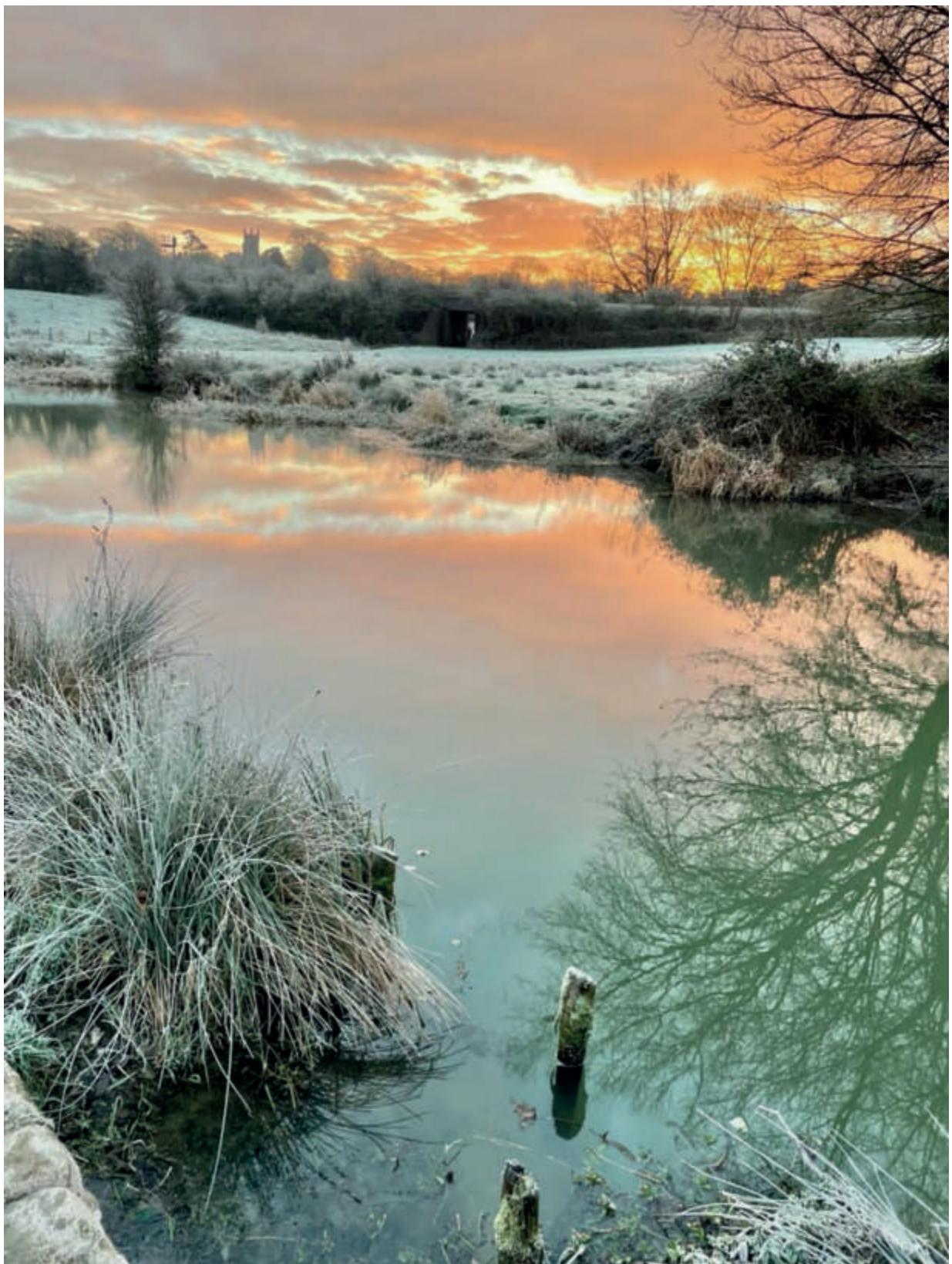
- To protect, enhance and care for the natural environment, and increase biodiversity while implementing carbon reduction measures.
- We support the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UK Government's commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions, the 25-Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act of 2021, aimed at halting biodiversity decline and delivering biodiversity net gains.
- Our natural habitat and biodiversity have been eroded through human activity, agriculture, commercial development, pollution and climate change. We recognise the need to act on the causes and impact of climate change and biodiversity loss. Addressing the climate, ecological emergencies and protecting our natural environment, are considered strategic priorities for planning all development. As well as preventing biodiversity decline, our intention to protect wildlife and their habitats, will also enable residents to continue to appreciate the rural nature of our countryside.

## 2.2 HOW DOES THE PLAN DELIVER?

2.2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to deliver the objectives through two main routes. First, through implementation of our **PLANNING POLICIES** (which follow in Section 3). These are essentially development management policies which will be applied by Cherwell District Council to all applications for planning permission affecting our Neighbourhood area after the date on which this Plan is operative. The wording of these Planning policies will have been subject to considerable scrutiny before the Plan comes into force, because they have to be in general conformity with strategic national and local policies, and be both reasonable and workable. Clearly, the application of such policies will not deliver the desired outcomes overnight: there will be a cumulative effect, and we cannot control the rate at which this occurs as it is largely dependent on the number and scale of applications that are submitted by others.

2.2.2 However, there is a second and more pro-active way in which our Neighbourhood Plan can try to deliver the desired outcomes. Section 4 contains our **COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN** (CAP), where the aspirations of the community can be addressed through proposals for action by our parish councils and other bodies. These proposals, while lacking statutory force, are not so dependent on market forces for delivery, and are therefore just as important as the planning policies as vehicles for providing solutions.

2.2.3 As an example, one of our objectives is "to ensure that affordable housing is provided within any local developments that meets the needs in particular of the local community, especially young people and older residents". As well as including housing allocation policies in the main Plan, the Community Action Plan makes provision for affordable housing schemes on any rural exception sites that may come forward. In addition, the CAP contains a proposal that our parish councils should establish a Community Land Trust to initiate and deliver such schemes. This two-pronged approach - supporting schemes if and when they occur, while at the same time taking proactive steps to create such Schemes - is a characteristic of this Neighbourhood Plan.



# 3 POLICIES

## 3.0 APPROACH

- 3.0.1 This section details those policies which specifically relate to development and the use of land. These are the policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan which will be examined formally and referred to in the referendum. Plan policies are prefixed with the letters MC.
- 3.0.2 Each policy is followed by a rationale which explains the intent and provides references to evidence supporting the need for the policy.
- 3.0.3 Some detailed aspects of policies and supporting evidence for them are set out in a separate document of Appendices which are an integral part of the Plan.

## 3.1 LIST OF POLICIES

- MC1** Settlement Areas
- MC2** Ardley site allocation - land off Station Road
- MC3** Kirtlington site allocation - land South of Jersey Cottages
- MC4** Kirtlington reserve site allocation - land North of Jersey Cottages
- MC5** Steeple Aston site allocation - land off South Side
- MC6** Steeple Aston site allocation - land off Fenway
- MC7** Steeple Aston reserve site allocation - land off Grange Park
- MC8** Upper Heyford site allocation - land off Mill Lane
- MC9** Green Infrastructure Network
- MC10** Local Gaps
- MC11** Local Green Spaces
- MC12** Protection of Important Views, Vistas and Skylines
- MC13** Light Pollution
- MC14** Housing Development
- MC15** Affordable Housing Allocation
- MC16** Sustainable Travel and Traffic Calming
- MC17** Local Employment
- MC18** Health Facility

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## POLICY MC1: SETTLEMENT AREAS

The Neighbourhood Plan makes provision for an additional approximately 60 homes in the period to 2042 at the villages of Steeple Aston, Kirtlington, Upper Heyford and Ardley, being sustainable locations for this scale of growth. The total indicative number of additional dwellings permitted in the Plan period shall be:

Steeple Aston - 30; Kirtlington - 12; Upper Heyford - 10, and Ardley - 8.

The Neighbourhood Plan defines Settlement Areas at Ardley with Fewcott, Fritwell, Kirtlington, Lower Heyford, Middle Aston, Middleton Stoney, Steeple Aston and Upper Heyford, as shown respectively on Policy Maps 1 to 8.

Proposals for development within a Settlement Area will be supported in principle. Development proposals will not be supported outside a Settlement Area unless the use is essential to or suited to a countryside location, or is allocated in this Plan for housing development.

### Rationale

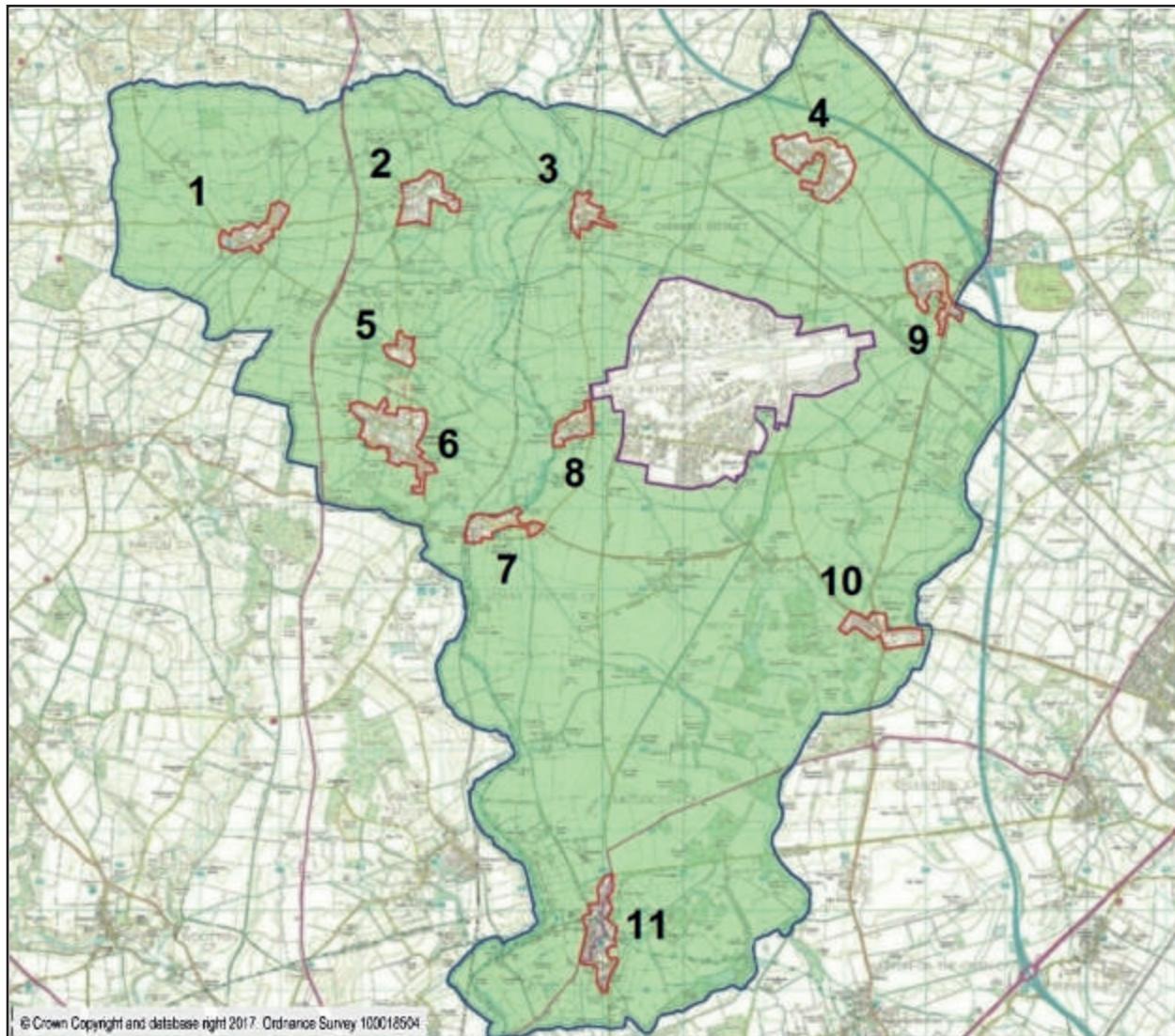
The purpose of defining settlement areas for these villages is to enable the provisions of the current Local Plan Policy Villages 1, which seeks to confine and manage 'residential development within the built-up limits of villages', to operate effectively. Policies PD1 and PD2 of the made MCNP defined Settlement Areas on its Policy Maps for Steeple Aston, Kirtlington and Fritwell (as 'Category A' villages) and for Middle Aston and Lower Heyford (as 'Category B' villages) respectively. In doing so, the policies removed any ambiguity on the precise extent of the 'built-up limits'. With Policies MC2 - MC8 now allocating land for development, the made policies have had to be modified. Appendix 6 provides justification for the indicative numbers stated in this policy MC1.

In addition, taking account of the emerging Local Plan 2042 and its proposed re-categorisation of villages, settlement areas are now being proposed for three additional villages - Ardley with Fewcott, Middleton Stoney and Upper Heyford. Fritwell's settlement area has been amended to include land with planning permission for new housing, and minor errors in other settlement areas have been corrected.

Fig. 5 is a map of the MCNP area showing all the settlements.

The policy provides an in-principle presumption in favour of development proposals within the defined settlement area, with other policies of the MCNP and Local Plan applying as relevant to judging their suitability in terms of land use, design, access etc. Outside the defined settlement area, the policy only allows for types of land use and development that are essential or suited to a countryside location. This rules out market housing schemes but allows for Rural Exception Site schemes and isolated homes in the countryside, provided the relevant national and Local Plan policies are followed, as well as other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. It also allows for the appropriate diversification of farms.

Refer to [Appendix C](#) for Settlement Area criteria.



- Settlements (indicative)
- Open countryside
- Heyford Park strategic site
- MCNP designated area

NB: The Heyford Park strategic site identified in LP2031 Policy Villages 5 and retained in LP2042 is not included within the MCNP area. The strategic site boundary shown on the map above is not the parish boundary (for which see Fig.2).

<b>1</b>	Duns Tew	<b>7</b>	Lower Heyford
<b>2</b>	North Aston	<b>8</b>	Upper Heyford
<b>3</b>	Somerton	<b>9</b>	Ardley with Fewcott
<b>4</b>	Fritwell	<b>10</b>	Middleton Stoney
<b>5</b>	Middle Aston	<b>11</b>	Kirtlington
<b>6</b>	Steeple Aston		

FIG.5: THE MCNP AREA AND ITS PRINCIPAL SETTLEMENTS

## **POLICY MC2: ARDLEY SITE ALLOCATION - LAND OFF STATION ROAD**

Site reference: HELAA 019 (part)

Area to be developed: approx. 0.38ha

Number of dwellings: approx. 8

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land off Station Road, as shown on Fig.6, for residential development. Proposals will be supported, provided:

1. The scheme comprises approximately 8 dwellings that reflect the principles set out in Policy MC14: Housing Development;
2. The layout of the development reflects the following principles:
  - the site to be developed does not exceed the area shown in Fig.6.
  - pedestrian and cycle access to be from the existing adjacent development, and if possible a single vehicle access also to be created by extension of the existing access road;
  - retention of healthy trees on the site frontage;
  - design of the scheme complements existing adjacent housing development
  - the scheme design incorporates measures to improve the management of any future surface water flooding on or adjoining the site boundary as recommended by the submitted flood risk assessment;
  - design of the scheme aims to enhance the adjacent Conservation Area
  - compliance with other policies in this Plan and other Development Plan documents
3. Applicants should consult with Oxfordshire County Council regarding possible mineral deposits below the site.
4. A Section 106 Agreement may be entered into with Cherwell DC which provides community benefits that have been pre-agreed with the parish council.

### **Rationale**

The choice of this site for housing allocation is supported by a site assessment report at [Appendix 6](#).

Ardley with Fewcott Parish Council approved the inclusion of this site allocation in the MCNP at a meeting of the parish council on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

This site is immediately adjacent to a recent development of affordable housing on a Rural Exception Site. The Forum considers that this allocation for a small extension of the earlier scheme stays within the southward extent of the settlement without undue intrusion into open countryside.

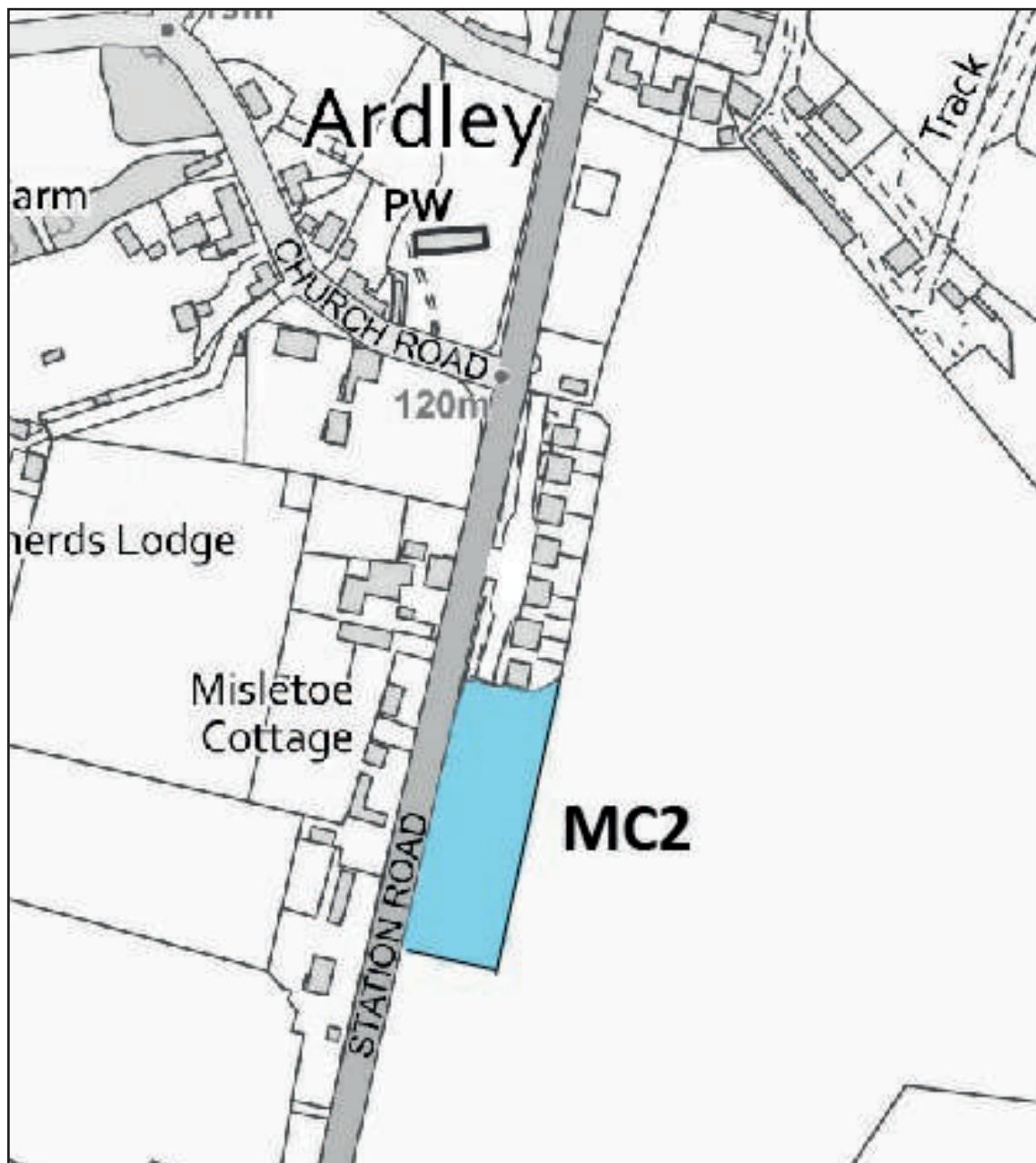


FIG. 6: SITE ALLOCATION MC2

Ardley, Land off Station Road; site ref: HELAA 019 (part)

See Policy Map 1 for context

## POLICY MC3: KIRTLINGTON SITE ALLOCATION: LAND SOUTH OF JERSEY COTTAGES

Site references: HELAA 319 and MCNP KT7

Area to be developed: 1.06 ha

Number of dwellings: approximately 12

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land off Heyford Road, as shown on Fig.7, for residential development. Proposals will be supported, provided:

- 1 The scheme comprises approximately 12 dwellings that reflect the principles set out in Policy MC14: Housing Development;
2. The layout of the development reflects the following principles:
  - the site to be developed lies within the area shown in Fig.7;
  - a single vehicular and pedestrian access to be from Heyford Road by way of the existing access to Jersey Cottages;
  - the scheme design incorporates measures to improve the management of any future surface water flooding on or adjoining the site as recommended by the submitted flood risk assessment;
  - the scheme location within the site, its layout, building heights, forms and materials palette are to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the setting of nearby listed buildings and of the listed park and garden within which it is located, as recommended by the submitted heritage assessment (Appendix 7);
  - retention of all healthy frontage trees, except for the achievement of required sight lines for the site access;
  - compliance with other policies in this Plan and other Development Plan documents;
  - consideration of Policy MC14 (F) in relation to the stone wall along the eastern side of Heyford Road.
3. A Section 106 Agreement may be entered into with Cherwell DC which provides community benefits that have been pre-agreed with the parish council. This Agreement may include the application of Policy MC15 regarding allocation and continued availability of affordable dwellings on this site.

### Rationale

The choice of this site for housing allocation is supported by a detailed site assessment report produced by a local MCNP team, at [Appendix 6](#). In addition, a Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared in support of this allocation - see [Appendix 7](#).

Kirtlington Parish Council approved the inclusion of this site allocation in the MCNP at a meeting of the parish council on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, and further confirmed its continued inclusion at its meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

This site was the subject of a planning application to Cherwell DC, ref 23/02471/F for 14 two-storey houses, which was refused permission at the Planning Committee meeting of 7/12/23.

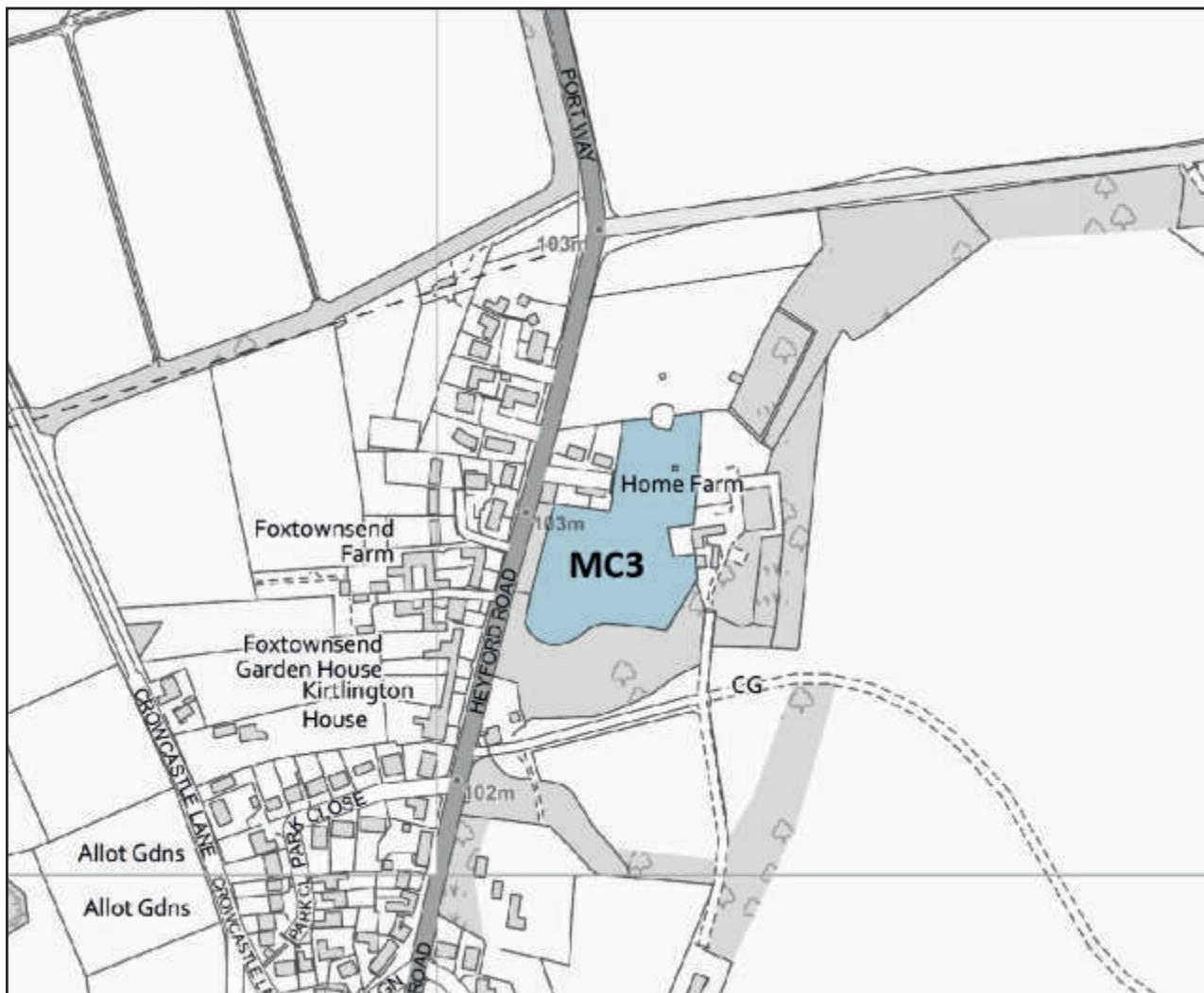


FIG. 7: SITE ALLOCATION MC3

Kirtlington, South of Jersey Cottages; site ref: KT7

See Policy Map 3 for context

## **POLICY MC4: KIRTLINGTON RESERVE SITE ALLOCATION: LAND NORTH OF JERSEY COTTAGES**

Site reference: KT8

Area to be developed: 1.86 ha

Number of dwellings: approximately 12

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land north of Jersey Cottages and off Heyford Road as shown on Fig.8, as a reserve site for residential development. Proposals will be supported, provided:

1. The scheme comprises approximately 12 dwellings that reflect the principles set out in Policy MC14: Housing Development;
2. The layout of the development reflects the following principles:
  - the site to be developed lies within the area shown in Fig.8;
  - a single vehicular access from Heyford Road, with an emergency access only, if required, from Akeman Street;
  - a separate pedestrian and cycle access from Heyford Road;
  - consideration of policy MC14 (F) in relation to the stone wall along the eastern side of Heyford Road;
  - retention of all healthy trees on site;
  - the scheme design incorporates measures to improve the management of any future surface water flooding on or adjoining the site as recommended by the submitted flood risk assessment;
  - the scheme location within the site, its layout, building heights, forms and materials palette are to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the setting of nearby listed buildings and of the listed park and garden within which it is located, as recommended by the submitted heritage assessment (Appendix 7);
  - creation of a woodland buffer zone between the development and Akeman Street, outside the site;
  - compliance with other policies in this Plan and other Development Plan documents.
3. A Section 106 Agreement may be entered into with Cherwell DC which provides community benefits that have been pre-agreed with the parish council. This Agreement may include the application of Policy MC15 regarding allocation and continued availability of affordable dwellings on this site.
4. Planning permission shall only be granted in the second half of the Plan period, and then only if housing allocation policy MC3 is not capable of being implemented for any reason.

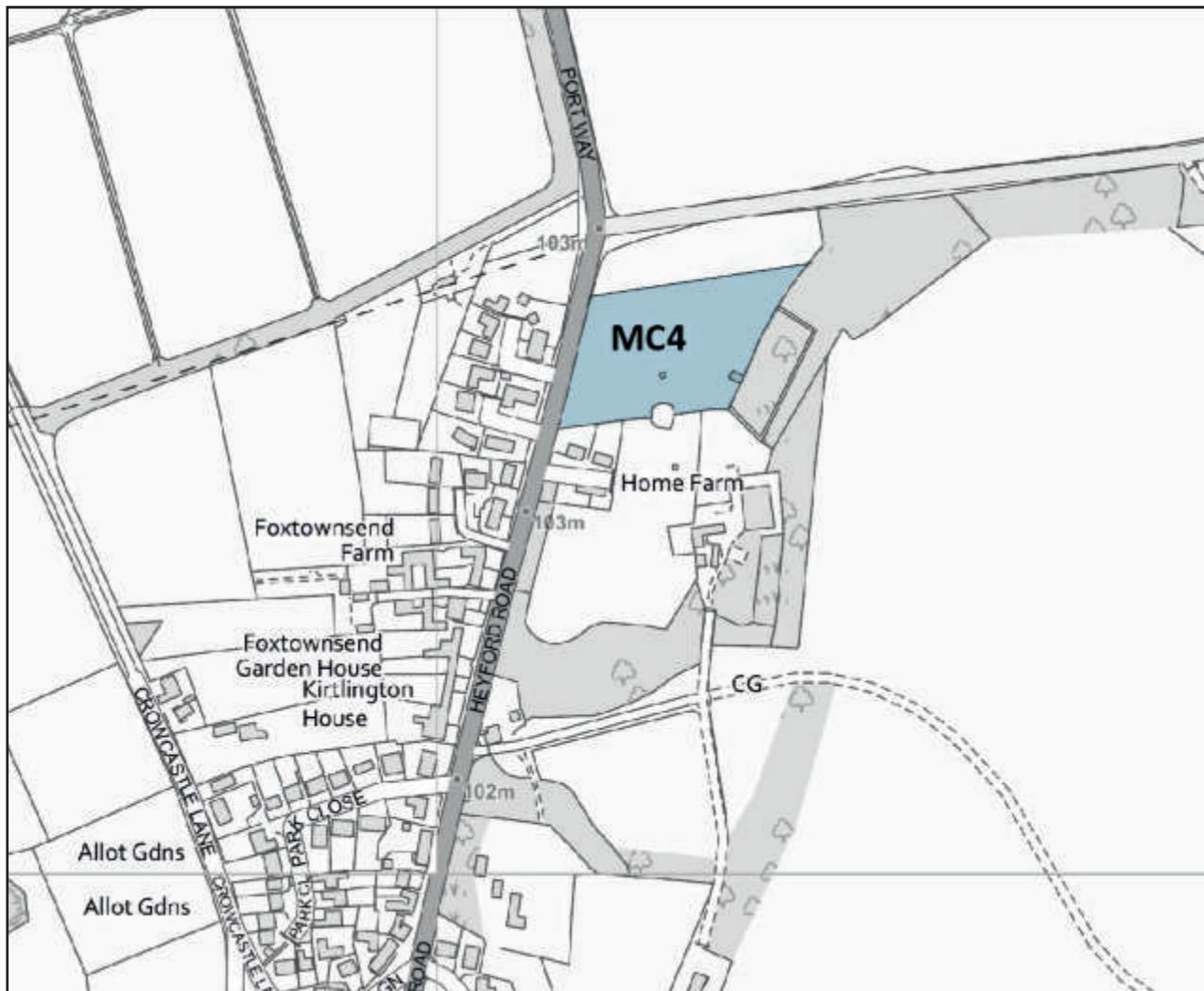


FIG.8: RESERVE SITE ALLOCATION MC4

Kirtlington, north of Jersey Cottages; site ref: KT8

See Policy Map 3 for context

#### Rationale

The choice of this site for housing allocation is supported by a detailed site assessment report produced by a local MCNP team, at [Appendix 6](#). In addition, a Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared in support of this allocation - see [Appendix 7](#).

Kirtlington Parish Council approved the inclusion of this site allocation in the MCNP at a meeting of the parish council on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, whereas, subject to its change of status to a reserve site only, further confirmed its inclusion at its meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

## **POLICY MC5: STEEPLE ASTON SITE ALLOCATION: LAND OFF SOUTH SIDE**

Site reference: MCNP SA8

Area to be developed: 0.8ha

Number of dwellings: approx.15

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land off South Side, as shown on Fig.9, for residential development. Proposals will be supported, provided:

1. The scheme comprises approximately 15 dwellings that reflect the principles set out in Policy MC14: Housing Development;
2. The layout of the development reflects the following principles:
  - the site to be developed does not exceed the area shown in Fig.9;
  - a single vehicular access from South Side;
  - a separate pedestrian and cycle access from South Side;
  - retention of the entirety of the woodland TPO adjacent to the site, and of healthy trees along the frontage which are also subject to TPOs;
  - creation of a woodland path linking the scheme northwards towards Fenway
  - design of the scheme aims to enhance the Conservation Area
  - compliance with other policies in this Plan and other Development Plan documents
3. Applicants should consult with Oxfordshire County Council regarding possible mineral deposits below the site.
4. A Section 106 Agreement may be entered into with Cherwell DC which provides community benefits that have been pre-agreed with the parish council. This Agreement may include the application of Policy MC15 regarding allocation and continued availability of affordable dwellings on this site.

### **Rationale**

The choice of this site for housing allocation is supported by a detailed site assessment report produced by a local MCNP team, at [Appendix 6](#).

Steeple Aston Parish Council approved the inclusion of this site allocation in the MCNP at a meeting of the parish council on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, and further confirmed its inclusion at its meeting of January 20<sup>th</sup> 2025.

A Housing Needs Survey for the parishes of Steeple and Middle Aston was carried out in July 2023. This identified significant demand for dwellings with suitable accommodation for older residents wishing to downsize while remaining local, and also for starter homes for younger people including children of local families unable to find or afford suitable accommodation. This site allocation aims to address these needs.

In March 2024, Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals team objected to the allocation of this site for housing as it was considered to be suitable for extraction of soft sand. While MCNP Forum acknowledges this, it is considered that any application for quarrying adjacent to pre-existing housing in the village is highly unlikely to be permitted.

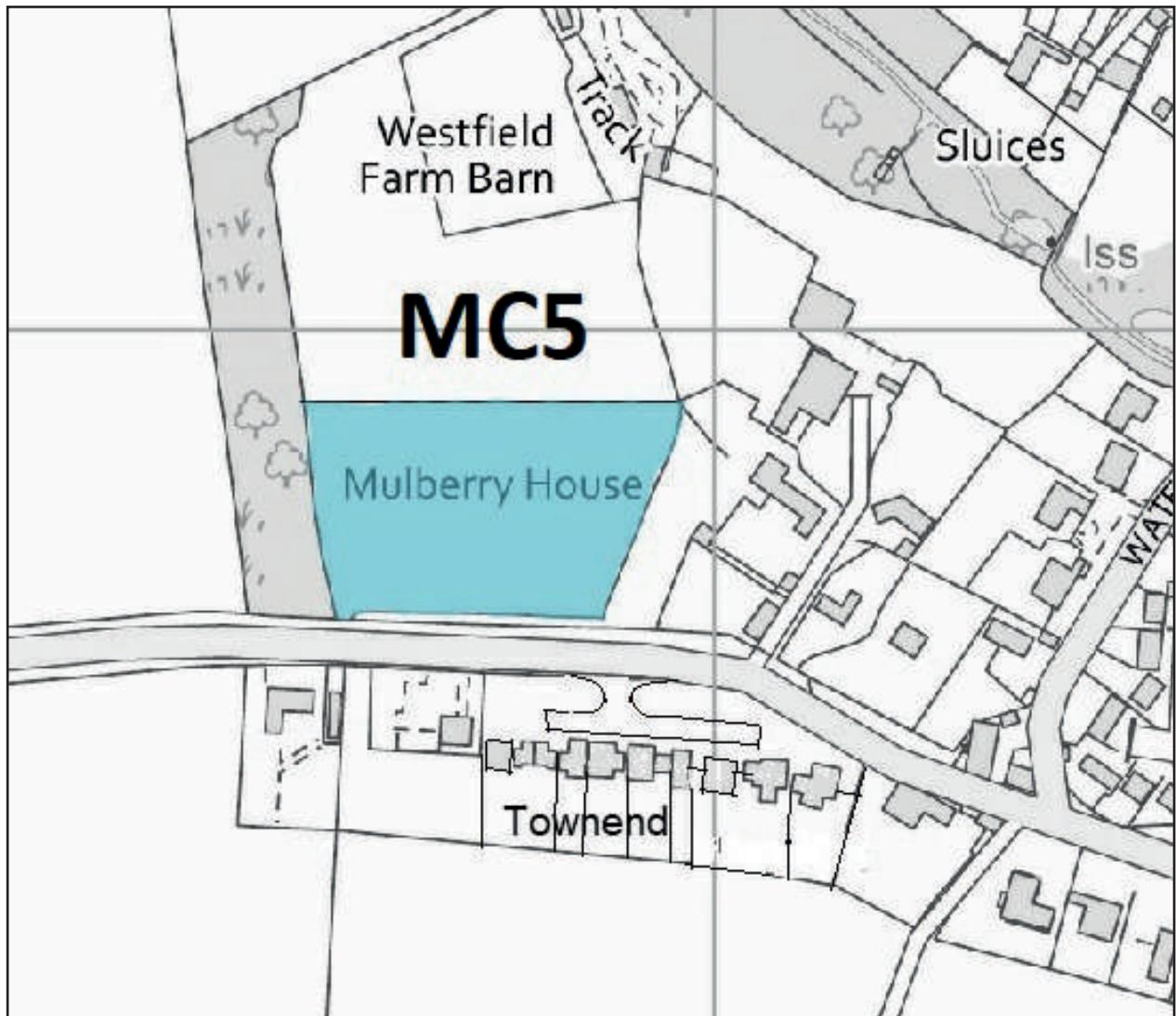


FIG.9: SITE ALLOCATION MC5

Steeple Aston, Land off South Side; site ref: SA8

See Policy Map 7 for context

## POLICY MC6: STEEPLE ASTON SITE ALLOCATION: LAND OFF FENWAY

Site reference: SA6

Area to be developed: 1.55 ha

Number of dwellings: approx. 15

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land off Fenway, as shown on Fig.10, for residential development. Proposals will be supported, provided:

1. The scheme comprises approximately 15 dwellings that reflect the principles set out in Policy MC14: Housing Development;
2. The layout of the development reflects the following principles:
  - the site to be developed does not exceed the area shown in Fig.10;
  - creation of a tree belt along the northern edge of the site, and of trees adjacent to the bridleway, enhancing the setting of both existing and new dwellings;
  - a single vehicular access from Fenway;
  - a pedestrian path within the site, avoiding the need for a footpath on Fenway;
  - retention of the adjacent bridleway;
  - retention of the majority of the existing hedge fronting Fenway ;
  - creation of a public green space on the site, enabling views from Fenway of the fields to the north of the site;
  - design of the scheme aims to enhance the Conservation Area;
  - compliance with other policies in this Plan and other Development Plan documents.
3. Applicants should consult with Oxfordshire County Council regarding possible mineral deposits below the site.
4. A Section 106 Agreement may be entered into with Cherwell DC which provides community benefits that have been pre-agreed with the parish council. This Agreement may include the application of Policy MC15 regarding allocation and continued availability of affordable dwellings on this site.

### Rationale

The choice of this site for housing allocation is supported by a detailed site assessment report produced by a local MCNP team, at [Appendix 6](#). The report recognises that Cherwell District Council officers rejected a site, which includes this site, put forward in the 2017 HELAA. The proposed allocation is for a smaller site limited to the area shown.

Steeple Aston Parish Council approved the inclusion of this site allocation in the MCNP at a meeting of the parish council on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

A Housing Needs Survey for the parishes of Steeple and Middle Aston was carried out in July 2023. This identified significant demand for dwellings with suitable accommodation for older residents wishing to downsize while remaining local, and also for starter homes for younger people including children of local families unable to find or afford suitable accommodation. This site allocation aims to address these needs.

*Continued on p.37*

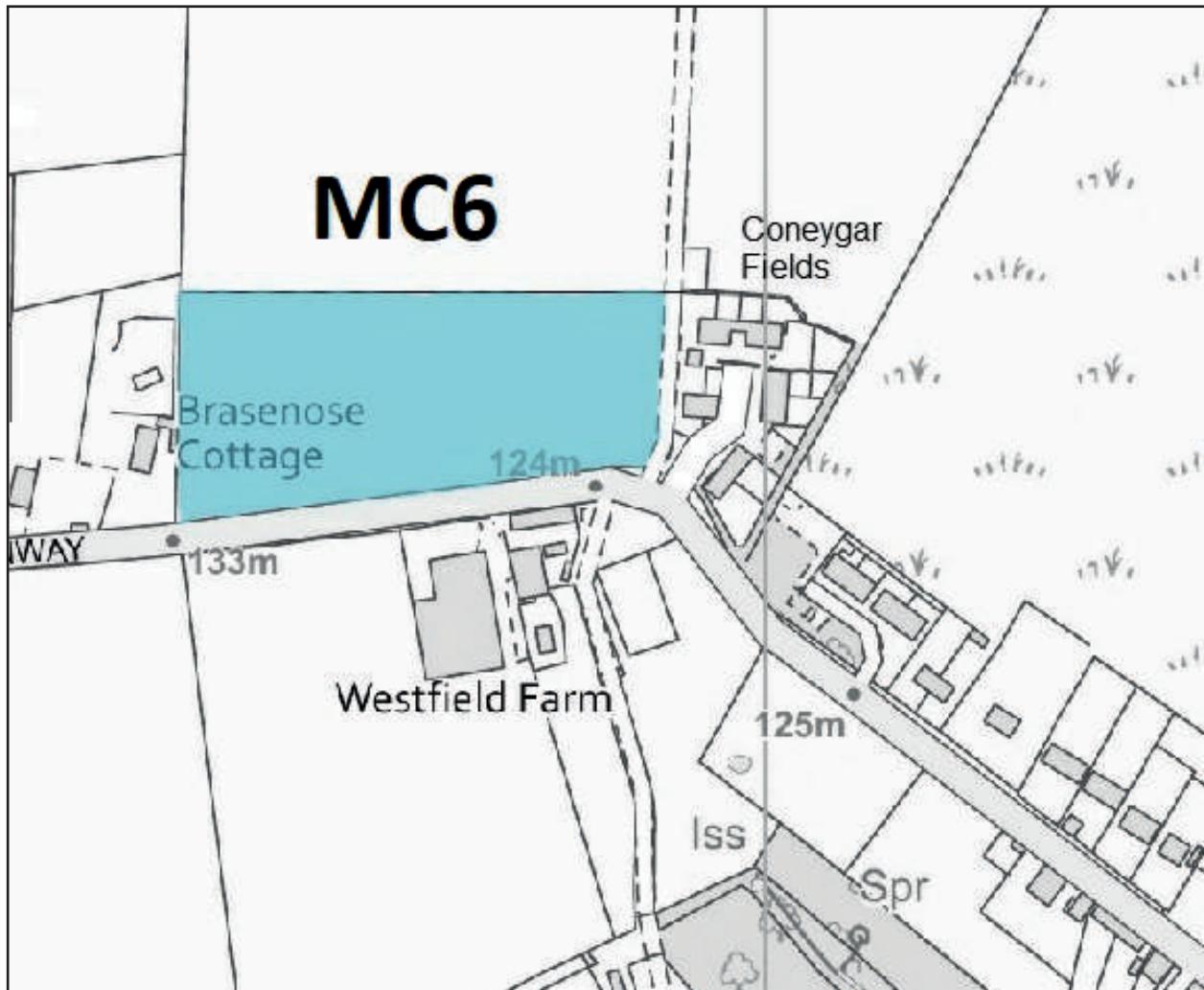


FIG.10: SITE ALLOCATION MC6

Steeple Aston, Land off Fenway; site ref: SA6

See Policy Map 7 for context

*Continued...*

In March 2024, Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals team objected to the allocation of this site for housing as it was considered to be suitable for extraction of soft sand. While MCNP Forum acknowledges this, it is considered that any application for quarrying adjacent to pre-existing housing in the village is highly unlikely to be permitted.

## POLICY MC7: STEEPLE ASTON - RESERVE SITE ALLOCATION: LAND OFF GRANGE PARK

Site reference: SA3

Area to be developed: 1.5 ha

Number of dwellings: 10-15

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land off Grange Park as shown on Fig. 11, as a reserve site for residential development. Proposals will be supported, provided:

1. The scheme comprises between 10 and 15 dwellings that reflect the principles set out in Policy MC14: Housing Development;
2. The layout of the development reflects the following:
  - the site to be developed does not exceed the area shown in Fig. 11
  - a single vehicular access from Grange Park as indicated on Fig. 11; no alternative vehicle access location is considered suitable.
  - pedestrian access from the Beeches footpath;
  - retention of all trees on or adjacent to the site, and the entirety of the woodland area adjacent to the Beeches footpath;
  - compliance with other policies in this Plan and other Development Plan documents
3. A Section 106 Agreement may be entered into with Cherwell DC which provides community benefits that have been pre-agreed with the parish council. This Agreement may include the application of Policy MC15 regarding allocation and continued availability of affordable dwellings on this site.
4. Applicants should consult with Oxfordshire County Council regarding possible mineral deposits below the site.
5. Planning permission shall only be granted in the second half of the Plan period, and then only if the number of new homes given planning approval as a result of policies MC5 or MC6 has not by that time exceeded 15 dwellings.

### Rationale

The choice of this site for reserve housing allocation is supported by a detailed site assessment report produced by a local MCNP team - see Annex to Appendix 6. Steeple Aston Parish Council approved the inclusion of this reserve site allocation in the MCNP at a meeting of the parish council on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, and re-confirmed its role as a reserve site at its meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2025.

A Housing Needs Survey for the parishes of Steeple and Middle Aston was carried out in July 2023. This identified significant demand for dwellings with suitable accommodation for older residents wishing to downsize while remaining local, and also for starter homes for younger people including children of local families unable to find or afford suitable accommodation. This allocation aims to address these needs.

However, the report of the assessment team regards this site's suitability as questionable and to only be included if the sites which are the subject of policies MC5 and MC6 are unable to fulfil the aim of achieving up to 30 new dwellings. The allocation policy therefore includes a condition that the site should only be constructed in the second half of the Plan period (ie 2033 – 2042) in that eventuality. This is in accordance with Cherwell District Council's definition of a "*developable site*" (see Annex to Appendix 6).

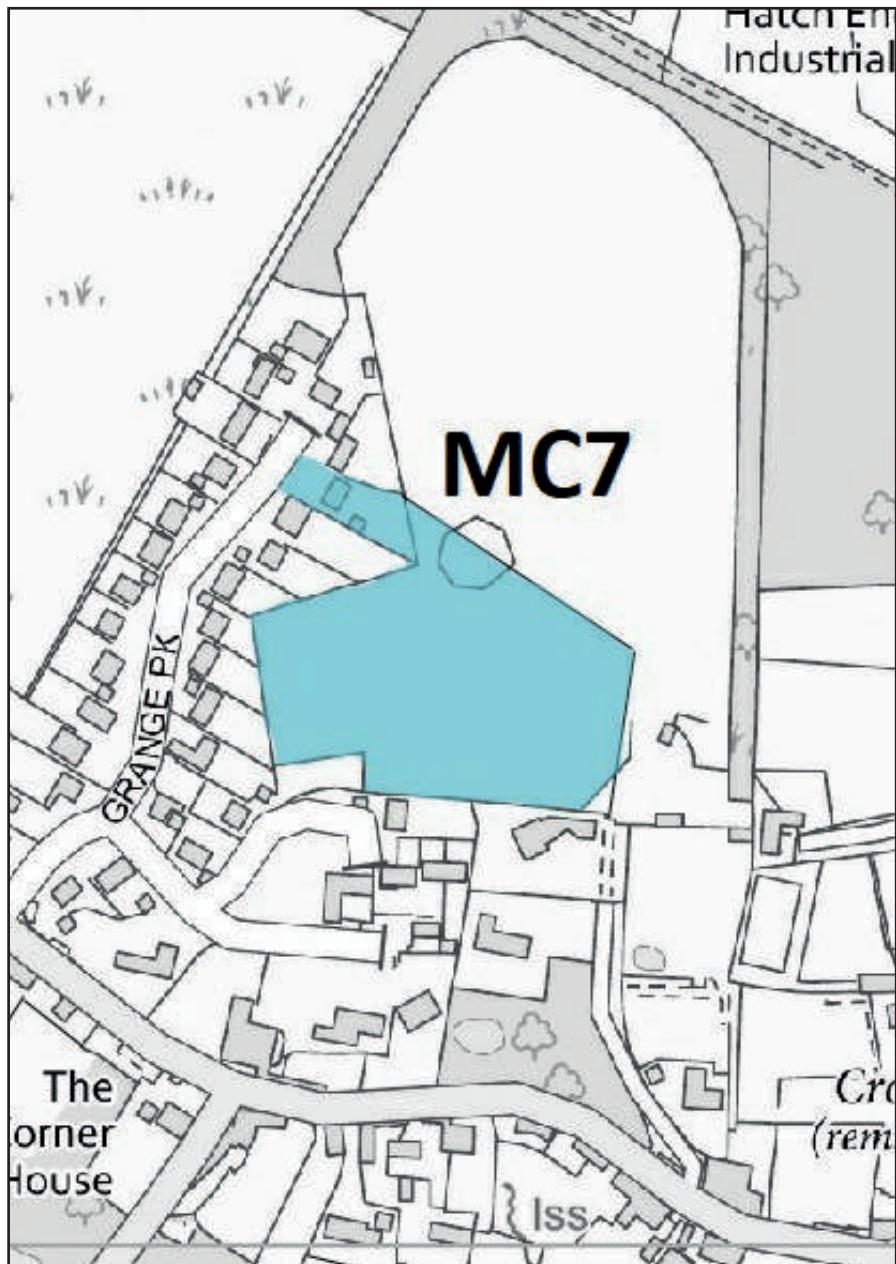


FIG. 11: RESERVE SITE ALLOCATION MC7

Steeple Aston, Land off Grange Park; Site ref: SA3

See Policy Map 7 for context

## **POLICY MC8: UPPER HEYFORD SITE ALLOCATION - LAND OFF MILL LANE**

Site reference: HELAA 218

Area to be developed: approx. 0.28ha

Number of dwellings: approx. 10

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates the site off Mill Lane as shown on Fig.12, for residential development. Proposals will be supported, provided:

1. The scheme comprises approximately 10 dwellings that reflect the principles set out in Policy MC14: Housing Development;
2. The layout of the development reflects the following principles:
  - the site to be developed does not exceed the area shown in Fig.12;
  - the land to the north of the allocated site is retained as open green space
  - as much as possible of the frontage hedgerow to be retained
  - vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to be from the Mill Lane frontage; a footway fronting the site is likely to be required.
  - design of the scheme aims to enhance the Conservation Area, and takes note of a view across the site identified in the CAA.
  - compliance with other policies in this Plan and other Development Plan documents
3. A Section 106 Agreement may be entered into with Cherwell DC which provides community benefits that have been pre-agreed with the parish council.

### **Rationale**

The choice of this site for housing allocation is supported by a site assessment report at [Appendix 6](#).

Upper Heyford Parish Council approved the inclusion of this site allocation in the MCNP at a meeting of the parish council on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

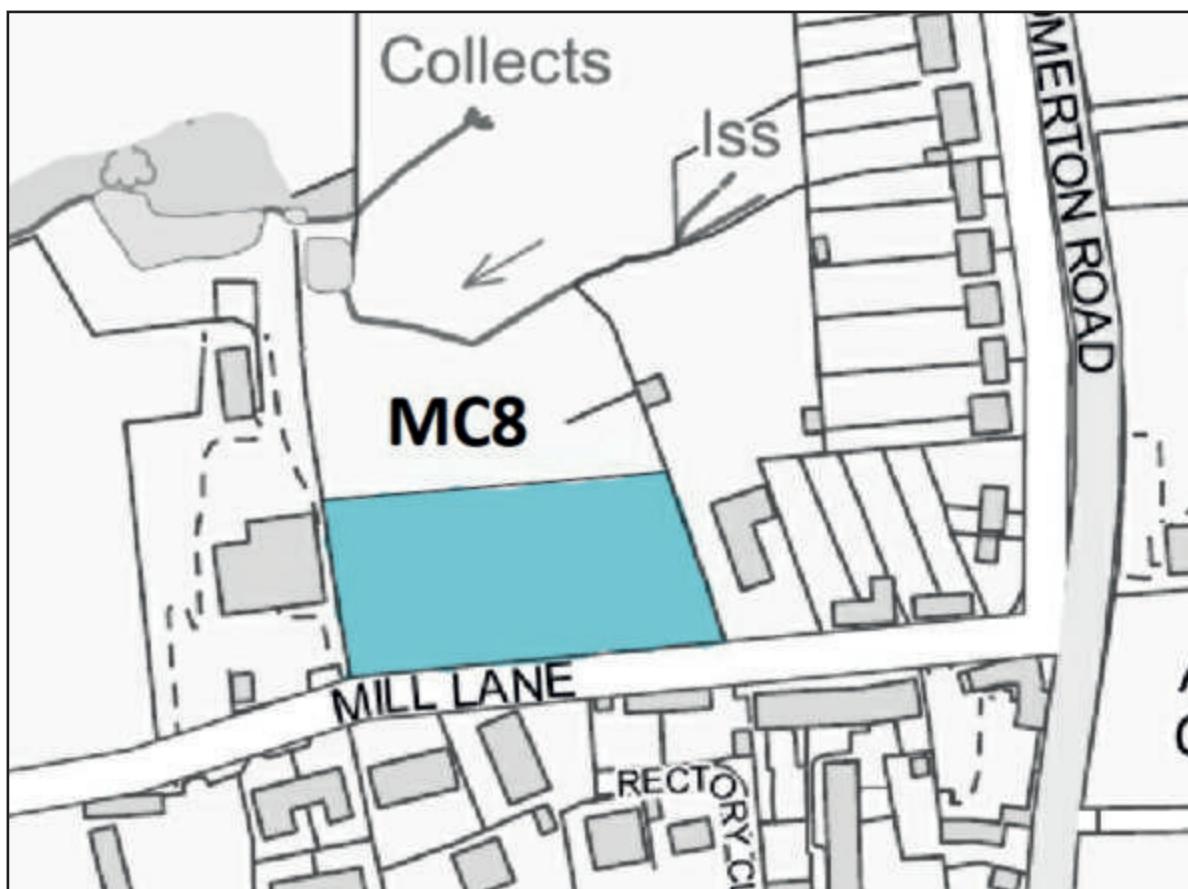


FIG. 12: SITE ALLOCATION MC8

Upper Heyford, Land off Mill Lane; Site ref: HELAA218

See Policy Map 8B for context

## **POLICY MC9: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK**

A. The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Mid-Cherwell Green Infrastructure Network in the designated Plan area, as shown on Policy Maps 11, and 11A-D, for the purposes of promoting:

- a net gain in biodiversity
- improved connectivity
- recognition and protection of wildlife corridors
- carbon capture
- natural flood management
- recreation and wellbeing
- reduced soil erosion, air pollution and noise.

The Network comprises a variety of green and blue infrastructure assets, including existing woodland, species rich grassland, hedgerows, and water bodies as well as public rights of way, amenity and recreation spaces.

B. Development proposals on land that lies within or immediately adjoining any part of the defined Network are required to have full regard to maintaining and improving the effectiveness of the Network, in particular by retaining and integrating existing green and blue infrastructure assets as far as possible, in the overall design of their landscaping schemes, layouts, access and public open space provision.

C. Proposals that will permanently harm the effectiveness or connectivity of the Network will not be supported. Proposals that will lead to an extension, or improved effectiveness of the Network (including the delivery of one or more of the identified Biodiversity Net Gain Opportunities) will be supported, provided that they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the Development Plan.

D. For the purpose of calculating Biodiversity Net Gain requirements using DEFRA's latest metric, development proposals on land that lies within or immediately adjoining any part of the defined Network should anticipate achieving at least a 'medium' distinctiveness multiplier score (see the penultimate paragraph of the supporting text).

E. Any proposal that can demonstrate that off-site compensation to mitigate for biodiversity loss is necessary must follow a sequential approach to its delivery. In the first instance, the gain should be delivered within or adjoining the Green Infrastructure Network where the land is suited in principle for delivering the necessary gain with multiple-benefit areas, as defined in the Policy Map. If this is impractical, then the gain should be delivered on land elsewhere within the same Parish before considering a location within an adjoining MCNP Parish that is suited in principle for delivering the necessary gain. Only if it can be shown that this is impractical may the gain be delivered on other land.

## Rationale

The content of this Policy is supported by the Treescapes Opportunities and Benefits Report published separately as Appendix 5. Policy Maps 11 and 11A-D use data that is still being developed at the time of writing. The reference to “LIDAR extracted features” in the Map keys is the best available information regarding the location of hedges and woodland in the MCNP area. However, work is already in hand to update this information with more accurate data, enabling the Maps to be “refreshed” in due course.

Not only are many green and blue assets of special value in their own right, but they are also either well-connected or capable of being better connected to function as green/habitat corridors and as more sustainable means for people to travel around the Parishes by foot or cycle.

The policy complements the more general requirements of the adopted Local Plan Policy ESD17 on green infrastructure by encouraging specific opportunities for woodland and other planting and management as part of landscape schemes to contribute to the multiple benefits of such assets. The policy also complements the emerging Local Plan 2042, which includes a policy with similar overall aims. Policy MC9, however, provides locally-specific detail and, because the designated area is large enough to do so, and because it contains an important area for biodiversity enhancement (the Cherwell Valley), also proposes that Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) should occur within the neighbourhood plan area.

The policy requires that all promoters of development proposals that lie within the Network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least not undermine its existing integrity connecting spaces and habitats. This may mean that development layouts are designed to contribute to the network’s effectiveness. The Treescapes Report identifies the locations that are best suited for specific intervention. It is acknowledged that there are already a number of Countryside Stewardship Agreements in the designated neighbourhood area. The Parish Councils will seek to work with landowners to realise the opportunities identified in the Treescapes Report where possible avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Clauses D and E respond to the BNG provisions of the Environment Act 2021, which has now become a statutory part of plan making and development management. The BNG Metric provides the means for applicants to calculate the baseline biodiversity value of the application site in determining the net gain requirement of their proposals. The Treescapes Report demonstrates that the existing Network has a biodiversity value of more than 6 units in most cases, or between 3 and 6 units.

Clause D anticipates that the distinctiveness multiplier score of the BNG Metric (from very low to very high) will be at least ‘medium’ for proposals located within or adjoining the existing Network.

The policy sets out how the loss of biodiversity value will be addressed through a sequential approach. The new biodiversity net gain requirement of at least 10% (as set out by the Environment Act of 2021) should be delivered either onsite or within or adjoining the Network so that the benefits of development are accrued as close as possible. Attention should be paid to areas where multiple benefits can be achieved. However, it is accepted that the Network in the parish concerned may not be suited to delivering every type of required off-site gain. In such cases, Clause E allows for the gain to be delivered in adjoining parishes or, as a final resort, on land elsewhere.

## **POLICY MC10: LOCAL GAPS**

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies Local Gaps for Upper Heyford (LG1), Lower Heyford and Caulcott (LG2), Middleton Stoney (LG3) and Ardley (LG4 and 5), as shown on Policy Map 12. Local Gaps are intended to prevent coalescence of any development proposals with existing settlements, to reduce the impact of any such development on existing settlements, and also to provide the opportunity for visual and acoustic screening.

Within a Local Gap, the land should remain predominantly in agricultural use, but it may also accommodate:

1. Development associated with agricultural use that conforms to other policies in this Plan and in the Cherwell Local Plan
2. proposals for economic activities that bring about rural diversification, providing that:
  - the development is operated as part of a viable rural business (including farm holding) and contributes to the viability of the holding;
  - it is not detrimental to the character and appearance of existing buildings and their setting within the landscape;
  - existing buildings are used in preference to new buildings or extensions;
  - utilities and other infrastructure are available or can be provided
  - and there is access by means of an existing road; no highway hazards are created or increased; and road improvements incompatible with the character of the surrounding area are not required.
3. Ecological mitigation and appropriate visual and acoustic screening arising from development outside the Local Gaps
4. Footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways
5. Recreational uses including Local Green Spaces.
6. Development required for the delivery of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Any development which is proposed adjacent to the designated strategic area of Heyford Park (as defined by Local Plan policy Villages 5) should not give rise to coalescence with the other surrounding settlements, or impact adversely on those settlements, to ensure that their rural amenity, separate identity and character are maintained.

*Continued.....*

## Rationale

This policy takes forward the 'zone of non-coalescence' at Heyford Park in Policy PD3 of the made MCNP but renames it as 'Local Gaps' and adds new Local Gaps identified by the review of the plan. The review continues to acknowledge the planned strategic development at Heyford Park, as set out in Local Plan Policy Villages 5. There is however a natural concern from the communities of surrounding villages that they should keep their discrete character, separated from Heyford Park by a significant gap of open countryside. Cherwell DC has acknowledged the importance of this concept in its new policy COM13: Strategic Gaps in the draft Local Plan 2042, where quite large tracts of land are identified as such between Heyford Park and surrounding villages in the MCNP area. These proposed Strategic Gaps cover areas of land that in some cases include those proposed in this MCNP policy. However, there are areas proposed here that are not covered by the Strategic Gaps. An important difference between the two policies is the requirement in MC10 that the land should remain predominantly in agricultural use. Another difference is that the extent and location of the Gaps proposed here have been originated by the respective parish councils and the MCNP Forum, thereby reflecting locally-specific preferences. The much greater extent, and looser criteria for development, of the COM13 policies may lead to a less effective and diluted type of protection for the settlements concerned. As a result, the MCNP Forum has chosen to put forward this Local Gap policy alongside that of CDC's policy.

Local Gap LG1, as now revised, does not include any of the Heyford Park strategic site; it is however within the Rousham Conservation Area (as shown in Fig.3 on p.11). It is intended to include a minimum 20 metre buffer zone where necessary to protect Upper Heyford village from the visual intrusion of any development. This green buffer zone (including the reinstatement of the historic Portway footpath) has been agreed between the owners of Heyford Park and Upper Heyford Parish Council. Protection from coalescence here is further supported by designation in policy MC11 of adjacent land in this area as Local Green Space (sites UH4 and UH5).

Caulcott is identified specifically by Local Gap LG2 in view of the possibility of Heyford Park developing to the south of the existing strategic site. Caulcott is in the parish of Lower Heyford, the parish council of which has requested inclusion in this policy, supported by many responses from local residents. Development on greenfield land above Caulcott would have a significant and detrimental visual impact on the setting of the hamlet. Heyford Park lies on a high flat limestone plateau while Caulcott lies within a dip of the plateau 1km to the south. The land between them is exposed and has no 'dead ground' which could mask further development. The size of Heyford Park in relation to Caulcott and the modern and urban nature of its development would have a harmful impact on the setting of Caulcott and its mainly 18th century vernacular buildings. The proposed Local Gap is intended to minimise harm from such development, and as now revised extends westwards to join with LG1.

Ardley has two Local Gaps, LG4 and LG5, identified, aiming to provide protection from possible encroaching commercial development to its north and to expansion of Heyford Park and further possible encroaching commercial development to its south. It is also intended to ensure that any future development at a possible new railway station does not lead to harmful coalescence with the village.

Middleton Stoney, likewise, has Local Gap LG3 identified in relation to potential development to its north.

Detailed evidence in support of Local Gaps in this policy is provided by the separate evidence report 'Proposed Local Green Spaces, Special Landscape Area, and Local Gaps Review' of 2023 by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Consultants ([Appendix 4](#)).

## POLICY MC11: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Neighbourhood Plan designates the Local Green Spaces listed in Fig. 13 and as shown on the Policies Maps for each of the settlements.

Development on the designated Local Green Spaces which does not relate to or complement their importance to the community will only be considered acceptable in very special circumstances.

### Rationale

This policy designates Local Green Spaces to protect them from inappropriate development. They comprise those designated by Policy PD7 of the made MCNP and 8 additional spaces identified during the process of reviewing the plan. All of them are considered to meet the tests of §107 of the December 2024 NPPF to show they are cherished by the local community. The effect of the designation is to give the spaces the equivalent protection as national Green Belt policy, meaning that only very special circumstances will justify what would be deemed ‘inappropriate development’.

Each participating Parish Council and Parish Meeting made an assessment of local green spaces in or close to their settlements and proposed nominations accordingly. A common system of assessment was used to ensure that each nomination met the NPPF requirements, and in particular had sufficient evidence of being “special to the local community”. Detailed evidence in support of each of the additional Local Green Spaces is provided by the separate evidence report ‘Proposed Local Green Spaces, Special Landscape Area, and Local Gaps Review’ of 2023 by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Consultants ([Appendix 4](#)). Note that the report refers to Local Green Spaces in Heyford Park parish which have subsequently been removed from this Policy.

A number of potential nominations have been excluded on the basis of expert advice received. These include Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Village Greens, which have been deemed to have a high level of protection from development that would not be improved by designation as Local Green Spaces. Some other potential nominations were excluded as they were deemed not to meet the requirements of NPPF para 107.

FIGURE 13: LIST OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

*Items in the list marked \* are retained from MCNP1 policy PD5; Proposed additional LGSS are shown in **bold***

Designation	Parish	Site Address
AF1*	Ardley with Fewcott	Ardley with Fewcott Playing Field
AF2*	Ardley with Fewcott	Old Quarry Field
AF3*	Ardley with Fewcott	The Knob Green
AF4*	Ardley with Fewcott	Fewcott Green
MA1*	Middle Aston	Middle Aston House front lawn
DT1*	Duns Tew	Duns Tew play area
SA1*	Steeple Aston	Robinson's Close, Fir Lane
SA2*	Steeple Aston	Allotments, Fir Lane
SA3*	Steeple Aston	Field adjacent to Paines Hill
<b>SA4</b>	<b>Steeple Aston</b>	<b>Water Lane Community Orchard</b>
LH1*	Lower Heyford	Meadow abutting Oxford Canal
LH2*	Lower Heyford	Paddock adjacent to Ivy Close in The Lane
LH3*	Lower Heyford (Caulcott)	Paddock on South Street, Caulcott
<b>LH4</b>	<b>Lower Heyford</b>	<b>Paine's Field</b>
<b>LH5</b>	<b>Lower Heyford</b>	<b>Station Road Allotments</b>
<b>LH6</b>	<b>Lower Heyford</b>	<b>Wildlife sanctuary behind Churchyard</b>
MS1*	Middleton Stoney	Children's Playground
<b>MS2</b>	<b>Middleton Stoney</b>	<b>Ardley Road Allotments</b>
KT1*	Kirtlington	The Allotments
KT2*	Kirtlington	Square green in the centre of Dashwood Mews

Continued.....

KT3*	Kirtlington	The Recreation field, etc.
KT4*	Kirtlington	Small green within Gossway Fields' housing
<b>KT5</b>	<b>Kirtlington</b>	<b>Kirtlington Community Orchard</b>
<b>SO1</b>	<b>Somerton</b>	<b>Ardley Road Children's Play Area</b>
FT1*	Fritwell	Church View
FT2*	Fritwell	Recreation ground and play area
<b>FT3</b>	<b>Fritwell</b>	<b>Covert Field</b>
UH1*	Upper Heyford	The Common
UH2*	Upper Heyford	High Street allotments
UH3*	Upper Heyford	Meadow abutting Allen's Lock
UH4*	Upper Heyford	Upper Heyford Recreation Ground
UH5*	Upper Heyford	Poors Allotments, Somerton Road

## POLICY MC12: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS, VISTAS AND SKYLINES

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Important Views, Vistas and Skylines listed in Fig.14 and as shown on Policy Maps 13 and 14, and those referred to in Appendix K, and in Conservation Area Appraisals.

Development proposals in the vicinity of an Important View or Vista, or of a scale and location that may affect a Skyline, must not cause significant harm, unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh that harm. Where development proposals may affect Important Views, Vistas or Skylines, the planning application must include an assessment of the significance of the views and the effect of the proposed development on them.

This policy replaces policy PD4 of the made MCNP, with additional views identified in Fig.14.

### Rationale

The underlying landform, historic landscape elements, and notable landmarks within the landscape make views an important characteristic within the Mid-Cherwell area. The Cherwell Valley provides opportunities for far-reaching and panoramic views from along the valley sides, and more intimate views from within the base of the valley. Along the Cherwell Valley the strong rural characteristics of the landscape are apparent, including the small-scale isolated settlements dispersed along the valley, most notable in views as a result of their churches standing tall above surrounding woodland. Views within the Cherwell Valley are more open from the eastern side of the valley than the west, which is more wooded and has slightly greater enclosure. Policy Map 13 shows the contours and highlights the sensitive skylines of high ground on each side of the Cherwell Valley that are to be protected.

There are important views recognised in Cherwell District Council's Conservation Area Appraisals for many of the villages, which are referenced in para. 1.6.3. Some of the land nominated as Local Green Spaces (policy MC11) plays a significant role in important views that are listed. Across the area the most prominent recurring landmarks are the churches at the many small villages within Mid-Cherwell, and structures at the former RAF Upper Heyford. The churches are often framed within the landscape by surrounding vegetation, and are often the first indicator of the location of a settlement. The views between church towers along the Cherwell Valley, and the setting of these views, are a particularly characteristic feature. See the Heritage and Character Assessment ([Appendix K](#)), where detail is provided of important and characteristic views.

Policy MC12 defines a series of key views listed in Fig.14, shown on Policy Map 13 and also referred to in Appendix K. The policy requires applicants to show that they have understood the potential for their proposals to cause harm to any of these views and that options have been properly considered to avoid such an outcome. This need not prevent development but should enable careful siting, design and layout decisions to be made.

Detailed evidence in support of Views and Vistas is provided by the separate report 'Proposed Local Green Spaces, Special Landscape Area, and Local Gaps Review' of 2023 by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Consultants ([Appendix 4](#)).

FIGURE 14: LIST OF IMPORTANT VIEWS AND VISTAS

Parish	Ref	Location of viewpoint	Direction of view	Source
Ardley w Fewcott	AFV1	Footpath off Somerton Road	NW towards Fritwell	Fewcott CAA 2008
Duns Tew	DTV1A	Hill Farm Lane	NW	CAA 2022
Duns Tew	DTV1B	Hill Farm Lane	NE	Parish Council
Duns Tew	DTV2	Former quarry, Duns Tew Rd	N	Parish Council
Duns Tew	DTV3	From RoW 195/2/10	NW towards Over Worton	Parish Council
Duns Tew	DTV4	From Daisy Hill bridleway	S	CAA 2022
Duns Tew	DTV5	From RoW 195/1/10	NE towards Deddington	Parish Council
Fritwell	FRV1	Raghouse Lane railway bridge	N	Parish Council
Fritwell	FRV2	Footpath 219/9	SE	Parish Council
Fritwell	FRV3	Park Street	E	Parish Council
Kirtlington	KTV1	Kirtlington Road	W towards Northbrook	HCA map
Kirtlington	KTV2	Top of Quarry, Mill Lane	N and W	HCA map
Kirtlington	KTV3	Bletchingdon Road	S	HCA map
Kirtlington	KTV4	Woodstock Way footpath	W	HCA photo p.43
Middle Aston	MAV1	Fir Lane opp Middle A. House	E	HCA map
Middle Aston	MAV2	near Grange Farm	E	Parish meeting
North Aston	NAV1	Village Green	N	HCA map
Lower Heyford	LHV1	Footpath 422/2/10	S towards Caulcott	HCA map
Lower Heyford	LHV2	Canal towpath	S towards village	HCA photo p.51
Lower Heyford	LHV3	Station Road	W towards church	HCA photo p.22
Lower Heyford	LHV4	Fields south of village	N	HCA photo p.51
Somerton	SOV1	Canal towpath	N	Parish Council
Somerton	SOV2	Souldern Road	NW towards Somerton Lock	Parish Council
Somerton	SOV3	Footpath 349/9	W to Mudgingwell Farm	Parish Council
Steeple Aston	SAV1	Fenway/ A4260	S	HCA map
Steeple Aston	SAV2	Shop corner, Paines Hill	N across village	HCA photo p.65
Steeple Aston	SAV3	Cow Lane	E towards Eyecatcher	HCA map
Steeple Aston	SAV4	Cow Lane	S towards Rousham	Parish Council
Upper Heyford	UHV1	West end of runway	W over valley	HCA photo p.72
Upper Heyford	UHV2	Somerton Road	W towards Steeple Aston	HCA photo p.72

## **POLICY MC13: LIGHT POLLUTION**

The design of external and street lighting in all new development should minimise the risk of light spillage beyond the development site boundary. Proposals should ensure that the installation of all external lighting satisfies the following criteria:

- a) elevations of buildings, particularly roofs, should be designed to limit light spill;
- b) proposals should not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of surrounding occupiers;
- c) proposals should not have a significant adverse impact on the character of a village and its setting or of the wider countryside; in particular, upward spillage if light should be avoided.
- d) proposals should aim not be detrimental to biodiversity and in particular should aim to minimise the impact of light on declining invertebrate populations;
- e) particular care should be taken to avoid light pollution where the development is in a remote rural location, or where it might adversely affect the setting and biodiversity value of the Oxford Canal.

This policy replaces policy PD6 of the made MCNP, with an amendment to the wording of section d).

### **Rationale**

CDC's Local Plan policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built Environment states that new development proposals should "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation". This policy addresses a concern expressed by a significant number of people at local engagement meetings and in responses to questionnaires during the formation of the made MCNP. Commercial users at Heyford Park already present a challenge to this policy because their night-time requirements for lighting are substantial. The night-time glow of light above the former Base is already significant, and is increasing, with a detrimental effect on the sense of rurality in the neighbourhood area that surrounds the Base. The Community Action Plan (Section 4 of this document) can also attempt to address this. In the meantime, this policy controlling light pollution from new development aims to stop the problem from getting worse.

The participating Parish Councils and their communities hold strong views about the proliferation of street lighting in traditional villages where there is either none or a very limited amount at present. Such proliferation is seen as damaging to the character of these villages. Any proposals to include new street lighting should therefore be discussed with the appropriate Parish Council or Parish Meeting, if possible prior to submission of planning applications. This issue is also addressed in the Community Action Plan.

## **POLICY MC14: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

A. Proposals for residential development schemes of 10 or more dwellings will be required to deliver, unless otherwise agreed, the following mix of dwelling types:

- 38% as 1 or 2 bedroom homes
- 61% as 3 bedroom homes
- 1% as homes with 4 or more bedrooms

Smaller schemes should aim for a similar mix where possible.

B. Proposals for residential development schemes of 10 or more dwellings will be required to deliver at least 35% of affordable homes within the scheme. Applicants should maximise the number of homes that are affordable to people on Cherwell DC average salaries, to meet local housing need, unless proven to be undeliverable. Unless otherwise agreed, affordable housing shall comprise the following mix:

- 60% social and affordable rent
- 40% affordable home ownership, comprising 25% as First Homes, 10% as shared ownership (at an equity share of 25%) and 5% as rent to buy.

C. Proposals for community-led and self-build housing will be especially welcomed. Housing schemes put forward by a locally-based Community Land Trust will be particularly encouraged.

D. Housing development will be favoured that is designed with features that enable residents to live there throughout different phases of their lives, and be capable of internal and external adaptation to help achieve this aim. Such housing should be built amongst other homes to mitigate isolation and loneliness. Homes should be constructed to Building Regulations Part M4 (2) accessible and adaptable standard (as amended) unless it can be demonstrated through an independent assessment that the application of the standard would make the development unviable. In addition, where possible, dwellings which are on one level should be included, to meet the need for such accommodation, in particular, for older people and those with disabilities.

E. Applications to alter or extend an existing dwelling that would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall parking provision retained on site is satisfactory and will not exacerbate existing difficulties with on-street parking in the locality.

F. Development affecting existing traditional stone walls should identify them on proposals drawings, and wherever possible retain and/or repair them using traditional forms and materials.

G. Proposals for residential development of more than 5 dwellings may be required to provide new or improve existing footpaths and cycle ways to ensure that residents of all ages and mobility have safe access to village amenities. Where new routes are proposed to meet this requirement, the development proposals shall contain full details.

## Rationale

This policy comprises various clauses that set out a framework for the types of mix of housing that will be required in Mid Cherwell over the plan period. Clauses A and B have been derived from the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) report of 2023 produced for the plan review by AECOM. Clauses C and D are retained (with some modification of clause D) from the made MCNP (formerly policies PH3 and PH4 respectively).

The current total number of dwellings in the area is estimated to be 2,650 (Census 2021). The area has a tenure profile which is dominated by people who own their own homes (77%), which is a slightly larger proportion than Cherwell (65%) and the national average (61%). The area has a private rental sector which is broadly similar in size to the District and national average, but has a smaller socially rented sector. Between 2011 and 2021, the private rental sector only grew by 2%. However, there was significant growth in shared ownership, while owner occupation remains the most popular tenure option. Heyford Park can be seen as helpfully diversifying the mix of tenures and widening options for local people.

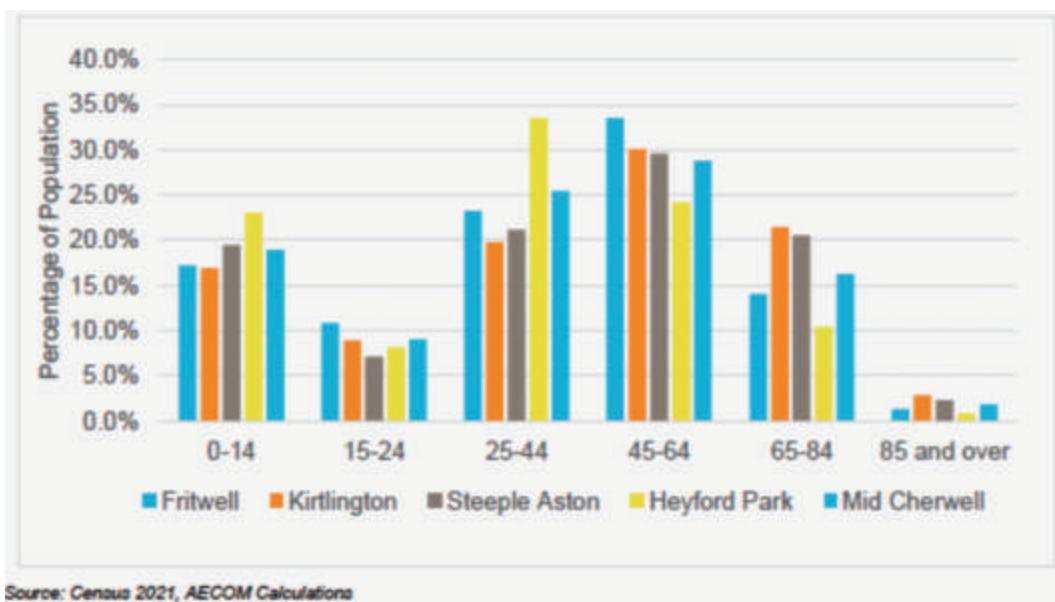


FIG 15: AGE STRUCTURE IN SUB AREAS, 2021 (HNA, AECOM, 2023)  
Heyford Park is included for reference

Clause A sets out the required mix of new housing types to achieve a healthier range in the housing stock of the area. The HNA proposes that in order to diversify its housing mix, the MCNP Review should primarily focus on the delivery of 3-bedroom homes, and also promote the delivery of smaller 1/2 bedroom homes (see Fig 16 below). The HNA emphasises the importance of delivering housing of diverse types and sizes which are financially within reach of those in the population who are in more acute need. There has been a considerable number of 4+ bedroom homes delivered in the wider local area (particularly at Heyford Park), generally following the pattern of development seen across the designated neighbourhood area.

*Continued.....*

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2011)	Suggested mix (2040)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix
1	3.5%	9.0%	24.8%
2	24.0%	21.9%	13.1%
3	37.8%	44.7%	61.1%
4+	24.0%	18.8%	1.0%

Source: AECOM Calculations

FIG 16: PROPOSED DWELLING SIZE MIX TO 2040 FOR MID CHERWELL (HNA, AECOM, 2023)

Clause B addresses the affordable housing requirements of the area over the plan period. The HNA notes that the median house price in Mid Cherwell is £412,500, having grown by 20% since 2012 (see Fig 15 below). The price of the lowest quartile (25%) grew at a faster rate of 31% to a current average of £325,000. There is a clear issue regarding the affordability of housing in Mid Cherwell, with the median house price requiring an income of £106,071, which is 82% higher than the average income. Moreover, both entry level and new build homes are generally out of reach for the average earning household.

Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Growth
Detached	£385K	£440K	£434K	£450K	£472K	£478K	£471K	£460K	£523K	£523K	35.7%
Semi-detached	£310K	£265K	£300K	£300K	£288K	£326K	£336K	£318K	£320K	£358K	15.3%
Terraced	£230K	£250K	£277K	£325K	£270K	£306K	£294K	£192K	£387K	£325K	41.3%
Flats	£179K	£218K	£375K	£201K	£150K	£231K	£122K	-	£350K	£185K	3.5%
All Types	£345K	£315K	£368K	£377K	£330K	£375K	£410K	£360K	£472K	£412K	19.6%

Source: Land Registry PPD

FIG 17: MEDIAN HOUSE PRICES BY TYPE IN MID CHERWELL, 2012-2021 (HNA, AECOM, 2023)

The HNA therefore proposes a tenure mix of 60% affordable rented and 40% affordable ownership accommodation, taking account of the required 25% First Homes. This reflects the particularly acute levels of unaffordability in the area, and an increase in the supply of social/affordable rental homes would respond to the most acute affordability pressures. The site allocation policies MC2 - MC8 require that the housing mix proposed in this policy MC14(B) be implemented in schemes on those sites, as a minimum. There may also be the possibility of Rural Exception Sites adjacent to villages in the MCNP area, in which case the NPPF requires that provision on site is principally for affordable housing.

Clause C applies in particular to the Site Allocation Policies in this Plan, as methods of delivering housing which can address the particular features of housing need that are articulated in the HNA and in this rationale. Community Land Trusts are especially appropriate as a vehicle for creating housing responding to local need, which remains under community control in perpetuity. The Government's definition of 'affordable' as 80% of market value is not affordable on household income of less than £30,000, and for that reason will not address the community's housing need. In cases where viability is a genuine barrier to delivery, the applicant will be required to demonstrate this by submitting a robust viability appraisal. The viability appraisal must be done on an independent and open book process and must be undertaken by a qualified Member of the RICS.

Self-build is encouraged not only on allocated sites but where infill or windfall schemes may become possible during the Plan period.

*Continued.....*

Clause D retains Policy PH3 of the made MCNP. The supporting text to that policy noted that many residents are content to continue into retirement in their current homes; others seek nearby alternative housing for those who wish to downsize and for surviving partners. The stock of smaller houses has been much reduced over the last few years. Recognising the relatively older profile of the population, Hamptons note that one dwelling type that is significantly under-supplied is bungalows. Downsizing from the Mid-Cherwell villages and other rural areas drives demand for bungalows, particularly in nearby towns with good pedestrian access to services and facilities, such as Deddington and Bicester and also, to a lesser extent at present, Heyford Park.

There remains a need for a two-bedroom, high specification dwelling, predominantly single storey and with a modest garden. The 'Lifetime Homes' standard (broadly equivalent to the Building Regulation M4(2) category homes) can offer benefits to everyone. Through design features that increase ease of access such as level thresholds and wider doorways, lit and covered entrance ways and good accessibility throughout the home, most people find it easier to enter, exit and move around in their properties without physical barriers such as steps and narrow areas. The Mid Cherwell HNA provides evidence which demonstrates that there is a need for Building Regulation M4(2) category homes in the designated neighbourhood area. The policy therefore makes this a requirement for all new homes, but provides flexibility where a financial appraisal proves there is a viability issue so that the requirement for all properties to meet Regulation M4(2) can be relaxed.

Clause E: many of the villages in the neighbourhood plan area suffer from parking congestion, because so few traditional dwellings have dedicated parking spaces or garages and so parking occurs at the roadside in locations which were never intended for such a use. This causes well-documented inconvenience to pedestrians and other drivers, including local bus services. This policy supports Local Plan 2031 policy ESD15. Reference should also be made to CDC's emerging Design Guide SPD 2017.

Clause F is an important contribution to maintaining the rural character of the MCNP area. Stone walls as boundaries to fields and properties are a characteristic and traditional feature of the neighbourhood. There is strong community support for their retention and protection. Some of these walls are in a poor state of repair, and others have virtually disappeared from view in undergrowth. This policy encourages their repair and re-emergence where the opportunity to do so arises.

Clause G refers to locations where village roads and lanes with grass verges, or those with none, at locations where small-scale development might occur, provide insufficient safe access for pedestrians.

Building design can also make an important contribution to biodiversity. Swift bricks should be incorporated in developments (refurbishments, extensions and new build) to provide nesting opportunities for birds, including species under threat. Swift bricks are supported because unlike other integrated nest bricks they are also used by other Red-listed species (eg House Sparrows, Starlings and House Martins). Integrated nesting bricks are preferred to external boxes for reasons of longevity, reduced maintenance, better temperature regulation with future climate change in mind, and aesthetic integration with the building design. The bricks should be installed in accordance with best-practice guidance, e.g. British Standard BS 42021:2022, which recommends one Swift brick per dwelling on average in each development, installed at least 4 metres high. Care should also be taken in the repair of buildings not to remove or block up known nest places in eaves or other locations. If unavoidable, alternative nest boxes or bricks should be installed.

## **POLICY MC15: AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLOCATION**

Support will be given to affordable housing schemes on development sites, including Rural Exception Sites, within or adjacent to villages, to meet specific housing needs within the Plan area supported by a recent Housing Needs Survey. Community-led schemes on Rural Exception sites will be particularly supported.

Affordable housing schemes must ensure that dwellings continue to be affordable and made available to meet local needs in perpetuity.

Priority for allocation will be given in the following order:

- qualifying residents of the parish in which the site is proposed for development
- qualifying residents of the MCNP designated neighbourhood area
- qualifying residents or those who live or work in the Cherwell District

### **Rationale**

Cherwell District Council published its 'Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Assessment' in November 2024. This projects an annual need for 590 affordable homes to be made available in Cherwell District every year during the plan period. About 43% of the need for affordable homes is projected to be from newly-formed households (typically of children of local families setting-up their own homes).

This policy aims to ensure that priority for provision of affordable homes is given to those with the most local connections. The precise definition of 'local connection' is under discussion with Cherwell DC, and will be applied as and when projects come forward. Experience of rural exception sites (RESs) in the MCNP area in recent years has included some disappointment in this regard, especially from the parish councils that supported the RESs. This is because the generic CDC policy for housing allocation has not delivered the desired emphasis on a parish-centric approach. This policy aims to provide that approach.

## POLICY MC16: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TRAFFIC CALMING

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Active Travel Network, as shown on Policy Maps 11 and 11A-D, for the purpose of supporting healthy and safe active travel opportunities in the Parishes.
- B. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should sustain and, where practicable, enhance the functionality of the network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.
- C. Proposals that will cause harm to the functioning or connectivity of the network will not be supported.
- D. Traffic Calming: applications for development of 10 or more dwellings, and applications for other uses which are likely to generate significant traffic movement, are required to contribute financially to the creation of traffic calming schemes in the villages most affected by the proposals. This may be achieved either by planning conditions, or by inclusion within a S.106 agreement. The traffic calming schemes should take account of the principles set out in the Village Traffic Mitigation report produced by Hamilton-Baille Associates ([Appendix M](#)).

### Rationale

The policy maps identify the Active Travel Network, walking and cycling routes through and between the main village settlements connecting them with the countryside and neighbouring settlements. The policy supports Oxfordshire County Council's Active Travel Network, and aims to raise awareness of routes to encourage safe and convenient use, and to identify future opportunities to improve their connectivity. This allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network and/or improve the attractiveness of rural routes. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that could undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission. The Oxford Canal is a resource that is not used to its full potential and access should be improved to promote green and sustainable leisure opportunities using the towpath for walking and cycling.

As regards Clause D, the aim is to ensure that mitigation of increased traffic through MCNP villages can be put in place, to supplement funds that have been set aside by Oxfordshire County Council from historic S.106 agreements relating to the development of Heyford Park and other local developments. MCNP Forum commissioned Hamilton-Baille Associates in 2016 to produce ideas and proposals for traffic calming in the MCNP area, and the report was presented as part of the Evidence Base for the made plan. Traffic calming schemes now proposed should therefore take these ideas into account, together with other reports on best practice for traffic mitigation in villages. Place-making is amongst the key themes, putting emphasis on "re-claiming" village spaces that are currently dominated by traffic, for people to instead walk and cycle – now referred to as active travel.

A major community objective is to maintain the rural character of the neighbourhood. There are numbers of roads in the NP area that are either single-track or where passing is difficult. These rural lanes are an essential part of the character of the neighbourhood and are unsuited to increasing volumes of traffic that new development will generate. Their protection is a key part of this policy. Given the scale of growth in both residential and commercial traffic it is critical that effective plans are put in place to route traffic entering or leaving the neighbourhood along designated routes, minimizing disruption to the rural road network and communities.

Traffic and transport issues are also addressed in the Community Action Plan - Section 4.

## **POLICY MC17: LOCAL EMPLOYMENT**

Continued commercial use of premises providing local employment within the neighbourhood area or otherwise benefiting the local economy, and proposals for the establishment of new small businesses will be considered favourably where they:

- a) provide diverse employment opportunities for people living in the neighbourhood area or otherwise benefit the local economy, or enhance agricultural production;
- b) do not have an adverse affect on the surrounding built, natural or historic environment that is not clearly outweighed by the economic benefits of the development;
- c) are unlikely to generate a volume of goods or other traffic that would have a significantly harmful effect on road safety or congestion or cause unacceptable noise and disturbance for local residents or to the rural environment and would not adversely affect on-street residential parking. New developments would be expected to provide safe pedestrian and cycle access to local settlements.

### **Rationale**

This policy is retained from the made MCNP (formerly Policy PC1) with some amendment. Employment opportunities within the Plan area continue to be very limited. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan states that less than a quarter of the rural population of Cherwell work within 5km of home. To help the neighbourhood become more sustainable and minimize traffic congestion it is proposed that all efforts be made to encourage the development of work opportunities and apprenticeships for local people in the neighbourhood area.

The encouragement of applications to establish new businesses that are unlikely to generate goods traffic includes support for working from home, so long as this does not in itself exacerbate parking or related problems for neighbours. The availability of fast broadband services is a factor in the success or otherwise of this policy.

## **POLICY MC18: HEALTH FACILITY**

A health facility serving the residents of the Mid-Cherwell area will be supported. Such a facility would also be supported if combined with other appropriate services or uses, such as community facilities or private dentistry, to increase viability.

### **Rationale**

This policy is based on that in the made MCNP (formerly Policy PC2), amended to remove reference to Heyford Park. The following rationale has also been updated.

The population of the former NP area (when it included Heyford Park) grew from 7,221 in 2011 to 8,233 in 2021, an increase of 14%. The services provided by Primary Care for the residents of the NP area have significantly worsened since 2018 given the increased demand from the substantial number of new housing developments in their catchment areas coming on stream, a shortage of NHS staff post pandemic, and the national shortage of newly qualified doctors choosing to work in primary care. Many GPs are also choosing to only work part time, preferring to apply for 3 days a week posts.

Many of the residents of the NP area are registered for Primary Care with Deddington Health Centre with most other residents registering at one of the three GP practices in Bicester. Residents do have the ability to register at any local practice. Although all 7 practices bordering the neighbourhood plan area say they are currently willing to accept new patients and are open for new registrations, spare capacity may be illusory as residents of several villages responding to our survey complained of 7 day waits, or worse, to make an appointment.

It is now widely acknowledged that the provision of NHS services is in crisis. For example, Deddington Health Centre which is only a mile or so outside the MCNP boundary currently has a list size of 12,068 (October 2022) which is a significant increase of circa 25% in the last 4 years. This resulted in the practice having to close to any new registrations in June 2022 for a six-month period, re-opening for new patients in January 2023. Since then the practice has been operating a severely restricted regime of access to medical advice and support.

The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) - now BOB-ICB - investigated the growth potential for existing clinics. Their preference was for larger clinics serving c.10,000 / 20,000 patients. With the loss of one Surgery in Bicester and growth outside the neighbourhood plan area existing clinics are approaching capacity.

There is ample scope for the creation of additional GP practices in the area covered by the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan. Heyford Park has the virtue of potentially offering space for a significant improvement in primary and community care facilities for the wider neighbourhood of surrounding parishes in the MCNP area as well as for the immediate community.

*Continued.....*

A new health facility would be expected to eventually serve 9-10,000 people living in Upper Heyford parish and Heyford Park by 2031. Oxford Health Foundation Trust which provides community health services may also be attracted to using the facility to base some local community health services.

This policy allows for the possibility of supplementing Heyford Park residents with a further (approximately) 3,900 people from other parishes within three miles of the location of the new health facility, who might choose to register there rather than travelling outside the area. Public transport links in the area are not good, and increased use of private cars to reach existing health centres is unsustainable.

Re-registration would not necessarily create problems for other current centres serving the area as even with the already planned new developments, there are more than enough patients to go around. CDC's SPD on Community Infrastructure Levy (adopted February 2018) uses a threshold of 8,000 new residents to trigger a requirement for developer contributions towards an on-site GP service.

Some limited progress in achieving these aims has been achieved in the first 4 years of the neighbourhood plan. Firstly, the Masterplan for Heyford Park adopted and agreed by Cherwell DC in 2020 clearly indicates a designated site for the provision of a new healthcare centre close to the Village Centre.

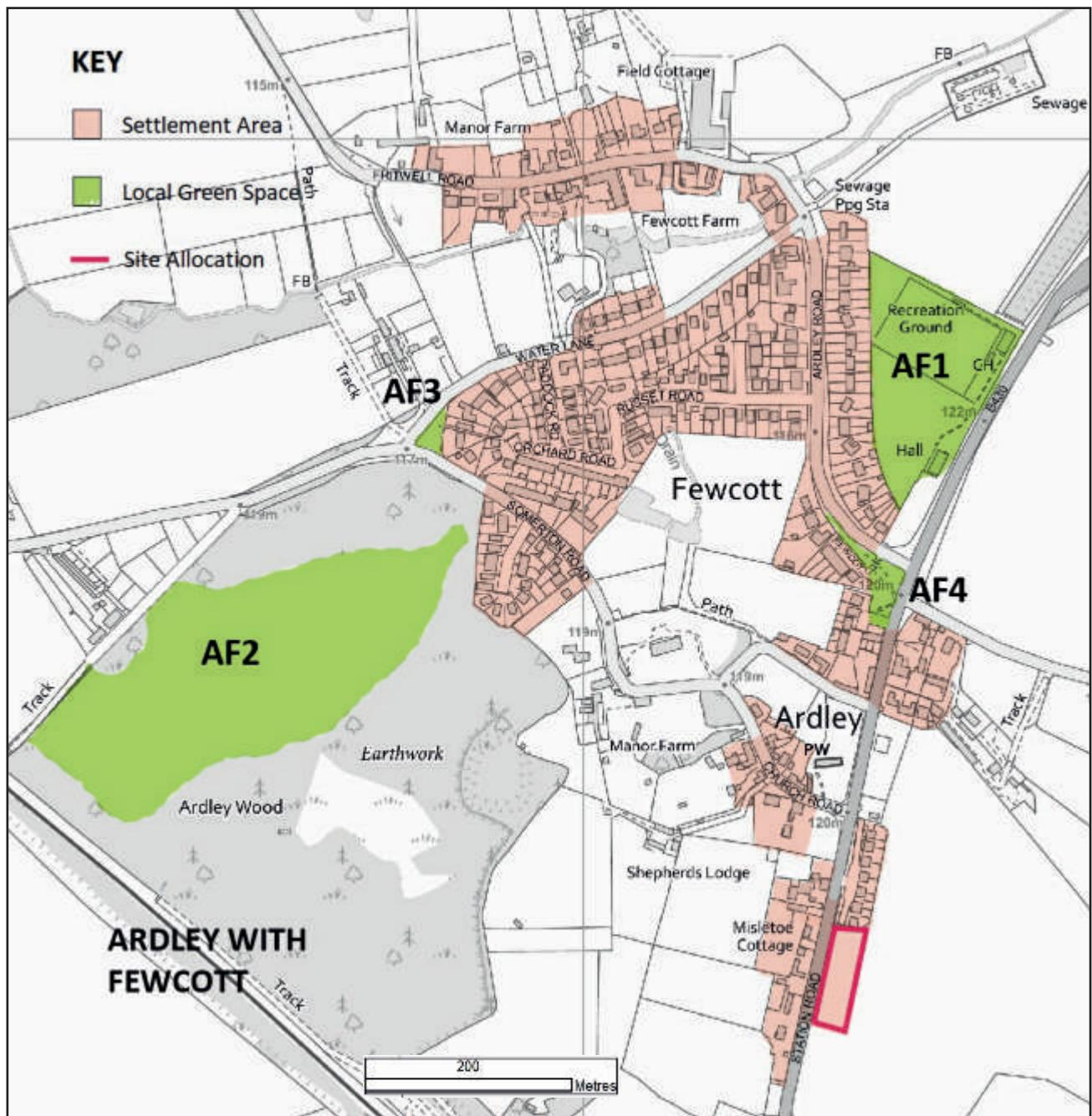
Secondly, a new Private Dental Practice moved to the Village Centre and opened in 2022. Thirdly, the Heyford Park Pharmacy operated by Minerva Clinical Services opened in January 2023 offering a dispensing service for local residents, wherever they are registered for primary care, who can opt to pick up their prescriptions items and buy over the counter medicines and healthcare products closer to home. Minerva Clinical Services has also linked up with the Alchester Medical Group in Bicester to provide local consulting rooms for the use of residents registered with the practice and wishing to see a doctor or nurse from the practice at a more convenient local facility. This move was supported by OCCG in the expectation that once numbers of residents using the consulting service at the new pharmacy increased to around 4,500 – 5,000 permission would be given for Alchester Medical Group to develop a new Branch Surgery on land set aside in the Heyford Park Masterplan for use as a health centre. The new centre would be developed and managed by the Alchester Medical Group.

This policy would support such a development as it would bring significant benefits to the surrounding community of the MCNP area.

# POLICY MAPS

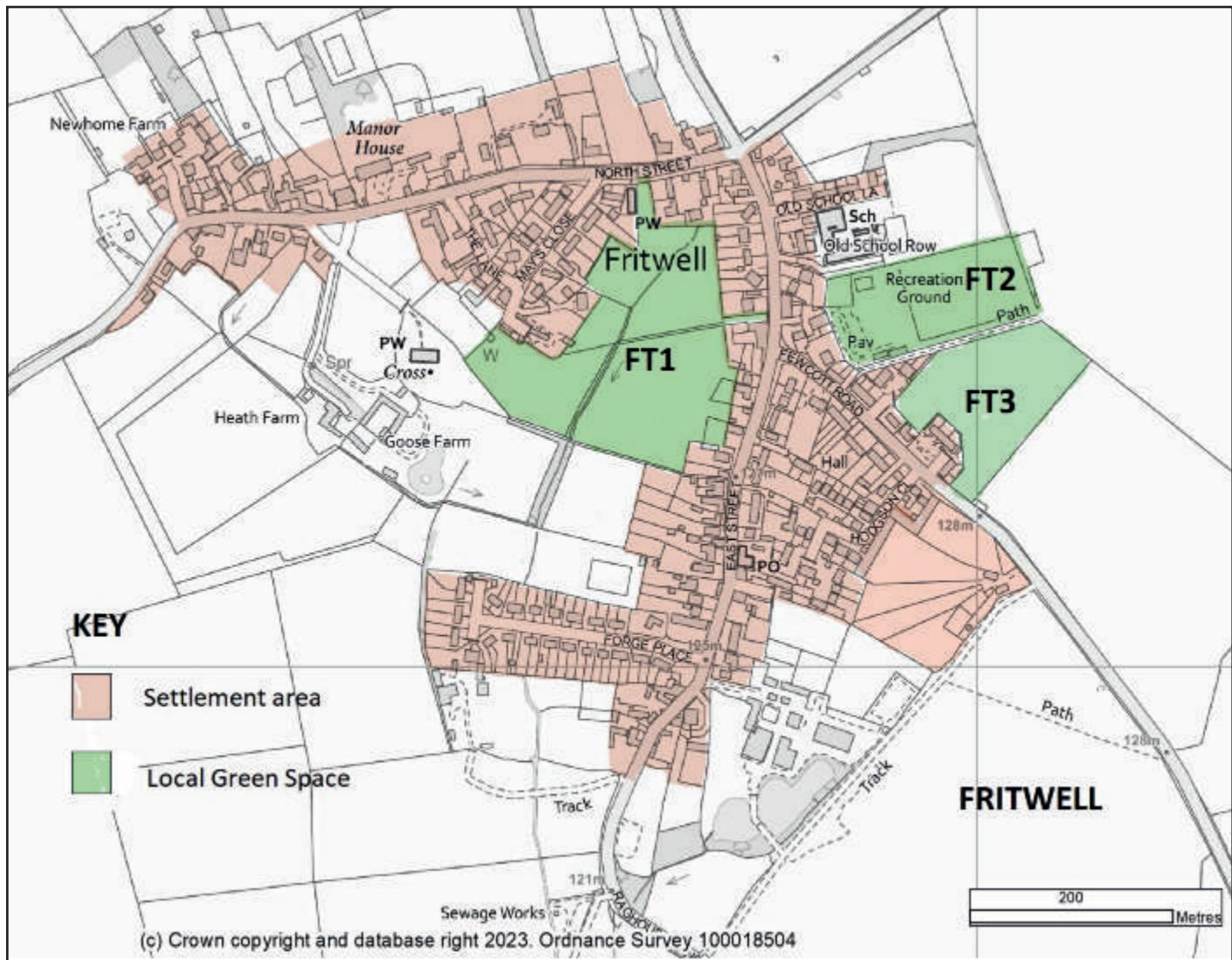
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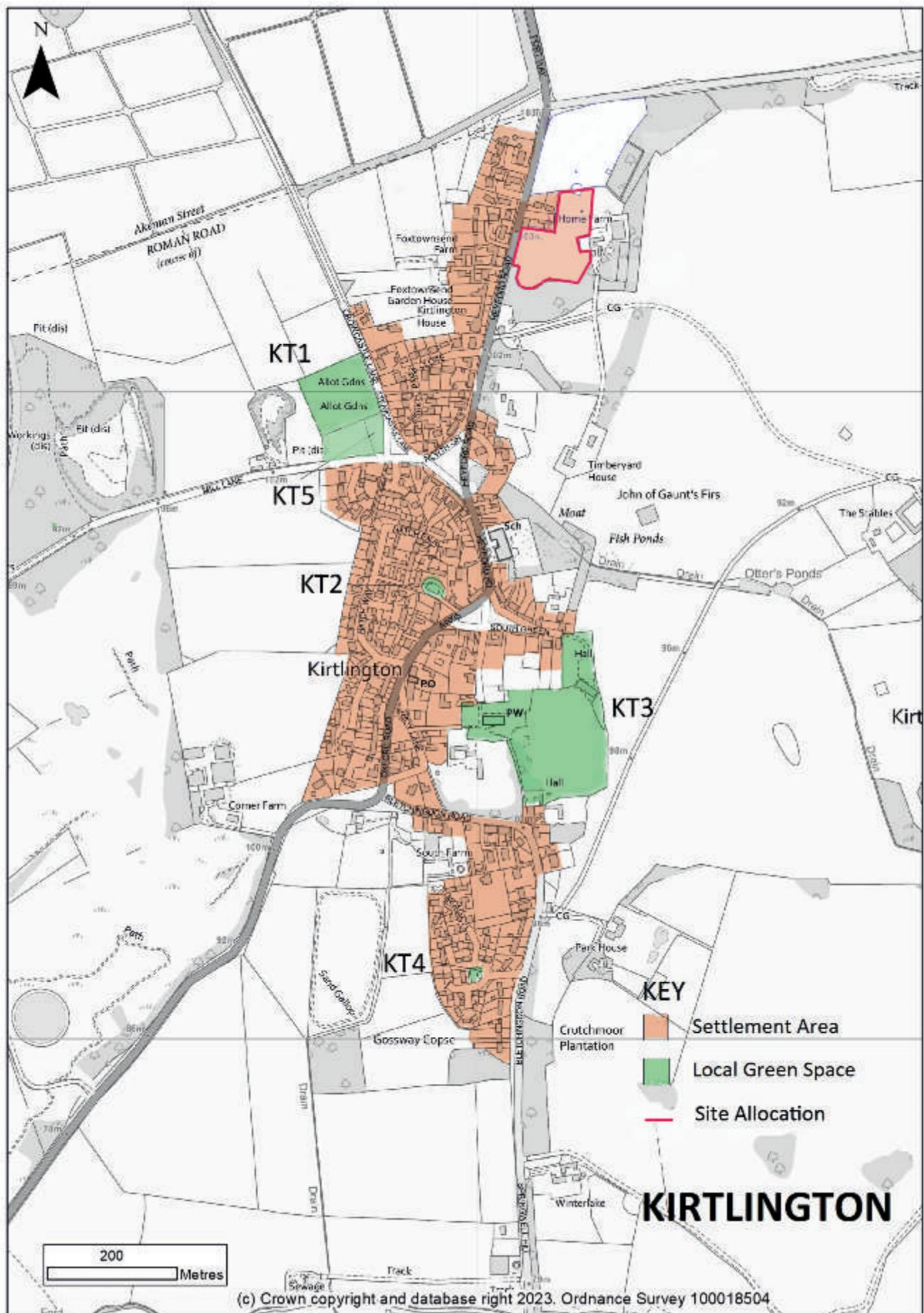


## POLICY MAP 1: ARDLEY WITH FEWCOTT

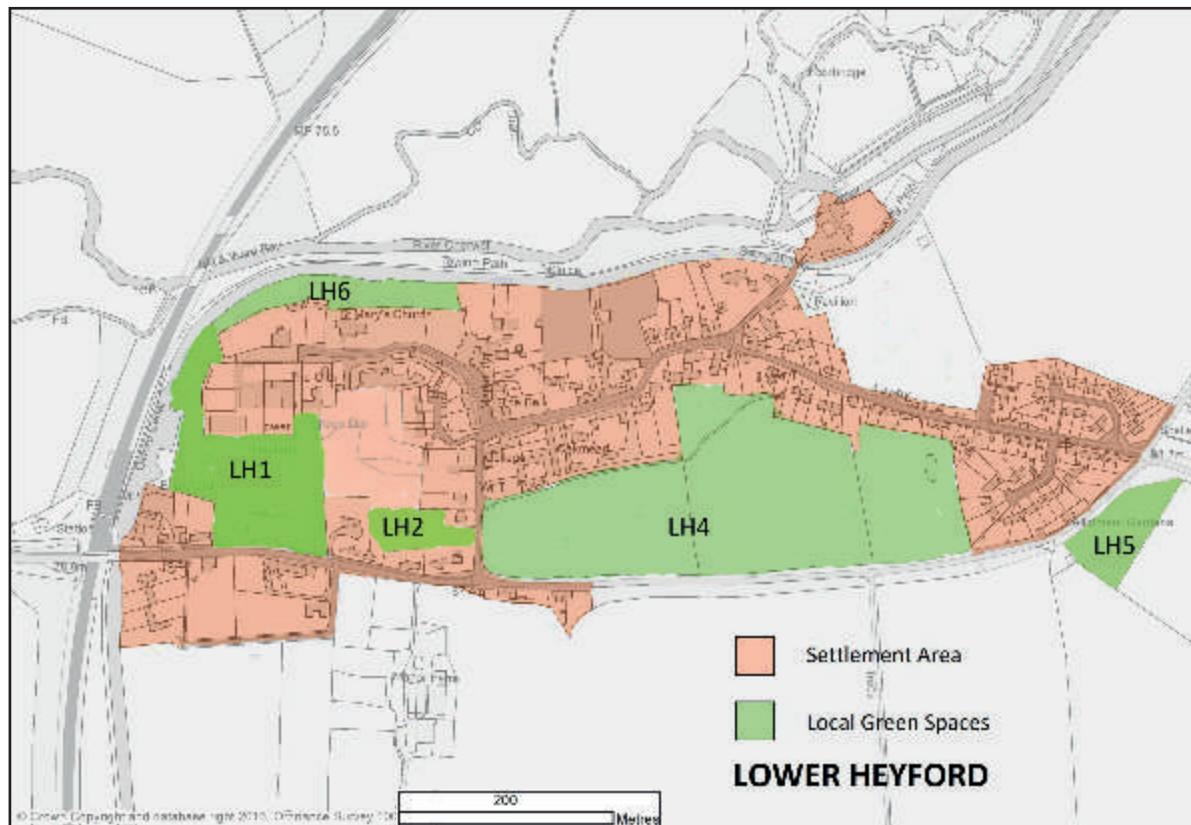
See also Policy Map 12 Local Gaps



POLICY MAP 2: FRITWELL

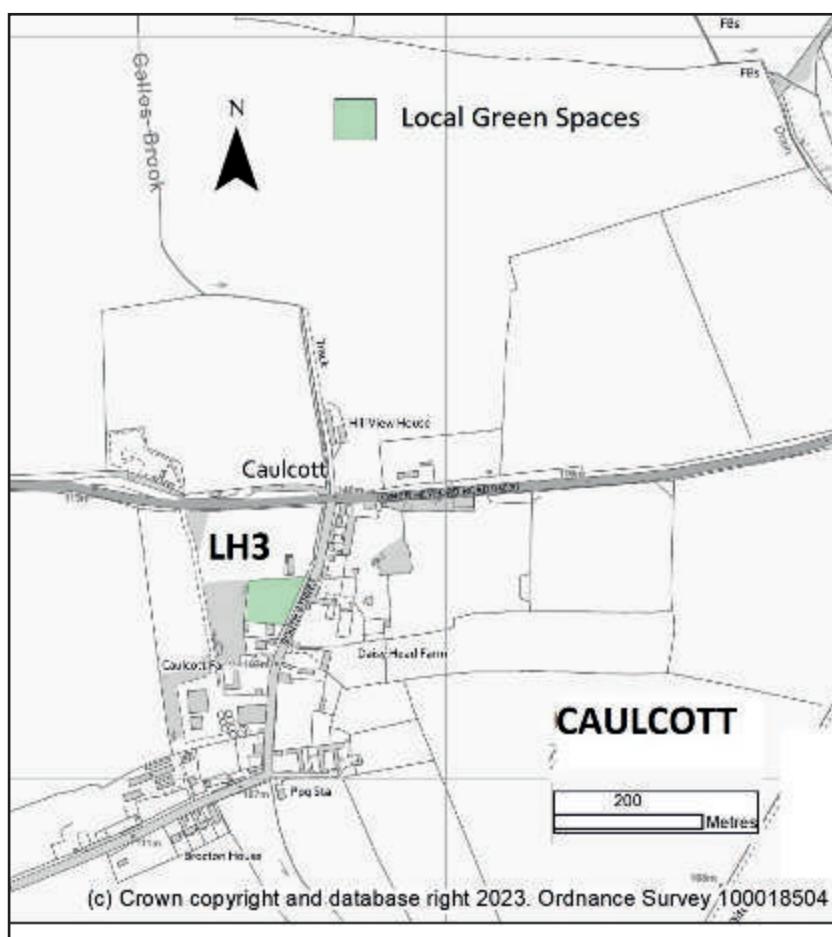


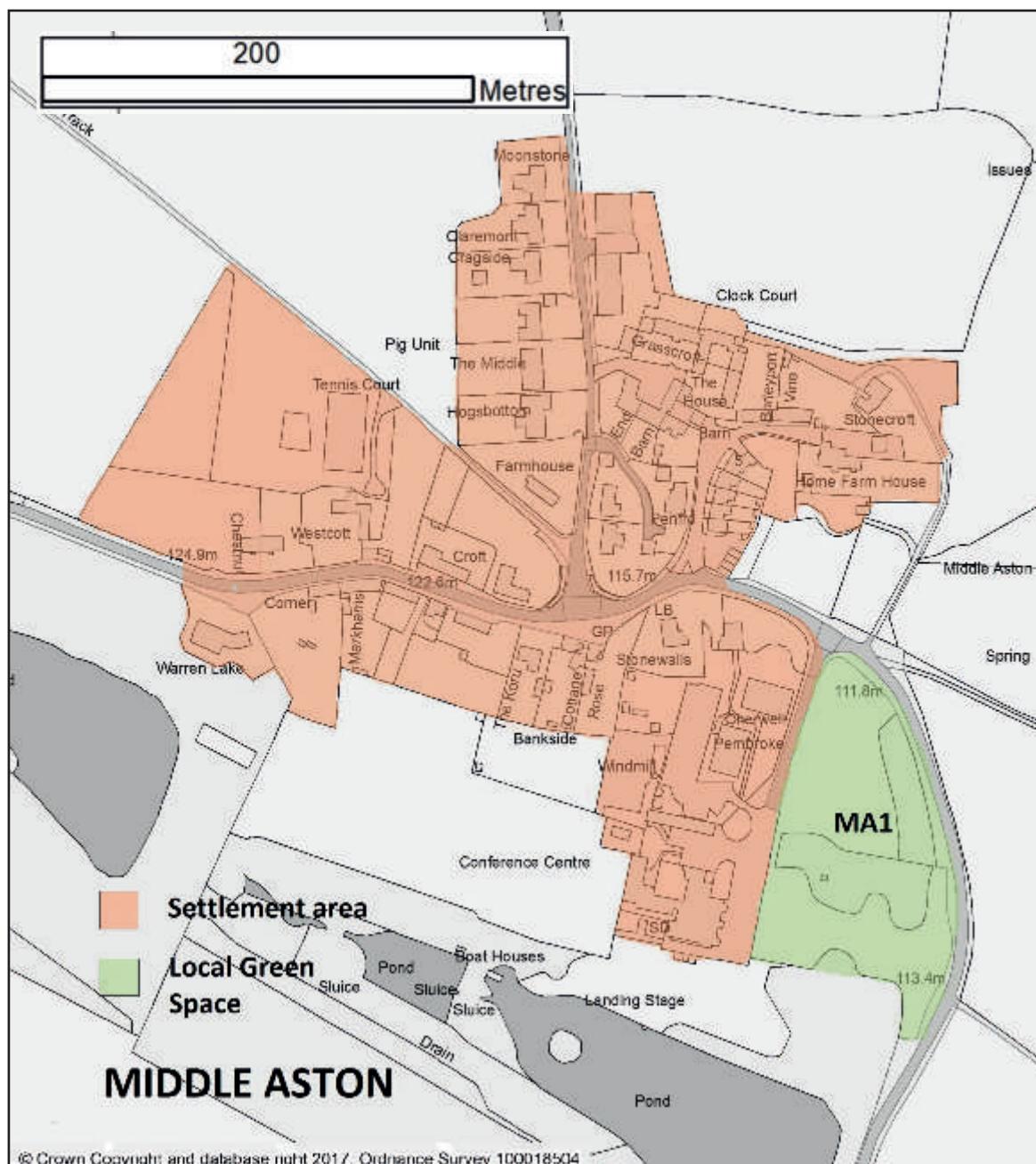
POLICY MAP 3: KIRTLINGTON



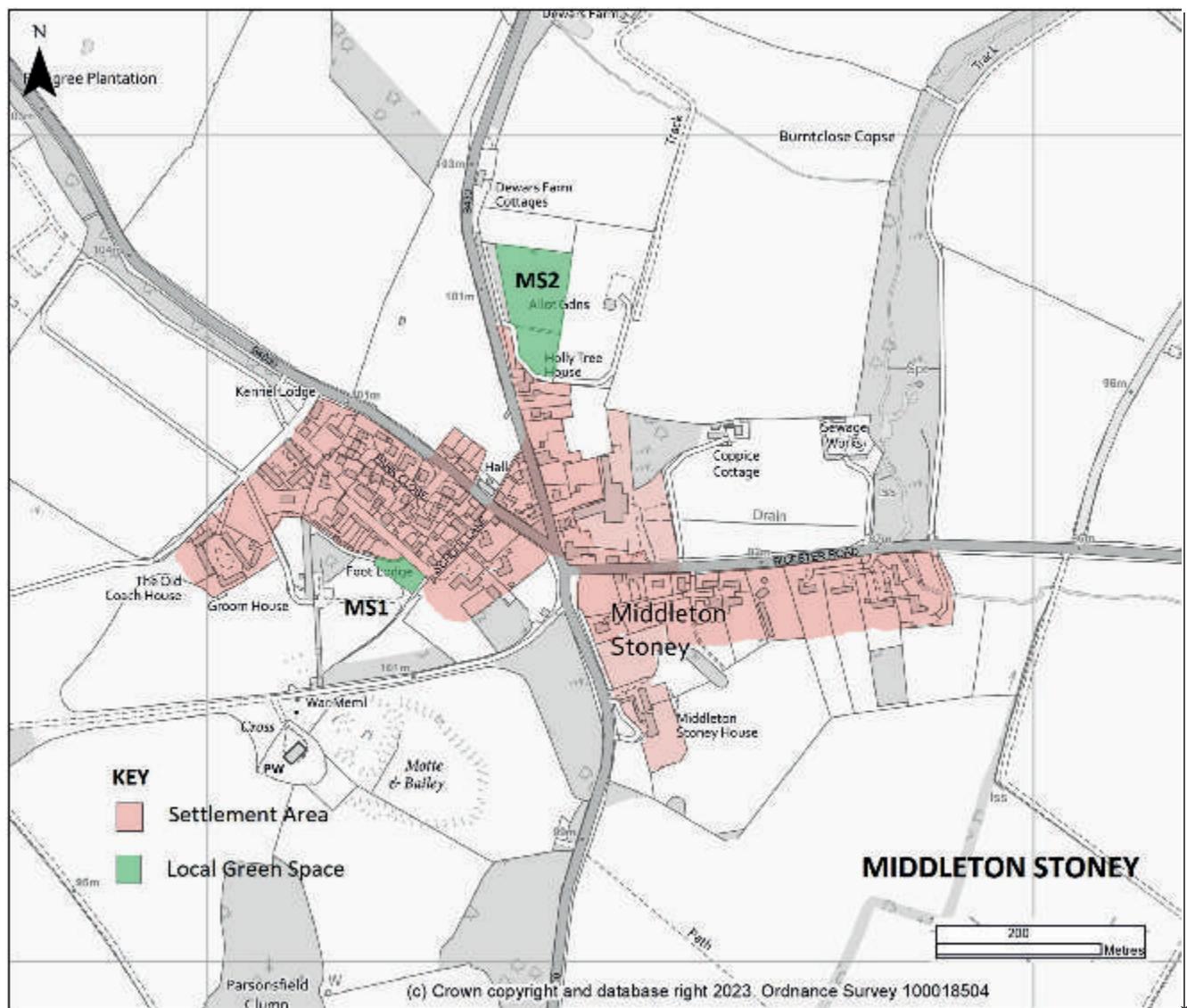
POLICY MAPS 4A: LOWER HEYFORD (ABOVE) AND 4B: CAULCOTT (BELOW)

See also Policy Map 12: Local Gaps



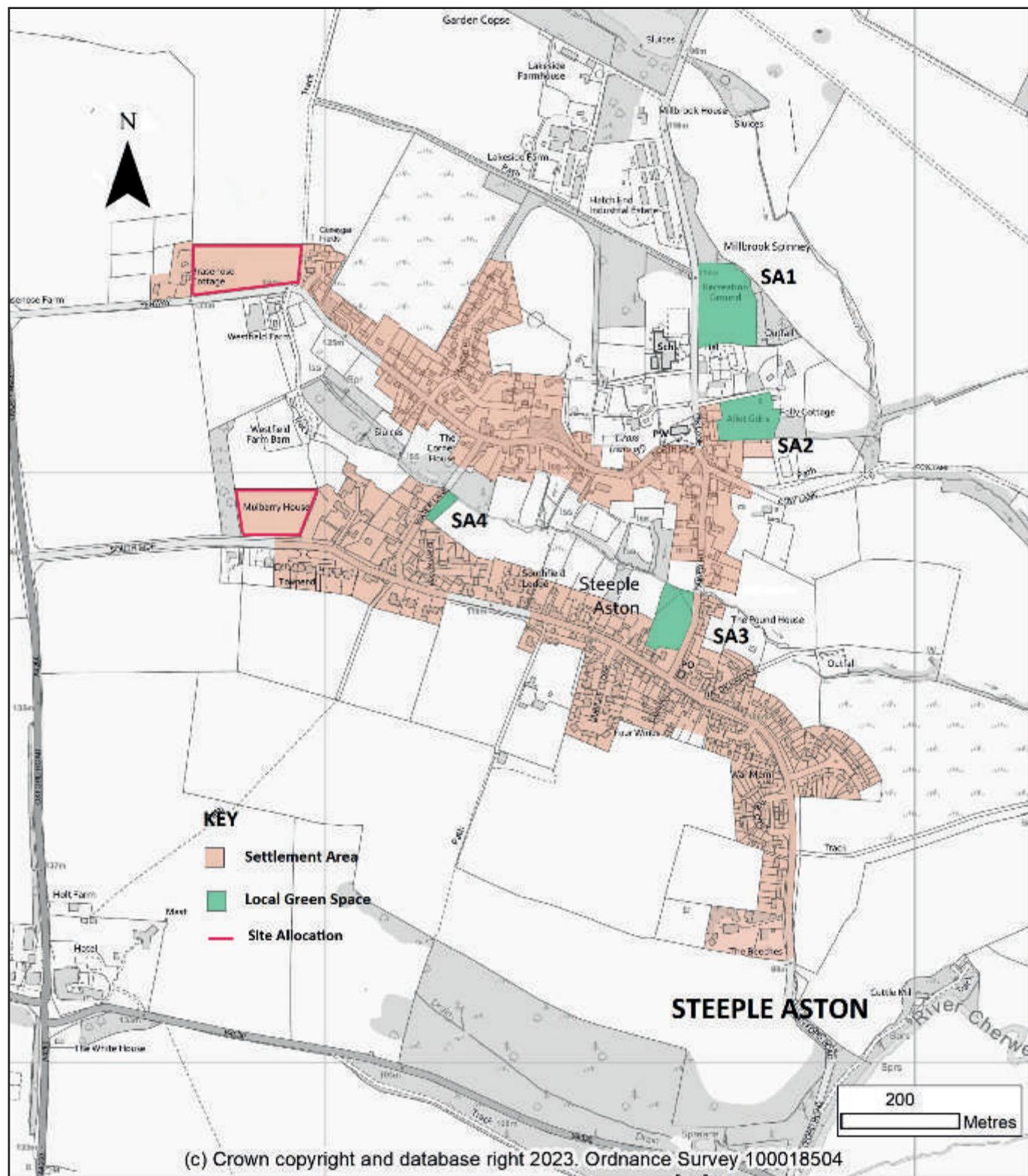


POLICY MAP 5: MIDDLE ASTON

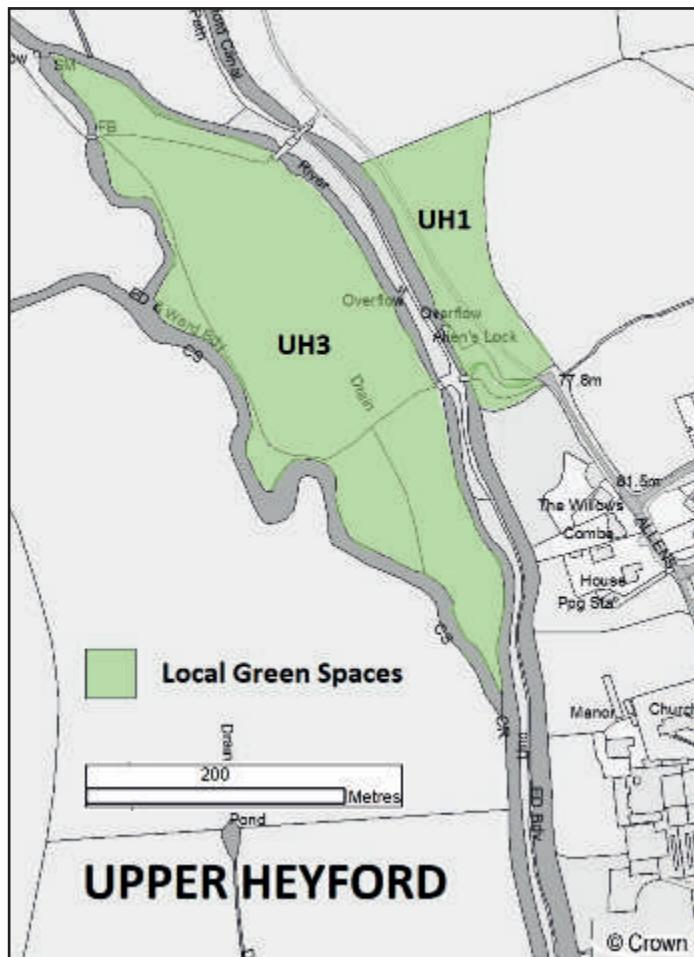


POLICY MAP 6: MIDDLETON STONEY

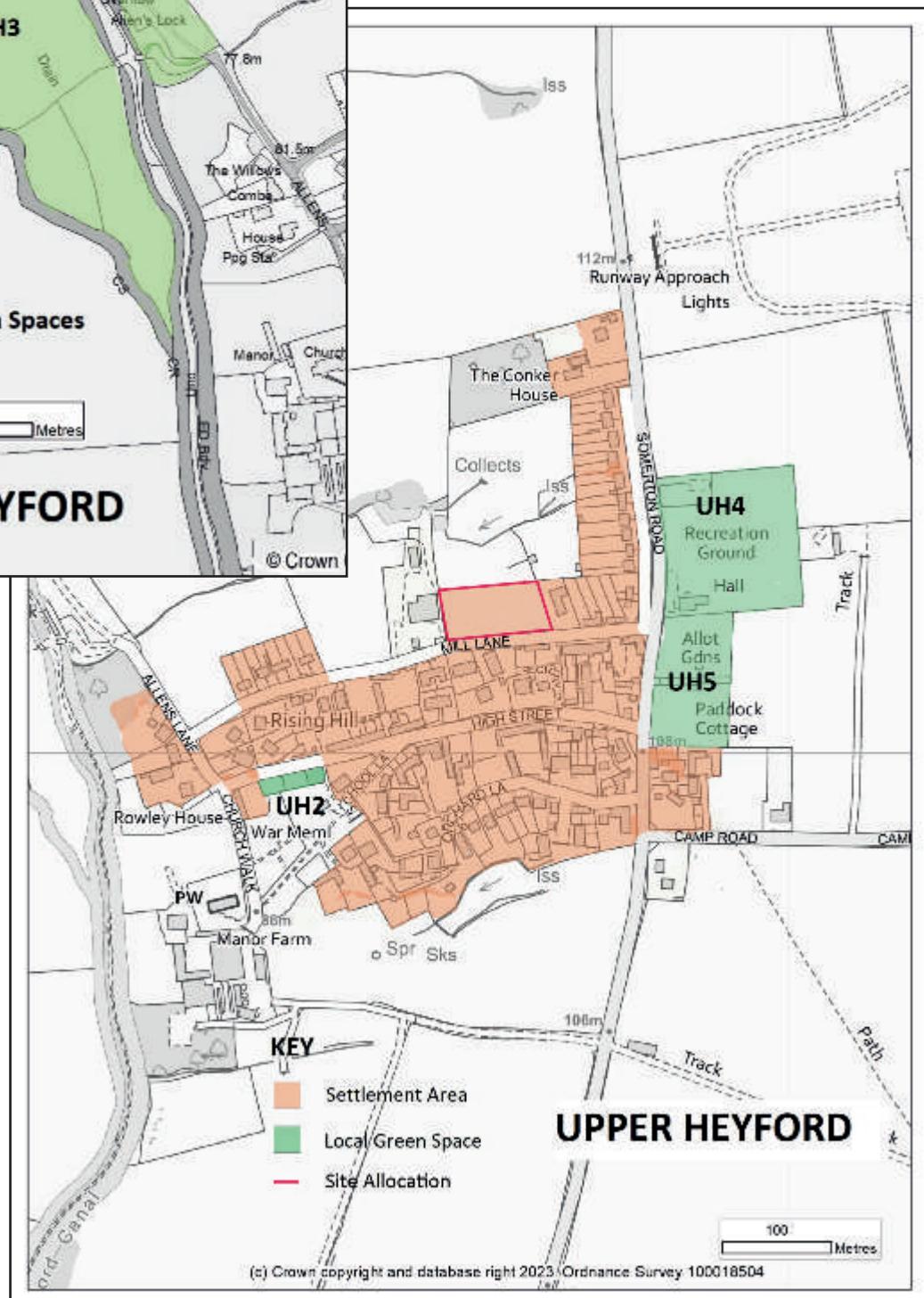
See also Policy Map 12: Local Gaps



POLICY MAP 7: STEEPLE ASTON

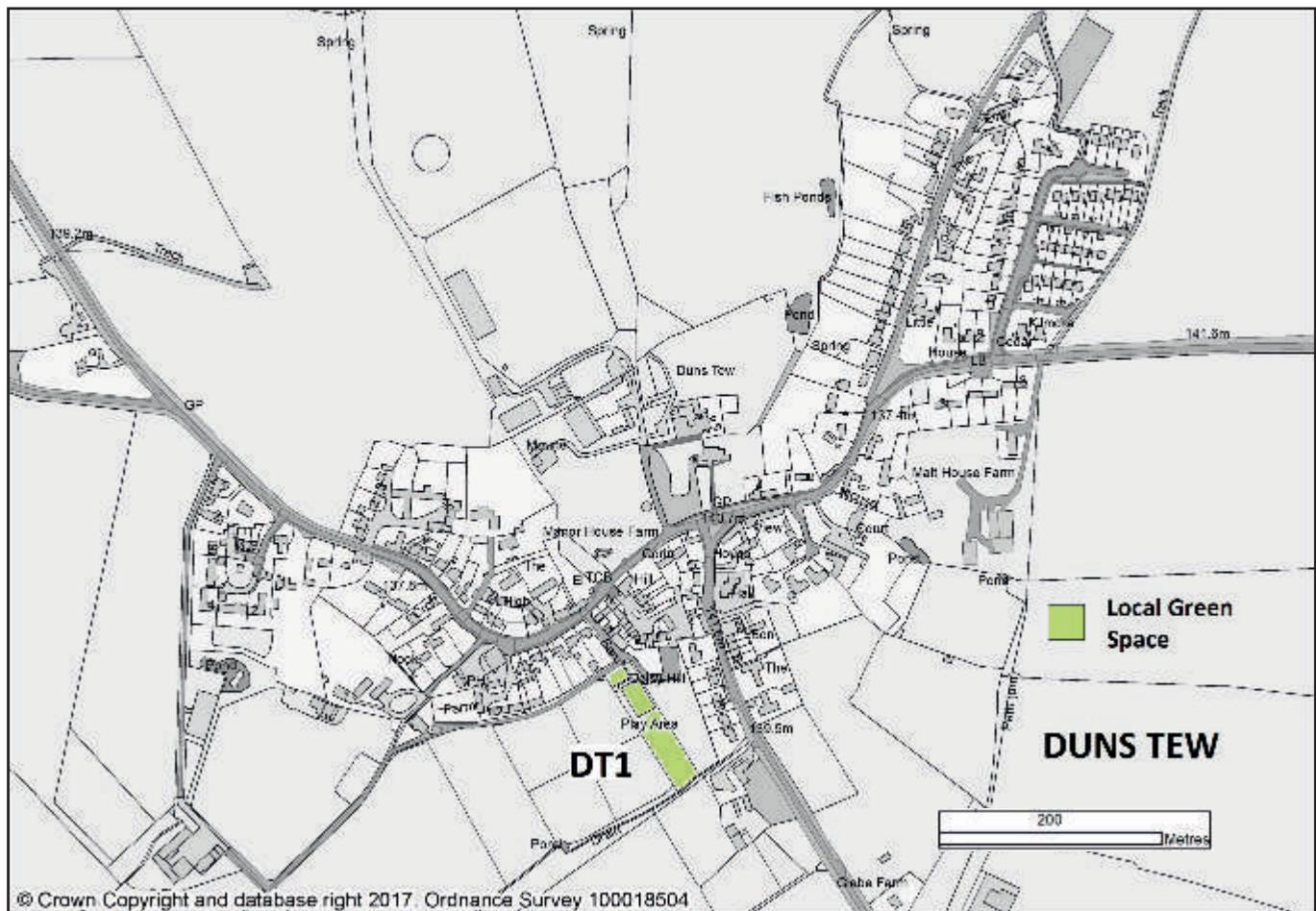


POLICY MAP 8A: UPPER HEYFORD

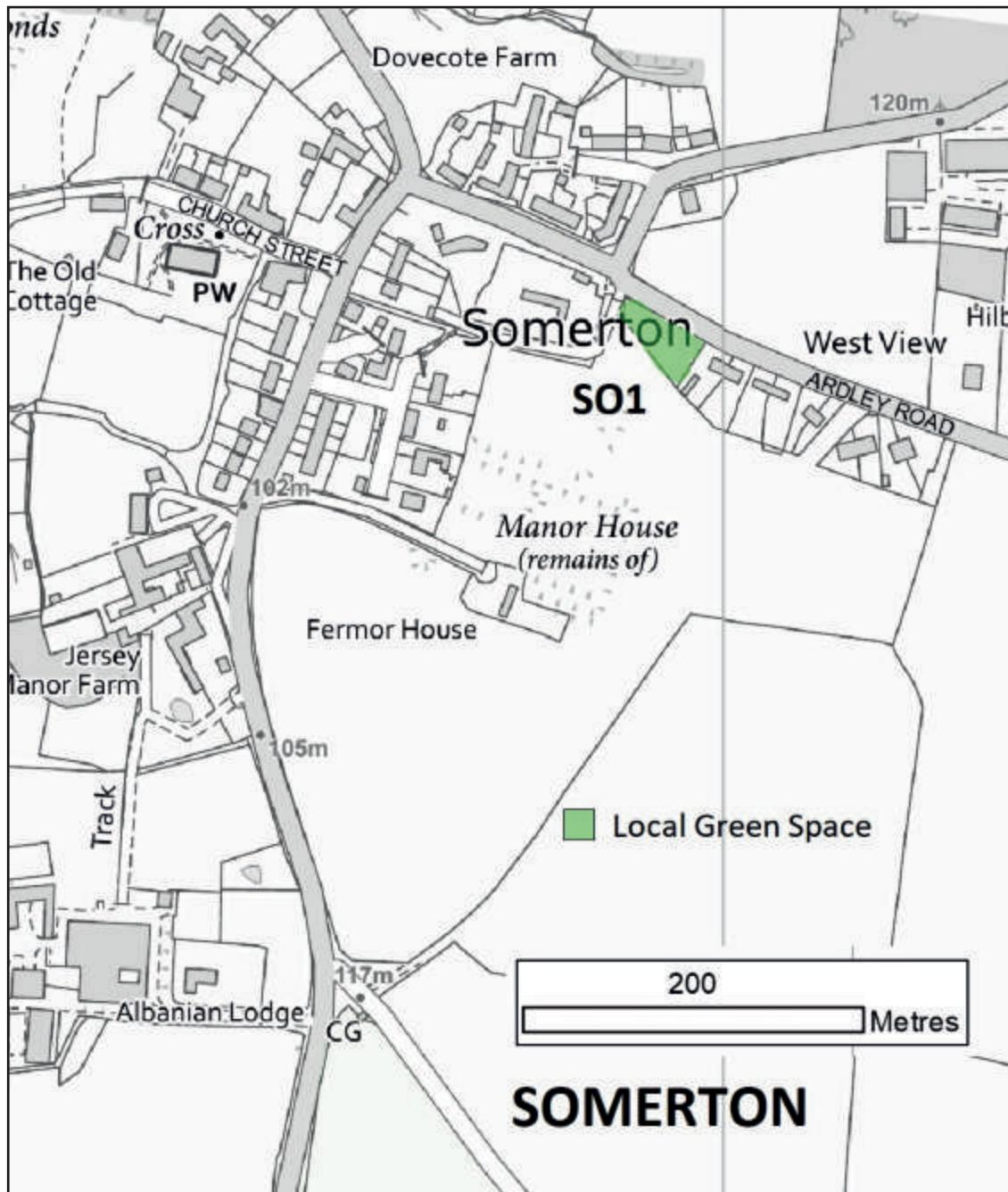


POLICY MAP 8B: UPPER HEYFORD

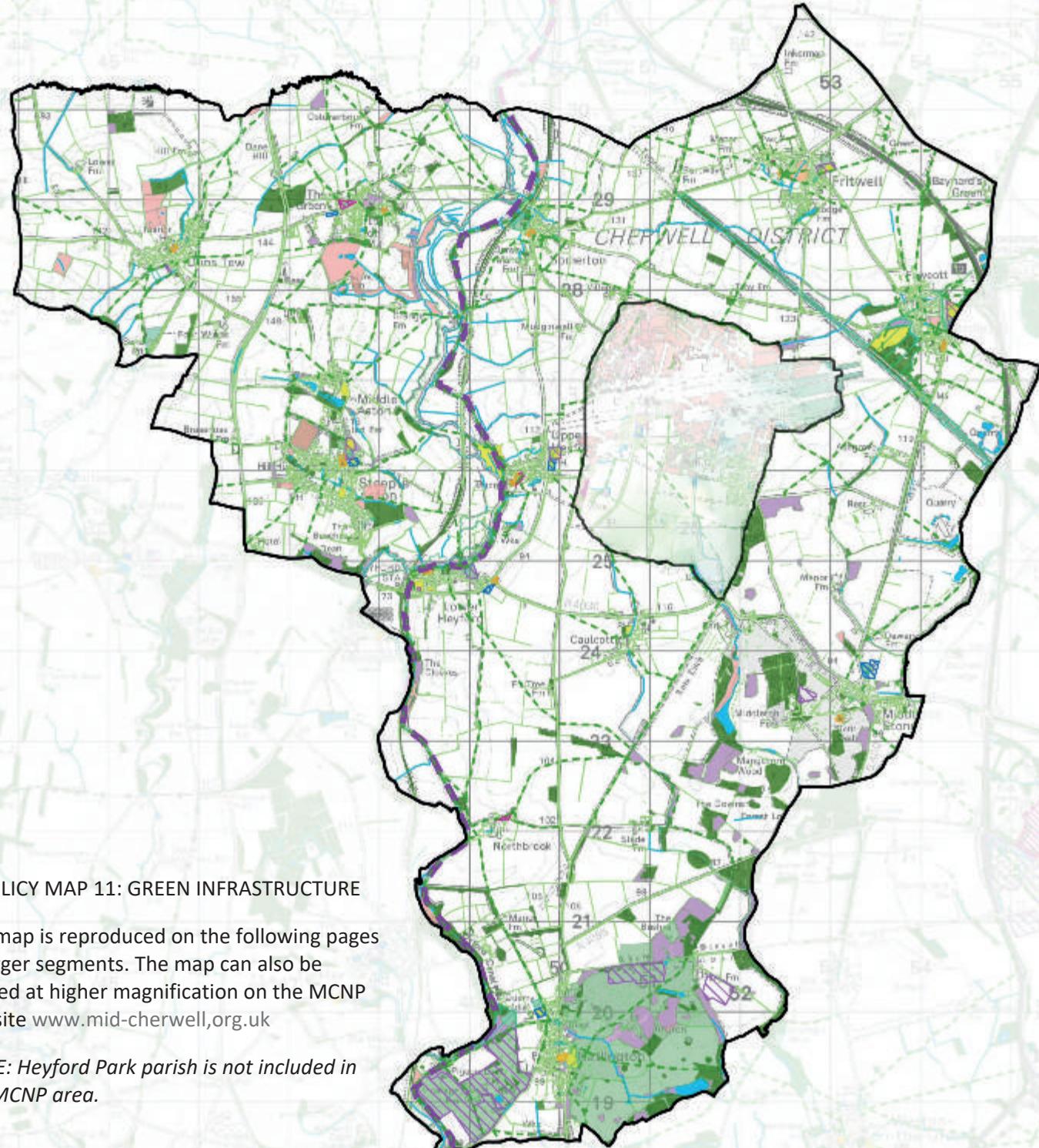
See also Policy Map 12: Local Gaps



## POLICY MAP 9: DUNS TEW



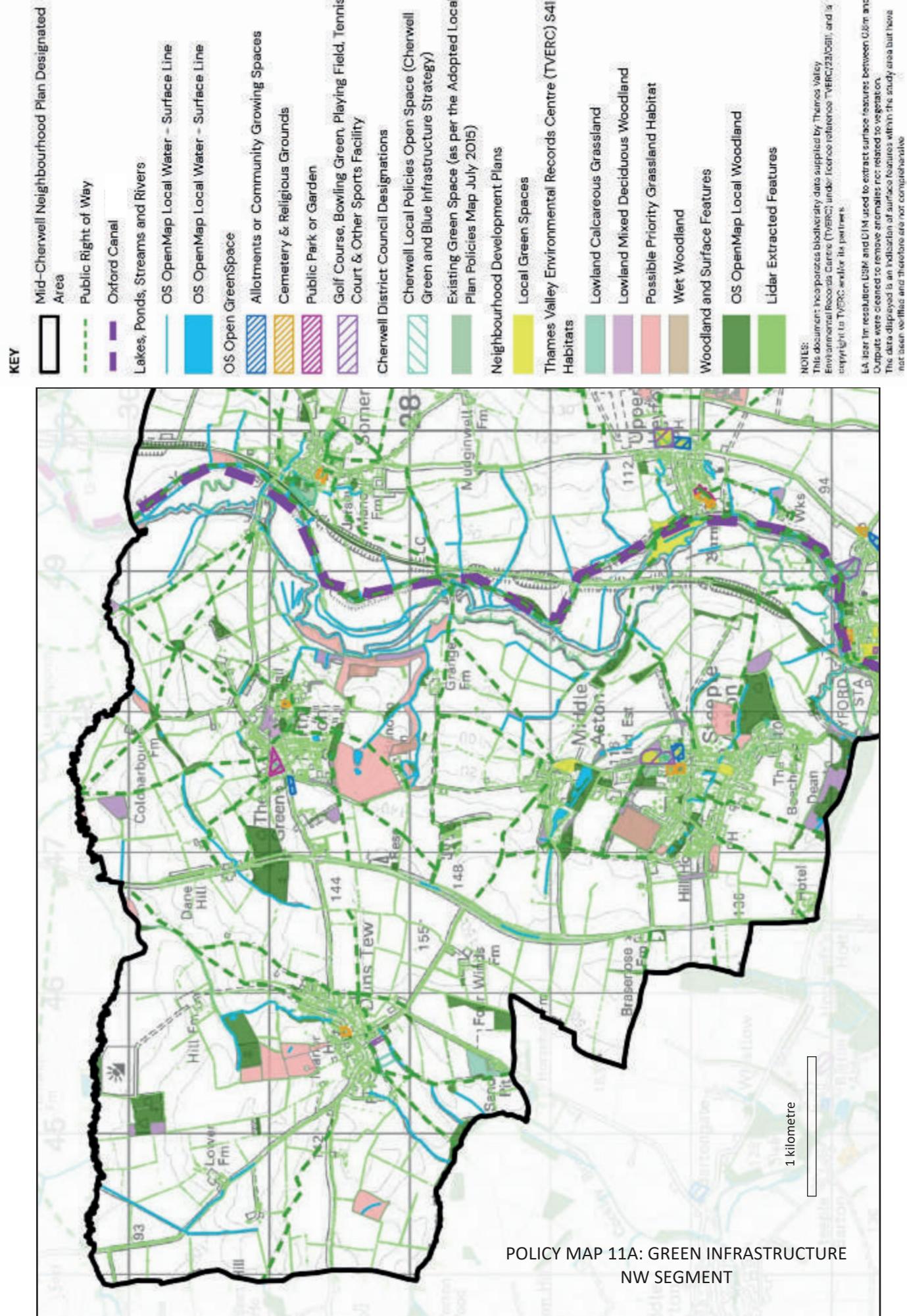
POLICY MAP 10: SOMERTON

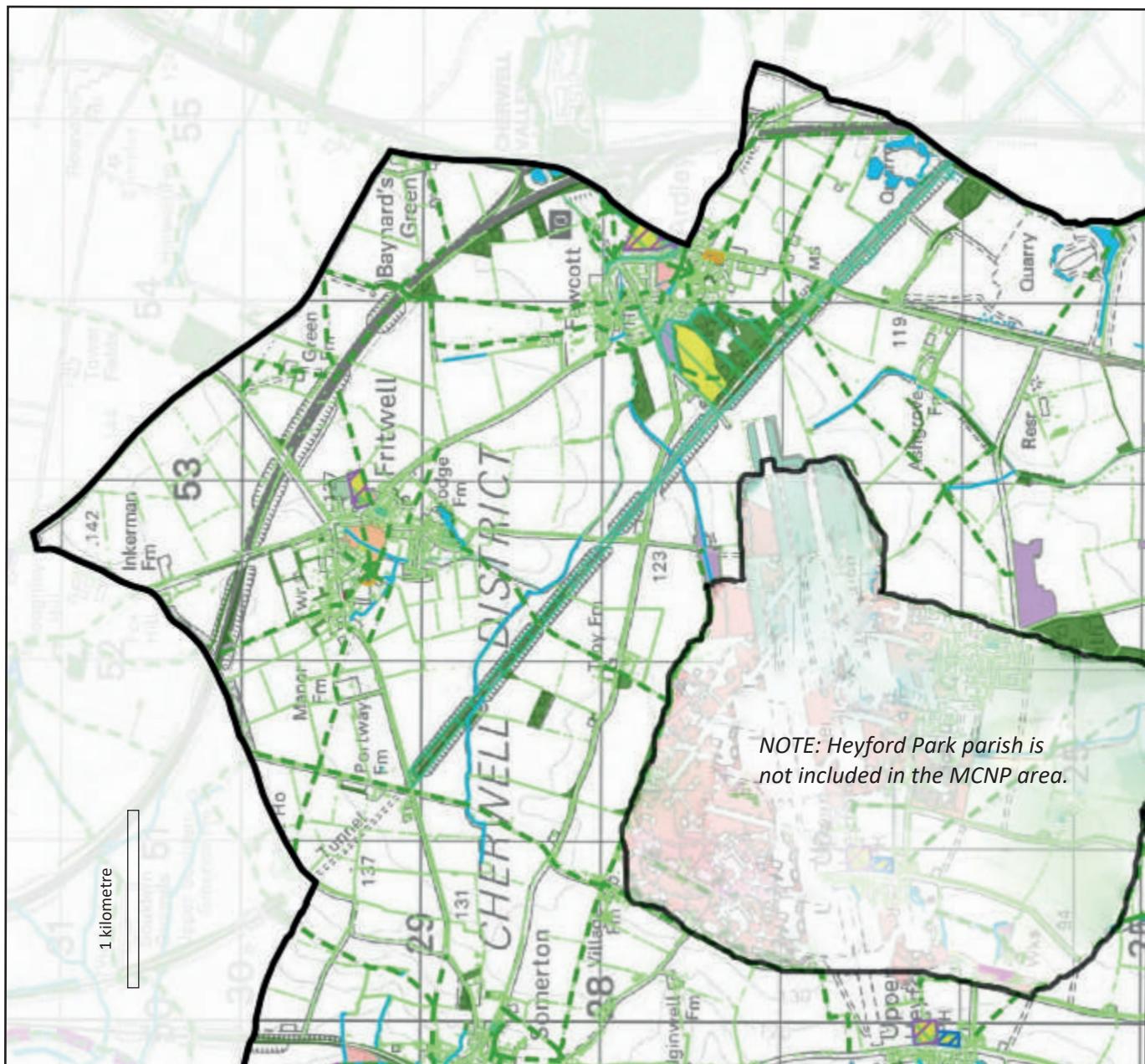
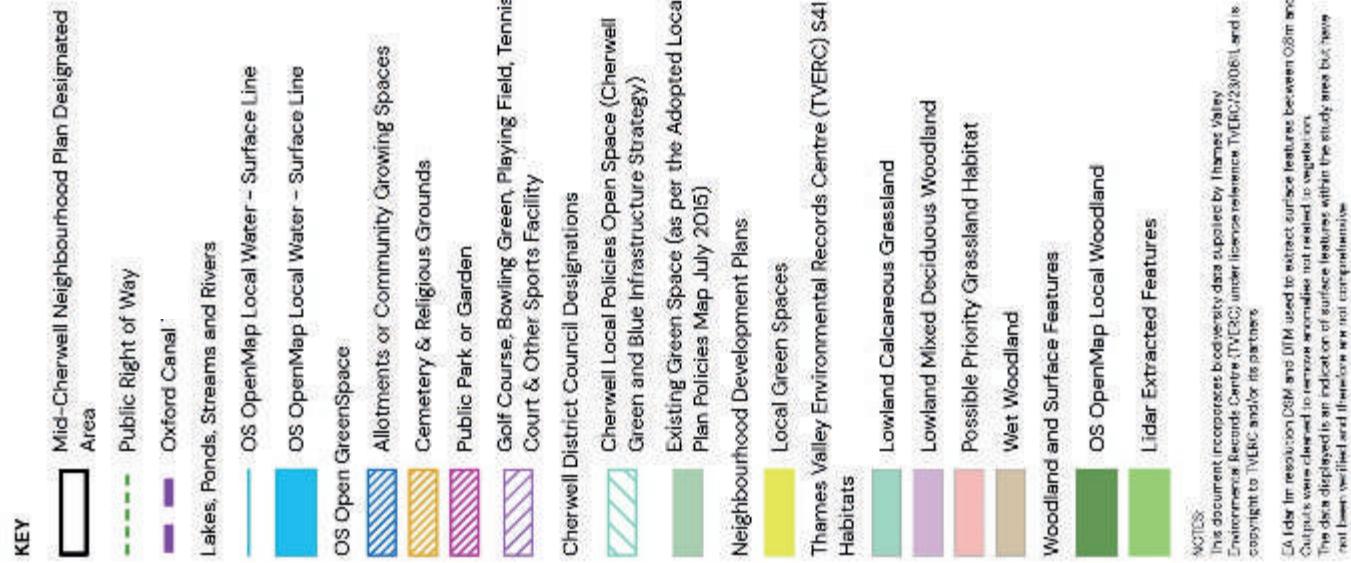


#### POLICY MAP 11: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

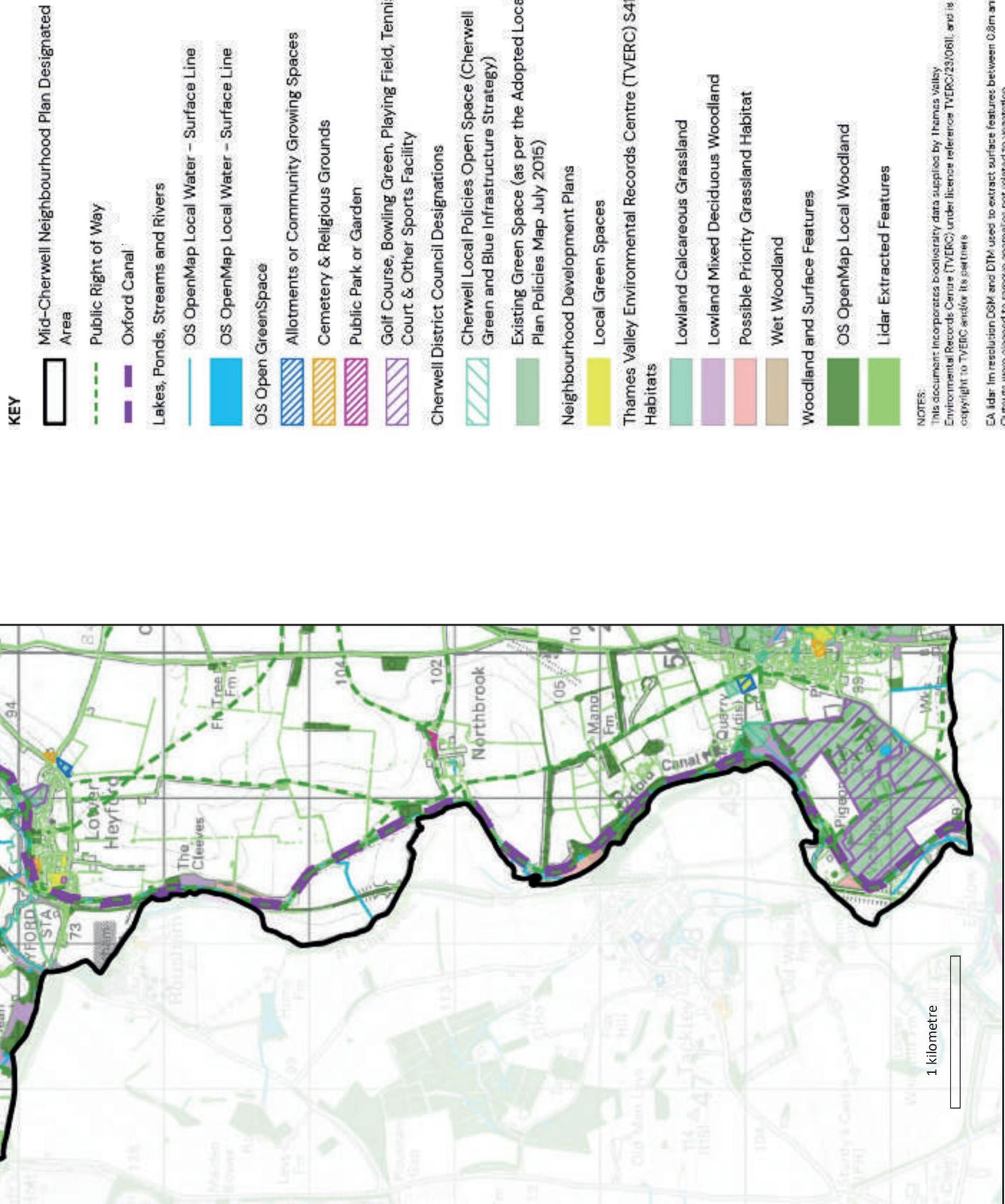
The map is reproduced on the following pages in larger segments. The map can also be viewed at higher magnification on the MCNP website [www.mid-cherwell.org.uk](http://www.mid-cherwell.org.uk)

*NOTE: Heyford Park parish is not included in the MCNP area.*

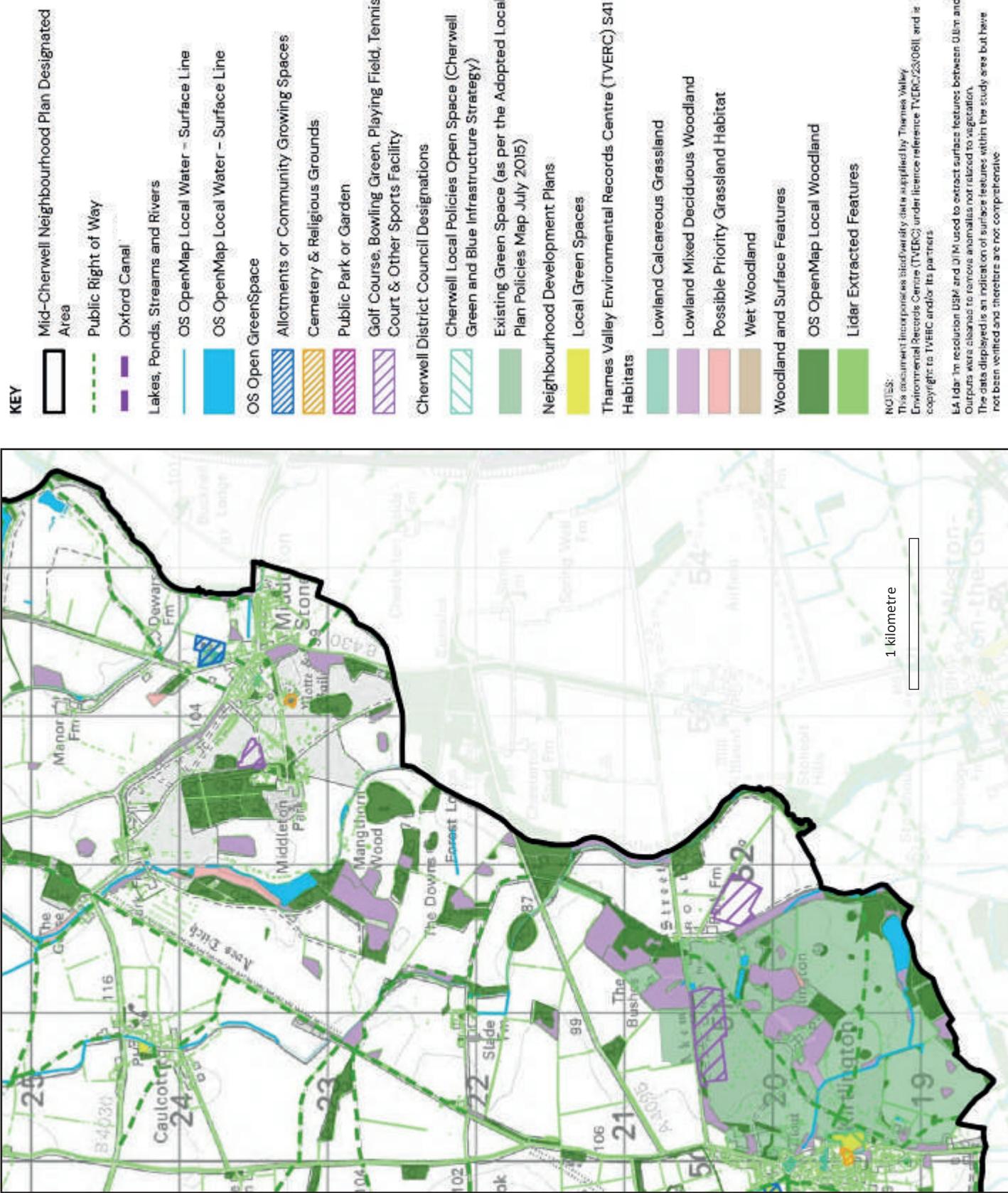




POLICY MAP 11B: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NE SEGMENT

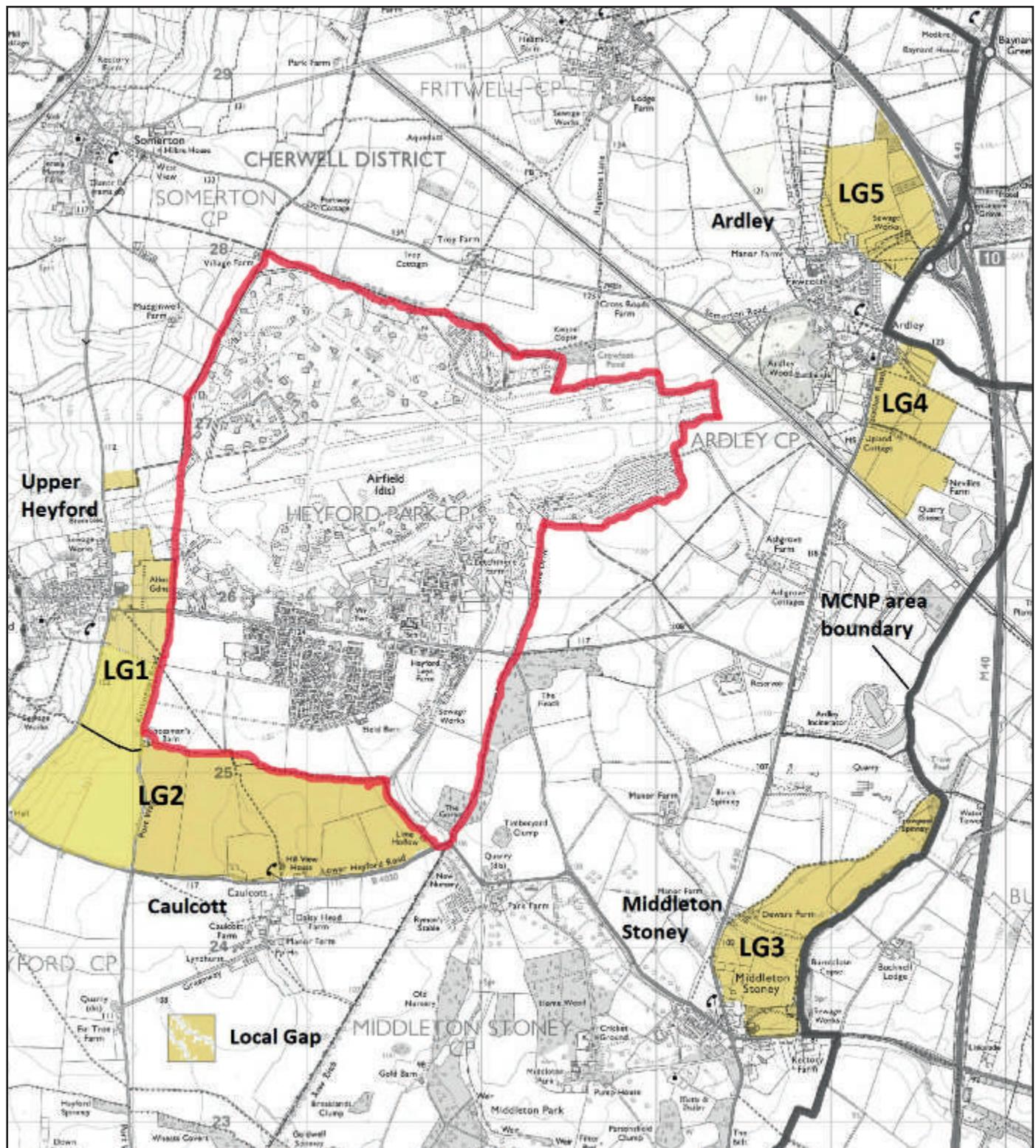


POLICY MAP 11C: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SW SEGMENT



POLICY MAP 11D: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

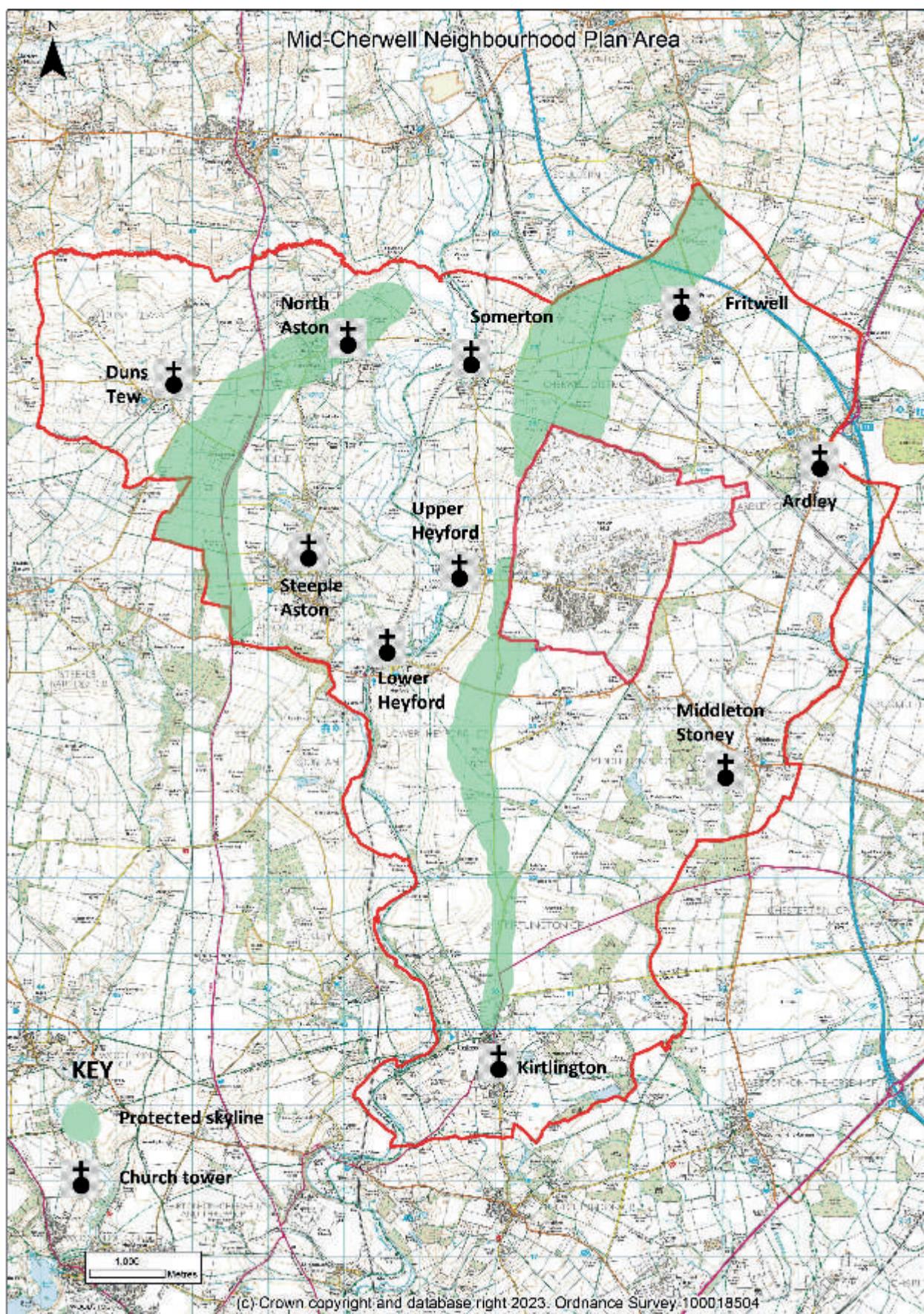
SE SEGMENT



POLICY MAP 12: LOCAL GAPS

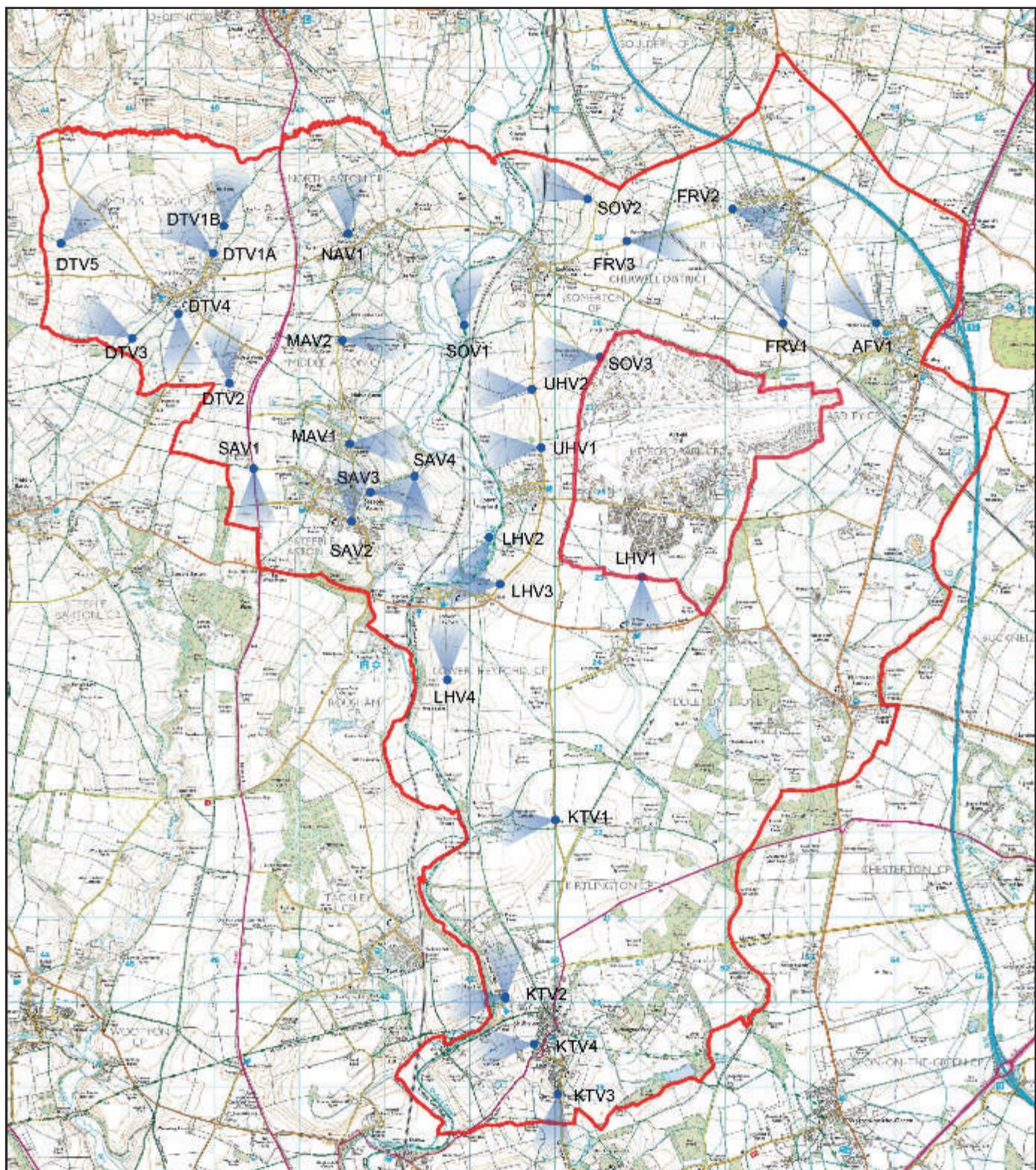
1 kilometre

NOTE: Heyford Park parish (red outline) is not included in the MCNP



POLICY MAP 13: SHOWING PROTECTED SKYLINES AND CHURCH TOWERS.

NOTE: Heyford Park parish is not included in the MCNP area.



1 kilometre

#### POLICY MAP 14: IMPORTANT VIEWS AND VISTAS

NOTE: Heyford Park parish is not included in the MCNP area.

## 4 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Some of the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan cannot be achieved through planning law. Instead, we aim to deliver them over time through our Community Action Plan, which will be the responsibility of the parish councils and the Neighbourhood Plan Forum. **None of the actions identified in the Community Action Plan have the status of development plan policies.**

During the course of the initial Neighbourhood Plan period, Parish Councils have become increasingly aware of the need for better communication and engagement from Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council. This is particularly relevant in the area of transport and traffic. The MCNP Forum and its Parish Councils need to have a voice in the planning process because they are best placed to know the issues that are important to their communities. We hope that the CAP will provide a better understanding of their aspirations and concerns and look forward to a closer working relationship with our Local Authorities so that they can be followed up with action.

The Community Action Plan will continue to evolve, but at this stage it includes the following:

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN	
OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE
<b>TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT</b>	
<p>Ensure a commitment from CDC to involve Parish Councils in the drawing up of S106 agreements.</p> <p>Urge CDC/OCC to communicate the terms of Section 106 contracts to Parishes when they are agreed, including sums and trigger points.</p> <p>Urge OCC and CDC to enforce S106 agreements. OCC to liaise with Parishes to develop traffic mitigation schemes in a timely fashion so that S106 monies can be spent as trigger points are reached. Encourage OCC to negotiate early 'trigger points'.</p> <p>Support alterations to the existing highway network and infrastructure which is designed to conserve, and be sympathetic to, the rurality of the area. Urge OCC to better maintain the highway network.</p> <p>Campaign for OCC to introduce weight limits in the neighbourhood area to protect our rural villages that are affected by HGV traffic</p> <p>Urge OCC to include HGV routing agreements (construction and operational) as part of planning approvals at Bicester and Heyford Park to avoid inappropriate 'rat running' through neighbourhood villages.</p> <p>Negotiate with local businesses that make extensive use of HGVs to try and reduce flows on certain roads.</p> <p>Urge OCC to provide resources for enforcement of routing agreements and to explore the use of cameras and HGV tracking technology.</p> <p>Urge OCC to provide an annual update of companies at Heyford Park to neighbouring Parishes affected by HGV traffic.</p>	<p>In order for CDC and OCC to negotiate effectively on behalf of Parishes, it is important that they know what Parishes need.</p> <p>To enable Parishes to plan ahead and prioritise how S106 monies are spent.</p> <p>Traffic in our neighbourhood has grown considerably as new development has been built. Many of our roads are not capable of sustaining the increase in volume without the infrastructure to mitigate it.</p> <p>The neighbourhood area is valued for its rural character and historic heritage and contains a number of Conservation Areas.</p> <p>HGVs from growing Bicester and Heyford Park have a disproportionate impact on minor roads through rural villages because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- speeds are higher causing greater noise and vibration</li> <li>- narrow or no pavement make them intimidating and unsafe for walkers</li> <li>- traditional houses have no set back</li> <li>- HGVs discourage walking, community life and the peace associated with the countryside</li> </ul> <p>Routing agreements need enforcing to work effectively. OCC currently has no officer responsible for enforcement.</p> <p>To enable Parishes to work with Dorchester Group for more effective enforcement of Heyford Park's routing agreement.</p>

<p>Explore sustainable public transport provision for villages such as 'call-on-the mile' buses and 'dial-a-ride' schemes.</p>	<p>There is a need for transport in the villages, particularly for the young and old and for those who do not drive. This will enable residents to use the amenities at Heyford Park and Bicester. It enables independence and prevents social isolation.</p>
<p>Urge OCC to restore historic bridges using contractors with the required skills and expertise to carry out conservation work.</p> <p>Ensure OCC Highways includes developer contributions for cycle paths and footpaths to Heyford Park.</p>	<p>To prevent harm to heritage assets by conforming to conservation principles and to ensure acceptable workmanship.</p> <p>To encourage healthy alternatives to driving and to minimise traffic growth. To enable students to travel independently and safely to Heyford Park School.</p>
<p>Ensure CDC provides full and transparent consultation on planning applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Documents on their planning portal should have titles to reflect their contents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Assessments for major applications should include traffic flow maps and current observed counts in line with national guidance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traffic model validation reports should be included as part of the evidence base.</li> </ul> <p>Make representations regarding unacceptability of increased noise from aircraft using Oxford Airport.</p>	<p>To enable easier and more effective consultation and to provide confidence in the planning process.</p> <p>The Cherwell Valley is increasingly affected by the expansion of Oxford Airport and the rising number of flights over MCNP parishes.</p>
<p><b>DEVELOPMENT</b></p>	
<p>Campaign to stop unwanted development on greenfield sites when appropriate brownfield options are available.</p> <p>Identify local amenities such as shops and pubs that may need protecting from conversion to dwellings by designating them as Assets of Community Value.</p> <p>Seek to reduce light pollution from established users of excessive lighting.</p>	<p>Greenfield development will degrade the rural nature of our villages and lead to coalescence. Valuable farmland is lost and natural habitats are destroyed.</p> <p>To ensure that essential amenities are not lost to the villages. Designation would enable the parish to purchase the building and run it as a community business.</p> <p>To complement policy MC13</p>

<b>HOUSING</b>	
Actively encourage developers to build to the Lifetime Homes Standard	To allow purchasers of new houses to remain there throughout their lives and to make new housing available for those with disabilities.
Persuade CDC to adopt a housing allocations policy that gives priority to families already living in a village when homes become available.	The absence of affordable housing in rural villages forces local families to leave their community and relatives. People with local family connections should have priority for available affordable housing. This issue has been highlighted by Parish Councils and through MCNP community engagement.
Support Open Market Housing Schemes with one and two bedroom dwellings, designed to be genuinely affordable for first time buyers, based on average salaries for the Cherwell District.	To address the need for starter homes in the area, pitched at affordable prices for young people.
Establish a Community Land Trust to develop our own affordable housing schemes on Rural Exception Sites.	To provide an effective way of delivering affordable housing for local people.
Approach local landowners with a view to purchasing such sites.	To facilitate the establishment of Land Trusts and designation of Rural Exception Sites.
Encourage CDC to use Local Letting Plans so that affordable homes can go to people from the MCNP area followed by those with a local connection. The MCNP Forum or Parish Councils would like involvement in the drafting of Plans.	To provide an effective way of delivering affordable housing for local people.
Identify the demand for self-build homes. If demand is established, identify sites and direct people to appropriate resources and information.	To provide choice in design and layout to meet occupiers' needs, with lower running costs and better energy performance.
<b>COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
Prioritise the provision of secondary school places at Heyford Park Free School for children within the neighbourhood plan area.	To prevent students from having to travel to outlying towns for school. Local provision will help to maintain the viability of at least one primary school in our neighbourhood area.
Respond to consultations on changes to local health services led by the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG).	Changes to local health services and the centralisation of services in Bicester and Oxford could result in transport problems for local people in accessing services.

<p>Support opportunities for improved outdoor recreation and leisure facilities, particularly for young people.</p> <p>Seek to create new permissive or definitive rights of way to improve connectivity between villages within and beyond the NP boundary.</p>	<p>These facilities are poorly provided for in the MCNP area and have social, recreation and health benefits.</p> <p>This has social, recreation and health benefits.</p>
<b>THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	
<p>Promote the historic environment of the area.</p> <p>Install artificial nest sites for birds and habitat for animal and insect species in and around the villages.</p> <p>Promote native wild flower growth in and around villages (eg village greens, roadside and pathway verges).</p> <p>Identify sites for nature reserves, wildlife ponds, tree planting and small-scale native woodlands.</p> <p>Promote increased use of and access to the Oxford Canal for walking and cycling.</p> <p>Consider other local measures that could impact on climate change. In particular, encourage all development to be low carbon, high sustainability design and construction, and for wide use of renewable energy.</p>	<p>To maintain and enhance historical features.</p> <p>To encourage local fauna and flora; policy MC9 includes rationale in support of this aim.</p> <p>To enhance the natural environment and aid biodiversity</p> <p>To enhance the natural environment and aid biodiversity</p> <p>Encourage towpath upgrades</p> <p>Specific measures in MCNP policies are considered unnecessary as national, county and local plan policies are in place.</p>
<b>TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
<p>Utility providers – water, drainage, electricity, gas – must provide evidence that their existing networks have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and without negative impact on existing users. If providers are unable to confirm this, the applicants should provide impact studies of the extent, cost and timescale for any required upgrading works.</p> <p>Support planning applications for high quality broadband infrastructure to improve mobile phone coverage on condition that this does not adversely affect the surrounding built and natural environment, including the setting of heritage assets and important views.</p>	<p>There is concern about the impact of the growing population on electricity supply, sewage and drainage capacity, mobile phone coverage and other related services. The impact of inadequate waste water treatment on watercourses and habitats is now of serious concern.</p> <p>This is essential for sustainable economic growth.</p>

# 5 GLOSSARY

Adaptable Housing	Housing designed to be capable of internal and external adaptation to suit residents as they age.
Adoption	The final confirmation of a development plan or local development document status by a local planning authority (LPA).
Affordable Housing	Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing (including shared ownership and low-cost purchase), provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
Brownfield Land	Land which has been previously used for any type of permanent building and can be reused.
Community Action Plan	A set of objectives identified by the community as being important but not subject to planning law. Parish Councils/ Meetings and the Forum implement the plan.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.
Community-led Housing	A development instigated and taken forward by a not- for-profit organisation primarily to meet the housing needs of its members and the wider local community, created, managed and democratically controlled by its members.
Community Land Trust	Community Land Trusts are a form of community-led housing, in which local organisations - set up and run by ordinary people - develop and manage homes as well as other assets. The CLT's main task is to make sure these homes are genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, for now and for future occupiers.
Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA)	CAAs help define the special architectural and historic interest of an area to clarify why it merits 'designation'. An appraisal also identifies the character of the area, and features which should be enhanced or conserved
Conservation Area	Areas designated by the Local Council as special for its architectural or historic interest, where the character or appearance is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Extra-Care Housing	Self-contained accommodation to suit people who want to live as independently as possible but who need extra care provided.
Green Infrastructure	A network of green spaces and other environmental features designed and managed as multi-functional resources providing a range of environmental quality of life benefits for the local community. This can include parks, open spaces, woodlands, nature reserves, playing fields, allotments and other natural assets.
Heritage and Character Assessment	A report which identifies the key characteristics of an area in terms of landscape, setting, and heritage.
Heritage Impact Assessment	A study to evaluate what impact the proposed development will have on the heritage resource(s) and to recommend a conservation strategy.
Heritage Asset	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 assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Infill Development	Small scale development filling a gap within an otherwise built up frontage.
Lifetime Homes	Homes carefully designed to incorporate 16 design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each of the criteria adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life, from raising children through to coping with reduced mobility or illness in later life.

Local Green Space	An area which is reasonably close to the community and where it is demonstrably special due to its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity, or richness of wildlife.
Local Plan (LP)	Cherwell District Council's statutory planning document which will guide and determine development through to 2031 (due to be replaced by LP2042)
'Made' Plan	When a neighbourhood plan is adopted by the District Council and becomes their formal responsibility.
Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP)	This Neighbourhood Plan, covering 11 Parishes around the Cherwell Valley.
Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum	The body responsible for the MCNP, consisting of representatives from the member Parishes, and the Dorchester Group.
Most Versatile Agricultural Land	Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The Government's policy on all matters affecting the planning system and to which the Neighbourhood Development Plan must conform.
OCCG	Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
OHFT	Oxford Health Foundation Trust
Policies	Those parts of the Plan which must be taken account of by anyone proposing development in the parish and which will be used by the District Council to help them decide planning applications in the parish.
Rural Exception Site	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
Section 106 Agreement	Section 106 (1990 Town & Country Planning Act) agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.
Settlement Area	The line that distinguishes between those parts of a settlement where development is acceptable in principle and those parts outside the settlement where more restrictive policies towards development apply.
Sustainable Development	Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Traffic Impact Assessment	A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.



