

A Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village

In Spring 2023, Ptarmigan Land and JTP, invited the Berinsfield community to a Community Planning Weekend to co-create a Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village, including the area of undeveloped land on the former Mount Farm airfield.

“Keep the community at the heart of everything!”

Community planning participant

Ptarmigan Land appointed JTP, architects and community planners, to arrange and run the Community Planning Weekend (CPW) on Friday 31 March and Saturday 1 April 2023 as an opportunity for the community to share local knowledge and help shape a new Vision for the Mount Farm site and how it integrates with the existing village of Berinsfield.

Participants took part in minibus site visits, walkabouts, workshops and hands-on planning groups. After the CPW, the Ptarmigan team reflected on and summarised the outcomes and drew up the illustrated Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village, which was reported back to the community on Tuesday 18 April 2023.

The Ptarmigan team will continue to work with stakeholders and the community to bring together a comprehensive plan for the Garden Village, known as a Masterplan Framework Document, which will be submitted to SODC later this year and prepare the ground for an Outline Planning Application for the site.

Please let us have any comments on the Vision presented in these boards by filling in the comments sheet or contact us by email community@jtp.co.uk on **Freephone 0800 0126 730** or write to us at **Freepost JTP (no stamp required)**.



TEAM TOUR



DIALOGUE WORKSHOP



DIALOGUE WORKSHOP



HANDS-ON PLANNING WORKSHOP



HANDS-ON PLANNING WORKSHOP



YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKSHOP



MOUNT FARM SITE AND BERINSFIELD

For more information, scan the QR code:



berinsfieldgardenvillage.com

Key Themes

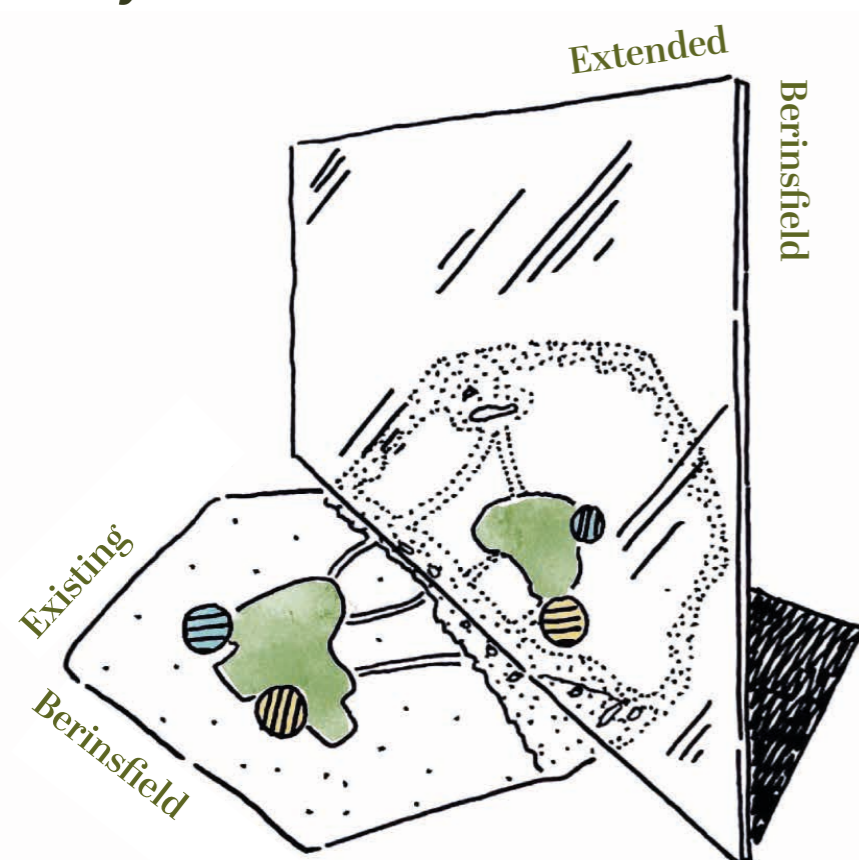
The following key themes represent a summary of the views of the participants through the community planning process. All quotes are from participants of the process unless otherwise stated.

One Berinsfield

Berinsfield is a unique village with a strong sense of identity and neighbourliness. People are proud of their local heritage and what the community offers to its residents today. New development must deliver investment into community amenities and infrastructure so that existing village facilities do not become overstretched, but rather development is seen to bring benefits to both existing and new residents. Participants at the CPW wanted to ensure that the growth of Berinsfield builds on the village's existing strengths in a way that creates one Garden Village not a "them and us" situation. Berinsfield Garden Village must grow as one integrated community, not two separate settlements.

"You've got to mesh the two together so you don't get old versus new!"

"Nobody should feel anything is too far away from where they are."



Trust and delivery

Many participants said that they felt there have been many consultations and promises made in the past with little positive actually happening as a result. To build trust in the process residents want to see stakeholders coming together, including Ptarmigan and SODC, to deliver the best possible masterplan for existing and new residents. Good and regular communication is vital and some "early win" projects should be identified and delivered with the community.

"It's great having new ideas but we have to move things forward."

Housing

New housing should be energy efficient, well designed and built, with a balance of affordable and for sale homes, and provision of some larger family homes and accommodation for the elderly. Participants also wanted to see investment in existing homes to reduce energy bills and water usage and provide other sustainability and quality of life benefits.

"If you build larger houses, you'll attract people who want to stay and work in the village, and put investment into the village!"

Employment and training opportunities

There is a range of employment in Berinsfield and within the surrounding area. Many villagers are employed locally (in shops, Williams Jet Traders, Drennan, Wandering Kitchen café at the Lake, etc). Development provides the opportunity to expand the amount of employment space in Berinsfield, support existing businesses and provide new jobs and training opportunities for local people, including in construction. The planning should also accommodate diverse and changing work patterns including increased home working, small workshop and maker spaces and spaces for co-working.

"Take the opportunity to create more jobs and raise skills levels."

Schools

Schools play a key role in building neighbourhood communities through the various relationships made within the school, at the school gates and by the potential use of their facilities out of hours. With new development at Mount Farm will come investment in primary schools within the Garden Village and financial contribution to a new secondary school, most likely in Culham Garden Village. For the primary schools, careful thought will need to be given to refurbishment and new build options, the locations of the schools and how they relate to neighbouring facilities.

"The primary school here has space to grow, but we desperately need a secondary school nearby."

Invest in existing village facilities, then add others

Participants appreciated the variety and quality of shops and amenities on offer in Berinsfield, which are well run and well used by residents and those from surrounding settlements. There was concern that some community facilities have become too expensive for some residents to use. With new development comes the opportunity to invest in the existing amenities and provide new ones. There was a desire to retain and invest in the established village centre focus in Berinsfield and mirror it in the new development with a new hub with complementary amenities to expand the offer and encourage villagers to visit all parts of the Garden Village. Participants saw opportunities to diversify sports provision, provide greater focus on arts and culture, including a museum to interpret the village's unique heritage. The village currently has limited food and drink provision and many participants wanted a new family pub overlooking the new linear park, to serve villagers and act as a destination to attract those from outside.

"Community facilities are right at the heart of this community!"

"We want to showcase our history."

Getting around

Villagers appreciate good pedestrian connections within Berinsfield, but mentioned a recent reduction in the River Rapids bus service and current issues around parking and traffic flow in Berinsfield. There is some concern about how new development will be accommodated, including in particular the option to reopen the northern access from A4074 to Fane Drive. A new vehicular access point is required to serve the development at Mount Farm, whilst promoting active travel (eg bus, pedestrian and cycling) throughout the Garden Village, including providing safe routes to schools. Many people in Berinsfield enjoy the pedestrian and cycling links to the surrounding countryside and the new development should incorporate and enhance these connections and links to nearby settlements, including along the Roman Road north towards Oxford. Villagers wanted to feel that they are part of a local, active travel network that in turn will encourage visitors to the village.

"Put in green infrastructure first! Then the network of cycle, paths and road links!"

"Instead of doing cars as a first choice we were thinking of doing electric bikes!"

Young people

Young people engaged with in Berinsfield appreciated the ease and safety with which they can get around the village, enjoy green spaces and make the most of the facilities on offer. There are fewer facilities for older teenagers, and there was a desire for additional sports (rugby, cricket, tennis) more equipment at the skate park, and other ideas included a parour course, climbing wall and after school clubs, especially related to art, drama, music and dance.

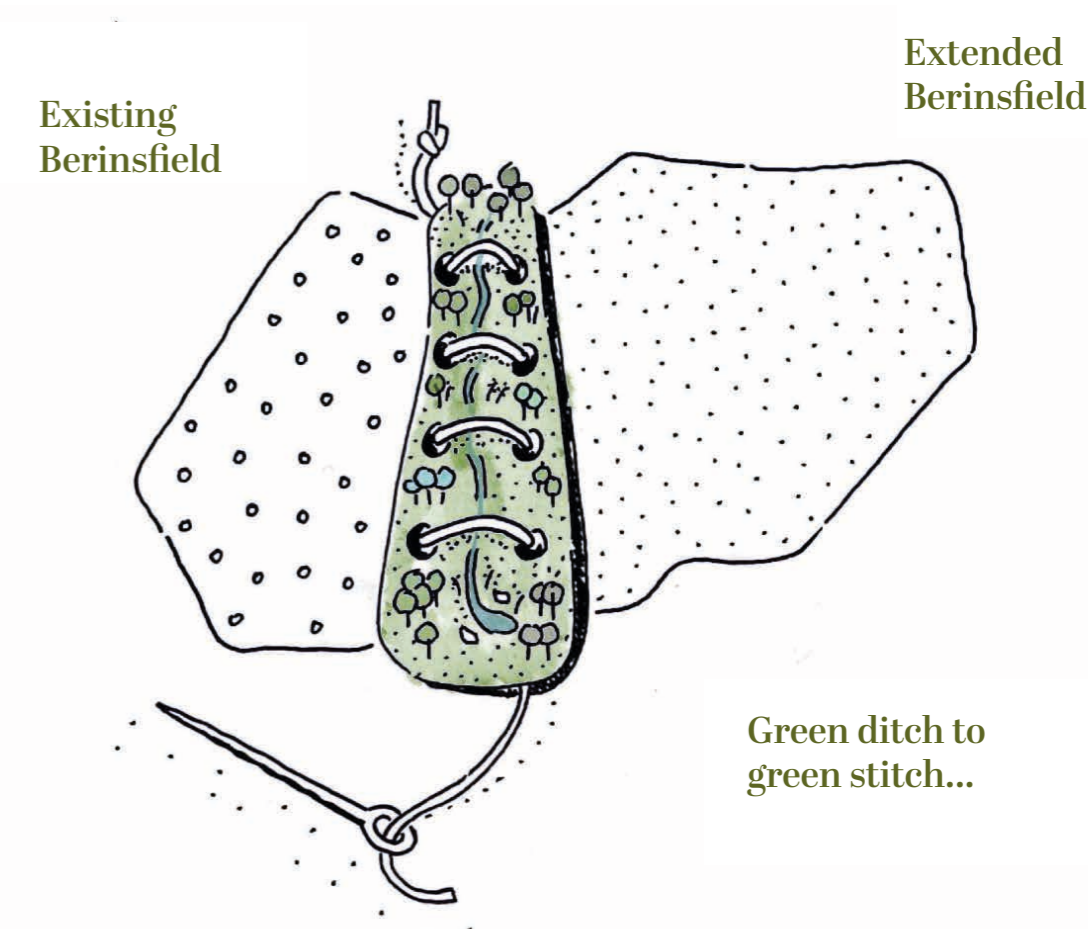
"There's a lot of call for different sports."

Fane Drive East Linear Park

The physical design and layout of the Garden Village is key to creating an integrated community and avoiding a "them and us" situation. As such, designing a linear park parallel with Fane Drive East, connected with the existing and future landscape and active travel networks, and with the stream opened up and celebrated, was seen as a way to provide a beautiful new asset at the heart of the Garden Village, adding value, bringing existing and new residents together and providing a destination to attract visitors from elsewhere.

"It would be nice to open up the ditch, have places where you can hear the water flowing."

"Green stitching can bring the two areas together."



Green and blue landscape framework

Villagers appreciate the green spaces and walking routes in Berinsfield and the views and access to the surrounding countryside. There was concern about the potential impact of new development on the existing ecology at Mount Farm, though development must deliver enhanced biodiversity. The new development at Mount Farm should create a network of linked green spaces connected to the existing village to provide attractive and varied spaces and linkages for people with opportunities to design in sustainable drainage and enhance habitats for nature. The central field in Berinsfield is greatly valued and participants wanted to mirror this in the new development with east west linear routes connecting both spaces via a new linear park along Fane Drive East.

"Protect and enhance existing green space network within the village and mirror it across into the new development."

Community involvement and "early wins"

Participants welcomed the opportunity to share their concerns and aspirations around the growth of Berinsfield and are keen now to "get on with it." The community wants to see partnership and collaboration between key stakeholders and for residents to be fully involved in the ongoing process to ensure the best possible outcomes. One suggestion was to unify the management of the green spaces in existing Berinsfield into one community not for profit organisation to deliver "early win" environmental improvements in the existing village and with expansion to cover the new development over time. In the longer term, participants discussed creating a Garden Village not for profit management company, including local residents, that builds on the good work already being carried out by groups and individuals within the Berinsfield.

"Make sure everyone knows what's happening. Even if there's a bump in the road, everyone should know about it."



A Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village

The Vision for Berinsfield was drawn up following the Community Planning Weekend public workshops. The illustrative framework includes around 1,700 new homes, at least 5 ha of additional employment land and supporting services and facilities.



ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Key

-  Complementary community hubs - existing and new
 -  Parkland and leisure spaces - existing and new
 -  Employment area
 -  Primary schools
 -  Proposed new residential neighbourhoods
 -  Potential mobility hubs - bus stops
 -  Potential bus routes
 -  Potential walking and wheeling routes
1. The Green Ditch - Fane Drive Linear Park
 2. The Green Stiches:
 - a) Woodland Walk
 - b) Parkland Walk
 - c) Farm Walk
 - d) Wetland Walk
 3. New "Community Farm" Centre & existing farm
 4. Woodland edge
 5. Wetland gateway
 6. Landscape corridors full of wildlife
 7. Primary access from A4074
 8. Potential second access from A4074
 9. Vehicular access from Burcot Lane

A Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village

The Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village includes a range of ideas:

- ensure new development and community provision at Mount Farm is blend-ed with the existing Berinsfield to create one fully integrated community;
- enhance green spaces in the existing village connected to a new landscape network for people and nature in extended Berinsfield;
- as part of the landscape network, create a new linear park running north/south along Fane Drive East stitching together existing and extended Berins-field;
- build a range of well designed, energy efficient homes for people of all in-comes and ages;
- invest in schools and community amenities to benefit the whole community;
- support local businesses and provide new jobs and training, including in construction;
- provide for effective vehicular access, parking and active travel (e.g. bus, pedestrian and cycling) across the Garden Village and beyond;
- continue community involvement in the development and delivery of the Garden Village.

You can view the full Vision presentation and the summary Vision newsletter on the project website at berinsfieldgardenvillage.com



FANE DRIVE LINEAR PARK



COMMUNITY FARM CENTRE



NORTHERN WOODLAND EDGE



NEW CENTRAL PARK

Vision Principles



One Berinsfield Community

Create one unique community - with attractive, safe places and spaces around the Garden Village for everyone to integrate and enjoy.



Two complementary community hubs

Invest in the existing village centre to provide enhanced and high quality services and create a new community hub with complementary services accessible to the whole community.



A Village with an active and empowered community

Invest in the culture within Berinsfield, supported by good communication and community structures, that gives everyone the opportunity to have their say and get involved.



A Village with nature on everyone's doorstep

Work collaboratively to enhance existing green spaces linked to an amazing network of new spaces for nature to thrive and for people to enjoy.



A Village of walking and wheeling

Build on the great routes and connections that everyone loves within the Village and extend them into the new neighbourhoods to "stitch" new and existing Berinsfield together



A Berinsfield home for all incomes and ages

Provide well designed, energy efficient and flexible homes for people of all incomes and ages.



A Village of enterprise and opportunity

Build on the strength of existing local businesses and networks to create exciting new opportunities for employment, skills and training.



A Village of learning

Invest in schools – new and existing – that are great places to learn and hubs for the local community.



A Village connected to neighbouring communities

Ensure that everyone can access neighbouring communities and opportunities using active travel eg bus, bike and walking, with bus stops and e-bike hubs a short walk from all homes.



Landscape Strategy

Landscape Principles:

- Create diverse habitats to enhance ecology and biodiversity
- Provide areas of productive landscape throughout the development
- Design a climate resilient place
- Provide natural play areas to balance Berinsfield formal open space
- Promote active and healthy lifestyle



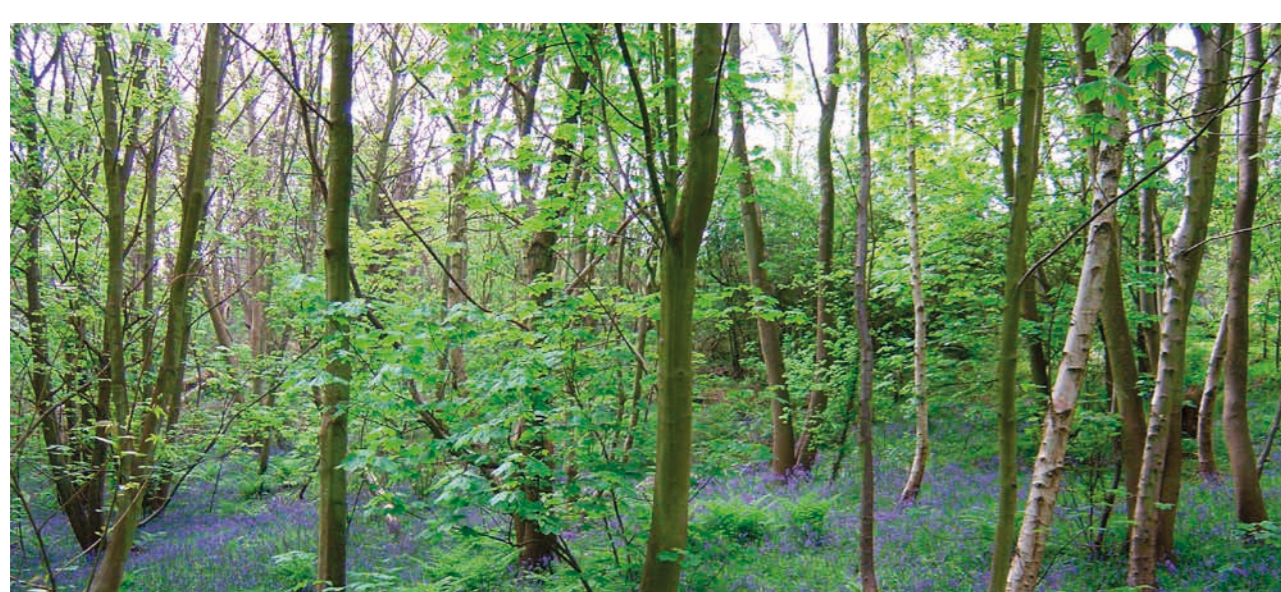
1. Parkland



3. Wild fringes



5. Community hub (orchard, farm etc.)



2. Woodland



4. Wetland



6. Productive landscape

Transport Principles

Provide easy access to facilities and sustainable transport modes

- All elements of the development will be within a 400m walk of a mobility hub
- All residential dwellings will be within 400m of a bus stop
- All residential dwellings will be within 800m walk of local facilities and services
- Mobility Hubs to provide E-Bikes/E-Scooters, which can be used to travel around the village and beyond
- EV charging points to be provided at all dwellings, workplaces and within community car parks



Existing and proposed bus network

- Improve existing bus stops and provide new bus stops
- Seek to maintain bus services into the village, which operate more frequently and over longer hours than existing
- Main vehicular route through village will be designed to accommodate regular bus movements

Create a pedestrian friendly environment

- Pedestrian and cycle routes will be segregated from vehicles, where possible
- Pedestrians and cyclists will have priority over vehicles where they interact, such as at crossing points
- All roads will be subject to 20mph speed limit within the village
- Roads will be designed so that walking and cycling to local destinations is seen as being quicker and more convenient over the car
- On-street parking restrictions to prevent inconsiderate parking

Access To Mount Farm

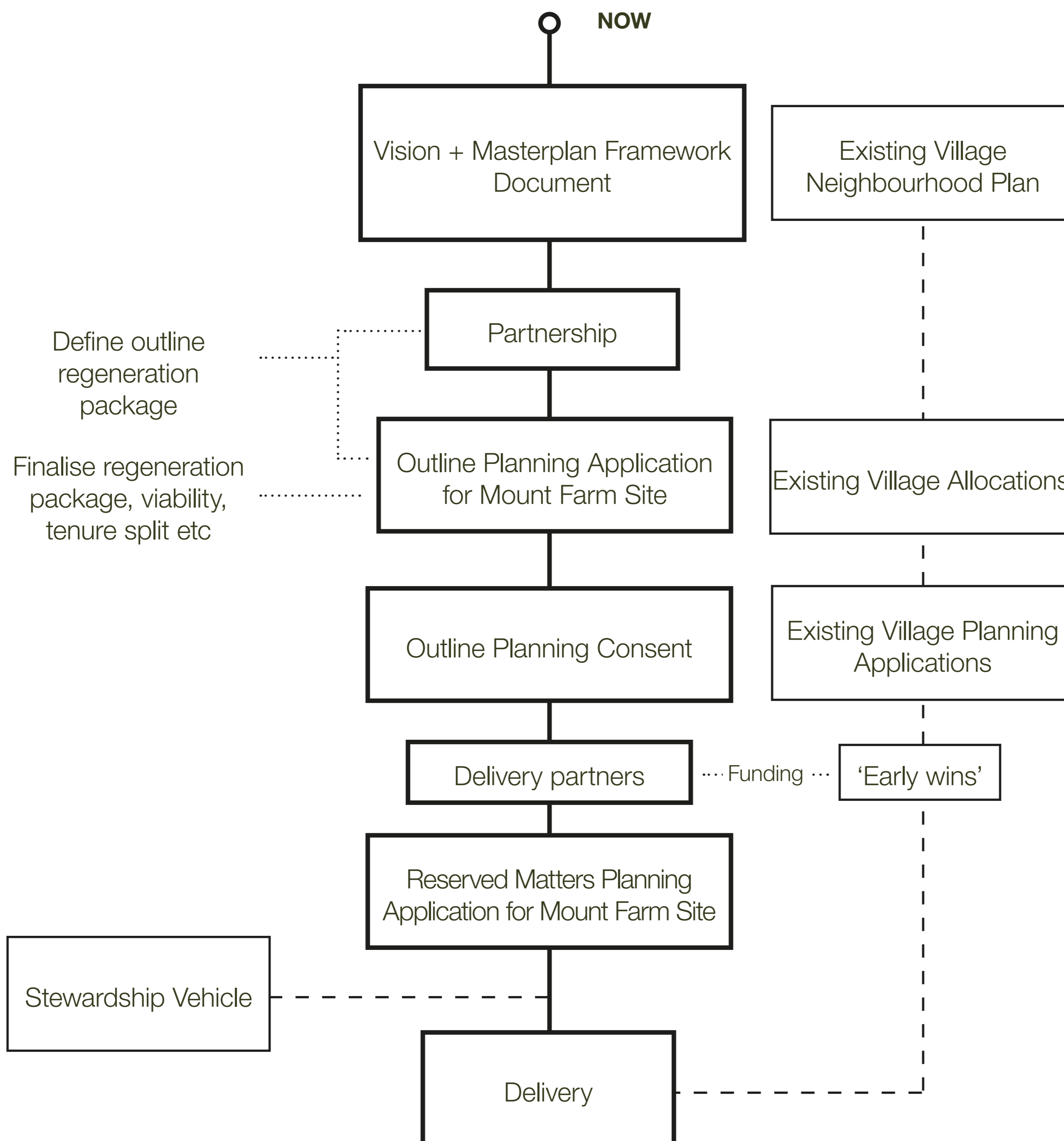


Next Steps

The Ptarmigan team will continue to work with stakeholders and the community to bring together a comprehensive plan for Berinsfield Garden Village, known as a Masterplan Framework Document (MFD), which will be submitted to SODC later in 2023 and prepare the ground for an Outline Planning Application for the site.

Prior to submission, there will be an opportunity later in the year for the local community to review and comment on the draft MFD. This will be at an in-person exhibition as well as online. Keep an eye on the project website for future updates berinsfieldgardenvillage.com

Planning Process



Timeline for the next stages of the project



What is the planning context?

The transformative change to the existing village of Berinsfield has been a long held aspiration of residents and the Council with it included in both the 2016 and current (2020 – 2024) Corporate Strategies.

The most recent major milestone for the project came in December 2020 when the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 was adopted. The area of undeveloped land on the former Mount Farm airfield is now identified for development through Policy STRAT10i (Land at Berinsfield Garden Village). It is expected to include around 1,700 new homes, at least 5 ha of additional employment land and supporting services and facilities.

The reason for the identification of Mount Farm is to allow for the transformative change planned for in the existing village. This is the core reason for Mount Farm being acceptable in principle for development. Historically, the Green Belt in Berinsfield had acted as a significant constraint that prevented development being permitted to support the transformational change.

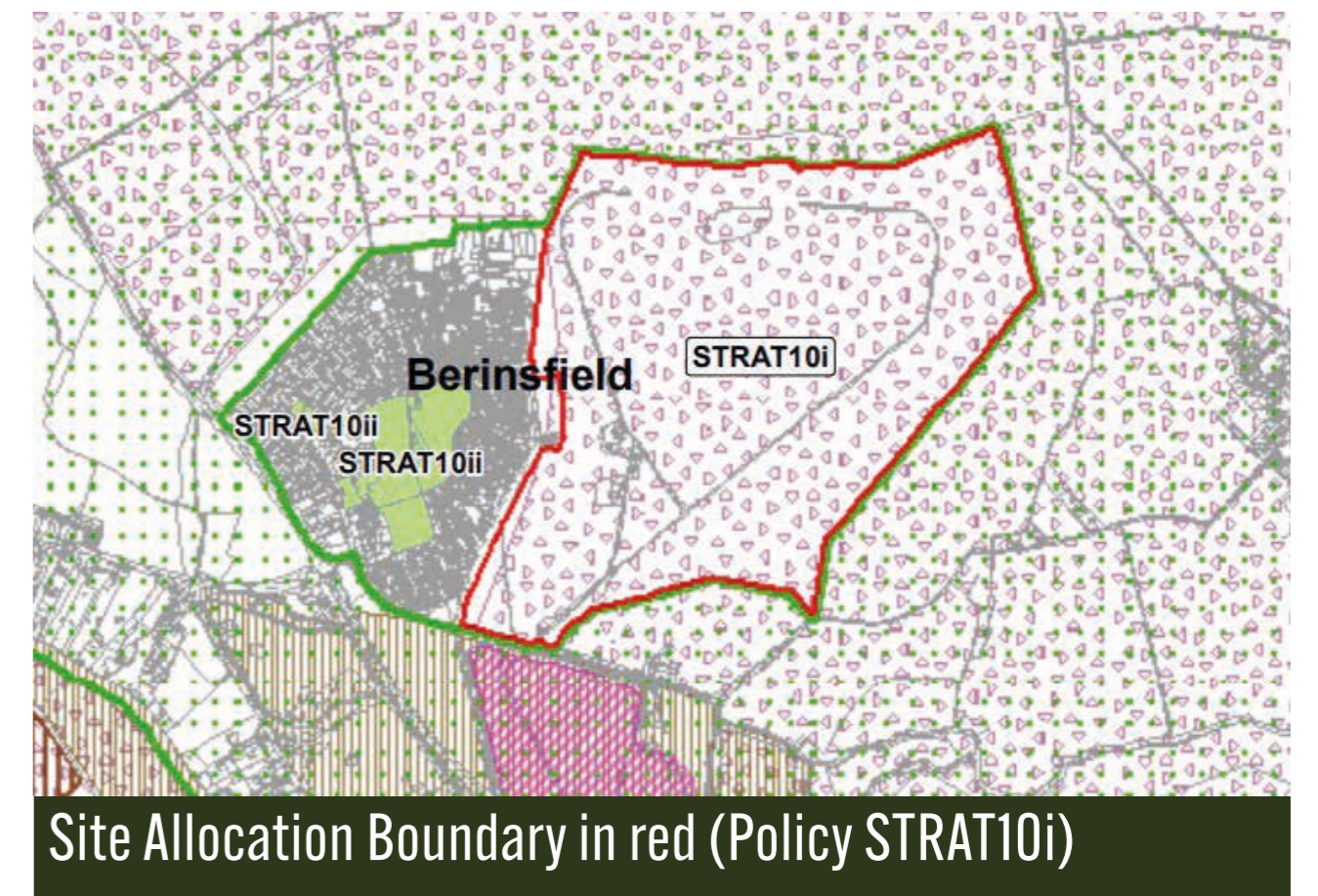
Berinsfield has been unable to evolve, as places naturally do, to meet changing needs because of the Green Belt. The basis for the identification of new homes being allowed at Mount Farm was on the appreciation that it would lead to the transformative change that the local community has wanted and expected of Berinsfield. The additional homes to be provided will provide the money that will allow investment into the existing facilities in Berinsfield to transform them. The additional population in the village will also help to sustain the facilities in the long term.

It is likely that the funds generated by the new development will be prioritised towards projects that could include, for example, the refurbishment and expansion of the Abbey Sports Centre and library to create a new community hub, which may also include an expanded or new health centre. This engagement weekend is an opportunity to understand if these, or other needs, remain the most important.

In addition to the transformative change of Berinsfield, it is a Local Plan Policy requirement that the site:

- will be delivered in accordance with an agreed comprehensive masterplan and vision;
- delivers a high-quality development that integrates and relates closely to the existing settlement of Berinsfield;

- delivers additional school places to meet the expected needs of the children that will occupy some of the homes in Mount Farm;
- provides local shops to support local village life;
- upgrades to the A4074/A415 to support the new development and provide better transport solutions for the site;
- achieves a mix of housing to support and compliment the existing village;
- delivers landscape and ecological enhancements.



Planning Timeline

