

LITTLE MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN BACKGROUND EVIDENCE STUDIES PART 1

BASELINE INFORMATION POLICY, POPULATION & HOUSING

May 2017

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Note: This Background Evidence Study was originally drafted in August 2016 to establish a baseline of information upon which the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group could start work. It has subsequently been updated to reflect South Oxfordshire District Council's proposed planning policies in their emerging Local Plan 2033 as drafted at the March 2017 2nd Preferred Options consultation stage. Some data was also been updated when the results of the Village Survey, conducted in November 2016, became available to verify some of the original data in this document.

Summary of Key Points

1. The SODC Core Strategy 2012 did not allocate houses to Little Milton; however the emerging Local Plan to 2033 2nd Preferred Options published in March 2017 states that smaller villages between them are likely to deliver 5-10% growth
2. The population of the village is currently 490+/-5
3. The number of children and young teenagers is average; the population aged 18-44 is below average; the population aged 45-59 is markedly above average
4. The working figure for the number of houses in Little Milton is 204.
5. The village has an above-average number of social houses when compared with the district, county and area, but an average number when compared with England as a whole.
6. The village has a significant number of listed buildings and buildings of historic interest.

7. The village has an average number of 1, 3 and 5 or more bedroom houses. The number of 2-bedroomed houses is below average; the number of 4-bedroomed houses is above average.
8. The village has an average percentage of semi-detached or terraced houses, an above-average number of detached houses but virtually no flats, maisonettes or apartments

A comprehensive overview of the village is available through the *Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Rural Evidence Project - Rural community profile for Little Milton November 2013* – [click here](#)

Introduction

This document is intended as a source of relevant information to assist in developing a Neighbourhood Plan. It summarises the key housing and development policies which form the foundation of a Neighbourhood Plan and provides key data on the current population and housing stock of the village.

Nature of the Village

Little Milton is a small village of about 500 people which is situated on a low ridge overlooking the valley of the River Thame. It is situated 7.5 miles south east of Oxford, in the county of Oxfordshire and the district of South Oxfordshire. It developed primarily as a farming community and the historic farms still form the nucleus of the village. However, after the Second World War employment in agriculture declined and now many of the population commute from the village to centres of employment in Thame, Oxford, Reading, the Science Vale, and London. A small but significant number of people also work from home.

The village sits on a low ridge surrounded by open agricultural land. The historic core of the village is a Conservation Area and contains a number of listed buildings or buildings of historic interest, some dating back to the 16th century. Much of the land to the east of the village is a nature reserve owned by BBOWT¹.

There are a small number of light industrial units located on farming land half a mile west of the centre of the village. These units lie off main road and are accessible along farm roads only. Traffic from these units does not come into the village.

The A329 coming south from Junction 7 of the M40 runs through heart of the village and carries a heavy volume of traffic, particularly during rush hours. HGV traffic through the village is a particular concern as the road in the centre of the village is not wide enough for two HGVs to pass and minor collisions occur with monotonous regularity.

Stone built houses and cottages, many of them thatched, predominate in the core village and define the nature of the village. There are 29 listed buildings, which are mainly focused in the Conservation Area, reflecting the historic character of Little Milton as a village of medieval origin consisting of a group of large farms and smaller cottages set around a church and Manor House within its own historic fields.

Some more modern houses were built as infill in the core village before the Conservation Area was designated in 1984. However these do not detract from the essential nature of the core village as a picturesque community.

The village is surrounded on all sides by open farm land with wide open views to the Chiltern Hills in the east and to the River Thame in the west.

¹ Bucks, Berks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY FOR LITTLE MILTON

See Annex A for further detail.

The current Core Strategy² states:

1	No specific allocation of houses to Little Milton
2	Infill allowed – 5-6 houses on sites up to 0.2ha
3	Affordable housing may be built on small rural exception sites, but only for those people with a local connection and if a need is identified

South Oxfordshire District Council's Core Strategy to 2027, and in particular policy CSR1, identifies Little Milton as a 'Smaller Village'. In the overall plan for housing allocations within the district, the Strategy allocates no houses to Smaller Villages. Infill is allowed on sites up to 0.2ha (45m x 45m), equivalent to 5-6 houses.

Rural exceptions are allowed if a need is shown; rural exceptions are small sites primarily for affordable housing, within or adjacent to villages where market housing would not normally be permitted (eg. on Green Belt). SODC's detailed policy for rural exception sites has yet to be published, but national guidance indicates:

Rural exception sites should only be used for affordable housing in perpetuity. A Rural Exception Site policy should seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection, whilst also ensuring that rural areas continue to develop as sustainable, mixed, inclusive communities. However the National Planning policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should now consider allowing some market housing on rural exception sites to facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.

However SODC's Local Plan to 2033 Preferred Options³ proposes a number of key changes to the above policy:

1. An expectation of a 5-10% increase in housing stock over the life of the plan in small villages
2. Changes in the numbers and percentages of affordable houses to be provided
3. A change in the definition of infill to include not just sites within a built-up frontage but also sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings

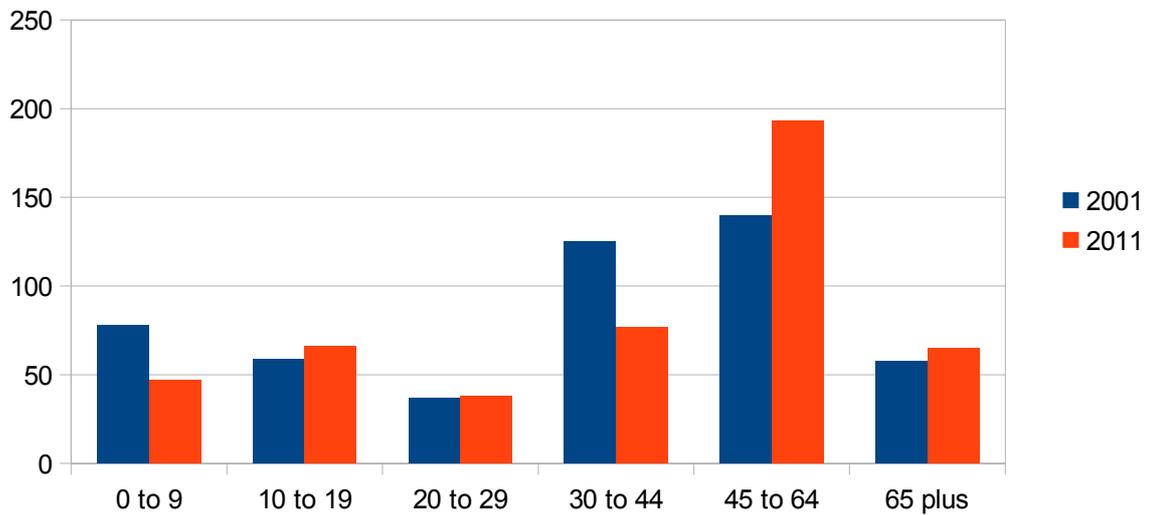
² South Oxfordshire Core Strategy Adopted December 2012

³ SODC Local Plan 2033 2nd Preferred Options March 2017

POPULATION

The Community Led Plan⁴ derived an extrapolated total population of the village of 496 in 2013. The 2011 Census data⁵ indicated a population of 486, compared with 493 in 2001. The age profiles compare as follows:

Population compared 2001 v 2011



There was a 2% decline in the population as measured by the 2011 Census compared with an 8% increase in the population of Oxfordshire.

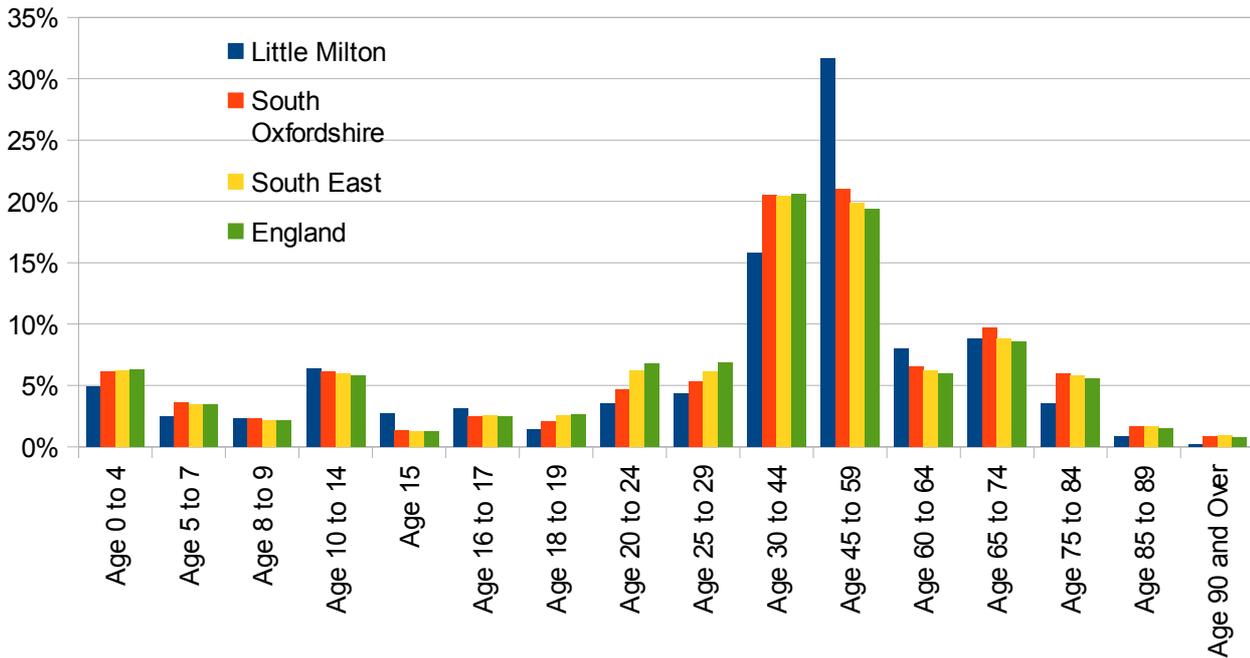
The 2011 age profile⁶ compares with district, county and national data as follows:

⁴ Little Milton Village Plan 2014

⁵ ONS 2011 Census Little Milton: Population

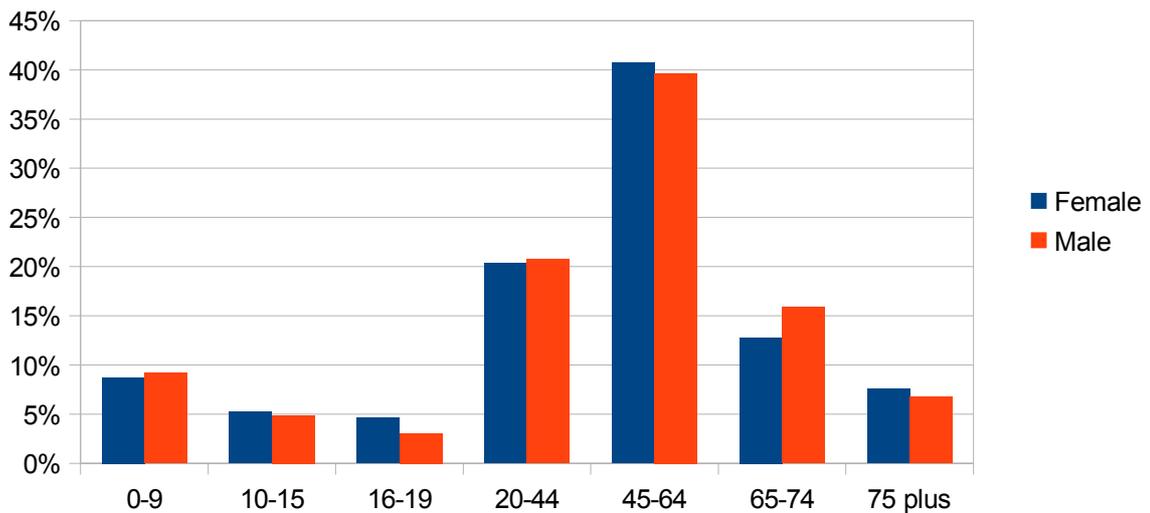
⁶ ONS 2011 Census Little Milton: Age Structure

Little Milton Age Profile 2011



The village has an average number of children and young teenagers. However the population is below average aged 18-44, and markedly above average 45-59. This trend was verified by data from the Village Survey 2016:

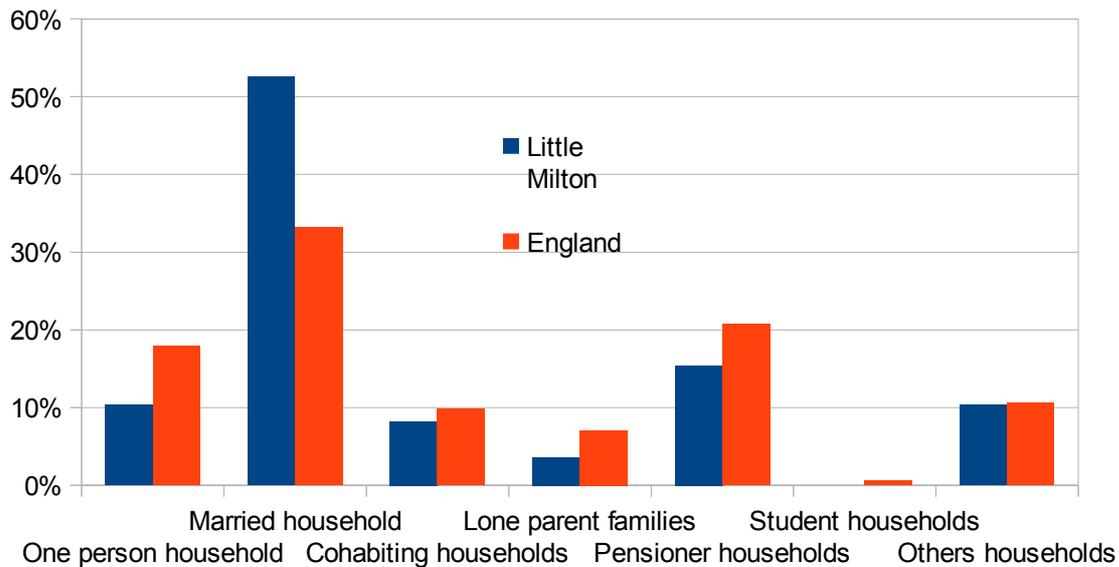
Demographics - 2016 village survey



In 2011⁷, there were:

- 85 children under 16
- 335 working age adults
- 65 people over 65
- 5 lone parent families with children
- 15 single pensioner households

The composition of households is as follows⁸:

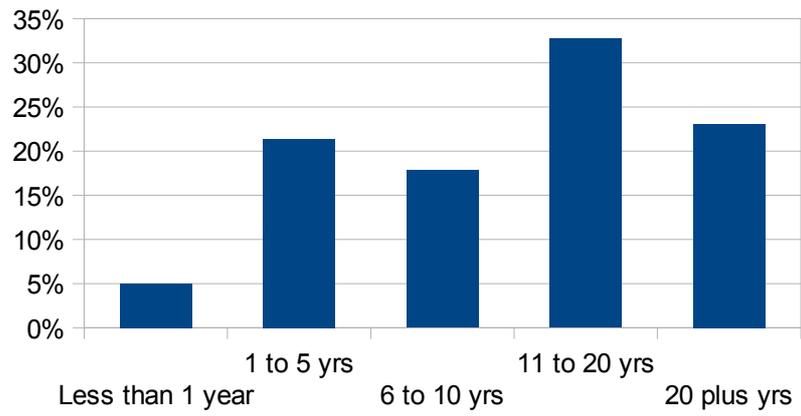


Over 55% of the population has lived in the village for over 10 years and, as people have stayed on in the village, this has contributed to an older population than average.

⁷ Census 2011 (table KS102EW)

⁸ Census 2011 (tables KS201EW, KS204EW and KS105EW)

Time lived in village



Data from the Village Survey 2016 confirms these figures.

HOUSING STOCK AND DWELLINGS

The 2011 Census indicated that there are 204⁹ dwellings in Little Milton. A map survey¹⁰ also shows that there are 204 houses in the parish. Some of the houses date back to the 16th century. Up to about 1960, the village comprised approximately 125 dwellings. Since then, houses have been added along the High Street and Haseley Road, and developments at Milton Manor Drive, Chiltern View and Warren View have increased the housing stock by about 60%.

Only 8 dwellings in the parish lie outside the core village - Ditch End (5), Orchard House (1), Views Farm Cottages (2), Warren Barn Farm (1).

104 dwellings are detached houses, 51 are semi-detached and 44 are terraced, including end of terrace, plus 6 others eg. temporary accommodation, caravans.

146 houses are owned by the occupants; 48 are rented¹¹.

Social Housing

Of the rented houses, 36 (17.7% of all houses) are classed as social housing, administered by SOHA¹² (most of Old Field and 4 houses in Thame Road) or Sovereign Housing (Warren View) on behalf of the District Council.

The stock of social housing has increased as follows:

		Total
Up to mid 1990s		23
Mid 1990s	Add 6 at Warren View	29
2003	Demolish 6 in Old Field/Thame Road and erect 13	36

The figure of 36 for social housing administered by housing associations is at variance with Census 2011 data which indicates 28 social rented houses. However the figure of 36 was verified from Land Registry data¹³ and also in consultations with the relevant housing associations¹⁴ and SODC housing department¹⁵ in July 2016. 20 private rented houses were recorded in the 2011 census. It is presumed that some tenants were unsure which category to tick when recording census data and that some of these houses are, in fact, owned by housing associations.

In the Village Survey 2016, 19% of households indicated they were renting from a Housing Association, which is consistent with the above figures.

⁹ ONS 2011 Census Little Milton: Dwellings

¹⁰ Parish Online Maps July 2016 (Ordnance Survey)

¹¹ ONS 2011 Census Little Milton: Tenure

¹² South Oxfordshire Housing Association

¹³ Land Registry Title Deeds searched 20 July 2016

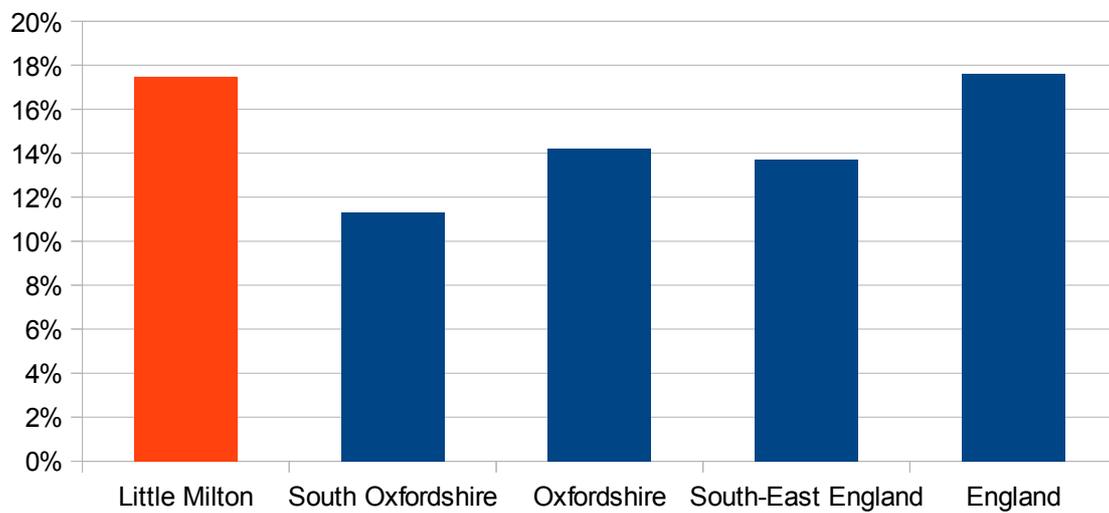
¹⁴ Telephone calls SOHA and Sovereign Housing 20 July 2016

¹⁵ Telephone SODC housing department 20 July 2016

Notwithstanding the census data, 36 is the correct number for social housing in Little Milton. The figure of 17.7% social housing in the village compares with local and national figures¹⁶ as follows:

	Percentage Social Housing
Little Milton	17.7%
South Oxfordshire	11.3%
Oxfordshire	14.2%
South-East England	13.7%
England	17.6%

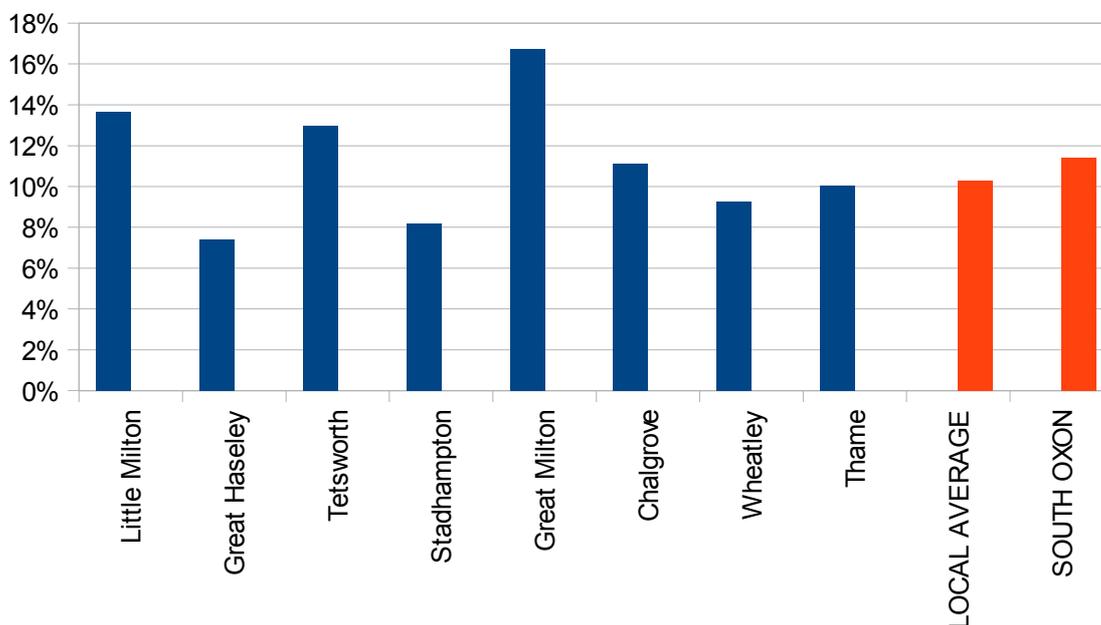
% Social Housing



¹⁶ ONS 2011 Census Little Milton: Tenure

Comparing these figures with local towns and villages:

% Social Rented Housing in local towns and villages
Census 2011 data



Of those 36 social houses in the village, 9 are subject to so-called s106 agreements, giving priority in perpetuity to those with a parish connection.

The criteria for a parish connection ensure that applicants with a strong local connection have first priority for the properties. Firstly an applicant must be on the housing register – therefore must meet all the criteria for that register in the first place. Then they might be required to meet additional criteria. A Joint Allocations Policy was adopted on 16th December 2013 by SODC with a strong local connection criterion for rural exception site defined as follows:

- Where applicant(s) have lived in the parish for 5 out of the last 8 and are currently resident there
- Where the applicant(s) had previously lived in the parish for at least 5 years and their parents or children still live there and have done for at least 10 years.

Note:

1. Warren View was built as the then equivalent of a rural exception site, on the joint application of Little Milton Parish Council and The English Village Housing Association¹⁷. A s106 agreement applies in that local people have priority for allocations for all of the 6 houses¹⁸. However Sovereign Housing, who administer Warren View, have advised that problems arise when tenants agree Mutual Exchanges, as the incoming tenant who swaps

¹⁷ [P94/N0068](#)

¹⁸ Deed dated 9 Jan 1995 between The English Village Housing Association and SODC

their house does not have to meet the criteria as a local person. This then dilutes the purpose of the original development.

2. 3 SOHA houses on Thame Road are also subject to a s106 agreement, again giving priority to local people¹⁹

LISTED BUILDINGS AND BUILDINGS OF HISTORIC INTEREST

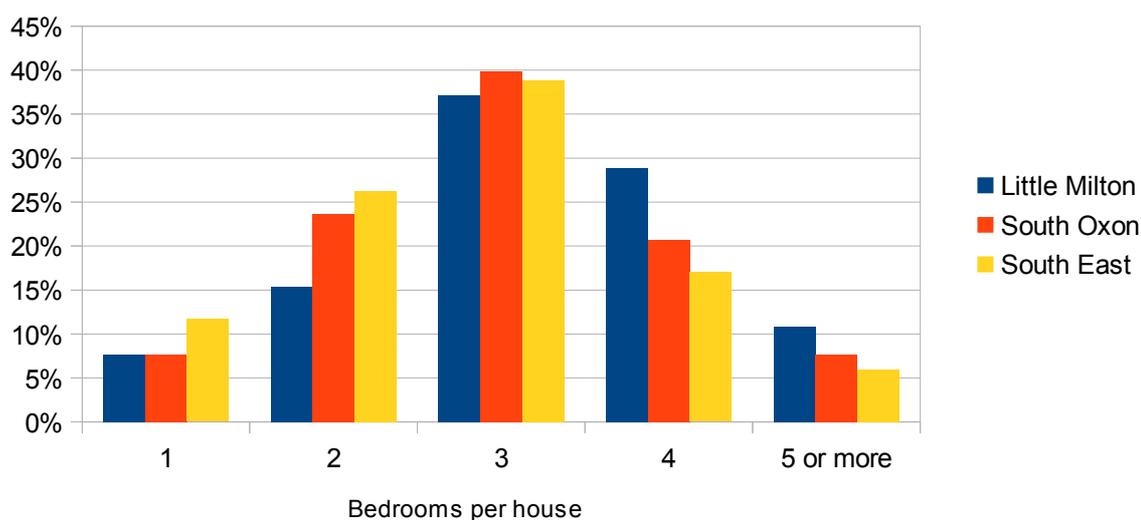
The core of the village is a Conservation Area²⁰. There are 28 listed buildings in the village, of which 24 are houses. In addition, 16 houses are of historic interest. Thus 19.5% of the housing stock is either listed or of historic interest.

SIZE OF HOUSES

In 2011²¹ data shows the following mix of house sizes, and the comparison with district and area figures:

Bedrooms	Number Houses	% of all Houses		
		Little Milton	South Oxon	South East
1	15	7.7%	7.7%	11.7%
2	30	15.4%	23.7%	26.2%
3	72	37.1%	39.9%	38.9%
4	56	28.9%	20.7%	17.0%
5 or more	21	10.8%	7.7%	6.0%

% Houses with given number of bedrooms 2011



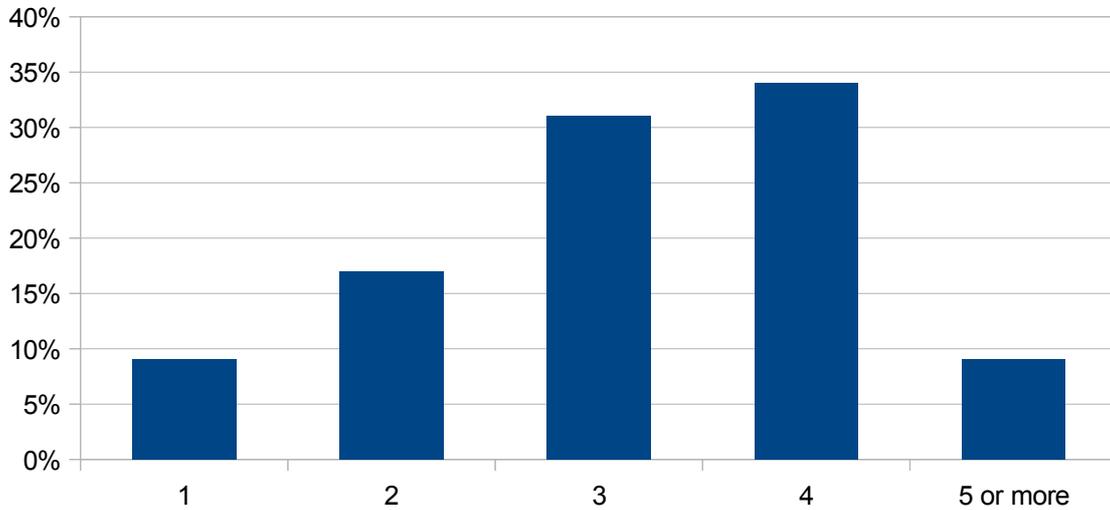
¹⁹ Deed dated 16 May 2003 between SOHA and SODC

²⁰ Little Milton Conservation Area Designated 11 December 1984

²¹ ONS 2011 Census Little Milton: Number of Bedrooms

The data from the Village Survey 2016 indicated a mix as follows:

No of bedrooms in houses 2016

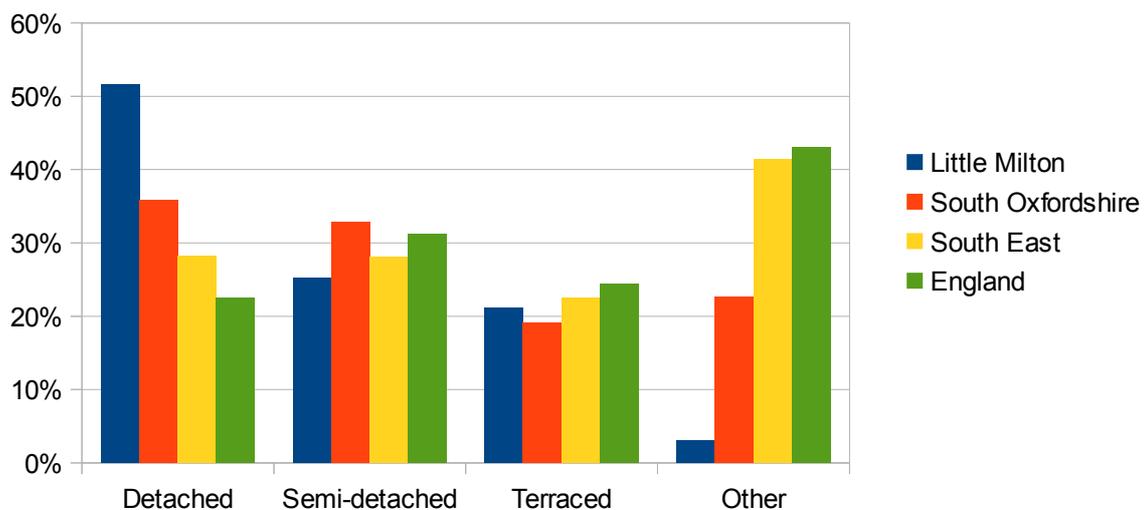


Note: the sample in the 2016 survey was 73% of households, which may explain the slight variance in data compared with the 2011 census.

Types of Houses

The figures for the types of houses compare as follows (Note: the Other category includes flats, maisonettes or apartments, of which there are only 2 in the village):

Types of houses



The village has an above-average number of detached houses. This data was verified in the 2016 Village survey.

CAR AVAILABILITY

Households own cars as follows²²:

No cars	One car	Two cars	Three cars	Four+ cars
10	50	95	25	10
5.3% of 190 households (England = 25.8%)	26.3% of 190 households (England = 42.2%)	50.0% of 190 households (England = 24.7%)	13% of 190 households (England = 5.5%)	5.3% of 190 households (England = 1.9%)

OTHER INFORMATION²³

- Low deprivation
- Low % of working age claiming DWP benefits
- Low unemployment
- 25 People in the village work from home
- 43.3% of the population are educated to degree standard or above, against the average for England of 27.4%

Little Milton Parish Council

Final May 2017

²²Census 2011 (table KS404EW)

²³ Rural community profile for Little Milton ACRE Nov 2013

ANNEX A

LIST OF RELEVANT POLICIES

The following key Core Strategy²⁴ policies were relevant to Little Milton at the time of initiating the NDP process but by the time that process is complete, the Local Plan 2033 will be in effect, or nearly so. It is therefore necessary to review both the older Core Strategy policies and the emerging policies at the Local Plan 2033 2nd Preferred Options stage.

Where **significant changes have been proposed in the emerging Local Plan 2nd Preferred Options²⁵, the proposed new policies are indicated in blue.**

Policy CS1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Planning applications which accord with the policies in the Development Plan (including, where relevant, Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning permission will also be granted where relevant policies in the Development Plan are out of date or silent unless:

- any adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in the Framework or other material considerations indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy CSS1 The overall strategy

Proposals for development in South Oxfordshire should be consistent with the overall strategy of:

.....
(iv) supporting other villages in the rest of the district by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment and by the provision and retention of services; and
(v) outside the towns and villages, and other major developed sites, any change will need to relate to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.

Proposed policy:

A minimum of 500 new homes will be delivered in the smaller villages through Neighbourhood Development Plans, infill development, and/or small suitable sites of up to 10 dwellings

Smaller villages, as defined in the settlement hierarchy, are likely to deliver 5%-10% growth, based on the number of dwellings at the 2011 census, minus completions since 2011 and outstanding commitments. The provision of 500 homes should be viewed as a minimum level of growth and will be met through small sites of 10 homes or less, and infill development, and will not be allocated by the local planning authority.

Policy CSH2 Density

On sites where housing development is acceptable in principle, a minimum density of 25 dwellings

²⁴South Oxfordshire Core Strategy Adopted December 2012

²⁵ SODC Local Plan 2033 2nd Preferred Options March 2017

per hectare (net) will be required unless this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area.

Proposed Policy

All development will be expected to make an efficient use of land, with a density appropriate to the site and its surroundings, subject to a minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare (dph).

Policy CSH3 Affordable housing

40 per cent affordable housing will be sought on all sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings subject to the viability of provision on each site.

- In cases where the 40 per cent calculation provides a part unit a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part unit;
- A tenure mix of 75 per cent social rented and 25 per cent intermediate housing will be sought;
- With the exception of part units the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with the market housing;
- The housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.

Proposed Policy – Affordable Housing

On all sites where there is a net gain of 11 or more dwellings the Council will require at least 40% of the dwellings to be affordable housing, subject to the viability of this provision on each site.

- **In cases where the 40% calculation provides a part dwelling a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part dwelling**
- **The tenure mix of the affordable housing will be 75% social rented and 25% shared ownership by the most up to date housing evidence**
- **With the exception of part dwellings, the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with the market housing**
- **The affordable housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.**

Policy CSR1 Housing in villages

In order to contribute to the present and future economic, environmental and social sustainability of the villages, housing will be allowed where the scale and nature of the development is as follows:

	Allocations	Infill	Rural exceptions
Smaller villages	No	Sites of up to 0.2ha*	Yes if need shown

*Equivalent to 5-6 houses

Proposed Policy

A minimum of 500 new homes will be delivered in the smaller villages through Neighbourhood Development Plans, infill development, and/or small suitable sites of up to 10 dwellings

Smaller villages, as defined in the settlement hierarchy, are likely to deliver 5%-10% growth, based on the number of dwellings at the 2011 census, minus completions since 2011 and outstanding commitments. The provision of 500 homes should be viewed as a minimum level of growth and will be met through small sites of 10 homes or less, and infill development, and will not be allocated by the local planning authority.

All development should respect national designations such as Green Belt and should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Suitably designed and located development at an appropriate scale that facilitates the economic and social well-being of such areas, especially in the Larger Villages in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be supported. This includes the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs. Local character and distinctiveness will be protected and the requirements of relevant development plan policies will be met.

Redevelopment proposals in all categories of settlement may be acceptable but will be considered on a case by case basis through the development management process in line with other policies in the Development Plan.

Policy CSR2 Employment in Rural Areas

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which support the economy of the rural areas through:

- schemes for agricultural diversification and the re-use of rural buildings;
- small-scale infill schemes in villages including mixed housing and employment schemes;
- working at home;
- schemes which support agricultural production and the retention of functioning farm units; and
- schemes which support tourism based on the character of the area.

Proposed Policy

Proposals for sustainable economic growth in the countryside and rural areas will be supported. We will:

- **Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings• Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses**
- **Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This will include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and**
- **Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.**

Policy CSR3 Community facilities and rural transport

Proposals which result in the provision of facilities and services in the rural areas will be encouraged, those which result in the loss of services and facilities will be resisted. Rural transport initiatives that improve movement particularly to access services and employment will be encouraged.

Policy CSEN1 Landscape

The district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced.

(i) Where development is acceptable in principle, measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character of the area.

(ii) High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and planning decisions will have regard to their setting. Proposals which support the economies and social well being of the AONBs and their communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement.

(iii) The landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames corridor will be maintained and where possible enhanced as will the setting and heritage of the river for its overall amenity and recreation use.

Policy CSEN2 Green Belt

The special character and landscape setting of Oxford will be protected by the Oxford Green Belt, the boundary is shown on the Adopted Policies Map.

A local review of the Green Belt will take place at Berinsfield.

Policy CSR1 allows for limited amounts of new housing through infilling in some Green Belt villages however planning permission will not be granted for development within the Oxford Green Belt that is contrary to national policy guidance in the NPPF and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The following are key previously developed sites in the Green Belt:

- Oxford Brookes University campus at Holton
- Culham Science Centre
- Culham No.1 Site
- Sandford Sewage Treatment Works

Policy CSEN3 Historic Environment

The district's designated historic heritage assets, both above and below ground such as:

- nationally designated assets including listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields and Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- conservation areas; and
- their settings

will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

This will be carried out through:

- conservation area appraisals/reviews;
- management plans;
- designating new conservation areas where appropriate;

- the determination of planning, listed building consent and other relevant applications.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy CSB1 Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

A net loss of biodiversity will be avoided, and opportunities to achieve a net gain across the district will be actively sought.

Opportunities for biodiversity gain, including the connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and habitat re-creation will be sought for all types of habitats, with a primary focus on delivery in the Conservation Target Areas.

The highest level of protection will be given to sites and species of international nature conservation importance (Special Areas of Conservation and European Protected Species). Damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest, local wildlife sites, local nature reserves, priority habitats, protected or priority species and locally important geological sites will be avoided unless the importance of the development outweighs the harm and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

Policy CSI1 Infrastructure provision

New development must be served and supported by appropriate on- and off-site infrastructure and services. Planning permission will only be granted when infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the new development, including that set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and/or mitigate the impact of the new development is already in place or will be provided to an agreed time scale.

Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development, and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers and secured by the negotiation of planning obligations, by conditions attached to a planning permission, and/or other agreement, levy or undertaking, all to be agreed before planning permission is granted.