



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

The top ten strengths which have been identified so far are:

1. An attractive place to live
2. The rich cultural heritage of the town
3. Good road access (even if there are some capacity issues)
4. Easy access to attractive countryside
5. Breadth of skills, experience and expertise among local people
6. Good schools
7. Harmonious architecture and strong design character
8. Good range of clubs and societies
9. Regular markets and a good range of independent shops
10. A high quality natural environment worthy of preservation/enhancement

The top ten topics to be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan (so far):

1. Car parking in the town centre
2. Increasing residential parking
3. Connecting/improving footpaths
4. Improving road capacity
5. Connecting/improving cycleways
6. Maintaining/increasing the amount of commercial space in the town centre
7. Maintaining/improving the character/attractiveness of the town
8. Ensuring infrastructure improvement meet the pace of housing development
9. Safeguarding/improving the natural assets of the town (green spaces, Letcombe Brook etc.)
10. Improving public transport (buses, Grove station)

**Detailed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats prepared by our working groups are on the following pages...**



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **STRENGTHS**

### **Town centre, businesses, economy and technology**

- Attractive town centre environment.
- Good pubs, restaurants etc.
- The heritage of the town.
- Adjacent areas to the town suitable for expansion.
- Good road access
- Broad demographic – wide skills base.
- Attractive place to live.
- Particularly high IQ working population.

### **Transport**

- 5 roads linking Wantage with surrounding area (A417E, A417W, A338E, A338W, B4494)
- Proximity to major highways (M4, M40, A34)
- Proximity to major rail station (Didcot)
- Bus service to Oxford, Abingdon, Harwell Campus and Didcot but .. (see Weaknesses)
- (Community) Bus service to local villages
- School bus transport from villages
- Voluntary transport scheme run by local charity for medical visits etc
- Taxi rank in Market Square with good availability
- Active cycling groups
- Network of footpaths for walking within Wantage

### **Infrastructure**

- Broadband cable to most areas
- Mains Gas
- Generally acceptable mobile signal
- Water supply (to 1 bar pressure)
- Mains sewer
- Public toilets
- Pedestrian crossings
- Litter bins
- Leisure centre
- Civic centre (The Beacon)
- Independent Advice Centre
- Market Square with markets Wednesday & Saturday (and monthly Farmers Market)
- Road/cycle signs
- Car parks
- Blue badge parking



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Education**

- Good collection of private nurseries and toddler groups
- Acorns / Camel / Ark pre-schools
- Charlton Primary School (OFSTED : Good)
- Stockham Primary School (OFSTED : Good)
- Wantage Church of England Primary School (OFSTED : Good)
- King Alfred's Secondary School (3 sites) (OFSTED : Outstanding)
- Grove Church of England Primary School (OFSTED : Good)
- Millbrook Primary School (OFSTED : Inadequate)
- St Amand's Catholic Primary School (OFSTED : Requires improvement)
- St Michael's Church of England Primary School (OFSTED : Good)
- St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, East Challow(OFSTED : Good)
- St James Church of England Primary School, Hanney (OFSTED : Good)
- The Hendreds Church of England Primary School (OFSTED : Good)
- The Ridgeway Church of England Primary School (OFSTED : Good)
- Good special needs school (Fitzwaryn)

## **Health/ Emergency Services**

- Medical centre (WHC, Mably Way) housing 2 practices plus 1 other, also in Grove
- Local midwife-led maternity unit
- Local physiotherapy clinics (NHSP + private)
- Complementary health therapists
- Community hospital
- Opticians / Dentists / Chemists
- Assisted Living residences
- Care/Residential homes
- Sheltered Accommodation
- Active, local care charities
- Defibrillators
- Fire Service
- Neighbourhood Watch areas
- Low crime area
- Street Pastors
- Police presence - counter service in Library
- Neighbourhood Teams
- First Responders

## **Natural Heritage**

- Proximity to Wessex Downs AONB and easy access to countryside generally
- Letcombe Brook corridor



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Cultural Heritage**

- Vale & Downland Museum
- Library
- Literary connections eg Betjeman/Hardy
- King Alfred connections
- Recreation Ground, Betjeman Park & other open spaces
- Market Place- Market held twice weekly
- Churches & The Convent
- Pubs and historic hotels
- FESTIVALS: Summer/Music/Betjeman/Other annual events
- Dickensian Evening
- Wantage Town Governors/Alms Houses
- Butler Centre
- Music and dance activities/Silver Band/Orchestra/ickniel Morris men/folk
- The Sack house museum
- Strong community and many local interest groups
- Wantage Improvement Act 1828

## **Industrial Heritage**

- Wantage Tramway
- Town and other mills
- Industrial archaeology
- Wilts & Berks Canal and Wantage Wharf

## **Environment**

- Letcombe Brook and its corridor is a rare chalk stream with protected species.
- Parks, nature reserve, conservation area, green spaces, allotments and community garden.
- Attractive countryside and landscape eg: North Wessex Downs AONB.
- Access to the countryside - public rights of way network and Ridgeway.
- Local conservation volunteer groups actively caring for the natural environment.
- Attractive rural landscape and approaches to Wantage by road.
- Semi-natural habitats and landscape features including hedgerows, shelter belts, small areas of woodland in surrounding countryside.
- Good soils and air quality



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Conservation**

- Most historic properties are concentrated in Wantage town centre or village centres - easier to protect with conservation areas.
- South and west ranges of the square not significantly altered since the 19th century
- Important archaeological sites located near the Ridgeway - high national public awareness and tourist interest encourages protection.
- Vale and national policies give high priority to conservation of heritage
- Strong local groups promote conservation of heritage, e.g. Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, Friends of the Ridgeway, historical and archaeological groups
- The award-winning Museum and events such as the Dickensian Evening raise awareness of Wantage's historic character and hence enthusiasm for its conservation.
- The district is relatively affluent and property is valuable, which is an incentive to care for it.
- The town's history is well-documented and there is plenty of literature available.
- The town's eastern, southern and western approaches are attractive.

## **Design**

- Diversity of styles and ages of buildings
- Harmonious mix of homes throughout the town
- Harmonious dimensions of the Market Place
- Materials – mainly red brick with “string” course, Tile/slate roofs & generous eaves
- Bay windows or dormer windows are common
- Most building in the conservation areas are well maintained
- Letcombe Brook and Humber Ditch enhance nearby developments
- Good use of local green spaces on some estates as children play areas
- Few “eyesore” buildings
- Manor Park and Betjeman Millennium Park.

## **Youth, Leisure, Sport and Art**

- Good quantity and diversity of facilities in the area
- 3 local gyms
- Wantage Silver band has hall at Tugwell Field
- Also pitches for youth football. Rugby pitches at Grove RFC
- Numerous clubs catering for variety of pursuits, but some do fall short of requirements
- The Beacon is recently refurbished and is well maintained and central to Wantage town
- The ongoing restoration of the Wilts and Berks canal is a positive step
- Most areas in Wantage are maintained by Vale District Council to a reasonable level
- Vale and Downland Museum offers community space for talks and performances
- Children's water play area at Manor Road park
- Sweatbox youth club provides activities for teenagers



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **WEAKNESSES**

### **Town centre, businesses, economy and technology**

- AONB restrains development.
- Lack of range of shops.
- Lack of parking for workers and visitors.
- Decline in market traders.
- Size of shop units.
- Lack of available retail space.
- Reliance on neighbouring parishes for commercial space.
- No rail connection.
- Poor road network
- Broadband.
- Competition easily accessible.
- Past planning has damaged historic fabric of town.
- Modern stereotype businesses dominate square.

### **Transport**

- No readily immediate alternatives to each of the 4 major roads
- A338 N and A417 E of inadequate standard for current volume of traffic during peak hours leading to acute congestion
- Roads leading to/from Wantage are not wide enough
- Conflict between car/bicycle concurrent use of major roads leading to long tailbacks during peak hours
- Denchworth Road inadequate to be part of Western "ring road"
- Portway/Ormond Road inadequate to be part of Southern "ring road"
- Cars parked on some main routes in Wantage leading to delays
- Bus parking in Market Place
- Excessive through traffic through centre of Wantage
- No train/bus co-ordination at Didcot Station
- Newbury bus Saturdays only
- Limited frequency, long trip duration, poor reliability and restricted operating hours on most bus routes (Oxford is exception)
- Existing shared use cycle paths do not meet national standards (e.g. width)
- No safe, continuous cycle paths on main corridors
- Pinched entry points to Market Square hazardous to cyclists and pedestrians



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Infrastructure**

- Poor reliability of some electrical mains systems)
- Roads flood frequently)
- Poor mobile signal in certain areas, notably Town centre)
- Inadequate sewerage capacity means that raw sewage appears in gardens)
- Only 1 public toilet in town centre, which has limited hours)
- Poor siting of some pedestrian crossings)
- No recycling litter bins)
- Little social seating throughout Wantage)
- Leisure centre already over capacity)
- Signage requires improvement for cyclists/tourists/hikers etc)
- Inadequate car parks)
- Poor enforcement of parking regulations

## **Education**

- Premises for nurseries, toddler groups and pre-schools are not secured for the long-term
- Some Wantage and Grove classes already full and/or using temporary accommodation
- Not all children have places within their catchment area
- No Adult Education within the town

## **Health**

- Lack of space at Medical centre for 3rd practice
- Medical centre currently over capacity
- Distance to major hospitals for routine appointments
- Lack of good public transport to A&E/hospitals/Minor Injuries Unit
- Distance of health practices from south and west Wantage
- Ambulance response standards not met
- Restricted mobility access within parts of Wantage
- Lack of police presence at certain times of the day and night
- Police counter service has restricted hours

## **Natural Heritage**

- Previous loss of heritage assets
- Disconnect between rural and urban parts of town
- Risk of encroachment on green corridors

## **Cultural Heritage**

- Need to learn from previous mistakes re built environment
- Changing age profile may threaten existing community organisations
- Possible lack of vision for the character of the town
- Impact assessments need greater public scrutiny
- Lack of coach park and lack of sufficient parking in general



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Industrial Heritage**

- Lack of protection for some historic assets e.g. Belmont canal bridge

## **Environment**

- Poor maintenance and management of semi-natural areas in green spaces.
- Unconnected habitats leading to fragmentation and isolation of areas for wildlife.
- Developers, landowners and contractors not experienced in managing semi-natural habitats eg: wildflower meadows become regularly mown grassland.
- Lack of environmental awareness. Little or no real gain achieved for biodiversity on new developments, lack of opportunity to effectively get involved in environmental aspect of planning process.
- Lack of trees or green boundaries planted on edges of new developments.
- Developers not implementing and maintaining agreed landscaping and biodiversity plans, little or no enforcement of planning conditions.
- Insufficient resources and infrastructure to improve water quality at Wantage and Grove Sewage Treatment works.
- Minimal resourcing of local projects enhancing the environment.
- Small gardens with little space for play or wildlife.
- Insufficient signed cycle paths/footpaths linking together green spaces, the Brook, Wantage and surrounding countryside.
- Lack of facilities in parks for all ages.
- Insufficient links with countryside community eg: farmers and racehorse stables.
- Lack of open green spaces and poor distribution away from users eg: Manor Road Memorial Park.
- Dog fouling and litter in open spaces and footpaths, and lack of bins.
- Low civic pride, lack of active volunteers to maintain green and clean environment.
- Bye-laws not enforced or un-enforceable.

## **Conservation**

- General ignorance of listing system and responsibilities it imposes on owners of historic properties, despite copious information available if looked for.
- Lack of support for owners of domestic listed buildings.
- Shortage and high cost of traditional building skills and local materials, e.g. English elm, lime plasterers. Modern alternatives trap damp and damage historic structures.
- Lack of public awareness of historic buildings in less prominent areas such as Mill Street - it is easy never to look above pavement level.
- Recession has exacerbated neglect - empty shops.
- Modern tarmac pavements prevent old walls from breathing. Renewal often means a new layer of tarmac, resulting eventually in floor levels below pavement levels, leading to damp.
- Heavy goods vehicles cause vibration and pollution - especially at bottom of Mill Street.
- Centuries-old trees in Conservation Areas rapidly being lost to disease and not being replaced - no tree planting policy.





# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Design**

- Lack of diversity of shops (numerous charity shops, cafes and estate agents)
- Nationwide branding of chains detracts from local styles
- Lack of residential parking when there is a heavy reliance on cars as a means of transport means significant amount of on street parking
- Lack of bin storage means that refuse bins can be an "eyesore"
- Weak design on Limborough Road shopping area
- Several un-adopted roads
- Problems with parking areas separate from homes in some areas
- Poor design of Sainsbury's car park near Letcombe Brook
- Shortage of public open space especially to the east of the town
- Some local green spaces stipulate no ball games therefore are not useful for children
- Poor road maintenance
- No coach parking.

## **Youth, Leisure, Sport and Art**

- The Leisure Centre is maintained to a good standard but there have been issues concerning the service provided
- The KA Academy has first call on use of the Leisure Centre
- No toddler pool
- There are no athletics facilities (inc running track/field event facilities or related training) in the area
- There is no skateboard park in Wantage, but the one at Grove airfield/near Mably way can be seen to serve both Wantage and Grove
- No Multi Use Games Area
- Grove RFC has a high level of use, but quality of some facilities falls short of matching this use
- There is no indoor rink for Bowls in Wantage, so from September- April, members travel to Cowley for this facility. However there are indoor Bowls facilities at Hanney and Grove
- Lack of facilities for young people/teenagers for example: cinema, bowling alley, ice rink
- Lack of large performance spaces
- Availability of rooms at the Beacon
- Sweatbox only open during term time
- Plenty of school playing fields, but these aren't available for non-school groups and are unused at weekends/holidays
- Plenty of surrounding countryside for walking etc, but designated open space per capita falls below recommendations and may fall



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Town centre, businesses, economy and technology**

- Undeveloped sites – e.g. Police Station, old Blanshards site.
- Improvement of Market Place e.g. Pedestrianisation.
- To identify ‘cells’ for development as certain uses.
- Increasing population and thus demand will attract services.
- IT provision to residential developments to assist home workers plus parking provision for visitors.
- Development of art based business.
- Commercial neighbours produce more market.

### **Transport**

- Eastern link road with cycle and foot paths
- Western link road with cycle and foot paths
- New developments to have self-sufficient off-road parking
- Grove Rail station
- Trams (Wantage/Grove or Wantage/Didcot/Harwell)
- Reduce traffic through Market Square
- Bus station
- All buses to have disabled access
- Park and Ride system e.g. Challow, Grove Technology Park, Crab Hill
- Improved bus services to key employment centres
- Extend bus service to Grove Tech Park
- Safe, continuous cycle paths for main corridors (e.g. employment, schools, shops) in town and beyond

### **Infrastructure**

- Home working
- Good broadband connections to all new buildings
- Tourist accommodation (e.g. new hotel)
- Range of litter bins to include recycling options
- Bus hub/station
- Covered cycle parks
- Coach and lorry parking
- Local community and leisure centres (adequately sized for whole of Wantage)
- Charging points for electric cars



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Education**

- New schools at Grove Airfield and Crab Hill
- Use of KA's East Site for primary school earlier than Crab Hill
- Inclusion of Adult Education within existing schools
- Safe car, coach, cycle access to schools

## **Health/ Emergency Services**

- Health hub with improved primary healthcare, minor injuries unit, additional GP services (e.g. diagnostics)
- Enhanced community hospital with beds for respite/convalence, rehabilitation, re-enablement without prejudicing existing mobile services
- Improve response time for ambulances in order to meet/exceed national standards
- Ambulance Station
- Extended hours at police counter
- Health hub (medical centre) to also house 3rd practice

## **Heritage**

- Reflect heritage features in new developments
- Make better use of green corridors and improve signage/access
- Wilts & Berks Canal restoration
- Make more creative use of Industrial archaeological heritage
- Make positive use of scientific heritage e.g. Harwell/Culham/RAL
- Re-opening Railway Station
- Arts projects and ARTISAN HUB potential
- S106 monies from developments
- Listing of community assets where risk of loss/insensitive development
- Toning down the National chains branding



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Environment**

- New developments - create new accessible green spaces in urban area for public enjoyment and recreation, including semi-natural habitats for wildlife and public enjoyment.
- Protect, enhance and create green spaces, including areas with semi-natural habitats, biodiversity and nature conservation interest.
- Connect green open spaces and habitats with green corridors to allow movement of species and people.
- Letcombe Brook - designate, protect and enhance rare chalk stream and corridor with a brook restoration and management plan.
- Protect Letcombe Brook from development, pollution and disturbance.
- Promote nature conservation with local residents, especially children.
- Restore the Wilts and Berks Canal providing recreation opportunities and a green corridor for wildlife.
- Community action groups and partnerships - need to be more visible and supported.
- Develop education and volunteer opportunities to engage and inspire new conservationists to tackle the ongoing problems faced by wildlife and the natural world.
- Continue to support and increase resources to local environment groups eg: Letcombe Brook Project to raise awareness and engage people in caring for their environment.
- Undertake a survey and engage the public in identifying areas of biodiversity interest, raise awareness of these, protect and enhance areas.
- Carry out an environmental audit of green spaces and improve and integrate areas for recreation, biodiversity, and landscape.
- Ensure developments are designed/constructed to high sustainable standards eg: energy efficiency, renewable energy, grey water recycling systems, water storage etc.
- Develop a Green Plan for Wantage.
- Improve signposting for footpaths and cycle routes and usage of public rights of way
- Solar panels should be encouraged on roofs.
- Undertake a tree survey, protect existing trees and plant new trees in appropriate areas.
- Cycle friendly paths.
- Provide more allotments as population increases.
- Promote Wantage as 'Gateway to Ridgeway'.
- Adopt woods for community use eg: Pewitt Wood.
- Promote community spaces.
- Promote local businesses using local products.
- King Alfred Academy could help improve environmental education of pupils and parents.
- Use of festivals to facilitate greater awareness of the environment.
- Sponsorship opportunities for green/environmental improvements, eg: use of Trusts.



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Conservation**

- Recovery from recession means more prosperity, care and repair.
- Public could be made more aware of conservation issues and responsibilities of owners to listed buildings, perhaps with displays at the Museum or leafleting.
- Development of tourist industry would further incentivise proper maintenance.
- New housing developments could increase demand for shops and hence value and status of commercial and residential properties.
- Empty buildings in Alfred Street could be saved from dereliction by Council intervention. This would also promote commerce by improving pedestrian circulation.
- Community Assets strategy could be used to purchase and protect vulnerable features, e.g. pubs.
- Community Land Trusts could be established - self-funded redevelopments, combining housing with community spaces, e.g. Convent.
- Crab Hill development and Science Vale Oxford would divert traffic away from town centre - less pollution, vibration.
- Park & Ride at Grove Technology Park could reduce pollution in the town centre.
- New trees could be planted where old ones have been removed.
- Tree Preservation Orders could be used to protect ancient trees, where appropriate.
- Development of eco materials, e.g. limecrete, clay paints, may bridge gap between traditional and modern building materials and make sympathetic repairs more feasible.

## **Design**

- Chance to develop a vision for Wantage as a Neighbourhood comprising integrated sub-neighbourhoods/ communities
- Chance to encourage use of sustainable & environmentally-friendly designs and materials (e.g. solar panels, ground sources heat, waste-recycling, facilities shared with Grove etc.)
- All new developments to include accessible and enclosed public open space
- All new open space to be places in Trust for the community and to include provision of finance for sustained management in perpetuity
- Planning consent conditions to include mandatory 'environmentally sustainable compliance' and 'financial provision for sustained management/maintenance
- Opportunity to meet local housing needs:
  - Homes with granny flats
  - Bungalows
  - Homes with space for home working
  - Homes for young couples/professionals
  - Opportunity to separate cars, cyclists and pedestrians
  - Create a coach park
  - Opportunities to provide sufficient residential parking with sustainable drainage
  - Opportunity to create the future heritage of the town
  - Opportunity to regenerate the Canal in Wantage



# ***Wantage Neighbourhood Plan***

## **Youth, Leisure, Sport and Art**

- New leisure centre planned for Mably Way
- Crab Hill development will have skate park, community hall and open spaces/play areas and sports pitches
- VWHDC has plans to upgrade facilities in Manor Road park, possibly to include outdoor gym/running track
- Football club raising funds for Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) behind leisure centre
- Leisure centre under new management from Sept 2014
- The Beacon plan to show monthly films, including children's films



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **THREATS**

### **Town centre, businesses, economy and technology**

- Internet shopping.
- Growth of other centres – e.g., Didcot.
- Inadequate future proofing of the future needs of businesses.
- Inadequate parking for future.
- Inadequate protection of future and existing employment sites.
- Inadequate provision for future transport.
- Disabled access.

### **Transport**

- No Western or Eastern link roads
- Developers do not fulfil their obligations
- Link roads only completed after new housing
- A417E/A338N chronic congestion during peak hours
- A34 or A420 problems leading to diversions through Wantage
- Town centre gridlock
- Increased number of road accidents for all users
- Increased traffic causing further deterioration of road surfaces

### **Infrastructure**

- Capacity of existing/planned facilities to cope with future demand – gas, leisure centre, telephone, mobile, electricity, cable, water, sewerage, drains, parking (regular, cycling and blue badge)
- Increased litter
- Increased flooding on roads and footpaths
- Inadequately sized, inflexible community and leisure centres

### **Education**

- Secondary schools concentrated in western Wantage
- Capacity and phasing of existing/planned schools (including pre-schools) to cope with future demand
- Potential loss of pre-schools due to land being ear-marked for other education needs
- Developers fail to provide space/funding for new schools in step with demand from all new developments throughout Wantage and Grove (leads to disjointed community)
- Monopoly provision of education by single academy trust

### **Health**

- Capacity of existing/planned facilities (including "Strengths" opposite) to cope with future demand
- Ageing population
- Reduced funding for care providers
- Increased road congestion hindering emergency services thus increasing response times even further
- Closure of police counter service



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Heritage**

- Unforeseen changes in National Planning policies
- Risk to heritage assets from increased traffic flows
- Loss of green corridors due to adjacent development
- Risk of loss of quality of Letcombe Brook corridor
- General loss of character of Wantage through insensitive developments
- Absentee landlord issues
- Inadequate impact assessments open to public scrutiny
- Inadequate enforcement of Environment Impact Assessments
- Threat to heritage as a result of speed of developments
- Changes in demographics and social structure having knock on effect on community organisations

## **Environment**

- Letcombe Brook has no legal protection, is not designated as important priority habitat, suffers from a range of issues and challenges; ecological status under the Water Framework Directive is failing 'Moderate to Poor'.
- Climate change - increasing temperatures leading to intense rainfall in summer and prolonged wet periods on winter. Increasing regularity of surface, fluvial and pluvial flooding. Threats to people, homes and businesses, habitats and species.
- Growing population - increasing demands on scarce resources eg: local water is supplied by the aquifers of the Letcombe Brook on which animals and plants rely.
- Development pressure - increasing pressure on the natural environment and scarce resources; including strain on drainage system, roads, parking, crowded cemetery, etc.
- Development on green field land and close to sensitive habitats such as Letcombe Brook and countryside in North Wessex Downs AONB.
- Intensification of agriculture; solar farms in open rural countryside.
- Loss of semi-natural habitats.
- Lack of management of nature conservation areas.
- Lack of knowledge about local biodiversity areas, and how to manage habitats and wildlife, and lack of monitoring and recording.
- Tidier environment - we are less tolerant of "weeds" and use more pesticides. More space is covered by decking, gravel, tarmac and other sterile surfaces
- Development - keep the countryside setting of the parish and green gaps between Wantage, Grove, and East Challow protected and where appropriate enhanced.
- Non-native and invasive species eg: American signal crayfish, ash dieback and domination of areas with Himalayan balsam.
- Lack of base-line data, monitoring to assess the environment eg: water quality before during and after developments.
- People have less contact with their natural environment leading to a lack of environmental awareness.
- Fly-tipping, vandalism, graffiti, litter and dog fouling a serious problem, which increases as population increases.
- Future biodiversity offsetting needs to be properly evaluated locally.
- Heavier traffic during construction works results in increase in pollution and roads become more dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians





# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Conservation**

- Pressure from central government to convert and update old housing stock for residential use - large, non-local commercial developers uninterested in conservation and may actively subvert it.
- Local authorities apparently unable or unwilling to prevent damage to or destruction of historic buildings, even in Conservation Areas, e.g. 16th century(?) Blanshards building, inappropriate doors and double glazing in some properties. Enforcement officers need to deal with these issues

## **Design**

- No overall vision of the town as a "science based service centre"
- Potential for flooding if run-off, Letcombe Brook, Humber Ditch and other ditches not managed
- Not enough diversity in shops to encourage tourism
- On-street parking
- Traffic congestion
- Permission granted for developments which create ghetto effects
- Lack of finance for maintenance of community assets
- "Identikit" housing developments destroy the character of the town

## **Youth, Leisure, Sport and Art**

- Better facilities for children available elsewhere e.g. Didcot Wave
- Multiplex cinemas in Didcot and Oxford



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Political Influences**

- Nationally Imposed Planning Policy.
- Lack of funding for infrastructure.
- Inadequate use of compulsory purchase orders to avoid haphazard redevelopments
- Lack of AV.
- Changes in EU agricultural policy, less grants available for protection and enhancement of biodiversity on farms through agri-environment schemes.
- Development pressures.
- Lack of protection for environment.
- Lack of real consultation and listening regarding planning locally or nationally.
- Changes of government nationally and locally.
- Changes in policy
- Presumption in favour of development outweighing all other considerations
- UK Government Strategy
- OCC Strategy
- VWHDC Strategy
- NHS strategy
- Wantage Town Council
- Wantage MP
- Green Lobby

## **Social Influences**

- Historic science and technology based knowledge.
- Residents reluctant to use town centre.
- Scientific.
- Unsatisfied Artist demand
- Rise in population growth of Wantage and attendant knock on effects on environment eg: air and noise pollution form increase in traffic, impact on scarce water resources, increased litter.
- People have less contact with nature than ever before. The loss of open green spaces, coupled with cultural changes and the rise of technology, means that many children rarely play outside.
- Food waste - valuable resources are wasted when we throw food away including, land, soil, water, which could be used to support biodiversity.
- Demand for housing.
- Increase in housing, increase in population - changes
- Reaction to urbanisation and change.
- Ageing population.
- Increased outdoor activity.
- Integration of newcomers.
- Significant number of young families coming into the area



# **Wantage Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Economic Influences**

- Lack of funding for infrastructure.
- Inadequate use of compulsory purchase orders to avoid haphazard redevelopments
- Oxfordshire SHMA - Strategic Economic Housing Assessment, April 2014 air quality - 100,000 new homes for county in next 17 years. Harwell, Culham expansion, Abingdon 'Garden City'.
- Lack of funding and competition for resources to restore, create and enhance the environment
- Lack of resources for protecting and enhancing the environment.
- Decreasing resources and increasing demands on government agencies e.g.: Environment Agency - pressures to cut costs e.g.: Augmentation of Letcombe Brook.
- Increasing population will demand more food production, resulting in less area for biodiversity.
- Increase in housing resulting in more people and an increase in spending in area.
- Employment demands – infrastructure and (skilled) labour pool (particularly Science Vale)
- (non) availability of funds
- Increased prosperity
- Local Enterprise Partnerships

## **Technological Influences**

- Broadband wholly inadequate.
- No 4G.
- Less contact with the natural world.
- GM foods and potential effects on biodiversity.
- Use and effect of pesticides on biodiversity eg neonicotinoids (insecticide) and bees.
- Pollution.
- Renewable energy - solar farms
- Driverless cars.
- Use of technology for managing traffic and parking, e.g. number plate recognition for congestion charging or car parking.
- Greater use of electric cars.
- Greater use of cards, chips etc. for shopping and journeys.
- Online shopping.
- Changes in methods of communication