Policy Title:

LP9 - Charfield Village Extensions

Existing Policies Which adopted Core Strategy or Policies Sites and Places (PSP) policy would eventually be replaced	**NEW**
Non-Strategic / Strategic	**Non-Strategic**

Purpose

Policy LPS2 - Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire makes provision for a significant expansion of Charfield village, comprising 775 dwellings and supporting infrastructure. New homes, facilities and open space will extend east of New Street to the Little Avon River and on land around the southwest of the village from the Wotton Road to Little Bristol Lane. This new housing will benefit from the new rail station expected to open in 2027 and provide funding for a major expansion and refurbishment of the primary school, as well as extensive areas of new public open space and provision of new amenities. It will also assist in delivering new bus services and improved active travel infrastructure within the village. This policy and supporting Concept Diagram set out the key principles of development for the new village extensions.

Policy wording

Land comprising two sites at Charfield, north and south of the Wotton Road (Figure 6), will deliver up to 775 new dwellings and supporting strategic and local infrastructure. Development proposals should also comply with policies set out in the made Neighbourhood Plan (Jan 2021). Homes will predominantly be traditional in appearance reflecting the local vernacular characterised by railway cottages and Victorian villas.

Acceptable development proposals will be required to:

1. **Deliver or make financial contributions towards supporting infrastructure, including capacity improvements to J14 of the M5, an expanded primary school and additional nursery places, environmental improvements including active travel & traffic calming measures to the Wotton Road, improved foot and cycle paths throughout the village including the Greenway (and connections to it), outdoor sports provision, a new rail station and enhanced bus services, new local amenities, EV charge points and Travel Plans.**
2. **Work with the Parish Council, existing community and new residents, to consider and implement robust stewardship arrangements for all the strategic green infrastructure and communal facilities across the two sites. This will also include the creation of a single stakeholder group and contribution for community support to assist promote community integration and cohesion across the two developments and with the existing local community (see Policy LP29 - Stewardship Arrangements).**

Site A (south of the Wotton Road) will:

3. **Provide up to 525 dwellings in two distinct, well-designed character areas including a minimum of 75 age friendly homes. 35% of the new homes will be affordable.**
4. **Provide new outdoor sports facilities with ancillary facilities. Meet provision for children and young people including in a central park, and a minimum of 1ha of land for non-residential uses including a mobility hub (including EV charging points, car club vehicles & cycle parking), new community meeting space, nursery, commercial & retail floorspace and funds for repairs to St.James Church.**
5. **Establish a robust and multi-functional green infrastructure network that takes an integrated approach to SuDS, provides tree-lined streets and allotments, enhances and buffers the two SNCI's, respects the PROW network where practical and in the interests of good placemaking, respects the existing vegetation and helps protect the setting of heritage assets, including the Grade I Listed St James Church. New dwellings adjacent the existing village will be provided with additional planting and garden space (at least 15m long) to protect the amenity of existing residents.**
6. **Create vehicular access points onto the Wotton Road and Little Bristol Lane. The two parcels of development will be connected by a tree lined active travel corridor.**

7. **Ensure new development works sympathetically with the topography to minimise the need for reprofiling works and retaining structures.**
8. **A master plan & design code will be agreed prior to the commencement of development.**

Site B (north of the Wotton Road) will:

9. **Provide up to 250 dwellings (35% affordable), an enhanced green infrastructure corridor alongside the Little Avon River, tree-lined streets, provision for children and young people, allotments, and a strategic pedestrian & cycle connection linking New Street to the Wotton Road/Greenway. Access will be via the Wotton Road and off New Street. Existing vegetation will be respected and new dwellings adjacent the existing village will be provided with additional planting and garden space (at least 15m long) to assist respect the amenity of existing residents. A design code will be agreed prior to the commencement of development.**
10. **Work with Network Rail to secure a permanent solution for the Charfield 8 rail crossing.**

Supporting text

Charfield benefits from a range of local amenities, facilities and employment opportunities in the village and local area. A new rail station is also expected to open in 2027. It therefore presents an attractive place to live. New housebuilding in the village in recent years has also been accompanied by a new Co-op convenience food store, café and improvements to the village hall. To expand further the village will need additional infrastructure to make it a more sustainable place to live. The Parish also benefits from a Neighbourhood Plan (Jan 2021).

The number of new dwellings in this part of the district is constrained by capacity and safety issues at M5 Junction 14. National Highways have agreed that up to 775 dwellings may be provided but only subject to the early implementation of an improvement scheme for the junction. In addition:

1. Developers will need to provide early financial contributions for the expansion of the existing primary school and nursery places, as the small Victorian school is now over capacity. Delivery of new primary school places is of high priority and will be required early in the build-out of any further dwellings. The Wotton Road through the centre of Charfield is already busy and footways narrow in places. Traffic will therefore need to be further slowed and provision for pedestrians and cyclists improved, as will foot & cycle infrastructure around the village to encourage local trips by non-car modes. Both sites will also be expected to contribute either in-kind or financially towards the new Greenway (cycle path between Charfield, Renishaw's New Mills, Katharine Lady-Berkeley Secondary School and Wotton-under-Edge), the new rail station, primary care and library services, community meeting space, outdoor sport facilities, active travel, and enhanced bus services. Parking standards on the new sites may be lower than the current minimum standards subject to innovative approaches taken such as car barns and car club vehicles to encourage use of non-car modes of transport and enable lower car ownership.
2. Both sites contain extensive areas of green space. This is welcome but presents a long-term management & maintenance issue. It is paramount therefore that a robust financial solution is found. The developers will therefore work with the Parish Council and local community to formulate Stewardship arrangements that are fair and equitable to all.

<u>Site A (south of the Wotton Road)</u>

3. The site is constrained by the escarpment, the setting of the Grade I Listed church (St. James') at Churchend and distance from the Wotton Road. It also contains two SNCI's and central field/pastureland with mature trees that provides an attractive parkland landscape through the centre of the scheme. It therefore divides into three parcels with capacity for up to 525 dwellings. This creates the opportunity to develop two distinct characterful neighbourhoods and a central sports hub. The scheme will also include land for non-residential uses, including some age friendly accommodation and be at least 35% AH to create a mixed community. (Note: Age Friendly accommodation comes in a variety of models, but essentially is Homes with Care. It is also known as ExtraCare Housing, Assisted Living, Retirement Living Plus or Integrated Retirement Communities). See Policy LP16 - Age-Friendly Housing & Care Homes, for more detail.
4. Non-residential uses will include a new mobility hub, community meeting space, outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities (including changing rooms and toilet), MUGA, nursery, retail and commercial opportunities to ensure the new development is a lively vibrant place. The Neighbourhood Plan - policy 8, supports proposals for a 'Business Hub' and the Parish Council are known to need new office space.
5. Existing fields and the SNCI's will be enhanced for wildlife and recreation, including new meadow on the escarpment, new wetland habitat and ponds, equipped play spaces, allotments and walking routes. Existing trees and hedges will be retained and supplemented with additional trees helping to integrate the development into the landscape. The main route through the site will also be tree lined. New dwellings adjacent the existing village edge will be provided with additional planting and garden space to soften views of the new dwellings and help protect the amenity of existing residents.

6. The two residential parcels will be accessed off the Wotton Road and Little Bristol Lane respectively and linked by an active travel corridor. Lighting along the active travel corridor will be sensitively designed, particularly where it crosses the parkland landscape and skirts the outdoor sports facilities.
7. The eastern and western edges of the development are on slopes. It will not be acceptable to simply bulldoze these hillsides to create flat development platforms as this is neither sustainable nor will achieve visually attractive development. New housing will therefore be expected to be planned carefully to work with the slope and to prevent an over-engineered appearance to the development. In some areas roofscape and skyline will also be important, particularly in the context of the setting of the Grade I listed church at Churchend that looks down across the village.
8. A master plan and design code will be produced in consultation with the community prior to any detailed planning submissions to inform future development proposals.

Site B (north of the Wotton Road)

9. This site is characterised by its gentle slope down to the Little Avon River and existing mature field boundaries. The development is therefore necessarily set back from the river to allow for flood events, so providing a wide green infrastructure corridor along its eastern edge that will be enhanced with new meadow and wetland species, improved paths and ponds. New and enhanced green infrastructure will also be used to conserve the setting of adjacent heritage assets. Provision for children and young people and allotments will be provided on-site outside of the flood zone. Access will be off the Wotton Road and a small parcel of development will be served off New Street at its northern end. The Greenway will connect from New Street to the SE corner of the site/Wotton Road. The site is also visible from the Cotswold National Landscape so the roofscape will be an important consideration. New dwellings adjacent the existing village edge will be provided with additional garden space and planting to soften views of the new dwellings and help to protect the amenity of existing residents.
10. The nearby rail crossing was moved to its existing position some years ago to improve its safety, but now due to increased frequency of services and faster trains is again considered unsafe. It is likely that it will need to be closed. The developer will therefore need to work with Network Rail to find a permanent solution before occupations on this site will be acceptable.
11. Both sites also contain a ‘focus area for nature recovery’ (watercourse & riparian buffers) within the West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The creation and good management of riparian habitat (floodplain wetland mosaic grassland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland & ponds) should be prioritised accordingly to receive a 15% BNG uplift.
12. CIL receipts as well as s106 contributions will need to be retained and spent locally to achieve these objectives. Contributions may be used to pay back expenditure on infrastructure, such as the rail station, where the infrastructure is delivered ahead of s106 triggers.

Additions	
Key evidence	
Other relevant policies to cross-reference?	LP16 – Age-Friendly Housing & Care Homes

Figure 6. Charfield - Concept Diagram

