



A short summary of the Plan's policies

The final Neighbourhood Plan is available for everyone to read. You can find it on our website (blewburyneighbourhoodplan.org) and there are printed copies at a number of sites in the village. This is a summary in plain English of the Plan's policies – they are what developers and planning officers will be guided by in preparing and deciding planning applications in Blewbury, and therefore in shaping the future development of our village and parish. The policies are based on extensive feedback received from the community during the three years it has taken to get to the final step – the village referendum.

If approved our Plan will have significant weight in the planning process, as part of the Vale's statutory Local Development Plan. As a result the Plan must not be in conflict with the Vale's Plan. This has greatly limited our flexibility but will result in a Neighbourhood Plan with significant legal standing.

Please remember that the Plan is only allowed to include policies concerning land use and housing development – *nothing else*. However, and not surprisingly, feedback from the village raised many other issues people are concerned about. They could not be policies, but Chapter 9 of the Plan records such community issues for future attention from the Parish Council and local government, and they are listed at the end of this summary.

The Plan is based on the following vision:

Our vision is to safeguard the unique character of this ancient village, to protect the beautiful landscape that surrounds us and to ensure sustainable development that meets the needs of residents at different stages in their lives, now and in the future.

Policy summaries

In the light of the limited scope for further development, the Plan focuses on policies that seek to ensure that new houses are targeted, as far as possible, at directly meeting the needs of the community.

- P1 Location of residential development** – Defines the built area of the village. Development will only be permitted outside the built area if it is a Rural Exception Site to provide social rented and affordable housing.
- P2 General principles for development** – Sets out conditions, based on the Landscape and Village Character Assessments, that must be met by any planning proposals. New development must preserve the character of the village and landscape, and not harm heritage assets or views (both within the conservation area and of the AONB landscape). Development must enhance local distinctiveness and not harm the amenities of adjoining properties by loss of light, being overlooked or of overbearing impact.
- P3 Housing mix** – Developments should favour smaller dwellings. Specifies minimum percentages of one, two and three bedroom homes, with only a few having four or more bedrooms.
- P4 Provision of affordable housing** – Developments of 11 houses or more must provide affordable housing as required in the Local Plan. Affordable houses must be distributed around the site and be indistinguishable from market housing.
- P5 Allocation of affordable housing** – 20% of new affordable housing is reserved for people with a strong local connection.
- P6 Design and aesthetics: new development** – Specifies good quality design that respects the characteristics of the immediate area and uses suitable materials. The policy will be applied flexibly for exceptional, innovative designs.
- P7 Design and aesthetics: new development, in an historic setting and extensions to historic buildings** – New development in the conservation area must be sensitive to the historic qualities and context. Alteration or extensions to historic buildings must respect the building's character,

materials and historic plot boundaries. Cob walls must be preserved. Paths, lanes, open spaces and public views (both into and out of the village) must be retained and enhanced. The dark visual ambience of the village should be preserved. Modern designs are not necessarily excluded, provided they are compatible with the building concerned and the local context. If an existing building or structure does not contribute positively to the character of the village it may be replaced by a building which does.

- P8 Amenity: new development** – New development must minimise noise, odour and light pollution. It must provide sufficient outdoor storage space for refuse, recycling and parking of cars and bicycles. If consisting of 10 dwellings or more with two or more bedrooms, it must include communal green space for children’s play.
- P9 Natural environment** – Where possible, boundaries should be native or wildlife-enhancing hedgerows. Fencing and walls should reflect traditional rural styles; high fences or walls restricting views are discouraged.
- P10 Sustainable development** – New housing should have provision for high-speed broadband or similar. Boxes for technology, services and utilities should be unobtrusive, with cables buried if possible. Developments of 10 or more units must show how their design follows the principles of the Building for Life 12 Guide.
- P11 Water management** – Requires adequate wastewater drainage and freshwater capacity, and not lead to problems of sewerage overflows for existing or new users.
- P12 Drainage and flooding** – Planning proposals must demonstrate that they will not exacerbate surface and groundwater drainage and flooding problems. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) must be incorporated wherever possible.
- P13 Access and movement** – New development must provide sufficient parking, integrated into the landscape to avoid dominating the street scene. Safe pedestrian access to bus stops, schools and other facilities must be provided, allowing for use of pushchairs, mobility scooters, etc. Developments should be open to the public, to allow social integration in the village.
- P14 Highways and traffic principles** – New development must not impact unduly on infrastructure and road safety. Priority should be given to pedestrians where possible.
- P15 Retail space, business services, restaurants and cafes** – New businesses are encouraged. No loss of retail, restaurant or cafe space is permitted unless the site has been marketed for one year with no viable offers, or if an equivalent replacement is provided elsewhere in the village, or new employment space would be created.
- P16 Public houses** – Change of use or redevelopment of the two existing pubs will be refused unless there is robust evidence to show that the pub is not economically viable and no longer required.
- P17 Community assets** – There will be a planning presumption against any proposals that would lead to a loss of community value.

Community issues

The **Community Issues** chapter highlights issues that came up time and again in our consultations but do not directly concern planning. They include:

- **Traffic and pedestrian safety:** lack of footpaths, traffic calming and crossing London Road.
- **Street lighting:** not wanted by the majority surveyed.
- **Transport:** local bus service situation and cycle paths.
- **Village character:** cob walls, footpath and bridge maintenance, designating unlisted heritage assets and possibly extending the conservation area.
- **Building standards:** small rooms, information on building quality and running costs.
- **Climate change and energy issues:** encouraging low-carbon building, renewable energy, and conservation of energy and water.