

CULHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2020 – 2041



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REFERENDUM VERSION

Published by Culham Parish Council for Referendum under the
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as
amended).

March 2023

Policy CUL4: Enhancing Culham Conservation Area

Development proposals within the Culham Conservation Area and its setting should preserve or enhance its significance as a designated heritage asset. Features identified as positive characteristics of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting are defined in the Culham Design Code. All development proposals in the Conservation Area should have full regard to the Design Code.

Policy CUL5: Design Code for Culham

Development proposals in Culham will be supported provided they have full regard to the essential design considerations and general design principles set out in the Culham Design Code attached as Appendix B.

5.21 The policies establish the importance of design of new development in the Conservation Area, its setting and the village to maintain and enhance its character. It directs applicants bringing forward proposals in and around the village to the design codes contained in the Culham Design Code attached at Appendix B.

5.22 The Code refines South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' Joint Design Guide, and establishes the principles of essential design considerations within three distinct area typologies of the main village settlement as well as certain features of the area outside of the main village settlement. These considerations set out features of each typology that make it distinctive, and the extent of each is defined in the Design Code document. In turn it complements Policies DES1 and DES2 of the SODCLP by highlighting particular characteristics of the Parish. The policies require proposals demonstrate, where relevant to the nature and location of the proposal, that full regard has been paid to the Code. The policies do not advocate pastiche or historic solution, however it is important that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making.

Policy CUL6: Local Heritage Assets

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies buildings as Local Heritage Assets as included in the Appendix B and shown on the Policies Map, for the purposes of applying development plan policies on non-designated heritage assets:

- i. The Lion, High Street;***
- ii. Nos. 7 – 11 The Green;***
- iii. 22-23 High Street;***
- iv. School House, High Street;***
- v. Kiln Cottage;***
- vi. Station House;***
- vii. The Railway Inn;***
- viii. Tollgate Cottage;***
- ix. 60 Abingdon Road;***
- x. Maud Hales Terrace, Abingdon Bridge;***
- xi. Pill boxes (Types FW3/24 The Burycroft; FW3/24C & FW3/28A at Appleford Bridge; FW3/28A at Sutton Bridge; FW3/24C at Sutton Pools; FW3/28A at Zouch Farm and FW3/28A at Tollgate Road).***

5.23 The policy designates certain buildings or structures as Local Heritage Assets in order to give them additional protection as heritage assets, in recognition of the important contribution they make to the special character of the Parish for the application of Policy ENV6 of the SODCLP. Policy ENV6 requires a balanced judgement to take place where proposals directly or indirectly affect the significance of a local heritage asset taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset, in line with §197 of the NPPF. This means that Policy ENV6 will apply to schemes coming forward which may affect the local heritage assets listed in this policy. Culham parish also comprises a rich archaeological landscape within which is contained numerous cropmark complexes denoting its early occupation and use from the prehistoric period onwards. This policy focuses on the built historic environment. Policy ENV6 of the SODCLP will therefore continue to apply to above or below ground archaeological remains as well as other elements of the historic environment.

Policy CUL7: Nature Recovery and Climate Change

- A. The Parish contains a variety of green and blue infrastructure that provides an environmental support system for the community and wildlife. The Neighbourhood Plan designates this as a Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of promoting nature recovery and for mitigating climate change. The Network comprises the Water Meadows between the village and Sutton Pools, Andersey Island Water Meadows, woodland, trees, hedgerows, Culham Brook SSSI and other land of biodiversity value.***
- B. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network are required to have full regard maintaining and improving the functionality of the Network, including delivering a net gain to biodiversity, in the design of their layouts and landscaping schemes. Proposals that will harm the functionality or connectivity of the Network will not be supported.***
- C. Development proposals that will lead to the extension of the Network, which includes the delivery of allotments for the use of the village, will be supported, provided they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.***

5.24 The policy defines the presence of green and blue infrastructure assets in the Parish. By doing so it supports SODCLP Policies ENV1 – ENV5 on the Environment. Its purpose is linked with the vision and principles of green infrastructure in the district of defining a network of green infrastructure assets in the neighbourhood plan area as a means of providing environmental support for the community and wildlife. These assets will be maintained and added to throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area and will be the means of nature recovery through connecting and improving habitats and sequestering carbon through woodland planting.

5.25 Alongside the Culham Brook SSSI, there is a variety of other priority habitat areas in the Parish. The village itself hosts Traditional Orchard habitats as well as Deciduous Woodland. A number of these form part of the Core Zone of the Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network prepared by Wild Oxfordshire. A large part of the Parish has also been identified as a Recovery Zone. The purpose of this policy is to identify existing green and blue infrastructure and opportunities to better connect them which may also play a part in delivering the aims of the Recovery Zone of the Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network carried out collaboratively by a partnership of local nature conservation organisations, led by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), Wild Oxfordshire and The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and overseen by Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Advisory Group (BAG) and adopted by the Oxfordshire Environment Board (OxEB). Whilst much of the land surrounding the village settlement, and northern parts of the Parish already have Countryside Stewardship Agreements, opportunities identified by the Neighbourhood Plan include additional tree planting on Land adjacent to the Cricket Club Grounds, additional catchment woodland, floodplain woodland and riparian woodland planting opportunities using the 'Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk' evidence base by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Research and Development Programme and Environment Agency in February 2021. These opportunities are all shown on the Policies Map and the Parish

Council will seek to work with landowners to realise such opportunities where possible avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

5.26 The policy therefore requires that all development proposals that lie within the Network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. The Policy Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network, for example in complementing existing biodiversity value through the design of the landscape scheme. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission.

5.27 The Network will become more valuable over time, and although the majority of these features are physically attached to enable habitat connectivity, some features of the Network are not. This does not devalue their integral biodiversity or recreational value and at some point in the future an opportunity may arise to achieve similar connectivity. The Neighbourhood Plan also signals to the Responsible Authority that it should consider the role of this Network in the future Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the area which is now a requirement of the Environment Bill.

Policy CUL8: Sustainable Travel

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Sustainable Travel Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of supporting active travel in the Parish.***
- B. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should sustain, and where practicable, enhance the functionality of the Network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.***
- C. Proposals that will harm the functioning or connectivity of the Network will not be supported.***
- D. The comprehensive masterplan for the strategic allocation STRAT9 Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre will be expected to demonstrate that the masterplan layout enables safe and secure access to the required social infrastructure for the existing village of Culham through new, and improvement to, existing cycleways, footpaths, and bus services.***

5.28 The policy seeks to encourage safe, accessible and convenient means of walking and cycling in the parish. It refines Policy TRANS2 by providing a local element to its provisions. The policy implements elements of the Culham Community Led Plan in 2014 which identified cycle safety as being important especially between Culham and Abingdon. At the time the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy was interested in improving arrangements for their cycling employees. Ideas that came from the consultation were:

- 1) A cycle path from Waggon and Horses to Abingdon

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- 1) A cycle path from Waggon and Horses to Abingdon

- 2) Cyclists able to use the Causeway with pedestrians
- 3) Road to Abingdon is too dangerous – use the causeway
- 4) Purchase land to the south of A415 for a new pavement/cycle path
- 5) Improve cycling to Sutton Courtenay
- 6) Footbridge from Culham to Abingdon marina
- 7) Cycle path alongside the railway to Oxford via Radley joining Sustrans Cycle Route 5 including a river crossing

5.29 The Policies Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network and/or improve the attractiveness of rural routes. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission.

5.30 The extension of existing paths has been identified as opportunities to improve the Network and these are shown on the Policies Map at the end of this document. There are also a number of permissive paths which landowners have allowed the local community to use to enjoy the surrounding countryside and improve local connectivity and the Parish Council will continue to work with local landowners in this respect. The policy also signals that connectivity of the existing village to the strategic allocation STRAT9 Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre will be important to ensure that the existing community can benefit from the provisions in the new development. The crossing at the traffic lights on the A419 Abingdon Road is already problematic making very little provision for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling access. 8) Improvements to this crossing and the existing shared pedestrian and cycleway on the A419 Abingdon Road will be expected to form part of the provision of sustainable transport facilities required by Policy STRAT9.

Policy CUL9: Zero carbon buildings

Development proposals which would be 'zero carbon ready' by design by minimising the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping will be supported. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.

Proposals for a Passivhaus or equivalent standard buildings with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m²/year will be supported. Schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have an unacceptable effect on the character area.

Proposals for major development should be accompanied by a Whole-Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions have been taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its life.

5.31 Policies DES8-10 of the adopted Local Plan provide local guidance on this important matter. Its paragraph 8.30 provides the context for the approach taken and comments that the Government has established that through Part L of the Building Regulations, emissions allowed from new buildings will be reduced incrementally and that "zero carbon" buildings will be required within the plan period. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 stipulated that a review of minimum energy performance requirements under Building Regulations must be carried out and it is expected that current standards will be improved with the introduction of the Future Homes Standard. Policy DES10 sets the Council's policy requirement for carbon reduction.

5.32 Policy DES8 of the Local Plan comments that all new development, including building conversions, refurbishments, and extensions, should seek to minimise the carbon and energy impacts of their design and construction. Proposals must demonstrate that they are seeking to limit greenhouse emissions through location, building orientation, design, landscape, and planting considering any nationally adopted standards and in accordance with Policies DES10 and DES7.

5.33 Policy DES10 of the Local Plan provides more specific details and comments that a range of development proposals (including those for residential uses) should achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case. This reduction is to be secured through renewable energy and other low carbon technologies and/ or energy efficiency measures. The policy comments that this requirement will increase from 31 March 2026 to at least a 50% reduction in carbon emissions and again from 31 March 2030 to a 100% reduction in carbon emissions (zero carbon). The policy also comments that these targets will be reviewed in the light of any future legislation and national guidance.

5.34 The implementation of Policy DES10 is expanded in the Joint Design Guide (June 2022). This Design Guide has been prepared as part of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' commitment to securing the highest quality development within the districts. The guide builds upon and replaces previous local design guides and aligns with the National Design Guide (2019). It is intended to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers, and planners in the process of developing high quality development and in assessing its design quality. The guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The section on Climate and sustainability sets out a series of design standards to achieve the details of Policy DES10.

5.35 In November 2022 the District Council published a technical advice note on Policy DES10 of the Local Plan. The note comments that whilst it is not an adopted policy document, and should not be read as such, it sets out how applicants should demonstrate compliance with the adopted policy. It also comments that it will be of use to South Oxfordshire District Council officers, developers, and applicants, elected Members, as well as any other interested parties.

5.36 Policy CUL9 of this Plan builds on this comprehensive local approach. It will result in a situation where the neighbourhood plan would offer a supportive context for development proposals in the parish to achieve more sustainable solutions that those required by the Local Plan policy. Plainly the wider situation may be affected by changes to national or local planning policies on these matters in the Plan period.

Policy CUL10: Light pollution

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should be designed to minimise the occurrence of light pollution and employ energy-efficient forms of lighting that reduces light scatter.

5.37 The Culham Community Led Plan 2014 identified that less street lighting was important to the local community. The strategic allocations and transport schemes in and adjacent to the parish will have a major impact on existing lighting levels. The brightest levels can already be seen to be straying into the village's night sky (see Plan E below). Many councils across England support measures to protect and enhance the dark night sky. The policy reflects the purpose and objectives of policies ENV11 and ENV12 on Pollution of the SODCLP. For all proposed developments, factors that will be considered when deciding the appropriateness of artificial lighting, include the location, the hours of operation, the quantity of lights proposed, brightness and control, and direction of the beam. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have been designed to prevent light pollution. Information on these measures should be submitted with applications, and proposals should have regard with the current guidelines established for rural areas by the Institute of Lighting Professionals. Where a development proposal is otherwise acceptable, but would potentially impact on light levels in the area, an appropriate lighting scheme will be secured by planning condition.

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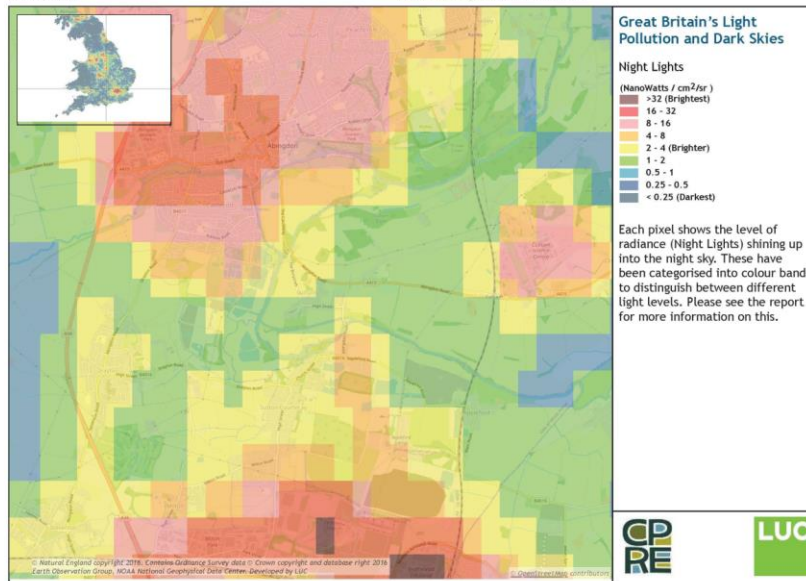
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For best results the map should be printed at A4 landscape.

Culham Design Code

June 2022



5. Design Codes

Outside the main village settlement

	The Natural Environment
	<i>Joint Design Guide: "The site layout should respect its physical features and those of its adjacent land including its topography, orientation, landform, geology, drainage patterns, field patterns/boundaries and vegetation cover, for example."</i>
2.0	<i>retains and strengthens the site's landscape features; using the physical features of the site and results of technical studies positively and imaginatively in its design</i>
OVS2.0.1	All development should contribute to the maintenance and delivery of a high quality multi-functional network of Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Parish to provide long-term benefits for people, places and nature, in ways that reinforce local character.
2.3	<i>implements SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems) as an integral part of the development's open space network. SuDs should be designed into the development from the outset with features such as: wetlands, basins, ponds, scrapes, swales, retention planters (rainwater gardens), combined with good landscaping to make a positive contribution to the biodiversity, character and appearance of a development</i>
OVS2.3.1	Proposals should consider flood resistance and resilience measures such as the use of permeable paving surfaces and green, blue and brown roofs.
2.13	<i>retains and enhances existing important habitats, creates new habitats and aims to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (Environment Bill 2020)</i>
OVS2.13.1	Proposals should embed green and blue infrastructure in ways that help support nature recovery and reverse the decline in biodiversity resulting in a 'net gain', including the placement of swift bricks, bat box bricks, insect bricks, house martin nest boxes, 'hedgehog holes' between gardens and the external natural environment avoiding openings onto roads.