



## **This is the Hanborough Parish Council response to WODC’s “Preferred Spatial Options (Oct 2025) re: West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043” - Dec 2025**

### **Background (WODC statement)**

This is the fourth stage of consultation on our new Local Plan, building on the conversations we’ve had with you since autumn 2022. Your feedback has made a real difference, and this is another important opportunity to have your say.

Although the structure of local government in Oxfordshire is set to change, the Local Plan we are developing now will not be lost or set aside. Once adopted, it will carry forward into the new arrangements and continue to guide future planning decisions. This means that the views you share now will have a lasting impact, helping to shape how the new authority manages growth and protects our communities.

This matters because the Local Plan is about much more than planning policy – it’s about how our towns and villages will look, feel and function for years to come. It’s about where new homes, jobs and community facilities go, and how we protect what’s special about West Oxfordshire so future generations can thrive here. So, it’s vital that the decisions we take now reflect your views.

**National Planning Policy requires WODC to prepare a plan that delivers 905 homes a year from now until 15 years after it has been approved.** As that’s likely to be in 2027, this means over 16,000 homes by 2043. WODC does not have any real choice in this, but **we do have a choice in what homes are built, and where.** While National Policy sets overall housing requirements, West Oxfordshire District Council retains control over the location, type, quality and phasing of development to ensure it reflects local priorities and infrastructure capacity. **This consultation focuses on the “where”.**

### **Factors to consider:**

**Tier 2 Service Centre Classification** - We (HPC) remain steadfast in our objection to the Tier 2 Service Centre classification for Long Hanborough – **see *previous response to Preferred Policies Consultation***. In our view, this classification significantly overstates the range and capacity of services and facilities available in the village and does not accurately reflect its ability to sustainably accommodate further large-scale growth.

Designating Long Hanborough as a Tier 2 Service Centre risks:

- Attracting disproportionate levels of development that is unable to cope with.
- Placing unsustainable pressure on already limited services, amenities and infrastructure.
- Undermining the rural character of the village.
- Compromising the quality of life for current and future residents by the creation of separate communities at both the western and eastern ends of Long Hanborough.
- Compromising the status of Pinsley Wood as an Ancient Woodland and destroying rare flora and fauna habitats.
- Overextending the size / length of the village to encroach upon other surrounding villages such as Freeland and Bladon.

It is evident from the Spatial Options plan that Hanborough train station carries significant weight in the classification of Hanborough as a Tier 2 Service Centre. **Our *previous response (see Public Transport Services)*** demonstrates the inadequacy of the train station and its limitations (single line and platform) much of which require significant investment to rectify. It is apparent from the recent OCC consultation and OxRail policy that the development needed is not planned for and therefore further large-scale development in the village will only exacerbate the problems existing commuters face, never mind future residents. It is also evident from census data and our Hanborough Transport

Survey that residents using public transport is lower than other Tier Two Service Centres such as Eynsham and Woodstock. **The train station is not a sustainable reason for growth. To help us understand and justify** WODC classification, the criteria and scoring system used needs to be made more available to the public. **This needs to be made public ASAP.**

**Under WODCs scoring system Burford** (Tier 2), a fully-fledged service town with a secondary school, library, fire station, dozens of shops, a huge garden centre and a thriving local economy scores the same “shop” points (2) as **Long Hanborough**, with a Co-op and a part-time bicycle shop. **This put simply, is senseless.**

We therefore urge WODC to **reconsider this categorisation for Long Hanborough** and adopt a more realistic classification that reflects the village’s actual capacity and infrastructure **i.e. a large village or Tier 3 Settlement.**

**HPC has used a more defined scoring system for estimating Tier Settlement size such as South Oxfordshire / Vale DCs methods rather than WODC**

Using this system, we estimate that **Long Hanborough on average scores around 100** (by 8 independent scorers). **Scores of 191+ designate Tier 2 Settlements.** (see Appendix 1 for a scoring example).

**Basingstoke and Dean Local Plan or another way of defining Category / Tier 3 Settlements**

Here they define Category 2 and 3 differently again to South Oxon and indeed less precisely. Bramley and Kingsclere have very similar characteristics in many ways to Long Hanborough and therefore are a good comparison. They are clearly categorised as a Tier 3 Settlements. **See Appendix 2.**

**This strongly suggests that LH is a Tier 3 Settlement.**

**WODCs Local Plan spatial strategy states and recognises:**

Long Hanborough is classified as a Tier 2 Service Centre and the Spatial Strategy therefore acknowledges that the settlement is suitable for a proportionate level of growth appropriate to its size and to support its local service function, with a particular emphasis on good public transport accessibility. Large Villages are defined as those with populations above 1000.

The Council acknowledges that Long Hanborough has been subject to quite significant growth since 2011 which has altered the character of the settlement in certain locations and although some investment has been made in infrastructure to support new development, there are existing issues with transport, utilities and community infrastructure that need to be resolved with any future plans for the community. An example is the A4095, this is Hanborough’s main artery and in recent years West Oxfordshire’s too. The congestion and sheer number of vehicles using this route has tripled over the last ten years.

Developments at Olivers Garage, Church Road, south of Hanborough Station and south of Witney Road to the west of the village have been completed and there is a further scheme for 150 dwellings that has been approved but is yet to commence.

The latest housing proposal for Long Hanborough the preferred spatial option is considered to be consistent with the Local Plan spatial strategy, as it focuses development at Hanborough station and therefore seeks to maximise opportunities for use of rail infrastructure. It should be noted that HPC consider it vital that ANY new developments within the village should be seen to be inclusive within the villages’ fabric! Some feedback from residents at Hanborough Park states that they feel isolated from the village amenities.

It should also be recognised however, that this location has a number of environmental and heritage sensitivities, relating to its proximity to the Ancient Woodland at Pinsley Wood and its historic landscape character. Development in this location will need to be planned and phased in such a way that it protects and enhances the settlement character of Long Hanborough, contributes to nature recovery and natural capital within the site and adjoining area and is supported by necessary investment in infrastructure.

Hanborough Railway Station has the highest volume of passenger numbers of any station in West Oxfordshire (286,402 in 2023/34). Passenger numbers grew from around 119,000 in 2011 to 271,000 in 2016 and are at an all-time high. Accessibility to the station is an issue, particularly in terms of constrained car parking availability and poor integration with other forms of public transport such as bus provision.

Waste Water treatment capacity at Hanborough is a significant issue to be resolved affecting the health and wellbeing of communities and the natural environment. Church Hanborough Sewage Treatment works currently has no capacity to accommodate additional flows arising from new development and has been operating outside its permit in recent years.

It states that Hanborough is relatively well served with infrastructure such as schools, GP surgeries shops etc.

**The Plan proposes that Long Hanborough can take up to 300 houses. The land indicated for such development is on two and a half fields between Pinsley Wood and the railway line and adjacent to Lower Road where the entrance would be and opposite Mill Farm on the other side of the road. The main two fields are presently owned by Blenheim Estates. The remaining land is presently owned by a sheep farmer who resides in Witney.**

**Scale of development of up to 300 Houses** – The draft local plan refers to proportionate growth throughout but does not state what proportionate growth is. However, 300 homes would further increase the number of households in the village by **18%** (a cumulative **increase of 31.7%** over the 2021 census data). This 18% growth in housing numbers would still represent **nearly double the 10% “reasonable” threshold** cited by a WODC planning officer at the Hanborough consultation event on July 2nd, 2025. Given there is already growth of 10% planned for Hanborough in the North Field development outside of the current Local Plan we feel that any further development in the New Local Plan 2041 should be kept to a maximum of **3-5% for Hanborough. We request that WODC define “proportionate growth” explicitly within the Local Plan. NB We previously asked WODC to define this in the last consultation “Preferred Policies Options”.**

**To illustrate this clearly:**

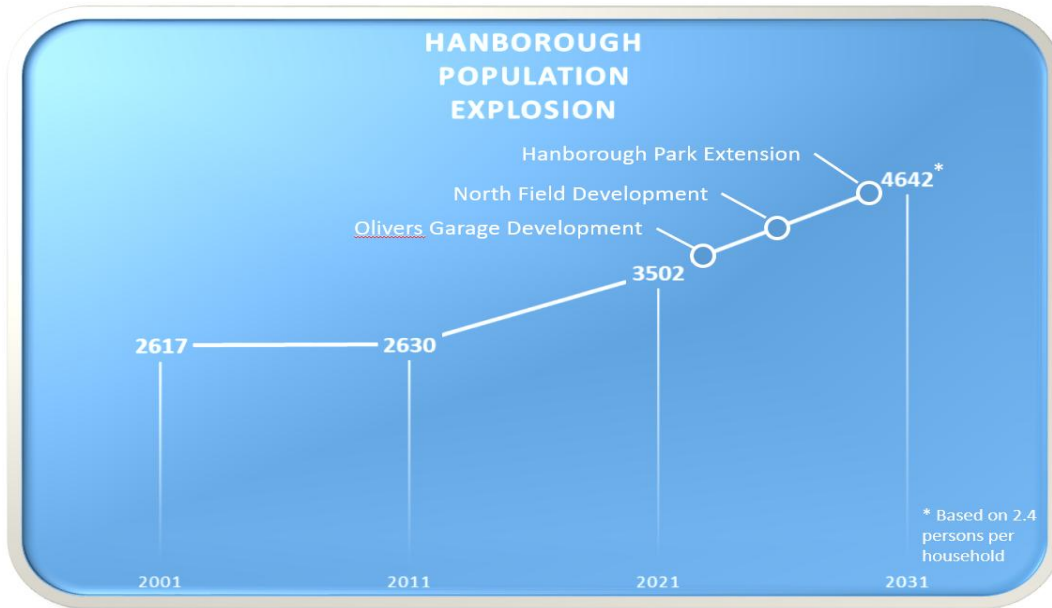
- A 5% population increase from a baseline of 3925 (#) equates to **118-196 people**, or approximately **49-81 new homes at the very most**;
- This figure must be viewed in the context of the **exceptional growth** Long Hanborough has already absorbed since 2011;
- Even this level of growth would only be acceptable if matched by timely and substantial investment in local infrastructure and services (e.g. The village’s existing water and sewage supplies cannot sustain the already-approved additional 150 houses on the North Field site adjacent to the Hanborough Gate development, never mind an additional 300 houses proposed at the other end of the village).

Unlike its neighbours, Hanborough has experienced disproportionately rapid growth (see Hanborough Population Explosion below) without a matching increase in local services — indeed, some amenities have declined e.g. there were two garages serving fuel and car maintenance services now there is only one and there were 4 pubs now there are just two.

Population density is also unusually high: 392 people per km<sup>2</sup> in Long Hanborough and its surroundings, compared with Woodstock's 268, and Burford's 73.

# 2021 census data (3502) plus Olivers Garage (60) & North Field (360) = 3925

**“Hanborough Population Explosion”**



**Hanborough**

**Census/Population**

2011/2630  
2021/3502

Up 872 or **33%**

**By contrast Woodstock**

2011/3100  
2021/3503

Up 420 or **14%**

Whilst in the whole of West Oxon the increase is only **9%** over the same period. Hence Hanborough is running at 4x West Oxon rate and would appear to bear the brunt of population increases in the area to date.

To add to Long Hanborough woes:

Since the 2021 Census, the village has continued to grow, with completion of 25 houses at Oliver's Garage. Two sets of 5-8 flats have been established at the west end of Long Hanborough near the Recreation Hall. Planning permission has now been granted for 150 new homes at North Field, west of the village, on the A4095. If we add the additional 300 houses being proposed based on an average occupancy of 2.4 persons per household, this will bring the local population to ~ **4600 residents. This represents a 75% increase in populous in 20 years.**

**Location** – The key factors to consider regarding the proposed site are:

1. Damaging effects to the rural landscape and setting of the village, leading to further sprawl of the built-up area and extenuating the linear extension of the village. The site would sit adjacent to the proposed Solar Farm (Botley West) or indeed on top of it as the same fields are presently proposed for solar panel occupancy (**see Appendix 3**). **The governments inspectors examining the credibility of Botley West Solar Farm state that any housing should be at least 250 metres away from solar panels, which thus negates the use of much of the allocated field space for housing.** Additionally, it would then run right into the Salt Cross development. Significant and irreversible effects to biodiversity and wildlife, the site sits within the wildlife corridor identified by Hanborough's emerging Neighbourhood Plan and **is home to the largest badger sett in Oxfordshire**, as well as many deer, rare bats, other animals and birds from the adjacent Pinsley Wood which was part of the former ancient Wychwood Forest;
2. The proximity to an ancient woodland (Pinsley Wood) and the effects this would have on biodiversity. It would also affect the wellbeing of residents. ***The Spatial Options plan refers to the protection of woodland and this site would contradict that policy;***
3. Connectivity – the location would be at the furthest point from central village amenities. Residents would not be able to walk or cycle to these amenities within the 10-minute parameter WODC has set as a preference. The location would isolate residents from the central village community and thereby cause more use of cars;
4. Access to the site would be from Lower Road which has obvious limitations and restrictions such as the railway bridge and narrowing of the road. It is a very busy and dangerous (heavy goods vehicles travelling at speed) road to cycle from to get to central village facilities;
5. The plan refers to avoiding flood risk areas. The site proposed is prone to severe flooding (see picture in Appendix 4) which would also likely impact Lower Road and would result in restricted access to the site.
6. The development will damage the landscape as viewed from the top of Station Hill towards the Evenlode River.

**We therefore conclude:**

1. **WODC must reconsider the definition of Long Hanborough in terms of Settlement size i.e. that the village be reduced from a Tier 2 Settlement back to a large village (a Tier 3 Settlement) and provide concrete objective evidence to support any classification as Tier 2.**
2. **WODC must reduce the housing allocation for Long Hanborough in line with its true settlement size. It must accept that the North Field development of 150 houses already given planning permission but not yet built, should be taken into account as part of Long Hanborough's allocation as this is not part of the current Local Plan or the new 2043 Local Plan. Therefore, Hanborough should not expect more than a 3-5% housing allocation in addition i.e. 49-80 houses max.**
3. **WODC must also respect the fact that Hanborough Parish has taken significantly of West Oxfordshire housing development over the past 10+ years compared to other towns and villages in the area.**

4. **WODC must recognise that there has been negligible improvement in infrastructure capacity to support additional developments (particularly sewage systems) and in certain amenities, a reduction.**
5. **WODC should explain how and why the land shown in the Preferred Strategic Spatial Option (K) has been doubly allocated for houses and solar panels i.e. Botley West Solar Farm.**
6. **WODC should recognise that Long Hanborough will have three Tier 2 Settlements within 3 miles i.e. Eynsham, Woodstock and the soon to be built, Salt Cross Garden Village along with their superior services and facilities.**

**Final message:**

***Please listen and understand, Hanborough has had enough and we cannot take any more.***

## Appendix 1

### Long Hanborough Tier Settlement Grouping by South Oxon District Scoring System

The scoring system can be found at:

[https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/Topic Paper Settlement Assessment and Hierarchy Jan 2024.pdf](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/Topic_Paper_Settlement_Assessment_and_Hierarchy_Jan_2024.pdf)

#### Brief explanatory notes:

##### **Services and Facilities**

The settlement assessment scores the settlements according to the level of services and infrastructure in the area. We weighted the scores for some service/facilities to reflect the relative importance of each facility, because some services are more essential and used more frequently than others. For example, schools and supermarkets are important facilities that reduce the need to travel by car and support the vitality of the local community. Other facilities such as a village hall or a recreation ground are not weighted as heavily as they do not contribute as significantly to people's day to day needs or reduce the need to travel, although they do contribute to the social objective of sustainable development.

##### **Proximity**

An analysis of each settlements' proximity to major employment locations and higher tier settlements (including outside of the districts i.e. Oxford, Reading and Swindon) based on accessibility within a 20 minute (10 minute each way) walk, cycle, or public transport journey time, was undertaken and this was used to create a proximity score.

##### **Connectivity**

Each settlement was given a score based on its connectivity, which was assessed based on the frequency/availability of public transport.

##### **Calculating the final score for each settlement**

The final score for each settlement was calculated by summing:

- Weighted facilities score + broadband score
- Connectivity score
- Proximity score

#### **MIKES e.g. SETTLEMENT SCORE**

|                            | <b><u>Score</u></b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Station                    | 20                  |
| Buses                      | 10                  |
| Proximity                  | 7                   |
| Nursery n=2                | 4                   |
| Primary School             | 3                   |
| GP surgery                 | 4                   |
| Dentist surgery            | 2                   |
| Pharmacy                   | 2                   |
| Shops n=5                  | 20                  |
| Restaurants/cafes/pubs n=3 | 6                   |
| Takeaways                  | 2                   |
| Post Office                | 1                   |
| Village halls n=3          | 3                   |
| Churches n=2               | 2                   |
| Sports clubs n=3           | 3                   |
| Sports pitches n=4         | 4                   |
| Playgrounds n=3            | 3                   |
| MUGAs                      | 1                   |
| Broadband                  | 4                   |

**Total score = 101 (total scores above 191+ reflect Tier Settlement 2)**

## Appendix 2

### Basingstoke and Dean Local Plan or another way of defining Category / Tier 3 Settlements

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/64504/Settlement%20Study%20-%20Part%201.pdf>

#### Category 3: Small Local Service Centres

The settlements identified as Small Local Service Centres are Bramley, Kingsclere. Each have access to all the identified Key Services and Facilities which are valued by the community and provide support to communities within the wider Parish, however they contain more limited options for education, healthcare and leisure services and facilities than the Large Local Service Centres. These settlements also provide a level of sustainable transport provision which is considered to provide a realistic alternative to the private vehicle (running Monday to Saturday as minimum). In respect of employment opportunities, Kingsclere and Bramley are all located within close proximity to Strategic Employment Areas which enhance the economy.

#### **Bramley and Kingsclere meet the characteristics of Category 3 in respect of population and service and facility provision as defined by the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan.**

They have populations of 2,930 and 3430 residents and contain Key Services and Facilities that meet all four identified day-to-day functions (community hall, a convenience shop; a post office, primary education and a Public House), in addition to the following amenities:

- Choice of other shops or services
- A GP surgery and a pharmacy
- A dentist
- A place of worship;
- Recreation ground/sports pitches; A bus service running at least once a day Monday to Saturday connecting to Basingstoke Town;

Whilst secondary schools are within 8 km from the settlement and the villages are served by a school bus. Kingsclere is also within an accessible distance (8 km) of indoor sports and leisure facilities (Tadley). In addition to the above, the settlement also contains a library. The settlement also contains a Strategic Employment Area at Kingsclere Park. Bramley also contains a mainline railway station and a Strategic Employment Area (Campbell Court).

## Appendix 3

Long Hanborough is subject to development proposals being put forward in the emerging WODC Local Plan 2043. The land being offered for housing development conflicts with the Botley West Solar Farm order limits.

The attached maps show the area between Hanborough Railway Station and Pinsley Wood; west of Lower Road.

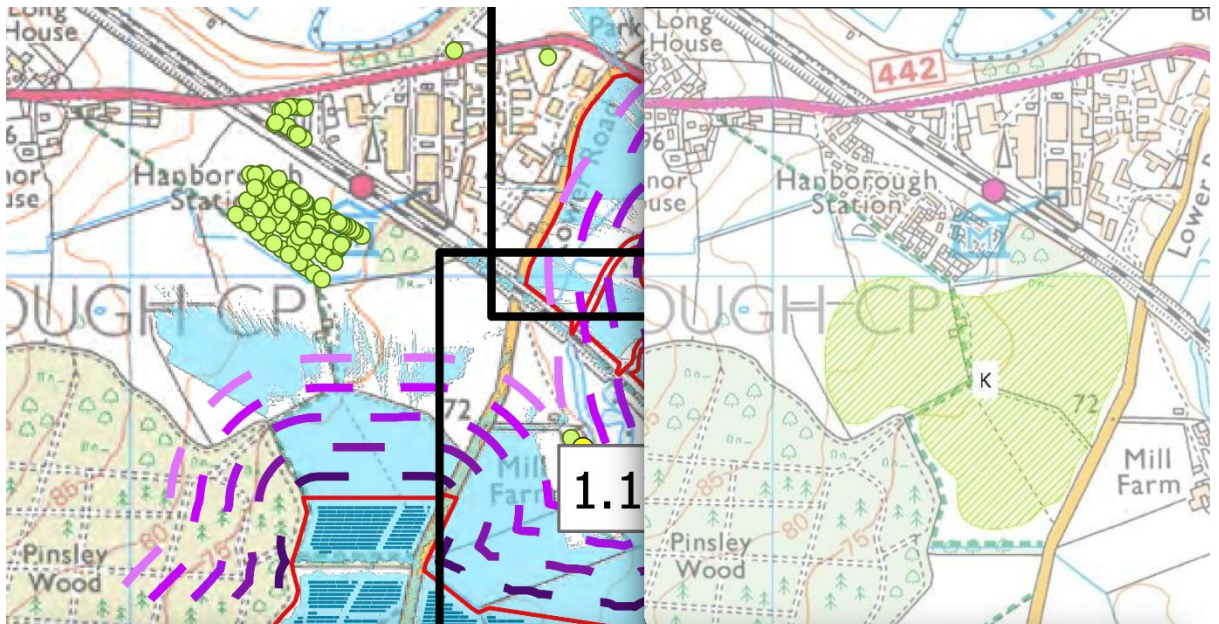
ON THE RIGHT MAP: The developer has offered the area of land marked 'K' on the maps for development of up to 300 houses. The two fields adjacent to Lower Road are owned by Blenheim and the remaining field is owned by another party (all TBC).

ON THE LEFT MAP: The land included in Botley West Solar application showing the red line boundary (order limit), various panel buffers 50m-250m and the Solar Panels - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) shown in light blue.

The attached photograph below shows the view across the map area looking to the south east with Pinsley Wood on the right; Burleigh Wood on the left.

**Points to note re the solar proposal:**

- The land offered for housing overlaps into the order limits of Botley West
- The land offered for housing overlaps the proposed positions of solar panels and other infrastructure
- Ignoring the 'double counting', any houses built on the land marked 'K' will be directly adjacent to Botley West
- The south field regularly floods every winter and standing water usually remains in the southerly portion of the field for weeks each year
- The land is directly adjacent to the ancient woodland area at Pinsley Wood
- The open farmland and meadows between Pinsley Wood and Burleigh Wood form part of the wildlife corridor between the areas of ancient woodland in the Evenlode Valley
- The proposals show disregard for the coalescence of development proposals across the area (Salt Cross, Botley West & other housing proposals being put forward)





Shows a **visionary wildlife corridor around Hanborough** inside the marked waymarks (red line) i.e. from Gibbot's Hill near Cogges, Witney eastwards to Pinsley Wood, Burleigh Wood and then following the River Evenlode on the north side westwards via Mill Wood/Abel Wood and on to North Leigh Common.



Shows the view across the map area looking to the south east with Pinsley Wood on the right; Burleigh Wood on the left.

## Appendix 4

Shows flooding in one of two fields off Lower Road and directly adjacent to Pinsley Wood which has been allocated for house building in Long Hanborough by WODC in the 2043 Local Plan for West Oxfordshire. Today, Wednesday 10th December 2025 the flooding in field is considerably worse than that shown in the present picture.

