

WANTAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PRE-SUBMISSION NEWS

Pre-Submission Plan?

This Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan for Wantage is the Town's plan for land use for 2015-2031.

This is your last chance to comment on the content before we send it to the District Council, who will arrange its independent examination and then the referendum.

PLEASE READ THE FULL DOCUMENT before commenting. Copies of the Plan are available on our website www.wantageplan.org or paper copies are available from the Beacon, Vale and Downland Museum, or the Libraries in both Wantage and Grove.

Then send your comments to either comments@wantageplan.org or Comments, Neighbourhood Plan, Wantage Town Council, The Beacon, Wantage, OX12 9BX by Friday 20 November.



What happens next?

When we have analysed all the comments on this Pre-Submission Plan, we will make any changes necessary to the policies and then send the Final Plan to the District Council. They will check that proper procedures have been followed in its preparation and that any necessary assessments accompany the Plan. Following a period of publicity, they will arrange for an independent examination and organise the public referendum, subject to the Plan meeting legal requirements.



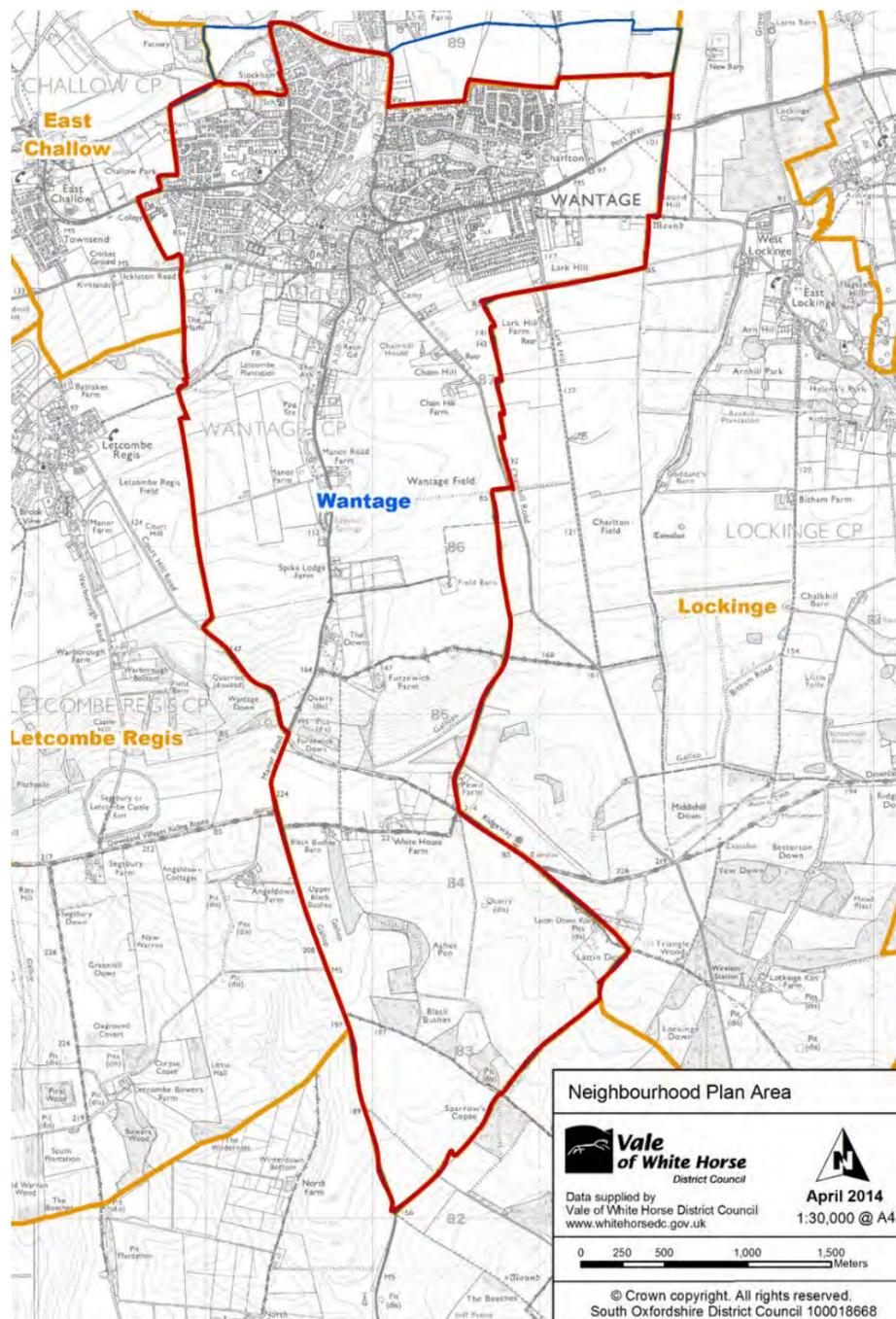
What can the Plan do?

There is a limit on what we can achieve in this plan. We can only influence planning decisions, and only planning decisions on things within the red and blue lines on the map shown in the centre. We can't include anything that will happen in the rest of Grove parish or in East Challow such as Grove Station or the Western Bypass. We have included things that money from the developers can be spent on in the future. So our Policies concentrate on:

- Improving the Town Centre but creating more space for shops, cafes and restaurants
- Ensuring the design of any development creates enough parking and fits in with the character of the specific area of the Town
- Improving and maintaining the green infrastructure of the Town.

What area is covered by the Plan?

The designated area covered by the Wantage Neighbourhood Plan is shown in the map below. This includes all of Wantage Town (inside the red line) and the additional new developments at Stockham Farm and Crab Hill (inside the blue line) which are in the parish of Grove.



A Vision for Wantage

'Wantage will remain a thriving market town, with its retained historic and architectural character, busy town centre and attractive network of green space and links to the surrounding countryside and AONB. Emphasis will be placed on commercial and retail success to meet the demands of changing economic practices, greater accessibility and increased mix of housing and recreation whilst protecting the landscape setting, green infrastructure and community assets.'

For this vision to be realised, a number of strategic objectives need to be achieved by the Neighbourhood Plan over the next few years:

A Successful Town Centre

- To maintain the viability and vitality of the town centre to serve a growing local population by resisting the loss of existing retail space in the key shopping frontages and by planning for new retail development and public car parks.

Green Infrastructure

- To conserve and improve the ecological, water management and recreational value of Letcombe Brook as an essential green infrastructure asset for the town
- To create a viable green infrastructure network of other assets including open spaces, amenity areas, with enhanced connectivity through new and improved footpaths and cycleways
- To conserve the special landscape and scenic beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting

Maintaining Our Heritage

- To sustain and enhance the special significance of the variety of heritage assets in the town
- To require high design standards in all future development that reflects the distinct character of the town.

Meeting Local Housing Need

- To provide housing types that focus on a wide range of requirements including affordability, first homebuyers, downsizers, home workers and self-builders.

Viable Community Assets

- To protect and encourage the improvement of cherished community assets

We now have 14 Policies

Our Policies are:

1. A Spatial Plan for Wantage
2. Town Centre Policy Area
3. Town Centre Development
4. Protection of Employment Sites
5. Design – General Principles
6. Design – Character Areas
7. Design – Housing Types
8. Green Infrastructure Network
9. Letcombe Brook
10. Chain Hill Special Landscape Area
11. Local Green Spaces
12. Infrastructure Investment
13. Community Facilities
14. Community Assets

For details see overleaf:

What changes have been made since the last version?

As a result of the considerable volume of responses (over 1000 comments) we have made a number of alterations and additions to this Pre-Submission version of the Plan.

We have updated the foreword and added information to the introduction relating to the scope of consultation and expanded the areas where Wantage can be improved. We now refer to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty board and management plan in the policy context and have rewritten the Vision for Wantage.

We have also added four new Policies; these cover the protection of employment sites, the protection of the special landscape area between the cemetery and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south, investment in infrastructure and more about our Community Assets and facilities. A brief description of each policy is shown on the reverse of this leaflet.

We've still included our vision and plan for the town centre. We recognise that planning applications have been granted on some of the area covered by the Masterplan but believe that our ambition stays the same. We need more retail space of appropriate sizes within easy walk of the Market Place and more access to parking space.

We have also updated the Green Infrastructure Plans so that the Green Infrastructure Network is a map of the green spaces which currently exist in the town and the existing and proposed links, footpaths and cycleways. The Local Green Space Policy then shows the areas we want to protect for the Town.

Most of the changes to the Plan have been made to the last section about implementation where we now have sections on; Development Management, Infrastructure Projects, Town Centre Improvements, Transport Management, Education Provision, Cycleway and Pedestrian Infrastructure Investments, Green Infrastructure Improvements, and Community Assets.

Please get a copy of the plan from the Beacon, Vale and Downland Museum, or the Libraries in both Wantage and Grove or online at www.wantageplan.org and read the detail for yourself.

WHAT POLICIES ARE IN THE PLAN?

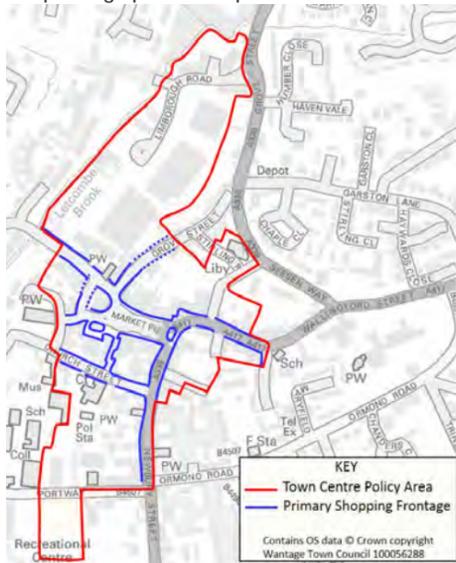
The most important parts of the Plan are the Land Use Planning Policies. In summary they are:

1. A Spatial Plan for Wantage

This Policy restates the purpose and value of defining a development boundary around the urban area of the Town to encourage high quality and appropriate development within the boundary and to confine development beyond it to that which is appropriate to the countryside.

2. Town Centre Policy Area

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Wantage Town Centre Policy Area, as shown on the map. The Policy encourages shops and café/restaurants in the area inside the red line. Proposals for employment uses will be encouraged elsewhere provided they meet minimum car parking standards and any loss of existing car parking spaces is replaced.



3. Town Centre Development

Our advisors tell us that the best way to expand the shopping area is to use Church Street and the area around the Beacon. We recognise that planning applications have been granted on some of the area covered by the Master-plan but believe that our ambition stays the same. We need more retail space of appropriate sizes within easy walk of the Market Place and more parking space.

4. Protection of Employment Sites

This policy supports the need to ensure a balance between housing and employment and therefore to ensure that employment sites are not lost to alternative uses.

5. Design - General Principles

This Policy emphasises three especially important design principles:

1. that the layout and building form of developments must maintain and frame important views from and to the Town from its edges.
2. that at least two off street parking spaces should be provided per dwelling in all residential schemes with one additional space for each bedroom above 3 bedrooms, unless special circumstances can be demonstrated in which case the scheme will be expected to make a financial contribution to improving the Green Infrastructure Network in the locality for the direct benefit of the occupants.
3. that improved provision for cycling should be made.



6. Design - Character Areas

This Policy complements the draft Vale of White Horse Design Guide by identifying six different character areas in the Town and setting specific design parameters and maximum housing densities for each area.

7. Design - Housing types

This Policy requires housing schemes to focus on delivering housing types that will meet the needs of the local community not just in terms of size to suit new entrants into the housing market but also downsizers. It also requires new homes to be adaptable to enable home working in respect of the number and size of habitable rooms.

8. Green Infrastructure Network

This Policy proposes a Green Infrastructure Network is established to connect important open spaces, watercourses, footpaths and cycleways with the Town Centre and countryside. Its purpose is to ensure that development proposals that may affect the Network are able to contribute to its improvement and



do not undermine its connectivity, ecological or recreational value.

9. Letcombe Brook

This Policy aims to protect the biodiversity value and the eco-system functions of Letcombe Brook.

10. Land on Chain Hill

This Policy aims to protect the area on Chain Hill near the Cemetery and backing onto the AONB.

11. Local Green Spaces

This Policy proposes a number of important green spaces in the Town to be protected from development by their designation as Local Green Spaces. In each case, the green spaces are an integral part of the Town and are therefore regarded as special to the local community.

12. Infrastructure Investment

This Policy aims to ensure that developments which increase the demand for off-site service infrastructure will only be allowed where the capacity can be provided in time to serve the development which will ensure that the environment and the amenity of local residents are not adversely affected.

13. Community Facilities

This Policy identifies the most important infrastructure projects to support the development proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan. These include Traffic Management proposals, including the Market Place, pedestrian crossings and long stay car and coach parking; Green Infrastructure Network including improvements to pavements and footpaths; and cycle ways within and linking Wantage to adjacent areas.

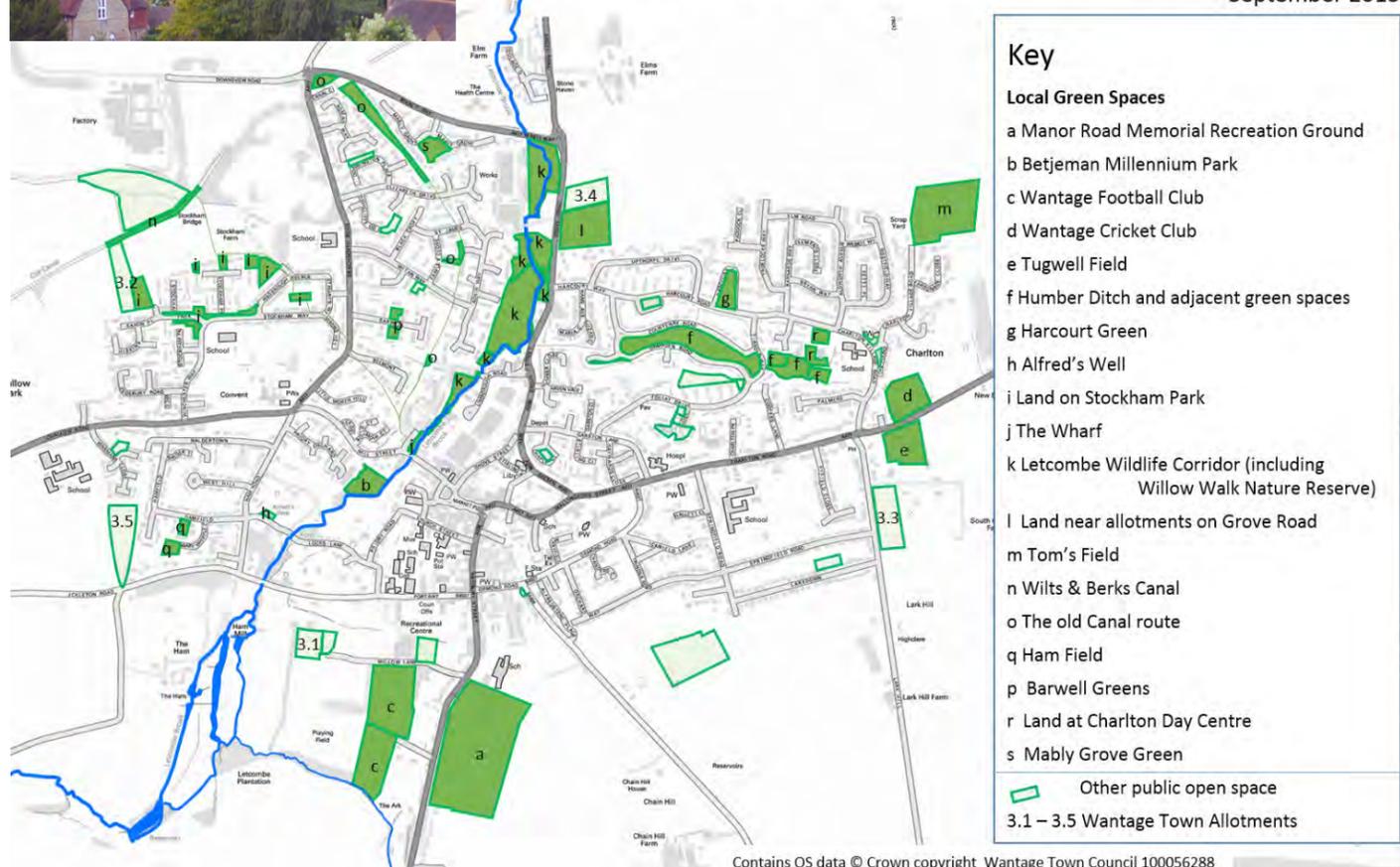
14. Community Assets

This Policy serves two purposes. First, it seeks to protect designated Assets of Community Value from unnecessary loss. Secondly, it supports the improvement and extension of these Assets and of other community land and buildings.



Wantage Local Green Spaces, Public Open Space and Allotments

September 2015



Who is behind this Plan?

The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by the Town Council, working with the Vale of White Horse District Council and consultants. The work has to follow strict guidelines laid down by the Government.

The Town Council asked for volunteers to help prepare the Plan and over 40 members of the community volunteered to help. They were organised into four working groups looking at:

- Town centre, businesses, economy and technology;
- Heritage, environment, conservation and design;
- Transport, infrastructure, education and health, and
- Youth, leisure, sport and art.

The work is co-ordinated by a Steering Group reporting to the Town Council. This comprises

the leaders of each working group, a number of Town Councillors and two District Council staff representing Planning Policy and Planning Support.

Steering Group Chairman: Julie Maberley.
Councillors: St. John Dickson, Mayor; Julia Reynolds, Chairman of Planning Committee; Steve Trinder, Deputy Mayor; Charlotte Dickson; and Jenny Hannaby.
Working Group Leaders: Tony Gilhorne, Flora Nuttgens and Edward Rogers.
District Council Staff: Andrew Maxted and David Potter, Planning Policy Team.

The Working Groups comprised over 40 people who have worked hard to pull everything together. They have helped to prepare the surveys which were distributed in late 2014 to residents of OX12, businesses and other stakeholders. We received almost 1600

responses. These were used to identify the topics to focus on when defining the Policies.

A large workshop was held early this year with representatives of the key organisations in the Town to ensure that the Plan included the right things for the town. This was very well attended and added detail to the work already done by the Working Groups.

The Working Groups also worked on the preparation of detailed papers to support the policies that the survey results, workshop outputs and initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the town suggested.

These Policies were then tested in the Draft Plan Consultation held in June. We received over 1000 comments. These have all been analysed and the Pre-Submission Plan has been prepared taking into account the comments received.

GET YOUR COPY OF THE PLAN AND READ THE DETAILS

Copies of the Plan are available on our website www.wantageplan.org or paper copies are available from the Beacon, Vale and Downland Museum, or the Libraries in both Wantage and Grove.

Then send your comments in by Friday 20 November to either comments@wantageplan.org or Comments, Neighbourhood Plan, Wantage Town Council, The Beacon, Wantage, OX12 9BX