

SOUTH LEIGH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



2017 - 2031

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Planning Policies
 - 1.11 Localism Act
 - 1.12 National Planning Policy Framework
 - 1.13 EU Regulations
 - 1.14 WODC Local Plan
- 1.2 South Leigh Parish Neighbourhood Plan Designation
- 1.3 Parish Profile
- 1.4 What Has Been Done So Far

THE VISION OF THE COMMUNITY

- 2.0 Maintaining the Character of South Leigh Parish
- 2.1 Developing a Successful Community
- 2.2 Summary

KEY ISSUES

- 3.0 Environment
- 3.1 Climate Change
- 3.2 Housing
- 3.3 Employment
- 3.4 Services and Facilities
- 3.5 Traffic and Transport

POLICIES

- 4.0 **ENVIRONMENT**
 - 4.01 Background
 - 4.02 Landscape
 - 4.03 Access to the Countryside
 - 4.04 Green Infrastructure
 - 4.041 Green Corridors
 - 4.042 Local green Spaces
 - 4.05 Biodiversity
 - 4.06 Heritage Assets
 - 4.061 Listed Buildings
 - 4.062 Undesignated Heritage Assets
 - 4.07 Dark Skies
- 4.1 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 4.2 **HOUSING**
 - 4.21 Background
 - 4.22 Process of Investigation
 - 4.23 Exception Site Affordable Homes
 - 4.24 Brown Field Sites
 - 4.25 Design

- 4.3 **EMPLOYMENT**
 - 4.31 Background
 - 4.32 Working From Home
 - 4.33 Internet Connection
 - 4.34 Mobile Phone Coverage
 - 4.35 Business in the Countryside

- 4.4 **SERVICES AND FACILITIES**
 - 4.41 Key Services and Facilities
 - 4.42 Sport and Recreation
 - 4.43 Retail

- 4.5 **TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT**
 - 4.51 Background
 - 4.52 Traffic Management
 - 4.53 Parking
 - 4.54 Buses
 - 4.55 Cycling
 - 4.56 Walking

- 5.0 **ANNUAL REVIEW**

PLANS

- Figure A** - Parish Boundaries
- Figure B** - Landscape Assessment Report Map of Cogges Wood
- Figure C** - Landscape Assessment Report Map of South Leigh north
- Figure D** - Landscape Assessment Report Map of South Leigh south
- Figure E** - Landscape Assessment Report Map of South Leigh south-east
- Figure F** - Landscape Assessment Report Map of South Leigh centre
- Figure G** - Landscape Assessment Report Map of South Leigh south-west
- Figure H** - Rights of Way
- Figure I** - Green Corridors
- Figure J** - Local Green Spaces
- Figure K** - Woodland and Wetland Habitats
- Figure L** - Listed Buildings
- Figure M** - Dark Skies

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A Neighbourhood Plan is a type of planning document which is part of the Government's approach to planning, aiming to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. However, all Neighbourhood Plans must also be in line with higher level planning policy ('Planning Policies'), namely the 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework* ('NPPF') and, in the case of the Parish of South Leigh, a Neighbourhood Plan must also presently be aligned to the Saved Policies of the adopted 2011 West Oxfordshire District Council's ('WODC') Local Plan and the Policies of the 2031 WODC Local Plan. (as appropriate collectively 'WODC Local Plan')

The overall requirement of any Neighbourhood Plan is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) relates to the whole of the geographic Parish of South Leigh (the Parish) as shown in Figure A.

MAP SHOWING THE BOUNDARY OF SOUTH LEIGH PARISH

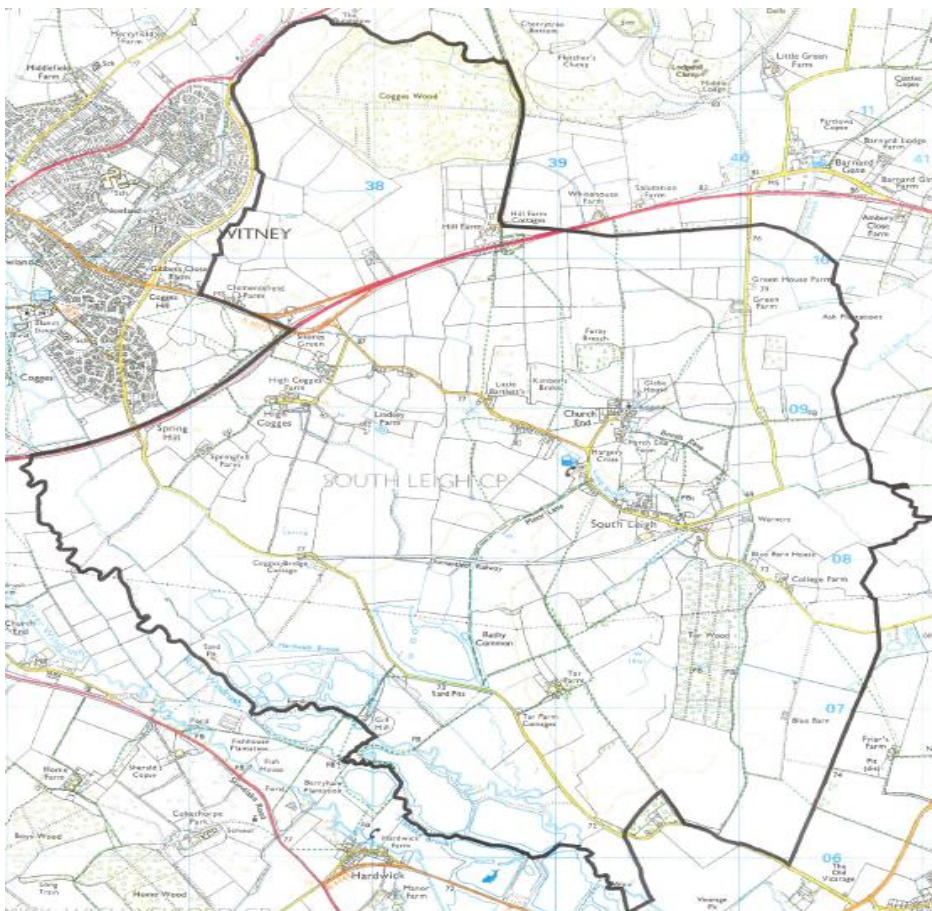


Figure A

The Plan intends to ensure and safeguard the future of our Community (in this context meaning the residents of the Parish) as a small, vibrant, rural Parish while recognizing that to maintain that vibrancy, the Community needs to plan for some limited new housing within the already built area in the Parish or areas adjacent thereto in order to allow a widening of demographics within the Parish whilst retaining its essentially polyfocal nature.

The Plan also includes sections on the environment and climate change, how to support local/home working, and employment, how to maintain and enhance services and facilities where possible and how to control traffic taking into account the fundamental nature and constraints of a rural Parish.

1.1 PLANNING POLICY

The appropriate Planning Policies begin with the Localism Act and the NPPF as applied through the relevant Local Plan for the District of West Oxfordshire as set out below.

1.11 The Localism Act

The Localism Act came into force in April 2012 and sets out the regime for a Neighbourhood Plan. Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their area, the Localism Act sets out some important requirements. One of these is that all Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with the Planning Policies.

1.12 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF retains a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', as defined by five basic principles: (1) living within the planet's environmental limits; (2) ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; (3) achieving a sustainable economy; (4) promoting good governance; and (5) using sound science responsibly. ^[1]_[SEP]

In addition the NPPF embraces three critical roles for sustainable development: (1) an economic role, contributing to a strong, responsive, competitive economy; (2) a social role, supporting vibrant and healthy communities and (3) an environmental role, protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. ^[1]_[SEP]

The NPPF also recognises twelve core-planning principles. In summary, they: (1) are led by local plans which set out a vision for the future of the area; (2) enhance and improve the places where people live; (3) drive sustainable development; (4) secure a high quality of design and a good standard of amenity; (5) protect the diversity of different areas; (6) support the transition to a low-carbon future; (7) help conserve and enhance the natural environment; (8) encourage the re-use of land; (9) promote mixed use developments; (10) conserve heritage assets; (11) make full use of public transport, walking and

cycling; and (12) improve health, social and cultural wellbeing. [SEP]

The Plan is designed to embrace these basic principles, the roles of sustainable development and the twelve core planning principles, insofar as they can be applied to the Parish. General conformity of the Plan to the NPPF is assessed in the Basic Conditions Statement.

1.13 European Regulations

The Plan must comply with European Regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations. In the case of the Plan, neither a Sustainability Appraisal nor a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. However, the basic Conditions Statement evaluates the impact of the European Regulations on the Plan and a Screening Assessment against these Regulations has been carried out which endorses the conditions of the Basic Conditions Statement.

1.14 WODC Local Plan

The Plan is written in conjunction with, and to conform to, the WODC Local Plan which contains a range of policies relevant to the Plan. General conformity to these policies is assessed in the Basic Conditions Statement.

In particular, WODC Local Plan Policy OS2 classifies the two settlements in the Parish as settlements where development would only be supported where;

- (a) it is required to meet a local need or
- (b) development requires a rural location or
- (c) development is proposed through a Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 SOUTH LEIGH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DESIGNATION

The Qualifying Body to create the Plan is South Leigh Parish Council ('SLPC'). The Plan Area was formally designated by WODC on 1st March 2017 and includes the whole of the Parish.

SLPC determined that the Plan should cover the period from 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2031 so as to align with the WODC Local Plan.

1.3 PARISH PROFILE

The majority of the evidence and policies in the Plan concerns the settlements of South Leigh and High Cogges, but there is a significant area of agricultural land and dispersed individual dwellings outside those two settlements.

The key points of the Parish profile are:

- The 2011 Census shows the resident population to be 336, with 141 households in the Parish; the population density is 0.2 people/ha; in comparison the population density for WODC as a whole is 1.5 people/ha.
- The age profile of the Community is very much weighted towards the older age group with 81 of the Community being over 65 and only 14 pre-school children living in the Parish.
- 52% of the Parish's houses are lived in by only 2 people.
- 13% of the Residents of the Parish live on their own.
- Comparable house prices for the Parish are higher than the national average.

1.4 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR

SLPC has been assisted in the preparation of the Plan by the South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan Group ('SLNPG').

The SLNPG has undertaken extensive consultations within the Community and others with an interest in the Parish and has considered their views in preparing the Plan. These consultations have included: several public meetings and Community consultation events; questionnaire surveys, and liaison with formally constituted groups, the owners of businesses and managers of services and interested landowners.

Communication with the Community has also been through quarterly articles in the Parish newsletter, which goes free into every household and business in the Parish, and an updated page on the South Leigh website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. There have also been extensive consultations, public meetings and exhibitions within the Community.

Reports have been commissioned from third party contractors in respect of the Historic Landscape, Green Corridors, Hedgerows and Housing. The Community itself has produced reports on the history of the built area including the Church, the Fauna and Flora of the Parish and Community activities.

Copies of all these reports are contained in the Consultation Report.

Based on the responses and reports received through the Consultation Process, the SLNPG formulated a draft Plan which was submitted to SLPC for its approval.

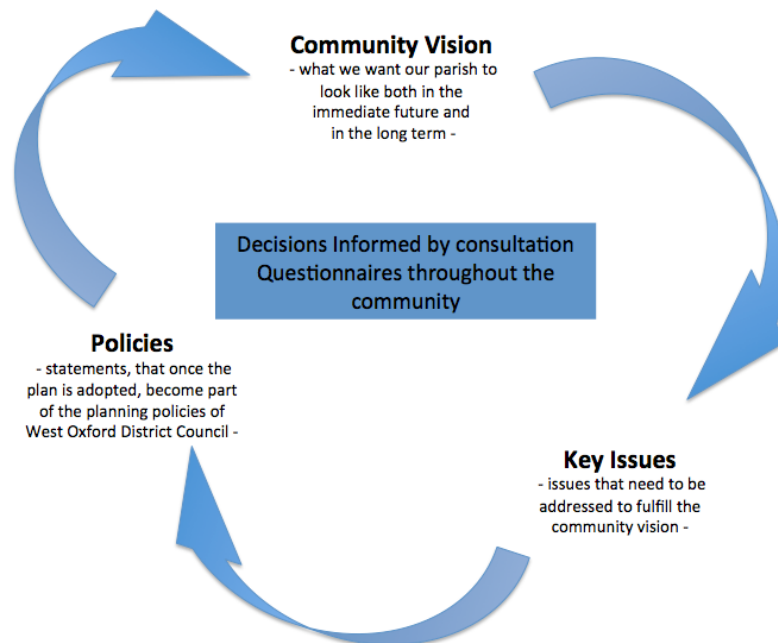
The Draft Plan utilized the Consultation responses to create a statement of the **VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITY**. The Plan sets out the **KEY ISSUES** – being the objectives necessary to satisfy the Vision of our Community.

Then, the Plan establishes **POLICIES** designed to meet these Key Issues and thus deliver the Community Vision.

SLPC has approved the draft Plan in the form of this document.

THE VISION OF THE COMMUNITY

The Steps Undertaken to Achieve our Community Vision



The Parish has a strong sense of Community cohesion and purpose. The Community Vision for the Parish was developed from an initial Community consultation event followed by questionnaire surveys with input from other Community groups, societies and organisations in the Parish. Two broad themes emerged:

2.0 MAINTAINING THE CHARACTER OF THE PARISH

The Parish is effectively made up of the two settlements of South Leigh and High Cogges.

The two settlements within the Parish retain their essential rural character. The overwhelming view of the Community is that the strengths of the Parish lie in this strong sense of community and identity as rural settlements – both as separate entities in their own right and as one combined Community – sharing facilities and friendships as a cohesive whole.

The appearance of the two rural settlements within the Parish has been preserved by the managed integration of very small numbers of new housing

over many years.

The settlement of South Leigh has a wide range of listed buildings (heritage assets), some small businesses and industrial units that together create a distinctive setting. It retains its polyfocal appearance with open green spaces intersecting the built area being a particular feature and with the majority of its population living within 10 minutes walk of its key focal points - the Village Hall, the Village Green, the Pub, the Football Pitch, the Playground and the Church. The Plan wishes to preserve and enhance the essential attractive and polyfocal nature of the built area. The Plan does not support the creation of a continuous, linear settlement.

The other settlement of High Cogges lies approximately one mile from the centre of the settlement of South Leigh and is the smaller of the two settlements by far, having approximately twenty houses. It is much more linear in appearance albeit with development, in the main, on one side of the road. The settlement contains some listed buildings, some small business and industrial units.

In Consultation events, the Community has expressed its commitment to landscape, nature conservation, protection of its local green open spaces, combating climate change and limiting light pollution. The Community has a close relationship with the open countryside: most residents live within a 5 minute walk of the surrounding open farmland. The Plan will enhance access to the countryside, seeking to maintain the current feel of the two settlements and underpin their close relationship with the open countryside.



2.1 DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY

The Parish has a strong sense of Community resting on the successful integration of people with a wide range of personal characteristics and backgrounds and the Plan seeks to ensure that the Parish continues to be a strong rural Community inclusive of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and disability. There is a low crime rate and a high participation rate in Community events. The Community is committed to sustaining and developing these features of Community cohesion and inclusiveness.

The settlements of South Leigh and High Cogges support a small number of mostly small businesses and home workers, although a significant number of the Community commute to nearby towns for employment or are retired.

The Plan supports the development of more local employment opportunities, supported by an improved broadband and by comprehensive mobile phone coverage which would support a small but strong local economy, reduce the reliance on commuting and retain young people within the Community.

The Community wishes to play its part in reducing and mitigating environmental degradation and climate change. The Plan seeks to minimise additional traffic flows within the Parish, encourage energy efficiency, protect dark skies by minimizing light pollution and promote renewable energy production on an individual household basis (with the aim of reducing the overall carbon footprint of the Community) and create and protect wildlife habitats and corridors around the Parish.

2.2 SUMMARY OF THE VISION OF THE COMMUNITY

Maintaining the Character of the Parish

- The rural character of the two settlements of South Leigh and High Cogges should be retained and the existing strong sense of community and cohesion should be maintained.
- The dispersed and polyfocal character of the Parish's historic settlement pattern should be conserved and enhanced.
- The attractive landscape, countryside, tranquillity, dark skies, Rights of Way, wildlife habitats and biodiversity, of the Parish should be conserved and enhanced.
- The Parish should remain connected by a network of rural roads and lanes free of urban infrastructure and traffic.

Developing a Successful Community

- The Parish will continue to be a strong inclusive rural community.
- The local economy will be sustained with more local employment opportunities.
- Climate change and environmental degradation will be mitigated through minimising additional traffic, encouraging energy efficiency and promoting small scale renewable energy.

KEY ISSUES

The Plan is an opportunity to meet the Parish's immediate needs and address the longer term Community Vision.

Through the Consultation Process, the following Key Issues (objectives) were identified.

3.0 ENVIRONMENT

How to ensure that the distinctive rural landscape of the Parish, the polyfocal settlement pattern, the historical assets, the dark skies, the natural environment and the biodiversity of the Parish including its open green spaces and corridors are protected and enhanced.

3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

How to mitigate, wherever possible, against the adverse effects of climate change caused by the way in which we live and in particular to mitigate against the impact on the climate of any development.

3.2 HOUSING

Whether any new housing was required to meet the Community Vision.

3.3 EMPLOYMENT

How to encourage and support more home working and additional local employment within the Parish.

3.4 SERVICES AND FACILITIES

How to encourage and improve the present facilities where possible.

3.5 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

How to mitigate the amount of traffic passing through the Parish (it being recognised that the main problem with regard to traffic and transport in the Parish is the volume of traffic on the A40 which is a matter outside the remit of the Plan).

POLICIES

4.0 ENVIRONMENT

4.01 Background

The Parish is located approximately 8km to the south east of the town of Witney. The main settlement is South Leigh which is located in the centre of the Parish with the smaller settlement of High Cogges located in the north west of the Parish close to the south-eastern boundary of Witney.

The Parish is located in the transitional zone between the Upper Thames Clay Vale and the Limestone Wolds.

The River Windrush runs along the south-western edge of the Parish where there is large scale gravel extraction around the site of Gill Mill which has a number of Grade 2 listed sites and Roman remains. Although mineral extraction policy remains the preserve of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and is not therefore covered by this Plan, the preservation and development of these and heritage assets in the Parish will be covered by The Plan.

The surrounding fields form an interlude between the separate parts of the Parish of South Leigh and what makes the settlement of South Leigh unique in the area are the fields which intersperse the built area of the settlement itself so that most homes both face and have open fields to their rear. The fields are part of the settlement and help to give it its sense of historical place.

Likewise the surrounding fields are an integral part of High Cogges.

To the north of Church End, South Leigh lies the heathland enclosed in 1793. This essentially open area of fields and countryside, unchanged in over 200 years, gives a unique aspect to the settlement of South Leigh and the pathway to the historic church of St. James.

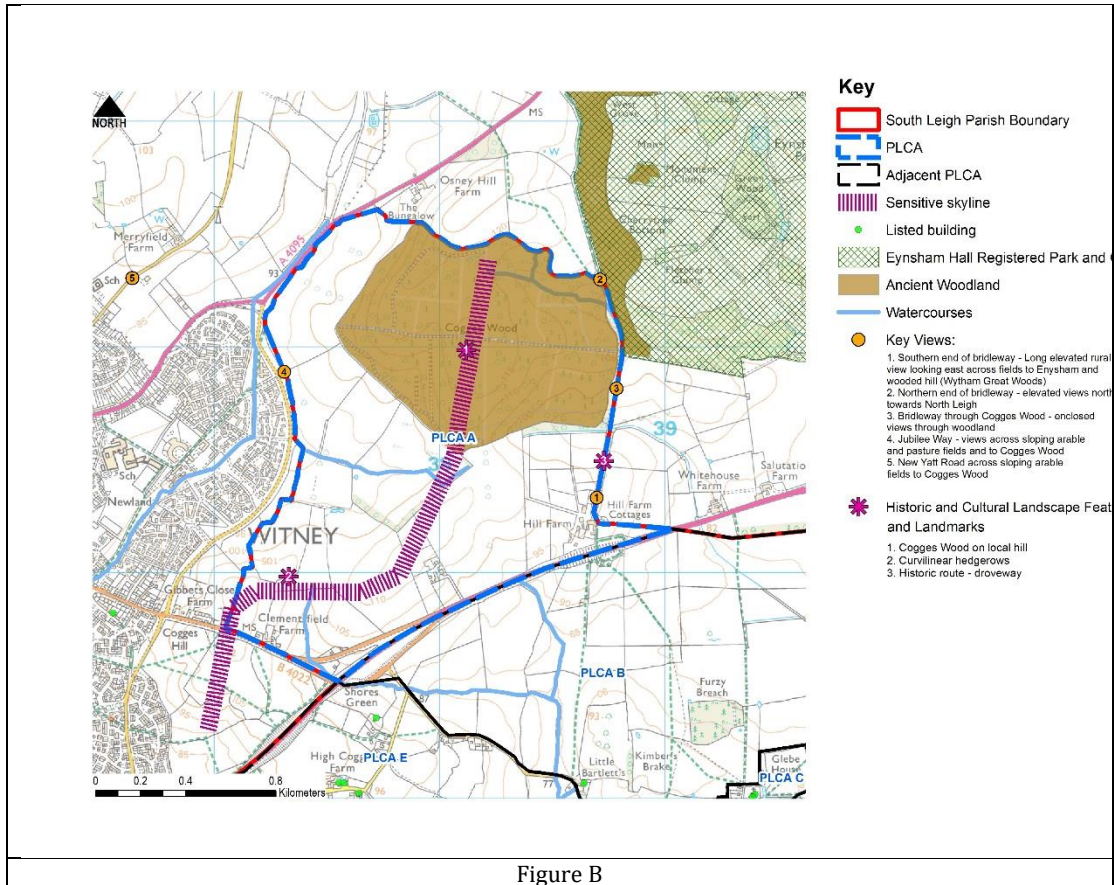
The largest use of land in the Parish is for agriculture. Since the 1793 enclosures, and in particular the early years of the 20th century, the traditional farming practices of smallholdings and communal strip farming has given way to a few large estate landholdings and several individual farms.



4.02 Landscape

The fundamental landscape of the Parish has remained unchanged since the Enclosure Act of 1793. This is particularly true of the open fields lying south of the A40 as well as the open fields lying along Stanton Harcourt road to the south of South Leigh. The intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside was created by these enclosures which is what makes the Parish unique in this area.

The Landscape Assessment Report (a full copy of which forms part of the Consultative Report) splits the Parish into six distinct Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCA) marking the relationship of the landscape with the settlement patterns of the Parish. These six distinct landscape areas are shown on the six maps that follow.



South Leigh PLCA A Cogges Wood and Open Rolling Vale Farmland lies in the northern area of South Leigh Parish between the A40 and Witney. The area as a whole is typical of the Open Rolling Vale Farmland which characterises the northern landscape setting of South Leigh Parish. The whole area is important to the wider landscape setting of South Leigh containing a route for quiet, informal recreation, areas of biodiversity allowing appreciation of wildlife and areas with a distinctive sense of place with cultural and historic associations. The area has an overriding perception of remoteness away from busy areas and strongly contrasts with the built-up urban areas of nearby Witney and Eynsham. Visual sensitivities include the long rural views into, out of and across the area from public rights of way, settlements and roads. Fields along the higher ground are the most visually sensitive and the area forms a sensitive skyline between South Leigh and Witney. The area's raised topography and vegetation contributes to providing visual screening of the large urban area of Witney from South Leigh.

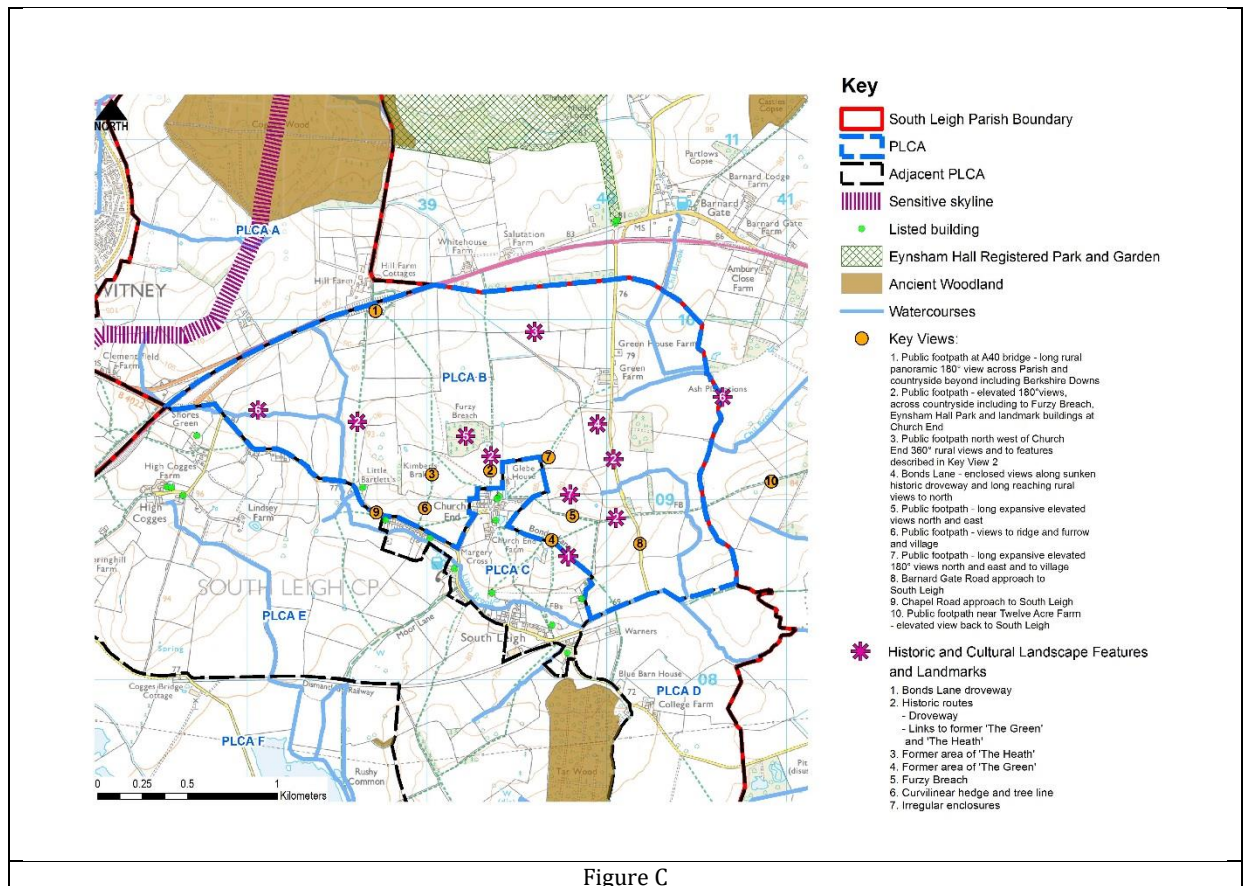


Figure C

South Leigh PLCA B South Leigh Northern Semi-enclosed Rolling Vale Farmland lies between South Leigh Village to the south and the A40 to the north. The area as a whole is typical of the low-lying Semi-enclosed Rolling Vale Farmland and Rolling Clayland landscape types which characterises much of the surrounding landscape setting of South Leigh. The whole area is important to the wider landscape setting of South Leigh containing routes for quiet, informal recreation, areas of biodiversity allowing appreciation of wildlife and areas with a distinctive sense of place with cultural and historic associations. The area has an overriding perception of remoteness away from busy areas and strongly contrasts with the built-up urban areas of nearby Witney and Eynsham. Visual sensitivities include the long elevated rural views into, out of and across the area from public rights of way and roads, views to and from the Eynsham Hall Registered Park and Garden to the north, and views to the historic edge of South Leigh village notably to landmark buildings.

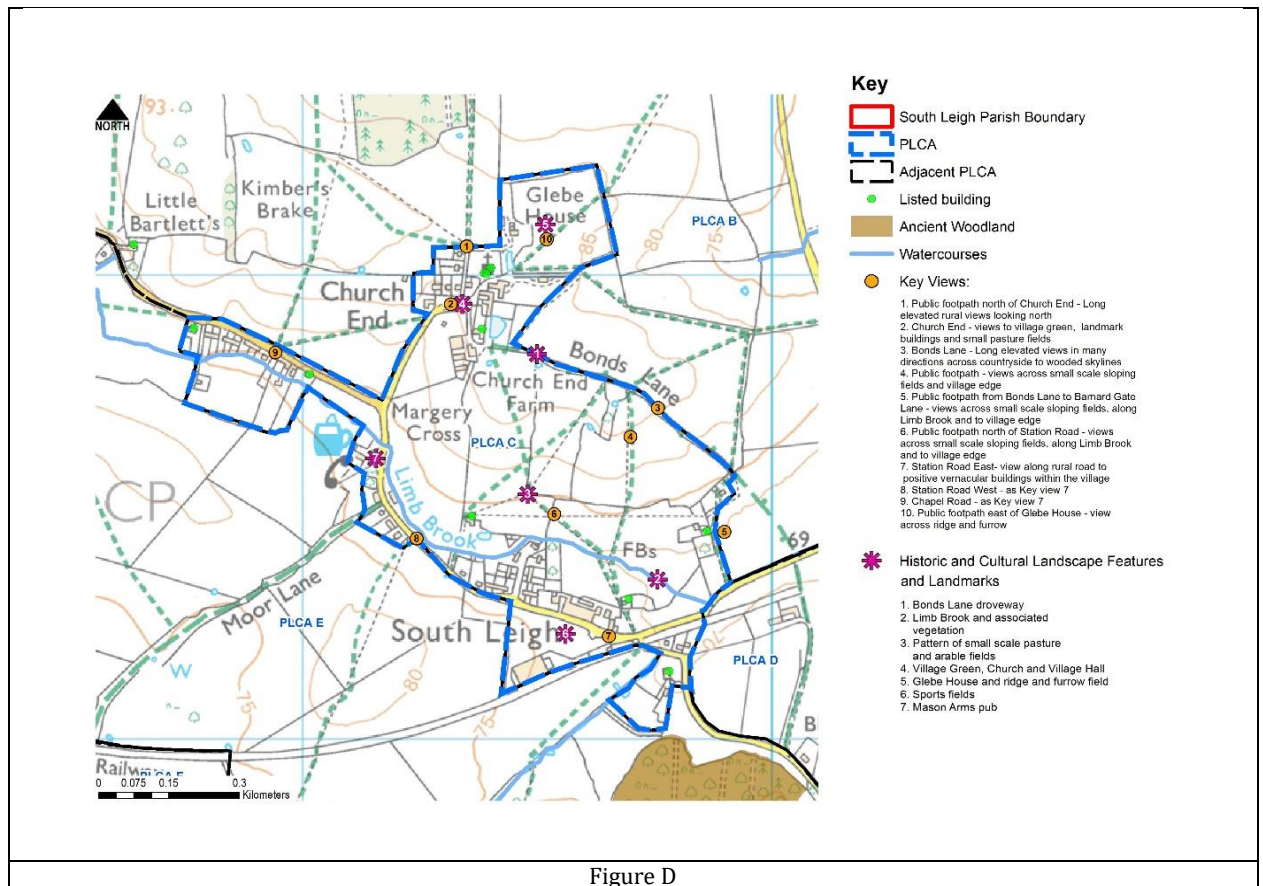


Figure D

South Leigh PLCA C South Leigh Village Core includes the village core of South Leigh and area of small scale arable and pasture fields. The area as a whole is typical of the low-lying Semi-enclosed Rolling Vale Farmland, Flood Plain Pasture Rolling and Clayland landscape types which characterises much of the surrounding landscape setting of South Leigh. The area contains South Leigh's distinctive village core and contains valued historic assets and areas and routes for quiet informal recreation, areas of biodiversity allowing appreciation of wildlife and areas with a distinctive sense of place with cultural and historic associations and strong vernacular character. The area has an overriding perception of a tranquil rural village, reinforced by the pattern of small pasture and arable fields encircling it, that strongly contrasts with the built-up urban areas of nearby Witney and Eynsham. Visual sensitivities include the long elevated rural views into, out of and across the area from public rights of way and roads, views across the village green at Church End, views across small scale sloping fields and along Limb Brook and views to the historic edge of South Leigh village notably to landmark buildings.

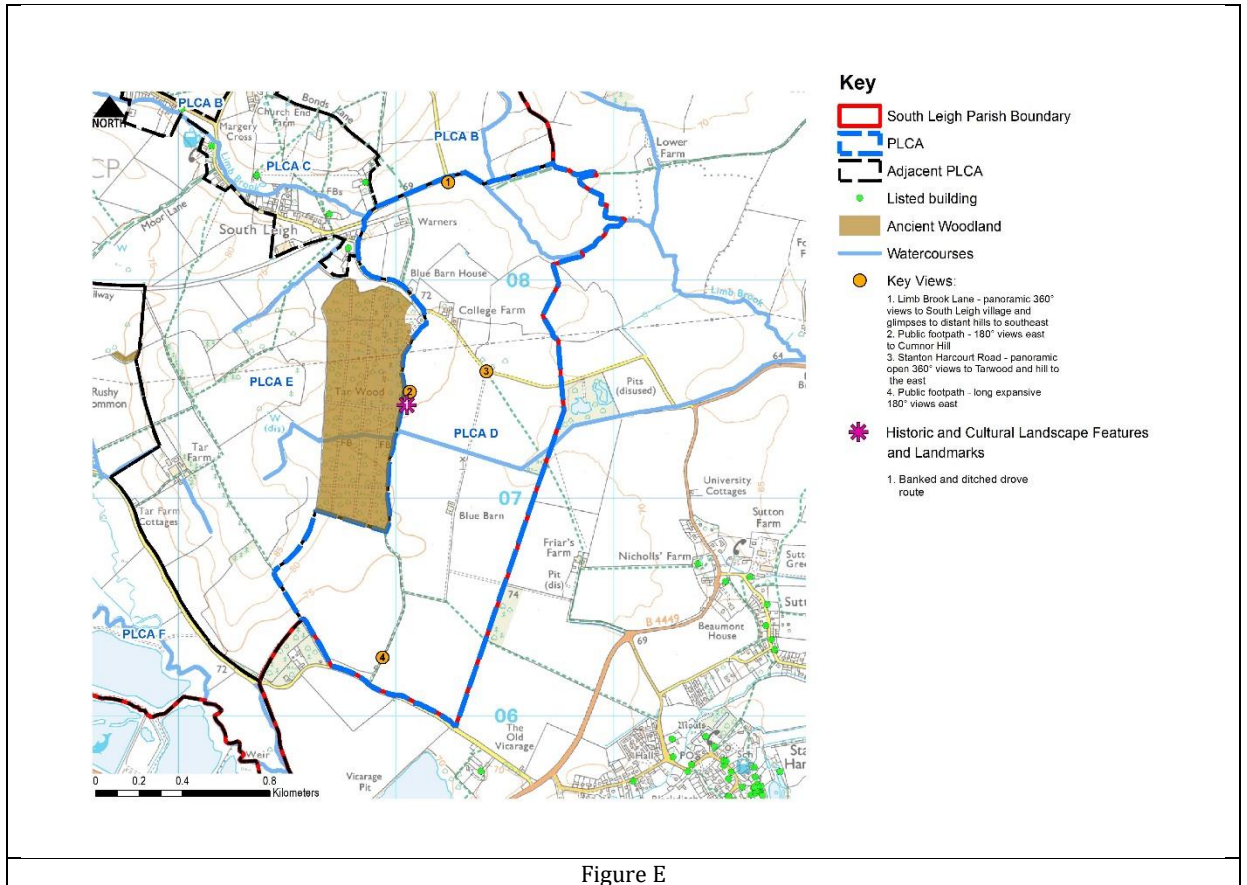


Figure E

South Leigh PLCA D South Leigh Open Flat and Rolling Farmland lies in the south-east of the parish, between South Leigh village and Stanton Harcourt. The area as a whole is typical of the Open Rolling and Open Flat Vale Farmland landscape types. The whole area is important to the wider rural setting of South Leigh and its separation from Stanton Harcourt. The open landscape allows expansive views which are possible from the rural roads and from several public rights of way which themselves have historic connections and associations, most notably the ditch and bank along the edge of Tar Wood. The paths are locally valued, including as circular routes and links to Stanton Harcourt and providing opportunity to appreciate wildlife and a sense of tranquillity.

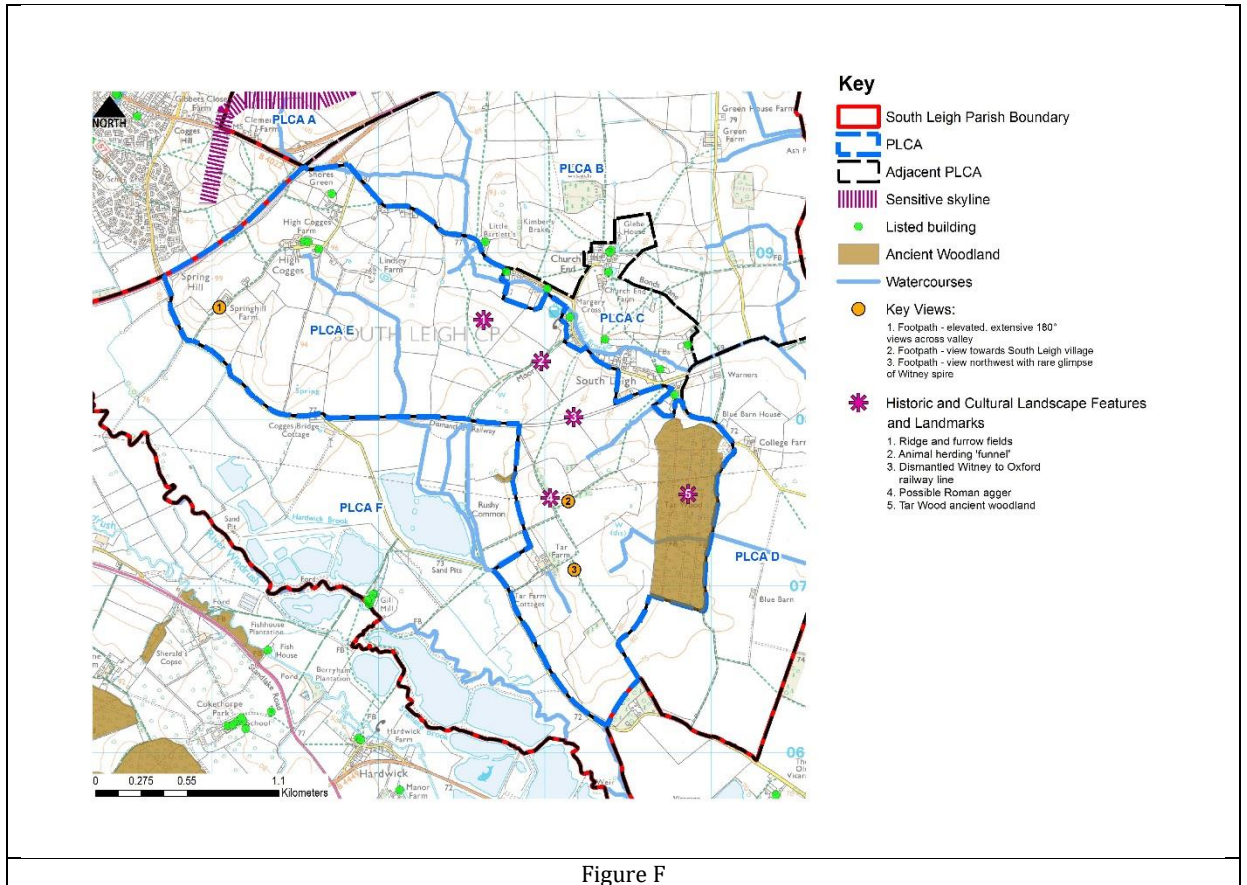


Figure F

South Leigh PLCA E South Leigh Southern Semi-enclosed Rolling and Flat Farmland lies across the centre of the parish, from the south-eastern edge of Witney and the A40, south-west of South Leigh village, broadly parallel with the course of the River Windrush. The area as a whole is typical of the Semi-enclosed Rolling and Open Flat Vale Farmland and OWLS Rolling Clayland landscape types. The whole area is important to the wider rural setting of South Leigh and its separation from Witney and distinction from High Cogges. Much of the area is an important transitional landscape between the settlements and the mineral workings along the River Windrush. The semi-enclosed landscape often shortens views, though more expansive views are possible from High Cogges. The paths are locally valued, including as circular routes and links to Rushy Common and the River Windrush, providing opportunity to appreciate wildlife and a sense of tranquillity.

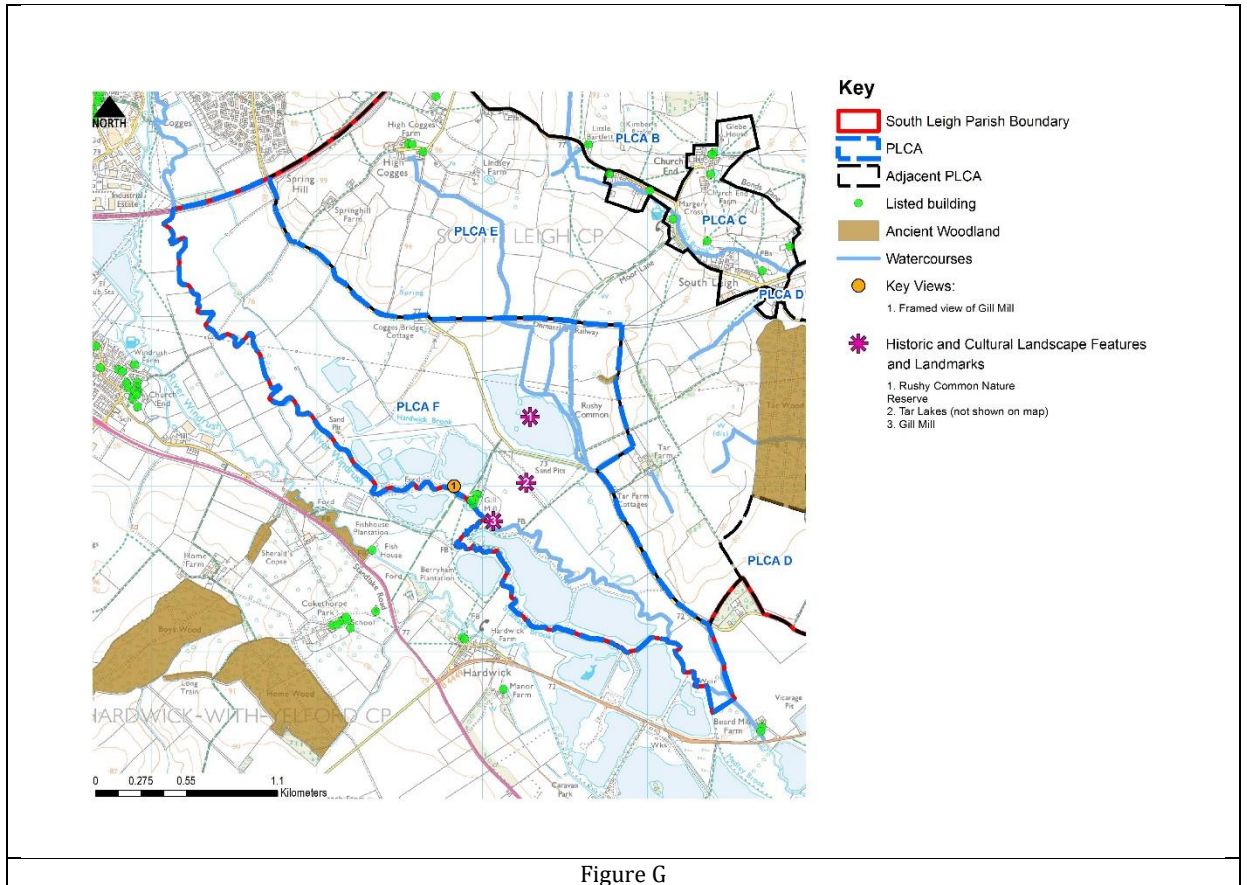


Figure G

South Leigh PLCA F River Windrush Semi-enclosed Flat Vale Farmland and Mineral Sites lies along the south-western edge of the parish, from the south-eastern edge of Witney along course of the River Windrush. The area as a whole is typical of the Semi-enclosed Flat Vale Farmland landscape type in many respects, and the Minerals and Landfill Sites landscape type in particular. The area contains the course of the River Windrush and is important in this respect, although the natural landscape has been greatly affected by extensive mineral workings. Despite this, the semi-enclosed landscape accommodates the workings well and the area retains a strongly rural character. Restored pits provide valuable recreation and nature conservation assets and restoration has generally been carried out sensitively and in keeping with local character.

POLICY SLE1 COUNTRYSIDE AND LANDSCAPE

Proposals for development should respect and safeguard the countryside and in particular should conserve and where possible enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the landscape features within the Parish including:

- **Individual or groups of features and their settings, such as stone walls, trees, hedges, woodlands, rivers, streams and ponds;**
- **Rural landscape and visual setting of the Parish's settlements;**
- **Setting of historic and landmark buildings;**
- **Tranquillity and perception of remoteness;**
- **Dark skies;**
- **Historic droveways and public rights of way;**
- **Historic settlement patterns, landscape patterns and enclosures.**

In assessing development proposals particular regard will be given to the South Leigh Parish Landscape Assessment and the aims of the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area and Wychwood Forest Project Area.



4.03 Access to the Countryside

The Landscape Assessment Report and the Consultation Process identified the importance of the network of Rights of Way as shown on the map that follows (Figure H) which is highly valued by the Community for quiet informal recreation. These Rights of Way are also enjoyed by numerous visitors to the Parish especially those on walking tours. Some of the Rights of Way are well known and publicised circular walks benefitting the people of Witney and Eynsham as much as the Community itself.

RIGHTS OF WAY WITHIN THE PARISH

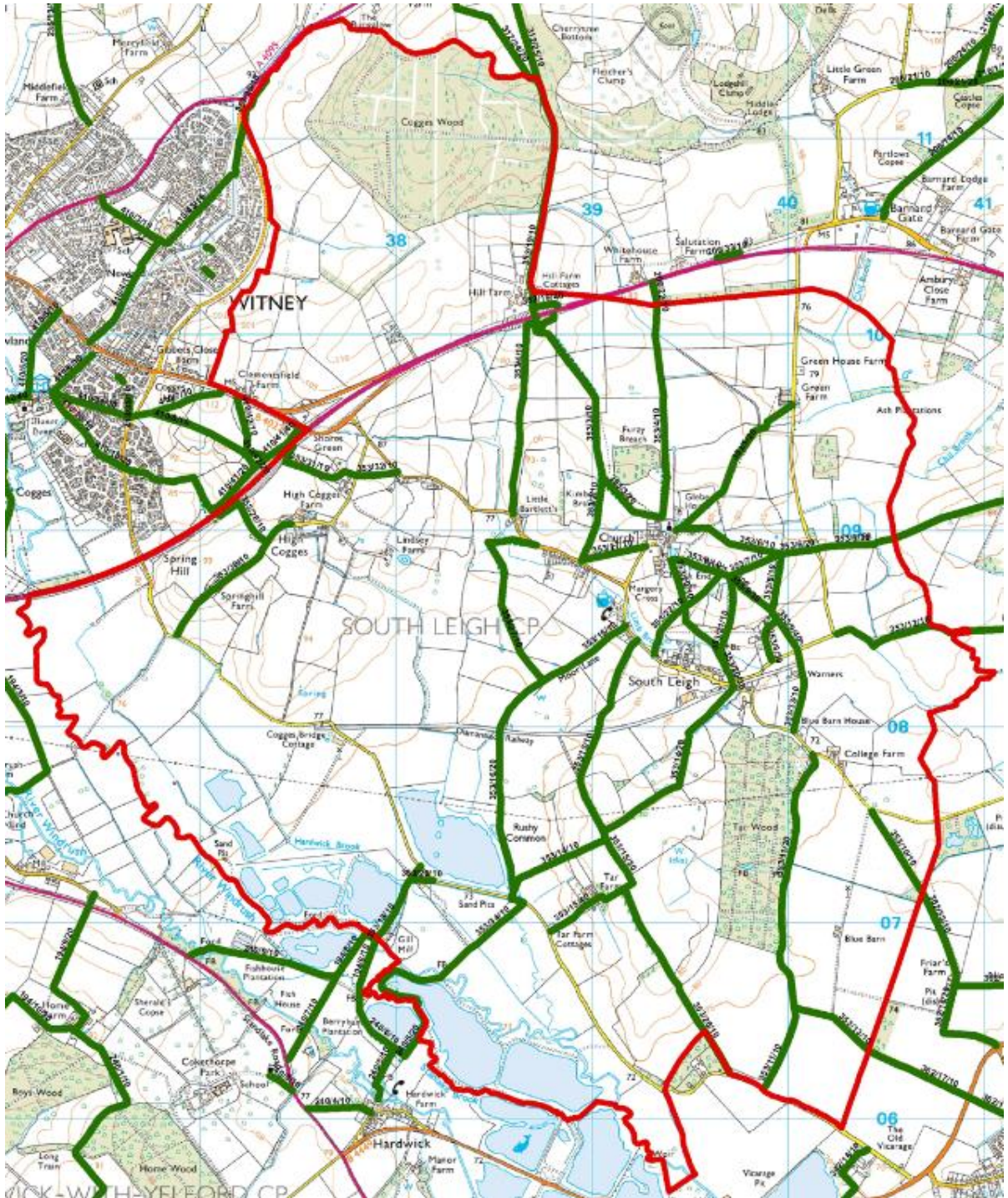


Figure H



POLICY SLE2 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

Any development should protect and enhance public rights of way within the Parish for the benefit of the user's experience of the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside.

Improvements to rights of way will be supported where this preserves and enhances access to the countryside and the rural character and appearance of the area.



4.04 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is the term used to encompass the network of multi-functional green spaces within the Parish which help to provide a natural life support system for people and wildlife and in the Plan its expression includes Green Corridors and Local Green Spaces.

4.041 Green Corridors

Wildlife needs space to move, feed and breed. Green Corridors are routes that support the conservation and protection of wildlife. The Parish has significant

wildlife resource and the Plan seeks to preserve and enhance such wildlife protection.

National and local planning policy supports the identification and enhancement of Green Corridors as areas of importance for wildlife. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre ('TVERC') in its report of August 2017 headed 'Green Corridors in South Leigh' (a copy of which is contained in the Consultation Report) have identified a network of existing and potential green corridors in the Parish.

The corridors are based on modelled habitat networks and Public Rights of Way and facilitate the movement of people and wildlife through the landscape.

Existing north-south Green Corridors in the TVERC Report passing through the settlement of South Leigh include along Bonds Lane, past Tar Wood and along Moor Lane to the Lower Windrush Valley, and north from South Leigh to the A40.

Proposed east-west Green Corridors have been identified including the old railway line to the south of the settlement of South Leigh and connecting a series of small woodlands including Furzy Breach Wood to the north of the settlement of South Leigh itself. Any new development will be expected to maintain and enhance these Green Corridors.

Accordingly the Plan seeks to protect the existing Green Corridors and to take steps to enhance the provision of Green Corridors across the heathland to the south of the A40 as shown on the Plan marked by Figure I by working with WODC, OCC, landowners and other interested parties.



POLICY SLE3 EXISTING AND PROPOSED GREEN CORRIDORS

The existing and proposed Green Corridors shown at Figure I will be protected through this Plan, with any new development expected to conserve and where possible to enhance the identified corridors to facilitate their multi-functional role, including the movement of people and wildlife through the landscape (and any other functions that are particularly important for South Leigh) and to demonstrate how the corridor will be maintained in the long

Green Corridors in South Leigh



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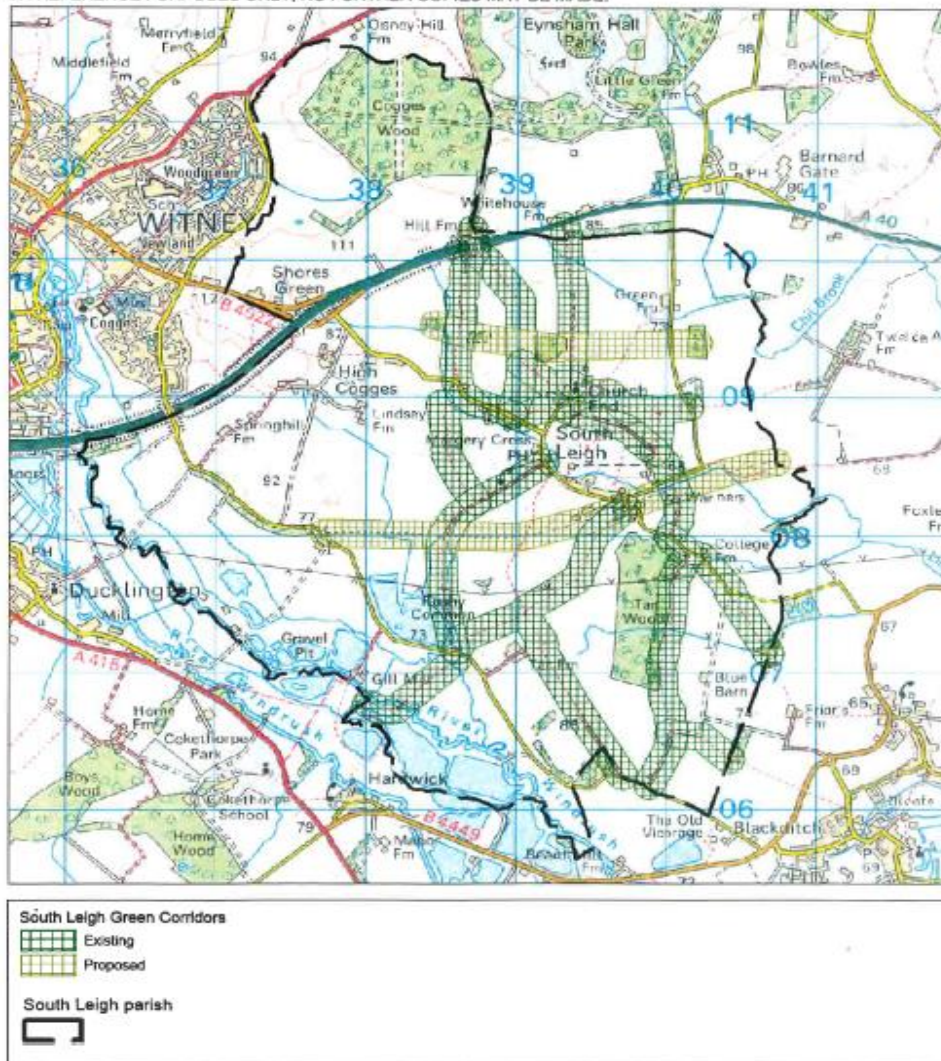


Figure.I

4.042 Local Green Spaces

The Plan recognises that Green Infrastructure is important because it provides many social, economic and environmental benefits close to where people live and work, including:

- Places for outdoor relaxation and play.
- Space and habitat for wildlife with access to nature for people.
- Climate change adaptation – for example, flood alleviation.
- Improved health and well being – lowering stress levels and providing opportunities for exercise.

The Plan identifies for special protection, green spaces of particular local significance for reasons of the intrinsic beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity and richness of its wildlife.

Local Green Spaces so identified for special protection in the Parish are marked on the Plan following (Figure J) and include: the Football Pitch and surrounding area and the Village Green. The Plan prohibits new development on Local Green Spaces other than in very exceptional circumstances where a suitable and acceptable alternative will be provided.

These Local Green Spaces are used by locals and visitors and provide facilities and central points for the local Community to meet. They are often used for fundraising events. They are an essential part of creating a cohesive settlement.

POLICY SLE4 LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Local Green Spaces that are of special significance to the Parish as identified on The Open Green Spaces Map will be protected from development other than in very exceptional circumstances. Local Green Spaces include the Football Pitch and surrounding area, and Village Green.

OPEN GREEN SPACES MAP



A Village Hall Garden

B Village Green

C Football Pitch and Surrounding Area.

D Playground

Figure J

Magnified Open Green Spaces from Figure J Above

A - Village Hall Garden – 0.12 hectares



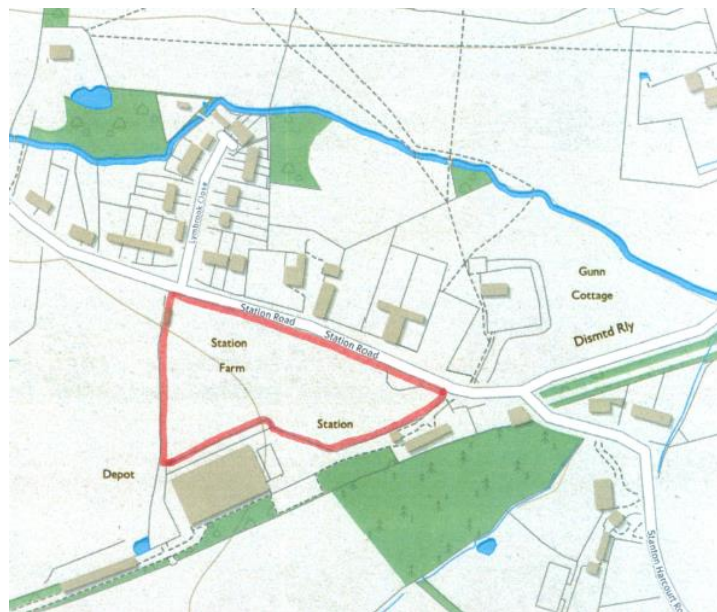
B – Village Green – 0.06 hectares



C – Playground – 0.15 hectares



D – Football Pitch and Surrounding Area – 3.75 hectares



Total of 4.62 hectares of proposed Local Green Space Designation

4.05 Biodiversity

The Community places considerable value on the enhancement of biodiversity in the Parish, including the creation of wildlife habitats (as shown on figure K below), the conservation of the native hedgerows, the planting of native trees and wild flowers, and the protection of wildlife corridors. Any new development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing green corridors and landscape features (such as water courses, hedgerows and treelines) for biodiversity.

South Leigh: Woodland and Wetland Habitat Networks



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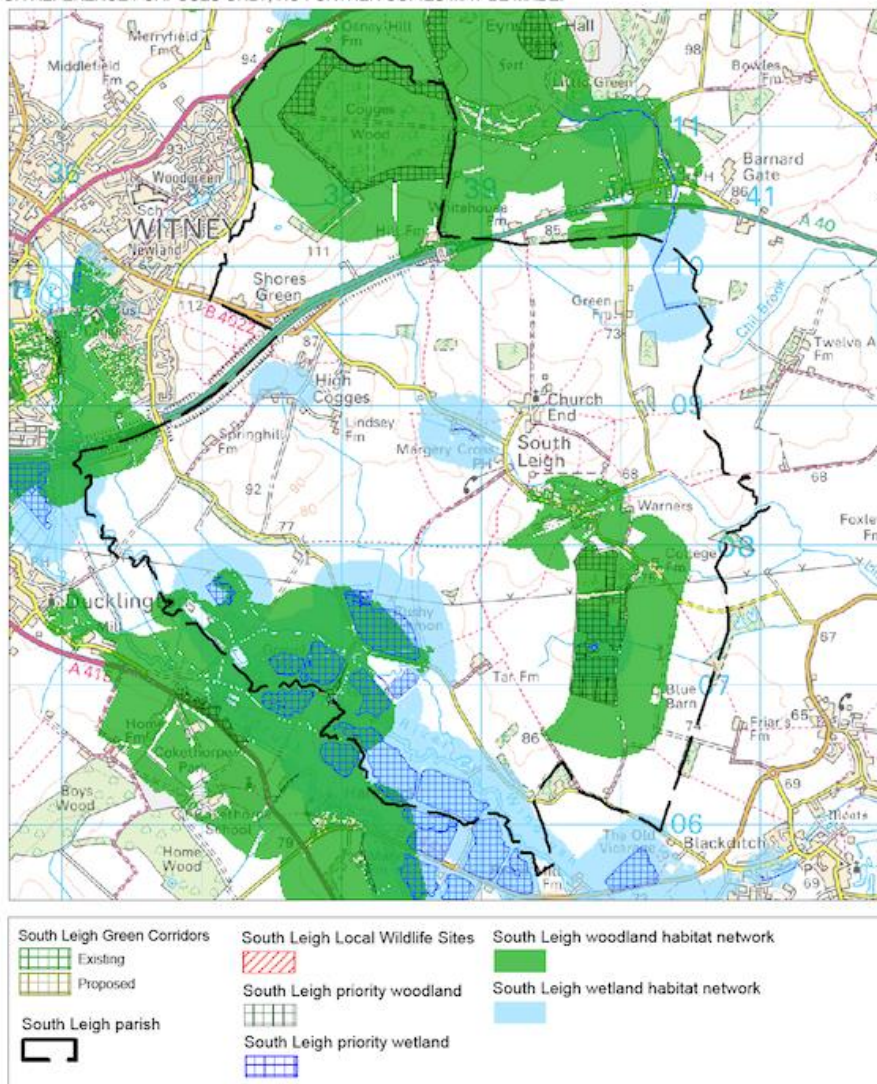
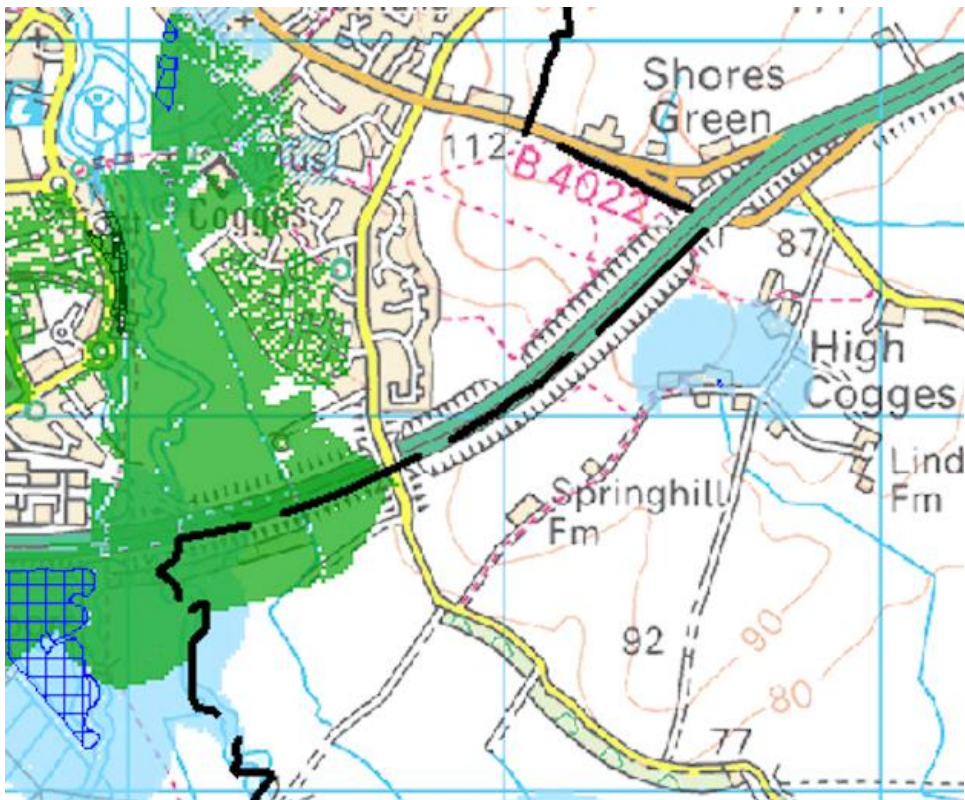
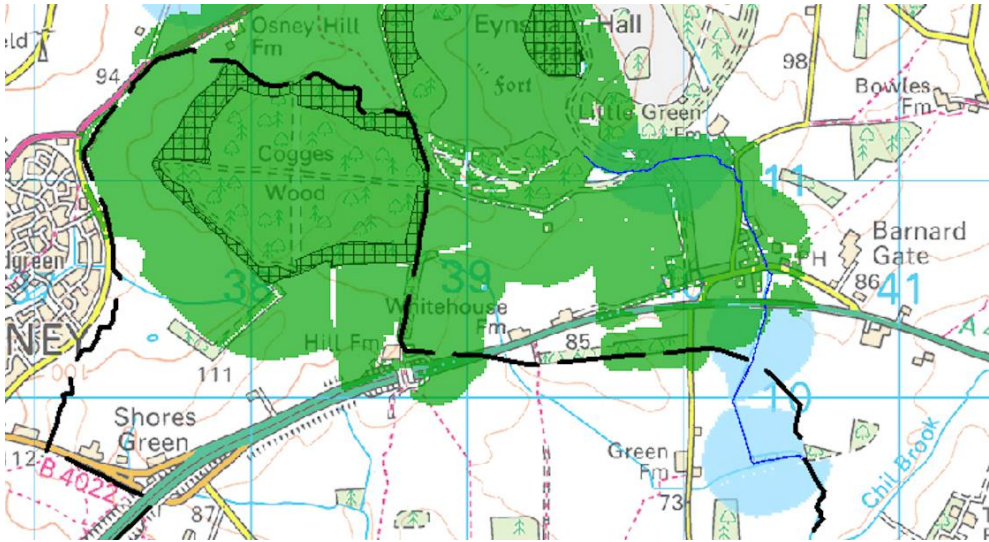
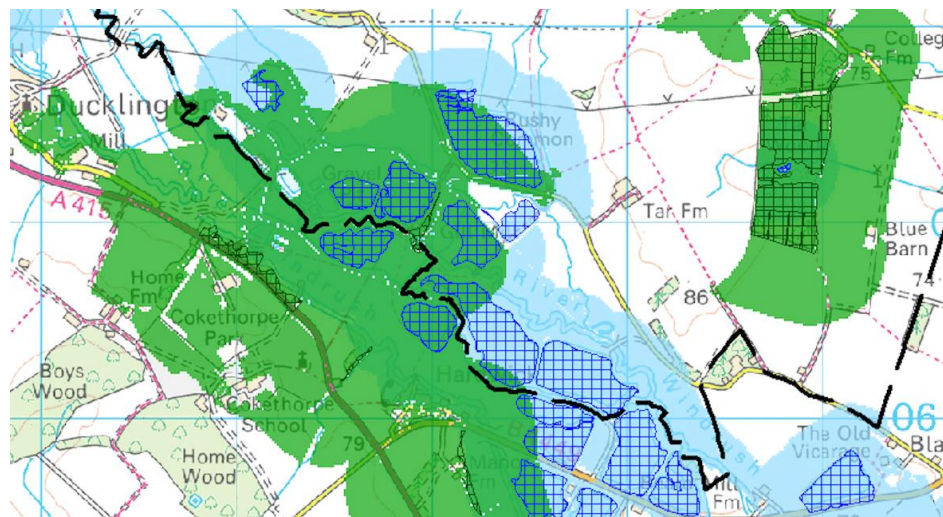


Figure K

Magnified boundaries from Figure K above







POLICY SLE5 BIODIVERSITY

The biodiversity, important habitats and Green Corridors of the Parish will be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity.

Development should not harm the biodiversity of the Parish, the network of green corridors, the local ecology and natural habitats, as shown on Figure K.

Any development should promote the enhancement of identified Local Wildlife Sites and Green Corridors and should support the achievement of the aims of Conservation Target Areas including the Lower Windrush Valley and the Wychwood Forest Project Area.

4.06 Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are defined as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as being of heritage interest whether designated (e.g. listed buildings) or undesignated. The Community wants to conserve and enhance the significance of the Parish's heritage assets and their settings, for their value and contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Heritage assets such as listed buildings have their own particular protection. This extends to their settings where this contributes to their historic significance and value. Setting is a wide concept which includes visual and other cultural or historic associations, e.g. agricultural hinterland.

The Parish has a number of designated and undesignated heritage assets including:

4.061 Listed buildings

There are number of listed buildings scattered through the Parish's settlements reflecting the historic polyfocal settlement pattern.

Listed Buildings in South Leigh Parish

GRADE II

- Medieval grave slab Approximately 7 metres south of West Tower.
- Medieval grave slab with carved cross approximately 7 metres south-west of porch and 71/2 metres south of nave, both at Church Of St. James, South Leigh.
- Ladymead Cottage, High Cogges, South Leigh,
- 9 and 10, High Cogges, South Leigh.
- Granary approximately 20 metres east of High Cogges Farmhouse, South Leigh.
- High Cogges Farmhouse, South Leigh.
- Gunn Cottage, Station Road, South Leigh.
- Homan's Farmhouse, Station Road, South Leigh.
- Gill Mill, South Leigh.
- Barn at Gill Mill, High Cogges, South Leigh.
- Store/Shelter At Gill Mill, South Leigh.
- Cart shed at Gill Mill, South Leigh.
- Stables at Gill Mill, South Leigh.
- Wayside Cottage and Upper Wayside Cottage, Witney Road, South Leigh.
- 62, Witney Road, South Leigh.
- Tar Wood House, South Leigh.
- The Cottage, South Leigh
- The Mason Arms Public House, Station Road, South Leigh.
- The Manor House, South Leigh.
- Church Farmhouse, Church End, South Leigh.

GRADE I

- Church of St. James, South Leigh.

MAP OF LISTED BUILDINGS IN SOUTH LEIGH PARISH

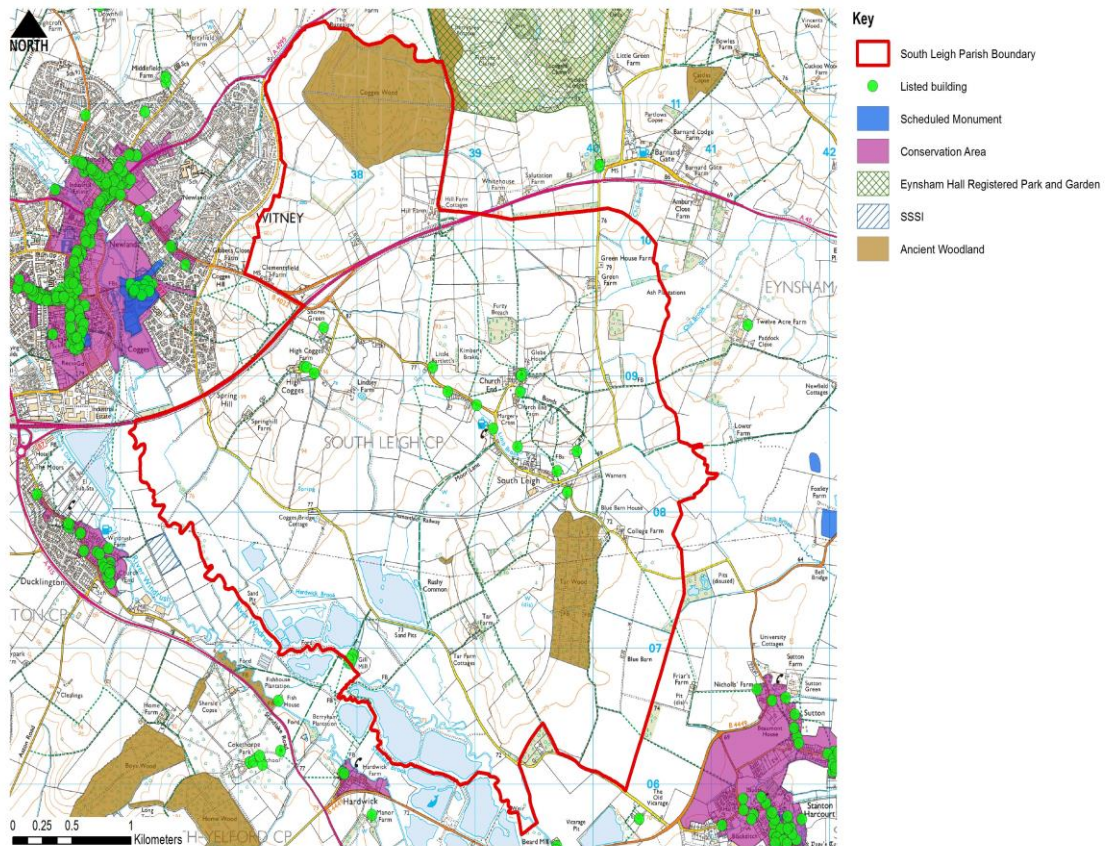


Figure L

4.062 Undesignated Heritage Assets

- Glebe House, Church End, South Leigh (former vicarage)
- Village Hall, Church End, South Leigh (former school)
- The Old Vicarage, Church End, South Leigh
- College Farm, Station Road, South Leigh
- The Crossing, Station Road, South Leigh
- The White House, Station Road, South Leigh
- Springhill Farm, High Cogges
- Blue Barn, Station Road, South Leigh 18th century barn and adjacent wind pump
- Tar Farm, Station Road, South Leigh with intact 19th century Model Farm layout
- Green Farm, Green Lan , South Leigh– 18th century barn and 19 century stockyard
- Browns Hill and Kitty Kimbles, Chapel Road, South Leigh
- Acre Cottage, Chapel Road, South Leigh (smoked blackened thatch)

Station Farmhouse, Church End, South Leigh
Holyrood House, Church End, South Leigh
The Old Chapel, Chapel Road, South Leigh



SLE6 - HERITAGE ASSETS

The Parish's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced taking into account their significance and contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place in accordance with national legislation, policy and guidance for the historic environment.

Considerable weight and importance will be given to conserving and/or enhancing the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings.

4.07 Dark Skies



Presently, given the limited amount of development in the Parish, the skies above the Parish are dark at night. During the Consultation Process, the Community made clear its wish to maintain the Dark Skies of the Parish as shown on the plan below. The Plan views Dark Skies as an essential feature of the Parish.

SLE7 DARK SKIES

The existing dark skies in the parish will be maintained. Proposals for external lighting will be kept to a minimum and will be assessed against the guidance contained in Policy EH8 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. Proposals that include external lighting which would have a detrimental effect on intrinsically dark landscapes, nature conservation, local amenity, character of a settlement or wider countryside will be refused.

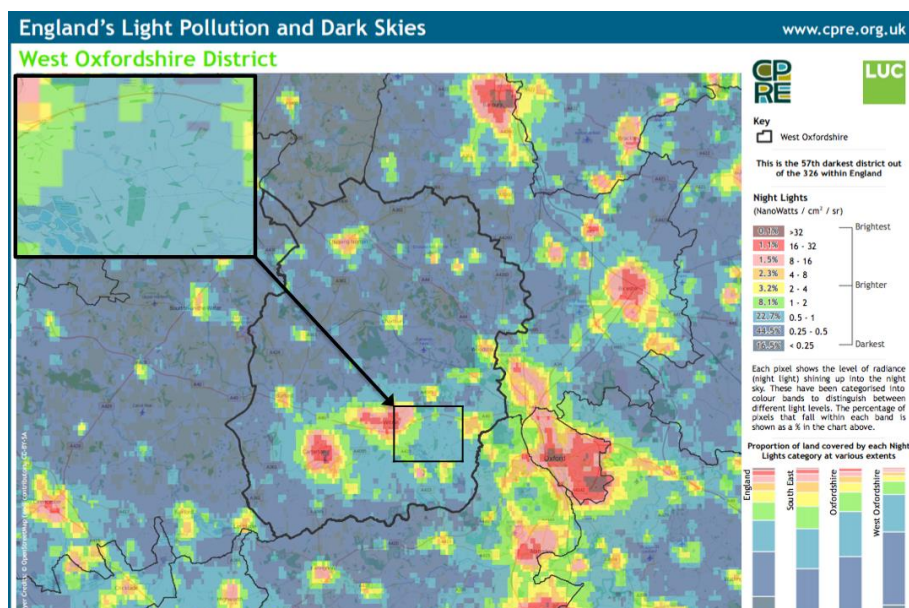


Figure M

4.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

The Community supports the national move to a low carbon future. The Plan plays a role in helping secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy.

The Plan also encourages energy efficiency improvements to new and existing buildings and the incorporation of sustainability measures, such as rain harvesting, grey water recycling, high standards of insulation and renewable energy systems. The following small-scale renewable energy technologies will be acceptable where they integrate with new and existing buildings and conform to the WODC Local Plan:

- Solar heating systems
- Photovoltaic Panels
- Biomass fuelled combined heat and power facilities and biomass boilers
- Ground or air sourced heat pumps

SLE8 CLIMATE CHANGE

The incorporation of small scale domestic renewable energy systems in any new and existing developments will be positively supported, including solar heating systems, photovoltaic panels, biomass fuel and ground or air sourced heat pumps.

4.2 HOUSING

4.21 Background

The Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies for the area as set out in the WODC Local Plan.

The settlements of South Leigh and High Cogges and remainder of the Parish fall within the small villages, settlements and open countryside category of the WODC Local Plan settlement hierarchy (WODC Local Policy OS2) where development is limited to that which is required and appropriate for a rural location.

There is no specific housing requirement or target for the Parish which the Plan must address.

Limited new housing in the Parish may be permitted through WODC Local Plan policies allowing the conversion of existing buildings and/or to meet specific needs such as farm worker dwellings (Policy H2).

WODC Local Plan policies are clear that other housing provision, including on undeveloped land, in the Parish should be limited to that required to meet local needs through the 'rural exception site' approach to affordable housing or through the allocation of sites in a Neighbourhood Plan.

It is worth noting that our Community is ageing with just over 60% over 45 and 22% of our population being over 65.

The average price of a home in the Parish is £456,000 (being the average of the 16 only house sales made in the period 2011 -2017 (figures taken from Rightmove). The average house price over the same period in the OX29 postcode that includes the Parish is £400,000 (figures taken from Rightmove 'Sold properties in OX29').

However, there is already some social housing within the Parish, comprising 11 homes owned by Cottsway Housing Association which, whilst interested in taking on additional homes, nonetheless has no wish to become involved in any direct development.

The Consultation Process established that there was no significant demand for new housing in the Parish and that the Community does not want to change the fundamental rural nature of the Parish by accepting any major development in the Parish. The Community supports the WODC Local Plan, recognising that it provides for limited development in the future in certain circumstances (including on brownfield sites) which the Plan believes the Community could successfully assimilate.

4.22 Process of Investigation The SLNPG did investigate the possibility of some limited new housing for local people. A housing need assessment survey was undertaken and a call for land made. External consultants were engaged to advise on the feasibility of the sites offered especially with regard to very limited new housing development but ultimately the Consultation Process established that there was insufficient local demand and thus the Community did not support any new development outside the remit of the WODC Local Plan.

POLICY SLD1 - HOUSING

Proposals for new residential development in the Plan area will be considered in the context of other policies in this Plan and in particular Policy SLD2 (Design).

Proposals, including those on rural exception sites, will be supported in principle where they meet a clearly identified local need for affordable housing, would make effective use of previously developed land or would represent the most appropriate use for former commercial and agricultural buildings.

4.23 Exception Site Affordable Homes

The WODC Local Plan provides for rural exception sites for Affordable Housing where the development meets an identified local need and is supported or initiated by the Parish Council. Subject to proven local need, a limited amount of Affordable Housing could be provided within the Parish on small rural exception sites, adjacent to the end of the built area of the two settlements, where proposals for housing would not normally be permitted.

The Plan makes no specific provision for new housing but believes that this policy offers the flexibility that might be needed as circumstances change to meet the specific requirements of housing for the Community in the future.

4.24 Brown Field Sites

Small scale development of derelict land will be supported where it meets the policies that are set out in the Plan.

4.25 Design

Much of the newer housing in South Leigh and High Cogges is architecturally undistinguished and not particularly in keeping with the West Oxfordshire locality. However, there are particular buildings within the two settlements which are of particular historic and architectural interest such that the Plan wishes to maintain the building design principles appropriate to the Plan area as set out below with regard to the appearance and facilities of any new development.

The Plan will require all proposals for development to be accompanied by a design and access statement to show how they have responded to the policies in

the WODC Local Plan and WODC Building Design Guide and any other relevant guidance. This statement should include a clear vision as to how such new development would conform to, and build on, the character and needs of the Parish.

In addition, proposals for any development will be expected to show that they:

- have adopted, to the fullest extent practicable, the guidance produced by the WODC Building Design Guide.
- have adopted, to the fullest extent practicable, the guidance produced by the WODC Building Design Guide Supplementary Technical Notes on local building material and use locally sourced building materials.
- promote waste water management both in respect of sustainable drainage and water capture (for use in activities such as gardening, car washing).
- maximise the use of renewable energy opportunities offered by a particular site.
- adopt the guidance produced by the Building for Life Partnership and, in particular, that proposals for development:
 - integrate the new homes into the existing neighbourhood.
 - private parking off road in front of houses or in garages, with plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars;
 - have provided adequate storage space for bins and recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles.

POLICY SLD2 - DESIGN

New development should demonstrate high quality and sustainable design which respects and enhances the historic, architectural and landscape character and quality of the surroundings having regard to the design principles set out in the accompanying text and in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide.

The Parish wishes to maintain and protect the distinctive characteristics of the Parish which are to be respected in the form and detailing of new developments in terms of:

- Settlement form - polyfocal.
 - building generally on one side of the road.
 - building only one house deep.
- Plot layout - set back from the road (not hard up to the road).
- Scale and form - predominantly two storey, detached and semi-detached. Absence of long terraces.

- Building details - simple, narrow plan form and with some gable front projections, steeply pitched roofs, gabled dormer windows.
- Building materials (walls) - local limestone and occasional red brick.
- Building materials (roofs) - stone slates, clay tile, thatch.
- Boundary treatments - limestone walls and native species hedgerows.

The Parish welcomes development which incorporates quality contemporary interpretations of traditional design will be considered on a case-by-case basis.



4.3 EMPLOYMENT

4.31 Background

There are no large or medium sized employers within the Parish. However, there are a number of small businesses, including some office space in converted farm buildings, a distribution warehouse, a machinery sales operation, a company refurbishing buses as promotional vehicles, farmland used by contractors from outside the Parish, a Pub which employs several local people together with about 8% of the Residents working from home.

With limited employment opportunities in the Parish, many Residents commute to work in Oxford, Witney and elsewhere. There is no public transport and around 83% of Residents who travel to work do so by privately owned vehicles.

Many Residents wish to work more from home but have been hampered by slow internet connection and poor mobile phone coverage. The Plan supports providing services to encourage home working and small business owners to create jobs and prosperity within the Parish and reduce the need for people to travel to work in privately owned vehicles.

4.32 Working From Home

While working from home may not be a suitable option for every employee in

every business, using home as a working base for at least part of the week offers a number of benefits for business. For example, home working can help working parents with childcare responsibilities. [L] [SEP]

Working from home does not necessarily need planning permission. Whatever business is carried out from home, the key test is whether the premises are still mainly used as a home, or are they used primarily for business? [L] [SEP]

With a relatively large proportion of Residents working from home, the Plan responds positively to enable these businesses to grow.

[L] [SEP]

POLICY SLD3 - WORKING FROM HOME

Planning permission for development that enables home working will be granted if the development:

- **is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings.** [L] [SEP]
- **does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of the community in the area.**
- **does not significantly increase vehicular traffic flow through the two settlements and has safe and suitable access to the site for all people.**

4.33 Internet Connection

The Internet is driving business innovation and growth, helping people access services, and opening up new opportunities for learning. The Community and businesses within the Parish are unable to take advantage of these opportunities, as local Internet connection speeds are variable and predominately slow. Local people think that current connection speeds are unacceptable. [L] [SEP]

Superfast broadband will revolutionise internet use, opening up new opportunities for businesses, communities and individuals. For businesses of every size, from self-employed and home based businesses, right up to the very largest employers, the benefits of high-speed broadband are considerable. The Plan considers that a basic requirement of all new employment and housing development should be that it is superfast broadband ready, especially where this could help bring forward superfast broadband for the existing Community. [L] [SEP]

POLICY SLD4 - FULL FIBRE BROADBAND CONNECTIONS

All new dwellings and employment buildings should incorporate ducting capable of accepting full fibre broadband connections.

4.34 Mobile Phone Coverage

Mobile phone coverage within the Parish is patchy and the Plan will support any reasonable steps required to improve coverage.

POLICY SLD5 - ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

Proposals which seek to expand and improve electronic communications networks will be supported where they are sympathetically designed and located to respect the character and appearance of the area. Existing masts, buildings or structures should be used wherever possible, and proposals for any new communications masts and structures will be assessed against other policies in this Plan, and in particular those which seek to safeguard the appearance of the countryside

4.35 Business in the Countryside

The Plan supports the rural economy whilst seeking to protect the open countryside from new development. Thus the Plan supports the sustainable growth and expansion of small business and enterprises through the conversion of existing buildings in the Parish. For the purpose of this Plan, business use is defined as Category B use and particularly B1 office, B2 Industrial and B8 Storage.

The change of use of some rural buildings to new uses is already permitted under the General Permitted Development Orders. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013 allows existing redundant agricultural buildings of 500m² or less to change to a range of new business uses, to boost the rural economy whilst protecting the open countryside from development. Prior approval is required for such a change of use of buildings between 150 – 500m².

POLICY SLD6 - BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Planning permission will be given for development that enables existing rural businesses in the Parish to expand and develop and for the conversion or reuse of buildings to new business uses provided that:

- **It is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings.**
- **It does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of the community in the area.**
- **It does not significantly increase traffic on the rural roads in the Parish.**
- **The proposed use falls within Uses Classes B1, B2 or B8 of the Use Classes Order**

Note Policy SLD6 – BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE 4th bullet point has been corrected from ‘The proposed use falls within Uses Classes B1, B2 or B3’ to ‘The proposed use falls within B1, B2 or B8’ – to be consistent with the Examiner’s Report Proposed Modification PM17 and in line with the Regulation 18 Decision Statement (as required under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) published in October 2018. 26/01/2021.

4.4 SERVICES AND FACILITIES

4.41 Key Services and Facilities

The WODC Local Plan identifies the settlements within the Parish as being unsustainable because they have very limited services and facilities, namely the Church, Village Hall, Pub, Football Pitch and Playground.

The retention of these very limited facilities is important for the long-term survival and success of the Parish.

4.42 Sport And Recreation

The Parish has a strong sense of Community and Parish facilities are well supported. The Parish also has a strong record of Community fundraising activities and has been particularly successful in raising third party money to support projects such as the restoration of the Village Hall.

This is a testament to the strong sense of Community which the Plan wishes to maintain through supporting:

- The continued success of the Village Hall as a focal point for village activities.
- Improvements to the Football Pitch and changing rooms.
- Providing a more modernized Play Area for the children of the Parish.
- Supporting the recently reopened and refurbished Pub to help it be a successful business and thereby ensure its long-term success.
- Supporting the Church, its congregation and Community activities where possible.

4.43 Retail

Neither of the two settlements have a shop but the settlement of South Leigh itself does have a recently reopened Pub, which serves food and drinks to both locals and visitors. The owners have expressed an interest in expanding their business and this has been supported by the Community.

However, the Plan strongly prefers the conversion of existing buildings to facilitate any such expansion.

POLICY SLD7 - COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The existing community services and facilities within the Plan area will be protected, and any proposals which would result in their loss will not be supported.

The provision of new community services and facilities, including the provision of appropriate retail facilities, will be encouraged and supported, subject to the other policies in this Plan.

4.5 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

4.51 Background

During the Consultation Process, the community expressed a fear that increasing traffic volumes, particularly through the settlement of South Leigh, would pose significant dangers and difficulties. However, the Community has also expressed

a clear wish to remain free of urban and suburban traffic management infrastructures. The Plan therefore supports management methods suited to a rural environment.

The roads within the Parish are not well suited to modern traffic and the Community has expressed concerns about road safety, noise and vehicle emissions associated with the volume and speed of traffic passing through the Parish especially along Chapel Road and Station Road which carry a lot of 'rat-run' traffic. In many places these roads are single lane tracks with sharp, blind bends which are dangerous in themselves and particularly dangerous when faced with oncoming traffic and/or pedestrians and cyclists. As a result, The Plan seeks to minimise the impact of additional traffic generated by any new development, and especially the proposed Shores Green slip road off the A40 by SLPC engaging in active consultation with the OCC and WODC.

4.52 Traffic Management

The Plan does not propose specific traffic management measures, which have little local support. However, the policies under the Plan will ensure that new development of both housing and the proposed Shores Green slip road will not make the current situation significantly worse. OCC has provided a traffic monitoring system along Station Road and SLPC keep traffic management under review.

POLICY SLT1 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Any proposals which would result in a significant increase in the volume of traffic on roads in the Plan area will be assessed in terms of their potential impact upon the environment and amenities of the Parish. Where necessary, the Parish Council will work with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to identify any appropriate traffic management measures that will serve to mitigate the negative impacts of additional traffic generation.

4.53 Parking

Some services and facilities have their own car parking, namely the Village Hall, the Pub and the warehouse facility while other services and facilities have car parking on adjacent roads. Presently additional parking for Village Hall events is only available on a temporary basis and the Plan supports a more permanent solution to ensure the continued success of the Village Hall and Church.

POLICY SLT2 RESIDENTIAL PARKING

Proposals for all new dwellings to be built in the Plan area should ensure that adequate off-street parking provision is made, having regard to the site-specific circumstances and Oxfordshire County Councils parking standards.

POLICY SLT3 VILLAGE HALL PARKING

Proposals for the provision of additional parking adjacent or close to the Village Hall to meet the needs of the Village Hall will be supported.

4.54 Buses

The Parish's small population means that a commercial village bus service is probably not viable and therefore the Plan accepts that generally the Community requires access to other forms of transport. However, the Community can access a regular bus service from Witney and Eynsham - about 4 miles in either direction. The WODC Local Plan has identified an area for a Park and Ride service which will benefit the Community - approximately 4 miles away and the Plan supports the aspiration of a volunteer Community bus service.

4.55 Cycling

A significant number of cyclists use the roads within the Parish every day with many more cycling for recreational purposes at weekends. The Plan will encourage the use of the roads within the Parish and the trackways for both recreational and daily use cycling.

4.56 Walking

Whilst the main settlement of South Leigh has a small number of pavements a significant number of people (both villages and visitors) walk through the village on the roads. The Consultation Process clearly established that the Community did not want more formal pavements but there were concerns for the safety of walkers which has led the Plan to consider the 'rat-run' aspect of the roads through the built areas and to seek to liaise with OCC and WODC to look at ways to lessen the rat-run effect from the A40.

5 ANNUAL REVIEW

It is the intention of SLPC to keep the Plan under active review and in particular to effect a general review on an annual basis to keep the Plan active and relevant as circumstances change.

GLOSSARY

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
AECOM		The consultants appointed to assess the suitability of sites for housing.
	Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It does not include low cost market housing.
	Affordable Rented Housing	Rented housing let by registered providers of affordable housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.
	Basic Conditions Statement	A statement establishing the conformity of the Neighbourhood Plan to the basic conditions as set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
	Biodiversity	The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
	Consultation Process	The process of consultation in connection with the Neighbourhood.
	Consultation Report	A report giving details of the Consultation Process undertaken in support of the Neighbourhood Plan.
	Edgars Limited	Consultants engaged to devise SLPC on the Neighbourhood Plan.
	European Regulations	Rules and regulations derived or imposed by the European Union.
	Historic Landscape Assessment	An assessment of the historic landscape carried out by Terra Firma.
	WODC Local Plan	The Development Plan Document setting out long-term spatial vision and objectives, and containing both strategic policies and generic policies which will apply to all development proposals in the district.
	Infilling	The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.

	Listed Buildings	Buildings and structures which are listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural and historic interest and whose protection and maintenance is the subject of special legislation.
	(Open) Market Housing	Private housing for rent or for sale, where the price is set in the open market.
NP	Neighbourhood Plan	A plan forming part of the development plan prepared by Town or Parish Councils.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	A document setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
OCC		Oxfordshire County Council
	(the) Plan	The South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan.
	Renewable Energy	Energy generated from the sun, wind, oceans, plants, the fall of water, biomass and deep geothermal heat
	Screening Assessment	An assessment of the Neighbourhood Plans compliance with the Planning Policies
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects, which must be applied to all Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	Assessments made compulsory by a European Directive (the SEA Directive). To be implemented in planning through Sustainability Appraisal of Development Plan Documents.
SLPC	South Leigh Parish Council	
SLNPG	South Leigh Neighbourhood Planning Group	
WODC	West Oxfordshire District Council	
WOLA	West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998)	