

*“Congratulations on the exemplary approach to understanding the historic interest and character of the village and the succinct but informative way this is presented in the plan...”*

English Heritage

As we approach the final weeks of working on the Neighbourhood Plan, it is worth celebrating some of the comments that have been part of the statutory consultation. It is common to focus on the problems but I'm pleased to share the above comment because it puts in a nutshell the focus of our work. We want to preserve the historic interest of the village and at the same time look forward and think about our future. To this extent we have decided to include a policy on biodiversity. Natural England encouraged this thinking as they led us to focus on the richness of our rural landscape and the refuge we are and can continue to give to important insects and small animals.

*“.....the detail and thought that has gone into understanding and explaining the landscape character of the parish is welcomed..”*

Oxfordshire County Council – Green Infrastructure

OCC gave us some excellent advice about how to improve our section on landscape as well as giving us the above compliment.

We have spent quite a bit of time discussing traffic and transport issues and they remain key concerns for us. However, other key issues were brought to our attention:

*“We would welcome a reflection within the Neighbourhood Plan that any impact from housing would have a corresponding impact on the practices ability to support their existing population.”*

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS)

The amount of growth in adjoining villages must have begun to increase the local population significantly. I don't see a significant growth in health services. The Oxfordshire Commissioning Group is very concerned that house building will get ahead of health and welfare services. In their comments to us they stated that they feel developers should calculate the expected growth in the population and actively support a corresponding growth in health services. Our population growth is expected to be about 10%, but even that could put increased pressure on the Islip and the Bicester health services: doctors surgeries, dentists, physiotherapy and community care services.

Our concerns about our small village mirror many of the national concerns regarding growth. Recent additions to the NP have included these issues.

We sincerely hope that the next edition of this newsletter will contain an announcement regarding our final submission to Cherwell District Council.