

**Vision, Aims, Objectives and**

**Policies**

‘Our Community… Our Plan’

**Review Document JUNE 2023**

WNDP

June 2023

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# 1.INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood Plans are now recognised as an important and integral part of the overall planning process. This is fully recognised in the SODC Local Plan 2035 and in the current 2021 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Government’s White Paper ‘Planning for the Future’ *(August 2020)* proposes significant changes to planning law and processes in the UK in the future but reinforces the position of Neighbourhood Plans at the centre of its focus on ‘localism’.

Along with this recognition there is an obligation on Parish Councils to monitor and review the progress of a Neighbourhood Plan on a regular basis, adjusting and updating as required to reflect changing circumstances, government policies and other material considerations. This updated version of the WNDP is a result of this review. Before addressing our updated WNDP Aims and Objectives for the period 2023-2041 it is worthwhile therefore providing a brief summary of progress on the original Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) from 2018 (when it was made by SODC) to 2023 – to remind ourselves what we were asked to do, where we are at currently and establish the baseline for the new Plan.

The original WNDP was developed in the period 2014-2018 in response to country-wide objectives for housing growth included in national government legislation and published alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This legislation set out new national housing targets, with specific targets being allocated to individual areas. Locally this resulted in South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) being directed to assess likely housing demand over the period through to 2033, and to accept a direction from the government to ensure new housing in the area hit agreed targets over this period. In turn, SODC allocated this total across all major settlements in our area to ensure their commitment to central government could be met.

In the case of Watlington this allocation proposed at least a 15% increase in housing stock from 2011 to 2033 in order to meet planned growth locally and the district as a whole. The WNDP 2018 reflected the SODC target of a minimum of 262\* new houses to meet foreseeable housing needs, a proposed increase of 20% on the 1,200 houses in the parish at that date. (\*SODC recognised that 24 new houses had been built in the period prior to publication of the Plan so the future ‘demand’ case was adjusted to a minimum of 238 new homes.)

In the made WNDP 2018 three development sites were allocated to provide a minimum of 238 new homes over the period of the Plan. In addition, the plan included support for the provision of specialist housing for older people, staff accommodation at the Watlington and District Nursing Home, and some park homes. It was proposed also that opportunities to identify Rural Exception Sites would be investigated during the period of the Plan in order to increase the supply of affordable housing for local people. These additional opportunities to increase housing stock in the area to support our residents and social and economic growth are also seen as important elements of this updated Plan.

Progress in building on the three sites allocated for development has been slower than anticipated largely due to delays in confirming the necessary infrastructure associated with them. In particular, the delay in approving the route and technical specification of the Watlington Relief Road (WRR) has created consequent delays in the planning applications and approvals process. Now that funding for the road is secure using funds allocated by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (now the Future Oxfordshire Partnership) and agreed contributions from developers, together with support for the road incorporated in the SODC Local Plan 2035 and OCC plans, we are confident that barriers to progress have been removed. A planning application for the WRR is expected in summer 2023.

The Planning Application on Site A has been approved on the basis of 183 housing units plus a small business unit. Site preparation and infrastructure installation commenced in November 2020, with an anticipated build rate of around 61 houses a year over the period 2021-2023. Outline planning applications for Sites B and C, submitted in the 1st quarter of 2021, were approved by SODC early in 2021. These developments are expected to deliver another 130 houses over the three-year period 2023 - 2025.

This level of growth will deliver new housing well in excess of the SODC target for Watlington: 313 houses versus 238 (representing a 26% increase in housing stock for Watlington over this period). This figure does not include the 100 houses expected to be built in neighbouring Pyrton Parish on site PYR2 or the development for retirement homes on site PYR1, both located between Shirburn Road and Pyrton Lane. It is recognized, though, that these two developments, while not in our parish, will be adjacent to and totally dependent on Watlington for local services. As a result, WPC will monitor the overall increase in housing stock against the approved allocation to ensure future goals are met. This level of growth, while ambitious and substantially in excess of SODC targets, will support WNDP objectives for sustainable development while being reasonable and proportionate to the capacity, services and facilities of a ‘larger village’ (SODC’s description of Watlington in its Settlement Hierarchy). It should provide a substantial boost to existing and new businesses in the town. The developments in Watlington Parish will provide at least 125 affordable homes, of which a minimum of 31 will be available for allocation to local people.

There are significant constraints to further development in Watlington which comprise the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the town centre Conservation Area and Air Quality Management Area and locations which are identified by the Environment Agency as within Flood Zones 2 and 3. While the planned development of new homes could represent a risk to the identity and character of the town it will also bring tangible benefits. It will bring – through Community Infrastructure Levy allocations (CIL – developer contributions on each house built) – substantial investments in the facilities and well-being of the town; and it should materially improve the health and safety of residents through the redirection of much of the through traffic and HGVs from the town centre to the Relief Road.

Much work remains to be done to ensure the successful delivery of the plans outlined in the WNDP 2018. However, much of the ‘heavy lifting’ proposed in 2018 has now been done and this updated Plan is designed to focus on supporting our community and improving the environment in which we live. Our aim is for a more sustainable community with reduced carbon emissions, well-managed and biodiverse natural habitats and a good network of accessible green spaces.

# 4.VISION AND OBJECTIVES

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The vision and objectives outlined in WNDP (2018) have been updated and expanded in the light of progress made since the Plan was made by SODC. In addition, this new iteration of the Plan takes note of the adopted SODC Local Plan 2035 (December 2020) and evolving Government policies on planning, the environment and the economy, and reflects both the need for increased knowledge of the likely impact of climate change on our locality and the opportunities for our community to contribute to and be part of the ‘green revolution’.

Since publication of the WNDP 2018 Watlington Parish Council (WPC) has declared a climate emergency and adopted a Climate Action Plan. This declaration has also been made by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), while SODC made an additional declaration of an ‘Ecological Emergency’ in February 2021. This revised version of the WNDP seeks to reflect these declarations by reducing the emission of greenhouse gases within in our parish and contributing to nature recovery. SODC considers these issues as strategic priorities for planning policies and the WNDP will adopt this approach in implementing its Vision and Objectives.

The WNDP seeks also to ensure that our Plan and our community is prepared and agile enough to cope with local challenges that may be presented in a post-Covid world.

In making these changes, the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Board (NPAB) has worked with Watlington Parish Council (WPC) to monitor progress on the Plan since 2018 and to track initiatives and proposals from other Plans and all levels of government. In addition, WPC and the NPAB have continued to engage with and encourage input from all parts of the community, and has conducted further surveys, and consultations to ensure community involvement and support for this updated WNDP.

The overwhelming support of local residents – resulting in an 81% vote in favour of the WNDP in the 2018 Referendum - indicates the commitment and enthusiasm of our community for localism. They are both protective and proud of our heritage and aspire to sustainable growth and measurable improvements in our economic and social well-being. They want a full say in their future, and they want WPC to aim high. In developing this Plan we support this ambition and the aspirational objectives that come with it. To illustrate this, and bring more clarity to our Plan, we detail both our ***Aims*** – our vision and aspirations which are valid and desirable but not easily measurable, and our associated **Core Objectives** – outcomes that are measurable, feasible and against which proposals can be assessed. Together they represent the wishes of our community for the future.

## Our Vision

**In 2041 Watlington will be a small, thriving Chilterns town, adapted to the reality of change in South Oxfordshire. It will contribute to the reduction in the causes of climate change and the recovery of natural capital and biodiversity.**

New housing will have been added to the current built form, in a sensitive and inter-connected manner, providing a balanced mix for the range of people who have chosen to make their home in Watlington. A re-aligned route for the B4009 from the Pyrton crossroads to the Britwell Road (the Watlington Relief Road) will mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution in the town centre. The area around the Town Hall will be attractive and accessible and create an environment where retail and other local businesses thrive. Support for businesses and other enterprises across the Parish is seen as key to ensure that Watlington's success as a service centre continues. The views and needs of all local employers, including those in Howe Road, Lys Mill and Cuxham Road, need to be taken into account in the Plan.

The local economy will be strong and more people will be able to work closer to home making full use of the town as a local hub. The natural and historic environment will be conserved and, from the vantage point of Watlington Hill, the town will retain its setting at the foot of the Chilterns escarpment and its compact appearance in the landscape. The town will retain its strong sense of community and friendliness and will be a place where people enjoy coming to live.

## What Watlington Wants the Neighbourhood Plan to do

The objectives of the WNDP span a range of issues which are important to local people and can be addressed in part through planning policies and their implementation. The policies are intended to provide clarity to potential developers, assistance to the officers of SODC, and guidance to members of the public.

With housing developments proposed in the 2018 WNDP already underway, and the Watlington Relief Road now committed in the SODC Local and OCC Plans, the Plan is now moving into a new phase.

‘Development’ has never been just about housebuilding. The first iteration of the WNDP clearly focused on our part in easing the housing crisis, in meeting the new-build targets set for us by central and local government; in trying to ensure that the required infrastructure was agreed, committed, funded and built. We need still to ensure that delivery is completed to Plan, in a timely manner and with minimum adverse impact on our town and people.

Now the emphasis in the Plan moves on to maximising the benefits to our community from this commitment:

* fully integrating these new developments into the fabric of the town.
* ensuring any future developments within the Plan period are both small-scale and appropriate to the scale and character of the town and smaller settlements and the surrounding countryside.
* helping the new residents see Watlington as ‘their town’, using their knowledge and energy – together with the substantial funding provided by the Community Infrastructure Levy on the new houses – to build a better, brighter future for Watlington.

We must also recognise that Watlington now has its own Climate Action Plan and has declared an ecological emergency which should be reflected in the WNDP. Clearly, climate change and the broader concerns around ecological sustainability – and, thus, sustainable development – should become an integral part of all aspects of policy and cut across each section of the WNDP. Our objectives should underline openly and clearly the choices made, their implications and how they match up to a commitment to become a ‘greener’ locality. To emphasize the fundamental imperative for managing climate change this updated version of the WNDP includes in and across all policies and objectives the actions needed to address this obligation.

## WNDP Aims and Core Objectives

There are a series of aims and objectives which underpin the WNDP, which should not be viewed in isolation, but rather should be considered as a full suite of objectives. This parallels and supports the approach taken in the SODC Local Plan 2035. These objectives are the guiding principles of the Plan and are designed to strike the right balance between protection and enhancement: between the core pillars of sustainable development (including the protection of the environment) and the need to provide sufficient development to meet the existing and future demand from our parish and South Oxfordshire as a whole.

**ACO1. Aims to protect and enhance what makes Watlington special:**

* *its historic character including the Conservation Area, listed buildings and other heritage assets*
* *its scale and distinctiveness as a small, rural, Chilterns town*
* *its High Street and small independent shops*
* *its setting in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*
* *its landscape setting at the foot of the Chilterns Escarpment*
* *its rural setting surrounded by farmland*

**Objectives:**

1. Review and confirm definition, scope and reach of the Conservation Area together with a future Management Plan
2. Protect the setting of the town, especially from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the South and the East by ensuring that development proposals enhance it and do not have an adverse impact on it.
3. Conserve the rural landscape by keeping any loss of agricultural land to a minimum
4. Protect views both into and out of the AONB to maintain the character of Watlington as a small Chilterns town at the foot of the escarpment
5. Develop and implement a plan to make the town centre more user-friendly and attractive to residents and visitors
6. Maintain the character and appearance of the High Street by protecting shop frontages and, where possible, supporting independent retail traders

**ACO2. Aims to conserve and enhance the natural environment by:**

* *contributing to nature recovery by enhancing biodiversity and protecting and increasing habitats and wildlife corridors*
* *protecting and creating green spaces and green infrastructure*
* *conserving water resources*
* *protecting ponds and streams*
* *preventing flooding*

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure that all Policies in the WNDP contribute tothe reduction and mitigation of the impact of climate change on the natural environment
2. Explore and maximise the opportunities to support nature recovery on all planning applications
3. Ensure that long term management plans are in place for green spaces
4. Protect wildlife from the impact of artificial light at night (ALAN) by taking action, where possible, to minimise light spill and promote dark skies
5. Work with developers and landowners to identify areas where high sequestration habitats (such as managed deciduous woodland) can replace low sequestration habitats
6. Ensure that all new planting schemes for trees and hedges use locally native species and provide food sources for wildlife
7. Record and protect existing ponds and water courses
8. Ensure that the chalk streams in the area are fully recognised for their national importance, that they are protected and are not adversely affected by development proposals.
9. Ensure that sustainable drainage schemes contribute to the provision of new wildlife habitats
10. Encourage the establishment of areas of wetland where appropriate
11. Protect areas designated as ‘Local Green Spaces’. Review the current list to consider opportunities for enhancing existing green spaces and identifying further green spaces and green infrastructure
12. Promote the provision of community green spaces including orchards and allotments

**ACO3. Aims for designing a green, sustainable locality by:**

* *Changing the way we use resources to ensure that they remain available for future generations*
* *Changing the way we build so that construction utilises low carbon technologies and renewable energy*
* *Recognising how we can reduce our carbon footprint*
* *Monitoring and reporting on actions to reduce climate impact in our parish*

**Objectives:**

1. Promoting the use of renewable energy and supporting community energy schemes
2. Expecting high standards of energy efficiency in all new dwellings including extensions and refurbishments
3. Encouraging development which makes provision for future proofing for a changing climate, including more extreme weather and environmental conditions.
4. Encouraging schemes for the conservation and re-use of water
5. Encouraging coherent, user friendly design which facilitates social inclusion and integration to achieve healthy, supportive communities

**ACO4. Aims for meeting housing challenges:**

* *Providing a well-balanced mix of housing to meet identified local needs*
* *Ensuring that 40% of new housing is for affordable homes in line with SODC policy with at least 25% of those for people with strong connections with Watlington*
* *Demonstrating the wider benefits of sustainable developments and re-developments*
* *Encouraging developers to go beyond current building regulations and practice*
* *Working closely with OCC, SODC and other providers to ensure adequate infrastructure is provided to meet local need*

*Ensuring that all new development is well designed*

* *Use Watlington Parish Council’s role in planning to promote the highest insulation standards and non-carbon energy sources in all new builds and building modifications*
* *Catering for an increase in need for home working facilities, particularly post-Covid*

**Objectives:**

1. Update information on local housing needs by carrying out regular surveys
2. Implement survey outcomes in co-operation with SODC, affordable housing providers and other organisations
3. Include suitable opportunities for self-build homes and community-led housing projects
4. Ensure that new housing developments are designed and built to optimise physical and visual flows and integration into the existing built form with easy access to the town centre and other facilities
5. Support SODC policy on affordable housing, ensuring that developments are fully integrated
6. Meet SODC commitments on achieving building targets while protecting Watlington from unplanned and inappropriate developments
7. Reflect Watlington’s rural setting abutting the Chilterns AONB and a requirement for new housing to demonstrate a ‘soft edge’ to the countryside through promotion of appropriate housing densities, layout and landscaping
8. Developers should reflect as an integrated part of the development design process local need for different house types, decent size, family-friendly gardens and access to green space
9. Developments should provide flexibility for changing needs including working from home.
10. Plans by owners of existing homes to eco-upgrade their houses to include energy conserving and renewable energy features will be encouraged

**ACO5. Aims to resolve traffic and transport issues:**

* *improve the health and wellbeing of people who live in, work in and visit Watlington*
* *Improve air quality by reducing traffic emissions*
* *reduce the need for travel and car dependency*
* *improve the public realm at the town centre to make it a safer part of the town*
* *reduce the damage to historic buildings through vibration and water spray*
* *reduce congestion by better management of through traffic*
* *improve safety by reducing traffic speeds throughout the parish*
* *minimise the impact of traffic generated by new development*
* *reduce the number of unauthorised HGVs using the town centre as a through route*
* *improve access to public transport to Junction 6 of the M40 motorway, Oxford and other locations*
* *provide good connectivity within the town and surrounding settlements by improving the network of cycle paths, footpaths and bridleways*

**Objectives:**

1. Work with OCC towards the completion of the Watlington Relief Road in 2024/2025
2. Ensure that SODC and developer Traffic Management Plans for the WRR and all other developments have the minimum possible impact on the town, parish and neighbouring parishes and are effectively monitored and enforced
3. Gain OCC approval for 20mph zone and implement it in all residential areas of the town
4. Work with OCC Trading Standards and Thames Valley Police to improve signage of the existing restricted weight limits throughout the town and parish and improve enforcement
5. Review and implement proposals in the Watlington Traffic Management Plan to reduce the impact of continuing through traffic
6. Gain approval for the partial closure of Pyrton Lane and conversion into a ‘Green Lane’
7. Investigate and implement, if supported locally, converting Britwell Rd and Cuxham Road into a one-way system
8. Introduce traffic calming, seating areas and planting to improve air quality and ambience in the town centre
9. Ensure the town centre is accessible by safe footpaths and cycle ways from all new developments
10. Produce a Local Infrastructure Plan for Walking and Cycling
11. Encourage the County Council to ensure that bus services meet the public transport needs of the community, and that the financial contribution from housing development is used to provide enhanced services in the future
12. Investigate opportunities, demand and a business case for community transport schemes
13. Encouraging people to minimise carbon-generating travel
14. Encourage a switch to electric and other sources of sustainable power for vehicles by supporting the installation of charging points in both public and private locations, in all new developments and in all new parking and garaging proposals
15. Review provision for parking

**ACO6. Aims to support the local economy by:**

* improving access to the town centre for visitors and tourists
* improving car parking and signage
* encouraging small businesses, start-ups and homeworking
* Changing the way we work to ensure that work and employment is sustainable and has a minimal carbon footprint
* supporting the provision of fast broadband and fibre to the premises throughout the parish

**Objectives:**

1. Work with SODC to ensure they understand, document and help mitigate the possible impact on Watlington’s economy and position as a Local Service Centre from their SODC Local Plan 2035 STRAT7- a “New 21st Century Market Town” proposed to be built at Chalgrove Airfield
2. In particular, model the impact of the possible transfer to Chalgrove of Watlington’s largest single employer – the Icknield Community College – and agree a contingency strategy that could protect both the employment and future business opportunities in the town
3. Survey future requirements for retail, office and workshop space to establish need and opportunities
4. Ensure that new developments allow for space for new business use as well as future home working facilities
5. Analyse how public spaces in the town centre could be improved in appearance and made more accessible
6. Evaluate the impact of pedestrianisation of the High Street, with associated street furniture
7. Ensure that all new developments have clear and safe footpath and cycleway access to the town centre and key amenities
8. Investigate the provision of cycle racks in the town centre to encourage more frequent visits (and a reduction of motorised vehicle traffic)
9. Use planning regulations to protect existing retail and office space and prevent change of use to other uses
10. Identify and register Assets of Community Value (ACV) to protect and enhance buildings and services important for the community and our position as a recognised Local Service Centre
11. Use funds available from the Community Infrastructure Levy to protect and enhance our community facilities and public spaces
12. Recognise tourism as an important contributor to the local economy and agree a new strategy focused on the actions and resources needed to increase visitor numbers and visit duration

**ACO7. Aims to ensure that local infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of a growing population by:**

*Ensuring that there is sufficient provision for primary health care*

*Ensuring that there is good provision for child care including nurseries*

*Ensuring that there is good provision for recreation and sport*

*Ensuring that there are enough community spaces for a range of different activities*

*Ensuring that communications networks provide up to date services*

*Ensuring that the water supply is secure and that there is sufficient capacity for waste water treatment*

**Objectives:**

1. Assessing the capacity of local services including water supply and waste water treatment
2. Assessing the capacity of local schools, pre-schools and nurseries to provide places for more children
3. Assessing the capacity of local health services to provide for an increased number of patients
4. Seeking land for additional facilities for sport and recreation
5. Assessing the range of community facilities against the changing needs of a growing population and providing new or re-purposed facilities where needed
6. Working with OCC and local providers to upgrade communications networks

# 5.1 POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF WATLINGTON, ITS LANDSCAPE AND THE SMALL SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE WNDP BOUNDARY

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| Proposals for all types of development are expected to comply with the following policies:  **W1 Heritage and Conservation Area:**   1. The development respects the local and historic character of Watlington including the town and small settlements within the WNDP boundary 2. Development in the Watlington Conservation Area protects and enhances its special interest, character, setting and appearance in accordance with the most recent Appraisal and Management Plan. Development proposals which cause less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area will not be supported unless there is clear and detailed evidence to demonstrate that the harm would be outweighed by substantial benefit for the Watlington community 3. The significance of designated and undesignated heritage assets is sustained and, where possible, enhanced by protecting their fabric and setting and ensuring that they retain a viable use consistent with their conservation and enhancement   **W2 Street scene and town centre:**   1. New development relates well to the established character of the street scene and to the street pattern of the town in accordance with the most recent version of the Watlington Design Guide 2. The character of the High Street, Shirburn Street and Couching Street as the centre for local shops and businesses must be retained and, in particular, shop fronts must be protected. 3. Proposals within the town centre and High Street are expected to contribute to the overall improvement of the public realm by making good provision for pedestrians and providing attractive public spaces for local residents and visitors to the town   **W3 Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, landscape and views:**   1. Development proposals which are within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the small settlements of Christmas Common, Greenfield, Howe Hill and parts of Pishill and Northend, must protect and enhance the AONB through uses and design which reflect the scale and character of the site and its setting within the AONB 2. Proposals for development must not detract from the rural character and agricultural landscape in the WNDP area. 3. The specific landscape features of the escarpment and the rolling downs described in the SODC Landscape Character Areas 5 (Eastern Vale Fringes) and 8 (Chilterns Escarpment) must be conserved. 4. Where development proposals result in the loss of agricultural land any loss must be outweighed by a significant benefit to the community 5. Proposals for development must take account of the extensive views of the landscape which are characteristic of the area 6. Distance views of Watlington from the surrounding countryside must be protected, especially from the Chilterns escarpment and Watlington Hill and minimise the visual impact of development on the setting of the town. |

# 5.2 POLICIES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

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| **E1 Biodiversity gain:**   1. Development proposals are expected to make provision for a clear 10% biodiversity net gain. Proposals which have an adverse impact on wildlife and cause a loss of habitats will not be supported 2. Proposals take account of the impact of climate change and maximise opportunities to support the health, resilience and connectivity of wildlife 3. Proposals demonstrate that wildlife corridors and habitat linkages can be maintained and improved and do not lead to the isolation of populations of species 4. Artificial light at night (ALAN), including external lighting, must be kept to a minimum to avoid the harmful impact on wildlife including bats and night-flying insects   **E2 Green infrastructure:**   1. All green spaces, including the areas designated as a Local Green Space (the sports field, recreation ground and allotments, the tennis club, bowls club and the Paddock, West Meadow, Mansle Gardens, Little Orchard and Marlbrook Green) are managed for the enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity as well as other, designated, purposes including recreation. 2. Provision of new, public, green spaces is encouraged, including allotments and community orchards. 3. Where appropriate, provision of a conservation management plan should have a minimum time span of 20 years 4. Management proposals for areas of grassland, including amenity grassland and road-side verges should include areas for longer grass and wildflower planting and increase the range of habitats and food sources for wildlife. 5. Trees are protected and well managed to provide healthy habitats. Provision is made, if necessary off-site, for the replacement of trees which are lost as a result of development or other reasons. The planting of locally native trees and/or fruit trees is required. 6. Opportunities are taken, where possible, to provide and manage areas which offer high levels of carbon sequestration (such as deciduous woodland). 7. Hedges are protected and well managed. New and re-generated hedges should include a mix of several locally native species selected to provide the establishment of good habitats with a good continuity of food sources.   **E3 Ponds, streams and wetland habitats:**   1. The ponds and chalk streams in Watlington, including the Willow Pond, the Horse Pond and the Chalgrove Brook are protected and, where possible, enhanced. 2. Surface water drainage schemes are designed to have a minimal impact on local water courses and water bodies and take account of the increased rainfall expected as a result of climate change 3. Proposals for culverting any of the streams will not be supported. Opportunities to ‘daylight’ water courses are encouraged. 4. The provision of new ponds and areas of wetland are encouraged where appropriate. 5. Sustainable drainage schemes, including attenuation ponds, swales and reed beds, should be designed to maximise opportunities for wetland habitats. |

# 5.3 POLICIES FOR DESIGN

Proposals for development must demonstrate high quality design which takes account of local design codes including the Watlington Design Guide, guidance from the Chilterns Conservation Board, the most recent SODC Design Guide and up to date national design codes and guidelines. Designs are also expected to mitigate the effects of climate change and contribute to the achievement of net zero carbon buildings.

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| **D1 Energy use and generation:**   1. Designs use materials and systems which increase energy efficiency of buildings and reduce demand for energy for heating and cooling 2. Designs make provision for shading to avoid over-heating and the need for air conditioners 3. Designs provide on-site energy generation using solar, ground source, air source or other sustainable energy sources in proportion to the scale of the development   **D2 Flooding and use of water:**   1. Designs are resilient to flooding events linked to the changing climate and make provision for the flooding of water courses and rising of springs along the spring line in the town 2. Designs make efficient use of water and include proposals for water storage and re-use of ‘grey’ water.   **D3 Lighting and Dark skies:**   1. Proposals protect dark skies and comply with the E1 designation of the Institute of Lighting Professionals which applies to Watlington and the surrounding AONB. 2. Street and private lighting schemes are in line with the guidance in the Watlington Design Guide and minimise the impact of lighting within the town and surrounding countryside 3. External lighting should be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary for reasons of security and safety and should be managed by timers or movement sensors to limit its impact 4. Designs make maximum use of natural lighting and reduce the demand for artificial light 5. Designs which include roof lights and large areas of glazing demonstrate that they avoid light spill 6. Proposals for the use of specialist glazing to reduce light spill will be supported where it can be proved to be effective   **D4 Sustainable buildings:**   1. Designs for new buildings will be supported if they comply with other policies in this Plan and will not require retro-fitting to meet government targets for net zero carbon by 2050 and SODC targets for net zero carbon by 2030 |

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# 5.4 POLICIES FOR HOUSING

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| Development proposals should demonstrate how they meet the following criteria in proportion to the scale of each site:    **H1 Provision for new housing:**   1. They reflect the scale and character of the adjacent neighbourhood and accord with other policies in this Plan. 2. They are built at a density which is appropriate for a historic rural community which borders the Chilterns AONB, with housing densities to be reduced below 15dph along development and rural edges. 3. They provide, according to scale, significant additional investment in facilities and infrastructure 4. They respect the value of residential gardens and avoid back-land development. 5. They are appropriate for a countryside location.   **H2 Housing demand, mix and tenure:**   1. They provide attractive and safe places to live which integrate new homes successfully    1. into the character and scale of their surroundings.    2. They meet the needs identified in the most recent Watlington Housing Survey and Housing Needs Assessment. 2. They provide Watlington with a range of housing which includes family homes with good sized gardens, housing to meet the needs of younger and older people and people with disabilities. 3. They provide internal spaces which are easily adaptable to future needs, including opportunities for home working. 4. They have regard to the guidance from the Housing our Aging Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) 5. They deliver affordable housing to development plan standards for rent, social rent and part ownership 6. They provide small rural exception sites for affordable housing in perpetuity which do not have an adverse impact on their location and countryside setting. 7. Proposals for genuinely affordable homes in perpetuity, including community-led housing projects will be supported where they comply with other policies in this Plan. 8. Proposals for self-build homes will also be supported where they comply with other policies in this plan   **H3 Extensions and conversions:**   1. They must be designed to an appropriate scale to the original building 2. They should respect or enhance the original building and the character of the location |

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# 5.5POLICIES FOR TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

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| **T1 Reducing the impact of traffic and associated emissions:**   1. Watlington will continue to work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to deliver the Watlington Relief Road and improve traffic flows through the town centre 2. Development should aim to support and contribute to enhancing the provision for sustainable modes of transport 3. Proposals for development should demonstrate how they will minimise air pollution caused by vehicle emissions, including small particulates, within the Watlington Air Quality Management Area. In particular, they should provide evidence of the impact on air quality caused by extra traffic generated from the development in relation to the cumulative impact of traffic on air quality in the Watlington AQMA. 4. Proposals for traffic mitigation measures should be based on the most recent Watlington Traffic Management Plan 5. Traffic mitigation measures should aim to improve safety for all road and pavement users 6. Traffic mitigation proposals should aim to reduce the damaging impact of water spray and vibration on historic buildings in the town centre 7. All new development which has off-street parking is expected to contribute to the reduction in emissions by making provision for the charging of electric vehicles. Where off-street parking is not possible, on-street charging points are encouraged where parking is permitted, including in the town centre.   **T2 Improving provision for walking, cycling and horse riding:**   1. Provision is expected to be made, wherever possible, for improved opportunities for active travel including new and connecting links for cycle routes and footpaths which provide good access for all users 2. Proposals for improvements to make the pavements and paths in the town more easily accessible and safe for all users will be encouraged. 3. Proposals for additions and improvements to the footpath network will be welcomed, especially where they provide off-road links between paths. 4. Proposals for the improvement of cycle paths and cycling routes will be expected where they can be provided both within the town and the wider area 5. Improvements to the bridleway network will be welcomed, especially if they link up routes and reduce the need to ride on local roads. 6. Proposals to close Pyrton Lane to through traffic beyond St Leonard’s Close are supported. This will provide enhanced and safe routes for cyclists, pedestrians and other users to local schools, to the town centre and to the wider network of rights of way. 7. Proposals which encroach onto the network of alleyways in the town will not be permitted.   **T3 Car and cycle parking**   1. Proposals for new or extended public parking facilities within or adjoining the built form of the town will be supported where they are of a scale that respects the historic street pattern of the town and safeguard heritage assets in the immediate locality of the site. 2. The provision of electric charging points in areas used for public parking or private parking for local businesses is encouraged. 3. Provision for parking on sites for development must be sufficient to avoid unsightly use of amenity and green areas for additional parking space. One parking space per bedroom up to 4 vehicles is recommended. 4. Development proposals are expected to make provision for a secure space for cycle storage.   **T4 Schemes to reduce individual car use**   1. The provision of car sharing schemes and community transport schemes will be welcomed and supported 2. Work with Oxfordshire County Council will continue to ensure the provision of public transport services which meet the needs of the community 3. The use of the public transport levy on development will be monitored to ensure that it provides the best value for money for Watlington bus users |

# 5.6 POLICIES FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY

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| **LE1 Proposals that would enhance the local economy by any or all of the following initiatives will be supported if they also comply with other policies in this Plan:**   1. They provide new spaces for local businesses including new retail premises in the High Street, Shirburn Street and Couching Street and/or 2. They provide new small-scale workshops and accommodation for small and medium-sized businesses, including start-ups, appropriate to the immediate locality and/or 3. They provide opportunities for small scale businesses for local growers and secondary food producers and/or 4. They provide spaces for home working and/or 5. They promote tourism of a scale and character appropriate to Watlington and the WNDP area and/or 6. They contribute to the improvement of public spaces in the centre of the town and/or 7. The contribute to the provision of car parking and secure cycle racks or shelters for shoppers and employees and/or 8. They improve signage to facilities and amenities appropriate to the scale and character of the town centre   **LE2 Proposals that would lead to a loss of an existing retail facility as shown on Map….. will not be supported unless:**   1. It would lead to the significant improvement or replacement of an existing business with equivalent or improved services 2. It has been demonstrated that the commercial service is no longer needed by the community |

# 5.7 POLICIES FOR PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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| **PSI 1 Proposals that enhance the provision of infrastructure in the following areas will be supported if they comply with other policies in this Plan:**   1. They improve the quality and provision of local sport and recreation facilities and/or 2. They provide land for additional sports pitches and/or 3. They provide new and/or expanded facilities for child care and early years education and/or 4. They provide new or improved community buildings and facilities and/or 5. They provide land for allotments, community orchards, community gardens or other green infrastructure and/or 6. They provide land for community energy projects and/or 7. They provide improved communications networks and/or 8. They make improved provision for water supply and waste water treatment and/or 9. They provide new or expanded services for primary health care |