

# **Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Basic conditions statement**

## 1 Introduction

This Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared to accompany the Weston-on-the-Green (WOTG) Neighbourhood Plan. It meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

### The Qualifying body

Weston-on-the-Green Parish Council is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011. In July 2015, the Council submitted an application to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for an area of the village to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. This was advertised as required and confirmed by the Cherwell District Council Executive at a meeting held on 2 November 2015.

The Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Plan is a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

### The Neighbourhood Area

The Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Area covers the civil parish of Weston-on-the-Green and extends to the flood plain to the west, just beyond the A34 to the south, the M40 to the east (excluding Junction 9) and the Roman road of Akeman Street to the North (see Figure 1 on page 3).

The Plan proposal relates solely to the Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Area and no other neighbourhood plans relate to this neighbourhood area.

### The time period covered by the Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period up to 2031, to coincide with the end date of the Cherwell Local Plan 2012-2031.

### Scope of this Plan

What is being proposed is a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which relates to planning matters (the use and development of land), and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

Its policies do not relate to 'excluded development', as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with 'County Matters' (minerals extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters as set out in Section 61K of the 1990 Act.

### Basic Conditions

In order to meet the Basic Conditions, a Neighbourhood Plan must:

- have regard to National Policy and advice, including that contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- contribute achieving sustainable development
- conform generally to the Adopted Local Plan of Cherwell District Council
- be compatible with EU obligations.

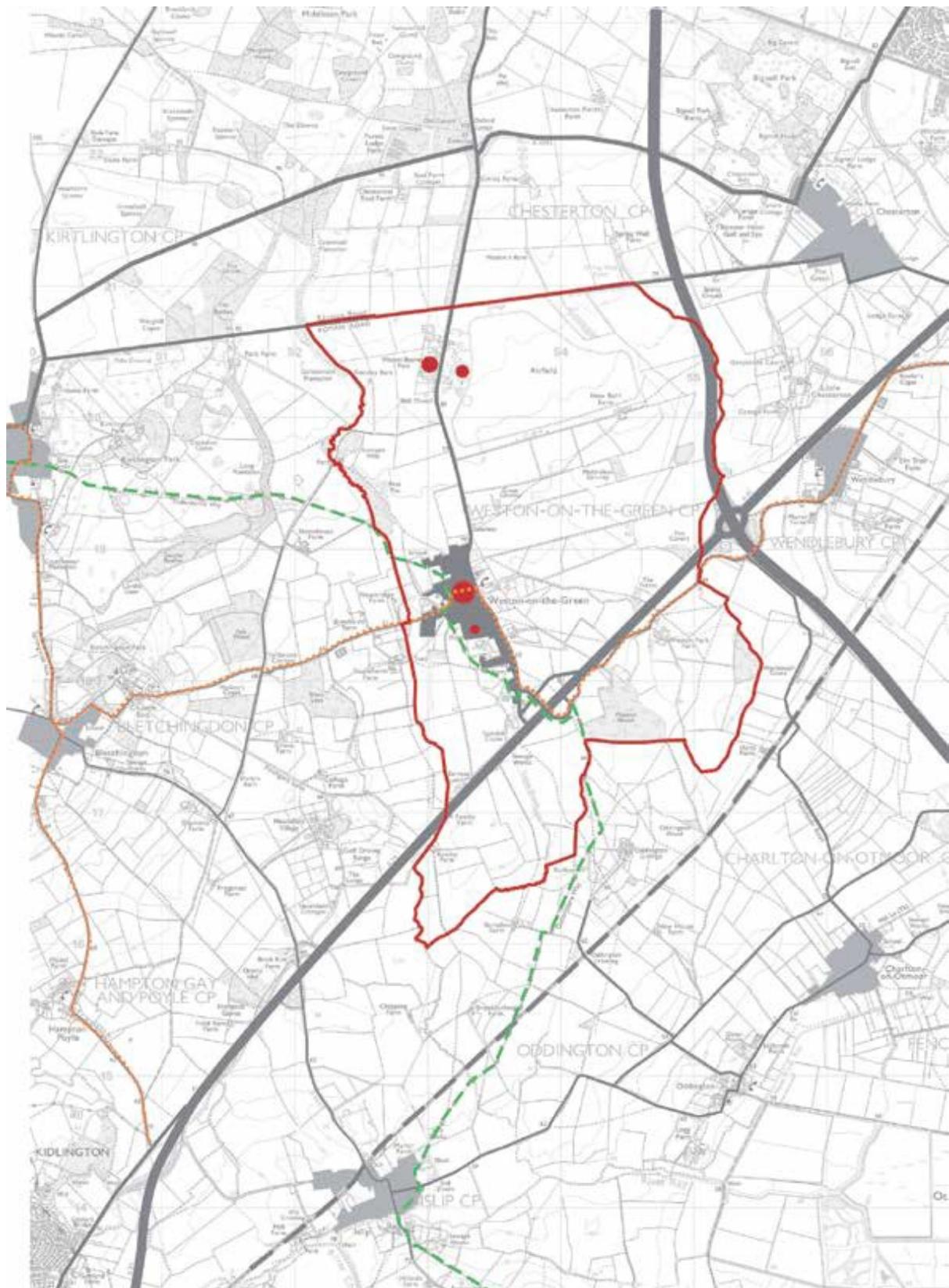


Figure 1 – The Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Plan area (Crown copyright)

## 2 Conforming to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

According to paragraph 17 of the NPPF, a set of 12 core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The WOTG response to these principles is summarised in Table 1.

NPPF planning principle	WOTG response in the Neighbourhood Plan
1 Be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings	The Plan will be kept up-to-date to reflect changing conditions and provide a framework within which to make decisions on planning applications. There will be regular reviews of the aims, objectives and policies.
2 Find creative ways to enhance and improve places where people live their lives	This planning principle runs through the whole of the WOTG Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, upgrading facilities at the 'village centre' and the enhancement of public open space, including grassland management, are cases in point.
3 Drive and support sustainable development to deliver homes, businesses and infrastructure	Our Plan has taken into account the needs of the residential and commercial community and has identified land that is suitable for the development of homes and businesses over the Plan period. The development of infrastructure, particularly broadband, is key to the success of small businesses.
4 Aim for a high quality of design and amenity	The Plan seeks to promote a high quality of design and amenity through its policies and through the inclusion of a Design Code, which will guide the design of new housing in the village.
5 Protect the Green Belt, recognising the character of the countryside and supporting rural communities	We respect the extent and boundary of the Green Belt, although, in order to achieve our housing target and the sympathetic integration of housing developments, we would support planning applications for some sites within it on an exception basis. Priority will be given to previously developed land.
6 Support a low carbon future, encouraging the conversion of existing buildings and the use of renewable resources, while taking account of flood risk	Housing development will be avoided on the designated area of flood plain to the west of the village, while preserving ancient water courses.
7 Help to conserve the natural environment and reduce pollution.	The Plan aims to preserve and extend green spaces and vistas by restricting development in certain zones (Local Green Spaces) and maintaining the long-standing characteristic of grass verges along the B430 and the 'Lanes'. We wish to encourage greater use of the existing recreational space, which includes the children's playground, while improving the safety of access to it. We also aim to conserve the potential grassland habitat south of the Weston Fen SSSI (Area B) according to Natural England's guidelines, for use as a passive recreational area.  There is a Plan policy (C3) to support proposals for a new nursery facility in walking distance of most of the village. This

	will reduce the number of vehicles being used for transport.
<b>8</b> Encourage the use of 'brownfield' land	WOTG has no available 'brownfield' land on the official register.
<b>9</b> Promote mixed use developments	Village surveys have identified that there are many businesses that are being run from home, having recently received the benefit of high speed broadband to the village. We are seeking an area of open land which could be used as an allotment.
<b>10</b> Conserve heritage assets for the benefit of future generations	The village contains a number of important heritage buildings and features, which will be preserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. As much of the village is in a Conservation Area, the recommendations of the Cherwell Conservation Area Appraisal are accepted and will be followed.
<b>11</b> Manage patterns of growth to make full use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus development in sustainable locations	The growth in the village will concentrate on increasing the number of families with children. The village has a large network of public rights of way, including parts of the Oxfordshire Way and the national cycle route 51 also runs through the village.
<b>12</b> Contribute to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing and deliver facilities and services for local needs	The Plan proposes to increase social interaction within the village by developing the 'village centre' around the Memorial roundabout, including the Parish Church, the Memorial village hall and the newly upgraded post office and shop. Access routes between any new developments and all the facilities in the village should take account of the needs of disabled and elderly people. Overall safety within new developments will be addressed through traffic calming measures, including the choice of suitable road surfaces.

*Table 1 – Summary of WOTG responses to the NPPF principles*

### 3 Contributing to achieving sustainable development

The overriding principle of the NPPF is that of sustainable development, which is generally taken to mean 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

The NPPF identifies three key elements of sustainable development:

- economic – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, supporting growth and innovation;
- social – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing a supply of suitable housing and a high-quality built environment;
- environmental – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, improving biodiversity, minimising waste and mitigating the effects of climate change.

These three elements are further expanded to create 13 policy headings in the NPPF. The extent to which the WOTG Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies follow these NPPF policies is shown in Table 2, below.

NPPF sustainability policy	WOTG response in the Neighbourhood Plan
1 Building a strong, competitive economy	Our objective is to expand community services at the 'village centre' to support small businesses and sole traders. Parking in this area will be made more efficient.
2 Ensuring the vitality of town centres	N/A
3 Supporting a prosperous ruraleconomy	We aim to promote and publicise the historic buildings and landmarks of the village for tourists, as well as the footpath network for ramblers. Now that we have high speed broadband in the village, our objective is to increase the number of local businesses and support home working.
4 Promoting sustainable transport	<p>Developments of more than 10 dwellings will be expected to promote and improve low-carbon transport connectivity by contributing to improvements in the local footway/cycleway network.</p> <p>By engagement with the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority, our objective is to introduce speed reduction and traffic calming measures on the B430 and in the lanes branching off the B430.</p> <p>We are pleased to have the Sustrans National Cycle Route 51 running through the village.</p>
5 Supporting high quality communication infrastructure	We will monitor and, if there is sufficient demand, upgrade the broadband service to an ultra high-speed service.
6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes	<p>Feedback from the village consultation indicated a desire for a more balanced provision of housing throughout the Plan period. One site, which has already obtained outline planning permission, concentrates mainly on 4-bed market houses, although there is the minimum amount of affordable housing. This represents the first phase of housing development.</p> <p>Two other sites have been identified within walking distance of the village 'core' which, due to being in the Green Belt, cannot form part of the Neighbourhood Plan proposals. However, we would support any applications made for the development of small houses for retired and single people, as well as starter homes/ affordable housing for small families with children which have a connection with the village.</p>

<b>7</b> Requiring good design	<p>We will implement a Design Code that will cover the public realm, site layout, house form and materials. Our aim is to achieve good design within the village, without stifling innovation or originality.</p> <p>Any housing applications will be required to follow a Site Brief, including requirements for density, layout, massing, frontage and building line.</p>
<b>8</b> Promoting healthy communities	<p>We will encourage the greater use of the childrens' playground and playing field by seeking safer pedestrian access to them.</p> <p>A site is being sought for community allotments, which will not only provide healthy food but also contribute to a healthy lifestyle for villagers.</p> <p>We will conserve the potential grassland habitat known as the Schoolfield for limited passive recreation and selected green spaces will be designated as Local Green Spaces to protect them from development.</p> <p>In larger developments, we will consider using developer contributions to expand local care facilities.</p>
<b>9</b> Protecting Green Belt land	<p>We do not aim to alter the boundary of the Green Belt.</p>
<b>10</b> Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	<p>A flood plain of category 2 and 3 runs North/South along the western boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. There are no existing buildings in this plain, nor are there plans to allow new development within this zone.</p>
<b>11</b> Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	<p>We will conserve the rural character of the 'lanes' branching from the B430, maintain the wide grass verges and the 'open skies' feel on the east side of the B430. We will preserve the 'dark skies' by opposing street lighting throughout the village.</p> <p>The SSSI called Weston Fen (reference SP 526194) will be protected from development and will form part of a larger designation of green space that will enhance biodiversity and create new habitats for wildlife.</p> <p>We expect all new developments to result in a biodiversity net gain for the parish.</p>
<b>12</b> Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	<p>Our aim is to achieve good design in any development, while complementing the historical character of the village. We will expect developers to conserve and enhance the heritage assets, including the many listed buildings, when preparing their designs.</p>
<b>13</b> Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	<p>No minerals are supplied from within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>

*Table 2 – Summary of WOTG responses to the NPPF policies*

## 4 Conforming to the strategic policies of the Local Plan

We confirm that the policies in our Neighbourhood Plan are compatible with the strategic policies of the Cherwell Local Plan. These policies are arranged under 4 Themes and the relationship with the Cherwell strategic policies are shown in Table 3.

Policy Ref.	WOTG Themes and policies	Relevant CDC policies
<b>Theme 1 – Village character and environment</b>		
E1	<p>Development should provide a positive contribution to the locally distinctive character of Weston-on-the Green and conserve the setting of the village, in particular;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve existing and take every available opportunity to create new areas of open space to help retain the rural character and open areas of community benefit, including the preservation and enhancement of important views linking with the rural landscape;</li> <li>• Achieve a biodiversity net gain for the parish, including maintaining and expanding green spaces that extend habitat corridors that link designated sites to the north and south of the parish;</li> <li>• Implement a biodiversity measure for all development proposals;</li> <li>• Resist development outside the village 'confines' along the B430.</li> </ul>	ESD13
E2	<p>Development should preserve and enhance the green infrastructure and the natural environment of the area, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide new footpaths with landscaping to link existing rights of way or other green spaces;</li> <li>• Value, preserve, support and enhance green infrastructure within the parish, including open green space, wild green space, allotment space, habitats in or on structures;</li> <li>• Preserve hedgerows or create new ones;</li> <li>• Create a pond or preserve an existing one;</li> <li>• Plant trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape;</li> <li>• Use native plants in landscaping to provide nectar and seed sources for wildlife;</li> <li>• Incorporate bird and bat boxes into the design of new buildings;</li> <li>• Keep exterior lighting levels low to encourage wildlife;</li> <li>• Use green roofs or walls to new or existing buildings where allowed;</li> <li>• Preserve and manage grassland habitats by careful cutting, grazing and monitoring visitor numbers.</li> </ul>	ESD10
E3	The distinctive wide grass verges between dwelling boundaries and the carriageway should be preserved and protected in the existing village landscape and the same pattern adopted in new developments.	ESD13
E4	Any lighting proposed should be designed to ensure that it does not cause visual intrusion, nor cause adverse effects due to light pollution.	ESD15
E5	The distinctive wide grass verges between dwelling boundaries and the carriageway should be preserved and protected in the existing village landscape and the same pattern adopted in new developments.	ESD13
E6	Sites designated as Local Green Spaces because of their significance to the character of the village should not be developed.	ESD13
E7	New development will not be permitted on land designated as Local Green Space except in very special circumstances. This policy applies to the four important open spaces designated as Local Green Spaces in policy E6 of this Plan. The effect of this policy is to provide Green Belt-equivalent protection from development in that any proposal must maintain the essential open character of the space and must, in any event, demonstrate the exceptional circumstances for its justification.	ESD13

**Theme 2 – Housing and land use**

H1	A development of 20 dwellings is supported on Site A (Southfield Farm) as shown on Figure 22 subject to compliance with other policies in this Plan (as planning approval has been granted, policy H2 does not apply).	BSC3
H2	New developments should contribute to the overall target of 30% 1-2 bedrooms; 40% 2-3 bedrooms; 25% 3-4 bedrooms and 5% 4-5 bedrooms	BSC4
H3	New development should place additional emphasis, in addition to the requirements outlined by the NPPF paragraphs 126-141 and especially paragraphs 132 and 139 on the conservation or enhancement of all heritage assets of the parish and ESD15 of the Local Plan such that housing type should be appropriate to the local setting e.g. terrace, detached, semi-detached, affordable, design for life, and relate in scale, massing and layout to neighbouring properties. The density of new housing should be consistent and compatible with the existing prevailing density of the locality in which new development is proposed.	ESD15
H4	All planning applications for development should provide specific detail to show compliance with the Design Code (Appendix A) and all other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, including proper and full consultation with utility companies with specific regard to building over or close to existing public utility infrastructure.	ESD15
H5	Developments should provide safe and convenient access to village facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and users of mobility aids.	ESD17
H6	New housing should be: clearly designed for the needs of residents at or beyond the state pension age; adaptable for wheelchair access with ground level WC and shower where practicable.	ESD15
H7	New developments of 10 or more houses should have a corresponding impact on the health care resources available to support the expanded population. Developer contributions should be considered to enable local health facilities to expand and to support ancillary resources that offset the effects of rural isolation.	BSC8

**Theme 3 – Community and economy**

C1	Area B (The Schoolfield) will be preserved and managed as a grassland habitat with access for passive recreation commensurate with the maintenance of a lowland meadow. The area will be carefully managed to enhance natural grassland and wildlife diversity (see also policy E2).	BSC10
C2	Development proposals should not adversely affect facilities of community benefit. Developments that seek to enhance the facilities in the area bounded by the Church, the Memorial Village Hall and the village shop/post office, including the Memorial Village Hall itself, should not adversely affect the existing character of the area, nor reduce the parking provision for or associated with the Memorial Village Hall.	ESD15
C3	Developments that enhance the community educational facilities within the designated Plan area, including the safe access for all users, will be supported. Proposals that address the provision of children's nursery facilities will be supported.	BSC11
C4	All development must provide connectivity (virtual services such as broadband, telecoms) to the highest standard available at the time of proposal.	BSC9
C5	All developments should protect the character of the village centre, conserve and enhance its heritage assets and respect the importance of space, key street scenes and views such that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Development that results in harm to the visual contribution of key views set out in this Plan and in Cherwell District Council's Weston-on-the-Green Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) shall not be permitted;</li> <li>b. Development shall show that the design will conserve key features of local and heritage character as described in Appendices A, F-H of this Plan and including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. views of high positive visual impact, particularly the Parish Church, the green and stocks, the Memorial roundabout at the village centre, the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	ESD13 ESD15

Basic Conditions Statement	wide verges on North Lane and the B430, the Manor frontage; designated Local	12 August 2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Green Spaces;</li> <li>iii. the rural character engendered by all types of amenity and green spaces, particularly the playing field, the spinney, the ponds and the Schoolfield.</li> </ul>	
<b>Theme 4 – Transport, Highways, Footpaths/ways</b>		
T1	Parking areas and access routes related to new development should be designed in a manner in keeping with the local area with regard to scale, materials, splays and signage, be consistent with the stated Design Code and should not result in a net loss to biodiversity or green space.	ESD13
T2	Developments of 10 or more dwellings will be expected to promote and improve low-carbon transport connectivity by contributing to improvements in the local footway/cycleway network to facilitate safe and energy efficient means of transport around and beyond the village limits and enhance links with neighbouring parishes.	ESD17
T3	In so far as planning permission is required, any proposal to alter or extend an existing dwelling that would reduce the level of off-street parking provision will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the overall parking provision retained is satisfactory.	ESD15

## 5 Compliance with EU and other obligations

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

Cherwell District Council is preparing a Screening Opinion on behalf of Weston-on-the-Green.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

The Screening Opinion will confirm whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is necessary.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

Weston-on-the-Green does not contain a European site for nature conservation and the nearest European site is Oxford Meadows approximately 10 miles from the Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan will therefore not have an impact on the integrity of a European site. The Screening Opinion will include a Habitats Regulation Assessment.

### **Human Rights**

Our consultation has been widespread within the village, including all sections of the community, both residents and businesses and covering all issues of concern. There have been numerous opportunities and methods by which views have been expressed such that the human rights of neither Weston-on-the-green residents, nor other parties who may be affected by it, have been diminished.

### **Summary and conclusions**

This Basic Conditions Statement is submitted to accompany the Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Plan as required under paragraph 15 (1)(d) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

**The Statement shows that the Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions required and it is therefore concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan should progress to Referendum.**