

**WANTAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**PLANNING WORKSHOP: 23 JANUARY 2015**  
**Conserving the Historic and Natural Environment**  
Facilitator: Caroline Finney

Design

- A policy on design was welcomed on all four tables. This policy could derive from the VWHDC's adopted (2009) and emerging (2014) Design Guides. The principles could be specific to particular character areas where that areas density, landscape design, layout and materials is reflected and enhanced to fit in with its surroundings.
- One option would be for the Wantage Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) policy to only cover the character areas of more historic importance and leave the district's own Design Guides to cover the remaining town. This idea came from one of the table as they believed the standards set in the district's guides were high enough to sufficiently protect the areas outside the town centre and the two conservation areas.
- A second option would be to define character areas for the whole of the town and the future developments. One character area to cover the historic parts (the two conservation areas with surrounding streets of historic character) the second to cover the rest of the existing town and the third to represent future development areas.
- There was no clear steer on how the character areas should be defined. However regardless of how the character areas are defined, there was a strong consensus that certain streets outside the conservation areas such as Charlton Road and Mills Street should have stronger guidelines set through the WNP design policy.
- The importance of the listed St Mary's Convent building and its surroundings to be reinforced through this policy.
- Important that car parking standards are applied to ensure more than one space per dwelling for future development.
- The appearance of the areas where you enter the town should also be considered in this policy.
- Local Green Spaces
- The four tables agreed that there needs to be a policy on this matter, to safeguard the existing green spaces in the town.

- All the Urban Open Spaces in the adopted Local Plan 2011 should be defined as Local Green Spaces in the WNP. There will be additional areas identified by the WNP including new open spaces delivered by new developments such as the Crab Hill site. A list of the Green Local Spaces will be prepared by members of the WNP working group for inclusion in this policy.
- The sports field which is part of King Alfred's Academy should be considered for protection as there is poor provision for green spaces in the south eastern area of Wantage.
- As there are green open spaces that may not be suitable as Local Green Spaces, these should be protected against development as Open Spaces, e.g. smaller green areas such as larger verges.
- Green Infrastructure Network
- This policy should contribute to Wantage becoming a Garden Town, through linking the local green spaces and open spaces to form a green infrastructure network for the town. Due to the central location of Letcombe Brook, it should be the spine from which these links are connected.
- Connections linking Wantage to the Ridgeway, the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and along the Old Canal should also be considered.
- The Network should comprises a variety of green infrastructure assets to be enjoyed by all age groups, such as informal open spaces, allotments, sports fields, landscape buffers, assets of biodiversity value and children's play areas. It could also include footpaths, bridleways and cycleways.
- Depending on its location, future development permitted during the WNP plan period could provide access to connect to the green infrastructure.
- In order to maintain this green infrastructure network, an endowment fund should be set up from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other sources where possible, to enable this network to be sustainable.
- Other potential policies and proposals
- There is a strong consensus that the Letcombe Brook should be protected and managed. The brook may have its own policy similar to the existing policy referring to the Letcombe Brook in the adopted Local Plan 2011. It should also form part of the Green Infrastructure Network, although there were some concern whether improved access in certain areas could have a detrimental effect on its wildlife.

- It was suggested that the plot of land identified as WANT12 in the district's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) could be proposed by the WNP to become part of the AONB. This is more likely to be a non- statutory proposal by the WNP (and not a land use policy) as it is outside the remit of the neighbourhood plan.