



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVISION SURVEY

2020

FINAL REPORT

**Prepared by:
Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Performance, Consultation & Insight Unit
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Do you think the following sites are suitable for residential development? Any other comments.
Do you wish to protect Sonning Common's boundaries and keep the village separate from surrounding settlements? Please comment
Do you believe that some extra-care accommodation for Sonning Common's elderly/retired population should be provided under the revised Neighbourhood Plan? Please comment.
What size homes are needed most for the village's overall population? Please comment.
Do you agree with the Neighbourhood Plan revision strategy to date? Please comment.
Written response from resident X

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan Revision survey was designed to gather the opinions and views of the residents of Sonning Common Parish in order to help keep the Neighbourhood Plan current: to ensure it accords with developing planning policy, and can continue to shape development in the village in line with residents' wishes.

The review of the Plan will help to promote the most suitable sites for new development, while working hard to maintain the village's character and preserve the landscape.

Sonning Common is required to put forward additional sites which are potentially suitable for new housing development to meet the district's housing targets. This is on top of those sites already allocated in the existing Neighbourhood Plan which was adopted in late 2016.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The Performance, Consultation and Insight section at Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) offers its services as a market research agency to other District Councils, Parish and Town Councils and other public bodies. The section was engaged by Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, as they could offer an independent research project.

The questionnaire was designed to be answered as an individual.

Copies of the survey were made available at a public exhibition in the Village Hall on 29 February and from the Parish Office. Completed forms were returned to the Parish Office. Alternatively, the survey could be completed on-line from a link provided on the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan website.

The survey period was from Wednesday 26 February to Monday 23 March 2020. 131 questionnaires were completed – 101 paper questionnaires and 30 completed online.

All the information provided was processed by SDC and then aggregated and analysed to create this final report. Complete confidentiality for the responses has been ensured.

The report follows the order of the questionnaire. Charts and tables are used to assist the interpretation of the results. In some cases where the percentages do not add up to 100%, anomalies appear due to "rounding". The term "base" in the tables and charts refers to the number of responses to a particular question. These are shown with a bracket around the number.

3.0 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

3.1 Part One: Potential Sites

- Residents were asked to indicate whether they thought each of 11 potential sites were suitable for residential development. SON 23: Johnson Matthey car park site was thought suitable by 69% of respondents, with SON 26: Rudgings Plantations thought suitable by 46%. The least suitable sites were at SON 24: Land behind Widmore Pond (89% No) and SON 12b: Blackmore Lane North (upper) (87% No).

3.2 Part Two: Development Priorities and Strategy

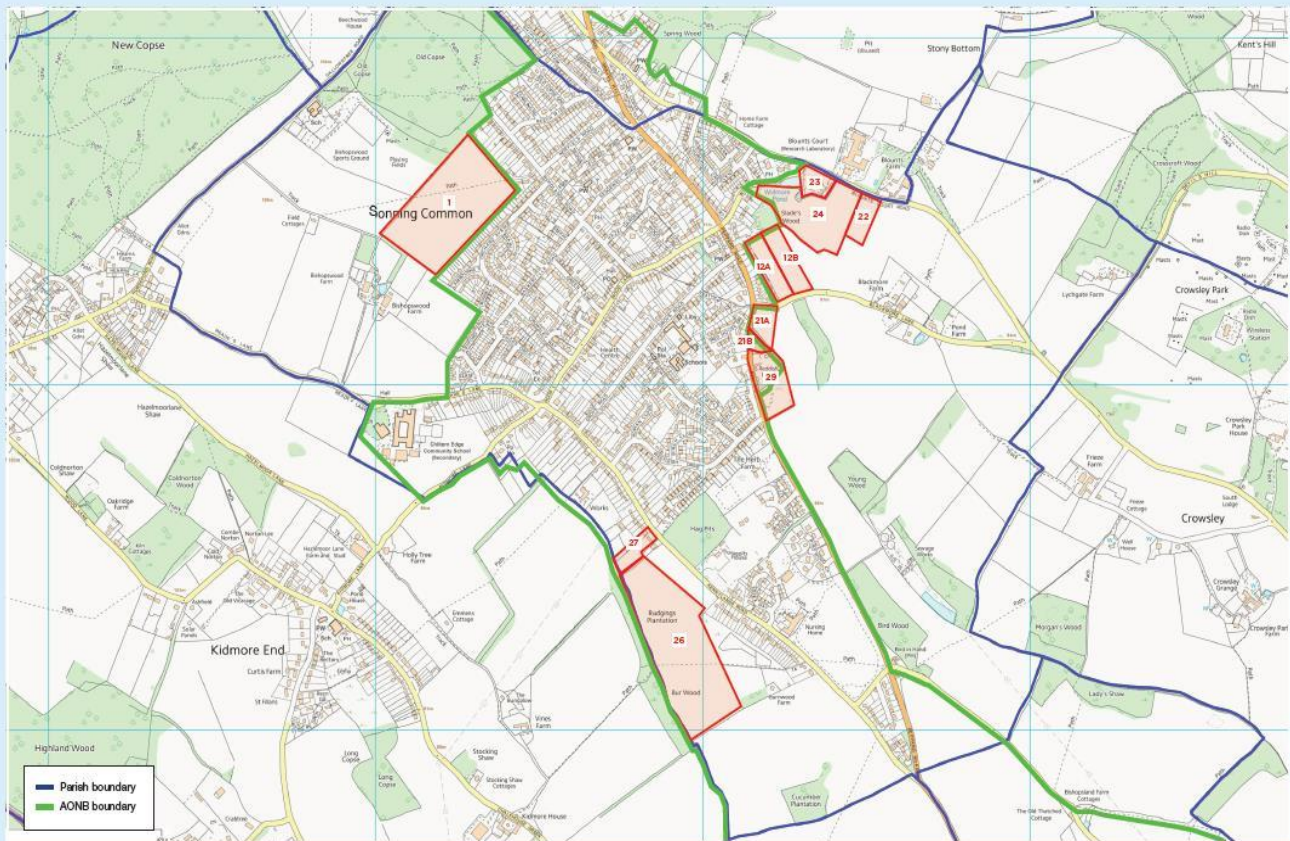
- Residents were asked if they wished to protect Sonning Common's boundaries and keep the village separate from surrounding settlements. 97% were in agreement with this.
- 66% of respondents felt that some extra-care accommodation should be provided.
- 94% were in favour of 2-3 bedroom homes, 34% in favour of 1 bedroom homes and 2% wanted to see 4 bedroom + homes.
- 78% of respondents were in agreement with the revision strategy to date.

4 RESULTS IN DETAIL

4.1 PART ONE: POTENTIAL SITES

Residents were provided with a list of 11 sites under consideration for potential future housing development in Sonning Common, along with a description of each site and the recommendation of the NP working party. Residents were then asked to indicate whether they thought any of the sites were suitable for residential development.

Figure 1: Potential Sites



Recommendations on the 11 sites under consideration for potential future housing development in Sonning Common

Site Number	Location	Area	NP Working Party Recommendation
SON 1	Behind Orchard Avenue and Woodlands Road	6.2 ha of Local Green Space within the AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 12a	Off Blackmore Lane and behind Peppard Road houses	0.9 ha of agricultural land within the AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 12b	Off Blackmore Lane	1.3 ha of agricultural land within the AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 21a	Corner of Blackmore Lane and Peppard Road	0.7 ha of agricultural land within the AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 21b	Peppard Road, opposite Red House Drive	0.3 ha of unused land adjacent to AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 22	Blounts Court Road, opposite Blounts Farm	0.9 ha of agricultural land within the AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 23	Widmore Lane, currently Johnson Matthey car park	0.7 ha of hard surface land, within AONB but used as car park for decades	Recommended for 2 and 3 bedroom housing development
SON 24	Blounts Court Road and Widmore Lane	3.4 ha of agricultural land within the AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 26	Kennylands Road, opposite Hagpits House	6.7 ha of agricultural land, not in AONB but within setting of AONB	Development restricted to 26 homes within SON 6, already included in existing NP
SON 27	Alpen Rose, Kennylands Road	0.6 ha of house, garden and orchard, within setting of AONB	Not recommended for development
SON 29	Reddish Manor, Peppard Road, opposite Westleigh Drive	1.5 ha of garden and orchard, part within the AONB	Not recommended for development

The above recommendations are being made by the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. They follow extensive research and analysis work on each of the sites. Research materials informing these recommendations are available on the Neighbourhood Plan website: www.scpc-ndp.co.uk

SON 23: Johnson Matthey car park site was thought suitable by 69% of respondents, with SON 26: Rudgings Plantations thought suitable by 46%. The least suitable sites were at SON 24: Land behind Widmore Pond (89% No) and SON 12b: Blackmore Lane North (upper) (87% No).

Table 1:

Do you think the following sites are suitable for residential development?	Yes	No	Don't Know
SON 23: Johnson Matthey car park, Widmore Lane (124)	69%	24%	7%
SON 26: Rudgings Plantation, Kennylands Road (121)	46%	49%	5%
SON 27: Alpen Rose, Kennylands Road (118)	28%	65%	7%
SON 21b: Land north of Reddish Manor, Peppard Road (116)	26%	69%	5%
SON 29: Reddish Manor, Peppard Road (122)	21%	73%	6%
SON 21a: Blackmore Lane South (122)	18%	75%	7%
SON 1: Old Copse Field Off Woodlands Road (121)	16%	79%	5%
SON 22: Blounts Court Road (122)	12%	84%	4%
SON 12a: Blackmore Lane North (lower) (123)	11%	85%	5%
SON 12b: Blackmore Lane North (upper) (123)	8%	87%	5%
SON 24: Land behind Widmore Pond, Blounts Court Road (122)	8%	89%	3%
Base: (All respondents) ()			

Residents were then asked to make any comments to expand on their above selections. 68 responses were received (see Appendix A).

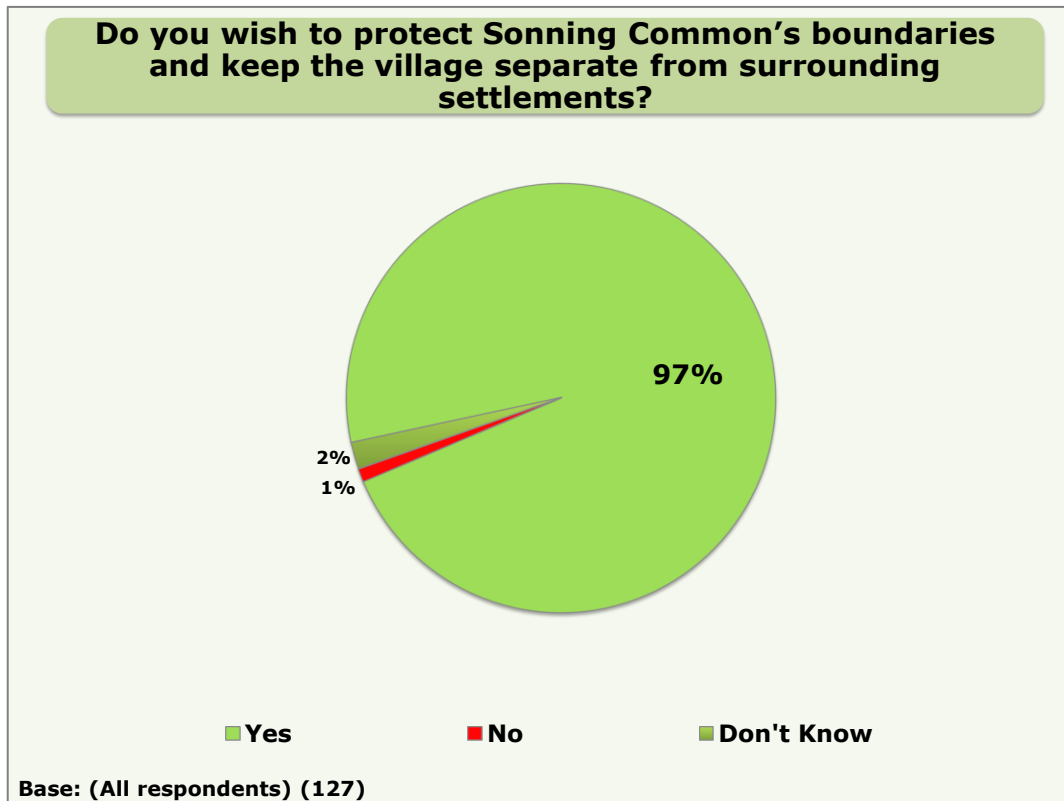
4.2 PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND STRATEGY

Do you wish to protect Sonning Common's boundaries and keep the village separate from surrounding settlements?

97% respondents said that they wished to protect Sonning Common's boundaries, with 1% saying they did not, and 2% did not know.

Asked to comment further on this, 54 responses were received and can be seen in Appendix B.

Chart 1:

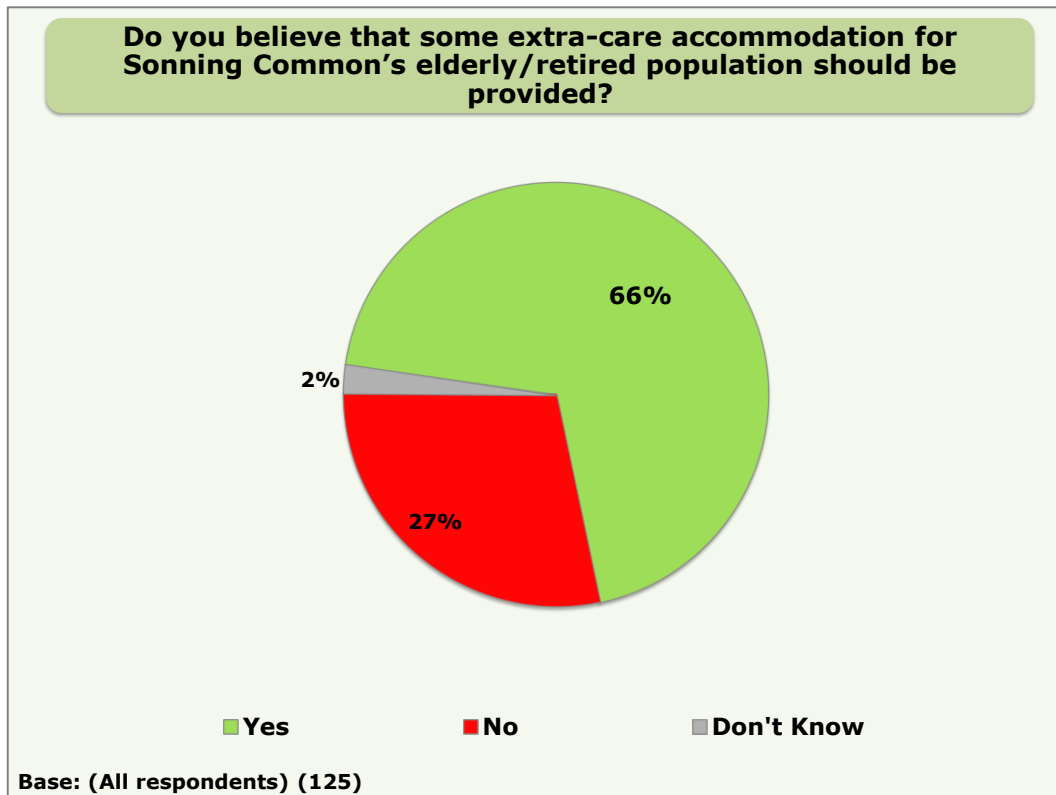


Do you believe that some extra-care accommodation for Sonning Common's elderly/retired population should be provided under the revised Neighbourhood Plan?

66% of respondents felt that there should, while 27% did not feel there should be, and 7% did not know.

Asked to comment further, 67 responses were received. These can be seen in Appendix C.

Chart 2:

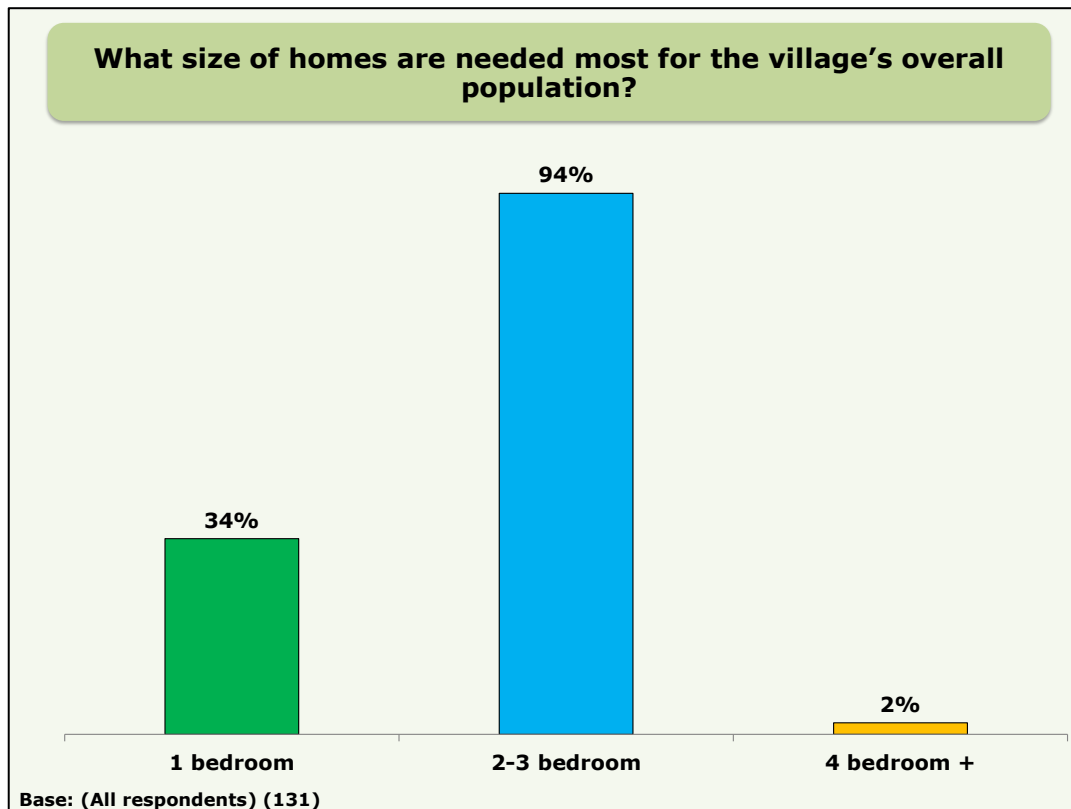


What size homes are needed most for the village's overall population?

94% of respondents felt that two to three bedroom homes were needed, while 34% felt one-bedroom properties were needed and 2% wanted to see four bedrooms or more.

Asked to comment further, 70 responses were received. These can be seen in Appendix D.

Chart 3:

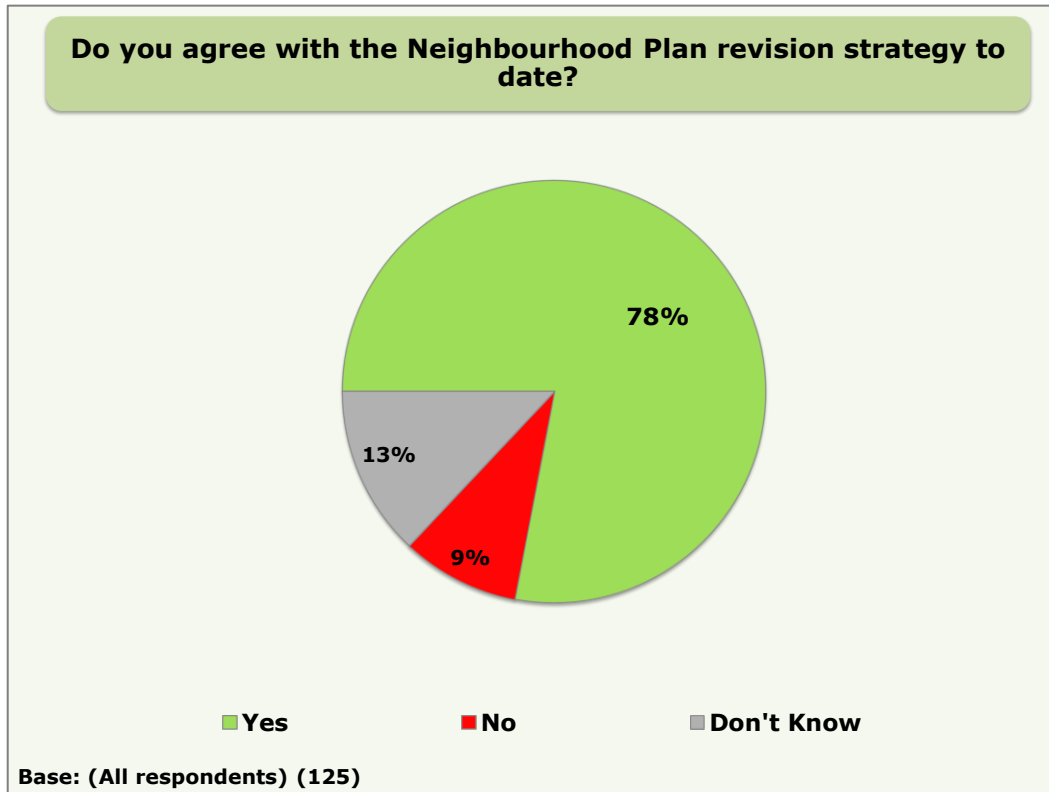


Do you agree with the Neighbourhood Plan revision strategy to date?

78% of respondents said that they agreed so far, while 9% did not and 13% did not know.

Asked for further comment, 45 responses were received. These can be seen in Appendix E.

Chart 4:



APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Do you think the following sites are suitable for residential development? Any other comments

68 responses

1/3 of Rudgings plantation would be OK.
21a and 21b are not very attractive areas so could do with tidying up, a few houses might do that.
29: Reddish Manor would be a small (relatively) development slightly extending the built-up area; 23: This would be a small development already on hard surface though these should be a barrier between the development and the pond to stop any pollution or waste causing contamination. I appreciate the amount of work being done by the team.
A category of "possibly" would have been helpful.
Any development on Kennylands Road should be infill only in a single row and not mini estates back into the fields. Building should be in keeping with housing already surrounding the sites.
As long as currently agreed plans and infill sites are sufficient to come within striking distance of the target, then the minimal approved list above is fine.
As recommended by SCNP working party
Blackmore Lane N lower - could take houses without imposing on sky line or moving village boundary towards Reading. Improvement of Blackmore Lane road would be relatively easy.
Could do edge of SON 24 by pond linking SON 23 with housing line on Widmore Lane
Extremely well done! This whole approach is about as professional as anyone can get.
For 26, it is infill only; SON1presumes building line to north of village
Hopefully we can stick to working party recommendations of SCNP.
I agree with the assessment made by NPWP and the consultant
I agree with the recommendations of the consultant. I would like the use of infill development to be kept to a minimum because it provides space for wildlife and individual breathing space for people.
I agree with the recommendation/plan to accommodate the new housing requirement by JM car park 23, infill building, and extra car apartments near existing care home, extra houses on school field. I only want 2/3 bed houses as there is a glut of large homes already.
I agree with the recommendations made by the NP working party
I agree with the SCNP recommendations for these sites and the reason given. SON26: limited housing only. The village centre needs re-development rather urgently or as quickly as possible.
I am happy to agree with what is proposed by those who have put a lot of work and research into this subject
I believe development should be restricted to infill or brown sites, and be of small properties up to 2 beds for first time buyers or people wishing to downsize

Important that 2/3 bedroom house development is the focus to ensure the right community population mix. SON26: NO! Die in a ditch; SON23: 2/3 bedroom only!
It is really important to preserve the nature of the village - family-friendly, semi-rural and not overly developed with intensive residential developments. There is a need to protect the health centre from being overwhelmed vs the parking vs the traffic issues to be solved, or at the very least not increased.
It is very important that all areas of AONB should be protected. Once development creep is allowed, there will be no stopping it. We all benefit from AONB, hence our support for your recommendations of the eleven sites under consideration. Protect the AONB for future generations!
JM car park and local area is not suitable for old people accommodation.
Keep the development around the south of the village and protect the community space north by the sites I have indicated prevent extra infill scope creep. These are only OK if they are for local people (born and lived in the village) and not overpriced ridiculous homes for Londoners, or just for families. Single people who are catered and have lived in the village their whole lives are being forced out.
Let's keep Sonning Common a village and not a suburb of Reading. 1: What is the point of having AONB when building is going to take place with no objection? 2: No affordable housing. How can those e.g. nurses/police/teachers afford to live within the village? 3: Primary school places get filled quickly. People able to buy expensive houses take the places until they manage to get a place in Independent Schools. This means a place that a local child should have is taken; 4: The infill housing is unaffordable; 5: Having assisted living means more traffic on busy lanes. The Health Centre would be unable to cope. Causing lengthy wait for appointments and treatments. The people living there would have to buy at an unimaginable price, pay a yearly grounds payment. If they become ill, with mental problems/memory loss they have to move out. Selling their home with the developers taking half, then it would be up to doctors and local authority to rehome!
Old Copse Field: I seem to remember that a building of some kind was to be built in this area. So why not houses? Reddish Manor: deemed unsuitable re the village boundary line? Johnson Matthey car park: possibly suitable for housing, the road is NO way suitable to take more traffic, Widmore Lane is definitely a no-no; Blounts Court Road: Unsuitable to take any more traffic; North of Reddish Manor: Why not a small development as houses are opposite
Please don't build in the area of outstanding natural beauty.
Plus infilling
Re SON23 JM car park: The road access to this site is difficult, particularly whilst construction work takes places. Widmore Lane is often restricted by parked cars, and the road is single way at Widmore Pond. Blount Court Road is not a viable alternative access for heavy traffic either. The detail of any planning would require careful scrutiny regarding the above comments.
Re: SON23 development could be viable with connection to Widmore Lane (existing access); Re SON27, not viable unless included in the current Fisher development.
Same old same old. It doesn't matter what time of day there's a queue to get in or out of the village. We have seen swallows, hares, hedgehogs, moths, many birds including fieldfares and owl disappear or decrease rapidly. Well done to the planning team a difficult job!
So many within the AONB. What is the point of having it! The roads around Widmore Pond are very narrow with NO pavements.

<p>Son 21a and Son 21b could be suitable for a few homes without making too much impact on the locality. Whereas developing Son12A, Son12b and Son 29 would have a negative aspect on views and once building has been permitted south of Reddish manor it would allow the argument for further development all along the Peppard road. Allowing Rudgings plantation Son26 would reduce the open aspect and green areas acting as a buffer to other settlements, definitely not desirable.</p>
<p>SON 21b Small unmanaged piece of ground - has become an eyesore so could be put to better use SON 23 Ground already taken for car park -will no longer be required - so ideal rather than taking other green areas SON 26 If it is restricted to 26 homes and is not added to SON 6 as I do not know where this is. This is a lovely piece of land with lovely views which seems a shame to take but may be preferable than taking some of the other sights on list if it has to be done. SON 29 I would not want this built on at all lovely piece of ground far reaching views, trees, and herd of deer close by mature trees and wildlife and the house is one of the oldest period houses in the village would be a terrible shame if it was lost or built all around plus already too much traffic on Peppard Road. New housing needs to be spread out and not saturating any one area of the village or joining up with other villages.</p>
<p>SON1 & SON23: Least impact visually close to village centre; SON12a/b Ignores landscape-valley containment, too visible & intrusive; SON21a/b/22/24/26/29: visually intrusive; SON26: destroys buffer zone with AONB, extends village towards Kidmore End, not close enough to village centre.</p>
<p>SON1: Essential green space should not be used in any circumstance; SON26: green space buffer - should not be used; All development to east of Peppard Road has to content with the hilly terrain which limits ease of access.</p>
<p>SON1: I often walk through old copse, I am not sure where this site is but the approach road is a dead end unless other access can be made available; SON12a/b: Blackmore Lane is not a viable option for heavy or constant traffic; SON23: Johnson Matthey is already too big for a rural site with commercial vehicles using Widmore Lane, this road is dangerous and any attempt to introduce more traffic could prove disastrous; SON26/29: Kennylands Road and Peppard Road could sustain small developments without upsetting our village status.</p>
<p>SON1: I would not rule this out entirely but in AONB and access would require demolition? SON12a/b: #intrusive and overbearing on sloping site and would loom over existing Peppard Road properties; SON21a: Possible as slightly downhill site from Peppard Road in AONB so this would be not a first choice; SON22: intrusive to views of AONB restricted access via Blounts Court Road; SON23: OK, but do JM have permission for car parking elsewhere only smallish site so what number of houses? SON24: No, and certainly not retirement village! SON26: Notwithstanding previous fight I'm minded to suggest this goes ahead with son 6 but not on the whole site shown SE boundary to align with Kennylands Road properties. SON27: too confined and narrow site unless joined with SON5, 6 & 26; SON29: it would be a pity to spoil the current tree lined aspect. NB mention made of AONB setting - this is not a sustainable standpoint as it is subjective.</p>
<p>SON1: if there is a significant shortfall in achieving the extra 100 houses I favour using this site in preference to spreading over smaller sites; SON23: As a resident of Blounts Court Road I am against this proposal but I appreciate it would provide 20% of the extra requirement and might help prevent the Inspired Villages proposal of a much larger development.</p>
<p>SON1: no road access! SON24: Anchors AONB to south and east</p>
<p>SON1: this site looks ideal as it seems to carry on into the village - not making it look as if it's stuck out on its own so wouldn't look odd; SON12a/b/21a: The access to all of these sites is not suitable for the access roads around as they are country lanes - not fit for heavy traffic; SON21b: access wouldn't be a problem as it would be easy to get access to Peppard</p>

Road; SON22/23: Traffic going to and coming from Johnson Matthey is already too heavy - large tankers and lorries already using it, plus 240 cars from Johnson Matthey. SON 26/27/29: These sites would all carry on along Kennylands Road/Peppard Road - not making an eyesore!
SON1: to be left as a community 'green' space to complement millennium Green on the opposite side of the village; SON23: this area is a backdrop to Widmore Pond, so any buildings here must not be too tall or colourful and more screening must be added; SON21a/b: a single row of buildings here would logically extend dwellings along the road; SON29: the parts screened by the greenery might be developed, and again only a single row, but it must not be visible from the herb Farm 'beautiful view' area!
SON1: was ear-marked for a school in the past. The playing fields and football fields cover large green spaces. There are the woods surrounding this plot. There is access via Woodlands Road where properties have encroached; SON21b/29: On the main road, opposite the new bungalows, could be incorporated into village building line, suitable for small developments; SON23: access into Widmore Lane is totally unsuitable. Road is narrow with???? on a steep gradient to the pond. Extra cars will jeopardise their safety with proximity of the pond. Within AONB but screened by the flub and brick wall and woodland. (Blounts Court Road not suitable passing Home Farm area and narrow onto the B481. This already has a dangerous junction onto Stoke Row Road); SON27: suitable for a small development. Instead of opting for large overwhelming developments it is time to consider small developments of 2-bedroom houses across the village.
SON22/23/24: has pathetic ability to allow any increase in vehicle numbers; Johnson Matthey already have permission to build opposite which will further increase carnage.
SON23 is fine for houses but not a retirement village. SON 26 development should be limited to within the Kennylands Road area, not out behind that.
SON23: as it is already a car park, could it be developed sensitively? SON27: the garden wildlife habitat forms part of a corridor connected to Bur Wood.
SON23: JM car park - the site is suitable for residential development provided Johnson Matthey will provide car parking for their HRs that does not require a land surface on open, presently green, land; generally there are too many proposals for building on AONB land without any mention of the exceptional circumstances required by UK law. There are no proposals to improve public transport, so existing roads will become even more congested. I invite those in power to consider the centre of Sonning Common. There are very few road traffic accidents because motor vehicles are kept to walking pace. Should the whole of Sonning Common enjoy similar traffic congestion? Failure to improve public transport will require residents to own and use motor vehicles.
SON26/29: Partial development only at Northern End
SON26: Infill on road only; SON1: Preserves building line to north of village. Access is the only issues really, preferably onto Horsepond road not Orchard Avenue; SON15: Great idea for 50 houses out of sight and not on AONB land; SON27: Sets dangerous precedent as would extend building line for SON 26.
SON26: The proposed site is adjacent to the woodland and is likely to be an area used for some rubbish and garden waste. The nutrient enrichment would degrade a very pleasant woodland area. Would it be possible to make the boundary further to the east? SON27: Would prefer no development as the house is very attractive; SON24: Adjoins Slade's wood - contains wild-service tree, an indicator of ancient woodland; SON15: Keep any development well away from the ancient hedge line and adjacent nutrient-poor grassland, there is a strong possibility of rare plants in the area.

Support development of SON 23 BUT only if the proposed retirement village is REFUSED on site SON 24.
The assessment of the sites has been undertaken in a manner that is flawed. There are disparities in the manner that the sites have been assessed, and great inconsistency in the way the scoring system has been applied to the different sites. For example, site SON 24 is scored red for environmental sensitivity due to proximity to Widmore Pond, but SON 23 is scored green despite having similar proximity. Similar concerns relate to the following items on the traffic light chart – 2D, 2E, G, H, K, N, O, P, Q, R, AB, AC, AD and AK. This is inconsistent and raises concerns to the robustness of the scoring system, which skews in support of a site favoured by the Parish Council. We would query who going to build 26 extra care units on SON26? Is there a developer lined up – is it actual extra care or just age restricted?
The 'no' boxes ticked because if all these areas built on it would have a huge impact on the village, the infrastructure is not then to cope .i.e. surgery centre, car parking etc.
The Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan working party have thought and discussed and considered options for several years and I trust them to know what is best for this neighbourhood. The Ticks above should follow their recommendations which are plainly set out.
The traffic along Kennylands road is already busy and far too often speeding; there is also an increase in parking along Kennylands Road making it even more dangerous. Please remember the fatality on Kennylands some years ago. If there has to be more housing, it should have more of an element of affordable/social housing. Before more housing, the schools need re-development, village centre parking needs addressing, sports and recreation, somewhere for the youth/elderly to meet.
The village cannot take the level of development we have now. Particularly the increase in traffic and parking in the village centre. Personally, I travel to Emmer Green to shop if heavy shopping as it is easier to park. More attention to infrastructure needed. Nowhere do I see any suggestion of social housing which is needed. The school and village shops were also staffed by social housing tenants with the current emphasis on high value properties is never likely.
There has already been so much new and large-scale building development, as well as infill building, which is eroding the "country" feel of Sonning Common. (The unattractive and overly intensive development on the right-hand side of the road to Reading is a case in point - it still looks unlandscaped and unfinished, and is not a pleasing first sight of the village.) Housing developers should be directed to building on brown-field sites and not choosing the pick of green-field sites - they choose the latter because it is less expensive for them and increases their profits. There is no benefit to Sonning Common by building on green-field sites.
There is a very short area of land separating Sonning Common and Emmer Green if we are not careful we will be part of Reading very soon!
There is enough accommodation in Sonning Common now to cope with the facilities it amazes me how the Health Centre and schools cope, now they don't need any more pressure.
There should be no building in AONB land. The building line along Peppard Road and Kennylands Road should be maintained as is.
These are almost all in the AONB, if it gets built on then the AONB concept should be abandoned.

We are in agreement with the recommendations put forward by the working party and further felt that the AONB should be protected because it surrounds the village envelope and it gives Sonning Common its identity. SON 23 ideal for smaller properties.
We are seeing more and more parking problems in the village centre. It seems likely that Reading buses given the difficulty of travel along Wood Lane are likely to simply change the route to travel along Peppard Road, this would be a grave mistake, but seems inevitable.
We cannot block everything and as such there must be understanding and compromise
We do not want any AONB land developed
When will the urbanisation of this village end? Where is the infrastructure plan to support building in the above areas? This village cannot take any more houses. It is nice to see building being proposed in other areas of the village and not Reade's Lane area (makes a change).
Why is there no mention of SON 15a? This affects us the most. We are incredibly concerned about all the proposals that have been put forward to us so far as the suggested positioning of the new houses are VERY close to our boundary. Also WHY are they now suggesting increasing the number of houses to 50 when it is being suggested that we do not require as many properties in Sonning Common as first thought. The school trust will NOT be using all money raised from the sale of the land to improve Chiltern Edge School, but instead will be distributing it to other schools under their wing, which contradicts the original reason for selling the land!!! The positioning of the properties close to our boundary seems counter intuitive....they keep saying they are trying to stop the development from spoiling the views from the adjacent area of outstanding natural beauty, yet they are proposing the development should be built on the highest point of the plot, siting that the southerly section has drainage issues (I fail to understand that there is an issue with drainage when the whole plot and the field beyond are all on a slope.....). Kind regards xxxxxxxx name and address provided
Would prefer development of brownfield site that encroaching further into AONB

Appendix B:

Do you wish to protect Sonning Common's boundaries and keep the village separate from surrounding settlements?

54 responses

A gap between Sonning Common and Emmer Green is vital and every effort should be made to get this gap designated as AONB asap - Reading's 'green belt' perhaps.
Absolutely
Absolutely. I want us to absorb the built-up area inside the AONB line of Peppard to the north
All of Sonning Common is within easy walking distance of open countryside. Being involved in the NDP to a small extent has helped me to better appreciate the beauty of our adjoining countryside and we must strive to preserve the majority of it. Allowing the village to join up with surrounding settlements will ultimately change our village to an urban area.
Although large, important to keep a 'village' surrounded by green separate from reading.
Although the village has expanded in recent years, we still class ourselves as a village. We are already experiencing parking problems and much longer waiting times at the medical centre. I don't see how we can accommodate more housing.
And focus on born and bred villagers for priority housing
Any extension of village boundaries will I'm sure increase further building to outlying village.
Boundaries of the village should be kept as such and remain as boundary for any future growth.
Definitely, I don't want any more development towards Emmer Green and Reading
Definitely - in areas to preserve our village status
Definitely if we are to remain as a village
Definitely! This is a must otherwise all the villages etc. will merge into one homogenous mass.
Do not allow to extend toward Reading or Peppard.
Fundamental requirement of NDP
Further development should be kept at the required minimum. Infilling over the last few years has been very active. A number of new builds have not been sold.
Have lived here over 50 years and this village has had many changes, most good but the village is now becoming too large. Already have 2 very large developments. I don't want to become part of Reading.
I believe we should keep an area free of housing and buildings between Sonning Common and Reading as this would destroy the 'rural feel' of Sonning Common.
I feel we are losing our identity, we are becoming an urban sprawl.
I sometimes think we'd be better joining forces with Reading and getting a new bridge built and guaranteeing bus services

I think this is really a tough call as developers are always ready to pounce on any land in order to make money. I also think our village has already lost village status. We should do our utmost to retain what we have.
If not we will end up like Woodley, one estate merging into another.
If the betting shops were taking bets I would be tempted to put money on whether Sonning Common will first become a suburb of Emmer Green, Rotherfield Grey or Nettlebed.
If the village becomes larger, then it will get taken by Reading.
In part yes - away from Reading
It is important to preserve the open space between Reading and Sonning Common and to preserve the county boundary.
It is very important to keep distinct communities.
Keen SC apart from urban sprawl of Reading.
Keep the best of the village as it is
Most certainly. If I wanted to live in any other 'settlement' I would have bought there.
Needs to keep its village status not joining Reading.
None of the proposed options would result in the coalescence of Sonning Common with a surrounding settlement, but if development does intervene with the existing boundaries then measures should be put in place to offer a suitable new boundary to Sonning Common. The development of land on the edge of Sonning Common provides an opportunity to provide an attractive landscaped buffer that would integrate successfully within the local area.
Preserve AONB and reduce expansion outside village boundaries. Consideration given to how current green spaces are used and accessed by the community.
Psychologically and physically very desirable to be separate from Reading. To keep our own identity very important.
Retain the identity of the village and that of Kidmore End, retain green margin between Sonning Common and Emmer Green i.e. NO development
Sonning Common is a village not a suburb of Reading!
The key word is village how long before we get swallowed up by Reading and become Berkshire?
The village has now got enough large scale developments and is in danger of losing its character as a village. The schools already accept children from out of the village. The Health Centre is already over- stretched.
This is vital to prevent 'ribbon' development
To maintain its own identity in a semi-rural area
Urban creep is not good for the countryside
Very important not to merge with Reading
Very important to maintain the village environment and not merge with Reading etc.
Very important to retain village (albeit a large one) ambience
We are a village and wish it to remain that way

We are still a village! Blurring the boundaries would mean we become North Emmer Green!
We are vulnerable to urban creep and Emmer Green could be joined to Sonning Common. We need to stop this happening.
We have been trying to preserve the character of Sonning Common ever since I first knew it in 1969 and, if anything, my opinions against the idea have hardened. The village is basically full without any further development. Wood Lane is often congested or blocked by inconsiderate parking or simply traffic. Our schools are full and our health centre is being overwhelmed by new patients. Our boundaries should be protected and the countryside preserved by limiting growth. We have developed a good community spirit over the last decade or so and that is likely to be destroyed if the village becomes larger and impersonal.
We moved because it was quiet and village don't want to move again.
We must remain a self-contained village
We need corridors for wild life and breathing spaces - whether agricultural or greened for village use. Woodland between settlements could become degraded.
We wish to remain a village not a small satellite town - part of Reading
Yes - to keep village separate from the surrounding settlements; No - to rigidly protecting existing boundaries
Yes, but considering the reduction in the current bus service into Reading, would it be possible to build a pavement/footpath from here to Emmer Green for those of us who can still walk.

Appendix C:

Do you believe that some extra-care accommodation for Sonning Common's elderly/retired population should be provided?

67 responses

A great many elderly/retired people are happy to stay in their own homes having spent many years in the village. I think any new accommodation of this kind would appeal to people from outside the village.
Although fairly well catered for a little more could be done.
Am not sure about this as I have concerns about change of development of SON 8, from sport and recreation use to close care flats for the elderly. It seems to me that the height of such flats should be carefully considered in an area which is largely single storey dwellings. Flats can be very isolating for the elderly - more so than single story housing. This area is also some distance from the village centre amenities and access for residents who are in need of close care would be difficult.
As an integrated development - not as a contained separate development
As is identified within the DLP Planning 'Need Statement for Elderly Housing in relation to Development at Sonning Common' that was submitted as part of the Little Sparrows planning application (SODC Ref. P19/S4576/O). This analysis suggests that at present there is a level of unmet demand for 1,003-1,440 specialist units in South East Oxfordshire. There is a particularly high shortfall for owner occupied accommodation of all types, which is set to increase over the proposed plan period. Sonning Common is capable of making a significant contribution towards meeting the demand that is known and identified. As a larger village, Sonning Common is an appropriate location for this form of development.
But concerned that this is only for those that can afford it!
But not excessively. The younger generation and 1st time buyers need to be considered and included in the plan.
But not necessarily at site 24.
But not next to Johnson Matthey. A few more bungalows of single storey accommodation is needed as we are an aging population in Sonning Common.
But this should be a small development such as Birdwood Court not the much larger Inspired Villages Concept. Also it should be limited to Sonning Common residents if this is possible.
Careful consideration about location and access to key services
Extra care for elderly people in their own homes would be preferable.
I also think we need starter homes for young couples.
I am an 83 year old pensioner who has lived in Sonning Common for over 50 years. I like the fact that we have a population of all ages - keep it that way.
I do believe some will be required, similar to Batten House however, we do not need a huge development like the one proposed behind Widmore pond. I grew up here, and decided to I wanted to bring my Daughter up in the village. Being able to safely walk to the shops and play in the parks. Not everybody who lives here, or would want to live here is elderly.
I don't know which circle to tick. . Any extra-care accommodation for Sonning Common's elderly/retired population should be exactly that - for the elderly and retired of Sonning Common - not houses costing £400,000+ which very few villagers would be able to afford and which are more geared towards rich incomers.

I think Sonning Common has enough care accommodation in Abbeycrest who always seem to have spaces. I like the fact that there all different age groups in the village. Being 75 it's good to have young around.
I think the question should be "Do we want to support the existing care.." as I think we may lose that.
Ideally as shown next to Abbeycrest
I'm not sure what provision we already have, if any
In a location that will ensure they are able to integrate/participate in village activities and near transport links.
In keeping with village, not too high! So it looks like a block of flats!
It is important that long-term residents have an option to remain in the village for their final years. It helps to retain a community spirit and would encourage their children into the village to visit them.
It needs to be affordable to middle of the road people and not the wealthy as per the one that wants to go ahead with Gym swimming pool library etc. as these ad ons make the upkeep too expensive for most people concentrate on good quality build without so many extras that only a few may use and all will have to pay for.
It needs to be small scale to keep a healthy balance of people in the village
It's a known problem the elderly are living longer (me included) and that sort of facility would be great. BUT as the surgery has already repeated, this would put extra strain on existing medical services. You cannot have the former without considering the latter.
Kennylands Gym, as advised at the neighbourhood planning exhibition
Maybe just expand existing care home and Essex Way.
Not in the suggested location inappropriate
Not on the Johnson Matthey site. Agree with the suggestion of using the Gym site by the Millennium field and moving the Gym to the new recreation area near Chiltern Edge.
Not the massive project near JM
One or two bed houses/bungalows would be better, so as older people can downsize.
Only if another surgery was built and fully staffed. The present facilities are already at full capacity.
Only if it is for born and bred villagers and other villages. Truly local doesn't include Reading or High Wycombe
Placed near Abbeycrest if necessary is a good idea.
Please - we don't want Sonning Common to be a retirement village. A few smaller bungalows like Essex Way would be acceptable.
Precisely what is meant by extra-care? Mobile elderly and retired people want to live in their own houses with support in later years if necessary. Ghettos for the old are not good for the residents. Care villages seem dependent on making money from those using onsite restaurants.
Sites should (must) be at a location where there is easy, level access to village centre.
Smaller development than suggested
Smaller units like the ex-Baskerville Road house would keep needy older people in their own environment.

Smallish careful development - NOT the type proposed recently
Some additional units required for local residents so they may remain in the village near relatives and friends
The area suggested in the plan for this is in a more central and flatter area of the village and should be more affordable than the Inspired Villages ones. My mother lives in one in Wellingborough with her small four-room apartment, with communal lunch area downstairs, is ideal for her.
The population is aging and I remember Baroness Thatcher recommending a UK economy based on services.
The site of the gym at Kennylands seems ideal as well-situated to ????? the village and main road to Reading & public transport.
The village already has a retirement home.
The village does not have the resources. Drs would have problems getting appointments. It would mean more traffic on busy lanes. The builders have this idea that elderly people would walk or cycle - that won't happen.
The village needs affordable houses in order that local young people can stay here to build for the elderly is an excuse to build.
There are already care homes in the village and plenty of bungalows. Current services such as Health Centre could not cope with additional care for people later on in life. If there were extra care housing built it should be counted towards housing quotas.
There is a need or there will be for a limited amount of extra-care accommodation
There is additional capacity at existing care home and space
There is adequate accommodation now.
There is probably sufficient extra-care accommodation in the village at the moment. More should be built only if the demand for local residents can be demonstrated.
This is a family village - lots of young people to be catered for
This is vital. Right place and right numbers. It's should not be just a profit-centre for developer
This would free up existing properties as elderly move to local care accommodation
We already have one substantial care home and that should be enough. Many of our older people prefer to live in their own homes until that is no longer possible. When we first moved here we thought that one of the charms of village was the cosmopolitan distribution of people especially in age, some of whom we did help. Communities for the older tend to be inward looking and not contribute to village life.
We need young folk to give a more balanced village
Why we moved here. They will be out of the price range of normal elderly people it's just another way of keeping up the build numbers for the area.
Within easy access of village centre and bus stop.
Would need to bring workers in from outside village adding to traffic. Extra strain on Doctors surgery
Yes but a small amount for local people, not on scale of Inspired Villages!
Yes but we need a level area with easy access to bus services.
Yes if suitable brownfield sites can be identified. There is no justification for concreting over the countryside.

Yes, but only for the needs of Sonning Common. We should not provide for all of South Oxfordshire
Yes, but only if it is affordable in the case of a care home. Alternatively sheltered accommodation with an onsite warden.
Yes, but this development should match the needs of the community and not those with incomes/savings means by which to purchase highly inflated house prices.

Appendix D:

What size homes are needed most for village's overall population?

70 responses

1 / 2/3 bed properties needed but with realistic prices. Current new build prices are way too much for many people to get on property ladder or to make next move up ladder. I purchased a 3 bed 1960 home in the village last year for 315k, a two bed on linden homes site was 385k. Not realistic
1 bed makes S.C a <i>commuter</i> zone, couples/singles only. 4+ beds changes character of village.
1-2 bedrooms
2-3 bedroom properties are more affordable
2-3 bedroom properties encourages young or younger families, whom I feel ought to be encouraged.
A mix of all of these
A variety of sizes suitable for the plot chosen. Not too much tight filling in.
Affordable homes for young local villagers, not £450,000 plus housing.
Affordable homes of an appropriate size
Affordable housing
Allow owners of larger family homes to downsize
An urgent need is for start-up homes so that young people can get onto the 'housing ladder'. This is already reflected in the working party's 'recommendations'
And 3-4 bedroom, nothing more
And homes for young families
As ever, a mix is required
But not next to Johnson Matthey. A few more bungalows of single storey accommodation is needed as we are an aging population in Sonning Common
Do not require any more 4-bed + properties - they can't sell the ones we have. Maybe it would help encourage younger people to stay in the village if they could afford the property. My children had all to move away.
Even single residents or couples are likely to want a room for visitors or children. We should not be trying to accommodate large families since the population must decline to combat global warming. Families continue to be at the heart communities and this is perhaps more obvious now than for many decades.
Family homes
For working single people who are always overlooked
How do we put pressure on developers to make sure this happens?
I also think that we need 4-5 bedroomed properties as well
I think we have enough million pound houses already.

I think we have too many larger-, more expensive properties in the village. New, highly priced homes seem to be on the property market for some time before they are sold.
I would very much like to see a few small social housing groupings
Large homes emit more carbon dioxide which is bad for everyone.
Larger houses are not necessary
Low cost housing so that people who grew up in the village can live here.
Many children of current residents wish to live in the village but at present the cost is prohibitive, often because only larger houses are built that are outside their price range.
My daughter has lived here all of her life (she is 37 now). Her work is local and she still can't afford to live here despite a £60,000 deposit.
Need some more affordable housing allowing younger people to get on the property ladder
Needs a balance but not 1-bed properties and not all 4 bed or more.
No 4+ bed executive houses. Presently with only a few affordable houses leads to a village with no young families.
No more 4 bed houses or larger. They are not selling. We need far more starter homes to enable young people to buy and the elderly to downsize.
No more big houses, think about young families in normal jobs who don't earn 40k plus.
No more large 4 bedroom houses to be built. More affordable housing needed included 1 bed accommodation.
No more large properties. Need homes for younger generation and downsizing.
People who can only afford 1 bed are many and there is almost none.
Provision must be made for affordable housing for young families. Many of which have grown up in the area and reluctant to leave due to inflated house prices
Smaller for new families and retired downsizing
Some 1 bedroom properties would enable village 'children' to start their adult lives on home turf. Maybe then being able to buy the next stage along as family homes. 4 bedroom + - a surfeit now!
Some homes required at 'affordable' end of market to achieve a social and demographic mix
Some one bedroom properties would be very welcome for the young. Possibly in the form of maisonettes.
Starter homes - young families NOT large expensive homes out of reach of locals
Suitable for older people moving down
The houses being built are the moment are struggling to be sold.....why cover more green land in houses before the existing stock has been sold?
The mixture of employment options around Reading ensure that school leavers and young couples can get employment so build affordable homes to keep them in our village.
The most viable choice

The village is currently awash with 4 and more bedroom properties (primarily for developers profits), starter homes and homes for young families is the requirement.
The village needs affordable houses for the young, not 4/ 5-bedroom houses that do not sell we have enough of them.
There are plenty of 4/5 bed properties
There are too many large homes which seem to me not to meet the needs of our population
There is a need for smaller accommodation (bungalows and houses) to cater for first time buyers and those retiring.
There is a need for social housing for young families and smaller properties for older couples who want to downsize.
There is a pressing need for affordable housing. My two daughters are living elsewhere as they cannot afford to live in Sonning Common.
They should be affordable if possible i.e. a new 2-bed property should be less, or certainly not more than, an older 3-bed one which has not been the case so far!
This is needed to allow the larger houses to be had by family. At present there is a shortfall preventing the 'oldies' moving onwards to a smaller property.
To encourage the younger element to stay and take part in village life.
We need affordable housing that includes 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms. We do not need larger houses in a small village that are out of price range for individuals and young families.
We need affordable housing to keep the younger generation in the village
We need affordable housing. Not large unaffordable houses that are not selling.
We need housing for young couples and those downsizing at a reasonable price.
We need more smaller cheaper homes to maintain a wider range of people living in the village.
We need more starter home/downsizing sized properties and at more affordable cost.
We need smaller affordable houses not 4 or more bedrooms that younger people cannot afford
We need smaller properties for both young people and older people looking to downsize.
We need suitable accommodation for young families and for retired people whose children have left house
We understand that there is greatest demand for 1-2 bedroom properties in Sonning Common, although there is scope for larger properties to also be provided for in Sonning Common.
Where are the affordable homes for young people?
Young people need smaller houses to obtain mortgage.

Appendix E:

Do you agree with the Neighbourhood Plan revision strategy to date?

45 responses

A very well thought out response
Absolutely
As I said above there is no justification for destroying the environment to build houses in an area where they are not selling. It would be better to build homes in Reading where the employment is.
As mentioned earlier my views diverge from the current recommendations.
But please can we have a strategy for parking and infrastructure improvement.
Disagree with people's comments that housing should be built and affordable for local people. No one is entitled to stay in the village they grew up in, people need to work up the housing ladder as others have. People pay a premium to live in a nice village like Sonning Common having worked hard and saved and this should not be devalued.
Doing a good job
Excellent revision
Excellent work. Tom from I.V. said village is doing a great job, unlike other parishes he knows.
Fine job keep it up. Much appreciated.
Fully support but I do hope consideration is given to both ends of the housing market with sensible and considerate development.
Generally 'yes', but not 100% in agreement. The process is excellent and made random proposals from developers easier to refuse.
How long is a piece of string? This time next year it could all change again.
I am full of admiration for the thoroughness and diligence behind the neighbourhood plan. The biggest future problem will be to curtail developers who think that their built estates are heaven on earth. The plan is short on community space.
I have every confidence in the team managing the Neighbourhood Plan.
In general terms given the qualifications stated above.
It all makes a lot of sense and the process ensures that it is democratic.
It is clear it is the best way forward
It's been an excellent job! Keep it up.
Many residents' opinions have not been listened to. Linden have ridden roughshod over the NDP because the PC allowed them to. Where will it end?
Mostly I do with exceptions
No defined strategy stated - only a view on specific sites. Noted village centre plans, but consider end-on parking poor and likely to lead to accidents. What about a small industrial site to re-position businesses?

No, I think we need smaller properties as the large ones are not selling. These are not affordable and are being rented not sold. We need housing for local young people.
Not quite sure - we still feel that if we are to have 100 extra houses that they should be in small plots - not large developments. If that's your plan then I agree!!!
Not really the village is getting bigger, a drain on resources. The housing built is too expensive. So people who commute to London, they don't get involved within the village.
Only housing for born and bred villagers or all ages should be provided
Our team is doing the best it can given the constraints imposed by the dictates of our central government. We should plan ahead for reduced population to combat global warming. It is regrettable that Coronavirus is likely to lead us in a very difficult and heart-rending direction but we should await its outcome before our plan is confirmed
Please stick to it??
Probably necessary to protect the village from developers
Thank heaven for the Neighbourhood Plan!
Thank you for all the continual hard work put it by the working party of neighbourhood Plan.
Thank you for your efforts. Well done
Thank you for your hard work.
Thanks to team for their continued hard work.
The Village Map with sites produced for the meeting on November 14th 2019 is much more helpful as it allows residents to see the relationship between the old and revised NPs.
There is no option - politics and money take over
We have no further comments
We need to press a pause button to let the village adjust to the three big developments under construction. They are all on the edge of the village - so more cars will swamp Wood Lane, the Health Centre and the primary school.
Well done NP revision working party!
What infrastructure is being included in the plan? Schooling, doctors' surgery, playgroups, parking and shopping needs. We need to preserve the countryside as well as providing housing needs. If we are increasing the population of Sonning Common has the impact on local services been addressed?
Where would we be without it!
Whilst there is an acceptance that a small amount of development will be located in Sonning Common, the current Neighbourhood Plan fails to provide any accommodation for the older persons housing necessary to meet growing needs. The Site Selection process should be carried out again in a more transparent manner so that residents can be confident that is fair, lawful and robust.
With slight variations
Yes - excellent.
You are doing great work!

Appendix F

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVISION RESPONSE

Having been to the display at the Village Hall, I attach my response as requested. I also offer the following thoughts.

1. There is a real need to provide more housing for an expanding population, nationally, county-wide, and locally. There is no sound reason why Sonning Common should not contribute towards meeting this need. It should also be recognised that, demographically, the fastest rate of growth is amongst older people, many of whom might be able to release homes that are presently larger than they need. Doubtless, it has also to be acknowledged that it is the young who will find it most difficult to secure housing.
2. Scenically, the village has little special character, but it does have very good local services, is in close proximity to attractive countryside, and is more obviously associated with the Reading area than Oxford.
3. Strategically, the area to the south of Reading would be the one most suitable for major new development, being close to the M4, with new transport infrastructure proposed, and having a relatively ordinary flat landscape. In contrast, the area to the north comprises the commencement of the Chiltern Hills, and has limited accessibility across the River. For the record that does not represent a convincing argument for a third bridge, in my opinion.
4. Additionally, whilst land at the edge of any existing settlement will always be vulnerable to new development, there is a clear open wedge between the northern limits of the present built up area of Reading (i.e. Emmer Green and surrounds) and Sonning Common. Maintaining that open wedge is an important objective in defining and enjoying the separate settlements – otherwise Sonning Common will be absorbed into a Greater Reading.
5. However, that does not mean that there should be no more development on the land to the south of the village. The development of sites 26 and 27 would not take the village any further south than existing development already does. This land is also bounded to the west by a well established line of trees. If this land were to be released for new development, the opportunity should be taken to reinforce that line of trees with more planting, and to plant an extensive tree belt along the southern boundary. The strict enforcement of that requirement would then create a clear defensible boundary to discourage any further development to the south, so maintaining the open wedge.
6. This land is also outside of the present boundary of the AONB. However, I do not consider that over reliance should be placed on these existing boundaries. They were introduced decades ago, and the designated area contains hundreds of square miles. I further believe that any arguments relating to the 'setting' of the AONB are of minimal significance. How can such a large area truly have a 'setting', and if any adjoining land is of significance, it should be within the defined area? It is manifestly unreasonable to effectively 'extend' the AONB by claiming a 'setting'. Indeed, the opportunity exists now to suggest changes to the AONB, if any are justified, as they might be.

7. In contrast to the land to the south, the land to the east is on rising ground, and at a plateau in the vicinity of Blounts Court Road. Much of it is open to view along the main road through the village, and from Blounts Court Road itself. This area also suffers from a very poor road system, being narrow, with sloping and poorly angled road junctions, and is inherently dangerous. It is also the area that has best retained its rural character, and would be most vulnerable to obvious and potentially damaging visual change. All these sites, including the 'Johnson Matthey car park', are much less suitable for development than those to the south, or SON 1, in my opinion. I do not favour any of them.

8. Indeed, with regard to the Johnson Matthey car park, has any attention been paid to where the displaced parking is going to be located, and if it has, would it be acceptable? Just because the car park is nominally 'previously developed land' that does not automatically make it suitable for new development, in this case development totally unrelated to Johnson Matthey, who, presumably, still have a need for car parking.

9. Although no comments have been requested for the draft village centre proposals, which I welcome in principle, I fear the end-on parking will be potentially dangerous. Whilst I recognise the capacity will be less, parallel parking ought to be far safer, though not without its own risks. In reality, there is only so much you can do, where demand will always outstrip supply. Time limitations and more effective enforcement may be a better bet, if only to discourage the use of the car for short trips.

10. Finally, as far as I am aware, little thought is being given to land or buildings for the local businesses we rely on. Some are not best located, though very necessary for many of us. Is there scope for a relocation site in future plans, which could lead to the release certain sites in the village which may be more suitable for new housing.

Baskerville Road, resident.