

Online Comments - Consultation 3 - "Character of Watlington"

Reference	Plan Comment
656	100 houses was the preferred number for Watlington, not 400 which is ridiculous. The character of Watlington is the smallest town, keep it how people love it.
657	1a-c. Will you be able to ensure that development will be within your proposed guidelines? 1d. What is the Watlington Design Guide? I seriously doubt you will be able to dictate 'appropriate materials' to developers - there are already a lot of 'new builds' in Watlington and I haven't seen any in keeping with its rural character.
658	1b suggests that the building will 'contribute positively to views of the town,....., in particular from Watlington Hill.' This is a purely subjective view. It might not be as detrimental as building elsewhere but that does not mean it will enhance the view. I would argue that the views of fields and trees are significantly preferable to housing.
683	All building works should not detract from the town and its heritage. It should form part of the community.
697	Anything that protects and enhances the character of Watlington should be supported - I'm just not convinced that's possible given the planned number of new houses.
706	As above. Watlington has always worked hard to maintain the character of Watlington as a town , with peeper pot approach to new homes that have individual designs when built as separate projects over time. The new massive estate is not the way Watlington has ever grown in all its history and shouldn't start now. Totally out of character.
707	As above. Well considered and sympathetic to the existing character of Watlington. It ensures that the requirement for additional housing is addressed in a way which allows Watlington to evolve whilst preserving the nature and feel of the town.
741	Essential. If you over-run the Watlington with inappropriate development, the character will be lost for ever
772	I am broadly in support HOWEVER with one big caveat..... the character of Watlington will only be protected and enhanced if the homes built are in-keeping and characterful. Profit-driven developers building large sites like this, especially with such a large percentage that's affordable, means building style and all that entails will be compromised only to benefit the pockets of the developers. Watlington already has examples of award winning, fantastic new build developments and sadly the opposite, examples of aesthetically unappealing poor quality developments.....

Reference

Plan Comment

783	I believe these new homes and rerouted traffic will enhance the character of watlington.
787	I do not believe this plan will do anything to protect and enhance the character of Watlington. How can adding such a large development possibly add anything to character of the town.
792	I don't want the additional housing at all because of the impact it's bound to have on Watlington.
803	I object to the level of housing 238 seems very high for this small town - totally excessive
804	I object to the Plan because the new houses and related B4009 bypass will, at best, address only two of the six bullet points in the consultation summary, namely "3. Make good housing provision ..." and "4. Help the local economy grow". Three of the other points (1, 2 and 5) are incompatible with the above two points and "6. ...local infrastructure ..." is not addressed in the plan. As a consequence Watlington will sprawl over green fields, some of the serenity of the area will be lost and the infrastructure will be under increasing pressure with little room to grow.
806	I still need to be convinced that this will be done in a way that is sensitive to preserving the feel of Watlington and have no idea what additional considerations are being made of such things as parking and education.
810	I support the Policy 1 Watlington must retain its character it is a quaint town steep in local history We have lost our post office and the fire at the Hardware Store was devastating I personally hope it remains a Hardware Store
820	I would prefer the peppercorn plan of smaller sites spread around Watlington. This would have less impact on the character of the town.
826	I'm happy to have affordable housing in Watlington, let's keep our young community here, but I really do hope that consideration will be given to the appearance and style of the new houses so they add to the charm of Watlington.
879	No I do not agree with this policy - employment focus is necessary but not if it is detrimental to the character of the town
904	preserving the character of Watlington as a small town capable of supporting a varied population is important. we don't want a chocolate box town filled with curio shops.
905	Protect the character and Watlington and surrounding countryside at all costs.
906	Protect the character of Watlington by all means, but what is meant by "enhance"?!

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907	Protect yes. Enhance, what do you mean? Enhance could mean make it more attractive to visitors and enhance the economy by having people visit the shops but that could increase the traffic which means more pollution and traffic congestion.
947	Thank you for consulting the people of Watlington. Sadly, the plan would change Watlington for the worse. Watlington should stay the smallest town in Britain with small developments close to the centre.
960	The intention of the policy is supported, but any reference to existing heritage assets should use the words 'where appropriate' as the relevance of these depends upon the particular site and proposal. Without this change, the Plan will not meet the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans, specifically the requirement to have regard to the national policies and advice contained in the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
979	The properties along Shirburn street, Couching Street, Brook Street and the high street are intrinsic to the character of Watlington. The deterioration of these properties due heavy road use undermines the integrity of the buildings also the aesthetics. Damage to property from heavy goods vehicles is evident and is also a healthrisk. This supports the need for a bypass. For those shop keepers that believe this has an impact on "passing trade" I would suggest that is minimal would be outweighed by the construction of 140 dwellings on site A.
987	The scale of this plan in reality is far higher than the town can reasonably absorb. A maximum of 238 houses should be proposed (or lower).
1021	This policy only applies to larger developments - what are the policies on infill? 4f which seems to encourage park homes goes directly against 4c which calls for high standards of design. Also the character of the AONB should be respected.
1039	Watlington has a character as a very small town, and in itself has particular characteristics which need to be preserved. It does have an active business centre which needs to be encouraged to expand steadily, however the main stranglehold over the town is road system with the one way system and road junctions as they are. For many it is easier to go to Chalgrove Benson or Stokenchurch to park and shop that fight around the one way system and accordingly the Town looses out to nearby villages on trade and business. The Character of Watlington needs to be preserved whilst addressing the problems of the above issues. If the problems are not addressed then the town will detrimentally change due nothing being done.
1041	Watlington is a quiet town that must maintain its character. I was attracted to the town because it is rural and up until the social housing is built it will remain that way.

1044 Watlington's identity should be upheld. The character and the personality it retains, arguably, is what new homeowners want to buy into. About buying what they see. In creating more homes, some 2,000+, the notion of a 'village set within green rural surroundings' changes. One also has to ask about the highstreet as a result. There are few shops and in building these new dwellings puts extra strain on roads, business and traffic alike. Furthermore, in adding these houses the relief road will not solve the problem.

1082 Whilst Watlington requires improved traffic management through and around the town, and should accept the building of new houses, the plan as presented fundamentally fails to do this while protecting 'the scale, character and setting of Watlington', as per the objectives laid out in the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP). As presented, it is a major threat to the character of our wonderful rural (large) village. As the minutes of meetings with the 'GVA' and 'HCA' on the WNDP website indicate, the plan as presented will not result in 238 new houses being built, but between 400-700 new houses so as to pay for the construction of a substantial by-pass depending on whether SODC or Developers build it. This would radically alter the 'scale, character and setting of Watlington' and would have dramatic consequences for the surrounding area. Nowhere in either the SODC 'Second Preferred Options' plan nor the WNDP is provision made for schools, medical facilities, shops and amenities for 1000 or more people living in 400 plus new homes. It is a completely impractical proposition. If this is allowed to go ahead Watlington will no longer be the attractive village in a rural setting that it currently is. The by-pass as currently envisaged to the west of Watlington would destroy the green buffer between it and the village of Pyrton and presents major hazards for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders on what are currently country roads and lanes. Evidence from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in March 2017 found that road schemes of the scale envisaged in this plan induces increased traffic, leads to significant environmental damage and has little economic benefit to local communities. The aspiration to provide 40% affordable homes also means that public transport will have to be increased in order to meet the needs of this demographic of resident. The WNDP must be considered within the broader context of a major housing development proposed in the SODC 'Second Preferred Options' plan of 3,000-3,500 homes on Chalgrove Airfield. Such a development would have a significant impact on Watlington and surrounding areas, doubling traffic on the B480 and B4009 as residents seek access to the M40 motorway and local amenities. The WNDP steering group should be doing everything possible to coordinate with Pyrton, Cuxham, Chalgrove and the Haseley Brook Action Group (HBAG) their objections to such a development that will dramatically affect Watlington. Given this wider context and the needs and desires of those beyond the remit of the WNDP (e.g. SODC and Oxford County Council), the WNDP group is urged to seek the professional advice of experts in areas such as Public Affairs, Legal, Development Planning etc, either independently or from among interested members of the Watlington community. By accepting the advice and guidance of officials in SODC the WNDP runs the risk of being distorted by other priorities, such as the development of Chalgrove Airfield. The WNDP group need the best possible advice available and this should be independent of SODC. Changes Required: 1. The provision of 238 houses should be the maximum number of houses acceptable in the WNDP. 2. Development should be achieved through in-fill on the various plots of land to the north, within the village and with modest development around a much reduced relief road via Willow close as originally envisaged. 3. The relief road should be kept as a modest country road so as to discourage the build up and use by large and heavy vehicles. 4. Any relief road should take account of the needs of rural activities – walkers, cyclists and horse riders, facilitating access to existing footpaths and bridleways and

providing safe crossing points.

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Whilst Watlington requires improved traffic management through the town and some houses should be built, the current plan fails to protect 'the scale, character and setting of Watlington', as per the objectives laid out in the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP). As presented it presents a major threat to the character of our wonderful rural small town. To pay for the construction of a substantial by-pass depending will require far more houses than the current minimum of 238 - and estimates range from 400-700. This would radically alter the 'scale, character and setting of Watlington', would have dramatic consequences on the surrounding area and environment. Nowhere in either the SODC 'Second Preferred Options' plan nor the WNDP is provision made for schools, medical facilities, shops and amenities for 1000 or more people living in 400 plus new homes. The proposition has not been thought through. The by-pass as currently envisaged in the plan to the west of Watlington is a major construction and would destroy the green buffer between Watlington, Cuxham and Pyrton and presents major hazards for pedestrians, cyclists, rural ramblers and horse riders on what are currently country roads and lanes. Evidence from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in March 2017 found that road schemes of the scale envisaged in this plan induces increased traffic, leads to significant environmental damage and has little economic benefit to local communities. The aspiration to provide 40% affordable homes also means that public transport will have to be increased in order to meet the needs of this demographic of resident. Changes Required: 1. The provision of 238 houses should be an absolute maximum number of houses acceptable in the WNDP. 2. Development where possible should be achieved through a mix of in-fill on the various plots of land to the north, within the village and with modest development around a much reduced relief road via Willow as originally envisaged. 3. The relief road should be kept as a modest country road so as to discourage the build up and use by large and heavy vehicles. 4. Any relief road should take account of the needs of rural activities – walkers, cyclists and horse riders, facilitating access to existing footpaths and bridleways and providing safe crossing points.

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Who is this " Phantom Enhancer" ? To enhance anything is a matter of opinion and taste. Very spurious. Beware the gilders of the Lily!