

EAST CHALLOW NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

DRAFT POLICIES at 28th March 2018

(Prepared by the Steering Committee appointed by the Parish Council)

The following policies have been developed following the village consultation, steering group discussions, and discussions with our consultant, Community First Oxfordshire, and Vale of the White Horse District Council. They are still under review and are subject to change but are made available to the public in advance of the village meeting planned for Monday 23rd April 2018 at Challow & Childrey Cricket Club. Once finalised, these policies will form the heart of the Neighbourhood Plan submitted to the village for consideration in a local referendum.

The Policies and their associated objectives have been grouped under themes:

Theme	Policy
Rural Setting	Green Gap
	Protection of the open countryside
	Local Green Space
Environment and Biodiversity	Carbon Footprint
	Biodiversity and Green Corridors
Infrastructure and Facilities	Community Facilities
	CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)
	Public Rights of Way and Footways
Traffic and Roads	Parking
	HGV Traffic
	Western Relief Road

A further policy relating to Housing Mix was considered. However, there is a strong housing mix policy in the VWH Local Plan based on sound planning evidence, and local evidence from the community survey, and the methodology and sample size, is too small to warrant changes to the Local Plan policy.

Core Policy 22 states that 'a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be required on all new residential developments.' This should be in accordance with the Council's current

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) unless an alternative approach can be demonstrated to be more appropriate through the Housing Register or where proven to be necessary due to viability constraints.

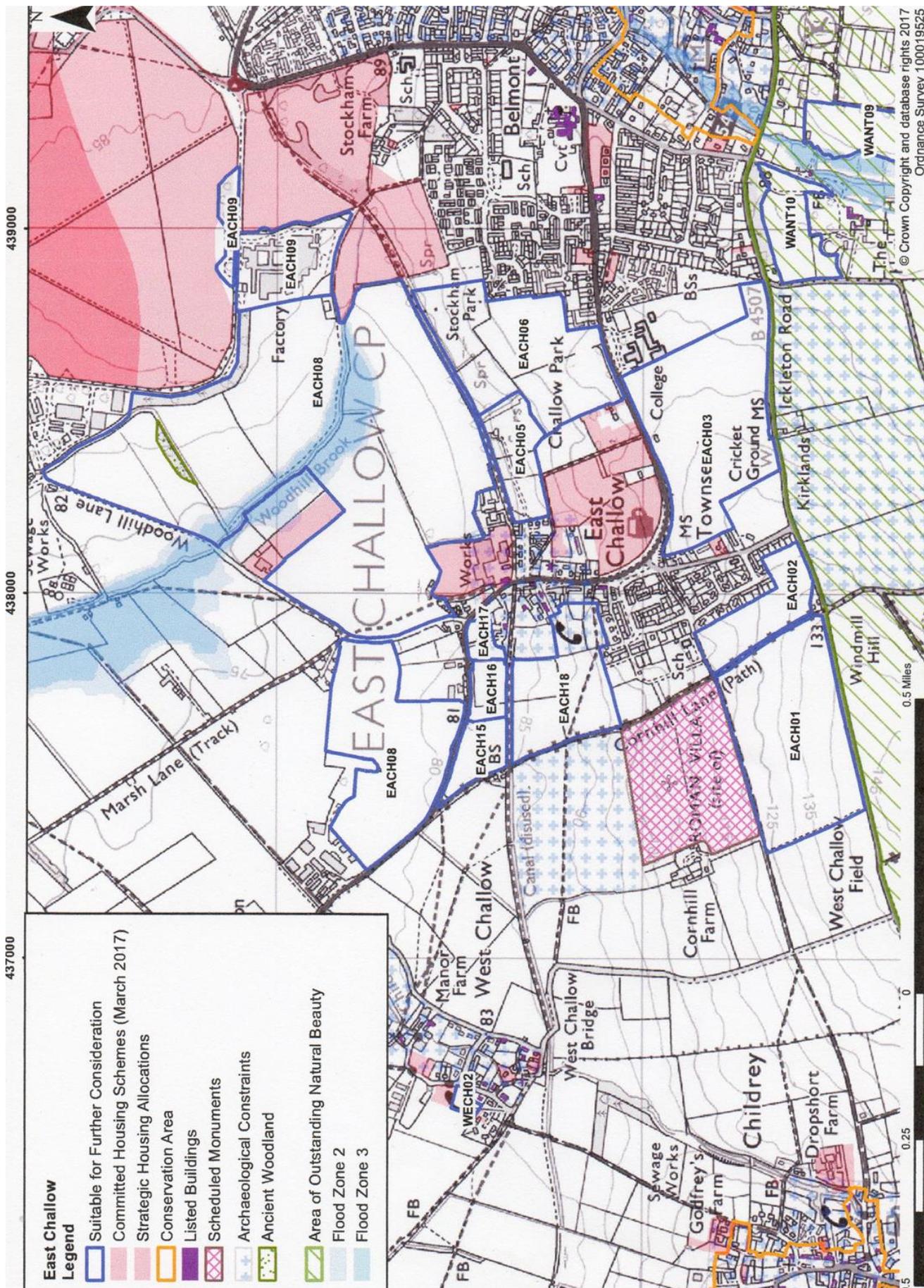
The SHMA (2014) proposed the following housing mix for the Vale of White Horse housing market area:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Market	5%	25%	45%	25%
Affordable	25-30%	30-35%	30-35%	5-10%
All dwellings	15%	30%	40%	15%

A further policy relating to Traffic Speeding was considered. However, traffic speed is a highways matter not a planning matter, and the issue is therefore addressed in the list of CIL projects contained in Appendix X.

In these policies, land parcels within and close to the village are referenced to Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments (HELAAAs) that form part of the evidence base for the preparation of Local Plans. An HELAA is an assessment of land in a specific area that is likely to be available and capable of development for new housing or employment within a certain timeframe, typically 15 years. HELAAAs in the parish of East Challow are summarised in Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2, Appendix 19. The location of each HELAA is shown on page 13 of Appendix 19 which is reproduced overleaf, each land parcel being defined by a reference "EACH xx".

Map x – East Challow HELAA sites



RURAL SETTING

POLICY TITLE	
Green Gap	
ISSUE	
<p>The purpose of this policy is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent the coalescence of the Wantage and East Challow settlements • To retain the historical character of East Challow as a separate settlement <p>Our NP Vision states that “in 2031 the community of East Challow will still sit in a rural setting, adjacent to but separate from the urban developments of Wantage and Grove, as a smaller, rural village...” Our NP Objectives include “...focus new development in locations that preserve the heart of the village.” In order to meet and safeguard the Vision, it is necessary to prevent development of selected land parcels to prevent coalescence with the town of Wantage (HELAAs EACH03, 06, 05).</p> <p>Historically, the village of East Challow has been an established and separate settlement for centuries, the name first recorded as “Es Challowe” in 1284. A brief history of development of the village is given elsewhere in this document. Of special importance in this regard are Land Parcels EACH03 (the location of prehistoric records) and EACH18 (visual evidence of ridge and furrow farming from the middle ages).</p> <p>The gap between our settlement and Wantage has been slowly eroded over the years to the extent that Wantage housing developments, and one of the Wantage school sites, now extend to the south-east boundary of the parish, as shown on the HELAA Plan. Recent planning approval for Park Farm and Challow Park have pushed the eastern extent of the village further toward the south-east parish boundary.</p> <p>A Village and Landscape Character Assessment, undertaken as part of NP evidencing (see Appendix X) further defines and supports the importance of preventing coalescence. Indeed, the Assessment describes the land to the north of the A417, in the following terms; “feels quiet and peaceful” and is a “relatively attractive landscape”, and confirms this area as continuing “to be covered in the Local Plan 2031 by the policy NE10 “Important Open Land” to prevent coalescence of Wantage and East Challow”. To the south of the A417 the Assessment describes the land separating Wantage and East Challow in the following terms “The elevated nature.....and relationship with the North Wessex Downs AONB suggest a high visual sensitivity of this site to any form of development. It is an attractive area of countryside on the edge of the AONB. Its function as a buffer between East Challow and Wantage, however, indicates that local residents may accredit a higher value to this particular parcel than one may assign to ordinary agricultural land. This particular area is also covered by the policies NE9 Lowland Vale and NE10 Important Open Land of the Local Plan 2031, both aimed to protect the character of the local landscape and prevent coalescence of the two settlements.</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>It is demonstrably apparent that villagers want to retain the identity of East Challow as a smaller rural village and to continue to enjoy the emotional response when crossing the gap between neighbouring settlements and their village.</p>	

From the results of the NP Community Survey, in relation to green space and the natural environment, 88% of responses identified Green Areas, Rural Setting and Access to Countryside, and Wildlife/Nature as very important.

In addition, there are significant and beautiful long-distance views from the footpath along the A417, to both the Wessex Downs to the north, and the Vale of the White Horse to the south, which will be lost if Land Parcels EACH03 and 06 are ever developed.

The issue of coalescence is also addressed in the Village and Landscape Character Assessment. In particular, in the summary; "As discussed in paras 4.21 and 4.22, two recent planning applications in Parcel B have been approved which have considerably undermined the purpose of policy NE10 in the Local Plan 2031 and combine to further erode the rural setting of East Challow. These approvals will cause the setting of the village to change considerably over the next few years."

POLICY CONTEXT

Important reference to existing policies NE9 and NE10 of the Local Plan 2031 is already made in the Issue and Evidence Sections above.

The settlement hierarchy set out in Core Policy 3 defines East Challow as a Larger Village, i.e. a settlement with a limited range of employment, services and facilities, where unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities. Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily be to meet local needs. Historically, East Challow Parish Council have contested the definition of the village as "larger" and claim that the village has insufficient services and facilities to meet this definition.

Importantly in the context of the Development Pattern, Core Policy 44 requires that the key features that contribute to the nature and quality of the Vale of White Horse District's landscape will be protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced, in particular (inter alia) important landscape settings of settlements (and) important views and visually sensitive skylines.

The Adopted Policies Map (December 2016) for the Western Vale Sub Area identifies land to the east of the village as "Important Open Land." This relates to saved policy NE10 Urban fringes and countryside gaps. The Character Assessment (Appendix 2).

Emerging Local Plan 2031 Development Policy 29: Settlement Character and Gaps seeks to protect against the loss of physical or visual separation between settlements.

DISCUSSION

The VWH Local Plan 2031 Adopted Policies Map, December 2016, identifies the open space between East Challow and Wantage (HELAA EACH03, 04, 05, 06) as 'Important Open Land', based on saved Local Plan policy NE10.

Notwithstanding this, planning was approved on part of this same land (Park Farm (P17/V2031/RM) (88 houses - EACH 04) and Challow Park (P16/V1714/O) (38 houses - EACH 06) in October 2016. The Council advised the PC that, at the time of granting the application on EACH 04, it did not have a five-year housing land supply and the current local plan was only in draft form with limited weight given to it. Hence, the development was permitted on what was 'Important Open Land'.

The wording of Saved Policy NE10 does therefore not provide the necessary protection; the planning authority's landscape architect, in commenting on the development on HELAA EACH04, determined that housing development in the gap had only a minor impact.

Therefore, this policy is needed to add weight to existing adopted and emerging policy now because, in the gap between Wantage and EC, there is a need to prevent further unallocated development.

To summarise, the reasons for a specific policy to prevent coalescence with Wantage are the following:

- 1. Recent planning permissions have demonstrated that the existing policy is not given sufficient weight to prevent development in the gap.
- 2. It appears that the main reasons for granting recent applications for development on land between the village and Wantage are that there was no five-year housing land supply at the time, and the current local plan was only in draft form with limited weight given to it. This leaves little confidence that future development applications in the gap will be resisted.
- 3. Core policy 3 states that in larger villages, unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities in the local community. This policy appears to have had little weight in East Challow.
- 4. Development under recent applications in land between East Challow and Wantage will have a negative impact on EC's character as a separate settlement.

POLICY

Unallocated development will not be permitted on sites HELAA EACH03, 06, 05 (see Map X) in order to preserve East Challow's historic character as a separate settlement.

POLICY TITLE	
Protection of the Open Countryside	
ISSUE	
<p>The purpose of this policy is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To preserve and enhance the open countryside around the village as a recreational resource and for its intrinsic beauty and tranquillity. • To preserve long distance views from the countryside to the village in recognition of the historic character of EC as a separate settlement. • To allow better access to the countryside from the village by foot, cycle and canal to increase opportunities for passive recreation <p>The community of East Challow values its rural setting and the surrounding farmland, experienced as views from footpaths and Public Rights of Way (PROWs), and wishes to ensure that this historic setting is preserved. The term ‘rural’ is suggestive of countryside, and the Village and Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 2) includes abundant reference to the rural nature of the village, stating in summary (5.5) that “..the village setting and adjacent rural landscape is of significant visual and recreational importance to both residents and visitors” .</p> <p>In further support of the importance of protecting the open countryside immediately surrounding the village, Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) has identified a network of green corridors in East Challow. These corridors, shown on the map included in our policy on Biodiversity & Green Corridors included later in this section, and in the TVERC report included in Appendix X, are based on modelled habitat networks and PROWs and facilitate the movement of wildlife and people through the landscape.</p> <p>The NP Vision and Objectives include specific statements supporting the requirement to maintain a rural setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘In 2031 the community of East Challow will still sit in a rural setting... East Challow will be a smaller, rural village, with a strong heritage, a critical environmental awareness.’ (Vision) • “Preserve the high quality and accessible countryside setting of the village within the open landscape of the lowland Vale area...” (Objectives) 	
EVIDENCE	
<p>The Village and Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix X) discusses the intrinsic value of the countryside and farmland surrounding the village. It identifies five land parcels and includes important countryside views within and from each parcel, and from associated footpaths and PROWs.</p> <p>A map showing PROWs and footways around the village is included in Appendix X. There are four important views from popular paths which, to a great extent, define the character of the village setting. Photos of these views are presented in Appendix X:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwards from the recreation ground and PROW 196/6 across Land Parcel E (EACH 15,16,17,18) also Photo E7 - Village LCA • Northwards across Land Parcel B from the A417 footpath (EACH 06) • Northwards and westwards from the cricket ground across Land Parcel C 	

(EACH 03) also Photo C2 – Village LCA

- Southeastwards from the A417 footpath across Land Parcel C
(EACH 03) also Photo C1 – Village LCA

Note: to avoid confusion footpaths are renamed ‘footways’ in order to differentiate them from public footpaths recorded as Public Rights of Way (PROWs).

From the results of the Community Survey, in relation to green space and the natural environment, 88% of responses identified Green Areas, Rural Setting and Access to Countryside, and Wildlife/Nature as very important (section 3.1). The Youth survey August 2017 also stated: “... we like that [the village] is small, quiet and peaceful and that we are near the countryside.”

POLICY CONTEXT

This policy offers additional local detail to protections set out at local and national level:

- NPPF 73 (planning policies to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities et al)
- NPPF 75 (planning policies to protect and enhance public rights of way and access et al)
- NPPF 109 (planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes)
- NPPF 123 (planning policies and decisions to (inter alia) aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason)

- Core Policy 3 (settlement hierarchy to include larger and smaller villages)
- Core Policy 37 (proposals for new development to be of high quality design that (inter alia) responds positively to the site and its surroundings, cultural diversity and history)
- Core Policy 44 (landscape to be protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced in particular (inter alia) important landscape settings of settlements)

POLICY

New development will only be permitted where:

1. No strategic views are blocked or adversely impacted.
2. A proportionate contribution is made by developers to improve access to the countryside and safeguard and enhance the green corridors, such as improvement to the footpath network, reinstatement of views, improvements to feeling of tranquillity, etc.
3. It does not introduce urban features, noise, or additional traffic such that the intrinsic value of the countryside is diminished or to the detriment of feelings of openness and tranquillity from footpaths.

POLICY TITLE	
Local Green Space	
ISSUE	
<p>The purpose of this policy is to retain the character of the village by proposing a number of important green spaces in the parish to be protected from development by designation as Local Green Spaces. In each case, the green spaces are an integral part of the village character and are therefore regarded as special to the local community. A map showing the above-referred green spaces is included in Appendix X.</p> <p>This policy is supported by evidence from the Local Green Spaces Evidence Base (Appendix X), the Village Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix X), and the TVERC report on Green Corridors in East Challow.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan vision states that: ‘In 2031 the community of East Challow will still sit in a rural setting... [and] East Challow will be ... a smaller, rural village, with a strong heritage, a critical environmental awareness.’ The Neighbourhood Plan objectives aim to: ‘Preserve the high quality and accessible countryside setting of the village within the open landscape of the lowland Vale area and protect the valued neighbouring green spaces.’</p> <p>The character of the village is a rural village with very many green spaces of diverse use and type. The village is surrounded by farmland. It is adjacent to but separate from the urban developments of Wantage and Grove by fields EACH03, EACH05, EACH06 and EACH07.</p> <p>East Challow has five small parcels of land which, combined, make up the village green opposite St Nicholas Church. This is classified as common land (CL98). There is an additional strip of land which runs parallel to the A417 road from the entrance to Wises Farm which also has common land status (CL99).</p> <p>One of the characters of the village is the wide grass verges which run alongside the A417. The Wilts and Berks Canal runs through the village with a canal path which is used by the villagers. The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust hold a long-term lease on the majority of the canal paths through the village. The Trust maintains the canal paths.</p> <p>The recreation ground land was bequeathed to East Challow Parish Council in 1963. There is evidence that the land was transferred to the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan group are seeking legal advice to confirm this. The group will then consider requesting a transfer to common land if the Parish Council agrees.</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>The Local Green Spaces evidence base (Appendix X) sets out the case for each site to be designated. Once designated, the policy will resist all proposals for development unless it can be clearly demonstrated they are minor or they are required utilities development.</p> <p>The Village and Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix X) discusses the intrinsic value of the countryside and farmland surrounding the village. It identifies five land parcels and includes important countryside views within and from each parcel, and from associated footpaths and PROWs. The TVERC Green Corridors report includes detailed information about the green corridors in the village which facilitate the movement of wildlife and people through the landscape.</p>	

The Community Survey analysis states that these factors are of high importance and valuable to the village: 1- East Challow's setting in a rural landscape including the long open views around the village and out to the surrounding countryside; 2- The ability to access the countryside surrounding the village easily on foot/bicycle; 3 - Public parks and open green areas within the village. The Youth survey August 2017 analysis also stated: 'we like that [the village] is small, quiet and peaceful and that we are near the countryside.'

POLICY CONTEXT

Potential Local Green Space site must meet the criteria set out in the NPPF Clauses 76, 77 and 78, and further detailed in the National Planning Practice Guidance:

- NPPF Criteria 1: The designation should only be used where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
- NPPF Criteria 2: The designation should only be used where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.
- NPPF Criteria 3: The designation should only be used where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

In order to provide further certainty, Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) have been used to define the likely size of a suitable Local Green Space and its distance from the local community. Therefore, a Local Green Space should normally be located within 2km (1.25 miles) of the community it serves and a site of 2ha (5 acres) or less should be located within 300m (325 yards) (or a 5-minute walk) of the community it serves. A site of over 20ha (50 acres) would be considered to be 'an extensive tract of land' and therefore not suitable for designation as a Local Green Space.

DISCUSSION

In recent years three planning applications have been rejected by VWHDC for developments on EACH02, EACH 16 & 17, and EACH 18, as described in Appendix X. The NP protects certain green spaces (those not already protected through other means e.g. Common land).

POLICY

The Neighbourhood Plan designates Local Green Spaces in the following locations, as shown in the Local Green Spaces Evidence Base in Appendix X:

1. HELAA reference EACH02
2. HELAA reference EACH18- 8.36 hectares agricultural land.
3. Parcel of land between Hedgehill Road and A417 road.
4. Wide grassed verges alongside Goodlake House and opposite side of A417 road.

The above sites are designated as Local Green Spaces where development will only be allowed under very special circumstances.

ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

POLICY TITLE	
The Low Carbon Transition	
ISSUE	
<p>The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK to an 80% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2050. This is a challenging target, which requires everyone to be engaged, from households and communities, to businesses and local and national government. With this in mind, it is likely that national and regional policies relating to the reduction of the carbon footprint will impose themselves increasingly on East Challow residents in years to come.</p> <p>The East Challow NP acknowledges the climate emergency facing the planet and wishes to play an enabling, proactive role in assisting the low carbon transition by encouraging the use of electric vehicles and by ensuring that new development allows more local residents to work from and access services from home, thereby reducing the village's carbon footprint.</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) research shows that electric car sales in the UK have risen dramatically over the past few years. While only around 500 electric cars were registered per month during the first half of 2014, this has now risen to an average of almost 4,000 per month during 2017. These trends are forecast to continue to rise, thereby necessitating a parallel increase in infrastructure, particularly charging points.</p> <p>From 1998 to 2014, the number of home workers in the UK increased from 2.9 to 4.2 million. This trend appears to be more pronounced in East Challow. The 2011 Census showed that 7.2% of East Challow residents in employment aged 16-74 worked from home, compared to 3.5% in England as a whole. Therefore, an upwards trend in home-working in an area like East Challow which already has above-average numbers puts a premium on ensuring that technological infrastructure is adequate to service their activities.</p>	
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>At national and local level, a number of policies support the low carbon transition.</p> <p>NPPF para 35 states that development should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes and incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. NPPF para 42 states that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth while the development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.</p> <p>It is a strategic objective in Vale of the White Horse Strategic Objective in Local Plan Part 1 to protect the environment and respond to climate change. In addition, Core Policy 36: Electronic communications promotes faster, more reliable and more comprehensive coverage of electronic communications and allow businesses and residents to access services and information more effectively, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel. Proposals for all new development should ensure appropriate infrastructure is provided during development, sufficient to enable all properties to be connected to superfast broadband without any post- development works.</p> <p>Core Policy 33: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility seeks to ensure that developments are designed in a way to promote sustainable transport access both within new sites.</p>	

DISCUSSION	
	<p>There is overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is happening and human activity is the primary cause. The Paris Agreement sees an unprecedented consensus from 185 countries on the need to take action on climate change.</p> <p>Locally, this aspiration is reflected by the Vale of the White Horse Strategic Objective in Local Plan Part 1 to protect the environment and respond to climate change.</p> <p>In turn, therefore, this NP policy is a practical means to help enable a low carbon future by facilitating the uptake of new, greener technologies and enabling more home-working. In addition, the Facilities Project list (Appendix X) will include the development of a meeting place, for example the Village Hall, with high speed broadband, where local residents could carry out their work as part of a community.</p>
POLICY	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for any new houses should make provision for superfast broadband and charging points for electric vehicles. • A development that requires the provision for parking should ensure that 2 spaces, in addition to allocated spaces, are provided with vehicle charging points. Further parking should ensure that for every 10 additional parking spaces provided, 1 should have access to a vehicle charging point. The location of the charging point should be clearly signed. Payment to be by contactless card. • EC will encourage the introduction of vehicle charging points to the existing dwellings. This can be by fitting power sockets under windows or using power in a garage. • All new houses should be fitted with photovoltaic panels sufficient to make the dwelling energy self-sufficient with 10% extra capacity for future needs. • All new developments should retain existing trees where possible. For each tree removed one new tree should be planted to replace it.

POLICY TITLE	
Biodiversity and green corridors	
ISSUE	
<p>East Challow is situated in a rural setting, affording easy access to the natural environment for residents. This access comprises public rights of way and associated existing green corridors, outlined in work commissioned by the Parish Council from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (Appendix X). The majority of existing properties in the village are adjacent to agricultural land or green space, enabling these existing wildlife corridors that enhance local green infrastructure.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enhance these existing green corridors and relationship with the natural environment • Promote critical environmental awareness within the existing village and among new developments as necessary • Require ‘net gain’ in biodiversity and green infrastructure from new developments, considering existing and proposed green corridors and known protected species <p>Our neighbourhood plan vision states that ‘in 2031... East Challow will sit in a rural setting’ with ‘a critical environmental awareness’. Our Neighbourhood Plan objectives include: 1- have a say where housing is sited; 2- preserve the rural character of the village; and 8- preserve the high quality and accessible countryside setting of the village within the open landscape of the lowland Vale area and protect the valued neighbouring green spaces.</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>A ‘green corridors’ report (Appendix X) was commissioned from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC). The corridors identified in the report ‘are based on modelled habitat networks and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and facilitate the movement of wildlife and people through the landscape’ (report summary). A number of existing corridors were identified (green), and a number of proposed corridors identified that link existing corridors along PROW (blue). The canal forms one of the identified green corridors (The Vale Way).</p> <p>East Challow Parish Council also commissioned a Biodiversity report from TVERC (Appendix X), to identify protected (NERC S41) and notable species present within the parish. This report identifies the presence of badgers, bats and Great Crested Newts, among many other species. The sightings of these species occur throughout the parish, but notably, for example in the case of the protected Great Crested Newts, on land that was recently granted planning permission for development (EACH04 and EACH06). This is just one example of planned development impacting existing species and habitats within our parish. EACH06 land parcel is also one of the identified priority habitats within the village.</p> <p>The results of our village survey indicate a number of environmental matters that are of significant importance to the village. These include: ability to access countryside easily on foot or bicycle (score 1.2 on a scale of 1-5 where 1= most important) and the village’s ability to sustain wildlife and nature within its’ boundaries through retaining ‘green infrastructure’.</p>	
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states: ‘To minimize impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should: ...identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy</p>	

of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation; ...'. The identification and mapping of green corridors by TVERC is therefore in accordance with the NPPF.

Additionally:

- NPPF109: The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- NPPF110: In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this framework.
- NPPF114: Local planning authorities should: set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- NPPF117: To minimize impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should: promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan.

Local Plan Part 1

- CP45: A net gain in Green Infrastructure, including biodiversity, will be sought either through on-site provision or off-site contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources. A net loss of Green Infrastructure, including biodiversity, through development proposals, will be resisted.
- CP46: Development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district will be permitted.

DISCUSSION

The reasons for a specific policy to promote biodiversity, and protect, maintain and enhance the green corridors within the parish are as follows:

1. Recent planning permissions have been granted on land that overlaps with both existing and proposed green corridors (HELAA EACH04 and EACH06, P17/V0231/RM and P16/V1714/O), without regard for NPPF10 (allocate land with least environmental... value) or LPP1 CP45 (net gain in green infrastructure), amongst others. This is land where protected and notable species have been observed, and EACH06 is an area identified as priority habitat within the parish. Existing policy does give sufficient weight to prevent development on important green corridors within the parish.
2. Village opinion strongly suggested the need for improvement to PRoW, existing hedgerows and trenches, and the desire to enhance green infrastructure. PRoW should be maintained by Oxfordshire County Council, and various countryside access projects grant funding for improvements to signage etc. for promotion of walks. These aspirations are the subject of a specific Infrastructure project (see Appendix X), linked to the Neighbourhood Plan CIL policy.

POLICY

Development proposals should seek to maintain and enhance the connectivity of all existing and proposed green corridors wherever possible.

Proposals for development on or adjacent to existing and proposed green corridors, must maintain and if possible enhance the function of the corridor. Planning applications for new dwellings must clearly

demonstrate how they have incorporated appropriate measures to secure the connectivity of the corridor and the freedom of movement for species on or through the site.

Development proposals should seek to enhance biodiversity wherever possible. On sites where protected species have been observed/recorded, developments should plan for the protection and, where possible, enhancement of existing habitats, both during and after construction.

INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

POLICY TITLE								
Community Facilities								
ISSUE								
<p>East Challow’s village life is supported in particular by the following community facilities: Village Hall, Challow Mission, St. Nicholas’s Church, Challow and Childrey Cricket Ground, the Royal British Legion and the Recreation Ground and Allotments. However, as set out below, some of these facilities are operating at or near capacity, while some are in need of physical improvement.</p> <p>At present, there are minimal retail facilities within the village, with only a hire centre/ agriculture/ horticultural workshop and store and a hardware/ homeware/ furniture shop located within the village. Elsewhere in the parish there is a fuel station with limited retail facilities and a small industrial estate, but neither can safely be reached on foot.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to protect a specific number of community facilities from unnecessary loss, in line with the VWHLP policies CF1 and CF5 and NPPF para 70 that support the retention of existing community facilities and public houses if their viability can be demonstrated. They comprise a range of buildings and associated land, all of which may be capable of being extended or redeveloped in ways that are suitable to a rural location.</p> <p>The policy also seeks to ensure that new development contributes sufficiently to ensure that new residents have access to the same quality of community infrastructure as present. This is in line with NPPF paras 69 and 70, which seeks to facilitate social interaction and create healthy and sustainable communities and deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities which the community needs. A relatively large number of villagers (about 40% of respondents) work from home and therefore broadband facilities are particularly important.</p> <p>In addition, the policy is intended to secure the long-term benefit of a range of facilities that are important to the local community through engagement with potential developers. In some cases, remaining viable will require investment in updating and/ or increasing the size of the facility to support new uses.</p>								
EVIDENCE								
<p><i>Community Facilities</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="161 1675 1337 2007"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="161 1675 392 1821">Village Hall</td> <td data-bbox="392 1675 1337 1821"> Located off Canal Way at the bottom of the village Used by many residents, groups and committees and the school for various functions, it also houses key community programmes. Parking is limited due to resident’s usage </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="161 1821 392 1935">Challow Mission</td> <td data-bbox="392 1821 1337 1935"> Located on Main Street opposite St Nicholas Church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by residents • No parking facilities </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="161 1935 392 2007">St Nicholas Church</td> <td data-bbox="392 1935 1337 2007"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on Main Street at the bottom of the village next to the Village Hall. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Village Hall	Located off Canal Way at the bottom of the village Used by many residents, groups and committees and the school for various functions, it also houses key community programmes. Parking is limited due to resident’s usage	Challow Mission	Located on Main Street opposite St Nicholas Church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by residents • No parking facilities 	St Nicholas Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on Main Street at the bottom of the village next to the Village Hall.
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Challow & Childrey Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on Vicarage Hill at the top of the village • Used by many residents from the village and surrounding villages for cricket and functions with bar facilities • Parking is sufficient
The Royal British Legion	<p>Located on Vicarage Hill at the top of the Village</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by many residents for bar facilities and a function room is also available for hire • Parking is sufficient
Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on Cornhill Lane in the middle of the village • Play area used by many residents • Current sports facilities inc. football pitch/changing rooms/tennis & netball court which unfortunately have no current village team use • Allotments are well used and appreciated and there is currently a waiting list • Parking is sufficient • Given the lack of exercise equipment, there is an opportunity to provide outdoor exercise equipment for adults.
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>The policy adds local detail to the following national and local policies: NPPF 69 (places for community to meet) and NPPF 70 (social/cultural facilities for community), Core Policy 26 (elderly should be near facilities), saved policy CF1 protection of existing services and facilities and emerging Local Plan part 2 – community and village hall standards (p.60).</p>	
POLICY	
<p>Proposals should make proportionate provision to improve and enhance existing community infrastructure where new users are likely to be introduced to the community.</p> <p>Proposals involving the loss of land or buildings in community use which, in terms of their location, physical characteristics and accessibility, are considered suitable to meet identified community needs will not be permitted unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate, appropriate, alternative provision sufficient to accommodate the loss is included as part of the proposal, or • Sufficient convenient provision is already available elsewhere 	

POLICY TITLE	
Community Infrastructure Levy	
ISSUE	
<p>Any housing development in the Plan period must provide either infrastructure on site or funding for this through a legal agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) enables the village to prioritise use of any funding from development for specific costed, feasible community projects (see Appendix X).</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>A number of projects have been identified through the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process and which would significantly benefit the village. The projects relate to local transport, traffic speeding and footways and cycleways. It is proposed that these be financed from Community Infrastructure Levy funding. Projects identified and discussed in Appendix X are based on current circumstances and priorities. These may change and the Appendix will be reviewed annually and updated as required.</p>	
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>NPPF paragraph 175 states that the Community Infrastructure Levy should support and incentivise new development, particularly by placing control over a meaningful proportion of the funds raised with the neighbourhoods where development takes place.</p>	
POLICY	
<p>Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from development will be used for the benefit of the community, including the priority projects listed in Appendix X.</p>	

POLICY TITLE	
Public Rights of Way (PROWs) & Footways	
ISSUE	
<p>A map of all PROWs and footways is in Appendix X. Note: to avoid confusion [footpaths] are renamed ‘footways’ in order to differentiate them from public footpaths recorded as public rights of way (PROWs).</p> <p>There is ample scope for improvement and expansion of existing footways, some of which can be upgraded to cycle routes. These will improve both life quality and social interaction. There are no nominated safe cycle routes through or in the village.</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>Notwithstanding the good existing footpath network, concern is expressed in the Community Survey about the loss of established footpaths (2.2) and the use of 4x4 vehicles and motorcycles on Cornhill Lane/Green Lane (2.2). There are also concerns about the use of 4x4 vehicles and motorcycles along sections of the canal paths.</p> <p>The Community Survey (3.1) identifies the ability to access the countryside easily on foot/cycle as one of the most important environmental matters. The Survey (2.1) also indicates that the existing good footpath network is highly valued and that walking and cycling (4.9 and 4.15) are popular forms of transport.</p>	
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>NPPF Policy 4 (para 35) states that plans should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements.</p> <p>Local Plan Part 2, Policy 31: Protection of Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas – seeks to support improvements to the Public Rights of Way Network and Open Access Areas, and to protect National Trails</p>	
POLICY	
<p>The protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access; and the provision of new public rights of way and access that link into existing routes, will be supported.</p>	

TRAFFIC & ROADS

POLICY TITLE	
Parking	
ISSUE	
<p>This policy is included to support the Local Plan policies on residential parking. There is only limited public transport and a shortage of amenities in the village, therefore East Challow residents are dependent on the private car. As a result, car ownership is higher than average (see reference to ACRE report below) and new development needs to address local concerns that new housing will not add to the identified congestion in the village. Put simply, where residents have no choice but to own a car this situation needs to be recognised.</p> <p>Parking on the A417 along Main Street, in the historic core of the village, creates a traffic hazard because parked vehicles extend out into the carriageway (see photos in Appendix X). The same vehicles cause obstructions on the footpath for pedestrians, especially with pushchairs, at school start and finish times. Parking on Hedgehill Road/ Sarajac Avenue makes it difficult for buses and dust carts to pass easily.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is three-fold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid increase in traffic congestion and traffic hazards in the village centre due to on-street parking • To ensure that pavements and village streets are accessible to pedestrians, particularly the mobility impaired such as parents with prams and the less sure of foot. • To remove on-street parking in areas which reinforce the rural character of the village 	
EVIDENCE	
<p>The Rural Community Profile for East Challow (ACRE, Nov 2013, page 35) shows that the number of households with 2, 3, or 4 cars is above the Vale and national averages. Parking problems are therefore not surprising.</p> <p>The Community Survey (4.4 & 4.5) details the concerns of the villagers, ie a high number of responses (36%) identified parking concerns as very important, particularly along the A417 and along Hedgehill Road/ Sarajac Avenue (see photos in Appendix X)</p> <p>The village character assessment (Appendix X) identifies East Challow’s historic core. The predominant parking issue along the A417 occurs within this historic core, opposite or nearly opposite the village green, described in the character assessment (3.14) as providing “ a breathing space ...and reinforcing the rural character of East Challow” with associated properties providing “a visually attractive grouping and...a unique and distinct area within the village”.</p>	
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>NPPF 39: parking standards should take into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of development, the availability of and opportunities for public transport; local car ownership levels.</p>	

Core policy 33 (i, v & vi): i. actively seek to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network are minimised v. ensure that transport improvements are designed to minimise any effects on the amenities, character and special qualities of the surrounding area, and vi. promote and support improvements to the transport network that increase safety, improve air quality and/or make our towns and villages more attractive.

Core policy 35 (vii): ensure adequate parking is delivered on new developments in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's published standards

Core Policy 37 : (i) Design to respond positively to the site and its surroundings, cultural diversity and history, conserve and enhance historic character and reinforce local identity, (xi) ensure a sufficient level of well-integrated car and bicycle parking and external storage.

Oxfordshire Parking Policy 6.9 (parking on footways & verges): The Highway Code says: "Do not park partially or wholly on the pavement unless signs permit it". Under section 19 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, Heavy Goods Vehicles are banned from parking on the footway, although ...an HGV may be parked on the footway when loading/unloading is in progress. There is no national legislation prohibiting the parking of all vehicles on footways and verges, due to the wide range of circumstances where [this] occurs.

POLICY	
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- Developments will be permitted where their full parking needs can be met off-street.
- The provision of additional short-term off-street parking will be welcomed.
- **Sizeable** future developments should include parking provision for villagers generally.
- The size of standard parking bays should meet the needs of modern vehicles.

POLICY TITLE	
HGV Traffic	
ISSUE	
<p>The purpose of this policy is to reduce the negative amenity impact of lorry traffic on the A417 through East Challow, and to avoid increases of lorry through-movements on the A417 through the village. This is for two reasons: 1- existing controls are not sufficient to ease problems and 2; need to ensure that future decisions have a net positive impact.</p> <p>East Challow is largely a ribbon village along the A417. Within the village the A417 forms junctions with a number of other roads. All roads lead to residential properties and businesses. There is a junction at the south end of the village which in addition provides a short cut through Letcombe Hill to Ickleton Road.</p> <p>Our Objectives statement seeks to ‘address transport issues’ and to ‘encourage sustainable development if it can contribute to the development of the Western Relief Road and reduce the current traffic flow on the A417.</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>There is a 30mph speed limit through the village which is frequently ignored by HGV vehicles on the A417 travelling too fast.</p> <p>The Community Survey (4.1) identified heavy lorries as the most important issue in the category of traffic, speeding and parking; 112 out of 127 respondees indicated they were concerned or very concerned.</p>	
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>A number of national and local provisions underpin an East Challow-specific HGV policy:</p> <p>NPPF 30 (traffic solutions should support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion), NPPF 35 (development plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people), NPPF 36 (all developments which generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a Travel Plan) and Vale Local 2031 Part 1, Core Policy 43: Natural Resources (encouraging developers to make provision for the effective use of natural resources where applicable, including taking account of the Council’s Air Quality Action Plan).</p> <p>HGVs contribute large amounts of nitrogen dioxide pollution. Therefore, a policy is required which reduces these emissions in general accordance with the Council’s Air Quality Action Plan to ‘reduce air pollution and contribute to the development of more sustainable communities in order to help improve the health and well-being of our residents’ (p. 9).</p>	
POLICY	
<p>A traffic /speed survey should be carried out as a priority.</p>	

A future traffic plan must be generated that will remove or reduce the noise, vibration, dust and air pollution from the built-up area, and most particularly reduce NO2 levels. This is included in the Infrastructure Project List (Appendix X)

Proposals that generate significant levels of lorry movements that are likely to pass through East Challow should contain provisions to minimise the amenity impacts on local residents.

The use of lorry routing agreements will be encouraged where this can reduce the use of the A417 through East Challow.

POLICY TITLE	
Western Relief Road	
ISSUE	
<p>The purpose of this policy is to offer locally-contextualised support for the proposed Western Relief Road policy in the Local Plan. It is important that a relief road, if built, achieves the objective of not only routing traffic out of the village but also ensures that residential roads in the village, especially Letcombe Hill/ Vicarage Hill, do not receive a greater traffic load from vehicles accessing the new link road. A future traffic plan must remove or reduce the noise, vibration, dust and air pollution from the built-up area, and most particularly reduce NO2 levels</p> <p>East Challow is largely a ribbon village along the A417. Within the village the A417 forms junctions with a number of other roads. All roads lead to residential properties and businesses. There is a junction at the south end of the village which in addition provides a short cut through Letcombe Hill to Ickleton Road.</p> <p>Our Objectives statement seeks to ‘address transport issues’ and to ‘encourage sustainable development if it can contribute to the development of the Western Relief Road and reduce the current traffic flow on the A417’. The issue of HGV Traffic is dealt with in a separate policy, while the issue of speeding is dealt with in a separate Infrastructure Project proposal (Appendix X).</p>	
EVIDENCE	
<p>A FOI request by the Parish Council to Oxfordshire County Council in 2016 revealed that the A417 is at or over capacity.</p> <p>The volume and speed of traffic on the A417, and on Letcombe Hill/Vicarage Hill, was recorded as the issue of greatest concern to villagers in the Community Survey (2.2). Another significant concern was the potential for a future Western Relief Road to add traffic to other arterial and residential village roads.</p> <p>The Community Survey (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) and specific narrative comments) documents respondents’ detailed concerns regarding heavy lorries, heavy traffic generally and speeding.</p> <p>Further details are given in the Infrastructure project on speeding (see Appendix X) and the HGV Traffic policy.</p>	
POLICY CONTEXT	
<p>Local Plan 2031 Part 1, safeguards land to deliver a West Wantage Link Road (WWLR) connecting the A417 from Mably Way in Wantage to East Challow. In Core Policy 17: Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area, all development within the South-East Vale Sub-Area will be required to contribute towards infrastructure including the West Wantage relief road.</p> <p>A property development company, Dandara, is proposing a new development of 750 houses immediately to the north and east of the village. Dandara claim that their new development will finance the new link road.</p>	

NPPF Policy 4 para 31 states that local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure.

POLICY

A development proposal for a relief road must demonstrate that it will:

1. Reduce the volume of traffic running through the heart of the village, and
2. Reduce noise, vibration, dust and air pollution, most particularly NO₂ levels, in the built-up area of the village.