

WHITCHURCH VILLAGE DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN



2015 – 2042

BY THE WHITCHURCH VILLAGE COUNCIL

**SUBMISSION REG.16 DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DOCUMENT**

We care about our village...

“Whitchurch Village is an historical village located in a predominately farmed, Green Belt parish adjacent to the City of Bristol.

Bath and North East Somerset Council approved a plan for the area that predicts an over 50% growth in our village up to 2029.

This Neighbourhood Plan identifies ways in which new residents can be welcomed into our community while reconciling longer term plans to ensure we can keep our village as a village, shape any future growth within an awareness of the constraints i.e. traffic pollution due to the A37, Green Belt, lack of sustainable local employment, and how it can protect the quality of life that our residents readily share but value so highly.

Fortunately, The Neighbourhood Plan team have had consistent and valued input from our community and consequentially endeavour to reflect your wishes and needs, whilst preparing for new residents to join us.

We have worked constructively with the proposed developers to mitigate the impact of new developments and have tried to identify potential benefits to the community as a result of such development.

This is your Plan so we welcome your further engagement to ensure your views influence decisions that are likely to affect you and your families’ future within Whitchurch Village.”

Alyson Lampard. Whitchurch Village Council & Paul May, Ward Councillor, BANES
(January 2017)

Joint Chairs of the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Development Plan

Thank-you to...

Parish Volunteers

Volunteers from the community - Whitchurch Village has an active community and this document has been produced by a group of 12 local people and the views of the wider parish reporting and accountable to the Village Council.

Jill, Mary and Alyson have continued to provide host venues as well as food and beverages to enable the group to meet effectively without generating costs for the parish.

The Steering Group

The Plan was started in 2014 and the Steering Group has stayed with the project and the community engagement has widened as it has developed. They continue to support the aims and objectives of their community's plan and to go beyond the call of duty!

Julie O'Rourke & Cleo Newcombe-Jones

The professional support provided by B&NES has helped the community express its role effectively. Their dedication in providing this support is much appreciated.

Rosemary Naish ALCA and nearby Clutton Parish chair

Helped us at every stage of the Plan despite not living in the parish

Students and support from UWE

The University of the West of England have used the practical example of Whitchurch Village as an opportunity to provide professional final year under graduate projects to a very high standard- also assisted by professional engagement with B&NES officers.

Pensford NP team

Despite the two adjacent areas and with very different relationships to the Green Belt issues such as the A37, shops and pedestrian safety are shared concerns and we have established and continue a close working relationship.

Justin Jones

Organised a professional assessment and identified the demand, turn over, access and location of a potential mini-supermarket.

ERB Print, Trevor Evans

Thank you very much for the high quality and timely printing of leaflets, banners, maps etc.

David Worskett, consultant regarding transport

The gap between the strategic routes and the infrastructure between the village needed to be addressed at a professional level and David has helped enormously despite not living in the village.

1.0. OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.1. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the 2011 Localism Act.

They allow local people to have a say in how their community will grow over a set period. The Plan allows the community to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, to have their say on what those new buildings should look like, whilst at the same time, protecting the landscape and character of the parish.



Village landscape, as in 2016

1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general compliance with the Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Local Plan policies, the National Planning Policy Framework, EU obligations and human rights requirements. The Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, forms part of the B&NES Development Plan. Its policies will work alongside, and where appropriate, replace the policies in the B&NES Development Plan.

1.3. The Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Plan has been produced in accordance with the approved B&NES Core Strategy and the creation of the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) in the greater Bristol area. It has been undertaken so the timescale of this Plan and the long term implications for the village are acknowledged and agreed. However it is recognised that the Plan will need to be reviewed to ensure its continued relevance. Therefore every 5 years the Plan will be revised or sooner if necessary to ensure community concerns are addressed and any amendments can be made to housing, economic ideas, transportation, infrastructure etc. as necessary.

2.0. WHY DEVELOP A PLAN?

- 2.1.** Whitchurch Village is within the Unitary Authority of Bath & North East Somerset. It is crossed by the A37 into and out of Bristol but it still retains its Village characteristics. Farming is still an important industry within the parish boundary and has a huge impact on the surroundings with active agriculture right up to the boundaries of the Village. Indeed over 80% of the parish is Green Belt. The Parish Survey registered that 98% of the village residents value the Green Belt.
- 2.2.** Within this active village there are six local sports clubs, children's playground, allotments, a thriving village hall, a primary school, the Horse World Charity, History society, Scouts club, Play groups, active churches and a very popular garden centre. For example, Bristol Barbarians RFU clearly have community asset aspirations which are referred to in this document. (Appendix 1).
- 2.3.** Whitchurch Village Primary School acts as a nucleus for parents to meet, an existing Pre-School and a proposed Pre-School provide other facilities for the local children. There is a popular Village play area.
- 2.4.** These positive communal groups highlight what makes this village special but it is not without its problems.
- 2.5.** It has a higher than average reliance on private cars and this leads to dangerous parking, congestion, air pollution and road safety concerns. One of the reasons for this high car use is the difficult and unsustainable public transport links to Bath, Keynsham and Bristol whether by public transport, foot or by bicycle. The village is vibrant but its identity suffers from the A37 route which bisects it.
- 2.6.** This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to deal with the 50% growth identified in the Core Strategy to 2029 but is yet to acknowledge highway and pollution implications of such huge growth and needs to be carefully evaluated to see

how further growth into 2040 can be facilitated while retaining its historical village characteristics.



Figure 1 - The Poor House - historical building



Figure 2 - Illustration of local architecture

The Whitchurch Village Plan Area

- 2.7.** The Whitchurch Village Area which follows the Whitchurch Village parish boundary was designated by Bath and North East Somerset Council on 3rd November 2014.

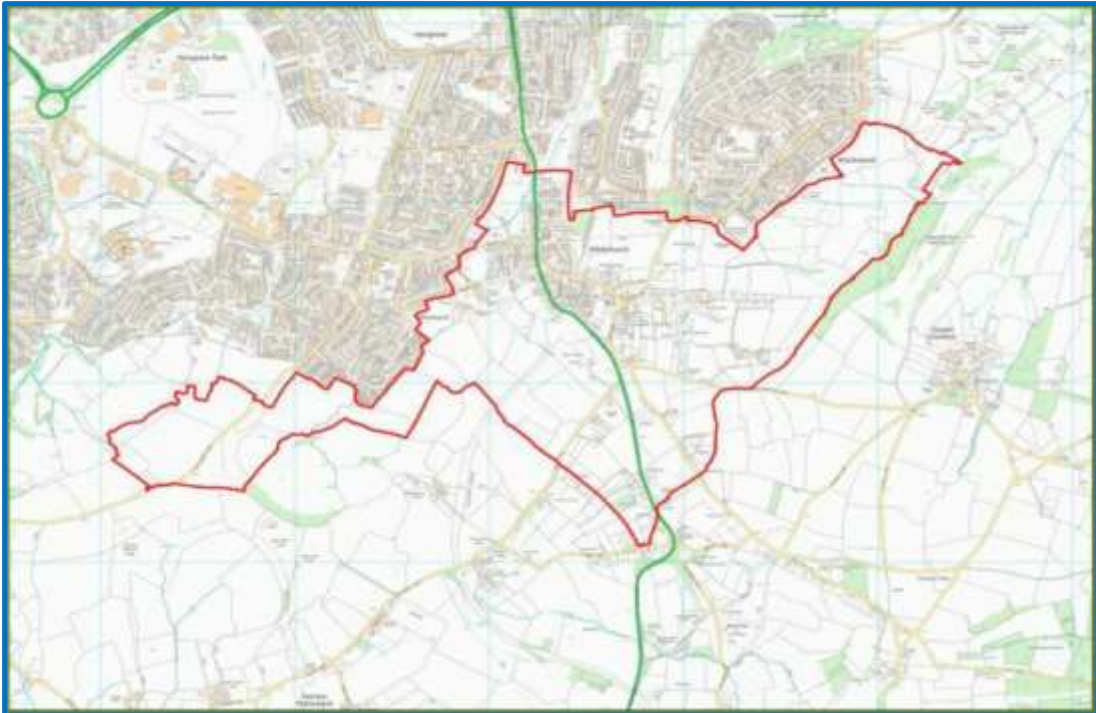


Figure 4 - Whitchurch Village Parish Boundary

3.0. THE WHITCHURCH VILLAGE STEERING GROUP

- 3.1.** The Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Development Plan has been compiled by a Steering Group working for Whitchurch Village Parish Council. The first step in producing a Neighbourhood Plan was the establishment of the “Plan Area”. This was agreed formally by B&NES at the start of the process. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will only apply to the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Development Plan Area.
- 3.2.** The Whitchurch Village Parish Council decided to produce a neighbourhood plan to respond positively to the Core Strategy and the B&NES RA5 strategic allocation for the village, with particular emphasis on the positive integration and impact on the village from the 50% population growth but to maintain the Village character and to ensure separation between the village and Bristol.
- 3.3.** The Steering group was established with a 50/50 mix of Parish Councillors and residents and locals with a joint Parish and local Chairperson. As time went on the mix has grown to 75/25 residents/parish. The Parish Council and local residents have produced Terms of Reference and agreed the ways of working together including attendance at all meetings.
- 3.4.** An initial Community Event invited all residents including parish council members to an information sharing meeting. There were at least 100 people in attendance and the resulting policies and objectives provide the basis of the action group and subsequent fact finding and proactive strategies.
- 3.5.** The aims and objectives of the steering group were village focused and supplemented by a Village Residents Survey with a 50.1% response rate. The responses were overwhelmingly supportive and are in the Consultation Document. Volunteers came forward as a result of this Community event.
- 3.6.** This Neighbourhood Plan has been subjected to extensive consultation within the parish and with key stakeholders. It is a plan for Whitchurch Village for the next 27 years. All respondents’ views have been analysed and as many as

possible included, ensuring focus on future development for the village. A Consultation Summary of comments is available on the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Development Plan web site.

Analysis of the Plan Area

- 3.7.** At its northern edge, the village is separated from Bristol by the Saltwell Valley. This is a huge valley with the Brislington Brook running through. The valley is spanned by the Saltwell Viaduct which carries the A37 Bristol Road into Bristol. Whitchurch Village has developed over the years on either side of this arterial route but mainly to the east. At the southern end is a humped back railway bridge which used to serve the GWR rail service from Radstock to Temple Meads.

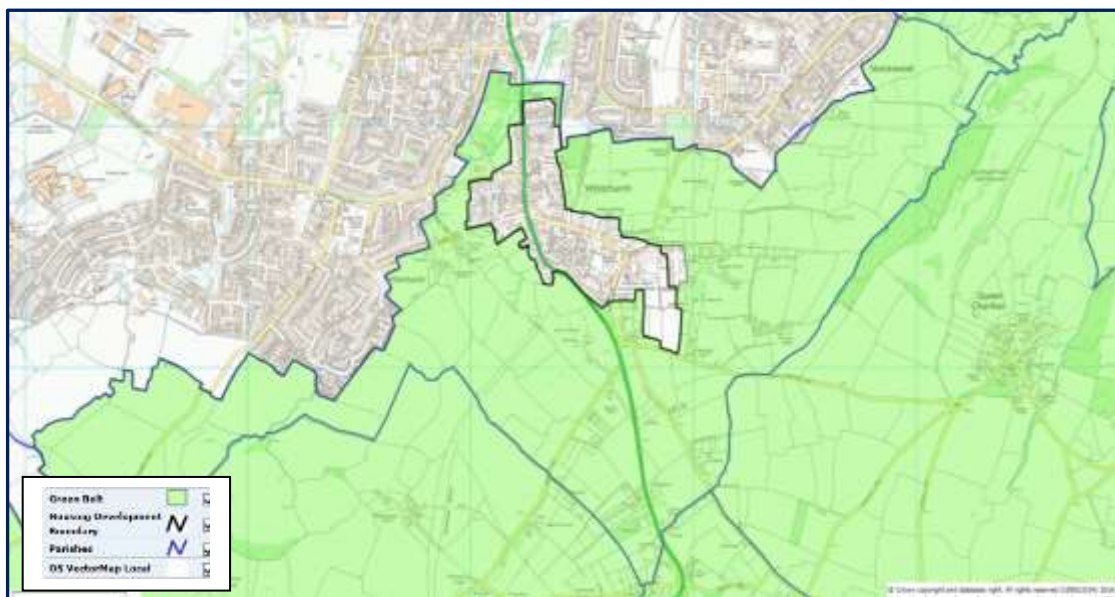


Figure 5 - The planning context for Whitchurch Village



3.8. Less than 20% of the parish is housing. This is a village with farmed countryside on the edge of a major city. There is Maes Knoll, Dundry Plateau and the Wansdyke as the environmental and historic features.

3.9. The Character Assessment shows that the Village has embraced development over the years. The pattern of that development has been to retain the village character.

4.0. HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

- 4.1. Historically there have been human settlements in the area since ancient times. There is evidence of an Iron Age settlement locally and of the existence of a roman villa and mint at Lyons Court Farm within the present village.



St Nicholas Church

- 4.2. The original Saxon village is thought to have been known as Filton (or perhaps Fylwood or Felton) and lay somewhat to the west of the present village but the centre of population appears to have moved to the site of the present village in about the 12th century.

Fig. 3 to show below grounds remains of Bronze Age and Romano-British settlement at Whitchurch, identified through geophysics and field evaluation (SHINE Sites)



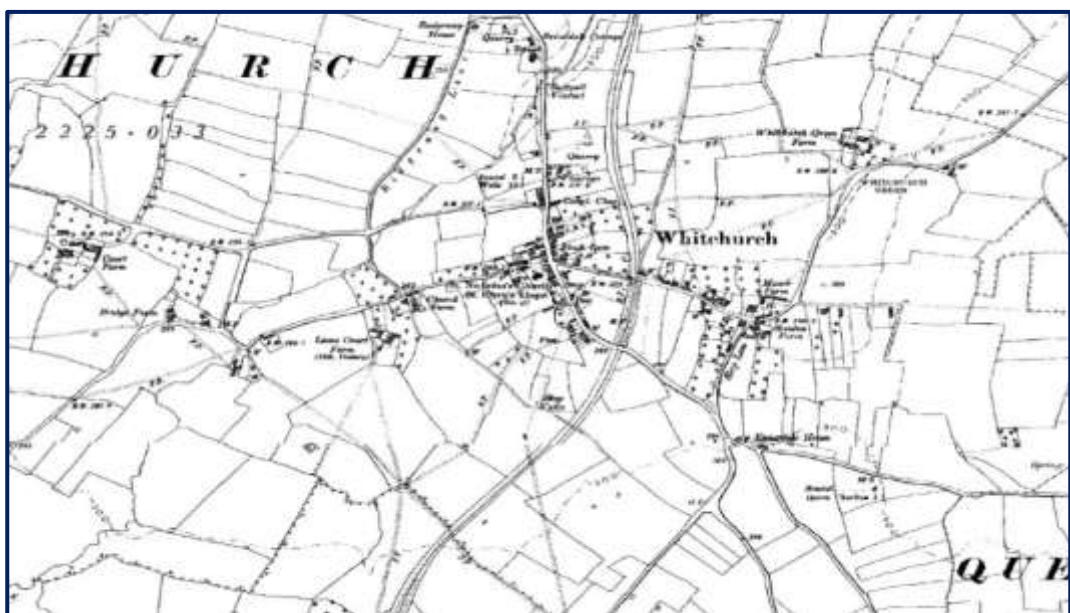
This picture shows the location of evidence of an Iron Age Settlement and existence of a Roman Villa at Lyons Court Farm

Fig. 4. Whitchurch Village: 1887-1891



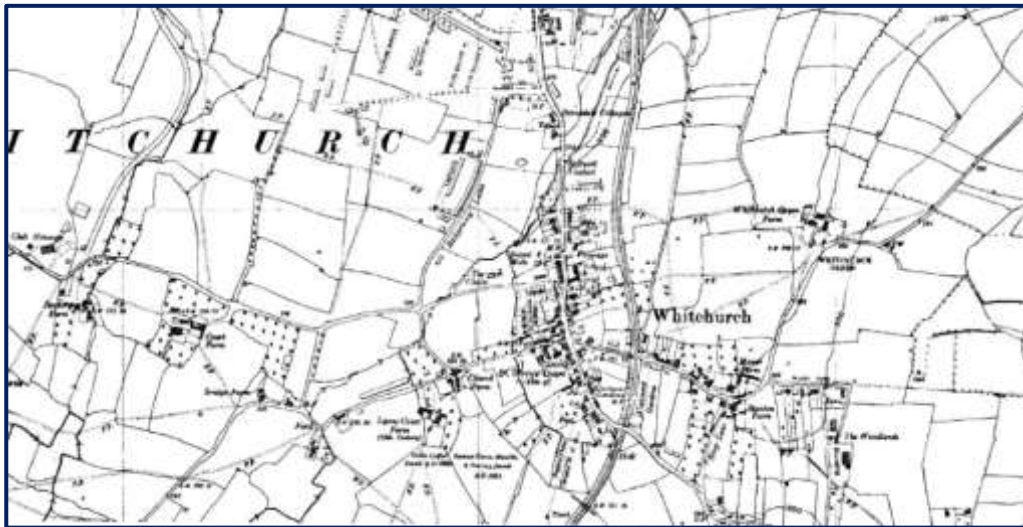
- 4.3. It is at about that time that the building of the present church was started (the tower dates from that time). The church stands on the site of a cell or chapel of St. White, an ancient British saint and was originally known as St. Whites Church. This suggests the origin of Whitchurch. The church was later extended to its present form in the 15th century building.

Fig.5. Whitchurch Village: 1901-1905



- 4.4. The village has several local names that reflect on life in past ages, '*Sleep Lane*' where it is said that the tramps from Bristol used to spend the night, '*a Washing Pound Lane*' by the Saltwell stream based on the story that there was or is an underground tunnel leading from the church to the local hostelry.

Fig.6. Whitchurch Village: 1933-1939



- 4.5. Until the last century there were two adjoining local inns known as the Black Lion and the White Hart. These were replaced in the 20th century by one modern public house and restaurant now named the Maes Knoll after the prominent Iron Age earth work to be found on the hill overlooking the village.

Fig.7. Whitchurch Village: 1960

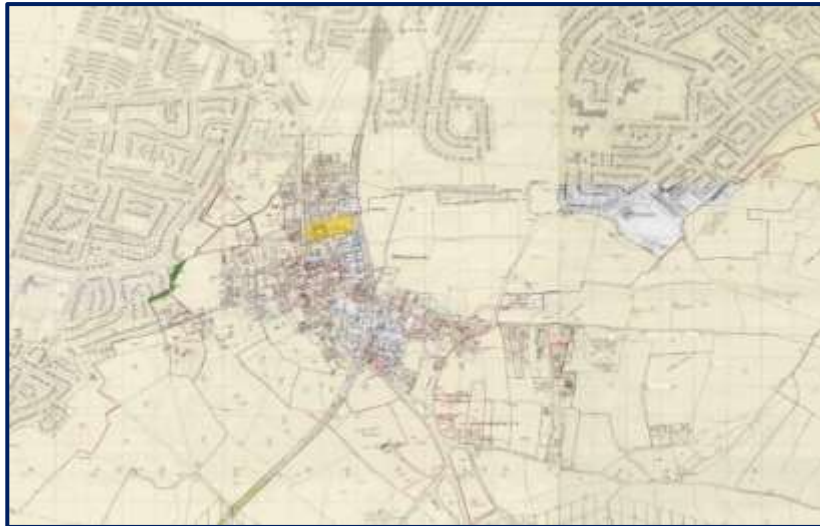
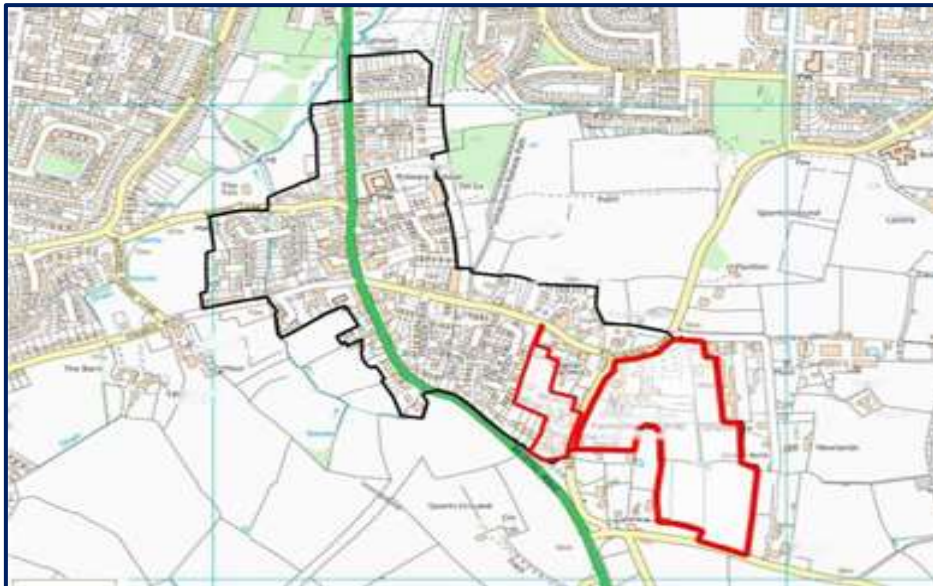


Fig.8. Whitchurch Village: by 2029



- 4.6.** The village has remained as a village and has grown over time. A pattern we would like to preserve.



- Tapestry made by residents to commemorate the millennium, 2000

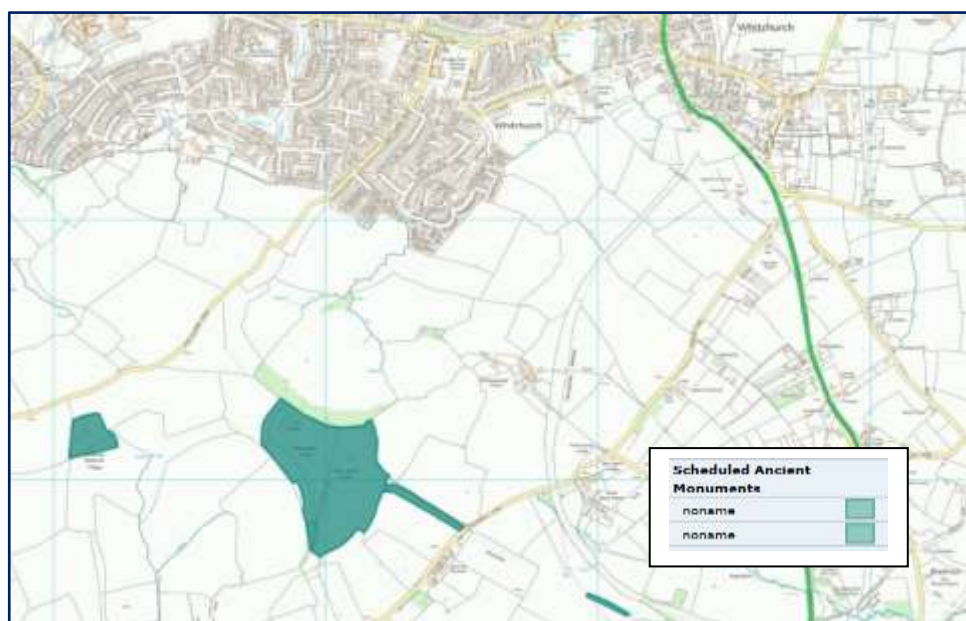
5.0. Maes Knoll

- 5.1. Maes Knoll is an Iron Age hillfort and in parts designated SSSI and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (ref: DBN 102). It occupies the Oolite Ridge that commands the hills south of Bristol. This ridge, which stretches from Dundry Hill to Maes Knoll, steeply descends to the north and the Avon Valley, creating fine views over the Lower Avon Valley from Clifton Gorge to the Cotswold escarpment and is known as the Dundry Plateau.



Historic Maes Knoll/Dundry Hill

Fig 9: Maes Knoll Scheduled Ancient Monument



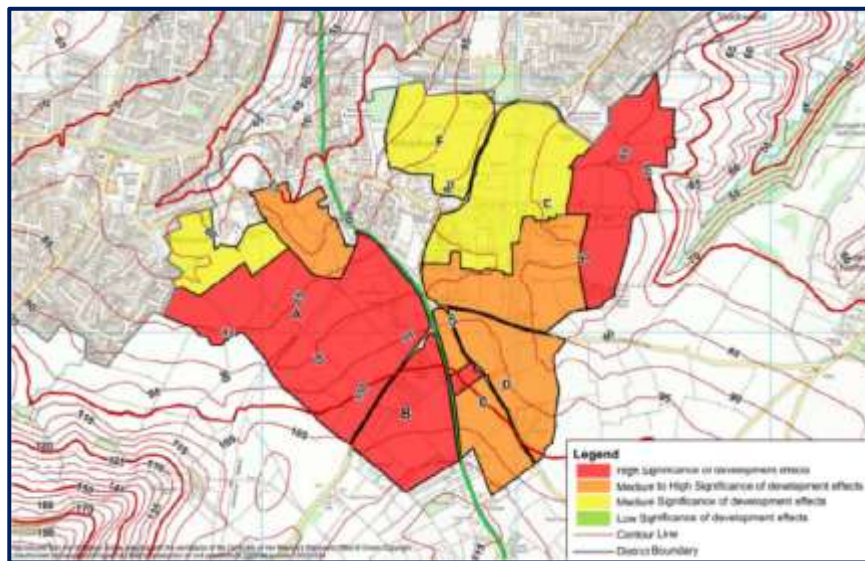
- 5.2.** Seven Counties can be seen from this advantage point. The hillfort (also called a camp) is thought to be constructed around 250 BC for defensive purposes. The Hillfort was in use between Roman times and the 7th Century.
- 5.3.** Following this the Wansdyke was constructed. Wansdyke (ref: DBN62 and DBN157). Further comprehensive historical information can be seen in the Whitchurch Village Historical Assessment to be found in the Appendix 2.



6.1. Whitchurch Village is situated within the Dundry Plateau landscape character area. The land is used both for pasture and cereal production. Arable land predominates in areas such as to the west of Maes Knoll while pasture predominates further east in the area north of Gibbet Lane.

6.2. The undeveloped and rural landscape is open and windswept. The elevated character of the area gives extensive views to and from the south and east also taking in the settlements of Bristol, Keynsham, Saltford and Bath as well as the Chew Valley and Mendip Hills. Conversely the hills of the Dundry plateau are visible over a wide area forming a valuable and sensitive backdrop landscape setting for Bristol.

Fig.10: Whitchurch Village Landscape and Visual Assessment Summary (B&NES, Aug 2015)

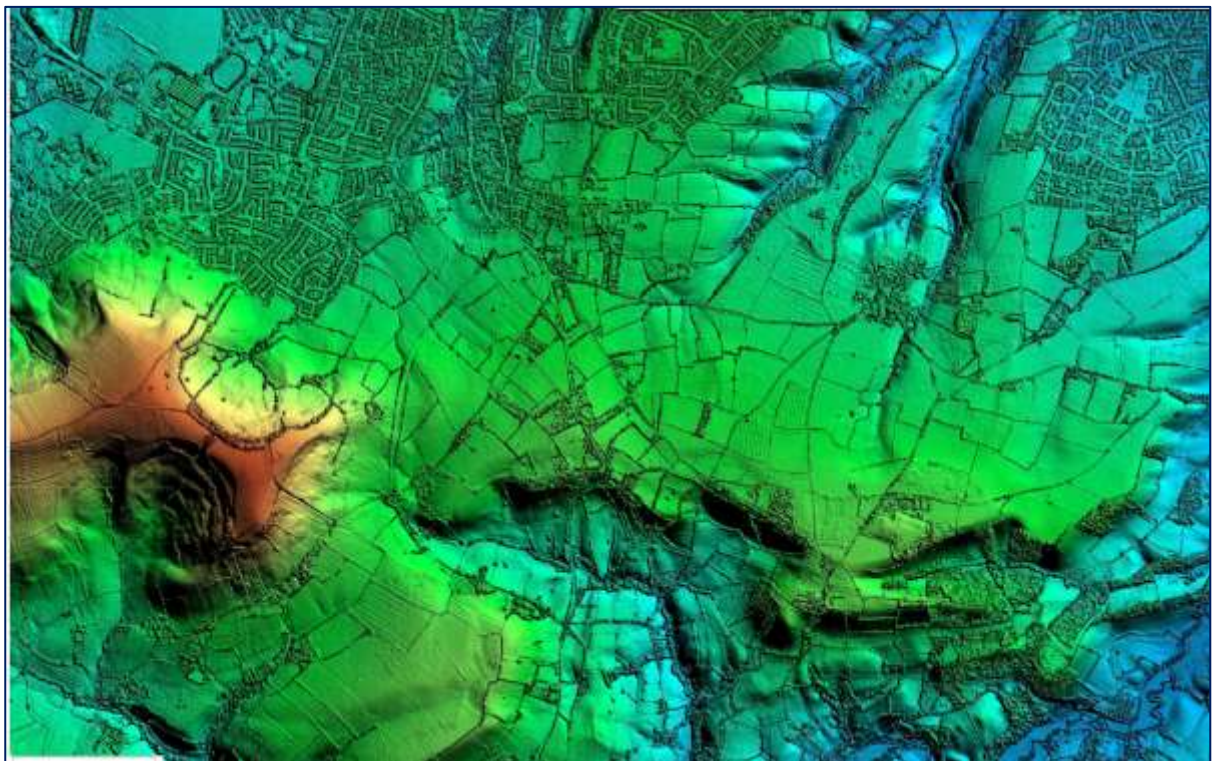


Landscape character map



- 6.3.** Two of the most significant historical features within the area are the late prehistoric hill fort at Maes Knoll and the Wansdyke which is a later, possibly post-Roman, linear earthwork which starts at the hill fort and runs to Horsecombe Vale to the south-west of Bath.
- 6.4.** Maes Knoll is on a high level Dundry plateau and is a significant landscape feature which can be viewed from the Chew Valley looking into Whitchurch Village and looking out from the City of Bristol.

Fig 11. Whitchurch Village digital terrain model showing Maes Knoll and its setting

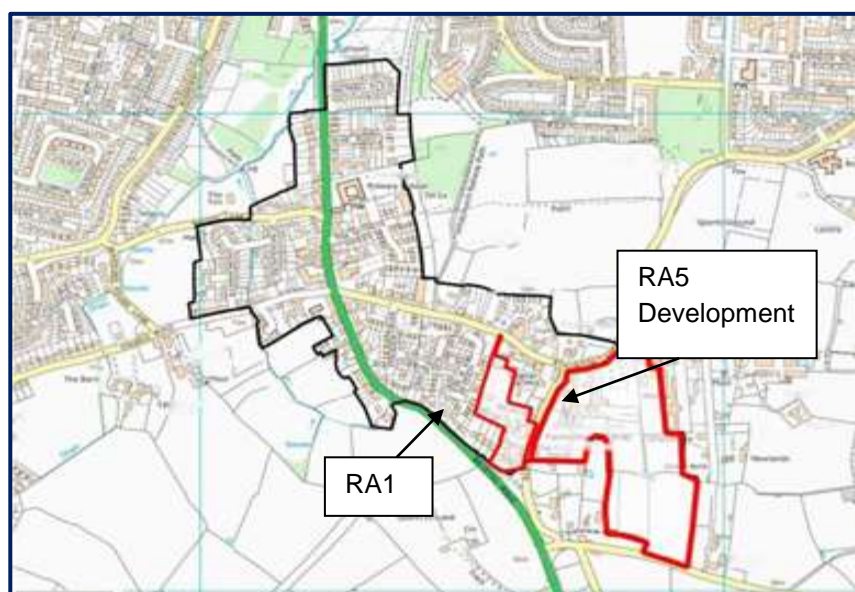


7.0. LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Core Strategy

- 7.1.** The Whitchurch Village Plan is to be in accordance with the adopted Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) Core Strategy (2014) covering the period up until 2029 and National policy guidelines as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This Neighbourhood Plan will deliver the local democracy set out in the Localism Act of 2011. The strategic highways issues are excluded from the Neighbourhood Plan but safe access is addressed within the sixteen Neighbourhood Plan policies. The Core Strategy identified Whitchurch Village as a village which met the criteria of Policy RA1 and Policy RA5.
- 7.2.** As Whitchurch Village met the criteria of a RA1 village, it was allocated around 50 dwellings over the Core Strategy period. This development has been met by the development off Sleep Lane which was granted permission by appeal. Policy RA5 allocated a site for around 200 homes to be built in land removed from the Green Belt.

Fig 12: Core Strategic RA1 and RA5 allocation sites in Whitchurch Village.



7.3. As a result of these policies the existing village housing will grow by 50% within the Core Strategy Plan period of 2011 -2029. The local authority has a duty to work with Bristol and its adjacent Unitary Authorities to examine their housing needs until 2036 and this may affect the context of the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Plan within its lifespan to 2040. The Plan reflects and should continue to reflect the importance of keeping its distinctive village character, the design and integration of future development.

7.4. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have worked consistently and positively with the three developers of the Horse World to help inform the Horse World Masterplan and detailed layouts within their applications

Placemaking Plan

7.5. Whilst the Council's Adopted Core Strategy sets out the broad and strategic approach to the level and location of new development throughout Bath and North East Somerset, the Council's Placemaking Plan focuses more on the specifics, including detailed design principles, development aspirations and updating the planning policies used in determining planning applications. The Parish contributed to the Placemaking Plan through developing a character assessment and list of community assets (please see appendix 3).

7.6. The Placemaking Plan will:

- Allocate sites for development for housing, employment and other uses to help meet development needs identified in the Core Strategy;
- Review and update the development management policies used in the determination of planning applications
- Facilitate the delivery of key development sites;
- Safeguard and enhance the quality and diversity of places in B&NES including the protection of valued assets and identifying new opportunities
- Provide the opportunity to work together with local communities to review Housing Development Boundaries. The Core Strategy and the Placemaking Plan are complementary planning policy documents and should be read as one.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 7.7.** In Bath & North East Somerset there are sixteen areas working on or have made neighbourhood plans – please see map below. In addition to these, within Bristol City Council, the area of Whitchurch is also exploring/undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.8.** The Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Plan will be a legally binding local planning document relating to the development and use of land and proposals that will require planning permission. As such the document will be reviewed at least every five years and more frequently if necessary.

West of England Joint Spatial Plan

- 7.9.** B&NES, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset local authorities are actively engaged in joint working on strategic planning issues and are producing a West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP). In March 2014 the West of England authorities formally agreed to work together on a Joint Strategic Planning Strategy. This Memorandum of Understanding committed the four unitary authorities, working with partner organisations and adjacent authorities as appropriate, to jointly prepare a new strategic framework.
- 7.10.** This will be a strategic planning framework for the West of England and will inform local plan reviews. Its objective will be to identify the overall quantum of housing, infrastructure requirements and jobs within the West of England to be planned for and their distribution across the sub-region, the overall spatial strategy, strategic priorities, and strategic transport infrastructure necessary to deliver the spatial strategy. The Joint Strategic Planning Strategy will be a formal development plan document prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 7.11.** The West of England Unitary Authorities are committed to joint working, sharing resources and expertise to prepare a formal development plan document to an

agreed timetable. This will provide the means by which the outputs of the new Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be considered and articulated within a formal strategic planning document. The distribution of development will then be allocated and delivered through the policy framework agreed by the JSP, involving, where appropriate, cross boundary agreement. This process is therefore wider than the remit of this Plan however is relevant to the village. Depending on the results of this JSP then the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Plan may need to be reviewed to ensure that the Plan can reflect the policies within the approved JSP whilst retaining its separate identity within the Green Belt requiring major investment to resolve traffic congestion, resulting in further air pollution and significant commitment to employment.

- 7.12.** Any proposals in Whitchurch Village in relation to the village will have to satisfy the National Planning Policy Framework requirements for sustainability, pollution, employment, environment and effective, transportation commitments in comparison with other locations surrounding the City. Whether dispersed development can be delivered will depend upon the highway infrastructure costs being balanced by housing need.

Sensitivity of the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 7.13.** This document has been developed to reflect the emerging Joint Spatial Plan and the Joint Transport Plan for the greater Bristol area. It seeks to establish and address key issues, to retain the village as a village and maintain the separateness, minimise the visual aspects of urban sprawl within the Green Belt. This is a development plan in the context of keeping a stable distinct rural community.
- 7.14.** Housing and employment is a key element of the community being vibrant within this context. Transportation proposals need to be delivered as a priority before any major development can be considered reasonable.

WHITCHURCH VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN VISION AND OBJECTIVES



The Neighbourhood Planning Committee



Members of steering group members meeting with MP Jacob Rees-Mogg

The Whitchurch Village Vision:

“Whitchurch Village wishes to remain as a distinct, stable, separate and sustainable community in a valuable Green Belt setting. It will work with developers and the new communities to achieve improvements and integration for all of its residents.”

Objectives of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan:

- 1. Maintain the village identity and increase sustainability***
- 2. Manage and maintain the Green Buffer***
- 3. Ensure that new development is integrated within the village***
- 4. The A37 - Impacts***
- 5. Seek improvements for the community arising from future growth***



Cattle on a Local Farm

The objectives are expressed within sixteen land use policies.

Non-planning issues are relevant to the community but have to be external to the plan and clearly shown as '*Aspirations for the Community.*'

8.0. OBJECTIVE 1: Maintain the village identity and increase sustainability

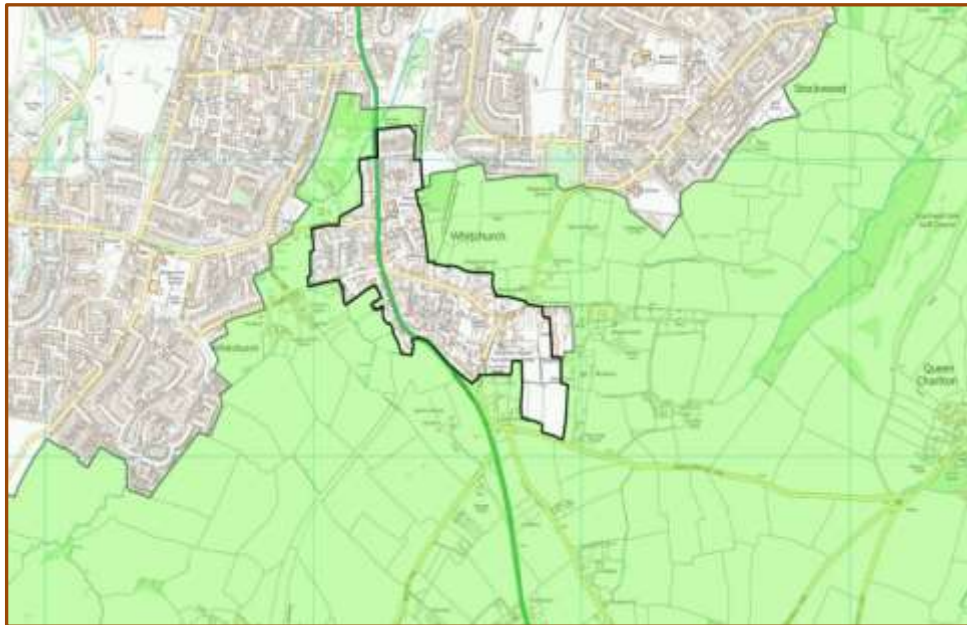
8.1. Whitchurch Village has a separate identity. It is a thriving community and it still wishes to remain as a sustainable village. Bristol has always supported this but any new development should be used to influence BANES towards retaining and developing that identity. The aim is to enhance the character of the village and the things its community value. To reinforce this, a survey of local residents has been undertaken with a 50% response rate, a website and face book page have been set up and an independent character assessment carried out. This leaves potential developers considerable flexibility for their designs as long as they recognise and contribute to keeping the village as a village. Consideration should be given to quality design, density, facilities, heights, views, housing needs, transport, employment, environment, ecology and history.

Housing

- 8.2.** As this is a 27 year plan the village may come under pressure when any B&NES Core strategy review takes place or with the adoption of the Joint Spatial Plan. The retention of a green buffer remains a key issue to keeping the village identity but there are other issues which affect how the area has developed over the years. As a result a number of styles and different building types have occurred which now contribute to the village as it exists now.



- 8.3.** The main A37 crosses the village with major cross roads in the centre. The area is therefore quite complex so the Neighbourhood Plan team worked with the Local Authority and some University of the West of England under graduates to carry out a Character Assessment. They fed their results back to a packed village hall. This plan has therefore been accepted as a realistic overview of the village buildings linked to the various areas within the village. The village has an ageing population who wish to stay within the village by downsizing. There is a very small rented sector. This means that demand for 1, 2 and 3 bed homes is much higher than other areas. There is a District and local need for affordable housing. Any future development should take account of the Village Survey and be in accordance with the most recent housing surveys



Map of Whitchurch Village surrounded by the Bristol and Bath Green Belt

Policy WV 1.1 - Village Design

All proposals for new development shall comply with Whitchurch Village Character Assessment Document (2015). Furthermore, each new development application shall demonstrate the following:

- a) is designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive character and reflects the identity of the local context of Whitchurch Village as defined in the Character assessment in terms of; height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings, the scale, design and materials of the public realm (highways, footways, open space and landscape)
- b) is sympathetic to the setting of any heritage assets
- c) incorporates energy efficient design and climatic resilience into the design; and,
- d) efficiently uses water (such as through the use of flow regulators, water efficient fittings and appliances) and encourages water reuse

- 8.4.** Being a village, with a village way of life and access to the countryside, house prices tend to be high. There is a need to create more balance and within any affordable housing, the provision for local people and their families to purchase or rent low cost housing remains important.

Policy WV 1.2- Provide a mix of housing types

Schemes of more than 10 dwellings, will require a mix of types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households. Large areas of uniform type and size will not be acceptable.

Policy WV 1.3- Allocation of Affordable Housing

At least 30% of affordable housing within Whitchurch village (or such different number as is evidenced by demonstrable need at the time of development) shall be allocated based on a local connection, meaning that people with a strong local connection to the Parish and whose needs are not met by the open market will be the first to be offered the tenancy or shared ownership of the dwelling. A strong local connection means an applicant(s) who:

- a) Is resident in the Parish and needs separate accommodation
- b) Is not resident in the Parish, but:
- c) Has family associations in the Parish; or
- d) Has had periods of residence in the Parish; or
- e) Through their work provides important services to the Parish and who need to live closer to the community or has employment or the offer of employment within the Parish.

Heritage

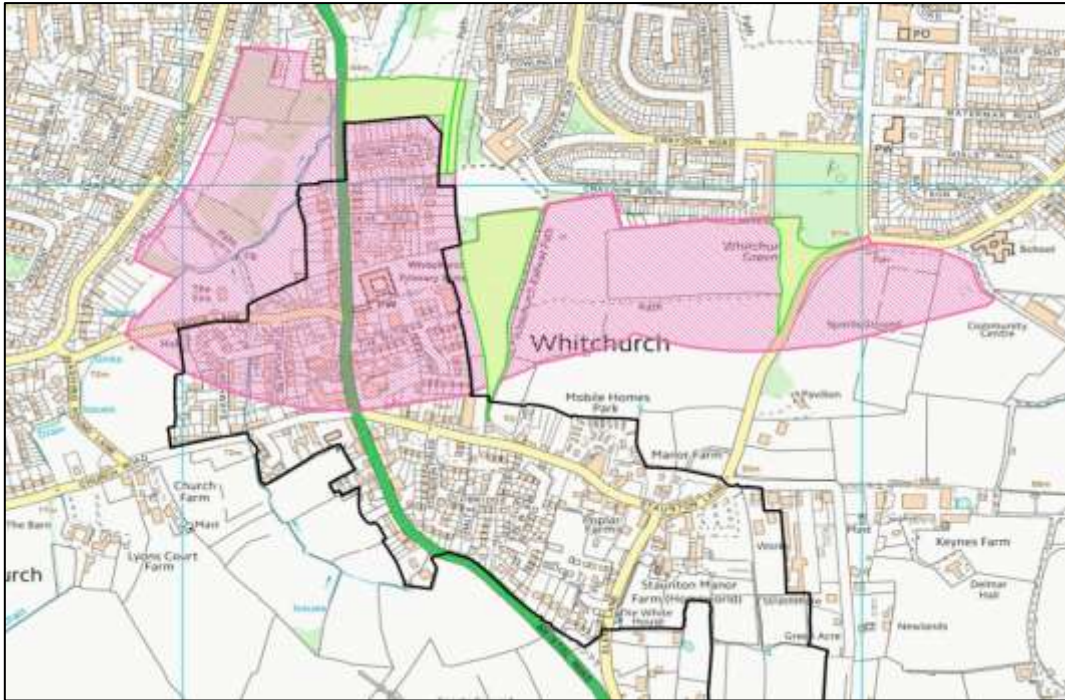
- 8.5. In Whitchurch Village there are approximately 8 Listed Buildings within the parish.

Fig 13. *Listed Buildings in Whitchurch Village*



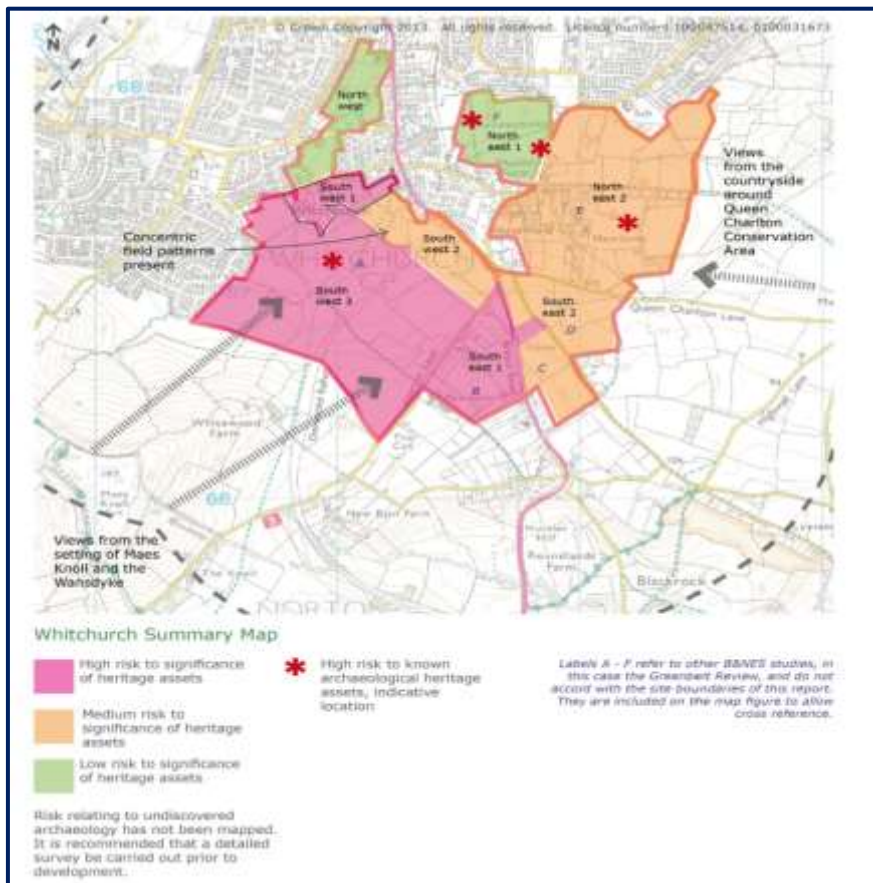
Policy WV 1.4- Heritage Assets and their Setting

Any development must conserve and enhance the heritage assets of the Parish and their setting, including maintaining settlement separation. Inappropriate extensions or revisions to Listed Properties will be resisted. Any development must not cause harm or adversely impact on the setting of important heritage sites in the Parish.

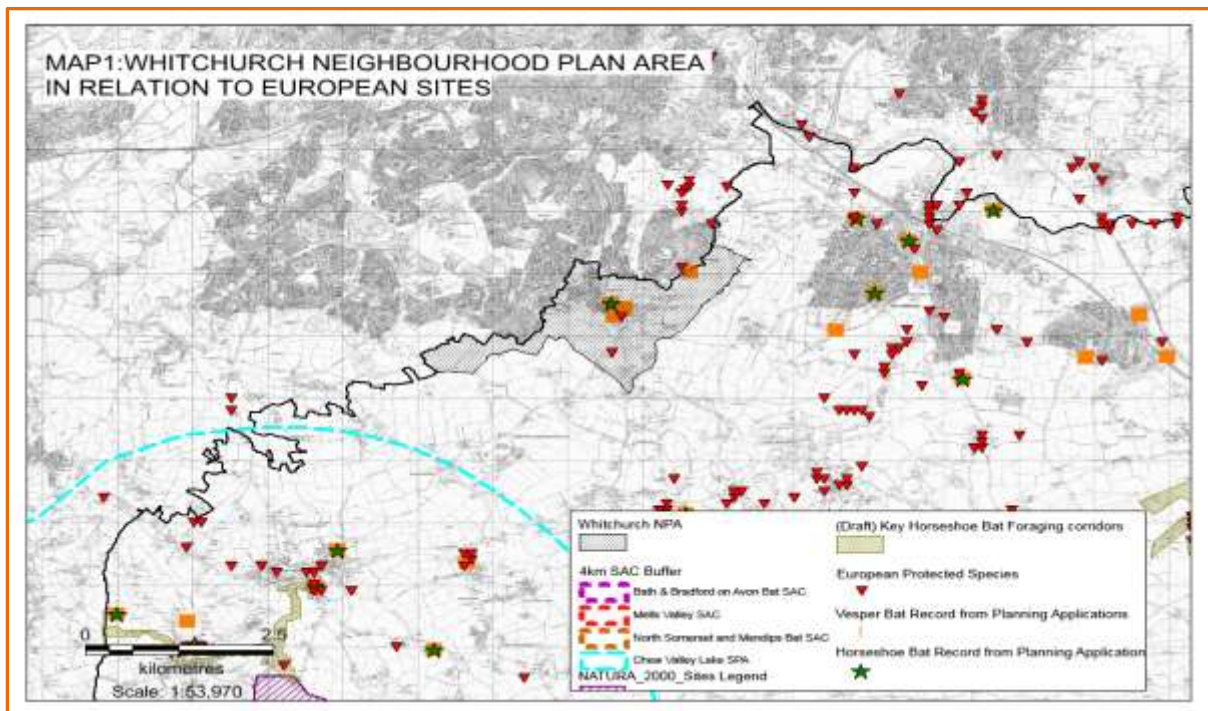


Map of Whitchurch Village ecological corridors (from the Draft Placemaking Plan)

Fig.14: Map to show the overall assessment of the risk to the significance of heritage assets



Source: B&NES Strategic Land Availability Assessment Report Findings (November 2013)



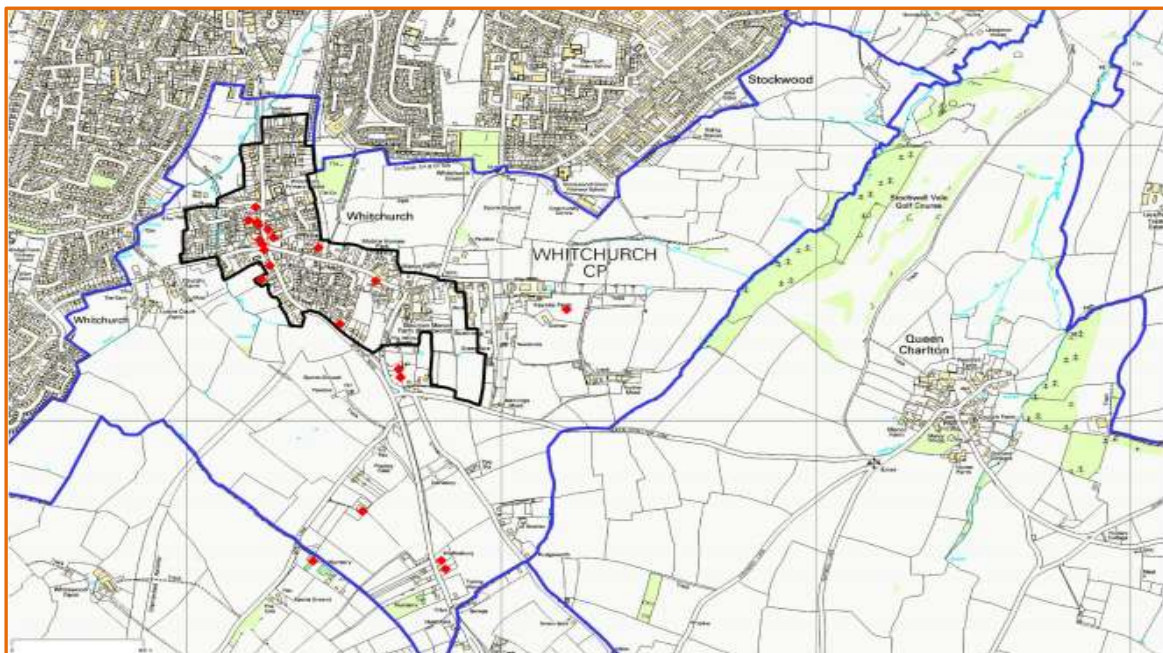
Employment

- 8.6.** Whitchurch village remains a village and its local employment needs have been met with a varied number of small businesses spread around the village however there is significant scope to seek economic growth within any future developments.
- 8.7.** The economic activity is high 73.6% with very low numbers of unemployment 2.3%. This appears to be a very positive picture but the community characteristic is that there is an exceptional high driving to work figure, low bus use and high numbers of people in the non-professional type jobs. As a result there is exceptionally high home ownership but a very high intermediate semi-routine type occupation profile. The exceptional high reliance on cars is due to the unsustainable levels of low employers within the village.
- 8.8.** Further local employment is therefore needed in order to improve sustainability and if possible create higher grade professional jobs as a target. The residents' survey confirmed the statistics in that pedestrian safety fears

dissuaded against use of public transport, there is a long standing resident population with 42% having lived in the village for over 20 years and therefore seeking to down size within the village. An overwhelming desire exists for more local employment and the village needs to find ways to use development to achieve this. (Census data)

8.9. However, the local survey showed that there were quite a few small employment locations within the village. Local employment is low but there are some 30 places of employment within the village with a music shop/organ business of national importance, a dentist, Care Home, a coal yard, a hairdresser, three estate agents and a restaurant (please see appendix 4).

8.10. New employment should aim to create high quality jobs and employment.



Map to show employers within the Parish

Policy WV 1.5- Retain employment in the village

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of the ground floor of redundant land or buildings in employment or service trade use to non-employment uses will only be permitted if the existing use is no longer economically viable and the site has been marketed for freehold or leasehold at a reasonable price for at least a year without restriction.

Policy WV.1.6-Broadband Provision Policy

To be supported development proposals for new dwellings, employment premises, and education facilities must make provision to connect to the internet with a minimum symmetrical speed of 25Mbps where available and with realistic future proof upgrades available (demonstrated through a 'Connectivity Statement' provided with relevant planning application).

Community Facilities

8.11. As a village there are a number of community facilities such as the formal village play area, cricket club, the rugby club, the football club, the social club, the equine centre and Horse World which have been at the heart of village activity. In addition the Village Hall is well used during the day and evening with events in both the large hall and small halls. There are active churches. The Maes Knoll restaurant provides an eating place and the music shop provides a community cafe and a unique classic wind pipe organ rebuilding service.

These two pictures of the allotments and adjacent children's play park illustrate two community assets which the Neighbour Hood Plan would seek to retain.



Below shows the newly renovated Whitchurch Village Primary School.



Community Shop

11.1. A community shop is an essential and critical requirement for sustaining a local community and this plan brings forward a long term site specific set of proposals. This will be a clear community aim for the future.

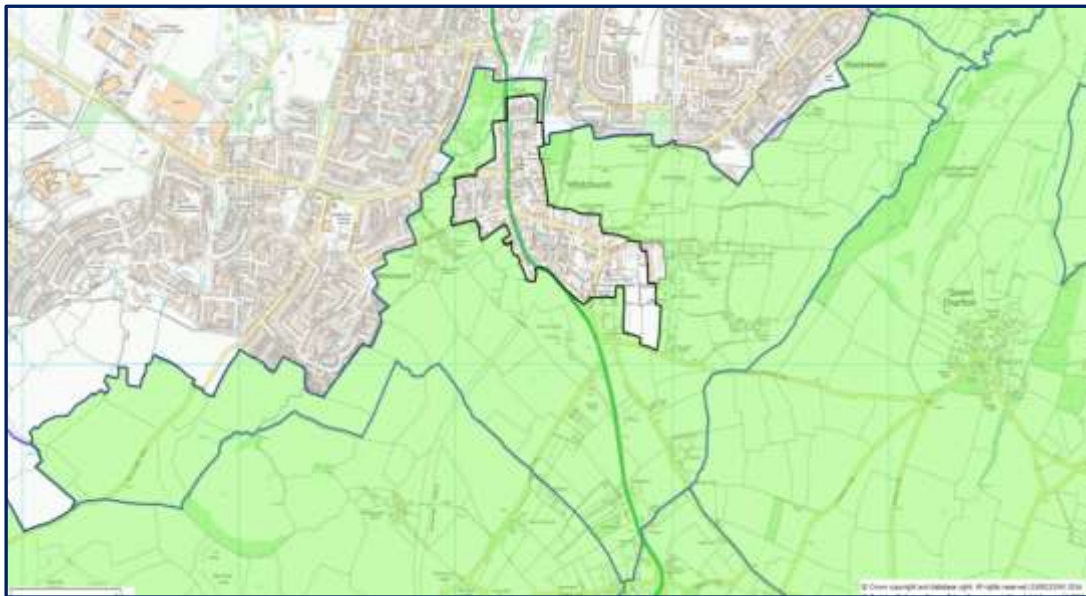
12.0. OBJECTIVE 2: Manage and Maintain the Green Buffer

12.1. Whitchurch Village is surrounded by the Green Belt. It is a superb example of how diverse a Green Belt can be. It is farmed right up to the Village and City of Bristol which significantly contributes to its rural feel. The local population were surveyed with an overwhelming support. 98% of the respondents stated that they value the Green Belt and the benefits it brings to their lives.

12.2. Whitchurch Village is a rural village. As an ancient village that has embraced change, it is set in nationally recognised, valuable countryside with protected landscape features and important heritage. In the area of Whitchurch there are Protected Landscapes and Cultural Landscapes which require a sensitive planning approach. These areas are Maes Knoll Tump, Dundry Plateau, Wansdyke and Lyons Court.

12.3. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to check unrestricted urban sprawl, to safeguard the countryside and to preserve the character of the village. Further urban expansion will threaten its separate identity unless there remains a clearly defined rural Green Belt barrier as a visual and identity protection.

Fig. 13: Map of Whitchurch Village surrounded by the Bristol and Bath Green Belt



Policy WV 2.1- Positive green buffer management between Whitchurch Village and Bristol

Development will not be permitted outside the housing development boundary, as defined on Fig.13 if individually or cumulatively it would result in increasing the coalescence between Whitchurch Village and Bristol or reducing their separate identity by:

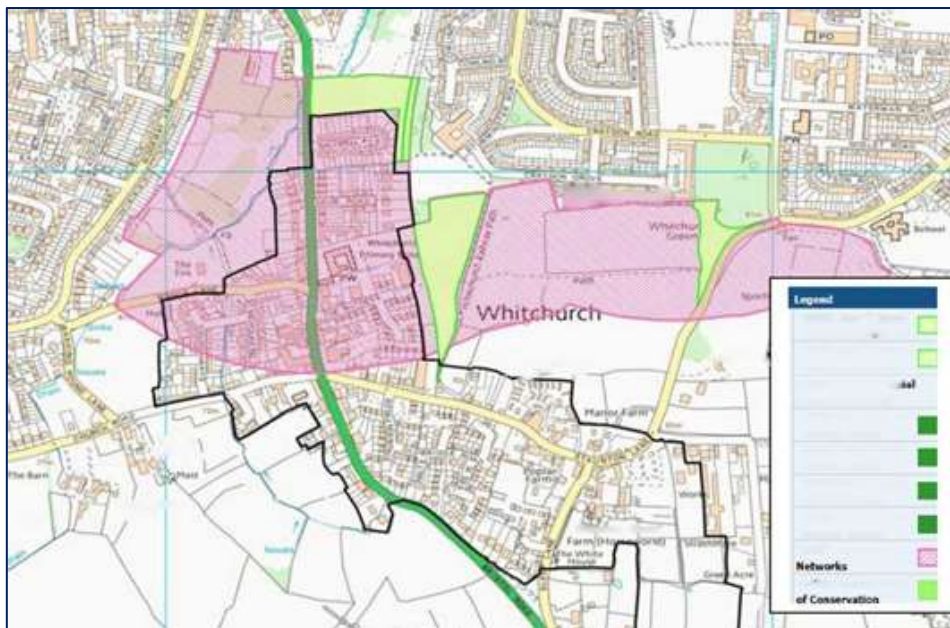
- a) Reducing the gap between Whitchurch Village and Bristol or,
- b) Increasing the density of development within existing curtilages

Policy WV 2.2- Development proposals, particularly where sited on the edge of Whitchurch Village must maintain visual connections with the countryside

Where possible, open views towards the countryside, and across open spaces must be maintained from key existing routes within the village. Views along streets and/or open spaces to the surrounding countryside must be created within new developments where there are opportunities to do so.

Policy WV2.3- The Visual impact of new development on views into and from the countryside must be minimised.

An assessment of views to and from the proposed development must be included in a supporting Visual Impact Statement. Visual impact should be minimised through the design of the site layout, buildings and landscape. The approach to minimising visual impact must be fully explained in the visual impact statement.



Policy WV 2.4-Wildlife Corridors and Ecological Network

Development must avoid harming existing ecological assets i.e. the habitats and dependent local biodiversity, including any features of importance for foraging and for maintaining habitat connectivity (including local and strategic Ecological Networks). Any development must submit evidence which shows how development will not harm these attributes. This shall be in the form of a Landscape and Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan.

13.0. OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure the new developments are integrated within the village

13.1. The village has worked well with developers related to the strategic allocation RA5. Issues raised during this collaborative working, included:

- Making reference to safe routes to school, facilities and play areas
- Maintaining an option to keep potential bus routes through the site
- How the demand for onsite parking can be dealt with
- Pedestrian and safe walking routes to village facilities
- How cycle routes through the village into Bristol can be developed
- The avoidance of major traffic problems on Sleep Lane
- Flooding risks
- Community facilities and health provision
- Housing mix, biodiversity, schools and affordable housing

13.2. A large numbers of new residents will decide to live in the village based upon housing need, cost, and a desire to live close to the countryside but not in it.

13.3. Any further development will need to retain the character of the village for new, existing and future populations. It is important to the current population that any new developments/community see themselves welcomed into the village and not seen as a commuter suburb of Bristol.

13.4. Whitchurch Village has seen considerable change from the 12th century. It was a tiny village through to the development of Sleep Lane. It is now our responsibility to welcome new people and seek improvements together. The village design has to influence a development plan but the physical aspects can positively help the integration of new communities. This includes house design, mix and types of property, safe pedestrian and cycling routes, parking, affordable housing, safe routes, bus accessibility, play areas, biodiversity, watercourses and impact on already congested routes.

- 13.5.** The significant increase in population of our well-established stable community makes it essential that we welcome and positively work to create opportunities for our new residents to fully engage in village activities.
- 13.6.** The community need to see the impact of the “about 200” houses set out in the Core Strategy (2011-2029) to assess pollution, service provision, highways capacity, transport and jobs before any significant further strategic allocations are proposed.

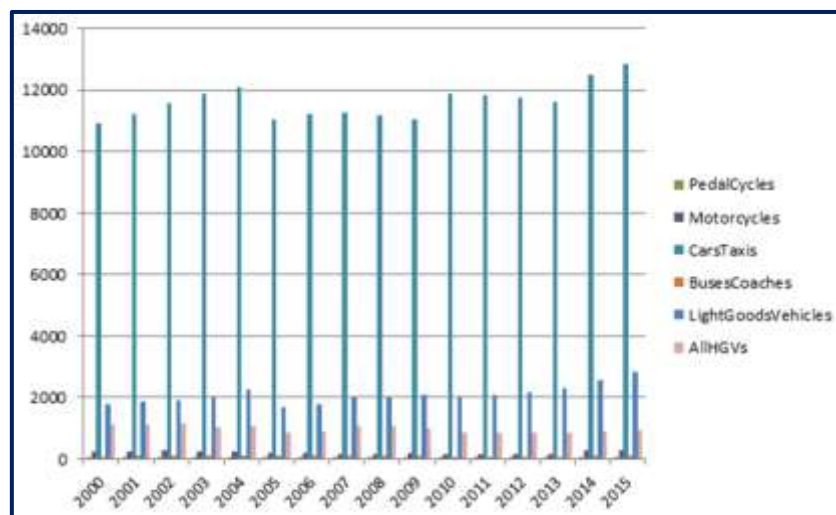
Policy WV 3.1- Proposals for new housing in Whitchurch Village must ensure that the new homes are well integrated with the existing village.

Proposals for new housing must ensure that the new homes are well connected both within any site and with the wider village.

14.0. OBJECTIVE 4: The A37 – Impact

- 14.1.** The A37 is a major route that bisects the village. It is beyond this Plan to address the traffic problems arising but there are some aspects which are relevant. The transport and planning issues pertaining to Whitchurch Village are contained in a report (appendix 5) and highlights the shortcomings of the A37 to cope with substantial traffic increase. Upgrading the A37 to trunk road status to qualify it as a strategic route must be supported by firm evidence rather than vague assertions.
- 14.2.** The main A37 has a high volume of traffic but the normal expectation for a village of its size to have a general food store, a post office, a school and a community meeting place has not been possible to date due to the lack of road crossings, road safety and a lack of stop off parking.

Fig 15: Traffic graph shows a 50% increase from 2000-2015 of approximately 12,000 vehicles a day to approximately 18,000 vehicles a day.



B&NES, 2016

- 14.3.** The traffic use of the A37 needs to be assessed by carrying out a fully comprehensive “Origins and Destination and purpose of heavy freight traffic” data survey. Such a survey would reveal how best to address the A37 corridor and future developments within this corridor.

- 14.4.** The present traffic flows through the Village are clearly illustrated in the accompanying photographic evidence in appendix 6.
- 14.5.** The around 200 houses contained within the Core Strategy have, after negotiation, alternative access and egress options to reduce the concentration of traffic through the village. Access to the A37 which is already difficult due to new developments in Keynsham will require serious attention arising from this additional development. This issue is not addressed as part of the master plan for the development because it relates to off-site works. Whitchurch Village and Keynsham Town Council will bid for CIL funding to improve access to the A37 at Norton lane.

Air Quality

- 14.6.** Bath and North East Somerset Council have been monitoring air quality at the main A37 crossroads and have recorded annual average Nitrogen Dioxide levels above the Governments air quality objectives. As a result six further monitoring locations have been added by them and the potential of adding more complex equipment to register times of peak pollution. Within the current Local Air Quality Management regime, the Council will declare the area as an Air Quality Management Area if the levels continue to be above the Governments Air Quality Objectives. The impact of further traffic growth without alternatives in place will cause further deterioration in the Nitrogen Dioxide levels and this must be protected against.

Policy WV 4.1- Air Quality

Development proposals must demonstrate that developers have considered the impact of their proposals on air quality and where appropriate, provide an air quality assessment and appropriate mitigation measures.

Developments which would result in detrition of Whitchurch Village's nitrogen dioxide pollution levels will be resisted.

Policy WV4.2 -Traffic Impacts of Developments

Development proposals that are likely to have severe effects on transport must be accompanied by an assessment of the transport implications during both construction and in operation, in particular addressing impacts on:

- a) Road dangers
- b) Pedestrian environment and movement
- c) Cycling infrastructure provision
- d) Public transport
- e) The street network

Policy WV4.3- Traffic and Safety

Proposals that accord with the policies in the Plan and result in improvements to the free flow of traffic in the Village will be supported. Proposals requiring planning permission and which seek to increase the number of access points, or which would involve an increase in traffic generation, will need to demonstrate that they do not further inhibit the free flow of traffic or exacerbate conditions of parking stress, including conflict with larger vehicles or encourage through traffic.

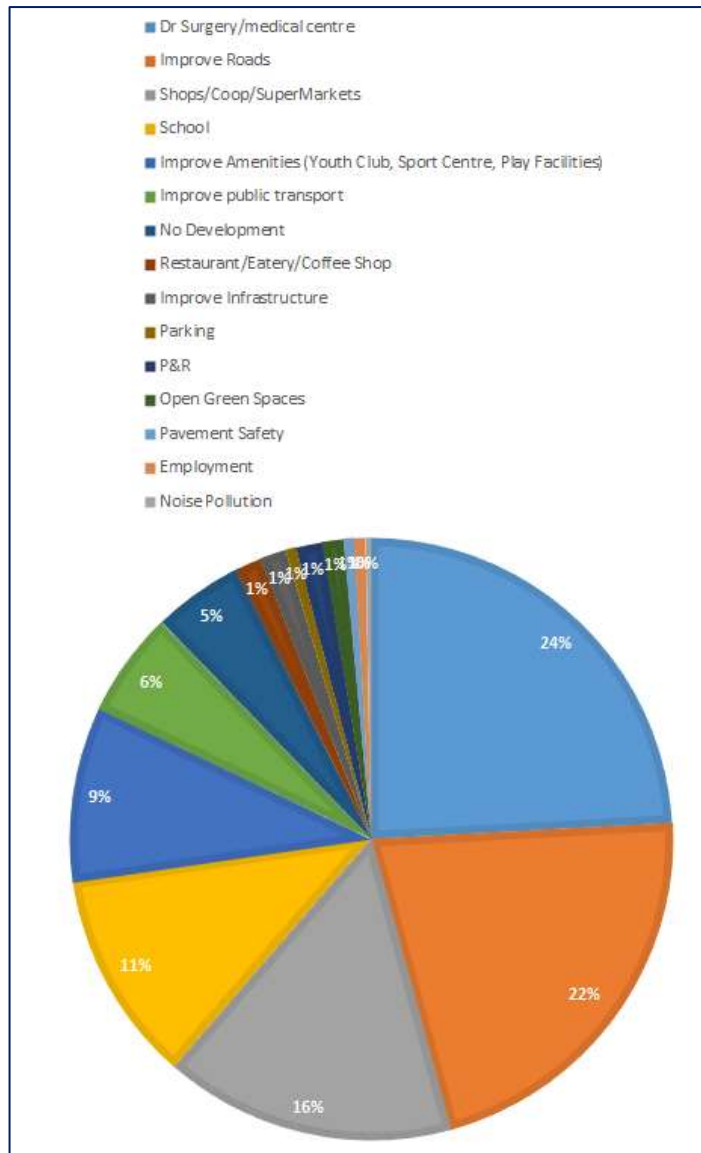
Policy WV 4.4- Pedestrian and cycle routes must be provided to link together housing and Whitchurch Village community facilities and services

Pedestrian and cycle routes must follow desire lines and clearly link new development to community facilities and services. Routes must keep road crossings and changes in level to a minimum. Road crossings must form a natural part of the route, avoiding detours that make road crossings dangerous.

15.0. OBJECTIVE 5: Seek improvements for the community arising from future growth

15.1. The current 50% increase in housing numbers will generate significant growth in the village population. As a vibrant village it currently supports considerable community and supporting facilities. For example the village hall has nearly 100% usage for its two halls (large and small/day and night). All of the sports clubs are supported.

15.2. However the village facilities can benefit from development. The village Survey (appendix 7, December 2016) shows the top priorities within the community:



15.3. In addition, the real shortage of car parking spaces, speed of traffic; lack of formal open spaces, lack of safe walking routes and suitable footpath widths on key routes are issues that have been raised through the neighbourhood plan consultation (appendix 8).

15.4. This is a long list of aspirations and therefore The Team have analysed these aspirations which are not land use policies however can use any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money generated from new development.

15.5. Future development can assist in creating a more sustainable village, e.g:

- New shop

- Local employment growth (Policies WV1.5 and WV1.6)
- Improvements to roads, junctions and foot paths (Policies WV1.4)
- Village park
- Increasing long term viability of the existing sporting and recreational facilities
- New school in a safe location
- Community hall/office expansion

15.6. Existing and future development will create greater community need for services, employment, transportation, social and physical infrastructure. This highlights the fact that there are certain aspects of the village that could be improved as a direct result of investment arising from future development.

Village Shop

15.7. A suitable retail site has been identified as a potential local shop. If this site becomes available the community should seek funding for its purchase as viable local shop unit. See Appendix 9 for full details of potential shop feasibility.

Whitchurch Village Leisure and Recreational Area Project

15.8. Play is generally recognised as being a vital element in the development of all children. It helps children of all ages to learn, solve problems and work together in a fun environment. The provision of opportunities for play as part of new housing areas benefits future residents in terms of providing an attractive environment for all in addition to providing a valuable play resource.

15.9. It is important, however, to ensure that such areas are conveniently located within easy walking distance of homes and are safe, attractive and integrated into the residential area they are intended to serve. In this way the areas will be attractive to children and minimise the potential for disturbance to other residents.

15.10. Analysis by BANES and consultants indicate the village is short of public green space. The Neighbourhood Planning group commissioned UWE under graduates to examine a potential area for development by the parish as a community facility. They have looked at the ownership and options/costs for the development. From previous housing development there is a sum of S106 money available to the parish for such work. The formal Parish play area is well used but safe access is an issue because it is located on the edge of the village and many people have to cross the A37 for access.

15.11. The creation of a new leisure and recreational area project has been subject of a feasibility study undertaken by UWE students in April 2016 (appendix 10).

15.12. The project may include:

- Identification of the land owner and securing ownership of the land
- Creation of a play area management committee
- Further work on the design of the space-building on the feasibility study developed by the UWE students
- Bidding for funding
- Allocation of S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy money
- Implementation and phasing of the project

Increasing long term viability of the existing sporting and recreational facilities

15.13. *As an example, the local Barbarians RFC have intentions to develop more community focused facilities (please see appendix 11).*

New school in a safe location

15.14. Careful consideration should be given to the future educational provision to the Whitchurch Village as at present the school is being expanded to cater for the current intake from the future additional development of up to approx 300

houses. Any further development may render this school not fit for purpose thereby requiring a new site with improved facilities for the children, possibly sited within new development because the existing provision is dangerously located on the main A37 road. Parent parking, at times, creates long queues at peak times and school arrival/departure times, causing disruption and inconvenience to adjoining residents.

Community hall/office expansion

15.15. The existing community village hall is always fully booked. New residents joining the area will increase demand for leisure, recreation and administrative services, including car parking.

16.0. Conclusion

16.1. *“Whitchurch village is a lovely and thriving village that has developed and embraced change whilst maintaining its character. New development needs to be sympathetic to this.” Alyson and Paul*