

**Longworth Neighbourhood Plan
2015 - 2031**

Basic Conditions Statement

**Published by Longworth Parish Council under the
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012**

February 2016

1. Introduction

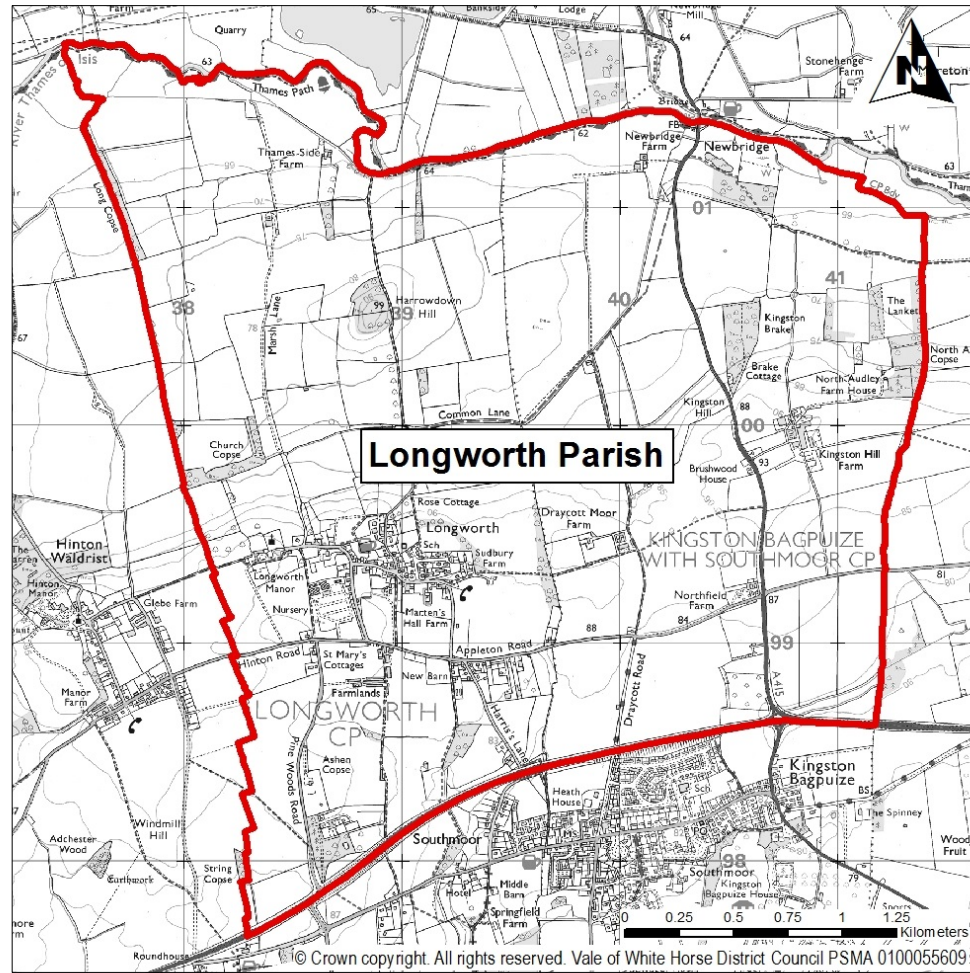
1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Longworth Parish Council ("the Parish Council") to accompany its submission to the local planning authority, the Vale of White Horse District Council ("the District Council"), of the Longworth Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations").

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Parish of Longworth, as designated by the District Council on the 13 December 2013 (see Plan A below). The policies described in Section 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan all relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area. It does not contain policies relating to excluded development as defined by, and in accordance with, the Regulations. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2031.

1.3 The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act.

1.4 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area); and
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.



PLAN A: The Designated Longworth Neighbourhood Plan Area

2. Background

2.1 The decision to proceed with a Plan was made by the Parish Council in 2013. A chief concern was to ensure that local planning policies were robust enough to protect the character of the parish, and especially the special historic character of the main village, at a time when the trend towards relaxation of planning restrictions was gathering pace. For this reason, the Neighbourhood Plan is designed to complement and refine as appropriate the saved policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (VWHLP) adopted in 2006.

2.2 A Neighbourhood Plan Committee was formed by the Parish Council, comprising parish councillors and members of the local community and it was delegated authority to make day-to-day decisions on the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as qualifying body, the Parish Council itself approved the publication of the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan of December 2015 and now the Submission Neighbourhood Plan of February 2016.

2.3 There has been very considerable community engagement activity on the Plan. This is laid out in detail in the separate Consultation Statement, which is published by the Parish Council as part of the submission documentation. The Parish Council has worked closely with officers of the District Council during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure the relationship between the Plan and the saved policies of the VWHLP and reasoning and evidence of the emerging Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2013 Part 1 ("the new VWHDLP") have been properly understood. The Committee has also benefited from the professional planning and design advice of Neil Homer MBA MRTPI of RCOH Ltd, which has an unrivalled track record in supporting neighbourhood plans.

2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan contains four land use policies and a Policies Map. The Parish Council has deliberately sought to focus policies on the key issues that matter to the local community and to avoid proposing policies that may duplicate national planning guidance and/or development plan policies that are already material considerations in determining future planning applications.

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.

3.2 In overall terms, there are three NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

Para 16

3.3 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively for future development in the Parish within the considerable environmental constraints that apply and that is consistent with the provisions of the VWHLP. The parish is very rural in character and remote from the larger populations of the district. The whole parish is located in the special landscape of the North Vale Corallian Ridge and almost all the main village is designated a Conservation Area, with a number of listed buildings. As a designated 'smaller village' in the district settlement hierarchy, there is no expectation of any major development in or around the village. However, Policy 1 does allow for small infill development schemes within suitable locations of the built up areas of the village.

Para 183

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan establishes a clear vision and objectives for the parish that reflect the views of the majority of the local community. It has sought to translate the objectives into a small number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development proposals.

Para 185

3.5 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan, as is highlighted below, is in general conformity with all the relevant policies of the VWHLP and with the strategic direction of the new VWHDLP and this has been confirmed by the officers of the District Council. The Neighbourhood Plan is considered to strike a positive balance between the considerable policy constraints of the Parish and the need to support some degree of change within the village.

3.6 The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan and other adopted supplementary planning guidance into specific policies for the parish. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.

3.7 Set out in Table A below, is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

Table A: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Conformity Summary

Policy No.	Policy Title	NPPF Para	Commentary
1	A Spatial Plan for the Parish	15, 50, 55, 110	<p>This policy establishes the key spatial plan for directing future development proposals in the parish within the built up areas of the parish. As clarified in the supporting text to the policy, this primarily relates to the main village of Longworth but also extends to the cluster of buildings at Appleton Road/Harris's Lane. It reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and will guide how development will be delivered over the plan period in line with Para 15 of the NPPF.</p> <p>The Parish Council has chosen not to define the built up areas on the Policies Map as it considers the boundaries of the main village and the small groups of buildings around its edge are clear on the ground. The policy balances housing growth with the provisions of Para 110 of the NPPF in respect of preparing a plan to meet the development needs and at the same time minimising detrimental effects to the natural environment through providing for infill development proposals.</p> <p>Together with Policy 2, this policy contributes to delivering a choice of high quality homes as set in Para 50 of the NPPF. This will enhance and maintain the vitality of the rural community and further avoid the delivery of isolated homes in the countryside. In these respects the policy is in line with Para 55.</p>
2	Design	58, 115	<p>This policy accords with paras 58 and 115 of the NPPF in requiring the design of all development proposals to reflect the local character and countryside of the Parish and especially of the landscape and historic land use qualities of the village.</p>
3	Community Facilities	28, 70	<p>This policy accords with paras 28 and 70 of the NPPF by encouraging and enabling the use of a variety of the existing community facilities in the parish through supporting proposals that further this objective, including the creation, extension or partial redevelopment of buildings to maintain their viability as</p>

			valued community assets.
4	Local Green Spaces	76, 77	This policy proposes a number of important green spaces in the parish to be protected from development by the designation as Local Green Spaces in accordance with paras 76 and 77 of the NPPF.

4. Contribution to Achieving Sustainable Development

4.1 The District Council considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was not required for the Neighbourhood Plan as it considered the policies were unlikely to have significant environmental effects, as defined by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

4.2 In its formal screening opinion of 24 August 2015, the District Council stated:

“Vale of White Horse District Council has carried out a screening of the Longworth Neighbourhood Plan. The Council has determined under Section 9 of the Regulations, and in consultation with Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency, that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore that a full strategic environmental assessment is not required”.

For more details on the SEA opinion, please refer to “Longworth SEA Screening Report Final” and “Longworth SEA Notice” documents in the evidence base documents.

4.3 However, the basic condition of ‘contributing to the achievement of sustainable development’ requires a broader scope of assessment to embrace social and economic, as well as environment, objectives. For completeness, therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been analysed and a summary is contained in Table B below.

4.4 It is clear that the Neighbourhood Plan, in its own modest way, will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This outcome may be inevitable for Neighbourhood Plans prepared in similar planning policy circumstances. If local communities are to back development in this type of location, to the extent they will turn out to vote at a referendum, then they will expect that

the environmental assets of the parish will be protected from inappropriate development. In any event, the planning policy context is such that to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, the Neighbourhood Plan must acknowledge those environmental constraints.

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Sustainable Development Summary					
No.	Policy Title	Soc.	Eco.	Env.	Commentary
1	A Spatial Plan for the Parish	+	0	+	This policy has modest social benefits in providing for small infill housing development schemes within the built up areas of the village. In confining development in this way, the policy will protect the essential rural character of the village and its main heritage assets and landscape setting.
2	Design	+	0	+	This policy has positive social and environmental benefits in seeking to control the design of new proposals to suit their location in specific character areas of the village. In doing so, it will maintain the strong local community identity and enjoyment of living in a charming village as well as ensure that heritage assets are not harmed by inappropriate development.
3	Community Facilities	+	0	0	This policy has a positive social benefit in retaining and supporting the continued viability of important facilities for the use and enjoyment of the local community.
4	Local Green Spaces	+	0	+	This policy has positive social and environmental benefits by protecting the essential open character of two spaces that are highly cherished by local residents for their recreational and allotment value.

Key: + positive 0 neutral - negative

5. General Conformity with the Development Plan

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to ensure its general conformity with the development plan, that is the saved policies of the VWHL of 2006. The new VWHDLP will replace some of the saved policies once adopted and establish a new strategic policy framework for the Neighbourhood Plan, but it has not yet reached a stage where it can inform the basic condition of the Neighbourhood Plan being in general conformity with its strategic policies. However, as it has been submitted for examination (in March 2015), Table C below considers both conformity with the relevant saved policies of the VWHL and indicates how the policies have anticipated the new VWHDLP.

Table C: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary		
No.	Policy Title & Refs	Commentary
1	A Spatial Plan for the Parish	<p>This policy conforms with and to an extent refines policies GS1 and GS2 of the VWHL in respect of reflecting the status of the village in the settlement hierarchy and its consequences for the scale and type of development that is appropriate, both within the village and in the surrounding countryside. It is also consistent with Policy NE7 in protecting the special landscape character of the North Vale Corallian Ridge and with Policy H12 in respect of the principle of confining development to small infill schemes in the smaller villages of the district.</p> <p>In respect of the new VWHDLP, its spatial strategy identifies the village in the Abingdon & Oxford Sub Area of the district and continues to define the village as one of 12 small villages in the Sub Area (in its Core Policy 3). Core Policy 4 and Policy 8 on the Sub Area require that development in such villages will be confined to 'limited infill development'. In both respects, the Neighbourhood Plan policy is in general conformity with the strategic policy framework provided by the development plan.</p>
2	Design	The policy seeks to shape the appropriate design of new buildings to reflect the dominant characteristics of specific parts of the village. It therefore adheres to saved Policy DC1 on Design (and to an extent some other of the detailed design policies of the VWHL) and the heritage policies of HE1 and HE4 in respect of development

		in Conservation Areas and affecting the setting of listed buildings. It also anticipates policies CP37 and CP39 of the new VVHDL P, and the Vale of White Horse Design Guide, in respect of ensuring design proposals support local distinctiveness and the character of the historic environment.
3	Community Facilities	<p>The policy complements saved Policies CF1 and CF5 (in respect of public houses) by identifying those community facilities that the local community strongly favours are retained under that policy. They comprise buildings and associated land, which may be capable of being extended or redeveloped in ways that are suitable to this rural location.</p> <p>There is no policy on this matter in the new VVHDL P but it is expected that Part 2 of the Local Plan will replace policies CF1 and CF5 with something similar in due course.</p>
4	Local Green Spaces	<p>There is no saved policy relating to this policy.</p> <p>The new VVHDL P Policy CP45 on Green Infrastructure requires development proposals to demonstrate how green infrastructure assets, which would include Local Green Spaces, are retained and enhanced.</p>

6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act. As set out above, a screening opinion was issued by the District Council, which confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have any significant environmental effects and that an SEA would not be required for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42. Further, the designated neighbourhood area is not in close proximity to any European designated nature sites and so no Habitats Regulation Assessment is required of the Neighbourhood Plan under the EU Habitats Regulations.