

Online Comments Consultation 3 - "Environment"

Reference

Plan Comment

- 680 Agree with the general thrust of the document, but it is very difficult to follow. It appears to have sustainability objectives, NDP objectives, sites, questions and policies all tabulated against one another and assigned to one of three categories, but with no clear indication of what the categories really mean. It is obvious that the red, green yellow coding is some form of no, yes, maybe grading but what do they really mean and how can the grading be used to take decisions. For example, NDP objective 2, which is to do with traffic issues according to the NDP, is the only NDP objective that has any red values against environmental questions, and the questions that get red scores are to do with biodiversity, light encroachment, landscape setting, flooding, water courses and food production. Surely covering a field with houses has a bigger effect on food production or flood risk or landscape setting than building a road across the same field? Similarly, building a new road, with the consequent effect of loss of part of a productive field, surely cannot have a positive effect on the impact of traffic on the environment?
- 692 Although we broadly agree with most of the draft plan proposals, and in particular support the principle that any significant development should be located to the north and/or west of the town and should be supported by a new alternative road route around the town, we are very disappointed that the Church Hall site is not explicitly protected as a green space. Other areas explicitly identified as green spaces to be protected are not as well used or as threatened as this area. With further development of the town likely, all the existing significant and valuable green spaces should be strongly protected. If significant development is allowed to the west of the town, the church hall site will be invaluable as a green space. We also feel that the proposal that 40% of developments should be affordable homes may result in unintended consequences. There is clearly a need for more affordable housing in and around the town, but specifying that such a large proportion of major developments is allocated to cheaper housing may lower the overall quality of housing and/or discourage potential developers. We believe that a more flexible strategy would be appropriate. We believe that the realignment of the B4009 needs to be in place before any major development takes place, to avoid the very significant adverse impact on traffic arising from further development, but more importantly to ensure that the town does not ultimately find itself in the position of having large new developments in place but there being no funds to effect the realignment. In our view, it is absolutely essential that a solution to the traffic issues throughout the town is found and effected sooner than later. It would be a disaster to allow any significant further development without solving the existing, and worsening, problems.
- 709 As I wrote above, more information on the possible flood risk and how exactly it would be alleviated would be really needed.
- 718 Building work is required, and necessary. The environment must be treated with respect. Humans need space and should be allowed to build, with respect and care. The environment adapts to humans.

- 721 bypass would improve air and noise level,s
- 738 Enforce requirement for road borders / verges to be sustainably planted to provide visual and acoustic screening and enhance natural habitats. Essential to provide investment to manage traffic to avoid town centre rat runs - especially on Couching street, Shirburn street.
- 740 Ensure this includes the outlook, access etc.. for existing housing, especially that which will abut the new proposed sites. i.e. not just safeguards for historic buildings
- 747 Flooding was mentioned...? Where and how could/would these occur? Will housing be impacted and potentially at risk?
- 785 I broadly agree with what is a good plan. However, I still have concerns over the use of what was previously labelled WAT 11 (the site by the roundabout), as it is we'll know to get very boggy to the point of saturation during periods of heavy rain. The existing flood plan for Cuxham Road, including that site, is wrong. It shows the end and not the middle part as at risk. I also understand the flood map is currently being revised by flood risk consultants, coincidentally to coincide with and alleviating barriers relating to the new development. Having green and conservation areas is great, but the displacement of water from other parts of the development will most likely compound the issue.
- 796 I fully support the plan. It is imperative to alleviate the traffic pressure on the centre of Watlington in order to prevent further damage, improve pollution levels, lessen noise nuisance and solve the traffic congestion problems. The logical solution, that addresses all these issues as well as satisfying the other objectives set out in the WNDP, is the proposed alternative route of the B4009 and the development of sites A, B & C.
- 809 I support the plan, but am unclear why the ring road cannot be extended to include the entire new development within it's perimeter (rather than have the new road go through the new development). Doesn't this just route pollution-producing traffic through a residential area, rather than around it, and also create a danger for pedestrians, esp. children?
- 816 I would add specifically the provision of native trees within the housing developments as these will provide a number of benefits to the residents, wildlife and those visiting Watlington Hill. This would support objectives 1b, 3a and 3d.
- 818 I would like to see developers having to include water efficiency, water recycling and grey water use into their houses, to reduce the impact of any new housing on the waste water network
- 822 If sites A,B,C are developed, there is no guarantee that the re-aligned B4009 will be built. The re-alignment must be made a condition of the development. Also it would be really nice if trees were planted in the developments and also find alternatives to using red brick. New estates of red brick houses without a tree in site look so depressing.

- 827 Important to ensure that new housing is built carefully and does cause flooding
- 828 Important to,enhance watercourses.
- 837 It has been well prepared but use the environment as a category to prevent growth is going backwards - control and care coupled with fairness are what's needed
- 849 It would be great for the town centre as well as improving safety around the small lanes leading to the schools if a new drop off point/car park could be built towards the rear of Ickniel School serving the secondary and primary school. At present the buses and many parents in large vehicles all converge on the school at once whilst hundreds of children cycle and walk between them. If the schools car parks in front could be pedestrianised with traffic coming off the bypass via a separate entrance, it would make it much safer for those walking and cycling. It might also allow the provision of more classrooms at the primary school (surely required) as well as enhanced green space in front of Ickniel school. For instance, look at the amazing giant redwoods in front of Gillotts School and how they make the school much greener and softer with all the attendant benefits that trees provide.
- 865 My main objection is the fact the majority of Watlington is protected in the Chiltern Green Belt but for some reason the North and West are not. This project will effect the Marlbrook estate more than anyone else in Watlington in terms of Air, Noise and sound pollution. Moving the problem across town to the poorer part of town is not a solution but discrimination.
- 873 New route of B4009 is not 'future-proof' since it will run through the middle of planned sites A, B & C exposing residents of these homes to all the pollution problems that currently blight residents on Couching Street and Shirburn Street. The new route should be placed further west beyond the planned sites.
- 891 Overall I support the new housing development proposals and in particular I think you have chosen the best sites for it. As above, I think improving pedestrian access from the new housing developments to the schools sites, and improving pavements in the current town, would help make the new housing development work best. Also as above, I would like more reassurance as to the flood risk in the proposed new housing developments as the wording in you WNDP isn't clear on what the exact risk is, and how effective any proposed strategies would be to minimise it. I agree that affordable housing is key and the ideas for new homes for care workers near the GP surgery also seem good. I agree with somewhere in the report you mentioned that the housing developments would need to have green spaces within them eg along chalk streams.
- 894 Page 27, Site B (Wat10) and Site C (Wat9) should record Positive (instead of Neutral) scores for the following sustainability objectives: Q2 – Create safe environment through good design Q6 – Reduce negative impact of traffic on environment Q7 – Support action to improve air quality On Page 25 it is already acknowledged the sites will safeguard land for a re-aligned B4009 which will benefit Watlington by reducing the volume of traffic in the town centre, leading to an improvement in air quality.

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- 895 Particularly support 20mph limit in town centre together with solutions which will enable pedestrians to feel safer and improve air quality. Long term the realigned B4009 will ultimately achieve these goals but in the interim innovative solutions to improve the current situation should be considered.
- 905 Protect the character and Watlington and surrounding countryside at all costs.
- 914 Resist any development in conservation area and especially in the AONB. Support the need for hospital site development on Hill Road, but please resist any further ribbon development on Hill Road.
- 916 Ring road / bypass and pollution - these are existing issues that need dealing with first.
- 932 Strongly support a large buffer zone between Watlington and Pyrton
- 943 Support the proposed locations of housing development in conjunction with a realignment of the B4009 (subject to my comments regarding the danger of having the realigned road through housing). Recognise these are the only sites which will not greatly impact on the AONB and views from Watlington Hill.
- 948 Thankful for the time and trouble taken by people looking after the countryside.
- 955 The chalk stream emphasis is overstated.
- 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.
- 961 The intention of the policy is supported, but some of the wording should be amended. Phrasing the policy wording to say that 'development will be permitted so long as..' is too strongly worded as these are not the only planning considerations to be weighed. There should not be a blanket requirement to protect views of the town. Some harm to views is inevitable with urban extensions and instead the policy should be to minimise harm and to require appropriate mitigation, where necessary. There should not be a requirement to reduce flood risk and to improve water flows to benefit higher risk zones. That is unreasonable to schemes already in low risk flood zones which do not cause flood risk beyond their boundaries. There should not be a requirement to provide opportunities for new Local Green Spaces within developments. Designation of Local Green Space must be done in accordance with criteria contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It is a designation that is intended to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities". Development land is unlikely to accord with this definition. Without these changes, 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.

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- 966 The only addition I would make is around surface water flood routes - currently only fluvial sources are shown (in Map 4 of the excellent map series) - and highlight where these are the for need development to contribute to the manage of surface water too.
- 977 The policies will result in an irreversible and negative impact on wider views over the historic landscape of Shirburn and Pyrton within the Chilterns AONB from the Ridgeway National Trail, from Watlington Hill, Shirburn Hil and Pyrton Hill, nationally protected SSSI's and the wider public footpath network.
- 986 The same policies should be applied to preserve the natural environment for the surrounding villages that lie within the Parish e.g. Northend
- 993 The springs need to be protected as they are a key part of the local environment and have had a lot of work to clean them up recently.
- 1059 We must keep the green space we already have, as well as providing some green space in the new developments.