

MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2018 - 2031

PLAN SUMMARY

June 2019



Produced by



MidCherwell
Neighbourhood Plan Forum

52 Camp Road, Upper Heyford,
Oxfordshire OX25 5HD

This document is a short summary of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan.

The Plan was approved by Cherwell District Council in June 2019, and is now a statutory part of the local Development Plan. This followed a successful referendum of the electorate of the eleven parishes in the Mid-Cherwell designated plan area, of whom over 90% voted in favour of adopting the plan.

The **full document**, with more explanatory information, all the policy maps, and other diagrams is available on our website: www.mid-cherwell.org.uk.

A hard copy of the full document is available from Parish Clerks
(check parish websites for details)
or from our Secretary at info@mid-cherwell.org.uk

The plan provides what we hope is a clear and viable framework for future development within the Mid-Cherwell area. Every planning application relating to sites in any of the eleven parishes, submitted to Cherwell District Council until 2031, is now subject to our policies, in addition to those of Cherwell itself, and of national planning policy. The plan will be kept under regular review.



MCNP's VISION FOR 2031

In 2031 our Neighbourhood will still comprise vibrant, individual villages connected by unspoiled countryside, and our community will feel that its wishes have been heard and its rural way of life maintained; small-scale affordable housing will have been sensitively added, heritage and conservation respected, and road traffic mitigated; public transport will be well-used, and local amenities will better provide for our community's needs.

MID-CHERWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM

WHO ARE WE?

The Forum is a consortium representing the interests of eleven parishes within Cherwell District. We are local residents - mostly parish councillors - all working for the community on a voluntary basis. In addition, the Dorchester Group (owners of the former airfield at Upper Heyford - now called Heyford Park) and Heyford Park Residents Association, are associate members of the consortium. Those residents are now represented by the new Heyford Park parish council. This consortium has prepared the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP).



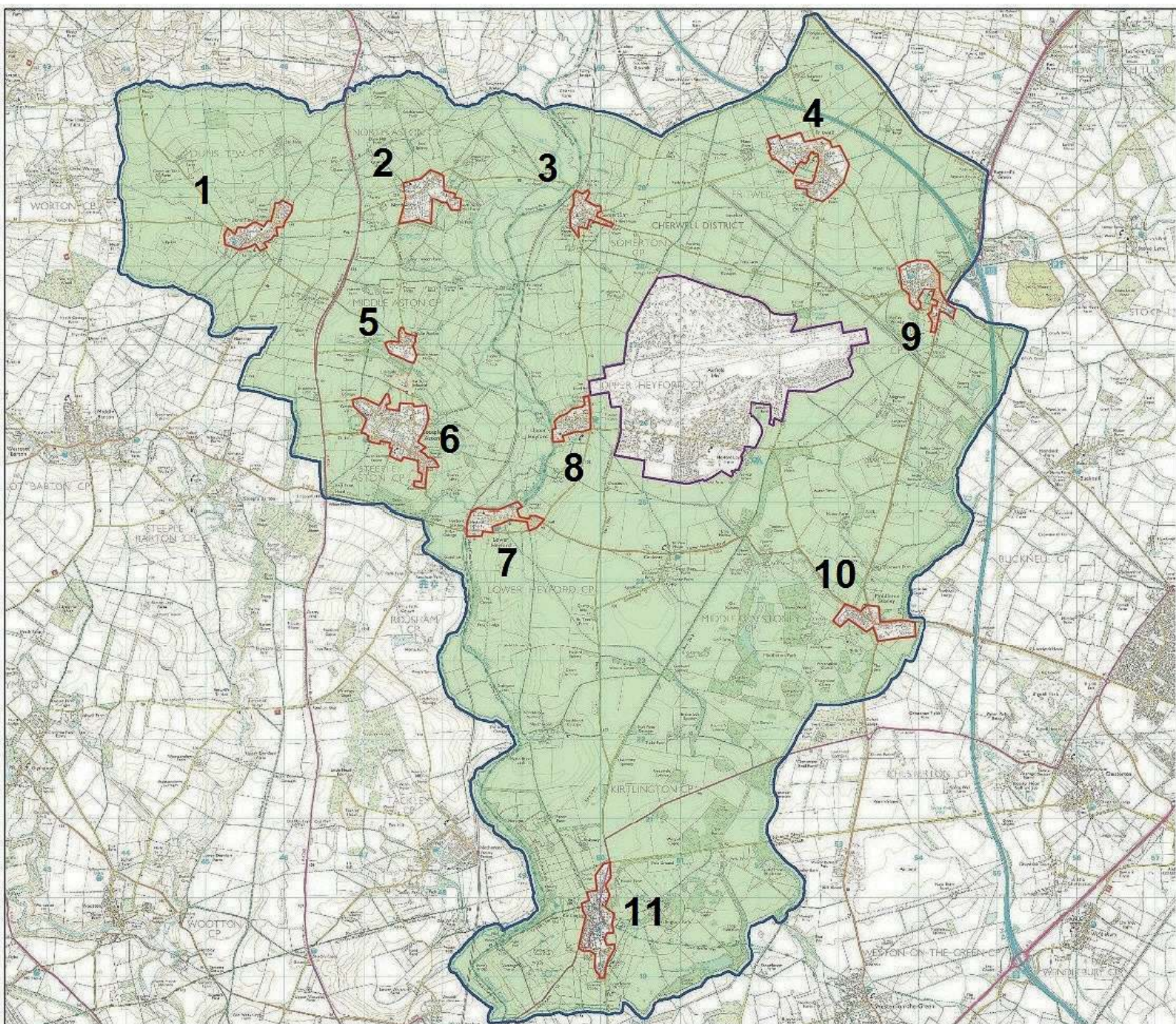
WHAT WAS INVOLVED?

Starting in 2014, we asked all 7,000 residents of our Area to engage with the Plan, and to tell us what the priorities should be for the future. We set up a website, emailed regular newsletters, and held meetings, events and workshops all over the neighbourhood area to better understand what we needed to do. We held regular meetings with Cherwell District Council, and involved elected councillors and MPs. We then prepared, consulted on, and amended the policies. In 2018 an independent Examiner was appointed to decide whether the Plan should go forward to referendum. The examiner recommended approval, albeit with a number of required changes. After further revision, the plan was once again made available for the public to view prior to the referendum, which finally took place on 21st March 2019.

WHAT WERE THE CONSTRAINTS?

We had to work within the existing statutory planning framework: we cannot oppose “sustainable development”, and we must also be in conformity with the Cherwell District Local Plan 2011-2031. That Local Plan designates three of our villages as Category A (suitable to take “minor developments” of more houses): these are Fritwell, Kirtlington and Steeple Aston. Category B (satellite) villages Lower Heyford and Middle Aston could also take minor developments, whereas Ardley with Fewcott, Duns Tew, Middleton Stoney, North Aston, Somerton and Upper Heyford are Category C villages (deemed suitable only for conversions and infill). Heyford Park, on the other hand, is named in the CDC Local Plan as a strategic development site for 2,675 dwellings and 1,500 additional jobs.

In April 2017 we received the results of an independent “healthcheck” of the draft policies on which we consulted in January. We were strongly advised that some of the policies did not meet the strict requirements of the regulations. Regrettably, therefore, some policies were omitted while others were moved from the statutory policies section to another part of our Plan - the Community Action Plan (see page 16).



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

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

THE POLICIES

The following policies are now being used by planning officers of Cherwell District Council to help decide all planning applications across the MCNP area. To understand them fully, you should also read the *Rationale* section and look at maps that follow some policies in the [full Plan document](#), which you can see on our website www.mid-cherwell.org.uk Some of the maps are reproduced in this summary document.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

POLICY PD1: DEVELOPMENT AT CATEGORY A VILLAGES

Residential development proposals at Fritwell, Kirtlington and Steeple Aston in the form of infilling, conversions and minor development will be supported in principle within the settlement areas established and defined in Policy Map Figs. 9, 10 and 11 respectively.

Any residential development proposal which is outside the settlement areas of these three villages must have particular regard to all the following criteria:

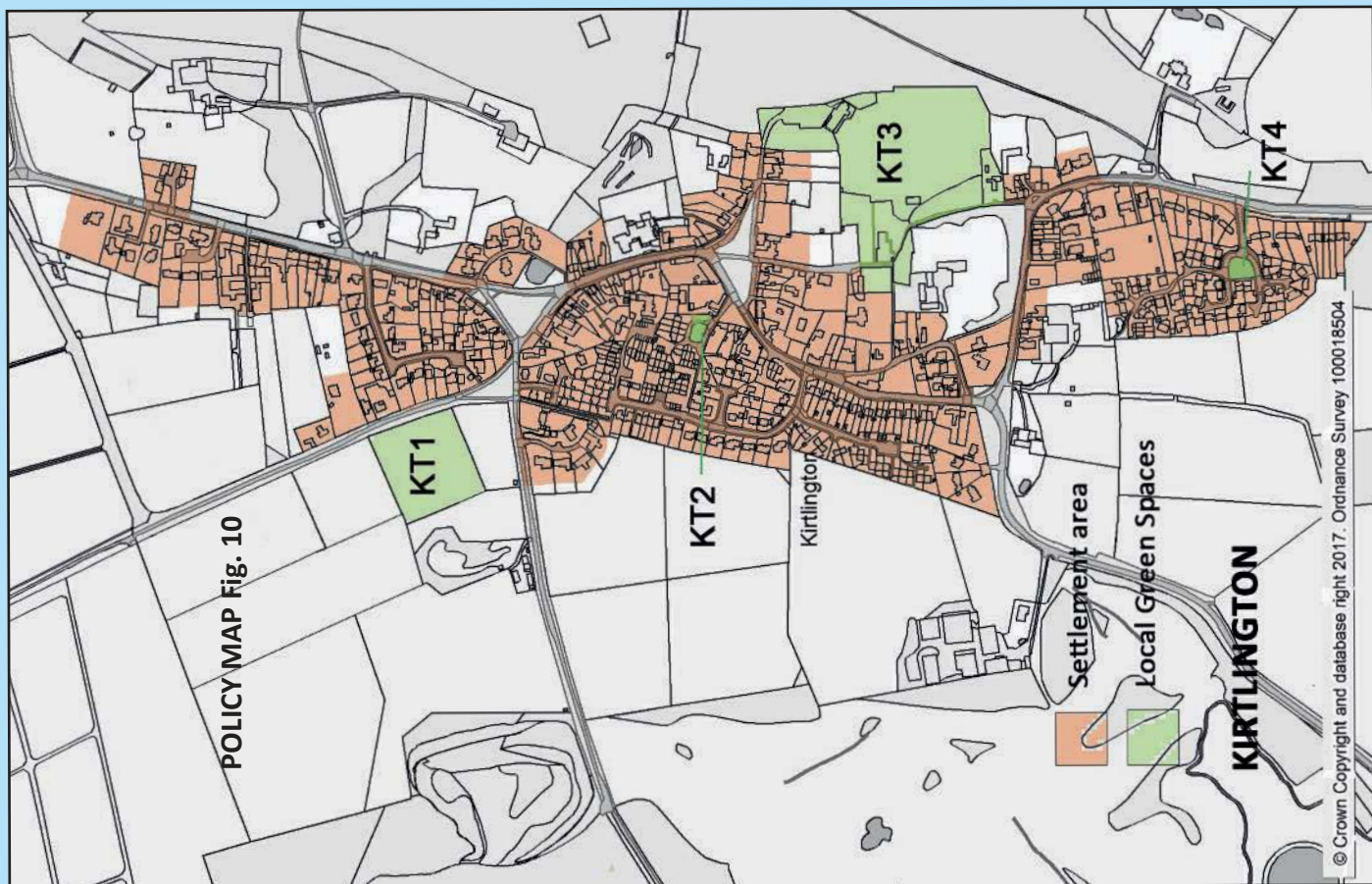
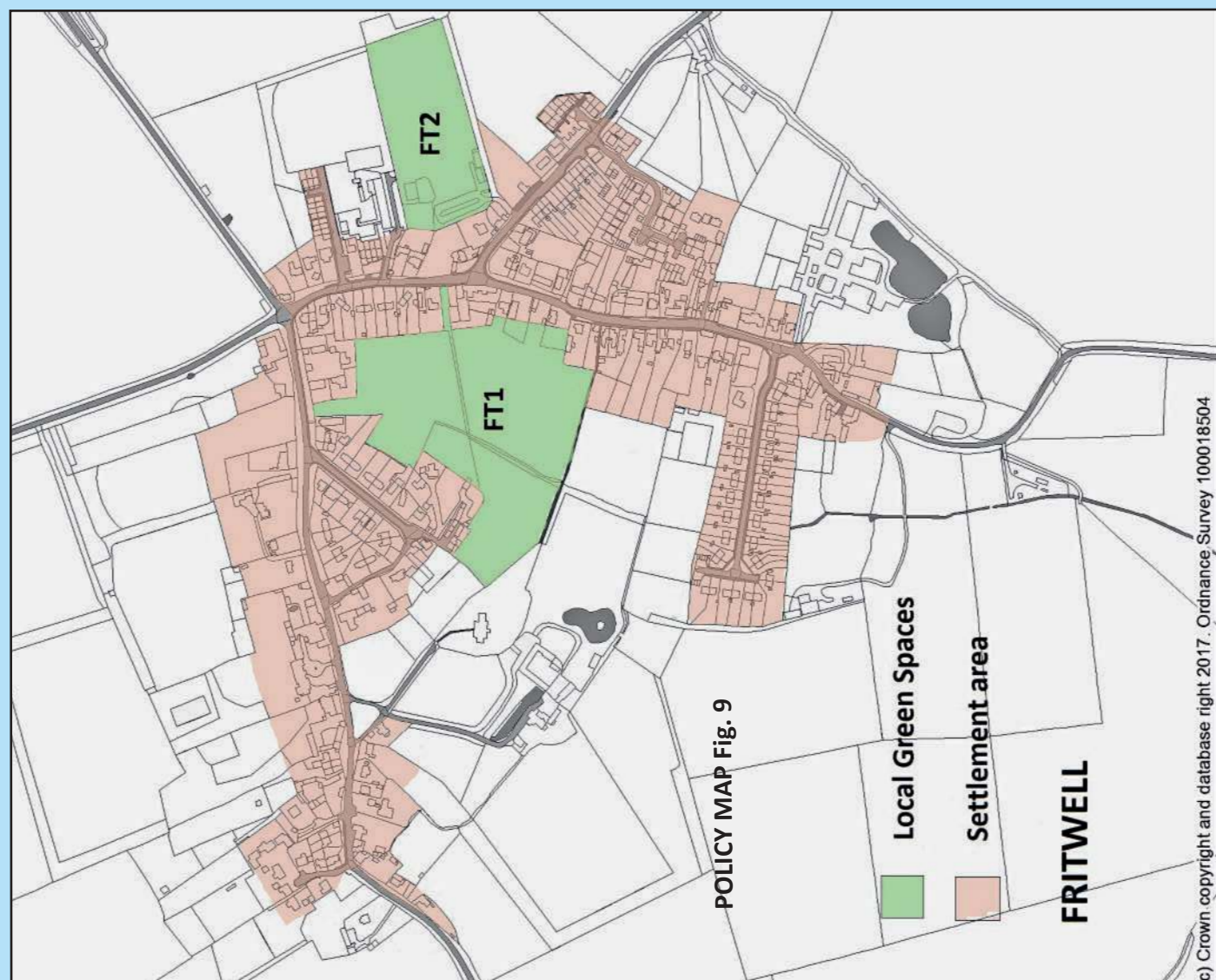
- a) The site should be immediately adjacent to the settlement area
- b) The site should not be the best and most versatile agricultural land and the use of previously developed land is particularly likely to be acceptable.
- c) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the landscape.
- d) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation areas and the significance of other heritage assets (see Appendix K: Heritage and Character Assessment).
- e) The development should not give rise to coalescence with any other nearby settlement. This particularly applies to Steeple Aston and Middle Aston.

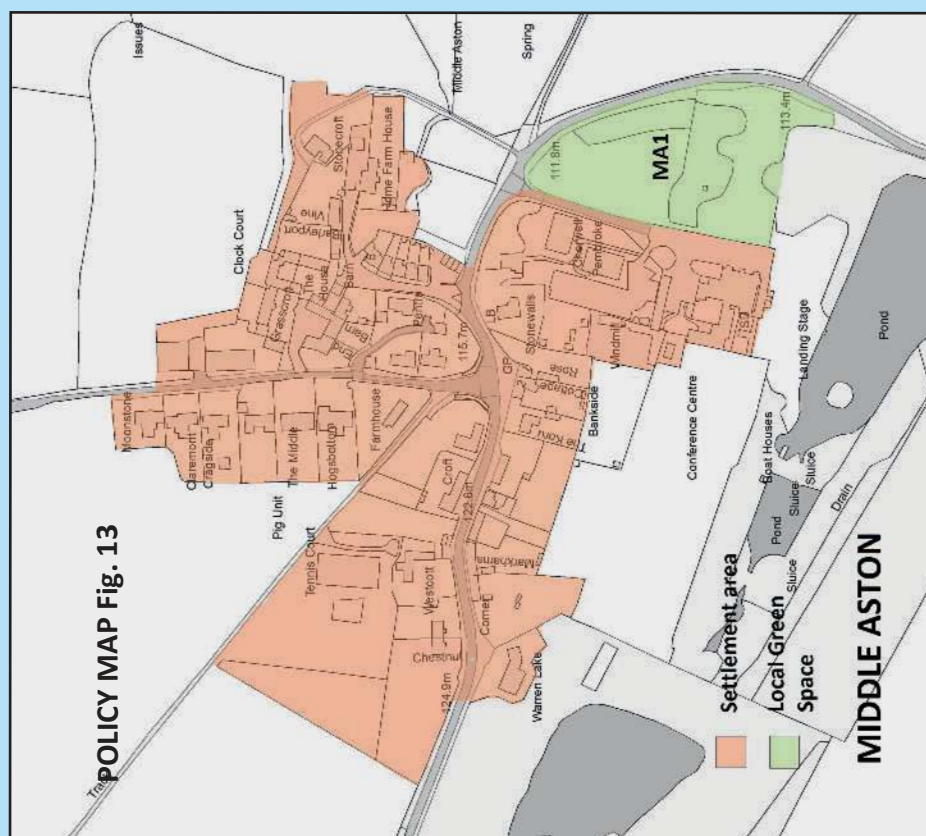
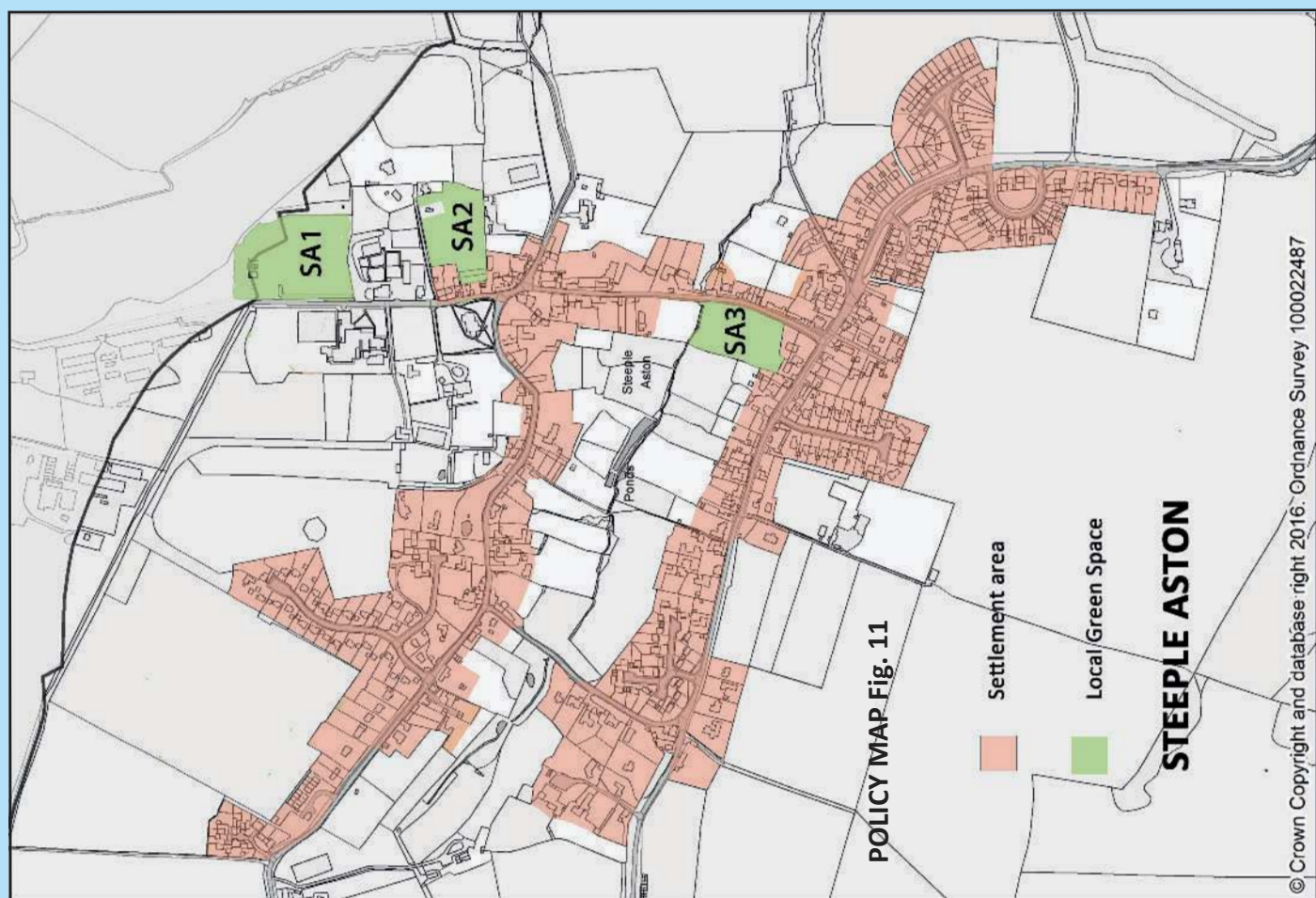
The total indicative number of additional dwellings permitted during the Plan period either within the settlement areas of these villages, or adjacent to them, shall be approximately 25 for Fritwell, 17 for Kirtlington, and 20 for Steeple Aston (as detailed on p.29).

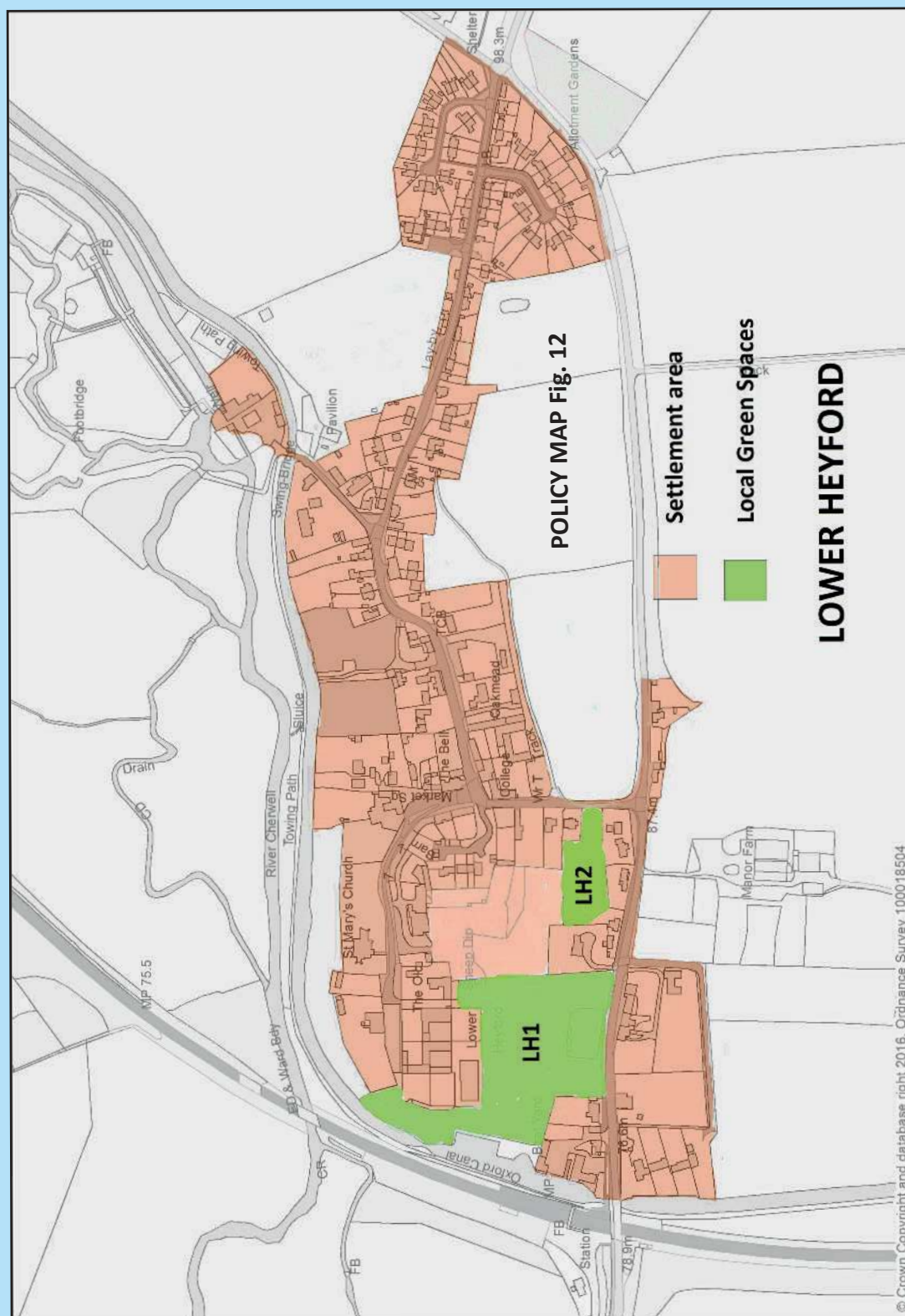
POLICY PD2: DEVELOPMENT AT CATEGORY B VILLAGES

Residential development proposals at Lower Heyford and Middle Aston in the form of infilling, conversions and minor development will be supported in principle within the settlement areas established and defined in Policy Map Figs. 12 and 13 respectively.

The total indicative number of additional dwellings permitted during the Plan period within the settlement areas of Middle Aston and Lower Heyford (and being the aggregate of infilling and minor development), shall be 5 per village.







POLICY PD3: DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO HEYFORD PARK

A zone of non-coalescence, defined on Policy Map Fig. 18, on the western boundary of Heyford Park shall prevent coalescence of any development proposals at Heyford Park with the village of Upper Heyford.

Within the zone of non-coalescence, the land should remain predominantly in agricultural use, but it may also accommodate:

- Ecological mitigation and appropriate visual screening arising from development at Heyford Park
- Footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways

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 surrounding settlements, to ensure that their separate identity and character are maintained.

POLICY PD4: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS AND VISTAS

Development proposals within the plan area must demonstrate sensitivity to the important views and vistas described in Table 4 and illustrated by photographs in the documents referred to in that Table, by including an assessment of the significance of the views and the effect of the proposed development on them. Proposals which cause significant harm to any of these views will only be acceptable where the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any harm.

Development proposals must also be designed such that there is no adverse impact on the sensitive skylines identified in Fig. 8 and referenced in Table 4.

Applicants for development in or adjacent to a Conservation Area must demonstrate in a Heritage Impact Assessment that they have taken account of the appropriate Conservation Area Appraisal, and of the Heritage and Character Assessment at Appendix K, and demonstrated that the proposal causes as little harm to an identified view as possible and that any harm is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal. The development should not harm the Conservation Area and its setting, other heritage assets, or historic street and village views and longer distance vistas.

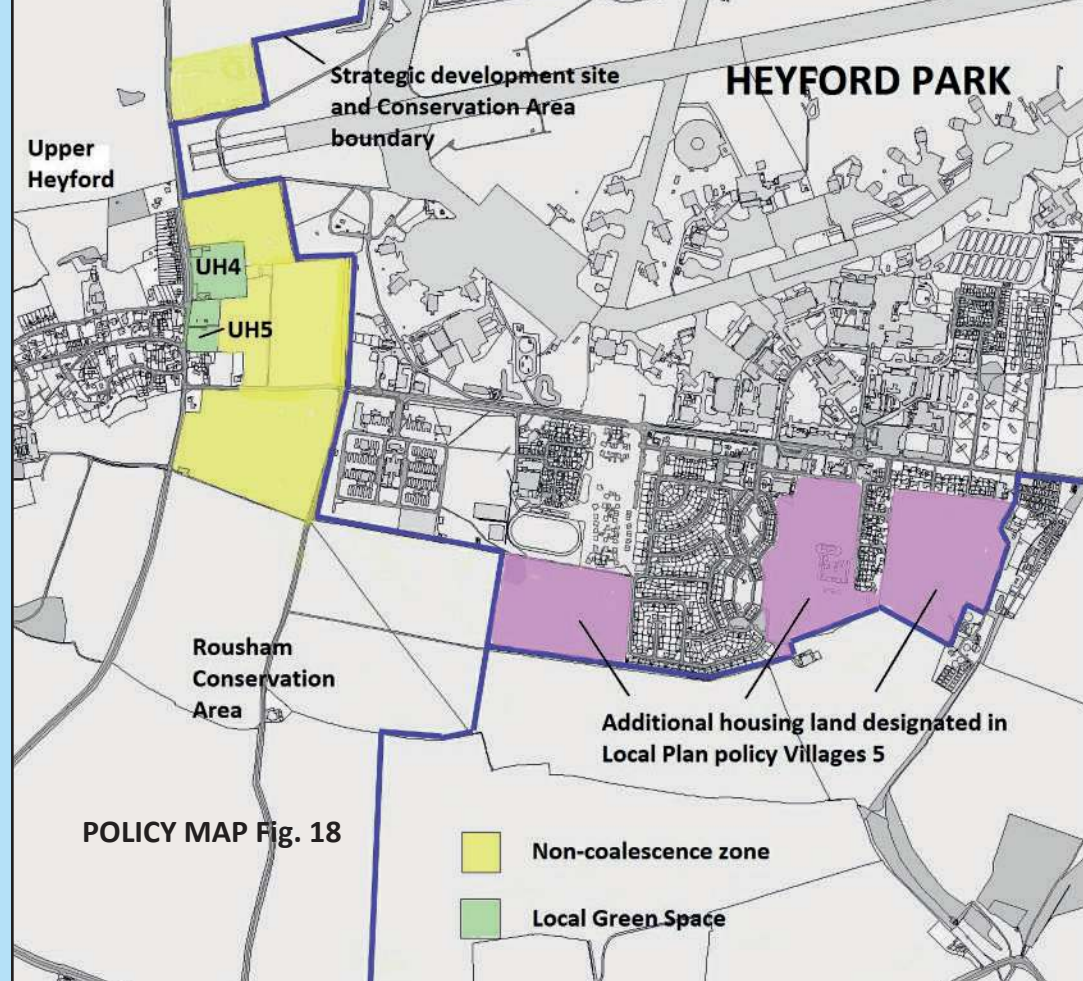


TABLE 4: IMPORTANT VIEWS TO BE PROTECTED

a) Views of all church towers in the MCNP area, as seen from numerous viewpoints including those shown in photos referred to in (c) below.

b) All the vistas and views referred to in the following CDC Conservation Area Appraisals, or in updated versions of these documents:

Ardley CAA 2005: para 4.12 and Table p.11-12; church views on p.27

Fewcott CAA 2008: para 6.11 and Fig.7

Duns Tew 2005: Table 1 and Fig.8

Fritwell 2008: Paras. 6.11, 7.11, 8.7, 9.10 and 10.11 and Figs. 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16

Kirtlington 2011: p.33-34, and Fig.13

North Aston 2015: Para 12.2 and Fig.12

RAF Upper Heyford 2006: Para 6.4 and Figs 9,10 and 11

Steeple Aston 2014: Paras. 8.1.3, 8.1.4, 8.2.1 and 8.3.3, p.26 and Fig.14

Rousham 1996 (in course of updating)

Somerton 1996 (to be updated)

c) With reference to Appendix K (AECOM Heritage and Character Assessment), all the vistas and views referred to on p.76 and those referred to below:

Fritwell: p.35; Kirtlington: p.43; Lower Heyford: p.51; Middle Aston: p.57;

Steeple Aston: p.65, and Upper Heyford: p.72

POLICY PD5: BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

New development should be designed to a high standard which responds to the distinctive character of the settlement and reflects the guidelines and principles set out within the Heritage and Character Assessment (see Appendix K). Development proposals should have full regard to the following criteria:

- a) Proposals should wherever possible include appropriate landscape mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the built form, to ensure that development is in keeping with the existing rural character of the village, and to provide a net gain in biodiversity.
- b) 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.
- c) Proposals for minor development schemes (excluding infill and conversions) of new housing will be required to provide new or improve existing footpaths and cycle ways to ensure that new residents of all ages and mobility have safe access to village amenities such as the school, bus stops, shop and green spaces. Where new routes are proposed to meet this requirement, the development proposals shall contain full details of all associated materials and infrastructure.
- d) The section on Managing Change on p.76 -77 of the Heritage and Character Assessment (see Appendix K), which sets out general principles and specific recommendations for villages highlighted in the document.

NOTE 1: This policy does not apply to development within the area covered by CDC's policy Villages 5, where site-specific design and place-shaping standards are already set out.

NOTE 2: Part 2 of APPENDIX K covers only Category A and B villages and Upper Heyford; other Category C villages were excluded from AECOM's study because of funding limitations affecting the scope of the work.

POLICY PD6: CONTROL OF 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;
- d) proposals should not be detrimental to an area of nature conservation interest.
- 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 of the Oxford Canal.

POLICY PD7: DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Local Green Spaces listed below are designated in accordance with NPPF requirements, as shown in Policy Map Figs. 9 to 18 and as further detailed in Appendix D. 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 exceptional circumstances.

PARISH	REF NO	LOCATION
Ardley with Fewcott	AF1	Ardley with Fewcott Playing Field
	AF2	Old Quarry Field
	AF3	The Knob Green
	AF4	Fewcott Green
Duns Tew	DT1	Duns Tew Play Area
Fritwell	FT1	Church View
	FT2	Recreation ground and play area
Kirtlington	KT1	The Allotments
	KT2	Square green in the centre of Dashwood Mews
	KT3	The Recreation field, etc.
	KT4	Small green within Gossway Fields' housing
Lower Heyford	LH1	The meadow abutting Oxford Canal
	LH2	Paddock adjacent to Ivy Close in The Lane
	LH3	Paddock on South Street, Caulcott
Middle Aston	MA1	Middle Aston House front lawn
Middleton Stoney	MS1	Children's Playground
Steeple Aston	SA1	Robinson's Close, Fir Lane
	SA2	Allotments, Fir Lane
	SA3	Field adjacent to Paines Hill
Upper Heyford	UH1	The Common
	UH2	High Street Allotments
	UH3	The meadow abutting Allen's Lock
	UH4	Upper Heyford Recreation Ground
	UH5	Poors Allotments, Somerton Road



HOUSING POLICIES

POLICY PH1: OPEN MARKET HOUSING SCHEMES

Where other policies permit such development, any new market housing should favour homes with a smaller number of bedrooms. The mix of housing will be determined having regard to the evidence of housing need in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, or more up to date published evidence, and the characteristics of the location and site. On the basis of the 2014 SHMA, in developments of 10 dwellings or more the indicative mix should be: 30% 1 or two bedrooms, 46% 3 bedrooms and no more than 24% with 4 bedrooms or more. Smaller schemes should aim for a similar mix where possible.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to the affordable housing element of such schemes or developments affected by Policy Villages 5 of the Local Plan.

POLICY PH2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

Support will be given to small-scale affordable housing schemes on Rural Exception Sites within or immediately adjacent to villages, to meet specific needs within the Plan area which cannot be met by other sites allocated for housing development. This type of housing is supported particularly where it will redevelop brownfield land.

Rural Exception Site schemes must ensure that dwellings continue to be affordable and made available to meet local needs in perpetuity. The number of affordable dwellings on rural exception sites shall not exceed that evidenced by local housing needs surveys.

POLICY PH3: ADAPTABLE HOUSING

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.

Support will be given to new houses being constructed to Building Regulations Part M (4) as amended). In addition, where possible, dwellings that are on one level should be included, to meet the need for such accommodation in particular for older people and those with disabilities.

POLICY PH4: EXTRA-CARE HOUSING

If the number of extra-care homes proposed at Heyford Park is insufficient to serve demand during the Plan period from the population of the MCNP area, then support will be given for additional dwellings in Fritwell, Kirtlington and Steeple Aston to meet demonstrable need.

In addition, applications to provide extra-care housing at the Category A villages will be supported where they meet the requirements of other Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

POLICY PH5: PARKING, GARAGING AND WASTE STORAGE PROVISION

Unless it is clearly impractical, garages, covered or open parking areas should be built in direct association with the houses whose inhabitants may be expected to use them. These are preferred to rear or separate parking courts. They must be spacious enough to accommodate modern cars and bicycles.

All dwellings should have well-designed and adequate facilities for the storage of waste bins to avoid less able residents having to haul heavy bins from unsuitable locations to the front of properties.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to development within the area covered by CDC's policy Villages 5, where site-specific design and place-shaping standards are already set out.

POLICY PH6: PARKING FACILITIES FOR EXISTING DWELLINGS

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.



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

POLICY PC1: LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Continued commercial use of premises providing local employment within the neighbourhood area or otherwise benefiting the local economy will be encouraged. 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 effect 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 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.

POLICY PC2: HEALTH FACILITY

A Health facility at Heyford Park serving the residents of Heyford Park and those residents within the NP area most suitably served by such a new service, will be supported. A new-build health facility at Heyford Park would also be supported if combined with other appropriate services or uses, such as community facilities or private dentistry, in order to increase viability.

POLICY PC3: NEW CEMETERY

Subject to the suitability of the site having regard to Policy Villages 5 of the Cherwell Local Plan and other development plan policies, an application for the provision of a cemetery or green burial facility at or adjacent to Heyford Park, will be supported.



THE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Some of the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan cannot be enforced through planning law. Instead, we aim to deliver them over time with our Community Action Plan, which will be the responsibility of the parish councils and the Neighbourhood Plan Forum. The Action Plan is work in progress, and currently includes:

- Campaigning to stop unwanted development of greenfield sites
- Actively encouraging developers to build to the Lifetime Homes Standard
- Persuading Cherwell District Council to adopt a housing allocations policy that gives priority to families of those already living in the village where homes become available
- Supporting Open Market housing schemes designed to be genuinely affordable for first-time buyers, affordable by people on salaries that are average for Cherwell District
- Establishing a Community Land Trust to develop our own affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites, possibly with an element of extra-care housing, and approaching local landowners with a view to identifying and purchasing such sites
- Negotiating with local businesses that make extensive use of heavy goods vehicles to try to reduce flows on certain roads
- Campaigning to improve bus services
- Developing an acceptable mitigation plan with Oxfordshire County Council that will deal with the worst of our highways and traffic problems
- Trialling schemes of traffic calming and place-making that could help win back villages worst affected by through-traffic
- Prioritising the provision of secondary school places at Heyford Park Free School for those within the Plan area
- Being proactive in procuring a health centre at Heyford Park through ongoing consultation with the Health Authority and developers
- Requiring utilities providers (water, drainage, electricity, mobile phones, etc) to improve their services to our community
- Efforts to establish Nature Reserves, additional wildlife ponds, and small-scale native woodlands and tree-planting in the neighbourhood area for the benefit of local fauna and flora
- Consideration of local measures that could impact on climate change
- Seeking to create new permissive or definitive rights of way to improve connectivity between villages within and beyond the NP boundary for non-motorised users, creating social, recreational, and health benefits.

PLEASE CONTACT US AT

www.mid-cherwell.org.uk or info@mid-cherwell.org.uk