

# Watlington Neighbourhood Plan



## Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

### *Our Community*

### *Our Plan*

Watlington Parish Council

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## Executive Summary

This document is the scoping report for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WSNDP). The purpose of sustainability appraisal is to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are embodied into all levels of planning policy. In 2014 South Oxfordshire District Council confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

In October 2013 SODC approved all land within the Watlington Parish boundary as the designated Neighbourhood Area for the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) following a year-long discussion between the Parish Council, SODC officers, SODC Councillors, and the Parish Councils (or Meetings) of Pyrton, Cuxham and Britwell Salome. This discussion included requests for clarification and information from the Department for Communities and Local Government in London.

This document describes the policy context, baseline evidence and sustainability issues which will be addressed throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Much of the information contained here is taken from of the available published evidence and from local studies and consultations.

The Watlington planning context is described in terms of messages from all relevant plans and programs. The baseline situation in terms of environment, population, employment; transport etc. is documented and the consequent sustainability issues are defined. This document will be sent to statutory consultees for their feedback on our proposed sustainability objectives and assessment framework for the neighbourhood plan.



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## 2. Introduction and Methodology

### 2.1 Background

This document sets out the scope and describes the procedural steps to be taken, in preparing the Sustainability Appraisal for the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP). It represents the first stage in the Sustainability Appraisal and is intended to provide the context in policy, environmental, economic and social terms in which WNDP will be set. It meets the requirements of Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) as defined in EC Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and to be compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012; the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, SI 2012 No. 637; and the Localism Act 2011.

The Localism Act of 2011 gives towns and villages such as ours, the opportunity to have a greater say in the future development of their area. This is done through a Neighbourhood Plan which defines such items as where we would like new housing to be built; the mix of housing types needed; the location of retail or commercial premises; green space to be protected; and the infrastructure needs to support growth of the town. A properly prepared and approved Neighbourhood Plan has legal status similar to the SODC's Local Plan although it cannot override requirements included in the Local Plan.

To achieve this legal status, a Neighbourhood Plan must satisfy an external examiner that it meets a number of basic conditions, including conditions relating its ability to achieve sustainable development for the community. Where a Neighbourhood Plan could have significant environmental effects, it may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as defined in EC Directive 2001/42/EC which is implemented in UK law through Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004 (Ref.1). These regulations require that a plan is supported by a SEA if:

- the plan or programme sets the framework for future development consent of projects and
- The plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

Both of these apply to the WNDP, as specified in the SODC screening opinion of 15 October 2013 as it will allocate preferred sites for development and provide guidance on the types of development that are acceptable, and because most of the possible development sites either adjoin or are very visible from the Chilterns AONB, in addition to any specific environmental impacts the new development might have.

### 2.2 Designated area

In October 2013 SODC approved all land within the parish boundary as the designated Neighbourhood Area for the WNDP. Following a year-long discussion between the Parish Council, SODC officers, SODC Councillors and the Parish councils (or meetings) of Pyrton, Cuxham and Britwell Salome. This discussion included requests for clarification and information from the Department for Communities and Local Government in London.

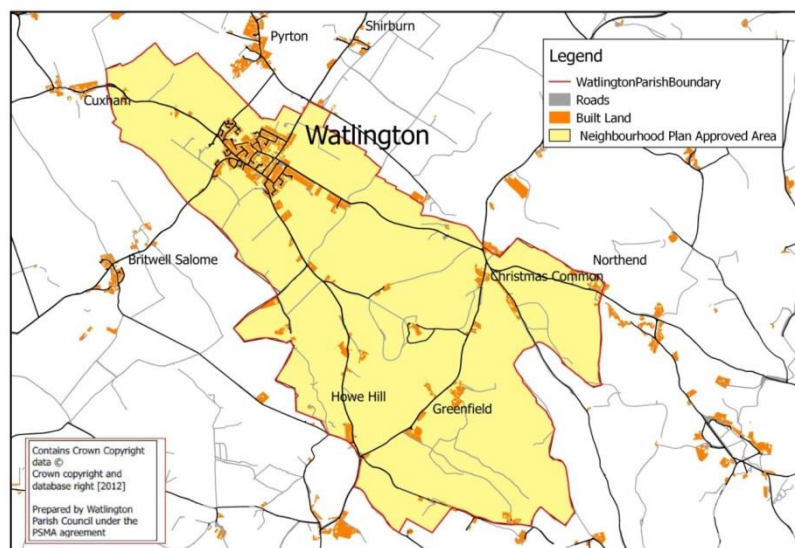
The issue behind this discussion was whether the WNDP should include parts of the adjacent parishes in order to provide some local protection against the communities being merged into each other. In addition, two sites included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) fall within Pyrton Parish. Ultimately the three smaller parishes decided that they did not want to be



included in a WNDP and the Watlington Parish Council proceeded with an application for Watlington civil parish alone. Pyrton Parish Council subsequently decided to commence on a Neighbourhood Plan for their parish.

In 2015 Watlington Parish Council submitted a new application for the (re)designation of a neighbourhood area in accordance with Regulation 5 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The specified area includes the whole of the parish, as amended by parish boundary changes April 2015. Watlington Parish Council made the application as a result of the parish boundaries review in order to maintain the conformity of the emerging policies and proposals within the WNDP that covers the area indicated. The area was designated on 5 November 2015 (Figure 1).

The area is not primarily or wholly business in nature and should not be designated as a business area under section 61(H) (1) of the Act. The potential impacts of two SHLAA sites which fall outside the 2015 Parish boundary will be included in the assessments and consultations for the WNDP for the purpose of completeness, but will not form part of this Neighbourhood Plan. We will engage in discussions about these sites with Pyrton Parish Council with their Neighbourhood Plan process.



**Figure 1: Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan Designated Area 2015**

### 2.3 Methodology

Watlington Parish Council is the qualifying body for the WNDP. Following the designation of the WNDP area in October 2013, a steering committee made up of parish council members was



established to oversee the setting up of a group to take the WNDP forward. It was agreed that the group would be called the Neighbourhood Plan Core Committee and would comprise of three members of the parish council and three members of the wider community. The Core Committee began its work in February 2014 and was responsible for two public consultations and a variety of meetings, workshops and events to engage members of the public in the WNDP process. A working group was formed to examine and produce evidence for environmental sustainability and an early draft of a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was produced in February 2015. Phase 1 of the process came to an end in April 2015.

Following the election of a new council in May 2015 and the Annual Parish Meeting in July, a Watlington Neighbourhood Plan Forum was established by the Parish Council in August 2015. There was strong public support for work on the Neighbourhood Plan to continue and the parish council decided to adopt a structure which placed responsibility for governance and oversight with the parish council as the accountable body and a Forum of local residents to research and draft the Plan. Membership of the Forum was open to anyone who lives, works or visits Watlington and was self-selecting. The Coordination Group was formed to manage the progress of the Plan and several working groups were set up. These included groups to work on Environmental Sustainability and Social Sustainability (to include Housing). The environmental sustainability group worked on the SEA, whilst wider sustainability issues were covered by groups working on social and economic sustainability. A housing survey was undertaken and evidence relative to the local economy was gathered from questionnaires and meetings with the local businesses.

The National Planning Practice Guidelines for the strategic environmental assessment requirements for Neighbourhood Plans has been followed for the scoping stage and this report includes stages A and B.

### **2.3.1 Community Engagement**

The working group on the SEA and environmental sustainability comprised of professional environmentalists and knowledgeable amateurs, including members of several local environmental groups.

The social sustainability group had representatives from local churches, Age Concern, youth groups, local children's centre. Discussions also involved the local primary and secondary schools, the local Women's Institute and U3A group. Evidence on the local economy was gathered from questionnaires and meetings with local businesses and employers, which led to additional work on traffic management, car parking and the quality of the public realm in the town centre.

Roadshows were held at seven locations around the parish in June 2016 and were attended by approximately 300 people. The Sustainability Objectives were presented and 88% of responses rated the objectives either Good or Excellent.

Aside from the formal consultations, other community engagement activities are being carried out with the aim of involving as many people in the community as possible.

These activities consist of:



- Invitation to inspect plans and data held both in hard copy and online on the neighbourhood plan website ([www.watlingtonnp.org.uk](http://www.watlingtonnp.org.uk))
- Attendance at meetings of local clubs e.g. the Business Association, U3A, sports clubs etc. (There are over 50 such organisations in Watlington)
- Presentations to public bodies such as the schools, the care home and the fire service
- Representation at public events such as the British Legion Fair and the High St Christmas Fair
- Roadshows and Public presentations to update on for example; progress, options, survey results or consultation content

Over 50 people have been involved as active members of the different groups working on the WNDP. Every effort has been made to engage the interest of local residents. Every household within the WNDP area (1200) was invited to complete the housing survey and every house will receive a Christmas card (December 2016) giving information on progress of the WNDP and the timetable for the milestones in 2017. Formal consultations have been responded to by nearly 300 people each time. The website provides an ongoing source of information which is regularly updated so that local people can know what is happening and the local press frequently includes items relating to the WNDP.

### **2.3.2 Record keeping**

The Parish Office filing system and the computer system is the central repository for all records, e.g. background data such population census and results from consultations and surveys. These are maintained by the Neighbourhood Plan Administrator and are available for inspection on request. Electronic files are backed up weekly as a security measure and the office is registered with the Data Protection Registry.

Meetings of the WNDP Forum are held when required (or otherwise appropriate to complete the necessary task). The minutes of the WNDP Forum are formally recorded. The work of the Forum is overseen by a Steering Committee appointed from members of the Parish Council. In accordance with parish council protocols, agendas are published at least 3 working days in advance of meetings, meetings are open to all and meeting notes are published on the WNDP website. All this is done to enable full community engagement and transparency.

### **2.3.3 Problems encountered**

Whilst, overall, the WNDP process has run relatively smoothly, a number of problems were identified and addressed by the Steering Committee.

- Delays in working on the SEA and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report caused by the gap between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the WNDP
- Delays in securing funding for professional support for this work





- Difficulty in scoping the issues relating to air quality and harm to the historic environment because the impact of traffic is beyond the scope of neighbourhood planning
- Difficulty in providing evidence of the sustainability of the small settlements which are within the WNDP area. The town and its settlements are mutually interdependent and each contributes to the other's social and economic sustainability. This is not just an issue relating to small settlements but is a key criterion in the SODC settlement hierarchy. There was some local opposition in the initial stages to the composition of the WNDP forum and the NP process. The forum of the WNDP addressed this, by ensuring wider representation on the group and all information was made available on the website.



### **3. Policy Context**

The WNDP has to be consistent within the legislative framework. This includes not only planning for housing, but also traffic and transport, environmental policies and requirements. A full policy context relevant to the WNDP was carried out and can be found listed in Appendix B.



## 4. Sustainability Context

The WNDP forum used local knowledge and the results of local studies and consultations, together with the available published material, to establish the baseline situation in Watlington which is summarised in Appendix A.

**Table 1: Summary of baseline data in relation to SEA Directive**

Baseline Theme	Status*	Relationship to SEA Directive
A1: Housing	Amber	Material assets
A2: Population profile	Amber	Population
A3: Deprivation levels	Green	Material assets
A4: Employment	Green	Material assets
A5: Health	Green	Human health
A6: Education	Green	Material assets
A7: Services, Communications & Facilities	Amber	Material assets
A8: Economy and Tourism	Green	Material assets
A9: Air Quality and Traffic	Red	Human health, climatic factors, air
A10: Climate	Red	Water, air, climatic factors
A11: Biodiversity/Nature Conservation	Green	Biodiversity, flora, fauna
A12: Landscape - Built /Heritage	Amber	Cultural heritage
A13: Landscape - Archaeology	Green	Cultural heritage
A14: Landscape - Environment	Green	Biodiversity, flora, fauna, soil
A15: Efficient use of land & Soil	Green	Soil
A16: Energy, water and waste	Red	Water, air, climatic factors
A17: Flooding	Red	Water, air, climatic factors

### 4.1 Information Collection

During the process of understanding the WNDP sustainability needs, data was taken for the WNDP from Consultation I and II processes and used in conjunction with all of the below methods.

Data collected from official websites, such as the Census 2011, English Heritage etc. was also used to substantiate local knowledge.

As per the Methodology described in Chapter 2.3, the WNDP Forum initiated working groups of interested residents to discuss sustainability aspects relevant to the development of WNDP, that is, environmental, infrastructure, social and economic/business forum, traffic, site development and housing.



As well as these volunteer groups' work, there were also meetings with the local schools to understand their current status and future needs. Estate agents were canvassed as to their perception of the current and future market needs.

Information was also obtained from a number of surveys:

- Housing survey in April 2016 to obtain more up to date information on the breakdown of the type of housing needed. A summary of the results are shown in Appendix A
- Parking survey in April 2016 to understand the usage between the 3 different parking sites within the town (Appendix A)
- Retailers survey in 2016
- Business survey in 2014
- Traffic survey done in 2014

Further work on traffic impact assessments and traffic management strategies are planned.



## 5. Key Sustainability Issues and Challenges

The WNDP created ‘What Watlington Wants’ (Table 2) from the aims and objectives published in the Vision, Objectives and Options Consultation document in January 2015. These formed the basis of Consultation 2 and were well supported. The details of Consultation 2 are published on the website. The Aims and Objectives also received a high degree of support from residents at the roadshows run during June 2016 (92% agreed from 258 feedback forms).

**Table 2: ‘What Watlington Wants’**

What Watlington wants the WNDP to DO
<p><b>1. Protect and enhance the special features of Watlington including</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• its historic character including the Conservation Area &amp; listed buildings</li> <li>• its scale &amp; distinctiveness as a small Chilterns town of only 900 dwellings within the built form</li> <li>• its setting in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</li> <li>• its landscape setting at the foot of the Chilterns Escarpment</li> <li>• its rural setting surrounded by farmland</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Resolve traffic issues in order to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve the health &amp; wellbeing of people who live in, work in &amp; visit Watlington by reducing air pollution</li> <li>• improve the public realm at the town centre to make it a safer &amp; more attractive part of the town</li> <li>• reduce the damage to historic buildings through vibration &amp; water spray</li> <li>• reduce congestion by better management of through traffic (possibly including the development of an alternative route)</li> <li>• improve safety by reducing traffic speeds throughout the parish</li> <li>• reduce the impact of traffic generated by new development</li> <li>• reduce the number of unauthorised HGVs using the town centre as a through route</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Conserve and enhance the natural environment by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting the Chilterns AONB &amp; surrounding countryside</li> <li>• keeping any loss of agricultural land to a minimum</li> <li>• preventing flooding</li> <li>• protecting ponds, streams &amp; springs</li> <li>• enhancing biodiversity by protecting &amp; increasing habitats &amp; wildlife corridors</li> <li>• protecting and creating green spaces &amp; green infrastructure</li> <li>• conserving water resources</li> <li>• conserving energy &amp; supporting energy generation schemes</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Make good provision for new &amp; existing residents by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing a well balanced mix of housing to meet identified local needs including homes for older residents, provision for home-workers, self-build homes, starter &amp; other low cost homes</li> <li>• ensuring that 40% of new housing development is for affordable homes in line with SODC policy</li> <li>• making sure that there is good access for all from new housing development into the town centre &amp; to other services &amp; facilities</li> <li>• making sure that there is good access for all from new development into the surrounding countryside</li> <li>• providing a good mix of facilities for sport &amp; recreation</li> <li>• creating a network of cycling paths &amp; routes</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• supporting initiatives to improve public transport</li></ul>
<p><b>4. Help the local economy to grow by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• improving the environment for visitors &amp; tourists by improving the environment of the town centre</li><li>• improving car parking &amp; signage</li><li>• providing new small scale workshops &amp; accommodation for small businesses &amp; start-ups</li><li>• supporting the provision of fast broadband for all households in the Parish</li><li>• developing the established value of the town of Watlington as a local service centre to further fulfil its role in supporting the economic &amp; social sustainability of for the entire Parish &amp; other communities</li><li>• maintaining the vitality of the High Street &amp; the retail mix</li></ul>
<p><b>5. Ensure that local infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of a growing population by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assessing the capacity of local services including water supply &amp; waste water treatment</li><li>• assessing the capacity of local schools, pre-schools &amp; nurseries to provide places for more children</li><li>• assessing the capacity of local health services to provide for increased numbers of patients</li><li>• working with community organisations, local authorities &amp; the emergency services to address issues affecting existing &amp; new residents</li></ul>

In October 2014 the Environmental Sustainability Assessment Group produced an extensive list in the form of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis which concentrated mainly on environmental topics but also covered additional points that the group felt strongly about (Table 3). This analysis gives an overview to more detailed information provided in Appendix A which provides baseline information on the Watlington Parish gathered from the 2011 Census and a variety of surveys that have been done to support the WNDP in accordance with policy guidelines.



**Table 3: SWOT analysis**

Topic	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Traffic</b>	1) Brings passing trade	1) Location of haulage company/HGVs 2) through traffic/rat run 3) congestion 4) lack of safe on-road cycle routes 5) unsafe narrow pavements	Development planning to 1) Improve connections with surrounding villages by cycle and footpath 2) Traffic management to reduce congestion	Increased traffic and ill-considered travel patterns for new homes
<b>Housing</b>	1) Well preserved old centre of town	1) Lack of top-end and bottom-end housing options 2) Lack of front gardens		1) Lack of balance with housing needs 2) Poor design or construction 3) Poor energy performance 4) Not reflecting local vernacular or inappropriate architectural style 5) Developer led planning
<b>Retail/Business</b>	1) Quality of shops 2) Local hub for surrounding villages	1) Vacant Shops	Help protect the retail and business community by restricting loss of suitable premises	Inadequate resources for increased population
<b>Environment - natural environment</b>	1) AONB 2) Accessibility of countryside 3) Rural character 4) Quality of farmland 5) Good quality chalk streams	1) Lack of wildlife corridors 2) Low local food production & limited options to 'buy local'	Exploit environmental opportunities to 1) Improve existing wetlands to provide flood plains 2) Protect and improve chalk streams and culverts to manage flood flows 3) Allow habitat and wildlife corridor creation	1) Loss of green space 2) Damage to historic fabric 3) Landscape threatened by developments on or in view of AONB
<b>Environment - built environment</b>	1) Quality and variety of built environment 2) Conservation area 3) Attractive roofscape 4) Open spaces 5) Rights of way including lanes and passageways	1) Water spray damage from traffic in conservation area 2) High Energy use of older properties	Design guidance to 1) Create a diverse mix of housing 2) Use green technology in housing 3) Foster the local vernacular 4) Developments with front gardens	1) Lack of diversity in demographic 2) Isolated development (like Marlbrook)
<b>Environment – pollution &amp; climate change</b>	1) Sense of community 2) Good recycling 3) Environment groups (Chilterns Society, WEG, WIB, FOWH, OCCA)	1) Poor air quality (AQMA) 2) Flooding 3) Sewage treatment 4) No Community Green energy production	Development planning to 1) Incorporate green energy production 2) Increase local food production through allotments, community gardens and orchards	Air quality not addressed before developments approved
<b>Getting around</b>	1) Network of pedestrian only paths	1) Lack of connectivity to Marlbrook Estate 2) Insufficient Public Transport, including link to Oxford Tube and connectivity to local villages	Development planning to 1) Encourage walking & cycling 2) Reduce car use in centre 3) Ensure adequate off-road parking	1) Public Transport provision inadequate 2) No footpaths or cycle paths from new developments
<b>Services</b>	1) Wide range of facilities (retail, recreation, social) 2) Range of medical facilities 3) Good schools & nurseries 4) Campsite 5) allotments	1) Areas of poor or non-existent broadband capability 2) Lack of entertainment for teenagers 3) Lack of self-promotion – relatively unknown beauty spot 4) Lack of tourist information/ museum/arts centre	1) Planning to improve community facilities 2) Economic and societal gains from development such as promotion of tourism and enhanced facilities for schools and recreation	Increased population leading to insufficient infrastructure improvements i.e. sewerage, roads, telecoms, schools and health issues including GP provision

From the baseline evidence, consultation and SWOT, we have identified the sustainability challenges to be addressed:



- Housing: there is not a good enough mix of housing types in the WNDP area to meet local needs. Too many people are priced out of the market for homes to rent or buy. There are not enough low cost homes or mid-priced larger homes for families to move into as they grow.
- Population: The population profile shows that Watlington does not have a well-balanced age range in the community. It has a higher percentage of over 60's than the district and county and a lower percentage of 16-29 year olds. This has an impact on social and economic sustainability and is largely the result of the lack of suitable housing.
- Services and facilities: retaining the vitality of the High Street is a key challenge. The primary frontages need to be retained if at all possible. Public transport is inadequate to meet local needs for access to employment and facilities in the wider area. Facilities for cycling and car parking also need improvement.
- Air quality and traffic: air quality is below national and EU standards. Traffic emissions are the primary cause of the pollution. Traffic volume and congestion in the town centre are a major concern for residents. Car dependency in the WNDP area is high and matches that in the rest of the SODC district. Local residents have been consistent in identifying traffic as a dominant theme over many years and unsurprisingly, it has emerged as a key issue from the Neighbourhood Plan consultations and informal opportunities for community engagement. HGV traffic through the town is a major concern.
- Light pollution: Light pollution adversely affects the rural character of the area. Much outdoor lighting used at night is inefficient and unnecessary use of natural resources. Views of the night sky are compromised.
- Landscape - Built/Historic environment: the central area of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within it, are threatened by the impact of vibration and water spray from passing traffic.
- Landscape – natural environment: the loss of agricultural land to housing development will affect the rural nature of the settlement of Watlington and have an impact on views of the town from the AONB at Watlington Hill. Mitigating measures will be needed to ensure that the essential character of the town and the three identified landscape character areas are not compromised.
- Efficient land use: development of greenfield sites would result in the loss of farmland which is assessed as being the best and most versatile.
- Energy, water and waste: domestic energy consumption is higher in South Oxfordshire than in the County and the South East and there are fewer renewable energy sources in the WNDP. The whole of South Oxfordshire is designated as a water stress area and Thames Water has confirmed that there are problems with the treatment of foul sewerage in Watlington. The overall quality of water in the Chalgrove Brook in Watlington is reported as poor.
- Flooding: Areas of Watlington are designated in flood zones 2 and 3 from fluvial flooding. There is a risk of flooding from groundwater sources when groundwater levels are high (e.g. in the winter of 2013/2014).
- Communications and community engagement: communication with local residents can always be improved and more opportunities provided for people to affect decisions made on behalf of the community.





## 6. Next Steps

### 6.1 Sustainability Assessment Framework

The SODC in preparation of their Core Strategy documents carried out a sustainability assessment based on a set of sustainability objectives. These objectives have been used as guidance. The objectives in Table 4 below are based on the available evidence and on local consultation (Consultation 2 Jan 2015 and Summer Roadshows on 11th – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016). Sub-groups reviewed and refined the objectives in view of the evidence.

**Table 4: Sustainability objectives**

#	Sustainability Objective
1	To help to provide a good mix of housing types to meet the identified needs of Watlington residents and to provide the opportunity for people to live in a decent home which is affordable within their means
2	The help to create a safe environment through well designed development in which people can live and work and which is attractive and welcoming to visitors
3	To enable everyone to contribute to decisions affecting the community and to support community initiatives that will benefit local residents
4	To promote people's health and wellbeing by making sure that everyone has good access to local green spaces, to the countryside and to surrounding villages via attractive pedestrian and cycle routes
5	To improve accessibility for people of all abilities to local services and facilities and to promote improved opportunities for public transport
6	To reduce the negative impact of traffic on the environment caused by noise, vibration, and congestion by promoting effective traffic management strategies
7	To support action to improve air quality
8	To conserve and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity, maximising opportunities for biodiversity within all new development, and paying particular attention to habitat linkage and wildlife corridors
9	To protect and enhance the town's landscape setting and the countryside around it with special regard to the Chilterns AONB
10	To protect the rural character of the parish by minimising light encroachment in order to preserve dark skies
11	To protect and enhance the town's historic environment, Conservation Area and heritage features including archaeological sites
12	To ensure that new development reflects the distinctiveness of the built form of Watlington by using high quality design and materials
13	To ensure that the location and design of new development is resilient to the effects of climate change and to mitigate and adapt to climate change by securing sustainable building practices which conserve energy, water resources and materials
14	To support energy generation projects from renewable sources
15	To protect, enhance and manage the parish's watercourses, springs and ponds. To safeguard their margins and groundwater sources, restoring naturalised sections and creating wetland features where appropriate & improve water quality



16	To reduce the risk of damaging groundwater or fluvial flooding by taking advantage of natural processes in the way flows are managed and ensuring that sustainable drainage systems are used on sites which are developed.
17	To support the reduction of waste through recycling, composting and energy recovery
18	To improve efficiency in land use through re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings and to protect minerals and other natural resources
<b>#</b>	<b>Sustainability Objective</b>
19	To safeguard and enhance opportunities for local food production by protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land, small holdings and allotments and facilitating other initiatives such as community orchards and gardens
20	To promote the development of local businesses which are appropriate in scale to the rural context of Watlington and provide increased employment opportunity
21	To support provision for home workers together with support networks for small businesses
22	To support the growth of Watlington as a thriving commercial hub in maintaining and enhancing the vitality of our settlements within the Parish and other nearby communities

The above objectives will be used to assess the suitability of sites for development and the WNDP objectives, strategic alternatives and policies.

**Table 5: Sample spreadsheet for Sustainability Assessment**

		Version 1.0, 25 July 2016										
		Options	A	B	C	D	E					
Q1	Provide a good mix of housing											
Q2	Create safe environment through good design											
Q3	Support community initiatives, benefit residents											
Q4	Good access to green spaces and countryside											
Q5	Accessibility to local services, improve transport											
Q6	Reduce negative impact of traffic on environment											
Q7	Support action to improve air quality											
Q8	To conserve and enhance biodiversity/geodiversity											
Q9	Protect landscape setting especially AONB											
Q10	Minimise light encroachment											
Q11	Protect/enhance town's CA, heritage & environment											
Q12	Reflect distinctiveness of Watlington through design											
Q13	Ensure location/design is resilient and sustainable											
Q14	Support energy from renewable sources											
Q15	Enhance watercourses, springs and ponds											
Q16	Reduce flooding risk through managing flows											
Q17	Support reduction of waste through recycling etc											
Q18	Re-use previously developed land and buildings											
Q19	Protect/ enhance local food production											
Q20	Provide increased employment/appropriate businesses											
Q21	Support home working and support networks											
Q22	Support Watlington's growth, commercial & tourism											

Not all the sustainability objectives are site specific. Table 5 above gives an example of a spreadsheet that will be used to indicate which objectives will be assessed against individual sites and which ones are more general.



This scoping report will be reviewed by the SODC as the local planning authority before being sent for formal consultation as required by the SEA Directive, which includes seeking the views of the following statutory bodies: The Environment Agency; Natural England and Historic England. We will consult Highways England, neighbouring parishes, local groups and bodies that have environmental, social and economic interests and expertise: local residents, businesses and stakeholders as part of the NDP communications strategy. Comments will be recorded and appended to this report (see Appendix C).



# Appendix A : Watlington Parish Baseline Information

Table 1: Summary of baseline data in relation to SEA Directive

Baseline Theme	Status*	Relationship to SEA Directive
A1: Housing	Amber	Material assets
A2: Population profile	Amber	Population
A3: Deprivation levels	Green	Material assets
A4: Employment	Green	Material assets
A5: Health	Green	Human health
A6: Education	Green	Material assets
A7: Services, Communications & Facilities	Amber	Material assets
A8: Economy and Tourism	Green	Material assets
A9: Air Quality and Traffic	Red	Human health, climatic factors, air
A10: Climate	Red	Water, air, climatic factors
A11: Biodiversity/Nature Conservation	Green	Biodiversity, flora, fauna
A12: Landscape - Built /Heritage	Amber	Cultural heritage
A13: Landscape - Archaeology	Green	Cultural heritage
A14: Landscape - Environment	Green	Biodiversity, flora, fauna, soil
A15: Efficient use of land & Soil	Green	Soil
A16: Energy, water and waste	Red	Water, air, climatic factors
A17: Flooding	Red	Water, air, climatic factors

\*Status ratings are a judgement of how serious these issues are within our neighbourhood taking into account, comparisons done in Census 2011, reports and local perceptions.

Legend: Red – top priority, Amber – needs attention and Green - acceptable



## A1 Housing

**Key Indicator and Status: Provision for elderly & low cost housing      Indicator Status AMBER**

Key Sources: Watlington Neighbourhood Plan Housing Survey Report, April 2016 (Report done by Community First Oxfordshire), Consultations

Watlington has a core of older buildings centred on the High Street, Shirburn Street and Couching Street with many dating back to the 17th century, as well as a smaller number of old dwellings in the area of St Leonards church. There have been some infill developments, ranging from individual buildings to ~ 50 properties during the last century. Growth has also occurred beyond the historic centre, with the largest development being Marlbrook in the 1980's. Not all of the development over the past 100 years has been sympathetic to the older vernacular style although the Lilacs provides a good example of what is achievable (see the historic development map in Map Supplement).

As part of its evidence gathering, the WNDP group commissioned Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) to conduct a housing survey in January 2016. The survey gave all households in the parish the opportunity to express an opinion on housing development and to register their own housing need, if they have one. All households were asked to complete Part 1: Your Watlington household and Part 2: Your Opinions on Housing Development. Parts 3 and 4 asked households living inside and outside Watlington which need a new home in Watlington to state their requirements. Six hundred and seventy five responses were received resulting in a 54% response rate.

**Figure 2: The CFO survey results summary:**

### **Part 1- Your household**

78% of respondents (526 out of 675) are home-owners (with or without mortgage)	The largest proportion- 42%- of respondents (272 out of 652) live in semi-detached houses
22% of respondents (137 out of 636) are interested in downsizing their house in the next 2-10 years	13% of respondents (84 out of 642) would be interested in building their own home if land was made available



## Part 2- Your opinions on housing development

Top 3 types of accommodation respondents think Watlington requires:

- Affordable housing- 65% (398 out of 614 respondents)
- Semi-detached houses- 51% (315)
- Starter homes (government)- 47% (288)

Top 3 types of supported housing that respondents think Watlington requires:

- Independent accommodation with care support- 57% (194 out of 340 respondents)
- Housing Association Sheltered Housing- 47% (160)
- Private Sheltered Housing- 37% (127)

Top 3 types of tenure respondents think Watlington requires:

- Owner-occupation- 64% (373 out of 582 respondents)
- Shared-ownership- 61% (356)
- Affordable rent through Housing Association- 60% (350)

## Part 3- Does your whole household or any person/s in your household need a new home in Watlington?

9% of whole households (34 out of 364 respondents) are intending to move to another home in Watlington in the next 5 years

8% of partial households (19 out of 230) are intending to move to another home in Watlington in the next 5 years

16% of whole households (60 out of 364 respondents) wish to move to another home in Watlington in the next 5 years but cannot

12% of partial households (28 out of 230) wish to move to another home in Watlington in the next 5 years but cannot



#### Top 3 reasons preventing households from moving:

- Unable to afford to buy new home- 59% (69 out of 116 respondents)
- A lack of suitable housing- 47% (55)
- A lack of affordable private rented properties- 21% (24)

#### Top 3 reasons for needing a new home in Watlington:

- Need bigger home- 35% (47 out of 134 respondents)
- Want to start first home- 27% (36)
- Other- 17% (23)

13% of respondents (19 out of 146) have mobility or other care/ support needs which affect the type of home needed

#### Top 3 type of homes needed:

- Semi-detached house- 56% (80 out of 143 respondents)
- Detached house- 52% (74)
- Terraced house- 34% (49)

#### First choice housing tenure preferences:

- Self-ownership- 74% (111 out of 151 choices)
- Housing Association rent- 18% (27)
- Shared ownership- 4% (6)

10 respondents have a supported housing need

## Part 4- Do you know of anyone living elsewhere who wishes to move to Watlington

97 households living outside Watlington wish to move to the parish in the next 5 years

#### Top 3 reasons for wishing to move to Watlington parish in the next 5 years:

- To be near family – 62% (41 out of 66 households)
- Want to start first home- 27% (18)
- The natural environment- 26% (17)



In addition to the highlighted need to accommodate independent accommodation with care support (57% of respondents), Watlington also needs local affordable housing. Using the survey results and applying the South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council- Housing Allocations Policy (Ref. 9) it would seem to indicate that a total of 33 households require affordable housing in a variety of sizes (Table 6).

**Table 6: Indicative Affordable Local Housing Need**

Size of house needed	Number of households	Number currently on Housing Register
One-bed	14	5
Two-bed	8	6
Three-bed	9	4
Four-bed	2	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>15</b>

*Note: Social rented, affordable housing and shared ownership are examples of types of affordable housing*

The Policy CSH3 of the SODC Core Strategy requires that all developments which provide an increase in the housing stock of three or more must include 40% affordable housing. Currently SODC have projected that we need ~200 new dwellings to the parish from which the affordable housing needs to be derived.

There was a wide ranging discussion about the current housing market in Watlington and the problems associated with the high cost of housing and high rents. The survey, together with local knowledge demonstrates that many people, especially key workers and young people are being priced out of the market. 675 questionnaires were completed which equals 54% of the 1250 circulated.

Key information noted in the survey:

- There is strong support for the provision of affordable housing and starter homes
- There is a high level of home ownership, with and without a mortgage (526 out of the 675 who responded)
- 33 families need a home provided by a housing association
- There are nearly 100 households wanting to move to Watlington to be near their family
- Two and three bedroom semi-detached houses are the most popular
- 36 people want to stay in Watlington but move to their own first, starter, home
- People looking for a different home in Watlington mainly need 2 or 3 bedrooms
- Watlington is a very stable community where people tend to stay for many years
- A significant number of households are thinking of downsizing in the next few years
- 47 households need a bigger home in Watlington
- 84 people are interested in building their own home





- 84 people are considering building an extension to their home
- A relatively small number of people(19) have left Watlington in the last five years because of the lack of suitable or affordable housing
- A small but significant number of people are looking for low cost homes, either prefabricated construction or permanent mobile homes
- Bungalows are a popular choice
- There is a strong interest in housing for people as they get older including sheltered housing and homes with care support

Key points made in the comments boxes in the questionnaire:

1. the most frequent comment was about the need for cheaper housing
2. people are concerned about the impact of more housing on existing roads and infrastructure
3. concerns about car parking were raised by 23 people
4. 11 people think a good mix of housing types is needed
5. 11 people think new housing should be on small sites rather than on large housing estates

The WNDP Forum Housing group agreed on the following priorities:

- More housing is needed in Watlington to ensure that the community thrives
- The top priority is to make sure that there is a good mix of housing to sustain a well-balanced community
- Local people want to be able to stay in Watlington so there is a need for them to be able to find a bigger home or downsize
- More affordable, housing association, homes are needed as well as low cost homes (prefabricated buildings and/or permanent mobile homes)
- The mix of new homes needs to include bungalows, flats and small living spaces
- More homes for older members of the community are needed, like Orchard Walk and Old School Place



## A2 Population Profile

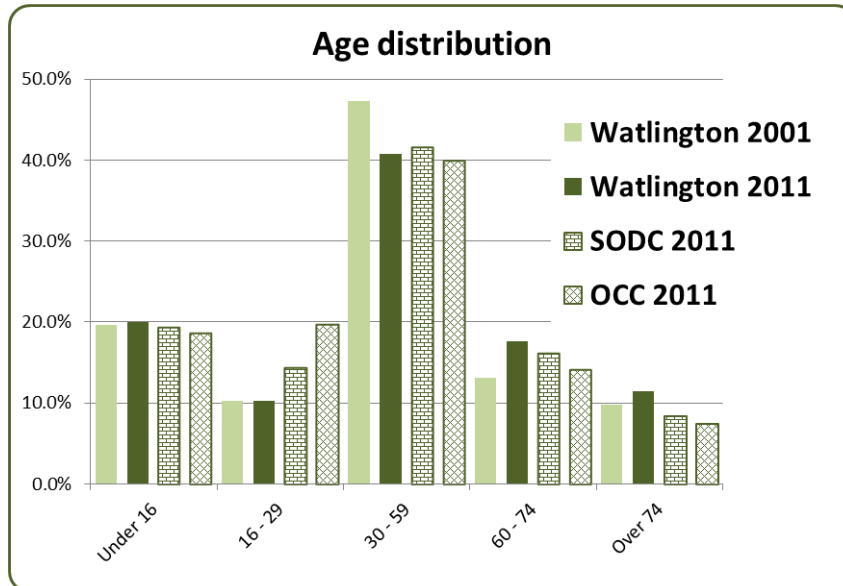
**Key Indicator and Status: Age structure and growth rate    Indicator Status AMBER**

Key Sources: Census 2011

Watlington has a population of 2727 most of whom live in the town, with ~10% in the settlements of Christmas Common, Greenfield, Howe Hill and other more rural locations. Comparison with the previous census shows that the population grew by 13% in the period 2001 to 2011. This is significantly higher than the UK growth rate and the SODC growth rate (5%) for the same period (Ref.4).

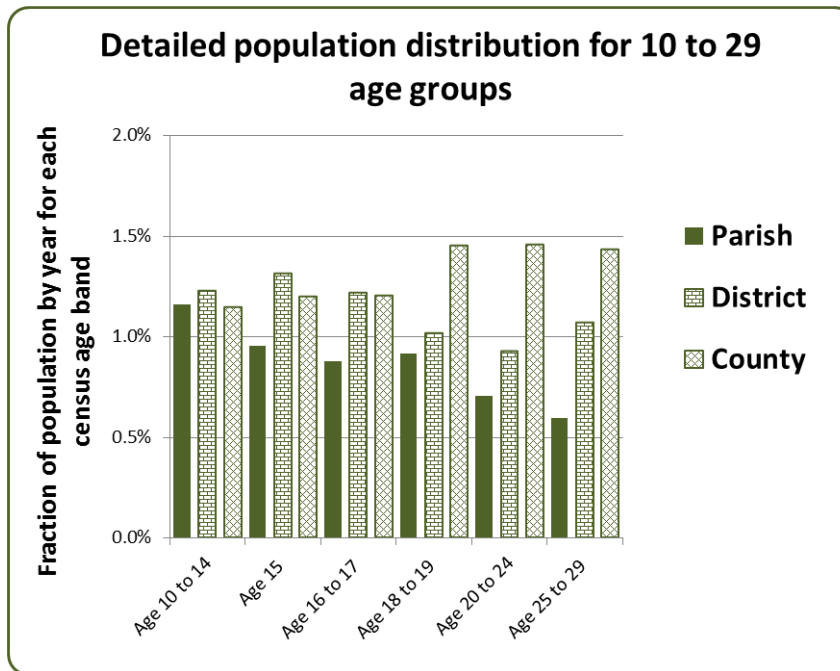
The population profile for Watlington (Figure 3) shows a higher proportion of over 60's than the District and the County. The local plan can help in accounting for this shift by ensuring appropriate accommodation and proximity to services and facilities.

In contrast, there are a low number of 16 to 29 year olds in comparison with both the District and the County. The fraction of the population in this band is half of that of the full County and about two-thirds that of the District.



**Figure 3: Watlington Parish population distribution 2011**

A more detailed analysis (Figure 4) of the 10-29 age group shows a relatively low number for all ages from 15 upwards, but particularly marked for over 20's. The 25 to 29 group proportion of this band in Watlington is only ~41% of the County and ~55% of the District.



**Figure 4: Fraction of total population with ages in each year for the 10 to 29 age group**

With regards ethnic grouping in the parish we have a predominance of the White, English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British group (Table 8); a similar breakdown to the rest of South Oxfordshire. But it is noted that we do have one or two discrete minority groups.

**Table 7: Ethnic grouping**

	Watlington		South Oxfordshire		South East	
All Usual Residents	2727		134257		8634750	
White; English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	2537	93%	122083	91%	7358998	85%
White; Irish	24	1%	1092	1%	73571	1%
White; Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0%	135	0%	14542	0%
White; Other White	81	3%	5683	4%	380709	4%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black Caribbean	10	0%	506	0%	45980	1%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black African	1	0%	168	0%	22825	0%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Asian	9	0%	690	1%	58764	1%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Other Mixed	3	0%	437	0%	40195	0%
Asian/Asian British; Indian	0	0%	814	1%	152132	2%
Asian/Asian British; Pakistani	0	0%	194	0%	99246	1%
Asian/Asian British; Bangladeshi	1	0%	179	0%	27951	0%
Asian/Asian British; Chinese	4	0%	443	0%	53061	1%
Asian/Asian British; Other Asian	47	2%	775	1%	119652	1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; African	5	0%	445	0%	87345	1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Caribbean	0	0%	241	0%	34225	0%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Other Black	1	0%	82	0%	14443	0%
Other Ethnic Group; Arab	3	0%	89	0%	19363	0%
Other Ethnic Group; Any Other Ethnic Group	1	0%	201	0%	31748	0%



## A3 Deprivation levels

**Key Indicator and Status: Deprivation level**

**Indicator Status GREEN**

Key Sources: Census 2011

The 2011 Census provides information on four dimensions of deprivation as a measure of the economic health of an area. These four measures for a household are:

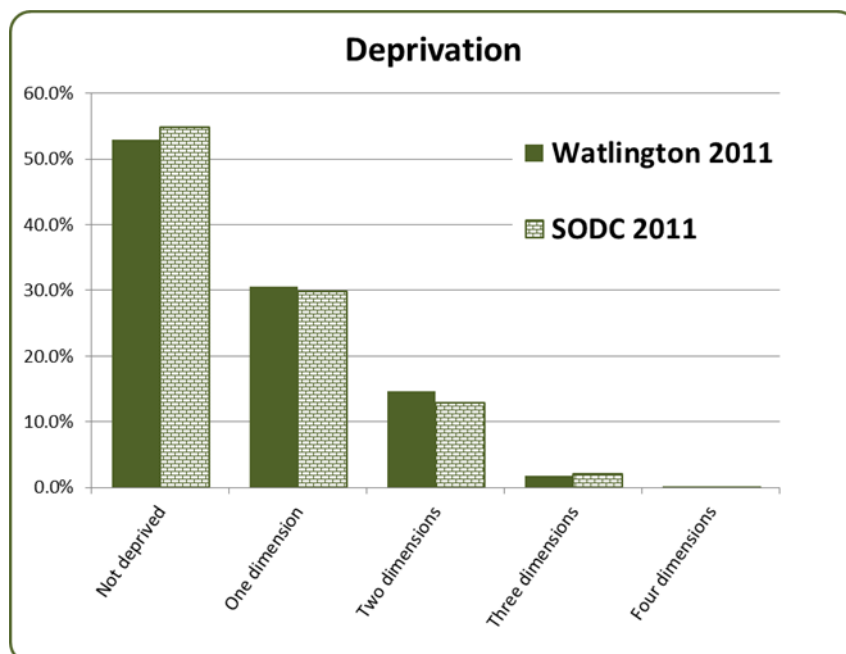
**Employment:** Any member of the household who is not a full time student is either unemployed or on long term sick-leave

**Health:** Any member of the household has a general health rating of “bad” or “very bad” or has a longer term health problem

**Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 education (GCSE’s) and no person aged 16-18 is a full time student

**Housing:** The household’s accommodation is overcrowded, with an occupancy rating of -1 or less, or is a shared dwelling, or has no central heating

Figure 5 is a comparison of deprivation measures between Watlington and the SODC area as a whole. Watlington has a slightly higher level of deprivation than the district as a whole (0.66 dimensions compared with 0.63) but most of this is at the one or two dimension level. This level of deprivation is relatively low in comparison with the average of 0.88 for England.



**Figure 5: Economic deprivation**

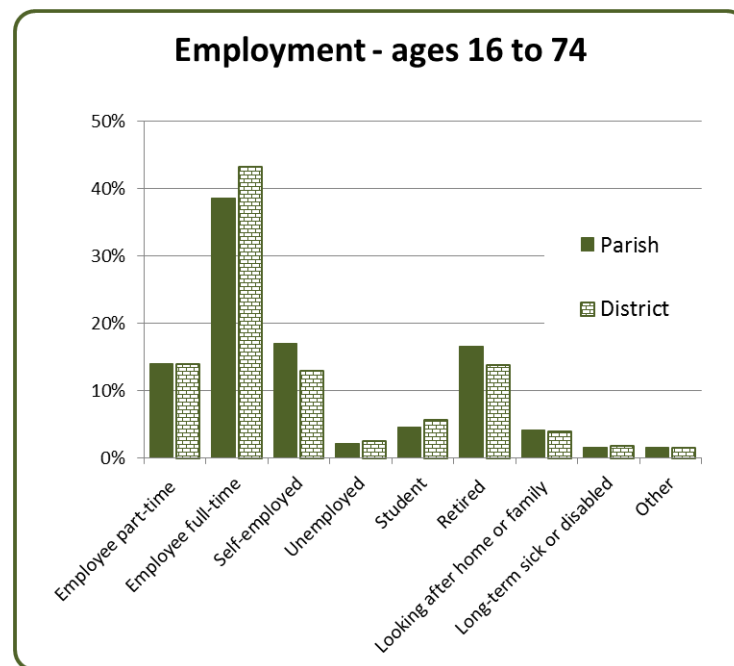


## A4 Employment

**Key Indicator and Status: Employed vs. Unemployed Indicator Status GREEN**

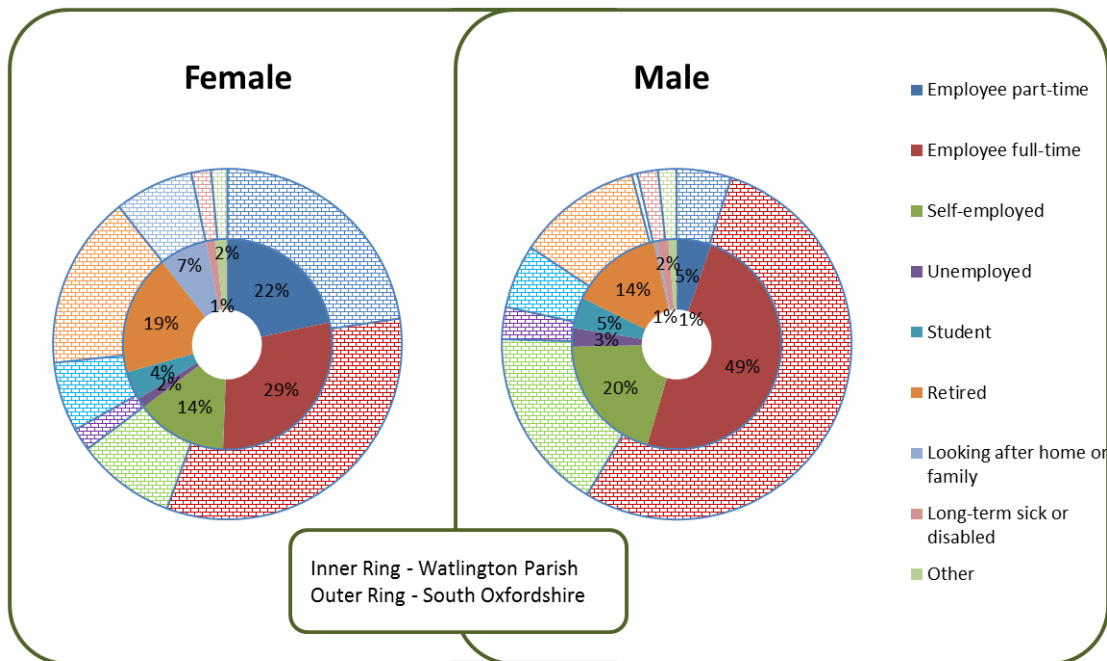
Key Sources: Census 2011

The 2011 census shows employment levels within the Parish are broadly similar to those for the District (Figure 6). The main difference is a larger number of self-employed people matched almost exactly by a lower number of full time employees. When compared with the District, about 4% more of the working age population are self-employed. The next largest difference is that a higher part of the population in the Parish are retired, which is not unexpected given the higher than average number of over 60s in the Parish.



**Figure 6: Employment status**

Figure 7 compares the employment breakdown between residents of the Parish and of the District for men and women separately. In both cases the largest difference between the Parish and District is for full time employment and self-employment where for both men and women the Parish has about 4% more people self-employed and a similar number less in fulltime employment. The proportion of retired people for both genders is about 2.5% more than the District average.



**Figure 7: Comparison of employment of men and women**

Within the Parish is an industrial estate, small high street businesses, a care home and schools, all of which employ people. However a large number of these employees who work in these businesses have been priced out of the property market within Watlington.



## A5 Health

Key Indicator and Status: Good Health

Indicator Status GREEN

Key Sources: Census 2011

The majority of the Watlington Parish show very good or good health. At the time of the Census 2011 (Figure 8), out of 2727 respondents, 122 people had bad health and 15 cited as very bad health.

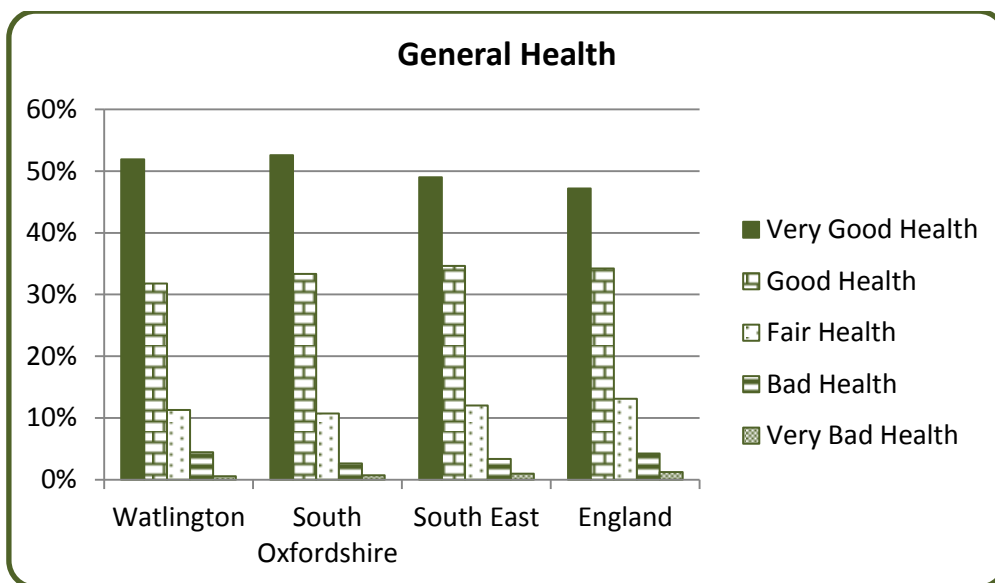
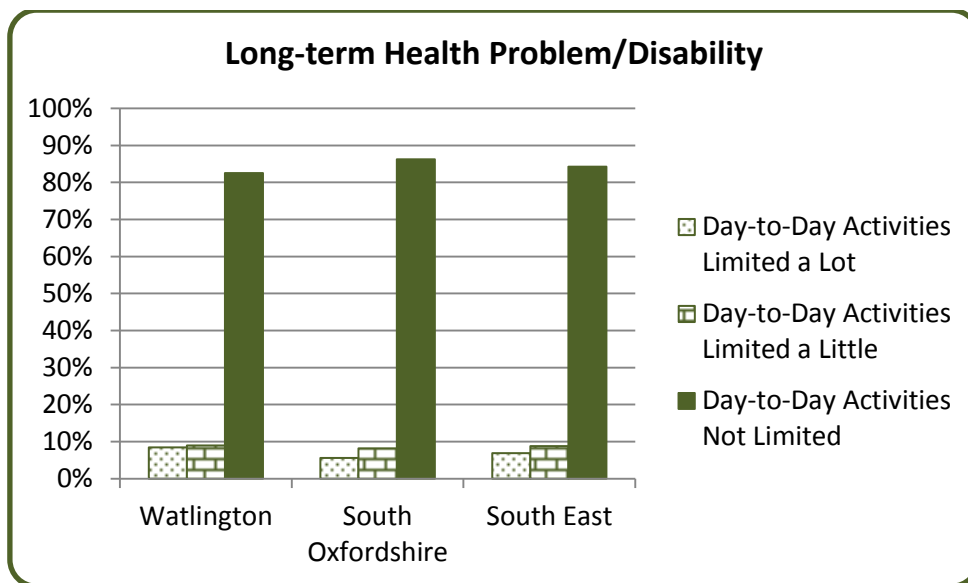


Figure 8: General Health Comparison



**Figure 9: Limitation of day-to-day activities**

The long-term health problems and disability data (Figure 9) show that the Watlington population has a slight increase in a limitation of their day-to-day activities due to health problems or disabilities when compared to the other regions. This needs to be taken into account when developing the WNDP infrastructure strategy, for example the pull on the Doctor's Surgery.

Statistics for the provision of unpaid care show the same profile for South Oxfordshire and South East Region. That is, 2% of the parish gets 50 or more hours unpaid care a week, 1% of the parish 20-49 hours and 7% 1-19 hours of unpaid care.

As well as the Census results, the housing survey has also identified a need for elderly care.

Watlington has a Watlington & District Age Concern Drop in Centre which is situated in the High Street, and offers a warm welcome each weekday morning, where you can socialise with friends, play scrabble on Wednesday afternoons or use many of the services available. A Chiropractor and Chiropodist visit regularly. New Hearing and Batteries can be obtained at the centre. A volunteer Mini Bus is also operated for weekly shopping trips.





## A6 Education

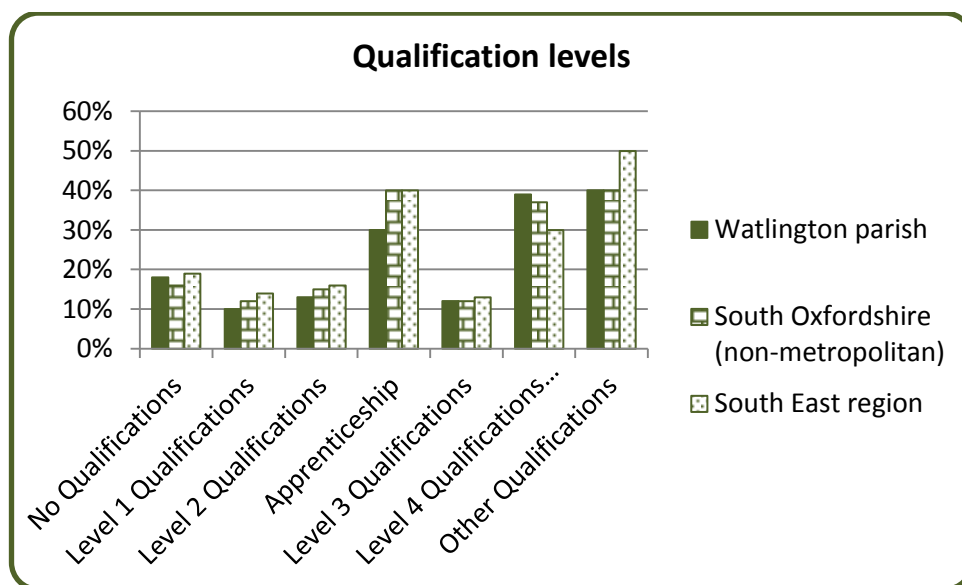
**Key Indicator and Status: Qualification Levels**

**Indicator Status GREEN**

Key Sources: Ofsted Inspection Reports and Census 2011

Watlington Primary School was found to be 'Outstanding' in all four areas in the Ofsted Inspection Report of June 2013. Whilst the Icknield Community College was found to be 'Good' in the March 2015 Ofsted Inspection report.

In the Education level comparison from the 2011 Census (Figure 10), there is a higher degree of Level 4 qualifications than the other comparative areas. In all the other metrics Watlington Parish is either below par or equal. This bias of lower level of education needs to be taken into account when viewing future economic sustainability for the area.



**Figure 10: Qualification levels**



## A7 Services, Communications and Facilities

Key Indicator and Status: Public transport

Indicator Status AMBER

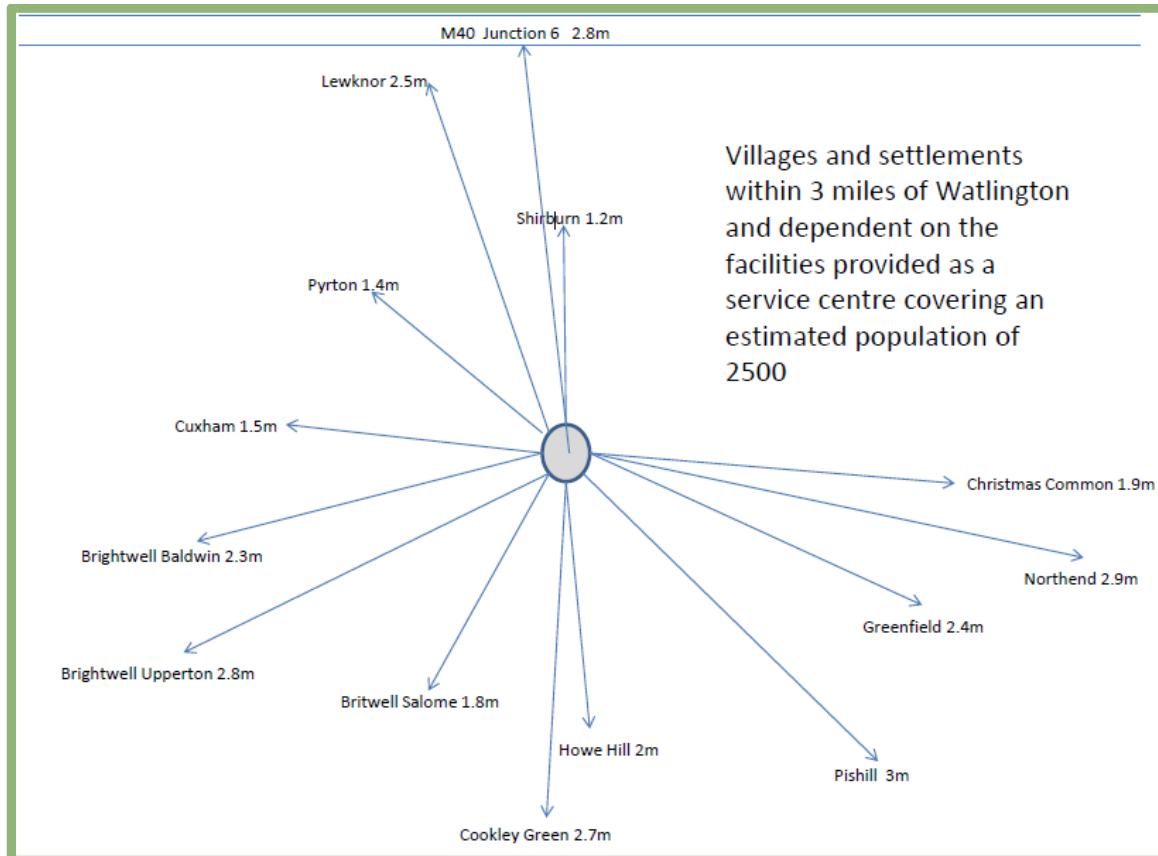


Figure 11: Watlington as a service centre

Watlington is a small market town that provides a hub for the surrounding rural communities and offers a wide range of services (Figure 11). The key facilities are marked on the Key Places map (Map Supplement). The town has both a primary and secondary school, sharing the same site and providing schooling for residents of the parish and neighbouring parishes. The primary school is effectively fully subscribed but the secondary school may have some surplus capacity as a result to the changes in school bus provision within the county. In addition to the schools, there are a number of pre-school facilities (both commercial and voluntary) in the town. There is a popular volunteer-run public library in the High Street which as well as books, videos and music provides a number of computers with Internet access for public use.

There is a GP surgery in town with three GPs employed and a Care Home which provides both short term convalescent care and long term residential care for the elderly. There is a private dental practice in town, but no NHS practice.



The town has a large, well equipped recreation ground and sports field on the outskirts of town, which is used actively by both the cricket club and football club. In addition, there is also tennis, bowls, and squash clubs in town with their own facilities. The schools have a large area of playing fields. The town has allotments and in the centre of town are two small public parks, one of which has play equipment for younger children.

There are three churches with active congregations in town (Church of England, Methodist and Catholic).

The town has three public houses in town with a fourth in Christmas Common on Watlington Hill, as well as restaurant and take away food outlets. There are number of well-used meeting and social venues including the Town Hall, Sports Pavilion, Memorial Club and Community Centre.

For retail and other commercial service, the town has a small but active retail area with a mix of grocery and food suppliers as well as a number of more specialist shops. The Co-Op convenience store has recently undergone refurbishment.

Currently the Royal Mail post office location is under review by the Post Office Transformation team.

Watlington's distinctive role as a provider of local services for the surrounding rural community is dependent on its ability to retain and improve the core shops and services that are currently available in the town.

A separate survey of the business community was carried out as part of the information gathering for the Neighbourhood Plan. The main issues raised by the businesses that responded were:

- Increased parking availability for both staff and customers
- Better enforcement of parking restrictions
- More affordable housing
- Better traffic management and enforcement of HGV restrictions
- Need for some form of relief road to reduce the congestion in town

## **A7.1 Transport, paths, cycle ways, parking**

### Public transport:

Oxfordshire County Council has withdrawn funding for the T1 bus service effective 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016. This is an hourly service connecting Oxford, Cowley, Garsington and Watlington. There is no T1 service on Sundays or Public Holidays.

As of 23<sup>rd</sup> July, of the 16 previous /departures from Oxford Railway station, it has now dropped down to 5 stops. In addition there are now only 3 stops at Watlington Library compared to the stop being used on every route previously.

Recently a bus survey was completed which highlighted the need for a market day service between Watlington and Thame and Watlington and Wallingford.



The OCC Internal Transport Unit operates a service M1 to Reading.

The Oxford Tube is a coach service that travels between Oxford and London every 12 minutes with a stop at Lewknor at Junction 6 of the M40 although sadly the connection service from Watlington to Junction 6 no longer runs and there is no pedestrian or cycling pathway to the stop.

The nearest rail connections are at Princes Risborough for trains to Marylebone in London, from Oxford to Paddington, Birmingham and to the west and from Reading to the south as well as London and the west.

In summary, as this is a town in the countryside the above transport facilities are inadequate and requires car ownership in order to be able to commute for daily life. The increase in car ownership has an added impact on traffic congestion and air quality.

#### Pathways:

In town there is a network of footpaths which provide routes to the centre of the town isthat to a large extent is separated from through road traffic. The largest recent development at Marlbrook was not provided with convenient footpath access to the town, a situation that needs to be avoided in any future developments. Pavements throughout the town are very narrow.

The town is skirted by the Icknield Way (part of The Ridgeway National Trail) making it a popular stop-off for walkers, naturalists, cyclists and horse riders. The countryside around Watlington is dotted with farms, hidden valleys, sleepy villages and medieval hamlets. There is a network of rights of way offering many possibilities for country walking.

#### Cycling:

The road network around and through Watlington doesn't make it a particularly safe place to cycle. The B4009 is a very busy through route to and from the M40 and the roads in the town are narrow and frequently obstructed by parked vehicles. Frequent traffic delays cause drivers to become frustrated and impatient. Slow moving cyclists can feel the effects of this. There are few places wide enough to provide dedicated cycle lanes to separate cars and bikes. There are no dedicated cycle paths in the town, although many of the footpaths are regularly used by cyclists. There is also no cycle path to Lewknor where the Oxford Tube bus has a stop, and which is used by a large number of the parish residents. The area is popular for visiting cyclists as it gives a variety of terrain and beauty to cycle through.

#### Parking:

Parking is another issue within the town as many of the properties within the conservation area do not have off-road parking. There are three public parking areas, a relatively small area serving the sports field and pavilion on the northern edge of the town and the larger car park in Hill Road near the centre of town and a smaller car park by the church. The Hill Road car park is free to users and is funded to a large extent by contributions from the retail businesses in town for use as a shoppers' car park. About a quarter of the car park has a two hour parking limit on it, but this frequently insufficient to cater for shoppers.



The WNDP team recently held a forum with invited shopkeepers in the Town where they were asked a number of key questions as to the importance of the following points, with the top scoring three topics summarised below:

- The value of the town of Watlington acting as a “service centre” to the settlements and communities with a 5 km radius – this scored 156 out of 160 points and classified as extremely important
- The availability of visitor parking near to the town – this scored a maximum of 160 points out of 160 and sits alongside the topic above
- The strategic value of the Post Office – this scored heavily with 154 points out of 160 and is once again seen as extremely important.

In June 2016 a Car Park survey was done which recorded over the course of six hours on three consecutive days, over 350 drivers used the Car Park arrive from 81 different towns, villages and settlements with the vast majority within a 5km radius of Watlington. Some of the results:

- 406 completed forms
- 26% from Watlington
- Visitors from 90 different places
- 46 different reasons for visiting
- 59% came to do shopping only or shopping and another service
- 68% reported no problems with parking

Although parking is often cited as a problem, 68% of respondents reported no problems with parking, although some commented that they might have to wait a couple of minutes for a space. Some people found this more of a problem and commented that they would leave if there were no spaces. The percentage finding a problem with parking varied according to the time of day – peaking between 10-11am.

## **A7.2. Communications**

There is good access to local information and effective use of the local press including the Watlington Times and Henley Standard. The parish council and WNDP have websites which are kept up to date with local information. Good strategies are still to be developed in order to get bi-directional communication and allow local people to contribute to decision making in the community.



## A8 Economy and Tourism

**Key Indicator and Status: Tourism**

**Indicator Status GREEN**

According to the MINT UK company database, Watlington is home to around 400 businesses.

Watlington has a hub of shops and services but has suffered a number of closures in the last few years, the most recent closure being Barclays bank on the High Street. Currently there is also uncertainty of the future location of the post office. In putting together the WNDP, future economic sustainability and growth needs to be taken into account.

A conservation area and reputedly England's smallest town, nestling in the shadows of the Chiltern Hills, Watlington offers a traditional market town welcome to visitors. The Town has much to offer as a tourist destination, both from its' natural and built/historic environment.

The Chiltern Hills, one of South England's finest landscapes, rise above the town to offer much to the outdoor enthusiast. The Icknield Way (Ridgway National Trail) runs within half a mile of the town as does the Oxfordshire way. Watlington is the heartland of the re-introduced red kites which can often be seen soaring above the roof tops.

Records go as far back as a 9<sup>th</sup> century charter which mentions eight major dwellings in Watlington. Population of the area is possibly due to its proximity to the Icknield way and trading routes. Medieval documents indicate that the modern street plan has been in existence since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. An essence of this history is still in evidence with the Town Hall (built in 1664-5) and St. Leonard's parish church, a Grade 11\* listed building, which, originally Norman has been rebuilt a number of times over the years. The mix of historic buildings within a conservation and AONB area is a draw card for tourists and the film making industry.

A lot of filming takes place in and around Watlington such as the film 'Fury' and the very popular Midsomer Murders. Midsomer walks can be found at <http://www.visitmidsomer.com/>.

Accommodation for visitors can be found locally at The Fat Fox pub.



## A9 Air Quality and Traffic

**Key Indicator and Status: Air Quality & Traffic**

**Indicator Status RED**

### Key Sources:

SODC Air Quality Action Plan 2014

A Low Emission Strategy for South Oxfordshire

Traffic Report 2014 by TPP for the neighbourhood plan

Ricardo Energy and Environment report

### A9.1 Traffic:

Watlington is a rural community situated at the foot of the southern Chiltern Hills, and provides services for a number of the smaller villages in the surrounding areas. It offers many essential services but inevitably residents of the town have to travel to larger centres for a wider range of services as well as for employment.

The neighbouring towns of Henley, Wallingford and Thame are all readily accessible by road and are within eleven miles of the town (Figure 13 previous cited and Map Supplement, Through Route map). The larger centres of Oxford, Reading and High Wycombe are slightly further away but are also easily accessible by road. Junction 6 of the M40 motorway is 3 miles away and provides a convenient route to London as well as connections to the rest of the motorway network through the M25 and through northward connection from the M40 at Birmingham.

In addition to this, Watlington has the B4009 going through its' center connecting Benson/Henley on one side and Chinnor/Thame on the other resulting in a high degree of through traffic and congestion.

Oxford County Council data from 2015 shows that the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) through Watlington is 9400 vehicles. The major route is the B4009. which takes 5000 vehicles.

There is a weight restriction zone in force to limit access by vehicles of 7.5t and above, which covers the WNDP area and surrounding parishes. This restriction is widely ignored by HGVs which routinely use Watlington as a through route. The diesel engines of freight vehicles contribute disproportionately to levels of air pollution in town.

The 2011 census shows (Table 8) that most people who work travel by car or van, either as driver or passenger but this figure (67%) is very similar to the average for the District. The most notable differences from the District are in the number of people who work at home (2 percentage points more in the Parish) and who walk to work (one percentage point more in the Parish). The Parish, as might be expected from the distance to the nearest rail station, has 2 percentage points fewer rail commuters than the District as a whole.



**Table 8: Travel to work**

Method of travel to work	Parish	District
Work mainly at or from home	11.70%	8.90%
Rail	3.20%	5.20%
Bus, minibus or coach	3.20%	3.10%
Taxi	0.10%	0.10%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0.50%	0.80%
Driving a car or van	63.80%	62.70%
Passenger in a car or van	3.10%	3.90%
Bicycle	1.90%	3.70%
On foot	12.10%	11.00%
Other method of travel to work	0.50%	0.60%

In 2014 a traffic survey was done. The TPP Watlington Traffic Study Report showed that based on the traffic flows and geometry of the junction, the PICADY results show that the maximum Ratio of Flow to Capacity (RFC) was 64% in the morning peak and 50% in the evening peak with queueing of less than two vehicles. For an un-signalised junction, a maximum RFC of 85% is considered to be operating within capacity. The PICADY results show that the junction should theoretically be operating within capacity and supports TPP's observation that queueing at the junction is caused by the on-street parking on Couching Street rather than the capacity of the junction itself. Manual counts showed more vehicles use Pyrton Lane to travel from the B480 to the B4009 in the morning peak hour. This could suggest that vehicles are avoiding the congestion at the Couching Street/ Brook Street junction which is worse in the morning peak.

The layout of the Couching Street junction does not fully accommodate for HGV movements. Specifically, large vehicles leaving Couching Street have to over-swing onto the other side of the road to complete the manoeuvre and can result in the vehicle mounting the footway.

In all consultations and voice of residents' collections, the traffic impact within the parish is a high priority with regards any future housing development. A route which avoids the town centre could bring significant benefits but may also change the character of the town and have a negative impact on local traders who depend on passing traffic for some of their business. It could also have traffic flow implications for surrounding villages if increased highway capacity generates increased number of vehicles.

The main issues are:

- Average Annual Daily Traffic through the town is 9,400 vehicles (Oxfordshire County Council 2015 figures). This is not greater than the assessed capacity of the road network but the carriageways are narrow with several pinch points and pavements are narrow





- 80% of this traffic is through traffic
- At peak times and at other periods in the day there is congestion at pinch points, particularly by the Town Hall
- Traffic emissions are responsible for levels of air pollution which are above national and EU standards. The 'street canyons' in the town centre exacerbate the problem. SODC has designated the town centre as an Air Quality Management Area and has produced an Air Quality Action Plan. SODC has also consulted on a Low Emissions Strategy paper which includes proposals for the reduction of air pollution in the town. However, pollution is at a level which is known to have a serious impact on health
- The town is at the centre of a weight restriction zone. HGVs of 7.5t and above are not authorised to travel through the zone unless they have deliveries/collections to make. The restriction is widely ignored and enforcement is not stringent. There is a distribution business on the Watlington Industrial Estate which adds significantly to HGV journeys through the town. Other local businesses also generate HGV traffic. Approved HGV access routes are not generally followed and are not enforced
- The town centre is part of a designated Conservation Area which contains many listed buildings. The Town Hall is a Grade 2\* and is a building which defines the character of Watlington. The volume and type of traffic through the town has a materially damaging impact on these heritage assets through vibration and especially, through water spray. For this reason Repairs to the Town Hall were carried out in 2014.
- The dominance of traffic in the town centre creates a threatening environment for pedestrians. The elderly, people with disabilities and families with young children are particularly vulnerable
- The lack of an attractive, user friendly, town centre environment may have an adverse impact on tourism and on the local economy.

## **A9.2 Air Quality**

Although South Oxfordshire, as a largely rural district, has very good air quality, there are discrete locations where traffic emissions cause pollution. Streets in Watlington town centre were designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in 2009 and 2010 and the most recent monitoring records (2014) show that Nitrogen Dioxide levels continue to exceed statutory levels. The 'street canyons' around the town centre trap emissions and pollution levels are highest by the Co-Op and the nearby parts of Couching and Shirburn streets. Fine particulates, PM2.5 are not measured, but are known to contribute to a range of serious illnesses and premature deaths. SODC has calculated that 82% of traffic in Watlington is cars and they create 44% of vehicle emissions. Consultations on a Low Emissions strategy were held by SODC in 2015 and included a proposal for reducing air pollution in the town.



## A10 Climate

**Key Indicator and Status: CO2 emissions**

**Indicator Status RED**

Key Sources:

Met Office

UK Climate Projections (UKCP09)

### A10.1 CO2 emissions

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report concluded that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal” and “it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century”. Carbon dioxide emissions from South Oxfordshire decreased between 2005 and 2012, from 8.2 to 7.0 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per capita (source DEFRA CO<sub>2</sub>emissions data). This is below the Oxfordshire average of 7.3 tonnes per capita. Just over 36% of South Oxfordshire’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from industrial and commercial sources, 37% from domestic sources, 27% from road traffic. (DEFRA “Local and Regional CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Estimates for 2005-2012” June 2014).

However, as can be seen from the prior raised points on Air Quality in Watlington, we are a designated AQMA and have pockets of high emissions due to traffic bottlenecks.

### A10.2 Climate

The low-lying clay part of the parish of Watlington lies below the 300 foot contour line. Watlington’s climate is affected by the proximity of the town to the Chilterns escarpment which rises to a high point around Christmas Common of 770 and 788 feet. The nearest Met Office weather station is located at Benson. Thirty year averages (1981-2010) from this station indicate the following averages for the local area [\[1\]](#):

Average annual max temperature 14.4°C (warmest month July 22.6°C)

Average annual min temperature 5.9°C (coldest month February 0.8°C)

Average annual rainfall 112.3mm (highest rainfall month November 11.1mm)



Climate change projections, according to a high emissions scenario (known as A1F1) – and therefore the worst case – indicate that the climate for the south east of England (finest resolution of current projections) can be summarised as changing for 2050 and 2080 in Table 9 following [2]:

**Table 9: Climate change projections**

	<b>2050</b>	<b>2080</b>
Winter mean temperate	increase of 2.5°C	increase of 3.7°C
Summer mean temperature	increase of 3.1°C	increase of 4.9°C
Summer mean daily maximum	increase of 4.3°C	increase of 6.7°C
Annual mean precipitation	increase of 0%	increase of 1%
Winter mean precipitation	increase of 19%	increase of 30%
Summer mean precipitation	decrease of 19%	decrease of 29%

In summary, it is likely that the changes with the greatest effect will arise from significantly higher winter rainfall – which would exacerbate seasonal flooding – while summer drought is likely to impact on farming and other businesses that require water.

[1] Met Office: thirty year data for

Benson. <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/climate/gcpjw35jy>

[2] UK Climate Projections (UKCP09). <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk>



## A11 Biodiversity/Nature Conservation

**Key Indicator and Status: Presence**

**Indicator Status GREEN**

Map Supplement: Designated Areas maps (Central and All)

The Watlington Parish has a strong and active community when it comes to preservation of its biodiversity and nature. A number of organisations exist to this effect:

- Watlington Environmental Group
- Watercourses Group
- Friends of Watlington Hill
- Chilterns Society
- Watlington In Bloom

The character of the area is dominated by the Chilterns escarpment slope that rises behind the town. The gently rolling hills are swathed in beech woodland and chalk down-land, providing a haven for wildlife. Wildflowers found on the down-land in summer include abundant orchids and the rare Chilterns gentian. The area is also the perfect place to watch red kites soaring overhead. These distinctive birds of prey were re-introduced to the Chilterns from Spain in 1989-1994 after human persecution drove them to extinction in England by the end of the 19th century.

### A11.1 Site of Special Scientific Interest

Watlington and Pyrton Hills: (SU705936) is listed as an SSSI area containing Calcareous grassland

This site supports a mosaic of chalk down land, chalk scrub, mixed broadleaved and yew woodland habitats, with areas of leached and more acid grassland and scrub on the upper slopes. The site supports some of the most floristically diverse grassland in the Chilterns and is also notable for its lower plant flora and butterfly populations. Watlington and Pyrton Hills consist of a section of the Chiltern Escarpment with moderate to steep north and west-facing slopes.

The conservation objectives for the site are to:

- Maintain the existing open areas of chalk grassland
- Expand and connect these patches where possible, at the expense of scrub
- Maintain the population of juniper



- Maintain the mosaic of chalk grassland, scrub and woodland.

#### Watlington Chalk Pit: (SU 700940)

Watlington Chalk Pits is a designated site for nature conservation an area of land bounded by the Icknield Way to the west and Hill Road to the south and extends east beyond the Thames Water reservoir. The western part of the site is owned by South Oxfordshire District Council and the land to east around and beyond the reservoir is owned by Watlington Park Estate. The whole area, with the exception of the reservoir area, is leased by Watlington Parish Council, and is managed for the Parish Council by the Watlington Environment Group following the Site Management Plan prepared in 2003 by the Northmoor Trust. In addition, the site declared a Local Nature Reserve has open access on foot, with two public footpaths crossing the site. The need to gain public support and interest in the site is recognised, with the need to provide on-site interpretation included in the management plan.

Watlington Hay Meadow: (SU 698938) is also registered as a County Wildlife site.

### **A11.2 Chalk streams**

Watlington sits on the chalk spring line at the foot of the Chilterns that feeds the Chalgrove Brook, one of the country's unique chalk streams. The UK contains some 70% of the World's chalk streams which are characterised as deriving flow from chalk-fed groundwater (which is alkaline, clear and of constant temperature) and having clean gravel beds. All the UK chalk streams are considered potentially capable of supporting Brown Trout though only a third, including the Chalgrove Brook, does have trout populations. In its 2014 report 'The State of England's Chalk Streams' the World Wildlife Fund highlights that 77% of the UK's chalk streams are failing to meet the Good status required by the Water Framework Directive.

Chalgrove Brook in Watlington (also known as the Marlbrook) comprises a mix of permanently flowing watercourses and 'winterbournes', watercourses that flow seasonally depending on the height of the water table. However, the watercourses in Watlington have been heavily modified with the natural meanders straightened, widening to form watercress beds and culverting beneath roads, footpaths and properties. These modifications have caused barriers to fish migration and agricultural land drainage issues.

The watercourses in Watlington support a healthy aquatic invertebrate fauna including caddis flies, mayflies and freshwater shrimp. These are indicators of good water quality and provide food for fish.

The Brook in Watlington contains a self-sustaining Brown Trout population which is using spawning beds and nursery areas above the roundabout on the Cuxham Road. A survey by the Wild Trout trust has identified significant potential spawning areas between Watlington and Cuxham and both the Environment Agency and The River Thame Catchment Project are supporting efforts to improve the habitat for Brown Trout.

In addition, the watercourses and associated ponds support amphibians, birds (including mallard, heron, wagtail and occasionally egret) and have a varied plant fauna. Winterbournes support some species of animals and plants that are uniquely capable of surviving periods with no water flow.



## A12 Landscape - Built/Heritage

**Key Indicator and Status:**

**Indicator Status AMBER**

- **Impact on listed buildings & sites**
- **Impact on views within & to & from the AONB**

Refer to Map Supplement: Designated Areas maps (Central and All)

Watlington includes a Conservation Area which was designated in 1997. SODC published a character study of the Conservation Area in June 2011, stating that 'There are many attractive views in Watlington, particularly to and from the Town Hall along Couching Street and High Street. These are created by the picturesque mix of vernacular building materials and historic buildings. There is very little inappropriate modern development to spoil these views. Views out of the town to the attractive countryside beyond, including Watlington Hill which is the Chilterns AONB can be gained from the Carriers Arms public house, the land to the south of Spring Lane and the meadow to the south of Barnarce. Watlington itself is very prominent when viewed from Watlington Hill to the south-east.'

There are approximately 80 listed buildings in the WNDP area. Grade 11\* buildings include Watlington Park, East End House, St. Leonard's Church and the Town Hall. (Map Supplement, Listed Buildings map). In addition to the listed buildings there are many vernacular buildings which contribute significantly to the character of the town and are of local significance. In the surroundings of the parish there are such places as Swyncombe with its' historic church, the sleepy hamlet of Cookley Green, Christmas Common with its magnificent views, the traditional Chilterns villages of Cuxham and Lewknor and many more such as Pishill, Pyrton, Shirburn, Brightwell Baldwin and Britwell Salome.

New development will need to be sensitive to the setting of the Conservation Area and to reference the materials used in the vernacular buildings if it is to contribute to its character and quality. There is a risk that development will be unsympathetic in scale and design. Changes within the Conservation Area may not conserve or enhance it and small changes, which in themselves do not cause significant harm, nevertheless may contribute to a gradual adverse impact over time. The Conservation Areas in Pyrton and Shirburn are close to the boundary of the NDP area and will also need to be taken into account when new development is proposed to ensure that they are not adversely affected.

There is evidence of water spray damage to listed buildings along Shirburn Road and Couching Street caused by traffic. In wet weather spray can reach above the ground floor windows of smaller dwellings and mortar pointing is damaged. The Town Hall recently (2013) needed to have an area



of brickwork repointed and some brick replaced as they had been eroded by water spray. This problem will continue and possibly increase if no action is taken to reduce traffic flow and speeds.

## A13 Landscape - Archaeology

**Key Indicator and Status: Impact on listed sites**

**Indicator Status GREEN**

There are no designated archaeological sites or monuments in Watlington although The Icknield Way runs through the parish. This prehistoric track and the Iron Age hill forts scattered along the Hills give a sense of the ancient history of the Chilterns but there is no evidence of any prehistoric settlements in the area.

The Romans used The Icknield Way and some artefacts have been found in the parish. The most significant find recently was in February 2016 when a rare, nationally important, Viking hoard was discovered within Watlington Parish. It consisted of seven items of jewellery, 15 ingots and about 200 coins - including rarities from the reign of King Alfred "the Great" of Wessex, who reigned from 871 to 899, and King Ceolwulf II, who reigned in Mercia from 874 to 879.



## A14 Landscape – Environment

**Key Indicator and Status: Classified conservation area**

**Indicator Status GREEN**

Watlington lies in a beautiful, unspoilt corner of England. It is only a few miles to the north-west of London and yet has a very rural character. The rolling countryside around Watlington is dotted with farms, hidden valleys, sleepy villages and medieval hamlets. Its main access points are the B4009 from the direction of the M40 or Benson or the B480 from the direction of Oxford.

In 1965, 833 square kilometres of the Chilterns were designated by the government as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This recognises that the Chilterns countryside is amongst the finest in the country, on a par with National Parks. The majority of the NDP area is within the AONB and, because the town lies at the foot of the escarpment, views of and from the AONB are a very significant feature of the landscape.

Landscape Character studies were carried out for South Oxfordshire in the 1990's and identified three character areas within the parish of Watlington:

- Character Area 5: Eastern Vale Fringe. Features of this area are described as 'a distinctive belt of low, rounded hills, approximately (3 – 4) kms wide, which follow the base of the towering Chiltern escarpment and form a transitional zone between the chalk uplands and the low-lying clay vale'. 'Many of the existing settlements were established by Saxon times (including Watlington) and the basic pattern of settlement has changed very little since then'.
- Character Area 8: Chilterns Escarpment. This area is described as 'the most visually significant and distinctive landform unit within the whole District'. Most settlements along the escarpment but some small settlements are above and these include Christmas Common, Greenfield and Howe Hill.
- Character Area 9: Chilterns Ridges and Valleys. This forms part of the Chilterns dip slope and is characterised by wooded, steep valleys with pasture and arable fields towards the lower valley sides and bottoms.

A local feature, The Watlington White Mark was designed by local squire Edward Horne, who felt that the parish church of St. Leonard, when viewed from his home, would be more impressive if it appeared to have a spire. He had this unusual folly cut into the chalk escarpment of Watlington Hill in 1764. It is 36 feet (11m) wide at its base and 270 feet (82m) long.





There is a good network of rights of way, including the Ridgeway National Trail, offering many possibilities for walking. You can either stick to the flatter routes in the Vale or climb up the wooded Watlington Hill or other viewpoints on the ridge for magnificent views.

In common with most of south east England, Watlington suffers from light pollution. The main sources of light pollution are glow from the High Wycombe area and night-time domestic and commercial lighting. This does have an adverse impact on the population and resources. In common with other areas of south Oxfordshire, views of the night sky are limited, thus impacting the rural character of the area.



## A15 Efficient Land Use & Soil

**Key Indicator and Status: Land usage**

**Indicator Status GREEN**

Agriculture has been taking place in one form or another for thousands of years in the Chilterns and today farming practices account for 75% of the total AONB land area making a major contribution to the appearance of the Chilterns landscape and soil. There are two main types of farming: arable and livestock. The land in the area is Grade 2 (the best and most versatile).

In immediate surrounding areas of Watlington Parish, for example West Meadows, the land is rented out for cattle grazing.

Watlington 'Pyrton Field' Allotments are a source of exercise and fresh air. More than seventy families grow their own fruit and vegetables. Plots are available with car access and water supply. An increase in housing will require that additional land is put aside for more allotments.

A number of food providers such as the Fruit and Vegetable market and the butchers do their best to provide locally sourced food.



## A16 Energy, Water and Waste

**Key Indicator and Status:**

**Indicator Status RED**

**Energy level usage + water stress**

### A16.1 Energy:

SDOC reports (Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report June 2014) that domestic energy consumption and CO2 emissions are consistently higher in the District than in Oxfordshire and the South East. Although levels are decreasing, there is little progress in reducing CO2 emissions. Progress is also slow in the development of diverse renewable energy resources. Watlington is likely to reflect these findings. There are no large scale renewable energy installations within the NP area although one of the largest solar farms in the country has been installed in an adjacent parish and a percentage of the electricity supplied to homes in Watlington comes from this source. Several properties in Watlington have the benefit of solar panels providing a portion of their energy needs.

### A16.2 Water:

SODC reports (as above) that water quality in the District is good but that there is stress on supply in the area because of diminishing water resources. Thames Water has confirmed (letter dated 08.04.16) that there are no concerns with regard to water supply to the expected level of new development in Watlington at this stage. However, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan Preferred Options 2032 consultation document includes proposals for a new reservoir within 10 miles of Watlington. Thames Water is also likely to need to import water from other areas which will increase the carbon footprint of the resource.

### A16.3 Waste Water:

Thames Water published a Watlington Drainage Strategy in 2015 (<http://thameswater.co.uk/about-us/19624.htm>) in response to ongoing problems with the treatment of foul sewerage. The Watlington Sewage Treatment Works discharges into the Pyrton Stream which then flows into the Chalgrove Brook east of Cuxham. The system becomes overwhelmed following prolonged and heavy rainfall.



Investigations are current to establish whether there is evidence of groundwater infiltration into the foul sewerage network. Upgrading of the local treatment plant was carried out in 2015. However, because of the known issues in Watlington, Thames Water is likely to have problems providing for foul sewerage for new development at this stage.

#### **A16.4 Waste:**

Recycling: South Oxfordshire achieved a recycling rate of 67.3% in the year 2014/15. Watlington contributes to this figure. There are well used facilities for recycling clothes and textiles in the Watlington Hill Road Car Park and at the Primary School. There are no charity shops in the town for recycled items but there are occasional Swap Shop and Fashion Exchange events.



## A17 Flooding

**Key Indicator and Status: Flood risk**

**Indicator Status RED**

There is risk of flooding in Watlington, especially from groundwater. There is medium risk from surface water. The Environment Agency flood map shows the areas in flood zones 2 and 3 (refer to Map Supplement, Flood Zone map). The prolonged rainfall over the autumn and winter of 2013/14 gave rise to several weeks of flooding which affected most parts of the town.



## APPENDIX B

Table B.1 below lists the major policy sources of these requirements and gives an indication of how these will affect the WNDP. Table B.2, following Table B.1, gives a similar analysis against the SODC Core Strategy policies.

**Table B.1: Plans, Programmes and Policies**

Relevant Plans And Programmes	Relevance to WNDP
<b>European/International</b>	
Kyoto Climate Change Protocol, 1997 & subsequent 2015 Paris agreement on climate change	Aims to keep global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius & to keep below 1.5 degrees Celsius by reducing emissions & to mitigate impacts of climate change. WNDP relevance relating to energy efficiency, waste reduction, emissions from transport, mitigating flood risk change
The European Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats & of Wild Fauna & Flora (The Habitats Directive) 1992	Relevant objectives are to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitat and wild flora & fauna with particular attention to the WNDP areas existing SSSI's and chalk streams
European Sustainable Development Strategy, May 2001	Relevant to the WNDP with regards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dealing with the social &amp; economic implications of an ageing population</li> <li>• improving the transport system &amp; land use</li> <li>• limiting climate change &amp; increasing the use of clean energy</li> </ul>
The European Directive on Ambient Air Quality Assessment & Management (The Air Quality Framework Directive) 1996, & subsequent Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) June 2008	Relevant objectives are to maintain ambient air quality where it is good & improve it in other cases
European Commission Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection, 2006	The main objectives of this strategy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preventing further soil degradation &amp; preserving its functions: when soil is used &amp; its functions exploited action has to be taken on soil use &amp; management patterns</li> <li>• restoring degraded soils to a level of functionality consistent at least with concurrent &amp; intended use, thus considering cost implications in such restoration</li> </ul>
The European Water Framework Directive, 2000	The main objective is ensuring sustainable water usage, including both surface & ground water resources
Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992	Objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conservation of biological diversity</li> <li>• sustainable use of its components</li> </ul> fair & equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources



Relevant Plans And Programmes	Relevance to WNDP
<p><b>National</b></p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) &amp; National Planning Practice Guidance (2014) (DCLG)</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consolidates &amp; replaces national guidance set out in preceding Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance &amp; a number of related circulars, into a single document. The NPPF describes three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social &amp; environmental. It sets out proposals for delivering sustainable development through the planning system &amp; should be used throughout the plan-making &amp; decision-taking process.</p> <p>Elements of the NPPF of particular relevance to the WNDP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing people &amp; communities to participate in planning</li> <li>• A presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan</li> <li>• Neighbourhood plans must be in general conform with the strategic policies of the Local Plan</li> </ul> <p>Guidance which applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic environmental assessment &amp; sustainability appraisal</li> <li>• Air quality</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Conserving &amp; enhancing the historic environment</li> <li>• Ensuring the vitality of town centres</li> <li>• Environment impact assessment</li> <li>• Flood risk</li> <li>• Health &amp; wellbeing</li> <li>• Light pollution</li> <li>• Natural environment</li> <li>• Noise</li> <li>• Open space, sports &amp; recreation facilities, public rights of way &amp; local green spaces</li> <li>• Renewable &amp; low carbon energy</li> <li>• Rural housing</li> <li>• Starter homes</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Water supply, wastewater &amp; water quality</li> </ul>
<p>National Heritage Protection Plan Historic England 2012/13</p>	<p>Provides information on local planning processes for proactive &amp; positive local heritage management &amp; how to enhance new development proposals so that they respond well to the historic area, local context &amp; wider surroundings</p>
<p>Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 (The Chilterns Conservation Board)</p>	<p>There is continuing pressure to locate large scale developments in the AONB or its setting. Assessment of the impact of these proposals needs to accord with national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 113, 115 and 116)<sup>1</sup> The AONB is a nationally important landscape designation in the NPPF (paras. 14, 109 &amp; 115) &amp; is also protected by local landscape policy (CSEN1) although this policy also provides for certain development. Any proposed development would need to take into account the views of the Chilterns AONB Board, who are likely to oppose this sort of development in principle. The justification for development can be made through the Plan. The “Chilterns Buildings Design Guide” is relevant</p> <p><a href="https://www.chilternsaonb.org/buildings-design-guidance">https://www.chilternsaonb.org/buildings-design-guidance</a></p>



Relevant Plans And Programmes	Relevance to WNDP
<b>County</b>	
Water Resources Management Plan 2015-2040 (Thames Water) & River Basin Management Plan – Thames River Basin District (2009) (EA)	Maintain a balance of supply & demand for water whilst protecting biodiversity & ecosystems. The Plan will take into consideration implications on enlarging the sewerage plant capacity
Thames (2014) & Cherwell, Thame & Wye Catchment Abstraction Licensing Strategies (2012) (EA)	All of South Oxon is a water stress area
Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 (OCC)	This could potentially increase the number of houses we must provide by a significant number beyond the 79 allocated in the Core Strategy. It will not be clear what this increased number is until Oxford City gives its definitive number of houses they will provide and SODC has completed a local plan review
Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan - SEP (March 2014)	The SEP is the major driver for investment especially for infrastructure. The Plan must not preclude anything that is planned in the SEP – e.g. proposing a housing site on a piece of land identified for a road. (Note: there is little in the SEP of concern to Watlington specifically – it focusses mainly on Oxford, the “knowledge Spine” & ‘Science Vale’. This is currently under review (as of June 2016)
Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2011 (OCC)	The maps and commentary at: <a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-preliminary-flood-risk-assessment-pfra">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-preliminary-flood-risk-assessment-pfra</a> & at: <a href="http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies/district-flood-risk">http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies/district-flood-risk</a> will be used to inform the identification of development sites
LPT4 2016	<a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/ltp4-policy-and-overall-strategy">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/ltp4-policy-and-overall-strategy</a> Replaces Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2030 (2011) (OCC). Over-arching transport goals to: 1) support jobs & housing growth & economic vitality, 2) to reduce transport emissions, 3) to protect & where possible enhance Oxfordshire’s environment & improve quality of life & 4) to improve public health, air quality, safety & individual wellbeing
Oxfordshire’s Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 (OCC BAP)	The Plan takes into consideration impact on Target Conservation Areas described at: <a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshires-biodiversity-action-plan">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshires-biodiversity-action-plan</a>
North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2009-2014 (North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners)	Emphasis on AONB Partnerships to protect precious environments. Borders onto WNDP area





Relevant Plans And Programmes	Relevance to WNDP
Oxfordshire Draft Rights of Way Management Plan 2014-2024 (2014) (OCC)	The Plan should not conflict with this. If there are any identified areas for improvement in Watlington then the town may want to consider helping to achieve that. Any rights of way are preserved & look for opportunities to enhance them
<b>District</b>	
South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012) (SODC)	Must apply. Included as part of the Local plan is the Sites & Policies document which includes an allocation of houses to each of the larger villages in the District, including Watlington. Originally 79 new homes needed to be included in the WNDP documentation, but SODC is in the process of developing a new Local Plan which indicates that this number will increase to at least 200
South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (2006) (SODC) & South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032	The SODC Core Strategy supersedes a number of the Local Plan 2011 policies – the generally ‘strategic policies.’ The “Development Management” type policies (i.e. the detail to consider in a planning application) are still adopted policy & some of these might have a slight impact on the plan– the Neighbourhood Plan policies will eventually supersede these detailed policies. Any issues not covered by NP policies will default back to the Local Plan. The 2032 plan is an emerging Local Plan which will be adopted during the period covered by the WNDP. WNDP will have regard to the policies in LP2032 in the interim period
South Oxfordshire Housing Strategy 2008-2011 (SODC)	Most of what is in this strategy is out of date but it has not been officially superseded. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) provides an update on a number of the issues covered. The Plan will also, where necessary consider the housing policies documented in: <a href="http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/housing-policies">http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/housing-policies</a>
South Oxfordshire District Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014)	The WNDP needs to provide homes, mix of homes needed & meet needs of specific groups within the population
South Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026 (SODC - SCS)	This will be taken into consideration during the Sustainability Appraisal.
South Oxfordshire District Council Refined Options Sustainability Appraisal (2015)	Sustainable development to be taken into account
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SODC 2013)	Identifies 12 sites around Watlington which their owners have put forward as possible development sites
South Oxfordshire District Council & Vale of White Horse District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009) (SODC & VOWH)	In addition to the above the maps at <a href="http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=468500.0&amp;y=194500.0&amp;topic=floodmap&amp;ep=map&amp;scale=9&amp;location=Watlington,Oxfordshire&amp;lang=e&amp;layerGroups=default&amp;distance=&amp;textonly=off#x=468663&amp;y=194503&amp;lg=1.2,&amp;scale=10">http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=468500.0&amp;y=194500.0&amp;topic=floodmap&amp;ep=map&amp;scale=9&amp;location=Watlington,Oxfordshire&amp;lang=e&amp;layerGroups=default&amp;distance=&amp;textonly=off#x=468663&amp;y=194503&amp;lg=1.2,&amp;scale=10</a> will be used to confirm the maps above



Relevant Plans And Programmes	Relevance to WNDP
The Emerging Science Vale Action Plan	This plan will help shape, co-ordinate & deliver sustainable growth across the area. The WNDP area is viewed as a feeder area into this the Science Vale area
<b>Local</b>	
Thames Water Watlington Drainage Strategy	Relevant
Village appraisals/design statements/parish plans (relevant parish council/community group)	Suggestions for a Better Watlington (2002), Watlington Speaks (2012), Watlington Conservation Area (1997)

<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012)

**Table B.2: SODC Core Strategy Policies**

Policy #	Description	Relevance to WNDP
CS1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development	Applies unless application causes undue harm to the environment
CSS1	The overall strategy	Applies & should be consistent with the overall strategy
CSM1	Transport	Applies, with particular attention to (v) modal shift to public transport, cycling & walking, (vi) promote & support traffic management measures & environmental improvements e.g. air pollution, (vii) car parking & (ix) electronic communications to enhance economic sustainability
CSM2	Transport assessment & travel plans	Applies to all development proposals for Watlington due to the B4009 going through the centre of town & resultant traffic congestion and air pollution
CSEM1	Supporting a successful economy	All points relevant – but with particular attention to (ii) education skill set to fit future economy needs, (iii) sustainable transport solutions & (v) high speed broadband
CSEM2	The amount & distribution of employment	Applies, but no Watlington-specific requirements. Some employment opportunities will come from areas such as Culham Science Centre, Thame & Wallingford
CSEM3	Culham Science Centre	Not applicable apart from a possible employment site
CSEM4	Supporting economic development	Applies but no Watlington-specific requirements
CSEM5	Oxford Brookes University	Not applicable
CSH1	Amount & distribution of housing	Applicable. Table 7.3 clusters Watlington with other larger villages, but does not have an individual requirement assigned in this policy
CSH2	Density	25 houses/hectare applies but no Watlington-specific requirements



Policy #	Description	Relevance to WNDP
CSH3	Affordable housing	Need to allow for the policy-defined percentage of affordable housing & meet survey needs
CSH4	Meeting housing needs	As identified in the SODC local plan
CSH5	Gypsies, travellers & travelling show people	Need to allow for possible minor extension or intensification of Webb's Yard &/or Bucklands Paddock
CST1	Town centres & shopping	Watlington is classified as a local centre serving their immediate rural area. Support initiatives which safeguard & enhance. Proposals for out of centre development will not be permitted. Changes of use within defined primary & secondary retail frontages will be managed to maintain the role of the town centre
CSR1	Housing in villages	In addition to the requirements & as a 'Large Village' there is a need to consider provision of adequate free car parking & improved enforcement, support independent retailers & farmers markets, & try to ensure accessibility to elderly
CSR2	Employment in rural areas	Aim to support agricultural & home workers. Employment should be in accessible locations close to transport corridors, cycling & walking possibilities. High speed Broadband & support amenities to be made available. Avoid adversely affecting heritage or natural assets & encourage schemes which support tourism based on the character of the area & do not rely on heavy transport
CSR3	Community facilities & rural transport	Aim to maintain & improve town centre & visitor attractions retaining important views & approaches. Aim to improve car parking & access & to improve air quality. Also maintaining health & education services & an enhanced quality of life. Proposals which result in the provision of facilities & services in the rural areas will be encouraged, but those which result in the loss will be resisted. Rural transport initiatives that improve movement particularly to access services & employment will be encouraged
CSEN1	Landscape	Applies, particularly (1) integration within the landscape & (ii) as the Parish is within an AONB & SSSI delineation
CSEN3	Historic environment	Applies with a Strategic Environmental Assessment needed to minimise impact & take into account previously unidentified heritage assets, including archaeological remains
CSQ1	Renewable energy	Aim to include renewable energy technologies in new developments provided they do not have an adverse impact on the landscape, heritage & biodiversity of an area, traffic generation or the amenities. AONB designations are likely to place a significant constraint on large scale turbines & wind farms however there may be scope for installation of smaller scale turbines in less intrusive locations where there are suitable wind speeds
CSQ2	Sustainable design & construction	Ensure that new development achieves high standards of energy efficiency & secures a proportion of its energy demand from renewable energy sources. Nationally recognised standards exist for sustainable design & construction in the form of the Code for Sustainable Homes, Eco Homes & BREEAM. National guidance <sup>16</sup> is clear that these standards should be used. As Watlington has a number of flood zones a focus should also be given to (vii) where new developments should be built to adapt to climate change e.g. heavy rainfall



Policy #	Description	Relevance to WNDP
CSQ3	Design	Applies. As an AONB for landscape and townscape it is important that new development designs take into account the historic aspect of the parish & the connectivity to the rural green spaces within keeping of the current status
CSQ4	Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods & major development sites	Proposals for housing allocations & major development sites must be accompanied by a design brief that includes a clear vision for the type of place that could be created & which builds on the overall vision for the town and district. It should demonstrate quality of development, high level of accessibility & good connections to public transport, community facilities & local services. There should also be a clear structure of open spaces & landscape network to ensure that open space standards are met & that new spaces relate well to each other & existing areas
CSG1	Green infrastructure	Applies. As the parish has AONB, SSSI designation & a local nature reserve it is important that there is a net gain in biodiversity & biodiversity corridors. Access to these areas also need to be considered
CSB1	Conservation & improvement of biodiversity	Applies. There are four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) considered to be within influencing distance of the WNDP area. These are Aston Rowant, Chiltern Beechwoods, Little Wittenham & Hartslock Wood. Future development needs to take this into account & actively work towards conservation & net gain of biodiversity in the area
CSI1	Infrastructure provision	Promote accessible high quality healthcare, education, cultural, leisure, sport & other services.
CSC1	Delivery & contingency	Applies, however note that deliverables detailed in Table 18.1 & 18.2 are currently under review by SODC. To focus on identifying land for new homes, support the conversion of rural buildings for employment & support people working at home



## APPENDIX C

Table C.1: Response log from statutory bodies and other consultees

Consultation Responses	Date Received	Suggestions	Actions
SODC			
Environment Agency			
Natural England			
Historic England			



## Appendix D: References

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1. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 , SI 1633, July 2004
2. Visions, Objectives and Options, NPCC - Consultation 2, December 2014
3. Community Engagement Data, NPCC - Consultation 2, December 2014
4. Census 2011
5. South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012 (SODC)
6. South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, Sustainability appraisal scoping report, June 2014
7. 'DIY SA': Sustainability Appraisal (including strategic environmental assessments) of Neighbourhood Plans
8. South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council- Housing Allocations Policy
9. Available at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/join-housing-register-and-find-home>
10. A Low Emission Strategy for South Oxfordshire (Final report) Ricardo Energy and Environment
11. Information was also obtained from a number of surveys:
  - Housing survey in April 2016 to obtain more up to date information on the breakdown of the type of housing needed. A summary of the results are shown in Appendix A
  - Parking survey in April 2016 to understand the usage between the 3 different parking sites within the town (Appendix A)
  - Retailers survey in 2016
  - Business survey in 2014
  - Traffic survey done in 2014