



Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan

Non-Statutory Projects



May 2020





Contents

Introduction	4
Infrastructure and Community Infrastructure Levy	5
Biodiversity	7
Broadband and Mobile Communications	8
Business Development	10
Community Facilities and Local Green Spaces	11
Community Hub	13
Crudwell's Setting	15
Green Network	16
Public Transport	17
Renewable Energy	18
Self-Build Housing	19



Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan can only contain policies which relate to development. This means that planning policies can only be included in the Neighbourhood Plan if they influence the way a planning application (which is an application for development) is determined or the mitigation that is provided alongside the development.

However, during the course of drafting the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan, a number of other issues have arisen. The Steering Group felt that it was important to reflect these, even though they do not relate directly to development, and are not part of the statutory Neighbourhood Plan itself.

This is explained by Locality, which produces a Toolkit for Neighbourhood Planners. This includes a guide called "Writing Planning Policies" and this explains that:

"There will be a range of local initiatives which the local community wishes to pursue which fall outside the legal definition of development. This doesn't mean they are not important but a neighbourhood plan is not going to be an effective way of delivering them. You can include them in your plan as projects but they carry no particular status and are not subject to examination or referendum."

Equally, a number of issues have arisen that will take some time to resolve. The priority for this Neighbourhood Plan is to enable the local community to plan for the amount and location of new development in the parish. On that basis, it is important to produce the Neighbourhood Plan quickly.

This means that a number of issues that will take longer to resolve have been left out of this version of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, these issues have not been ignored. They are described below, and can be taken forward in the next version of the Neighbourhood Plan, as described in the Monitoring and Review section.

Finally, a number of issues were raised by the community and included in the regulation 14 draft neighbourhood plan that Wiltshire Council said duplicated policies in their Core Strategy, so were unnecessary or superfluous.

These issues are set out below.

Infrastructure and Community Infrastructure Levy

Infrastructure can be provided as part of development through two mechanisms:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Planning obligations

Planning obligations require the applicant to provide an item of infrastructure or contribute funds towards infrastructure at a particular time. This is done through a legal agreement called a S106 Agreement between the applicant and (normally) Wiltshire Council.

By law, planning obligations must be:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b) directly related to the development; and
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is collected by Wiltshire Council to help fund larger infrastructure projects that don't meet the statutory tests for planning obligations. This is collected from many (but not all) developments across Wiltshire, to be spent on a list of infrastructure items in its "Regulation 123 List".

The Regulation 123 list includes projects relating to education, sustainable transport, open space, green infrastructure and the environment, community and cultural, health and social care, emergency services. Almost all of the projects are specified, and none of the specified projects relate directly to Crudwell Parish.

A proportion of CIL resulting from development in Crudwell is given to Crudwell Parish Council, who will then decide what to spend it on. When the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan is made, this proportion increases from 15% to 25%.

A number of infrastructure items have been mentioned through the Neighbourhood Plan work undertaken so far. Those items that, in principle, the Parish Council's proportion of CIL could be spent on are as follows:

- To investigate mechanisms for delivering a village community hub/shop;
- To help better maintain the existing drainage network to avoid blockages; and
- To fund improvements to the pedestrian environment on Tetbury Lane.

The CIL funds made available to the Parish Council will not be sufficient to fund all of the above infrastructure items, so the Parish Council will work towards achieving those items not funded through CIL through other means.

Additionally, some ideas that came forward are not, realistically, going to be funded by CIL, so the Parish Council will also work towards delivering these through other means. This include:

- To encourage improved bus services with timetabling designed to enable commuting to Cirencester, Malmesbury, Chippenham and to train services at Kemble station;



- To encourage improvements to the school bus service from outlying parts of the parish, and improved links to Malmesbury;
- To investigate opportunities for car sharing, volunteer transport etc.

Finally, improvements to the existing bus shelter were suggested. The Parish Council agreed to fund these improvements on October 2018.

Biodiversity

Preserving the natural environment and wildlife in Crudwell is very important to Parishioners. As the Consultation Statement demonstrates, 85% of respondents rated the impact of development on biodiversity as being either extremely or very important.

While much of the Parish does not contain internationally or nationally important habitats, protected species such as bats have been sighted in the parish, and Great Crested Newts have been sighted in the waterways within Crudwell village.

Additionally, more localised biodiversity which is not subject to any particular protection, is nevertheless valued locally, and should be protected and enhanced wherever possible. Consultation responses specifically refer to great crested newts, kingfishers, herons, bats and deer in and near the Swill Brook and other waterways, bats near the church and churchyard, grass snakes and other rare grassland species on various sites around the village.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, requires development proposals to demonstrate how they would protect features of nature conservation and geological value by retaining, buffering and managing them, and then, where they cannot be retained, how impacts will be mitigated and compensated.

Additionally, Core Policy 50 requires development proposals to seek opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

Photo 12: Fields near Crudwell



Wiltshire Council told us that our regulation 14 draft policy largely duplicated Core Policy 50, so it was superfluous. It is therefore deleted from the neighbourhood plan.



Broadband and Mobile Communications

The community engagement undertaken for the neighbourhood plan showed that improving broadband speeds and mobile communications coverage is important to Parishioners.

Policy DD1 aims to ensure that homes at the Tuners Lane site will have fibre to the premises, but the quality of the broadband network at this site and elsewhere in the parish ultimately depends on the quality of the broadband service in the wider network.

A few properties are connected via Exchange Only (EO) Lines (i.e. no cabinet) and these properties are currently limited to data rates of 2-10Mbps. However, Openreach advise that a solution for EO lines will be rolled-out from the end of 2018.

In addition to fibre provision by Openreach, Gigaclear has been contracted by Wiltshire Council to deliver a new ultrafast fibre-to-the-premises broadband network to more than 5,500 properties in Wiltshire as part of the Wiltshire Online programme. This will deliver speeds from 50Mbps to 1000Mbps. Work in Crudwell has commenced, and we understood was due to be completed during the first quarter of 2019, to provide homeowners with the opportunity to purchase fibre-to-the-premises. The completion of this project has been delayed however.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 3 requires all new development “to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal”, with priority given to “essential infrastructure” which includes “telecommunications facilities, including fibre-optic superfast broadband connectivity services, to serve local communities and the business community”.

The regulation 14 draft neighbourhood plan included a policy requiring the development of all new homes or business to be enabled for fibre to the premises.

Wiltshire Council responded to the regulation 14 draft policy saying it could be onerous. The Tuners Lane developer is comfortable to provided fibre to the premises, so we have included this requirement in policy DD1, rather than making this a requirement for all new homes or businesses.

In terms of mobile communications, basic mobile communications across the Parish are reasonable but there are some areas of poor reception which is dependent upon which of the four network providers (EE, Vodafone, 3 or O2) are supplying the signal. Mobile data communications are also variable with some areas of very good reception, others not so and particularly poor around the Eastcourt area.

The regulation 14 draft neighbourhood plan included a policy which supported measures to improve mobile phone coverage, including through the installation of new mobile communications infrastructure.



Wiltshire Council told us that this policy was superfluous because the issue is largely covered by Permitted Development rights, and because, where planning permission was explicitly required, it is covered by Core Strategy policies anyway.



Business Development

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 34: Additional employment land, sets out the strategic policy requirements for employment developments within the Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres, none of which are found in Crudwell Parish.

Outside these three categories of settlement, Policy 34 sets out criteria which would relate to proposals in Crudwell Parish. These would enable employment developments that:

- i. Support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification; or
- ii. Are for new and existing rural based business within or adjacent to Crudwell Village (as the only large or small village in the Parish); or
- iii. Are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Wiltshire, as determined by Wiltshire Council.

Where they:

- a. Meet sustainable development objectives as set out in Wiltshire Core Strategy policies; and
- b. Are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity; and
- c. Are supported by evidence that they are required to benefit the local economic and social needs; and
- d. Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations; and
- e. Are supported by adequate infrastructure.

On that basis, business development in Crudwell is supported by the wider development plan.

However, Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 13 defines three “Principal Employment Areas” in the Malmesbury Community Area, at Malmesbury Business Park, Dyson Site, and Land North of Tetbury Hill. Core Policy 35 explains how these areas will be protected and retained for employment purposes.

The Kemble Business Park in Crudwell Parish is not referred to explicitly, despite its importance to the local community

The next review of this Neighbourhood Plan will consider whether the Kemble Business Park and any other parts of the parish require additional protection to ensure that local employment opportunities remain in the parish.



Community Facilities and Local Green Spaces

The local community values the range of community facilities available in Crudwell parish, and would want to see changes of use from their current uses avoided

The most valued community facilities were found to be as follows:

- All Saints Church and Graveyard
- Crudwell Primary School
- Post Office Green
- The allotments
- The Mayfield House Hotel
- The Potting Shed Pub
- The Rectory Hotel
- The Sports Field
- The Village Green
- The Village Hall
- The Wheatsheaf Pub

All of these important buildings and green spaces are protected by various policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy, particularly:

- Core Policy 49: Protection of rural services and community facilities
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 40: Hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and conference facilities

Some of the important buildings and green spaces are owned by the Parish Council, which means they can't be redeveloped without the Parish Council's agreement, so this provides additional protection.

Additionally, a number of the valued buildings are listed, which protects them from redevelopment where it would affect their character or appearance.

The table below shows how the above buildings and green spaces are protected.

Buildings	Green Spaces
All Saints Church and Graveyard (listed building and protected by Core Policy 49)	
Crudwell Primary School (protected by Core Policy 49)	
	Post Office Green (protected by Core Policy 52 and owned by the Parish Council)
	The allotments (protected by Core Policy 52)
The Mayfield House Hotel (protected by Core Policies 40 and 49)	



The Potting Shed Pub (listed building and protected by Core Policy 49)	
The Rectory Hotel (listed building and protected by Core Policy 40)	
	The Sports Field (protected by Core Policy 49 and owned by the Parish Council)
	The Village Green (protected by Core Policy 52 and owned by the Parish Council)
The Village Hall (protected by Core Policy 49)	
The Wheatsheaf Pub (protected by Core Policy 49)	

Additional powers are available to local communities to protect community facilities and local green spaces.

Community facilities that are particularly important can be declared as "Assets of Community Value". This means that, if they are sold, the community has the opportunity to gather the funds together to purchase the facility and keep it in community use.

Important green spaces can be declared as Local Green Spaces, which provides additional protection from redevelopment.

The next review of this Neighbourhood Plan can decide whether any buildings and local green spaces should have this additional protection.



Community Hub

Background - Why is the Hub needed?

Whereas Crudwell in the past has had numerous shops, the last of these closed in 2004 with the Post Office relocating to the Wheatsheaf Pub on a part time basis (1.5 days per week).

The loss of these facilities, in addition to making travel to neighbouring towns for shopping necessary, also impacts parishioners by a loss of community cohesion with fewer opportunities to engage with others in the informal circumstances found in meeting in the shops, this in turn can also lead to isolation. The problem is particularly acute in Crudwell as the village is bisected by the very busy A429 trunk road, which inhibits easy conversation and recreation.

Work within the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan included a Community Focus Group consultation and a subsequent working paper which evidences the expressed need for a shop, café and small accessible meeting facilities for small groups. The preferred option identified in the paper is a community hub, which would meet these requirements. Many such hubs, owned and operated by local communities, are successfully operating locally and in many other parts of the country.

A discussion paper was displayed and shared with residents at NP consultation events. The Parish Council has agreed to a feasibility study to determine options for the potential siting of the hub and an associated business case.

It is envisaged that the hub would include a community shop, café, small meeting room/s, rentable space and associated facilities to complement those available at the village hall.

Ideally the hub would be located centrally in the village close to the main road to provide easy access for parishioners and the benefit of footfall from those passing through the village. We have discussed potential free use of the hub with the C of E Primary School governors and also the potential for the hub to provide additional parking which is badly needed.

We are also in discussions with the Parochial Church Council, and the Vicar has joined the Community Hub Steering Group. Crudwell Church is positive and receptive to the idea of supporting joined up community facilities in the parish to provide services and support to parishioners and in particular vulnerable people, which the hub could provide a focus for. Further to this the church is proposing to trial hub facilities in the future and to become a formal part of the Hub community by offering the Parish Church building as a resource to the community for concerts, cinema films etc.



How would the Hub happen?

There is a vision in the Community Hub Steering Group that a Community Hub, like those in neighbouring villages and many other parts of the country, could be provided in Crudwell to help support our local community.

A Community Interest Company or Trust, where parishioners own the hub by a share or shares in that company, each having one vote in its operation and planning activities, usually manages these Hubs, and a Management Board would be established for governance.

Various options for location of the Hub have been considered and this business case will seek to identify the most suitable and viable. The options identified include developing existing accommodation or a new build in the centre of the village.

Successful hubs locally and in other parts of the country raise significant funds for local communities as well as providing invaluable services. If a new build Hub were possible then planning and build will probably take two years or more to plan and build.

There have been advanced discussions with the land agent and landowner; The Diocese of Bristol re a long lease of part of a Glebelands field in the village centre at a very economical rent. Early work shows that this would be the preferred option in the business case as it would benefit from footfall and traffic from the A429 which the land borders.

We have also engaged the Plunkett Foundation who will provide business support to the project. This work is progressing as a separate project to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Depending on progress with this further research, it is hoped that the next review of the Neighbourhood Plan can include a policy to deliver a community hub in the village.



Crudwell's Setting

Crudwell is a rural parish and the vast majority of land in the parish is agricultural.

It is important to retain this rural character, to maintain the separation between Crudwell village and the parish's hamlets, and to protect particularly valued views.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 57 requires all new developments to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to local character so, to a certain extent, Crudwell's character is protected through this policy.

The results of consultation suggest that there may be particular features or views that require specific protection.

The next version of the Neighbourhood Plan can look into this further.



Green Network

There is a particular desire locally to protect and enhance existing hedgerows, watercourses and wildlife corridors because these provide essential corridors for many native animals and birds to live in and travel along, and they are part of Crudwell's rural character.

There is a concern locally that hedgerows will be lost as a result of development, either because they fall within development sites or because development will result in road widening which will require hedgerow removal.

The local community also wishes to be able to safely walk, cycle or ride horses around the Parish.

Better access to cycle tracks, bridleways and footpaths will all contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the Parish – as well as adding value and enjoyment to everyday village life.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 52: Green Infrastructure, requires that "Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained".

The importance of particular local green spaces, and the potential to define them as such, is set out above.

The Steering Group has been advised that the best way to deal with all this is to consider each of these elements as part of a holistic green infrastructure network, and to consider how all the parts inter-link for the benefit of parishioners and wildlife.

This will take some time, so these issues are proposed to be dealt within the next draft of the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan.



Public Transport

As Crudwell is not a place of significant employment, any new development is likely to result in an increase in commuter traffic. This has issues for the environment so the provision of a more accessible public transport is imperative.

Crudwell, like many other rural parishes has seen a decline in its public transport connections. Both the nearby Malmesbury and Tetbury rail lines closed in the mid 1960s, leaving Kemble as the nearest station, 5.5 miles from Crudwell village.

Bus services have been similarly affected, with frequencies and destinations reduced. Currently, no bus service from Crudwell stops at Kemble station in either direction, although the station is better served from the North, which comes under the auspices of Gloucestershire Council.

Outlying villages, i.e. Eastcourt, Chedglow and Kemble Business Park have no bus services.

From Crudwell, there are some five bus services to Cirencester at roughly 2 hr intervals from 0745 till 1623 hrs. From Cirencester the return bus services seven operates from 0701 to 1740 hrs but with no Sunday service.

Another area where transport is lacking is the delivery/collection of school children from outlying settlements. Provision of transport for schoolchildren would alleviate current congestion around the school area at drop off and pick up times.

The Infrastructure and Transport Focus Group made a number of recommendations for improvements to the local bus service. The Neighbourhood Plan is not in a position to deliver many of these, but it is important to highlight the issue as items for further consideration.



Renewable Energy

The community engagement undertaken for the neighbourhood plan showed that the local community is keen to encourage the responsible use of renewable energy whilst preserving the rural character of Crudwell.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low-carbon energy, encourages new development to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand and requires proposals for major development to submit a Sustainable Energy Strategy alongside the planning application outlining the low-carbon strategy for the proposal.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 42: Standalone renewable energy installations, supports proposals for standalone renewable energy schemes subject to satisfactory resolution of all site specific and cumulative effects. The policy specifically states that "Applicants will not be required to justify the overall need for renewable energy development, either in a national or local context."

In the light of these policies, Wiltshire Council advised us that the regulation 14 draft policy dealing with renewable energy was superfluous, so we have now deleted it.



Self-Build Housing

The delivery of self-build housing (i.e. housing proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own home) in Crudwell is supported by the local community, and is one way of delivering lower cost housing which meets local community needs without being “affordable” as defined in the NPPF.

In October 2018, Wiltshire’s self build register included over 300 households, of which 2 had registered an interest in building in Crudwell.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 2 sets a presumption of all types of housing, including self-build housing, within the village of Crudwell.

Wiltshire Core Strategy policy 44: Rural Exceptions Sites supports the delivery of affordable homes¹ “within, adjoining or well related to” a range of settlements including Crudwell village, subject to a number of additional criteria. On that basis, self-build housing can also be delivered on the edge of Crudwell village if it is also “affordable” as defined by the Government.

The next review of this Neighbourhood Plan can take this issue further by considering whether there is a need to promote the delivery of self-build housing, either by allocating a site specifically for self-build housing, or by extending the rural exceptions policy to allow self-build housing that is not strictly affordable.

¹ Defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as:

“Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent...**
- b) **Starter homes...**
- c) **Discounted market sales housing...**
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership...**”