

GORING-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

**All Councillors are summoned to an extraordinary meeting of Council, to be held at the Main Hall, Village Hall, Goring on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 7.30pm
Public and press are invited to attend**

Members are respectfully reminded of the obligation to declare any interests relevant to business to be conducted at this meeting and of the convention as to withdrawal from the meeting for the relevant item unless the interest is not one that debars the member from speaking thereon.

AGENDA – EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Please note that the public and the media have a right to make audio and visual recordings of council meetings. It would be helpful if those wishing to record could contact the Council before the meeting so that we can ensure the necessary facilities are in place. The Chair of the meeting will advise the public that the meeting is being recorded. A request to record a meeting shall only be refused if the Chair of the meeting believes recording would disrupt the meeting. There are no restrictions on anyone at a council meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar social media provided that the Chair does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive declarations of interests
3. Chairman's introduction
4. Public forum: *An opportunity for the public to address the council. With the permission of the chairman, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise*
5. Presentation about the Neighbourhood Plan (NP)
6. Presentation about the school
7. Update on a meeting between representatives of South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, The Diocese, The School Governors, The NP Steering Group and Goring on Thames Parish Council
8. Presentation on the implications of taking the school's proposal within or without the Neighbourhood Plan Process
9. Question and Answer session
10. To consider motions put forward by councillors:
 1. That the council agree to support the school to work through the process to get the best school facilities for Goring.
 2. To consider, should the first motion be passed, whether that support would depend on the work being done outside the NP process, or to request that it be within the NP process
11. Matters for future discussion

Kevin Bulmer, Chairman

8 September 2017

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council

Extraordinary Meeting

The School & The Neighbourhood Plan 13th September 2017



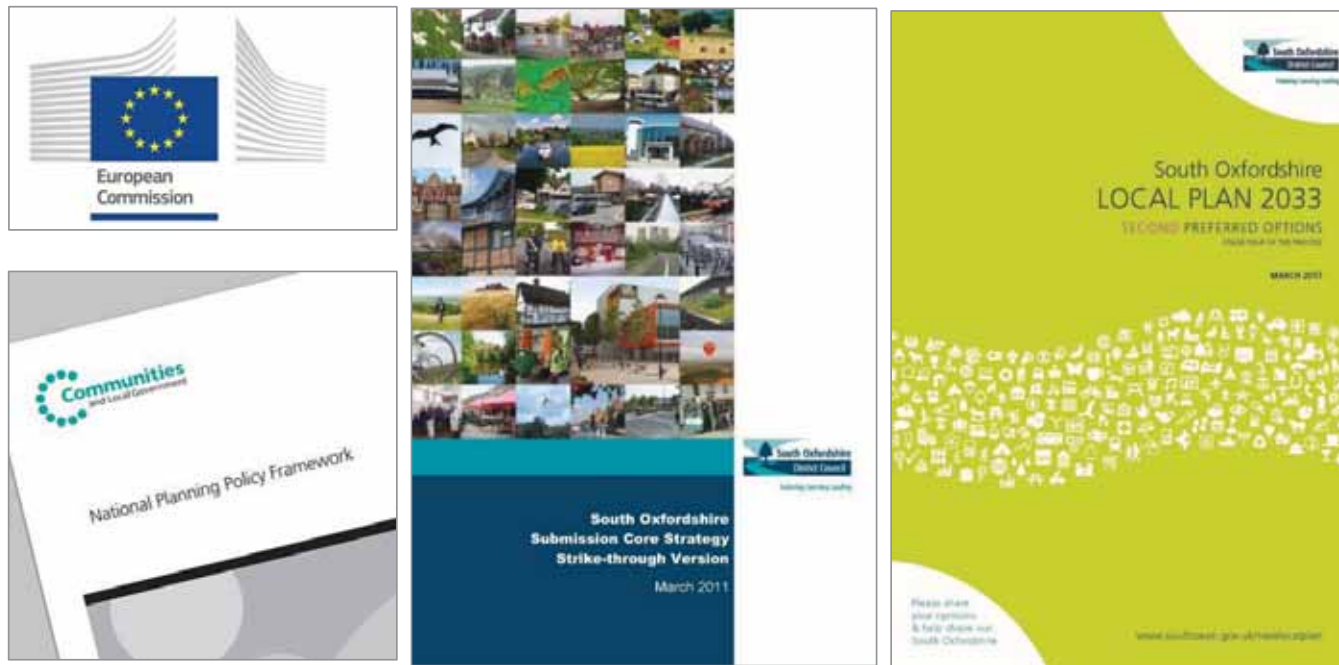
Please note that any excerpts from the unfinished, draft, Neighbourhood Plan may be subject to change following feedback during the pre-publication validation and proof reading.



Goring-on-Thames Parish Council
Extraordinary Meeting
The School & The Neighbourhood Plan

13th September 2017

How does the Planning System work (and what does this have to do with the Neighbourhood Plan)?



To state it simply, the Neighbourhood Plan must fall in line with European legislation (Sustainability Appraisal), National legislation (National Planning Policy Framework), Oxfordshire County (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) and District planning (current Strategic Development Plan and draft of the not-as-yet adopted Local Plan, as well as the Design Guide).

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Designed to be a way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work.

It can be used to:

- Develop a **shared vision** for the community
- Choose **where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built** (as long as it complies with policies in Local Plan)
- **Identify and protect** important local aspects (AONB, Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, design/style, etc) as well as looking to protect the village/area 'envelope' to help restrict over-development.
- **Influence the look** of what new buildings should look like
- Identify **key strategic issues and projects**

NOTE: The Neighbourhood Plan must also include a Sustainability Appraisal

Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting: The School & The Neighbourhood Plan





The Goring Neighbourhood Plan was driven by the desire to have greater local input, based on the requirement of the Local Plan for the housing allocation for Goring.

Prior to NP, SODC was consulting with Goring to determine most suitable locations to address this allocation. (The process, at the time, was at an advanced stage – though the decision to do a NP stopped that process.)

As part of the currently adopted Local Plan, Goring must provide 105 houses – as part of the District-wide strategic housing allocation. To date, 19 have already been constructed.

But wasn't the GNP5 site (formerly GOR1) already supported by the Goring Parish Council?

Yes – at the time of the SODC consultation, based on community input, GOR1 was one option that was supported as it would be one site that could accommodate all the housing allocation – with minimum impact.

Around the time, SODC commissioned an independent expert report on the suitability of that site. GOR1 was deemed inappropriate for development. Because the process was curtailed, this proposal wasn't tested in a subsequent round of consultation.

By taking the decision to commence the NP process, the consultations started all over again – and later, a different independent expert (to the SODC investigation) came to the same conclusion - that GNP5 was not suitable.





The NP process is broadly **proscribed**, it must be **transparent** and **fair** to all parties (ie developers and land owners, but also to disparate views in the community).

SODC is required by law to support and oversee the GNP process. As a result, the NP Steering group has maintained communication throughout, and used SODC as a first-resource on many matters, including the issues with the school.



Goring Neighbourhood Plan



Can **decide where and what type of development** should happen in the neighbourhood

Can **promote more development** than is set out in the Local Plan

Can **include more detailed policies** - provided they do not conflict with the strategic policies in the Local Plan.

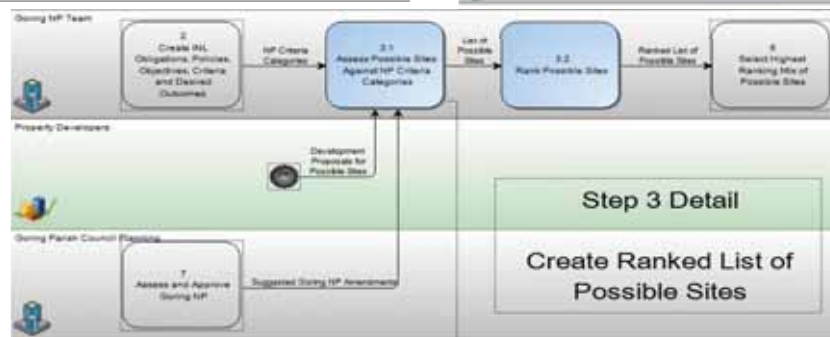
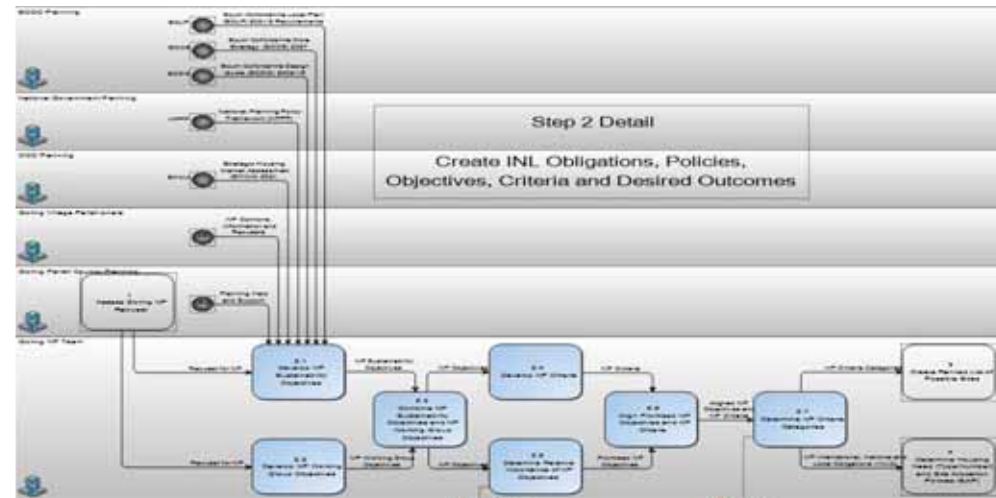
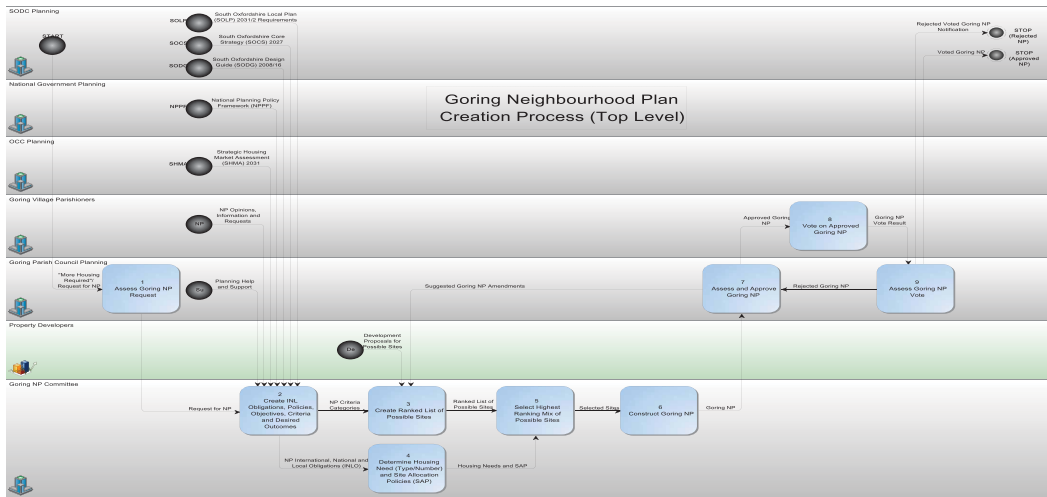


Cannot be prepared by a body other than a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum.

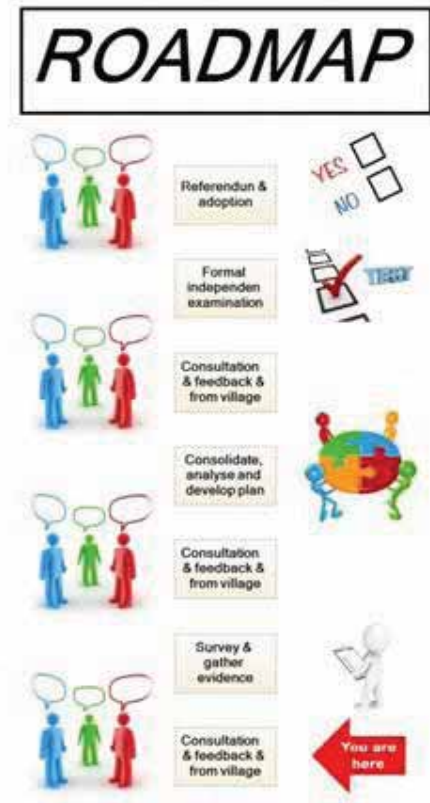
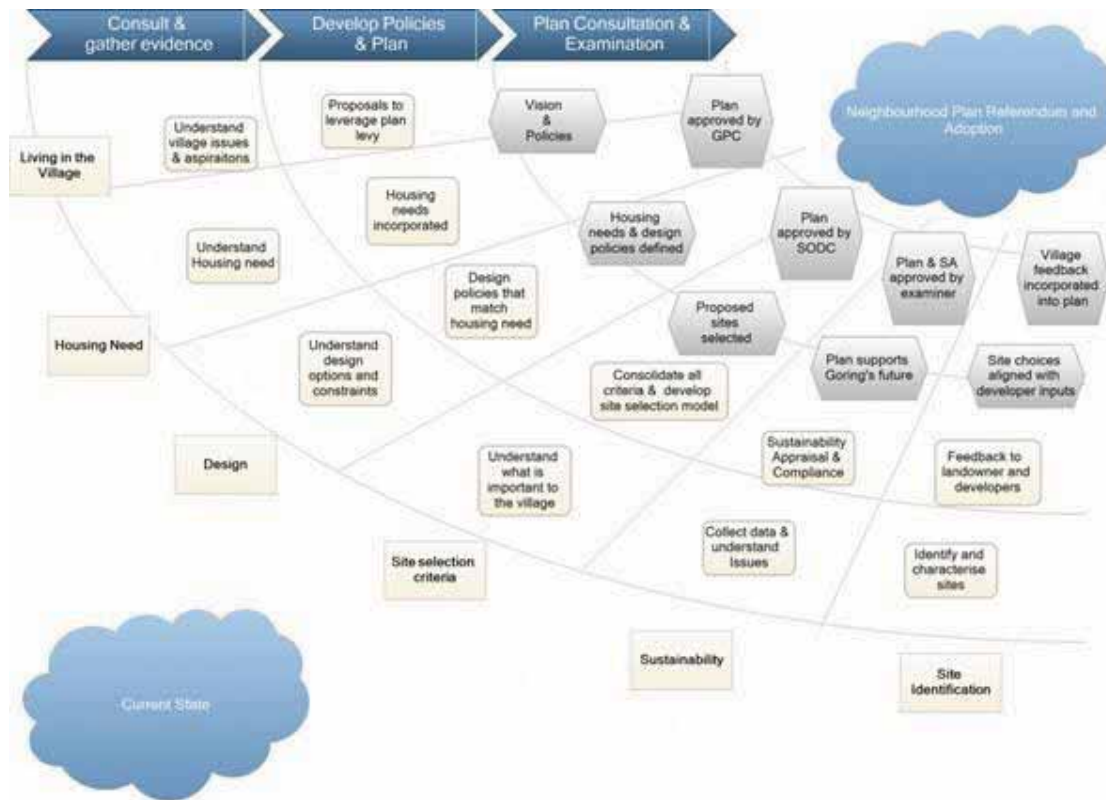
Cannot **conflict with the strategic policies in the Local Plan** prepared by the local planning authority

Cannot be used to **prevent development** that is included in the Local Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Process is complex – and on top of aligning with Local, National and European policy and legislation, must be **evidence-based**, gathered through a process similar to that of the SODC Local Plan - with a great deal of consultation and, as needed, expert advice. It is NOT only about local opinion and ideas, but most importantly how those opinions and ideas fit the various Local, National and European legislation.

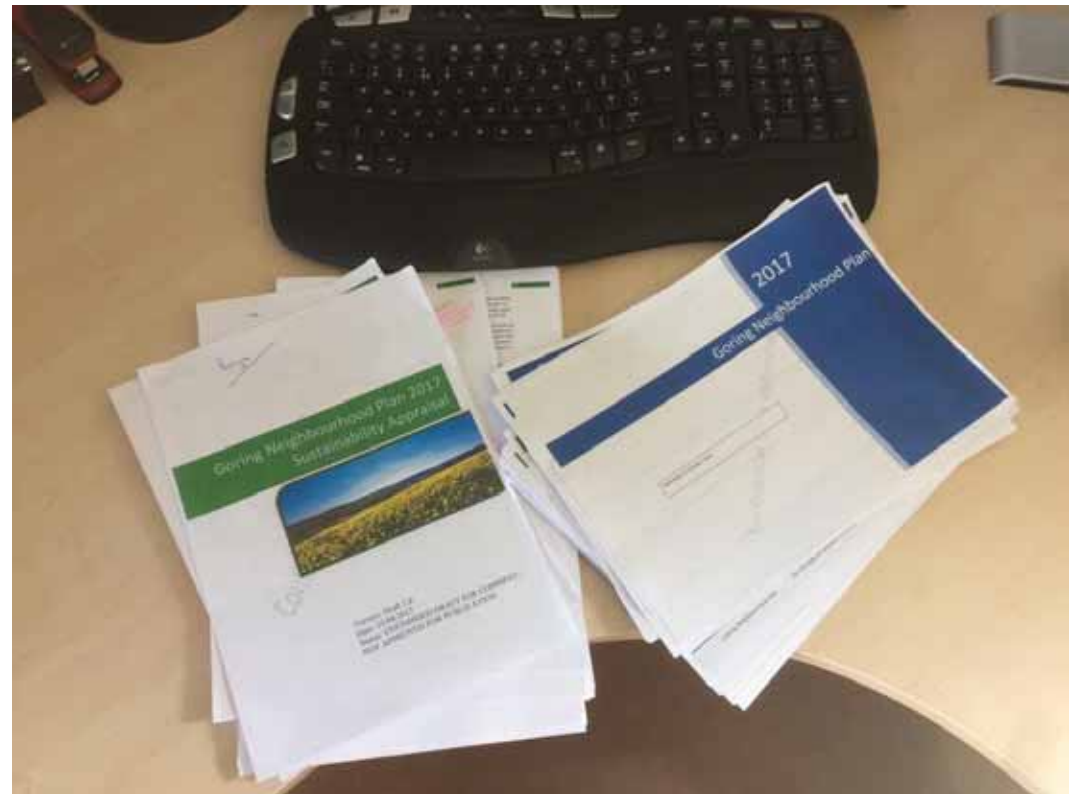


What has been involved in making the Goring Neighbourhood Plan?



Where are we in the Neighbourhood Plan process?

The proof-reading of the 'pre-draft' Plan and Sustainability Assessment is expected to be completed end September.



...and this took 1,000s of hours of volunteers' time...

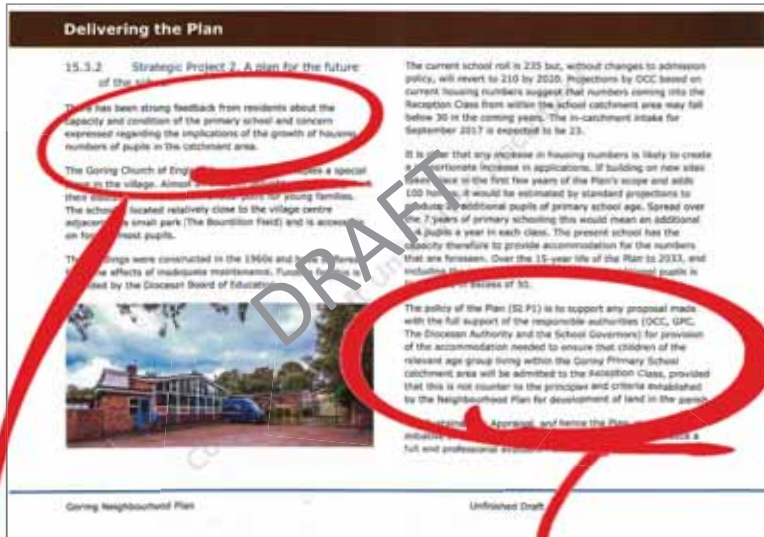


The Steering Group individuals bring a great deal of professional and business experience, as well as understanding of the local area – plus a commitment to see through a complex, time-consuming process.

There have been comments to suggest that the Steering Group doesn't understand the situation at the school. It should be noted that the majority of SG have been school Governors (one has been a Governor at GPS), one SG member attended GPS, one SG member has grandchildren at GPS.



...and we will have spent about £27,000
(so far the spend is £22,000, with
£5,000 more budgeted) – and have
received grants for about £21,000.



Why isn't the School a part of the Neighbourhood Plan?

It is, and always has been – the proposal from the school impacted the detail of how the issue will be addressed. (See excerpts below from the draft NP document - Strategic Project 2: A plan for the future of the school)

“There has been strong feedback from residents about the capacity and condition of the primary school and concern expressed regarding the implications of the growth of housing on numbers of pupils in the catchment area.”

“The policy of the Plan (SI P1) is to support any proposal made with the full support of the responsible authorities (OCC, SODC, GPC, The Diocesan Authority and the School Governors) for provision of the accommodation needed to ensure that children of the relevant age group living within the Goring Primary School catchment area will be admitted to the Reception Class, provided that this is not counter to the principles and criteria established by the Neighbourhood Plan for development of land in the parish.”

...and the School has been determined to be one of three key strategic projects for the Parish - and that this project should be considered to be funded by CIL monies.

- “2. an independent professional evaluation of the capacity and maintenance issues facing the primary school, including an analysis of options, liaison with all stakeholders (parents, governors, Diocese, OCC, SODC) and resulting in a costed proposal on the way forward.”

NOTE: the other two proposed strategic projects are traffic management and rejuvenation of the Village Centre (particularly around the Arcade area).





Why hasn't the NP Steering Group been listening?

The NP Steering group proactively approached the school from the outset – and because the school is important (a key infrastructure pillar), it is deemed important (and that importance is where there is a specified Strategic Project in the NP).

At the time, there was no concrete proposal from the developer/landowner, and since there wasn't an option on the table, it wasn't pursued by the school – until AFTER the site selections had been published.

Since that time, much work behind the scenes has been done – with about 30 separate communications (in-person and written) having been instigated – with the School, the Diocese, OCC Education and the developer. Additionally, 100s of hours has been invested to consider the current school proposal and to determine the best way to deal with it .

FYI – SODC, in their consultative role, recommended that all meetings with the School are kept separate from meetings with any developer. Though this may seem illogical, it was recommended by SODC to ensure that the fairness and integrity of the process is maintained.

What about the 251 houses required in the upcoming Local Plan?



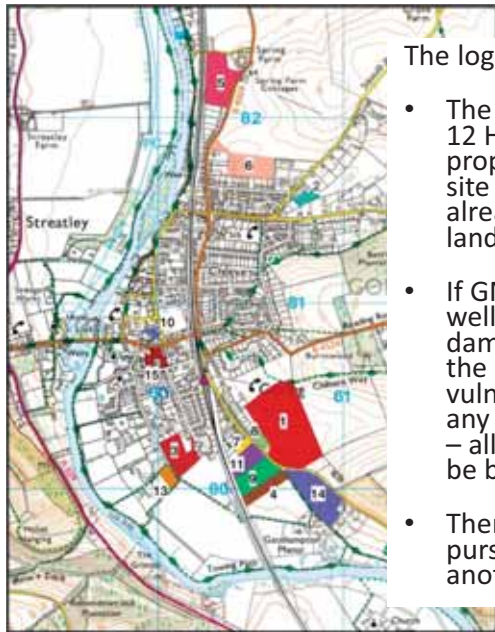
As of today's meeting, this has changed. SODC have confirmed that in the updated draft Plan being published tomorrow, they have reduced the housing allocation from 251.

The prior Goring allocation as a number that **excluded 'in-fill'**.

The current Goring allocation – if adopted – would **include 'in-fill'**.

When the approved sites (in the draft NP) are included with current and projected in-fill, the full 251 house allocation (over the next 16 years) is addressed – without the need for any additional development sites.

What's this about 2,000 more homes? Isn't that just scaremongering?



The logic for concern is:

- The Gatehampton GNP1 site is 12 Ha. They have previously proposed ~ 100 houses but the site could take 300 and they have already said they would donate land for community projects.
- If GNP1 is built, GNP8 must be as well. If they are built, the damage to the AONB is done so the rest of the Gatehampton is vulnerable - without providing any further community facilities – all told 280 more houses could be built.
- Then GNP12 would potentially pursue their ambitions – up to another 210 houses

Sites proposed for NP

The Plan is working to a target of 86, but has identified sites for 94 that are acceptable. Infill will add a further 130 to 160 by 2033

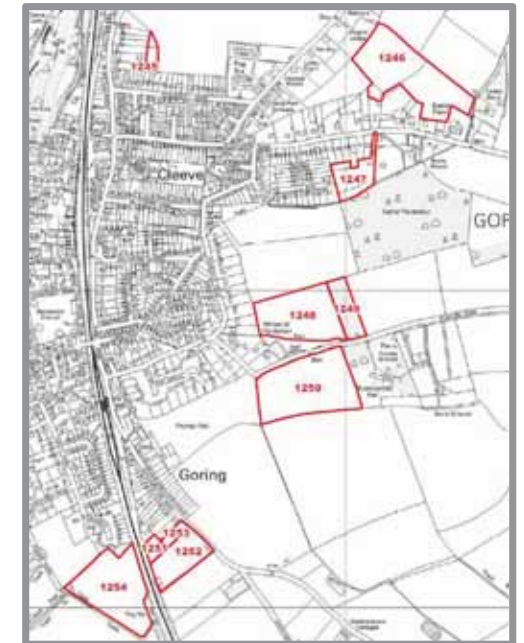
The larger the village is, the greater the allocation – it's based on a percentage increase, so as we grow, the expected increase grows, too.



Sites proposed to SODC

An additional 20Ha of land between GNP5 and GNP6 has been proposed to SODC (by the same landowner as is proposing the school plan) – and based on SODC per Ha allocation, this would be up to another 500 houses

Other landowners have submitted more land to SODC for their Housing and Economic Land Availability survey – in total over 80Ha (including the 14 sites submitted to the NP), capable of supporting over 2000 dwellings



Sites identified by SODC



Though a risk, because of other protections – AONB, restrictions from river and flood zones, etc - the full risk of 2,000 is realistically unlikely.

However, it is important to understand risk, as it is a theoretic possibility – and the Parishioners have adamantly opposed increased development in Goring at all stages of the NP consultations. The NPSG is trying to protect that desire.

What's next with the Neighbourhood Plan?

1

Parish Council (Reg 14) consultation – feedback on a pre-submission draft must be considered and held as evidence. The Plan will be updated as appropriate and a final version issued to SODC.

2

SODC(Reg 16) consultation – on the updated Plan will be conducted. Feedback will be held as evidence.

3

Independent Examiner – the Plan and all evidence will be considered by a government appointed Examiner who will accept or reject the Plan, or request changes to it.

...and finally, the Referendum



Once the plan has been accepted by the Examiner, residents of Goring will be asked to vote to accept or reject the final Plan – on the basis of a simple ‘YES’ or ‘NO’ vote.



If the Plan is accepted by a majority of one vote or more, it will become planning law and will have significant weight in all planning decisions.



If the plan is rejected, it has no significance as a planning tool and will offer no protection to Goring. However, the evidence gathered and published with the plan may/may not be attempted to be used to support or refute individual planning applications.

The School's Proposal

Presented by:
Helen Scurr, Chair of Governors
Kerry Hughes. Governor



Why do we need a
new school and what
are the options?

13th September 2017

Why we need a new school

Three big challenges

- capacity
- infrastructure
- money

Capacity

‘If significant housing development is approved for this area, additional school capacity will be required, which in many cases will be challenging to provide due to constrained school sites’
(OCC *Pupil Place Plan*, November 2016, referring to our local school cluster area)

- currently 233 children in school. OCC Pupil Planning Department stated that our site is ‘on the small side for a PAN of 30’ (ie, for 210 children)
- OCC estimates suggest that 100 new homes likely to bring 28 applications
- OCC has also stated that with just 100 new homes Goring Primary will struggle to cope
 - proposed school, even with the current one-form entry, will be in a much better position to cope with bulges and will be able to expand if 1.5-form entry is deemed appropriate without resorting to temporary classrooms

Infrastructure

- school was opened on the current site in 1960
- expected life of the buildings 60 years
- extensive repairs needed amounting to more than £1 million
- asbestos
- other problems associated with ‘incremental development’
 - lack of small-group working space
 - car park/access/security
 - kitchen, staff room, etc
 - temporary classrooms which restrict outside space

Funding

‘Mainstream schools have to make £3 billion in efficiency savings by 2019–20 against a background of growing pupil numbers and a real-terms reduction in funding per pupil’ (National Audit Office, December 2016)

- school funding situation well-documented
- Goring Primary School fares particularly badly
 - lowest funding in our cluster
 - this academic year has seen a cut in support staff provision
 - don’t anticipate benefiting from New Funding Formula

A new school will remove a significant element of financial pressure

What are our options?

- expanding onto the Bourdillon field
- McAdden/Hildred proposal – GNP6 package
- Archstone proposal – GNP1
- do nothing

Bourdillon field

- first suggested by OCC in 2014
- regarded as 'stop gap' in absence of a more suitable site and funding
- advantage
 - keeps school in a relatively central location
- disadvantages
 - loss of recreation space
 - no formal offer made – covenants and easements unknown
 - unlikely funding available for solid construction, therefore temporary buildings
 - access and logistics

McAdden/Hildred proposal

- school governors' preferred option
- current school site swapped for larger site with new-build school/pre-school on GNP6, with planning permission granted for houses on GNP5, GNP6 and accommodation for the elderly on the current site
- school would be built as 1-form entry but expandable to 1.5-form entry
- advantages
 - new purpose-built school fitted out and equipped
 - delivered at nil cost to public purse
 - 1.9 hectare site, community use
 - safer access
- disadvantages
 - edge of village location, but close to current site, and 35% of pupils come from immediately surrounding roads

Archstone's Gatehampton proposal

- initial offer: gift of 2 hectares on land to the east of Gatehampton Road
- September 2016 offer 'enhanced' to include land and building for a school of up to £4m in exchange for current school site and planning permission for 'not less than 100 homes' on the Gatehampton Road site
- advantages
 - new school building
 - 2 hectare site
- disadvantages
 - funding gap
 - edge of village location – the (currently) most densely populated area with primary school pupils is Elvendon Rd/ Springhill Rd part of village
 - any boundary with recreation ground deemed less attractive
 - access/pavements/narrow road
 - less professional approach from developers/owners

Do nothing

- the fabric will deteriorate further in the absence of very significant capital funding
- as a 'voluntary aided' C of E school we have no obligation to take more than 30 children per school year
- OCC has the legal responsibility to find school places
- children will be bused outside the village and possibly outside the cluster (South Stoke, Woodcote, Whitchurch, Stoke Row, Checkendon and Nettlebed)
- as a church school and as part of our Christian ethos we believe all children in our community should, as far as possible, attend the village school if this is their preference
- governors see doing nothing as failing in their statutory duty to plan for the future, and hope the village shares this desire so we can plan collaboratively

To sum up ...

- existing school site not suited to future pressures
- there will be significant pressure, even with the Neighbourhood Plan as it is currently emerging
- this opportunity needs to be grasped now

Update on today's SODC meeting...

For this specific School proposal to go forward, there are some likely hurdles and challenges to overcome.

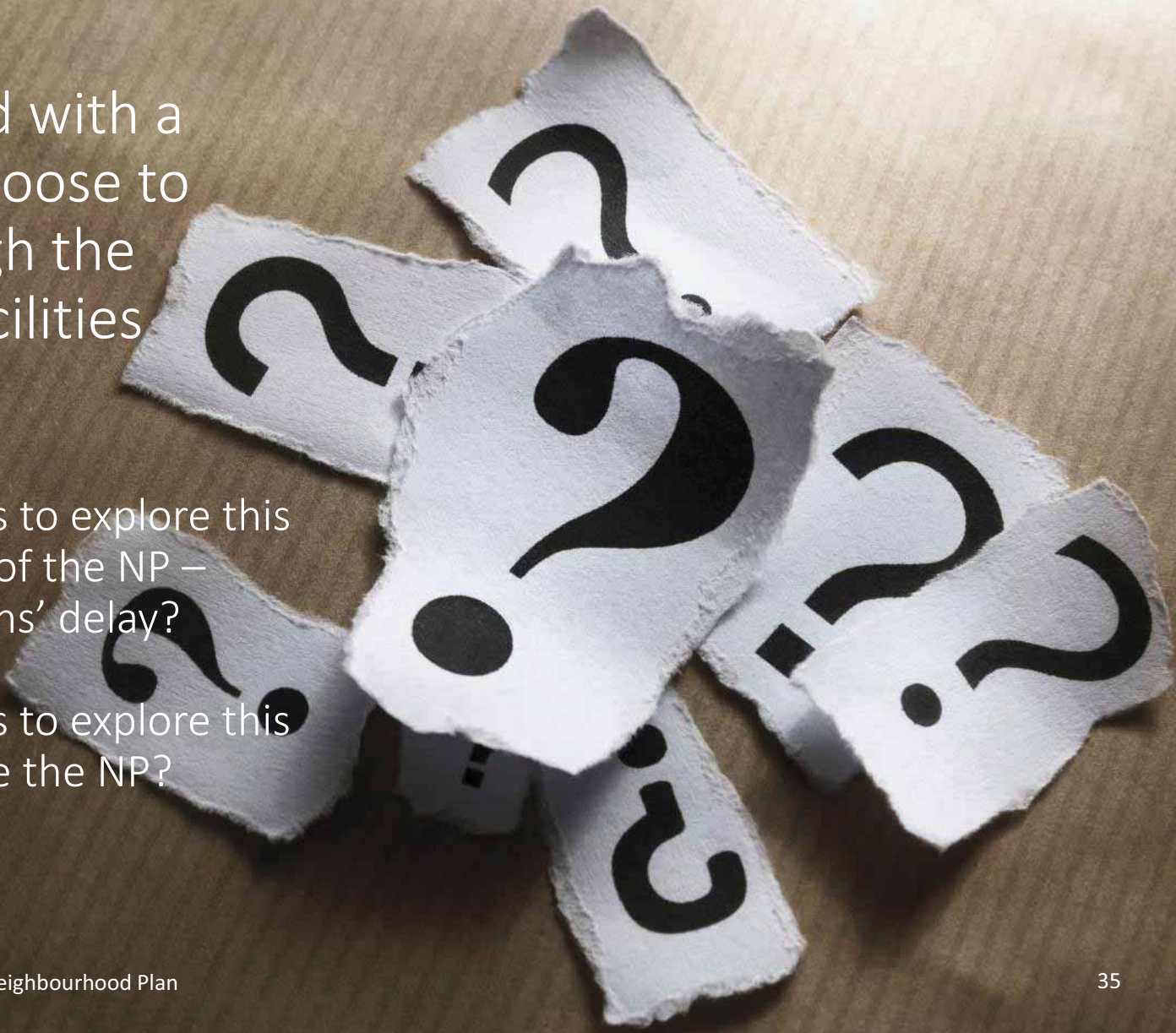
- All legal stakeholders need to be aligned – OCC, SODC, Diocese and Governors.
- Need for school needs to be proven – ‘need’ in a planning sense will need to show evidence that all other options have been fully explored and are not viable.
 - GNP 5 – 60 years of planning history, with 3 recent expert evaluations – so the need will need to be proven to be greater than the harm.
 - Must show it is not possible to develop school on current site (with or without the use of Bourdillon Field) and that all potential funding routes have been explored. Other options must also be fully vetted.
 - As the Diocese is responsible for the fabric of the school, and therefore has legal responsibility for its upkeep/maintenance, a thorough vetting of the maintenance history may be needed.
- Formal consultations with other local schools (this is a requirement)
- Formal consultation with those affected by proposed changes to GNP6, GNP5, current school site
- The consultation of the NP determined that it is a key priority to deliver necessary development – but worries were expressed about over-development. This plan significantly increases the number of new houses within the Parish, and a consultation on this point will need to be conducted.
- Legal determination of ‘proportionality’
- ...and probably more things will come up as the proposal is progressed.



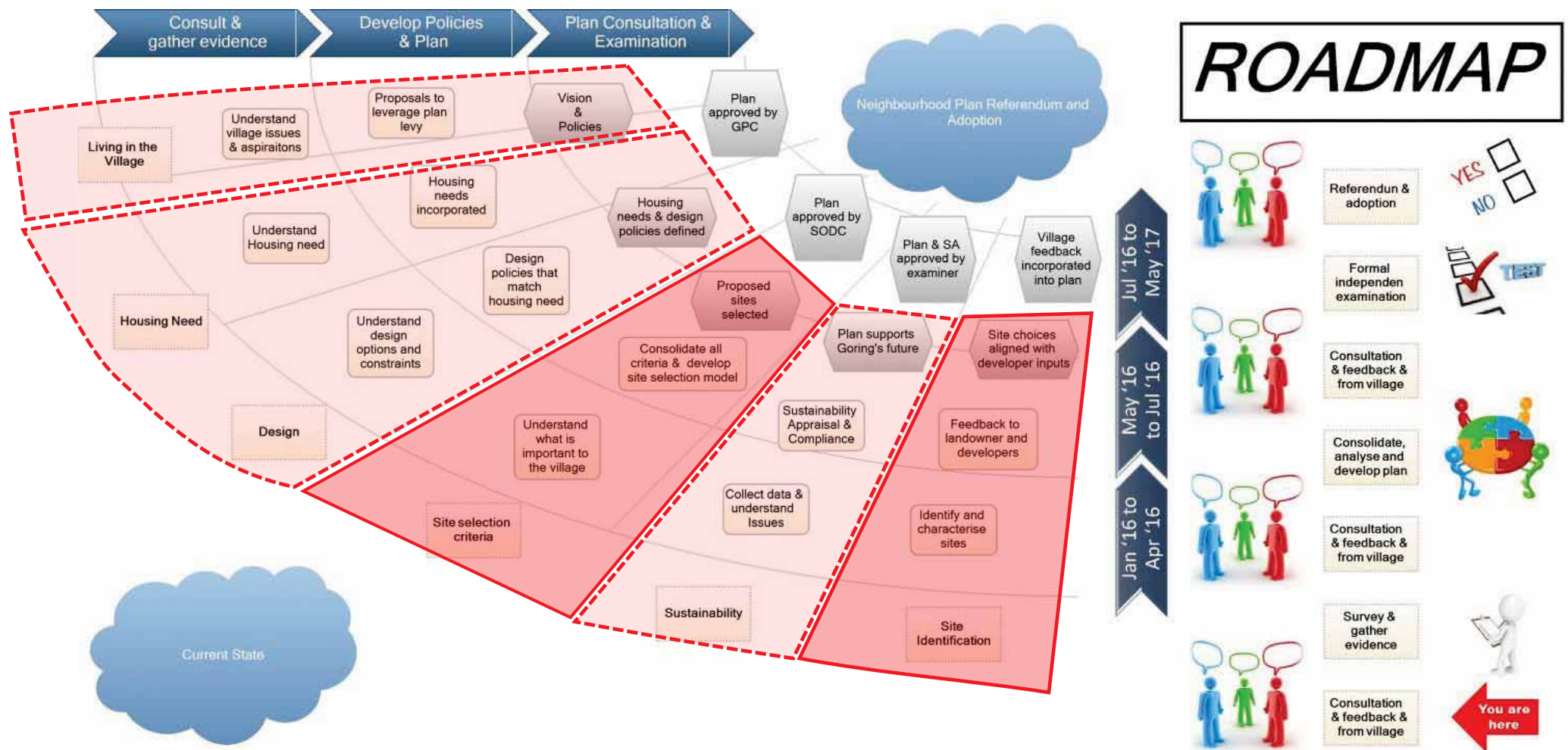
The Parish Council is faced with a choice... (assuming we choose to support the school through the process to get the best facilities possible)

Do we want to support the process to explore this proposal and other options inside of the NP – likely to create a minimum 6 months' delay?

Do we want to support the process to explore this proposal and other options outside the NP?



To include in NP, it is likely to impact all aspects of the plan, though some more than others.





The challenge with going back is that **all previously gathered evidence is extant**. This means it is unlikely that there will be a change to the existing sites deemed appropriate for development.

Implications for delaying the NP...

- Delays can increase the risk of speculative developer proposals
- Delays mean that any of these speculative proposals would be measured against the lack of a 5yr Housing Supply within SODC (though we do have additional protections with AONB/flood risk)
 - If we have the NP, we are only measured against SODC's 3 yr housing supply – and that is currently met
- May need a new SG team, and may need to re-do a considerable amount of work
- The costs – best-guess estimated at about £10k-£15k would need to be funded (no grant sources for re-do)



For the current proposal to be considered outside the NP

- The current proposal would need to be fully vetted, with other options to support need – this is the same if in/out of the NP
- The process can go along parallel to the current plan – especially since there is identified a Strategic Project for the school (so in essence, the process is already addressed within the Plan)
- The School governors would have more control – and indeed will drive the process (though it is recommended that expertise is sought and engaged)
- If outside of the plan, they can start tomorrow, if they wish.



Thank you

Local photos courtesy of R Bridle
Satellite images courtesy of Google Maps