

East Challow Neighbourhood Plan

2022-2031



Made

June 2023

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.1 East Challow Parish Council would like to acknowledge and thank all those who have contributed to the creation and development of this Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council especially thanks the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group who have made significant contributions, including the two chairmen, Peter Rumsey and Cllr Paul Barrow. However, this work could not have been completed in the form which is now presented without the first-class support of Julia Evans (East Challow RFO) and Jeremy Flawn (Bluestone Planning), on whose huge experience we drew heavily.

1.2 In addition to Bluestone Planning, which prepared the Community Facilities Survey, Local Green Space Assessment and Parish Character Appraisal, additional work was carried out by Lepus Consulting (Landscape Character Assessment) and Cobweb Consulting (Business Survey and Housing Needs Survey).

1.3 An earlier Community Survey and Youth Community Survey (2017) was carried out by Community First Oxfordshire. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre carried out the biodiversity survey (Biodiversity Report).

1.4 The parking survey was carried out by Cllrs Trevor Hayes and Sarah Parker. The Footpath Survey was carried out by Cllr Paul Barrow, Anna Barrow and Caroline Dunstan.

2. FOREWORD AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The East Challow Neighbourhood Plan (The Plan) has been developed for East Challow Parish. The aim of the plan was to develop a set of policies which would be available for the local community during planning applications which affect the parish directly or indirectly and also to provide a guide for planning applications. The local community has been consulted on a number of occasions and the final Plan will be subject to a referendum. It has been prepared by a dedicated steering group under two chairmen, comprising members of the parish council in addition to other community members with specialist interests. It has been supported throughout by independent consultants and by officers of the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC).

2.2 The vision embodied in The Plan is that in 2031 East Challow will remain an essentially rural village set in a peaceful landscape, between the Berkshire Downs and the Ridgeway to the south and the Vale of White Horse to the north, within the parish of East Challow. The village will remain separated strategically from Wantage to the east and Grove to the north east by agricultural and parkland, avoiding further development which would erode these strategic gaps. Further development will inevitably take place, but it will be consistent with the VWHDC Local Plan and is likely to consist primarily of in-fill development. The development that does take place will take into account the Housing Needs Survey to address the specific needs of the community. New residents in the new housing developments will

have integrated well into the community and facilities will have improved to provide essential and non-essential needs for all residents. The economic life of the village will be thriving with businesses at both business parks performing effectively and with additional commercial activities run from private dwellings. Businesses and residents will be supplied with clean energy, some of which will be generated locally. Active travel will have been implemented with improvements in the cycle network and other public rights of way and an improved community bus service connecting local villages. The green environment will have been improved with healthy wild flora and fauna.

2.3 The unique character of the village will be preserved including protection of designated and non-designated heritage assets, ensuring the local economy remains strong, including companies based in the two industrial and business parks, others based within the village and smaller companies run from private dwellings. The community facilities will, ideally, have been improved and its green spaces will be protected. Community access to the local rural landscape will have been enhanced through improvements in footpaths and other public rights of way (PROW).

2.4 The climate emergency will have been addressed, particularly through changes to transport and installation of appropriate technologies to private and commercial dwellings. Biodiversity and green corridors will have been improved for their own inherent value and to improve the health and well-being of residents.

2.5 We aspire to East Challow village and parish remaining an essentially rural environment but with infrastructure which is appropriate to the 21st century for local and more regional benefit.



Figure 1. East Challow in the middle distance viewed from the Ridgeway.

2.6 A number of major issues were identified by the community, parish council and steering group (below). The principles on which the policies are based arose from the Community survey (Appendix 4a) and the Community Youth Survey (Appendix 4b) carried out in 2017 (Principles 1-5, 7-9, 10- 12), the Business Survey (Appendix 5, Principle 6) and close contact between the parish and the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust (Principle 10).

Principle 1	To ensure that East Challow retains its identity as a discrete village separate from Wantage and Grove
Principle 2	To ensure that the village and parish remains set in an essentially rural landscape with all the ecological, geographical, and historical attributes and characteristics which can benefit residents and visitors
Principle 3	Further housing development should benefit the local population either directly or indirectly and development should reflect the housing needs of the local population (i.e. those residing in the Plan Area).
Principle 4	Residential development should respect and, where possible, align with the vernacular architecture in the village and Plan Area.
Principle 5	To ensure that the historic and heritage assets of the parish are conserved and maintained such that they contribute to the cultural and historic value of the Plan Area.
Principle 6	To set principles whereby new business can be encouraged to locate in East Challow and to improve the environment and efficiency of existing businesses.
Principle 7	To ensure that sufficient facilities are available locally to residents to enable normal everyday activities, including the purchase of provisions, recreation and supporting residents engaged in professional activity, to be carried out.
Principle 8	To ensure that the Plan Area meets the obligations posed by the climate emergency in moving towards reduced and zero carbon emissions and energy self-sufficiency.
Principle 9	To ensure that the existing footpath and cycle way network is integrated with the public and community transport network, with easy access to existing and future community facilities.
Principle 10	To ensure that the historic Wilts and Berks Canal, a part of which passes through the parish, is maintained in terms of structural integrity and relevant infrastructure for its historic and cultural value, as a biodiverse corridor and for recreational purposes.
Principle 11	To ensure that traffic flow through residential areas of East Challow are not hindered by on-street parking arising from new developments.
Principle 12	To ensure that the Plan Area preserves and enhances its natural environment and landscape, particularly maintaining and increasing natural green corridors for recreation, biodiversity and carbon absorption.

Table 1. The 12 principles underpinning the objectives of the Plan

2.8 Evidence was gathered, including the earlier community surveys and initial plan. The Steering Group commissioned a number of comprehensive surveys including:

- a) A Landscape Character Assessment to give the village and parish a feeling of place set as it is between the Ridgeway and Berkshire Downs to the south and the Vale and to identify key features that provide a degree of uniqueness to the Plan area, both in terms of geography, geology and topography. The survey covered the landscape of the Plan Area but did not include the built-up village area.
- b) A Parish Character Appraisal complements the Landscape Character Assessment by describing the key features of the built environment, particularly those features which provide a sense of history and continuity which is always required in assessing the impact of new development. This included a list of designated heritage assets and a design guide to inform any new developments that take place.
- c) A Housing Needs survey carried out in 2019 complemented an earlier one carried out in 2017, both of which were commissioned to understand fully the wishes of the community in terms of housing for the next few years.
- d) The parish contains several local businesses and two industrial estates providing local employment and contributing significantly to the local economy. A Business Survey was commissioned to seek to identify any concerns regarding location and business activity.
- e) A Community Facilities and Infrastructure Survey identified those services which are important to a large village such as East Challow. This was particularly important as the village has seen deterioration in this aspect over the last two decades.
- f) Potential Local Green Spaces were identified and a biodiversity survey carried out. These are regarded as important given the drive to increase biodiversity for its own value but also to address the climate emergency.
- g) The parish has a number of rural footpaths heading north from the village towards the village of Denchworth and which are currently unused. A thorough walking survey was carried out on all the footpaths and other Rights of Way in the parish.
- h) A parking survey in the village core was carried out on three occasions at different times of the day.
- i) Green corridors were surveyed by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.

2.9 The community has been consulted early in this process to inform them of the nature of neighbourhood plans and expected outcomes and to identify major community concerns which could be included and addressed in the plan. The whole parish community has been updated regularly through the parish newsletter and web site. Input has been obtained on a number of occasions from the VW HDC.

2.10 This process led to the development of policies which will guide and inform applicants for any new development. The policies are presented in the report and cross-referenced to the commissioned surveys and reports and should be read in the context of these documents.

2.11 The community wishes to see a degree of continuity in the character and appearance of the village and parish although appreciates that these features will necessarily change with time given the location of the village within the county and importance of the county to the national economy. The rationale for a plan is to avoid rapid change which would create problems in community well-being, for infrastructure provision and to preserve something of value for future residents. On that basis a list of community aspirations has been included and whilst not policies *per se* do outline the direction in which the community would like to see

the village progressing. Heritage assets are a key aspect of providing continuity and although the designated assets are well known and listed, a number of non-designated assets have also been identified which are also listed since these also provide an element of additional historical relevance and character to the plan area.

2.12 Planning applications and appeals will be determined in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan (once it is 'made') as well as the adopted VWHDC Local Plan (parts 1 and 2) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions will also have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The plan will be reviewed when appropriate, taking into account changes to national and local policies and local circumstances.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Localism Act 2011

3.1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. East Challow Parish Council is a “qualifying body” and is authorised to lead in the preparation of the East Challow Neighbourhood Plan (ECNP).

3.2 The Purpose of Neighbourhood Plans

3.2.1 The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance website explains that “*Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community’s needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.*”¹

3.2.2 Neighbourhood Plans must deal with the development and use of land². This is because once a Neighbourhood Plan is ‘made’ (i.e. it passes a referendum and becomes part of the statutory development plan), decisions about whether development should go ahead must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate to the contrary³. This means that development proposals must follow policy unless there are good reasons not to.

3.2.3 Although the development and use of land is a fundamental principle of neighbourhood planning, other non-land use issues have been raised during the public consultation exercises, but which are nevertheless very important to the local community. These are identified in Section 6 which deals with Community Aspirations.

3.3 Basic Conditions

3.3.1 Under the terms of the governing legislation,⁴ Neighbourhood Plans must comply with what are known as ‘Basic Conditions’. These Basic Conditions are as follows:

- a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or Neighbourhood Plan).
- b) The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- c) The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- d) The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations as incorporated into UK law.

¹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, ‘Planning Practice Guidance’ Last Updated 25-10-20, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20190509. Revision date: 09 05 2019

² Section 19(1B-1E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

³ Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

⁴ Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- e) Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) – in this case the relevant ‘prescribed condition’ is that the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which set out the habitat regulation assessment process for land use plans, including consideration of the effect on habitats sites.

3.3.2 Schedule 4B (8(6)) also indicates that it is necessary to consider whether the neighbourhood plan is “*comparable with the Convention rights*”. The interpretation section (s.17) in Schedule 4B confirms that “*the Convention rights*” has the same meaning as in the Human Rights Act 1998.

3.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in March 2012 and sets out planning policies aimed at sustainable development. It also addresses the preserving and enhancing of natural and historic environments and encourages high quality design in the built environment. The Government last updated the NPPF on 20th July 2021. This neighbourhood plan is consistent with the provisions in the revised NPPF.

3.5 Local Development Plans

3.5.1 The Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) published its adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (LPP1) in December 2016. LPP1 covers the period 2011 to 2031 and deals with the larger strategic sites and policies in the Vale. Several of its Core Policies (CP) are referenced later within this document. The current Plan area lies within the Western Vale Sub-Area, which stretches from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the River Thames and contains the market town of Faringdon and several larger villages including East Challow (see Figure 2). The VWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (LPP2) was adopted in October 2019. LPP2 contains detailed development management policies to complement those in LPP1, replacing the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011, and allocating additional development sites for housing and other uses. No sites were allocated for housing development in the Western Vale Sub-Area, which includes East Challow parish.

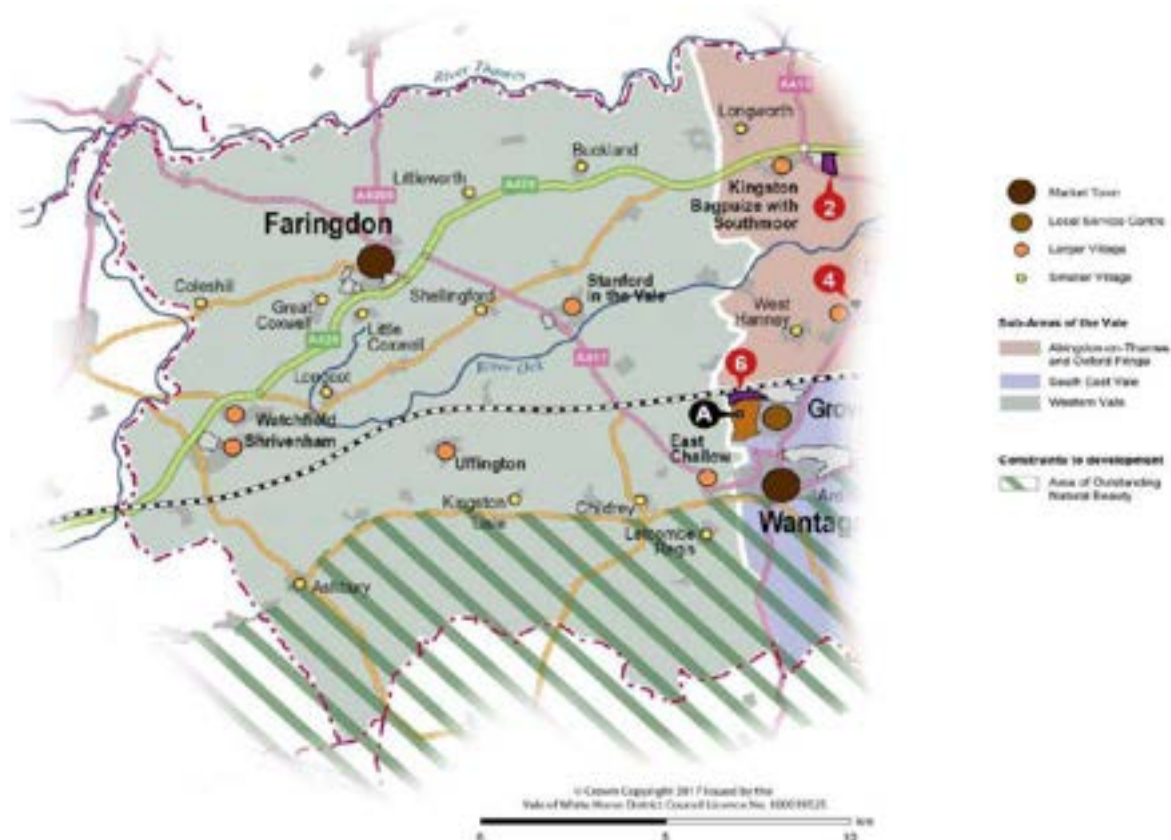


Figure 2. The western vale sub-area within the Vale of White Horse District showing local villages (Map from Local Plan part 2)

3.6 The Need for a Neighbourhood Plan - Steering Group Development

3.6.1 The community had concerns about the effects of excessive development on the nature, environment and character of the village and parish.

The concerns were outlined as:

1. A recognition of the need for development and to ensure that the village “had a say” in the location, setting and design of further housing development.
2. A wish to preserve the essentially rural character of the existing village/settlement and focus new development in areas which do not disturb the heart of the village.
3. Avoidance of congruence with Wantage and Grove.
4. Concerns over the heavy traffic on the A417.
5. A desire to increase employment opportunities in the vicinity.
6. A need for more housing and facilities for the elderly and for young families.
7. Poor level of public transport.

3.6.2 These concerns led the Parish Council to appoint an independent Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which has developed the Plan together with the East Challow RFO (responsible financial officer). Work began in 2016 with a whole-village consultation. The rationale, purpose and aims of the Neighbourhood Plan were published on the village web site.

3.7 Designated Area, Plan Period and Review

3.7.1 In accordance with regulations, VWHDC publicised the Neighbourhood Plan application from East Challow Parish Council submitted on 13 September 2016. The Head of Planning at VWHDC agreed the designated area (Figure 3) as the East Challow Neighbourhood Area on 11 November 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan Area (hereafter the ‘Plan Area’) in this case is identical to the Parish boundary. At its eastern edge it borders the settlements of Grove and Wantage. Otherwise, it primarily includes the rural parts of the Parish and the village of East Challow itself.

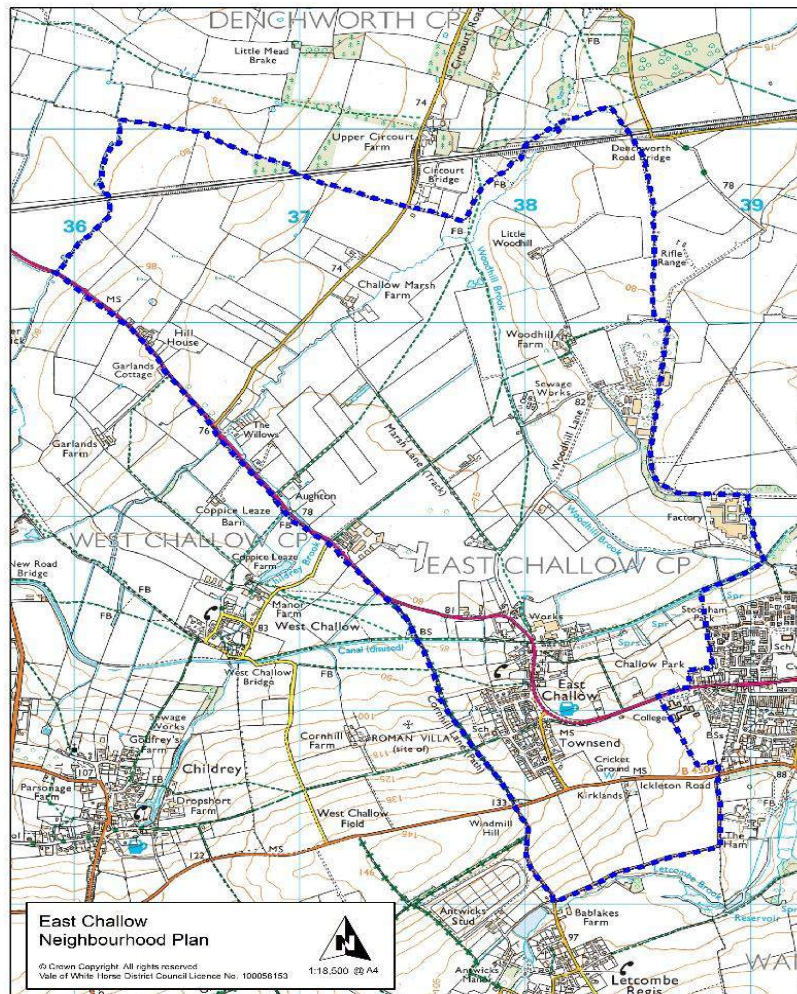


Figure 3. Outline of East Challow Neighbourhood Plan Area (Parish) superimposed on 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey map

3.7.2 The East Challow Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision, objectives and policies for a sustainable future for the village which are intended to instruct and guide both developers and landowners wishing to develop land within the Plan Area.

3.7.3 The Plan was developed with a duration from 2022 to 2031, to ensure as much alignment as possible with the Plan period of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2) from 2011-2031.

3.7.4 The plan will be reviewed when appropriate, taking into account changes to national and local policies and local circumstances.

3.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

3.8.1 The Vale of White Horse District Council confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment were not required in a screening opinion dated 12th August 2021.

4. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

4.1 East Challow – The Parish and Village

4.1.1 East Challow lies on a spring line at the foot of the Berkshire and Wessex Downs, on the southern edge of the Vale of the White Horse. It lies just over one mile from the centre of Wantage (to the east) and about eight miles from Faringdon (to the west). Its separation from Wantage is still a critical part of the village's history and character. The southern-most section lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

4.1.2 The older village was centred around the church and what is now the village green opposite, just south of the route of the Wilts & Berks canal which bisects the village along an east-west axis. The A417 road bisects the village approximately along a north-south axis.

4.1.3 Historically East and West Challow were part of Letcombe Regis Parish, but in 1852 they split to become separate parishes. Later, East and West Challow further divided into two separate civil parishes. All three were part of Berkshire until the boundary changes of 1974 transferred them to Oxfordshire.

4.1.4 East Challow parish houses two industrial and manufacturing estates, Grove Business Park on the north-east boundary of the parish and the W&G estate on the Faringdon Road. Businesses located at these sites vary widely from precision engineering, computer hardware and physiotherapy suppliers, motor repair shops and building supplies to a gym and many start-ups based in Boston House, Grove Business Park which acts as a base for new companies. Additional companies based in the parish include hardware and agricultural engineers, a charity company and many small companies run from residents' dwellings.

4.1.5 Agricultural land use is largely arable cultivation with a very small livestock sector. The village is regarded by the Local Authority as a larger village although during the last 20 years it has lost its only shop, its two public houses and its local community bus service which passed through the High View/Sarajac Avenue/Hedgehill Rd. estate. Despite this, it has several facilities, used by residents of the parish and from other villages, which include the Challows and Childrey Cricket Club and the Royal British Legion. There is an extensive recreation area with a tennis court and football pitch and a well-used village hall.

4.1.6 The 2011 census gave a population figure of 769. The Challow Park, Park Farm and Woodhill Lane housing developments are progressing and the 2019 ONS Mid-year Estimates are showing a population for the Parish of 979 already. The 2021 Census data is expected to reveal further increases when it is released.

4.2 The Parish and Village - Brief History

4.2.1 People have been living in and around East Challow for many thousands of years. The Berkshire and Wessex Downs immediately to the south were the site of a huge number of settlements from before the Bronze Age (ca. 2500 BC) right up to the Roman conquest. A few Bronze Age artefacts are reported to have been found and it is reasonable to picture the landscape in the late Iron Age, around the time of the Roman invasion of Britain in 45 BC,

being dotted with the thatched roofed round huts of the Celtic tribespeople of the period. Possible prehistoric or Roman trackways, boundaries, pits and parts of enclosures are still visible in the little remaining open land between Wantage and East Challow. In these fields a published map of 1761 marks an "obelisk", providing circumstantial evidence that East Challow was once the home of a prehistoric monument of an age to rank with other more famous landmarks.

4.2.2 The site of Cornhill Villa, a Roman building in one of the fields immediately adjoining East Challow to the west of the current primary school, was originally noted in 1876 and a selection of Roman artefacts have been found in and around the area. It is probable that Saxon people were living in Challow from between 450 and 500 AD. A Saxon charter from King Eadred in 947 gives rise to the first recorded appearance of the burial mound of a Saxon named Ceawa near Challow, and the name changed variously over the years to Cewehlewe in the time of King Henry I, and Chaulawe in 1241. East Challow first occurs as Es Challowe in 1284. The present Anglican church in the centre of the old village was begun sometime in the mid-12th century.

4.2.3 The manorial system started in the Saxon period and grew and was adapted after the Norman conquest. The earliest historical record from this system relating to East Challow was in 1655. East Challow itself did not have a manor and was managed from a manor at Letcombe Regis. The names of many of the village people from the seventeenth century onwards are known from the church registers.

4.2.4 It is almost certain that from the beginning of the village, most inhabitants made their living by working the land. The people of the village would each have farmed several strips scattered throughout the fields. Documents in the Berkshire Record Office dealing with the buying and selling of land through the years 1571 and 1679 give the names of fields and of smaller areas within the fields. In a few of the fields around the village the undulations, or ridges and furrows, left by strip farming can still be clearly seen. As time went on, strips were exchanged or bought and sold which led to any one individual having strips concentrated in a few areas rather than scattered over the fields. From the mid-1700s "Inclosure Acts" brought to Parliament enabled all parts of the open fields of East Challow to be enclosed and allotted to individual people.

4.2.5 The Wilts & Berks Canal was built as far as East Challow in 1807 and opened in 1810. The coming of the Great Western Railway, fully open in 1841, which passed two and a half miles to the north of the village, started the canal's decline, but not before significant industrial development adjacent to the canal which later, in the 1860s, became the Nalder Agricultural Engineering Works. For many years Nalders were by far the largest employers in the village and East Challow was consequently more prosperous than some of the nearby villages. Traffic on the canal had virtually ceased by the end of the nineteenth century. In 1903 Nalders' works covered four acres and employed 150 men. The works eventually closed in the mid-1900s. The site remained a manufacturing centre until 2014 when it became the Nalder housing estate.

4.2.6 Not many of the present buildings are earlier than the late 1800s although some had earlier houses on the site, and a few have parts built in the 1700s and earlier. A published map

of East Challow in 1801 shows the relatively small number of buildings existing at that time. In 1867 there were 67 cottages in the village; two earlier large houses in the vicinity of what is now Park Farm and Main Street no longer existed at this time. East Challow had 367 dwellings in July 2017 (EC Parish Council data), including developments of about 70 on the Nalder estate built around 2014, 60 in the Windmill Place area in the 1950s and 80 in the Hedge Hill Road area in the 1960s. It now exceeds 523 with an additional 88 on the Park Farm estate, a further 38 hedged around Challow Park and 14 houses on the Woodhill Lane, Old Country Club site.⁵

4.2.7 A detailed summary of the village’s heritage assets is presented in the Parish Character Appraisal, Appendix 2.

4.3 The Plan Area – current situation

4.3.1 The Village

4.3.1.1 East Challow is currently regarded by the VWHDC as a large village but which is going through a period of rapid change, with loss of facilities and with several housing developments, which a neighbourhood plan seeks to ameliorate. It lies a mile to the west of Wantage separated by an intervening rural landscape which has become narrower as a result of housing developments on the edge of both settlements. It also lies approximately one mile to the south-west of Grove and until recently was separated by Grove airfield which is rapidly being covered by the Wellington Gate development. The rapidity with which these changes are taking place creates a degree of disquiet and uncertainty about the future of East Challow and whether a village with its own identity would eventually be swallowed up by the larger Wantage-Grove settlement.

4.3.2 Location (also see Landscape Character Assessment, Appendix 1)

4.3.2.1 The Plan Area is situated between the Berkshire Downs and Ridgeway, the ancient roadway, to the south and the Vale of White Horse in which the Thames and local tributaries, the Ock and more minor streams flow to the north. It sits on a north slope of one of the northerly spurs extending out from the Berkshire Downs. The more southerly area of the Plan Area locates within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB), is subject to statutory protection and consists of high-quality agricultural land (Figure 4).

⁵ Much of this information is taken from the publication: Brown, H., Brown, C., Mann, M. and Mann, D. 2007, ‘Ceawa’s Burial Mound. A Celebration of East Challow’. Garden Shed Publications



Figure 4. East Challow in the middle distance taken from near the Ridgeway (NWD AONB) and showing the Vale of the White Horse in the background.

4.3.2.2 The north border of the Plan Area overlaps with the main Great Western main line.

4.3.2.3 The land immediately surrounding the core of the village is a mixture of grass land, used now as pasture (Figure 5), and arable land, some of which has now been built on (Park Farm development).



Figure 5. Rural pastureland immediately north west of the village.

4.3.2.4 The village is separated from Wantage by arable land south of the A417 and parkland immediately north of the A417 (Figures 6 and 7).



Figure 6. Panoramic view of the separation between Wantage and East Challow. Upper image looking east from East Challow with King Alfred's School at far right and A417 on left of picture. Lower image looking south-east with school on far left and Ridgeway on far right.



Figure 7. View of parkland between Challow Park House and Wantage and opposite King Alfred's School looking north-east and with A417 on right.

4.3.2.5 The north-east border of the Plan Area is occupied in part by Grove Business Park, to the north east of which was the former Grove airfield separating the Plan Area from Grove village, this area now being developed as the Wellington Gate housing development (Figure 8).



Figure 8. View of Grove airfield looking north with Grove Business Park on left and position of Grove village at far right. A proportion of the airfield is now built up with the Wellington Gate development.

4.3.2.6 Grove Business Park is separated from the village core by arable land (Figure 9) and a green corridor represented by Woodhill Brook.



Figure 9. View of arable land taken from Woodhill Lane looking north-east with Grove business park at far left.

4.3.2.7 Immediately north of the village core lies the former, currently non-navigable, Wilts and Berks canal which also represents a large green corridor running west to east and is used extensively for recreation purposes.

4.3.2.8 Much of the Plan Area is arable land with an area of wet pasture running north along Childrey Brook. The immediate areas around Childrey and Woodhill Brook are potential areas of localised flooding and also of biodiversity and there is currently no housing development in these areas (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Flood risk areas associated with Woodhill Brook and Childrey Brook⁶.

4.3.2.9 In most of the Plan Area trees are restricted to hedgerows and field edges. There exist two or three small copses.

⁶ Extract from Appendix 1 (East Challow Parish Council Neighbourhood Development Plan Landscape Character Assessment July 2021)
Figure 5.2

4.3.2.10 The area immediately to the south of the Crown Packaging company on Grove Business Park has been used to create new ponds in mitigation for loss of habitat associated with a recent housing development in Wantage (Figure 11).



Figure 11. The position of the new-crested ponds for Great Crested Newts immediately south of the Crown Packaging factory (Google maps).

4.3.2.11 An area of land between Grove Business Park and the A417 is safeguarded as a potential western relief road (Figure 12). It has the potential to cross several Public Rights of Way if constructed.



Figure 12. Safe-guarded land intended for by-pass (Taken from Appendix E of Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1.)

4.4 Population and Profile

4.4.1 The size of the population of East Challow has changed significantly between 2011 and 2019. At the date of the 2011 Census there were 769 residents, and according to ONS Mid-Year estimates for 2019 there are now 979 residents, an increase of 210, representing 27% growth. Moreover, this growth has not been spread evenly across age groups. Although the size of all age groups has increased, the greatest growth occurred amongst the younger segments of the population – those aged between 0 to 15 increased by 64%, those aged between 16 and 24 by 50% and those aged between 25 and 49 by 27%. In contrast, increases in the older age group between 50 and 79 were between 5 and 6%. The increase in those over 80 was 20%. There is a higher ratio of dependency (72%) in East Challow compared with the VWHDC and national figures of 60% and 65% respectively all indicating an increase in younger families corresponding, in all probability, to the newer housing developments.

4.4.2 The general health of the resident population is good with age-related diseases being predominant.

4.5 Architecture (also see Parish Character Appraisal, Appendix 2)

4.5.1 The built-up area in the village core has developed over more than 200 years. The oldest buildings and dwellings are centred around the A417 in the centre of the village with brick-built houses from the later 18th century onwards (Figure 13).





Figure 13. Examples of vernacular architecture in the village core.

4.5.2 There are also a few limestone buildings of which the old Nalder building on the junction with the canal is probably the most significant (Figure 14).



Figure 14. The former Nalder manufacturing works (now residential properties), an example of limestone construction.

4.5.3 To this core were added three clusters of houses in the 1940s to 1960s comprising the Canal Way, The Park and High View estates. The latter estate was enlarged in the 1960s-1970s with the addition of the Sarajac Avenue/Hedgehill Road development (Figure 15) and individual buildings along Letcombe Hill.



Figure 15. Sarajac Avenue.

4.5.4 Very recent developments have been approved which, at the time of writing, are still in the process of being built. These are the Park Farm and Childrey Park developments around Challow Park (Figure 16).



Figure 16. The new Childrey Park development on the A417.

4.5.5 Each of the different phases of development are also characterised by different styles of building typical of the period in which they were built.

4.5.6 Interspersed amongst the clusters of dwellings are a number of green spaces including the village green and dedicated green space in the most recent housing developments.

4.5.7 Most of the designated heritage assets associated with the Plan Area are located in the village core where the oldest buildings are situated. Apart from the 12-14th century church and the early 20th century non-denominational Mission, most of the remaining buildings are private dwellings, including the Old School. Other notable buildings include an old 18th century barn and the Nalder building from the 1860s.

4.6 Facilities (also see [Community Facilities assessment - Appendix 6](#))

4.6.1 East Challow is regarded as a larger village by virtue of its size and facilities. However, both its public houses and convenience store have closed and are now private dwellings. A convenience shop existed on Windmill Place but which closed 20 years ago. A similar facility exists in Mellor's garage on the A417 but this is almost impossible to reach by foot. In addition to individual specialised retail outlets on the Business estates (*vide infra*) the village has a number of prominent facilities. These include the Challows and Childrey Cricket Club which hosts county matches (Figure 17) and a Royal British Legion Club both of which hold private and public social events.



Figure 17. The Challows and Childrey Cricket Club, based in East Challow.

4.6.2 A large recreation area includes football fields, a tennis court and a children's play area in addition to well-used allotment gardens. St. Nicholas Church of England is in use and the Mission was used until recently. The village hall is well used (Figure 18) and is provided with a fairly spacious car park.



Figure 18. East Challow village hall.

4.6.3 The St. Nicholas primary school is well attended and expanding. A filling station and motor engineer is based at Mellor's Garage, attached to the W&G estate.

4.6.4 Prior to the most recent developments, no concern was given to the issues associated with mitigating climate change and very few dwellings are fitted with photovoltaic panels or electric vehicle charging points.

4.6.5 Since the 2011 census the population is likely to have increased by nearly 30% as a result of the ongoing housing developments. This has led to an increase in the number of motor vehicles and associated parking problems including obstruction. The village is provided with public transport with a frequent bus service between Wantage and Faringdon running every three hours. A community bus service used to run between local villages including East Challow but was discontinued in 2016. The cycleway from the Harwell campus and Didcot has not yet reached East Challow on the A417.

4.7 Businesses (The Local Economy)

4.7.1 East Challow parish (The Plan Area) benefits from having two clusters of employment in the W&G Industrial estate hosting 18 companies and Grove Business Park, which hosts 80+ companies, some of which use Boston House as a virtual base (Figures 19 and 20).



Figure 19. (left) W&G Estate, (right) Grove Business Park.



Figure 20. Boston House on Grove Business Park, home to many start-up companies.

4.7.2 The Business Survey (Appendix 5) indicated that ca. 25% of the employees live locally. Currently, the vast majority of employees travel by private transport. In addition, there are a smaller number of private companies including Haynes of Challow, L.J. and C.A. Cannings, agricultural engineers and Mission motorsport, a commercial charity, the latter situated on the W&G Estate. A number of businesses are run from private houses and an increasing number of residents now work, at least part-time, from home.

4.8 Public Rights of Way (also see [Footpaths and Public Rights of Way Survey, Appendix 7](#) and [Green Corridors Report, Appendix 12](#))

4.8.1 The Plan Area has a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW). These include a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) between the A417 and B4507 which is used for recreation purposes. Footpaths and a Bridleway within and in the immediate vicinity of the village core are in good condition and several are metalled. North of the village there are several footpaths and a Bridleway which are neglected and in poor condition (Figure 21) but nevertheless offer future prospects for recreational walking.



Figure 21. Examples of neglected footpaths north of East Challow. Left image, unmarked path through cereal field. Right image, overgrown bridge crossing ditch, blocked by vegetation.

4.8.2 The Wilts and Berks canal has a towpath which runs, in this section of the Vale, from West Challow to Wantage and is well used for walking.

4.9 Flora and Fauna (also see [Biodiversity Report, Appendix 10](#) and [Green Corridors Report, Appendix 12](#))

4.9.1 This area of the Vale has no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and is not particularly rich in flora or fauna. Areas of relative biodiversity tend to be concentrated along hedgerows, the canal and the few waterways with Woodhill Brook (Figure 22) and Childrey Brook connecting up to Letcombe Brook and, via the Ock, with the Thames.



Figure 22. Riparian vegetation and good water flow after ditch clearance, tributary of Woodhill Brook.

4.9.2 These waterways are currently slowly being improved and offer the opportunity for improvement in the riparian flora and fauna. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre have documented a large number of common animals and plants in the Plan Area.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.0 The neighbourhood plan is based on several principles which encapsulate the views of residents of East Challow and on which the Vision for the Plan is based and from which the Objectives and Policies derive.

5.1 [Setting \(for background, see Landscape Character Assessment, Appendix 1, Parish Character Appraisal, Appendix 2 and Community and Community Youth Surveys, Appendix 4a and 4b\)](#)

5.1.1 Residents are concerned about the creeping housing development directed by central government and managed by the Local Plan parts 1 and 2. Although part 2 has no allocated housing sites with the Western Vale, considerable development has already taken place in the Plan Area and village in the last few years that threatens to change its character and to erode the separation between East Challow, Wantage and Grove. It is therefore important to retain and protect the rural landscape that exists between East Challow and Wantage and Grove.

5.1.2 Principle 1: To ensure that East Challow retains its identity as a discrete village separate from Wantage and Grove.

5.1.3 Principle 2: To ensure that the village and Plan Area remain set in an essentially rural landscape with all the ecological, geographical, and historical attributes and characteristics which can benefit residents and visitors.

5.2 [Housing and Development \(for background see Community Survey, Appendix 4a\)](#)

5.2.1 Although housing developments are regarded in a different light by those residents moving into the village, the principle of the Shifting Baseline Syndrome dictates that existing village residents view these changes negatively. This is compounded by little consideration being given to the housing needs of the local population both in terms of housing type, size and numbers. Housing developments frequently also show little regard to the existing vernacular architecture in the central, most visible part of the village.

5.2.2 Principle 3: Further housing development should benefit the local population either directly or indirectly and development should reflect the housing needs of the local population (i.e. those residing in the Plan Area).

5.2.3 Principle 4: Residential development should respect and where possible align with the vernacular architecture in the village and Plan Area.

5.3 Heritage (for background see Parish Character Appraisal Appendix 2 and Non-designated Heritage Assets Report Appendix 11)

5.3.1 Although the village is bisected by a busy A road, it contains several very visible heritage assets both in public and private buildings and non-dwelling assets. These are an important component of the village which contributes character and provides a strong and important degree of continuity during a period of rapid change.

5.3.2 Principle 5: To ensure that the historic and heritage assets of the Plan Area are conserved and maintained such that they contribute to the cultural and historic value of the parish.

5.4 Business (for Background see Business Survey Appendix 5)

5.4.1 Unlike some of the other parishes in the western vale the village of East Challow has a thriving industrial economy based around the two industrial estates which house a wide variety of manufacturing and other businesses and provide employment for local and other residents. In addition to these sites, other agri-engineering and motor-maintenance businesses are located in or near the village and many residents run businesses from their homes. These provide important economic activity for the village separate to that in Wantage and Grove. The village is keen to see these businesses thrive and where possible improve and expand their activities. The provision of ultra high-speed fibre Broadband internet is seen as vital for this.

5.4.2 Principle 6: To set principles whereby new business can be encouraged to locate in East Challow and to improve the environment and efficiency of existing businesses.

5.5 Facilities (also see Community Facilities Assessment Appendix 6)

5.5.1 Residents are concerned by the loss of community facilities in the village. The two public houses closed in 2000 and 2016 and the convenience store in 1998, while the local community bus service ceased in 2016. The existing 67/67C bus service runs along the A417 but which can be difficult to access by relatively immobile older residents. Residents are required to travel to the convenience shop at Mellor's Garage on the A417 or into Wantage to purchase provisions. The village hosted a Scout group until about 25 years ago but which is now restarting again.

5.5.2 The sports recreational facilities are under-used, and one positive aspect of housing development is that the expanded population may lead the drive towards greater activity in these areas.

5.5.3 Principle 7: To ensure that sufficient facilities are available locally to residents to enable normal everyday activities, including purchasing provisions, recreation and supporting residents engaged in professional activity, to be carried out.

5.6 Climate Change

5.6.1 The Vale of White Horse District Council declared a climate emergency at Full Council on 13 February 2019. In June 2019, the UK legislated for a net-zero target for carbon emissions by 2050 and local residents are supportive and keen to play a part in this. They have frequently questioned the lack of provision of photo-voltaic panels in new development and of electric vehicle charging points which must currently be fitted retrospectively. Much could be done by local landowners in terms of solar farming and other forms of clean energy generation and provision of such services for industrial sites.

5.6.2 Principle 8: To ensure that the Plan Area meets the obligations posed by the climate emergency in moving towards reduced and zero carbon emissions and energy self-sufficiency.

5.7 Health and Well-being (also see Footpaths and Public Rights of Way Report, Appendix 7)

5.7.1 The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023⁷ contains the expectation of improved physical activity leading to improved physical and mental health. This is deemed to be important to enable adults in Oxfordshire to “.... live their lives as healthily, successfully, independently and safely as possible, with good timely access to health and social care services” (page 17 of the Strategy).

5.7.2 The existing cycle network to Didcot and Harwell stops at Wantage and does not extend to East Challow. The parish has an extensive network of footpaths. Some of these, particularly the Bridleway to Childrey and the Canal tow path (part of the Vale Way) are used heavily for recreation. Others, leading north from the village are much less well-used. The future vision for healthy active living envisages integration of pedestrian traffic, cycle paths and public service transport connecting villages with towns and rail services, particularly the proposed reopened Grove railway station.

5.7.3 Principle 9: To ensure that the existing footpath and cycle way network is integrated with the public and community transport network with easy access to existing and future community facilities.

5.7.4 Principle 10: To ensure that the historic Wilts and Berks Canal, a part of which passes through the parish, is maintained in terms of structural integrity and relevant infrastructure for its historic and cultural value, as a biodiverse corridor and for recreational purposes.

5.8 Parking (also see Parking Survey)

5.8.1 The increase in motor-car possession by the public creates problems with a shortage of parking spaces on existing housing estates. There is a concern that this problem may extend to new housing developments and it should be avoided.

⁷ Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board. (2019). *Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023*. www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/constitution/oxfordshirejointhwbstrategy.pdf. [Accessed: 04-02-22].

5.8.2 Principle 11: To ensure that traffic flow through residential areas of East Challow are not hindered by on-street parking arising from new developments.

5.9 The Environment and Biodiversity (also see Footpaths and Public Rights of Way Report Appendix 7, Local Green Spaces Appendix 9, Biodiversity Report Appendix 10 and Green Corridors Report Appendix 12)

5.9.1 There is a requirement within the Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 to combat climate change and preserve and enhance the local natural environment not only for its own sake but also to contribute to tackling climate change and, together with local green spaces, to improve the health and well-being of residents. Natural green corridors are important to prevent fragmentation and isolation of populations of fauna.

5.9.2 One important green corridor is the Wilts and Berks Canal, which passes through the Plan Area, both sides of the A417 and parts of which are undergoing restoration. This is a popular walk for residents of East Challow and neighbouring villages.

5.9.3 Principle 12: To ensure that the Plan Area preserves and enhances its natural environment and landscape, particularly maintaining and increasing natural green corridors for recreation, biodiversity and carbon absorption.

6. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

6.1 Vision (see also section 2.2)

6.1.1 Our vision for East Challow is that the village will remain in a rural setting within the Plan Area, separate from the urban communities of Wantage and Grove, and with a strong identity and community spirit. New residents in the new housing developments will have integrated well into the community and facilities will have improved to provide essential and non-essential needs for all residents. The economic life of the village will be thriving with businesses at both business parks performing effectively and with additional commercial activities run from private dwellings. Businesses and residents will be supplied with clean energy, some of which will be generated locally. Active travel will have been implemented with improvements in the cycle network and other public rights of way and an improved community bus service connecting local villages. The green environment will have been improved with healthy wild flora and fauna.

6.2 Objectives

6.2.1 To address this vision and principles the following objectives were compiled.

Objective 1	To maintain the separate identities of East Challow, Grove and Wantage.
Objective 2	To preserve and enhance the open countryside and farmed landscape setting around the village for its intrinsic beauty and tranquillity and as a recreational resource.
Objective 3	To secure an appropriate mix of housing in future developments in suitable sites and appropriate to current and future needs of the local community.
Objective 4	To ensure that development reflects and respects the vernacular in the village with respect to design and density.
Objective 5	To protect and maintain the historic and heritage assets of the Plan Area.
Objective 6	To support and encourage business development.
Objective 7	To protect and enhance existing facilities that are important to the community and to set out requirements for development.
Objective 8	To acknowledge the climate emergency and be proactive in assisting the low-carbon transition.
Objective 9	To improve and expand existing footways and other rights of way and cycle routes.
Objective 10	To protect the canal corridor as a recreation and wildlife habitat.
Objective 11	To ensure that new dwellings provide sufficient on- and off-street parking.
Objective 12	To maintain and enhance the existing green corridors and their relationship with the natural environment.

Table 2. The 12 Objectives which form the basis of the Plan policies

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

7.1 Introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan Policies

7.1.1 In this section reference will be made to the following evidence documents:

Landscape Character Assessment, Appendix 1	Parish Character Appraisal, Appendix 2
Housing Needs Survey (HNS), Appendix 3	Community and Community Youth Surveys, Appendices 4a and 4b
Business Survey (BS), Appendix 5	Communities Facilities Assessment (CFA), Appendix 6
Footpaths & Public Rights of Way Survey, Appendix 7	Parking Survey (PS), Appendix 8
Local Green Space Assessment (LGS), Appendix 9	Biodiversity Report, Appendix 10
Non-designated Heritage Assets, Appendix 11	Green Corridors, Appendix 12

7.2 Landscape / Green Space Policies L1-L4

7.2.1 East Challow is a large rural village which has a strong sense of its identity separate to that of Wantage (Figures 23) and Grove (Figures 24 and 25) with which it lies in close proximity. This sense of separate identity was demonstrated in the initial Village Meeting and the Community Survey (Appendix 4) carried out in June 2017. At the meeting the comment was made that “A number of villagers raised concerns about the impact of the development on the village. One particular concern was that a proposed new development effectively meant that East Challow would effectively connect the village with Wantage and Grove.” Maintaining this degree of separateness is one of the key Principles (1) and Objectives (1).



Figure 23. view from East Challow to the East indicating the gap between the village and the outskirts of Wantage with King Alfred’s School visible on the right of the image.



Figure 24. View of Grove Business Park from Woodhill Lane



Figure 25. View across the old airfield site from Grove Business Park towards Grove village, now the site of a large housing development (Wellington Gate).

7.2.2 Much of the Plan Area landscape falls outwith the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and, as such, does not receive the protection afforded by the designation. However, these rural parts of the Plan Area comprise a mixture of intensively farmed arable land and grassland/pasture some of which comprises an interesting landscape which, although sparse, will be relatively rich in terms of biodiversity (Figure 26) and which act as a buffer for the AONB.

7.2.3 Separated as the village and parish is from the parishes of Wantage and Grove, the rural landscape is a key feature to the immediate and more distant areas surrounding the village and its maintenance is a key Principle (2) outlined by residents and an important Objective (2). Despite being bisected by the A417, and with the B4507 which passes through the Plan Area, much of the landscape is essentially rural and is tranquil with relatively little traffic. Some of the roads are unmetalled and used for recreational walking and exercise and run along-side minor watercourses. Policy L1 addresses this matter. For clarity the policy applies only within the East Challow Neighbourhood Area (as shown in Figure 3).

7.2.4 The historical rural environment ranges over 2000 years encompassing ridge and furrow fields, the Wilts-Berks Canal and residual architecture and minor buildings associated with the defunct Grove airfield.

7.2.5 The fields are well populated with mature trees and hedgerows providing a landscape for recreation activity including walking, horse-riding, and cycling (Figure 27).



Figure 26. Circourt Road a minor rural road used by residents for access to the village of Denchworth and by cyclists



Figure 27. Cornhill Lane, a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) separating the parishes of East and West Challow and used for recreational purposes.

7.2.6 The Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1) indicates clearly the position of East Challow viz-a-viz the Vale and the Berkshire Downs with unrivalled views north over the Vale towards Oxford and Faringdon, east towards Didcot and south across the North Wessex Downs AONB landscape of Letcombe Regis and the towards the Ridgeway (Figure 28).



Figure 28. View south towards the Ridgeway.

7.2.7 The gently sloping rise in the village surrounding Main Street and Townsend is visible from the more northerly parts of the parish, northwards from the Wilts and Berks Canal (Figure 29). With its position, a number of vistas are available from within different parts of the Plan Area, including across the gaps between the village and Wantage and Grove (Figure 23-25).



Figure 29. View east from Cornhill Lane across fields to the village core.

7.2.8 The views and vistas are an integral aspect of the position of the village and provide inherent value giving a sense of place and benefiting residents, visitors and anyone passing through by road or foot (Figure 31 and 32). See also Figures 5, 6 and 8 for view across pasture land north east of the village (Figure 5), panoramic view from near the A417 south towards the Ridgeway (Figure 6) and view north from Woodhill Lane towards Grove Business Park (Figure 8), and Figure 26 (Circourt Road looking south towards the Ridgeway). A map of the most important views and vistas is provided at Figure 30 below, with the correspondingly numbered views and vistas described in Policy L3:



Figure 30. Important views and vistas (map reproduced from Parish Character Appraisal)



Figure 31. View across the Windmill Hill Local Character Area from the south (Photograph 4 from the Landscape Character Assessment)



Figure 32. View north towards Oxford from the A417 across the park land separating East Challow from Wantage.

7.2.9. Within the built-up area of the village and village core, local green spaces are particularly important. Together with the green corridor provided to the parish by the Wilts and Berks Canal and the more rural footpaths, they act to preserve green areas for recreation, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and are important contributors to mental and physical well-being for the local population. Their maintenance is important for these reasons.

7.2.10 They are an intrinsic component of the village landscape which remind residents and those passing through by road or foot that this is essentially a rural landscape (Figures 33 and 34).



Figure 33. Green space adjacent to the A417 in village core. Looking south (left panel) and looking north (right panel).



Figure 34. Part of the village green adjacent to the A417 looking south.

7.2.11 Following a process of nomination and sieving based on a detailed assessment in accordance with the criteria in the NPPF (see Appendix 9) a number of Local Green Spaces (LGS) have been identified for designation (see Figure 35 which shows those closest to the village core), including those shown which are listed in the Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2). The full list of LGS sites is set out in policy L4 and detailed maps can be found following policy L4.

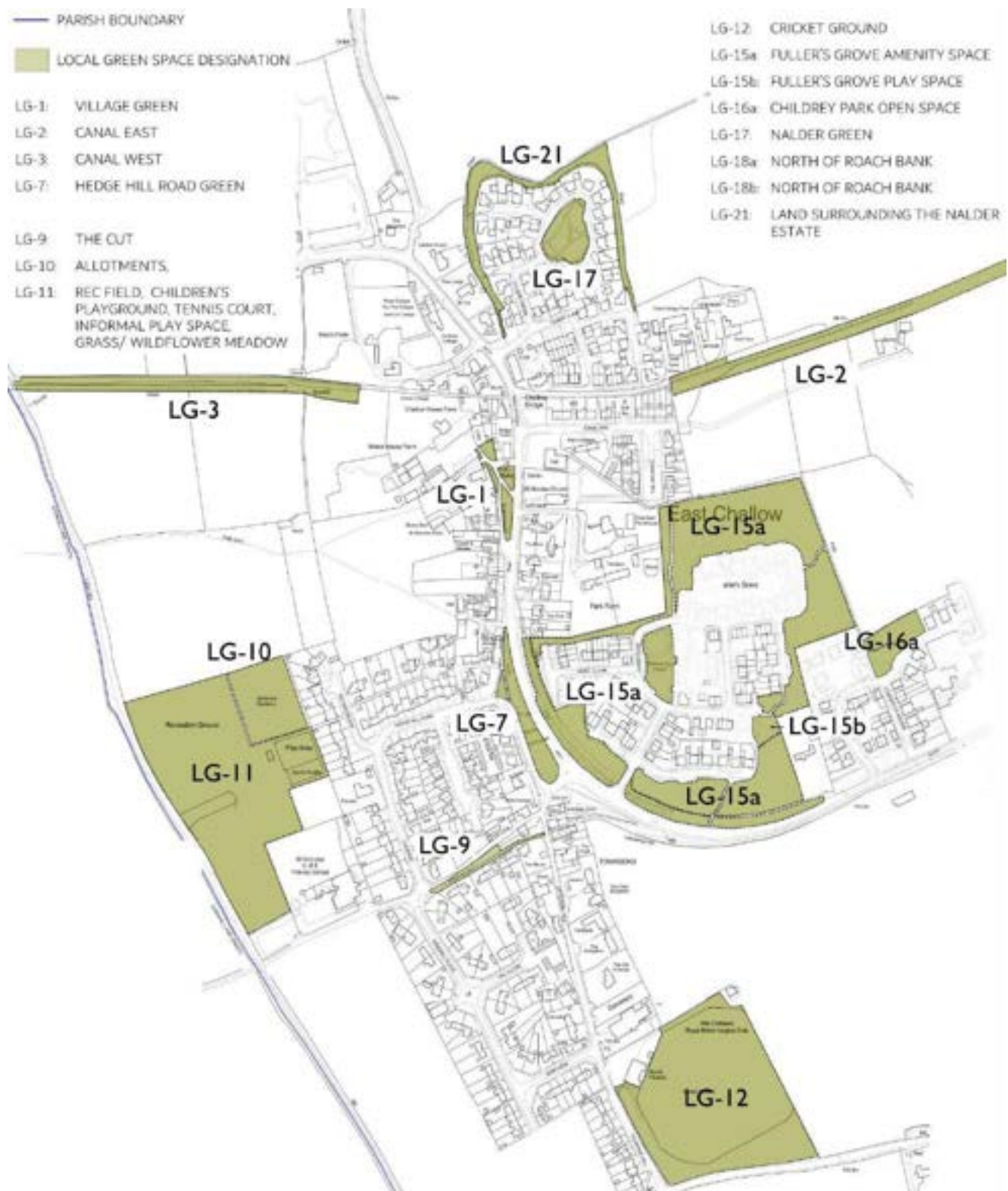


Figure 35. A reduced map showing the location of Local Green Spaces within the village core.

7.3 Landscape Policy L1 – Maintaining the Separate Identity of East Challow

Policy L1. Maintaining the Separate Identity of East Challow
Development proposals between East Challow and Wantage and East Challow and Grove should conserve the open and tranquil character of the intervening landscape. Proposals which would unacceptably detract from the separation between East Challow and Wantage or between East Challow and Grove either individually or cumulatively will not be supported. Subject to proposals complying with other policies in the development plan, new residential development will be supported where: • It comprises sustainable development within the existing built area of East Challow; or • It is allocated for development in the development plan; or • In the case of open countryside, it is limited to that which is considered appropriate development for the open countryside as set out in the development plan and national planning policy. Proposals to redevelop brownfield land in the Parish will be determined in accordance with the policies in the Development Plan and national planning policy.

Justification from evidence base	This is an important aspect of the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1), landscape character area 1 (LCA1) (Windmill Hill) which separates East Challow from Letcombe Regis and LCA3 (pastoral footslopes with parkland), separating the village from Wantage and LCA4 (Clay Vale 1) providing separation from Grove. Landscape Character Assessment: Settlement Landscape Context p 104 – “Separation of settlements along the footslopes is a key characteristic of the landscape and settlement coalescence should be avoided. The gap between Wantage and East Challow is just perceptible and any further erosion should be avoided”.
Policy supported	The policy is in accordance with the NPPF paragraphs promoting effective use of land including undeveloped land (paragraphs 119 and 120) and taking a strategic approach to protecting and maintaining a network of green infrastructure and valued landscapes (paragraphs 174 and 175). It is also supported by Local Plan Part 1 Core policies 3 (Settlement hierarchy), 4 (Meeting our housing needs), CP20 (Spatial Strategy) and CP 44 LP1 (Landscape) and Local Plan Part 2 Development Policy 29 (Settlement character and gaps).

	These policies set out measures to ensure that proposals do not compromise important gaps between settlements and maintain landscape and views.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 1. To maintain the separate identities of East Challow, Grove and Wantage Principle 1: Residents wish East Challow to retain its identity as a discrete village separate from Wantage and Grove

7.4 Landscape Policy L2 – The Setting of the Village in a Rural Landscape

Policy L2. The Setting of the Village in a Rural Landscape.	
Development proposals should preserve or where appropriate enhance the landscape character of East Challow Parish, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment and Parish Character Appraisal. Development proposals within the North Wessex Downs AONB must demonstrate how they would conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty. Major development in the AONB will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should reflect the characteristics which define the special character of the AONB, and the individual landscape character areas, including: 1. Conserving the intimate, tranquil and small-scale pastoral character of the landscape. 2. Protecting and strengthening the historic pattern of fields, watercourses, copses, roads, rights of way, the route of the Wilts and Berks Canal and boundaries (hedgerows, trees, walls etc) 3. Conserving the surviving areas of permanent pasture including ridge and furrow and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses 4. Promoting the replacement of veteran and mature trees where appropriate. 5. Maintaining the role they play in protecting the character and special qualities of the AONB and its setting 6. Protecting the rural character of highways and rights of way 7. Maintaining the openness of the landscape in the southern part of the Plan area 8. Protecting and where possible enhancing tranquillity through use of carefully considered lighting schemes and consideration of the visual relationship between new development and historic or traditional landscape features. 9. Protecting and enhancing the special, often wooded, character of the Wilts and Berks Canal corridor	

10. Seeking opportunities for the establishment of locally important habitats such as semi-improved grassland and small deciduous woodlands in a way that strengthens wildlife corridors and enhances the local landscape character
11. Seeking opportunities for expanding the unimproved calcareous grassland in the south of the parish through the establishment and management of field margins/buffer strips adjacent to existing calcareous grassland habitat using native wildflower species appropriate to the area
12. Seeking opportunities to expand the open mosaic habitats in the southern part of the Parish.

Justification from evidence base	The vast majority of the Plan Area comprises arable land and pasture which surrounds the village and also separates East Challow village from Letcombe Regis, Wantage and Grove and is covered in detail by the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1). This shows that, outwith the immediate boundary of the village centre, the landscape is divided into six recognisable different sectors including land south of the built-up village looking north and south, the latter across the land of the AONB. Between the village and Wantage outskirts north of the A417 are the remains of parkland that used to stretch further west along the road and further north are three regions of clay-based landscape which are essentially arable farmland. The landscape slopes down in a northerly direction and is traversed by small streams which coalesce further north of the plan area into the River Ock. The landscape area covered by the AONB lies within LCA1 (Windmill Hill) and is represented by large intensively farmed arable land. The Landscape Character Assessment and Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2) show the positions of PRoW many of which are rural footpaths or bridleways. In many cases these are used infrequently and require attention which will improve their attractiveness for recreation. One of the PRoW, running along the Wilts and Berks Canal is a footpath which is part of the Vale Way (https://www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thevaleway/valeway.htm). Although an A and B road run through the parish away from Wantage they are essentially rural roads requiring appropriate levels of lighting which is regarded as a sensitive issue for landscapes adjacent to the AONB. The Management Plan for the AONB (2019-
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	24)⁸ highlights this issue, stating (paragraph 7.29): <i>“Many rural lanes have a rich character of their own. The challenge is to retain that character whilst meeting modern highway safety needs. Particular problems occur when urban solutions are imposed on the rural setting. This results in a loss of local character and the addition of lighting and clutter. The North Wessex Downs Unit will collaborate with the Highways Authorities to improve the existing highway environment and seek improvements to proposed new schemes.”</i> The AONB Position Statement on Dark Skies and Artificial Light (2021)⁹ deals with the impact of lighting on the AONB and the setting of the AONB. Page 2 explains that <i>“One long-term goal for the AONB is to be a place: Where a sense of remoteness and tranquillity predominates and where vast night skies can thrill the eye, unaffected by light pollution; where these special qualities are recognised in development decisions within in the setting of the AONB, so that the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs is protected.”</i> The landscape around the village of East Challow is essentially rural, although housing development has crept towards Wantage from the east end of the village. Development has grown in an area that is within the setting of the AONB. The North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on Setting (2019) discusses the effect that development outside, but within the setting of, the AONB can have on the landscape character. At paragraph 18 of the Statement¹⁰ it explains <i>“It is considered that many issues in relation to new development within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB can be resolved through careful design, appropriate materials, location and layout and mitigation measures from landscaping to use of minimal, well-directed and full cut-off street (and other external) lighting.”</i>
Policy supported	The policy draws on the sections of the NPPF promoting effective use of land including undeveloped land (paragraphs 119 and 120) and taking a strategic approach to protecting and maintaining a network of green infrastructure and valued landscapes (paragraphs 174 and 175) and the inherent value of land protected by being incorporated into the NWD AONB (paragraphs 176 and 177). Part of paragraph 177 states that <i>“When considering applications for</i>

⁸ North Wessex AONB. 2019. *North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024*. <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/planning/planning-guidance-2.html>. [Accessed 04-02-22].

⁹ North Wessex AONB. 2021. *North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement: Dark Skies and Artificial Light*. <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Position-Statement-on-Dark-Skies-and-Artificial-Light-Final.pdf> [Accessed 04-02-22].

¹⁰ North Wessex AONB. 2019. *North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement: Setting*. <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Setting-Position-Statement-2019-Final.pdf>. [Accessed 04-02-22].

	<i>development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest”.</i> The policy aligns with VWHDC Local Plan part 1 Core policies 43 and particularly 44 (Landscape) which seeks to protect and enhance major biological landscape features including trees, hedges, fields and water courses, topographical and historical features, views and, although with the A and B roads traversing the parish, tranquillity. All applications for development whether this be dwellings or business premises will be measured against the points in this Core Policy.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 2. To preserve and enhance the open countryside and farmed landscape setting around the village for its intrinsic beauty and tranquillity and as a recreational resource. Principle 2: To ensure that the village and parish remains an essentially rural landscape with all the biological, geographical and historical attributes and characteristics which can benefit residents and visitors.

7.5 Landscape Policy L3 – Important Views and Vistas

Policy L3. Important Views and Vistas
The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following important views which are drawn from the Landscape Character Assessment and Parish Character Appraisal and are shown at Figure 30: 1. Views from the B4507 north over the Vale of the White Horse and south across the AONB towards the Ridgeway, across the Letcombe Brook valley (Landscape Character Assessment, photographs 2-4) 2. Views from Segsbury Camp and Gramps/Smith’s Hill and the Ridgeway northwards across the land either side of the B4507 and towards the northern parts of the Plan area (Landscape Character Assessment, photographs 5 and 6, respectively) 3. Views from the Wilts and Berks Canal corridor towards East Challow village (Landscape Character Assessment, photograph 7, 8) 4. View from the Wilts and Berks Canal corridor towards Wantage village (Landscape Character Assessment, photograph 13) 5. Views from the Wilts and Berks Canal corridor southwards towards the AONB and Ridgeway (Landscape Character Assessment, photograph 9, 12) 6. Views from the rights of way north / north-west of East Challow southwards towards the AONB and Ridgeway (Landscape Character Assessment, photograph 14-16)

7. Views of the rural landscape from Circourt Road (Landscape Character Assessment, photographs 18-21)
8. Views of the agricultural landscape south from Woodhill Lane (Landscape Character Assessment, photographs 16 and 17).
9. Views from the A417 north across parkland (LCA 3) towards the vale and south towards the North Wessex Downs (Landscape Character Assessment, photographs 10 and 11 respectively)
10. Views from the A417 and associated footways west to the historic village green area (Parish Character Appraisal Area 1)

The design, height, massing, and layout of development proposals should acknowledge and respond positively to the identified important views. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on an identified important view will not be supported.

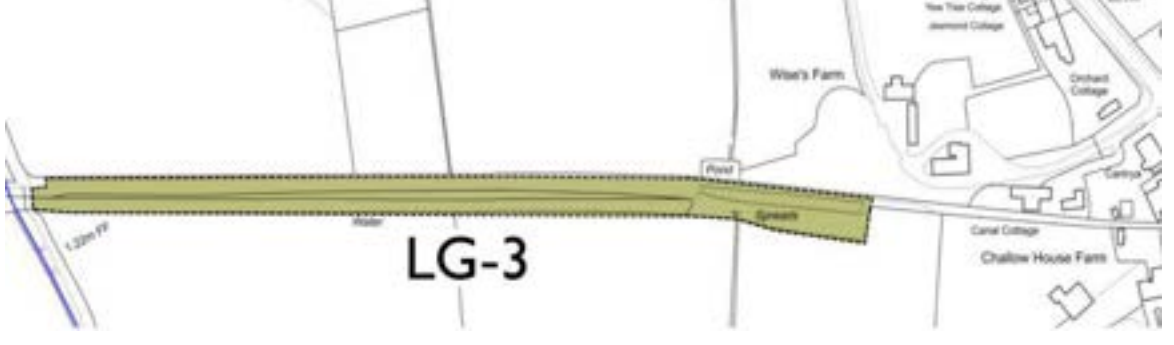
Justification from evidence base	The essentially rural character of the landscape in which East Challow is situated is shown clearly in Landscape Character Areas 1-6 in Appendix 1. The views from strategic points within and immediately outside the parish emphasise its rural nature where existing development is largely protected from view by trees lining roadways and waterways. The maintenance of the components of these green corridors is mentioned as an important aspect of ensuring its continuation. These views also emphasise the physical separation of East Challow from Wantage and Grove.
Policy supported	The policy draws on the sections of the NPPF promoting effective use of land including undeveloped land (paragraphs 119 and 120) and taking a strategic approach to protecting and maintaining a network of green infrastructure and valued landscapes (paragraphs 174 and 175) and the inherent value of land protected by being incorporated into the NWD AONB (paragraph 176). The policy is in accord with VWHDC Local Plan Core policies 43, where the long and short vistas are an integral part of the beauty of the countryside around the parish, and particularly 44 (Landscape) which identifies topographical features and important views and visually sensitive skylines such that development in particular areas could destroy these features and should be avoided. All applications for development whether this be dwellings or business premises will be measured against the points in this Core Policy.

Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 2. To preserve and enhance the open countryside and farmed landscape setting around the village for its intrinsic beauty and tranquillity and as a recreational resource. Principle 2: To ensure that the village and parish remain an essentially rural landscape with all the biological, geographical and historical attributes and characteristics which can benefit residents and visitors.
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7.6 Landscape Policy L4 – Local Green Spaces

Policy L4. Local Green Spaces
The following areas shown on maps LG-1 to LG-21 below are designated as Local Green Spaces: • LG-1 Village Green areas • LG-2 Canal East • LG-3 Canal West • LG-7 Hedge Hill Road Green • LG-9 The Cut • LG-10 Allotments • LG-11 Rec Field / Children's playground / Tennis Court / Informal Play Space / Grass Meadow adjacent to the school • LG-12 Cricket Ground • LG-15a Fuller's Grove Amenity Space (all areas around the new development site except play area and drainage) • LG-15b Fuller's Grove Play Space • LG-16a Childrey Park Open Space • LG-17 Nalder Green • LG-18a South of Roach Bank • LG-18b North of Roach Bank • LG-21 Land Surrounding the Nalder Estate Proposals for development on these Local Green Spaces will only be permitted in very special circumstances.

The specific maps for each of the Local Green Spaces are below:

LG-1 Village Green Areas	LG-7 Hedge Hill Road Green
 This map shows the LG-1 Village Green Areas in East Challow. The highlighted green areas are located near Challow House Farm, Challow Bridge, and St Nicholas Church. Other nearby features include Canal Cottage, Bridge House, Shelter, St Nicholas Place, and The Park. The map also shows Main Street and a 65.3m elevation point.	 This map shows the LG-7 Hedge Hill Road Green. The highlighted green area is a narrow strip along Hedge Hill Road. Other nearby features include Park Farm, The Park, and a 102.2m elevation point.
LG-2 Canal East	
 This map shows the LG-2 Canal East. The highlighted green area is a long, narrow strip along the canal. Other nearby features include a 64.7m elevation point and a 1.2m wide area.	
LG-3 Canal West	
 This map shows the LG-3 Canal West. The highlighted green area is a long, narrow strip along the canal. Other nearby features include West's Farm, Canal Cottage, Challow House Farm, and a 1.2m wide area.	

LG-9 The Cut  This map shows a narrow, elongated green-shaded area labeled 'LG-9' running diagonally through a residential area. The area is bordered by buildings and streets. Labels on the map include 'Mokundange LB', 'Foretop', 'Kernside', 'The Mount', and 'Simon'.	LG-10 Allotments  This map shows a rectangular green-shaded area labeled 'LG-10' located next to a 'Recreation Ground'. Other labels include 'Play Area', 'Sports Field', and 'St Nicholas Church'.
LG-11 Rec Field / Children's playground / Tennis Court / Informal Play Space / Grass Meadow adjacent to the school	LG-12 Cricket Ground
 This map shows a large, irregular green-shaded area labeled 'LG-11' adjacent to a school. The area includes a 'Recreation Ground', 'Play Area', and 'Sports Field'. Other labels include 'St Nicholas Church' and 'The Mount'.	 This map shows a large, irregular green-shaded area labeled 'LG-12' which is a cricket ground. It is bordered by residential streets and buildings.
LG-15a Fuller's Grove Amenity Space (all areas around the new development site except play area and drainage) LG-15b Fuller's Grove Play Space	LG-16a Childrey Park Open Space
 This map shows a large green-shaded area labeled 'LG-15a' and 'LG-15b' surrounding a new development site. The area is labeled 'East Challow' and 'Fuller's Grove'. Other labels include 'Play Area' and 'Sports Field'.	 This map shows a green-shaded area labeled 'LG-16a' located in a residential area. The area is bordered by streets and buildings. Other labels include 'A 817'.

LG-17 Nalder Green	LG-18a South of Roach Bank LG-18b North of Roach Bank
 A map showing a green space labeled 'LG-17' situated within a residential area. The green space is irregularly shaped and surrounded by buildings and roads. Labels on the map include 'Nalder Green', 'CLIFFY LANE', and 'The Lodge'.	 A map showing two adjacent green spaces labeled 'LG-18a' and 'LG-18b'. They are located near a road and some buildings. The spaces are separated by a narrow path or road.
LG-21 Land Surrounding the Nalder Estate	
 A map showing a large green space labeled 'LG-21' that surrounds a residential estate. The green space is irregularly shaped and follows the perimeter of the estate. Labels on the map include 'The Lodge', 'Nalder Estate', and 'CLIFFY LANE'.	

Justification from evidence base	The Local Green Space Assessment evidence base document (Appendix 9) provides detailed analysis of the degree to which the proposed Local Green Spaces meet the criteria for designation set out in the NPPF. A number of sites were assessed and of those, 15 sites were recommended for designation as Local Green Spaces in policy L4. The Plan area is characterized by a number of green spaces which are important to residents. These spaces are valued by villagers for different reasons, and development will only be supported if it would improve access to, or enhance the use of such spaces, provided that the integrity of the spaces remains intact. Whilst it is acknowledged that some of the areas are already protected by virtue of their recreational value, these have been assessed for completeness.
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	Local Green Spaces should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period and that is the case with all of the spaces that have been identified. Discussions have taken place with the Highway Authority concerning the two parcels owned by Oxfordshire Highways. The detail of those discussions is set out in the Consultation Statement and the outcome is that the Steering Group has decided to continue to designate site LG-7 as a Local Green Spaces due to the value of this green area to the local community.
Policy supported	The policy draws on the sections of the NPPF promoting the designation of Local Green Spaces (paragraphs 101-103). The proposals are also consistent with paragraphs 92 and 93 (ensuring a viable, safe and healthy community) and 98 and 99 (Opportunities and protection for sport and physical activity). The policy is in accord with VWHDC Local Plan Part 1 core policies 44 (Landscape), 45 (Green Infrastructure) and Local Plan Part 2 policy DP 8 which emphasizes the importance of maintaining or improving existing facilities and protecting against the loss of facilities used by the community.

Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 7. To protect and enhance existing facilities that are important to the community and to set out requirements for development. Objective 10: To protect the canal corridor as a recreation and wildlife habitat. Principle 2: To ensure that the village and parish remain an essentially rural landscape with all the biological, geographical and historical attributes and characteristics which can benefit residents and visitors. Principle 7: To ensure that sufficient facilities are available locally to residents to enable normal everyday activities, including the purchase of provisions, recreation and supporting residents engaged in professional activity, to be carried out. Principle 10: To ensure that the historic Wilts and Berks Canal, a part of which passes through the parish, is maintained in terms of structural integrity and relevant infrastructure for its historic and cultural value, as a biodiverse corridor and for recreational purposes. Principle 12: To ensure that the Plan Area preserves and enhances its natural environment and landscape, particularly maintaining and increasing natural green corridors for recreation, biodiversity and carbon absorption.
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7.7 Housing Policy HO1 – Meeting the Housing Needs of the Parish

7.7.1 The size and composition of the local population in the East Challow parish has changed considerably over the last 30 years. A relatively small population who worked mainly locally has been replaced in part by a more mobile population more than 90% of whom work outside the parish, (Business Survey, Appendix 5) some of whom commute to Oxford, Didcot, Swindon, London and further afield, requiring effective transport and different housing requirements.

7.7.2 With a changing population there is the risk that the character of the village will change and it is important to preserve the most important aspects of its character and the significance, historic and geo-biological, of its setting to avoid the risk of shifting baseline syndrome, involving gradual deterioration which is not perceived by new residents.

7.7.3 The community Housing Survey (HS, Appendix 3) indicated the preferred housing requirements of the existing population together with a projection of the requirements into the near future. The HS indicated that the population has increased and continues to increase substantially (estimated to be an increase of ca. 30% between 2011 and 2021 and these are mainly children (increase of 65% <2019) and young adults (50% <2019). There is a clear understanding of the needs of those who have difficulty entering the purchased housing

market with 74% regarding affordable housing as desirable or acceptable, facilitating young people in entering the housing market. Shared ownership and rented social housing were also supported indicating a desire for mixed housing but preferring housing for local people which is affordable.

7.7.4 It is therefore important to ensure an understanding that, although housing and business requirements will gradually change with time, this can be countered profitably by a desire for continuity to reduce the speed of change which can frequently lead to loss of well-being.

7.7.5 In general, populations change in other ways, including a gradually ageing profile, smaller families and children being produced later in life and increasing demand for accommodation for individuals. East Challow appears to have a different profile with increased numbers of young people (50%) and children (65%) in addition to increases in residents over the age of 80 (20%). These changes all require changes in housing requirements. This is always coupled with and may overlap with the perennial need for social housing. Principle 3 highlights the desire that any new development should benefit local residents. This is recognised and translated into Objective 3 with the aim of ensuring an appropriate mix of housing in any further development and which will benefit the existing resident profile together with any changes that may take place as populations change.

Policy HO1. Meeting the Housing Needs of the Parish

Proposals for residential development should have regard to both the districtwide need and the local housing need as identified in the East Challow Housing Needs Survey.

Where appropriate, proposals should make provision to meet the needs of first time buyers and young people (First Homes) and the needs of older people or those with disabilities including new homes that are suitable or capable of adaptation to facilitate lifetime independent living.

Justification from evidence base	The commissioned community Housing Survey (Appendix 3) indicated the greatest support for affordable housing (74% found this was needed or acceptable). Other more acceptable home types were for those with disabilities (28%), retired accommodation (25%), shared ownership (20%) and social housing (20%). Large family homes were felt to be needed by only 2% of the respondents. Section 12(ii) of the District Council's Housing Allocation Policy (February 2019)¹¹ has a requirement of 20% allocation to people with a strong local connection to the parish. The Policy states: "
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¹¹ South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. 2019. *South Oxfordshire District Council & Vale of White Horse District Council Housing Allocations Policy*. <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/housing/social-housing-and-join-the-housing-register/>. [Accessed 04-02-22]

	<i>...the councils will adopt a target that aims to ensure that 20% of new build lettings, that are not rural exception sites or developed for a particular client group, are offered in the first instance to people with a strong local connection to that parish and who have a housing need as defined by the allocations policy. If there is more than one applicant who meets the criteria, band and date of application will be the determining factor."</i>
Policy supported	This is reflected in NPPF paragraphs 62, 63 and 65 and Local Plan part 1 Core Policies 22 and 24 and those specifically affecting a rural population (CP 25) and an aging population (CP26).
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 3. To secure an appropriate mix of housing in future developments in suitable sites and appropriate to current and future needs of the local community. Principle 3. Further housing development should benefit the local population either directly or indirectly and development should reflect the housing needs of the local population.

7.8 Development Policy D1 – Vernacular Architecture and Housing Density

7.8.1 The Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1) shows clearly that East Challow sits in a predominantly rural setting separated from the bigger residential and commercial settlements of Wantage and Grove.

7.8.2 The setting is a gentle slope up from the Vale of White Horse to the lower reaches of the West Berkshire Downs and the Ridgeway such that the most southerly part of the parish sits in the North Wessex Downs AONB and overlooks a rural landscape of great beauty. Although modern sustainable building is encouraged this must fit within the overall architectural picture associated with a rural village.

7.8.3 The built-up village centre is sandwiched between Landscape Character Area (LCA)1 (Windmill Hill), 2 (Pasture footslopes), 3 (pasture footslopes with parkland) and 4 (Upper Clay Vale 1) (Figure 36).



Figure 36. Landscape Character Areas in the Plan Area with the East Challow settlement in light blue (centre of image).

consisting of a variety of building styles around the A417 road dating from 18th-20th century and built originally around the village green (Character Area 1: village core, see Figure 36 above) and comprising largely brick-built dwellings with a smaller number of older limestone-built dwellings (Figures 37 and 38). This is also the most immediately visible part of the village in driving through on the A417. This relatively simple building style is continued into the lower end of Character Area 2 (Letcombe Hill/Townsend). The desire to minimise major visible changes in the village and wider Plan Area is indicated in Principle 4 and Objective 4.



Figure 37. Listed building 18th century farmhouse.



Figure 38. Listed building. The former 19th century Nalder Manufacturing centre.

7.8.5 In addition to the residential area and agricultural dwellings outside the immediate boundaries of the village, two industrial centres exist within the parish in Landscape Character Area 4. The W&G Estate is a small estate comprising a mixture of building sizes with no consistent style. Grove Business Park is larger and more modern with a degree of consistency in the style of many of the buildings, being largely large commercial warehouse style buildings in addition to small office-centred buildings (Figure 39).



Figure 39. Modern functional building style at Grove Business Park

7.8.6 Any further development must therefore be sensitive to these settings and not result in detrimental effects in regard of vistas, architectural design and styles representatives of which are presented in the Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2). This document highlights the allocations, designations and permission of significance in the parish or adjacent to the boundary which may affect the character of the built form. The built character of the village has developed piece-meal over 2-3 centuries which residents wish to maintain to ensure that even with gradual change in the form of development, the essential character of the village and its immediate surroundings do not change markedly. The character of the built environment is supplemented by Local Green Spaces (Appendix 9), its Heritage Assets (Appendix 2), Footpaths (Appendix 7) and even its employment centres based in the two business and industrial estates (Figure 39). The Design Guide in the Parish Character Appraisal sets out representative examples of structural and other features which are desirable in new dwellings.

Policy D1. Vernacular Architecture and Housing Density

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

1. Have regard to the Joint Design Guide, the Parish Character Appraisal including local character areas, and the Design Code, where appropriate reflecting the local vernacular in the historic parts of the village (including Main Street and Letcombe Hill). New major development should be subject to an agreed Design Code specific to the site, with an agreed overall palette of materials (based on this appraisal or subsequent later appraisals) and suitable house types. Reliance on standard house types and generic designs which do not represent the area are to be avoided; and
2. Respond positively to scale, mass, density, landscaping and design of the immediate area and the village context, ensuring development does not dominate adjacent buildings and preserves the amenity of nearby properties; and
3. In edge-of-village locations, acknowledge the Plan's spatial strategy and are sensitive to the transition from urban to rural character; and
4. Sympathetically introduce high quality, modern design in appropriate locations; and
5. Incorporate energy conservation, insulation, and low carbon energy management measures e.g. electric car charging points, photovoltaic cells, ground source heat pumps etc. (see also policies CL2 and P1); and
6. Provide necessary infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of fibre Broadband to the edge of each development plot; and
7. Consider the use of locally distinctive features and materials as described in the East Challow Character Appraisal and Design Code and Principles; and
8. Respect and protect the AONB and its setting; and
9. Include appropriate landscape mitigation measures to reduce the impact of development such as soft borders trees, hedges or planting to enclose the front of plots, and utilising locally native species where possible.

Justification from evidence base	The building forms and styles typical of each of the village Character Areas are presented in the Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2) including Character 5: the rural parish, containing information on the local industrial estates. Reference should be made to the Design Guide and Principles contained in this document (pages 21 and 22). The importance of ensuring separation between East Challow village and Wantage and Grove in any development at the edge of the village is mentioned in the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1).
Policy supported	The benefits of good design are outlined in NPPF paragraphs 126-132 together with the need for aligning with the local character

	(134) and the desire for innovative sustainable designs (136). Local design guides at a neighbourhood scale are particularly important (paragraphs 127, 128 and especially 129). The importance of design alignment with local character is also emphasised in Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 37-39, 40 and 41 (including the increasing expectation to generate renewable energy), 42 (need to take into account flood risk), 43 (use of natural resources), 44 (use of natural features), 45 (importance of saving green infrastructure) and 46 (need for conservation and biodiversity improvement). Local Plan Part 2 also covers loss of amenity as a result of development (Development Policy 23) and siting in respect of existing development (DP24).
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 4. To ensure that development reflects and respects the vernacular in the village with respect to design and density. Principle 4. Residential development should respect and where possible align with the vernacular architecture in the village and parish.

7.9 Heritage Policy HE1 – Heritage Assets

7.9.1 The Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1), Appendix A of Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2, page 7 and Appendix A) identify and highlight a number of heritage assets mainly in the core area of the village but also in the wider Plan Area (Figures 40 and 41). These include listed buildings (Figure 41) which together with non-designated heritage assets (Appendix 11), have immense character providing attractive visual interest particularly in the village core and the lower parts of Townsend. In addition, the grain of the village and parish provides architectural richness and diversity which is important to preserve and maintain.

7.9.2 The parish contains 16 listed buildings and structures, 15 are listed as Grade II, with the Church of St. Nicholas as Grade II*.

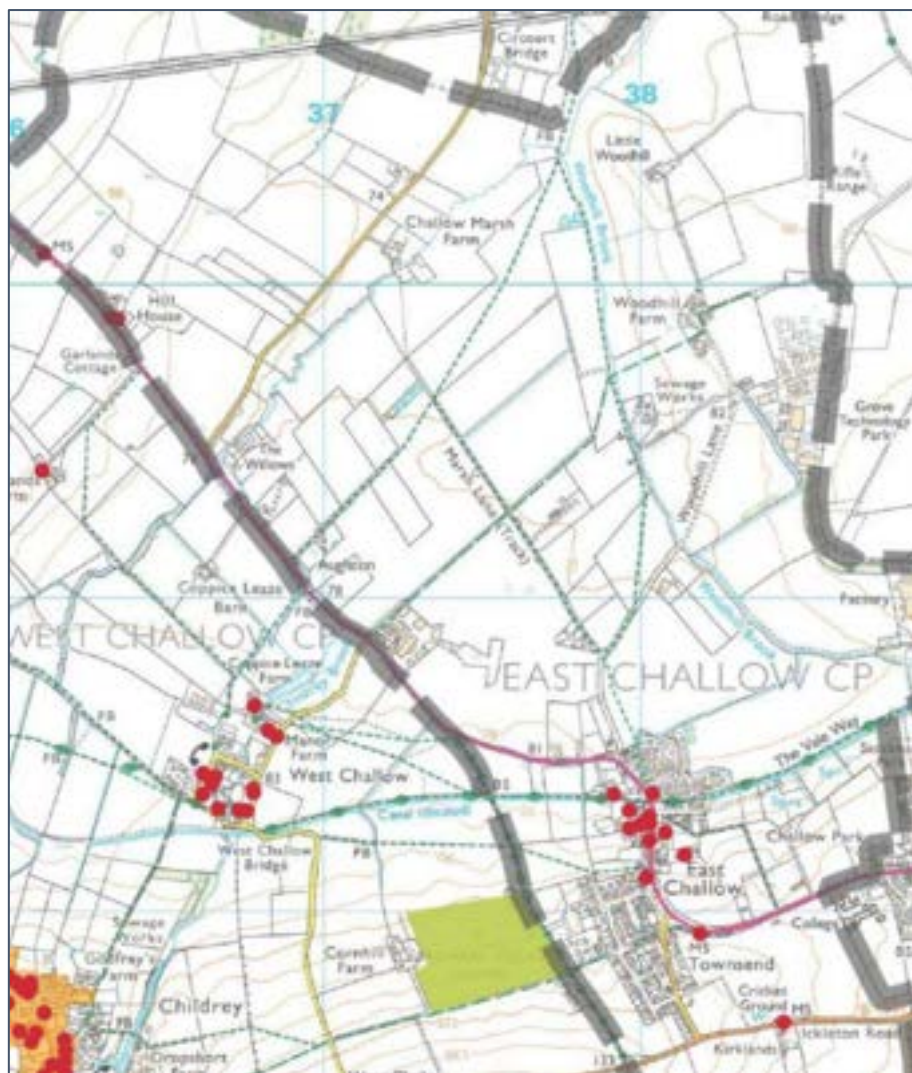


Figure 40. The position of the main heritage assets in the plan area. (Red dots refer to the heritage assets described in the Parish Character Assessment Appendix 2. The green area represents the position of the Roman villa immediately west of the parish)

7.9.3 Most heritage assets lie within the village core and are visible in passing through the village centre on the A417.



Figure 41. The position of the heritage assets in the village core (green dots).



Figure 42. Listed building. Bridge House, 17th century, remodelled in 18th century

7.9.4 The preservation of assets is of national in addition to local significance and is an important factor to be taken into account in planning applications. This is emphasised in Principle 5 which summarises the views of residents outlined in the Community Survey of 2017 and translated into Objective 5.

7.9.5 The village and parish also have a number of non-designated heritage assets which are of primarily historical significance and which are of particular local value to the community. These are also noted in the Character Appraisal (Appendices 2 and 11). These are regarded by the NPPF as being of local significance and the effect of development proposals on that

significance should be considered during planning application procedures (see NPPF paragraph 203 and footnote 68). In detail they are:

1. Wooden barn at Woodhill Farm
2. Unused Grove Airfield buildings
3. The Old Goodlake Arms, Main Street
4. Nineteenth century terrace of houses, Main Street
5. Row of mixed nineteenth century housing, Main Street
6. Semi-detached workers cottages, Letcombe Hill
7. The Mission
8. Ridge and furrow field systems
9. Stone canal marker
10. Roll back metal seat

7.9.6 Other features of no less significance but which are covered by ecclesiastical protective rules include the following items within the curtilage of the Church of St. Nicholas: The lych-gate erected in 1920, the church clock installed in 1911, the church screen erected in 1905, an arts and crafts style metal crucifix from the late 19th century, the 12th century stone font, a religious relic embedded in the altar and a First World War Grave from 1916.

7.9.7 Further development will be expected to maintain the existing level of granularity and not be detrimental to the existing architectural and heritage richness already present.

7.9.8 The village has a long history with remains of an adjacent Roman Villa being located just outside to the west of the Plan area. It is likely therefore that additional historic and heritage assets exist below ground. Development must take account of any discoveries to ensure preservation or conservation.

7.9.10 Policy HE1 seeks to provide a means by which to consider proposals which affect both designated heritage assets (in the first part of the policy) and non-designated assets (in the second part of the policy).

Policy HE1. Heritage Assets

The Plan area's designated historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground including archaeological sites and listed buildings, will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Development proposals that would affect a non-designated heritage asset (as identified in Appendix 11) will be considered, taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021).

Justification from evidence base	The heritage assets, including listed buildings are described in detail in the Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2). Non-designated heritage assets are described in Appendix 11. The Wilts and Berks Canal and ancient PRoW are not designated as listed buildings but are mentioned in the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1, section 5.9) and described in detail in the Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2) and the Report on Footpaths and Public Rights of Way (Appendix 7).
Policy supported	The policy is supported by NPPF paragraph 190 (benefits from preservation and conservation of heritage assets), 199-202 (harm caused to designated heritage assets from development) and 208 (developments which aid preservation of a heritage asset). Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 39 describes issues around development and conservation and heritage assets and Part 2 Development Policy 36 also emphasises the irreplaceability of heritage assets and that development should conserve or enhance their significance supported by DP 38 (Listed buildings) and DP 39 (Archaeology and scheduled monuments).
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 5. To protect and maintain the historic and heritage assets of the parish. Principle 5: To ensure that the historic and heritage assets of the parish are conserved and maintained such that they contribute to the cultural and historic value of the parish.

7.10 Business Policy E1 – General Development of Business

7.10.1 This policy aims to set principles whereby new business can be encouraged to locate in East Challow and to improve the environment and efficiency of existing businesses (Principle 7, Objective 7).

7.10.2 The unemployment rate in the Vale of White Horse District Council at 3.4% is lower than the UK national average at 4.8% (ONS). The 2011 census indicated that 75% of residents were in active employment and that 36% of employees were living and working in Wantage and Grove and 64% worked outside the area.

7.10.3 East Challow has several businesses based in two industrial estates (Figure 43).



Figure 43. Position of the two Industrial estates in the Plan Area.

The smaller W&G Estate (Figure 44) which contains a variety of businesses ranging from wholesale and retail building supplies to process engineering companies. The commercial use of the estate dates back to 1968, when the petrol station was initially granted. The 18 companies with assets can be seen at <https://suite.endole.co.uk/explorer/postcode/ox12-9tf>. The larger Grove Business Park (<https://www.grovebusinesspark.com/>) (Figure 45) also has a range of 85+ companies, from early-stage start-ups to established companies, across a range of sectors from manufacturing and logistics to forensics, IT, electronics and life sciences. Boston House on the site plays host to regular business and as a base for new start-ups and networking events.



Figure 44. The W&G Industrial Estate



Figure 45. Grove Business Park

7.10.4 In addition to these two parks, a smaller number of individual companies are based in the village and parish and an increasing number are based in individual homes, not including the increasing number of individuals working part-time or full-time at home.

7.10.5 The Business survey (Appendix 5) showed that ca. 25% of employees lived in East Challow and nearly all companies were satisfied or very satisfied with their location. Restrictions to growth included provisions of Ultra-fast Fibre Broadband and staff availability in addition to the transport links already highlighted. There was felt to be a need for smaller start-up premises for early-phase company establishment and initial expansion.

7.10.6 Until recently the village also contained a small shop and two public houses. The Housing (Appendix 3, Executive Summary, section 10), and communities facilities surveys (Appendix 6) identify this and the desire for such facilities to return to the village. All three premises have now been converted into private dwellings.

7.10.7 The business survey 2019 indicated that the vast majority of companies which completed the survey (21 out of 22) were satisfied or very satisfied with the location and facilities of their business premises. The reasons given included the location being central to the key business area, easy access and convenience for staff.

Businesses which are run from homes highlighted the advantages of absence of commuting and flexible hours with the disadvantages including lack of contact with others, variable internet connection and distractions from family.

Policy E1. General Development of Business

As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location proposals to develop existing businesses including those within the W&G Estate and Grove Business Park, will be supported subject to the following conditions:

1. The development is appropriate to the locality having regard to the requirements of the Neighbourhood and Local Plan and the Design Code for the Plan.
2. The development contributes to achieving a transition towards zero carbon activity using solar panels and other forms of energy generation, better insulation of buildings, installation of charging points for electric vehicles and fibre broadband to the edge of the premises.
3. The development provides connection points for superfast broadband to the business and provides support to provision to other neighbouring businesses.
4. Providing cycle path access to industrial sites from the village and other local villages, developments, and settlements
5. Provide support towards improved transport links including more frequent bus services to Grove and improved rail services from Grove.

Justification from evidence base	The variety of building styles associated with the industrial and business areas within the Plan area reflect the different time scales over which they have developed. These are presented together with a recommendation for a design code and principles in the Parish Character Appraisal for any further wholesale development (Character Area 5). The Business Survey (Appendix 5) highlights a requirement for improved public transport infrastructure and public transport links including improved rail links. It also identifies variable internet connections as a limiting factor in success particularly in businesses run from residents' dwellings.
Policy supported	Development of local business is encouraged in the NPPF (paragraphs 81, 84 and 85) including required changes in response to the climate emergency (paragraph 152). The effect of location of new employment is covered by Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 28 and the scope for change of use from employment is covered by CP 29.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 6. To support and encourage business development Principle 6: To set principles whereby new business can be encouraged to locate in East Challow and to improve the environment and efficiency of existing businesses.

7.11 Business Policies E2 – Development of New Businesses and Proposals for Non-Business Uses and Policy E3 - Proposals for the Alternative Use or Redevelopment of Employment Premises

Policy E2. Development of New Businesses and Proposals for Non-Business Uses

Proposals to develop new businesses will be supported provided the development is appropriate to the locality having regard to the requirements within the Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting design code for the Plan.

Businesses located within residential areas should be capable of adequately meeting their access needs to the extent necessary to mitigate their own impact. Where practicable, new business premises should be designed to enable their reversion to residential use in circumstances where the business ceases to trade.

New retail provision within East Challow village will be supported provided it complies with the other policies in the development plan.

Policy E3. Proposals for the Alternative Use or Redevelopment of Employment Premises

Other than where allowed under permitted development rights, the loss of existing businesses through change of use or redevelopment to non-employment / non-retail uses will not be supported unless clear evidence is provided that demonstrates that:

1. The business is no longer viable; and
2. The site is not suitable for alternative business uses; and
3. The site has been marketed for business purposes at a realistic price for a period not less than 12 months and with no proceedable offers; and
4. Such proposals are accompanied by an employment skills and training plan which sets out how the developer intends to mitigate the loss of employment impacts that are directly attributable to the redevelopment of the site

Justification from evidence base	Existing building forms in the industrial areas covered by the Plan are presented in the Parish Character Appraisal (Character Area 5). The Design Guide and Principles in this document includes recommendations for sustainable building construction and provision of communications including full-fibre, high-speed Broadband. The Business Survey (Appendix 5) highlights a requirement for improved public transport infrastructure and public transport links including improved rail links. It also identifies variable internet connections as a limiting factor in success. East Challow had two public houses, but these closed in 2000 and 2016, and a convenience store which closed in 1998. Residents are required to travel to Mellor’s Garage on the A417 or into Wantage to purchase provisions (Community Facilities Survey Appendix 6).
Policy supported	Development of local business is encouraged in the NPPF (paragraphs 81, 84 and 85) including required changes in response to the climate emergency (paragraph 152). The effect of location of new employment is covered by Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 28 and the scope for change of use from employment is covered by CP 29.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 6. To support and encourage business development Principle 6. To set principles whereby new business can be encouraged to locate in East Challow and to improve the environment and efficiency of existing businesses.

7.12 Community Facilities Policy C1 - New or Enhanced Community Facilities

7.12.1 The Plan is supported by a Community Facilities Assessment (found at Appendix 6) which describes each of the facilities, their age, level of usage, state of repair etc. Policies C1 and C2 directly draw on the evidence in this report and the community feedback from surveys and previous consultation exercises.

7.12.2 East Challow has a primary school which serves local villages (West Challow and the Letcombes) and which is currently expanding its facilities for Reception year children.

7.12.3 The village has a village hall which is used by a number of community groups and children’s parties. A scout group has just been restarted after many years and this will initially use the village hall.

7.12.4 Although it is important to maintain the gap between East Challow, Grove and Wantage, their proximity means that most shopping now takes place in either of these two larger centres. However, a convenience shop, as exists in some other smaller villages in the Vale, would be useful and welcomed.

7.12.5 Within the last 30 years the two public houses located in the village closed and the one small convenience store also closed. Several villages in the Vale have opened community shops which are supported by the community. Although there is no longer a public house in the village, it has a successful Royal British Legion Club which is also used for social events as is the cricket club. The local motor repair garage and filling station on the A417 has a small convenience shop but which cannot be reached easily by pedestrians as it lies almost 1 km west of the village core and there is no footpath along the A417 which might provide easier access.

7.12.6 East Challow village has reasonably good recreation facilities, in one case (Challow and Childrey Cricket Club) of county significance. This club has a number of teams including a youth team and has held demonstration matches including players of international status. The club house is also used for special village meetings and social events including wedding receptions.

7.12.7 The recreation field has two football pitches, one full size and a smaller pitch. There is a changing facility, but it is in a state of very poor repair. The ground has flood lights which are supplied by power cables over ground from the changing facility and this arrangement requires replacement. The recreation area has a hard tennis court which is also used for netball by local groups and a children's play area well supplied with various installations (Figure 46).



Figure 46. Children's play area showing equipment and (left hand panel) tennis court behind

7.12.8 The area also has allotments which are well used (Figure 47).



Figure 47. Allotment gardens

7.12.9 The recreation area uses a car park which is also used by parents bringing children to St. Nicholas's school and a smaller, currently unused car park closer to the football pitch accessed via Cornhill Lane. There is an additional overflow car park to the village hall that is also used by residents for their own use.

7.12.10 The village has two places of worship, the 12th century Church of England Church of St. Nicholas and the non-denominational Mission (Figure 48). The Mission building is in the process of being marketed for sale at the time of writing this Plan and for which application has been made for historic building status. There is interest in using this building for community purposes.



Figure 48. The two places of worship: St Nicholas church (left) and The Mission (right)

7.12.11 There are a number of businesses within the plan area which provide a retail or commercial function to the local area, as mentioned above. The commercial activities are also covered by the Building Survey and policies pertaining to it are mentioned above, policies E1 and E2. A large number of these are located within the W&G Industrial Estate, which is host

to the majority of the Parish's service industry. These are included due to their importance and contribution to the parish. The estate is home to a number of retail and trade companies covering car and body repair, tool hire, joinery, ceiling repair, building materials, furniture manufacture and physio- and hydrotherapy.

7.12.12 Additional companies on the W&G Estate do not serve parish residents directly but are important economically. Some of these business premises are several decades old and are thus in a variable state of repair.

7.12.13 Grove Business Park has less direct interaction with parish residents. However, TFD Health and Fitness provides a gym, John Lewis of Hungerford provides a kitchen/furniture fitting service and GC Tiling offers a tile fitting service. Most of the buildings are very new and thus in a good state of repair. A large number of small high-tech and start-up companies are run from this Business Park.

7.12.14 East of the W&G estate on the A417 lies Haynes of Challow. It sells tools, garden equipment, second-hand furniture and is a car breaker. This company is well known throughout the county and is busy particularly at weekends.

7.12.15 L.G. and C.A. Cannings, located in the village core, sells tools and workwear goods, operates an equipment hire service and agricultural vehicle repairs and is an important component of the local economy.

7.12.16 The village is also well provided with a number of green spaces (see Local Green Spaces survey, Appendix 9).

7.12.17 It is clear that for a large village such as East Challow a number of facilities are available although several have been lost and it is important to maintain those that remain and to replace, where possible, those that have been lost (Principle 8, Objective 8).

Policy C1. New or Enhanced Community Facilities

The provision of new community facilities such as a village shop or public house will be strongly supported.

Proposals for the extension, adaptation or redevelopment of the community facilities, identified in the Community Facilities Assessment, for community purposes will be supported, provided the resulting improved facilities are appropriate in design terms and will not unacceptably impact the amenities of adjoining residential properties.

Justification from evidence base	The Community Facilities Assessment (Appendix 6) indicates that, although East Challow village is regarded as a larger village, it currently has no public house and no shop but, for its size,
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	reasonably good recreation facilities, in one case (Challow and Childrey Cricket Club) of county significance. It also has a number of other service and retail outlets based around the W&G estate and a business which provides support for the local agricultural economy but which also supplies garden equipment, tool hire and workwear. Furniture and tiling fitting companies are based at Grove Business Park. Two places of worship are situated in the village core. The local primary school provides primary education for the village and others in the immediate vicinity. The village has a number of local green spaces (Local Green Space survey, Appendix 9).
Policy supported	The importance of adequate community facilities is emphasised in the NPPF: paragraphs 84 (supporting the rural economy), 92 and 93 (ensuring a viable, safe and healthy community) and 187 (avoiding conflict with existing businesses and community facilities). The Local Plan Part 2 DP 8 and 9 emphasises the importance of maintaining or improving existing facilities including public houses. DP 12 indicates the importance of farm shops and equestrian establishments and DP14 emphasises the importance of a village shop to the community and of the desirability of developing a shop should one not exist.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 7. To protect and enhance existing facilities that are important to the community and to set out requirements for development. Principle 7: To ensure that sufficient facilities are available locally to residents to enable normal everyday activities, including purchasing provisions, recreation and supporting residents engaged in professional activity, to be carried out.

7.13 Community Facilities Policy C2 – Preservation of Existing Community Facilities

Policy C2. Preservation of Existing Community Facilities
Development proposals that will result in either the loss of or significant harm to a community facility as defined the Community Facilities Assessment (Appendix 6) will not be supported, unless it can clearly be demonstrated that the operation of the asset, or the ongoing delivery of the community value of the asset is no longer financially viable, it is surplus to requirements or it will be replaced by a facility of at least equivalent value, utility and ease of access to the local community.

Justification from evidence base	The Community Facilities Assessment (Appendix 6) lists those facilities that are present in the Plan area and available to residents and others living outside the Plan area.
Policy supported	The importance of adequate community facilities is emphasised in the NPPF: paragraphs 84 (supporting the rural economy), 92 and 93 (ensuring a viable, safe and healthy community), 98 and 99 (Opportunities and protection for sport and physical activity). The Local Plan Part 2 DP 8 and 9 emphasise the importance of maintaining or improving existing facilities. DP 12 indicates the importance of farm shops and equestrian establishments and DP14 emphasises the importance of a village shop to the community and of the desirability of developing a shop should one not exist.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 7: To protect and enhance existing facilities that are important to the community and to set out requirements from development Principle 7: To ensure that, as a larger village, sufficient facilities are available locally to residents to enable normal everyday activities, such as purchasing provisions, recreation and, in some cases, including professional activity, to be carried out.

7.14 Climate Emergency Policy CL1 – Local Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

7.14.1 The government target for carbon emissions is net zero by 2050. It is expected that solar, but also wind, will form a substantial contribution towards this target. Renewable energy capacity connected to the grid expanded six-fold from 8GW in 2009 to 47.4GW in 2020. It is expected that wind and solar will produce the majority of generating capacity by 2050¹².

7.14.2 The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy published data showing that the percentage contribution of renewables to the UK energy requirement was 47% in 2020, which when added to nuclear energy, low-carbon sources contributed 62%. In the first quarter of 2021 renewables contributed 41.6% which included 13.4% from onshore wind, 2.1% photovoltaic (PV) and 12.3% bioenergy. Thus, although PV contributes a small percentage to the overall UK requirement, which includes industrial requirements in addition to domestic, it is clear that installation of PV to domestic dwellings will contribute substantially to domestic needs which, according to government data, represented 35% of total UK electricity demand in 2019.

¹² Climate Change Committee. 2019. Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming. <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/>

7.14.3 The community must play a part in resolving climate change issues and is keen to do so (Principle 8) with concerns over the environment, especially amongst the young (see Community and Community Youth Surveys, Appendices 4a and 4b). In 2019 the VWHDC declared a Climate Emergency and announced that it would reduce carbon emissions in its activities by 75% by 2025 and be carbon-neutral by 2030. It is the intention that the District will reduce its carbon emissions by 75% by 2030 and be carbon-neutral by 2045, 5 years before the UK target date¹³. In February 2022 the District Council published its Climate Action Plan 2022-24¹⁴ explaining how it intends to achieve these ambitious targets. Policy CL1 comments on this matter. Its final section addresses the potential environmental implications. In assessing this matter reference should be made to appendices 1, 2, 10 and 12 of the Plan which detail the local landscape and environment of the parish.

7.14.4 Water and wastewater management is also a significant issue across the region and Thames Water have indicated that since the 1st April 2018 all off-site water and wastewater network reinforcement works necessary as a result of new development will be delivered by the relevant statutory undertaker. Local reinforcement works will be funded by the Infrastructure Charge which is a fixed charge for water and wastewater for each new property connected. Strategic water and wastewater infrastructure requirements will be funded through water companies' investment programmes which are based on a 5 year cycle known as the Asset Management Plan process.

7.14.5 Thames Water asks developers to consider the net increase in water and wastewater demand to serve their developments and also any impact the development may have off site further down the network, if no/low water pressure and internal/external sewage flooding of property is to be avoided.

7.14.6 They encourage developers to use their free pre-planning service¹⁵. This service can tell developers at an early stage if they will have capacity in their water and/or wastewater networks to serve their development, or what they'll do if they don't.

7.14.7 The developer can then submit this as evidence to support a planning application and Thames Water can prepare to serve the new development at the point of need, helping avoid delays to housing delivery programmes.

¹³ <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/action-on-climate-and-nature/>

¹⁴ Vale of White Horse District Council. 2022. Climate Action Plan. <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/02/Vale-Climate-Action-plan-2022-2024.pdf>

¹⁵ Thames Water. Water and Wastewater Capacity. <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/preplanning> [accessed 25-4-2022]

Policy CL1. Local Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

Support will be given to renewable and low carbon energy generation proposals that:

- a. are led by, or meet the needs of, the East Challow parish community; and
- b. create opportunities for co-location of energy producers with energy users, in particular heat, and facilitate renewable and low carbon energy innovation.

Development proposals are encouraged to secure a proportion of their total regulated energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources. Development proposals are also encouraged to create opportunities for co-location of energy producers with energy users and facilitate renewable and low carbon energy innovation.

When considering such proposals, regard will be given to the wider benefits of providing energy from renewable sources, as well as the potential effects on the local landscape and environment, including any cumulative impact of these proposals.

Justification from evidence base	The VWHDC recognises the essential and increasing contribution that locally generated electricity can make to the local economy in the period up to 2031 with a key policy 41 in Local Plan Part 1 which will encourage the development of renewable energy production, providing a number of local conditions are fulfilled. The Vale of White Horse Climate Action Plan 2022-24¹⁴ contains a range of actions that are directly relevant to and support the approach set out in this policy. The parish has aspirations to include wind energy as a sustainable form of local electricity generation.
Policy supported	Responding appropriately to the climate emergency is one of the Strategic Objectives and informs the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan (Core Policies 40 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and 41 (renewable Energy)) The NPPF (paragraphs 152-155) expects a proactive approach towards mitigating and adapting to climate change particularly addressing flood risk and the potential effects on biodiversity and landscapes and assisting in increasing use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 8: To acknowledge the climate emergency and be proactive in assisting the low-carbon transition.

	Principle: 8 To ensure that the parish meets the obligations posed by the climate emergency in moving towards reduced and zero carbon emissions and energy self-sufficiency.
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7.15 Climate Emergency Policy CL2 – Innovative Approaches to Construction

Policy CL2. Innovative Approaches to Construction
Development proposals which take innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon homes which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels will be supported. Proposals providing new homes with installed electric vehicle charging points will be supported.

Justification from evidence base	The government target for carbon emissions is net zero by 2050. It is expected that particularly solar but also wind will form a substantial contribution toward this target. Renewable energy capacity connected to the grid expanded six-fold from 8GW in 2009 to 47.4GW in 2020. It is expected that wind and solar will produce the majority of generating capacity by 2050¹⁶. The need for Electric Vehicle charging points in new developments is highlighted in the Parish Character Appraisal design guide and principles.
Policy supported	This approach is supported by NPPF (see paragraphs 154 and 155) some of which is incorporated into Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 40.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 8: To acknowledge the climate emergency and be proactive in assisting the low-carbon transition. Principle 8: To ensure that the parish meets the obligations posed by the climate emergency in moving towards reduced and zero carbon emissions and energy self-sufficiency.

¹⁶ Climate Change Committee. 2019. Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming. <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/>

7.16.1 The village and wider Plan Area are provided with a good network of footpaths, Bridleways and a BOAT (Figure 49).

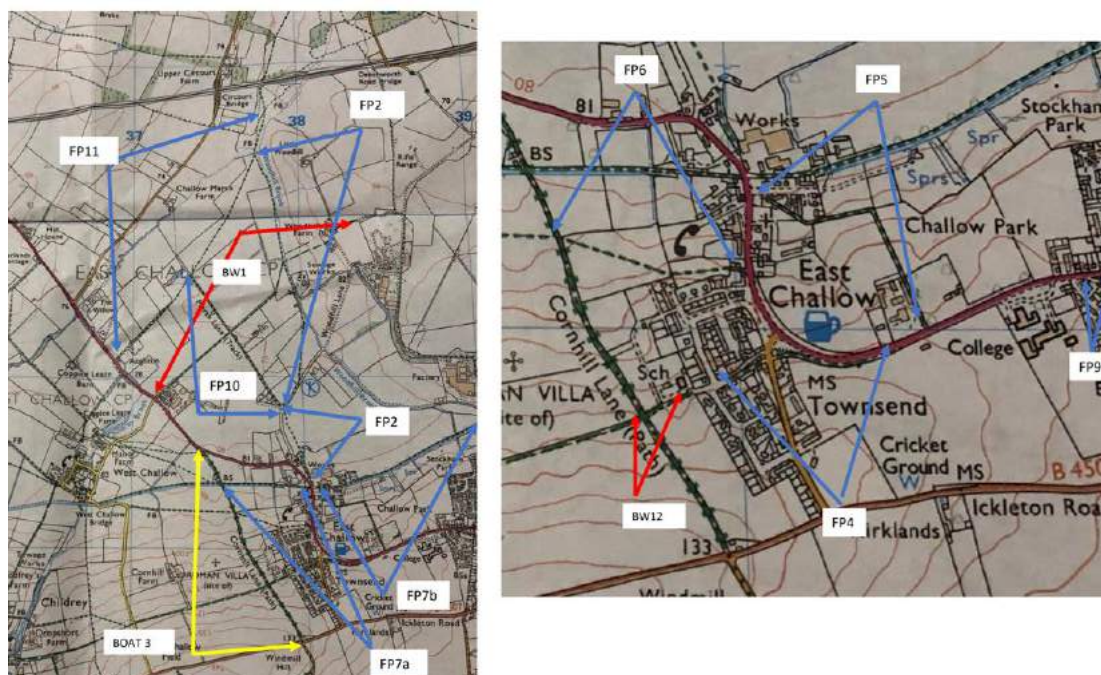


Figure 49. PRoW in the Plan Area showing their extent (panel above) and annotated (panels below) showing Footpaths (FP) 1-11, marked in blue, Bridleways (BW) 1 and 2, marked in red, and BOAT marked in yellow (Taken from Footpath and PRoW survey Appendix 7).

7.16.2 These rights of way are used to a very variable extent (Figures 50 and 51). The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Plan area have been surveyed in detail (see Appendix 7 for survey findings). These facilitate communication by foot with Grove via the airfield and with Childrey, West Challow, Letcombe Regis and Denchworth. Some are used for recreation and dog walking whilst others are in very poor condition and currently overgrown and impassable in places. More may be made of them for recreational purposes, for reasons of improving fitness and well-being and they also provide channels for biodiversity.

7.16.3 Should the western relief road be constructed this will sever several rural footpaths. This is an issue where members of the local community have expressed concern (see for example the Consultation Statement).

7.16.4 The Oxfordshire County Health and Well-Being Strategy (see section 5.7 above) focuses on living and aging well which expects increasing walking and cycling (Principle 9). This also aligns with the national environmental strategy to reduce carbon emissions by increasing cycling as a means of transport. Cycling can be challenging and unsafe along some country roads, but it is an increasingly popular means of recreation and improving fitness. The local cycling network utilising dedicated cycle ways has yet to reach from Wantage to East Challow and this would increase cycle use if completed. Improvement of the PRoW network in the Plan Area is a key Objective (9). Improving cycle safety is an important aspect of increasing use of cycle ways and this is strongly supported.



Figure 50. PROW 3, BOAT, Cornhill Lane.



Figure 51. PROW 4, footpath, Childrey Way at Letcombe Hill.

7.16.5 The Wilts and Berks Canal (Figure 52) was discontinued as an economically viable entity in 1914.



Figure 52. Route of Wilts and Berks Canal through the Plan Area (entry and exit points arrowed)

7.16.6 In more recent years it has provided local residents with a valuable footpath for recreation purposes, and it forms a section of the Vale Way (Figure 53). It also provides a corridor for wildlife, is relatively biodiverse with a number of common animals and plants identified in a recent biodiversity survey carried out by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC, Appendix 10).



Figure 53. PRoW, footpath running along the Wilts and Berks canal, west of the A417, left and east of the A417, right.

7.16.7 The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust intends to restore the canal between Swindon and Abingdon (see their Strategy dated March 2019¹⁷) which would provide additional benefits to the parish and village from tourism. A programme of work has been developed for the Oxfordshire stretch which includes the parish¹⁸.

7.16.8 The Canal retains some original infrastructural elements including bridge foundations, recognised passing places and water top-up entry points from fields and drains immediately south of the canal.

¹⁷ Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire Canal Partnership. 2018.

https://www.wbct.org.uk/images/Holly/WSO_Partners_Strategy_Revision_Mar_2019_Abridged.pdf

¹⁸ Wilts and Berks Canal Trust. Restoration Projects in the East Vale. 2016. <https://www.wbct.org.uk/east-vale-projects> [accessed 26-4-2022]

7.16.9 The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust recognises the potential benefits to canal restoration of development as has taken place in Swindon, in that case with full restoration of a functioning navigable waterway and with less emphasis on biodiversity. However, functioning waterways in other parts of the UK show the benefits of tourism to increased biodiversity. Maintenance and improvement of the canal is a key aim for the community (Principle 10, Objective 10).

Policy FP1. Public and Community Transport Integration

Where it is practicable to do so, new developments should integrate with the current green infrastructure network and have access to public and community transport and social and community facilities in the village via existing, new or enhanced footpaths, cycleways and other routes.

Justification from evidence base	The Oxfordshire Health and Well-being Strategy 2018-2023 (see section 5.7 above) emphasises the importance to physical and mental wellbeing of physical activity including active transport. The Government publication ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’¹⁹ aims to increase access to the countryside for local populations. One of its six main goals is <i>“Making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and wellbeing.”</i> The Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1) highlights the importance in maintaining access to the rural landscape by maintaining footpaths and other PRow. The benefits to Health and Well-being of green spaces within villages is also described. The Green Spaces within, and in close proximity to, the village are described in detail in the Local Green Spaces Survey (Appendix 9). Both the Landscape Character Assessment (all character areas include or are bordered by PRow) and the Parish Character Appraisal (Green Infrastructure and Open Space) identify the PRow in the Plan Area (Appendices 1 and 2). The Community Facilities Assessment (Appendix 6) lists those facilities to which access is required by local residents and those living further afield.
Policy supported	The value and desirability of increased use of rural footpaths and provision of cycle routes and ways is provided by NPPF paragraphs 92 and 98

¹⁹ HM Government. 2018. A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>. [Accessed 04-02-22].

	(benefits of a healthy lifestyle through walking and cycling), paragraph 100 (their value as nature trails) and 104 and 106 (sustainable transport). Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 37 indicates the need to provide links to green infrastructure through Rights of Way and to provide sustainable transport connections. Core Policy 45 expects net gains in green infrastructure. Local Plan Part 2 Development Policy 31 covers protection of Public Rights of Way and Open Access Areas. NPPF paragraphs 110-111 make clear that safe and suitable access for all is essential, and that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 9: To improve and expand existing footways and cycle routes. Principle 9: It is desirable that the existing footpath and cycle way network is integrated with the public and community transport network and with easy access to existing and future community facilities.

7.17 Footpath and Transport Policy FP2 – Existing Footways and Cycle Routes

Policy FP2. Existing Footways and Cycle Routes	
Support will be given to proposals that improve and extend the existing footpath and cycle path network, allowing greater access to new housing, the village centre, green spaces and the open countryside. The loss of existing footpaths and cycle paths will not be supported.	

Justification from evidence base	The Oxfordshire Health and Well-being Strategy (https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/constitution/oxfordshirejointhwstrategy.pdf) emphasises the importance to physical and mental well-being of activity including active transport. The 25 year Environment Plan (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan) aims to increase access to the countryside for local populations. The Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1) highlights the importance in maintaining access to the rural landscape by maintaining footpaths and other PRoW. The PRoW in the parish are shown in the Landscape Character Assessment (shown in all character areas) and Parish Character Appraisal (Appendix 2, Green Infrastructure and Open Space).
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	The condition of each of the PRow are shown in detail in the Footpaths and PRow survey (Appendix 7). The benefits to physical and mental health of green spaces within villages and parishes are highlighted by the Local Green Spaces Survey (Appendix 9).
Policy supported	The value and desirability of increased use of rural footpaths and provision of cycle routes and ways is provided by NPPF paragraphs 92 and 97 (benefits of a healthy lifestyle through walking and cycling), paragraph 100 (their value as nature trails) and 104 and 106 (sustainable transport). Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 35 promotes walking and cycling and 37 indicates the need to provide links to green infrastructure through Rights of Way and to provide sustainable transport connections. Core Policy 45 expects net gains in green infrastructure. Local Plan Part 2 Development Policy 31 covers protection of Public Rights of Way and Open Access Areas. Land for the proposed Wantage Western Relief Road has been safeguarded by Vale Local Plan Part 1 policies CS17, CS18 and Appendix E site 10 (Wantage Western Relief Road). Where this impacts on existing PRow, provision should be made for suitable pedestrian / cycle crossing points to enable people to continue to use severed PRow.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 9: To improve and expand existing footways and cycle routes. Principle 9: It is desirable that the existing footpath and cycle way network is expanded providing a network of easily accessible walking and cycling routes within the village and parish and connecting more widely with Wantage, Grove and neighbouring villages.

7.18 Footpath and Transport Policy FP3 –Wilts and Berks Canal

Policy FP3. Wilts and Berks Canal
The Wilts and Berks Canal is regarded by the Parish as a recreation area and a wildlife habitat. All new development should ensure that its value to the community for these purposes is maintained and enhanced.

Justification from evidence base	The Landscape Character Assessment highlights the importance of the Wilts and Berks Canal (section 5.15) to the parish both for recreational purposes, for its heritage value and as a green corridor with the capacity to enhance biodiversity. Improvements to the Canal could lead to increasing its value for tourism. It constitutes a section of the Vale Way walk from Abingdon to Faringdon (https://www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thevaleway/valeway.htm). The Wilts and Berks Canal passing through the parish is a designated Green Space (Appendix 9) and a recognised footpath (Footpaths and PROW, Appendix 7, Footpaths 7a and 7b).
Policy supported	The NPPF covers the protection of waterways through paragraphs 92 (supporting healthy lifestyles), 100 (enhancing Public Rights of Way and Nature Trails), 104 (sustainable transport, walking and cycling), 106 (developing infrastructure to widen transport choice), 179 and 180 (protect wildlife and promote conservation and prevention of damage to important habitats). Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 45 covers Green infrastructure and 46 conservation and biodiversity improvement.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 10: Protect the canal corridor as a recreation and wildlife habitat. Principle 10: To ensure that the historic Wilts and Berks Canal, a part of which passes through the parish, is maintained in terms of structural integrity and relevant infrastructure for its historic and cultural value and as a biodiverse corridor and for recreational purposes.

7.19 Footpath and Transport Policy FP4 – Wilts and Berks Canal – Route and Infrastructure

Policy FP4. Wilts and Berks Canal – Route and Infrastructure
New development should avoid conflicting with the historic route of the Wilts and Berks Canal unless an alternative alignment of the canal can be provided as part of the development. Development should avoid impacting adversely on the infrastructure of the Canal. Where impacts are unavoidable the infrastructure should be removed and, where possible and practical, reused in any alternative alignment of the Canal.

Justification from evidence base	The importance of the Wilts and Berks Canal to the parish both for recreation, biodiversity and for its heritage value is highlighted in the Landscape Character Assessment (section 5.15). As indicated above, the ultimate aim of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust is to restore navigability of the canal between Swindon and Abingdon¹⁸ with a programme of work already developed for the Oxfordshire stretch through the parish¹⁹. The Wilts and Berks Canal both East and West from the village are designated green spaces in the Local Green Spaces Survey (Appendix 9) and is a recognised Footpath (Footpaths and PRow survey, Appendix 7).
Policy supported	The NPPF covers the protection of waterways through paragraphs 92 (supporting healthy lifestyles), 100 (enhancing Public Rights of Way and Nature Trails), 104 (sustainable transport, walking and cycling), 106 (developing infrastructure to widen transport choice), 179 and 180 (protect wildlife and promote conservation and prevention of damage to important habitats). Local Plan Part 1 Core Policy 45 covers green infrastructure and 46 conservation and biodiversity improvement.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 10: Protect the canal corridor as a recreation and wildlife habitat Principle 10: To ensure that the historic Wilts and Berks Canal, a part of which passes through the parish, is maintained in terms of structural integrity and relevant infrastructure for its historic and cultural value and as a biodiverse corridor and for recreational purposes.

7.20 Parking Policy P1 – Parking Facilities

7.20.1 The Parking Survey (Appendix 8) carried out within the village core indicated parking to be an acute problem particularly in two parts of the village, namely the southern residential area and the main street, although off-road parking spaces have been provided in the latter location. The increase in the number of cars per dwelling has been the main contributor to this situation. The move towards more environmentally friendly transport with increasing use of electric vehicles is unlikely to reduce this problem although increased frequency and use of public transport may resolve this in part.

7.20.2 The village is in-part a commuter village with most working residents employed outside the immediate village and wider Plan Area requiring adequate levels of transport and an effective transport network connecting East Challow with Wantage and further afield to Oxford and Didcot.

7.20.3 Any new developments must take into account high car usage requiring appropriate levels of off-road parking space (Principle 11). New developments should not exacerbate the current parking situation and ideally should improve it (Objective 11).

Policy P1. Parking Facilities
All development proposals should have regard to the following matters: 1. Proposals should meet Oxfordshire County Council’s parking standards, providing sufficient parking for residents and visitors to ensure that overspill on-street parking does not occur. 2. Development proposals should not lead to a reduction in existing car parking provision in the neighbourhood area. 3. Proposals for the provision of electric vehicle charging cabling so that each new dwelling/apartment has direct access to charging facilities will be supported.

Justification from evidence base	The Parking Survey (Appendix 8) indicates over-use of on-street parking in the Hedgehill Road/Reynolds Way/Sarajac Avenue/Windmill Place/High View Estate. There is much greater off-road parking provision in the more recent Nalder Estate but this is also an area of particular concern regarding on-road parking. The need for Electric Vehicle charging points in new developments is highlighted in the Parish Character Appraisal Design Guide (Appendix 2) and Principles section.
Policy supported	This is covered by NPPF policies 104 and 106 (transport network provision) and particularly 107 and 108 (adequate parking provision for residential areas). Local Plan Part 1 Core Policies 33 and 35 also expect promotion of public transport, cycling and walking and a sustainable transport network.
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 11 To ensure that new residential housing provides sufficient on- and off-street parking. Principle 11: To ensure that traffic flow through residential areas of the village is not hindered by on-street parking.

7.21 Environment Policy EV1 – Green Corridors

7.21.1 The Plan Area contains a number of identified green corridors (Appendix 12) and aims to increase this number (Figure 54). Policy EV1 comments about circumstances where trees would be lost to new development. In such circumstances, the applications concerned should incorporate detailed or replacement trees. Ideally, they should be replaced within the site and in a way which will ensure that the number of trees is greater than the number lost and/or that the overall effect of tree cover is replaced. Clearly this will need to take account of the overall layout and design of the site concerned and the longer-term relationship between the buildings and the replacement trees once they mature. In a more general sense, the planting of new trees does not usually need planning permission. Nevertheless, the Parish Council would support and encourage the responsible planting of additional trees throughout the parish.

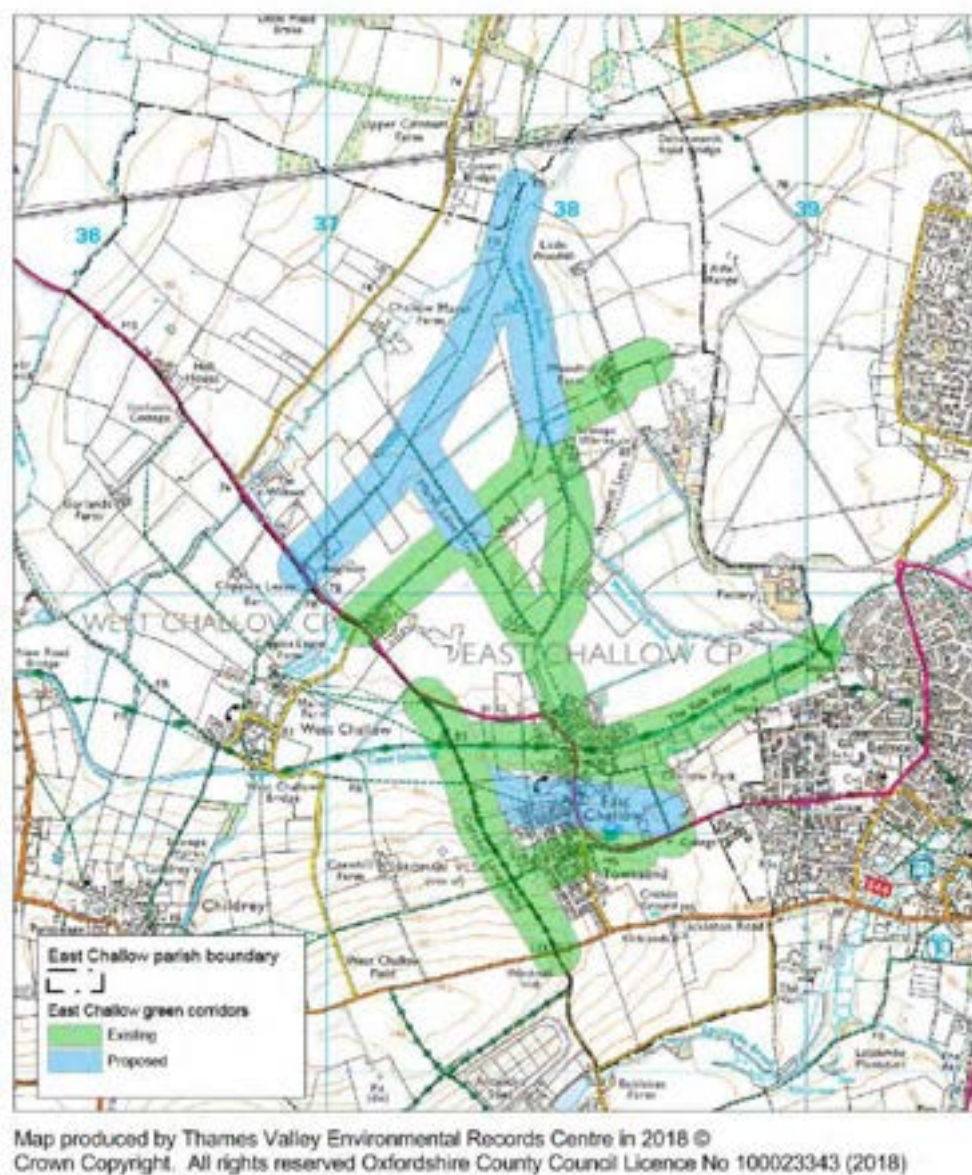


Figure 54. Existing and proposed Green Corridors (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) from Appendix 12.

Green corridors serve as routes of recreation for walking and cycling (see Footpath policies). Mature trees also act as sources of invertebrates for birds and mammals and as carbon sinks. The green environment is accepted as a means of carbon absorption. The practice of tree planting is known to increase this capacity.

7.21.2 The survey carried out by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC, Appendix 10) indicates a wide variety of common mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, invertebrates and plants within both the village core and wider Plan Area.

7.21.3 The importance of increasing biodiversity cannot be over-emphasised not only for its own inherent value but for the beneficial effects on physical and mental well-being by acting as a source of recreation (Principle 12). The fragmentation of local environments and corridors has resulted in part from agricultural activity but also from housing development resulting in numerically fewer individual wild animals and reduced diversity.

7.21.4 Areas of interest include the Wilts and Berks Canal, the Circourt Road (Challow Marsh) wet pasture area and un-maintained hedgerows following footpaths and Byways. The Plan Area is not rich in woodland. Adjacent grassland areas (Grove airfield) are subject to massive housing development. Minor waterways exist but are poorly maintained or polluted. No SSSIs are present, but the community wishes to improve the landscape and increase biodiversity.

7.21.5 The Plan Area also has areas of wetland and potential wetland around Woodhill Brook and Childrey Brook (see Figure 10 above).

7.21.6 New ponds have been created north of the east arm of the Wilts and Berks Canal just south of Crown Packaging, Grove Business Park and which do not have public access (see Figure 11 above).

7.21.7 The importance of maintaining these habitats to preserve biodiversity and the effects of habitat loss is highlighted by species including the Badger (*Meles meles*) and Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) previously present on Park Farm, now developed into a housing estate, and the renewed frequent occurrence of Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) in the new Grove Business Park ponds. Improvement of the natural environment in the Plan Area is a key objective (12).

Policy EV1. Green Corridors

Proposals should be designed to retain ancient, veteran and mature trees and hedgerows which contribute to, provide and extend green corridors. Development proposals which affect trees and hedgerows should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and hedgerows.

Where trees would be lost as a result of development proposals, they should be replaced within the site, using trees local to the parish or fruit/nut trees.

Justification from evidence base	This is an important aspect of the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1) involving all six Landscape Character Areas. Several trees were identified as possible ancient trees in the Landscape Character Assessment including those in LCA3: Pasture footslopes with parkland. Green corridors identified are highlighted in the Landscape Character Assessment and Report on Green Corridors (Appendices 1 and 12). A large number of mature native trees are identified as present bordering several designated green spaces (LG2-4, 6-8, 9, 11, 12-14 and 18) in the survey of Local Green Spaces (Appendix 9). The Landscape Character Assessment recommends planting trees and, where possible, orchards, maintaining standard trees and seeking opportunities for increasing biodiversity, including expansion of priority habitats. This may be done along all the green corridors identified in the parish (Appendix 12). The Biodiversity Report from the TVERC (Appendix 10) identifies some of the native species of flora and fauna identified in the parish.
Policy supported	The policy is supported by the NPPF (see paragraphs 174 and 180 pertaining to conservation of biodiverse habitats), the importance of trees (paragraph 131) and the Local Plan Part 1 Core Policies 44-46 (Protection of the nature and quality of the landscape, seeking a net gain in green infrastructure and biodiversity and conservation and biodiversity improvement).
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 12: To maintain and enhance the existing green corridors and their relationship with the natural environment. Principle 12: To ensure that the parish preserves and enhances its natural environment and landscape, particularly maintaining and increasing natural green corridors for recreation, biodiversity and carbon absorption.

7.22 Environment Policy EV2 – Biodiversity

Policy EV2. Biodiversity
As appropriate to their scale nature and location development proposals should maintain and enhance the local biodiversity including the maintenance and creation of wildlife corridors.
Proposals should be accompanied by surveys which assess the impact of the development on local biodiversity. Development proposals should seek to deliver a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10%, having regard to the requirements of section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Justification from evidence base	Green corridors identified in the South and Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy and highlighted in the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 1) are important as havens for invertebrates, birds and mammals. They include areas where minor waterways (Childrey and Woodhill Brook) and low-lying land may lead to local flooding creating wet pasture (Figure 25). Areas of potential wetland are identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (section 5.4 Hydrology) and the Parish Character Appraisal (Blue Infrastructure, flooding and drainage). The Biodiversity Report (Appendix 10) identifies some of the native species of flora and fauna identified in the parish. The Environment Act 2021 has a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity which might include the minor waterways and low-lying wetland referred to above.
Policy supported	NPPF (paragraphs 179, 180) aims to safeguard biodiverse environments, protect them from damage as a result of development or replace and increase them should damage or destruction occur as a result of development. It is also supported by the Local Plan Part 1 Core Policies 45-46 (seeking a net gain in green infrastructure and biodiversity and conservation and biodiversity improvement).
Policy intention (link to objectives)	Objective 12: To maintain and enhance the existing green corridors and their relationship with the natural environment. Principle 12: To ensure that the parish preserves and enhances its natural environment and landscape, particularly maintaining and increasing natural green corridors for recreation, biodiversity and carbon absorption.

8 COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

8.1 A number of desirable community aspirations have emerged as a result of producing this Neighbourhood Plan, but also from recognised aspirations for the village community over several years.

- a) Creation of a community hub (with e.g. shop / meeting space etc) as part of any new housing development.
- b) Registration of additional footpaths with CPRE.
- c) Creation of a cycle way to Wantage and as far as the W&G Estate on the A417.
- d) Improving connectivity and interaction between East Challow and neighbouring villages.
- e) Increased parking facilities.
- f) Manage air quality and sustainable development more generally.
- g) Fit photovoltaic panels on established housing estates and business parks and install public EV charging points.
- h) Consider the use of wind-turbine-generated electricity, particularly for the industrial and business parks.
- i) Re-establish football and other sports clubs to encourage greater social interactions within the village.
- j) Encourage use of footpaths and other village attractions, particularly heritage assets.
- k) Reduce speed and air pollution from vehicles entering the village. To adopt the County Council aim for 20mph speed limits in villages as soon as possible.
- l) Establish community shop. The Plunkett Foundation will be consulted on this possibility.
- m) Re-establish community bus service passing through the housing estate.
- n) More litter and dog waste bins.
- o) Establish Childrey and Woodhill Brooks as green biodiversity channels connecting up with the River Ock.
- p) Re-fallow areas of arable farmland, plant trees and preserve wet pasture land.
- q) A safe footpath to the W&G estate and the convenience shop at Mellor's Garage from the village centre.
- r) Establish a community improvement group to coordinate village activities such as village tidying, Best Kept Village in Bloom competition, annual fete organisation etc.
- s) Designate currently non-designated heritage assets.
- t) Develop the village centre as a conservation area.
- u) Creation of a pedestrian/cycle route to Grove Business Park along Woodhill Lane.
- v) Wantage Western Relief Road - provision to be made for shared cycle / pedestrian paths along the route of the relief road to ensure access by a range of means to Grove and the re-opened railway station. Where the Wantage Western Relief Road crosses the route of existing PRowS, provision shall be made for suitable pedestrian / cycle crossing points.

8.2 These are all important to the community and a number have the potential to be delivered outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process. Not all may be consistent with the overall strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan but all are worthy of recording.

9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Landscape Character Assessment

Appendix 2. Parish Character Appraisal – including design guide and principles

Appendix 3. Housing Needs Survey

Appendix 4a. Community Survey 2017

Appendix 4b. Community Youth Survey 2017

Appendix 5. Business Survey

Appendix 6. Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Appendix 7. Footpaths and Other Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Appendix 8. Parking Survey

Appendix 9. Local Green Space Evidence Base

Appendix 10. Biodiversity (TVERC)

Appendix 11. Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Appendix 12. Green Corridors (TVERC)



Figure 55. Rural panorama with East Challow in the middle distance.