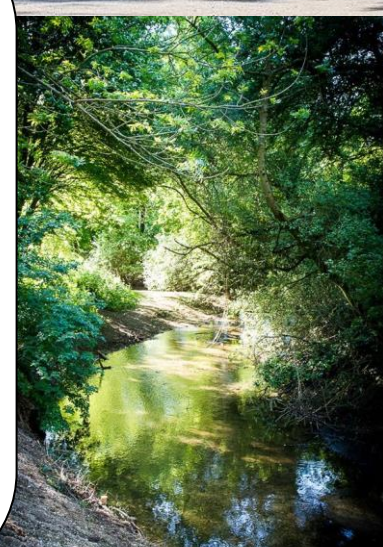




**SOMERFORD KEYNES  
AND SHORNCOTE**



**NEIGHBOURHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2015-2031  
DRAFT FOR REFERENDUM  
MAY 2020**



## Table of Contents

1	Foreword.....	4
2	Introduction.....	5
2.1	What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan? .....	5
2.2	Why do we need a Neighbourhood Development Plan? .....	5
2.3	The Plan Area.....	5
2.4	Process for Development of the Plan .....	6
2.5	Scope of the Plan and Conformity with Other Relevant Plans and Legislation .....	6
	Map 1: Area Designated for Somerford Keynes and Shorncote NDP .....	7
2.6	The Evidence Base.....	8
3	Profile of the Parish of Somerford Keynes.....	9
4	Community Strengths and Weaknesses .....	12
5	The Vision and Aims .....	13
6	Policies and Community Proposals.....	14
6.1	A Guide to the Plan's Policies.....	14
6.2	A Guide to the Plan's Community Proposals.....	14
7	Settlement and Housing .....	15
7.1	Objectives .....	15
7.2	Context and Background.....	15
7.3	Policies.....	18
	7.3.1 Residential Development .....	18
	Map 2 - Defined Limits of Linear Development in Somerford Keynes .....	19
	Community Proposal 1: Housing Availability for Local Residents.....	22
	7.3.2 Holiday Homes .....	23
	Map 3 - Lower Mill Estate Development Boundary.....	24
8	Economy.....	26
8.1	Objectives .....	26
8.2	Context and Background.....	26
8.3	Policies.....	29
	8.3.1 Tourism and Use of Former Mineral Extraction Sites .....	29
	Community Proposal 2: Keynes Country Park .....	32
9	Transport and Infrastructure.....	33

9.1	Objectives .....	33
9.2	Context and background.....	33
9.3	Policies.....	35
9.3.1	Transport Infrastructure and Safety .....	35
	Map 4 - Suggested New Footpaths and Cycleways in Somerford Keynes .....	36
	Community Proposal 3: Enhancement of pedestrian safety .....	37
	Community Proposal 4: Footpaths and Cycleways .....	37
	Community Proposal 5: Road safety .....	37
9.3.2	Flooding and Drainage Infrastructure.....	38
	Community Proposal 6: Flooding and drainage .....	39
9.4	Telecommunication Infrastructure .....	40
	Community Proposal 7: Broadband and Telecommunication Provision .....	40
10	Community Facilities.....	41
10.1	Objectives .....	41
10.2	Context and background.....	41
10.3	Policies.....	43
10.3.1	Protection of Key Community Facilities .....	43
10.3.2	Local Green Spaces .....	45
	Map 5 - Areas Designated as Local Green Spaces.....	45
10.3.3	Support for New Community Facility .....	47
11	Conservation and Environment .....	48
11.1	Objectives .....	48
11.2	Context and background.....	48
11.3	Policies.....	50
11.3.1	Protecting Settlement Characteristics and Key Vistas .....	50
	Map 6 - Key Vistas.....	51
11.3.2	Nature Conservation.....	54
	Map 7 - Important Trees and Tree Scenes.....	55
11.3.3	Built Heritage .....	58
	Map 8 - Non-Designated Heritage Assets.....	59
	Community Proposal 8: Conservation Area Management Plan.....	61
12	Plan Delivery & Monitoring .....	62
13	References and Supporting Documentation.....	63

## 1 Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present the Somerford Keynes Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) on behalf of the Parish Council, who unanimously endorsed it at its meeting on 7 October 2019.

The Plan has been prepared to reflect the views and aspirations of the people of the Parish of Somerford Keynes as they look forward to the future shape of their physical environment.

The development of the Plan was led initially by a Steering Group established by the Parish Council, comprising:

Sarah Powell

Ron Munroe

John Sweet

Sadly, John Sweet, who had led the work on the Somerford Keynes Parish Plan 2012-22, passed away in 2016. The Plan is dedicated to John's memory and his contributions to the community over many years. Subsequently, the Steering Group was expanded to include all members of the Parish Council, with Sarah Powell and Ron Munroe as joint Project Leaders.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan is a framework for guiding the future development and conservation of an area. The Plan's principles and proposals for change are based upon the views of the community collected throughout the development period. Our Plan is made by the community for the benefit of the community, within a framework of local national and European planning priorities. The Vision and Objectives reflect and carry forward aspirations for a strong and progressive community now and in the future.

It follows that this Plan could not have happened without the help, co-operation and engagement of the people of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote. We wish to thank everyone who has participated in the various activities - focus groups, public consultations, questionnaires, etc. - as well as contributing informally as the Plan has evolved. The Plan is the product of the time and effort of the whole community.

The communities of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote have a long and noteworthy history. We believe that this Plan will ensure their vitality and longevity in the years to come by assuring that local people have a say in the future development of the Parish.

Roger Sleeman

Chair

Somerford Keynes Parish Council

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

The Localism Act 2011 aimed to reform the planning system in England and Wales by giving local communities more say in how they shape development in the areas in which they live. The Neighbourhood Plan is a framework for guiding residents and local authorities on the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. Its primary purpose is the consideration of land use and its implications on planning. This can be extended to include the impact of land use on social, economic and environmental issues, such as employment, heritage and transport.

### 2.2 Why do we need a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

A neighbourhood development plan allows residents in Somerford Keynes Parish to have more influence on the future direction of their parish. Crucially, the resulting document is a planning document that must be used by the Local Planning Authority in making planning decisions within the Parish.

Following the completion of the Parish Plan in 2012, a number of issues were raised that may be applicable to a neighbourhood plan. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) commissioned two reports (by Erimax and the Localism Network) to look at the issues raised and how they could be addressed by a neighbourhood plan. The Parish Council concluded that a neighbourhood plan would be beneficial to the community as a means of addressing these issues and for the other reasons outlined in this section.

Should any development take place, then the community can benefit from a guaranteed income from the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). In August 2018, Cotswold District Council adopted its charging schedule for acquiring CIL monies on development. Once in place, 25% of any CIL funding raised in a Neighbourhood Plan Area will be made available to the community itself to decide how the money is spent. The Parish Council will receive the money directly and the Localism Act sets out that the neighbourhood CIL can be spent on "The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing demands that development places on an area".

### 2.3 The Plan Area

It was agreed by the Parish Council that the area of the neighbourhood development should include the entire parish and so is coterminous with the new parish boundary that came into

effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. The area was formally designated by Cotswold District Council on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014. The Plan period is 2015-2031. Map 1 (overleaf) shows the designated area.

## 2.4 Process for Development of the Plan

The process for the development of the Somerford Keynes and Shorncote Neighbourhood Development Plan ("The Plan") was initiated by the Parish Council, which established a sub-committee known as the NDP team. The NDP team followed the process described in the Erimax report for developing a neighbourhood plan from a Parish Plan.

The extensive consultation carried out for the 2012 Parish Plan provided the starting point for further research and community consultation and provided the NDP team with five areas of focus:

- Housing
- Economy
- Community facilities (amenities)
- Infrastructure
- Conservation and Environment

The views of local residents from all of the four main settlements were sought through presentations, consultations, survey questionnaires and opportunities to comment on every aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan. Throughout the process, regular NDP Newsletters were delivered to every permanent household. These were e-mailed to holiday home owners on Lower Mill Estate and businesses based within the Parish, and contributions were also invited from the residents of the Four Acres Traveller site.

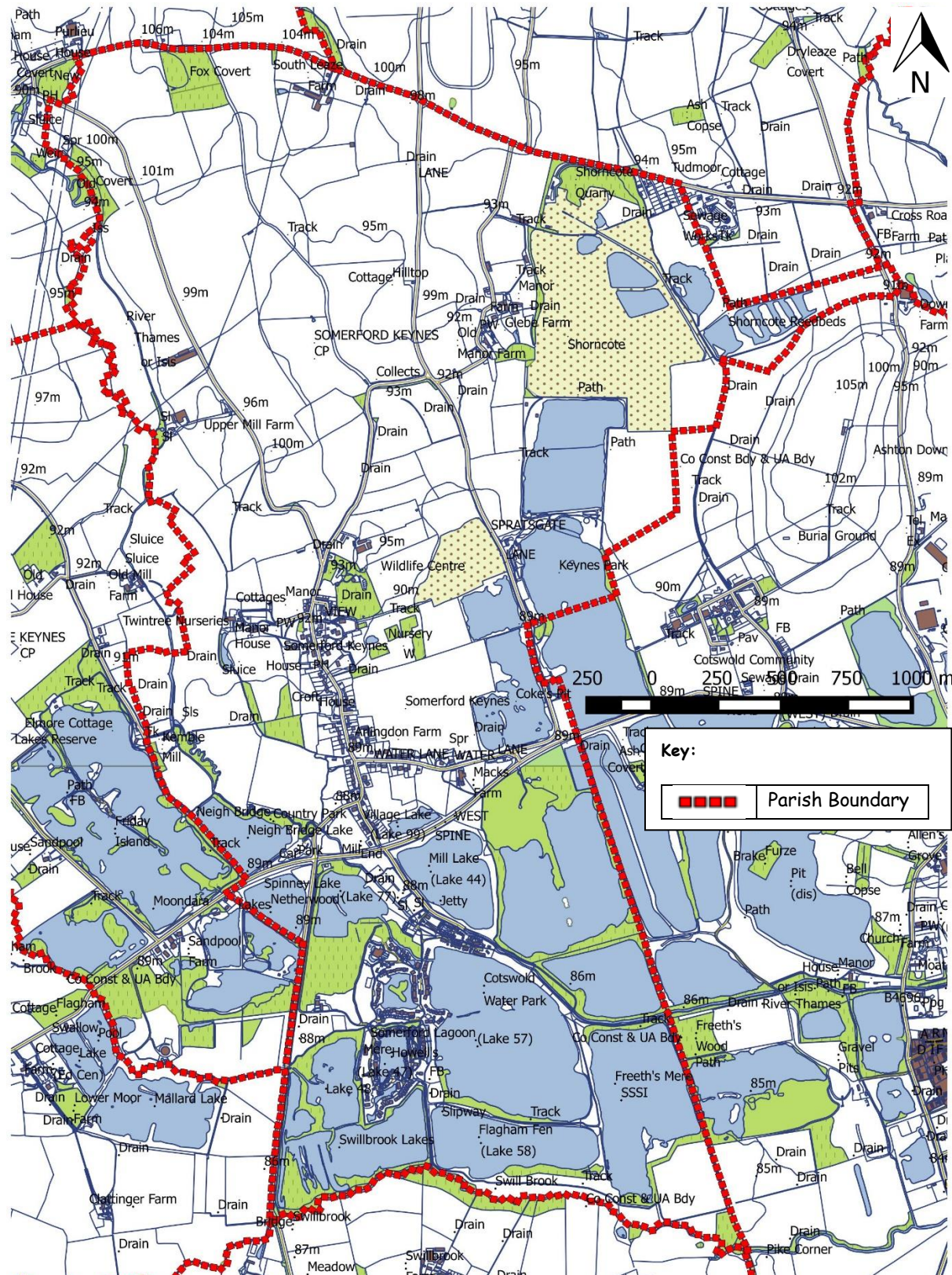
It is prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended.

## 2.5 Scope of the Plan and Conformity with Other Relevant Plans and Legislation

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended, the Plan has regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is in general conformity with the Cotswold District Council (CDC) Local Plan 2011-2031. The Plan does not breach, and is compatible with, the European Union Human Rights and Environmental Directives.

**Map 1: Area Designated for Somerford Keynes and Shorncote NDP**

(Land Contained Within Parish Boundary, Dating from April 2015)



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014. Ordnance Survey, LA No. 0100055816

## 2.6 The Evidence Base

To build up an evidence base, the NDP team carried out the following steps:

- Review of the Parish Plan 2012 and its consultations to identify areas of focus
- Identification of gaps in the evidence
- Further public consultations
- Compilation of new evidence through local audits, examination of evidence for CDC's Local Plan (Submission Draft Reg.19), CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031 and other relevant documentation
- Analysis of evidence

Following the completion of above, the Plan and its policies were drafted. This, in turn, was the basis of further consultations in January 2015 and June 2016. Therefore, it is trusted that the Plan reflects the community's hopes and aspirations.

The evidence and supporting documentation that does not form part of the justification for the Plan's Policies can be found in 'References and Supporting Documentation' of the Somerford Keynes and Shorncote Neighbourhood Plan. Where this is the case, it is referenced in chapter 13 'References and Supporting Documentation'.



### 3 Profile of the Parish of Somerford Keynes

Somerford Keynes is a small parish, population 479 (2011 census), set on the edge of the Cotswolds and with the beginnings of the river Thames to its north west. Historically, there is evidence of Bronze Age and Roman settlement nearby. One parish boundary, to the north east, has evidence of being over 3000 years old. There is a Saxon Charter from Malmesbury Abbey dating to 685AD and the church in Somerford Keynes provides evidence of a Saxon settlement with a Domesday Book entry.

The parish currently comprises 795 hectares, approximately 3 square miles. In April 2015, its western boundary was slightly extended to incorporate Neigh Bridge Country Park and Lake 63. There are four distinct settlements in the parish; these are Somerford Keynes village, Shorncote village, the Lower Mill Estate of holiday homes and the Four Acres travellers' site with the majority of the permanent population living in the village of Somerford Keynes.

The parish is part of a considerable area where vast quantities of sand and gravel were deposited during the Ice Age. This area, between Cirencester and Swindon and covering an area of over 40 square miles, is known as the Cotswold Water Park. Its landscape has been significantly altered over the past 60 years as much of the mineral resource has been extracted and replaced by over 150 man-made lakes. The parish of Somerford Keynes is located on the western edge of the Cotswold Water Park. In this area, particularly, the gravel extraction is mainly complete with the resulting lakes, such as Keynes Country Park and Neigh Bridge Country Park, now used for tourism and recreation.

Another important aspect of the Cotswold Water Park is the unique natural environment created in and around the series of man-made lakes, as well as the remnant pre-extraction habitats. The area is rich in ecological resource; within Somerford Keynes there are a number of nationally and locally designated nature conservation sites (see appendix 4), and North Meadow and Clattinger Meadow Special Area for Conservation is located on the parish boundary to the south-west. As part of the early preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, ecological data was obtained from the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records and this emphasised the importance of the area for its sites, habitats and species.

As a result of being located in a low lying, flat area, in close proximity to the River Thames and in a changing landscape, the parish has suffered over the years from flooding. Thankfully, the Thames flood defences installed in 1998 have worked well and, despite the recent extremely wet winters, the majority of the parish has remained dry. The management of ditches and water flows continue to be vital.

Despite the many changes in the surrounding landscape, the two main settlements still have a timeless appeal. In the parish, there are 29 listed buildings and structures as well as a conservation area incorporating, amongst others, the church, Manor House and the Bakers' Arms public house. This rich history contributes to the rural ambience and multitude of attractive

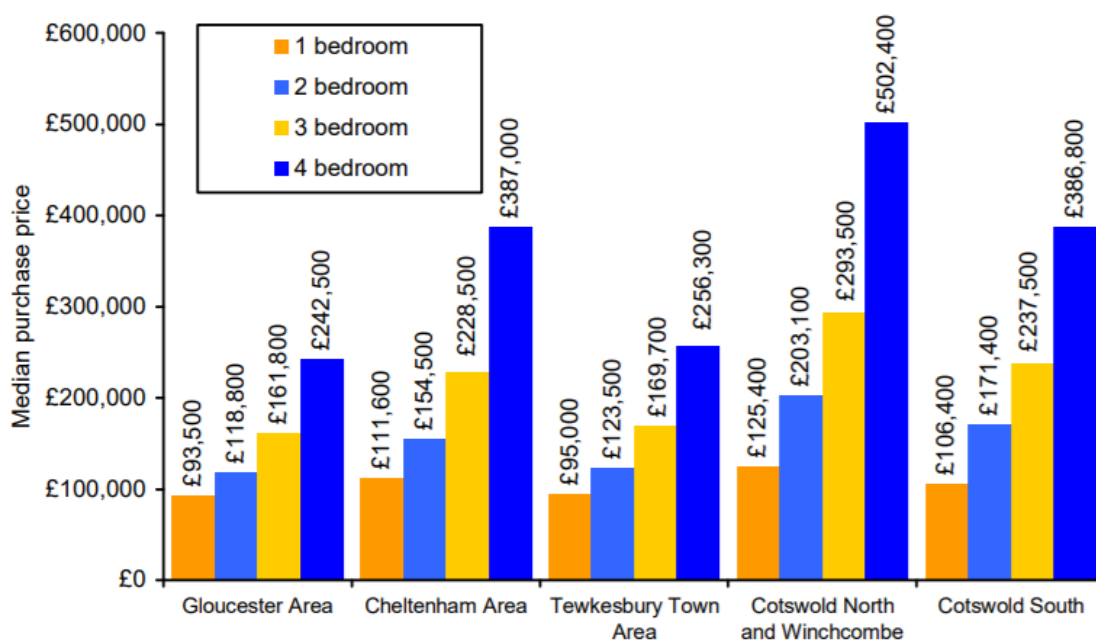
vistas around the parish. There is an active history society within the parish which holds detailed records of the many aspects of the parish's history.

For over 100 years since records began in 1831, the number of houses in the parish remained reasonably constant with a small peak at 90 houses in 1961. Since then the number of permanent houses has doubled with considerable development taking place in the 1970s and 1980s but very little since. The 2011 Census found 210 permanent households within the Parish.

The most significant development has taken place since 2000. Now, over 300 holiday homes have been built in the newly created Lower Mill Estate, south of the village of Somerford Keynes.

The majority of permanent houses (51%) have at least four bedrooms which, when combined with the attraction of the local area, results in relatively expensive property when compared to surrounding areas. The table below is taken from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update for the Local Authorities of Gloucestershire (March 2014) and shows the median price of properties by size for March 2013 solely for the Cotswolds South area from estate agent listings (with a downward adjustment of 5% to reflect usual sale prices):

Median Property Prices by Size for the Cotswold South Area



It is extremely difficult to provide summarised house price data for permanent houses in the Parish as there are very few house sales. In the period of 2000-2017 inclusive, there are only 81 permanent property sales recorded at HM Land Registry ranging from 2 bedroom properties to properties having in excess of 4 bedrooms. The median price across these 81 transactions is £390,000.

The low number of transactions in Somerford Keynes Parish makes it extremely difficult to compare the two sets of data. However, a median price of £390,000 across all property sizes is

above the median for 4 bedroom properties for a one month window of March 2013 for the Cotswold South area. This reflects both the larger size of properties and the relative expense of the area, compared to surrounding areas, especially as house price inflation, from the years preceding 2013, has not been taken into account.

Four Acres is a travellers' site with planning permission for 40 pitches. The Lower Mill Estate is a recent development with, according to the 2011 census, 256 holiday homes sited in a private, gated community providing many leisure facilities for its home owners and holiday makers. Planning permission has been granted for the development of a total of up to 575 holiday homes, which means that, upon completion, the ratio of holiday homes to permanent homes in the parish would be nearly three to one.

As a small parish, Somerford Keynes is fortunate to have a number of highly valued amenities such as the village hall, the church and the Baker's Arms pub. The village hall continues to flourish and is both well managed and well used, forming the centre point for most large parish events such as the Diamond Jubilee celebration in 2012 and a beacon celebration for the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Similarly, the church continues to be a valued asset and is well maintained and well attended for the big events in the Christian calendar. The pub is considered by the community as an asset that should be protected.

Consultation has consistently shown that an overwhelming majority of residents feel part of the community and are satisfied with the area as a place to live. Residents continue to value the parish amenities, its peaceful location and its access to the countryside through an extensive footpath network. Other amenities and shops are located in neighbouring towns such as Cirencester and Swindon, which are easily accessed by car.

Agriculture is still a major business within the parish, with leisure, recreation and tourism an obvious growth area, particularly on the periphery of the parish around the lakes. One of the larger employers in the area continues to be engaged in minerals extraction. Home working continues to grow with a significant number of residents working from home, some or all of the time.

The parish of Somerford Keynes is in the administrative district of Cotswold District Council, which in turn is one of the six districts within the boundary of Gloucestershire County Council.

## 4 Community Strengths and Weaknesses

Key features of the Parish have been identified by the community at consultation events for the Parish Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

The principal attributes of the Parish:

- Strong sense of community
- Good location, with most properties having open views of the countryside
- Highly educated population
- Good access to the countryside, through footpath and cycleway network
- Convenient transport links, mainly by car, to Cirencester, Swindon, Cheltenham and London
- Easy access to retail and leisure amenities

The main challenges facing the Parish:

- Ageing population (the modal group is now 60-74) may seek to downsize within the Parish
- Housing stock of main settlements dominated by large houses, with prices in excess of £400K inaccessible to younger families
- Few local amenities and some, e.g. transport, under threat
- Managing flood risk
- Absence of village "centre" as a focal point
- Surrounded by large holiday home developments, which don't offer anything to the permanent settlements
- Absence of local employment opportunities

## 5 The Vision and Aims

At the outset of the NDP project, the NDP team created a vision that was endorsed at the July 2014 consultation events. The vision is as follows:

*To maintain and enhance a vibrant community which is an attractive location to live, work and visit.*

For each of the key areas, an aim was established and consulted on during the July 2014 consultations. These were as follows:

Settlement and Housing:

*To improve the demographic balance and, thereby, the continuing viability of the community by the appropriate development of housing.*

Economy:

*To make the parish an attractive place to work and a sustainable place from which residents can go to work.*

Infrastructure:

*To build on the existing infrastructure for the improvement of safety, work opportunities and communications within and between the communities of the Parish and beyond.*

Community Facilities:

*To maintain the current amenities of the Parish, develop and add to them to meet the needs of the community now and in the future.*

Conservation and Environment:

*To conserve and enhance rural settings, buildings and countryside and adapt, enhance, maintain and protect the environment to improve the sustainability of all the settlements in the parish.*

## 6 Policies and Community Proposals

### 6.1 A Guide to the Plan's Policies

The Plan contains a range of policies that all relate to the development and use of land. The policies will provide the basis for determining future planning applications. Whilst the policies have been written to reflect the requirements of each of the NDP's focus areas (settlement and housing, the economy, community facilities, infrastructure and conservation and environment), planning applications must be considered against all these policies as a collective and not against a single policy in isolation.

### 6.2 A Guide to the Plan's Community Proposals

As the Plan has developed, proposals, aspirations and considerations have emerged which, whilst not part of the formal Neighbourhood Plan, have indicated the directions in which the community would like to move. Consequently, a number of community proposals have been developed to reflect these aspirations. It is recognised that these proposals cannot influence the determination of planning applications but are important to fulfil the vision and the aims of this Plan. Therefore, these Proposals are included in the Plan and should be seen as supplementing the Action Plan appearing in the Parish Plan 2012.

## 7 Settlement and Housing

Aim:

*To improve the demographic balance and, thereby, the continuing viability of the community by the appropriate development of housing.*

### 7.1 Objectives

The following objectives were derived from feedback received at the July 2014 consultations and then later endorsed by the community at the January 2015 consultation:

- To maintain the identity and characteristics of the main settlements, by protecting them from uncontrolled expansion
- To protect the surrounding countryside from inappropriate, large scale development schemes but to support small scale sustainable growth with uses that benefit the rural landscape, economy and environment
- To maintain the open countryside views enjoyed from houses within the settlements and to maintain the linear design of the two settlements of permanent housing
- To ensure that any new development enhances the setting of the settlements and complements and enhances their character, including the predominant vernacular, their setting alongside verges, and their relationship with the roads, paths and the surrounding countryside
- To ensure all new development and payments derived from development schemes benefit the Parish and communities, whilst not negatively impacting on existing services and the environment (e.g. flooding)
- To ensure that any new residential development meets the needs for smaller homes for new buyers or for households which are downsizing

### 7.2 Context and Background

#### National and District Level

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and directs that this is the basis for every plan and every decision. It also confirms that neighbourhood planning has been introduced by the Government to allow people and communities to have a say in the way their buildings, landscapes, towns and villages are developed in the future. Furthermore, paras 83-84 emphasise the imperative in planning to promote a healthy and sustainable rural economy, whilst para 170 identifies ways in which "planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment."

The CDC Local Plan 2011-2031 does not identify the parish of Somerford Keynes as one of its eighteen principal settlements. Consequently, the parish is not expected to provide additional housing.

### Parish Level

#### Demographics:

The population of the Parish has aged over the past twenty years. The percentage of people aged 60 or older at 31% (2011 Census) is only marginally higher than the 30% in the Cotswold District (the percentages for the South West and England are 26% and 22% respectively). However, the modal age group changed between the 2001 Parish Appraisal and the 2012 Parish Plan. In the permanent home settlements, this was 45-59 in 2001 and 60-74 in 2012.

People 19 and under are well represented in the permanent settlements at 22%, close to the England average of 24%. However, the under-represented group is the age group 20-39 which at 15% is considerably below the CDC and South West average of 19% and 24% respectively, and almost half of the English average of 27%.

#### Housing Stock:

The 2011 Census reported that there are 466 dwellings in the Parish, of which 210 are occupied by permanent households. So, in 2011, 55% of all dwellings had a holiday home<sup>1</sup> use. This percentage will increase as the Lower Mill Estate has planning permission for up to 575 holiday homes, meaning that the Parish will have one of the highest ratios of holiday homes to permanent homes in the country.

Low cost permanent housing is in very short supply within the Parish. Data from HM Land Registry shows that, for the second quarter 2013, the mean and median house prices for Cotswold District are £328,542 and £250,000 respectively (compared to the Gloucestershire data of £225,937 and £183,000). The house price analysis on page 9 shows the median price (albeit for few sales) for permanent homes in Somerford Keynes in 2013 to be considerably higher than that of the Cotswold District. This analysis calculates the median house sale price from the 81 permanent property sales recorded at HM Land Registry between 2000 and 2017 inclusive. This removes any impact on comparative house price data caused by the higher proportion of homes sold within the Parish of sales of holiday homes on the Lower Mill Estate, which are initially sold as leaseholds of land only.

---

<sup>1</sup> Within the Cotswold District there are many developments providing holiday accommodation. These units of accommodation are subject to restricted occupancy conditions in the following general form (although there may be slight but insignificant variations from development to development):

"Notwithstanding Classes C2 and C3 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, the lodges shall be used to provide holiday accommodation only and they shall not be used as permanent unrestricted accommodation or as a primary place of residence".



There are very few small permanent houses within the Parish. The 2011 census data shows that only 16% of permanent homes in the Parish have fewer than three bedrooms and 51% have four or more bedrooms.

In 2014, Somerford Keynes Parish Council worked with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council to carry out a housing needs survey across the parish to establish and quantify the housing need in the area. This has been used to inform the development of housing policies for the Somerford Keynes Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Housing Needs Survey has been published, has a life of 5 years and will be updated as necessary. The survey report and the Local Insight Profile detail the distribution of housing type and size within the parish. (Please refer to 'Supporting Documents').

Both the Parish Plan 2012 consultation and the Housing Needs Survey expressed a desire by a number of older residents to be able to downsize to smaller properties within the village in which they reside.

Housing design:

The consultation from the 2012 Parish Plan showed that the vast majority of permanent residents valued their community, particularly enjoying the attractive setting of their settlements within the open countryside. Therefore, it is essential that any future housing development is a positive enhancement to the street scene and the settlements in their rural environment. Key local features of house and settlement design were drawn up reflecting these priorities and formed part of the January 2015 consultation.

## 7.3 Policies

### 7.3.1 Residential Development

#### **SKPOL1 - Residential Development**

New residential development within the defined limits of Somerford Keynes (shown on Map 2 below) will be supported if it:

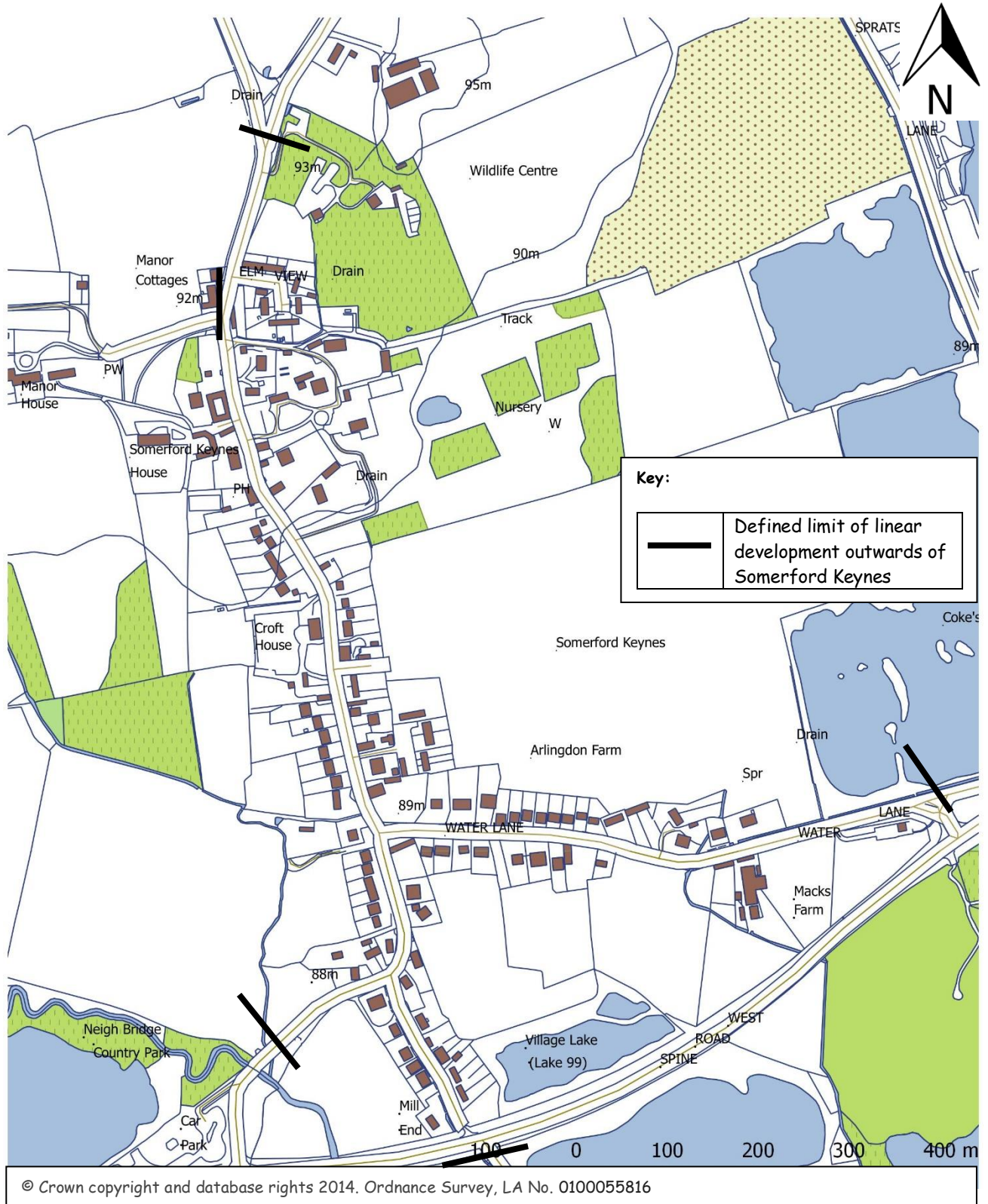
- a) is small and proportionate in scale;
- b) is adjacent to existing development;
- c) is compatible with the surrounding character and settlement;
- d) maintains the existing linear pattern of Somerford Keynes, ensuring the existing open countryside views in general, and the Key Views as included in SKPOL11 in particular, are not adversely impacted;
- e) comprises housing that is limited to small (up to and including three bedroomed) houses with modest plot sizes consistent with the specification in paragraphs 7.3.1.7 and 7.3.1.8;
- f) does not increase the level of flood risk to the occupiers of the site, the local community or the wider environment AND
- g) conserves and where practicable contributes to and enhances the historic and natural environment by:
  - being in accordance with the Cotswold Design Code
  - reflecting the analysis in the Character Assessment (appendix 1) and
  - taking account of the key local features listed in table 7.3.1.9.

Justification:

7.3.1.1 This Policy builds upon Policy DS3 "Residential Development Outside the Principal Settlements" from CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031. One of the main aims of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is to adjust the demographic balance of the parish through housing development and this has been published and supported at all the NDP consultations. The objectives in section 7.1 reflect this.

7.3.1.2 There is support within the Parish for small in scale development as shown in the response to supplementary questions in the Housing Needs Survey where 80% of respondents showed definite or possible support for new development that is small in scale in terms of the overall size of the development and the size of the individual units. This follows similar support shown in questionnaires carried out the Parish Appraisal (2001) and the Parish Plan (2012) and has been reinforced by support shown for the housing policies at NDP consultations. The NPPF

Map 2 - Defined Limits of Linear Development in Somerford Keynes



paras 68 and 69 supports the development of small sites. Whilst this Plan does not include site allocations, the criteria within this Policy allows for the development of suitable sites that are proportionate with the settlement of Somerford Keynes.

7.3.1.3 The feedback from the January 2015 consultation supported the requirement that any development should be compatible with its surroundings and that the integrity of the setting is retained. This is further reflected in other Policies and by, for example, NPPF para. 8c) which states that any development should fulfil the environmental role of development by ensuring that it contributes to "Protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment".

7.3.1.4 A key feature of the setting of Somerford Keynes is its linear topography along principal roads within the settlement. To maintain this settlement envelope, defined limits for development are the River Thames by Neigh Bridge, Spine Road West, Water Lane / Spratsgate Lane junction, the Ewen Road fork and the junction of "The Street" and Church Lane, as shown in Map 2, and development should be immediately adjacent to existing development. These limits have been chosen as they are considered to be physical (road ends or junctions) or natural (River Thames) end points of the village. Church Lane has been excluded from development to maintain the important vista. An integral part of this vista is the uninterrupted traditional Cotswold stone wall which runs along the entirety of the lane. To preserve the integrity of the local environment, all sites with an environmental designation (such as Local Nature Reserves) would also be excluded. This prevents development at Coke's Pit at the eastern end of Water Lane. Permitting development within these limits will ensure that the countryside permeates the village, social cohesion is maintained and that the distance to village amenities is reasonable. Public consultations have shown strong support for maintaining the settlement envelope, preventing development sprawl and retaining the community cohesion and identities of the settlement.

7.3.1.5 The consultations for the 2012 Parish Plan and the NDP highlighted that many households valued the views of the open countryside from their dwellings and that these should be protected.

7.3.1.6 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure a greater mix and balance of homes. This works together with Policy H1 in CDC's Local Plan 2011 -2031 and the NPPF para 61. The current imbalance of housing stock can be adjusted by allowing the development of additional small houses. The Housing Needs Survey stated that 62% of the (permanent) households that responded lived in a house with four or more bedrooms and that only 9% occupied a house with two or fewer bedrooms. The UK 2011 census states that the mean number of bedrooms per household in the parish is 3.6 compared to an average of 3.0 in Cotswold District and 2.7 in England. Similarly, the mean number of rooms per household in the parish (7.0) indicates that the parish contains a greater proportion of larger homes than local and national averages (Cotswold district is 6.1 and England is 5.4).

7.3.1.7 To achieve the Plan's objectives of adjusting the housing stock, any new housing development should consist of small properties up to and including three bedroomed houses. To increase, and subsequently maintain, the parish stock of smaller houses, this policy states that

the plot sizes for a one / two bedroomed house and a three bedroomed house should not exceed 270m<sup>2</sup> and 300m<sup>2</sup> respectively where mains foul drainage is not available. If mains foul drainage is available then the plot size should be reduced accordingly. This minimises the opportunities to extend the property. In Somerford Keynes, between 2013 and 2017 inclusive, there have been two permitted applications for the building of individual dwellings against over ten permitted applications for extensions to existing dwellings, the result of which is to further reduce the stock of smaller housing.

7.3.1.8 The Department for Communities and Local Government's Technical Housing Standards document (March 2015) provides minimum gross internal floor areas for various sizes of dwellings. For example, for a two storey, one / two bedroomed house accommodating four people, this is 79m<sup>2</sup>. This is a footprint of 40m<sup>2</sup> (rounded up to the nearest m<sup>2</sup>). This has been increased by 20% to allow for internal and external walls and blending in with surrounding houses giving a house footprint of 48m<sup>2</sup>. The plot shall make provision for off-road parking in accordance with the parking standards including turning provision to permit egress in forward gear if required. The means of drainage shall accord with the Building Regulations for locations without mains drainage, which typically means soakaways for surface water and a septic tank with a drainage field for foul water, all of which shall be within the plot. If mains foul drainage is readily available, then that should take precedent. The plot sizes given in SKPOL1 can be considered as maximum plot sizes as they have been based upon DfCLF's recommendations as well as providing an additional 20% on the footprints. This also allows for the efficient use of land without unnecessary loss of green land to development.

7.3.1.9 This Policy is supported by the NPPF in section 12 which encourages community involvement in the design of new developments. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the Cotswold Design Code (CDC Local Plan 2011-2031 appendix D). Resulting from community consultation and the Character Assessment (appendix 1), this Plan highlights key local design features in the table below:

Table 7.3.1.9: Key Local Design Features	
	The traditional 'Cotswold' character of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote, with their rich built heritage and visually pleasing appearance.
	The linear nature of Somerford Keynes. However, there is little uniformity to the setting of the houses along the main roads: some have frontages directly on to the road, some have small gardens, some have courtyards, and some are set well back from the road. This provides a sense of harmony and balance.
	The widespread use of natural Cotswold stone for construction, with some use of artificial Cotswold stone.
	Many houses are built in the traditional Cotswold 'vernacular', even more modern properties. This ensures a harmony to the overall appearance of the villages and ensures that they fit appropriately into their settings.
	Extensive use of Cotswold stone walls as boundaries (with some use of artificial Cotswold stone).
	The rural character of the settlements with views out and through to the countryside.

7.3.1.10 A recurring theme during the consultations is the wish of some older residents to be able to downsize to smaller properties within the settlement that they reside in. The policy to allow only small houses on small plots will facilitate this.

7.3.1.11 The village of Shorncote has been excluded from future housing development as it does not have any services or community facilities to support development.

### **Community Proposal 1: Housing Availability for Local Residents**

*The Parish Council will work with applicants and developers to ensure that local residents are aware of the timetable and the arrangements for marketing new houses in the neighbourhood area. It will particularly look to do so where the properties concerned are seeking to address local housing needs or would provide smaller homes which may allow existing residents to downsize within the security of their known community.*

### 7.3.2 Holiday Homes

#### **SKPOL2 - Holiday Homes**

Proposals for purpose-built holiday homes will be supported within the Lower Mill Estate holiday home development boundary (shown in Map 3 below).

#### Justification:

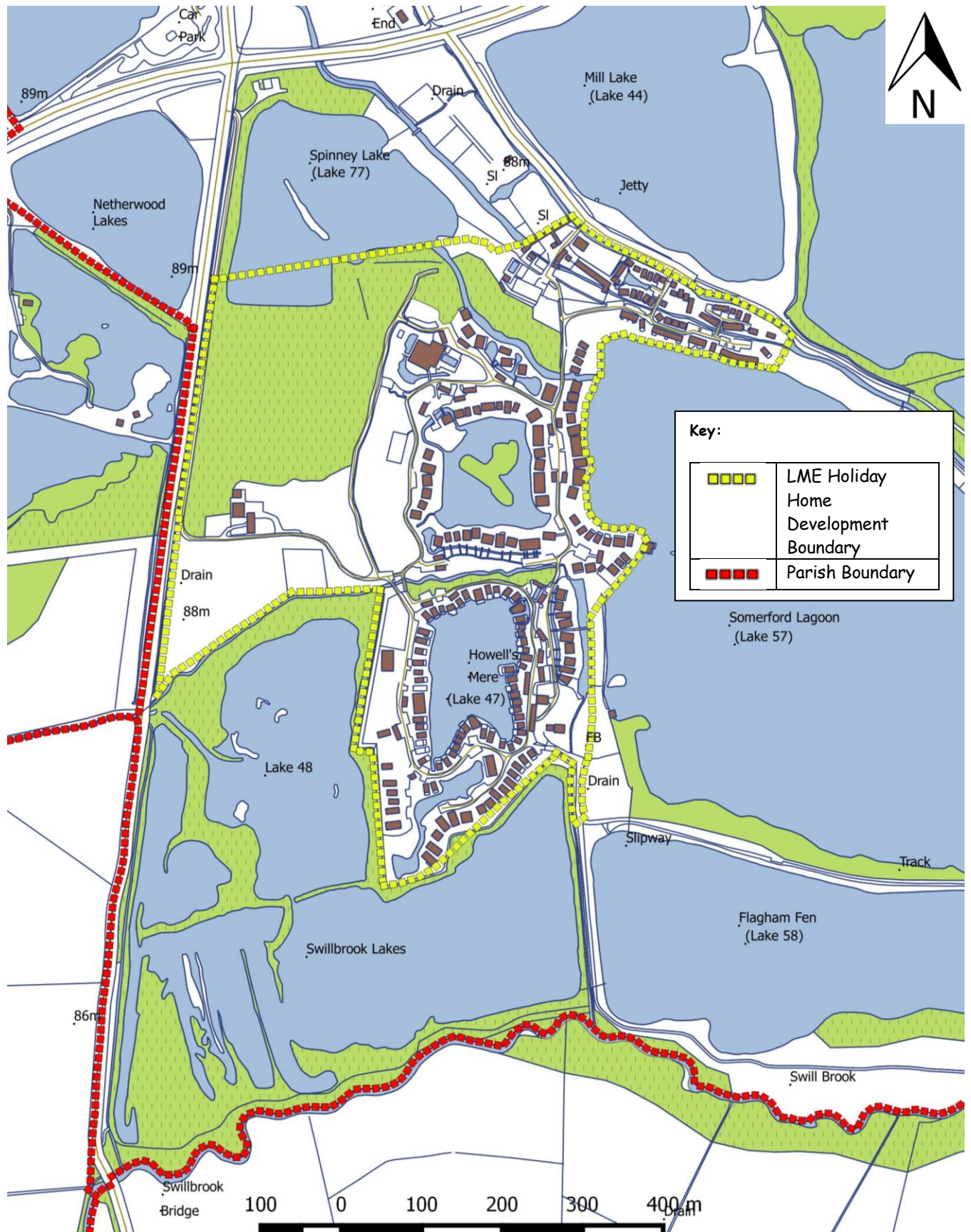
7.3.2.1 The planning permission for the Lower Mill Estate (application CT.6441/J, 1998), through its masterplan, set out the location of the proposed dwellings so specifying a development boundary within the estate, with all building and permissions for buildings contained within the boundary. Correspondence relating to the application ensured that all development of holiday units is confined to Zone C (as defined in the CDC Supplementary Planning Guidance, 1998) areas as well as removing development from the Swill Brook corridor and maintaining the distinctiveness of Somerford Keynes village by having no buildings within 250m of the Spine Road. The total number of permitted holiday homes is 575. This policy preserves these planning restrictions.

7.3.2.2 The 2012 Parish Plan consultation showed that 77% of responding permanent households either strongly disagreed (68%) or disagreed (9%) that more holiday homes should be given planning permission. In addition, 62% of the responding households from the Lower Mill Estate either strongly disagreed (37%) or disagreed (25%) that more holiday homes should be given planning permission. Comments were made during the 2012 Parish Plan consultation such as the Parish was "Swamped by holiday homes" and residents least liked "Second [holiday] homes and over development of the leisure industry". As outlined, there is a major imbalance of holiday homes to permanent homes, currently; upon completion of building the holiday homes with planning permission the ratio of holiday homes to permanent homes within the parish will be nearly three to one.

7.3.2.3 The rationale behind creating estates for the sole purpose of holiday homes was to reduce the number of homes being bought in permanent settlements across the Cotswolds for use as second homes, thereby threatening social cohesion in those communities. There are very few houses in the parish, outside the Lower Mill Estate, that are second homes. We do not, however, have figures for the Cotswold District.

7.3.2.4 SKPOL2 clearly states that any future development of holiday homes should be contained within the LME holiday home development boundary. As part of the original holiday home planning permissions (dating from 1998), permitted development rights were removed from the entirety of the Lower Mill Estate that resides in the Cotswold District. Any future applications for non-holiday home development on the remaining parts of the Estate will be considered using SKPOL3 and SP5 in the CDC Local Plan 2011-2031.

**Map 3 - Lower Mill Estate Development Boundary**



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014. Ordnance Survey, LA No. 0100055816



7.3.2.5 Building so many holiday homes within one location has brought significant numbers of holiday makers to the area. These visitors have benefited some local businesses, such as the Baker's Arms, but have also contributed to an increase of traffic, noise and pollution in and around the main settlement of Somerford Keynes.

7.3.2.6 The holiday home development has contributed very little in the provision of additional amenities and facilities to residents of the parish. Facilities such as a small shop and leisure facilities have been built within the development but these are not available to residents outside the Lower Mill Estate. Therefore, in the absence of overlap, there are effectively two distinct communities with very little interaction between them.

## 8 Economy

Aim:

*To make the parish an attractive place to work and a sustainable place from which residents can go to work.*

### 8.1 Objectives

The following objectives were derived from feedback received at the July 2014 consultations and then later endorsed by the community at the January 2015 consultation:

- To support and encourage existing businesses within the parish
- To encourage home working and innovation
- To support appropriate, small development of 'cottage' or 'barn-style' buildings and conversion of existing buildings for use as business units whilst ensuring that they complement the existing settlements and do not have a harmful impact on existing residential properties, services and the environment
- To encourage the development of the necessary infrastructure to support business and home working
- To minimise the negative impact of tourism on the permanent settlements
- To ensure that any signage used is appropriate to the rural setting

### 8.2 Context and Background

#### National and District Level

Supporting economic growth within rural areas is a strong component of the NPPF with para 83a) stating that planning policies should enable "the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings". It goes on to encourage appropriate economic growth through agricultural diversification, rural tourism and leisure and the maintenance and development of amenities and services in rural environments.

From CDC's Supplement to Cotswold Economy Study 2012 and Economy Evidence Paper 2013 (November 2014), the Cotswold District has a higher percentage (80% in 2013) of economically active adults than the national average and a lower percentage (0.8% in 2013) of adults claiming income support. Cirencester is the district's major employment hub with, in 2013, approximately one third of the district's employment. In 2013, 10% of the district's employment was in the Cotswold Water Park.

Many of the defining features of the Cotswold Water Park are a result of minerals extraction

and the restoration and after-use of the extraction sites. Two important planning policies have ensured the continuation of the integrity of the settlements in their rural setting within the Cotswold Water Park. These policies are:

- Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire 2018-2032 does not have any allocated sites within the Parish. Policies MA02 and MRO1 stipulate criteria for aggregated working outside of allocated sites and the restoration of the sites.
- CDC Local Plan 2011-2031 (Policy SP5 – Cotswold Water Park: Post-mineral extraction after use) states that proposals for sports, recreation and tourism facilities will be supported on the provision that a number of criteria are met.

### Parish Level

Existing Businesses within the Parish:

Whilst none of the settlements has a retail or commercial centre, there are a considerable number of businesses based in the Parish. These are in the fields of:

- agriculture;
- public houses;
- tourism (accommodation and facilities);
- mineral extraction;
- consultancy and Professional Services (registered at home addresses).

Agriculture:

The majority of land in the parish continues to be used for arable and, to a lesser extent, livestock farming so agriculture remains of vital importance to the parish. The landscape in a significant proportion of the parish continues to be shaped by its agricultural use. Even though a very small percentage of parish residents are directly employed by the farms in the parish, agriculture and related industries continue to play a significant role in local employment.

Educational Attainment and Skills of Residents:

Residents of the parish are very well educated with only a small percentage (14%) of those aged 16 or over having no qualifications, compared to the Gloucestershire and England percentages of 20% and 23%. Similarly, the number of residents with degrees or equivalent is well above the national average (44% compared to 27% for England). As a consequence, the majority of those in employment work in managerial, professional and associated professional occupations (62% compared to 41% in both Gloucestershire and England).

Access to Employment and Education:

The parish of Somerford Keynes is geographically well located with easy access to many employment centres, albeit by car, such as South Cerney, Cirencester, Swindon and Cheltenham and further afield to Oxford, Bristol and London. Train services to London, Swindon and

Cheltenham are easily accessed from Kemble Station (3.5 miles). The percentage of residents travelling less than 2km (2001 census) is low at 13% (England's percentage is 20%).

**Working from home:**

The Parish Plan 2012 consultation showed that 28% of households contained at least one member working from home some or all of the time (the percentage for England is 3.5%). This was made more attractive in 2014 by the arrival of 'fibre to the cabinet broadband' technology. However, many respondents in both the Parish Plan 2012 and the NDP consultation reported that mobile telephone services in the parish are still inadequate with very poor reception, from most providers, in many areas.

**Small Businesses:**

There are many small, home-based businesses within the parish. Community consultation expressed a desire to support and encourage these businesses. There was also support for small 'barn-style' or cottage buildings to house business types such as rural skills and crafts and high technology businesses in the July 2014 consultations.

**Tourism:**

The pleasant Cotswold settlements in the parish and the numerous lakes are a tourist attraction. Whilst the community wishes to welcome tourists and support the tourism businesses within the parish, there is a desire for the negative impact of tourism on the communities not to be increased further, such as increases in traffic, intrusive car parking and excessive noise.

**Minerals Extraction and the After-Use of Extraction Sites:**

In the 2012 Parish Plan, 84% of all responding households supported the continuation of settlement protection zones as a means of protecting the settlements from minerals extraction and post-extraction uses that damage the setting of the settlements.

## 8.3 Policies

### 8.3.1 Tourism and Use of Former Mineral Extraction Sites

#### **SKPOL3 – Tourism and Use of Former Mineral Extraction Sites**

Development proposals for small-scale, low-intensity, tourism, recreational and business activities on former gravel extraction sites will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- the development does not have a detrimental effect on any residential dwellings;
- it is appropriate for an open countryside setting and it does not result in visual harm to the environment and/or the permanent settlements;
- there is good access to the site from main public highways and sufficient provision is made for on-site parking;
- there is no significant creation of noise and traffic nuisance;
- biodiversity is protected and enhanced;
- public accessibility to the site is enhanced and provision is made for additional public rights of way and/or cycleways, particularly where there is the opportunity to connect existing routes and/or settlements AND
- it takes account of the implementation of measures put in place as part of the approved restoration and aftercare works associated with the former minerals extraction of the site concerned

Justification:

8.3.1.1 Somerford Keynes' position at the southern end of the Cotswolds, within the Cotswold Water Park, adjacent to a number of SSSIs and on the Thames Path long distance trail means that tourism plays an important role in the local economy. Small businesses within the Parish include water sports, outdoor recreational facilities, camping sites, bed and breakfast accommodation, holiday cottages and other activities associated with the lakes.

8.3.1.2 Therefore, in supporting the further development of tourist facilities, they should be neither out of keeping with their surroundings nor cause this essential quality to be damaged. Rather, they should complement and enhance the key features that attract tourists and support sustainable tourism that brings income and employment opportunities into the area.

8.3.1.3 A significant number of former mineral sites are in the eastern and southern parts of the Parish. The Cotswold Water Park is identified as an area that should support and promote tourism in CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031 Upper Thames policy SP5. Whilst residents do not

necessarily disagree with CDC's aims, the Parish Plan showed widespread support for the lakes to remain unspoilt. 82% of permanent households valued walks and footpaths, whilst 67% valued the country parks. Therefore, it is essential that any proposed development for former minerals sites ensures that the sites retain an unspoilt and tranquil nature and do not adversely impact visually or create a nuisance to the permanent settlements; and that public access is increased across the sites. Of particular interest to the local community, is the creation of footpaths or cycleways that link villages or places of interests together either directly or by connecting to existing routes (see Map 4, page 37).

8.3.1.4 The NDP consultations showed that there was support for small scale businesses to operate within the parish providing that they do not impact on the tranquility and setting of the permanent settlements, and that they are in compliance with other Policies. Therefore, this policy will increase the sustainability of the parish by the provision of local employment opportunities. This approach conforms to the NPPF para 83, emphasising the need for the planning process to support sustainable business expansion.

8.3.1.5 In 2008, the Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee approved the Cotswold Water Park Strategic Review and Implementation Plan, otherwise known as the CWP Masterplan, which had been prepared on their behalf by consultants, Scott Wilson, in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The Masterplan helps guide the future of the CWP in recognition of the growing national and international significance of the area's biodiversity, the unfulfilled sporting and tourism opportunities within the area and lack of status and profile of the area at a national or regional level. This policy recognises the vision and implementation plan of the Masterplan and balances these against the integrity of local communities and the preservation of key tourism assets (the picturesque Cotswold villages).

### **SKPOL4 – Keynes Country Park**

Proposals for development of recreational activities within Keynes Country Park will be supported if:

- they facilitate and enhance the biodiversity and natural landscape of the Park;
- they include traffic management schemes to ensure that there is negligible negative traffic impact on nearby residents and other road users;
- they do not generate any significant increase in noise.

Justification:

8.3.1.6 The country parks within the Parish and the ability to walk to and around them is an extremely valued aspect of community life. The consultation for the 2012 Parish Plan reported that 82% of responding permanent households valued walks and footpaths and 67% valued country parks. The ratings were even higher amongst the Lower Mill Estate second home owners at 98% and 78% respectively. Keynes Country Park is the most established of the two Country Parks in the Parish and the Natural England Country Park accreditation criteria provides the delicate balance between tourism and protection of a much-loved site.

8.3.1.7 Keynes Country Park has a network of permitted paths into the Park and around the lakes within the Park, which have been walked continuously since their creation in the 1970s. Following an attempt to close off pedestrian access to Keynes Country Park in 2009 there was a large outcry in the community. As a result, the Parish Council lodged an application to Gloucestershire County Council and Wiltshire Council (the south east corner of Keynes Country Park is in Wiltshire) in 2010 to have the permitted paths placed on their respective definitive maps, so changing their status to public rights of way. The application was submitted with more than the requisite number of witness statements confirming use of the paths for a period of at least 20 years. In September 2018 Gloucestershire County Council, as landowner, dedicated the footpaths around Keynes Country Park as Public Rights of Way, albeit with conditions to allow the site operator to close the gates for Health and Safety reasons at busy times. Unfortunately, this decision was rescinded following a successful appeal by the leaseholder, Cotswold Water Park Trust. The footpaths remain permissive.

8.3.1.8 The Natural England Country Park accreditation scheme is criteria based with many of the essential and desirable criteria reflecting the valued aspects of Keynes Country Park by the community (free to enter, cycle trails, predominantly natural landscape, planned management of biodiversity and geodiversity, outdoor recreational facilities and, most importantly, informed by the local community). Further details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-accreditation-for-your-country-park>. Proposals which set out to achieve accreditation with this scheme will relate well to the first criterion of Policy SKPOL4.

8.3.1.9 Whilst the community recognises the need for elements of commercialism at Keynes Country Park, it is essential that these do not have a negative impact on the rural setting of the neighbouring villages (Somerford Keynes and Shorncote). Therefore, it is important that future planning applications for this site indicate how traffic and noise can be maintained at acceptable levels.

**Community Proposal 2: Keynes Country Park**

*The Parish Council will work with the leaseholders of Keynes Country Park so that the Park becomes an accredited Country Park under Natural England's Country Parks Accreditation Scheme. This will ensure that there remains a focus on biodiversity and education. It will also contain plans for the management of biodiversity and geodiversity and the improvement of the landscape following recent infilling.*



## 9 Transport and Infrastructure

Aim:

*To build on the existing infrastructure for the improvement of safety, work opportunities and communications within and between the communities of the Parish and beyond.*

### 9.1 Objectives

The following objectives were derived from feedback received at the July 2014 consultations and then later endorsed by the community at the January 2015 consultation:

- To improve travel options between locations within and beyond the Parish, whether on foot, by cycle, car or public transport
- To improve road and pedestrian safety within and around settlements
- In particular, to encourage sustainable transport on foot and by cycle
- To develop communications media opportunities in order to make the Parish a more attractive location in which to live and work

### 9.2 Context and background

#### National and District Level

The NPPF (para 102) establishes the priority that should be given to the promotion of sustainable transport, including the safe inter-relationship between various transport modes.

The main permanent settlements in the Parish are located between the three large towns of Cirencester (6 miles), Malmesbury (9 miles) and Swindon (15 miles). Since there are no employers of significant size in the Parish (but see above on home working) transport links are of vital importance for the community to get to work and access main services, such as banking, retail, medical, etc. Apart from cars, there is a, recently reduced, bus service to Cirencester and Malmesbury, but the only alternative for Swindon is by train from Kemble.

There are also important communication links to more distant destinations. Kemble rail station (3 miles) has a fast service to London, and the M4 is some 18 miles distant, offering direct road links to employment centres in the South East, South Wales and the Bristol area.

The importance of sustainable, "green" transport is clear in the NPPF (paras 29, 30 & 35), CDC Local Plan 2011-31 (Policy INF7) and in the CDC Preferred Development Strategy (objectives E and J).

The importance of effective communications infrastructure is highlighted in NPPF paras 112-115 whilst giving protection from insensitive construction proposals. This recognises the importance

of telecommunications and IT networks in supporting flexible working and local economic development. CDC Preferred Development Strategy, Objective I reflects those aspirations at local level. The significance of infrastructure is supported in Objective 4 (Infrastructure and Service Provision) of the CDC 2011-2031 - "Maximise the quality of life by maintaining and supporting the delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities needed to support local communities and businesses".

### Parish Level

The significance of these communication links is best understood by data contained in the Local Insight Profile for Somerford Keynes. This reveals that almost twice as many people (9%) travel over 40km to work compared to the national average (4.9%) and 50% more than the County (5.6%). Conversely, only 13.3% of the local population travel less than 2km to work compared with 23.1% for Gloucestershire and 20.0% nationally. The limited availability of public transport is highlighted by the fact that only half as many (5.2%) compared to 11% nationally, employ this method to get to work.

As with many rural communities, key services are more distant than they are for more urban populations. Of particular importance, given the age profile, is that the nearest GP surgery is over three times further away than the national average (3.7km compared with 1.2km). Again, the distance to the nearest post office is 3.9km, compared to just 1.0km nationally (Commission for Rural Communities 2010). Whilst this may not be unusual for this county (Maiden Neighbourhood Profiles 2012 for Gloucestershire) it is still a significant demand on transport facilities. This emphasises the importance of car travel to access key services.

The local community's support for sustainable transport modes is evidenced in the Parish Plan with 30% wanting better pedestrian access and 25% more cycleways.

Mindful of the distance from services and facilities and the relatively high number (28%) of people working from home for some or all of the time, communications media assume considerable importance, as they do with any rural community. The Parish Plan Survey 2012 revealed that 82% of respondents were dissatisfied with mobile phone reception and 68% with the broadband service they received. Whilst the broadband position has improved since that survey, with the installation of a fibre optic connection (download speeds are still low at peak times), there is a need to do more in both of these areas if we are to achieve our objectives in relation to encouraging economic activity and lowering the age profile.

## 9.3 Policies

### 9.3.1 Transport Infrastructure and Safety

#### **SKPOL5 - Footpaths and Cycleways**

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for improvements to or for new cycleways, pavements and footpaths will be supported where they enhance or extend existing provision, particularly, where possible in the locations shown on map 4 and / or to achieve better linkages to Ashton Keynes, Kemble (including the railway station) and Cirencester.

Development proposals that encroach upon existing cycleways, pavements and footpaths must make explicit the provision for their restoration, maintenance and/or enhancement.

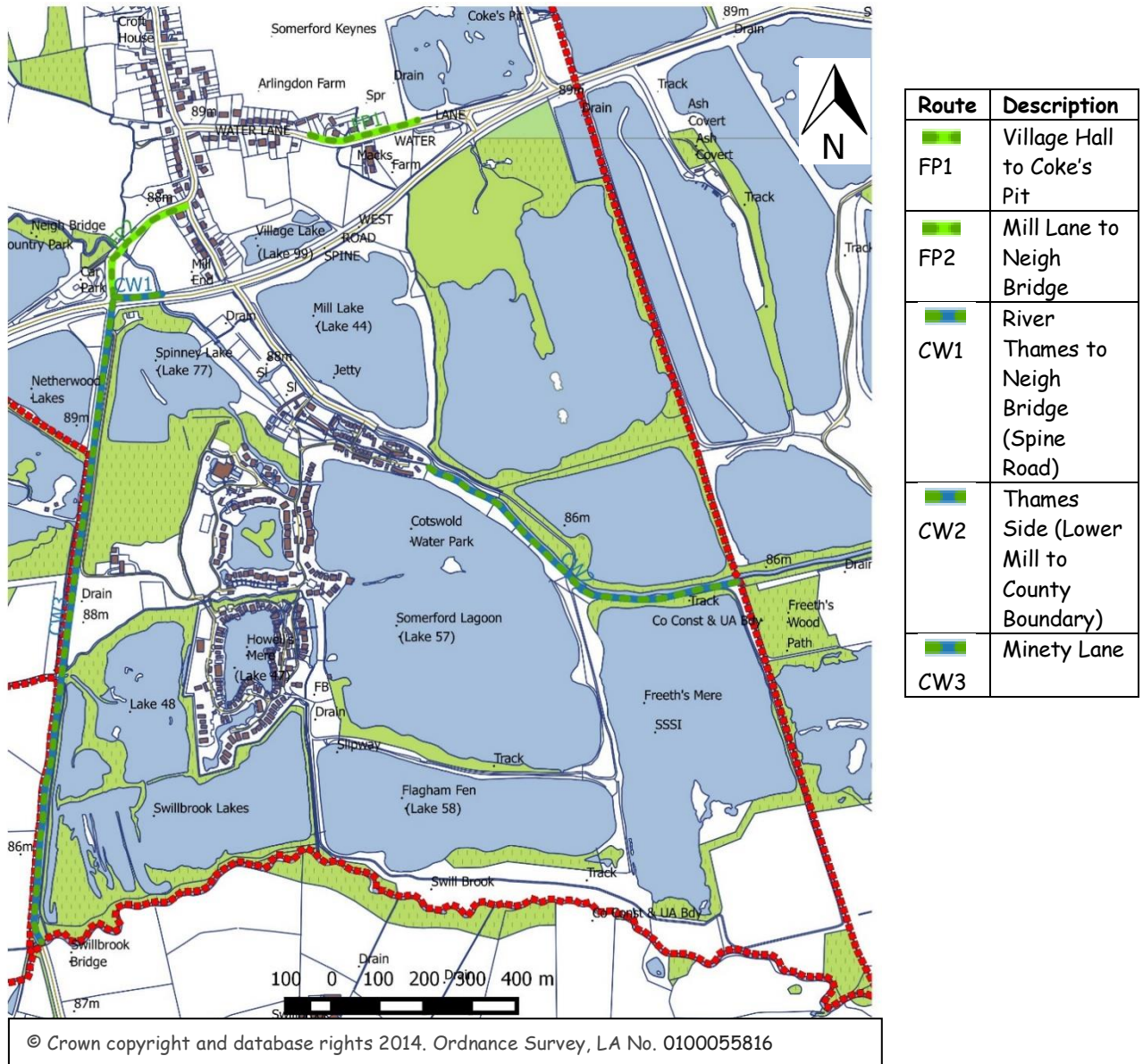
#### Justification:

9.3.1.1 The demand for an extended network of footpaths and cycleways was endorsed by the Parish Plan and by the first NDP Consultation. The NPPF states that, from the earliest stages, planning should ensure that "opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued" (NPPF para 102c)) and that planning policies should "provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting infrastructure" (NPPF para 104d)). The NPPF makes a specific directive that "Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access" (NPPF para 98) and goes on to state that development applications should "give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements" (NPPF para 110a)). Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

9.3.1.2 Local support is shown by the 81.6% of Parish Plan respondents who identified walks/footpaths as one of the most valued local amenities, the highest response of all. In addition, almost half of respondents (47.4%) valued cycleways. This view was reinforced by responses to the first NDP Consultation (July 2014), particularly for more and better footpaths and cycleways, especially those clearly linking destinations. These destinations include Ashton Keynes, Kemble, Kemble railway station and Cirencester or linking into existing footpaths, cycleways and quiet roads that connect to these destinations. As well as highlighting a requirement to improve linkage between neighbouring villages, residents also identified particular routes where the current footpaths and / or cycleways are poor or lacking and expressed a desire for suitable provision. These routes are shown on map 4.

9.3.1.3 The opportunities for exercise and recreation are not only important to the community, but to the attractiveness of the area as a tourist destination thereby reinforcing opportunities for rural business.

**Map 4 - Suggested New Footpaths and Cycleways in Somerford Keynes**



**Community Proposal 3: Enhancement of pedestrian safety**

*The permanent settlements in the Parish are small and rural, and have developed over many years. Thus, the provision of pavements is variable and, to a great extent, this is consistent with that rural nature. However, there are areas where the mix of vehicles and pedestrians has become more dangerous. The Parish Council should work with the highways authorities to identify those locations, evaluate them and take remedial action, where appropriate.*

**Community Proposal 4: Footpaths and Cycleways**

*The existing network of footpaths and quiet lanes assists in the safe movement of walkers and cyclists around the Parish. However, it is important that this network is subject to a strategic overview to identify gaps and take steps to remedy them. Maps 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 in the 2012 Parish Plan identifies new priority footpaths / cycleways as shown on map 4.*

*Additionally, the Parish Council should take every opportunity to safeguard access to footpaths in the Parish, notably within the Cotswold Water Park, specifically, but not only, in Keynes Country Park.*

**Community Proposal 5: Road safety**

*The community has expressed a clear wish to ensure that steps are taken to modify vehicle speeds within and around the settlements. This is not a problem in Lower Mill estate where the roads are all internal, but is being noted in the main road network. It is proposed that the Parish Council endeavours to conduct a review of speed limits throughout the Parish and establish with the highway authorities a number of traffic restrictions, particularly:*

- 50mph speed limits on the main roads within the parish;*
- adoption of traffic-calming measures at village boundaries, where possible and appropriate.*

### 9.3.2 Flooding and Drainage Infrastructure

#### **SKPOL6 - Flooding and Drainage Infrastructure**

Development proposals should demonstrate the way in which they have addressed flood risk and surface water run off issues in a sensitive fashion in the neighbourhood area in general, and within the following locations in particular:

- the areas shown on the drains map (Appendix 2) adjacent to the Thames at Old Mill Farm and the southern part of Shorncote;
- the impact on inflow to the County Ditch as it approaches the eastern boundary of Somerford Keynes;
- the area around Mack's Farm at the eastern end of Water Lane, including both culverts and ditches;
- the field immediately to the north of Water Lane.

Development proposals which would result in an unacceptable increase in the risk of flooding from rivers, watercourses or from surface-water run-off will not be supported.

Justification:

9.3.2.1 The purpose of this policy is to use the planning guidance provided by policy INF8 of CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031 as well as highlighting the need to be sensitive to areas within the Parish that have historically been prone to flooding or high levels of groundwater (of concern for properties with septic tanks).

In this context the two policies are complementary in the way they would operate within the neighbourhood area. In particular, Policy SKPOL6 identifies four locations within the Parish which are the most sensitive to flood risk.

9.3.2.2 The Environment Agency flood maps show the levels of risk in the Parish settlements. As a result of flood mitigation work undertaken in the 1990s, the risk to settlements has been significantly reduced. However, it is in a low-lying area, partially on a flood plain, and surface water drains naturally in this direction from the north. To ensure that the existing protection measures continue to be effective, future developments must not put further pressures upon them. The importance of addressing flood risk is clarified in NPPF paras 155ff. It is essential, therefore, to ensure that future development impacting on surface water flow in and through the Parish includes detailed plans for mitigating any potential flood risk, including that from foul water and pluvial sources.

9.3.2.3 Though the flood risk to properties is considered to be of a low or medium level, high water tables can present a health risk to residents and cause disruption to their everyday lives. This is because the permanent settlements do not have mains sewerage and are served by septic tanks.

9.3.2.4 The measures taken as part of the WILD (Water and Integrated Local Delivery) Project to improve the flow of the Thames, control water release upstream and improve habitat should enable ground water to efficiently flow south of Somerford Keynes, so mitigating some of the impact of river flooding in the south of Somerford Keynes and Lower Mill Estate. As part of this project there have been significant improvements to the Thames as it flows through Neigh Bridge and a walkway has improved access over an area prone to local flooding. Clearance work also took place to assist the flow of water from the County Ditch across Mack's Farm. These works, and others, have highlighted that there are certain parts of the Parish's drainage infrastructure whose function is vital and should be preserved in the event of development.

#### **Community Proposal 6: Flooding and drainage**

*Where development takes place in locations adjacent to the Parish, or further afield, which might have a negative impact upon the drainage system within the Parish, the Parish Council will employ all opportunities to ensure that this is given full consideration in the planning process, including in the development of the Cotswold District Local Plan, and that, if necessary, mitigating measures are put in place.*

## 9.4 Telecommunication Infrastructure

### **SKPOL7 – Telecommunication Infrastructure**

Proposals will be supported for structures designed to improve the telecommunication (including broadband and mobile) services in the Parish, provided that they are sympathetic with the local environment. Where practicable, such developments should utilise existing structures in order to minimise detrimental visual impact.

#### Justification:

9.4.1.1 The Parish has a significant number of home workers and / or residents operating businesses from home. However, a repeated frustration is the lack of mobile telephone reception and limitation of broadband facilities in some areas. This policy seeks to encourage the development of the necessary infrastructure to improve residents' access to telecommunications and to meet the Economy Objectives (8.1 above). It also works in partnership with CDC's policy INF9 and with the objectives set out in NPPF para 112.

9.4.1.2 It is a stated intention of the Plan to encourage younger people and families to live in the Parish. It seeks, further, to nurture and promote micro- and small-business development. Achievement of both of these aims requires effective telecommunications. 85% of respondents to the Parish Plan survey expressed dissatisfaction with mobile phone reception. Mobile phone connectivity is essential for most small businesses and people working from home. The NPPF (para 42) states that "Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth".

9.4.1.3 Sensitive developments that will lead to significant service improvements are to be encouraged, though not at the expense of the local environment. This Policy is consistent with NPPF para 43 in prioritising use of existing structures to support phone masts, and in stating that any new structures should be sympathetic to the existing environment.

### **Community Proposal 7: Broadband and Telecommunication Provision**

*Where commercial offerings become available in the local area, the Parish Council will investigate initiatives contributing to the improvement and / or extension of broadband and telecommunications provision within the Parish.*



## 10 Community Facilities

Aim:

*To maintain the current amenities of the Parish, develop and add to them to meet the needs of the community now and in the future.*

### 10.1 Objectives

The following objectives were derived from feedback received at the July 2014 consultations and then later endorsed by the community at the January 2015 consultation:

- To maintain the separateness of the main settlements by the establishment of development boundaries
- To maintain, enhance and protect local facilities important to the community
- To encourage additional facilities for which there is local support
- To protect the rurality and natural beauty of the local environment by restricting unsympathetic development

### 10.2 Context and background

#### National and District Level

The CDC Local Plan 2011-2031 does not include this Parish in its list of sustainable settlements earmarked for specific contributions to its Local Plan objectives on housing development. However, section 11.2 of the CDC Local Plan 2011-2031 describes the importance of social and community infrastructure, both in terms of its creation and maintenance. It is in this context that proposals to maintain and develop amenities within the Parish must be viewed.

The NPPF (para 8) states that the social objective for sustainable development is the provision of "Accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being". Again, in para 83d) it states that Plans should "promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship." NPPF paras 91 and 96 both emphasise the importance of leisure and recreational facilities and opportunities for communities to meet together informally. This is reflected also in Objective 4 of CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031.

### Parish Level

The Parish Plan records that 78% of respondents valued the Church, 77% the Village Hall and 72% the local pub. Efforts to attract young people and families would be at risk if the few amenities available were to be further diminished. Each of these three add value to the local community, as evidenced by the support for them.

However, it must be acknowledged that the current range of community amenities is somewhat limited, and their development represents a key plank in the plan to attract new people to the Parish. Therefore, any initiatives to encourage additional facilities consistent with the nature and ethos of the communities will be welcome. Indications of the community's views in this area may be found in the Parish Plan. 82% of respondents wanted a shop and 75% supported a post office. The first NDP consultation showed continuing support for the idea, but much scepticism about the feasibility of a stand-alone facility. However, there were numerous endorsements for linking it to, say, the local pub.

Supporting other new amenities, the Parish Plan showed that 38% of respondents supported the idea of an outdoor communal meeting place and 31% would like a children's play area. Such initiatives would be consistent with national and local policies.

Underpinning this Plan is a desire to maintain and protect the environment in which the settlements and human activities exist. There are examples in this area where unsightly and intrusive signage has had an adverse impact on the overall visual appearance of a rural landscape. This concern sits alongside the NPPF wish to avoid light pollution (para125) and CDC PDS Objective G, which states that landscapes should be protected by "designing new developments (including alterations and extensions) to complement and enhance the landscape". Robust application of the rules governing signs and signage is needed to ensure a proper balance between the needs of business to advertise and protection of the local environment.

## 10.3 Policies

### 10.3.1 Protection of Key Community Facilities

#### **SKPOL8 - Protection of Key Community Facilities**

The Plan designates the following as Key Community Facilities:

- the Village Hall;
- the Parish Church of All Saints;
- the village pub - the Baker's Arms.

Change of use and/or development of Key Community Facilities that would result in their loss or would be detrimental to the community will not be supported.

Development proposals to maintain or expand community use of Key Community Facilities will be supported, as will the sympathetic development of new facilities.

Justification:

10.3.1.1 This policy builds upon policy INF2 of CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031 in supporting the expansion of existing community facilities subject to the criteria listed in its policy.

10.3.1.2 The settlements within the Parish have a clear sense of community even though they enjoy a very limited range of facilities. The Parish Plan records overwhelming support for the three amenity centres that do exist, so it is particularly important that they are secured for the future. Efforts to attract young people and families would be at risk if the few amenities available were to be further diminished. Each of these three adds value to the local community, as evidenced by the support for them.

10.3.1.3 The Village Hall is a key location for social activities in the villages. It is the venue for community events, e.g. fund-raising evenings, national and local anniversary celebrations. Further, a wide range of regular activities occur - short mat bowls, bridge, art club, toddlers' group, Zumba, tai chi, village history group, etc, as well as business meetings, such as residents' group (LME), Parish Council, Village Hall trustees.

10.3.1.4 The Parish Church has a history dating back to 685 A.D. and the churchyard contains a number of historic monuments. It is a major landmark and feature of the village scene. Services are held in the Church regularly and major services in the Christian calendar are always well attended. All Saints Church, Shorncote is also an important landmark, but no longer hosts frequent services but does host a popular, annual service shortly after Christmas and is in the keeping of the Churches Conservation Trust. Therefore, whilst a significant feature of the settlement that should be protected, it cannot be regarded as a Key Community Facility.

10.3.1.5 The Baker's Arms Public House is a Grade II listed building and the only hostelry in the Parish. It is a noteworthy feature of the local streetscape that provides a service to the community and, more significantly, contributes to tourism as an attraction for visitors to Lower Mill Estate. Its significance has been gauged by its registration in January 2019 as an asset of community value.

10.3.2 Local Green Spaces

**SKPOL9 - Local Green Spaces**

The following open spaces identified on the Map 5 below are designated as local green spaces:

- Neigh Bridge Country Park;
- Village Lake (Lake 99).

Proposals for development within the two designated Local Green Spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

**Map 5 - Areas Designated as Local Green Spaces**



Key:	
	Local Green Spaces (Neigh Bridge Country Park and Village Lake)
	Parish Boundary

Note: the area to be designated as a Local Green Space at Neigh Bridge Country Park excludes the land currently used as a car park.

Justification:

10.3.2.1 SKPOL9 takes advantage of the opportunity provided by the NPPF (paras 99-100) to designate specified areas as Local Green Spaces. The importance of designating appropriate areas in this way is highlighted by the NPPF para 11b)i, which afford protection from development to "areas or assets of particular importance" and the explanatory Note 6 includes Local Green Spaces within that category.

10.3.2.2 CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031 Policy EN3 allows for the designation of Local Green Spaces within the Cotswold District. The conditions for which development will be permitted in the Local Green Space designated in that Plan are detailed in criteria 2 of EN3. Policy SKPOL9 applies the matter of fact policy approach included in paragraph 101 of the NPPF. This approach is entirely consistent with that in Policy EN3 of the adopted Local Plan.

10.3.2.3 A number of sites within the Parish, close to the community, were considered against the criteria set out in Cotswold District's Council Local Green Space Toolkit (no development planned, beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility and richness of wildlife). Neigh Bridge satisfied the criteria in terms of beauty, recreational value and tranquility and the Village Lake (Lake 99) satisfied the criteria in terms of recreational value and tranquility. As both sites contain lakes in the Cotswold Water Park, they are part of the Cotswold Water Park wildlife corridor (Cotswold Water Park Biodiversity Action Plan, p13) which contains a number of rare and protected species as identified by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's ecology survey of the Parish.

10.3.2.4 Further evidence relating to the appropriateness of Neigh Bridge Country Park and the Village Lake (Lake 99) to be designated as Local Green Spaces can be found in Appendix 3.

### 10.3.3 Support for New Community Facility

#### **SKPOL10 - Support for New Community Facility**

##### **SKPOL10.1 - Retail Facility**

The establishment of a small-scale convenience retail facility in the Parish in keeping with the community and its needs will be supported. In this context a village shop, in its own right or to consolidate an existing community facility, will be particularly supported.

##### **SKPOL10.2 - Sports or Recreational Facilities**

The establishment of an open-air community meeting place/play area with, as appropriate to its location, outdoor sports facilities including tennis courts and pitches will be supported.

#### Justification:

10.3.3.1 The Parish Plan shows that 82% of respondents wanted a shop and 75% supported a post office. The first NDP consultation showed continuing support for the idea, but much scepticism about the feasibility of a stand-alone facility. However, there were numerous endorsements for linking it to, say, the local pub. There are other possibilities of creating retail partnerships, which may develop in the future.

10.3.3.2 Consistent with the policy of support for small business, proposals for a small retail facility would be encouraged, subject to meeting the criteria on compatibility with its surroundings (Policy SKPOL1).

10.3.3.3 The Parish Plan showed that 38% of respondents supported the idea of an outdoor communal meeting place and 31% would like a children's play area. The Parish Profile shows that we have fewer under-16s than the national average and we are trying to attract a younger age group into the community. Improving the range of local amenities is one way of encouraging that outcome without losing the essential nature of our area. For that reason, any development of this kind must be consistent with our objectives in relation to Conservation and Environment.

10.3.3.4 This Policy reflects the intentions of CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031 Policy INF2.

## 11 Conservation and Environment

### **Aim:**

*To conserve and enhance rural settings, buildings and countryside and adapt, enhance, maintain and protect the environment to improve the sustainability of all the settlements in the parish.*

### 11.1 Objectives

The following objectives were derived from feedback received at the July 2014 consultations and then later endorsed by the community at the January 2015 consultation:

- To maintain the present relationship between the built environment and its surroundings, identifying the features important to the community and taking the necessary measures for their protection
- To protect important vistas in the Parish
- To recognise and protect areas of historical or archaeological importance within the Parish
- To protect important flora and fauna and their natural habitats
- To understand the hydrology in the Parish and to continue striving to improve the water management throughout the Parish, by the maintenance of flood defences, culverts and ditches and by taking every opportunity to extend and develop them for the protection of the community
- To ensure that any future development does not impact negatively on any of the above

### 11.2 Context and background

#### National and District Level

There are a range of national and local policies and controls in this area. The NPPF, particularly Sections 15 and 16, together with the supporting National Planning Practice Guidance gives the national context. The section titled 'Built, Natural and Historic Landscape' in CDC Local Plan 2011-31 provides the local dimension and particularly addresses conservation (built environment, local distinctiveness, character and special qualities) and environment (appearance, landscape, trees and woodland and biodiversity).

At the local level, too, two key documents have been published for the Cotswold Water Park. The Cotswold Water Park Master Plan (2008) was commissioned by the, now defunct, Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee, a partnership body representing parish councils and local authorities. The Biodiversity Action Plan (2007-16) was published by the Cotswold Water Park Society (now Trust) on behalf of the CWP Nature Conservation. These reports address the



impact of current and future developments on the infrastructure of the Water Park and its settlements and identify the ways in which the habitats of flora and fauna might be protected and enhanced going forward.

### Parish Level

The long history of the Parish, traceable to 685, and its archeological significance places an important responsibility on this and subsequent generations to preserve and protect it. This duty extends to care of the present environment and its important flora and fauna. These responsibilities are recognised nationally (e.g. NPPF paras 170) and locally (Parish Plan 2012). Further, the designation of part of the village of Somerford Keynes as a conservation area and the specific listing, by Historic England, of some 29 assets (detailed in Appendix 5(3)) reinforces the importance of conservation in the protection of the community. This designation occurred in 1989 and, in 2018, CDC completed an appraisal of the existing Conservation Area, reviewing the relevance of the boundaries then established. Minor modifications were made to the Conservation Area boundary. The final report and maps can be found in Appendices 5(1) and 5(2).

As part of the early preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, ecological data was obtained from the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records and this emphasised the importance of the area for its sites, habitats and species. The maps in appendix 9 show the sites, habitats and species that are important to the Parish and to the area that immediately surrounds it.

## 11.3 Policies

### 11.3.1 Protecting Settlement Characteristics and Key Vistas

#### **SKPOL11 – Key Vistas**

The Plan identifies the following Key Views (as shown in Map 6) in the neighbourhood area:

- the view from the public footpath (BSK13) looking towards Manor House, All Saints Church and Somerford Keynes House (Vista 1);
- the view along Church lane towards All Saints Church (Vista 2);
- the view of Dower Court and the main Street, heart of the conservation area (Vista 3);
- the view of All Saints Church, Shorncote, and the village from the lane (Vista 4).

Development proposals should take account of the identified key vistas and be designed and located to safeguard their integrity. Any proposal which would have an unacceptable impact on an identified key vista will not be supported.

#### Justification:

11.3.1.1 This Policy provides the detail of the visual quality of the landscape and historic landscape character that defines the local distinctiveness of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote as uses the protection provided to it by CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031 Policy EN4 clause 2. Policy SKPOL11 adds a local dimension to Policy EN4 of the adopted Local Plan. It identifies four Key Vistas in the neighbourhood area. It then applies the policy principles in the Local Plan policy to ensure that new development proposals take account of their integrity and their wider importance in the neighbourhood area. Where it is necessary to do so development proposals should include details about the way they have been designed to take account of the Key Vistas. In some circumstances this could be pursued through the submission of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment with the relevant planning application.

11.3.1.2 One of the common themes from the public consultations carried out for both the 2012 Parish Plan and the Neighbourhood Development Plan is how much residents value their settings and surroundings. The defining characteristics of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote are of traditional Cotswold settlements located in open countryside, with the majority of households enjoying views across fields and all households having easy access to footpaths and cycleways. During the consultations, a number of key vistas were identified as those that clearly define these characteristics. This reflects policy EN4 from CDC's Local Plan 2011-2031.

**Map 6 - Key Vistas**

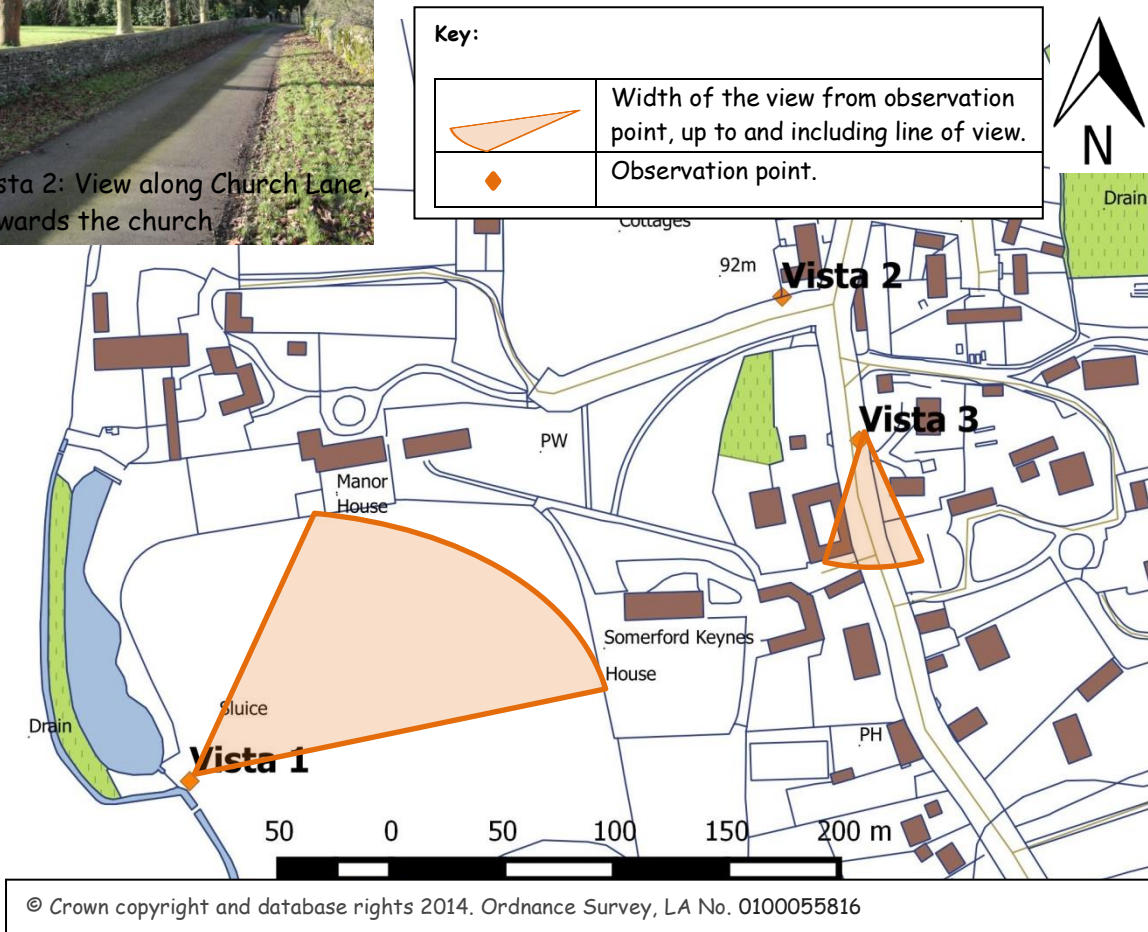
**Somerford Keynes:**



Vista 2: View along Church Lane towards the church



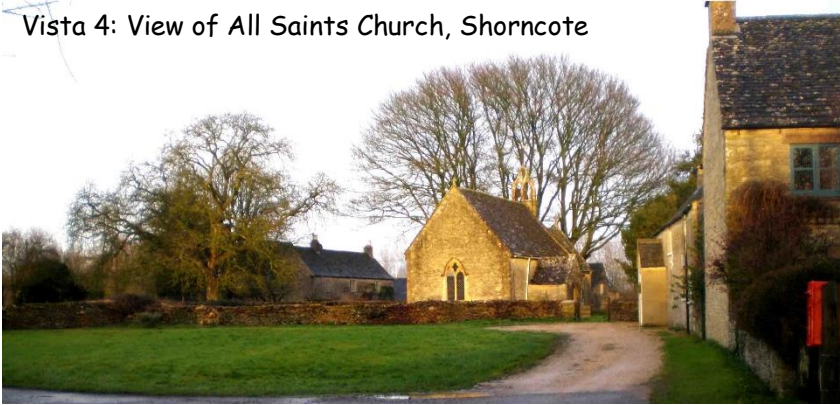
Vista 3: View of Dower Court and the main street



Vista 1: View of the Manor House, All Saints Church and Somerford Keynes House from across the Paddock



**Shorncote:**

Vista 4: View of All Saints Church, Shorncote



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014. Ordnance Survey, LA No. 0100055816

**Key:**

	Width of the view from observation point, up to and including line of view.
	Observation point.

11.3.1.3 The preservation of the historic built environment within its setting is further endorsed by the NPPF. For example, para. 185 states that "Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk though neglect, decay or other threats". It does also make clear the need for qualitative evaluation of assets put at risk by development.

11.3.1.4 The key vistas were identified and displayed at the January 2015 consultation and have since been supplemented by residents following further consultations. In selecting vistas, the NDP team considered those that most reflected, and so defined, the historic and environmental characteristics of the settlements. All vistas are accessible from public highways or public rights of way.

### 11.3.2 Nature Conservation

#### **SKPOL12 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland**

The Plan identifies the following series of sites (as shown in Map 7) as areas of important trees in the neighbourhood area:

- trees lining The Street (1)
- the hedgerow on Water Lane, at the junction with The Street (2);
- trees lining Church Lane (3);
- the trees across the parkland south of the Manor House (4);
- the Chestnuts, adjacent to the Shorncote road junction (5);
- Former Jefferies Nursery (Ref: "Through the Saxon Door" op. cit. p51) (6);
- the Village Lake (7);
- All Saints, Shorncote, churchyard (8);
- two stands of black poplars that are locally distinctive in the Cotswold Water Park (9).

Development proposals should take account of the identified areas of important trees. Any proposal which would have an unacceptable impact on an area of important trees will not be supported.

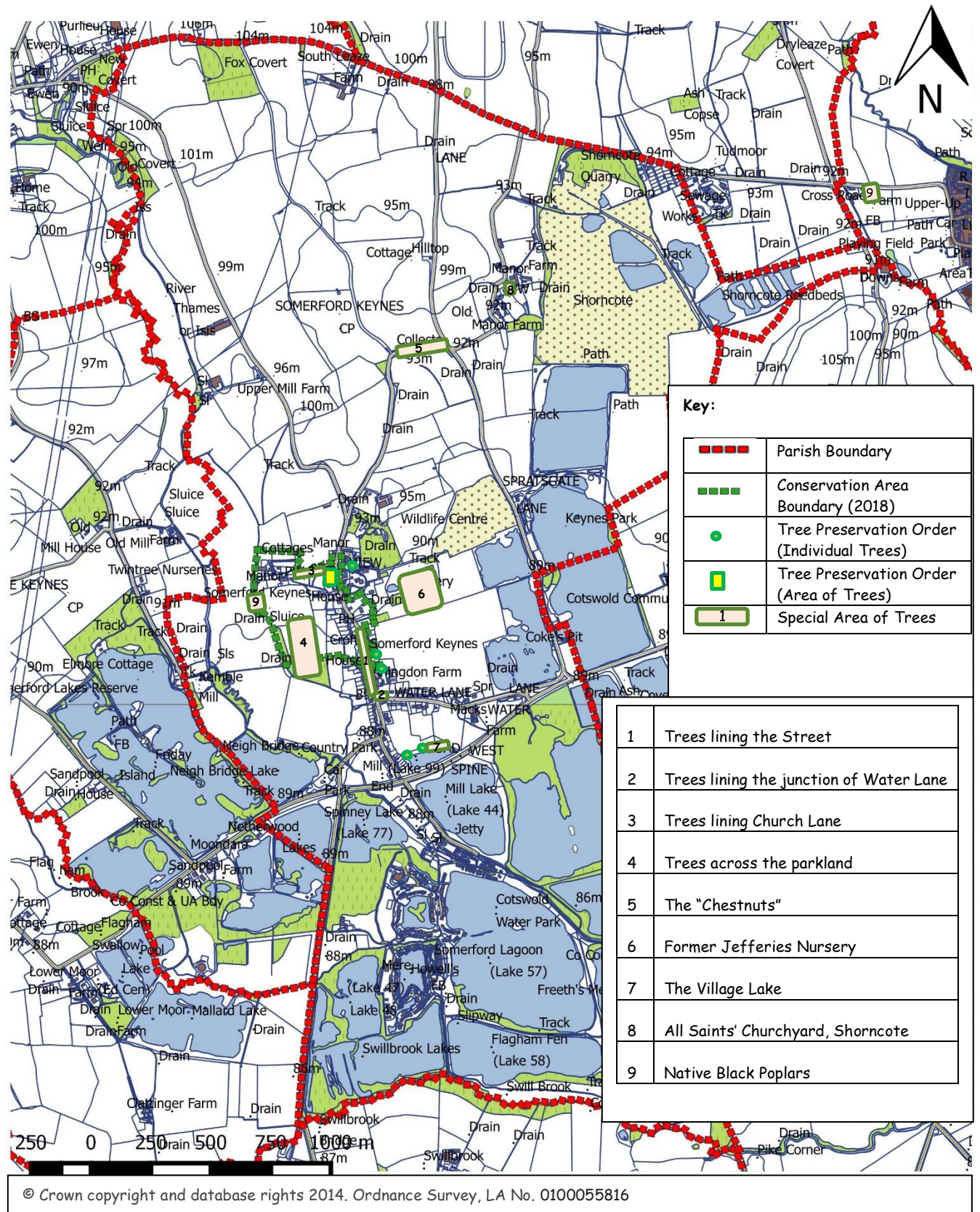
Where trees, woodland or hedgerows are proposed to be removed as part of development in identified areas of important trees which is otherwise acceptable, compensatory planting should be included within the development proposal concerned. In these circumstances, development proposals should, where appropriate, have regard to the potential for new or extended woodland to assist in carbon storage and to be a potential local source of biomass or biofuel.

#### Justification:

11.3.2.1 The Character Assessment prepared for this Plan emphasises the importance of trees in the permanent settlements in defining their key features. Individual and groups of trees play a defining role in the character of the area, for example along roads and around residential properties. Trees define the internal roads, enhance the mix of buildings and soften their lines. To preserve this framework, any new development must acknowledge the importance of existing trees and take opportunities within development briefs to extend the arboreal context of the settlements. Therefore, trees are not only a pleasant green adjunct to the community, they are fundamental to its overall character. It is also important to acknowledge the role of trees in mitigating the effects of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Policy SKPOL12 adds a local dimension to Policy EN7 of the adopted Local Plan. It identifies a

Map 7 - Important Trees and Tree Scenes



series of areas of important trees which fulfil the criteria included in the Local Plan policy. It then applies the policy principles in the Local Plan policy to the neighbourhood area.

11.3.2.2 CDC maintains a record of all TPOs in the Parish, of which 5 are currently (2019) in Somerford Keynes. Black poplars are a particularly significant species in the parish and are locally distinctive within the CWP. These and other important tree scenes are identified on Map 7 above.

### **SKPOL13 – Biodiversity Habitats**

Proposals for development will be supported that:

- conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area, and in particular:
  - any designated sites;
  - protected species;
  - priority species and habitats;
  - species and habitats that are locally characteristic (as set out in table 11.3.2.6) and/or;
- enhance the connectivity between existing biodiversity sites and habitats and/or;
- increase the potential for the public to enjoy and better understand biodiversity.

Justification:

11.3.2.3 The policies in the Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-2031), in particular policies EN8 and EN9, provide a comprehensive District-wide approach to nature conservation and development. Designated sites and priority species and habitats are defined in the Cotswold District Local Plan. This NDP policy gives additional local context as its biodiversity is one of its defining characteristics. One of the reasons that visitors come to the parish is to view wildlife and opportunities should be taken to raise awareness of wildlife issues and to enable the public, both visitors and residents, to enjoy seeing wildlife.

Policy SKPOL13 provides a local iteration of Policies EN8 and EN9 of the adopted Local Plan. In particular Table 11.3.2.6 of the Plan identifies species and habitats which are locally-characteristic. It has been designed to act in a complementary way to Policies EN8 and EN9 of the Cotswold Local Plan as part of the wider development plan.

11.3.2.4 Parish consultations have been consistent in recognising the importance of this Policy and the community's responsibility to protect important elements of the biodiversity complex. More widely, NPPF para. 174 states that, in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:



a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

11.3.2.5 Somerford Keynes falls within the CWP, which supports a wide range of species and habitats, as well as nationally and locally designated sites of nature conservation importance. These sites and habitats are illustrated on the maps in appendix 4. Data obtained from the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records in 2014 emphasised the biodiversity value of the area, and this can be found in the 'References and Supporting Documentation' section; however further wildlife surveying has been undertaken since then. Of particular relevance is the ongoing work by Natural England in assessing the water bodies in the CWP for their importance for wintering and breeding water birds. This is part of the work required to potentially re-notify or alter the SSSI designations in the CWP.

11.3.2.6 The CWP Biodiversity Action Plan (2007-2016) is still relevant in terms of highlighting the most important species and habitats in the area and some of the actions required to support and enhance them. The parish forms part of the CWP Nature Improvement Area, which emphasises the value of considering habitats and species at a landscape scale and enhancing and extending their coverage and connectivity. Table 11.3.2.6 shows a list of locally important species and habitats, that should be considered in the design of new developments.

Habitats	Standing open water (including ponds and lakes)
	Rivers and streams (including the Thames and the Swill Brook)
	Lowland neutral and wet grassland
	Fen, marsh and reedswamp
	Woodland
Species	Black poplar
	Wintering and breeding water birds
	Dragonflies & Damselflies
	Water vole
	Bat species
	Bittern
	Nightingale
	Otter
	Great Crested Newt
	Reed Bunting
Stoneworts	

### 11.3.3 Built Heritage

#### **SKPOL14 - Heritage**

The Plan identifies the following groups of non-designated heritage assets in the neighbourhood area:

- buildings shown as non-designated heritage assets within the Somerford Keynes Conservation Area, shown on the map in Appendix 5 (1) (or as identified in the adopted SK CA appraisal 2018);
- buildings and areas identified as such and shown on Map 8 below:
  - the group of cottages between the Village Hall and the modern house, Grangewood, at the east end of Water Lane (1);
  - three cottages at the north side of the approach to Mill Lane (2);
  - the buildings clustered around Lower Mill (3);
  - the buildings clustered around the "Green" in Shorncote (4);

Development affecting a non-designated heritage asset will be supported where it is designed sympathetically having regard to the significance of the asset, its features, character and setting.

Where it is possible to do so development proposals should seek to enhance the character of a non-designated asset. Proposals for the demolition or the total loss of a non-designated heritage asset will be assessed in a balanced fashion taking account of the significance of the asset and the scale of the proposed harm or loss.

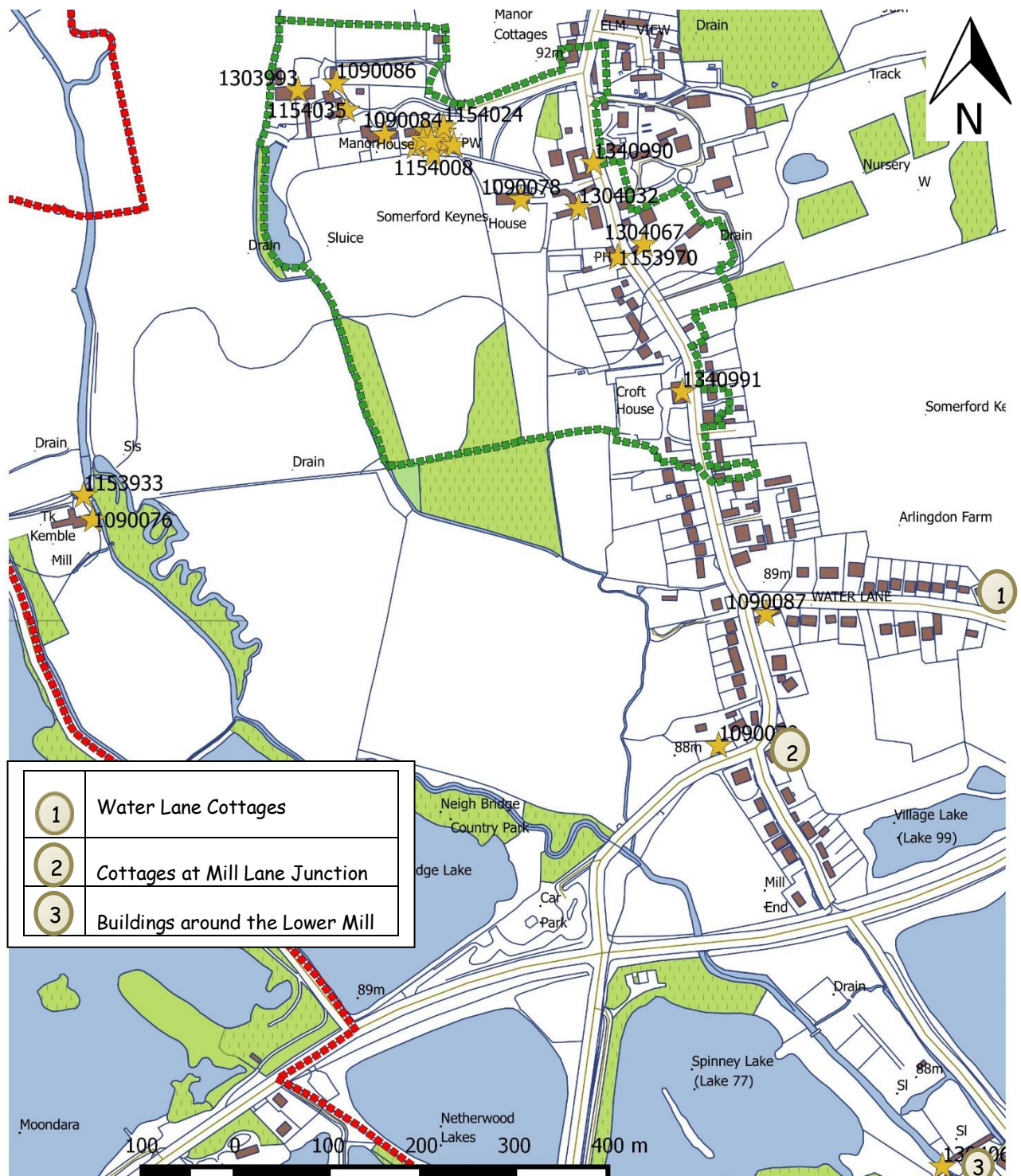
#### Justification:

11.3.3.1 Policies in the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031, including policies EN10-EN13 highlight the importance of recognising the place of heritage sites in the future development of the area. There are a range of designated heritage assets in the parish, including the SK Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings. The Local Plan gives adequate policy provision for the historic environment within the Parish, however it does not provide the local context in terms of the identification of locally important non-designated heritage assets. A number of NDHAs were identified during the production of the SK CA appraisal (2018); and others during survey work to prepare the NDP. The NDHAs listed in the policy are not an exhaustive list and more may be identified in the future, for example via planning applications, based on the criteria in table 6 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031.

Policy SKPOL14 adds a local dimension to Policies EN12 and 13 of the adopted Local Plan. It identifies important non-designated heritage assets in the neighbourhood area. It then applies

**Map 8 - Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

**Somerford Keynes:**

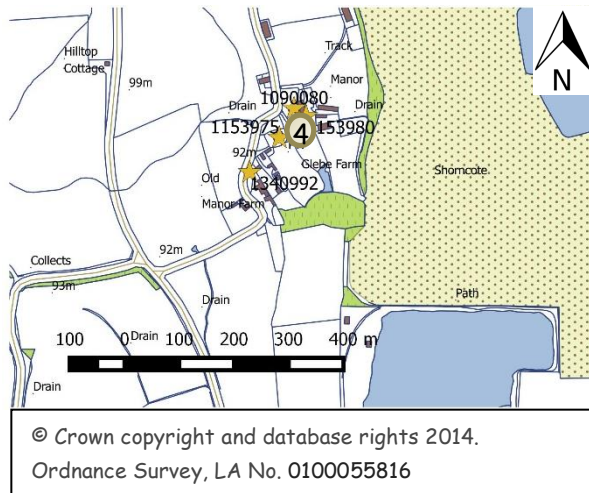


1	Water Lane Cottages
2	Cottages at Mill Lane Junction
3	Buildings around the Lower Mill

© Crown copyright and database rights 2014. Ordnance Survey, LA No. 0100055816

<b>Key:</b>	
	Boundary of Somerford Keynes Conservation Area (2018)
	Listed Building
	Non-designated Heritage Assets

**Shorncote:**



Key:	
★	Listed Building
④	Non-designated Heritage Assets (Shorncote Village 'Green')

the policy principles in the Local Plan policy to ensure that new development proposals take account of their integrity and wider importance in the neighbourhood area'

11.3.3.2 The Character Assessment for this Plan highlights the traditional, rural, ambience of the settlements of Shorncote and Somerford Keynes. This has survived substantial growth of housing, predominantly in the 1970s. Whilst there are small pockets of buildings that do not conform to this pattern, there is a general coherence to the appearance of the settlements that is fundamental to its appeal as a place to live, work and visit.

11.3.3.3 A key element of both settlements is the presence of old, well-preserved buildings and it is essential that they are maintained and protected in their settings for future generations. This Plan seeks to ensure that whilst providing ample opportunity for business and appropriate housing development to take place, it endeavours to maintain balance between these two, sometimes conflicting, aspirations, so supporting the continuation of a vibrant and sustainable community.

11.3.3.4 A detailed description of the heritage of Somerford Keynes may be found in Geoffrey Gibbon's publication, "Through the Saxon Door: The story of Somerford Keynes" (1969), in which reference is made to a number of the listed areas. Gibbon also wrote a later pamphlet "Shorncote, The Church and some Rectors", (1986), which provides some detail of the history of the village of Shorncote.

11.3.3.5 In 2018, CDC completed an appraisal of the existing Conservation Area. The final report and maps are in Appendices 5(1) and 5(2).

**Community Proposal 8: Conservation Area Management Plan**

*The currently designated Conservation Area was listed in 1989 and has been successful in maintaining the quality of the environment in those locations. The revision of the Conservation Area should maintain that quality. However, there is no management plan developed for the conservation area currently, an omission that should be corrected.*

*Following the recent appraisal, the PC will continue to work with CDC to ensure that the Conservation Area is reviewed at appropriate intervals.*

## 12 Plan Delivery & Monitoring

The Somerford Keynes NDP has been developed to support and reflect the policies embodied in the NPPF, the policies proposed to be carried forward from the CDC Local Plan 2001-2011 and the CDC Local Plan 2011-31 (Submission Draft Reg.19). Within those frameworks, it establishes the policies endorsed by the residents of the Parish to carry it forward as a sustainable, attractive and vibrant community. Together, these three levels of policy will provide the guidance to the LPA and to Planning Inspectors in consideration of future planning applications and appeals, and, in the case of the NDP, will form the basis of any comments on such applications by the Parish Council.

Cotswold District Council has now started the initial work on a partial update of its Local Plan with an aim to secure its adoption by 2023. This process may have important implications for the ongoing effectiveness of the neighbourhood plan.

It is proposed that the Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis. The Parish Council will consider the need or otherwise for a review of this neighbourhood plan within twelve months of the adoption of the emerging update of the Local Plan.

The purpose of such monitoring reviews would be:

- to ensure that the SKNDP remains in conformity with the CDC Local Plan and national legislation;
- to review the SKNDP to determine that it still achieves its objectives and remains a positive planning tool to meet the aspirations of the community;
- to ensure that it is compatible with adjoining approved Neighbourhood Development Plans and to seek opportunities to collaborate where that will serve the interests of the local community.

The NDP will be delivered by:

- planning decisions made by the LPAs taking account of the NDP Policies;
- delivery of the Action Plan detailed in the Somerford Keynes Parish Plan 2012, to which the NDP is closely linked;
- development of the Community Proposals which complement this NDP not specifically relevant to planning legislation, but which the community has identified, through consultation, as being important for the character and identity of the Parish.

## 13 References and Supporting Documentation

British Trust for Ornithology Wetlands Bird Survey ([www.bto.org/webs-reporting](http://www.bto.org/webs-reporting))

Cotswold District Council Evidence Paper: Supplement to Cotswold Economy Study 2012 and Economy Evidence Paper 2013 (2014)

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/1346663/Evidence-Paper-November-2014-Supplement-to-Cotswold-Economy-Study-2012-and-Economy-Evidence-Paper-2013.pdf>

Cotswold District Council Local Plan 2001-11

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/1624728/Previously-Adopted-Local-Plan-2001-2011.pdf>

Cotswold District Council Local Plan 2011-31

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2011-2031/>

Cotswold District Council Local Plan Reg 18 Consultation Development Strategy & Site Allocations (2015)

[https://cotswold.objective.co.uk/portal/fp/local\\_plan\\_2011-2031/lpr18/local\\_plan\\_reg\\_18\\_consultation\\_development\\_strategy\\_and\\_site\\_allocations\\_january\\_2015?pointId=3137977](https://cotswold.objective.co.uk/portal/fp/local_plan_2011-2031/lpr18/local_plan_reg_18_consultation_development_strategy_and_site_allocations_january_2015?pointId=3137977)

Cotswold District Council Preferred Development Strategy

[http://consult.cotswold.gov.uk/portal/fp/local\\_plan\\_2011-2031/development\\_strategy?tab=files](http://consult.cotswold.gov.uk/portal/fp/local_plan_2011-2031/development_strategy?tab=files)

Cotswold District Council Supplementary Planning Guidance for Affordable Housing (2007)

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/280314/Affordable-Housing-SPD-2007.pdf>

Cotswold District Council Supplementary Planning Guidance - Cotswold Water Park (1999)

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/1702022/Cotswold-Water-Park-SPG-%E2%80%93-Nov-1999.pdf>

Cotswold Water Park Biodiversity Action Plan 2007-16

<https://www.waterpark.org/resources-documents/>

Cotswold Water Park Master Plan (2008)

<https://www.waterpark.org/resources-documents/>

Environment Agency Flood Plan

[flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk](http://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk)

Erimax Report - Moving from a PP to an NDP (2012)

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Erimax%20report%20-%20moving%20from%20a%20PP%20to%20an%20NDP.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/Erimax%20report%20-%20moving%20from%20a%20PP%20to%20an%20NDP.pdf)

Gloucestershire County Council Emerging Minerals Plan 2018-2032

<http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s43528/Item%206%20-%20Minerals%20Local%20Plan%202018-2032%20Document.pdf>

Gloucestershire County Council Minerals Plan 1997-2006

[https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/5852/adopted\\_gloucestershire\\_minerals\\_local\\_plan\\_-1997-2006-22433.pdf](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/5852/adopted_gloucestershire_minerals_local_plan_-1997-2006-22433.pdf)

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Survey & Report - Somerford Keynes Parish (2014)

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20NDP%20GCER%20Biodiversity%20Reports.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20NDP%20GCER%20Biodiversity%20Reports.pdf)

Local Green Space Designation - A Toolkit for Local Communities in Cotswold District

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/CDC%20Local%20Green%20Space%20to%20okit.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/CDC%20Local%20Green%20Space%20to%20okit.pdf)

Local Insight Profile for Somerford Keynes CP Area (2019)

<https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2087582/somerford-keynes.pdf>

Localism Network Report - Issues from a PP to Consider in an NDP (2012)

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Localism%20Network%20Report%20-%20issues%20from%20PP%20to%20consider%20in%20NDP.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/Localism%20Network%20Report%20-%20issues%20from%20PP%20to%20consider%20in%20NDP.pdf)

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/807247/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807247/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)

National Planning Policy Guidance (2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (amended 2015)

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/20/pdfs/ukxi\\_20150020\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/20/pdfs/ukxi_20150020_en.pdf)

Outdoor advertisements and signs: A guide for advertisers (DCLG)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/11499/326679.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11499/326679.pdf)



Somerford Keynes Conservation Area Appraisal (2018)

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20Cons%20Area%20Appraisal%20March%202018.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20Cons%20Area%20Appraisal%20March%202018.pdf)

Somerford Keynes Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (2019)

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Habitats%20Regulations%20Assessment%20Screening%20Report%20SK%20v3%20Determination.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/Habitats%20Regulations%20Assessment%20Screening%20Report%20SK%20v3%20Determination.pdf)

Somerford Keynes Housing Needs Survey Report (2015)

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20HNS%202015%20report.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20HNS%202015%20report.pdf)

Somerford Keynes NP - Strategic Environment Assessment Screening Opinion (2016)

[http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20NP\\_SEA%20screening%20opinion\\_V0.1\\_060616.pdf](http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/index_htm_files/Somerford%20Keynes%20NP_SEA%20screening%20opinion_V0.1_060616.pdf)

Somerford Keynes Parish Plan (2012)

<http://www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk/parishplan.htm>

United Kingdom - Water Park - Census Data (2011)

<http://ukcensusdata.com/a-e00112964/b-qs411ew#sthash.W5FyLvq.dpbs>