



Update of Goring Neighbourhood Plan

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1. Introduction

The Goring Neighbourhood Plan (GNP) was Made in July 2019 and its period is 2018–2033. The GNP policies are aligned with the SODC Local Plan (LP2035).

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council (GPC) seeks to appoint a Consultancy Company (the Consultant) to update the GNP - adding a Design Code, taking account of the Goring-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) and ensuring the GNP remains compliant with current national and local planning policy, reflects changing local circumstances, and continues to provide a robust framework for guiding sustainable development within the parish.

The update will involve material modifications which do not change the nature of the GNP but which would require an examination but not a referendum.

The Consultant will be responsible for managing the process for GPC, liaising with GPC, and will update/produce all required documents through to the updated plan being examined and adopted by the planning authority.



2. Goring-on-Thames – overview

The Parish of Goring-on-Thames is a special and distinct location lying in the Goring Gap (see map at www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/2015-09-16-Goring-Parish-Boundary-Map.pdf) a landscape of national significance. The River Thames flows along the western boundary of the parish with its resulting flood plains. The parish is completely within the Chilterns National Landscape and is overlooked by the North Wessex National Landscape. It is the crossing point for 3 national trails. Goring has extensive coverage of mature trees planted in Victorian times and several areas of open green space used for recreation and sports. Residents and tourists are attracted by the surrounding landscape and views across the Goring Gap, the attractive bridge crossing and weir between Goring and Streatley and the historic village centre

The village of Goring has a railway station, primary school, medical centre, church, village hall, library, community centre, 2 remaining village pubs, shops and numerous sports, recreation and other clubs. The Conservation Area Appraisal of the village was published in January 2026 - www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/sites/2/2026/01/Goring-WIP-adopted.pdf and there are 27 listed buildings and over 80 non-designated historic assets.

On the southern edge of the Parish is the historic hamlet of Gatehampton, with its iconic Brunel Bridge and views from the nearby Hartslock Nature Reserve. Gatehampton, of archaeological significance, also contains a Conservation Area but there has been no appraisal made of it.

The Goring Neighbourhood Plan and the CAA outline the history of Goring and how the village has expanded and developed over the ages.

Goring languished during the 17C and 18C but became prosperous again in the 19C when the railway arrived and boating on the river became popular. Extensive Victorian and Edwardian 'suburbs' of red brick mansions and villas with slate roofs developed around the earlier village core. Today, many of these have been converted to flats, or demolished and replaced by small modern estates. Modern developments have filled in some previously extensive gardens. Many of the remaining Victorian/Edwardian buildings demonstrate period features and reflect the popular 'Arts and Craft' style. Higher density modern houses have progressively been built as the village has expanded out from the centre. The village has expanded, in particular:

- east of the railway line and north of the conservation area has developed with 20C mixed residential development and small infills and garden developments
- several pockets of 1960s and 1970s housing estates and small, infill 'cul de sacs' have been developed outside of the village centre.

Due to its erratic growth rate and varying economic fortunes, Goring's built environment does not fall neatly into well-defined character areas. The CAA identified three character areas within the Goring conservation area, largely defined by age of development, curtilage size and density rather than architectural character. The remainder of the village, essentially wrapped around the conservation area could be considered in a similar same way.

As well as the village of Goring and hamlet of Gatehampton the parish includes various isolated rural properties such as farms and dwellings.



3. Current Goring Neighbourhood Plan

The Goring Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, undertook the Regulation 14 consultation, collated and analysed the results and published them on <https://sites.google.com/goringplan.co.uk/home/>. Some of the evidence and the impact on key areas of the Plan was summarised in topic papers. – see <https://sites.google.com/goringplan.co.uk/home/evidence-and-topic-papers>. Once the GNP moved into Regulation 16, the responsibility and ownership of documents transferred to SODC.

The made GNP and all associated documents including the Sustainability Appraisal, Consultation Statement, Basic Conditions Statement, SEA Screening Statement, Examiner’s Amended Report and Area Designation Map can be found via SODC’s website:

www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/emerging-neighbourhood-plans/goring-neighbourhood-plan/

The Policies and Actions include housing number, infill, housing mix and affordable housing, conserving landscape and biodiversity, and building design. It commits to “approximately 94 new houses” on 5 allocated sites (GNP2, GNP3, GNP6, GNP8 and GNP10) in the life of the Plan.

The Parish Council’s Neighbouring Plan Monitoring Annual Report covers the status of the 20 policies and 10 Actions as at May 2025 – see

www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Appendix-Q-1.pdf

34 houses (GNP2 and GNP3) have been built and 3 (Triangle, part of GNP6) approved. A planning application for 44 (GNP6, Springhill Rd) has received permission but awaits completion of a S106 agreement while a “reserve site” (GNP8, in Gatehampton Road) is also awaiting planning approval. The 5th site (GNP10, village centre) is allocated for 14 dwellings and is currently in commercial use.

There is a Conservation Area Appraisal for Goring published in Jan 2026 (link in Section 2 above).

There is no current Design Code or Guide. A printed *Goring-on-Thames Village Design Statement* was produced in 2011 by the now defunct Amenity Association. They planned to produce a pared down version as web pages but this never came to fruition. Their draft of this is available at

www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Village-Design-Statement-DRAFT-2011.pdf

4. Scope of update

The primary purpose of the update is to produce a Design Code and integrate it and the CAA into the GNP policies and supporting text and to ensure that the GNP remains compliant with current national and local planning policy. Also to update the Actions and Strategic projects summarised in Section 14 of the GNP to reflect progress and changes since the Plan was adopted in 2018, and to ensure the GNP continues to provide a robust framework for guiding sustainable development within the parish. No work to identify new sites for housing is required.



4.1. Goring Neighbourhood Plan

The update will:

- integrate the Design Code and the Goring-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) into the GNP policies and supporting text
- introduce material changes to existing policies and supporting text where necessary
- ensure that policies are compliant with current national planning policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- maintain general conformity with the adopted Development Plan for the area, including the relevant Local Plan(s)
- be legally robust and capable of passing independent examination
- be brought into force through the appropriate statutory process without the requirement for a further local referendum (where this is supported by the planning authority and the independent examiner).

There will be no additional housing site allocations or additional houses above those in the current GNP.

4.2. Design Code

The Design Code will:

- be a key reference document for the council's Planning Committee and SODC planners and to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners through all stages of design and planning to achieve high quality and sustainable developments in the Parish of Goring-on-Thames.
- provide practical, locally specific design criteria to guide new development in ways that respect the character, heritage, and environmental quality of the parish.
- conform with and add a parish context to the SODC/Vale of the White Horse DC Joint Design Guide and Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.
- integrate with and supplement the Goring Neighbourhood Plan and the Goring-on-Thames Conservation Area appraisal.
- be extensive and inform and underpin all future developments in the village, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings.
- include a table of design Codes and be structured and easy to use with examples, diagrams and illustrations.
- define the design approach that developments will be expected to follow in conformity with the Joint Design Guide but reflecting the uniqueness of the parish and include (but not be limited to) the following:
 - Design principles, densities and policies that are consistent with those defined in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Conservation Area Appraisal
 - General Design Codes that apply to all areas of the parish and specific Design Codes that are applicable to certain geographic or other character areas
 - Design principles that:
 - are consistent with Goring-on-Thames' character and context
 - recognise the unique environment and landscape of the parish in line with the existing Neighbourhood Plan policies



- respect the local look, feel and layout and are consistent with the existing street scene and frontage where present
- describe a build form where scale and mass reflect neighbouring properties with appropriate height, roof pitch, windows, build materials and privacy
- incorporate appropriate boundary treatments, trees and vegetation
- encourage energy-efficient building fabric and renewable energy integration
- prioritise walking and cycling (active travel) within the village

5. Details of work expected

The following should be included and costed into the Consultant's submission:

5.1. Project inception and management and monitoring:

- a project plan and timetable showing the proposed timeline aligned with statutory stages and any requirements/dependencies on the Council
- ongoing project management, including an inception meeting to agree project scope and methodology, communication arrangements, regular progress updates and attendance at agreed meetings (in person or virtual)
- produce and keep updated a project forecast outlining any risks or overruns that impact the project timescale or costs
- the Consultant will report to the Council's nominated contact.
- all key decisions will be made by the Council, and the Consultant will be expected to work collaboratively with councillors, officers, volunteers, and stakeholders.

5.2. Production of Design Code

- an outline of any proposed consultation with the community or other key stakeholders
- an outline of the Design Code showing the proposed format and extent of the document and how it will dovetail with the Goring Neighbourhood Plan and Goring Conservation Area appraisal, and how it will build on the SODC Design Guide and Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.

5.3. Review of current GNP

- review the current Plan in detail
- identify policies that require updating or replacement, and those that require material modification to ensure policy compliance
- advise the Council on the appropriate statutory process for a material modification without referendum

5.4. Policy review

- review relevant national planning policy and guidance
- review the adopted and emerging Local Plan and other relevant strategies
- update the policies and supporting text in the GNP to reflect latest national and local planning policy



- update the Plan text and policies to introduce compliance with the Goring Conservation Area Appraisal and the Design Code

5.5.Community and stakeholder engagement

- prepare a proportionate community engagement strategy
- support the Council in meeting its consultation obligations, including Regulation 14 consultation
- prepare agreed consultation materials and summaries
- analyse consultation responses and prepare consultation statements as required

5.6.Drafting the Updated the GNP

- ensure that the GNP does not introduce changes to site allocations, number of houses or housing needs while allowing for material updates to policies where justified
- produce a revised GNP incorporating clearly identified updates and modifications to existing policies and supporting text
- clearly explain the scope and nature of the updates within the Plan
- ensure policies remain clearly worded, justified by proportionate evidence, and implementable
- prepare or update supporting documents to reflect the updates
- take full responsibility for producing the updated GNP and all associated documents, ready for consultation, submission, and examination

5.7. Liaise with the Parish Council, SODC and other statutory consultees as appropriate

- GPC will appoint a lead contact and small Steering Group to oversee the project from the start and through to examination and adoption by the local planning authority (SODC)
- liaise and participate with the GPC Steering Group at least monthly to ensure the project is on track and that any issues are intercepted and actioned in a timely manner
- liaise with SODC and GPC as required through the whole assignment, preparing required reports/assessments where necessary
- liaise with other statutory consultees (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Chilterns Conservation Board) as appropriate

5.8.Submission and examination support

- prepare the Submission (Regulation 15) version of the updated GNP and accompanying documents
- support the Council during the independent examination, including responding to examiner queries and assisting with any required modifications
- advise the Council on the most appropriate statutory process to bring the updated GNP into force, in accordance with legislation and examiner recommendations

5.9.Deliverables (all documents should be provided in an agreed electronic format suitable for publication)

- project inception, regular review notes and formal progress reports (at least monthly)



- detailed programme plan, updated monthly
- monthly risk analysis and project financial and timescale forecast
- draft updated GNP for consultation
- consultation analysis
- Regulation 14 consultation materials and consultation statement
- submission version of the updated GNP and Regulation 15 documents
- examination support materials and final amended GNP

6. Submission Requirements

The Parish Council seeks a full response from consultancy companies by 1st March 2026 in time to consider approval of a preferred contractor at the Council meeting scheduled for 9 March 2026.

The following information should be included:

- Detailed of scope of services and programme
- A clear fee proposal, including a breakdown of costs, assumptions and exclusions
- Confirmation of availability
- The supplier's terms and conditions that will apply to this contract
- Documentation received by the Parish Council will be in commercial confidential and will not be copied to any other consultancy company.

We are looking for a consultant with:

- Proven experience of preparing Design Codes and of preparing or updating Neighbourhood Plans that have successfully passed examination
- A strong understanding of national and local planning policy
- Experience of community engagement and consultation
- An understanding of the brief and proposed methodology
- Appropriate professional qualifications and experience and a multidisciplinary team where required

Responses should be addressed to clerk@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk & m.stares@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk and specify that the email relates to the 'Goring Neighbourhood Plan Update'.

Any questions regarding the above brief, or questions of a more general nature, should be addressed to clerk@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk & m.stares@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk

To ensure a level playing field for all companies questions will be answered formally and copied to all consultancy companies without identifying the source of the question.

Costs incurred by the Consultancy Company prior to a formal contract being placed by the Parish Council will be not be recoverable from the Council.