Bledlow-cum-Saunderton

2016 - 2033

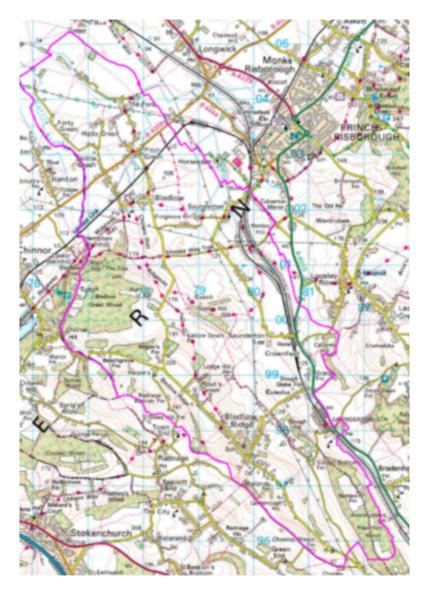
Basic Conditions Statement

Published by Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended.

August 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement has been prepared by Bledlow-cum-Saunderton (BcS) ('the Parish Council') to accompany the submission to the local planning authority, (Wycombe District Council) (WDC), of the BcS Neighbourhood Plan ('the Neighbourhood Plan') under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations").
- 1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council (as the qualifying body) for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Parish area, as designated by Wycombe District Council on 13th October 2015 (see plan A below). The policies described in Section 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan all relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area. It does not contain policies relating to 'excluded development' as defined by, and in accordance with, the Regulations. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 2016 to 2033. The document also contains a number of non-statutory proposals that relate to local planning matters in its Section 6 'Implementation'. Section 64 does not form part of the examined 'neighbourhood development plan' but provides the local community with a comprehensive view of issues that the Parish Council has considered during the preparation of the document.
- 1.3. The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act.
- 1.4. The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:
 - Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan;
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of authority (or any part of that area); and
 - The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU
 obligations.



Plan A: The Designated Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Neighbourhood Area

2. Background

- 2.1. The decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan was made by the Parish Council on the 5th June 2015. The key driver of that decision was a sense of wishing to plan positively for the future of the parish on a range of issues and the encouragement by Wycombe District Council to prepare neighbourhood plans. The Parish Council was also willing to participate in the development of the emerging Local Plan. At the same time, WDC was exploring the option of preparing a Saunderton Area Action Plan to consider whether this village, within the parish, could or should grow in a managed way. The District Council considered Saunderton unique in the District in having a large previously developed 'brownfield' employment/industrial site ('Molins') located on Green Belt land in the Chilterns AONB. The aim of the action plan was to explore possibilities for this site¹. The 'Molins' site is currently defined by policy GB9 of the Wycombe Local Plan as a 'Major Developed Site in the Greenbelt'.
- 2.2. Following the designation of the neighbourhood area in October 2015, the District Council resolved on the 16th November 2015 to abandon the Saunderton Area Action Plan in favour of the community developing proposals for Saunderton, and specifically the 'Molins' Site, within the Neighbourhood Plan. The decision was worded as follows:
 - a) the Saunderton Local Area Action Plan be abandoned in favour of a Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan:
 - b) the principle of established national planning policy of protecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt must be upheld; and
 - c) mixed use developments be actively encouraged within the parish of Bledlow-cum-Saunderton.
- 2.3. The emerging Wycombe Local Plan (Draft for Consultation June 2016) reaffirms the role of the neighbourhood plan in taking forward policies in relation to Saunderton:

'Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council have recently published a draft neighbourhood plan for the parish. This includes a number of proposals for the area, including for the former Molins site at Saunderton. As this site is being addressed in the draft neighbourhood plan the Council is not bringing forward a site proposal for Molins in this draft local plan' (Paragraph 5.5.42)

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¹ Saunderton Village Plan Information Sheet; WDC (July 2016)

- 2.4. Upon designation a Steering Group was formed comprising Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Councillors and members of the local community, and it was delegated authority by the Parish Council to make day to day decisions on the neighbourhood plan. However, as the qualifying body, the Parish Council approved the publication of:
 - a Parish Survey Report in February 2016
 - the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan in May 2016
 - and the Submission Neighbourhood Plan in August 2016
- 2.5. The Parish Council has worked closely with officers of WDC during the preparation of the BcS NP and the positioning of the plan in respect of the emerging Local Plan, and particularly in relation to Policy 3: Molins, South Saunderton. Modifications to the Policy 3 have been incorporated as the plan has progressed following these meetings. With regard to this and the remaining policies in the Plan, they reflect the reasoning and evidence of the emerging Local Plan. Nevertheless, a number of policies in the Wycombe District Council Consolidated Plan (2013) continue to provide a valid policy framework.
- 2.6. There has been very considerable community engagement activity on the Plan. This is laid out in detail in the separate Consultation Statement, which is published as part of the submission documentation. The Steering Group has also benefited from the professional planning advice of planning consultants, RCOH Ltd.
- 2.7. The Neighbourhood Plan contains fourteen land use policies, a Policies Map and 5 Inset maps, which identify where the policies will apply in the neighbourhood area. The Parish Council has deliberately sought to focus policies on the key issues that matter to the local community and to avoid proposing policies that may duplicate national planning guidance and/or development plan policies that are already material considerations in determining future planning applications.

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

- 3.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.
- 3.2. In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

Para 16

3.3. The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively for the development needs of the District, including modest infill development in settlements and rural diversification within the considerable landscape and heritage constraints that apply in the designated area. The emerging Local Plan has made provision for the neighbourhood plan to plan for the Saunderton area and the plan supports mixed use development proposals on a 'major developed site in the Green Belt' which will sustain the character of the area while meeting local needs. It also seeks to improve the quality and sensitivity of development in the area, protect the valued environment and community facilities and promote local employment; all of which will benefit the Parish.

<u>Para 183</u>

3.4. The Neighbourhood Plan establishes a clear vision and objectives for the area that reflects the views of the majority of the local community. It has sought to translate the objectives into a number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development proposals.

<u>Para 184 and 185</u>

3.5. The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan, as is highlighted below, is in general conformity with all the relevant policies of the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (As Saved and Extended (2007); and replaced by the Adopted Core Strategy July 2008 and Delivery and Site Allocations Plan July 2013 – 'The Consolidated Plan'). It is considered to strike a positive balance between the physical and policy constraints of the Parish and the desire to meet local needs. The Council wishes to use the power of neighbourhood planning to secure the unique opportunity

- presented by the Molins site to optimise its potential to contribute to a sustainable vision for the Parish and the wishes of the community.
- 3.6. The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan and other adopted supplementary planning guidance into specific policies for the area. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.
- 3.7. Set out in Table A below, is a summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

Table A: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Conformity Summary

No.	Policy Title	NPPF Ref.	Commentary
1	Spatial Plan for the Parish	15, 28, 50, 55, 89, 110, 115, 126	This policy reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and will guide how development will be delivered over the plan period in line with § 15 and § 28 of the NPPF which establishes the terms by neighbourhood plans can take a positive approach to supporting sustainable rural communities. The policy establishes the principle that modest future growth in the Parish will be directed to within the four proposed settlements. In doing so, it allows for small scale infill development to contribute to a desired mix of housing types (NPPF §50 and §55) and to encourage the contribution of the settlements to being sustainable places to live. It also reflects the importance of the surrounding landscape in defining the historic character of the proposed settlements by confining development beyond the settlement boundaries to that which is appropriate in the countryside (NPPF §110 and §126). Policy 2 and the design guidance of Policies 4-7 will ensure that the effects of new development on the historic landscape (§115) and biodiversity assets (Policy 10) can be managed effectively. In respect of Bledlow Ridge, the policy accords with § 89 which does not preclude the definition of a village envelope, even if a village remains washed over by the Green Belt, which would allow for limited infilling, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan."

2	Development within Settlements	50, 55,	This policy contributes to delivering a wide choice of homes §50 and accords with § 55 of the NPPF in highlighting the importance of sustainable development in rural communities, designed to support services nearby and to discourage where possible, new isolated developments.
3	Molins, South Saunderton	28, 50, 58, 89	This policy is consistent with § 28 and § 50 of the NPPF in contributing to the supply of a mix of residential uses to meet local needs and new employment uses as part of mixed scheme suited to this rural location. It does so by allocating land for these mixed uses within a boundary which encompasses a 'major developed site in the Green Belt' in line with § 89. The policy sets out the key development principles for the site in line with § 58.
4	Design Management in Bledlow Village and Pitch Green	58, 126	This policy accords with § 58 of the NPPF in requiring the design of all development proposals to reflect the local character and countryside of the Parish § 126 states that, "local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets" and the policy acknowledges the conservation area status of Bledlow, and expects development to respond accordingly.
5	Design Management in Bledlow Ridge	58, 87, 115	This policy accords with § 58 of the NPPF in requiring the design of all development proposals to reflect local character § 115 and avoid harm through inappropriate design §
6	Design Management in the Parish	58, 115, 125	This policy accords with § 58 of the NPPF in requiring the design of all development proposals to reflect the local character § 115 and countryside of the Parish, and limit the impact of light pollution on the 'dark skies' which form one of the special qualities of the rural landscape § 125.

7	Sustainable design in the Green Belt	87, 95	Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (§ 87) which this policy supports. It also encourages a response to climate change mitigation and promotes energy efficient design (§ 95)
8	Rural Diversification	28	This policy conforms with Section 3 of the NPPF. In particular, § 28 supports promotion of a strong rural economy, explicitly stating that Neighbourhood Plans should "support sustainable growth through conversion of existing buildings in the rural areas and the development and diversification of agriculture and other land based rural businesses.
9	Employment	23, 28	This policy is consistent with § 23 and § 28 in protecting existing retail uses and promoting rural economic development and flexible start up accommodation within settlements to balance loss of employment land over recent years.
10	Environment	115, 118,	This policy emphasises the importance of all development proposals avoiding harmful impacts on the many designated natural and heritage assets of the parish. The local community recognises that national and development plan policy already offer significant protection to designated assets. § 115 of the NPPF expects "great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty". § 118 states that, "planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by (refusing planning permission where) significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided and development is likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's).

11	Community Facilities	28, 70	This policy accords with § 28 and § 70 of the NPPF by encouraging and enabling the use of existing community facilities in the area through supporting proposals that further this objective, including proposals that sustain or develop facilities to maintain their viability as valued community assets.
12	Bledlow Ridge School	70, 72,	This policy supports development proposals to extend the primary school on land within the school grounds and is in conformity with § 70 and § 72 of the NPPF in providing facilities and services for community needs.
13	Connecting the Parish	43	This policy accords with § 43 of the NPPF, recognising the importance of high quality communications infrastructure that is essential for sustainable economic growth. The NPPF states explicitly that "local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communication networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband".
14	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	17, 91, 93, 97,115	This policy accords with § 17 and §93 and § 97 in supporting renewable and low carbon energy, whilst having regard to the landscape constraints § 115 and other policy constraints in the area § 91. It acknowledges the responsibility on all communities to support renewable energy generation.

4. Contribution to Achieving Sustainable Development

- 4.1. On 20th January 2016, Wycombe District Council determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required for the Neighbourhood Plan under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. However, the basic conditions of 'contributing to the achievement of sustainable development' requires a broader scope of assessment to embrace social and economic, as well as environmental objectives. The Submission Plan has therefore been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which incorporates the requirements of the SEA directive.
- 4.2. The BcS NP SA/SEA Report confirms that the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and balances the needs of the environment with economic and social objectives that have been described in previous sections. This outcome may be inevitable for Neighbourhood Plans prepared in similar planning policy circumstances. If local communities are to back development in this type of location, to the extent they will turn out to vote at a referendum, then they will expect that the environmental assets of the neighbourhood area will be protected from inappropriate development but that this is balanced with clear social and/or economic benefits that will arise from new development. In any event, the planning policy context is such that to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, the Neighbourhood Plan must acknowledge those environmental constraints.

5. General Conformity with the Development Plan

5.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to ensure its general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, that is primarily the strategic policies of the Wycombe District Local Plan (as saved and extended (2007) and replaced by the adopted Core Strategy July 2008 and Delivery and Site allocations plan July 2013). Table C below considers the general conformity with the relevant WDC policies.

	Table B: Neigh	abourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary
No.	Policy Title & Refs	Commentary
1	Spatial Plan for the Parish	The aim of this policy is to direct new housing development to the three established settlements of Bledlow, Pitch Green and South Saunderton and within the extended boundary for Bledlow Ridge. In this respect it accords with Policy CS2 in that it protects rural
	Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations (DSA) Policies: DM1, Core Strategy (CS) Policies:	character while at the same time supporting development that contributes to rural vitality and sustainable development (DM1, CS1) but at an appropriate scale. Hence it is an enabling policy that supports small scale high quality (CS19) infill development whilst protecting the landscape and countryside from encroaching or harmful development (L1, CS7, CS9, GB5, GB6, GB7)
	CS1, CS2, CS7, CS9, CS19 Saved Local Plan (LP) Policies: L1, GB4, GB5, GB6, GB7	The policy is intended to operate in parallel with Policy 2 of the Plan, which sets out the principles for development in these defined settlements. At present, only Bledlow Ridge (a defined settlement in the Green Belt GB4) and the Bledlow Conservation area have defined boundaries.
2	Development within settlements CS Policies: CS12, CS13, CS19 LP Policies: C10, GB4, GB5, GB6, GB7	The existing policy framework provides few opportunities for housing in the parish given the general policy of constraint that applies. The aim of this policy is direct new housing development to the proposed settlements in support of limited infill development and is consistent with policy C10 and GB4, 5, 6 and 7 in Green Belt locations, and contributes modest levels of housing growth across the District (C\$12). The policy focusses on a housing mix which is acknowledged as in short supply (C\$13) and requires design to respects local amenity (C\$19).

3	Molins, South Saunderton DSA Policies: DM1, DM2, DM6, DM11,	The Policy accords with policy GB9 which defines Molins as a 'Major Developed site in the Green Belt'. GB9 supports the partial or complete redevelopment of the site, whether redundant or in continuing use, and opportunities that arise for site enhancements through the better integration of new development with its surroundings and a reduction in the impact of past development on the openness of the Green Belt (CS9).
	DM16, DM13, DM14, DM19 CS Policies: CS1, CS9, CS17, CS15, CS19, CS21	The policy also accords with L1 and CS17 in terms of its potential to moderate its effects on the Chilterns AONB, and compliments policy CS19 and DM6 in requiring high quality and sensitive design which delivers comprehensive development, including an element of business use within the land use mix which in turn supports a balanced community (H9) and includes community facilities (CS15) and open spaces (DM16).
	LP Policies: L1, GB9, H9, G10	The policy requires a range of measures to deliver quality development and the manner by which it relates to its surroundings and contributes to a sense of of place; in this respect it goes considerably further than enabling an isolated single use development. It sets out a comprehensive list of development principles to mitigate any negative effects on landscape character and heritage assets (L1, CS17), biodiversity (DM13, DM14) and transport (DM2) and supports improved connectivity through improvements to green infrastructure (DM11).
		In all respects the purpose is to deliver sustainable development and appropriate type, tenure, access, design, landscape and layout proposals suited to the site characteristics (DM1, CS1) while ensuring a comprehensive approach is taken to financial contributions to local facilities, amenities (DM19) and infrastructure improvements (DM2, CS21).
4	Design Management in Bledlow Village and Pitch Green CS Policies: CS18, CS19	This policy requires all proposals to deliver high quality development that reflects the distinct character within these two proposed settlements in the Parish (CS18, CS19, G3, G10, G11).
	LP Policies: G3, G10, G11, HE2, HE3, HE6, HE8	Given the conservation area status of Bledlow in particular, the policy aligns with heritage requirements of polices HE2, HE3, HE6 and HE8 of the Local Plan.

5	Design Management in Bledlow Ridge CS Policies: CS18, CS19 LP Policies: L1, G3, G7, G10, G11,	This policy requires all proposals to deliver high quality development that reflects the distinct character of Bledlow Ridge a village Inset in the Green Belt (GB4), and requires development to accord with a series of distinctive development principles (CS18, CS19, G3, G7, G10, G11), The policy also acknowledges that the village lies within the Chilterns AONB and therefore the design of any proposals for housing development must be appropriate to an AONB setting and is therefore in line with Local Plan policy L1.
6	Design Management in the Parish DSA Policies: DM14 CS Policies: CS18, CS19 LP Policies: L1, G3, G10, G11, G16	This policy accords with Local Plan Policy G3 and L1 in respect of areas within the Chilterns AONB. Policy G3 is a more general policy covering design expectations throughout the whole District and seeks to ensure a high standard of design and layout that respects and reflects its urban or rural context so as to reinforce local distinctiveness, the principle purpose of of Policy 6. The policy also includes a number of distinct features to inform the landscaping and boundary treatment of development (G10, G11), reducing light pollution (CS18, G16), and as a consequence encouraging biodiversity in new development.
7	Sustainable design in the Green Belt DSA Policies: DM18 CS Policies: CS18, CS19 LP Policies: GB5, GB6	This policy accords with Local Plan Policy GB5 in trying to minimise impacts from redevelopments and/ or extensions in the Green Belt by encouraging these extensions to remain within the existing footprints of the previous development, and in certain circumstances extending the footprint proportionally to what was already there. It also aligns with Policy GB6 in making clear that extending existing building footprints in the Green Belt should be proportionate, by not exceeding adding an additional 50% of the original dwelling. The policy includes a range of measures for the quality of development and how it relates to its surroundings including encouraging high quality (CS19) and passive design to create environmentally efficient homes (DM18).

8	Rural Diversification CS Policies: CS7 LP Policies: C6, C7, C8	This policy accords with Policy C6 and CS7 in support of the diversification of farm enterprises in line with the Districts and local communities desire to promote the rural economy. Local Plan policy also extends to supporting the re-use or adaptation of buildings in the countryside (C7, C8) to promote rural diversification.
9	Employment CS Policies: CS16, CS18 LP Policy: E3	This general policy promotes employment development and start-up businesses and supports improvements of employment sites to improve their operational efficiency by ensuring proposals to intensify or extend existing employment sites are suitable and do not overstretch existing infrastructure (CS16, CS20). In doing so it refines Local Plan policy E3 by indicating principles that are specific to Bledlow-cum-Saunderton.
10	Environment CS Policy: CS17 LP Policies: EL1, G10, G11	The policy accords with Policy L1 regarding AONB and CS17 in terms of the protection of existing environmental assets. It refines policies G10 and G11 as it requires that development should not significantly affect habitats and flora and fauna and encourage environmental enhancements and enjoyment of green spaces by the community.
11	Community Facilities CS Policies: CS1, CS15	The policy supports proposals intended to secure the long term sustainability of a number of community facilities and ancillary land for the local community and to ensure their long term viability. The policy accords with Core Strategy policy CS15 and in terms of its contribution to the 'sustainability' of the parish as a whole, to policy CS1.
12	Bledlow Ridge School CS Policy: CS21 LP Policies: T6	This policy is intended to provide Bledlow Ridge School with the flexibility to create additional teaching space should additional capacity be necessary as a result of development in the area (CS21), whilst ensuring that any growth in pupil numbers has minimal impact on the local highway infrastructure and on highway safety by encouraging sustainable travel (T6).

13	Connecting the Parish LP Policy: G28	This policy supports the improvement of access to superfast (fibre and copper based) broadband infrastructure and services across this very rural Parish and in new development. In doing so, the policy is supportive of above-ground installations requiring planning consent, provided they are sited and designed to accord with a rural location. The policy accords with Local Plan policy on Telecommunications (G28), but acknowledges in the intervening period the significantly greater role broadband access plays in everyday home and work life.
14	Renewable and low carbon energy CS Policy: DM18 LP Policy: L1, G8	This policy is intended to provide additional support (beyond current permitted development rights) for small scale renewable generation, including farm based installations) whilst acknowledging the significant landscape constraints of the Chilterns AONB and the landscape character of the remaining parish beyond the AONB boundary. In this respect it accords with policy DM16 whilst acknowledging the landscape implications (L1) and potential impact on local amenity where planning consent is
		necessary (G8).

6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

- 6.1. A screening opinion was issued by Wycombe District Council confirming that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment, as the Neighbourhood Plan was expected to contain policies that may have environmental effects. The Parish Council has chosen to incorporate the SEA into a wider Sustainability Appraisal (SA). A separate Environment Report containing the appraisal has been prepared for the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan that demonstrates its policies will have no significant social, economic or environmental effects.
- 6.2. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan falls within the zones of influence of the Chilterns Beechwoods and Ashton Rowant Special Areas of Conservation, Wycombe District Council have concluded in their Screening Opinion (August 2016) that the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects on any Natura 2000 sites alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and an Appropriate Assessment for the Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan is not required.

6.3. The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act.

7. Equality Statement

- 7.1. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not.
- 7.2. The Plan has been prepared with the benefit of the local community in mind and applies equally to all residents in the Neighbourhood Area, irrespective of any protected characteristic. From an equality perspective, the vision, objectives and policies in the Plan are overall "neutral" and none would have a negative impact on any group with protected characteristics.
- 7.3. The Plan and all communication related to the Plan have been written or orally communicated in English. It has not been considered necessary to translate any communication into any other language due to the demographics of the parish (see Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish: 2011 Census data).
- 7.4. Bledlow-cum-Saunderton is a large rural parish, made up of three wards, with no "main village" to act as a focal point. The geographic structure of the parish has been taken into account when selecting the initiatives and means of communication / consultation.