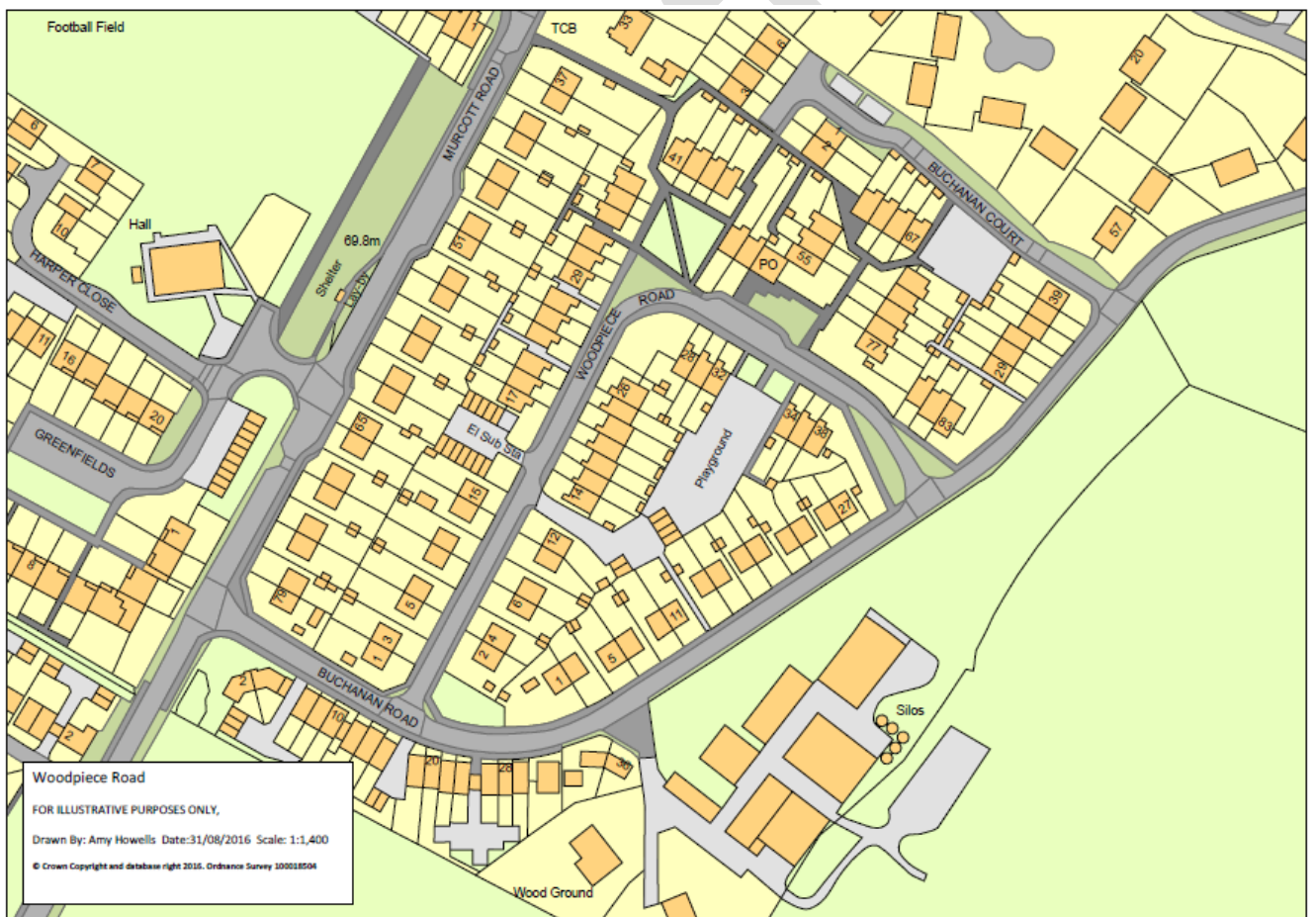


# **2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Report:** **Woodpiece Road Parking Options** **Appraisal**

January 2017

Produced by: The Investment & Growth Team, Cherwell District Council



Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team

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## **1.0 Background**

The Investment and Growth Team have been tasked with evaluating and preparing a report on the identified parking issue on Woodpiece Road, Arncott – and providing a range of options which might help to resolve the issue.

This options appraisal has been written using existing knowledge of the parking issue in the area, combined with drawing on local knowledge to produce a range of possible options which could be undertaken resolve the issue.

A 1<sup>st</sup> Stage Report written earlier in the year identified several different sites around the affected area, which offered potential opportunities to be converted from their current use into sites providing additional car parking. That report provided a basic overview of the problem, the area and some examples of how the issue could be approached in trying to resolve it.

This 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Report will build on the details of the previous report – but provide a more comprehensive analysis of each parcel of land located in the vicinity of the affected area which could be converted into extra car parking to ease the pressure on the road.

## **2.0 History**

In the village of Arncott (located just to the south of Bicester) there has been a long-standing parking issue on Woodpiece Road, due to the number of cars per household exceeding the designated parking areas available nearby.

In the evenings cars park along the road and on the green areas in an informal capacity, without any form of co-ordination or formal arrangement. This represents a serious concern because of the potential impact on access for emergency service vehicles, which at certain times of day may struggle to get to some of the residential areas on Woodpiece Road due to the number of vehicles parked on the road and surrounding areas.

The problem would appear to stem from the number of cars in the surrounding households exceeding the number which were initially planned for when the properties were built in the 1970s. Originally the houses were designed with rear parking courts and with green open spaces to separate pedestrians from vehicles. Subsequently, those garages fell into dis-use and then disrepair, and were recently converted into more housing. The primary tenure of the properties in the affected area of the road is privately owned, but a small number are still owned by the housing association Sanctuary Housing.

The growth of multiple car households is a common phenomenon many Western societies and is linked to changes in lifestyle and the growth of wealth over time. This pattern is more prevalent in rural communities than an urban environment due to the less frequent public transport connections to act as an alternative form of transportation.

Approximately half of the houses which face onto Woodpiece Road have already converted their own front gardens into in-curtilage driveways, although due to the placement of the houses, not all of the houses have the capacity to take this course of action.

Furthermore, the village Post Office/shop is also located in this very same area, and adds another

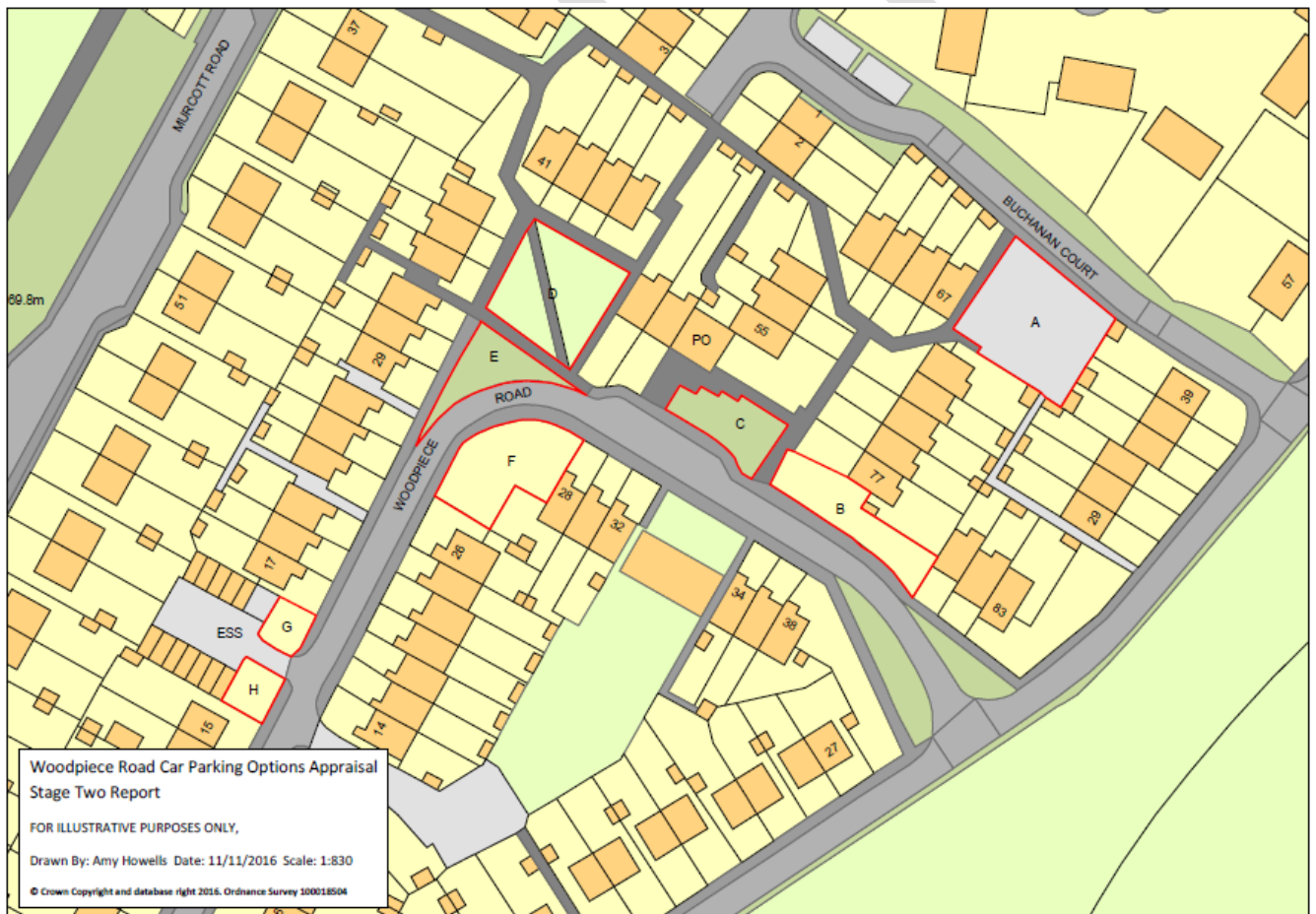
dimension to the parking situation. The cars that use the Post Office and shop would often only be using the area for short term parking, whereas resident parking is for longer periods of time. Any potential solutions identified will need to be able to accommodate both of these, since they will most likely be used interchangeably.

Due to these factors, it is estimated that there is a need to reduce the on-road parking at peak times by approximately 30 vehicles. Being able to do this given the constraints on the publicly owned land may not be achievable, but this report will go through some possible options which could ease the on-road parking along the road.

The map below highlights the main area affected by the parking issues, and details the potential sites in and around Woodpiece Road which could be considered for conversion.

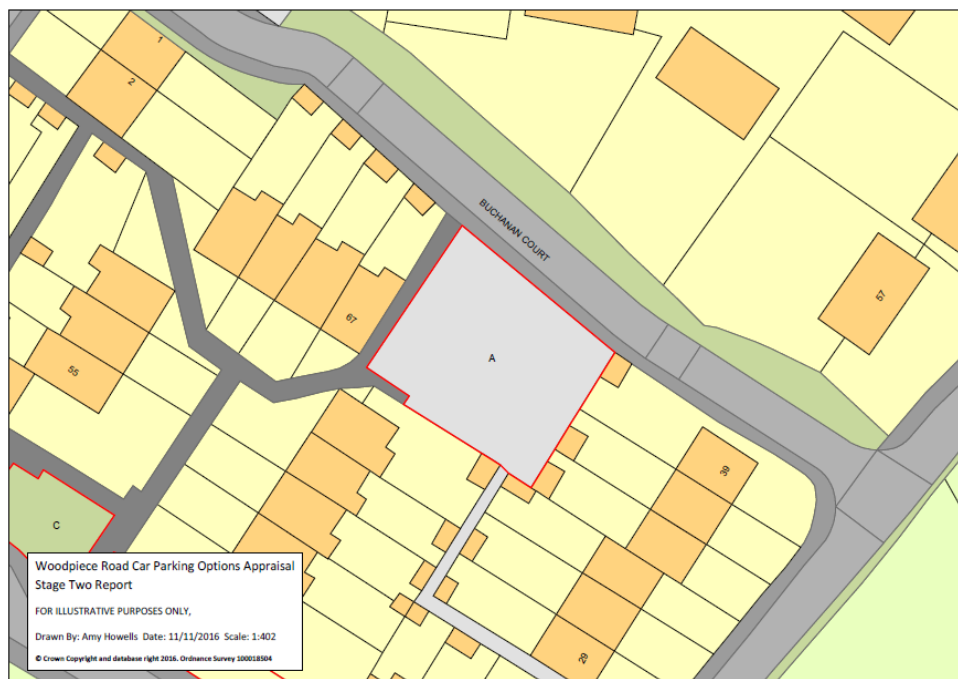
### **3.0 Potential sites for conversion map**

The following is a map of the Woodpiece Road, with the identified 8 potential sites (labelled A-H) for possible conversion into extra car parking, in order ease the on-road parking situation developing there:



Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team

### Site A



*Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team*

Overview	<p>Site A is located off Buchanan Court, adjacent to Woodpiece Road and is an area of land that is already designated as car parking. This area currently has limited lighting, and so becomes dark and is deemed unpopular to park in by residents. It would appear that this area has become somewhat disused and run-down as a result of this.</p> <p>While the site is a little way back from Woodpiece road it is still important, as the cars which were initially displaced from Buchanan Court to Woodpiece Road could return to parking there, easing the pressure on the road.</p> <p>It is the only site of the ones considered in this report that would only require minor improvements, rather than a full conversion.</p>
Estimated number of spaces	15
Land owner	Cherwell District Council
Estimated costs	<p>Capital costs: £10,000</p> <p>Revenue costs: £500 per annum (for lighting / maintenance)</p>
Planning department comments	No objections, as long as the lighting of the site is improved.
Highways department comments	No objections.

Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that this site is converted, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It benefits from only needing minor alterations (mainly lighting), rather than a full conversion – making it the most value for money of the sites.</li><li>• It makes use of space away from Woodpiece Road to help resolve the problem.</li><li>• It brings back an underutilised area into use.</li><li>• No green space in the village will be lost.</li><li>• There are no objections in principle from the Planning department.</li><li>• There are no objections in principle from the Highways department.</li></ul>
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### Site B



*Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team*

Overview	<p>Site B is located on Woodpiece Road and runs parallel to the road. This site is currently used in an informal capacity by residents as car parking. Due to its location, would provide direct relief for the build-up of vehicles on the road – both to the residents and to the customers of the Post Office.</p> <p>As this site is currently a green space, it means that the residents would be required to sacrifice this for off-road parking.</p> <p>Re-routing the pavement around the newly created parking site to make it safer for pedestrians would be unlikely to alleviate the danger posed, as people would still walk the most direct route (between the site and the road) – putting them at danger.</p>
Estimated number of spaces	7
Land Owner	Cherwell District Council
Estimated costs	£20,000
Planning comments	<p>Objection: The need to drop the curb along where the site meets the road presents a significant problem, as this directly impacts the pedestrian route, putting them at an increased risk of injury between the road and the site.</p>
Highways department comments	<p>Objection: The dropping of the curb was again seen as an issue, and even using a safer single access point was used, it would decrease the number of spaces available, due to the shape of the site.</p>

Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that this site is not converted, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It would require the dropping of the curb, which presents both increased cost and risk to pedestrians however, using a single access point instead would decrease the amount of spaces that could be created on the site.</li><li>• It does not represent value for money.</li><li>• It is not supported by the Planning department.</li><li>• It is not supported by the Highways department.</li></ul>
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### Site C



*Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team*

Overview	<p>Site C is located just off the layby near the Post Office / shop and provides frontage to the houses in that area.</p> <p>Due to its unconventional shape, it is not able to accommodate as many parking spaces as it could have if the same sized site was shaped differently. As this site is also the closest in proximity to the Post Office, it could ease the short term stopping of customers.</p> <p>It would require the loss of current green space which acts as frontage to twelve properties.</p> <p>Re-routing the pavement around the newly created parking site to make it safer for pedestrians would be unlikely to alleviate the danger posed, as people would still walk the most direct route (between the site and the road) – putting them at danger.</p>
Estimated number of spaces	8
Land Owner	Cherwell District Council
Estimated costs	£16,000
Planning department comments	Objection: Pedestrian safety concerns from people taking the most direct route between the road and the site. Even re-routing the pavement is unlikely to resolve this issue.
Highways	Objection: Converting this site would require the loss of the layby, which provides easy short

department comments	term parking for customers of the Post Office / shop, and any spaces gained from converting this site would effectively cancel out the amount of car parking lost from losing the layby parking.
Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that this site is not converted, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would only cancel out the number of spaces lost from losing the layby.</li> <li>• It presents an increased risk to pedestrians.</li> <li>• It does not provide value for money.</li> <li>• It is not supported by the Planning department.</li> <li>• It is not supported by the Highways department.</li> </ul>

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### Site D



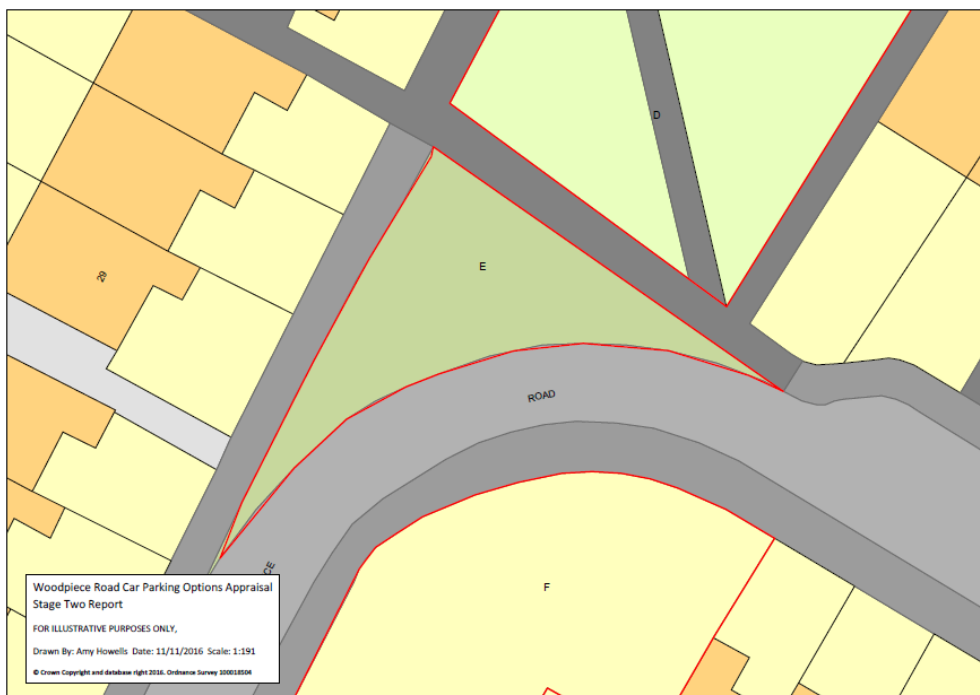
Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Site D is a large patch of green space set slightly back from the corner of Woodpiece Road, and is the largest single site in this report.</p> <p>It is close to the Post Office, but perhaps more importantly, provides frontage for 7 houses and represents a large, open, natural space. As there are a number of large family houses nearby, it is likely that children might use this large green space to play in.</p> <p>As the site is not itself contiguous to the road, there would need to be an access point added to the south east corner, or the site could be considered in tandem with Site E, due to the ease of access that this would provide. This would however increase the risk to pedestrians between the site and the road, unless a single access point was used.</p>
<p>Estimated number of spaces</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>Land Owner</p>	<p>Cherwell District Council</p>
<p>Estimated costs</p>	<p>£30,000</p>
<p>Planning department comments</p>	<p>Objection: This site is not supported because of the issue around access onto Woodpiece Road, pedestrian safety concerns and the amount of green space lost.</p>
<p>Highways department comments</p>	<p>Objection: It is difficult to convert (especially the access point to Woodpiece Road) without also converting Site E, and there are pedestrian safety concerns between the site and the road.</p>

Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that this site is not converted, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It would be awkward to access Woodpiece Road unless Site E is also converted.</li><li>• It is not supported by the Planning department.</li><li>• It is not supported by the Highways department.</li></ul>
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### Site E



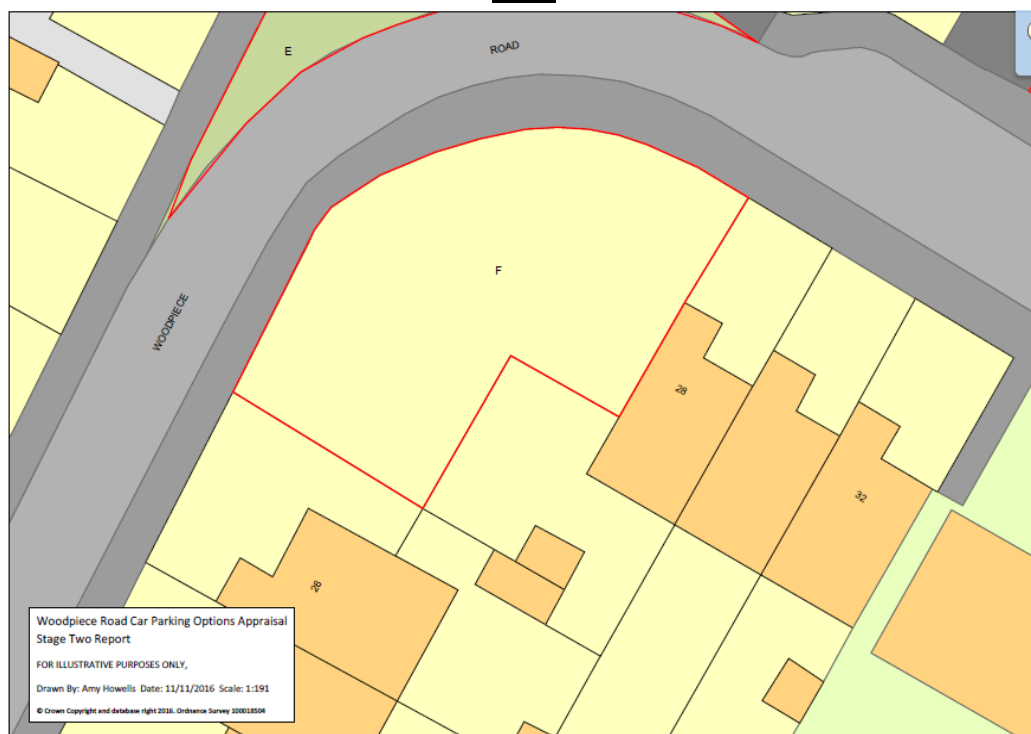
Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team

Overview	<p>Site E, is a small patch of green land, just north of the curve on Woodpiece Road. It is not able to provide as many spaces as initially thought in the 1<sup>st</sup> Stage Report, due to the odd shape of the land.</p> <p>This site also has to be thought about in tandem with Site D, as it would allow a better access point onto Woodpiece Road, and provide more spaces if the two sites were combined.</p> <p>This site would also require the removal of a street light, which currently occupies the area.</p>
Estimated number of spaces	5
Land Owner	Cherwell District Council
Estimated costs	£15,000
Planning department comments	Objection: The need to drop the curb along where the site meets the road means increased costs, and sites located on the outside of road corners rarely provide much parking due to the awkward shape.
Highways department comments	Objection: It is a hugely disproportionate amount of land for the number of spaces which it would provide.
Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that this site is not converted, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It does not represent value for money.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is not supported by the Planning department.</li><li>• It is not supported by the Highways department.</li></ul>
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### Site F



Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Site F is located on the inside of the Woodpiece Road corner and is at the centre of the area where the parking problem is most severe.</p> <p>It is already used informally by local residents to park on, but in an uncoordinated arrangement. If the site was formally arranged, then more vehicles would be able to utilise the space. Using a single access point, rather than dropping the curb along the whole site edge would provide the safest approach – as it would allow for an unobstructed view around the inside of the corner of the road.</p> <p>There are also some trees that have been planted in the area that would need to be taken into consideration.</p>
<p>Estimated number of spaces</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>Land Owner</p>	<p>Cherwell District Council</p>
<p>Estimated costs</p>	<p>£20,000</p>
<p>Planning department comments</p>	<p>No objections, as long as there is a single access point, rather than a dropped curb along the whole site edge.</p>
<p>Highways department comments</p>	<p>No objections, as long as there is an unobstructed view from the inside of the corner of the road.</p>

Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that this site is converted, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Its location on the most affected area of Woodpiece Road makes it a key site to resolving the problem.</li><li>• There are no objections in principle from the Planning department.</li><li>• There are no objections in principle from the Highways department.</li></ul>
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## Sites G & H



*Source: Arc Map – drawn by the Investment & Growth Team*

Overview	<p>Site G &amp; H are located to the south of the affected area of Woodpiece Road, and bookend the entrance to an enclosed set of garages, which are owned by Sanctuary Housing. These two sites which have been included together due to their very similar nature and location.</p> <p>These sites are situated away from the most affected area of the road.</p>
Estimated number of spaces	6
Land Owner	Cherwell District Council
Estimated costs	£12,000
Planning department comments	No objections.
Highways department comments	No objections.
Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that these sites are converted, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no objections in principle from the Planning department.</li> <li>• There are no objections in principle from the Highways department.</li> </ul>

#### **4.0 Grant option**

Overview	<p>The owners of some properties located in the affected area of Woodpiece Road have already taken it upon themselves to convert their own driveways into off-road parking, and so a different approach to this issue could be to target those that have not converted theirs, and to offer a grant of £100 which would cover the cost of obtaining a licence from the County Council to convert their own front garden into driveways.</p> <p>Not all the houses in the affected around are contiguous to the road, and so will not be eligible for the grant to convert the front garden.</p>
Estimated costs	<p>Maximum of £1,000, since the cost of a County Council licence to drop a kerb is £100 and there are only 10 privately owned properties which are located directly on the road, who haven't already converted their gardens to driveways.</p>
Recommendation	<p>It is the officer recommendation that this option is chosen because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It acts as different approach from the rest, and would minimise loss of public green space.</li><li>• It can be combined with any of the above options very easily.</li><li>• It requires the smallest amount of liability from the Parish Council or the District Council.</li><li>• It represents very good value for money.</li><li>• Shifting the emphasis of the problem onto the households involved means that the residents take on the responsibility for the issue themselves.</li></ul>

#### **5.0 Additional Considerations**

With regard to any of the options above, there will be certain factors which need to be further considered whichever option is chosen. These could ultimately affect the choice that is made and any decision-making process should bare the following aspects in mind.

#### **5.1 Financing**

Of the households who will gain from additional parking spaces being provided, most will be the private owners of the properties, but the tenants of Sanctuary housing, who still own approximately a fifth of the properties in the affected area and customers of the Post Office / shop could potentially also benefit from any of the above options being chosen. Cherwell District Council will attempt to seek proportionate financing from both of these parties, based on how the Parish Council wishes to proceed – although full details on the financing arrangements of any chosen options will need to be determined at a later date.

## **5.2 Previous potential site**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Stage Report included a site located behind the houses which face onto Woodpiece Road, which was previously designated as a playground, but has since become a redundant space, without lighting. This site has been removed from contention by this 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Report as while it had the required space, its location a long distance away from the affected area of the road and poor levels of lighting make it susceptible to being underused, similar to what has previously happened to Site A. It is for these pragmatic reasons that this site was thought to no longer be a viable option for conversion into additional parking.

## **5.3 Transfer of land ownership**

If it is decided that a site or sites are chosen by the Parish Council to be converted, then the land in question could be considered for transfer from the District Council to the Parish Council, either as a leasehold agreement or a freehold in perpetuity. This will include the upkeep and maintenance (both on-going capital and revenue costs) of the land, for which the Parish Council would be the responsible party. The full details of the proposed land transfer will need to be determined at a later date.

## **5.4 Consultations**

In producing this report, we have sought informal consultation with a member of the Planning department at Cherwell District Council and a member of the Highways department at Oxfordshire County Council. It should be noted that any and all comments made by representatives of the Planning department and the Highways department are not formal comments. This consultation process was conducted for information purposes only in order to feed into this report, and should not be made available externally.

If any of the options are chosen to be taken forward, the changing use of the current sites into car parking will need to go through the full process of public consultation, as well as getting the required formal approval from both the Planning Department and the Highways department. Environmental Impact Assessments would also need to be carried out for the change of use for the chosen site(s). The full details of these aspects will be agreed at a later date.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

The eight options (seven sites plus the grant provision option) discussed in this report cover a range of approaches aimed at easing the parking problem at Woodpiece Road. Each option is discussed, with key specifications provided and each with its own set of positives and negatives aspects which should be carefully weighed before any final decision is reached, as any proposed land transfer would be in perpetuity.

## **7.0 Options**

Below are a number of options that officers, members, the Parish Council need to consider when moving forward with this piece of work:-

- Option 1: Take no action.
- Option 2: Pursue the officer recommendation of converting site A, site F and sites G & H into parking.
- Option 3: Pursue the conversion of sites other than the officer recommended sites.

- Option 4: Pursue the grant provision offer to residents for driveway conversions.
- Option 5: Combine the converting of a site(s) as well as offering grants to residents.

Any option will be subject to further Cherwell District Council approval, budget capacity, planning consent, detailed cost analysis and detailed site surveys.

### **8.0 Next Steps**

1. The consultation on this draft report is to be carried out.
2. The finalised version of this report is to be taken to the Executive Committee.
3. A further detailed analysis of any preferred option(s) is to be undertaken.
4. The handover of this project to the Council's Build!® team in order for any chosen option to be completed through their works programme, including a detailed feasibility study.

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