

BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN



The Berinsfield War Memorial

'A vibrant community planning a new vision for the future

2 – SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCOPING REPORT

Post-consultation version

13th October 2014

SCOPING REPORT FOR THE BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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SCOPING REPORT FOR THE BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. The Localism Act 2012 introduces a new right for communities to draw up a neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood planning will allow communities, both residents, employees and business, to come together through a local parish council or neighbourhood forum and say where they think new houses, businesses and shops should go – and what they should look like.

These plans can be very simple and concise, or go into considerable detail where people want. Local communities will be able to use neighbourhood planning to grant full or outline planning permission in areas where they most want to see new homes and businesses, making it easier and quicker for development to go ahead.

Provided a neighbourhood development plan or order is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority of those who vote, then the local authority will bring it into force.

Local planning authorities will be required to provide technical advice and support as neighbourhoods draw up their proposals. The Government is funding sources of help and advice for communities. This will help people take advantage of the opportunity to exercise influence over decisions that make a big difference to their lives.

Source: A Plain English guide to the Localism Act

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf

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SUMMARY

Although Berinsfield is regarded as one of the least affluent communities in Oxfordshire, it is a vibrant village to live in with a good community spirit, as demonstrated by the contextual data that follows. In order to improve its overall amenity value and to protect the village with its lifestyle for posterity, the Parish Council believes it is essential that a Neighbourhood Development Plan be prepared and accepted by a referendum of the community. A Steering Group has been set up made up of members of the Parish Council and other key stakeholders to oversee the process and consult with the local community.

1 Strategic aims

This Scoping Report acts as the precursor to a Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) which will set out to:

- achieve the vision for Berinsfield that emerges following public consultations.
- meet the Berinsfield contribution over the 17-year plan period for the strategic requirements as set out in the adopted South Oxfordshire District Council Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan covering the housing employment and services requirements for larger villages.
- indicate how the development of Parish assets will be funded, including contributions from developers (Section 106 & Community Infrastructure Levy), local fund-raising and local, county & central government.

2 Green belt limitations

All of Berinsfield, including its Green and the surrounding land within the parish boundary currently lie within an area designated as the Oxford Green Belt (described as 'washed-over'). South Oxfordshire District Council's adopted Core Strategy identifies this designation as one of the major barriers to the future growth and regeneration of the village.

The SODC Core Strategy Policy CSEN2 (paras 7.21 & 7.22) provides for a local review of the green belt at Berinsfield which could include land outside the existing built-up settlement boundary. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published in April 2014 and identified that South Oxfordshire could need up to an additional 5900 homes.

3 Housing options

The NDP aims to identify the type and mix of housing that best meets the needs of Berinsfield residents and to promote their preferential access to housing, where possible.

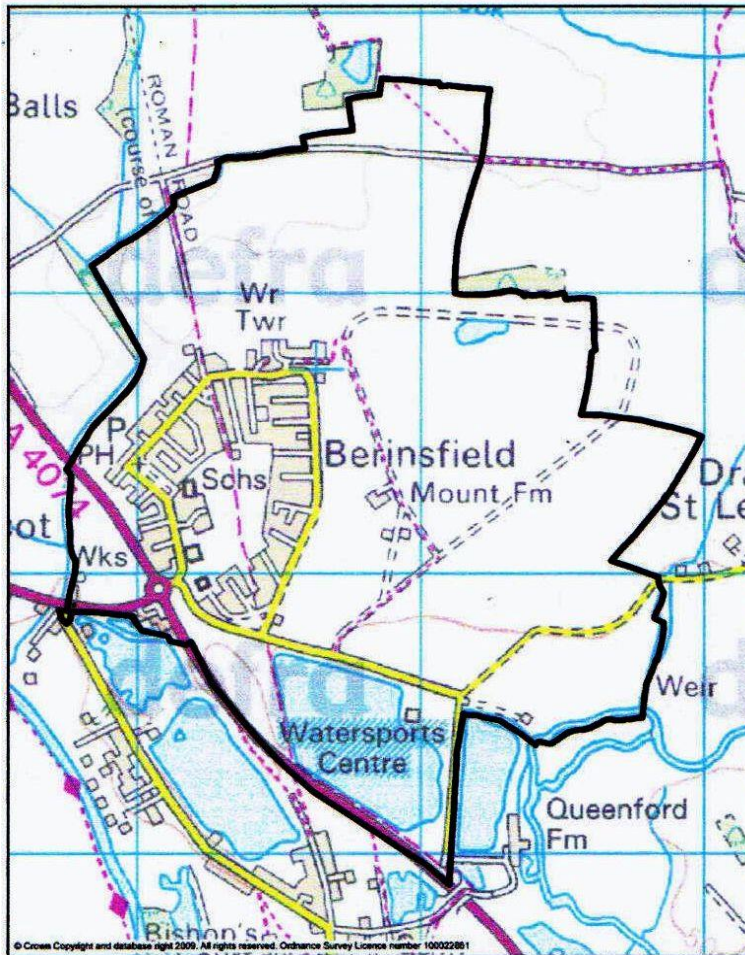
4 Looking ahead

The Parish Council's NDP Steering Group's aim is to collate the views of village residents employers, landowners and other key community stakeholders and to distil these into a strategy that will allow sustainable development to take place over the plan lifetime with benefits to all and, as stewards, to leave the village in a better position than we inherited it.

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Section 1 - INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA



Situated about 8 miles south of Oxford City, Berinsfield is one of the twelve larger villages within the South Oxfordshire District with some 2806 inhabitants.

It has existed in its present form only since about 1960.

The area to which the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP) relates is the whole parish within the solid black outline as shown on the adjacent map.



1.2 THE BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Neighbourhood Development Plans derive from the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions which affect them. Accordingly, the **Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP)** is being developed by volunteers from Berinsfield to establish a vision for the village and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the plan period 2014 – 2031. The BNDP is a statutory document that, once adopted, will form part of the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Local Development Plan and by the end of 2017 the SODC statutory development plan should include a suite of planning documents including any additional adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans.

The BNDP will provide a vision for the future and guide the development of Berinsfield over the next 17 years. This will be done through consultation with the residents of Berinsfield and other key stakeholders, especially SODC, in order to comply with its adopted Core Strategy 2027 and emerging Local Plan 2031, which is expected to be adopted in 2016. This will identify the number of new homes that will need to be built in larger villages like Berinsfield during the 17-year plan period.

1.3 DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The Berinsfield NDP is being produced by the local community, with the support of the Parish Council, to reflect the views of this rural community. The preparation of this **Scoping Report** has been informed by 'DIY SA': Sustainability Appraisal (including strategic environmental assessment) of Neighbourhood Plans by Levett-Therivel and URS Scott Wilson August 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning: Protocol for Preparing Neighbourhood Plans issued by SODC.

Before the BNDP: The Parish Plan and Community-Led Plan



The Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre is coordinating this communication activity.

Berinsfield Parish Council believes that good communication is essential to maintenance of a vibrant village community. As a result, the Community Places Project Worker and Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre developed a communication plan for agencies working in the village to help share information. The Parish Council and other agencies are working together to ensure that residents are aware of what is happening where they live. In turn this will enable residents to become more involved and participate in activities in the village. This was identified as a recommendation in the 2009 Parish Plan and has been carried forward by the Berinsfield Advisory Group. The Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre (BIVC) has agreed to coordinate this communication activity.

Source: Community-led Plan

Community-led Plans help focus local action and influence others (such as local councils) to improve one's local area. Berinsfield Advisory Group (BAG) has taken recommendations from the Parish Plan 2009 as the basis for its Community-led Plan 2012 and has developed these further. They included improving communication in the village, promoting a Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group and developing questionnaires for businesses.

Source: Community-led Plan

Consultation with the community started with a questionnaire in 2008. Results were fed into the Berinsfield Parish Plan and recommendations were made. A further series of public meetings and consultations were held on the themes of housing, leisure facilities and meeting spaces in 2010/11. The results have been used to clarify the community priorities.

The recommendations from the Berinsfield Parish Plan produced in 2009 were used to form the basis of the Community-Led Plan 2013 and some of this data has been used to inform this scoping report. *Source: Community-led Plan*

Developing the BNDP

All of these findings are being taken into account by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group so that information on community activity and needs can be properly considered as part of the emerging BNDP.

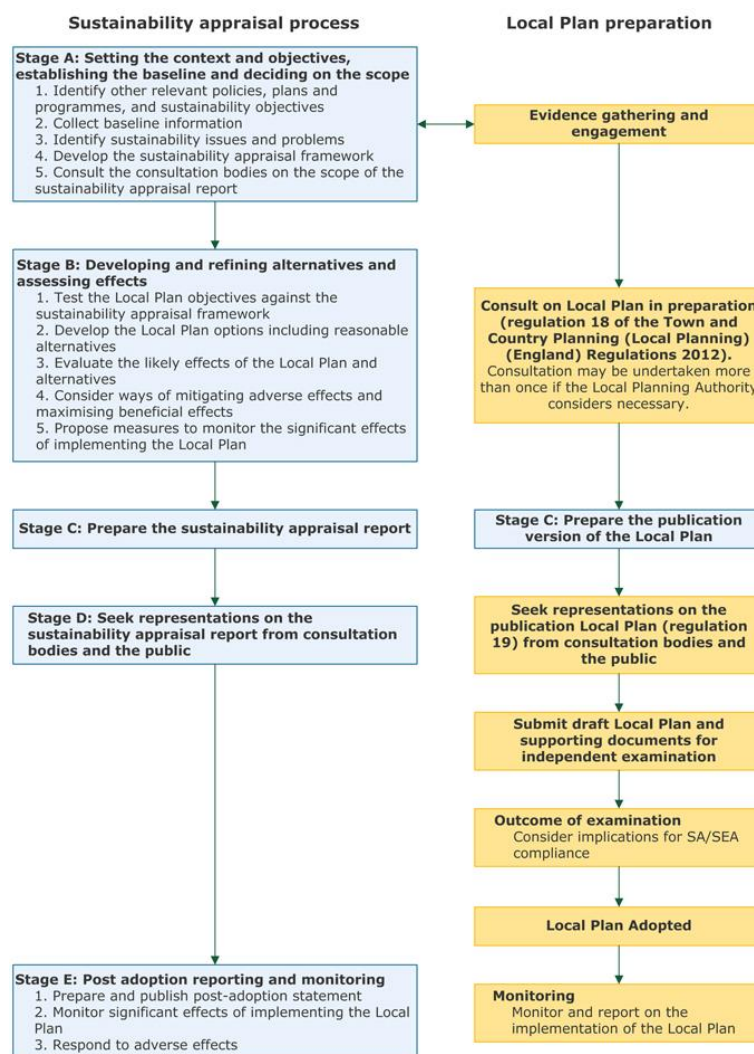
The Berinsfield Parish Council (BPC) initially appointed a steering group known as the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group (NDPSG) consisting of Parish Councillors, land owners and other key community stakeholders in order to distinguish it from the day-to-day duties of the Parish Council.

The Steering Group is inviting residents, employers and other members of the local community to join and help to gather information and consult on possible alternatives for the future growth of the village. This team is responsible for producing this Scoping Report and also the subsequent Sustainability Appraisal which will be used to formulate the final Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan.

1.4 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Steering Group has been advised that the draft screening opinion prepared by the District Council concludes that the BNDP could have significant environmental effects and therefore requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Given this, the Steering Group has agreed to prepare a Sustainability Appraisal as a separate document that will meet the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment as well as demonstrating how the BNDP will contribute to achieving sustainable development, a basic condition of the neighbourhood plan.

Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan is required to identify sites for the future sustainable development of the village to include new homes (in accordance with the requirements of the SODC Core Strategy 2027 and the emerging Local Plan 2031), local employment, shops and associated infrastructure. To achieve this, it will need also to set out relevant and appropriate planning policies which conform in general to the adopted SODC Core Strategy 2027.



The main stages in the Berinsfield neighbourhood plan preparation and sustainability appraisal

The flowchart above shows the main stages in neighbourhood plan preparation and sustainability appraisal. This scoping report represents Stage A of the SA/SEA process. For our purposes we are using the sustainability context with the specific dimensions of social, economic and environment aspects. Many of these aspects are systemically interconnected.

The BNDP is being prepared in line with the Strategic Environmental Assessment as required by The Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 by following the sustainability appraisal process. The first step of the process is this Scoping Report. The benefits of undertaking SA/SEA and the legal context for it are set out at the beginning of SODC's SA Report (paras 1-13) and in the National Planning Policy Guidance (paras 26-27).

Full details are given in the links below:

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014-06-09%20Final%20ReportSA%20ScopingReduced.pdf>

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/>

This Scoping Report establishes a baseline from which we can begin to assess what the BNDP should contain, based on consultation with the community and meeting the requirement to support the strategic objectives of the South Oxfordshire District Council's adopted Core Strategy 2027 and the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF).

It also discusses the policy context within which the BNDP is being prepared, and how the impacts of the BNDP might be appraised in the future.

1.5 CONSULTATION

As set out in the flowchart above, the Steering Group has sought representations from the public, local business, stakeholders and from the consultation bodies - SODC, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

In the case of the latter group, their comments have been considered carefully and wherever possible, and relevant, amendments have been made to the draft text to reflect these inputs. These additions are shown in the text in bold italic.

A number of comments were also received from residents and, along with the inputs from consultation bodies, have all have been incorporated in this latest version of the Scoping Report. (See details in Appendix 1).

1.6 DATA GATHERING

A fundamental characteristic of establishing the sustainability context is data gathering. Berinsfield Parish Council was not one of the front-runners given national government funding to develop its Neighbourhood Plan. So with an extremely limited budget, the sustainability team used the following resources for data gathering:

Their own time, freely given

Their own computing devices and broadband connections

Attendance at seminars and meetings;

Meetings with South Oxfordshire District Council & others involved in the Neighbourhood Planning process

Research through visits to relevant websites such as those of Central Government, Office of National Statistics, National Census and South Oxfordshire District Council

Results from the questionnaire prepared by Berinsfield Community-led Plan group.

Results from public consultations at village and academy fêtes in June/July 2014

Websites of other District Councils and Parishes were also visited to see what may be emerging as best practice amongst the front-runners and early adopters. The Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is grateful for the generous assistance it received from Adderbury and Woodcote Parish Councils.

1.7 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Communication is essential to sharing information between the residents, employers, various community groups and key statutory consultees. The aim of this Communications Strategy is to clearly set out how best to raise awareness of the NDP, allow feedback, transparency and to facilitate two-way communication.

This Communications Strategy has been developed to identify how we will manage the communications requirements for the NDP – sharing information with all interested parties, promoting early engagement and seeking additional views and further involvement from the wider community. The different methods used (newsletters, local press etc) will be evaluated in the summer for their effectiveness at reaching the particular audiences targeted.

Key audiences	Key Message	Delivery Vehicles	Objective	Impact
Residents/ public	What is the Neighbourhood Development Plan?	Newsletters (Village Voice) Meetings Email Events Websites/BIVC/ Parish Council Facebook (NDP) Local newspaper Word of mouth Local notice boards	To increase awareness of the NDP and encourage participation/ involvement from Berinsfield residents	Public awareness delivery and request feedback from public via web or regular mail. Feedback: opinions suggestions and more involvement.
Stakeholders, businesses	Consultation with local businesses.	Newsletters Email Meetings Websites Word of mouth Local notice boards	To involve businesses in the NDP	Responses from businesses received and fed into the NDP
Public, Media (Local papers,)	Promote early activity.	Press releases Advertising events Feedback to community	To increase local press coverage to highlight NDP developments and outcomes on a regular basis and explain the link between Parish council & NDP Steering Group	Wider awareness of the NDP itself

Parish Council/ Steering Group and local community	Parish support NDP - how the parish is dealing with local issues and planning issues	Attend meetings with regular updates Present reports of feedback from community. Publish updates on website.	To develop a reputation for being a transparent group, sharing resources and information to benefit the community	Better awareness in the community in relation to planning issues – reinforces feedback'.
Other agencies and local community	Sustainability appraisal	Direct correspondence email or letter Contact with environmental agencies	To explain how PC are helping to developing innovative collaborative approaches	Response to the environmental issues raised in the consultation

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

Following the introduction to the methodology employed in preparation of the report given in this section – this Scoping Report is set out as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the policy context and defines the relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives influencing the NDP
- A brief introduction to Berinsfield is given at section 3
- Current baseline information about the economy, social issues, housing and the environment is set out in sections 4-7
- Information about likely changes to the baseline without the BNDP is given at the end of each of those sections along with key sustainability issues and any problems
- A range of alternatives is summarised for consideration at section 8
- A sustainability appraisal framework is set out at section 9
- Next steps in the process are outlined in section 10

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Section 2 – POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 BACKGROUND

Future development in Berinsfield is currently considered against planning policies contained in the SODC's adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Core Strategy refers to the need for a local green belt review in and around Berinsfield to allow for regeneration, a better mix of housing and further development. This review will be undertaken as part of the emerging SODC Local Plan, in consultation with the local community. The National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance papers contain guidance on developing Local Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans, and on local green belt reviews.

2.2 SODC CORE STRATEGY

The adopted SODC Core Strategy includes the following statements that are relevant to Berinsfield:

Housing Provision

7.20 *For the larger villages we are allocating a total of 1,154 dwellings to be divided between these settlements and Bayswater Farm, a small area of land next to Oxford which performs well against sustainability criteria. These are not strategic allocations and will be addressed in our Site Allocations DPD. The general starting point for the Site Allocations DPD in distributing housing allocations among the larger villages and Bayswater Farm will be proportionality in relation to their existing number of dwellings, or in the case of Bayswater Farm constraints and design, but this will be modified by consideration of factors such as the individual vision for each village, the existence of designations such as Green Belt and AONB, the individual sustainability credentials of villages in relation to local facilities and transport links, and the existence of particular local needs and opportunities.*

7.21 *Policy CSEN2 provides for a local review of the Green Belt at Berinsfield, a planned post-war village built on the site of a Second World War airbase. The village is currently entirely within the Green Belt. The exceptional circumstances which justify this review are as follows:*

- *Areas of Berinsfield are in need of regeneration and Green Belt policy is inhibiting this.*
- *Some further land may be needed around Berinsfield to improve the mix of housing and to provide further opportunities for employment and service provision.*
- *Berinsfield is a local service centre and some further development would be consistent with the overall strategy.*

The outcome of the review will need to be in accordance with paragraph 84 of the NPPF that states when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.

7.22 *The review will be undertaken in consultation with the local community in the context of a new vision for the village prepared through the Site Allocations DPD.*

Green Belt

14.6 *Section 7 of this strategy explains the exceptional circumstances warranting a local review of the Green Belt at Berinsfield to be undertaken in the Site Allocations DPD. Apart from this, we will maintain the Green Belt and apply national policy guidance as set out in the NPPF.*

Flooding

14.13 *The NPPF requires that we follow a sequential test when identifying land for development, looking at zone 1 land first. This is land least likely to flood. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment¹³⁵ shows that there is enough zone 1 land available in the district to meet our (SODC) future greenfield allocation needs in our towns and villages. We will not therefore need to look at zone 2 or 3 land for the built element of greenfield allocations or carry out any exception testing.*

For other development we will follow the NPPF and its technical guidance and extant guidance in PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk Practice Guide. The strategic flood risk assessment provides detailed developer guidance and we will pick this up in our Didcot Area Action Plan, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPDs.

Green infrastructure

The SODC Core Strategy policy for green infrastructure (CSG1) is to seek 'a net gain in green infrastructure including biodiversity will be sought through developer works, developer contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources'.

Planning Policies contained in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 and the Focused Consultation 2013 documents that can influence the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan Policy are listed below:

Policy No	Title
CSS1	The overall strategy
CSM1	Transport
CSEM1	Supporting a successful economy
CSH3	Affordable housing
CSH4	Meeting housing needs
CSR1	Housing in villages
CSR2	Employment in rural areas
CSR3	Community facilities and rural transport
CSEN1	Landscape
CSEN2	Green belt
CSQ1	Renewable energy
CSQ2	Sustainable design & construction
CSQ3	Design
CSQ4	Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods
CSG1	Green infrastructure
CSB1	Conservation and improvement of bio-diversity
CSI1	Infrastructure provision
CSC1	Delivery & contingency

SODC planning policies influencing the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) covering the period from 2014 to 2017 updates the previous LDS published in 2010 by South Oxfordshire District Council. It provides information about the **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031** and related documents which will progressively replace the Local Plan 2011 (adopted in 2006) and the SODC Core Strategy (adopted in 2012).

The following table summarises other policy documents of note with a brief explanation of their intent and effect on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Source: SODC consultation

Policy Document	Description	Effect on Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF National Planning Policy Framework March 2012	This National Planning Policy Framework changed planning law and policies, by replacing over a thousand pages of national policy with around fifty.	1) Allows people and communities to participate in planning 2) a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, 3) Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan (clause 184)
The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012	Sets out a vision for South Oxfordshire to 2027. It shows how strategy was developed and how SODC plans to deliver it.	The Core Strategy requirements for villages class Berinsfield, along with four other South Oxfordshire villages, as needing to provide sites for 500 houses. The number allocated to Berinsfield is not possible to meet without significant relaxation of current Green Belt restrictions. Core Strategy Policy CSEN2 provides for a local review of the green belt at Berinsfield.
The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011; the Focused Consultation 2013 documents;	Both the Local Plan and the alterations included in the Focused Consultation Documents, set out the South Oxfordshire District wide policies on planning. Existing Planning Policy is contained in the saved policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan adopted 1996. These policies will continue to be relied upon for planning applications. As the LP progresses SODC will need to determine which of the saved policies of the Adopted Local Plan 1996 and the Non-Statutory Local Plan 2011 are replaced.	The Strategic Policy settlement classification in SOLP 2011 places Berinsfield along with two other South Oxfordshire villages, Garsington and Horspath in para 5.17 (iii) as the larger villages within the Green Belt. These settlements meet each criterion but are washed over by the Green Belt, and so, in accordance with PPG2 only infill development will be allowed – impossible at Berinsfield. This is plainly at variance with the requirement to provide sites in Berinsfield for 109+ houses as no infill is possible. Berinsfield already has the highest density of population in the County at 7.52/ha - nearly four times the density of South Oxfordshire as a whole.
South Oxfordshire Housing Strategy 2008-2011	SODC has housing as one of its main priorities and to this end has invested monies into the support of homes for local residents.	Many of the schemes for affordable housing have been to support vulnerable people within our communities giving them access to services they need to lead independent lives. SODC is also very aware that, with the high price of housing in the area, older residents are a priority as they need suitable housing to remain near families and friends. It says there is a growing need for smaller 2-bed households.

Policy Document	Description	Effect on Neighbourhood Plan
South Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026	The SCS provides a new, overarching vision for South Oxfordshire. It deals with difficult cross-cutting issues such as the economic future of South Oxfordshire, social exclusion and climate change	It supports Berinsfield NDP aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Create the conditions that encourage vibrant and thriving economies in villages and towns. □ Increase housing numbers to meet people's current and future housing need. □ Meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable groups including older people □ Plan services for an ageing population □ Increase participation in sport and active recreation.
Water Resources Management Plan 2015-2040	Thames Water has a legal duty to develop and maintain an efficient and economical system of water supply and every five years to produce a Water Resources Management Plan which set outs its plan to maintain the balance between supply and demand for water over a 25-year period.	There are no water courses running through Berinsfield. However, the River Thame runs in the neighbouring parish to the south east. <i>Environment Agency consultation</i>
River Basin Management Plan 2009	EA's Thames River Basin Management Plan aims to protect biodiversity & ecosystems and show how it is adapting to climate change	The main relevance is to the prediction of flood risk as several areas in the Parish proposed for development currently fall into areas zoned by EA as Flood Risk categories 2 & 3. However, there were no floods during the severe winter of 2013/2014.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Draft Report March 2013	The SHLAA provides an informed estimate of land availability for housing at a given point in, time, to inform plan-making and to ensure that councils maintain a five-year supply of housing land. The NPPF (par. 47) indicates that local authorities assessing an annual 5-year housing land supply should include an additional buffer of 5% (on top of the 5-year requirement) and that this buffer should be increased to 20% in areas where there is a record of under-delivery of housing.	The SHLAA identifies sites within the District with some potential for development. It considers each site against a criterion of Suitability, Availability and Achievability. Sites are listed in appendices: Appendix B Sites with Planning Permission of which no site is presently listed for Berinsfield. Appendix C Sites within settlements with potential of which no site is listed for Berinsfield. Appendix D Sites outside settlements with future potential Appendix E Rejected Sites of which six sites are presently listed for Berinsfield. Each site was rejected principally on grounds that it was in Green Belt – a restriction soon to be lifted.
Oxfordshire LEP Economic Plan 2014	Oxford has Europe's largest concentration of multi-million pound science research facilities, underpinning its leading position in advanced engineering, manufacturing and life sciences.	The Local Enterprise Partnership with its theme of 'Driving Economic Growth through Innovation' may suggest ways to stimulate commercial enterprise in the parish.

Policy Document	Description	Effect on Neighbourhood Plan
Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2030	Stage 2 comprises an appraisal of the 33 most sustainable villages against a set of transport criteria.	The results show that 13 villages performed well against the criteria. These villages could accommodate new development in a sustainable way with minimal adverse impact on the transport network. This report was used by SODC to help it arrive at a view on Village Categorisation.
Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2015	Conserving biodiversity for Oxfordshire's wildlife and people	Oxfordshire has been one of the first counties to develop a spatial approach to biodiversity action planning which highlights the main biodiversity hotspots in the county.
South Oxfordshire Local Framework – 'Options for Growth' - 2008	Consultation on direction for growth and strategic sites. Core strategy development plan document	Sets village categorization since this influences the number of houses for development.
Strategic Housing Marketing Assessment (SHMA) 2014	The Oxfordshire SHMA is concerned principally with issues related to housing development, and considers questions relating to: <input type="checkbox"/> how many homes might be needed in the future; <input type="checkbox"/> what mix of homes is needed; and <input type="checkbox"/> the housing needs of specific groups within the population.	The SHMA defines the effect of the changing demographics of the area, the need for new homes to match the new jobs being planned, and how to deliver affordable homes for those whose needs are not met by the market. Local surveys show a real need for 2-bed accommodation which is supported by SODC forecasts.
Oxfordshire Draft Rights of Way Management Plan 2014-2024	The consultation on the draft second Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), now called a Rights of Way Management Plan (RoWMP) has now closed. Adoption anticipated in autumn 2014	Access to these provides significant economic, health and environmental benefits. A well-maintained and connected public rights of way network, with information and improvements that meet the needs of users and potential users, offers almost unlimited potential for residents and visitors to enjoy Oxfordshire's countryside and landscape on foot, by bicycle and on horseback.
Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2011	SODC commissioned consultants to undertake a flood risk assessment in 2011.	Berinsfield has a number of potential sites for housing which are designated by the EA as having a cat2 or 3 Flood Risk
SODC & VoWHDC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009	Only rivers and streams that flow through our towns and larger villages were assessed in detail to help guide decisions about future development.	Flood zone 2 is a medium probability flood risk area that has between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 year annual probability of flooding. Flood zone 3 is a high probability flood risk area that has a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of flooding in any year.
Berinsfield Local Plan 2009	Published in July 2009 following a comprehensive survey across the community	In a village survey, 92% said NO to building in its green spaces and playing fields, which are regarded as a great asset and is a clear mandate to keep them as they are, with no building allowed thereon.

2.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of 2012:

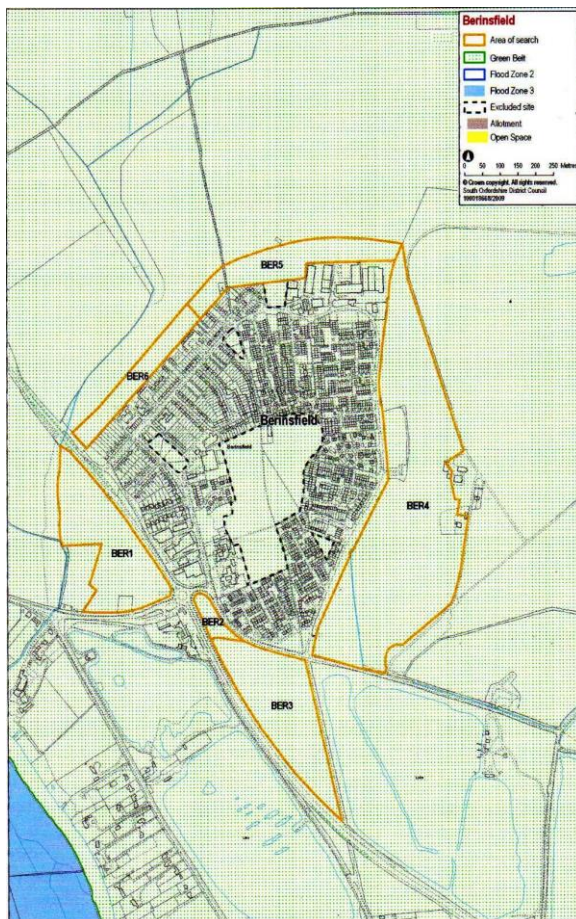
- ensures that the Local Plan is the keystone of the planning system
- makes planning much simpler and more accessible, reducing over 1000 pages of guidance into around 50 pages
- establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development
- guarantees strong protections for the natural and historic environment, and requires improvements to put right some of the neglect that has taken place
- raises design standards

2.4 GREEN BELT REVIEW

The main residential heart of Berinsfield, together with the surrounding land, all currently stand entirely within the Oxford Green Belt. SODC's adopted Core Strategy policy CSEN2 and Para 7.21 refer to the need for a local green belt review in and around Berinsfield to allow for regeneration, a better mix of housing and further development. This review is being undertaken by the SODC in consultation with the Parish Council as part of the emerging Local Plan with reference to the BNDP and in consultation with the local community. The NPPF policies and guidance papers contain clear guidelines on how any local green belt reviews should be carried out.

2.5 STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA)

The SODC's SHLAA of October 2011 identified a range of possible housing sites near Berinsfield, as shown on the map below. Each zone may contain more than one development site.



From the SODC strategic land availability assessment

New sites

Since the SHLAA 2011, some additional sites have become available. These include:

Queenford Lakes site in Burcot Lane

Industrial units between Wimplestraw Road and A4074 (Redevelopment)

Industrial units next to allotments just off Fane Drive (Redevelopment)

They are shown on the map in Section 8.6

2.6 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Environment Agency requires a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to be submitted alongside planning applications in areas that are known to be at risk of flooding (within flood zones 2 or 3) and/ or are greater than one hectare in area.

Planning permission is not usually granted until the FRA has been accepted by the Environment Agency. Flood risk assessments are also relevant to the maintenance and insurance of existing buildings.

A Flood Risk Assessment takes into consideration the risk and impact of flooding on a site, and makes an assessment of how any development may affect flooding in the local area. It also provides recommendations as to how any risk of flooding to a site can be mitigated or improved following development.

2.7 TRANSPORT PLANS

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will also be informed by the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2030. This Plan sets out proposals for delivering integrated transport over a five year period and contains a 'Transport Vision for Oxfordshire' which states that "Oxfordshire will be a county with a prosperous economy, attractive environment and inclusive society"

2.8 KEY ISSUES FACING BERINSFIELD

The BNDP will need to be “future proofed” against the possibility of housing and employment increasing from current known numbers during the life of the Local Plan to 2031 and any green belt review should plan for the construction of a greater number of homes and for more development beyond the life of this emerging plan.

Following publication of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (or SHMA) in April 2014 which identified that South Oxfordshire might need to plan for up to 5900 more new homes than previously thought, the Steering Group has confirmed the need to “future proof” the NDP in the event more home and employment sites are required during the life of the plan and how this might impact on existing community facilities.

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Section 3 - BACKGROUND

3.1 THIS IS BERINSFIELD

Modern Berinsfield is a comparatively large village of 2806 inhabitants (2011 census) situated about eight miles south of Oxford City within the District Council of South Oxfordshire (SODC). It has existed in its present form only since about 1960. Hitherto the site had been used as a WWII airfield (RAF Mount Farm) and this was sold to Bullingdon Rural District Council in 1957 for development as the first English village to be built on virgin land for 200 years. Artefacts of broad historical interest were discovered during excavations to build the village which date to Palaeolithic and Roman times.



An aerial view over Berinsfield from the south taken in June 2014

3.2 NOT YOUR USUAL OXFORDSHIRE VILLAGE

Berinsfield is quite unlike other, older, villages in South Oxfordshire and the South of England. As the general foundation and compact layout of the new village was constructed at the same time, in the 1960s, the density of population is relatively high at 7.52 people per hectare whilst neighbouring Benson and Dorchester are under 2.5/ha. (Source: 2011 census). Thus any policy which relies on the construction of additional properties within the existing outline of the village is likely only to increase the sense of overcrowding.

The SODC's Environmental Improvements Action Plan 2012 for Berinsfield states that the form of the 1960s & 1970s architecture bears more relation to a run-down urban district of a town or city than a rural village. This contrast is reinforced by the social make-up of the village. Unlike its more affluent neighbours, the village has an above-average bias towards social or rented accommodation.

3.3 A NEED FOR MORE HOUSING & EMPLOYMENT

There is much demand for new housing and employment in the area and Berinsfield is classified as one of the twelve larger villages within the district as a site for future development. Latest figures indicate that Berinsfield will need to allocate land for at least **109** new homes plus associated employment opportunities and infrastructure provision from now until 2031. The village currently sits entirely within the Oxford Green Belt and South Oxfordshire District Council's adopted Core Strategy provides for a local review of the green belt to remove one of the main barriers to regenerating parts of the village.

According to the 2011 census, there were **2806** people recorded as being resident in the village, about 4% up from 2001. Included in this figure were:

Working age adults	1995
Economically active	1475
People under 16	664
People over 65	388
People from ethnic minorities	368
People unemployed	75

The number of households was **1077** (up from 1023 in 2001) with 71 single-parent families with children and 109 single-pensioner households (over 65).

3.4 VILLAGE FACILITIES

The village's current facilities include a health centre with adjacent pharmacy, an NHS dental practice, a parish church (C of E), a public house, the Abbey Woods primary school (now an Academy), a library, a day-care centre, a sports centre and two rows of shops which include a post office. A number of industrial operations are also carried on within the parish area but more would be welcomed. A popular car-boot sale is held frequently on a field to the west of the village alongside the A4074.

The village is well-provided for in terms of recreation activity with the Abbey Sports Centre and indoor swimming pool. It also has a thriving boxing club, its own football team, a Women's Institute, a Scout group (1st Berinsfield), Brownies and a youth club for 10-21 year olds. There are plans in consideration to upgrade the range of leisure facilities within the village. Nearby a thriving watersports centre has been established on one of the lakes created during gravel extraction in the 1960s. *Source: Berinsfield Parish Council website*

The village will be consulted on the need for a village hall. There are a number of existing places currently used for meetings but these are considered too small to accommodate large village gatherings and community functions.

3.5 SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Questioned for the Rural Community Profile for Berinsfield in 2011, 91% of residents of South Oxfordshire said they were 'satisfied with the local area as a place to live', 64% felt they 'belonged to the area' and 83% felt that 'people from different backgrounds got on well together in the local area'.

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Section 4 - ECONOMIC FACTORS

4.1 ECONOMIC DATA

The idea of deprivation is based on more than just poverty with the standard national measure of poverty – the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – based on income, unemployment, health, education and skills, crime, environment and access to services. The SODC Core Strategy reports that in 2007 the average weekly earnings of those who just work in South Oxfordshire were 15% lower than for those who lived in the District. (*SODC Core Strategy para 2.11*) Although, together with Didcot, Berinsfield is one of the least affluent communities in the South Oxfordshire area, Berinsfield doesn't fall within the 20% most deprived areas in England. However, 260 members (15.1%) of the working population are currently receiving Department of Work and Pensions benefits, with 260 also receiving housing and council tax support (25.6% of households).

Berinsfield has a higher-than-average number of children in out-of-work families than either South Oxfordshire or the average for England as a whole.

Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield

4.2 THE BERINSFIELD COMMUNITY BUSINESS SCHEME

In 2002, the Berinsfield Community Business (BCB) was set up, with Housing Corporation Innovation and Good Practice funding, to provide intensive local housing, cleaning and grounds maintenance services to the village. The Community Business aims to provide capacity-building, sustainable jobs, training (including apprenticeships) and local business opportunities to complement the physical regeneration of the area. BCB directly manages Soha's 383 homes in Berinsfield, but all village residents can get help and advice.

4.3 EMPLOYMENT

Many rural communities have been affected by the recent economic downturns, with unemployment levels rising even in areas that, in the past, have had few people out of work. Being 'out-of-work' can have a serious impact on an individual's quality of life and not just economically. Knowing the number of people in the community not in work – and how this is changing – can help identify actions to improve prospects and suggest ways of contributing to an improvement, such as providing training initiatives and supporting local job creation.

Of a population numbering about 2806 in the 2011 Census, there were **1475** Berinsfield residents who were 'economically active' (73.9% of the working population) and 520 (237 retired) who were 'economically inactive' (26.1%). The working patterns varied as follows:

Full-time	893	Public sector	340
Part-time	301		
Self-employed	157	Working from home	50

In 2014, there are almost 80 businesses currently trading within the Berinsfield parish and offering local opportunities for employment. *Source: 2011 census (Economic activity) & Soha*

Name of business	Address	Employees
AB Connect Associates Ltd	Offices 5 & 6 Berinsfield Business Park	
AED Electrical Services Ltd	Unit 1, First Floor Wimblestraw Road	
Abbey Sports Centre	Green Furlong	12
Abbey Wood Academy	Wimblestraw Road	32
Abingdon Gymnastics Club	Unit A Tower Road Industrial Estate	
Arc Home Design	6 Leach Road	

Archaeopress	Dorchester House		3
Berinsfield Boxing Club	9 Colwell Road		
Berinsfield Children's Centre	Wimblestraw Road		4 + 2 NHS
Berinsfield Community Assoc'n	Green Furlong		10
Berinsfield Community Business	Dorchester House	Wimblestraw Road	10
Berinsfield Adult Learning	Wimblestraw Road		3
Berinsfield Library	Green Furlong		3
Premier Express	25 Fane Drive		6
Berinsfield Health Centre		Fane Drive	17
Berinsfield Pharmacy		Fane Drive	8
Berinsfield Post Office	29 Fane Drive		3
Berinsfield Voluntary Day Centre	53 Wimblestraw Road		3
Campus Youth Centre	Community Centre	Green Furlong	
Cane Field Confectionery	Fane Drive		7
Chinese Kitchen	180 Fane Drive		
Communication Support	Dorchester House		
Connect Vending Ltd	Units 5-6,	Tower Road Industrial Estate	69
Costcutter	Fane Drive		6
C V P (Oxford) Ltd	Unit 16	Tower Road Industrial Estate	3
Davenport Flowers	13a Davenport House	39 Evenlode Drive	
Delicioso UK Ltd	Unit 14	Tower Road Industrial Estate	10
D C Young Dental Surgery	204 Fane Drive		
DGR Manufacturing Ltd	Long Acre House	Tower Road Industrial Estate	8
Drennan International Ltd	Wimblestraw Road		25+
ECM Housewares	Vogue House Unit 1b, Vogue Industrial Estate	Tower Road Industrial Estate	
EC Marketing Ltd		Tower Road Industrial Estate	
Employment Action Group	Dorchester House		6
Facilitas SMC Ltd	Unit A		36
Fondera	Unit 3	Tower Road Industrial Estate	5
Hallidays U.K. Ltd	Unit 1 & 2	Tower Road Industrial Estate	8
M' Harris– ground staff			3
Homestead Timbers+-			6
Indigo Hair & Beauty	182 Fane Drive		6
Isis Leisure	Dorchester House	Wimblestraw Road	4
Jennings	Tower Estate		
Kamatsu Kamasan	Unit 10-11	Tower Road Industrial Estate	6
Lake Estates	Queenford Lakes	Burcot Lane	1
Line 63	63 Cherwell Road		
M J Services	Queenford Lakes	Burcot Lane	1
Milner	13 Leach Road		
Mr D Glaves	44 Kennet Close Queenford Lakes		
Oxford Wakeboard & Ski Club	Watersports Centre	Burcot Lane	2
Pearce's Private Hire Ltd		Tower Road Industrial Estate	12
Premier Express	25 Fane Drive		6
Professional Property Services	13 Green Furlong		
Real Mini			2
RC Combined Logistics	Dorchester House		4
SF Signs	44 Wimblestraw Road		
Saverforce UK	184-190 Fane Drive		6
Shades of Glass Studio	12 Fane Drive		
Sherlocks Dry Cleaning Textile Services Ltd	4 Tower Road	Fane Drive	
Skyline Scaffolding			20
Smarts Fish & Chips Takeaway	21-21a Fane Drive		2
Soha			2
Spec	Unit 12	Tower Road Industrial Estate	13
Spy Motorsport	Unit 12	Tower Road Industrial Estate	

Thames Property Investm'ts Ltd	Vogue House	Tower Road Industrial Estate	
The Midcounties Co-operative	29 Fane Drive		16
The Landscape Group	13 Green Furlong		
The Oxford Window Company	Kennet House	Tower Road Industrial Estate	
Toner Cable Equipment	Unit 9	Tower Road Industrial Estate	4
Travel Souk	3 Drayton House		
V Pass Motoring School	29 Kennet Close		
Vogue International Ltd	Vogue House	Tower Road Industrial Estate	
Wallingford Electrical	47 Colne Drive		
Wedding 4oto	56 Cherwell Road		
Williams Performance Tenders	Unit 2, Vogue Business Park	Fane Drive	42
Your Village Voice/BIVC	Fane Drive		2
Also within Parish of Berinsfield			
GP Performance	Deacons Garage, Oxford Rd	Dorchester-on-Thames	3
H Café	Deacon's Estate, Oxford Rd	Dorchester-on-Thames	5
Infinity Motorcycle Accessories	Deacon's Estate, Oxford Rd	Dorchester-on-Thames	4
Clover's Discount Store	Deacon's Estate, Oxford Rd	Dorchester-on-Thames	2
RJR Autos	Deacon's Estate, Oxford Rd	Dorchester-on-Thames	
Berinsfield Car Breakers	Deacon's Estate, Oxford Rd	Dorchester-on-Thames	2
Bell Motors	Deacon's Estate, Oxford Rd	Dorchester-on-Thames	2

Sources: *Soha & Ken Chrisp (resident)*

Williams Performance Tenders Limited is Berinsfield's biggest employer and was a winner in 2010 of the Queen's Award for Enterprise. It is based in the Vogue Business Park and also leases a lake to the south of the village as well as storage units at Queenford Farm. The company also takes on a number of apprentices and works closely with EAG (see below).



The company now employs 45 staff and is supported by a team of factory-trained engineers in twenty four European locations, and in key worldwide markets.

4.4 TOURISM

According to SODC, the service sector is overwhelmingly the main employer in South Oxfordshire providing employment for 87% of working people. Tourism is one of South Oxfordshire's strongest industries as it accounts for around 10% of all employment in the District. It attracts about 3.38 million visitors every year and brings in over £160 million to the local economy.

The SODC Core Strategy 2027 contains policy CSEM1 –Supporting a successful economy, which states it supports tourism and reads:

"We will work with our business and education partners to provide an environment that positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. We will do this by:

(vi) Supporting the prosperity of the area's tourism industry and recreation based rural diversification where proposals are of a scale and type appropriate to their location."



Whilst in itself having little to merit description as a 'tourist attraction', Berinsfield does lie close to a number of places noted for their interest to visitors.

The café on the A4074 Oxford Road is a weekend Mecca for motor-cyclists who often gather there in large numbers.

◀ *The H Café on the A4074*

Berinsfield is in the centre of Oxfordshire and on main transport routes – A 4074 & A415. It would be an ideal place from which to explore the county. Local villages have their own history, for example Drayton St Leonard was birthplace to George Washington's wife, Martha Curtis Dandridge. Her father is recorded as having been a church warden.

Sporting facilities such as the Abbey Sports Centre, boxing club, football club, gymnastics club and watersports centre are probably the main reason why visitors, including swimmers, fishermen, waterski & wakeboard enthusiasts, are known to seek out the village on account of the high standard of its sport and leisure offerings.

There have in the past been visitors from the USA interested in the history of the village as site of a former US air base in WW II (RAF Mount Farm) and to view the war memorial.

4.5 THE EMPLOYMENT ACTION GROUP

Employment Action Group (EAG) is a charity set up over 30 years ago which seeks to help people of all ages find employment through setting up their own businesses or by helping them to actively seek work and work experience. Its objective has always been to engage with the local residents and to provide services in response to need. Although Berinsfield is an area with an average unemployment problem, a high percentage of the community is in low-paid work. Aspiration among local young people is not high and historically there are several generations who have not been in regular employment.



A student on the joint EAG/Williams powerboat project

Its current focus is to support young people, and work with local businesses to provide work experience and apprenticeships to local youngsters. Its partnership with Williams Performance Tenders (Berinsfield's biggest employer) has been so successful that it is recruiting a member of staff to roll out this programme more widely. The EAG Community Development Worker is in close contact with all the schools in Abingdon and Didcot attended by young people in the village, and so is really well placed to identify the ones most in need of help. Part of its role is also to help those not successful in getting an apprenticeship with careers advice, college places and job search.

EAG, at the request of various village agencies, is taking the lead in setting up a trial Job Club initially for six months, and it is in the process of recruiting someone suitably qualified. It has been asked, in addition, to re-start the Furniture Re-cycling Project, which ran successfully for 4 years (2006-10) to assist those on low incomes with essential furniture and household items.

For now, EAG derives some revenue from running the Business Centre, but has low occupation because its lease ends in March 2015 and it is uncertain about its future location.

4.6 EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS

The jobs that local residents have reflect the opportunities in the local area. In Berinsfield, the largest employment sector was retail, health & social was in second place and construction rated third.

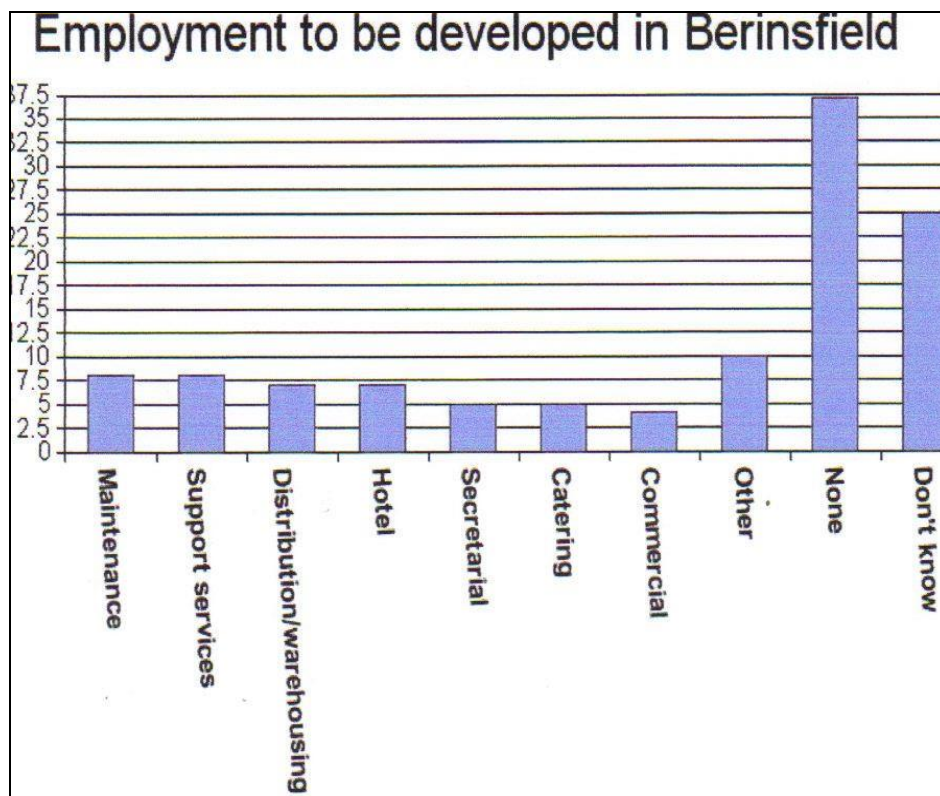
A breakdown from the 2011 census of those **1475** persons recorded as 'in employment' showed their occupations as:

Managerial	90
Professional	235
Administrative//secretarial	135
Skilled trades	220
Elementary occupations	245
Other incl part-time	550

Source: 2011 Census (Qualifications gained) and ORCC Community profile (Nov 2013)

The table below shows the sorts of employment opportunities residents would most like to see available following any redevelopment in Berinsfield. These include maintenance & support services (about 8% each) warehousing / distribution & hotel (about 7% each), secretarial & catering (5% each) & commercial (4%).

Source: berinsfield-pc.gov.uk, Parish Plan 2009



4.7 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The 2011 census showed that some 50 people in Berinsfield worked from home. To encourage local businesses to the area and make it possible for more people to work from home, good connection to fast broadband and reliable mobile phone services is essential.

The SODC has indicated in its Core Strategy that it wishes to 'encourage investment in technologies to enable remote working'.



The village water tower with communications antennae.

Broadband

The provision of rural broadband is an important element of government policy. Currently, only 53 per cent of properties in South Oxfordshire are able to receive super-fast broadband, with a large number of businesses and homes affected by slow download and upload speeds. Berinsfield is currently served by a number of providers offering conventional services. A fibre-optic service, which offers higher download speeds, has yet to be laid.

Residents and businesses in South Oxfordshire are set to benefit from a further investment to secure superfast broadband across the vast majority of the districts. The council has agreed to put forward a substantial amount of funding to ensure that superfast broadband will cover the majority of the districts, which is currently being installed by BT as part of the £25M 'Better Broadband for Oxfordshire' project.

Mobile phones

Smartphone, laptop or tablet device users in Berinsfield currently have a reasonable connection for calls, texts, web browsing, email, apps, video streaming and file downloads via the third generation of mobile phone networks – 3G.

Connection speeds can vary depending on location in the village. A new generation of mobile phone network, a lower-frequency 4G is only available in limited areas around the village with certain network providers.

4.8 TRANSPORT

People in rural areas rely more on private transport and, in general, spend more on this than their urban counterparts. The lack of good public transport is often a real barrier in accessing public services such as post-16 education, shops, healthcare, sport & leisure services, employment, financial services and training. Overall, residents of rural communities travel nearly twice as far by car each year compared to urban residents.

Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield

About 95 residents reported that they regularly use public transport to reach their place of employment. The average time to reach the nearest hospital is 59 minutes. The nearest job centre is about 9km away and the nearest secondary school is 7.6km.

Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield

Road safety

In village consultations, residents have been consistently concerned about traffic and, in particular, speeding, road safety, bad parking and congestion. There is an urgent need for a crossing on the A4074 to reach the bus stop opposite Shadwell Road following several fatal accidents over the years.

Berinsfield's Abbey Woods Academy (former CP School) has developed a School Travel and Road Safety scheme (STARS) to educate drivers not to park their vehicles on the zigzag lines and the “keep clear” markings outside the school.

Car ownership

The dependency on private transport is further illustrated by the table below which shows the car ownership per household data for Berinsfield. Any new development has the potential to impact on the road network due to an increase in the number of trips made by vehicles, and an increase in vehicle movements can also have a negative impact upon air quality within the parish.

Car or van availability				
All households	Berinsfield	%	Oxfordshire	England
Without a car	220	13.5%	11.6%	25.9%
1 car	463	37.5%	38.9%	42.1%
2 cars	297	35.3%	36.0%	24.6%
3 cars	73	9.6%	9.3%	5.4%
4+ cars	24	4.3%	4.1%	1.9%

Source: Census 2011

Local cycle amenities

There are currently no formal cycle routes or cycle parks within the village and cyclists use the main streets. There are no cross-village cycle routes and the intricate form of the footpaths of the Radburn layout is often too narrow for cyclists. The access routes often end with no access onto the footpath system of the Green. There are not enough cycle parks at critical locations to encourage cycling to community facilities.

Already in place are the cycle sheds for the school; Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have visited the school and cycle proficiency tests were given. While there are cycle parking points outside the Adult Education Centre and Abbey Sports Centre, there is a further need for racks at both shopping sites and at the Health Centre.

With an aging population, there is likely to be an increased use of invalid buggies and any improvement to cycle routes would also be of advantage to them.

Parking problems

With an estimated **1384** vehicles in the community and generally smaller residential plot sizes than other South Oxfordshire villages, inconsiderate parking is a frequent problem throughout the village with particular problems reported in a number of areas. This is exacerbated by the high density of residential accommodation.

Sources: 2011 census, Community-led Plan & Parish Council website

4.9 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus services

Although one of OCC's main transport hubs, there is only one public transport company servicing the village itself due to its location off to one side of the A4074. The T2 service connects to Abingdon, Cowley & Oxford. There is also the 97 service to Didcot and the 114 service serving Wallingford & Abingdon. Bus stops on the A4074 allow residents to connect to X39 & X40 bus services to Oxford going north and to Wallingford & Reading going south with about half-hourly frequency.

Since being identified in the earlier consultation, the Parish Council has been liaising with Oxfordshire County Council to find solutions to address transport issues raised by residents during consultation. The main concern expressed by residents is the difficulty in safely crossing the A4074 to get to bus stops. The pedestrian and cyclist crossings at the A4074 are very poor which creates safety hazards and do not encourage longer distance cycling.

Rail services

The nearest train station is at Culham (4.5km to the west) which lies between Didcot and Oxford with onward links to Reading and London Paddington. It is served by First Great Western local services but has no ticket office and only has parking for 8 cars.

There is a covered cycle store and the station can be reached via the Thames cycle path (Berinsfield to Abingdon).

4.10 SHOPS



The village shops and public house

There are two small parades of shops in the village with a Co-op supermarket, newsagents & post office, hairdresser and fast food outlet. There is also a public house, the 'Village Inn', at one end of the parade. A pharmacy is located adjacent to the health centre at the other end. Villagers needing to visit the larger supermarkets generally travel to Wallingford, Abingdon or Oxford.

The parade of shops on Fane Drive to the east of the village is in very poor condition and in need of regeneration. With two exceptions, the businesses are now closed and boarded-up. Residents together with land/business owners will be questioned on their strategic preferences – an attempt at regeneration or complete redevelopment of the site.

Outside the main village development and alongside the A4074 Oxford Road, there is a small collection of other businesses – the H Café, Infinity motorcyclist accessory store, Clover's Discount Store, a scaffolding business, a motor vehicle garage with used-car dealership and a scrap yard / metals recycling operation. This site also offers scope for re-development.



Deacon's Estate - A centre of business activity alongside the A4074



Vacant retail outlets in Fane Drive

The NDP can't force houses, shops or offices to be built on certain land but it can designate areas for preferred land uses which means land-owners and developers will know what the likely chances are of being able to build on it and what sort of homes and/or buildings the community would prefer to see there. The community will be consulted on whether it wishes to use its new powers under Neighbourhood Development Orders to grant certain planning permissions on key specific sites within the approved Neighbourhood Development Area.

4.11 KEY ISSUES FACING BERINSFIELD

With the country appearing slowly to be emerging from recession, there are growing opportunities for employment and increased demand for housing. Over time, if there was no Berinsfield NDP, residents could find it increasingly difficult to obtain local employment and suitable housing.

More opportunities for employment locally would reduce the need for car journeys with a benefit to the environment. Ways need to be found to encourage greater use of cycles for short journeys around the village with dedicated, buggy-friendly, cycle tracks. The village needs to consider the future implications of any change from fossil-fuelled to battery-powered cars and provision of charging points.

Key economic issues facing Berinsfield are:

- Any need for increased travel to find work would contribute to associated traffic problems and associated pollution.
- Local businesses and the employment they provide are vital to the economic well being of the village. Some employment sites are in need of regeneration and suitable alternative sites need to be identified before redevelopment can take place.
- New local employment opportunities are welcomed in the village but the green belt designation is inhibiting economic growth
- The village faces an aging population some of which may need more specialised forms of accommodation to meet their care needs in the future. The Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan will spell out policies to contribute to a better outcome.
- A need for better cycle ways and buggy-friendly routes around and through the village
- A need for greater skills training to help make people more employable locally
- A need to update local health and support services
- A need for more amenity space, leisure facilities and formal play areas for children

Section 5 - SOCIAL FACTORS

5.1 LEVELS OF EDUCATION QUALIFICATION OR SKILLS

Skill levels in the local population can be an important driver of community sustainability. In general those with low or no skills are more likely to experience exclusion and be vulnerable to changes in the economy such as increased demand for higher-skilled workers. By contrast, those with high-level skills are more likely to be in better-paid jobs and are more likely to run or start their own businesses. Employers are also more likely to locate in areas with a good supply of appropriately skilled workers. Knowing whether there are skills gaps has helped communities to think about whether there are enough learning and training courses locally – for example many communities run IT and other such courses.

For Berinsfield, the breakdown of skill levels in the census 2011 for the **2142** people aged 16+ was:

No qualifications	691
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The highest qualification gained by the others was:

Level 1 equivalent	430	(1 GCE or GCSE or NVQ)
Level 2 equivalent	315	(5 GCEs or GCSEs)
Level 3 equivalent	180	(2 A Levels)
Level 4 equivalent	345	(HNC, HND or higher)
Apprenticeship	75	
Other	109	

Source: 2011 Census (Qualifications gained) and ORCC Community profile (Nov 2013)

5.2 ETHNICITY

The census in 2001 recorded 130 people who described themselves as coming from black or ethnic minority groups. By 2011, this number had risen to **368**. Surveyed for the Local Plan, 83% of respondents felt that 'people from different backgrounds got on well together in the local area'. Source: 2011 census & ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield

Total population	2806
White (86.8% born in UK)	2438
Ethnic	368
Born outside UK	280

5.3 HEALTH

Health is a fundamental factor in well-being and quality of life, having a direct impact on an individual's ability to live a fulfilling and enjoyable life, and also indirectly impacting on their ability to sustain standards of living through income. Poor health may also have a severe effect on other people either directly, through changing relationships (for example forcing family members into informal unpaid care), or through indirect effects such as change in household income.

The general health of residents is shown in the Table below. In 2011, a significant number of village residents (230) were identified as having a limiting long-term health issue and 5.6% were in receipt of government benefits for reasons of poor health. At 13.1%, the number of people in Berinsfield with a limiting long-term illness was almost double the same figure for Oxfordshire (7.7%) but only marginally higher than the average for England as a whole (12.8%). Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield (Nov 2013)

Health status	Berinsfield	%	S. Oxon	England
All usual residents	2806			
Very good health	1322	47.1	52.5	47.0
Good health	974	34.7	33.3	33.9
Fair health	352	12.5	10.7	13.0
Bad health	124	4.4	2.6	4.2
Very bad health	34	1.2	0.7	1.2
Limiting long-term illness	230	13.1		12.8
Attendance allowance 65+	65	17.3*		16.7
Disability living allowance	155	5.6		5.1

Source: Census 2011

* 17.3% of those people in Berinsfield aged 65+
Some 111 people were also recorded as acting as full-time carers.

Berinsfield is fortunate in that it has a dedicated health centre in the village which also serves the needs of some other nearby villages and is part of Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. There is an adjacent pharmacy. It also has a dental practice that accepts NHS patients.



This purpose-built centre opened in 1970 and has an adjacent pharmacy

Of Berinsfield's 2806 residents in 2011, 664 were children under-16 with 388 people aged 60 or older. This latter figure is rising and the management of an aging population nationally has become politically more pressing. Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield

Currently, two-thirds of all hospital patients are aged over 65 and increasingly in need of aftercare. Source: BBC Panorama April 2014 With life expectancy also on the rise there is a danger that our public services will lag behind, and it may be relevant in considering any further development in the village to ensure adequate provision for sheltered accommodation and care facilities.

5.4 EDUCATION

Pre-school Playgroup

The Berinsfield Early Years Pre-School was established in 1989. It operates from a self-contained single-storey Terrapin building with an enclosed outdoor area, in the grounds of Berinsfield School. It serves families living in and near Berinsfield.



The Abbey Woods Academy

State education

The village school in Wimplestraw Road is larger than the average-sized primary school with a capacity of some 350 and has just been renamed the Abbey Woods Academy. There were 270 pupils on the school roll (May 2014). Most of the pupils are of white British heritage. A few are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds and some are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Source: Ofsted report 2012

The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by School Action Plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The school has a designated unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. *Source: Ofsted report 2012*

An Ofsted Report in May 2012 showed the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Nevertheless, the school has national awards for its work in promoting inclusion, ecological awareness, sport and healthy lifestyles. To attend secondary education, pupils need to travel over 7km to nearby Abingdon or Wallingford. *Source: Ofsted report 2012*

Adult learning

Berinsfield Adult Learning, situated in a purpose-built block to the rear of the Academy, offers a variety of courses to interested adults with free classes in English and Maths. A range of fee-paying courses and workshops is also offered. In addition, the centre runs classes for adults with learning difficulties.

5.5 PLACES OF WORSHIP

The name Berinsfield recalls St Birinus who brought Christianity to the area in 7th Century. A church was built in the village by volunteers in 1961 to provide a spiritual centre for the community and was named St Mary & St Berin. Its main weekly service is at 11.00 on Sunday mornings.

Although nominally of C of E denomination, the building is shared with the Roman Catholic church who celebrate a mass there at 09.30 each Sunday.



The village church, built in 1961 is the Church of St. Mary and St. Berin

5.6 SPORT AND RECREATION

In recent years, with the staging of the 2012 Olympics in London, sport has assumed a higher profile. The benefits of regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle are self-evident.

Writing in the *'Daily Telegraph'* in April 2014, Lord Coe said *"Today's children are the least active generation in history. They might also be the first generation to have a shorter lifestyle than their parents. Clearly that's not progress and physical inactivity may be a bigger culprit than we think. By the age of 15, European children are half as active as they were aged nine. As a nation we are currently a fifth less active than we were in 1961 and, if things don't change rapidly, we're on course to be 35% less active by 2030. The price we pay is high. Inactive children don't perform as well in school and are less likely to go to university"*.

He added that *"worldwide inactivity is closely linked to more than nine million premature deaths. According to the NHS, inactivity costs Britain nearly £10 billion every year."*

Berinsfield is better placed than some villages in the area with a broad range of indoor and outdoor sporting activities available to residents including football, boxing, gymnastics, swimming and watersports.

Shortfall in recommended formal play areas

However, according to the SODC's Berinsfield EIA Plan, Berinsfield falls short of the SODC standards for recreation. The village currently has some 4.2 hectares of formal recreation area, 0.8 hectares of equipped children's play space and more than 2.4 hectares of informal children's play space.

The standards in the SODC Local Plan recommend that a settlement like Berinsfield should have 5.0 hectares of formal recreation area and 2.25 hectares of children's equipped play space and informal play space. This suggests a slight shortfall in the recommendations for formal recreation areas which could be remedied as part of planning for any new developments in or around the village. Without careful planning, the problem will increase with the construction of any new dwellings in the village.



Berinsfield – a multi-sport venue

Watersports

A watersports centre has long been established on the nearby Queenford Lakes which has had planning consent for sailing, swimming and angling since 1966 and for powered sports like waterskiing, wakeboarding and jet-skiing since 1995.

Dinghy sailing is available on the Dorchester Lake on the other side of the A4074.

The remaining five lakes in the Dorchester complex of former gravel pits have no recreational use and are sites more suitable for nature conservation.

The SODC Leisure Team notes that, with a larger percentage of Berinsfield residents being 65+, any future plans should consider how to engage older residents in more sports and physical activities. This is important as low levels of social integration and loneliness can significantly increase mortality. Social participation (including sports and physical activity participation) acts as a protective factor against dementia and cognitive decline over the age of 65 and also has an impact on the risk of mortality by aiding recovery after becoming ill.

- Having a community hall where more day-time sports and physical activities can be offered would be one option. *(Currently we are limited on available indoor space due to the dual usage between the Schools and Abbey Leisure Centre).*
- Considering outdoor fitness equipment has proved to be popular with older residents in other villages such as Watlington and could be replicated in Berinsfield.
- According to the draft PPG17 study completed by the SODC in November 2007, Berinsfield is in need of:
 - A multi-use games area (MUGA)
 - A 20-100ha of natural and semi-natural green space within 5 km of Berinsfield
 - qualitative improvements to the sports hall, swimming pool, community hall, football pitch / recreation ground

The Leisure Team encourages Berinsfield to plan positively for the future by considering how infrastructure and a multi-agency approach can have an impact on the health and well-being of communities.

5.7 THE ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE

Abbey Sports Centre sits in the heart of Berinsfield and is very much a part of the community. The centre offers a 35-station gym, swimming pool, wide range of classes, a 4-court badminton hall, children's swimming lessons, archery and 5-a-side football. There is parking for 45 cars.

SODC and Oxfordshire County Council are currently considering the co-location of public services within Berinsfield into a single new-build.



The Abbey Sports Centre is at the heart of the village

This is likely to include a replacement leisure facility, library, information centre and early intervention facilities. They have not yet appointed a project team to undertake this work so no preferred site has been identified or ruled out, however based on feedback from the Parish Council they have, for now, ruled out the war memorial site. The SODC has said it will look to coordinate with the village's NDP as this progresses. *Source: Gemma Thynne, SODC*

5.8 BERINSFIELD AMATEUR BOXING CLUB

Berinsfield ABC is a well-established and highly-respected boxing club which gives the youth of South Oxfordshire the chance to learn self discipline, whilst building their self-confidence under the strict guidance of qualified coaching staff & within the rules of the Amateur Boxing Association of England. With its own club premises in Fane Drive, the club has a number of young boxers who have achieved distinction at regional and even national level.



The club caters for members of all ages and both sexes

5.9 BERINSFIELD FC

Now in its 36th year, Berinsfield Football Club previously played in the Reading Football League but has since transferred both its first and reserve sides to the North Berks Football League as a result of its position in Oxfordshire. Home pitch and changing rooms are situated in the village's central recreation space.



Berinsfield FC's first XI squad pose for a team photo.

5.10 SCOUTS, CUBS, BEAVERS & BROWNIES

Berinsfield has an active troop of Scouts (1st Berinsfield), Cubs, Beavers & Brownies which meet regularly in the village.

5.11 OXFORD WAKEBOARD & SKI CLUB

Oxford Wakeboard & Ski Club (OWSC) is based at Queenford Lakes Watersports Centre, with its two sheltered lakes and is designated a National Centre of Excellence for all disciplines of waterskiing and wakeboarding. Members from the OWSC won gold in the British Masters 2011 slalom waterskiing championships and last year a young skier won a bronze medal in the 2013 World Water Ski Slalom Championships in Chile.



Emphasis on training

The OWSC also works closely with the sport's governing body and the local District Council to provide 'Sportivate' programs as well as entry-level courses for local charities, schools and colleges.

Freddie Winter, who trains at Berinsfield, won a bronze medal at the 2013 World Waterski Championships

5.12 THE RAF HOME FOR SPORT – WATER SKI & WAKEBOARD CENTRE

The Royal Air Force has recently also designated Queenford Lakes in Berinsfield as its only "Home for Sport" for waterskiing and wakeboarding nationally and is a regular user of the facilities there with bases such as RAF Benson, RAF Brize Norton, RAF Halton and RAF High Wycombe all in close proximity.

5.13 OPEN-WATER SWIMMING

Open water swimming has become more popular since its introduction in the Olympic Games and there is a great deal of interest in Oxfordshire and adjacent counties.



Queenford Lakes Watersports Centre is the home to a number of open-water swimming and triathlon events and hosts regular training sessions and competitions there during summer months.

◀ *Open water swimmers limber up prior to competition*

5.14 BERINSFIELD ANGLING SYNDICATE

A Berinsfield Angling Syndicate has held fishing rights at Queenford Lakes for over 15 years with the site recording many record-breaking fish in the past. Some years back, three bream were landed in one night, all of which came within ounces of the then British record.



There are some big fish in Queenford Lakes

5.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour feature regularly in priorities for local areas. The SODC promotes a community safety strategy which aims to bring together agencies to reduce vandalism and crime and to promote road safety. Berinsfield is well-supported by the county's public services.

Police: Visible, effective and community-friendly policing can help bring down crime levels, as well as reducing people's fear of crime. Responsibility for public safety and public order within the village lies with the Thames Valley Police whose central HQ is at Kidlington. In the past, residents have complained about a lack of police presence. Two dedicated Police Community Support Officers are now seconded to Berinsfield to provide a day-to-day presence in the village and to maintain relations with the community. There are plans to establish a neighbourhood watch scheme in the village. A police helicopter is based at nearby RAF Benson.

The level of crime in this neighbourhood is still rated as average. The average number of crimes in 2013 decreased from 61.7 to 48.7, a 21.1% **decrease** compared to the same time last year. The individual crime categories were: burglary (8.7% decrease), robbery (100% decrease), vehicle crime (50% decrease), violence (77% increase) and anti-social behaviour (ASB) (16.9% decrease). *Source: Thames Valley Police*

Despite the community's sometimes poor image in the media, the perception of anti-social behaviour, drunk or rowdy behaviour and drug use scored lower than the average for South Oxfordshire as a whole. *Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield (Nov 2013)*

Fire: A comprehensive fire and emergency service is provided by the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service whose fire service control room is also based at Kidlington. The nearest appliances to Berinsfield are at Didcot, with a full-time staff along with Wallingford and Watlington (with part-time staff).

Ambulance: The South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) provides paramedics and ambulance services. In 2011, this was the top-performing ambulance service in the UK. The SCAS is supported by the Thames Valley & Chilterns Air Ambulance (TVACAA), which is run by an independent charitable trust. Their red and yellow liveried EC135 helicopter is also based at RAF Benson, which is the central point for the three counties it serves.

Utilities

There is good provision of gas, electricity and water locally. These services are located within the highway and along the eastern side of the route of the Roman Road. The main electricity sub-station lies just within the parish boundary to the east.

However the community's sewage system has been inherited from earlier developments on the site and is now not able to cope with current demands. Putting the drains and sewers under more pressure causes problems as shown with the 57% who reported in the Parish Plan questionnaire as having had problems with the drains, sewers or associated flooding.

Berinsfield's sewage system also suffers from a lack of records and maintenance: where maps of the sewage system have been checked, they seem to bear little resemblance to the current housing layout.



The sewage pumping station at the bottom of Fane Drive is stretched to capacity

The Berinsfield Local Plan 2009 states that no new housing should be constructed that would have to connect to this already over-loaded facility. *Source: Berinsfield Local Plan 2009*

On 1 October 2011, water and sewerage companies in England and Wales became responsible for private sewers, which were previously the responsibility of property owners. This is good news as it means the ownership and maintenance for private sewers and lateral drains were transferred to Thames Water, bringing some peace of mind to residents and clarity regarding ownership.

The Government plans to transfer the ownership of pumping stations to water companies on 1 October 2016. Until this time, the owner(s) of the pumping station will continue to be responsible for its maintenance and repair.

Source: <http://www.thameswater.co.uk/help-and-advice/8654.htm>

5.16 CEMETERIES

The village now has its own burial ground off Fane Drive on the east side of the village, which has sections for both burial and interment of ashes. To date 148 interments have taken place. The cemetery was opened in 1997 and, with the growing preference for cremation, it is believed to have capacity for at least another 50 years.



The new entrance pillars to the burial ground built in 2014

However, some consideration for the future extension of the burial ground should be taken into consideration as it took nearly 40 years to establish the current one.

5.17 ALLOTMENTS

There are 24 allotments located at the north end of the village which are administered by an allotment association on behalf of the parish council and are well-used by villagers. There is a small waiting list for plots that become available. Access is off Pritchard Close.

The allotment site is currently leased from SODC, but when the strategic land review takes place, the site will be transferred into the ownership of Berinsfield Parish Council. The council will need to review whether the current facility is adequate if the village acquires a number of additional residents.

5.18 KEY ISSUES FACING BERINSFIELD

Larger villages, defined by SODC as local centres serving their immediate rural area, are being encouraged to improve the range of facilities offered. The Core Strategy states that to achieve the long term success of these centres, development proposals will be permitted which, through infill development and small-scale redevelopment, provide **further retail and leisure uses** within town and larger village centres. *Source: SODC Core Strategy*

With an expanding village, the Berinsfield NDP will allow residents a voice to assert how they wish the local amenities and services to be organised, including particularly the primary school, health centre and sports facilities.

Key issues facing Berinsfield regarding social facilities are:

- The village's ageing population will require appropriate housing, health services etc.
- A need for more cycle & buggy-friendly routes about the village.
- Sewerage pumping station is at capacity. Whilst there are many reasons for not wishing to see building in the centre of the village, the main reason is that **the infrastructure simply cannot take it**.
- Lack of adequate public amenity space. The village doesn't want to build in the Green centre because it is a safe place for the younger generation to play – no cars or motor bikes – and they can be seen. Building here would result in serious over-development and Berinsfield already has the highest population concentration in Oxfordshire.

- Poor Ofsted report for the primary school, and recent change to Abbey Woods Academy
- More residents will increase the demand for allotments.
- There is no community centre where meetings for over 100 people can take place.

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Section 6 - HOUSING FACTORS

6.1 HOUSING TYPES

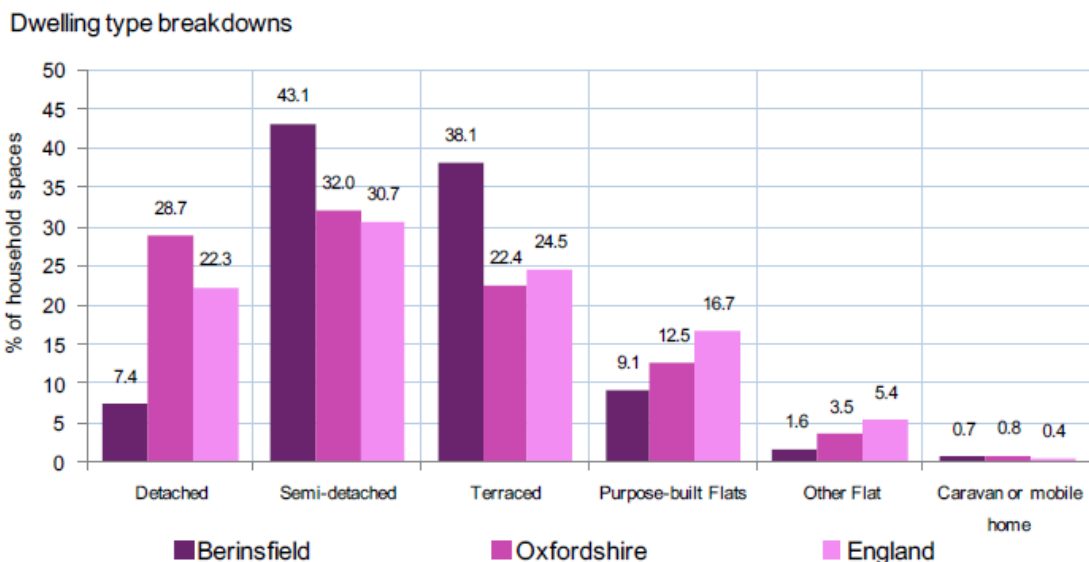
Housing within the Berinsfield community is not as diverse or 'up-market' as in many of the other large villages within South Oxfordshire and there are good historical reasons for this. Berinsfield was conceived as a new residential community only in the 1960s and so the housing stock erected was aimed at providing affordable accommodation for the needs at the time rather than evolving over many years like most older villages in Oxfordshire.

The village currently has some **1098** dwellings, up from 1020 in 2001. Only 7.4% of Berinsfield housing is detached with 43% semi-detached and 38% terraced. The breakdown in 2011 was made up as follows:

detached houses	81	7.4%
semi-detached house	473	43.1%
terraced houses	418	38.1%
purpose-built flats	100	9.1%
other	20	1.8%

This is widely different from either South Oxfordshire or England generally: the comparable detached ratio for South Oxfordshire is 28.7% and 22.3% in the South of England generally. In South Oxfordshire 32% of housing is semi-detached and only 22.4% of the total stock is terraced.

There is a lot of movement of people and families in the village. Unfortunately, families who do well and wish to move into a larger home frequently leave the village and relocate to a neighbouring area. All too often these people are the 'movers and shakers' and potential village leaders of the future that the village needs to retain.

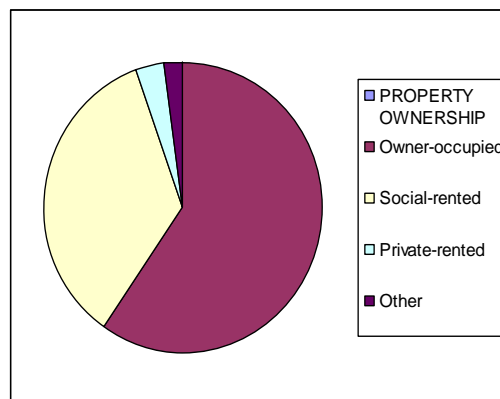


Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield (Nov 2013)

In Berinsfield, the density of population is relatively high at 7.52 people per hectare (neighbouring Dorchester has just 2.48 people per hectare and Benson 2.2).

6.2 HOUSING OWNERSHIP

Of the 1189 dwellings in 2011, 620 (57.6%) were owner-occupied, 388 (36%) social-rented, 49 (4.5%) private-rented and 20 (1.9%) other rented types. The proportion of rented housing is higher than the rest of South Oxfordshire which has 71% owner-occupied to 29% social- or privately-rented. *Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield (Nov 2013)*



Of the **1098** properties in 2011, South Oxfordshire Housing Association (Soha) currently owns 383 properties in Berinsfield made up as follows:

Leasehold	12
Key workers	7
Sheltered	46
General needs	318

Of the General Needs & Sheltered properties there are:

4-bed	9
3-bed	186
2-bed	87
1-bed	78
Bedsit	4

Source: Soha Housing

6.3 HOUSING COST AND AFFORDABILITY

Housing in Oxfordshire is widely considered to be more expensive and comparatively less affordable than across England as a whole. In 2010, the Affordable Housing Ratio for South Oxfordshire was assessed to be 16.8 which compares to the national figure of 10.9. This means that house prices in Oxfordshire are significantly higher as a proportion of lower quartile household incomes than across England generally. According to Zoopla, the current average price in April 2014 for a semi-detached house in Berinsfield is £282,019 and for a terraced property £222,854. This is up by 6.23% on the past year. *Source: Zoopla*

In 2011, 78 properties in Berinsfield fell into Council Tax band A, 586 into Council Tax band B and 328 into Tax Band C – notably higher proportions than across Oxfordshire generally. Thus Berinsfield is not regarded as an affluent community. ORCC's Rural Community Profile notes that some 259 residents were receiving housing and council tax benefits in 2005.

There is a clear need for more 'affordable housing'.

Sources: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield (Nov 2013)

6.4 NEED FOR CHANGE

In 2001/2 Soha Housing redeveloped an area of housing in Berinsfield. Prior to starting the work, Soha visited residents' homes to ask what they would like to see in the future and to answer any questions they may have. These views helped form proposals and resulted in the £3 million redevelopment of Evenlode Drive and Cherwell Road along with environmental improvements elsewhere in the village.

When the Berinsfield Parish Plan committee first met, the view was that the village required a different housing mix, especially more 4 & 5-bedroom houses with ample off-road parking provision. Additionally, the results of the questionnaire show that the community feels it needs more 2-bed bungalows for senior members of the community who would like to stay in Berinsfield, but find the upkeep of a house too much. There is also a need for accommodation for younger, single people who would like to stay in the village, but become independent of their families. *Source: Berinsfield Parish Plan 2009.*

In 2012, the SODC commissioned an Environmental Improvements Action Plan for Berinsfield which stated that the village is currently:

"skewed towards 2-3 bed affordable housing units, with many areas lacking the essential diversity of housing type and social group to enable a successful and balanced community to develop. Areas of new housing and areas for infilling will need to be identified and hurdles will need to be overcome to relax restrictions within the Green Belt to enable this to take place."

The consultation process prior to this Scoping Report originally included questions related to housing in Berinsfield. Although it was expected that further homes would soon have to be built in the locality, the detail was not then known. Clearly, any decisions made with regard to housing will need to be in line with the adopted Core Strategy. Consequently, Berinsfield Advisory Group decided that it would not undertake any further consultation until there was more information available to give residents. Berinsfield Parish Council promised to give updates through its website and the 'Village Voice' newsletter. *Source: Community-led Plan*



Berinsfield and a view across Green Furlong

6.5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

A number of areas were identified in the Parish Plan questionnaire as possibly suitable for infill of up to four dwellings each. These were Fane Drive (opposite the dentist), the bottom shops, beyond Barrington Close, the Drayton side of Fane Drive, Lay Avenue car park and behind Costcutters. In addition the land opposite H Café and the car-boot field, both next to the A4074, were identified as potential development sites. Respondents expressed strong opposition to using either the school field or Parish council fields.

For future developments, the village made it quite clear in its Berinsfield Parish Plan that its green centre should remain 'GREEN' with 92% saying 'NO' to building on the Parish or School fields and only 4% saying there should be any 'infill' within the village settlement area. In fact, some 37% want no further building programmes for the village at all.

It is clear that any greater development will most likely need to be on new greenfield sites and on previously-developed land around the village. The BNDP will wish to consider encouraging possible redevelopment of shops both within the village and alongside the A4074. There is also the former minerals extraction site to the south at Queenford Lakes (now a mixed-use site) as well as the Wally Corner landfill site on the other side of Burcot Lane which could play a role in any future vision for the village.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has recently written (April 2014) to local councils drawing attention to the recent Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) saying it is concerned that many of the assumptions behind the SHMA are unsound. The organisation urged councils to *"give proper thought to what can be achieved in a sustainable way to meet local need and protect our local environment"*.

6.6 KEY ISSUES FACING BERINSFIELD

Without a Berinsfield NDP, residents would have little control over the future structure of the village or the housing mix which developers might press onto the community. In parts of the village, the housing stock is dated, constructed to a high density and features an above-average proportion of terraced and semi-detached accommodation which seems to be keeping property prices below the average for the county. Some of these may need improving or replacing over the Plan period.

SODC states it is facing a requirement for 11,487 new homes over the next 15 years and that across the District there is a trend towards smaller households. Without an appropriate number of smaller dwellings, an ageing population would be unable to downsize to free up properties more suited to young families, and younger people would be denied access to starter homes to enable them to become independent. The SODC predicts that a typical village with a population of 3000 (like Berinsfield) will need an extra 110 houses by 2026 just to accommodate its existing population.

Key issues include:

- The existing housing stock is ageing and in some instances of poor quality
- There is a need to ensure that new housing meets local needs for more affordable homes whilst at the same time promoting a better mix of housing as per the SODC adopted Core Strategy.
- Berinsfield sits entirely within the Green Belt, which is inhibiting the regeneration of parts of the village and is preventing future growth and employment opportunities.
- A growing proportion of privately-owned housing within the village is now rented which increases still further the proportion of rented accommodation in the village.
- SODC states that 40% affordable housing will be sought on all new developments subject to viability and Berinsfield will need to discuss with SODC the need for additional social rented homes when the current proportion is already much higher than the county average.
- This fragmentation of ownership has also resulted in a somewhat uncoordinated approach to maintenance of public areas. According to the Berinsfield EIA Plan, this has resulted in differing standards of maintenance to various areas and a lack of clarity over responsibilities.
- Residents have already complained about the overloading of the existing sewerage system and there is a need to secure alternative disposal arrangements for any new developments as the existing system will be unlikely to cope.

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Section 7 - ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

7.1 LANDSCAPE

The village enjoys an attractive rural setting with open farmland extending up to the perimeter of the settlement along its northern, eastern and southern boundaries. To the south there exist a number of former gravel pits which have formed attractive lakes and separate the southern end of the village from Dorchester. The main residential heart of the village together with the surrounding land all currently stand entirely within an area currently designated as Oxford Green Belt.

The South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (SOLA) shows Berinsfield as located on the southern fringe of the Nuneham Courtney ridge landscape character area with land rising to the north-west.

South of Berinsfield the landform is flatter and more open, forming part of the 'River Thames Corridor', where there exist a number of former gravel pits which have formed attractive lakes and separate the southern end of the village from Dorchester. Two of these lakes have long-standing planning consent for recreational use. In such settings, architectural design plays a vital role in preserving our landscape and necessitates an integrated approach to sustainable development of both housing and surrounding farm land. *Sources: SOLA & Berinsfield EIA Plan*

7.2 GREEN AREAS

The village benefits from areas of open spaces within the residential areas which are much prized by residents. These are composed largely of grass with individual mature trees, typical of late 1960s/1970s housing developments. Due to the lack of co-ordinated maintenance, the quality of these spaces is poor.

A large central area of open space is used for football, children's play, school playing fields and informal recreation. This area is divided by the old Roman Road which runs across it in a north-south direction and stands slightly proud of the surrounding land with some mature trees along its length.

Sources: Berinsfield EIA Plan and SOLA



7.3 NATURE CONSERVATION

Within the Berinsfield NDP area there are no statutory designations relating to Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. ***The nearest statutory designated site is a Natura 2000 site which lies some 2km to the south of the plan area and is known as the Little Wittenham Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).*** "Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are strictly-protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive."

Sources: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-23> & Natural England consultation (italics)

Despite there being no statutory conservation policies affecting sites within the Parish area, the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan will seek to promote nature conservation, biodiversity, the creation of accessible open space and the protection of green infrastructure.

Similarly, there are no areas of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat or Wood Pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat in the plan area. "UK BAP priority habitats were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)". Source: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5706>

The River Thames runs to the East of the boundary of the Neighbourhood Development Plan area. The Environment Agency (EA) sees this as an important community asset and an important wildlife/ecological corridor. The EA recommends that the NDP seeks to ensure that the River Thames is not negatively impacted by any future development and is even enhanced where possible.

7.4 HISTORICAL INTERESTS

Sites of archaeological Interest

It is clear from the study of archaeological remains uncovered during previous developments that Berinsfield has had a long and varied history dating back to the Bronze Age. Although there are no listed buildings or structural sites of particular historic interest or importance, a number of sites within the village boundary are of significant archaeological interest, and any future developments would need to have due regard to possible future discoveries elsewhere. The remains of an old Roman Road run N-S across the village.

Wally Corner

In 1974 and 1975, Oxford Archaeological Unit excavated the Wally Corner gravel pit at Berinsfield prior to gravel extraction. In 1960, Oxford University Archaeological Society had earlier carried out an excavation in the area and discovered Romano-British ditches dating from the first to fourth centuries but it was not until 1974 that the Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered.

A late Neolithic/early Bronze Age barrow and cremation were excavated together with a Roman ditch system. However the main discovery was the 114 burials and 4 cremations dating from the Anglo-Saxon period. Most of the burials contained grave goods.



The objects found were typical of the sort found in sites along the Upper Thames Valley and included weapons, knives, jewellery, spindle-whorls, buckets and pottery. The archive and finds from this excavation were deposited with the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

◀ *The photo shows a saucer brooch from grave 42.*

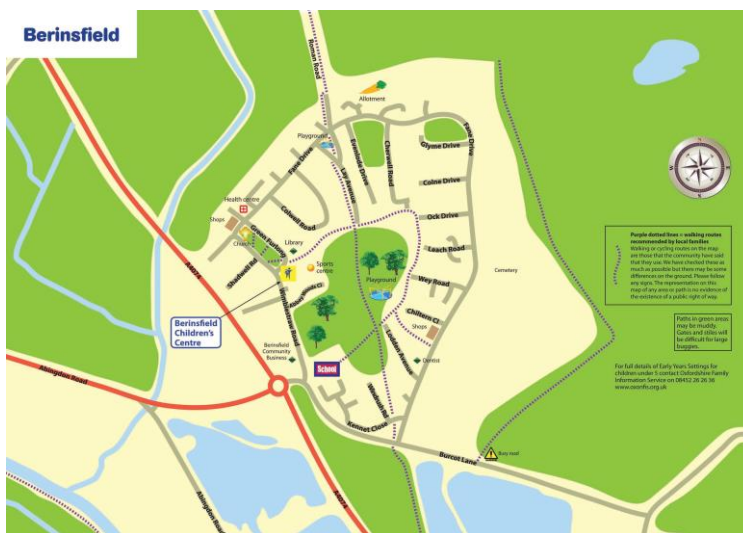
War Memorial

The village war memorial does have some recent historic significance as it serves also to commemorate the presence of the United States Air Force on the site during World War II. The USAF 7th Reconnaissance Group flew 5693 missions from the site when it was operating as RAF Mount Farm and maintains an interest in the memorial.

7.5 FOOTPATHS AND PERMITTED RIGHTS OF WAY

There are few footpaths that villagers can use for recreation and exercise. The OS Pathfinder 1136 map at a scale of 1:25000 shows the Roman road as a bridleway, running through the centre of the field, Lay Avenue, Evenlode Drive and Roman Road. It is part of a route running from Dorchester to the Baldons and east Oxford. This path is used mainly for walking although cycling (not motor bikes) is permitted. Another footpath leads from the Roman road at the edge of the village which skirts the allotments and joins a track which leads past Mount Farm, and joins Burcot Lane.

At the moment, the fields and lakes nearby have no legal rights of way but have nevertheless been used by some residents with consent for recreational walking.



Walking routes around Berinsfield

These facilities are much needed and their loss would be deplored.

A map is produced by OCC showing the location of a number of public footpaths around the village in a booklet entitled 'Oxford Outside'.

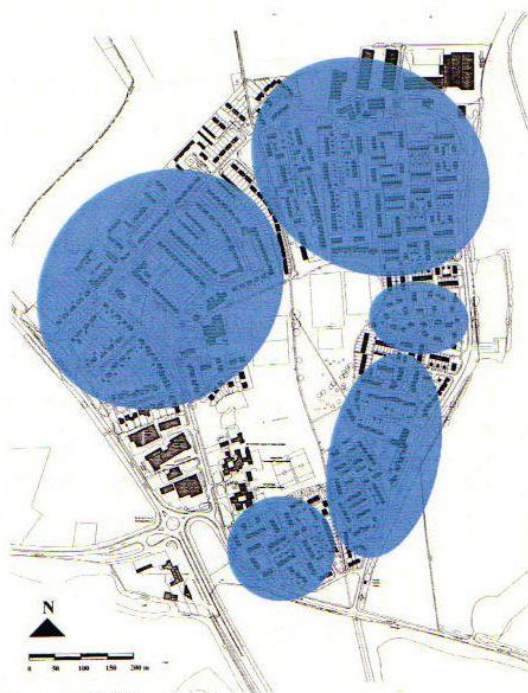


Figure 13, Neighbourhoods

The EIA report describes Berinsfield as being a series of overlapping neighbourhoods.

The interconnection of the neighbourhoods by footpath is poor and some could be eliminated.

There is potential for an east-west public footpath / cycleway across the Green.

Sadly, there are no major cycle parks at critical locations to encourage cycling within the village.

Source: Berinsfield Environmental Improvements Plan 2012

7.6 SOIL

All the sites proposed for development around the village currently lie in Green Belt and some are rated as grade 2 agricultural land. *Source: SODC SHLAA 2011*

The NPPF definition of previously developed land is land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. Such land may be contaminated by low concentrations of hazardous waste or pollution but has the potential to be reused once it is cleaned up.

Whilst none of the potential redevelopments sites in Berinsfield is believed to suffer from major contamination, these may need to be checked and dealt with before these areas can be redeveloped.

7.7 AIR, CLIMATE AND QUALITY FACTORS

Air pollution can be a local health problem, where for example the burning of wooden pallets creates toxic smoke due to probable solvents/wood preservatives contained within them. Since December 1997 all local authorities in the UK have been monitoring air quality in their area. Were SODC to find that the air quality in Berinsfield is not meeting national air quality objectives then it would be obliged to declare the village an Air Quality Management Area. To date, no such AQMA has been declared for Berinsfield.

SODC shows the level of CO₂ emission per head of population for Berinsfield as 8.0Kt whereas the average for South Oxfordshire generally is 6.7Kt.

Sources: SODC & Rural Community Profile

7.8 WASTE MANAGEMENT

In South Oxfordshire, currently, about 70 percent of domestic waste is recycled or composted, and about 100,000 tonnes of non-recyclables are to be burned at incineration facilities in Ardley, nr Bicester. However there is still potential for improvement as it is considered that up to 80% of all domestic waste is recyclable! *Source: SODC*

Recycling

SODC operates a fortnightly collection schedule alternating with waste collected for land-fill one week (in black bins) and waste that can be recycled picked up the following week (in green bins). Garden waste can be collected in brown bins. There is a weekly collection for food waste.

There are also a number of recycling points around the district that are home to a variety of different recycling banks, many of which are operated by charities. The one in Benson village hall car park is the nearest to the village. Residents in Berinsfield have complained at the loss of a local facility with the closure of the Wally Corner site and in a survey 80% indicated that they would wish the facility re-opened. There were also concerns that fly-tipping may become an issue if something were not done. At some of these sites SODC also has a pink recycling bank for small electrical items. *Source: SODC*

Litter & fly-tipping

SODC works hard to reduce fly-tipping through enforcement action, CCTV and education. Over the last 5 years, the number of fly-tips in Oxfordshire has dropped by over 50%. This has helped save local councils over £175,000 in clean-up costs.

There is concern that current recycling centres in Drayton, Redbridge and Oakley Wood are too far from the village for easy access. Where fly-tipping around the village is still a problem, the discarded material is often household rubbish that rogue traders have taken and then later dumped instead of disposing of properly. *Source: SODC*

In surveys for the village Local Plan, residents felt there was still a problem with litter & fly-tipping. The Parish Council is liaising with relevant agencies and the Berinsfield Advisory Group has organised a litter pick with local children. Agencies will also explore how to develop a new recycling initiative. This may involve improving an existing initiative such as the furniture recycling project or developing a new environmentally-friendly initiative.

Source: Berinsfield Local Plan 2009



Fly-tipping is a problem



SODC is on the case

7.9 ALTERNATIVE GREEN ENERGY

Renewable energy technologies are essential contributors to sustainable energy as they generally contribute to world energy security by reducing dependence on fossil fuel resources and by providing opportunities for mitigating greenhouse gases.



New technologies

Conceptually, one can define three phases of renewable technologies, reaching back more than 100 years.

First-generation technologies include hydropower, biomass combustion and geothermal. Some of these technologies are still in general use.

Second-generation technologies include solar, wind power, modern forms of bioenergy and solar photovoltaics. These are now entering markets as a result of research, development and demonstration (RD&D) investments since the 1980s.

A range of third-generation technologies are still under development

◀ *The wind turbine at the primary school*

Advances in solar power

Recent press reports suggest that solar power is winning the global argument. In Asia, photovoltaic energy is said to be already so cheap that it competes with oil, diesel and liquefied natural gas without subsidies. *Source: Daily Telegraph – 10th April 2014*

In the Local Plan questionnaire, Question 55 asked: 'Do you want to make use of our waste to create fuel and/or heat?' to which 87% replied 'Yes'. To Question 56, 'Would you be interested in making your home more energy efficient?' 79% replied 'Yes'.

Natural gas

Wally Corner to the south of the village is a former household waste landfill site (now restored to agriculture). The site is fitted with a methane burner which it is believed will burn for another 60 years. The Parish Council would like to explore the opportunities to generate electricity from this gas given its close proximity to the electric sub station and overhead power lines.

7.10 WATER QUALITY

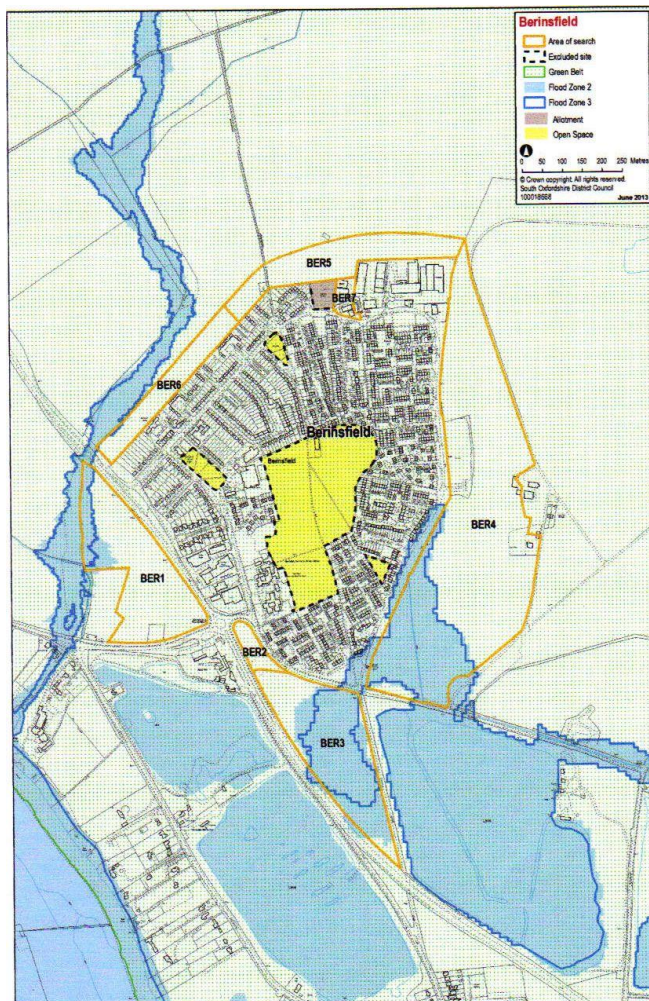
Domestic water is supplied by Thames Water. Following completion of the former household landfill site at Wally Corner, Oxford County Council requires regular monitoring of the water table around the perimeter of the site. The watersports centre also carries out periodic checking of water quality through regular sampling during open-water swimming season to ensure that this meets health & safety standards.

7.11 FLOODING

The Environment Agency flood maps show parts of the watersports centre to the south of the village and two other development sites put forward as part of SODC's SHLAA 2011 (BER3 & BER4) as lying in Flood Zones 2 & 3.

Despite the heavy rains this winter which caused wide-spread flooding in many other areas no major flooding incidents in the Neighbourhood Area were recorded. No requests for sandbags were received during the recent wet winter (*Source: SODC*) although there was some localised ponding to the south and east of the village.

Some flooding took place at Fane Drive in winter 2013/14. Surface water from Fane Drive is channelled towards the River Thame via a series of ditches (Elaine's Ditch) and culverts running from the east of the village along the side of Burcot Lane entering the Thame behind the electricity sub-station.



From SODC strategic land availability assessment showing zone 2/3 areas liable to flood

The SODC's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in July 2013 assessed flood risk around the larger villages where new housing is proposed. The result is summarised in the table below.

Following consultation with the Environment Agency, they commented that they had no plans to update their flood maps in the near future, some of which pre-date 2009.

Source: Environment Agency – consultation response 28.08.2014 (italics)

In response to this the Steering Group voted to appoint independent consultants to carry out a flood risk assessment of all affected areas.

Key settlement	Fluvial Flood Risk		Surface water	Ground water	Sewer
	Zone 2	Zone 3			
Bayswater Farm	Y	Y	Medium	Low	Low
Benson	Y	Y	Low	High	Low
Berinsfield	Y	Y	Medium	Medium	Low
Chalgrove	Y	Y	High	Medium	Low
Chinnor	N	N	Medium	Medium	Low
Cholsey	Y	Y	Medium	Low	Low
Crowmarsh Gifford	Y	Y	Medium	Medium	Low
Didcot	Y	Y	Medium	Low	Low
Goring-on-Thames	Y	Y	Low	Medium	Low
Henley-on-Thames	Y	Y	Low	High	Low
Horspath	N	N	High	Medium	Low
Nettlebed	N	N	Low	Low	Low
Sonning Common	N	N	Low	Low	Low
Thame	Y	Y	Medium	Low	Low
Wallingford	Y	Y	Medium	Medium	Low
Watlington	Y	Y	Medium	High	Low
Wheatley	Y	Y	High	Low	Low
Woodcote	N	N	Low	Low	Low

Source: SODC Flood Risk Assessment

A recent topographical study for Queenford Lakes shows that the Environment Agency's maps may overstate flood risk in Berinsfield.

The parish council will aim to work with independent consultants and the EA to update the flood maps now that the risk of flooding witnessed during the winter 2013/2014 has been shown to be minimal.



Recent ponding (2014) in lower Fane Drive was attributed to poorly-maintained drainage and ditches

Rainwater harvesting

Rainwater harvesting provides an independent water supply that can be used to supplement the mains supply. As well as providing water for domestic irrigation, car washing etc, it can help reduce the possibility of flooding, and reduce demand on wells which may enable ground water levels to be sustained.

7.12 KEY ISSUES FACING BERINSFIELD

The Berinsfield NDP will enable residents to have a direct influence on the type of measures to be employed through incorporating open green spaces and green corridors as well as the planting of trees to provide evaporative cooling and shade. Key environmental issues facing Berinsfield are:

- The Green Belt imposes significant constraints to future development and is to be reviewed by SODC in consultation with the village.
- Areas of Berinsfield have the potential to be contaminated. This will need to be checked and dealt with before these areas can be redeveloped. These include:
 - The former Wally Corner landfill site
 - Those industrial operations in the businesses off the A4074 Oxford Road
 - Any Industrial sites proposed for redevelopment within the village
 - Retail sites proposed for redevelopment within the village.
- Parts of Berinsfield are designated as flood zones 2 and 3, which currently restricts their suitability for some forms of development. These areas were not flooded during the very wet winter of 2013/14, suggesting that the flood risk maps may not be accurate. However the drainage of surface water from certain areas of the village will need to be improved to avoid localised ponding events following heavy downpours.
- Oxfordshire's main areas of climate-related vulnerability are increasing intense downpours and higher temperatures (*Source: SODC*). It will be important to ensure all new developments incorporate measures that address issues of adaptation to climate change taking account of best practice, including the need to improve measures for water conservation and storage.
- Although **the key issue is planning the need for additional housing** and employment the Steering Group may consider ways in which these developments could contribute to providing additional sources of green energy via roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels and other emerging technologies.

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8.3 HOUSING SUPPLY

An NDP must also consider the type and proportions of new housing. Should they be:

	<i>Current status</i>
• Principally for owner-occupation	620 (57.6%)
• Private rented	49 (4.5%)
• Social rented	388 (36.0%)
• Shared-ownership	
• Self-build	
• Sheltered housing for older people	
• Extra-care housing for older people	
• Other	

The current proportion of owner-occupation to rented housing in Berinsfield, at about 60-40, is higher than the rest of South Oxfordshire which has 71% owner-occupied to 29% social- or privately-rented. *Source: ORCC Community profile for Berinsfield (Nov 2013)* SODC Policy CSH3 calls for all new developments to include 40% affordable housing of which 75% would be social-rented.

8.4 EMPLOYMENT

Previous village consultations revealed that most residents would welcome more opportunities for employment in or close to the village following any redevelopment in Berinsfield. Their interest includes jobs in maintenance, support services, warehousing & distribution, hotel, secretarial, catering & commercial.

A reappraisal of the location of existing commercial activity around the village with the aim to centralise this on existing sites to the west of the village and on the land currently used for car-boot sales might be beneficial. This could have the added advantages of freeing up land at the top of the village for residential and/or amenity development thereby removing the problem of HGVs having to use residential village roads.

8.5 TOURISM

Sporting facilities such as the boxing club, football club, gymnastics club and watersports centre are probably the main reason why visitors, including swimmers, and watersport enthusiasts, are known to seek out the village on account of the high standard of its sport and leisure offerings. Any redevelopment of the area should consider the opportunities for local tourism and the associated economic benefits this can bring.

8.6 LOCATION OF HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT

Whilst Berinsfield residents accept that new housing will be required, in local consultations, they have stressed this should be **outside the current village boundaries**: the village's existing green spaces are highly valued, and other relevant sites are very limited. Furthermore, these new homes should not be joined onto the village's current infrastructure [drains & sewers] and transport issues need to be taken into account ensuring there are sufficient paths, parking and cycle paths, with access to public transport.

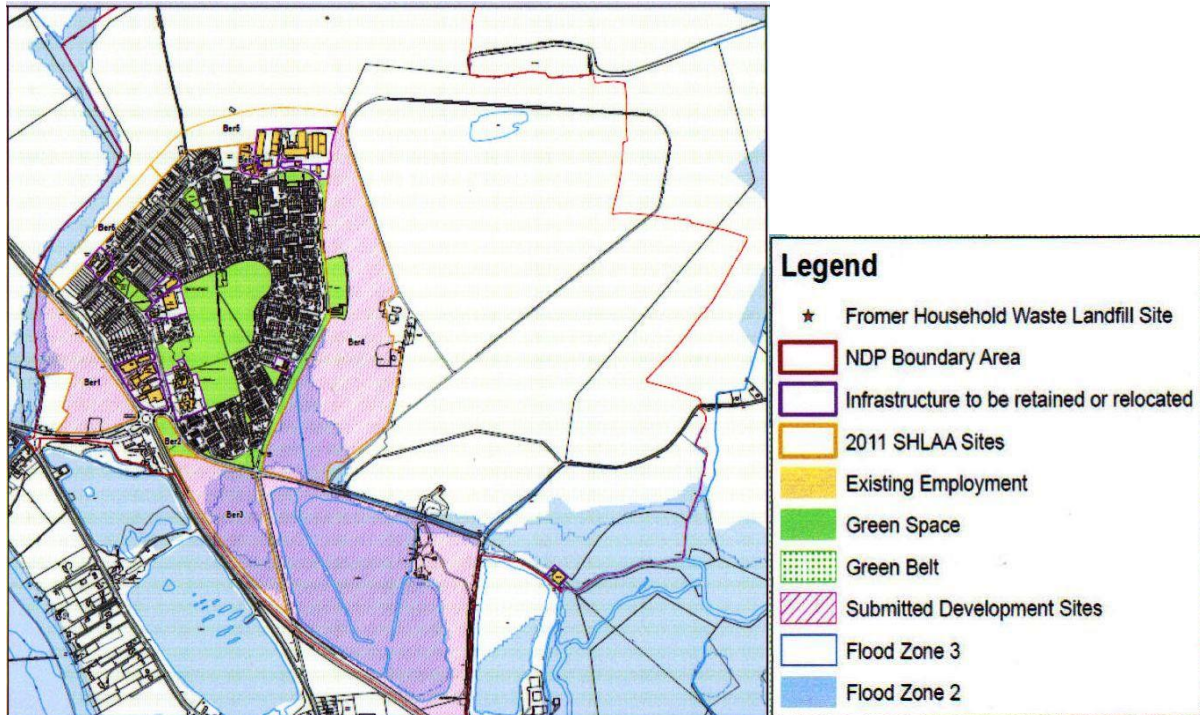
SODC conducted a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in 2011 and in 2013 asked the public to submit any additional sites. The links below show the results of these studies:

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Appendix%203%20Berinsfield%20strikethrough.pdf>

<http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/developmentsitesconsultation/ShowMap.asp?action=pan&direction=n&level=4>

In 2013 SODC consulted landowners to identify alternative sites which might be available for future development. The results of this exercise are shown shaded in red on the map below. Those areas that currently fall within Flood Zones 2 & 3 are shaded in purple. None of these areas experienced any flooding during the exceptionally wet winter of 2013/2014.

Other than some localised ponding in Fane Drive due to poor drainage, these flood zone designations require an urgent reappraisal by the Environment Agency as to the true likelihood of flooding in those areas where further development is most attractive and beneficial.



The areas zoned in red indicate areas where the landowners have already indicated an interest in development

Any new housing should be environmentally effective and heat-efficient making best use of renewable fuel and technologies, solar & wind to reduce household bills and reducing their carbon footprint. Also using grey-water in their design to reduce the need for processed water for waste and watering.

Sources: *Rural Community Profile for Berinsfield, Community-led Plan & Parish Council website*

8.7 THE SCHOOL

The primary school was built in the 1960s and is in urgent need of improvements requiring major funding. Although currently able to cope with additional numbers, as the village size increases, one critical factor is the ability of the school to offer the best possible primary education for all children in the village in that age category. Given that the village will continue to expand, the options then available to the school are:

- Bus those children who cannot be placed in the existing school to adjacent villages;
- Expand the present school by either taking up more land space or adding another storey to the present building;
- Re-locate the school now to elsewhere in the village and enlarge it.

Berinsfield used to have a secondary school and a new one may be required as current schools in the catchment area are already at capacity. Whilst some have expressed support for a new secondary school to be built, this is not something which is likely to happen under this NDP unless residents wish to make provision for more housing (above the 109 already allocated to Berinsfield). Any decision on this would ultimately involve the County Council and would be assessed on a local needs basis and fully cost justified.

8.8 THE WATER TOWER

The water tower is a major landmark feature in the village and is visible from several miles away. Residents disagree on whether the tower is attractive or not but the fact remains that whilst not formerly listed by English Heritage the structure is part of the village's history and does provide a tall base from which many telecommunications masts provide the mobile phone signals which so many now rely on.

8.9 TRANSPORT

Assuming that further development of dwellings in Berinsfield will result in a significant increase in traffic flow rates then the capacity of the existing road system is inadequate and increased traffic is likely to increase pollution levels. Furthermore, the position of a business area at the north end of the village necessitates heavy vehicles to use Fane Drive to gain access. Options need to be considered as follows:

- Allocate land for a new business park on the outskirts of the village
- Promote more employment locally and reduce the need to use motorised transport
- Make provision for better use of public transport by improving access where possible

8.10 WALLY CORNER

A former landfill site at Wally Corner is now completed and grassed over and lies within the parish boundary to the south-east. This has potential for designation as a nature reserve or recreational site / amenity space / tree planting, but may also be considered relevant for other uses.

8.11 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Other actions which help to improve the general community infrastructure and quality of life in Berinsfield will be encouraged through good neighbourhood planning. This includes consideration of more cycle tracks, improved footpaths with access for invalid buggies, additional bus services, better use of & improved facilities management of village green areas, and the updating of existing community facilities.

8.12 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS / COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The NDP cannot force developers to build or land owners to sell, but it can ask for any contributions from developers to be spent on upgrading community facilities for the benefit of the wider community. In January 2013, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced arrangements for the proportion of CIL receipts to be handed over as neighbourhood funds: Possibilities for improvement include:

- Improvements to Abbey Woods Academy buildings
- Construction of a new school(s)
- Improved, updated sports centre
- Village café
- Village hall
- Extensive tree planting
- Creation of a nature reserve/conservation areas
- Village pond
- More green amenity spaces
- Walking, cycling or jogging tracks
- Better bus stops
- Recycling area
- Green energy initiatives (electric car-charging, solar panels, water harvesting)
- More allotments

8.13 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The SODC Core Strategy policy for green infrastructure (CSG1) is to seek 'a net gain in green infrastructure including biodiversity which will be sought through developer works, developer contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources'. Thus any proposals for new development in Berinsfield should demonstrate that they have taken into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing green infrastructure.

Where appropriate, these proposals should contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure, a net gain in area of habitats created and/or the improvement of existing assets. Alternative forms of new/improved green infrastructure will be considered for inclusion in the NDP.

8.14 ENERGY

Considering the matrix below, economic and technical feasibility issues need to be evaluated.

SOURCE OF ENERGY	INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	COLLECTIVE LEVEL
Solar - heat	Possible	Unlikely - High system losses
Solar – voltaic cell	Possible	Possible
Wind turbine	Possible but obtrusive	Unlikely (because of size)
Heat pump – ground source	Possible	Unlikely - High system losses
Heat pump – air source	Possible	Unlikely
LPG from landfill	Not possible	Possible

Given the location of Berinsfield, an installation of solar voltaic cells sited in a discrete location may offer the most likely form of alternative energy supply. Whilst subsidies are available, some individual householders may also opt to fit such panels to their own roofs. At present the methane from the sealed landfill site at Wally Corner is simply flared off. It is worth investigating if some better and more environmentally-conscious option can be found.



Modern solar panels are relatively unobtrusive

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Section 9 – SA/SEA FRAMEWORK

9.1 IDENTIFICATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

In selecting the BNDP Sustainability Objectives, the Steering Group drew upon the SODC Core Strategy 2027 (Appendix 2) for general policy appraisal but these have not proved to be the most suitable for the purpose of selecting prospective sites for development in the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan and alternative more site-specific objectives will be examined as part of the subsequent Sustainability Appraisal.

Whilst these objectives operate well at the level of the South Oxfordshire District, the most relevant sustainability objectives set out below in Table 1 were found however to be of limited help in distinguishing between the four strategic options available to Berinsfield Parish Council for delivering the planned housing need.

	Sustainability Objectives derived from SODC Core Strategy
A	To help provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in affordable and energy efficient homes of a size suitable to their needs.
B	To help to create safe places for people to live and for businesses to thrive, to reduce antisocial behaviour and reduce crime and the fear of crime.
C	To improve accessibility for everyone to health, education, sport & recreation, cultural and community facilities and services.
D	To improve public transport choice and accessibility, reduce the need for travel by car and shorten the length and duration of journeys.
E	To maintain & improve people's health, well-being and community cohesion and support voluntary, community and faith groups.
F	To protect & enhance the village's open spaces & access to countryside
G	To reduce harm to the environment by seeking to minimise pollution wherever possible.
H	To conserve or enhance biodiversity wherever possible.
I	To seek to address the causes and effects of climate change by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. securing sustainable building practices which conserve energy, water resources and materials; b. maximising the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources ensuring that the design and location of new development is as resilient as possible to the effects of any climate change.
J	To seek to minimise waste generation and encourage the re-use of waste through recycling, composting or energy recovery.
K	Support community involvement in decisions affecting them and enable communities to provide local services and solutions.

Table 1 – Sustainability Objectives from SODC Core Strategy

A modified set of objectives which are more site-specific has been used in preparing the subsequent Sustainability Appraisal which, the Steering Group feels, are better suited to the task of identifying the most suitable sites for development.

9.2 ESTABLISHING AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The BNDP Steering Group was advised to use the SODC framework together with the “DIY SA” model developed by Levett-Therivel and URS/Scott Wilson, and other materials, tailored to its particular needs. The outcome produced a series of sustainability objectives to ensure that systematic consideration be given to all of the possible environmental, social and economic alternatives of the options and the draft BNDP.

9.3 FLOOD RISK

Whilst despite the heavy rains of the 2013/2014 winter which caused wide-spread flooding in many other areas of the UK, no major flooding incidents in the Neighbourhood Area were recorded, the EA says ***it would find the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan unsound if it proposes development within Flood Zones 2 or 3, contradicting South Oxfordshire District Council's Core Strategy and also National Planning Policy.***

Source: Environment Agency consultation

If development is proposed within Flood Zones 2 or 3, a sequential test will need to be produced to assess whether the proposed developments are acceptable, and demonstrate there is no other suitable sites available in the district within Flood Zone.

The Steering Group has appointed independent consultants to carry out flood risk assessments of all sites being considered under the NDP.

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Section 10 - NEXT STEPS

10.1 PROJECT PLAN

The timing of the next stages of plan development and assessment is shown in the project plan below:

Project Plan	Timescale	SA/SEA
Neighbourhood Area Designation	Jul-Nov 2013	Designation granted 25 th Oct 2013
Obtain SODC grant funding	Apr/May 2014	Prepare project plan and cost overview for SODC approval – awaited. Apply for grant funding.
Scoping report & SA	Mar 2014-Feb 2015	Identify broad issues, define scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and decide if an SA or full SEA is required. Identify relevant policies, plans & programmes and what requirements these place on the Neighbourhood Plan/Order
Preparing plan	Apr 2014-Feb 2015	Identify what evidence is needed to support the plan and collect evidence. Develop plan objectives that address the issues identified. Develop plan options including all reasonable alternatives. Identify preferred options/sites. Input into GB review being undertaken by SODC as part of adopted CS. Draft policies
Community engagement	Nov 2013-Feb 2015	Define issues that need addressing and test with community engagement
Pre-submission Consultation	Apr 2015	Consult appropriate bodies on plan and SA/SEA report Final drafting of NDP
Examination	May 2015	Submission of plan to SODC
Publication	6 weeks later	
Examiner appointed	28 days later	
Green Belt review	Post-May 2015	Review NDP post GB review to see if any implications for Berinsfield beyond life of Core Strategy 2027
Local Plan 2031 DPD	Post-2017	Review NDP post adoption of Local Plan 2031 to see if any implications for Berinsfield's future growth

Project Plan for Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

Next steps for community engagement will be:

- Develop plan objectives and options
- Appraise plan objectives and options
- Pre-submission consultation

Next steps for the SA will be:

- Revise this scoping report in response to feedback from the public and statutory consultees (Action now complete)
- Identification of reasonable alternatives in a public consultation exercise
- Assessment and comparison of the alternatives using the SA/SEA framework

10.2 COMMENTING ON THIS SCOPING REPORT

This Scoping Report is designed to help us identify the issues we need to consider as part of the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan. The views of the community are important to us and we encourage anyone who lives, works or has a stake in the village to get involved and help us shape the future vision for Berinsfield.

Consultation on this Scoping Report has now ended but for further information, please contact:

Berinsfield Parish Council,
Highsett, Alchester Road,
Chesterton, Bicester,
Oxon, OX26 1UN

Or by e-mail to berinsfieldndp@gmail.com

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Section 11 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

11.1 SOURCES

This Scoping Report for the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan utilises inputs from the following sources:

Berinsfield Parish website
Berinsfield Local Plan 2009 (based on Parish Plan questionnaire 2008)
Berinsfield Community-led Plan 2012
Rural Community Profiles for Berinsfield Parish (ORCC) – Jan 2012 & Nov 2013
Berinsfield Environmental Improvements Action Plan 2012 (*Prepared for SODC*)
The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 & National Planning Practice Guidance 2014
EA Water Resources for the Future – A strategy for the Thames Region 2004 & river basin management plan for the Thames Region 2009
Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2014
OCC Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2011 & SODC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009
Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2030
South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)
Landscape Assessment 2003
Local Plan 2011
Core Strategy 2012
Housing Strategy 2008-2011
Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2011 & 2013
Locality.org.uk
Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills
Soha Housing
Reports from the 'Daily Telegraph' & BBC 'Panorama'

It also draws extensively from the work already undertaken in:

Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013
Adderbury Sustainability Scoping Report – Jan 2014

11.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to the writing teams of Woodcote Parish Council and Adderbury Parish Council for making available copies of their own reports and for their permission to re-use relevant data deriving from their research in this scoping report.

Berinsfield PC would also wish to express its thanks to all the members of the community who contributed to the production of this document.

11.3 CONTACTS

Berinsfield Parish Council,
Highsett, Alchester Road,
Chesterton, Bicester,
Oxon, OX26 1UN

Website: www.berinsfield-pc.gov.uk

E-mails to: berinsfieldndp@gmail.com

Facebook: Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

APPENDIX 1

RESPONSES TO SCOPING REPORT CONSULTATION

A number of comments on the initial draft Scoping Report had been received by the 20th June deadline and are summarised below. Comments have been incorporated into the draft scoping report:

	NDP TOPIC	COMMENT
1	Location of New Sports Centre (SODC)	We are in the process of agreeing our procurement strategy for appointment of our project team and as such it could be some 6-months before we have an assessment of options to consider, but we will look to coordinate with the NDP as this progresses.
2	Description of church (Minister)	I would change "nominally" to say "Although the church is owned and maintained by the C of E, the building is shared...." For your info, we are currently beginning a rolling upgrade of the facilities as funds become available. To be honest I think the hall element is ripe for complete rebuilding with extension to add extra facilities for wide community use, but that's well beyond our present fundraising capacity.
3	Update to 'Transport' section (Resident)	Cycle parks. There are 5 bicycle parking points outside the Adult Education Centre. There should be cycle racks at both shopping centres and at the Health Centre.
4	Correction to 'Public Transport' section (Resident)	The second sentence 'The T2 service connects to nearby Abingdon' should be extended to read 'The T2 service connects to Abingdon, Cowley and Oxford. There is also the 97 service to Didcot and the 114 service serving Wallingford and Abingdon'.
5	New text for "Footpaths and permitted rights of way" (Resident)	The OS Pathfinder 1136 map at a scale of 1:25000 shows the Roman road as a bridleway, running through the centre of the field, Lay Avenue and Roman Road. It is part of a route running from Dorchester to the Baldons and east Oxford. This path is used mainly for walking although cycling (not motor bikes) is permitted. There is also a footpath leading from the roman road at the edge of the village which skirts the allotments and joins a track which leads past Mount Farm, and joins Burcot Lane. Other field and lakes nearby have no official access but have been used for recreational walking. These facilities are much needed and their loss is to be deplored.
6	Add to 'Pollution' section (Resident)	Air pollution can be a local health problem, where the burning of wooden pallets creates toxic smoke due to probable solvents/wood preservatives contained in them.
7	Add photo of flood by pumping station (Councillor)	Read through draft Scoping Report and made some comments. Shops in Fane Drive are a disgrace!
8	Capacity of primary school (Chairman of governors)	We are not running to capacity as yet so I guess that would hinder long term plans! The school has the capacity for at least 350 pupils and yet we have 270 on roll. We still have a lot to do to make it the school of choice
9	Role of Employment Action Group (EAG (Extract from e-mail)	Thanks very much for your help with this. We have read the Scoping Report and would appreciate it if the text in the attached file could be added to it.

10	5.6 Future Development (Landowner)	Confirmation that the car boot field identified as BER1 in SODC's SHLAA document is available for future development if required.
11	3.3 Encouraging business opportunities (Williams Performance Tenders) (Extract from e-mail)	Our long term aspiration would be to move our manufacturing operations next to the lake so that we could water test our craft straight from the factory. We support any Neighbourhood Planning proposals which help us achieve our strategic aims and to grow our business locally. We place considerable value on the water access we currently benefit from and which we believe is so essential to our business. Current forecasts are that we will need to employ another 20 staff by 2017.
12	4.10 & 4.12 Watersports centre (OWSC) (Extract from e-mail)	Despite being a previously developed site, the area still falls under the green belt designation and this is preventing the growth of our business. The lake is also wrongly identified by the Environment Agency as being in flood zone 3 (the EA social club is ironically one of our biggest corporate customers!). Queenford Lake has never burst its banks and did not flood this year after the wettest winter on record and we now understand that the EA has never carried out a detailed assessment of the true flood risk in or around Berinsfield. OWSC supports the neighbourhood development plan and would encourage you to use the powers granted under the localism act to plan positively for the future. This should mean creating policies which support local businesses and leisure facilities not just focusing on the housing need.
13	Housing development (Soha Housing)	As a significant landowner in Berinsfield I can confirm that Soha would be keen to work with the Steering Group to deliver the aims of the Plan and to assist in any way possible. Soha would consider redevelopment of some of its current landholdings to help deliver a vibrant & sustainable future for Berinsfield.
14	Multiple points raised in e-mail (District Cllr)	Detailed amendments to Scoping Report suggested and incorporated
15	Health Services Berinsfield Health Centre (GP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As you say, we rent our parts of the Health Centre from NHS England who own the building (and they are responsible for most maintenance and upkeep). Realistically, funding for new premises would have to come from NHS England. 2. The health issues facing Berinsfield over the next 5-20 years really mirror those of the rest of the country: i.e. a rising proportion of older people with multiple chronic illnesses and dementia, and continued increases in obesity and obesity-related diseases. 3. We feel that the current health centre could accommodate another 1000-2000 patients without needing major rebuilding or extension of the premises
16	Contribution to 'sheltered accommodation' (Soha)	People in Berinsfield like Berinsfield and want to stay, so when they are older and want to downsize within the estate to a bungalow or ground floor flat etc the take-up is quite high. The only problem, there is not enough older persons' accommodation.
17		
		Responses from statutory consultees
18	Environment Agency Jack Moeran	Insists there is a high risk of flooding and says it would find the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan unsound if it proposes development within current Flood Zones 2 or 3. Suggests reference to River Thames in neighbouring parish.

19	SODC Hannah Guest	Suggests a number of changes to ensure the scoping report covers all the required topics. Thinks a table would help when planning sustainability objectives
20	Natural England Piotr Behnke	It is clear that broadly the approach and methodology would be acceptable to Natural England. Suggests a mention of Wittenham Clumps.