

CULHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2020 – 2041



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REFERENDUM VERSION

Published by Culham Parish Council for Referendum under the
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as
amended).

March 2023

A Guide to Reading this Plan

Of necessity, this Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this page is to explain the structure and help you find your way around the plan.

1. Introduction & Background

This section explains the background to this Neighbourhood Plan and how you can take part in and respond to the consultation.

2. The Neighbourhood Area

This section details many of the features of the designated area.

3. Planning Policy Context

This rather technical section relates this Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning policies of South Oxfordshire District Council and the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

4. Community Views on Planning Issues

This section explains the community involvement that has taken place.

5. Vision, Objectives & Land Use Policies

This is the key section. Firstly, it provides a statement on the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives. It then details Policies which are proposed to address the issues outlined in the Foreword and in Section 4. These Policies are listed on page 5. There are Policy Maps at the back of the plan and additional information in the Appendices to which the policies cross reference.

6. Implementation

This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and future development guided and managed. It suggests projects which might be supported by the Community Infrastructure Levy which the Parish Council will have some influence over. Finally, it deals with a number of issues which although relevant are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

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FOREWORD

The submitted Plan represents the views of the local community with regard to the future of Culham up to 2041. It has been prepared by the Parish Council and with support from the local people, statutory bodies and our advisors. In our view, it represents a strong and robust approach to the Localism agenda. Within this context it has been designed to operate within the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan in the Culham Neighbourhood Plan area which will impact dramatically on our parish.

Our Ambitions

The Plan has been designed to be a planning, land use document. However, within this important context it delivers several overlapping community ambitions in Culham as follows:

- A wish to safeguard the rural character of the village.
- A wish to enhance community infrastructure.
- A wish to enhance and develop green spaces, wildlife and biodiversity.
- A wish to promote sustainable development in the form of carbon neutral building.

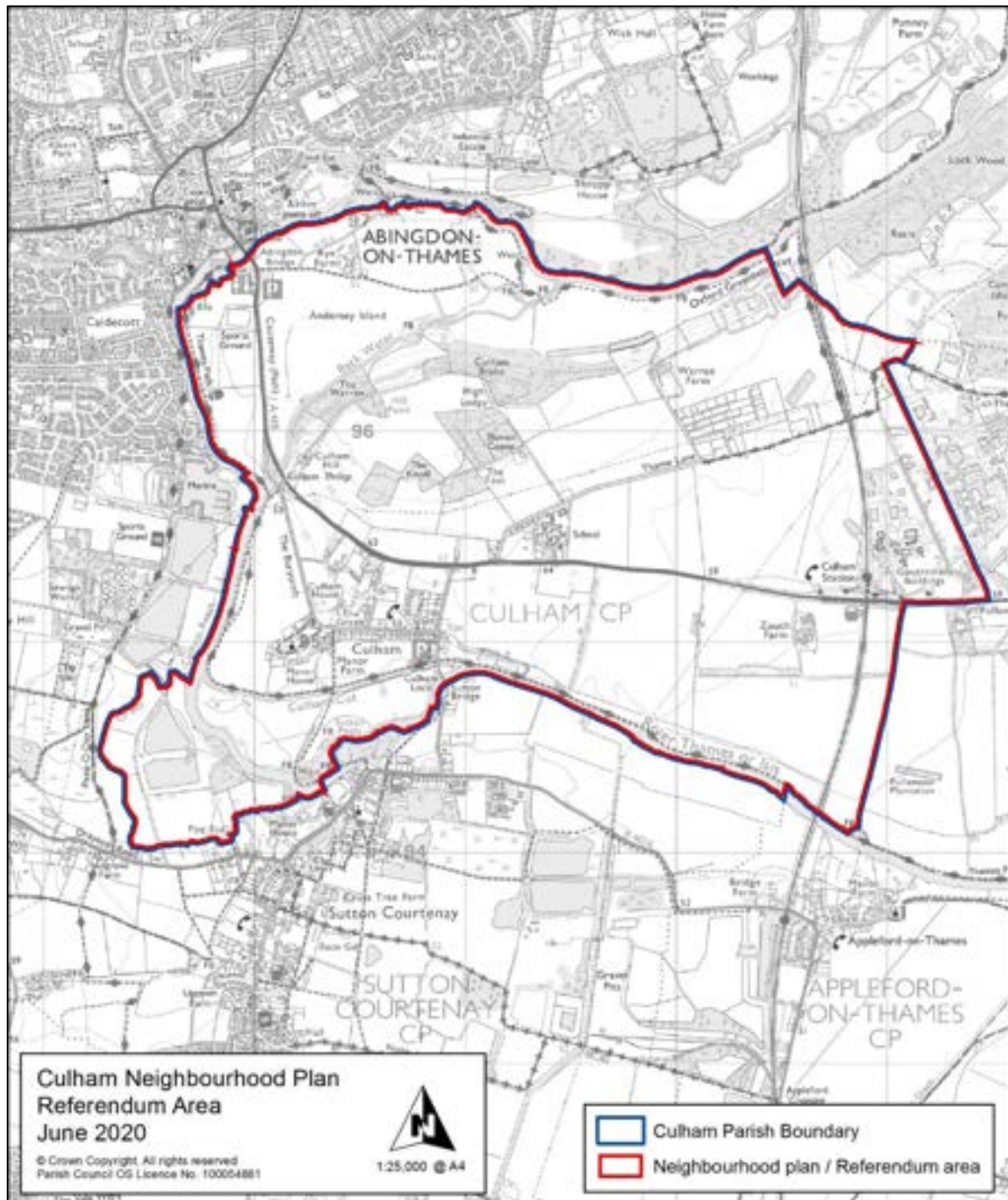
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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 Culham Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council, on 18 September 2020. The plan is being prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).

1.2 The area coincides with the parish boundary (see Plan A below).



Plan A: Designated Neighbourhood Area

1.3 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to 2041. The Plan will form part of the development plan for the district, alongside the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. There is also an emerging Joint Local Plan 2041, covering the same plan period as the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4 Once approved at a referendum, the Plan becomes a statutory part of the development plan.

1.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some 'basic conditions'. In essence, the conditions are:

- Does the Plan have regard to national planning policy and guidance?
- Is the Plan in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan?
- Does the Plan contribute to the achievement of sustainable development?
- The making of the Plan does not breach, or is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations as incorporated into UK law.
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with.

1.6 In addition, the Parish Council will need to demonstrate to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community in preparing the Plan. Following an independent examination, South Oxfordshire District Council will determine if they should accept the examiner's recommendation/s, if the Plan meets the basic conditions, and if the Plan should proceed to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority of the turnout votes in favour of the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the Parish.

The Levelling Up White Paper

1.7 In February 2022 the Government published for consultation its White Paper, '[Levelling Up the United Kingdom](#)', which proposes to make changes to planning system. It indicates that there is still a future for neighbourhood planning in that system. It remains unknown when any proposed changes will be implemented.

The Pre-Submission Plan

1.8 A draft Pre-Submission Plan was published for consultation 17 January – 14 March 2022 in line with the Regulations. The Parish Council reviewed the comments received from the local community and other interested parties and made changes for their submission version of the plan. They also updated some of the reports included in the appendices of the plan.

Sustainability Appraisal & the Habitats Regulations

1.9 The District Council has confirmed in its screening opinion that the proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan do not have the potential for significant environmental effects and therefore no Strategic Environmental Assessment will be necessary as per the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.10 The screening opinion also confirms that, given the plan scope and the absence of any Natura 2000 sites in the designated Neighbourhood Area, a Habitats Regulations Assessment will not be required, as per the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

(Based on the Culham Parish Council and the village run website about Culham and its history).

2.1 Culham is a small village and civil parish in a bend of the River Thames, 1 mile (1.6 km) south of Abingdon in Oxfordshire with more than 12 centuries of recorded history. The 2011 Census recorded the population of Culham as 453. The Parish lies entirely within the Green Belt (and the village itself is 'washed over').



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2.2 Though small, it is known internationally through the nearby research centre, Culham Science Centre, home to two major nuclear fusion experiments, JET and MAST. When JET was built, the European Commission set up the European School in Culham to provide an international education for the children of Euratom scientists who would come to work at JET. The European Commission withdrew from managing the school, and it is now a multicultural multilingual UK state school called the Europa School UK.



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2.3 The parish of Culham divides geographically into three distinct sections. Most of it lies between Clifton Hampden and a backwater of the Thames once known as Swift Ditch: Andersey Island, comprising the area between the backwater and Abingdon; and the Otneys, an area on the right bank of the Thames adjoining the west side of Sutton Courtenay.

2.4 The origins of the parish system go back to Anglo-Saxon times. We do not know when the parish of Culham first came into existence, but a survey of it was made in 940 in the time of King Edmund. The boundaries of the parish seem to be exactly as now, except for the loss of some eyots in the river to Abingdon in 1894. The survey mentions the ford where Abingdon Bridge now stands and refers to 'barrows' (earthworks) at some points along the Parish's eastern boundary; but all trace of the barrows has long since disappeared.

2.5 The parish is bounded by the Thames to the north, west and south, and by present and former field boundaries to the east. It is low-lying and fairly flat, rising from the Thames floodplain in the south to a north-facing escarpment in the north up to 260 feet (80 m) above sea level. The Thames was certainly navigable during the Middle Ages from London to Henley, and perhaps to Burcot; but the barges moving upstream from Burcot had to face a shallow, rocky bottom at Clifton and a very tricky passage through Sutton to Abingdon. There was, of course, no Clifton or Culham Cut until the 19th Century. At Abingdon the river was again shallow and there were numerous obstructions on the way to Oxford. Hence the wharfage for Abingdon came to be at Culham. We know, for instance, that stone and lead from the dissolved Abbey of Abingdon were brought by road to Culham Wharf to be loaded upon barges for transportation to London. In Tudor times barges became bigger and this made it almost impossible for them to move between Burcot and Oxford. Hence by two Acts of 1605 and 1624 Parliament set up the Oxford - Burcot Commission to improve the passage of the Thames between these places.



© unused RP postcard – Photo: Piper, Didcot Source: Sutton Courtenay Local History Society

2.6 The Commission did much to improve the river between 1624 and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. It built the first pound locks on the Thames at Iffley, Sandford and Culham. The Culham Lock was constructed about 1636 in a new cutting at the head of Swift Ditch, which was made the main artery for the barge traffic. The remains of the lock can still be seen as well as the assembly pool for barges that lay near it. There was a flash lock about half way along Swift Ditch, which existed at least as early as 1585. Swift Ditch remained the chief navigation channel until 1790 when it was abandoned in favour of the present route through Abingdon. Water communications through Culham were made much easier in 1809 with the construction of The Culham Cut and Lock. The Cut was made partly along the line of the old Speel Ditch, a straggling channel that left the Thames at the head of the present Cut and turned south to rejoin the river near Sutton Mill.

2.7 Communications by road were poor until the early 15th Century. The main Dorchester - Abingdon road runs through the parish from east to west, but before the reign of Henry V the traveller from Dorchester had to ford the river both at Culham and Abingdon. The highway from Dorchester to Abingdon is undoubtedly very old - it is said in an Act of Parliament of 1416 to have existed from "time immemorial". Between 1416 and 1422 a major scheme for improving communications between Abingdon and Culham was undertaken by the Abingdon Guild of the Holy Cross. Abingdon Bridge, the causeway across Andersey, and the old bridge at Culham were built at the Guild's expense.



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2.8 The old bridge is built across the site of the ancient ford known as Culham Hyth; it is of stone and has five perpendicular arches. It lies just to the south of the new bridge erected in 1928 by the Oxfordshire County Council. An Act of Parliament in 1736 created a turnpike trust to maintain the roads between Henley and Abingdon; the trust was empowered to levy tolls for the repair of the roads. Not until 1875 were tolls completely abandoned. The trust set up toll-houses at Culham Bridge and at the junction of Thame Lane with the main highway. The toll-houses are still standing.

2.9 During the English Civil War the bridge had considerable strategic importance. After the Royalists left Abingdon in May 1644 the Parliamentarians seized Culham Bridge and harried the royalist food convoys on the way to Oxford. The Royalists tried to recapture the bridge and demolish it in January 1645. This resulted in a skirmish on 11 January known as the battle of Culham Bridge. Sir Henry Gage "while boldly leading his men in a third assault on the enemy... was hit by a bullet and killed".

2.10 The highway is joined near the Wagon and Horses Inn by Thame Lane, which used to continue its journey across Clifton Heath. It was cut in 1941 when a Royal Naval Air Station was built on the east side of the railway line between Didcot and Oxford. A field to the north of Thame Lane bounded by the railway line was probably the site of the Abingdon races, held on Culham Heath from the 1730's to 1811. Visitors from Oxford could approach the racecourse by a road, or rather track, from Nuneham.

2.11 Culham village was never on the main road. The village High Street is part of a long loop beginning at the Wagon and Horses and ending at Culham Bridge. Before 1813 the straight stretch of road from Culham Bridge to the Village green, cutting through Bury Croft, did not exist; the main highway was linked to the village by a road running close to the west side of Culham House. This road was closed when the straight stretch of road to the Bridge was made. Before 1807 a road from the Wagon and Horses ran to the ferry which took travellers over the Thames to Sutton. The ferry lay just to the west of the present bridge. Built in 1807, it was extended over the Culham Cut in 1908. It was privately owned until 1939 when it was jointly purchased by the Berkshire and Oxfordshire County Councils.



© British Listed Buildings

2.12 The railway line from Didcot to Oxford runs through the eastern fringe of the parish. It was built in 1843 and 1844 after the objections of local landowners, the University and the city of Oxford had been overcome. The local station was known as "Abingdon Road" and was served by horse-drawn omnibuses from Abingdon which were timed to meet the trains. When Abingdon secured its own station in 1856 "Abingdon Road" was rechristened "Culham". The old ticket office at Culham Station, a Grade II* listed building, was designed by the famous Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

2.13 Culham's old English name (Cula's Hamm) suggests a possible 6th Century Anglo-Saxon settlement in the bend of the river, and it was a place of some importance in later Saxon times. For six centuries it was a possession of the Abbey of Abingdon, though the Abbey did not have continuous possession before the middle of the 10th Century; and it was 150 years after that before the Abbey finally secured Andersey. The Mercian King Offa (d.796) is said to have had a hunting lodge on Andersey. The remainder of the parish was apparently in royal hands at this time. The abbey later claimed that King Kenwulf of Mercia (796-821) had granted Culham to it

and produced two charters, dated 811 and 821 to prove its case. The charters are certainly spurious, but may nonetheless have a basis of truth. The forgery of documents by monks was a not unusual procedure in the Dark Ages; they probably forged them to ensure their Abbey's possessions had a legal basis. This may well be the case with Culham. Certainly, Culham enjoyed a spell of royal favour in the Middle Ages.



© unused postcard photo, Source: Sutton Courtenay Local History Society

2.14 The manor of Culham remained in the hands of Abingdon Abbey as a rest house until the dissolution of the Abbey in 1538 when it was seized by the Crown. In 1545 Henry VIII granted it to a London wool merchant, William Bury, in exchange for land in the Isle of Sheppey and £600. The house is largely of fifteenth century origin but in 1610 Thomas Bury rebuilt the north front. Bury's house was much larger than the present one, for an eastern section was demolished during the Civil War. The Manor House was in possession of the Bisshopp family from 1666 until 1856 but their interest in it ceased in 1749 and the Manor began a long period of decline; for many years it was a farm house. However, the house was restored splendidly by Sir Esmond Over from its sadly dilapidated state of 1933.

2.15 The majority of villagers obtained a living from agriculture, farming strips of land in the great open fields which surrounded the village. Originally, there were two vast arable fields, perhaps even as late as 1539; for a survey of that year speaks only of Town and Contard Fields. By the middle of the 17th Century there were three fields (Ham, Middle and Contard); during the 18th century there was a change to a four field system. The enclosure Award of 1813 mentions four fields: 1. Contard - forming a triangle between the main highway and Thame Lane and ending in the east at Culham Heath, 2. Ham - south of the main highway, from the Clifton boundary to a point perhaps half way between the Wagon and Horses and the boundary, 3. South Middle Field - the remainder of the arable area south of the main highway, 4. North

Middle Field - mostly north of the main highway between the Wagon and Horses and Culham Bridge, and also north of Thame Lane for a short distance at its western end.

2.16 The exact boundaries of the fields are hard to trace. They comprised altogether some 700 acres. Apart from the arable land there were before enclosure a number of hedged meadows and pastures: these were to be found on Andersey, on both sides of Swift Ditch and in the north of the parish. In addition, Culham Heath was a large tract of land in the north east of the parish south of Nuneham Park and reaching in places the main Abingdon-Dorchester Road. After enclosure much of the heath was drained and brought under cultivation. The 18th century saw the appearance of large farms. Tye, Warren and the Manor Farm were the best known. There were about 40 Houses in the village at this time.



© unused postcard photo - TVAP Oxford Series XXX 1395, Source: Sutton Courtenay Local History Society

2.17 The houses lay mostly north and south of the main village street, i.e., the present High Street, though for most of its length the old street was farther north, i.e. nearer to Culham House, than the present High Street. The alteration to the present line was made between 1810 and 1813 at the time of enclosure when the road across Bury Croft was constructed. Most of the village was rebuilt in 1869 and 1870 and consequently few of the old dwellings survive. Indeed, the only old cottage still in existence is the village store, of 17th century origin and refronted in the 18th century. Not even the inns can claim much antiquity. The parish now has three: the Wagon and Horses, the Lion and the Jolly Porter (formerly the Railway Hotel). The Wagon and Horses can be traced back to 1795, though the building is early 19th century; the Lion (formerly the Sow and Pigs) is a fairly modern building, but it too can be traced back to 1795; the Jolly Porter was built about 1846. In the late 18th century there were half a dozen malthouses in the village.

2.18 Culham's oldest Building is the Manor House, originally a medieval grange of the Abbots of Abingdon. The house is largely of 15th century date, but in 1610 Thomas Bury rebuilt the north front. Bury's house was much larger than the present one, for an eastern section was demolished during or after the Civil Wars. There is still a room within the house called the Abbot's Chamber which once had heraldic glass depicting the arms of Abbot Coventry, who died in 1512. In the grounds is a dovecote, dated 1685, and bearing the initials of Sir Cecil Bisshopp. It is believed to be one of the three largest in England. When the Bisshopps ceased to bother with Culham, the Manor House began a long period of decline; for many years it was a farmhouse.



© unused postcard photo, Source: Sutton Courtenay Local History Society

2.19 The largest house in the village is Culham House, built about 1775 by John Phillips, lay rector of the parish. Phillips was a London builder. His ancestors hailed from Hagbourne and became master carpenters to George I and George II. The Phillips family first appeared in Culham about 1736 and were here until 1935. As lay rectors they were entitled to sit in the chancel of the church and were also legally responsible for the chancel's upkeep. Several memorials to members of the family are in the church. John Phillips erected a handsome redbrick building of five bays, with contemporary staircase, overmantles and doorcases. The house was enlarged about 25 years later to seven bays. It was once noted for its collection of china.

2.20 The old Vicarage was built about 1758, probably by Benjamin Kennicott, vicar of Culham 1753-83. It was enlarged by a later vicar, Robert Walker, in 1849. It has now been sold by the church authorities.

2.21 The only large building beyond the confines of the village is Culham College of Education. The building, erected in 1852 was designed by Joseph Clarke, a minor architect of the Victorian era. Clarke designed the College in the neo-Gothic style which was fashionable at the time. The tower block was opened in 1973 when

Teacher Training Colleges were being expanded. Europa School was established in 2012 and took over the school site and pupils fully from the Culham European School in 2017. The European School was located on the site from 1975, in buildings which had previously been the home of Culham College, a Church of England teacher training college from 1853.

2.22 There is no sign of any school in the parish before the early 19th century. In 1808 younger children learned to read and write in two small schools, presumably held in cottages; in 1815 a Sunday School was started, its master being paid from the rates. Nevertheless, provision for education was very unsatisfactory until 1850, when the village Church of England School was erected at a cost of £438. Some additions to the premises were made in 1897. Usually a mixed all-age school, it was reorganised in 1924 for infants and girls only, but in 1931 the senior girls were transferred to Dorchester. Temporarily closed in 1948, the school was re-opened in 1951.



© Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

2.23 St Paul's Church is situated at the end of the village green, opposite the Manor House and gardens. It has a long history and was closely linked in medieval times to Abingdon Abbey. Rebuilt in Victorian times, replacing one of late twelfth century or early thirteenth century origin; the tower is its oldest part, dating back to 1710. The Mediaeval Church was about the same length as the present building but had a narrower nave, In 1852 the mediaeval nave was beyond repair and was rebuilt; the cost was borne partly by a parish rate and partly by donations. The chancel was rebuilt at the expense of the lay rector, John Shawe Phillips. A new parish cemetery bordering the existing churchyard was consecrated by the Bishop of Dorchester in 2004 and the Parochial Church Council received approval from the Home Office for the closure of the churchyard, which is full.

2.24 The parish is also host to the Culham Break Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the northern edge of the parish boundary, a small area of wet willow woodland with large sedges and wetland wildflowers on the ground. The site is particularly important for the presence of a large population of the nationally scarce Lodden Lily. Other wetland wildflowers found here include meadowsweet, valerian and yellow flag iris.

2.25 Culham, in the course of its known history of more than 1,000 years, has seen many changes in the evolution of England and many changes within its own boundaries. Yet it remains a unity despite the economic and social pressures of the 20th century.



© Aerial View of Culham Village, Source: Culham Campsites

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Parish lies within the South Oxfordshire District Council area in the county of Oxfordshire.

National Planning Policy

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the government is an important guide in the preparation of neighbourhood plans. The following paragraphs of the latest version of the NPPF are considered especially relevant to this neighbourhood plan:

- Neighbourhood Planning (§28 - 30)
- Promoting healthy safe communities (§92)
- Community facilities (§93)
- High quality design (§130)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (§174)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (§190)

3.3 The Government has also set out a requirement for the provision of First Homes in a Written Ministerial statement on 24 May 2021. These requirements were subsequently incorporated into National Planning Practice Guidance. As the Parish is 'washed over' by Green Belt, First Homes Exception Sites are unable to come forward in The Parish. However, this does not preclude First Homes forming part of the affordable housing contributions through Rural Exception Sites allowed for by adopted policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. It is anticipated that the forthcoming Local Plan will deal with this matter appropriately and South Oxfordshire District Council has published an advice note regarding First Homes in the meantime.

Strategic Planning Policy

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, which primarily comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2035 adopted in December 2020. There are also minerals and waste policies adopted by Oxfordshire County Council, but none are considered relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

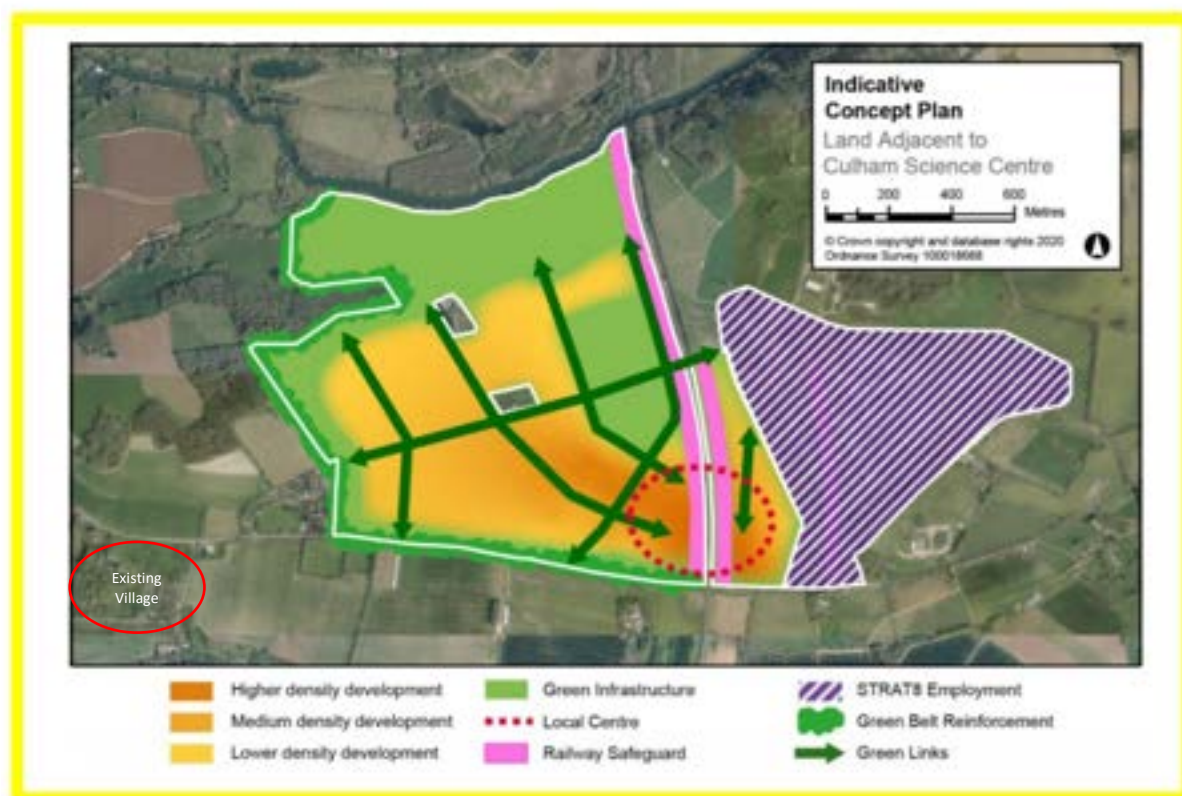
3.5 Culham village is defined as a 'smaller village' in the settlement hierarchy and remains 'washed over' by the Oxford Green Belt. The settlement infill development policy is H16 which allows for infill development and the redevelopment of previously development land or buildings as follows: *"the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location."*

3.6 Policy STRAT6 restates the national planning policy approach to development management in the Green Belt. In which case, unless 'very special circumstances' can be demonstrated, proposals will only be supported by this policy if they are deemed appropriate in the Green Belt as set out in NPPF §149 and §150. For housing schemes, that includes proposals for 'limited infilling in villages', which is defined by

Policy H16 and for affordable housing for local community needs as exception sites in line with Policy H10. Policy H8 guides housing development in the Smaller Villages – allowing for growth of up to 10% in the housing stock - but for Culham this policy is curtailed by its location in the Green Belt.

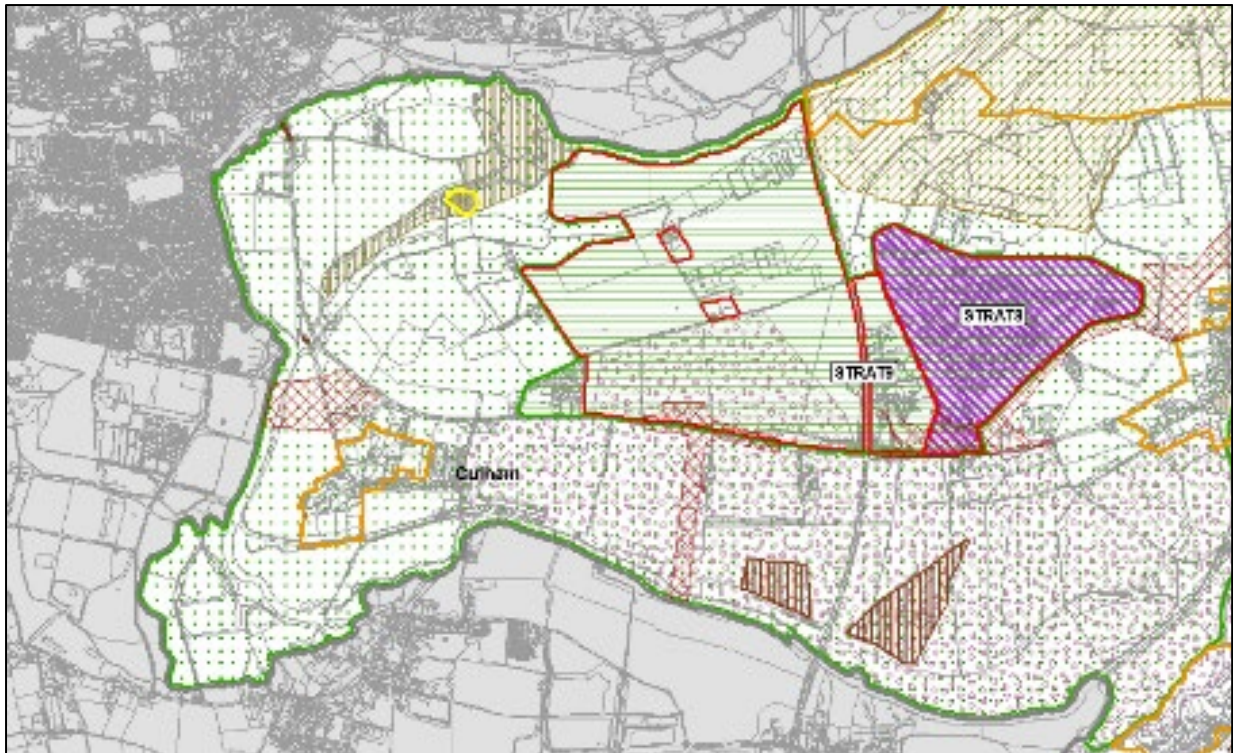
3.7 There are also major strategic allocations and safeguarded land for strategic transport schemes within and adjacent to its boundary as set out below:

- **STRAT8:** Culham Science Centre – Removing Culham Science Centre from the Green Belt and supporting its redevelopment and intensification to deliver at least a net increase in employment land of 7.3 ha (including the existing 10ha retained but redistributed across the two strategic allocations) in combination with the adjacent strategic allocation at Policy STRAT9 (see Plan B below).
- **STRAT9:** Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre – Removing land from the Green Belt for a strategic allocation for 3,500 new homes (with 1,850 to be built in the plan period), employment, retail and social infrastructure – including a GP surgery and 2FE primary school focussed on the railway station (see Plan B below).
- **TRANS3:** Safeguarding land for Strategic Transport Schemes – as shown hatched in red on Plan C overleaf. The policy safeguards land including for the widening of the A4130 at Didcot, Clifton Hampden Bypass, Didcot Science Bridge and Culham River Crossing. These schemes make up the Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund programme (HIF1) and are currently the subject of planning application, R3.0138/21, which at the time of writing is yet to be determined. To manage the highway network a tiered approach to development within the areas affected by HIF1 is currently in operation, enabling some development to come forward prior to the delivery of HIF1.



Plan B: Extract from South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Indicative Concept Plan showing existing village settlement

3.8 The existing Culham settlement lies to the south west of STRAT9 and is separated from it by the existing Europa School UK and the A415 (see plan B above). The sheer size and mix of uses proposed at STRAT9 will have an impact on existing services and facilities in the village. Whilst it is possible for Neighbourhood Plans to be used as a vehicle to masterplan strategic sites, in such cases the proposed strategic allocations adjoined existing larger communities. The Culham Neighbourhood Plan has therefore focussed on expressing the identity of the existing village community which may influence future masterplanning of STRAT9 indirectly. The Parish Council continues to engage in the future masterplanning of the site as part of its day-to-day business.



Plan C: Extract from South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 Policies Maps November 2020

3.9 There are other policies in the new Local Plan that may be relevant, including:

- ENV1 – Landscape and countryside
- ENV2 – Biodiversity
- ENV4 – Watercourses
- ENV5 – Green Infrastructure
- ENV6 – Historic Environment
- ENV7 – Listed Buildings
- ENV8 - Conservation Areas
- EP4 – Flood Risk as several parts of the village is subject to surface water flooding and much of the area adjacent to the Thames lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3
- DES1 - Delivering high quality development
- DES2 - Enhancing local character
- CF1 - Safeguarding community facilities
- CF4 - Existing open space, Sport and recreational facilities

The Joint Local Plan 2041

3.10 South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working together to prepare a new Joint Local Plan 2041. Once adopted, the Joint Local Plan 2041 will replace the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. The document is in its early stages of preparation with adoption anticipated to be in September 2025. The Parish Council will engage with the District Councils throughout this process.

Neighbourhood Plans

3.11 Neighbourhood planning is popular in the area and a number of plans have been made, or are in preparation, in the vicinity of the Parish, including the made plans in the neighbouring parishes of Drayton & Radley. Sutton Courtenay and Clifton Hampden are in the process of preparing neighbourhood plans. Clifton Hampden are also prepared a Neighbourhood Development Order. With the recent merging of the Culham Parochial Church of England Primary School and Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School, leading to the formal closure of Culham Parochial Church of England Primary School, the village relies on Clifton Hampden for this service.

3.12 The Clifton Hampden Neighbourhood Development Order proposes to encourage the improvement and extension of the primary school, as well as a new surgery. Whilst the provision of new services and facilities, including a new school, at the land allocation in Policy STRAT9 of the SODC Local Plan will have an impact, services and facilities in Clifton Hampden, such as the Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School currently serve the existing Culham community.

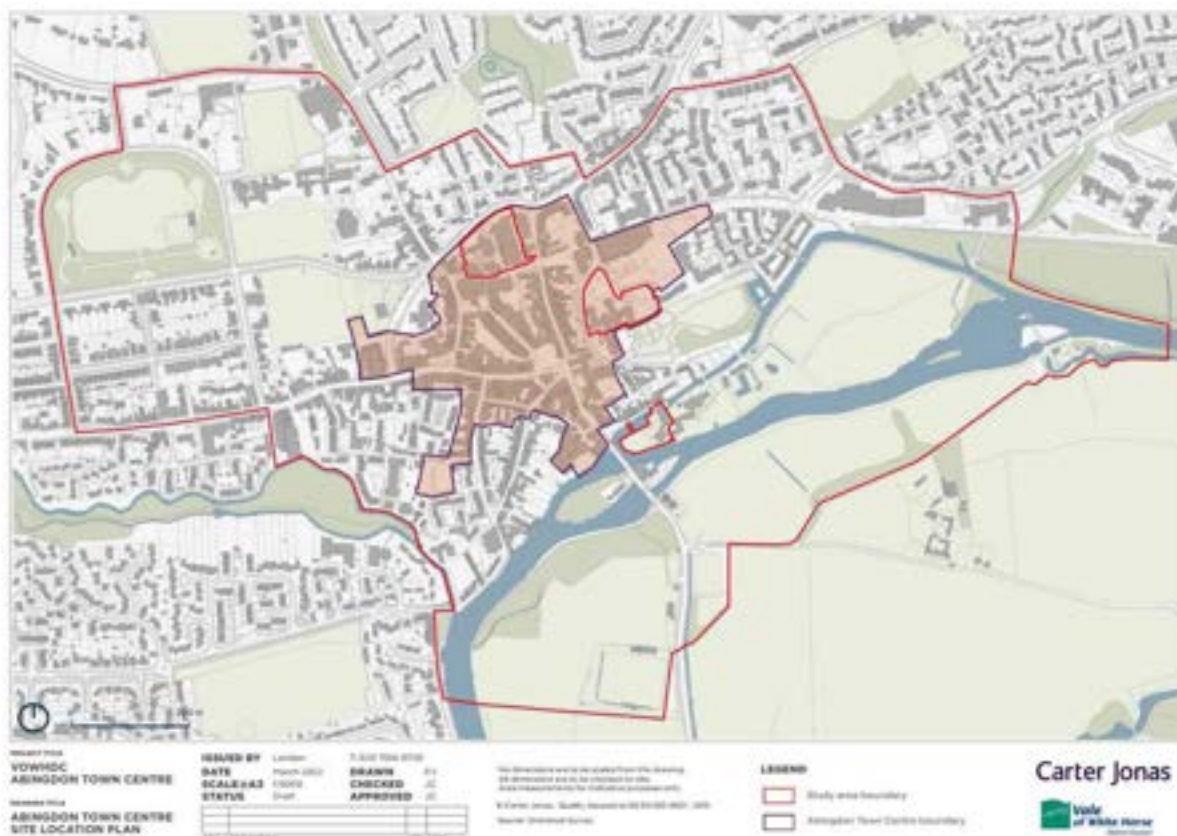
Culham Conservation Area

3.13 The Conservation Area was designated by South Oxfordshire District on 11 December 1984 (see orange outline in Plan C). Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, to protect areas of special interest as opposed to individual buildings. Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 72 in South Oxfordshire District. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas and from time to time to review the boundaries. Such areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

3.14 The main attributes that define the special character of an area are its physical appearance and history, i.e., the form and features of buildings and the spaces between them, their former uses and historical development. Where there are a number of periods of historical development, the character of individual parts of the conservation area may differ. Contrasts between the appearance of areas and the combination of buildings of various ages, materials and styles may contribute to its special character.

Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework

3.15 Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC) has established a Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF) project team. The aim of the CARF project is to establish a framework for guiding regeneration of central Abingdon, and includes land and property owned by VoWHDC, as well as improvements to other facilities and transport routes. The CARF project study area is shown on Plan D below which includes land in Culham parish. The Parish Council supports the aim of the CARF project and will engage with the CARF project team as part of its day-to-day business (see Section 6 for further detail). The CARF document has now been [published on the Council's website](#).



Plan D: CARF project study area

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

Community engagement

4.1 Putting together a Neighbourhood Plan for Culham started with a community-led Plan in 2014. That Plan led to a set of proposals which formed the subject of a community survey. The survey was prepared by Culham Parish Council and members of a specially created Neighbourhood Plan Committee in early 2020. The Neighbourhood Plan Committee continued to meet during 2020 and 2021, providing monthly updates at Parish Council meetings, and adding further details and proposals to the survey results. In August 2021, the Committee had a stall at the Culham Festival, with engagement from villagers and other festival-goers. Finally, there was consultation with the project planners for the redevelopment of the Waggon and Horses, who are key stakeholders in a prominent building, currently boarded up, at the entrance of the village.

2014 Community-led Plan

4.2 Key topics identified by the 2014 Community-led Plan were:

- Cycling – improving existing paths; adding strategic links to neighbouring communities
- Traffic – concerns about safety on Tollgate Road and A415; parking around the school
- School – Village School as part of the community; buildings could be more widely used (evenings / out of term)
- Pub – a village asset; sometimes noisy
- Shop – a village shop is desirable
- Church – could be enhanced to allow for a community space
- General – keeping the village a village; developing the mushroom farm (now defunct); investing in hydropower at the weir.

Several of these items are now out of date, such as traffic issues around the Primary School (closed in 2019), use of the Pub (Waggon and Horses, now closed and unoccupied), and a proposal to lobby for the village to be joined to mains gas.

2020 Survey

4.3 The Survey was put together explicitly to convert ideas from the Community-led Plan into draft policies for the Neighbourhood Plan and to elicit further feedback from the community. It was posted to all residents and the results suggested not only the material for policies presented in this document, but also for Community action campaigns beyond the scope of planning.

Survey topics

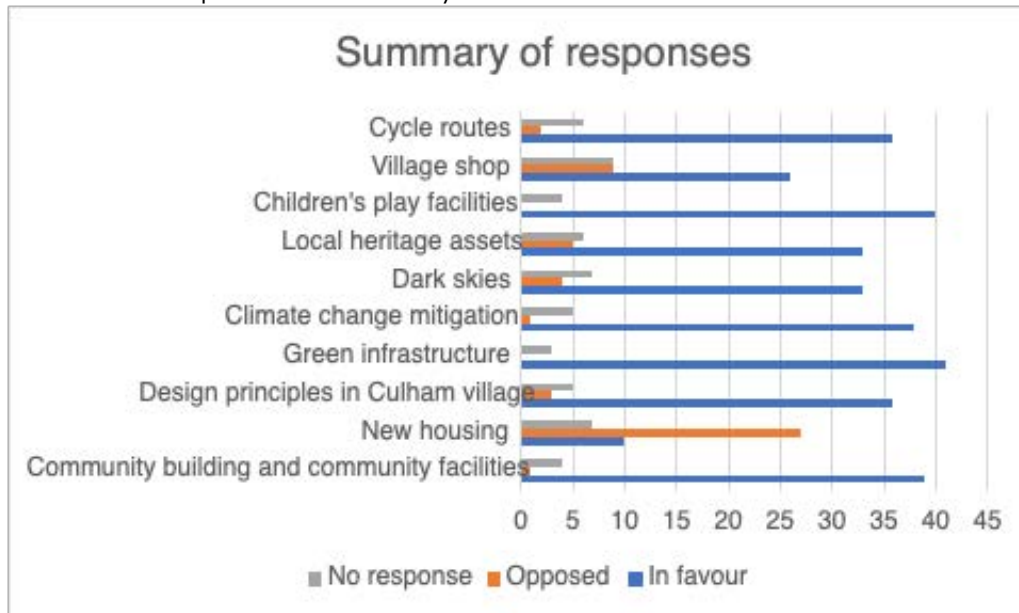
4.4 The topics for the Survey were:

- Community Building and Community Facilities: “The creation of a community building will be supported, provided the improved / updated / new buildings or structures are designed and sited in such a way that their impact on the open nature, rural character and visual amenity of the Green Belt is minimised and that they will sustain and enhance the village”

- New Housing: "Do you think new housing should be promoted with the village of Culham?"
- Design principles in Culham village: "Do you think setting out design principles which any planning applications would be required to follow is desirable?"
- Green Infrastructure: "Do you think a policy on green infrastructure should be included?"
- Climate Change Mitigation: "Do you think a policy for climate change mitigation regards new housing should be promoted within the NP?"
- Dark Skies: "Do you think a dark skies policy should be included in the Culham NP?"
- Local Heritage Assets: "The NP can identify buildings and structures which are not nationally listed with a view to assess them for local listing (...). This gives them additional protection from being altered or obscured should any planning application be made in the future."
- Play facilities for children of the parish: "The village has a play area on the recreation ground which is owned by the Diocese of Oxford. The NP could ask to ensure that any development the Diocese might have in mind for this land in the future would have within it a playground."
- Village shop: "The NP could encourage the creation of a village shop."
- Cycles routes: "The NP could encourage the creation of cycle routes to Abingdon and to Sutton Courtenay."

Survey results

4.5 There were 44 replies to the Survey and this is a visual breakdown:



Respondents often included comments and sometimes suggestions, and they shed some light on the motivations for these results.

4.6 Key negative feedback:

- strong aversion to new housing is linked to appreciation of huge impact of STRAT9 development
- ambivalence around village shop (is it viable? / where could it be sited?)
- uncertainty around local heritage: seen as restrictive, additional regulation

- a few questions on whether dark skies policy is necessary or a side issue
- several mentions of failure of previous applications for community facilities

4.7 Key supportive comments:

- near universal approval for green infrastructure and climate change mitigation
- wide approval for more attention to children's play facilities
- requests for allotments as part of green infrastructure and community facilities
- village shop ideas conflated with village pub / reuse of Waggon and Horses
- comments requesting cycle routes to be off-road and provide additional integration with neighbours (Abingdon, Sutton Courtenay, Radley then Oxford)

Neighbourhood Plan Committee

4.8 For the most part, the NP Committee discussions continued to reflect the strength of feeling among villagers as to the impact of the STRAT9 development and also repeated the survey results. Another key theme did emerge, most likely driven by the increased pull of the Europa School, with the arrival of a greater number of families with young children: focus on facilities for families. This highlighted the existing demand for adequate communal play facilities, but it also raised the problems of access to the Europa School from the village, and the lack of safe and properly integrated pedestrian flow across the parish. While the absence of a pedestrian crossing on the A415 does not constitute a planning issue, it did come up more than once in Committee meetings and discussions with villagers. A general point, frequently repeated, was that any facilities such as a school, shop, community centre, or local employer, if sited within STRAT9 must be made easily accessible on foot from the village, if only to deter further car use.

Culham Summer Festival 2021

4.9 Neighbourhood Plan Committee members held a stall for the day at the Culham Festival on a mostly sunny Saturday 7 August, and this served as an opportunity to raise awareness among villagers about the NP and gather further feedback on the issues that villagers cared most about.

4.10 Again, this was an occasion where strong opinions were voiced about the manner in which villagers felt that STRAT9 had been imposed, with the addition of mounting concern at the lack of consultation on the planning of the new road link from Didcot through our neighbours in Appleford.

4.11 In terms of specific contributions not already discussed, several residents of Tollgate Road expressed concern at the dilapidated state of the former Waggon and Horses and were very keen to hear about the site's future prospects. They were universally supportive of any proposed development that would replace what is now a near derelict building.

4.12 There were also several requests in support of enhancing the cycle route network and improving pedestrian access across Culham. Lockdown lifestyles have left their mark, with villagers seeing increased value in having a wide network of

walkable and cyclable paths across a natural resource that became very dear to them while national travel was restricted.

4.13 The Committee and the Parish Council considers that the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan deals with the matters of greatest concern to the local community in a way that the planning system allows.



5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

Vision

5.1 The vision of the neighbourhood area in 2041 is:

“Culham will have grown successfully as a community through sustainable infill within the existing fabric of the village whilst protecting the Green Belt. These schemes have been well-designed to ensure the rural character of the village has been preserved and the character and significance of the Conservation Area has been sustained and enhanced. Although change in the wider parish has been significant, it has provided the opportunity for access to new community facilities and services and improved connectivity of the wider green infrastructure network from the village into the countryside.”

Objectives

5.2 The key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- To manage the incremental growth of the village through sensitive infill and to protect the surrounding countryside from harmful development
- To conserve the special heritage character of the village and its landscape setting
- To protect and improve the ecological value and connectivity of the green infrastructure assets of the village and wider parish
- To sustain community facilities and services that are essential to community life

Land Use Policies

5.3 The following policies relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area of Culham. They focus on specific planning matters that are of greatest interest to the local community.

5.4 There are many parts of the Parish that are not affected by these policies, and there are many other policy matters that have been left to the Local Plan to cover. This has avoided unnecessary repetition of policies between the two plans, though they have a mutual, helpful inter-dependence.

5.5 Each policy is numbered and titled, and it is shown in bold italics. Where necessary, the area to which it will apply is shown on the Policies Map attached to the document. Some supporting text follows each policy, which explains the purpose of the policy, how it will be applied and, where helpful, how it relates to other development plan policies.

Policy CUL1: Community Facilities

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following community facilities, as shown on the Policies Map:

- i. Culham Recreation Ground & Playground***
- ii. St Paul's Church**
- iii. The Green***
- iv. Culham Lock Amenity Space***
- v. Culham Lock Car Park**
- vi. Abingdon Vale Cricket Club and Ground***
- vii. Abingdon Town Football Club and Ground***
- viii. Europa School**
- ix. The Railway Inn**
- x. Waggon and Horses Public House**
- xi. Andersey Island Water Meadow***
- xii. Rye Farm Car Park**

*** Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities**

B. Development proposals which would affect the use of the identified community facilities of the policy will be determined against the provisions of Policies CF1 (Safeguarding Community Facilities) and CF4 (Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities) of the SODCLP.

C. Proposals to change the use of part of a community, open space, sport or recreation facility that is surplus to requirements will be supported where they will not undermine the overall viability and importance of the community, open space, sport or recreation facility concerned.

D. The comprehensive masterplan for the strategic allocation STRAT9 Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre will be expected to demonstrate that the masterplan layout locates the required social infrastructure in such a way to ensure that the existing village of Culham can access that infrastructure safely and securely.

5.6 The policy supplements and refines existing development plan policies on community, open space, sport or recreation facilities to which the policies should apply and by seeking to ensure that the long-term potential value of land in community use is not lost without good reason. Given the small nature of the village, the loss of any of these facilities would be significantly detrimental, so even though a specific type of community use may no longer be viable, the opportunity to retain the premises or land in this use cannot be lost. The policy also refines Policy CF1 to ensure its application to the sui generis use of Culham Lock and Rye Farm Car Park.

5.7 In addition to existing development plan policies which protect these facilities and encourages new or extended facilities, the policy also allows for a partial change of use of a facility, if this is intended to help secure its longer-term viability. This may be an important way of putting to use space that is no longer needed, but

which can make a financial contribution to sustaining the facility. However, such changes must be shown not to undermine the community functions of the use.

5.8 The Use Class Order of September 2020 now deems such these uses as either Class F2 ('Local Community Uses') or in the case of St Paul's Church and the Europa School, F1 ('Learning and non-residential Institutions'). The pubs and car parks are now deemed 'sui generis' (i.e., not included in any class of uses). A description of each facility and its community value is provided in Appendix A. Collectively, these facilities are cherished by the community and offer a valuable and vital resource to support community life, and therefore warrant the protection of policies. In some cases, the facility is included in Policy CUL6 as a Local Heritage Asset to identify its historic as well as social value. Or it may be included in Policy CUL7 as a component of nature recovery.

5.9 The policy also takes the opportunity to make sure the social infrastructure of the nearby strategic allocation is located and connected to the village in such a way to ensure it benefits from that infrastructure. The distance from the existing village settlement to the proposed social infrastructure, and sustainable travel routes connecting these two locations, including the improvement of pedestrian and cycling access across the A415 Abingdon Road, will need to be considered in the masterplan layout.

Policy CUL2: Former Waggon & Horses Public House

Development proposals which directly provide or assist in the provision of a public house or drinking establishment use at the former Waggon and Horses Public House, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported, provided they are appropriate for a Green Belt location as defined in national policy and:

- i. A public house or drinking establishment use is retained on the site in line with the provisions of Policy CUL1 Community Facilities;***
- ii. The scheme makes provision for publicly accessible green amenity space;***
- iii. The location and design of any new buildings and structures are such that their height and bulk will not have a greater impact on or substantially harm the openness of the Green Belt;***
- iv. The building materials and detailing reflect those characteristics of the local area and comply with the requirements of Policy CUL5 Design Code for Culham Village;***
- v. Existing mature boundary trees of value and mature hedgerows are retained, unless removal is required to provide access, and new planting is undertaken, to provide adequate screening of the site within the surrounding landscape;***
- vi. A biodiversity strategy is prepared that creates new opportunities to improve biodiversity and delivers a measurable 'net gain' in biodiversity value across the site;***
- vii. Pedestrian and cycling access is provided off Tollgate Road to a specification to be agreed with the Highways Authority, and the layout has regard to the need to enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity across the A415 Abingdon Road including opportunities to enhance connections as defined in Policy CUL8 Sustainable Travel;***

- viii. Vehicle access is made from Tollgate Road in a location and type to be agreed with the Highways Authority, and suitable for waste and emergency vehicles;**
- ix. It can be demonstrated that parking provisions would comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policy TRANS5; and**
- x. It can be demonstrated that lighting proposals would comply with the requirements of Policy CUL10 Light Pollution.**

5.10 The policy is intended to help resolve the future of a prominent brownfield site in the Green Belt on the edge of the village by encouraging proposals to improve and extend the former Waggon and Horses Public House through its redevelopment. In doing so, the policy refines the intent and purpose of SODCLP Policies EMP10 and EMP11, CF1 and CF2. The policy is intended to operate alongside the provisions of strategic (STRAT6) and national policies (§148) on the Green Belt. It may also be possible to design proposals that are not inappropriate development (as per the exceptions of NPPF §149(c)(d) or (g)). In any event, the Parish Council considers the public benefit evidenced by the local community interest in seeing the retention of a viable social asset on the edge of the village, in the absence of any such other nearby, as highly desirable and should accrue significant weight in the planning balance.

5.11 The Waggon & Horses site comprises the former public house building, associated hardstanding previously used for car parking and associated open space. The public house dates back to the late 19th century however it was forced to close in 2015 due to no longer being a viable business. The building has since been boarded up and vehicular access from Abingdon Road closed off. Overall, the site does not make a positive contribution to the area and has become an eyesore in a prominent location at the entrance to the village. The current building is not fit for purpose in its current state and requires significant refurbishment in order to bring it up to acceptable standards. The cost of such refurbishment would have a significant impact on the viability of a reopened public house business.

5.12 It has been established through discussions between the landowners and SODC that some form of additional development will be required in order to make the reopening of the public house viable. A hotel element is considered to be a suitable form of additional development for this location. Due to the Green Belt location of the site, however, the quantum of additional development needs to be minimised as far as possible (in viability terms) to avoid sprawl and impact on the openness of the Green Belt. It is therefore more efficient for the public house and hotel to be combined into a single new building to minimise sprawl of development across the site. The existing public house building would also not be able to support the hotel element as an extension to the building. The redevelopment scheme proposes to rebuild the public house element on broadly the same footprint as the existing building with the hotel element perpendicular to it (parallel to Tollgate Road) to give the illusion of the site comprising just the public house element when viewed from Abingdon Road.

5.13 The development principles set out in the policy will secure a sustainable scheme that will benefit the village and wider Parish. In the first instance it will be very important for the public house use to be retained in any future proposal and

the policy therefore secures this in line with the provisions of Policy CUL1 of this Plan. The policy also highlights the importance that any scheme/redevelopment, in terms of Green Belt openness, does not have a greater impact than existing development, or cause substantial harm. The landowner has also confirmed that it is intended to retain the 'Waggon and Horses' name for the redevelopment scheme.

5.14 It should also be possible to deliver some publicly accessible green space as part of proposals to enable the local community to use the space and the inclusion within it of a community orchard will be particularly supported. The landowners have confirmed that an area of land to the south of the site has been reserved for a community orchard, as shown on the Policies Map. It will also be important to retain and enhance landscape and biodiversity provisions on site hence the policy makes provision for these matters.

5.15 Given the proposed strategic development of STRAT9, and the use of the existing Europa School by the existing village community, proposals to improve the pedestrian and cycling access across the A415 Abingdon Road will be crucial. It is also anticipated that the site will become an important meeting place for the existing village and new community. The policy therefore makes provision for the importance of this crossing to be considered in the provision of pedestrian and cycling connectivity as well as other opportunities highlighted in Policy CUL8 Sustainable Travel.

5.16 The site has a long planning history and previous investigations has shown that a new multi-modal access approach to the site, which includes removal of vehicular access from the A415 Abingdon Road and relocating the vehicular access on Tollgate Road away from the traffic signal-controlled junction, will provide betterment over the historic vehicular access from the A415 Abingdon Road and the Parish Council supports this approach. The policy therefore makes provision for this approach with details to be agreed with the Highways Authority.

5.17 SODCLP Policy TRANS5 sets out appropriate parking provisions and other infrastructure requirements for all types of development and the policy therefore directs any future proposals to its requirements. The Parish Council are also mindful that any new scheme may include new lighting proposals and therefore directs any future proposals to the requirements of Policy CUL10 Light Pollution.

Policy CUL3: Early years provision

A. Proposals to retain and improve the following early years provision facilities, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported, provided they accord with development plan provisions on the Green Belt and other development management matters:

- i. Culham Village Nursery & Preschool***
- ii. Culham Science Centre Nursery & Preschool***

5.18 The policy is intended to protect the only early years provision uses in the Parish from unnecessary loss. Both facilities provide an important service to the community meaning that fewer car trips are necessary to larger towns beyond the Parish. These uses now form part of Class E of the new Use Class Order, and new permitted development rights allow a change of use to residential use without the need for planning permission. In an area of very high land values for housing, such premises are therefore coming under increasing pressure.

5.19 The Parish Council therefore hopes that South Oxfordshire District Council will make an Article 4 Direction for these facilities in the parish to remove those rights with effect from August 2023, enabling such changes to remain in planning control. At the very least until such a time that, the early years provision for the new strategic STRAT9 allocation becomes clearer. The Parish Council will submit a formal request for this following the referendum of this Neighbourhood Plan.

5.20 The latest South Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan April 2020 update anticipates that the additional educational capacity at strategic allocation STRAT9 will include early years provision. Oxfordshire County Council, as the educational authority, confirms that sufficient early year's provision will be sought to mitigate the impact of development. The Parish Council will monitor the availability of early years provision in the overall neighbourhood area. This may be a matter for any review of the neighbourhood plan to address in the future.

Policy CUL4: Enhancing Culham Conservation Area

Development proposals within the Culham Conservation Area and its setting should preserve or enhance its significance as a designated heritage asset. Features identified as positive characteristics of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting are defined in the Culham Design Code. All development proposals in the Conservation Area should have full regard to the Design Code.

Policy CUL5: Design Code for Culham

Development proposals in Culham will be supported provided they have full regard to the essential design considerations and general design principles set out in the Culham Design Code attached as Appendix B.

5.21 The policies establish the importance of design of new development in the Conservation Area, its setting and the village to maintain and enhance its character. It directs applicants bringing forward proposals in and around the village to the design codes contained in the Culham Design Code attached at Appendix B.

5.22 The Code refines South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' Joint Design Guide, and establishes the principles of essential design considerations within three distinct area typologies of the main village settlement as well as certain features of the area outside of the main village settlement. These considerations set out features of each typology that make it distinctive, and the extent of each is defined in the Design Code document. In turn it complements Policies DES1 and DES2 of the SODCLP by highlighting particular characteristics of the Parish. The policies require proposals demonstrate, where relevant to the nature and location of the proposal, that full regard has been paid to the Code. The policies do not advocate pastiche or historic solution, however it is important that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making.

Policy CUL6: Local Heritage Assets

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies buildings as Local Heritage Assets as included in the Appendix B and shown on the Policies Map, for the purposes of applying development plan policies on non-designated heritage assets:

- i. The Lion, High Street;***
- ii. Nos. 7 – 11 The Green;***
- iii. 22-23 High Street;***
- iv. School House, High Street;***
- v. Kiln Cottage;***
- vi. Station House;***
- vii. The Railway Inn;***
- viii. Tollgate Cottage;***
- ix. 60 Abingdon Road;***
- x. Maud Hales Terrace, Abingdon Bridge;***
- xi. Pill boxes (Types FW3/24 The Burycroft; FW3/24C & FW3/28A at Appleford Bridge; FW3/28A at Sutton Bridge; FW3/24C at Sutton Pools; FW3/28A at Zouch Farm and FW3/28A at Tollgate Road).***

5.23 The policy designates certain buildings or structures as Local Heritage Assets in order to give them additional protection as heritage assets, in recognition of the important contribution they make to the special character of the Parish for the application of Policy ENV6 of the SODCLP. Policy ENV6 requires a balanced judgement to take place where proposals directly or indirectly affect the significance of a local heritage asset taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset, in line with §197 of the NPPF. This means that Policy ENV6 will apply to schemes coming forward which may affect the local heritage assets listed in this policy. Culham parish also comprises a rich archaeological landscape within which is contained numerous cropmark complexes denoting its early occupation and use from the prehistoric period onwards. This policy focuses on the built historic environment. Policy ENV6 of the SODCLP will therefore continue to apply to above or below ground archaeological remains as well as other elements of the historic environment.

Policy CUL7: Nature Recovery and Climate Change

- A. The Parish contains a variety of green and blue infrastructure that provides an environmental support system for the community and wildlife. The Neighbourhood Plan designates this as a Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of promoting nature recovery and for mitigating climate change. The Network comprises the Water Meadows between the village and Sutton Pools, Andersey Island Water Meadows, woodland, trees, hedgerows, Culham Brook SSSI and other land of biodiversity value.***
- B. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network are required to have full regard maintaining and improving the functionality of the Network, including delivering a net gain to biodiversity, in the design of their layouts and landscaping schemes. Proposals that will harm the functionality or connectivity of the Network will not be supported.***
- C. Development proposals that will lead to the extension of the Network, which includes the delivery of allotments for the use of the village, will be supported, provided they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.***

5.24 The policy defines the presence of green and blue infrastructure assets in the Parish. By doing so it supports SODCLP Policies ENV1 – ENV5 on the Environment. Its purpose is linked with the vision and principles of green infrastructure in the district of defining a network of green infrastructure assets in the neighbourhood plan area as a means of providing environmental support for the community and wildlife. These assets will be maintained and added to throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area and will be the means of nature recovery through connecting and improving habitats and sequestering carbon through woodland planting.

5.25 Alongside the Culham Brook SSSI, there is a variety of other priority habitat areas in the Parish. The village itself hosts Traditional Orchard habitats as well as Deciduous Woodland. A number of these form part of the Core Zone of the Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network prepared by Wild Oxfordshire. A large part of the Parish has also been identified as a Recovery Zone. The purpose of this policy is to identify existing green and blue infrastructure and opportunities to better connect them which may also play a part in delivering the aims of the Recovery Zone of the Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network carried out collaboratively by a partnership of local nature conservation organisations, led by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), Wild Oxfordshire and The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and overseen by Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Advisory Group (BAG) and adopted by the Oxfordshire Environment Board (OxEB). Whilst much of the land surrounding the village settlement, and northern parts of the Parish already have Countryside Stewardship Agreements, opportunities identified by the Neighbourhood Plan include additional tree planting on Land adjacent to the Cricket Club Grounds, additional catchment woodland, floodplain woodland and riparian woodland planting opportunities using the 'Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk' evidence base by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Research and Development Programme and Environment Agency in February 2021. These opportunities are all shown on the Policies Map and the Parish

Council will seek to work with landowners to realise such opportunities where possible avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

5.26 The policy therefore requires that all development proposals that lie within the Network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. The Policy Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network, for example in complementing existing biodiversity value through the design of the landscape scheme. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission.

5.27 The Network will become more valuable over time, and although the majority of these features are physically attached to enable habitat connectivity, some features of the Network are not. This does not devalue their integral biodiversity or recreational value and at some point in the future an opportunity may arise to achieve similar connectivity. The Neighbourhood Plan also signals to the Responsible Authority that it should consider the role of this Network in the future Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the area which is now a requirement of the Environment Bill.

Policy CUL8: Sustainable Travel

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Sustainable Travel Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of supporting active travel in the Parish.***
- B. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should sustain, and where practicable, enhance the functionality of the Network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.***
- C. Proposals that will harm the functioning or connectivity of the Network will not be supported.***
- D. The comprehensive masterplan for the strategic allocation STRAT9 Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre will be expected to demonstrate that the masterplan layout enables safe and secure access to the required social infrastructure for the existing village of Culham through new, and improvement to, existing cycleways, footpaths, and bus services.***

5.28 The policy seeks to encourage safe, accessible and convenient means of walking and cycling in the parish. It refines Policy TRANS2 by providing a local element to its provisions. The policy implements elements of the Culham Community Led Plan in 2014 which identified cycle safety as being important especially between Culham and Abingdon. At the time the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy was interested in improving arrangements for their cycling employees. Ideas that came from the consultation were:

- 1) A cycle path from Waggon and Horses to Abingdon

- 2) Cyclists able to use the Causeway with pedestrians
- 3) Road to Abingdon is too dangerous – use the causeway
- 4) Purchase land to the south of A415 for a new pavement/cycle path
- 5) Improve cycling to Sutton Courtenay
- 6) Footbridge from Culham to Abingdon marina
- 7) Cycle path alongside the railway to Oxford via Radley joining Sustrans Cycle Route 5 including a river crossing

5.29 The Policies Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network and/or improve the attractiveness of rural routes. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission.

5.30 The extension of existing paths has been identified as opportunities to improve the Network and these are shown on the Policies Map at the end of this document. There are also a number of permissive paths which landowners have allowed the local community to use to enjoy the surrounding countryside and improve local connectivity and the Parish Council will continue to work with local landowners in this respect. The policy also signals that connectivity of the existing village to the strategic allocation STRAT9 Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre will be important to ensure that the existing community can benefit from the provisions in the new development. The crossing at the traffic lights on the A419 Abingdon Road is already problematic making very little provision for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling access. 8) Improvements to this crossing and the existing shared pedestrian and cycleway on the A419 Abingdon Road will be expected to form part of the provision of sustainable transport facilities required by Policy STRAT9.

Policy CUL9: Zero carbon buildings

Development proposals which would be 'zero carbon ready' by design by minimising the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping will be supported. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.

Proposals for a Passivhaus or equivalent standard buildings with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m²/year will be supported. Schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have an unacceptable effect on the character area.

Proposals for major development should be accompanied by a Whole-Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions have been taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its life.

5.31 Policies DES8-10 of the adopted Local Plan provide local guidance on this important matter. Its paragraph 8.30 provides the context for the approach taken and comments that the Government has established that through Part L of the Building Regulations, emissions allowed from new buildings will be reduced incrementally and that "zero carbon" buildings will be required within the plan period. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 stipulated that a review of minimum energy performance requirements under Building Regulations must be carried out and it is expected that current standards will be improved with the introduction of the Future Homes Standard. Policy DES10 sets the Council's policy requirement for carbon reduction.

5.32 Policy DES8 of the Local Plan comments that all new development, including building conversions, refurbishments, and extensions, should seek to minimise the carbon and energy impacts of their design and construction. Proposals must demonstrate that they are seeking to limit greenhouse emissions through location, building orientation, design, landscape, and planting considering any nationally adopted standards and in accordance with Policies DES10 and DES7.

5.33 Policy DES10 of the Local Plan provides more specific details and comments that a range of development proposals (including those for residential uses) should achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case. This reduction is to be secured through renewable energy and other low carbon technologies and/ or energy efficiency measures. The policy comments that this requirement will increase from 31 March 2026 to at least a 50% reduction in carbon emissions and again from 31 March 2030 to a 100% reduction in carbon emissions (zero carbon). The policy also comments that these targets will be reviewed in the light of any future legislation and national guidance.

5.34 The implementation of Policy DES10 is expanded in the Joint Design Guide (June 2022). This Design Guide has been prepared as part of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' commitment to securing the highest quality development within the districts. The guide builds upon and replaces previous local design guides and aligns with the National Design Guide (2019). It is intended to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers, and planners in the process of developing high quality development and in assessing its design quality. The guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The section on Climate and sustainability sets out a series of design standards to achieve the details of Policy DES10.

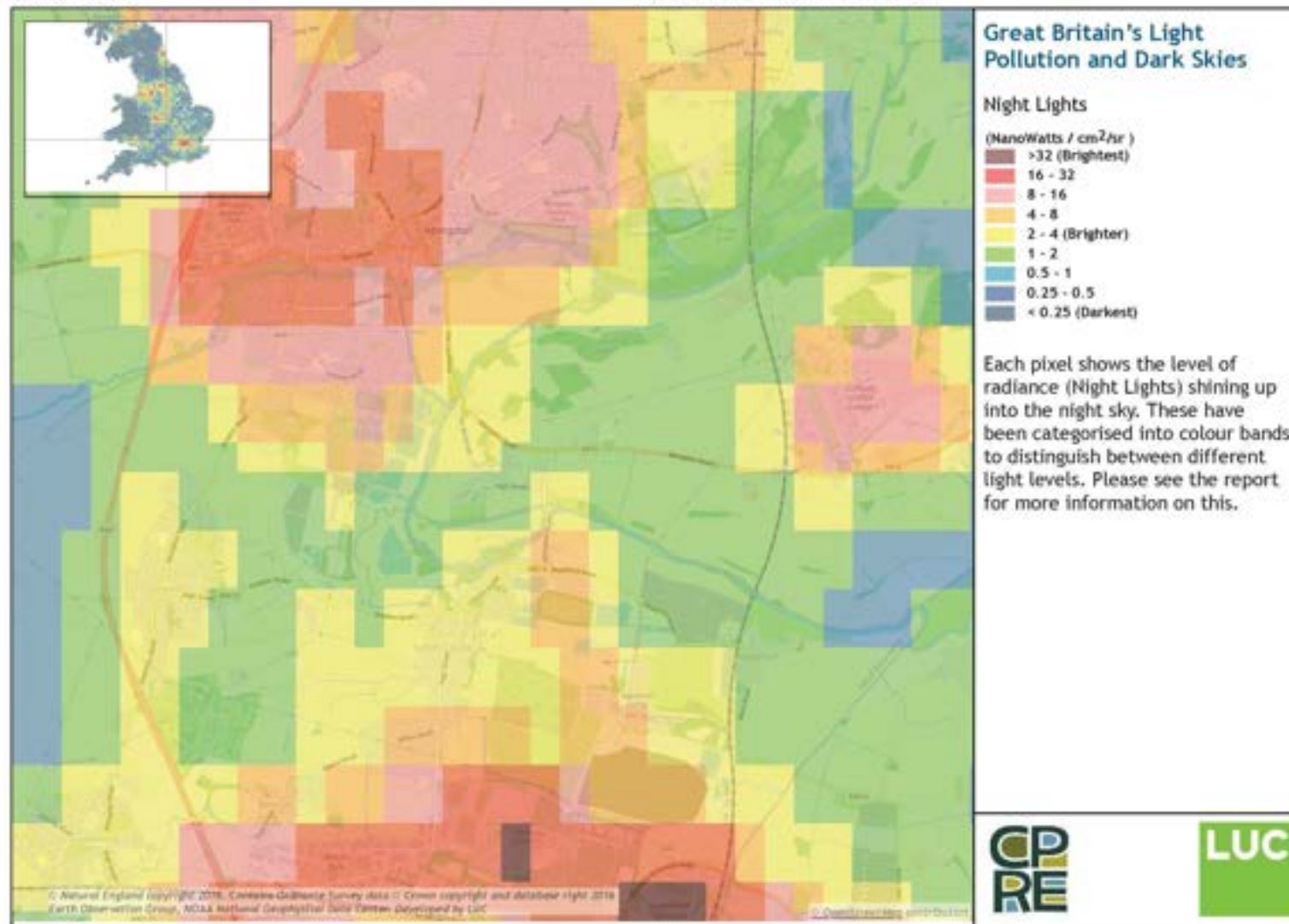
5.35 In November 2022 the District Council published a technical advice note on Policy DES10 of the Local Plan. The note comments that whilst it is not an adopted policy document, and should not be read as such, it sets out how applicants should demonstrate compliance with the adopted policy. It also comments that it will be of use to South Oxfordshire District Council officers, developers, and applicants, elected Members, as well as any other interested parties.

5.36 Policy CUL9 of this Plan builds on this comprehensive local approach. It will result in a situation where the neighbourhood plan would offer a supportive context for development proposals in the parish to achieve more sustainable solutions than those required by the Local Plan policy. Plainly the wider situation may be affected by changes to national or local planning policies on these matters in the Plan period.

Policy CUL10: Light pollution

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should be designed to minimise the occurrence of light pollution and employ energy-efficient forms of lighting that reduces light scatter.

5.37 The Culham Community Led Plan 2014 identified that less street lighting was important to the local community. The strategic allocations and transport schemes in and adjacent to the parish will have a major impact on existing lighting levels. The brightest levels can already be seen to be straying into the village's night sky (see Plan E below). Many councils across England support measures to protect and enhance the dark night sky. The policy reflects the purpose and objectives of policies ENV11 and ENV12 on Pollution of the SODCLP. For all proposed developments, factors that will be considered when deciding the appropriateness of artificial lighting, include the location, the hours of operation, the quantity of lights proposed, brightness and control, and direction of the beam. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have been designed to prevent light pollution. Information on these measures should be submitted with applications, and proposals should have regard with the current guidelines established for rural areas by the Institute of Lighting Professionals. Where a development proposal is otherwise acceptable, but would potentially impact on light levels in the area, an appropriate lighting scheme will be secured by planning condition.



For best results the map should be printed at A4 landscape.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for development in the Parish by the local planning authority.

Development Management

6.2 The planning authority will use both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the Parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by the planning authority. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

6.3 Where necessary, the Parish Council may seek to persuade the Secretary of State to call-in a planning application that it considers is in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan but which the planning authority has deemed to consent. Similarly, it may also seek to persuade the Secretary of State to recover an appeal of a refused application, where the conflict with one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies has been important in the reasons for refusal. In both cases, the Parish Council will do so if it considers matters of national policy significance (for neighbourhood planning) are raised.

Local Infrastructure Improvements

6.4 Where opportunities arise through Section 106 agreements (or through the Community Infrastructure Levy) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure, the Parish Council propose that the priorities for investment of future Community Infrastructure Levy, and/or S106 contributions received by the local planning authority are:

- Improving existing community facilities – toilets in the church, improved play equipment
- Traffic Management Measures. The main issues identified from the Culham Community Led Plan 2014 were:
 - i. A pedestrian crossing on the A415 at the end of Burycroft
 - ii. Traffic calming on Tollgate Road
 - iii. A pedestrian crossing on the A415 at the Waggon and Horses
 - iv. Traffic calming on High Street
 - v. Less street lighting
- New allotments to serve Culham village
- A new Culham Village Hall

Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework

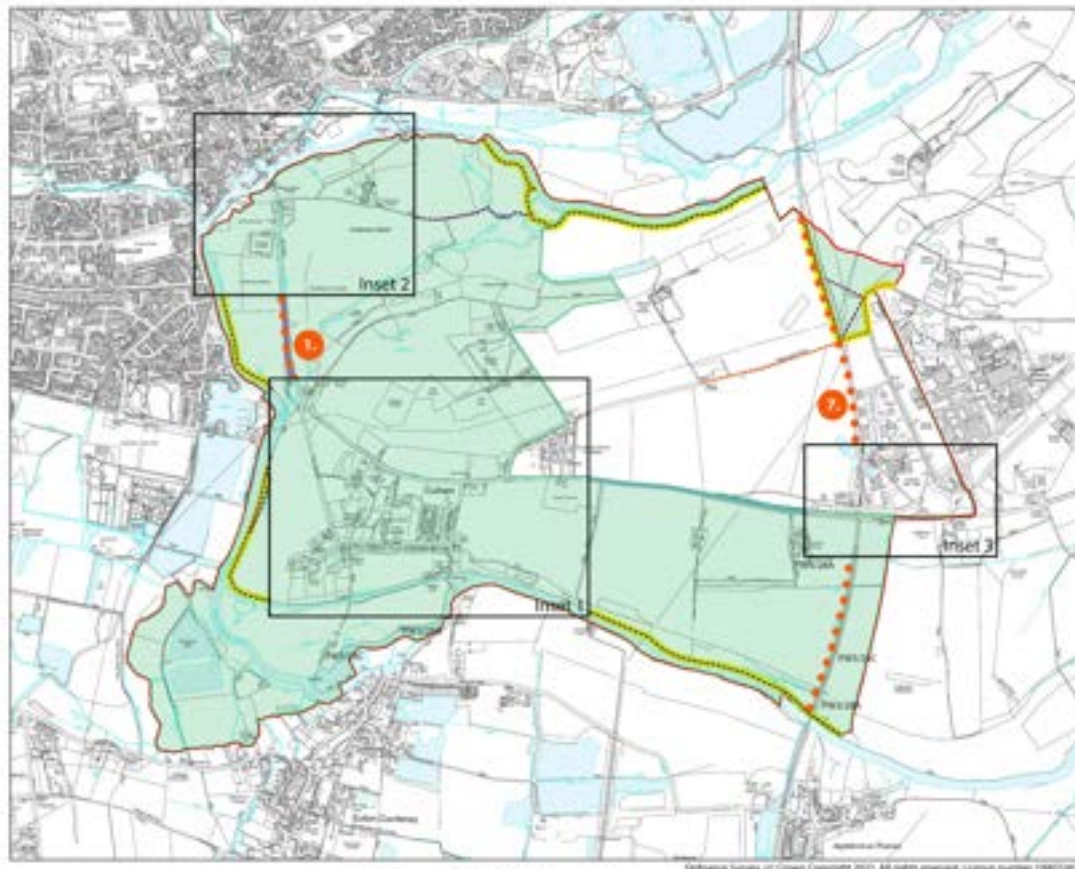
6.5 The Parish Council will engage with the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF) project team as part of its day-to-day business. It is not considered that this Neighbourhood Plan contains policies that will harm the delivery of the CARF project. The Parish Council supports the aims of the CARF project.

Other Non-Planning Matters

6.6 During the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, there have been many ideas for improving or addressing current problems in the Parish that lie outside the scope of the land use planning system to control. The Parish Council has noted these issues and will take them forward through its day-to-day business and in partnership with the local community and relevant parties. These include:

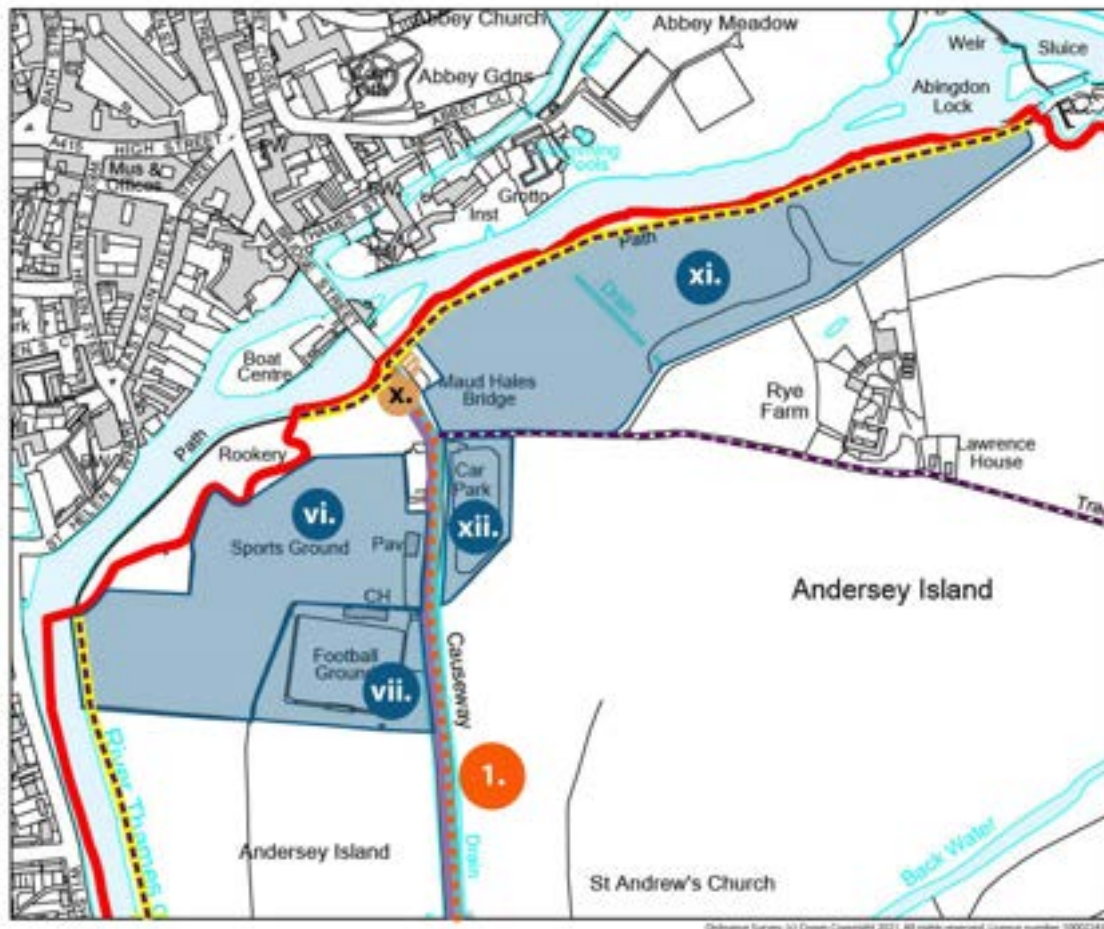
- Research discounts for bulk buying fuel with intention of setting up a scheme or adding to the oil bulk buying scheme that already exists
- Keeping the village tidy
- Community 'Good Neighbour' Scheme
- More social events / activities
- Emergency Plan

POLICIES MAP & INSETS



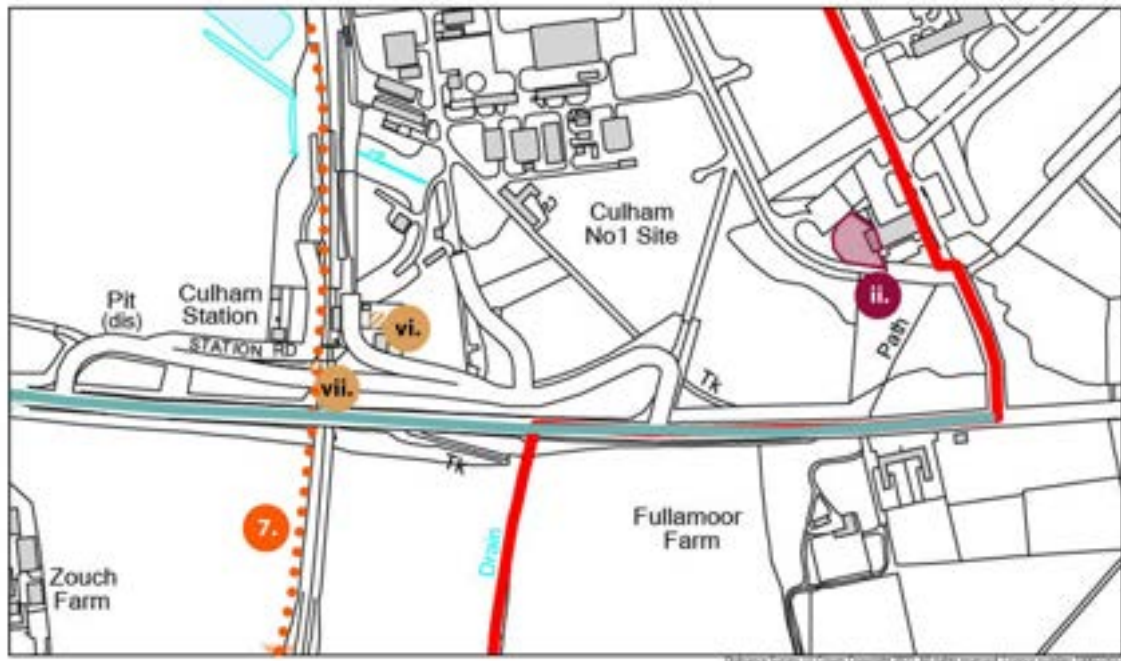
Culham Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map - November 2021

	Parish Boundary		Thames Path		Bus Route 33
	Green Belt		Public Right of Way - Footpath		Bus Route 45
	CUL6 Local Heritage Assets		Public Right of Way - Restricted Bridleway		Opportunities for improvements
xi. Pill boxes					
FW3/24C Appleford Bridge					
FW3/28A Appleford Bridge					
FW3/28A Sutton Bridge					
FW3/24C Sutton Pools					
FW3/28A Zouch Farm					



Culham Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map Inset 2 - November 2021

	Parish Boundary		Thames Path
	CUL1 Community Facilities vi. Abingdon Vale Cricket Club and Ground vii. Abingdon Town Football Club and Ground xi. Andersey Island Water Meadow xii. Rye Farm Car Park		Public Right of Way - Footpath
	CUL6 Local Heritage Assets x. Maud Hales Terrace, Abingdon Bridge		Bus Route 33
			Bus Route 45
			Opportunities for improvements



Culham Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map Inset 3 - November 2021

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
|  | Parish Boundary | CUL8 Sustainable Travel |  | Bus Route 45 |
|  | CUL3 Early years provision
ii. Culham Science Centre Nursery & Preschool |  | | Opportunities for improvements |
|  | CUL6 Local Heritage Assets
vi. Station House
vii. The Railway Inn | | | |

**Culham Neighbourhood Plan
Policy CUL7
April 2022**

Priority Habitats

- Woodland (Deciduous)**
- Traditional orchards**
- Semi-improved grassland**
- Coastal and Floodplain grazing marsh**
- Ancient and semi-natural woodland**

Other Habitats

- Garden and Parkland**

Designations

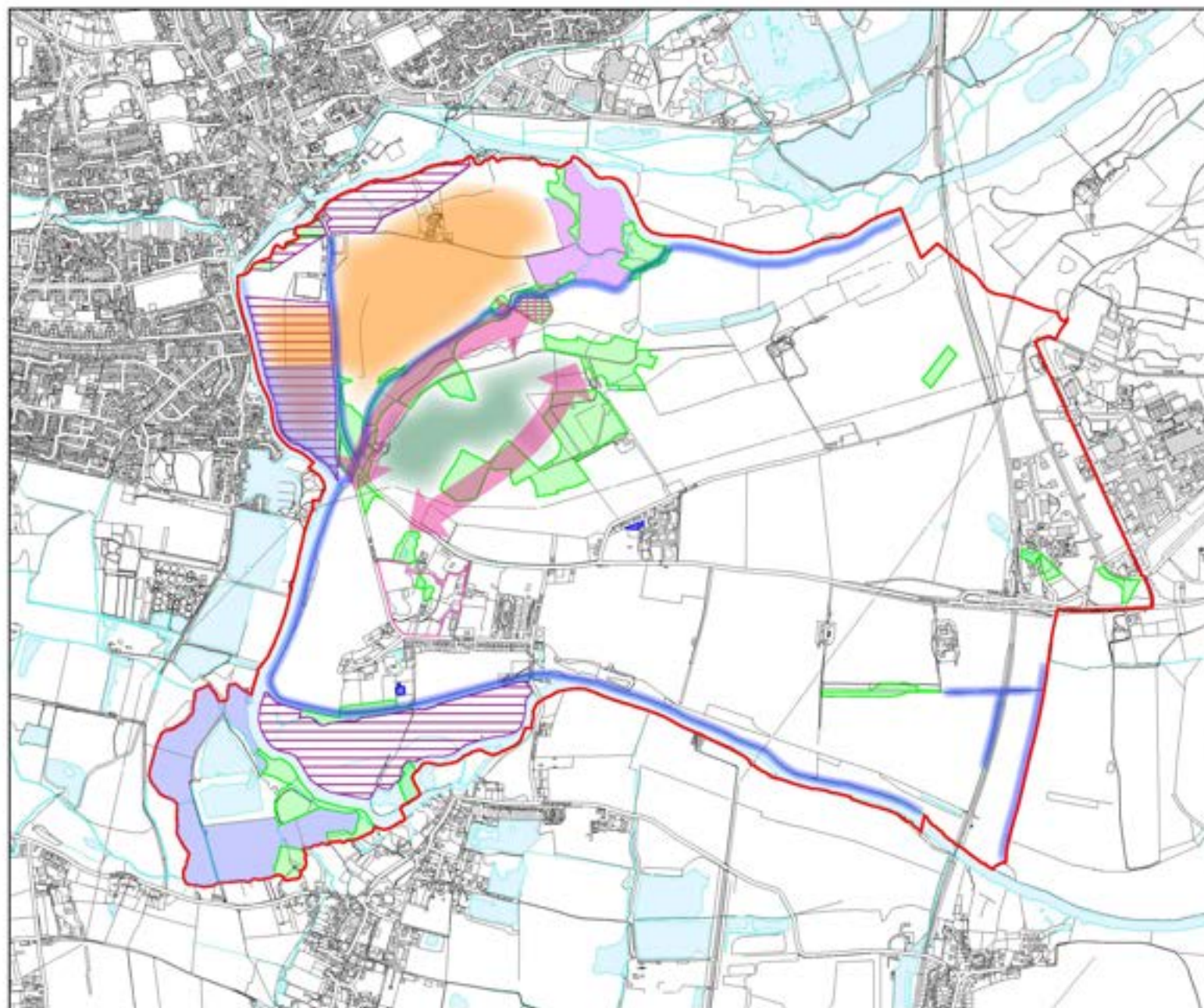
- Culham Break SSSI**

Water Meadows

- Meadows**

Opportunities

- Riparian woodland planting opportunity along water corridors**
- Catchment woodland planting opportunity**
- Floodplain woodland planting opportunity**
- Wildlife Corridors**



APPENDIX A – COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Policy CUL1 and CUL3 seeks to ensure that valued community facilities in the Parish have the proper protection of the planning system. These buildings, and the operational land in which they sit, all have a special value to the local community.

The following facilities are identified by Policy CUL1:

i. **Culham Recreation Ground and Playground**



A local community group have been working since September 2018 to develop a new playground at the Recreation Ground in Culham. The existing playground is very limited and the equipment that remains is gradually becoming unsafe and is being removed for safety reasons. The land that the Recreation Ground is on is owned by the Diocese of Oxford and leased to the Parish Council. Currently there are only 9 years left on the lease.

ii. **St Paul's Church**

The active core membership of the church has recently increased after a short



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period of decline and the electoral roll in 2005 had 20 names. There is active lay participation in all services, especially with readings and often with intercessions, at the All Age service on the first Sunday of the month, the Evening Prayer service on the third Sunday, at Communion services at Easter and Christmas and at other occasional services. Details of all services by the Bridge Group are printed in the village newsletter, 'The Mouthpiece'.

iii. **The Green**



Image Source: Oxfordshire Villages

Arthur Beckett's Memories: "There were shops overlooking the village green and after the bread was baked the baker would put villagers' meals into his oven to cook for a 1/2 penny. My mother used to send Doris to the bakers with our food. There were also some thatched cottages on the Green, and I remember that one caught fire and the fire spread to all of them. It was quite a blaze and us children all went to watch as the firemen tried to put out the fire."

iv. Culham Lock Amenity Space

The lock is a tranquil place with several benches beneath majestic trees offering plenty of shade. Views of the picturesque Sutton Bridge extension can also be enjoyed.

v. Culham Lock Car Park

Culham Lock Car Park, owned and operated by South Oxfordshire Council, is an important resource for the village. Culham Lock is an attractive destination for river users and walkers, its other regular clientele are parents dropping off and picking up children at the schoolhouse every morning and afternoon. The Lock Car Park is therefore an essential community facility, if it were not for the car park then car drivers would be forced to park along Tollgate Road which has traffic lights at both ends, and along Culham High Street. Tollgate Road would quickly become impassable as buses and lorries attempted to pass with traffic queues at both ends of the road, whilst the High Street would become a car park along one side restricting it to a single lane and inhibiting the ability of our local bus to pass through the village. The community as well as valuing the amenity of the carpark is also involved in its upkeep. The boundaries have been improved over recent years, most recently with the addition of a gate from the car park directly to the lock grounds, enabling users to avoid walking along Tollgate Road to get from the car park to the lock. The Parish Council also receives reports at its meeting of any damage to the car park, and will report damage to South Oxfordshire District Council to assist in ensuring it is properly maintained.

vi. Abingdon Vale Cricket Club and Ground

Owned by the Vale of White Horse District Council. Adults play league cricket on Saturdays in four teams, covering a wide range of abilities, ages, and experiences. The junior section starts at five years of age. At the time of writing the club has 50 senior members and 125 junior members and looking to expand in 2022 by introducing a women's team across the senior and junior sections.

vii. Abingdon Town Football Club and Ground

Affiliated to the Berks & Bucks FA. Teams are currently members of the Hellenic League Division One East and Southern Region Womens Division One.

viii. Europa School



Europa School UK is a unique state school, affiliated with the European School system and offering children a bilingual education in French, German or Spanish. Pupils follow both the national curriculum and the European curriculum from age 4 through to 18, culminating in the highly respected European Baccalaureate.

Image Source: Europa School website

ix. The Railway Inn



Image Source: The Railway Inn website

A traditional English pub, restaurant with rooms situated on the A415 Abingdon to Dorchester-on-Thames, adjacent to Culham Railway Station. The pub served takeaway food during the pandemic and is used by local people as well as for short stays from visitors.

x. Waggon and Horses Public House

Currently in a state of disrepair. This asset could be a valuable resource for the



Image Source: Movement80

community if brought back into community use. A planning application for the redevelopment of the Waggon & Horses Public House including extension to dining room and construction of 12 bedroom motel and 8 dwelling houses proposed to financially enable the development is currently being considered by South Oxfordshire District Council (P18/S3067/FUL).

xi. Andersey Island Water Meadow

The Right bank from Old Culham Bridge to half a mile above Abingdon Lock is Andersey Island - bounded by the Swift Ditch backwater weir stream and the main channel of the river. The area is rich in history and well used by local people, for events such as the Abingdon Park Run, dragon boat races etc., takes place here and the area holds special community value.

xii. Rye Farm Car Park

Owned by Vale of White Horse District Council, the Rye Farm Car Park provides free parking for river users for up to one hour.

The following facilities are identified by Policy CUL3:

i. Culham Village Nursery & Preschool



Image Source: Day Nurseries

For children from three months to five years old following the Early Years Curriculum the facilities are purposely designed for each child's age and children benefit from a large rural garden, mature trees and a forest school area.

ii. Culham Science Centre Nursery and Preschool

For children from three months to five years old following the Early Years Curriculum the facilities are purposely designed for each child's age.

APPENDIX B – CULHAM DESIGN CODE