

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Wednesday 9 October 2019**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **The Old Library - Oxford Town Hall**

For any further information please contact:

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Telephone: 01865252217

Email: jmitchell@oxford.gov.uk

Details of how City Councillors and members of the public may engage with this meeting may be found on page 8 of this agenda.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record the meeting please let the Committee Services Officer know how you wish to do this before the start of the meeting.

Cabinet

Membership

Chair/ Leader	Councillor Susan Brown	Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships
Vice Chair/ Deputy Leader	Councillor Linda Smith	Deputy Leader (Statutory), Cabinet Member for Leisure and Housing
	Councillor Ed Turner	Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management
	Councillor Nigel Chapman	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Customer Focused Services
	Councillor Mary Clarkson	Cabinet Member for Culture and City Centre
	Councillor Tom Hayes	Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford
	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth	Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Transport
	Councillor Mike Rowley	Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing
	Councillor Marie Tidball	Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities
	Councillor Louise Upton	Cabinet Member for Healthy Oxford

The quorum for this meeting is three, substitutes are not allowed.

Future items to be discussed by the Cabinet can be found on the Forward Plan which is available on the Council's [website](#)

Copies of this agenda

Reference copies are available to consult in the Town Hall Reception. Agendas are published 6 working days before the meeting and the draft minutes a few days after.

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AGENDA

PART ONE PUBLIC BUSINESS

Pages

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
- 3 ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
- 4 COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON ANY ITEM FOR DECISION ON THE BOARD'S AGENDA
- 5 COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES
- 6 ITEMS RAISED BY BOARD MEMBERS
- 7 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Scrutiny Committee meets on 01 October 2019. Any recommendations to Cabinet from that meeting will be published as a supplement to this agenda.

8 WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

11 - 174

Lead Member: Planning and Sustainable Transport (Councillor Alex Hollingsworth)

The Head of Planning Services has submitted a report to consider the Examiner's Report, approve modifications to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan and agree that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to a referendum.

Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Approve** the Modifications to Policies in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan as recommended by the Examiner's Report (July 2019);
2. **Approve** the factual modifications that have been made for the purpose of correcting errors and approve the factual modifications relating to textual changes in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan; and
3. **Agree** that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (as modified in the form at Appendix 4) is submitted to a referendum.

9	INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 2019/20	175 - 186
	<p>Lead Member: Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)</p> <p>The Heads of Financial Services and Business Improvement have submitted a report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 30 June 2019.</p> <p>Recommendation: That Cabinet resolves to:</p> <p>Note the projected financial outturn, the current position on risk and performance as at the 30 June 2019.</p>	
10	MODERNISING LEISURE CONCESSIONS	187 - 204
	<p>Lead Member: Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Leisure and Housing (Councillor Linda Smith)</p> <p>The Head of Community Services has submitted a report to present recommendations to improve how leisure concessions are used.</p> <p>Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve use of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and or the housing element of Universal Credit as the primary criteria for concessions; 2. Approve implementation of the changes shown in Appendix 2 in parallel with promotion of alternative memberships and discounted prices; 3. Agree that the age that someone is able to qualify for an older person concession should be increased from 60 to 65, and then until it reaches 66 in October 2020 and 67 between 2026 and 2028; 4. Instruct officers to conduct an annual review of concessionary categories alongside the annual fees and charges process; 5. Instruct officers to look to implement improvements to the leisure concessions offer from 1st April 2020; and 6. Instruct officers to review the target groups and decide any changes for when the leisure contract is retendered in 2023. 	
11	LETTING OF 24-26 GEORGE STREET	205 - 210
	<p>Lead Member: Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)</p> <p>The Executive Director- Development has submitted a report to seek approval for the letting of 24-26 George Street.</p>	

Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Approve** the letting of 24-26 George Street on the terms set out in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION appendix; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Executive Director - Development , to vary those terms on condition that the revised terms continue to represent the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

12 OXFORD SPORTS PARK - ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE

211 - 228

Lead Member: Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Leisure and Housing (Councillor Linda Smith)

The Executive Director Customer & Communities and the Regeneration & Major Projects Service Manager have submitted a report to seek Cabinet approval to assign the lease that the Council currently has in place with Fusion Lifestyle for the operation and management of Oxford Sports Park to Oxford United Football Club.

Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Approve** the proposal that Oxford United Football Club manage and operate the Oxford sports park;
2. **Approve** the assignment of the lease to the Oxford sports park from Fusion Lifestyle to Oxford United FC;
3. **Grant** delegated authority to the Executive Director Customer and Communities in consultation with the Head of Finance to agree the terms of a new management agreement with Oxford United FC, in line with the existing Development agreement and lease for the Sports Ground, including: a community use agreement; business plan; and governance arrangements for running the Sports park; and
4. **Note** that the agreement will deliver a saving of £50k for the 19/20 and 20/21 financial years and £25k per year thereafter.

13 MINUTES

Recommendation: That Cabinet resolves to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 03 October 2019 as a true and accurate record. **These minutes will be published as a supplement.**

14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 13 November
- 11 December
- 22 January
- 12 February
- 11 March

All meetings start at 6pm.

15 MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

If the Board wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Board to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Board may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

PART TWO **MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

16 LETTING OF 24-26 GEORGE STREET - APPENDIX 2

229 - 232

DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed “Declarations of Interest” or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council’s area; licences for land in the Council’s area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor’s Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council’s website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Member’s Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members’ Code of Conduct says that a member “must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself” and that “you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned”. What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member’s spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

HOW OXFORD CITY COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN ENGAGE AT THE CABINET

Addresses and questions by members of the public, (15 minutes in total)

Members of the public can submit questions in writing about any item for decision at the meeting. Questions, stating the relevant agenda item, must be received by the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am two clear working day before the meeting (eg for a Tuesday meeting, the deadline would be 9.30am on the Friday before). Questions can be submitted either by letter or by email (to cabinet@oxford.gov.uk).

Answers to the questions will be provided in writing at the meeting; supplementary questions will not be allowed. If it is not possible to provide an answer at the meeting it will be included in the minutes that are published on the Council's website within 2 working days of the meeting.

The Chair has discretion in exceptional circumstances to agree that a submitted question or related statement (dealing with matters that appear on the agenda) can be asked verbally at the meeting. In these cases, the question and/or address is limited to 3 minutes, and will be answered verbally by the Chair or another Cabinet member or an officer of the Council. The text of any proposed address must be submitted within the same timescale as questions.

For this agenda item the Chair's decision is final.

Councillors speaking at meetings

Oxford City councillors may, when the chair agrees, address the Cabinet on an item for decision on the agenda (other than on the minutes). The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one clear working day before the meeting, stating the relevant agenda items. An address may last for no more than three minutes. If an address is made, the Cabinet member who has political responsibility for the item for decision may respond or the Cabinet will have regard to the points raised in reaching its decision.

Councillors speaking on Neighbourhood issues (10 minutes in total)

Any City Councillor can raise local issues on behalf of communities directly with the Cabinet. The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one clear working day before the meeting, giving outline details of the issue. Priority will be given to those members who have not already addressed the Cabinet within the year and in the order received. Issues can only be raised once unless otherwise agreed by the Cabinet. The Cabinet's responsibility will be to hear the issue and respond at the meeting, if possible, or arrange a written response within 10 working days.

Items raised by Cabinet members

Such items must be submitted within the same timescale as questions and will be for discussion only and not for a Cabinet decision. Any item which requires a decision of the Cabinet will be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Cabinet

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To: Cabinet
Date: 09 October 2019
Report of: Head of Planning Services
Title of Report: Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To consider the Examiner's Report, approve modifications to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan and agree that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to a referendum.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Lead Member for Planning
Corporate Priority:	None.
Policy Framework:	Strong and Active Communities; Meeting Housing Needs; A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy; A Clean and Green Oxford
Recommendations: That the Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Modifications to Policies in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan as recommended by the Examiner's Report (July 2019); 2. Approve the factual modifications that have been made for the purpose of correcting errors and approve the factual modifications relating to textual changes in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan; and 3. Agree that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (as modified in the form at Appendix 4) is submitted to a referendum. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Map of neighbourhood plan area
Appendix 2	Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2034 Submission Version
Appendix 3	The Report by the Examiner to Oxford City Council on the Examination of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan
Appendix 4	The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan as modified by the Examiner's recommendations, and also including the type of modifications referred to in recommendation 2 of this report.
Appendix 5	Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Review in the light of the judgement 'People Over Wind' (the Sweetman decision)
Appendix 6	Risk Register

Introduction and background

1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to enable communities to become directly involved in planning for their areas. Neighbourhood planning allows interested communities to come together through a Neighbourhood Forum to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Once a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted or 'made' it will become part of the statutory development plan, and therefore an important consideration when making decisions on planning applications.
2. There are detailed statutory requirements for the process prior to submission of a draft neighbourhood plan and once such a plan has been submitted.
3. The draft Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034 (Appendix 2) was submitted by the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum on the 24th July 2018. The content of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan, has been shaped by the local community. The Submission Stage Consultation (Regulation 16) took place for 6 weeks from Tuesday 9th October to Tuesday 20th November 2018. The Neighbourhood Plan received responses from 11 organisations and individuals. The Draft Neighbourhood Plan ('The Plan') is for the area formally designated on 22nd January 2014 and re-designated on 13th March 2019. A map of this area is shown in Appendix 1.
4. It is worth noting that the boundary of the neighbourhood area is based on current ward boundaries. The results of the electoral review of the City Council's ward boundaries will take effect in May 2020. As a result the ward boundaries in the area will change but this will not affect the neighbourhood area.
5. The City Council in consultation with the Neighbourhood Forum discussed and agreed the appointment of an independent Examiner.

The Examiner's conclusions

6. Under the terms of the neighbourhood planning legislation the Examiner is required to make one of three possible recommendations these being:-

- (i) that the plan should proceed to referendum, on the basis that it meets all the legal requirements; or
 - (ii) that the plan should proceed to referendum as modified, based on the Examiner's recommendations; or
 - (iii) that the plan should not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet all the necessary legal requirements.
7. On 3rd July 2019, the City Council received the Examiner's Report (see Appendix 3). The Examiner concluded that *'Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum..'*
 8. A number of the modifications recommended by the Examiner concern the wording of the policies. The modifications aim to mostly add clarity to the policies, or help them to achieve their intended ambition. The principal modifications proposed by the Examiner related to 'spatial' policies, mainly on the grounds that they were not in 'general conformity' with adopted Local Plan policies set out in the Core Strategy or Sites and Housing Plan, or that they were contrary to national policy, or repeat existing Local Plan policies. As such a number of 'spatial' policies did not meet the 'basic conditions' test and therefore these policies together with the supporting text are recommended to be deleted.
 9. In relation to the 'community policies' the Examiner supported the majority of the policies proposed. Two policies (BEC2 and COC3) were proposed for deletion on similar grounds to the 'spatial' policies. The first (BEC2) because it was out dated and not in 'general conformity' with adopted Local Plan policies, and the second (COC3) because it did was not in 'general conformity' with an existing Area Action Plan (AAP) policy approach.
 10. The Examiner explains in the report that his role as an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. This requires him to examine whether or not the submitted Plan meets the 'basic conditions' and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. The modifications proposed by the Examiner are therefore made to ensure that the Plan is legally compliant which can enable the Plan to proceed to a Referendum.
 11. The Examiner recognises that the Plan *'seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area,'* and has a *'focus on safeguarding the very clear difference between the built-up parts of the neighbourhood area and its extensive green area'*, and *'seeks to improve the health and well-being of its residents'*. The report acknowledges that the Plan has been *'underpinned by community support and engagement'* and that *'all sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation'*. The Examiner is clear that the content and form of the Plan is fit for purpose and is *'distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area'*.
 12. The Examiner's overall conclusions are that:-
 - On the basis of the findings in the Examiner's report, the Examiner recommends to Oxford City Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in the report, that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

- that the neighbourhood area, as approved by the City Council initially on 22nd January 2014 and re-designated on 13th March 2019, is entirely appropriate and does not need to be extended;
13. The Council is now required to consider each of the Examiner's recommendations (and the reasons given) and decide what action to take in response to each of those recommendations.
 14. The Council must decide to proceed to the holding of a referendum if it is satisfied that:
 - a. Having regard to national policies and the advice of the Secretary of State's guidance, it is appropriate to make the Plan;
 - b. The Plan would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - c. The Plan would be in 'general conformity' with the strategic policies of the Development Plan;
 - d. The Plan would not breach (and would be compatible with) EU obligations;
 - e. Requirements imposed by regulations (e.g. as to consultation) are complied with; and
 - f. The Plan would be compatible with rights established in UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998.
 15. The Examiner has considered all of these matters in his report which have informed his recommendations, and subject to his modifications, recommends that the Plan should now proceed to a Referendum. Officers agree with the reasoning of the Examiner and, on the basis of the criteria a to f set out in paragraph 14 above and contained within the Regulations, see no reason to come to a contrary conclusion on any of his recommendations. Should Cabinet resolve as recommended (recommendations 1 to 3) it will be on the basis of accepting all of the Examiner's recommendations and his reasoning. The Plan, including the modifications recommended by the Examiner, as well as modifications concerning error corrections and factual textual changes, is attached as Appendix 4.
 16. The Council can proceed with the Plan in a modified form but there are limits to the power to modify. These are limited to modifications to ensure that the Plan meets the requirements set out in paragraph 14 above (recommendation 1), the error corrections, and factual modifications relating to textual changes (recommendation 2).

Subsequent steps undertaken with the Neighbourhood Forum

17. Officers met with four members of the Neighbourhood Forum on Wednesday 24th July to discuss the Examiner's report and the principal recommendations for changes to the policies and supporting text. The proposed textual changes (set out in Appendix 4) are intended to both align the text with the policy changes and ensure that the document reads as a planning document. They also include factual modifications that have been made for the purpose of correcting errors.
18. The Chair of the Forum subsequently confirmed that the forum have accepted the Examiner's recommendations (set out in Appendix 3), as well as minor, non-material error corrections and factual modifications to the Plan (set out in Appendix 4).

Next steps towards Referendum

19. The Regulations require decisions on the Examiner's recommendations to be made within five weeks of receipt of the Examiner's report unless some other date has been agreed with the Neighbourhood Forum. In this case the date 9th October 2019 (the date of this Cabinet meeting) has been agreed with the Forum.
20. Once Cabinet has made its decision, based on the recommendations in this report, that decision, together with its reasoning and the Examiner's report, will be publicised and the Council will proceed with the Referendum, which is likely to be in February 2020. The referendum will be fully publicised.

Policies in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan that will form part of the Development Plan

21. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan contains two types of policies. It contains 'spatial' policies that relate to the control of development (planning policies) which end in 'S' prior to their assigned number. These are the policies in the plan which will form part of the development plan and will be used to determine planning applications within the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Area. Appendix 4 shows a full list of all the planning policies (as modified by the Examiner). There is another type of policy in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan. These policies relate to wider community aspirations and are called 'community' policies. These policies end in 'C' prior to their assigned number, and do not relate to land-use matters or form part of the statutory development plan.
22. The Examiner has considered the structure of the Plan and is satisfied that the community policies should follow the spatial policies within the defined topics for each chapter. However to highlight the significance and importance of the 'spatial' policies which will become part of the development plan the Examiner has recommended that they are shown in a light tonal grey to clearly distinguish the 'spatial' policies from the 'community' policies.

Linkages between the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan

23. If the Plan proceeds to referendum and more than half of those voting in the referendum vote in favour of the Plan, the Council is required to make (adopt) the Plan unless Council considers that the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998) (*Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 s38A(6)*).
24. . At this point, the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan would then form part of the statutory development plan. The significance of this is that where future planning decisions have to be made in accordance with the development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise), the Neighbourhood Plan will have the same status as, for example, the Core Strategy and the Sites and Housing Plan. If there is conflict between the documents making up the development plan, the Neighbourhood Plan will prevail as it will be the most recent.

Environmental Impact

25. A combined Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Statement were submitted as part of the supporting evidence. The conclusions of this statement consider that the submitted Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on a European site and that an appropriate assessment is not required. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has concluded that none of the policies within the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have adverse effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows St Aldate's Chambers.
26. The City Council has undertaken a review of the screening work (Appendix 5) in the context of the Court of Justice of the European Union judgement (People Over Wind, Peter Sweetman and Coillte Teoranta, April 2018) which has changed the basis for undertaking habitats regulations assessments. This review has concluded that the recent Court of Justice judgement does not affect the integrity of its earlier screening work and that the HRA has been undertaken on the precautionary principle basis. It concludes that the HRA (June 2018) remains appropriate and no changes are considered necessary in the light of the 'People Over Wind' judgement.

Financial Implications

27. The City Council will be responsible for running any referendum. This requirement will be met from the current resources of the Planning Policy Team supplemented by grants available from central government to district councils for each neighbourhood plan.
28. It should be noted that from the date that a neighbourhood plan has been made, the local community will be entitled to an increase in the Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts that are to be spent in the locality with community input. This will rise from 15% of CIL receipts to 25% of CIL receipts. The City Council will retain all the CIL monies but engage with the communities where the development has taken place and agree with them how best to spend the neighbourhood funding element. At the point the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' the elements of Neighbourhood Portion of CIL which is allocated to Ward Members in this Neighbourhood Plan Area will cease at the end of the financial year.
29. In relation to the referendum, the current estimate for its cost is about £9,000.

Legal Issues

30. As the Plan conforms to the legal requirements, officers consider that the Plan should proceed to referendum, subject to the modifications proposed by the Examiner, as recommended by the Examiner's Report and subject also to the additional factual modifications to correct errors and the factual modifications relating to textual changes as set out in the version of the Plan contained in Appendix 4 to this report.
31. The legal requirements are set out in the body of the report.

Level of risk

32. The Risk Register is attached at Appendix 6. There are no abnormal risks

Equalities Impact

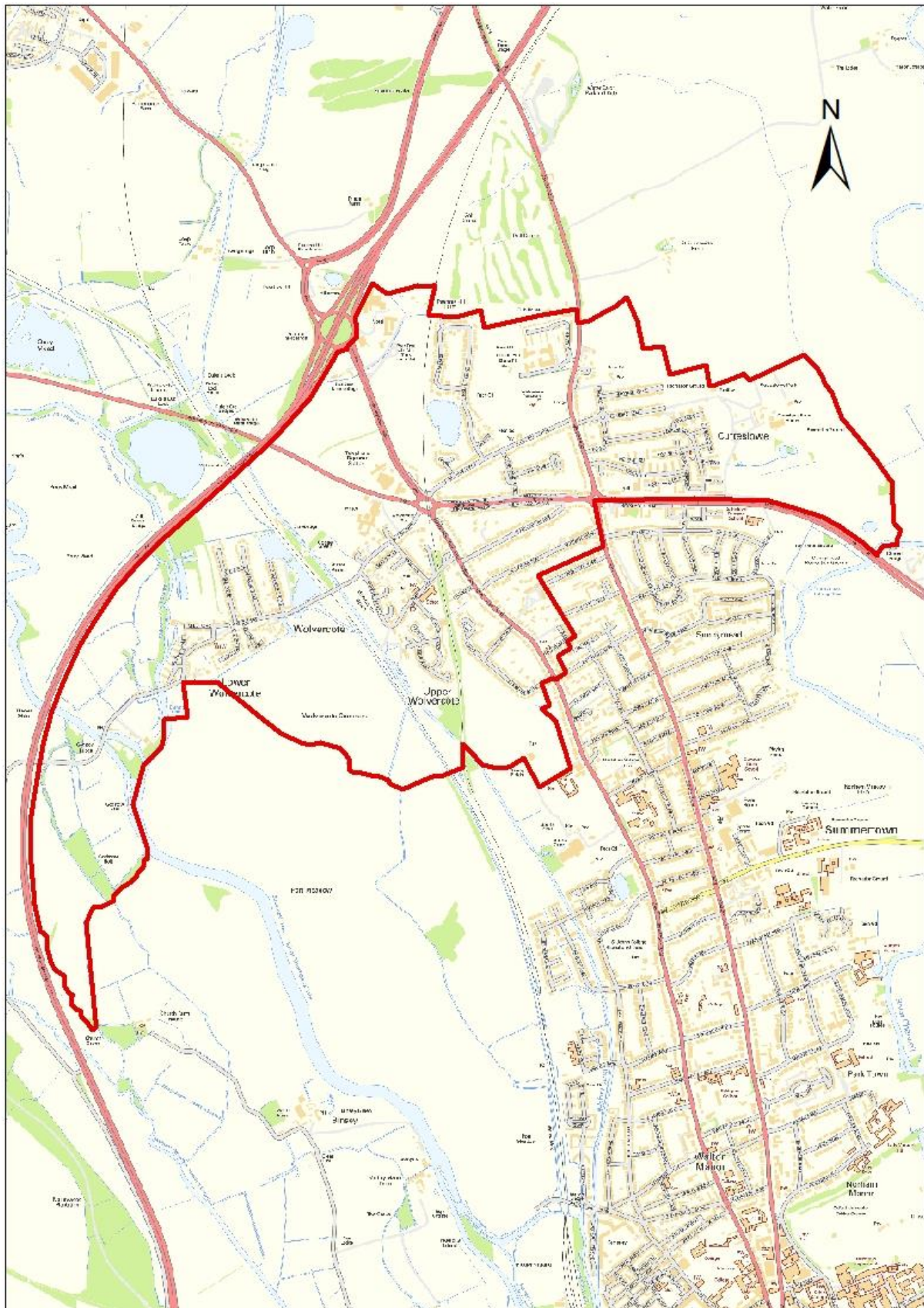
33. Consideration has been given to the public sector equality duty imposed by s149 of the Equality Act 2010. Having paid due regard to the need to meet the objectives of that duty the view is taken that the duty is met.

Report author	Keerpa Patel
Job title	Senior Planning Officer
Service area or department	Planning Services
Telephone	01865 335444
e-mail	kpatel@oxford.gov.uk

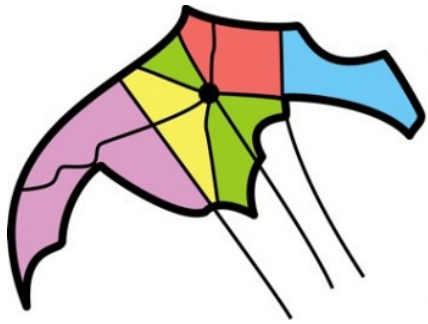
Background Papers: None

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Appendix 1: Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area



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WOLVERCOTE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
FORUM

DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2019 - 2034

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

WNF Document Control Sheet	
Document Title	WNP - DRAFT PLAN
Draft Number	v.8.2
Task Group and Authors	Project Manager, WNF SC
Date of Version	24 th July 2018
Status	Post Consultation, Post SC review, Post PM review, Post Regulation 14 Consultation
Date of Public Issue	
Visibility	For Oxford City Council official consultation
File Type	Word
File Name	WNP DRAFT PLAN v8.2

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Welcome to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan.

This Neighbourhood Plan is your plan. It seeks to establish a vision for Wolvercote and to deliver local aspirations and needs from 2019 to 2034. Neighbourhood planning was introduced in the Localism Act (2011) and reflects the Government's determination that local communities are closely involved in decisions about new buildings and developments that affect them. (See Annex 1 for more on Localism and Neighbourhood Planning.)

Our plan area stretches from North Oxford to Cutteslowe and to the villages of Upper and Lower Wolvercote. Many people have lived here all their lives, many have retired here or have lived here while working in Oxford, and with the planned developments there will be a growing and changing community.

Unlike many Neighbourhood Plans, ours will not be able to affect the designation of major sites for development, because the Northern Gateway and the Mill site were already allocated for development. However, a neighbourhood plan is a statutory document incorporated into the planning framework and can have an impact on the way development happens. It can help to ensure that development is sympathetic.

We have worked to discover the views of the community about what it values and what needs to be done to ensure that Wolvercote will be a place where people will be happy to live in the future and that, whatever changes and developments there are, its essential character will not be lost. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of those who have joined the Steering Committee. The process remains open to all wanting to help in the future. We always welcome help.

We have been concerned to reflect the views of the community regarding, for example: flood risk; pollution; the preservation, development and maintenance of our green spaces; the protection of the Green Belt; the scale and sustainability of building. We know, too, that that our neighbourhood is affected by developments that are outside our area and consequently more difficult to influence. It is, however, our intention to do our best to co-operate with our neighbours to do what we can to ensure that the common interests of all residents are protected.

This, then, is our vision for the future.

Christopher Hardman

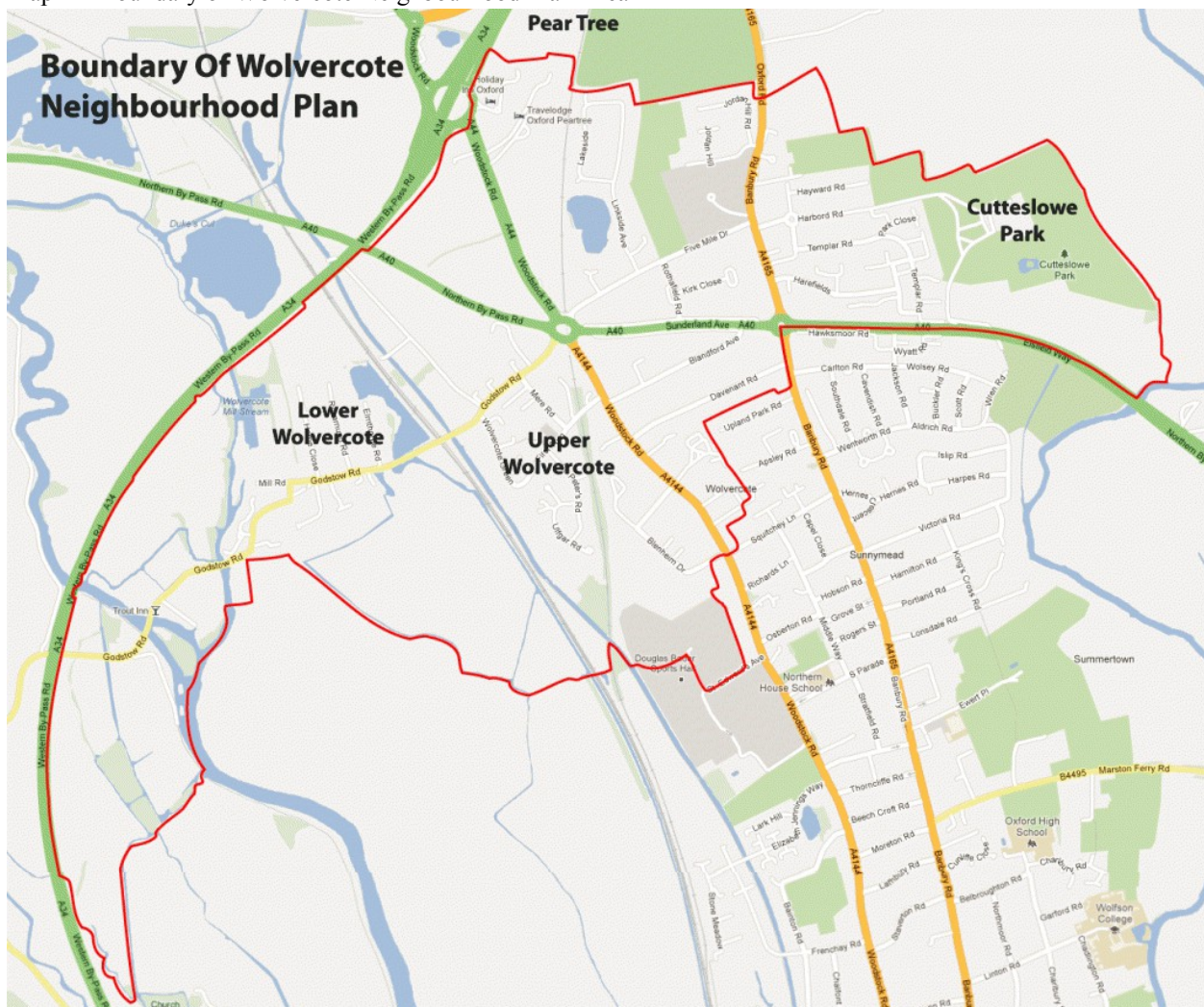
Chairman, Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and Plan Area

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum was designated by Oxford City Council (as our local planning authority) in January 2014 as the body responsible for developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wolvercote (the Plan). The Forum was established as an organisation whose purpose is to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. The Forum's structure is set out in Annex 2.

The Forum's membership represents a full cross-section of the local community, including those who live and work in Wolvercote. The Forum has approximately 150 members including elected members of Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils. It covers the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area (WNPA) which is set out in Map 1 below.

Map 1 – Boundary of Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area



All local groups operating in the area and owners of land within the area, but not resident or working in the area, have been invited to be represented. Open meetings of the Forum have been publicised online and in the local media, and membership sought through these means.

The process of developing the Plan, and of approving the Plan through a referendum, lies with WNF. However, it is important that WNF acts as a conduit for the views and expectations of the wider Wolvercote community. This includes those who live, work or study in Wolvercote. WNF also has a responsibility to be mindful of the impacts of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan on neighbouring parishes, city areas, and other neighbourhood forums.

Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan for Wolvercote?

In the past all statutory spatial plans have been prepared by the local planning authority, Oxford City Council. These plans are collectively known in legal terms as ‘the Local Plan’ and will remain in place. Oxford City Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to replace the one agreed in 2011.

These plans are prepared *in consultation with* the local community, however they do not necessarily reflect the ‘will’ of the community. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared *by* the community, *for* the community.

Through the Localism Act the Wolvercote community has had the opportunity to actually prepare the plan that shapes how the Wolvercote area looks. Communities can say what type of development they wish to encourage, how much development should take place (subject to generally conforming with higher level strategic plans), where and when that development should take place, and what they want to see protected in the long term.

Communities can do this by establishing what the community wants the area to look like over the coming years. They can then establish how relevant delivery organisations in the private, public, community and voluntary sector are able to meet those expectations.

Provided certain steps are taken during the preparation of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan, it will have a clear legal status and it will be used to make decisions on all planning matters coming forward in Wolvercote and in the adjoining areas that may have an impact upon Wolvercote.

Wolvercote is adjacent to the districts of Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, which will be developing their own local plans and proposing strategic developments that could bring significant change to the Wolvercote Plan Area.

Given the range of issues that the Wolvercote community faces, having a Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to try to resolve them through the planning system. WNF will also use the Plan to work with a range of community stakeholders to deliver local solutions and projects for Wolvercote.

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted to provide an opportunity to decide the future of the place (Wolvercote) where people live and work. In 2019 it is hoped that this Plan will be adopted by the Wolvercote community at a referendum, and it will provide a spatial planning template for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area until 2034.

The Plan is a spatial plan containing planning policies, which affect how planning applications are determined, and community policies and projects which aim to help the community in Wolvercote deliver the desired changes. Given that WNF is not the only statutory body responsible for spatial planning in Wolvercote (Oxford City Council is the Local Planning Authority), the Plan must be in general conformity with Oxford City Council's spatial planning policies within its Local Plan.

It should be noted that this Plan should be read as a whole in relation to development proposals. This Plan does not provide a 'pick-and-mix' approach to development, but sets down a coherent framework of policies which, taken as a whole, seeks to deliver the Vision and Objectives of WNF.

Consulting Statutory Stakeholders on this Draft Plan is a statutory requirement of the neighbourhood planning process, and the consultation period must be open for at least 6 weeks. However, opportunities to make representations to WNF are open throughout the Plan preparation process

The Plan Process

The process which neighbourhood plans need to follow is set down in statute by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). These regulations specify a series of stages and tests to ensure the validity and conformance of the neighbourhood plan. The process that WNF has followed in developing the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is set out in Annex 3.

The Plan also needs to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012) and this will be set out in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Vision, Aims and Principles

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by local residents from Wolvercote. These local residents have organised themselves into a series of Working Groups which report back to a main Steering Committee (SC), which in turn reports regularly back to the Forum (see Annex 2).

The Forum sets out the Vision for the Plan. The SC sets out the Aims and Objectives of the Plan. The Working Groups set out the Policies and Action Plans for the Plan.

Vision:

In 15 years, Wolvercote Ward, which stretches from Cutteslowe Park in the east to Godstow in the west, will be an attractive, economically vibrant and culturally lively area. It will be for people of all ages, backgrounds and interests, and will have a strong sense of community. All new building developments should be sustainable and of a high quality, designed to be sensitively integrated with existing buildings so that the valued character of the streets and the green open spaces in all of the Ward's distinct localities is retained and enhanced.

Aims:

The aims of the proposals in the Plan are to benefit all those who live and all those who work in the Ward and are for all age groups and for future generations. There should be a variety of housing to suit their needs and incomes, local employment opportunities, improved leisure facilities and accessible green spaces, and there should be an appropriate choice of environmentally friendly facilities for travel. The sustainability of the Ward, as a group of interacting communities existing within a wider economic, social and environmental context, should thus be ensured.

The Plan seeks to establish that new building developments are supported by adequate services and facilities. Transport links into and out of the centre of Oxford and with neighbouring areas should be maintained and improved so as to reduce dependence on cars, to lower pollution and to improve the ability of people to move about easily and safely. The Plan also requires that adequate precautionary measures are taken to reduce the risk of flooding, in particular in Lower Wolvercote, and especially in any new developments.

General Principles:

- 1) Community:** The Wolvercote Ward already contains several thriving communities, some of which have better facilities than others. All of them need communal facilities that will maintain and enhance social interaction. Where there is growth in population, more facilities should be provided. Facilities (social, sports, worship and medical etc.) are needed for all age groups from the young to the elderly and should be maintained and enhanced regularly as a matter of course. Wherever new development takes place the design and the layout should be in sympathy with the needs of the existing community in scale and should provide both communal facilities and public open space, which is welcoming and free of cars, where people can freely and safely interact. Public open space needs also to be secure and well maintained.
- 2) Schooling:** The community should support the provision of local schools. Sufficient capacity must be made available in local schools to accommodate any increases in

population, especially from large developments. Consideration needs to be given to safe travel routes to schools.

- 3) **Local employment:** A growing number of people want to work close to their homes. This might reduce traffic and pollution. Appropriate business development contributes to a balanced community, and may provide scope for local employment. However, the infrastructure needs to be developed accordingly. Where there are larger volumes of traffic because some employees and goods have to come from outside the area, it will be necessary to ensure that roads are in good repair and able to cope. At the same time measures should be introduced to encourage the reduction of car dependence.
- 4) **Local retail:** Local shops have an important function in any neighbourhood, not least because they cut down on the need for travel. They should be protected by planning policy.
- 5) **Mix of housing:** Any new developments must be planned to avoid ghettos and gated communities. New housing should include “affordable” housing both for purchase and for rent. The rental sector should be responsibly managed, with consideration and respect for all residents. There should be firm implementation of Oxford City Council’s policy on Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). Land should be made available for specialised types of housing, such as sheltered and extra care housing.
- 6) **Building scale, density and design:** It is important to attend to the scale of buildings and the density of development to ensure that any new building is appropriate in design, scale and character to its immediate neighbours. Areas for development within the Ward should be designated to ensure that the variations in scale and density accompanying different use categories are appropriately sited (for instance, housing compared with employment use). Furthermore, there should be a strict limit on the practice of infilling and the replacement of single dwellings by multiple properties, to control density and car ownership. New developments should have dedicated spaces to accommodate waste disposal (wheelie bins), to keep shared spaces, including pavements, clear.
- 7) **Sustainability and building standards:** All new developments must be planned to be sustainable in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). To meet this requirement, new building should be highly energy efficient and meet the highest standards for sustainable design. Improved space standards should be introduced for all new dwellings, and these standards should be made mandatory (as, for example, the standards used in public housing before 1980).
- 8) **Heritage:** New developments must respect buildings or groups of buildings of historical significance within the local area, whether designated heritage assets or within the Conservation Areas or not. This does not mean copying historical styles but re-interpreting the scale and grain of existing places in a contemporary way.

- 9) Renewable energy:** The Plan encourages the exploitation of the potential for renewable energy in existing housing and commercial building stock, and especially in new developments, including energy from natural features, such as rivers.
- 10) Energy and resource conservation:** Every effort should be made to promote the conservation of resources, reduce air pollution and bring down fuel bills. In terms of buildings this will be achieved by the use of efficient and selective construction methods, the elimination of waste material, and the employment of advanced technology (including district heating). In terms of transport it will be achieved through the development of public transportation, encouragement of cycling, walking etc.
- 11) Noise and air pollution:** The Plan requires effective steps to protect residents (both new and existing) from noise and air pollution from identified polluting sources (particularly major roads). Evidence to support proposals must be based on data obtained from actual measurements, not models. This is an issue for developers but also for the Highway Authority since the pollution levels at the Wolvercote Roundabout and almost certainly at the Cutteslowe Roundabout already exceed air quality standards. Consideration should be given to the prevention of “rat running”.
- 12) Green spaces and biodiversity:** While acknowledging the outstanding facilities provided by Cutteslowe Park, Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green, Wolvercote Lakes, Goose Green and Port Meadow, the Plan supports the work of local authorities, agencies, charities and local community groups in protecting and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity of the area. It will strive to make more green space accessible to the public, while, at the same time, supporting measures to protect rare plant species and habitats. Public areas in new developments should be stocked with native tree, plant and grass species. All developments, especially large developments, should contain green spaces offering a range of character. The potential for traffic calming by creating chicanes and parking bays, using trees or shrubs in planters, could be explored.
- 13) Drains and infrastructure:** The Plan seeks more rigorous checking of plans for forthcoming developments, based on measured evidence to ensure that the existing drains and roads in particular have sufficient capacity to support those developments. There is currently concern about the inadequacy of the sewerage system in Lower Wolvercote.
- 14) Risk of flooding:** The Plan seeks a more rigorous approach to the provision of flood defences where these are needed. There should be careful checking of all plans for new developments to ensure that they do not add to the risk of flooding in the area and will employ appropriate techniques to attenuate surface water run-off from buildings and paving. In low-lying areas there must be a clear understanding by landowners and agencies of the causes of flooding (e.g. where existing ditch networks are blocked) and clear and (where possible) enforceable lines of responsibility for the maintenance and management of banks, ditches and weirs.

15) Traffic and parking, alternative transport: Road layouts should be able to cope with the volume of traffic and, where that cannot be achieved, new development should be restricted. Changes to road layouts should not take place simply to accommodate development to the detriment of conditions for existing residents. New developments need to be planned with adequate parking provision. Public transport provision needs to be enhanced. Existing roads and bridges need to be repaired and reinforced to cope with bus and emergency services and refuse collection, with contributions towards this work where appropriate from developers. Alternative means of transport (cycling and walking) need to be encouraged, through provision of safer routes.

Policies and Action Plan Preparation

Each of the five Working Groups concentrated on a particular policy area. These are:

- 1 . Green Spaces and Biodiversity
- 2 . Built Environment
- 3 . Commerce
- 4 . Community, Transport and Health
- 5 . Heritage and Local Character

Throughout the whole Plan development process, the achievement of sustainable development has been embedded within policy formulation. At the heart of the Plan is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

Delivering the Plan

Delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan will take place through two distinct elements:

Firstly, the Spatial Planning Policies as set out below, if approved at Referendum, will become part of the Statutory Local Planning documents which determine planning applications in the WNPA. These policies specifically impact on proposed planning applications and can be implemented directly through the planning system.

Secondly, WNF has identified a number of Community Policies and Projects, which are set out below. These Policies and Projects cannot be delivered through development (i.e. when planning applications are made) and therefore will need to be delivered by WNF working with partners and external stakeholders.

Why consult on a Neighbourhood Plan?

The consultation process which neighbourhood plans must follow is set down in statute by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). These regulations specify a series of consultations to ensure the validity and conformance of the neighbourhood plan.

WNF has a duty to consult the Wolvercote community through a formal consultation process. Additionally, WNF must consult any consultation body whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan as set out in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012).

The consultation phase of the project includes one informal and two formal legally required processes to **consult** the community, and an ongoing informal engagement and consultation process.

During the first informal consultation process, WNF identified the potential community issues which needed to be fed into the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan.

Following this consultation WNF produced a draft Plan, which enabled the first formal community consultation process to proceed. This document is a result of this formal consultation.

The summary of the entire consultation process that the Plan has followed will be set out in the Consultation Statement.

WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DRAFT POLICIES

Green Spaces and Biodiversity (GB)

The aim of the Green Spaces and Biodiversity policies is to conserve and enhance green space and biodiversity primarily for residents' well-being. Green space should be maintained and opportunities for enhancement sought to help mitigate the effects of climate change. Public green space should be available for recreational purposes (such as playgrounds and allotments) and these should be decided on by the community. It is also important that green space should consist not just of grass, but a variety of plant species, to encourage greater biodiversity.

GB SPATIAL POLICIES

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area (WNPA or “Plan Area”) has within its boundary some of the most important publicly accessible green space within the City. These include:

- Port Meadow, Wolvercote Common and Wolvercote Green, (together with Yarnton and Pixey Meads of which only part is within the Plan Area), are designated as a European Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Meads are also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as are Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green and Port Meadow. Wolvercote Common and Port Meadow are also designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).
- Common land in Lower Wolvercote includes Port Meadow, Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green and Goose Green, and the land on which the surgery stands, as well as the Lower Wolvercote Children’s Playground.
- Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park in the east of the Plan Area, includes sport pitches as well as open play areas, a nature reserve, pond, and allotments. It is very well-used, and is a very important green space within the Plan Area for recreation for local residents.
- The Hurst, a small wooded area at the end of Wolvercote Green, near to The Plough
- Wolvercote Lakes Nature Reserve, which is owned and managed by the Oxford Preservation Trust.
- Four allotment sites and a Community Orchard

There are also smaller areas of green space, which although not designated are still important for recreation and the enjoyment of local residents in a relatively urban residential street. For example:

- The green area on Kendall Crescent (Map Reference SP 507102);
- Areas next to the flats in Millway Close (Map Reference SP449583);
- Green areas on Jordan Hill (Map Reference SP 501109).

These green areas, which include various species of grass and mature trees, must be retained and protected for their importance to biodiversity as well as their recreational value.

Policy GBS1 – Publicly Accessible Green Space

All existing public access green space in the WNPA (see Annex 4 Green Spaces Plan) will be conserved and opportunities for enhancement sought (unless currently allocated as a development site in an adopted development plan document).

Development will not be permitted where it results in the loss of public access green space or harms its setting unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need for development on that green space and:

(1) a public access green space(s) of an equivalent size and amenity is provided as near as possible to the existing space in the WNPA; or

(2) access by the public to an alternative private green space(s) of an equivalent size and amenity is provided as near as possible to the existing space in the WNPA.

The Plan seeks to retain the Green Belt to protect important sanctuaries of biodiversity. Where new developments are alongside areas of the Green Belt, or Common Land, no damage must be done to the land, either during construction or afterwards (e.g. through drainage issues).

Policy GBS2 – Green Belt, Designated Land (SSSI, SAC, SAM), and Common Land

Development will not be permitted on any designated green space, Common land or Green Belt. There should be no inappropriate contiguous development next to the Green Belt, to ensure the visual continuity of the Green Belt is retained.

New developments must not put protected and designated sites or Common land at risk from pollution of the air, water or other pollution, or increased recreational pressure.

Wolvercote has several Playing Fields and Children's Play Areas, but new developments already planned will mean that more will be needed. Usage of the existing football and cricket pitches is very high during the appropriate season, with Junior Football being especially popular, both on Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground and in Cutteslowe Park. Every weekend from September to July there are several matches and training sessions involving hundreds of children and young people.

Oxford City Council has as one of its priorities the development of 'Strong and Active Communities', and any new development should follow that strategy. It is important that the recommendations of "Fields in Trust", (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) should

be followed, in particular in regard to distances to formal space, and Equipped Play Space. Wolvercote cemetery should not be extended into Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground, as that space is needed for public recreation and sport.

Policy GBS3 – Playing Fields and Play Areas

Cotteslowe and Sunnymead Park and any playing field area (Five Mile Drive Playing Field and Banbury Road North Recreation Ground) should remain as areas of public amenity and be protected from development.

All existing Children’s Play Areas must remain, and all new developments of more than 10 dwellings must include provision for children’s play areas that are safe, and nearby (within 100 metres). This provision should either enhance existing facilities or provide for new facilities where appropriate.

Allotments are an important resource for social and physical recreation, as well as encouraging people to grow their own food. There are four separate allotment sites: two in Lower Wolvercote, one in Upper Wolvercote, and one in Cotteslowe. There are few, if any vacant plots on any of these sites, and waiting lists for all but one of them. All existing allotments must be retained, and new ones will be welcomed on new developments.

Policy GBS4 – Allotments

Existing and designated allotment land will be retained. Proposals that seek to increase the number of allotments in the WNPA or extend existing allotment sites will be encouraged. Allotments should be provided in accordance with current City Council Policy as a minimum.

New development must result in no net loss in the number of trees and hedges. In particular, there must be no loss or damage to existing ancient hedges such as that along Joe White’s Lane, near to Goose Green. Any work likely to result in the removal of trees or hedges will ideally be subject to planning permission.

Private gardens are an important characteristic of the WNPA. They form an extensive network of habitats and wildlife corridors throughout Wolvercote. An important sample survey was carried out on behalf of the Steering Committee by students from Oxford Brookes University. A wide range of species was recorded in gardens across the Ward. This included protected species like badgers, bats, toads, slow-worms and stag beetles. The results underlined the importance of gardens in the provision of wildlife corridors. A full species list is provided in Annex 5..

It is apparent that these wildlife corridors could easily be disrupted by new development, and mitigation strategies were suggested, including garden surveys in areas adjacent to new development prior to building so appropriate protection can be put in place. Where a developer provides alternative green space in the WNPA, due consideration must be given to the provision of wildlife corridors.

In granting planning permission, the importance of private gardens to the overall green character of the WNPA will be taken into consideration.

Policy GBS5 – Biodiversity

Development proposals which may result in significant harm to sites and/or species of ecological value as defined by Policy CS12 of the Oxford Core Strategy or an equivalent development plan, will not be permitted, unless the developer can demonstrate that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss.

This loss can be mitigated and compensated for on a like-for-like basis elsewhere within the WNPA by providing a replacement habitat of an equivalent or higher ecological value, that is appropriate for the habitat and species within it, and which provides net gains in biodiversity, which must be protected.

Consideration must be given to the importance of wildlife corridors and priority species and habitats.

Developments in existing gardens should not result in a net loss of trees.

Designs for new developments should try to include a mix of private and public open space of at least 15% of the total area of the development. More than 50% of that should be green space, designed and if possible planted to ensure the protection of wildlife corridors and biodiversity (see GBS5).

Policy GBS6 – Green Space in Developments

In order to increase and enhance green space within the WNPA:

- 1. Development proposals which increase public access green space and enhance biodiversity within the WNPA will be encouraged, including incorporation of biodiversity in and around developments.**
- 2. Major developments will be subject, where it is appropriate, to a planning condition requiring the submission to, and the approval of, the Local Planning Authority of a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan, which would include the provision for maintenance and for measures to increase the biodiversity of the site.**

The Plan favours the provision of public access green space on site. However, for major developments, where it can be demonstrated that public access green space cannot be provided on site, then alternative public access green space must be provided as near as possible to the site in the WNPA. This can be in the form of an extension or enhancement of existing public access green space within the WNPA.

GB COMMUNITY POLICIES

Wildlife corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations.

Policy GBC1 – Wildlife Corridors

Grass verges must be properly maintained with a view to the protection of biodiversity and as wildlife corridors. Appropriate planting and cutting should be carried out on verges, to encourage pollinating insects. Provision of trees and shrubs in new development will be encouraged in order to reduce air pollution, increase habitat connectivity and mitigate against rising temperatures. Trees and hedges on verges must be retained, and street planting and their required maintenance should be an important part of new developments.

Cemeteries act as a sanctuary in urbanised areas, and because they are not so intensely managed as other urban green spaces, they attract birds, wildflowers and elusive mammals.

Policy GBC2 – Cemeteries

Wolvercote and other cemeteries must remain places of tranquility, quiet contemplation and respect, free from intrusive development. Cemeteries should be managed with biodiversity in mind.

All of the waterways and their surrounding land in Wolvercote are extremely valuable sources of wildlife and form an important overwintering site for migrating birds. They are also used by native wildlife as vital green corridors, as well as having significant recreational benefits for residents. It is therefore vital that the waterways are kept open and maintained as necessary (possibly including dredging by the relevant authorities to ensure they can be used for boating).

Policy GBC3 – Watercourses and associated land

The Oxford Canal should be retained for recreational use and appropriate maintenance undertaken of the towpath, Wolvercote Lock and bridges.

The River Thames and Mill Stream should be conserved as a recreational waterway and as important resources for wildlife and biodiversity.

The Wolvercote Picnic Site (previously the Bathing Place) should be retained as a publicly accessible site, and (together with fencing) maintained, to prevent the ingress of grazing cattle and horses.

Local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park offers a wide range of activities, and space for recreation, and is much valued by the local community. It is acknowledged that not all of this park falls within Wolvercote, as the two parts are separated by the A40. However, the two parts of the Park are joined by a pedestrian bridge, and the Park should be designated in its entirety if possible.

Policy GBC4 – New designated local green spaces

The Forum seeks designation of Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park as a local green space.

Front gardens form a very important part of the green area in any community, and Wolvercote is no exception. However, many are being paved over to provide parking. This reduces the number and diversity of plants available for use by insects and birds and may also add to the risk of flooding unless permeable paving is used.

Policy GBC5 – Front Gardens

Protection of existing front gardens from being paved over to provide private car parking should be encouraged. All paving used for parking must be permeable and its effect softened where possible with planting to maintain the character of the streetscape.

Built Environment (BE)

BE SPATIAL POLICIES

The policy of living within your means is a basic tenet of sustainable living, of which minimising your ecological footprint is an important principle. Therefore, all land needs to be used efficiently and urban sprawl needs to be tightly controlled. Land is an asset not only in financial terms but also in terms of the natural resources it provides and the wildlife that inhabits it (see Green Spaces and Biodiversity Policies). Once built upon, an area of land becomes a 'Brownfield site' and cannot easily revert to its original 'Greenfield' status. That is why all available Brownfield sites should be used up before development is allowed on Greenfield land (Oxford Core Strategy 2026, para 3.1.3.).

Policy BES1 – Brownfield Sites

Proposals for new development on Brownfield sites will be prioritised. Where proposals for development on Greenfield sites are submitted (other than those already allocated for development in the Oxford Local Plan), a written justification of why the development has not been proposed on a Brownfield site will be required.

The whole of Oxford City has been identified as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) because of the levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, largely caused by motor vehicles, especially those that are diesel powered. Cutteslowe Roundabout and the Wolvercote Roundabout have been identified as localised Air Quality (AQ) hotspots where levels of nitrogen dioxide exceed target levels.

Private car and goods traffic continues to grow, with associated pollutants, despite efforts being made by the strategic planning authorities to encourage the use of other less-polluting modes of transport and despite cleaner engines and fuels. Air pollution is at its worst at peak times, when traffic is often slow moving or stationary.

Development proposals may be effective in reducing the impact of traffic through careful design and the use of travel plans.

The long-term goal should be for air pollution to be reduced to agreed limits. This would take time and in the meantime people's health continues to suffer. Air pollution is an ever-increasing cause of death in this country, particularly amongst the young and elderly. It affects all living beings and plant life. It puts strains on our medical resources.

People should not be expected to live or work in areas where the air they breathe is excessively polluted at any time. Therefore, where the pollution level in the vicinity of a proposed

development is found to be above those agreed limits, that development will not be permitted. If in the future air pollution levels were to be brought down locally to acceptable levels (for instance through the widespread use of cleaner fuels) a review of the planning application could then be made.

Mitigating measures could include, for example, avoidance of ‘canyon’ street forms (where buildings are sited close to major roads on both sides), and the introduction of vegetation proven to effectively absorb undesirable air particles.

Policy BES2 – Air Pollution

Residential development will not be permitted in areas where air pollution levels are found to be above levels considered injurious to health, as defined by The World Health Organisation¹. All such proposals near trunk and major roads, and traffic intersections must be accompanied by evidence concerning the present state of air quality at peak times. Furthermore, proposals must demonstrate how poor air quality and the impact on the health of the residents will be mitigated (through design and construction) in the WNPA.

Noise pollution is largely caused by traffic noise. Private car and goods traffic continues to grow, despite efforts being made by the strategic planning authorities to encourage the use of other modes of transport.

Options for reducing the impact of noise range from adjusting the wider transport infrastructure (such as the relocation of the noise source, improvements in road surface, engine and tyre design, introduction and monitoring of speed limits and sound barriers) to focusing on individual developments (such as using buildings and freestanding walls as sound barriers, distancing buildings from roads, reducing window size and double-glazing linked with mechanical ventilation). While developers will be expected to contribute (through CIL) to noise reduction measures taken at the wider level, they will also be expected, at the localised level, to design development for the aural comfort of residents and workers for their health and well-being. Therefore, developers will be expected to deploy a number of complementary measures. It will not be considered acceptable to deploy sound insulating glazing with mechanical ventilation alone, if this means that residents will need to stay inside their homes to obtain respite from traffic noise.

An acoustic planning report will be a condition of any planning consent for buildings located near to a trunk road or roads. This will detail the noise mitigation measures that will be deployed in that development.

¹ <http://www.who.int/airpollution/publications/aqg2005/en/>

Policy BES3 – Noise Pollution

New developments should be designed to minimise intrusive noise for new and existing residents, both inside their homes as well as within the domestic curtilage of their dwelling (which includes private gardens or yards). Developments must adhere to the acoustic standards defined by the World Health Organisation² and planning consent will only be granted where such standards are shown to have been incorporated into the design.

Demolishing a building which can be repaired or converted is unsustainable, however current VAT laws (zero percent on most elements of a new build) encourage demolition and new build

Demolition of a building and replacing it with one or more new buildings can change the character of an area, depending on the impact of this practice in any given area.

Policy BES4 - Building Demolition and conversion

Where possible, refurbishment and conversion will be preferred to demolition and rebuilding, to conserve material resources and to preserve the heritage of the area (see HES3 in Heritage and Character Policies).

Planning permission will be encouraged where it is proposed that existing buildings are converted or extended to create additional self-contained dwellings, subject to Local Plan Policy HP9 and to plans for provision of extra car-parking spaces (so that the existing on-street parking capacity of the street is not reduced).

“The design of any new development should consider its context. Sometimes there will be strong local patterns of urban design and architecture which will need to be reflected in the new design. This does not mean copying historical styles but re-interpreting the scale and grain of existing places in a contemporary way.” (Quote from East Thames Group design guide 2008.)

In the WNPA existing houses were built in a variety of styles, a few dating back to the 16th Century, but most built post war and are generally two storeys high. Attic conversions taking houses to three storeys are becoming common. Purpose-built flats contain three or four storeys. There are no taller buildings than this, therefore buildings designed to be taller than the norm could change the character of the area.

In consideration of the current shortage of housing stock, when asked, 50% of residents were against or strongly against building higher whilst 25% were ambivalent.

A limit on the height of new buildings, established at outline planning stage, is therefore desirable for the following reasons:

² <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/noise/data-and-statistics>

1. To demonstrate sensitivity to the visual appearance and character of the existing area, from within the area
2. To respect views from surrounding areas, taking into account the existing topography and roofscape
3. To restrict creeping urbanisation and the establishment of urban canyons
4. To protect the privacy of existing and new residents from overlooking by their neighbours.

Large developments usually take on a homogeneous appearance, which can be found anywhere in the country, resulting from numbers of dwellings being constructed by the same developer to the same formula at the same time. To stimulate diversity in the built environment, developers will be required to set aside plots of land for later use by independent builders, in the same way as land is reserved for recreation and green space.

Policy BES5 – Development Design Guidance

New developments (including conversions, additions, alterations, change of use and extensions) will only be permitted where they respond to and enhance the existing built environment as set out in the Local Plan Sites and Housing Plan HP9. This may include consideration of aspects such as bulk, materials, scale, siting use, layout, form, design, massing, cumulative impact and intensity of activity within the built environment and setting of the WNP.

Where development is adjacent to major roads and railway lines, new buildings may be higher than neighbouring buildings, particularly where they are partly intended to function as barriers to noise from the transport infrastructure.

The developer must demonstrate, using a view cone technique that the existing sight lines from surrounding areas have been considered and respected. The privacy and rights to light of occupants of adjacent lower buildings, especially dwellings, must also be respected.

Where developers are required to submit a Design and Access Statement, with or without a design code, they will be expected to demonstrate how their design and layout responds to the local character of the area.

When asked, 74% of residents felt that it was important or very important that affordable housing should be provided for school teachers, nurses, social workers, police officers, etc.

It should also be noted that Wolvercote Ward has a higher than average elderly population.

Policy BES6 – Affordable and Key Worker Housing

All housing developments of over 10 units must provide both social rented and affordable housing and housing for key workers, with a mix of tenure, in accordance with policies as set out in the Local Plan.

Parts of the WNPA are adjacent to the River Cherwell and the Thames. Much is on the flood plain and residents of Oxford have often experienced flooding as a result of historic building on the flood plain. To reduce the risk of surface water flooding, any development will be expected to minimise water run-off and maximise infiltration into the soil, where possible.

Therefore, all developments will be required to adopt best practice. Developers must consult the local water authority to ensure that the foul sewerage system is sufficient to cope with large development by, for example, surveying the pipework rather than by desk-top surveys. There should be no building on land liable to flooding without appropriate measures not only to protect new building, but to prevent any adverse effect on existing buildings in the neighbourhood. Run-off onto roads is already an issue and this needs to be addressed before being increased by further development.

Policy BES7 – Drainage and Flooding

All proposed developments will be required to demonstrate that they do not decrease rain water infiltration. Developments that demonstrate that they increase infiltration (where it is geologically possible), or reduce run-off to watercourses, will be encouraged. All run off water should be infiltrated into the ground using permeable surfaces (SUDS), or attenuation storage, so that the speed and quantity of run off is decreased.-

Proposals for new development must ensure that there is no increased risk of flooding to existing property as a result of the development.

Any new development, regardless of type and size, in areas likely to be flooded must incorporate flood resilience techniques in design and construction

BE COMMUNITY POLICIES

Monitoring new planning developments to ensure any new planning applications are appropriate and sustainable, and that there is adequate infrastructure in place before any new developments are allowed, is an issue which has been raised throughout the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum's planning process. Residents believe it is important that they get the chance to input into planning applications before they are considered by the local planning authority.

Policy BEC1 – Planning Watch System

No new development of any kind shall be considered by the planning authority without adequate consultation with the local community.

Too often it is reported that modern housing in Britain lacks sufficient space, both indoors and outdoors. Therefore, previously accepted minimum interior space standards for new dwellings (including storage space) should be reintroduced. These standards can be found in the report ‘Homes for today and tomorrow’ (<https://archive.org/details/op1266209-1001>) first published in 1961 by the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

Policy BEC2 – Interior and Exterior Space Standards

Improved interior space standards should be introduced for all new dwellings, and these standards should be made mandatory. There should be public open space, including streets designed as Home Zones, where people can meet and children play in safety. Hard spaces should be kept to minimum.

In larger developments, there is huge potential to influence the local environment, in a positive way, so that it becomes an asset to the WNPA. The master-plan or layout of the development is critical in establishing from the outset principles which will affect the quality of life of the inhabitants and local residents, including privacy, community interaction, security, safety, access to amenities, convenience and ease of moving about, economy and energy efficiency.

Policy BEC3 – Layout of Buildings on New Developments

Development design should safeguard privacy by minimising overlooking, and maximise natural light within dwellings and gardens, for the benefit of both new and existing residents. Living rooms with a northerly aspect should be avoided in new dwellings.

The Local Planning Authority will be encouraged to introduce new design codes, or adopt, for local use, codes used for recent large developments within the city (such as the Barton Development and the Northern Gateway).

Policy BEC4 – Design Codes

All new developments will be expected to provide safe and attractive environments through the enforcement of appropriate design and building codes in the planning process.

All buildings are expected to conform to the national Building Regulations. Planning law no longer has provision for design to promote energy efficiency in buildings. However there is scope to improve the energy efficiency of a development, not just at the detailed design level but at infrastructure design, outline-planning and master-planning levels, through the layout of buildings, planting design, introduction of shared heating systems, etc.

An incentive is needed to encourage developers to raise these standards of energy efficiency.

Policy BEC5 – Energy Efficiency and Smart Homes

All new buildings and extensions to buildings must meet the highest standards available at the time of application in energy efficiency and sustainable design. As part of the energy efficiency provision, new and extended buildings should incorporate effective internet connections, cabling and compatible fittings to enable “smart home living”.

The mix of dwelling sizes and types should reflect current local need and should be reviewed, together with policies on HMOs every five years as part of the Local Plan review process. The local strategic policies on HMOs, should be reviewed in consultation with the local community.

On large developments, land should be set aside for less mainstream types of dwelling, for example sheltered housing and co-housing.

All housing developments should be designed to accommodate the needs of the elderly and disabled as well as the able bodied, including provision for wheel chair access. Specific housing provision must be made for the elderly, including bungalows, sheltered housing and extra care housing. Proposals within developments, which provide for warden-controlled dwellings and nursing home care facilities, will be supported.

Policy BEC6 – Mix of Dwellings and less mainstream housing

There should be a regularly revised plan made in consultation with local residents that requires developers to provide an appropriate mix of dwellings, including less mainstream housing.

Commerce (CO)

Background

The nature of commercial activity is changing at an ever-increasing pace, affecting not only the workplace, but its interaction with the community.

Wolvercote Paper Mill, which used to employ approximately 100 people, most of whom were residents in Wolvercote, closed 20 years ago. Now many people work from home; this brings benefits to the community and to individuals in certain jobs by reducing the need for travel, saving both time and pollution.

Local shops have always played an important role in neighbourhoods: not only for their convenience as suppliers of basic groceries but also socially, as hubs where people informally meet and exchange information. Local shops, or ‘convenience stores’, also benefit the community by reducing the need for customers to travel in their cars.

Local shops have for many years suffered from competition with large supermarkets, which have prospered with the help of car travel. Now the advent of on-line shopping and associated door-to-door delivery provides a more efficient way of transporting goods to the front door. It cuts down on individual car journeys, but at the same time it appears to be challenging the existence of local shops more than ever. Given recent evidence, as shown by local support for the Lower Wolvercote shop when the landlord tried to sell, local shops need more protection through planning policy.

At present, the WNPA has a limited range and scale of commercial activities.

The 2011 census recorded 3,111 adults as economically active, which represented 73.4% of the population, compared to the national average of 69.9%. Of these, 13.5% were self-employed, which is well above the national average of 9.8%.

The WNPA has a number of small centres providing retail services to the local community, as well as some office and workshop sites. A higher proportion of residents work from home compared to many areas.

The WNPA contains four public houses, three hotels and several guest houses. All the public houses are situated in the village of Wolvercote in the western half of the WNPA and one has become a community pub. There are several blocks of office accommodation, a group at Jordan Hill in the east of the ward and others at isolated locations such as at Elsfield Hall and Upper Wolvercote (next to the church). Within Cutteslowe Park there is a garden centre.

In Wolvercote village, the two shops - one a post office and one a former post office - have struggled to survive in recent years and yet they are a lifeline for many. There is also a post office and shop on the eastern side of the ward near Cutteslowe Park. Additionally, adjacent to

the A44 in the middle of the ward (at the proposed Northern Gateway) there are small shops and cafes attached to two filling stations, with the above-mentioned hotels located nearby.

Future Developments

Permission has been granted for the Wolvercote Paper Mill housing development and other than a few small-scale workshops/offices there will be no significant commercial activities on this site.

An Area Action Plan has been adopted for the Northern Gateway in the centre of the ward. The brief for this site is for a primarily commercial development with housing. It also includes an additional hotel and services aimed at employees, such as some mid-sized shops and cafes. The Neighbourhood Forum hopes that this site will be developed to create a pleasant and stimulating environment for the benefit of the whole neighbourhood, both in and out of business hours.

Smaller developments are planned in the east of the ward such as a housing scheme at Elsfield Hall, and very significant developments along Banbury Road in the neighbouring Cherwell District have also been proposed.

CO SPATIAL POLICIES

Policy COS1 – Employment Use.

In order to retain the provision of local shops and post offices, in the WNPA, permission for change of use will not be granted for proposals which reduce the existing number of local outlets.

Positive consideration will be given to applications for additional small retail or service outlets in already developed areas to ensure sufficient services are available to local residents.

Policy COS2 – Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

Retail outlets should provide for the needs of employees of local businesses and residents and should not be destination shops. (When engaging in destination shopping, customers will plan a trip to a retail centre in order to spend a number of hours there as entertainment, rather than simply the act of purchasing goods.)

Planning permission will not be granted for any retail outlets above 2,500 m² in area, in order to reduce the need for travel by car.

CO COMMUNITY POLICIES

Transport Issues

The Neighbourhood Plan Area experiences heavy traffic congestion on the A40 east / west ring road, making access and alternative modes of travel difficult for local residents. Key pinch points are met with signalised junctions at the Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts. The A4165 and A4144 carry very high vehicle numbers at peak times due commuter, school and residential traffic coming into and out of the City.

The Wolvercote roundabout meets high traffic congestion from the east and west of the A40 junction and A44 leading to Peartree, which joins heavily congested traffic from the A34 trunk road.

Stationary vehicles, and high volumes of traffic on these roads, Sunderland Avenue in particular, result in highly unsatisfactory levels of pollutants which have a negative impact on the health of residents in our area. Additional development within the Neighbourhood boundary and outside it is likely to have further detrimental consequences unless alternative modes of travel are adopted.

Policy COC1 – Transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

Safe and separated footpaths and cycleways must be provided to and within major employment areas, with adequate and suitable cycle parking, to help reduce traffic movements. See also CHC2 below.

Policy COC2 – Public transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

Good public transport with sufficient links to transport hubs and residential areas needs to be available to and from the larger commercial areas.

Developers must contribute financially to the provision of adequate transport arrangements to support new businesses and services, in a way that does not add to existing traffic problems in the surrounding area.

Policy COC3 – Tenure Arrangements

The proposed new housing should be subject to strict tenure arrangements to ensure that it primarily serves the people who work in the new businesses, in order to minimise the amount of additional home to work travel.

Community, Transport and Health (CH)

The aim of the Community, Transport and Health policies is to promote and encourage a more vibrant, healthy and well-balanced community. The Plan aims to ensure that the local community has the most appropriate services, community facilities, and most suitable housing to meet the needs of residents through all stages of their lives, and to improve sustainable well-being.

An ideal community needs to be self-sustaining as far as possible. There should be opportunities for people to help themselves and others stay healthy and happy, minimising the requirement for financial or other support from outside, for example from local or health authorities.

To achieve this, some basic facilities and amenities (open space, play areas, flexible meeting places) need to be as close as possible to the people they serve, and ideally within walking distance. The level of provision should have regard to the natural size of a human community, and to the geography of the area. The amenities should:

- reduce the use of cars to travel elsewhere (traffic, pollution) and encourage walking and cycling within the local area (health);
- provide sporting and leisure opportunities for all age groups; and
- promote natural interactions between neighbours and thence a community where people meet and develop shared interests (reducing isolation, fostering healthy activities).

In Wolvercote Ward there are five geographically separate areas immediately identifiable as distinct and having different characteristics. Their populations are each of sufficient size to justify local provision of basic facilities. A survey of residents (published online) has confirmed that there are insufficient local facilities in the area between Woodstock Road and Banbury Road and to the north of Sunderland Avenue. Future housing developments are likely to add one or more further residential areas of a size and location that will justify their own amenities. Larger or more complex facilities (venues for large events, theatres, cinemas) will be fewer in number and shared by several local communities and may well be outside the ward.

	Lower Wolvercote	Upper Wolvercote	Cuttess- lowe	FMD triangle	East of Woodstock Road	Total
WOLVERCOTE WARD						
Number of households	526	449	775	482	563	2795
Percentage	19%	16%	28%	17%	20%	100%
<u>Facilities within 500 metres</u>						
Shop(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Halls, public rooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Pubs	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	
Churches	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
Open spaces	Commons	Commons	Park	FMD rec	No	

CH SPATIAL POLICIES

Residents' access to everyday services is a measure of how well connected the local community is. WNF is keen to improve this connectivity, encouraging the use of existing infrastructure and trying to reduce the environmental impacts of transportation.

Improvements should flow from the design of new developments, for example from the inclusion of cable and wifi in the home and across developments, reducing social isolation and the need to travel and enabling community connection and cohesion.

Policy CHS1 – Community Connectivity

Development proposals which seek to expand or improve community connectivity will be supported, subject to other policies in the Plan (see GBS3), and with appropriate consideration as to the impact upon adjoining properties.

As development proceeds across the WNPA there will be a commensurate and cumulative impact on community, medical and dental facilities. This is likely to be exacerbated over the lifetime of the Plan by an ageing population.

Policy CHS2 – Community and Medical Facilities

Proposals will be expected to provide for any necessary improvements to community and medical (including dental) facilities and ensure that present communities are not disadvantaged due to increased demand for services. Additional community meeting halls and social facilities to encourage community integration will be required, where appropriate.

Electric cars have many benefits; amongst other things, they cause less urban pollution, they are quieter and have lower maintenance requirements than petrol or diesel cars.

The UK Government's strategy is to ban the sales of petrol and diesel cars by 2040. Electric cars, and appropriate places to charge them, will be essential to meeting the transport needs of the population. Electric cars can be charged at public charging stations, but for convenience most electric car owners do the majority of their charging at home. Therefore, equipping new development to support this change is essential.

Policy CHS3 – Electric Vehicle Charging Points

New homes and commercial premises should include charging points for electric vehicles, which should be specified in Design and Access Statements for new developments.

The Plan recognises that active steps need to be taken to encourage alternative, non-congesting and non-polluting ways of travelling. Policy CHS4 aims to ensure that any new development plays its part, and that through continuous improvements in conditions for pedestrians, road users and cyclists, a network of safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes can be created.

Policy CHS4 – Safe Access Routes

All developers must ensure safe access routes between schools, community facilities and new homes, regardless of the size of the development. Proposed developments should consider the provision of routes connecting with adjacent streets and sites, including the commons. These routes should be made Public Rights of Way where practicable, or Permissive Rights of Way.

Proposals for 100 or more dwellings will be expected to provide for improvements to cycle ways, road crossings and junction access to roads approaching the development site, where appropriate.

Where new developments take place, the temptation is to see current parking provision as a resource for the new development. However, this causes problems for current residents, and may lead to increased congestion. Policy CHS5 seeks to protect the provision of parking for current residents.

Policy CHS5 – Parking

Parking provision in new developments should accord at least with the number of spaces required in the current Oxford City Council Local Plan policy. Where practicable and enforceable, car-free development is a preferred approach. There should be no reduction in off-street parking spaces for existing residents.

It is well recognised that travel habits are established early. Policy CHS6 aims to ensure that people are made aware of options for (and the benefits of) ‘active transport’ as soon as they locate to new premises as residents or employees. Travel plans should be provided for both small and large developments along with information on the health benefits of alternative transport, to encourage people to adopt healthy (and sustainable) transport habits.

Policy CHS6 – Travel Plans

Travel Plans should demonstrate how, by means of access, walking, and segregated cycling, residents can reach key destinations such as schools, recreation and health facilities.

- 1. Any new development which falls above the threshold set by the City Council Parking Standards, Transport Assessment and Travel Plans SPD will be expected to prepare a travel plan showing how employees and residents may minimise car use.**
- 2. Any development that requires the submission of a Travel Plan will be expected to state whether car-free or car sharing alternatives have been considered and, if parking provision is to be made, why the car-free alternative has been rejected.**

CH COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy CHC1 seeks to build on the Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS 21, which states that “planning permission will only be granted for development resulting in the loss of existing sports and leisure facilities if alternative facilities can be provided and if no deficiency is created in the area.” WNF believes that access to these facilities should be the right of all residents within the WNPA.

Commercial facilities such as shops and pubs also make an important contribution to community cohesion. Their retention and enhancement is supported and promoted by spatial policy COS1 in the Commerce section of this Plan.

Policy CHC1 – Community, Sports and Recreational Facilities

Every household should have access to local multi-purpose facilities for indoor community activities, outside sporting activities, and recreational activities appropriate to all age groups, within walking distance of 500 metres. Existing facilities are listed in Annex 6 and should be retained, and additional facilities should be provided as necessary.

The Plan recognises that active steps need to be taken to encourage alternative, non-congesting and non-polluting ways of travelling. Policy CHC2 aims to improve the infrastructure associated with these transport alternatives.

Policy CHC2 – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

Walking and cycling must be encouraged through dedicated cycle tracks and foot paths and provision of secure and sheltered cycle racks and storage.

The CMDE9 Oxfordshire County Council Design Guide for Cycling and the CMDE9 Oxfordshire County Council Design Guide for Walking in Oxfordshire set out standards, which should be viewed in conjunction with the London Cycling Design Guidance version 2014. These standards need to be applied in all possible circumstances, to improve infrastructure designation, signage and safe separation of continuous cycle paths, and pedestrian pavements, from vehicles.

Ample street lighting must be provided, to assure safety and security for cyclists and walkers. Light output should be carefully designed to avoid unnecessary light pollution.

A programme of new cycle and pedestrian routes should be drawn up, including additional crossings of the railway, canal, watercourses and direct cycling corridors from Park and Ride transport hubs.

Heritage and Local Character (HE)

The WNPA is a vibrant local community with a rich and varied character and heritage that has changed over time and will continue to change. Appropriate and sensitive change and development will, therefore, be embraced.

Wolvercote comprises five distinct areas of Lower Wolvercote, Upper Wolvercote, Woodstock Road, Five Mile Drive and Cutteslowe Park.

[Map will be inserted here in final version]

The areas are characterised by some traditional North Oxford roads with large houses, the original villages of Upper and Lower Wolvercote (parts of both are within the Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area), more recent developments of varying size and suburban in character, and the important open green spaces of Wolvercote Common and the Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park. Residential building development in the area is predominantly of two storeys and in a range of style and materials.

The WNPA is surrounded to its east, north and west by vast expanses of open and un-spoilt meadow land, including several with ancient field names. This includes Port Meadow where there are historic grazing rights and which is both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a heritage asset affording important views of the city of Oxford, as described in the Assessment of the Oxford View Cones 2015 Report produced by Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxford City Council and Historic England.

The historical importance of Upper and Lower Wolvercote was recognised by Oxford City Council when it designated Upper Wolvercote, and Lower Wolvercote with Godstow, as two separate conservation areas in 1981. Following a review of the boundaries, they were amalgamated with the inclusion of The Lakes and Goose Green in 1985 and became known as Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area.

[Map from page 1 of

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/266/wolvercote_with_godstow_conservation_area_appraisal will be inserted here in final version]

An Appraisal of the Conservation Area was carried out in June 2007 and it usefully provides details of listed buildings and scheduled monuments as well as unlisted buildings that are considered to merit care and protection³. The Appraisal documents the characteristics of the Conservation Area, including architectural features, its historical significance and development, open spaces, green spaces and views into and out of the Conservation Area.

³ To view this list see Appendix 1 of the report.

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/266/wolvercote_with_godstow_conservation_area_appraisal

The Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area Appraisal provides informative guidance regarding future changes, so that “Any new development must take account of the established character of the area by being of appropriate scale and density and utilising traditional materials so that the buildings will make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.”

The City Council is required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 to review conservation areas from time to time and where necessary to designate further areas. The Current Conservation area was published in 2007. A schedule for periodic review to comply with the requirement of the act is necessary.

The Heritage and Local Character Policies (as well as those in the Green Spaces and Built Environment sections) aim to extend some of these development principles to those areas of the Neighbourhood that are beyond the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

Character Assessments (CAs) provide guidance to Oxford City Council when assessing planning applications and developments in our WNPA. By providing a description of the area and its surroundings, and listing important assets to be protected and enhanced, guidelines will be available for planning officers to take into consideration when assessing planning applications.

HE SPATIAL POLICIES

Character assessments are created to help us understand the special qualities of the parts of the WNPA that do not have conservation status.

The character of the whole area is defined by its topography, landscape, views, layout, architectural style, materials, land use and social development.

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum will co-ordinate the preparation of Character Assessments for Lower and Upper Wolvercote (outside the Conservation Area), the Woodstock Road area, Five Mile Drive area and the Cutteslowe Park area.

Policy HES1 – Character and Streetscape

Developers and planning officers must review any relevant and available Character Assessments when submitting and considering planning proposals with the WNPA.

The conservation and enhancement of the streetscape should be an important consideration when reviewing planning applications.

Design of buildings should respond to and enhance the local character of each area. The layout and design of new streets and associated infrastructure should also respond to local character and scale, and proportion of historic street patterns.

Policy HES2 – Development Design

Any new development must take account of the established character of the area by being of appropriate design, scale and density. New developments must use materials in keeping with those used in neighbouring buildings, to enhance the character of the area.

Policy HES3 – Demolition.

Proposals to demolish and replace a building, especially one of local character and interest as outlined in the Character Assessments, must be justified by explaining why it cannot be retained and how its replacement will benefit the community and enhance the character of the area.

HE COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy HEC1 – Tree Planting.

In addition to the Green Spaces policies the WNF will seek to preserve and increase the greenery of the area by promoting the planting of trees and the replacement of old and dying trees.

Policy HEC2 – Heritage Partners.

The Forum will continue to work with the University of Oxford, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford Preservation Trust and Oxford Civic Society to promote the heritage of Wolvercote and the appreciation of its distinctive character.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. Localism and Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area. This means that neighbourhood plans have to take into account the local council's assessment of housing and other development needs in the area.

However, neighbourhood planning goes beyond traditional 'land-use' planning activity, which tends to focus on regulation and control of development. Neighbourhood planning allows greater scope for plan makers, acting with the community, relevant agencies and service providers, to promote and manage change in an area.

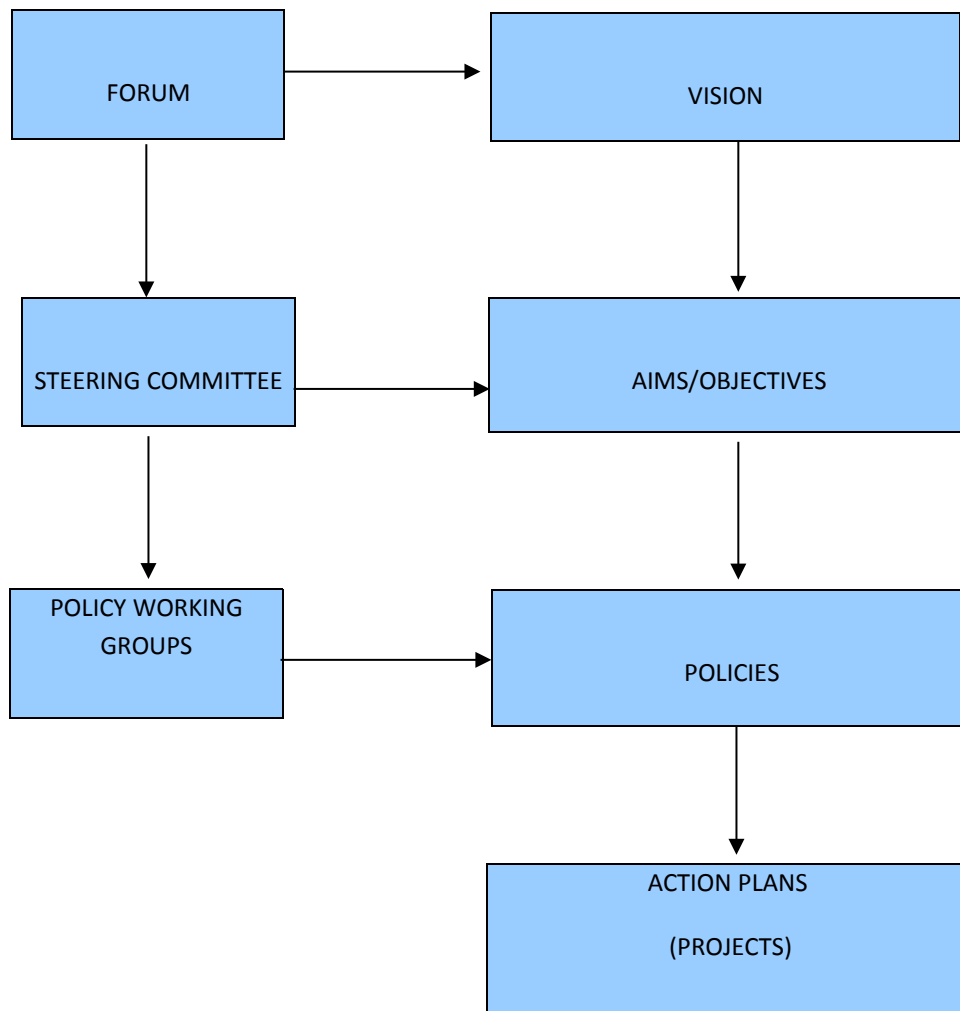
As with all plan-making, neighbourhood planning requires leadership. Where Town and Parish Councils do not cover an area, the Localism Act (2011) has given that leadership role to Neighbourhood Forums, and it is the role of the local planning authority to agree who should be the Neighbourhood Forum for a Neighbourhood Area.

To produce a plan that is representative of the community is a significant responsibility. The way in which the process is led and implemented will need to secure confidence from the community and those organisations and businesses that serve their needs. Confidence in the process and support for the outcomes will be more certain by starting the process in a demonstrably transparent way and continuing in that way through all stages of plan preparation.

A Neighbourhood Forum can do this by:

- showing a willingness to openly encourage opinions and suggestions from all individuals and organisations within the community, whether or not these present potentially conflicting, challenging or critical views of the Plan or the process;
- presenting a reasonable, realistic, evidence-based and cogently argued case to support the Plan at each stage of its preparation;
- making every effort to understand all views expressed from all individuals and groups and responding clearly on all matters raised in a timely manner; and
- demonstrating, in a form that is readily accessible and easily understood by the whole community, how the Plan reflects the views and opinions expressed during each stage of engagement and, where those views cannot legitimately be taken into account, explaining why that is the case.

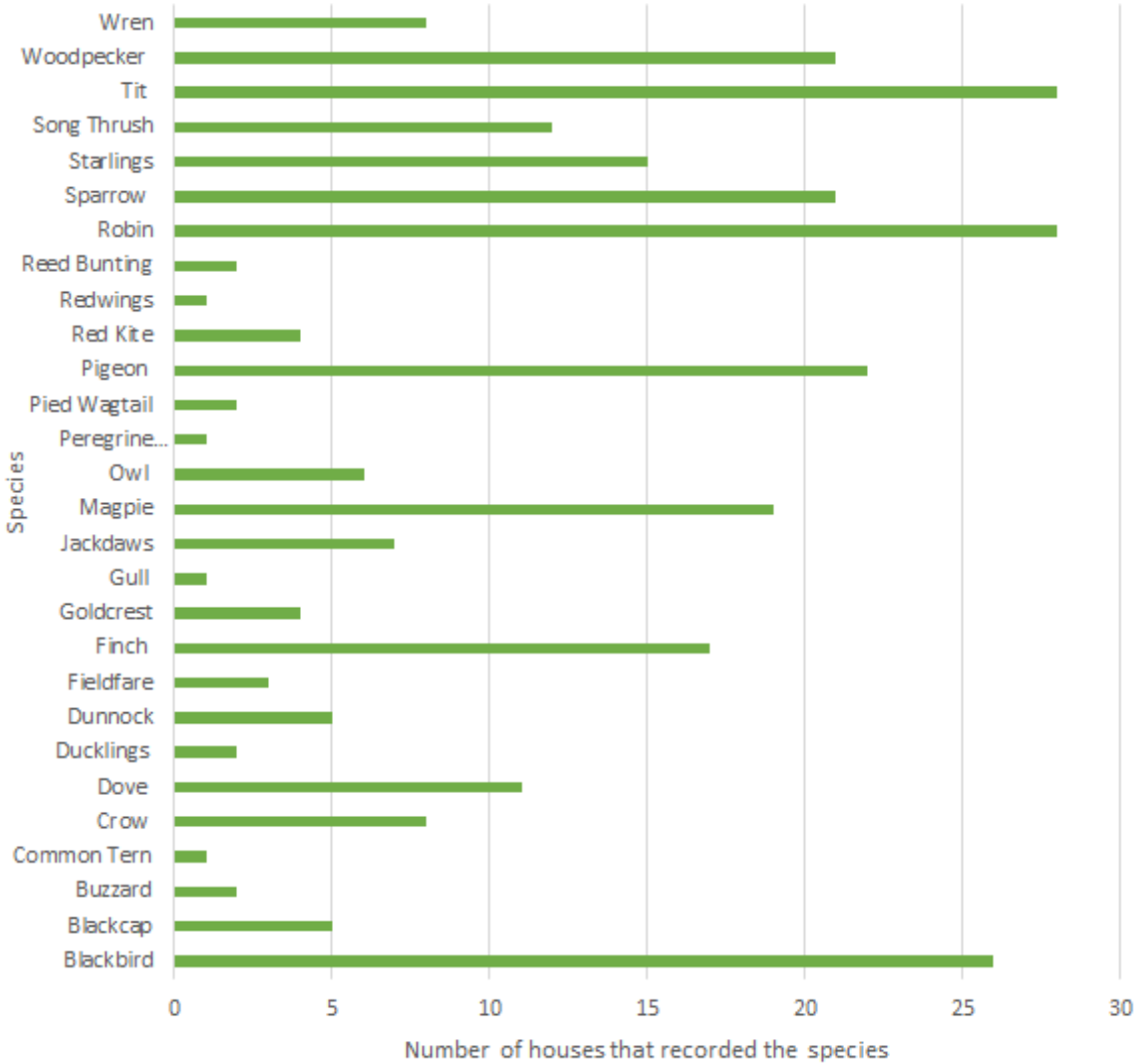
ANNEX 2. Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and Plan Structure

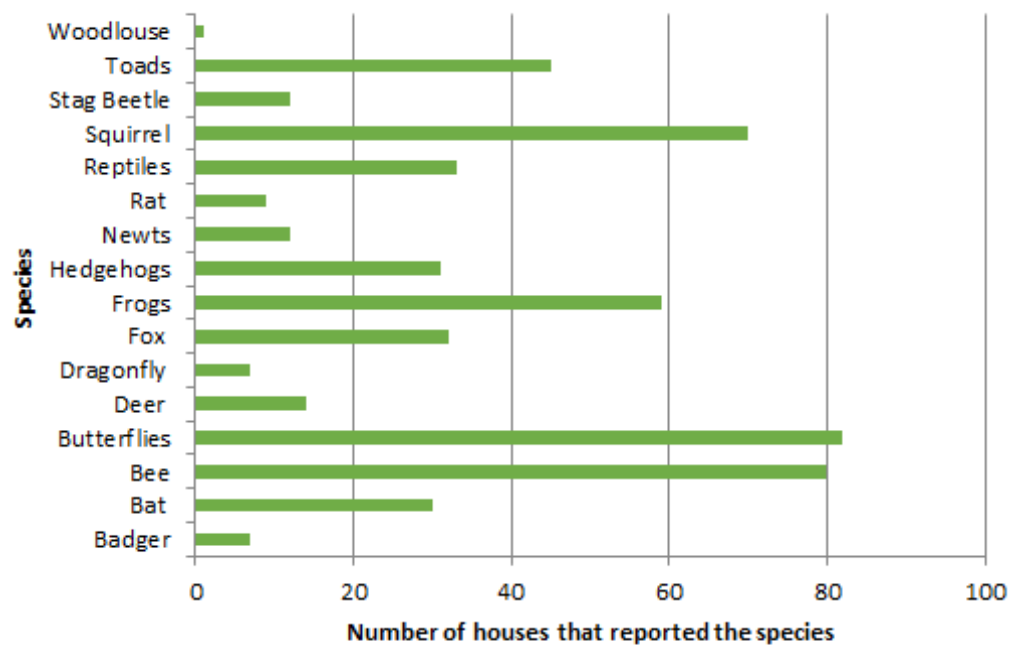


ANNEX 3. Process for developing the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (attached)

ANNEX 4. Green Spaces Plan (attached)

ANNEX 5. Species in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area





ANNEX 6. Community, Sport and Recreational Facilities (attached)

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Wolvercote Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2034

**A report to Oxford City Council on the Wolvercote
Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
BA (Hons) MA, DMS, MRTPI**

Director – Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited

Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by Oxford City Council in November 2018 to carry out the independent examination of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by way of written representations. I visited the neighbourhood plan area on 12 December 2018.
- 3 The Plan includes a variety of policies. It seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. It has a focus on safeguarding the very clear difference between the built-up parts of the neighbourhood area and its extensive green areas. It seeks to improve the health and well-being of its residents.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. It is clear that all sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
3 July 2019

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2034 (the Plan).
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to Oxford City Council (OCC) by the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and 2018. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether or not the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises as a result of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope. Any plan can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted Plan has been designed to reflect to its distinctive and varied character.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the plan area and will sit as part of the wider development plan.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by OCC, with the consent of the Neighbourhood Forum, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both the OCC and the Neighbourhood Forum. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have over 35 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

The Basic Conditions

- 2.5 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
 - be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations; and
 - not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (7).

I have examined the submitted Plan against each of these basic conditions, and my conclusions are set out in Sections 6 and 7 of this report. I have made specific comments on the fourth and fifth bullet points above in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.11 of this report.

- 2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan General Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 2.7 In order to satisfy the regulations OCC undertook a screening exercise. This process concluded that the Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. Consultation was carried out with the three statutory bodies.
- 2.8 OCC also undertook a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening report on the Plan in July 2018. The report is very thorough in its approach. It addresses the potential impact of the implementation of the Plan's policies on the following protected sites:
- Oxford Meadows SAC;
 - Cothill Fen SAC; and
 - Little Wittenham SAC.
- 2.9 The screening report concludes that the submitted Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on a European site and that an appropriate assessment is not required. During the examination process OCC updated the screening report to take account of the People over Wind judgement in April 2018. This process concluded that the earlier work on this matter remains appropriate and no changes are considered necessary.
- 2.10 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.
- 2.11 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Other examination matters

- 2.12 In examining the Plan I am also required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it

has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and

- the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.

2.13 Having addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.12 of this report I am satisfied that all of the points have been met subject to the contents of this report.

3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement.
- the Screening Statement.
- the update to the HRA element of the Screening Statement (July 2019).
- the various appendices to the Plan.
- the representations made to the Plan.
- the Neighbourhood Forum's responses to my Clarification Note.
- the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
- the saved policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2016.
- the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026
- the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (July 2015).
- the emerging Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036.
- the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012 and July 2018).
- Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 and subsequent updates).
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the neighbourhood area on 12 December 2018. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. My visit is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I concluded that the Plan should be examined by way of written representations.

3.4 On 24 July 2018 a revised version of the NPPF was published. Paragraph 214 of the 2018 NPPF identifies transitional arrangements to address these circumstances. It comments that Plans submitted before 24 January 2019 will be examined against the 2012 version of the NPPF. I have proceeded with the examination on this basis. All references to paragraph numbers within the NPPF in this report are to those in the 2012 version.

3.5 During the examination the Forum needed to be re-designated. This caused a delay in the proceedings. However, this delay did not affect its submission date and the examination proceeding on the basis of the 2012 version of the NPPF

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 the Neighbourhood Forum has prepared a Consultation Statement. This Statement is proportionate to the Plan area and its policies.
- 4.3 The Statement is particularly detailed in terms of its recording of the various activities that were held to engage the local community and the feedback from each event. It also provides specific details on the consultation processes that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (October to November 2017).
- 4.4 The Statement sets out details of the consultation events that were carried out in relation to the various stages of the Plan. It provides details about:
 - circulation of leaflets throughout the neighbourhood area;
 - the creation of a website;
 - the arrangement of community events;
 - the use of on-line surveys;
 - the organisation of drop in sessions during the pre-submission consultation exercises; and
 - the use of poster hoardings and other notices.
- 4.5 The appendix to the Statement sets out how the submitted Plan took account of consultation feedback at the pre-submission phase. It does so in a proportionate and effective way. It helps to describe how the Plan has progressed to its submission stage.
- 4.6 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by the City Council for a six-week period that ended on 20 November 2018. This exercise generated representations from several local residents and from the following organisations:
 - Environment Agency
 - Highways England
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
 - SSE

- Thames Water
- Thomas White Oxford
- Oxford City Council

4.7 I have taken account of all the representations received. Where it is appropriate to do so I have identified the organisations which have commented on the Plan on a policy-by-policy basis.

5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area is that of the designated Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 22 January 2014. It was re-designated on 13 March 2019.
- 5.2 The neighbourhood area is one of great contrasts. In general terms it sits to the north of Oxford and in a continuous arc around the Wolvercote roundabout on the A40. In this context is located at the very heart of the road network to the north of Oxford. The A34 forms the western boundary of the neighbourhood area. The A40 runs through the heart of the area in an east-west direction. The various roads largely subdivide the area into discreet areas. In general terms the part of the area to the west of the Woodstock Road has a more open and rural aspect. The part of the area to the east of the Woodstock Road has a more urban, north Oxford character. The northern and western part of the area overlaps with the North Oxford Gateway area as defined by the City Council.
- 5.3 The settlements of Upper and Lower Wolvercote have maintained their separation from the wider City to the south. This separation is primarily reinforced by the interrelationship between the floodplain of the River Thames and the scale of Port Meadow. They contribute in a very important way to the wider setting of the City of Oxford. Indeed, from several locations in this part of the neighbourhood area there are very interesting views of the City's historic core to the south. The strategic importance of the neighbourhood area is also recognised by the railway line and the Oxford Canal running parallel to the eastern boundary of Port Meadow.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The Oxford Core Strategy was adopted in March 2011. It sets out the basis for future development in the City up to 2026. The adoption of the Core Strategy partially superseded a number of policies in the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016. However, many of the Local Plan policies remain as saved policies. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy the City Council produced the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026. It was adopted in February 2013. This Plan allocates sites for development for housing, employment and other uses and sets out detailed policies for residential development. The Northern Gateway Area Action Plan 2015 provides specific policy guidance within the northernmost part of the neighbourhood area. It is this development plan context against which I am required to examine the submitted Neighbourhood Plan. The following policies in the Core Strategy are particularly relevant to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan:

CS9 Energy and Natural Resources
 CS12 Biodiversity
 CS15 Primary Healthcare
 CS18 Urban Design

CS23 Mix of Housing

CS24 Affordable Housing

- 5.5 The Basic Conditions Statement usefully highlights the key policies in the development plan and how they relate to policies in the submitted Plan. This is good practice. It provides confidence to all concerned that the submitted Plan sits within its local planning policy context.
- 5.6 The Sites and Housing Plan identifies a series of housing allocations in the City. It includes Policy SP63 Wolvercote Paper Mill. This allocation is two related sites (Plot A and Plot B).
- 5.7 The City Council is in the process of refreshing its planning policy. This is captured in the emerging Oxford Local Plan 2016- 2036. In process terms the timings involved have not permitted the submitted neighbourhood plan directly to take account of this emerging local planning context.
- 5.8 The submitted neighbourhood plan has been prepared within its wider development plan context. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing and emerging planning policy documents in Oxford City. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

Visit to the Neighbourhood Area

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 12 December 2018.
- 5.10 I entered the neighbourhood area from the Banbury Road to the north off the A40. This helped me to understand the neighbourhood area in its wider context within the City.
- 5.11 I looked initially at Upper and Lower Wolvercote to the west of the Woodstock Road. I saw the delicate relationship between the City to the south and east and the River Thames floodplain and the wider countryside to the west. At times it was difficult to comprehend that the heart of the City Centre was only 3km away.
- 5.12 In Upper Wolvercote I parked in Wolvercote Green. I saw the attractive range of houses, the playground and The Plough PH. I walked up to the railway line and the Oxford Canal at Ball's Bridge. I then took the opportunity to walk up the hill to the church and the school. I saw some of the fine vernacular buildings along First Turn.
- 5.13 I then drove through Lower Wolvercote to the Port Meadow Godstow car park. It was remarkably popular even in December. This part of the visit gave me an opportunity to understand both the significance and the scale of Port Meadow in the neighbourhood area and the wider City. The various information boards provided clear information about its importance as a prehistoric site and, more recently as a

First World War station for the Royal Flying Corps and later the Royal Air Force. I saw the new memorial erected in May 2018 to those who died in flying accidents.

- 5.14 I then walked to Godstow Abbey via the three bridges over the River Thames and past the Trout Inn PH. I took time to wander around the remains of the Abbey. I then followed the footpath down to Godstow Lock.
- 5.15 I then retraced my steps back to the Wolvercote roundabout on the A40. I then looked at the primarily residential part of the neighbourhood area to the north of the A40. I looked in particular at Cutteslowe Park. I saw its wide range of open and outdoor facilities and its careful and sensitive maintenance regime. I saw the extent to which it extended to the south of the A40 (outside the neighbourhood area) and the connection between the two areas via the pedestrian bridge.
- 5.16 I then walked around the southern part of the neighbourhood area on either side of the Woodstock Road. I saw that it had a similar urban character to that of the Summertown and St Margaret's neighbourhood area to its south. I left the neighbourhood area by way of the A44 to the north. This allowed me to see the range of existing commercial uses in the Northern Gateway Area (Oxford North), including the Pear Tree Park and Ride facility and the Welcome Break service station.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan as a whole

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented and informative document.
- 6.2 The Plan needs to meet all the basic conditions to proceed to referendum. This section provides an overview of the extent to which the Plan meets three of the five basic conditions. Paragraphs 2.6 to 2.11 of this report have already addressed the issue of conformity with European Union legislation.

National Planning Policies and Guidance

- 6.3 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in March 2012. Paragraph 3.4 of this report has addressed the transitional arrangements which the government has put in place as part of the publication of the 2018 version of the NPPF.
- 6.4 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are of particular relevance to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Development Plan:
- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the adopted Core Strategy/Sites and Housing Plan/saved Local Plan;
 - proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places;
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
 - always seeking to secure high quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
 - conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is identified as a golden thread running through the planning system. Paragraph 16 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.6 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and the recent ministerial statements.
- 6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the plan area in terms of promoting certain sustainable types of development and growth on the one hand whilst safeguarding its character and appearance on the other hand. The Basic Conditions Statement maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.8 At a more practical level the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraphs 17 and 154). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014. Its paragraph 41 (41-041-20140306) indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.9 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. Several of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.10 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social and environmental. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension the Plan includes policies for employment and retail uses (Policy COS 1) and the Northern Gateway Area - Oxford North (Policy COS2). In the social role, it includes policies on community facilities (Policy CHS2), on safe access routes (Policy CHS4) and on the mix of new dwellings (BES6). In the environmental dimension the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built and historic environment. It has specific policies addressing matters as varied as Green Belt, green spaces, renewable energy, sustainable construction and biodiversity. This assessment overlaps with the Forum's comments on this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in Oxford City in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.

- 6.12 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the adopted Core Strategy and the Sites and Housing Plan. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relates the Plan's policies to policies in the Core Strategy/saved Local Plan. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. In particular, it makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area. The wider community and the Neighbourhood Forum have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (41-004-20170728) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. The Plan identifies a range of other, non-land use matters (referred to as community policies). The community policies are included within the main body of the Plan rather than in a separate section as recommended by this element of national guidance. However, as they sit within a natural order in the Plan, I am satisfied that the arrangements are satisfactory and well-considered. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for the community policies to be differentiated clearly from the spatial policies. I address this matter by way of a recommended modification later in this report.
- 7.5 I have addressed the spatial policies in the order that they appear in the submitted plan. The community policies are addressed separately after the spatial policies.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies (spatial and community) whether or not I have recommended modifications in order to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing modifications to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial sections of the Plan

- 7.8 The initial elements of the Plan set the context for the production of the Plan. They describe the neighbourhood plan process in general terms and the remit of the
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Neighbourhood Forum in particular. They are proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the subsequent policies.

- 7.9 This part of the Plan identifies its Vision and Aims. Pages 8-10 identify a series of general principles that stem from the Vision and Aims.
- 7.10 This part of the Plan comments on the distinction between its spatial planning policies and the community policies and projects.
- 7.11 The remainder of this part of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.4/7.5/7.7 of this report.

Spatial Policies

- 7.12 As I have mentioned in paragraph 7.4 of this report on balance, I am satisfied that the relevant community policies should follow the spatial policies within the topic chapters of the Plan. There is a degree of synergy between the component policies. Nevertheless, the physical presentation of the community policies in the Plan is identical to that of the spatial policies. This is an important matter as the spatial policies will become part of the development plan in the event that the Plan is 'made'. In contrast the community policies will not have development plan status.
- 7.13 In order to remedy this matter, to highlight the significance and importance of the spatial policies in the Plan and to conform with national policy I recommend that the spatial policy boxes are filled with light tonal grey. I also recommend changes to the text on page 11 to address this matter. These recommended modifications should be read side-by-side with those proposed in paragraph 7.83 of this report in relation to the community policies.

In respect of all the spatial policies insert light tonal grey shading in the policy box.

In the second paragraph of the supporting text on Delivering the Plan (page 11):

- *at the end of the first section add: 'They will become part of the development plan'.*
- *at the end of the second section add: 'In this Plan the spatial policies are shown with light tonal grey shading to distinguish them from the community policies.'*

Policy GBS1 Publicly Accessible Green Space

- 7.14 This policy sets out to retain identified green spaces and to support opportunities for their improvement or replacement. The policy anticipates that some facilities may be proposed for redevelopment within the Plan period and identifies criteria for their replacement as part of the wider development proposal.
- 7.15 The generality of the approach adopted has regard to national policy. The implementation of the policy will play a significant part in the way in which the Plan contributes towards the achievement of the social element of sustainable

development in the neighbourhood area. The supporting text recognises that the neighbourhood area has a very significant number of public open spaces, and some of which are the most important accessible green spaces within the wider City. I saw clear evidence of their extensive use when I visited the neighbourhood area.

- 7.16 I recommend a modification to the first part of the policy. As submitted, it comments that green spaces will be conserved without identifying any mechanisms by which this would be achieved. I also recommend other detailed modifications to the wording used more generally within the policy. Otherwise it meets the basic conditions. It will properly help to secure the future and the sensitive maintenance of this important resources to the wider City.

Replace the opening section of the policy with:

‘Development proposals should protect the publicly accessible green spaces as shown in Annex 4 and, where practicable incorporate any opportunities for their enhancement’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘permitted’ with ‘supported’

Policy GBS2 Green Belt, Designated Land and Common Land

- 7.17 This policy addresses several matters within the same policy. In summary they are the Oxford Green Belt, designated land (SSSIs, SACs and SAMs) and common land. The policy approach taken is common to the various land types and is that development will not be permitted. A second part of the policy comments that there should be no inappropriate contiguous development next to the Green Belt to ensure that the visual continuity of the Green Belt is retained.
- 7.18 I sought clarification from the Forum on the way in which the policy had been designed in general, and the reasoning why three separate land types had been included in the same policy. I have taken its comments into account in formulating recommended modifications to the policy. Whilst I can understand the importance of the various matters to the community in general, and of the Green Belt in particular it does not reflect the different policy regimes which affect each of the identified parcels of land concerned. In addition, it fails to have regard to national policy on Green Belts and the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate development in particular.
- 7.19 In addition the policy has little practical effect in the absence of a plan or map which identifies the parcels of land concerned.
- 7.20 I recommend a series of modification to remedy these various matters. In particular I recommend that the policy is separated into its three principal components. In relation to the Green Belt I recommend that the policy takes account of national and local policies.
- 7.21 I recommend the deletion of the second part of the policy as submitted on development contiguous to the Green Belt. Plainly the Green Belt has been carefully

defined. In these circumstances it would be inappropriate to apply what would largely be a Green Belt policy to adjacent parts of land.

Replace the policy with:

‘The extent of the Oxford Green Belt within the neighbourhood area is shown on Map [insert number]. Development proposals for inappropriate development within the Green Belt will not be supported.

Development will not be supported on land designated as SSSI, or SAC, or SAM as shown on Map [insert number]

Development will not be supported on Common Land as shown on Map [insert number]

Include a map within the Plan showing the location of the various parcels on land to which this policy would apply

Policy GBS3 Playing Fields and Play Areas

- 7.22 This policy seeks both to safeguard existing playing fields and play areas and to ensure that new residential development provides for an appropriate amount of new play spaces. As with publicly accessible green spaces the neighbourhood area is well-provided with strategic playing fields within the wider context of the City.
- 7.23 I recommend a modification to the first part of the policy. As submitted, it comments that playing fields should remain as areas of public amenity without identifying any mechanisms by which this would be achieved. I also recommend other detailed modifications to the wording used more generally within the policy. Otherwise it meets the basic conditions. It will properly help to secure the future and the sensitive maintenance of this important resource to the wider City. I also recommend that the policy has sufficient flexibility to allow for the development of modest ancillary facilities which would enhance their principal uses as playing fields.

Replace the opening section of the policy with:

‘Development proposals should protect Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park, the Five Mile Drive Playing Field and the Banbury Road North Recreation Ground. Development will not be supported within these playing fields unless they are ancillary facilities which will sustain and/or enhance their use as playing fields.’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘All existing...remain and’ with ‘Development proposals should safeguard existing play areas.’

At the end of the supporting text add:

‘Policy GBS3 includes sufficient flexibility to allow for the development of modest ancillary facilities which would enhance their principal uses as playing fields.’

Policy GBS4 Allotments

- 7.24 This policy refers to allotments. It has three related parts. The first seeks to retain existing allotments. The second supports proposals for new allotments. The third comments about mechanisms for providing new allotments in association with other development
- 7.25 I sought advice from the Forum on the purpose of the third part of the policy in general terms, and the extent to which it related only to proposals for new residential development. I was advised that the intention is that new residential developments should provide allotments in line with current City Council policy. Where possible these should be on-site or within 400 metres of the new development.
- 7.26 I recommend a series of detailed modifications to the policy. In particular I recommend a modification to the first part of the policy. As submitted, it comments that allotments should remain without identifying any mechanisms by which this would be achieved. I also recommend other detailed modifications to the wording used more generally within the policy.

Replace the opening section of the policy with: ‘Development proposals should protect existing allotments and, where practicable incorporate any opportunities for their enhancement’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘permitted’ with ‘supported’

Replace the third part of the policy with: ‘New residential developments should provide allotments in line with current City Council policy. Where practicable these should be on site or within 400 metres of the new development.’

Policy GBS5 Biodiversity

- 7.27 This policy celebrates the rich biodiversity within the neighbourhood area. Annex 5 provides a full species list. A significant element of the survey work has been undertaken by students from Oxford Brooks University.
- 7.28 The policy has three related parts. The first safeguards sites and/or species of ecological value unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss of habitat. The second comments about the ability of mitigation and compensation measures to offset any loss of ecological value where the benefits of any development outweigh the ecological losses. The third part of the policy identifies that consideration should be given to the importance of wildlife corridors and priority species.
- 7.29 I sought clarification from the Forum on the purpose of the third part of the policy. I was advised that the intention was that only proposals that demonstrate an aim to preserve, increase and enhance biodiversity by retaining wildlife corridors will be supported. I recommend a modification accordingly.

- 7.30 I also recommend other modifications to the wording used in the policy so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF and can be applied clearly and consistently throughout the Plan period. Otherwise it meets the basic conditions.

In the opening part of the policy replace ‘may’ with ‘would’ and ‘permitted’ with ‘supported’. At the end of this part of the policy add ‘of habitat’ after ‘loss’

Replace the third part of the policy with ‘Development proposals which would preserve, increase and enhance biodiversity by retaining wildlife corridors will be supported.’

Policy GBS6 Open Space in Developments

- 7.31 This policy has a clear focus on green space within new developments. It has three related parts. The first supports proposals which would increase publicly accessible green space. The second refers to a requirement for major development to be associated with a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan. The third part of the policy sets out an expectation that new development should provide green space within the site itself. However, it identifies circumstances where off-site provision may be appropriate.
- 7.32 I am satisfied that the first part of the policy has the ability to meet the basic conditions. I recommend that the word ‘encouraged’ is replaced with ‘supported’. This will bring the necessary clarity to the policy.
- 7.33 I recommend that the two other parts of the policy are deleted. The second part of the policy is a process requirement, and the third part sets out a simple preference for where any green space is located in relation to a development site. In any event the provision of green space in new development is already adequately addressed in the City Council’s Core Strategy

In the first part of the policy replace ‘encouraged’ with ‘supported’

Delete the remainder of the policy

Policy BES1 Brownfield Sites

- 7.34 This policy sets out to ensure that new development proceeds on brownfield land. It takes into account the sharp focus between brownfield and greenfield land within the neighbourhood area.
- 7.35 In general terms the policy has regards to national policy and is in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan in general, and Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy in particular. However, the policy then goes beyond national and local policy in requiring that any applicant to submit a written justification as to the reasons why
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that development could not be brought forward on a brownfield site. Whilst I can understand why the community would wish to promote such a policy approach the Plan produces no detailed justification why the approach is necessary or applicable to the neighbourhood area. In any event Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy already comments on the limited circumstances in which new development will be supported on greenfield sites. On this basis I recommend that the more detailed parts of the policy are deleted. I also recommend a detailed change to the wording of the initial part of the policy. A policy cannot prioritise one form of development over another.

In the first sentence replace ‘prioritised’ with ‘supported’.

Replace the remainder of the policy with:

‘Proposals for development on green field land will be determined against Policy CS2 of the Oxford City Core Strategy’.

Policy BES2 Air Pollution

- 7.36 This policy seeks to relate the acceptability or otherwise of new development proposals to air quality conditions in the neighbourhood area. It has two parts. The first part indicates that residential development will not be permitted in areas where air pollution levels are found to be above levels harmful to health. The second part indicates that any such proposals should be accompanied with evidence about current air quality conditions and how any impacts of development on the health of local residents can be mitigated.
- 7.37 The policy has several issues around clarity and the way in which it could be consistently applied throughout the Plan period. Firstly, it is unspecific about the parts of the neighbourhood area which would be affected by the policy. The whole of the City is an Area Quality Management Area (AQMA). However only the Wolvercote Roundabout in the neighbourhood area exceeds air pollution levels. Secondly the standards provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) may change within the Plan period. This will fail to provide clarity for the development industry. Thirdly the policy is internally inconsistent. On the one hand its first section comments unequivocally that residential development will not be permitted in areas where air pollution levels exceed those identified by the WHO. On the other hand, the remainder of the policy then sets out the basis on which development proposals should provide evidence about the present state of air quality and how the development could mitigate the effects on local residents
- 7.38 I recommend modifications to remedy these issues. In particular I recommend the deletion of the first part of the policy.

Replace the policy with:

‘Proposals for residential development should identify the present state of air quality in the immediate vicinity of the site. In addition, development proposals should identify the ways in which the potential impact of new development on the health and well-being of existing residents in the immediate locality can be mitigated through both design, layout and construction.’

Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on air quality in their local environment will not be supported'

Policy BES3 Noise Pollution

- 7.39 This policy relates to noise pollution. It requires that new developments should be designed to minimise noise for new and existing residents. Its second sentence requires that developments must adhere to standards defined by the WHO.
- 7.40 I am satisfied that the approach taken meets the basic conditions in general terms. I recommend that the WHO reference is deleted from the policy and replaced with more general guidance.

Replace the second sentence with:

'New developments should demonstrate the ways in which they have responded to the most up-to-date technical guidance on noise pollution relevant to the proposed development'

Policy BES4 Building Demolition and conversion

- 7.41 This policy refers to proposals for the refurbishment and conversion of existing buildings. In particular it comments that refurbishments and conversions will be preferred to demolition and rebuilding schemes. A second part of the policy requires the provision of additional car parking spaces when conversion schemes generate additional dwellings.
- 7.42 I sought clarification from the Forum about the potential conflicts between this policy and policies in the Core Strategy. In particular the Core Strategy supports proposals for the demolition and rebuilding of certain properties where any such proposals would make a better use of urban land.
- 7.43 Having taken all matters into consideration I recommend the deletion of the policy and the supporting text. Whilst the generality of its approach is generally appropriate it is not in general conformity with the Core Strategy. In addition, the requirement for the generation of additional car parking spaces will run counter to the policies in the Core Strategy which support sustainable modes of transport. The potential outcome of the implementation of a policy of this nature would be to increase further vehicles onto the local highway network

Delete policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy BES5 Development Design Guidance

- 7.44 This policy sets out the Forum's aspirations for good design in the neighbourhood area. It makes reference to the various design principles in Policy HP9 of the Sites

and Housing Plan. It also comments on matters relating to development adjacent to major roads and railway lines and for developers to use a view cone technique method.

- 7.45 OCC comment that the policy is not in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan. In particular it asserts that the policy needs stronger cross-references to Policy HP9 and that there is no explanation about the need for and the proposed application of the view cone technique methodology.
- 7.46 Policies HP9 of the Sites and Housing Plan address these design matters in considerable detail. In these circumstances I recommend the deletion of the policy in the submitted Plan. It does not add to the detail already included in the development plan. In addition, national policy is clear that neighbourhood plan policies do not need to repeat existing policies in the development plan.

Delete policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy BES6 Affordable and Key Worker Housing

- 7.47 This policy sets out the Forum's aspirations for the delivery of affordable and key worker housing. It requires that all housing development over 10 units must provide both social rented and affordable housing and housing for key workers in accordance with Local Plan policies.
- 7.48 OCC comment that the policy is not in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan. In particular it asserts that the policy is not clear on the requirements either for affordable or for key worker housing.
- 7.49 Policies HP3 and HP4 of the Sites and Housing Plan address these important matters in considerable detail. In these circumstances I recommend the deletion of the policy in the submitted Plan. It does not add to the detail already included in the development plan. In addition, national policy is clear that neighbourhood plan policies do not need to repeat existing policies in the development plan

Delete policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy BES7 Drainage and Flooding

- 7.50 This policy addresses drainage and flooding. It does so to good effect. It has three related parts. The first requires that development proposals do not decrease rain water infiltration. Schemes which increase infiltration will be supported. The second part requires that new developments should not increase the risk of flooding. The third part requires that flood resilience techniques should be incorporated into the design and construction of development proposals in areas liable to flooding.

- 7.51 The thrust of the policy meets the basic conditions. I recommend a series of modifications so that the policy will have the clarity required by the NPPF and therefore be capable of being applied consistently throughout the Plan period. In particular I recommend that the requirement for flood resilience techniques in design and construction should be appropriate to the nature of the development proposed. As submitted the policy sets out an absolute requirement for such techniques which may be disproportionate to the development concerned.

In the first paragraph replace ‘will be required to’ with ‘should’ and ‘encouraged’ with ‘supported’

In the second and third paragraphs replace ‘must’ with ‘should’

In the third paragraph replace ‘Any new development, regardless of type and size,’ with ‘As appropriate to the scale and nature of any proposed new development’

Policy COS1 Employment Use

- 7.52 Notwithstanding its title this policy has a specific focus on retaining existing retail units and supporting the development of new retail units. I also saw that the eastern part of the neighbourhood area was relatively close and within walking distance of the Summertown district shopping centre.
- 7.53 The first part of the policy sets out an absolute statement that proposals that would result in the loss of local shops and post offices will not be granted. However, this approach is not in general conformity with saved policy RC.9 of the Oxford Local Plan. That policy includes a more nuanced and balanced approach which takes account of viability and marketing issues. In these circumstances I recommend that this part of the policy is deleted. However, given the importance of this matter to the local community I recommend that the supporting text on this matter is retained with appropriate modifications. I also recommend that the supporting text includes an explicit link to the Local Plan policy.
- 7.54 The second part of the policy meets the basic conditions in general terms. I recommend detailed modifications to its wording so that it has a policy format. I also recommend that supporting text within the policy is appropriately repositioned into the general supporting text.

Delete the first paragraph of the policy.

**Replace the second paragraph of the policy with
‘Proposals for additional local retail or commercial units within the developed parts of the neighbourhood area will be supported’**

At the end of the fourth paragraph of the Background section add:

'Policy RC.9 of the saved Local Plan sets out a clear context to safeguard local shops subject to a series of viability and marketing issues. Policy COS1 of this plan provides a supportive context for the development of additional local shops and service outlets'

Policy COS2 Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

- 7.55 This policy addresses potential proposals for retail outlets in the Northern Gateway. It indicates that they should be for the needs of local businesses and residents and should not be destination shops. It also indicates that consent will not be granted for any retail outlets above 2500 square metres.
- 7.56 The policy mirrors key elements of Policy NG2 of the adopted Northern Gateway Area Action Plan. This policy supports the development of local scale retail units (up to 2500 square metres in total) as part of the wider development mix. Paragraph 5.7 of the AAP refers to the need for local shop units rather than destination shops, and the associated need to safeguard the strategic role of Summertown district centre.
- 7.57 The AAP address these important matters in considerable detail. In these circumstances I recommend the deletion of the policy in the submitted Plan. It does not add to the detail already included in the development plan. In addition, national policy is clear that neighbourhood plan policies do not need to repeat existing policies in the development plan

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy CHS1 Community Connectivity

- 7.58 This policy supports proposals which would improve community connectivity. The supporting text comments that new developments should seek to secure improvements to connectivity through their design and specifications. Examples highlighted include the provision of cable and Wi-Fi in new homes and throughout new developments
- 7.59 The policy approach generally meets the basic conditions. I recommend that the policy makes explicit reference to improving community connectivity rather than to the rather loose reference to 'seeking to expand or improve' such facilities. The policy also makes a connection to other policies in the Plan. Whilst this is appropriate to avoid unintended consequences of the policy, I recommend the deletion of the specific reference to Policy GBS3.

Delete 'seek to' and '(see GBS3)'

Policy CHS2 Community and Medical Services

- 7.60 This policy seeks to make a connection between new development and the provision of necessary improvements to community and medical facilities. It specifies that additional community meeting halls will be required. The policy also sets out a requirement that existing communities are not disadvantaged due to increased demand for services
- 7.61 The policy is clearly comprehensive. It also has the well-being of the local community as its core matter. However as submitted it raises several issues for its potential implementation through the land use planning system.
- 7.62 Firstly it is unspecific in its thresholds and requirements. In its response to the clarification note the Forum suggests that it should apply to new residential development above 200 dwellings. This may be appropriate. However, it has not been tested through public consultation. In any event the matter of community contributions is already set out in detail in Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and in the OCC Community Infrastructure Levy charging regime
- 7.63 Secondly it fails to take account of the complex way in which community and medical facilities are delivered in general, and in Oxford City in general. In particular such facilities do not directly relate to neighbourhood areas. As OCC point out the key issue is the cumulative need for such facilities across a wider area which generates the need or otherwise for new development to contribute towards the wider delivery of such services
- 7.64 Thirdly the policy's requirement that new development does not disadvantage the accessibility of existing neighbourhood area residents to medical and community services is not a planning matter.
- 7.65 Taking account of all these matters I recommend the deletion of the policy and the supporting text.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy CHS3 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

- 7.66 This policy indicates that new homes and commercial premises should include charging points for electric vehicles
- 7.67 I am satisfied that the approach taken meets the basic conditions in general terms. It will assist with sustainability and will help to improve air quality. I recommend that the reference to Design and Access Statements is included in the supporting text rather than the policy itself. It is matter of process rather than policy.

Delete 'which should be.... new developments'

At the end of the supporting text add:

'Policy CHS3 addresses this matter. The details of the provision of charging points should be included in the Design and Access Statement associated with the planning application'

Policy CHS4 Safe Access Routes

- 7.68 This policy requires that developments provide safe access routes between schools, community facilities and new homes regardless of the size of the development. Its second part requires that proposals for 100 or more dwellings should provide for improvements to cycleways, road crossings and junction access to roads.
- 7.69 I sought clarification from the Forum on the application of the policy to all developments. I was advised that this was the intention of the policy. I am not satisfied that this approach meets the basic conditions. In particular it takes no account of the scale of the development concerned or the practicability of the proposal to provide the type of safe access routes anticipated. Within the Plan period the vast majority of development will be of a minor or domestic nature and where the opportunities to provide safe access to community facilities will simply not exist.
- 7.70 I also recommend the deletion of the second part of the policy on the provision of more extensive access arrangement. The policy fails to set out the detailed requirements that it has in mind. In any event the need for developer contributions is already addressed in local policy.

In the first part of the policy replace the first sentence with:

'As appropriate to the scale and location of the particular proposal, new development should ensure safe access to schools, community facilities and retail outlets where it is practicable to do so.'

Delete the second part of the policy

Policy CHS5 Parking

- 7.71 This policy refers to car parking. It refers developers to standards in the City Council's development plan. It also sets out a preference for car-free developments. It also comments that there should be no reduction in off-street parking spaces for existing residents.
- 7.72 I sought clarification from the Forum on the extent to which the policy added value to existing OCC policies. I was advised that it was included as a value to local residents who may be unfamiliar with OCC policies. I was also advised that the reference to off street parking should refer to on street parking.
- 7.73 Having considered all the evidence on this matter I recommend that the policy is deleted. It largely repeats OCC policy. In any event the corrected reference to on-street parking is not a land use matter. OCC regulates that matter under its powers under the Highways Acts rather than under the Planning Acts

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy CHS6 Travel Plans

- 7.74 This policy refers to travel plans. It requires that travel plans should demonstrate how local residents and occupiers of the buildings concerned will access key destinations in the neighbourhood area.
- 7.75 I recommend that the approach of the policy is modified. As submitted, it reads as a general statement on travel plans rather than a requirement which could be implemented and enforced through the development management process. I also recommend that the second part of the policy is modified so that it requires the Travel Plan itself to identify the selections that have been made for transportation measures.

Replace the opening part of the policy with:

‘Development proposals should demonstrate the ways in which they would facilitate sustainable means of access to key destinations such as schools, recreation and health facilities. Where Travel Plans are required with development proposals, they should demonstrate that:’

Replace the second criterion with:

‘All car-free or car sharing alternatives have been properly considered and that if car parking provision is included the reasoning why car-free alternatives have been partly or fully discounted’

Policy HES1 Character and Streetscape

- 7.76 This policy requires that developers and planning officers should review any Character Assessments when submitting and reviewing planning applications.
- 7.77 Plainly the conservation and enhancement of the street scene are important matters in determining planning applications. Nevertheless, I recommend that this policy is deleted. I do so for two reasons. The first is that the issue is a procedural matter rather than a policy matter. The second is that a Character Assessment of the neighbourhood area does not yet exist. In this context the need or otherwise for a policy of this type can be assessed as and when a Character Assessment is available and as part of a wider review of any made neighbourhood plan.

Delete policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy HES2 Development Design

- 7.78 This policy refers to the design of new development. It requires that any new development should take account of the established character of the area and that building materials should be in keeping with those used in other adjacent buildings
- 7.79 The approach taken is appropriate in general terms. However, it adds no local detail to Policies CS18 of the Core Strategy and Policy HS9 of the Sites and Housing Plan. Both of these policies provide significant policy detail and context to this important matter. On this basis I recommend that the policy is deleted

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy HES3 Demolition

- 7.80 This policy refers to proposals for the demolition of character buildings. It comments that they must be justified by evidence about why it cannot be retained and how its replacement will benefit the community and enhance the character of the area.
- 7.81 I have sympathy for the approach taken. However, it fails to have regard to national policy. In particular paragraph 135 of the NPPF comments about the significance of non-designated assets and how it should be taken into account in determining planning applications. It requires a balanced judgement to be made on the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset concerned. In these circumstances I recommend that the policy is deleted. OCC already has sufficient national and local detail to determine any such planning applications.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Community Policies

- 7.82 The Plan includes a series of community policies. As the Plan comments the Forum acknowledges that the community policies are different from the spatial planning policies. In particular the Plan comments that the community policies cannot be delivered through the development management process. As such they will need to be delivered directly by the Forum or by working with partners/stakeholders. I will assess the community policies on this basis.
- 7.83 As I have mentioned in paragraph 7.4 of this report on balance, I am satisfied that the relevant community policies follow the spatial policies within the topic chapters of the Plan. There is a degree of synergy between the component policies. Nevertheless, the physical presentation of the community policies in the Plan is identical to that of the spatial policies. This is an important point as the spatial policies will become part of the development plan in the event that the Plan is 'made'. The community policies however will not have development plan status. In order to remedy this issue and to ensure compliance with national policy I recommend that the tonal horizontal shading in the community policy boxes is deleted. I also recommend changes to the text on

page 11 to address this matter. These recommended modifications should be read side-by-side with those proposed in paragraphs 7.12/7.13 of this report in relation to the spatial policies.

In respect of all the community policies (as set out in the remainder of this report) delete the tonal horizontal shading in the policy box

In the third paragraph of the supporting text on page 11:

- *at the end of the first sentence add: 'They will not become part of the development plan.'*
- *at the end of the paragraph add: 'In this Plan the community policies are shown without any tonal shading to distinguish them from the spatial policies.'*

Policy GBC1 Wildlife Corridors

- 7.84 This community policy refers to wildlife corridors. It has a focus on their sensitive maintenance and appropriate planting.
- 7.85 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area

Policy GBC2 Cemeteries

- 7.86 This community policy refers to cemeteries in general, and their tranquillity and biodiversity.
- 7.87 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area

Policy GBC3 Watercourses and associated land

- 7.88 This policy refers to watercourses and associated land. It has a focus on the Oxford Canal, the River Thames and Mill Stream and the Wolvercote Picnic Site.
- 7.89 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. I saw the three areas mentioned in the policy when I visited the neighbourhood area.

Policy GBC4 New designated local green spaces

- 7.90 This community policy seeks the designation of Cutteslowe and Sunnymead as a local green space (LGS). I saw its extensive area and recreational uses when I visited the neighbourhood area.
- 7.91 Not all of the Park falls within the neighbourhood area. In addition, no detailed work has been undertaken to assess the extent to which the Park within the neighbourhood area meets the three tests for LGS designation in the NPPF. It is on

this basis that the use of a community policy is more appropriate than a land use, spatial policy.

- 7.92 However the use of LGS has a specific meaning in planning policy terms. As such I recommend modifications to the policy. The resulting approach is one which indicates how the Forum will work with other to achieve the ambitions of the policy.

Replace the policy title with:

‘Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park’

Replace the policy with:

‘The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies including the City Council ensure that Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park is retained for recreational purposes and managed in a sensitive way’

Policy GBC5 Front Gardens

- 7.93 This community policy refers to front gardens. Its ambition is to safeguard front gardens and prevent their use for carparking
- 7.94 Plainly there will be particular pressures for this type of development in certain parts of the neighbourhood area. I recommend a modification to take account of permitted development rights

Replace the first sentence with

‘The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies including the City Council to promote the retention of existing front gardens and to highlight their importance to an attractive street scene’.

In the second sentence replace ‘All paving used for parking must’ with ‘Where paving takes place the materials to be used should’

Policy BEC1 Planning Watch System

- 7.95 This policy indicates that OCC will carry out adequate consultation with the local community on planning applications. In its response to my clarification note the Forum expressed its concerns over the way in which this engagement takes place.
- 7.96 I acknowledge that this has been designed as a non-land use community policy. Nevertheless, I suggest that as submitted it fails as a policy for three reasons. The first is that fails to take account of the standard community consultation and engagement process operated by the City Council. The second is that it takes no account of the scale of development. In this context the vast majority of new development in the Plan period will be of a minor/domestic nature and where the degree of community engagement would be based simply around the property concerned. The third is that the policy fails to identify the scale and nature of ‘adequate’ consultation.

- 7.97 However I recommend modifications to the policy so that it reflects the potential making of the Plan and for the community to be engaged on planning application in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in Planning

Replace the policy with:

'The Forum will work with the City Council to ensure that appropriate consultation takes place with the community on planning applications in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in Planning. In turn the Forum will provide comments on planning application in accordance with policies in the adopted development plan, including the neighbourhood plan.'

Policy BEC2 Interior and Exterior Space Standards

- 7.98 This policy refers to interior and exterior space standards. It refers to standards from the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1961
- 7.99 OCC comment that the policy is both out dated and not in general conformity with Policies HP12 and HP13 of the Sites and Housing Plan. This is indeed the case and I recommend the deletion of the policy accordingly.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Policy BEC 3 Layout of Buildings on New Developments

- 7.100 This community policy addresses the layout of new dwellings. It has a focus on privacy, natural daylight and the aspect of living rooms
- 7.101 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. OCC suggest a modification to the policy to distinguish from a spatial policy. I agree with that approach and recommend accordingly.

In the final sentence insert 'generally' between 'should' and 'be'

Policy BEC4 Design Codes

- 7.102 This community policy has a focus on design and building codes.
- 7.103 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. As submitted, it reads in a similar fashion to a spatial policy. I recommend modifications to remedy this matter.

Replace 'All new developments will be expected to' with 'The Forum will work with relevant partners to ensure that new development will'

Policy BEC5 Energy Efficiency and Smart Homes

7.104 This community policy has a focus on energy efficiency and smart homes.

7.105 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. As submitted, it reads in a similar fashion to a spatial policy. I recommend modifications to remedy this matter.

Replace 'All new buildings....to buildings must' with 'The Forum will work with relevant partners to ensure that new development will'

In the second sentence replace 'should' with 'will be encouraged'

Policy BEC6 Mix of Dwellings and less mainstream housing

7.106 This policy seeks to encourage a mix of new dwellings to meet community needs

7.107 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. As submitted, it reads in a rather unusual fashion which requires an unspecified regularly revised plan to be drawn up with local residents. I recommend modifications to remedy this matter.

Replace the policy to read:

'The Forum will work with relevant partners to ensure that new residential development will provide for an appropriate mix of dwellings to meet community needs. Within this context the Forum will provide the necessary information to support the provision of housing for the elderly, and those persons needing wheel chair access'

Policy COC1 Transport to Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

7.108 This policy refers to planned footways and cycleways within the Gateway Area.

7.109 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. I recommend that the policy is modified so that its focus is on the work that the Forum will do with other partners to achieve the policy approach already included in the Area Action Plan.

At the beginning of the policy add:

'The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies and suppliers to ensure that.'

Thereafter replace 'must be' with 'are'

Delete See also CH" below"

Policy COC2 Public Transport to Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

7.110 This community policy highlights the importance of good public transport to and from the Northern Gateway Area and the need for developers to contribute financially towards the provision of adequate transport arrangements.

- 7.111 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. Nevertheless, it has the ability to be read as a very prescriptive requirement in general and as a potential spatial policy in particular. I recommend modifications to addresses these issues. The resulting approach is one which indicates how the Forum will work with other to achieve the ambitions of the policy.

At the beginning of the policy add:

'The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies and suppliers to ensure that.'
Thereafter replace 'need to be available' with 'is available'

In the second sentence replace 'must contribute financially' with 'will be expected to contribute financially as appropriate to the scale and location of the proposal':

Policy COC3 Tenure Arrangements

- 7.112 This community policy comments that new housing should be subject to strict tenure arrangements to ensure that it primarily serves the needs of persons working in new business. Whilst the policy is unclear on its applicability, I have taken it to refer to any new housing in the Northern Gateway initiative.
- 7.113 The Area Action Plan proposes up to 500 new dwellings within this important emerging project. Paragraph 5.18 of that Plan provides significant detail on the size and type of dwellings that would be appropriate. The proposed community policy does not add local detail to this policy approach on the one hand, and could be considered to go beyond its requirements with justification on the other hand. On this basis I recommend its deletion

Delete the community policy

Policy CHC1 Community, Sports and Recreational Facilities

- 7.114 This community policy refers to an aspiration that every household should have access to local multi-purpose facilities for indoor community activities within a distance of 500 metres. It also indicates that existing facilities listed in Annex 6 are retained and that additional facilities are provided where necessary.
- 7.115 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. Nevertheless, it has the ability to be read as a very prescriptive requirement in general and as a potential spatial policy in particular. I recommend modifications to addresses these issues. The resulting approach is one which indicates how the Forum will work with other to achieve the ambitions of the policy.

At the beginning of the policy add:

'The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies and suppliers to ensure that.'

Replace the second sentence with:

'The Forum will also seek to ensure that the existing community and recreational facilities listed in Annex 6 are retained and that additional facilities are provided as necessary within the Plan period'

Policy CHC2 Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

- 7.116 This community policy encourages walking and cycling through the provision of dedicated cycle tracks and footpaths together with the provision of secure and sheltered cycle racks and storage.
- 7.117 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. There are significant opportunities to extend the levels of existing cycling facilities.

Policy HEC 1 Tree Planting

- 7.118 This community policy indicates that the Forum will seek to preserve and increase greenery in the area
- 7.119 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area.

Policy HEC2 Heritage Partners

- 7.120 This community policy indicates that the Form will continue to work with a series of partners to promote the heritage of Wolvercote and the appreciation of its character
- 7.121 It is appropriate to be included as a community policy. Plainly it is distinctive to the neighbourhood area.

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2034. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan I have concluded that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.
- 8.3 This report has recommended a variety of modifications to the policies in the Plan. Nevertheless, the Plan remains largely unchanged in its role and purpose.

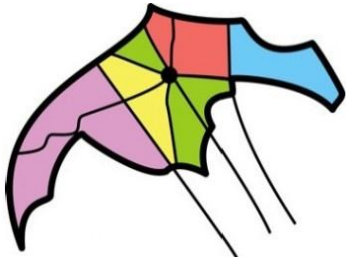
Conclusion

- 8.4 On the basis of the findings in this report I recommend to Oxford City Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

- 8.5 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by the City Council initially on 22 January 2014 and as re-designated on 13 March 2019.
- 8.6 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth and efficient manner.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
3 July 2019

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WOLVERCOTE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
FORUM

DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2019- 2034

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

WNF Document Control Sheet	
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Welcome to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan.

This Neighbourhood Plan is your plan. It seeks to establish a vision for Wolvercote and to deliver local aspirations and needs from 2019 to 2034. Neighbourhood planning was introduced in the Localism Act (2011) and reflects the Government's determination that local communities are closely involved in decisions about new buildings and developments that affect them. (See Annex 1 for more on Localism and Neighbourhood Planning.)

Our plan area stretches from North Oxford to Cutteslowe and to the villages of Upper and Lower Wolvercote. Many people have lived here all their lives, many have retired here or have lived here while working in Oxford, and with the planned developments there will be a growing and changing community.

Unlike many Neighbourhood Plans, ours will not be able to affect the designation of major sites for development, because the Northern Gateway and the Mill site were already allocated for development. However, a neighbourhood plan is a statutory document incorporated into the planning framework and can have an impact on the way development happens. It can help to ensure that development is sympathetic.

We have worked to discover the views of the community about what it values and what needs to be done to ensure that Wolvercote will be a place where people will be happy to live in the future and that, whatever changes and developments there are, its essential character will not be lost. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of those who have joined the Steering Committee. The process remains open to all wanting to help in the future. We always welcome help.

We have been concerned to reflect the views of the community regarding, for example: flood risk; pollution; the preservation, development and maintenance of our green spaces; the protection of the Green Belt; the scale and sustainability of building. We know, too, that that our neighbourhood is affected by developments that are outside our area and consequently more difficult to influence. It is, however, our intention to do our best to co-operate with our neighbours to do what we can to ensure that the common interests of all residents are protected.

This, then, is our vision for the future.

Christopher Hardman

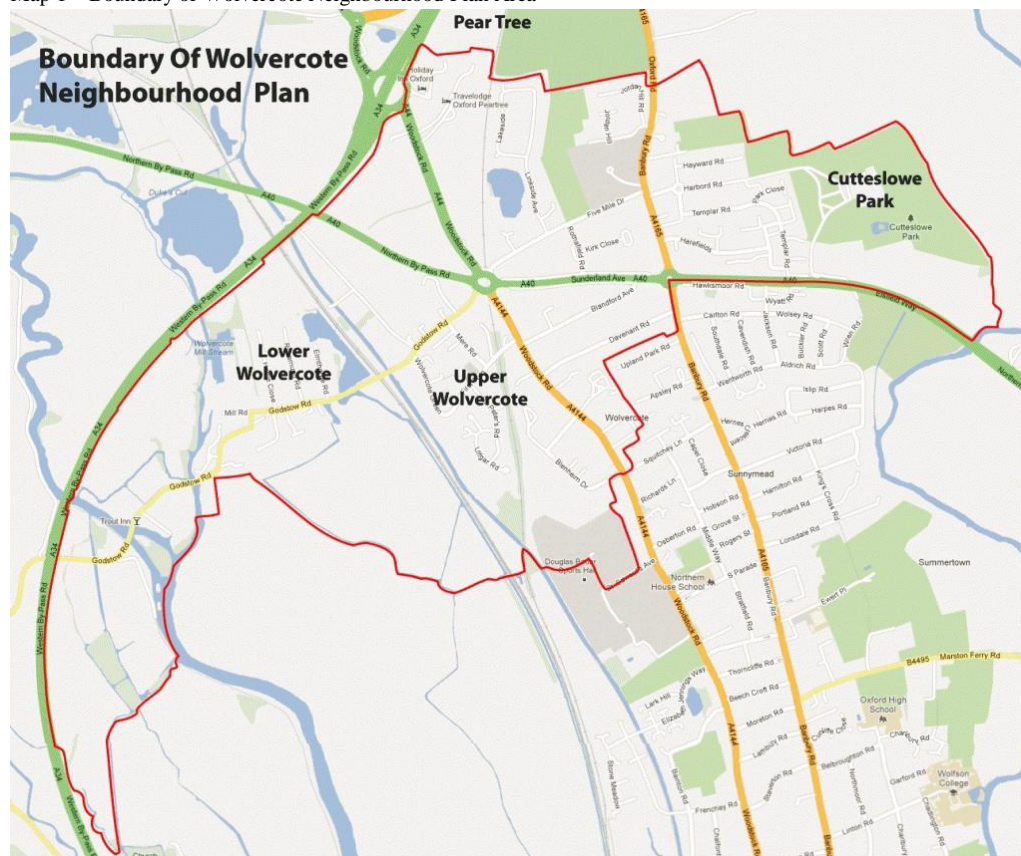
Chairman, Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and Plan Area

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum was designated by Oxford City Council (as our local planning authority) in January 2014 as the body responsible for developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wolvercote (the Plan). The Forum was established as an organisation whose purpose is to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. The Forum's structure is set out in Annex 2.

The Forum's membership represents a full cross-section of the local community, including those who live and work in Wolvercote. The Forum has approximately 150 members including elected members of Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils. It covers the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area (WNPA) which is set out in Map 1 below.

Map 1 – Boundary of Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area



All local groups operating in the area and owners of land within the area, but not resident or working in the area, have been invited to be represented. Open meetings of the Forum have been publicised online and in the local media, and membership sought through these means.

The process of developing the Plan, and of approving the Plan through a referendum, lies with WNF. However, it is important that WNF acts as a conduit for the views and expectations of the wider Wolvercote community. This includes those who live, work or study in Wolvercote. WNF also has a responsibility to be mindful of the impacts of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan on neighbouring parishes, city areas, and other neighbourhood forums.

Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan for Wolvercote?

In the past all statutory spatial plans have been prepared by the local planning authority, Oxford City Council. These plans are collectively known in legal terms as ‘the Local Plan’ and will remain in place. Oxford City Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to replace the one agreed in 2011.

These plans are prepared *in consultation with* the local community, however they do not necessarily reflect the ‘will’ of the community. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared *by* the community, *for* the community.

Through the Localism Act the Wolvercote community has had the opportunity to actually prepare the plan that shapes how the Wolvercote area looks. Communities can say what type of development they wish to encourage, how much development should take place (subject to generally conforming with higher level strategic plans), where and when that development should take place, and what they want to see protected in the long term.

Communities can do this by establishing what the community wants the area to look like over the coming years. They can then establish how relevant delivery organisations in the private, public, community and voluntary sector are able to meet those expectations.

Provided certain steps are taken during the preparation of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan, it will have a clear legal status and it will be used to make decisions on all planning matters coming forward in Wolvercote and in the adjoining areas that may have an impact upon Wolvercote.

Wolvercote is adjacent to the districts of Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, which will be developing their own local plans and proposing strategic developments that could bring significant change to the Wolvercote Plan Area.

Given the range of issues that the Wolvercote community faces, having a Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to try to resolve them through the planning system. WNF will also use the Plan to work with a range of community stakeholders to deliver local solutions and projects for Wolvercote.

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted to provide an opportunity to decide the future of the place (Wolvercote) where people live and work. In 2019 it is hoped that this Plan will be adopted by the Wolvercote community at a referendum, and it will provide a spatial planning template for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area until 2034.

The Plan is a spatial plan containing planning policies, which affect how planning applications are determined, and community policies and projects which aim to help the community in Wolvercote deliver the desired changes. Given that WNF is not the only statutory body responsible for spatial planning in Wolvercote (Oxford City Council is the Local Planning Authority), the Plan must be in general conformity with Oxford City Council's spatial planning policies within its Local Plan.

It should be noted that this Plan should be read as a whole in relation to development proposals. This Plan does not provide a 'pick-and-mix' approach to development, but sets down a coherent framework of policies which, taken as a whole, seeks to deliver the Vision and Objectives of WNF.

Consulting Statutory Stakeholders on this Draft Plan is a statutory requirement of the neighbourhood planning process, and the consultation period must be open for at least 6 weeks. However, opportunities to make representations to WNF are open throughout the Plan preparation process

The Plan Process

The process which neighbourhood plans need to follow is set down in statute by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). These regulations specify a series of stages and tests to ensure the validity and conformance of the neighbourhood plan. The process that WNF has followed in developing the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is set out in Annex 3.

The Plan also needs to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012) and this will be set out in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Vision, Aims and Principles

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by local residents from Wolvercote. These local residents have organised themselves into a series of Working Groups which report back to a main Steering Committee (SC), which in turn reports regularly back to the Forum (see Annex 2).

The Forum sets out the Vision for the Plan. The SC sets out the Aims and Objectives of the Plan. The Working Groups set out the Policies and Action Plans for the Plan.

Vision:

In 15 years, Wolvercote Ward, which stretches from Cutteslowe Park in the east to Godstow in the west, will be an attractive, economically vibrant and culturally lively area. It will be for people of all ages, backgrounds and interests, and will have a strong sense of community. All new building developments should be sustainable and of a high quality, designed to be sensitively integrated with existing buildings so that the valued character of the streets and the green open spaces in all of the Ward's distinct localities is retained and enhanced.

Aims:

The aims of the proposals in the Plan are to benefit all those who live and all those who work in the Ward and are for all age groups and for future generations. There should be a variety of housing to suit their needs and incomes, local employment opportunities, improved leisure facilities and accessible green spaces, and there should be an appropriate choice of environmentally friendly facilities for travel. The sustainability of the Ward, as a group of interacting communities existing within a wider economic, social and environmental context, should thus be ensured.

The Plan seeks to establish that new building developments are supported by adequate services and facilities. Transport links into and out of the centre of Oxford and with neighbouring areas should be maintained and improved so as to reduce dependence on cars, to lower pollution and to improve the ability of people to move about easily and safely. The Plan also requires that adequate precautionary measures are taken to reduce the risk of flooding, in particular in Lower Wolvercote, and especially in any new developments.

General Principles:

- 1) **Community:** The Wolvercote Ward already contains several thriving communities, some of which have better facilities than others. All of them need communal facilities that will maintain and enhance social interaction. Where there is growth in population, more facilities should be provided. Facilities (social, sports, worship and medical etc.) are needed for all age groups from the young to the elderly and should be maintained and enhanced regularly as a matter of course. Wherever new development takes place the design and the layout should be in sympathy with the needs of the existing community in scale and should provide both communal facilities and public open space, which is welcoming and free of cars, where people can freely and safely interact. Public open space needs also to be secure and well maintained.
- 2) **Schooling:** The community should support the provision of local schools. Sufficient capacity must be made available in local schools to accommodate any increases in

population, especially from large developments. Consideration needs to be given to safe travel routes to schools.

- 3) **Local employment:** A growing number of people want to work close to their homes. This might reduce traffic and pollution. Appropriate business development contributes to a balanced community, and may provide scope for local employment. However, the infrastructure needs to be developed accordingly. Where there are larger volumes of traffic because some employees and goods have to come from outside the area, it will be necessary to ensure that roads are in good repair and able to cope. At the same time measures should be introduced to encourage the reduction of car dependence.
- 4) **Local retail:** Local shops have an important function in any neighbourhood, not least because they cut down on the need for travel. They should be protected by planning policy.
- 5) **Mix of housing:** Any new developments must be planned to avoid ghettos and gated communities. New housing should include “affordable” housing both for purchase and for rent. The rental sector should be responsibly managed, with consideration and respect for all residents. There should be firm implementation of Oxford City Council’s policy on Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). Land should be made available for specialised types of housing, such as sheltered and extra care housing.
- 6) **Building scale, density and design:** It is important to attend to the scale of buildings and the density of development to ensure that any new building is appropriate in design, scale and character to its immediate neighbours. Areas for development within the Ward should be designated to ensure that the variations in scale and density accompanying different use categories are appropriately sited (for instance, housing compared with employment use). Furthermore, there should be a strict limit on the practice of infilling and the replacement of single dwellings by multiple properties, to control density and car ownership. New developments should have dedicated spaces to accommodate waste disposal (wheelie bins), to keep shared spaces, including pavements, clear.
- 7) **Sustainability and building standards:** All new developments must be planned to be sustainable in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). To meet this requirement, new building should be highly energy efficient and meet the highest standards for sustainable design. Improved space standards should be introduced for all new dwellings, and these standards should be made mandatory (as, for example, the standards used in public housing before 1980).
- 8) **Heritage:** New developments must respect buildings or groups of buildings of historical significance within the local area, whether designated heritage assets or within the Conservation Areas or not. This does not mean copying historical styles but re-interpreting the scale and grain of existing places in a contemporary way.

- 9) Renewable energy:** The Plan encourages the exploitation of the potential for renewable energy in existing housing and commercial building stock, and especially in new developments, including energy from natural features, such as rivers.
- 10) Energy and resource conservation:** Every effort should be made to promote the conservation of resources, reduce air pollution and bring down fuel bills. In terms of buildings this will be achieved by the use of efficient and selective construction methods, the elimination of waste material, and the employment of advanced technology (including district heating). In terms of transport it will be achieved through the development of public transportation, encouragement of cycling, walking etc.
- 11) Noise and air pollution:** The Plan requires effective steps to protect residents (both new and existing) from noise and air pollution from identified polluting sources (particularly major roads). Evidence to support proposals must be based on data obtained from actual measurements, not models. This is an issue for developers but also for the Highway Authority since the pollution levels at the Wolvercote Roundabout and almost certainly at the Cutteslowe Roundabout already exceed air quality standards. Consideration should be given to the prevention of “rat running”.
- 12) Green spaces and biodiversity:** While acknowledging the outstanding facilities provided by Cutteslowe Park, Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green, Wolvercote Lakes, Goose Green and Port Meadow, the Plan supports the work of local authorities, agencies, charities and local community groups in protecting and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity of the area. It will strive to make more green space accessible to the public, while, at the same time, supporting measures to protect rare plant species and habitats. Public areas in new developments should be stocked with native tree, plant and grass species. All developments, especially large developments, should contain green spaces offering a range of character. The potential for traffic calming by creating chicanes and parking bays, using trees or shrubs in planters, could be explored.
- 13) Drains and infrastructure:** The Plan seeks more rigorous checking of plans for forthcoming developments, based on measured evidence to ensure that the existing drains and roads in particular have sufficient capacity to support those developments. There is currently concern about the inadequacy of the sewerage system in Lower Wolvercote.
- 14) Risk of flooding:** The Plan seeks a more rigorous approach to the provision of flood defences where these are needed. There should be careful checking of all plans for new developments to ensure that they do not add to the risk of flooding in the area and will employ appropriate techniques to attenuate surface water run-off from buildings and paving. In low-lying areas there must be a clear understanding by landowners and agencies of the causes of flooding (e.g. where existing ditch networks are blocked) and clear and (where possible) enforceable lines of responsibility for the maintenance and management of banks, ditches and weirs.

15) Traffic and parking, alternative transport: Road layouts should be able to cope with the volume of traffic and, where that cannot be achieved, new development should be restricted. Changes to road layouts should not take place simply to accommodate development to the detriment of conditions for existing residents. New developments need to be planned with adequate parking provision. Public transport provision needs to be enhanced. Existing roads and bridges need to be repaired and reinforced to cope with bus and emergency services and refuse collection, with contributions towards this work where appropriate from developers. Alternative means of transport (cycling and walking) need to be encouraged, through provision of safer routes.

Policies and Action Plan Preparation

Each of the five Working Groups concentrated on a particular policy area. These are:

- 1 . Green Spaces and Biodiversity
- 2 . Built Environment
- 3 . Commerce
- 4 . Community, Transport and Health
- 5 . Heritage and Local Character

Throughout the whole Plan development process, the achievement of sustainable development has been embedded within policy formulation. At the heart of the Plan is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

Delivering the Plan

Delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan will take place through two distinct elements:

Firstly, the Spatial Planning Policies as set out below, if approved at Referendum, will become part of the Statutory Local Planning documents which determine planning applications in the WNPA. These policies specifically impact on proposed planning applications and can be implemented directly through the planning system. They will become part of the development plan.

Secondly, WNF has identified a number of Community Policies and Projects, which are set out below. These Policies and Projects cannot be delivered through development (i.e. when planning applications are made) and therefore will need to be delivered by WNF working with partners and external stakeholders. In this plan the spatial policies are shown with light tonal grey shading to distinguish them from the community policies.

Why consult on a Neighbourhood Plan?

The consultation process which neighbourhood plans must follow is set down in statute by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). These regulations specify a series of consultations to ensure the validity and conformance of the neighbourhood plan.

WNF has a duty to consult the Wolvercote community through a formal consultation process. Additionally, WNF must consult any consultation body whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan as set out in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012).

The consultation phase of the project includes one informal and two formal legally required processes to **consult** the community, and an ongoing informal engagement and consultation process.

During the first informal consultation process, WNF identified the potential community issues which needed to be fed into the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan.

Following this consultation WNF produced a draft Plan, which enabled the first formal community consultation process to proceed. This document is a result of this formal consultation.

The summary of the entire consultation process that the Plan has followed will be set out in the Consultation Statement.

WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DRAFT POLICIES

Green Spaces and Biodiversity (GB)

The aim of the Green Spaces and Biodiversity policies is to conserve and enhance green space and biodiversity primarily for residents' well-being. Green space should be maintained and opportunities for enhancement sought to help mitigate the effects of climate change. Public green space should be available for recreational purposes (such as playgrounds and allotments) and these should be decided on by the community. It is also important that green space should consist not just of grass, but a variety of plant species, to encourage greater biodiversity.

GB SPATIAL POLICIES

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area (WNPA or “Plan Area”) has within its boundary some of the most important publicly accessible green space within the City. These include:

- Port Meadow, Wolvercote Common and Wolvercote Green, (together with Yarnton and Pixey Meads of which only part is within the Plan Area), are designated as a European Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Meads are also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as are Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green and Port Meadow. Wolvercote Common and Port Meadow are also designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).
- Common land in Lower Wolvercote includes Port Meadow, Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green and Goose Green, and the land on which the surgery stands, as well as the Lower Wolvercote Children’s Playground.
- Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park in the east of the Plan Area, includes sport pitches as well as open play areas, a nature reserve, pond, and allotments. It is very well-used, and is a very important green space within the Plan Area for recreation for local residents.
- The Hurst, a small wooded area at the end of Wolvercote Green, near to The Plough
- Wolvercote Lakes Nature Reserve, which is owned and managed by the Oxford Preservation Trust.
- Four allotment sites and a Community Orchard

There are also smaller areas of green space, which although not designated are still important for recreation and the enjoyment of local residents in a relatively urban residential street. For example:

- The green area on Kendall Crescent (Map Reference SP 507102);
- Areas next to the flats in Millway Close (Map Reference SP449583);
- Green areas on Jordan Hill (Map Reference SP 501109).

These green areas, which include various species of grass and mature trees, must be retained and protected for their importance to biodiversity as well as their recreational value.

Policy GBS1 – Publicly Accessible Green Space

~~All existing public access green space in the WNPA (see Annex 4 Green Spaces Plan) will be conserved and opportunities for enhancement sought (unless currently allocated as a development site in an adopted development plan document). Development proposals should protect the publicly accessible green spaces as shown in Annex 4 and, where practicable incorporate any opportunities for their enhancement.~~

Development will not be ~~permitted~~ where it results in the loss of public access green space or harms its setting unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need for development on that green space and:

- (1) a public access green space(s) of an equivalent size and amenity is provided as near as possible to the existing space in the WNPA; or
- (2) access by the public to an alternative private green space(s) of an equivalent size and amenity is provided as near as possible to the existing space in the WNPA.

The Plan seeks to retain the Green Belt to protect important sanctuaries of biodiversity. Where new developments are alongside areas of the Green Belt, or Common Land, no damage must be done to the land, either during construction or afterwards (e.g. through drainage issues).

Policy GBS2 – Green Belt, Designated Land (SSSI, SAC, SAM), and Common Land

~~Development will not be permitted on any designated green space, Common land or Green Belt. There should be no inappropriate contiguous development next to the Green Belt, to ensure the visual continuity of the Green Belt is retained. The extent of the Oxford Green Belt within the neighbourhood area is shown on Map [insert number]. Development proposals for inappropriate development within the Green Belt will not be supported.~~

~~Development will not be supported on land designated as SSSI, or SAC, or SAM as shown on Map [insert number]~~

~~Development will not be supported on Common Land as shown on Map [insert number]~~

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New developments must not put protected and designated sites or Common land at risk from pollution of the air, water or other pollution, or increased recreational pressure.

Wolvercote has several Playing Fields and Children's Play Areas, but new developments already planned will mean that more will be needed. Usage of the existing football and cricket pitches is

very high during the appropriate season, with Junior Football being especially popular, both on Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground and in Cutteslowe Park. Every weekend from September to July there are several matches and training sessions involving hundreds of children and young people.

Oxford City Council has as one of its priorities the development of ‘Strong and Active Communities’, and any new development should follow that strategy. It is important that the recommendations of “Fields in Trust”, (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) should

be followed, in particular in regard to distances to formal space, and Equipped Play Space. Wolvercote cemetery should not be extended into Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground, as that space is needed for public recreation and sport.

Policy GBS3 – Playing Fields and Play Areas

~~Cuttesslowe and Sunnymead Park and any playing field area (Five Mile Drive Playing Field and Banbury Road North Recreation Ground) should remain as areas of public amenity and be protected from development. Development proposals should protect Cuttesslowe and Sunnymead Park, the Five Mile Drive Playing Field and the Banbury Road North Recreation Ground. Development will not be supported within these playing fields unless they are ancillary facilities which will sustain and/or enhance their use as playing fields.~~

~~All existing Children's Play Areas must remain, and~~ Development proposals should safeguard existing play areas. ~~all~~ All new developments of more than 10 dwellings must include provision for children's play areas that are safe, and nearby (within 100 metres). This provision should either enhance existing facilities or provide for new facilities where appropriate.

Allotments are an important resource for social and physical recreation, as well as encouraging people to grow their own food. There are four separate allotment sites: two in Lower Wolvercote, one in Upper Wolvercote, and one in Cuttesslowe. There are few, if any vacant plots on any of these sites, and waiting lists for all but one of them. All existing allotments must be retained, and new ones will be welcomed on new developments. Policy GBS3 includes sufficient flexibility to allow for the development of modest ancillary facilities which would enhance their principal uses as playing fields.

Policy GBS4 – Allotments

Development proposals should protect existing allotments and, where practicable incorporate any opportunities for their enhancement ~~Existing and designated allotment land will be retained.~~ Proposals that seek to increase the number of allotments in the WNPA or extend existing allotment sites will be ~~encouraged~~ supported. New residential developments should provide allotments in line with current City Council policy. Where practicable these should be on site or within 400 metres of the new development. ~~Allotments should be provided in accordance with current City Council Policy as a minimum.~~

New development must result in no net loss in the number of trees and hedges. In particular, WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – DRAFT PLAN

there must be no loss or damage to existing ancient hedges such as that along Joe White's Lane, near to Goose Green. Any work likely to result in the removal of trees or hedges will ideally be subject to planning permission.

Private gardens are an important characteristic of the WNPA. They form an extensive network of habitats and wildlife corridors throughout Wolvercote. An important sample survey was carried out on behalf of the Steering Committee by students from Oxford Brookes University. A wide range of species was recorded in gardens across the Ward. This included protected species like badgers, bats, toads, slow-worms and stag beetles. The results underlined the importance of gardens in the provision of wildlife corridors. A full species list is provided in Annex 5..

It is apparent that these wildlife corridors could easily be disrupted by new development, and mitigation strategies were suggested, including garden surveys in areas adjacent to new development prior to building so appropriate protection can be put in place. Where a developer provides alternative green space in the WNPA, due consideration must be given to the provision of wildlife corridors.

In granting planning permission, the importance of private gardens to the overall green character of the WNPA will be taken into consideration.

Policy GBS5 – Biodiversity

Development proposals which ~~may~~would result in significant harm to sites and/or species of ecological value as defined by Policy CS12 of the Oxford Core Strategy or an equivalent development plan, will not be ~~permitted~~supported, unless the developer can demonstrate that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss of habitat and species.

This loss can be mitigated and compensated for on a like-for-like basis elsewhere within the WNPA by providing a replacement habitat of an equivalent or higher ecological value, that is appropriate for the habitat and species within it, and which provides net gains in biodiversity, which must be protected.

~~Development proposals which would preserve, increase and enhance biodiversity by retaining wildlife corridors will be supported. Consideration must be given to the importance of wildlife corridors and priority species and habitats.~~

Developments in existing gardens should not result in a net loss of trees.

Designs for new developments should try to include a mix of private and public open space of at least 15% of the total area of the development. More than 50% of that should be green space, designed and if possible planted to ensure the protection of wildlife corridors and biodiversity (see GBS5).

Policy GBS6 – Green Space in Developments

In order to increase and enhance green space within the WNPA:

1. Development proposals which increase public access green space and enhance biodiversity within the WNPA will be ~~encouraged~~supported, including incorporation of biodiversity in and around developments.

~~2. Major developments will be subject, where it is appropriate, to a planning condition requiring the submission to, and the approval of, the Local Planning Authority of a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan, which would include the provision for maintenance and for measures to increase the biodiversity of the site.~~

~~The Plan favours the provision of public access green space on site. However, for major developments, where it can be demonstrated that public access green space cannot be provided on site, then alternative public access green space must be provided as near as possible to the site in the WNPA. This can be in the form of an extension or enhancement of existing public access green space within the WNPA.~~

GB COMMUNITY POLICIES

Wildlife corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations.

Policy GBC1 – Wildlife Corridors

Grass verges must be properly maintained with a view to the protection of biodiversity and as wildlife corridors. Appropriate planting and cutting should be carried out on verges, to encourage pollinating insects. Provision of trees and shrubs in new development will be encouraged in order to reduce air pollution, increase habitat connectivity and mitigate against rising temperatures. Trees and hedges on verges must be retained, and street planting and their required maintenance should be an important part of new developments.

Cemeteries act as a sanctuary in urbanised areas, and because they are not so intensely managed as other urban green spaces, they attract birds, wildflowers and elusive mammals.

Policy GBC2 – Cemeteries

Wolvercote and other cemeteries must remain places of tranquility, quiet contemplation and respect, free from intrusive development. Cemeteries should be managed with biodiversity in mind.

All of the waterways and their surrounding land in Wolvercote are extremely valuable sources of wildlife and form an important overwintering site for migrating birds. They are also used by native wildlife as vital green corridors, as well as having significant recreational benefits for residents. It is therefore vital that the waterways are kept open and maintained as necessary (possibly including dredging by the relevant authorities to ensure they can be used for boating).

Policy GBC3 – Watercourses and associated land

The Oxford Canal should be retained for recreational use and appropriate maintenance undertaken of the towpath, Wolvercote Lock and bridges.

The River Thames and Mill Stream should be conserved as a recreational waterway and as important resources for wildlife and biodiversity.

The Wolvercote Picnic Site (previously the Bathing Place) should be retained as a publicly accessible site, and (together with fencing) maintained, to prevent the ingress of grazing cattle and horses.

Local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park offers a wide range of activities, and space for recreation, and is much valued by the local community. It is acknowledged that not all of this park falls within Wolvercote, as the two parts are separated by the A40. However, the two parts of the Park are joined by a pedestrian bridge, and the Park should be designated in its entirety if possible.

Policy GBC4 – Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park~~New-designated local green spaces~~

The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies including the City Council ensure that Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park is retained for recreational purposes and managed in a sensitive way.~~The Forum seeks designation of Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park as a local green space.~~

Front gardens form a very important part of the green area in any community, and Wolvercote is no exception. However, many are being paved over to provide parking. This reduces the number and diversity of plants available for use by insects and birds and may also add to the risk of flooding unless permeable paving is used.

Policy GBC5 – Front Gardens

The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies including the City Council to promote the retention of existing front gardens and to highlight their importance to an attractive street scene.~~Protection of existing front gardens from being paved over to provide private car parking should be encouraged.~~ Where paving takes place the materials to be used should~~All paving used for parking must~~ be permeable and its effect softened where possible with planting to maintain the character of the streetscape.

Built Environment (BE)

BE SPATIAL POLICIES

The policy of living within your means is a basic tenet of sustainable living, of which minimising your ecological footprint is an important principle. Therefore, all land needs to be used efficiently and urban sprawl needs to be tightly controlled. Land is an asset not only in financial terms but also in terms of the natural resources it provides and the wildlife that inhabits it (see Green Spaces and Biodiversity Policies). Once built upon, an area of land becomes a 'Brownfield site' and cannot easily revert to its original 'Greenfield' status. That is why all available Brownfield sites should be used up before development is allowed on Greenfield land (Oxford Core Strategy 2026, para 3.1.3.).

Policy BES1 – Brownfield Sites

Proposals for new development on Brownfield sites will be ~~prioritised~~ supported. Proposals for development on green field land will be determined against Policy CS2 of the Oxford City Core Strategy. ~~Where proposals for development on Greenfield sites are submitted (other than those already allocated for development in the Oxford Local Plan), a written justification of why the development has not been proposed on a Brownfield site will be required.~~

The whole of Oxford City has been identified as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) because of the levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, largely caused by motor vehicles, especially those that are diesel powered. Cutteslowe Roundabout and the Wolvercote Roundabout have been identified as localised Air Quality (AQ) hotspots where levels of nitrogen dioxide exceed target levels.

Private car and goods traffic continues to grow, with associated pollutants, despite efforts being made by the strategic planning authorities to encourage the use of other less-polluting modes of transport and despite cleaner engines and fuels. Air pollution is at its worst at peak times, when traffic is often slow moving or stationary.

Development proposals may be effective in reducing the impact of traffic through careful design and the use of travel plans.

The long-term goal should be for air pollution to be reduced to agreed limits. This would take time and in the meantime people's health continues to suffer. Air pollution is an ever-increasing cause of death in this country, particularly amongst the young and elderly. It affects all living beings and plant life. It puts strains on our medical resources.

People should not be expected to live or work in areas where the air they breathe is excessively polluted at any time. Therefore, where the pollution level in the vicinity of a proposed

development is found to be above those agreed limits, that development will not be permitted. If in the future air pollution levels were to be brought down locally to acceptable levels (for instance through the widespread use of cleaner fuels) a review of the planning application could then be made.

Mitigating measures could include, for example, avoidance of ‘canyon’ street forms (where buildings are sited close to major roads on both sides), and the introduction of vegetation proven to effectively absorb undesirable air particles.

Policy BES2 – Air Pollution

Proposals for residential development should identify the present state of air quality in the immediate vicinity of the site based on the most up to date technical guidance standard. In addition, development proposals should identify the ways in which the potential impact of new development on the health and well-being of existing residents in the immediate locality can be mitigated through both design, layout and construction. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on air quality in their local environment will not be supported.

~~Residential development will not be permitted in areas where air pollution levels are found to be above levels considered injurious to health, as defined by The World Health Organisation¹. All such proposals near trunk and major roads, and traffic intersections must be accompanied by evidence concerning the present state of air quality at peak times. Furthermore, proposals must demonstrate how poor air quality and the impact on the health of the residents will be mitigated (through design and construction) in the WNPA.~~

Noise pollution is largely caused by traffic noise. Private car and goods traffic continues to grow, despite efforts being made by the strategic planning authorities to encourage the use of other modes of transport.

Options for reducing the impact of noise range from adjusting the wider transport infrastructure (such as the relocation of the noise source, improvements in road surface, engine and tyre design, introduction and monitoring of speed limits and sound barriers) to focusing on individual developments (such as using buildings and freestanding walls as sound barriers, distancing buildings from roads, reducing window size and double-glazing linked with mechanical ventilation). While developers will be expected to contribute (through CIL) to noise reduction measures taken at the wider level, they will also be expected, at the localised level, to design development for the aural comfort of residents and workers for their health and well-being. Therefore, developers will be expected to deploy a number of complementary measures. It will not be considered acceptable to deploy sound insulating glazing with mechanical ventilation alone, if this means that residents will need to stay inside their homes to obtain respite from traffic noise.

An acoustic planning report will be a condition of any planning consent for buildings located near to a trunk road or roads. This will detail the noise mitigation measures that will be deployed in that development.

⁺ <http://www.who.int/airpollution/publications/aqg2005/en/>

Policy BES3 – Noise Pollution

New developments should be designed to minimise intrusive noise for new and existing residents, both inside their homes as well as within the domestic curtilage of their dwelling (which includes private gardens or yards). New developments should demonstrate the ways in which they have responded to the most up-to-date technical guidance on noise pollution relevant to the proposed development. Developments must adhere to the acoustic standards defined by the World Health Organisation² and planning consent will only be granted where such standards are shown to have been incorporated into the design.

~~Demolishing a building which can be repaired or converted is unsustainable, however current VAT laws (zero percent on most elements of a new build) encourage demolition and new build~~

~~Demolition of a building and replacing it with one or more new buildings can change the character of an area, depending on the impact of this practice in any given area.~~

Policy BES4 – Building Demolition and conversion

~~Where possible, refurbishment and conversion will be preferred to demolition and rebuilding, to conserve material resources and to preserve the heritage of the area (see HES3 in Heritage and Character Policies).~~

~~Planning permission will be encouraged where it is proposed that existing buildings are converted or extended to create additional self-contained dwellings, subject to Local Plan Policy HP9 and to plans for provision of extra car parking spaces (so that the existing on-street parking capacity of the street is not reduced).~~

~~*“The design of any new development should consider its context. Sometimes there will be strong local patterns of urban design and architecture which will need to be reflected in the new design. This does not mean copying historical styles but re-interpreting the scale and grain of existing places in a contemporary way.” (Quote from East Thames Group design guide 2008.)*~~

~~In the WNPA existing houses were built in a variety of styles, a few dating back to the 16th Century, but most built post war and are generally two storeys high. Attic conversions taking houses to three storeys are becoming common. Purpose-built flats contain three or four storeys. There are no taller buildings than this, therefore buildings designed to be taller than the norm could change the character of the area.~~

~~In consideration of the current shortage of housing stock, when asked, 50% of residents were against or strongly against building higher whilst 25% were ambivalent.~~

~~A limit on the height of new buildings, established at outline planning stage, is therefore desirable for the following reasons:~~

³ <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/noise/data-and-statistics>

- ~~1. To demonstrate sensitivity to the visual appearance and character of the existing area, from within the area~~
- ~~2. To respect views from surrounding areas, taking into account the existing topography and roofscape~~
- ~~3. To restrict creeping urbanisation and the establishment of urban canyons~~
- ~~4. To protect the privacy of existing and new residents from overlooking by their neighbours.~~

Large developments usually take on a homogeneous appearance, which can be found anywhere in the country, resulting from numbers of dwellings being constructed by the same developer to the same formula at the same time. To stimulate diversity in the built environment, developers will be required to set aside plots of land for later use by independent builders, in the same way as land is reserved for recreation and green space.

Policy BES5 – Development Design Guidance

~~New developments (including conversions, additions, alterations, change of use and extensions) will only be permitted where they respond to and enhance the existing built environment as set out in the Local Plan Sites and Housing Plan HP9. This may include consideration of aspects such as bulk, materials, scale, siting use, layout, form, design, massing, cumulative impact and intensity of activity within the built environment and setting of the WNPA.~~

~~Where development is adjacent to major roads and railway lines, new buildings may be higher than neighbouring buildings, particularly where they are partly intended to function as barriers to noise from the transport infrastructure.~~

~~The developer must demonstrate, using a view cone technique that the existing sight lines from surrounding areas have been considered and respected. The privacy and rights to light of occupants of adjacent lower buildings, especially dwellings, must also be respected.~~

~~Where developers are required to submit a Design and Access Statement, with or without a design code, they will be expected to demonstrate how their design and layout responds to the local character of the area.~~

~~When asked, 74% of residents felt that it was important or very important that affordable housing should be provided for school teachers, nurses, social workers, police officers, etc. It should also be noted that Wolvercote Ward has a higher than average elderly population.~~

Policy BES6 – Affordable and Key Worker Housing

~~All housing developments of over 10 units must provide both social rented and affordable housing and housing for key workers, with a mix of tenure, in accordance with policies as set out in the Local Plan.~~

Parts of the WNPA are adjacent to the River Cherwell and the Thames. Much is on the flood plain and residents of Oxford have often experienced flooding as a result of historic building on the flood plain. To reduce the risk of surface water flooding, any development will be expected to minimise water run-off and maximise infiltration into the soil, where possible.

Therefore, all developments will be required to adopt best practice. Developers must consult the local water authority to ensure that the foul sewerage system is sufficient to cope with large development by, for example, surveying the pipework rather than by desk-top surveys. There should be no building on land liable to flooding without appropriate measures not only to protect new building, but to prevent any adverse effect on existing buildings in the neighbourhood. Run-off onto roads is already an issue and this needs to be addressed before being increased by further development.

Policy ~~BES7~~ BES4 – Drainage and Flooding

All proposed developments ~~will be required to~~should demonstrate that they do not decrease rain water infiltration. Developments that demonstrate that they increase infiltration (where it is geologically possible), or reduce run-off to watercourses, will be ~~encouraged~~supported. All run off water should be infiltrated into the ground using permeable surfaces (SUDS), or attenuation storage, so that the speed and quantity of run off is decreased.

Proposals for new development ~~must~~should ensure that there is no increased risk of flooding to existing property as a result of the development.

~~As appropriate to the scale and nature of any proposed new development. Any new development, regardless of type and size, in areas likely to be flooded~~ must should incorporate flood resilience techniques in design and construction.

BE COMMUNITY POLICIES

Monitoring new planning developments to ensure any new planning applications are appropriate and sustainable, and that there is adequate infrastructure in place before any new developments are allowed, is an issue which has been raised throughout the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum's planning process. Residents believe it is important that they get the chance to input into planning applications before they are considered by the local planning authority.

Policy BEC1 – Planning Watch System

~~The Forum will work with the City Council to ensure that appropriate consultation takes place with the community on planning applications in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in Planning. In turn the Forum will provide comments on planning application in accordance with policies in the adopted development plan, including the neighbourhood plan. No new development of any kind shall be considered by the planning authority without adequate consultation with the local community.~~

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~~Too often it is reported that modern housing in Britain lacks sufficient space, both indoors and outdoors. Therefore, previously accepted minimum interior space standards for new dwellings (including storage space) should be reintroduced. These standards can be found in the report 'Homes for today and tomorrow' (<https://archive.org/details/op1266209-1001>) first published in 1961 by the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government.~~

Policy BEC2 – Interior and Exterior Space Standards

~~Improved interior space standards should be introduced for all new dwellings, and these standards should be made mandatory. There should be public open space, including streets designed as Home Zones, where people can meet and children play in safety. Hard spaces should be kept to minimum.~~

In larger developments, there is huge potential to influence the local environment, in a positive way, so that it becomes an asset to the WNP. The master-plan or layout of the development is critical in establishing from the outset principles which will affect the quality of life of the inhabitants and local residents, including privacy, community interaction, security, safety, access to amenities, convenience and ease of moving about, economy and energy efficiency.

Policy BEC3-BEC2 – Layout of Buildings on New Developments

Development design should safeguard privacy by minimising overlooking, and maximise natural light within dwellings and gardens, for the benefit of both new and existing residents. Living rooms with a northerly aspect should generally be avoided in new dwellings.

The Local Planning Authority will be encouraged to introduce new design codes, or adopt, for local use, codes used for recent large developments within the city (such as the Barton Development and the Northern Gateway).

Policy BEC4-BEC3 – Design Codes

~~The Forum will work with relevant partners to ensure that new development will. All new-~~

~~developments will be expected to~~ provide safe and attractive environments through the enforcement of appropriate design and building codes in the planning process.

All buildings are expected to conform to the national Building Regulations. Planning law no longer has provision for design to promote energy efficiency in buildings. However there is scope to improve the energy efficiency of a development, not just at the detailed design level but at infrastructure design, outline-planning and master-planning levels, through the layout of buildings, planting design, introduction of shared heating systems, etc.

An incentive is needed to encourage developers to raise these standards of energy efficiency.

Policy ~~BEC5~~BEC4 – Energy Efficiency and Smart Homes

~~The Forum will work with relevant partners to ensure that new development will~~All new buildings and extensions to buildings must meet the highest standards available at the time of application in energy efficiency and sustainable design. As part of the energy efficiency provision, new and extended buildings ~~should~~will be encouraged to incorporate effective internet connections, cabling and compatible fittings to enable “smart home living”.

The mix of dwelling sizes and types should reflect current local need and should be reviewed, together with policies on HMOs every five years as part of the Local Plan review process. The local strategic policies on HMOs, should be reviewed in consultation with the local community.

On large developments, land should be set aside for less mainstream types of dwelling, for example sheltered housing and co-housing.

All housing developments should be designed to accommodate the needs of the elderly and disabled as well as the able bodied, including provision for wheel chair access. Specific housing provision must be made for the elderly, including bungalows, sheltered housing and extra care housing. Proposals within developments, which provide for warden-controlled dwellings and nursing home care facilities, will be supported.

Policy ~~BEC6~~BEC5 – Mix of Dwellings and less mainstream housing

~~The Forum will work with relevant partners to ensure that new residential development will provide for an appropriate mix of dwellings to meet community needs. Within this context the Forum will provide the necessary information to support the provision of housing for the elderly, and those persons needing wheel chair access. There should be a regularly revised plan made in consultation with local residents that requires developers to provide an appropriate mix of dwellings, including less mainstream housing.~~

Commerce (CO)

Background

The nature of commercial activity is changing at an ever-increasing pace, affecting not only the workplace, but its interaction with the community.

Wolvercote Paper Mill, which used to employ approximately 100 people, most of whom were residents in Wolvercote, closed 20 years ago. Now many people work from home; this brings benefits to the community and to individuals in certain jobs by reducing the need for travel, saving both time and pollution.

Local shops have always played an important role in neighbourhoods: not only for their convenience as suppliers of basic groceries but also socially, as hubs where people informally meet and exchange information. Local shops, or 'convenience stores', also benefit the community by reducing the need for customers to travel in their cars.

Local shops have for many years suffered from competition with large supermarkets, which have prospered with the help of car travel. Now the advent of on-line shopping and associated door-to-door delivery provides a more efficient way of transporting goods to the front door. It cuts down on individual car journeys, but at the same time it appears to be challenging the existence of local shops more than ever. Given recent evidence, as shown by local support for the Lower Wolvercote shop when the landlord tried to sell, local shops need more protection through planning policy. Policy RC.9 of the saved Local Plan sets out a clear context to safeguard local shops subject to a series of viability and marketing issues. Policy COS1 of this plan provides a supportive context for the development of additional local shops and service outlets.

At present, the WNPA has a limited range and scale of commercial activities.

The 2011 census recorded 3,111 adults as economically active, which represented 73.4% of the population, compared to the national average of 69.9%. Of these, 13.5% were self-employed, which is well above the national average of 9.8%.

The WNPA has a number of small centres providing retail services to the local community, as well as some office and workshop sites. A higher proportion of residents work from home compared to many areas.

The WNPA contains four public houses, three hotels and several guest houses. All the public houses are situated in the village of Wolvercote in the western half of the WNPA and one has become a community pub. There are several blocks of office accommodation, a group at Jordan Hill in the east of the ward and others at isolated locations such as at Elsfield Hall and Upper Wolvercote (next to the church). Within Cutteslowe Park there is a garden centre.

In Wolvercote village, the two shops - one a post office and one a former post office - have struggled to survive in recent years and yet they are a lifeline for many. There is also a post office and shop on the eastern side of the ward near Cutteslowe Park. Additionally, adjacent to

the A44 in the middle of the ward (at the proposed Northern Gateway) there are small shops and cafes attached to two filling stations, with the above-mentioned hotels located nearby.

Future Developments

Permission has been granted for the Wolvercote Paper Mill housing development and other than a few small-scale workshops/offices there will be no significant commercial activities on this site.

~~An Area Action Plan has been adopted for the Northern Gateway in the centre of the ward. The brief for this site is for a primarily commercial development with housing. It also includes an additional hotel and services aimed at employees, such as some mid-sized shops and cafes. The Neighbourhood Forum hopes that this site will be developed to create a pleasant and stimulating environment for the benefit of the whole neighbourhood, both in and out of business hours.~~

Smaller developments are planned in the east of the ward such as a housing scheme at Elsfield Hall, and very significant developments along Banbury Road in the neighbouring Cherwell District have also been proposed.

CO SPATIAL POLICIES

Policy COS1 – Employment Use.

~~In order to retain the provision of local shops and post offices, in the WNPA, permission for change of use will not be granted for proposals which reduce the existing number of local outlets.~~

~~Proposals for additional local retail or commercial units within the developed parts of the neighbourhood area will be supported. Positive consideration will be given to applications for additional small retail or service outlets in already developed areas to ensure sufficient services are available to local residents.~~

Policy COS2 – Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

~~Retail outlets should provide for the needs of employees of local businesses and residents and should not be destination shops. (When engaging in destination shopping, customers will plan a trip to a retail centre in order to spend a number of hours there as entertainment, rather than simply the act of purchasing goods.)~~

~~Planning permission will not be granted for any retail outlets above 2,500 m² in area, in order to reduce the need for travel by car.~~

CO COMMUNITY POLICIES

Transport Issues

The Neighbourhood Plan Area experiences heavy traffic congestion on the A40 east / west ring road, making access and alternative modes of travel difficult for local residents. Key pinch points are met with signalised junctions at the Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts. The A4165 and A4144 carry very high vehicle numbers at peak times due to commuter, school and residential traffic coming into and out of the City.

The Wolvercote roundabout meets high traffic congestion from the east and west of the A40 junction and A44 leading to Peartree, which joins heavily congested traffic from the A34 trunk road.

Stationary vehicles, and high volumes of traffic on these roads, Sunderland Avenue in particular, result in highly unsatisfactory levels of pollutants which have a negative impact on the health of residents in our area. Additional development within the Neighbourhood boundary and outside it is likely to have further detrimental consequences unless alternative modes of travel are adopted.

Policy COC1 – Transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies and suppliers to ensure that
Safe and separated footpaths and cycleways must be provided to and within
major employment areas, with adequate and suitable cycle parking, to help reduce
traffic movements. See also CHC2 below.

Policy COC2 – Public transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North)

The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies and suppliers to ensure that ~~Good-~~
~~good~~ public transport with sufficient links to transport hubs and residential areas ~~needs to~~
~~be~~ available to and from the larger commercial areas.

Developers ~~must will be expected to~~ contribute financially as appropriate to the scale and
location of the proposal to the provision of adequate transport arrangements to support new
businesses and services, in a way that does not add to existing traffic problems in the
surrounding area.

~~Policy COC3 – Tenure Arrangements~~

~~The proposed new housing should be subject to strict tenure arrangements to ensure that it~~
~~primarily serves the people who work in the new businesses, in order to minimise the~~
~~amount of additional home to work travel.~~

Community, Transport and Health (CH)

The aim of the Community, Transport and Health policies is to promote and encourage a more vibrant, healthy and well-balanced community. The Plan aims to ensure that the local community has the most appropriate services, community facilities, and most suitable housing to meet the needs of residents through all stages of their lives, and to improve sustainable well-being.

An ideal community needs to be self-sustaining as far as possible. There should be opportunities for people to help themselves and others stay healthy and happy, minimising the requirement for financial or other support from outside, for example from local or health authorities.

To achieve this, some basic facilities and amenities (open space, play areas, flexible meeting places) need to be as close as possible to the people they serve, and ideally within walking distance. The level of provision should have regard to the natural size of a human community, and to the geography of the area. The amenities should:

- reduce the use of cars to travel elsewhere (traffic, pollution) and encourage walking and cycling within the local area (health);
- provide sporting and leisure opportunities for all age groups; and
- promote natural interactions between neighbours and thence a community where people meet and develop shared interests (reducing isolation, fostering healthy activities).

In Wolvercote Ward there are five geographically separate areas immediately identifiable as distinct and having different characteristics. Their populations are each of sufficient size to justify local provision of basic facilities. A survey of residents (published online) has confirmed that there are insufficient local facilities in the area between Woodstock Road and Banbury Road and to the north of Sunderland Avenue. Future housing developments are likely to add one or more further residential areas of a size and location that will justify their own amenities. Larger or more complex facilities (venues for large events, theatres, cinemas) will be fewer in number and shared by several local communities and may well be outside the ward.

WOLVERCOTE WARD	Lower Wolvercote	Upper Wolvercote	Cuttesslowe	FMD triangle	East of Woodstock Road	Total
Number of households	526	449	775	482	563	2795
Percentage	19%	16%	28%	17%	20%	100%
Facilities within 500 metres						
Shop(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Halls, public rooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Pubs	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	
Churches	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
Open spaces	Commons	Commons	Park	FMD rec	No	

CH SPATIAL POLICIES

Residents' access to everyday services is a measure of how well connected the local community is. WNF is keen to improve this connectivity, encouraging the use of existing infrastructure and trying to reduce the environmental impacts of transportation.

Improvements should flow from the design of new developments, for example from the inclusion of cable and wifi in the home and across developments, reducing social isolation and the need to travel and enabling community connection and cohesion.

Policy CHS1 – Community Connectivity

Development proposals which ~~seek to~~ expand or improve community connectivity will be supported, subject to other policies in the Plan ~~(see CHS3)~~, and with appropriate consideration as to the impact upon adjoining properties.

~~As development proceeds across the WNPA there will be a commensurate and cumulative impact on community, medical and dental facilities. This is likely to be exacerbated over the lifetime of the Plan by an ageing population.~~

~~Policy CHS2 – Community and Medical Facilities~~

~~Proposals will be expected to provide for any necessary improvements to community and medical (including dental) facilities and ensure that present communities are not disadvantaged due to increased demand for services. Additional community meeting halls and social facilities to encourage community integration will be required, where appropriate.~~

Electric cars have many benefits; amongst other things, they cause less urban pollution, they are quieter and have lower maintenance requirements than petrol or diesel cars.

The UK Government's strategy is to ban the sales of petrol and diesel cars by 2040. Electric cars, and appropriate places to charge them, will be essential to meeting the transport needs of the population. Electric cars can be charged at public charging stations, but for convenience most electric car owners do the majority of their charging at home. Therefore, equipping new development to support this change is essential. Policy CHS2 addresses this matter. The details of the provision of charging points should be included in the Design and Access Statement associated with the planning application.

Policy CHS~~23~~ – Electric Vehicle Charging Points

New homes and commercial premises should include charging points for electric vehicles,~~5~~ which should be specified in Design and Access Statements for new developments.

The Plan recognises that active steps need to be taken to encourage alternative, non-congesting and non-polluting ways of travelling. Policy CHS~~34~~ aims to ensure that any new development plays its part, and that through continuous improvements in conditions for pedestrians, road users and cyclists, a network of safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes can be created.

Policy CHS~~34~~ – Safe Access Routes

As appropriate to the scale and location of the particular proposal, new development should ensure safe access to schools, community facilities and retail outlets where it is practicable to do so.All developers must ensure safe access routes between schools, community facilities and new homes, regardless of the size of the development. Proposed developments should consider the provision of routes connecting with adjacent streets and sites, including the commons. These routes should be made Public Rights of Way where practicable, or Permissive Rights of Way.

~~Proposals for 100 or more dwellings will be expected to provide for improvements to cycleways, road crossings and junction access to roads approaching the development site, where appropriate.~~

~~Where new developments take place, the temptation is to see current parking provision as a resource for the new development. However, this causes problems for current residents, and may lead to increased congestion. Policy CHS5 seeks to protect the provision of parking for current residents.~~

Policy CHS5 – Parking

~~Parking provision in new developments should accord at least with the number of spaces required in the current Oxford City Council Local Plan policy. Where practicable and enforceable, car-free development is a preferred approach. There should be no reduction in off-street parking spaces for existing residents.~~

It is well recognised that travel habits are established early. Policy ~~CHS6-CHS5~~ aims to ensure that people are made aware of options for (and the benefits of) ‘active transport’ as soon as they locate to new premises as residents or employees. Travel plans should be provided for both small and large developments along with information on the health benefits of alternative transport, to encourage people to adopt healthy (and sustainable) transport

habits.

Policy ~~CHS6~~ CHS5 – Travel Plans

Development proposals should demonstrate the ways in which they would facilitate sustainable means of access to key destinations such as schools, recreation and health facilities. Where Travel Plans are required with development proposals, they should demonstrate that:~~Travel Plans should demonstrate how, by means of access, walking, and segregated cycling, residents can reach key destinations such as schools, recreation and health facilities.~~

1. Any new development which falls above the threshold set by the City Council Parking Standards, Transport Assessment and Travel Plans SPD will be expected to prepare a travel plan showing how employees and residents may minimise car use.
2. All car-free or car sharing alternatives have been properly considered and that if car parking provision is included the reasoning why car-free alternatives have been partly or fully discounted.~~Any development that requires the submission of a Travel Plan will be expected to state whether car-free or car sharing alternatives have been considered and, if parking provision is to be made, why the car-free alternative has been rejected.~~

CH COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy CHC1 seeks to build on the Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS 21, which states that “planning permission will only be granted for development resulting in the loss of existing sports and leisure facilities if alternative facilities can be provided and if no deficiency is created in the area.” WNF believes that access to these facilities should be the right of all residents within the WNPA.

Commercial facilities such as shops and pubs also make an important contribution to community cohesion. Their retention and enhancement is supported and promoted by spatial policy COS1 in the Commerce section of this Plan.

Policy CHC1 – Community, Sports and Recreational Facilities

The Forum will work with relevant partner agencies and suppliers to ensure that ~~Every~~ household should have access to local multi-purpose facilities for indoor community activities, outside sporting activities, and recreational activities appropriate to all age groups, within walking distance of 500 metres. The Forum will also seek to ensure that the existing community and recreational facilities listed in Annex 6 are retained and that additional facilities are provided as necessary within the Plan period.~~Existing facilities are listed in Annex 6 and should be retained, and additional facilities should be provided as necessary.~~

The Plan recognises that active steps need to be taken to encourage alternative, non-congesting and non-polluting ways of travelling. Policy CHC2 aims to improve the infrastructure associated with these transport alternatives.

Policy CHC2 – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

Walking and cycling must be encouraged through dedicated cycle tracks and foot paths and provision of secure and sheltered cycle racks and storage.

The CMDE9 Oxfordshire County Council Design Guide for Cycling and the CMDE9 Oxfordshire County Council Design Guide for Walking in Oxfordshire set out standards, which should be viewed in conjunction with the London Cycling Design Guidance version 2014. These standards need to be applied in all possible circumstances, to improve infrastructure designation, signage and safe separation of continuous cycle paths, and pedestrian pavements, from vehicles.

Ample street lighting must be provided, to assure safety and security for cyclists and walkers. Light output should be carefully designed to avoid unnecessary light pollution.

A programme of new cycle and pedestrian routes should be drawn up, including additional crossings of the railway, canal, watercourses and direct cycling corridors from Park and Ride transport hubs.

Heritage and Local Character (HE)

~~The WNPA is a vibrant local community with a rich and varied character and heritage that has changed over time and will continue to change. Appropriate and sensitive change and development will, therefore, be embraced.~~

~~Wolvercote comprises five distinct areas of Lower Wolvercote, Upper Wolvercote, Woodstock Road, Five Mile Drive and Cutteslowe Park.~~

~~{ Map will be inserted here in final version }~~

~~The areas are characterised by some traditional North Oxford roads with large houses, the original villages of Upper and Lower Wolvercote (parts of both are within the Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area), more recent developments of varying size and suburban in character, and the important open green spaces of Wolvercote Common and the Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park. Residential building development in the area is predominantly of two storeys and in a range of style and materials.~~

~~The WNPA is surrounded to its east, north and west by vast expanses of open and un-spoilt meadow land, including several with ancient field names. This includes Port Meadow where there are historic grazing rights and which is both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a heritage asset affording important views of the city of Oxford, as described in the Assessment of the Oxford View Cones 2015 Report produced by Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxford City Council and Historic England.~~

~~The historical importance of Upper and Lower Wolvercote was recognised by Oxford City Council when it designated Upper Wolvercote, and Lower Wolvercote with Godstow, as two separate conservation areas in 1981. Following a review of the boundaries, they were amalgamated with the inclusion of The Lakes and Goose Green in 1985 and became known as Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area.~~

~~{ Map from page 1 of~~

~~<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/266/wolvercote-with-godstow-conservation-area-appraisal> will be inserted here in final version }~~

~~An Appraisal of the Conservation Area was carried out in June 2007 and it usefully provides details of listed buildings and scheduled monuments as well as unlisted buildings that are considered to merit care and protection³. The Appraisal documents the characteristics of the Conservation Area, including architectural features, its historical significance and development, open spaces, green spaces and views into and out of the Conservation Area.~~

³ To view this list see Appendix 1 of the report.

<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/266/wolvercote-with-godstow-conservation-area-appraisal>

The Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area Appraisal provides informative guidance regarding future changes, so that “Any new development must take account of the established character of the area by being of appropriate scale and density and utilising traditional materials so that the buildings will make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.”

The City Council is required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 to review conservation areas from time to time and where necessary to designate further areas. The Current Conservation area was published in 2007. A schedule for periodic review to comply with the requirement of the act is necessary.

The Heritage and Local Character Policies (as well as those in the Green Spaces and Built Environment sections) aim to extend some of these development principles to those areas of the Neighbourhood that are beyond the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

Character Assessments (CAs) provide guidance to Oxford City Council when assessing planning applications and developments in our WNPA. By providing a description of the area and its surroundings, and listing important assets to be protected and enhanced, guidelines will be available for planning officers to take into consideration when assessing planning applications.

THE SPATIAL POLICIES

Character assessments are created to help us understand the special qualities of the parts of the WNPA that do not have conservation status.

The character of the whole area is defined by its topography, landscape, views, layout, architectural style, materials, land use and social development.

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum will co-ordinate the preparation of Character Assessments for Lower and Upper Wolvercote (outside the Conservation Area), the Woodstock Road area, Five Mile Drive area and the Cutteslowe Park area.

Policy HES1 – Character and Streetscape

Developers and planning officers must review any relevant and available Character Assessments when submitting and considering planning proposals with the WNPA.

The conservation and enhancement of the streetscape should be an important consideration when reviewing planning applications.

Design of buildings should respond to and enhance the local character of each area. The layout and design of new streets and associated infrastructure should also respond to local character and scale, and proportion of historic street patterns.

~~Policy HES2 – Development Design~~

~~Any new development must take account of the established character of the area by being of appropriate design, scale and density. New developments must use materials in keeping with those used in neighbouring buildings, to enhance the character of the area.~~

~~Policy HES3 – Demolition.~~

~~Proposals to demolish and replace a building, especially one of local character and interest as outlined in the Character Assessments, must be justified by explaining why it cannot be retained and how its replacement will benefit the community and enhance the character of the area.~~

HE COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy HEC1 – Tree Planting.

In addition to the Green Spaces policies the WNF will seek to preserve and increase the greenery of the area by promoting the planting of trees and the replacement of old and dying trees.

Policy HEC2 – Heritage Partners.

The Forum will continue to work with the University of Oxford, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford Preservation Trust and Oxford Civic Society to promote the heritage of Wolvercote and the appreciation of its distinctive character.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. Localism and Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area. This means that neighbourhood plans have to take into account the local council's assessment of housing and other development needs in the area.

However, neighbourhood planning goes beyond traditional 'land-use' planning activity, which tends to focus on regulation and control of development. Neighbourhood planning allows greater scope for plan makers, acting with the community, relevant agencies and service providers, to promote and manage change in an area.

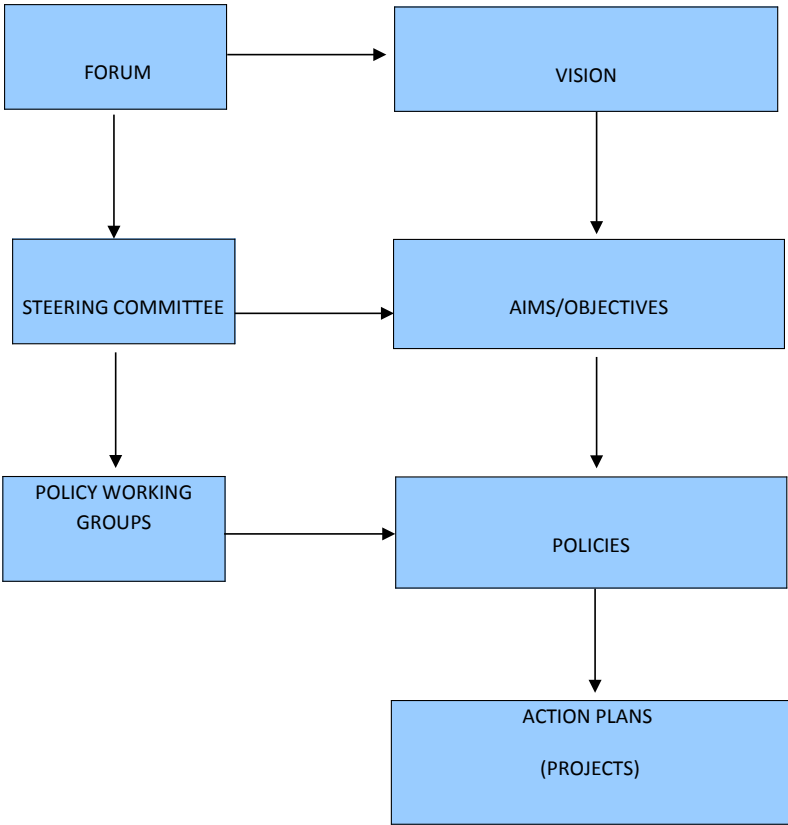
As with all plan-making, neighbourhood planning requires leadership. Where Town and Parish Councils do not cover an area, the Localism Act (2011) has given that leadership role to Neighbourhood Forums, and it is the role of the local planning authority to agree who should be the Neighbourhood Forum for a Neighbourhood Area.

To produce a plan that is representative of the community is a significant responsibility. The way in which the process is led and implemented will need to secure confidence from the community and those organisations and businesses that serve their needs. Confidence in the process and support for the outcomes will be more certain by starting the process in a demonstrably transparent way and continuing in that way through all stages of plan preparation.

A Neighbourhood Forum can do this by:

- showing a willingness to openly encourage opinions and suggestions from all individuals and organisations within the community, whether or not these present potentially conflicting, challenging or critical views of the Plan or the process;
- presenting a reasonable, realistic, evidence-based and cogently argued case to support the Plan at each stage of its preparation;
- making every effort to understand all views expressed from all individuals and groups and responding clearly on all matters raised in a timely manner; and
- demonstrating, in a form that is readily accessible and easily understood by the whole community, how the Plan reflects the views and opinions expressed during each stage of engagement and, where those views cannot legitimately be taken into account, explaining why that is the case.

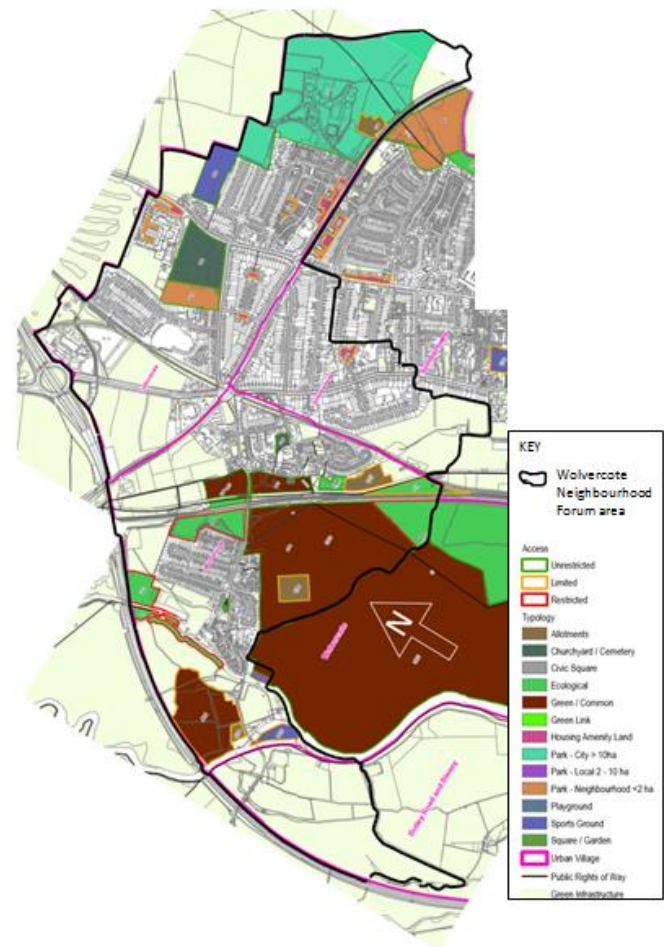
ANNEX 2. Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and Plan Structure



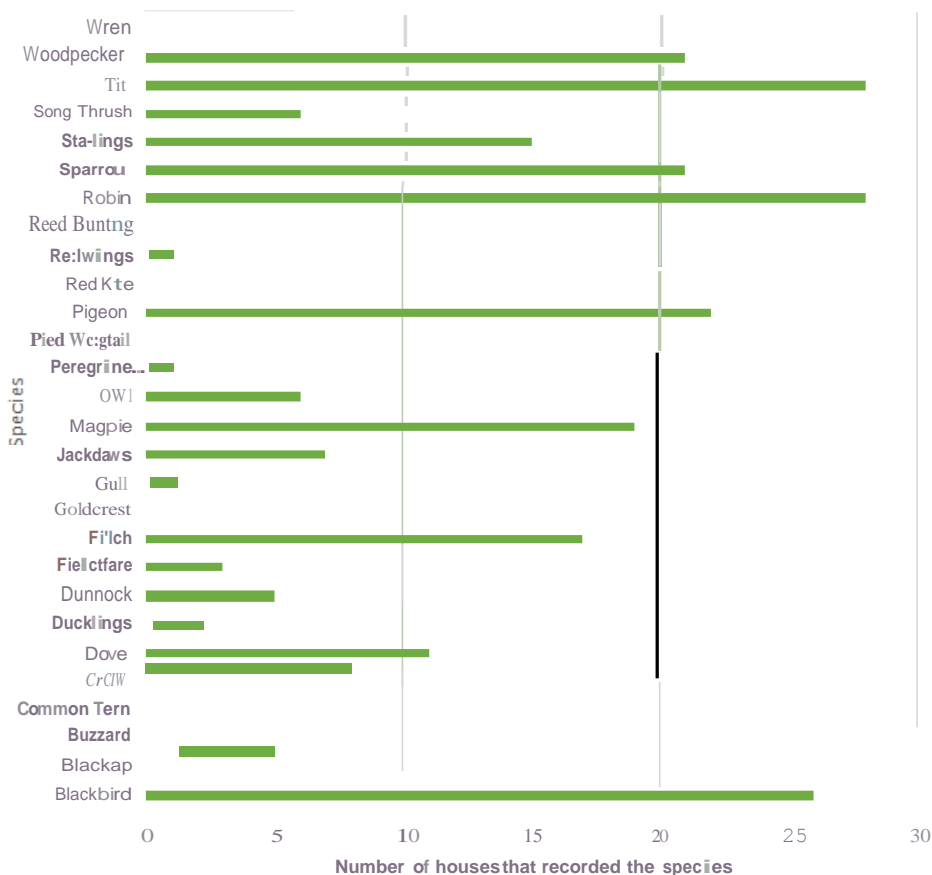
ANNEX 3. Process for developing the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (attached)

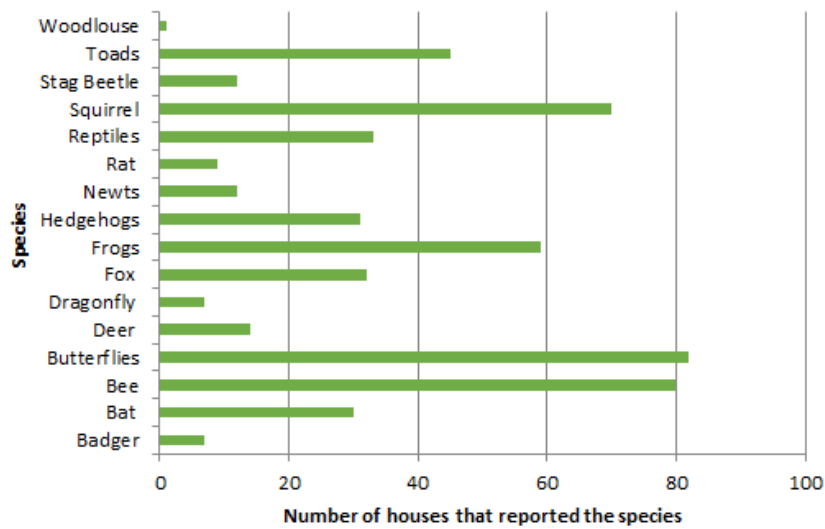
ANNEX 4. Green Spaces Plan (attached)

Annex 4: Green Spaces



ANNEX 5. Species in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area





ANNEX 6. Community, Sport and Recreational Facilities (attached)

SEA Screening Opinion and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Consultation for Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

June 2018

Introduction

1. This screening report is used to determine whether or not the contents of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (hereafter 'the Directive') and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (hereafter 'the Regulations'). These require an SEA to be undertaken on any land use plan or programme 'which sets the framework for future development or for future development consent of projects'.
2. However, there are exceptions to this requirement for plans 'which determine the use of a small area at a local level', or which only propose 'minor modifications to a plan', if it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects'.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 167, advises that assessments should be proportionate, and should not repeat policy assessments that have already taken place.
4. To assess whether an SEA is required a screening process must be undertaken based on a standard set of criteria. This must be subject to consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The results of the process must be documented in a Screening Statement, available to the public.
5. This report also contains a Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening as required under the Habitats Directive.

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

6. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan contains policies to guide the development of the Wolvercote Area¹. The policies cover five different areas:
 - Green Spaces and Biodiversity
 - Built Environment
 - Commerce
 - Community, Health and Transport
 - Heritage and Local Character
7. It is worth noting that it is only the planning policies that are the subject of this assessment
8. The plan does not allocate any sites for development.

¹ The Wolvercote Area Map is shown at Appendix 1

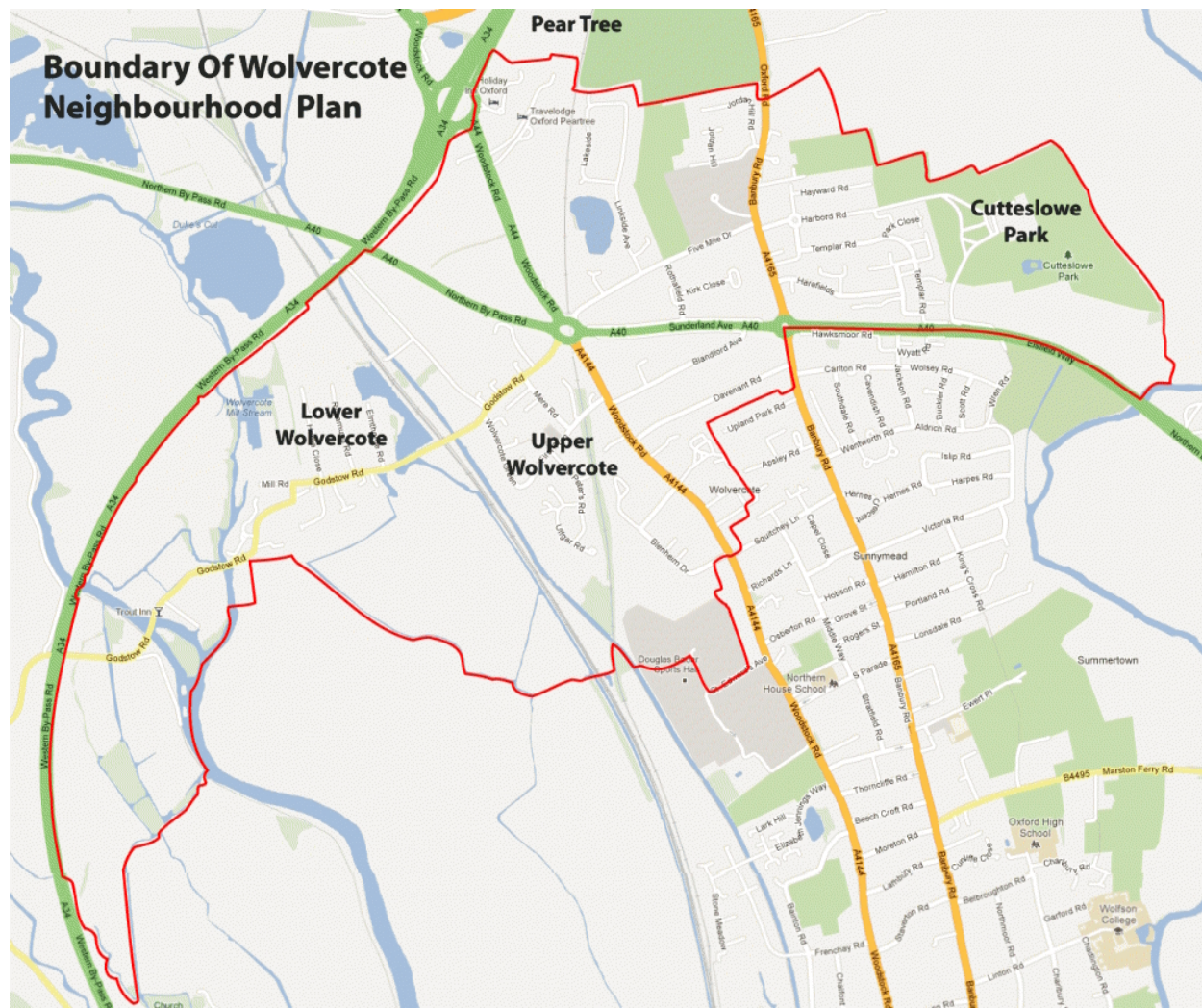
The Screening Process

9. The key to the screening decision is the determination of whether the Plan is likely to have any significant environmental effects on the environment, using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These criteria are set out in the table at Appendix 3.
10. An extract from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment' (set out at Appendix 2) provides a flow diagram to demonstrate the SEA screening process. This flow diagram sets out the process to be undertaken in order to ascertain whether or not an SEA is required for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan.
11. Part of the screening process is a requirement to consider whether the Plan requires a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). An HRA Screening has been undertaken, and can be found at Appendix 4. An assessment of likely significance of effects on the environment has also been undertaken, which can be found at Appendix 5. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA Screening Assessment.

Conclusion

12. Oxford City Council considers that the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan will not be likely to have any significant impacts on the environment and as such does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

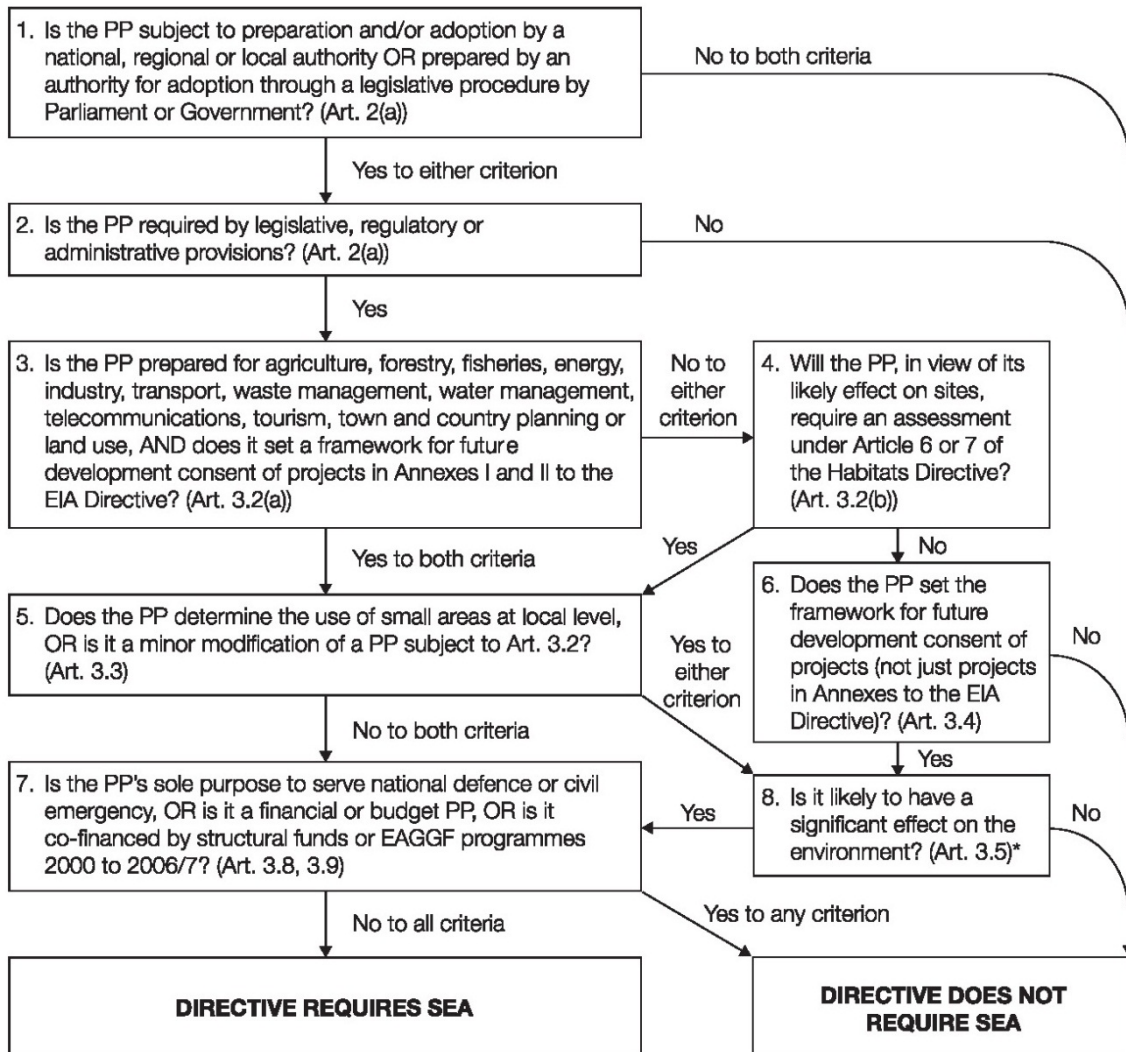
Appendix 1: Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area



Appendix 2 – Extract from ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’, DCLG, 2005.

Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

Appendix 3: Application of the SEA Directive as shown in Appendix 2.

Stage	Yes/ No	Explanation
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The preparation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared by the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum (as the 'relevant body') and be "made" by Oxford City Council as the Local Authority. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is subject to the following regulations: The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012.
2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	No	Whilst Neighbourhood Planning is not a requirement, it is optional under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. It will, if "made", form part of the Development Plan for the City. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecoms, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II (see Appendix 5) of the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for town and country planning and land use. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive.

4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art 3.2(b))	No	See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan at Appendix 4. If No, go to Step 6 of the Flow Chart
5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? (Art 3.3)	N/A	N/A
6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Yes	The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan will be used to determine future planning applications. If Yes, go to Step 8 of the Flow Chart
7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds by EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	N/A	N/A
8. Is it likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No	See Assessment of Significant Effects on the Environment Likely (Appendix 5)

Appendix 4 – Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

1. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum has undertaken this Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) with advice from Oxford City Council. This report discusses Stage 1 – Screening.
2. This Screening Assessment relates to a Neighbourhood Development Plan (Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan) that will be in general conformity with the higher level strategic plan (Oxford's Local Plan). This Screening Assessment uses the Oxford Core Strategy HRA as its basis for assessment. From this, the Local Authority will determine whether the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in significant impacts on 'European' sites and therefore whether an 'Appropriate Assessment' is required.

Requirements of the Habitats Directive

3. Appropriate Assessment of plans that could affect Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites (jointly called 'European sites') is required by Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive², which states:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions in paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

4. Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive discusses alternative solutions, the test of “imperative reasons of over-riding public interest” (IROPI) and compensatory measures.

“If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of over-riding public interest, including those of social and economic nature, the Member State shall take compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.”

² Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna

5. The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to European sites. Plans and projects can only be permitted if it can be shown that they will have no significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, or if there are no alternatives to them and there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.
6. The Habitat Directive was implemented into UK legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended³). This piece of legislation is generally known as the Habitats Regulations.

Methodology used for this assessment

7. Habitat Regulations Assessment can involve up to a four stage process.
 1. **Screening:** Determining whether a plan 'alone, or in combination' is likely to have a significant effect on a European site
 2. **Appropriate Assessment:** Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation objectives, the plan 'alone or in combination' would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site. If not, the plan can proceed
 3. **Assessment of Alternative Solutions:** Where a plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of a site, there should be an examination of alternatives.
 4. **Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain**
8. The HRA covers stage one of the process. This was carried out in April/ May 2018. Broadly, the HRA process involved:
 - Identification of European sites that could possibly be affected by the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan, qualifying features of those sites and, where available, key environmental conditions to support the sites' integrity. This process relied on information used in the Core Strategy HRA, which was updated through the Sites and Housing Plan HRA and most recently through the HRA for the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan;
 - Identification of possible impacts arising from the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Identification of impacts and policies that could be screened out, and those that were likely to require more detailed appropriate assessment;
 - Consultation with Natural England to confirm that the proposed approach for the Habitat Regulations Assessment was acceptable, and what additional information (if any) was required to complete the analysis.
9. This report discusses Stage 1 (screening) only.

³ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012.

Screening

European Sites

10. Table 1 lists all European sites that area within 20km of the boundary of Oxford City Council.

Name of site	Distance from boundary	Reason for designation ⁴
Oxford Meadows SAC	Within the City Boundary, extending into administrative area for Cherwell District Council and into the administrative boundary of West Oxfordshire District Council.	<p>Annex I habitats that area primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p>Oxford Meadows represents lowland meadows in the Thames Valley centre of distribution. The site includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in the world reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland meadows. The site has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function.</p> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p>Oxford Meadows is selected because Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for creeping marshwort <i>Apium repens</i>.</p>
Cothill Fen SAC	Located 7km from the City boundary	<p>Annex I habitats that area primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p>This lowland valley mire contains one of the largest surviving examples of alkaline fen vegetation in central England, a region where fen vegetation is rare. The M13 Schoenus nigricans – Juncus subnodulosus vegetation found here occurs under a wide range of hydrological conditions, with frequent bottle sedge <i>Carex rostrata</i>, grass-of-Parnassus <i>Parnassia palustris</i>, common butterwort <i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i> and marsh helleborine <i>Epipactis palustris</i>. The alkaline fen vegetation forms transitions to other vegetation types that are similar to M24 <i>Molinia caerulea</i> – <i>Cirsium dissectum</i> fen-meadow and S25 <i>Phragmites australis</i> – <i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i> tall-herb fen and wet alder <i>Alnus</i> spp. Wood</p>
Little Wittenham SAC	Located 19km from the City Boundary	<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p>One of the best-studied great crested newt sites in the UK, Little Wittenham comprises two main ponds set in a predominantly woodland context (broad-leaved and conifer woodland is present). There are also areas of grassland, with sheep grazing and arable bordering the woodland to the south and west. The River Thames is just to the north of the site, and a hill fort to the south. Large numbers of great crested newts <i>Triturus cristatus</i> have been recorded in the two main ponds, and research has revealed that they range several hundred metres into the woodland blocks.</p>

⁴ Source: www.jncc.gov.uk

Oxford Core Strategy

11. An HRA was carried out for the Oxford Core Strategy. The Oxford Core Strategy sets out the strategic locations for housing and employment developments within Oxford, identifies a hierarchy of centres and sets a number of more general policies on climate change, housing, transport and employment. The Oxford Core Strategy also sets out the amount of housing required up to 2026.
12. The HRA for the Core Strategy examined whether the policies within the Core Strategy would adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites within 20km of the City. Of the three sites that were within 20km of the Oxford, two were screened out, and an Appropriate Assessment was undertaken on the Oxford Meadows SAC.
13. The HRA concluded that none of the policies in the Oxford 2026 Core Strategy were likely to have adverse effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC with regard to the following environmental requirements of the site:
 - Maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing
 - Absence of direct fertilisation
 - Minimal air pollution
 - Absence of nutrient enrichment of waters; good water quality
 - Balanced hydrological regime
 - Recreational pressures

Content of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

14. Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan provides a series of policies to:
 - Green Spaces and Biodiversity
 - Protect and enhance green space and biodiversity for residents' well-being.
 - Maintain and enhance publicly accessible green space, including allotments and play areas
 - Ensure developments should always aim to increase biodiversity
 - Built Environment
 - Ensure that house building developments include affordable housing for purchase and rent.
 - Make sure that buildings are designed sustainably, land used efficiently, and pollution minimised.
 - Commerce
 - Ensure that growth in local businesses is matched with additional infrastructure that reduces dependence on car travel
 - Protect local businesses
 - Influence Northern Gateway development
 - Community, Health and Transport

- Ensure that growth in population is matched with provision of adequate schools, community and medical facilities for all age groups
- Improve transport links and promote safe access routes
- Heritage and Local Character
 - Protect and enhance the local character of Wolvercote -its building and streets - through the use of Character Assessments
 - Enhance the Wolvercote and Godstow Conservation Area.

Other Plans and Projects

15. In compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the City Council must consider the implications of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan for relevant sites 'in combination' with other plans or projects that might have significant impacts for these sites. The HRA for the Core Strategy, and more recently the HRA for the Northern Gateway, considered many of these documents, but since those assessments were made, some projects have progressed. The following list updates those projects set out in the HRA for the Core Strategy and those in the HRA for the Northern Gateway.

Table 2: Other plans and programmes with potential 'in-combination' impacts

Policy, Plan, Strategy/ Initiative	Proposals	Potential 'in-combination' impacts?
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy	Variety of sites proposed for minerals and waste throughout the County	The HRA concluded that a conclusion of no likely significant effects on the Oxford Meadows SAC could not be reached in respect of land in the Eynsham/ Cassington/ Yerton area with respect to hydrological impacts (groundwater flow to the SAC)
Oxford's Local Plan (includes Core Strategy/ Barton AAP/ / Northern Gateway AAP/ West End AAP/ Sites and Housing Plan	8,000 new homes and between 11- 13,000 new jobs by 2026	HRA ruled out impact on Oxford Meadows SAC subject to further work, which was carried out as part of the Northern Gateway AAP process.
Cherwell Local Plan 2031	21,734 new homes and an additional 56,000 sq m of employment space by 2031.	The HRA Screening report concluded that none of the policies will lead to likely significant effects on Oxford Meadows SAC. ⁵
Cherwell Local Plan 2031	4,400 new homes within the	A joint HRA statement between the Vale of White Horse and Cherwell District Councils

⁵ <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6347/hd-12-cdc-note-on-legal-issues---sustainability-assessment-and-habitats-update.pdf> 24/4/18

Oxford's Unmet Need	administrative boundary of Cherwell to assist Oxford City in meeting its unmet housing need	has been produced. This forms part of an addendum to the HRA for the Vale of the White Horse. Natural England have stated that they "are satisfied with the conclusion that the changes in NOx levels arising from Vale and Cherwell Local Plans will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC".
South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (Adopted)	5,000 new jobs and 11,487 homes by 2027. In process of reviewing Core Strategy to provide for additional homes over and above those allocated.	Current evidence shows unlikely to have an impact on Oxford Meadows SAC. HRA will need to be updated as the Core Strategy review comes forward.
Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031	20,560 new homes by 2031, and 23,000 new jobs	It is considered likely that planned growth across Oxfordshire will have an effect on the air quality within a small part of the Oxford Meadows SAC as it lies adjacent to the A34 and A40. The Council has engaged with the other Oxfordshire authorities through the Oxfordshire Growth Board and with Natural England in relation to this issue and preparing the Habitats Regulations Assessment. ⁶
Vale of White Horse Part 2 – detailed policies and additional sites	Plan submitted. Hearing sessions commence in July 2018. Plan proposes 3,490 new homes, a proportion of which are required to meet Oxford's unmet housing need	A joint HRA statement between the Vale of White Horse and Cherwell District Councils has been produced. This forms part of an addendum to the HRA for the Vale of the White Horse. Natural England have stated that they "are satisfied with the conclusion that the changes in NOx levels arising from Vale and Cherwell Local Plans will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC".
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	Plan hearing sessions completed. Currently consulting on Further Main Modifications. Plan provides for 15,950 homes and more than 70ha of new employment land.	Current evidence shows that the Local Plan is unlikely to have an adverse impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC in terms of recreational pressure and air quality.
Oxford Flood Risk Management Strategy	Flooding improvements across Oxford and surrounds.	This is no longer a standalone strategy being managed by the Environment Agency; it has been subsumed within relevant local authorities' plans.

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

16. The planning policies in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed in Table 3. The table shows that there are no policies within the Neighbourhood Plan which are likely to have an adverse impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC.
17. Table 3 shows that none of the policies within the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have an adverse impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC.
18. Categorisation of the effects of elements of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan
 - A – Policies or proposals cannot have any negative impact
 - B – Effects will be addressed in assessments “down the line”, including project assessment under Regulation 48
 - C – Could have an effect, but would not be likely to have a significant (negative) effect (alone or in combination with other plans or projects
 - D – Likely to have a significant effect alone and would require an Appropriate Assessment
 - E – Likely to have a significant effect in combination with other plans or projects and which require Appropriate Assessment of those combinations
 - F – Likely to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, but which would not adversely affect the integrity of a European site
 - G – Likely to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and for which it cannot be ascertained that they would not adversely affect the integrity of a European site

Table 3 showing the likely key environmental considerations that are likely to give rise to significant effects as a result of the policies in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

Policy	Categorisation of the effects of elements of the Wolvercote NP	If policy has no effect, then reasons why
Add Policy name and number here	Categorise the effects of the policy using the above key	Set out what policy is trying to achieve and why it is not likely to have an impact on the SAC
GBS1- Publicly Accessible Green Space	A	Policy seeks to conserve and enhance public access green spaces in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area (WNPA)
GBS2 - Green Belt, Designated Land and Common Land	A	Policy seeks to restrict development on Common Land, and land designated as Green Belt or SSSI.
GBS3- Playing Fields and Play Areas	A	Policy seeks to protect areas of public amenity from development, and prescribes the provision for children's play areas on development of more than 10 homes.
GBS4- Allotments	A	Policy seeks to retain designated allotment land, and welcomes any increase in the number of allotments in the WNPA
GBS5– Biodiversity	A	Policy supports developments that conserve and enhance land which has a significant wildlife or ecological value, and that aim to enhance biodiversity. It seeks to promote the importance of wildlife corridors.
GBS6– Green Space in Developments	A	Policy seeks to increase and enhance accessible green space in development proposals within the WNPA.
BES1–	A	Policy challenges developments on greenfield sites when brownfield site is available.

Policy	Categorisation of the effects of elements of the Wolvercote NP	If policy has no effect, then reasons why
Brownfield Sites		
BES2– Air Pollution	A	Policy challenges residential development on sites where air pollution levels are injurious to health.
BES3– Noise Pollution	A	Policy seeks to minimise intrusive noise for new developments.
BES4- Building Demolition and conversion	A	Policy outlines preference for refurbishment and conversion of existing buildings over demolition and rebuilding.
BES5– Development Design Guidance	A	Policy seeks to limit new developments to those that respond to and enhance the existing built environment as set out in the Local Plan Sites and Housing Plan HP9.
BES6– Mix of Dwellings and less mainstream housing	A	Policy seeks to ensure that the local authority reviews its Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document every five years minimum.
BES7– Affordable and Key Worker Housing	A	Policy re-enforces Oxford's Local Plan that stipulates provision of affordable and key worker housing in new developments.
BES8– Developer Contributions	A	Policy ensures that new development should be phased in tandem with the timely provision of infrastructure.
BES9– Drainage and	A	Policy ensures that new developments do not decrease rain water infiltration or increase the risk of flooding to existing properties. It requires that there is no new development on

Policy	Categorisation of the effects of elements of the Wolvercote NP	If policy has no effect, then reasons why
Flooding		sites in areas likely to be flooded.
COS1– Employment Use.	A	Policy seeks to ensure that permission for change of use will not be granted for proposals which reduce number of retail outlets in WNPA. Policy supports applications for additional small retail or service outlets in already developed areas to ensure sufficient services are available to local residents.
COS2– Northern Gateway	A	Policy seeks to minimise road traffic by limiting the size of retail outlets in the Northern Gateway development and avoiding destination shops.
CHS1– Community Connectivity	?	Policy supports development proposals that expand or improve community connectivity.
CHS2– Community and Medical Facilities	A	Policy seeks provision of improvements to community and medical (including dental) facilities for proposals for 100 or more dwellings.
CHS3– Electric Vehicle Charging Points	A	Policy seeks provision of adequate charging points for electric vehicles on community developments.
CHS4– Safe Access Routes	A	Policy requires that developers contribute to safe access routes between schools, community facilities and new homes.
CHS5– Parking	A	Policy requires that parking provision in new developments adhere to Oxford Local Plan policy, at a minimum.
CHS6– Travel	A	Policy requires that travel plans are provided to the local authority for new developments.

Policy	Categorisation of the effects of elements of the Wolvercote NP	If policy has no effect, then reasons why
Plans		
HES1– Character and Streetscape	A	Policy seeks to ensure that developers and planning officers refer to relevant Character Assessment in the WNPA.
HES2 – Development Design	A	Policy seeks to ensure that new developments take account of the established character of the area.
HES3 – Demolition.	A	Policy requires that proposals to demolish and replace a building must be justified with reference to local character.
HEC1– Tree Planting.	A	Policy seeks to plant and replace dying trees.
HEC2– Heritage Partners	A	Policy seeks to promote heritage of Wolvercote by working with local partners.

Environmental Requirements for European Sites

Oxford Meadows SAC

19. The citation for the Oxford Meadows SAC states that:

Oxford Meadows includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. The site has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation structure and function. Port Meadow is the largest of only two known sites in the UK for creeping marshwort *Apium repens*.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)

Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Creeping marshwort *Apium Repens*

20. Natural England's report on the condition of Oxford Meadows notes that the most recent surveys took place in 2010 and 2011. These report that the Oxford Meadows SAC is in a favourable condition.

21. The following key environmental requirements to support the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC were agreed at a screening workshop for the South East Plan and are as follows:

1. Minimal air pollution;
2. Absence of nutrient enrichment of waters; good water quality;
3. Balanced hydrological regime – alteration to adjacent rivers may alter flooding regime and reduce botanical diversity;
4. Maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing;
5. Absence of direct fertilisation.

22. A further workshop on HRA for the Core Strategy raised the additional issue of ensuring that recreational pressures are maintained at a reasonable level.

Screening Conclusions

23. It is worth noting that the HRA for the Oxford Core Strategy screened out the two other European sites within 20km of Oxford. These sites are Cothill Fen SAC and Little Wittenham SAC. The screening conclusions from the Core Strategy HRA have been summarised below for completeness

Cothill Fen SAC

24. It is considered that the Oxford Core Strategy could not have an adverse impact on Cothill Fen SAC. Cothill Fen is an alkaline fen dependent on a high

water table and calcareous, base rich water supply. As Cothill Fen is in the catchment of the River Ock, which is a different river catchment, the Oxford Core Strategy could not have an adverse impact on this Designated Site. Cothill Fen SAC is in a relatively remote location and can only be accessed by private car, or by local residents travelling on foot. Recreational pressure is therefore likely to be slight as a result of the proposed new development in the Oxford Core Strategy. Development within Oxford is likely to feature new green spaces which will ease recreational pressure on the Cothill Fen.

Little Wittenham SAC

25. Little Wittenham has been designated because it contains two ponds with large populations of great crested newts. These areas have restricted access which is designed to prevent conflicts between the visiting public, the newts and their habitat. As development in Oxford will not affect the habitat in the ponds or the newts foraging habitat around them, the Oxford Core Strategy could not have an adverse impact on this site. The site has therefore been excluded from further assessment.

Oxford Meadows SAC

26. In the case of the HRA for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan it has been possible to screen out all of the impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC.

- Air Pollution;
- Water Quality;
- Balanced Hydrological Regime;
- Increased Recreational Pressure;
- Maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing*
- Absence of direct fertilisation*

* These conservation objectives have been screened out as they are related to activities directly at the site which the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan will not affect

Air Pollution

27. The HRA for the Core Strategy referred to EA Interim advice note 61/05 "Guidance for Undertaking Environmental Assessment of Air Quality for Sensitive Ecosystems in Internationally Designated Nature Conservation Sites and SSSIs", which states:

"If there are no Designated Sites within 200m of an affected road, there is no need to proceed any further with [the] air quality assessment. If there is a Designated Site within 2km of a scheme but there is no significant change in emissions from roads within 200m of the site, then the scheme will not result in a significant change in air quality and the effects of change in air quality can be assumed to be negligible"

28. The boundary of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan area includes part of the Oxford Meadows SAC, but as no development is included in the Plan,

there should not be any impact associated with the Plan on the air quality at the Oxford Meadows SAC.

29. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan does not include any additional development that was not assessed as part of the HRA for the Core Strategy.
30. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan includes part of the Oxford Meadows SAC within its boundary. The Plan's policies do not include any developments which will affect the air pollution conservation objective.

Balanced Hydrological Regime

31. The HRA for the Core Strategy states that "Oxford Meadows SAC straddles the north western boundary of Oxford. Most of it is therefore upstream of the large urban areas of Oxford". The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area includes some of the Oxford Meadows SAC and includes land within 2km of the Oxford Meadows SAC. The HRA for the Core Strategy continues, "... a study of 'The Hydrology of the Oxford Meadows' states that '[t]he Second Terrace Gravels (Summertown Radley Terrace) on which much of Oxford is built appears to be a source of groundwater recharge (Eyles, 1986) with groundwater/ surface water flowing south and west across Port Meadow to the Seacourt Stream."
32. The boundary of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan area sits entirely within the bedrock unit Oxford Clay Formation and West Walton Formation Alluvium deposits of clay and silts are interspersed with patches of river sands and gravels deposited across the area containing fragments of limestone, flints and rounded quartzite pebbles.
An interactive map available from the British Geological Survey website <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> provides further details of the geology.
33. The Plan policies do not include any developments, so is not likely to have an impact on this conservation objective

Recreational Pressure

34. The Core Strategy HRA assessed the impacts of recreational pressure from 8,000 new homes on the Oxford Meadows SAC. The HRA for the Core Strategy stated that "[p]ublic consultation carried out by Scott Wilson as part of their "Oxford City Green Space Study" revealed that people are willing to walk approximately 1,900m to important green spaces such as Oxford Meadows SAC, which includes Port Meadow."
35. Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area lies adjacent to and includes part of the Oxford Meadows SAC. Other green spaces that exist with the Neighbourhood Plan Area include the Thames Path, Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park, Wolvercote Lakes, Wolvercote Green, Goose Green, North Oxford Golf Club and Lower Wolvercote Play area.

36. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan promotes green spaces (see Table 3 above) and does not include any building development proposals. It is not likely to have an impact on this conservation objective.

Conclusion

37. The Oxford Meadows SAC is currently judged by Natural England to be in favourable condition.
38. The policies in the Plan alone are not likely to have an impact on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC. There are other development plans (former Mill Site, Wolvercote, the Northern Gateway AAP, and possibly the Cherwell Local Plan, which may have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC

Appendix 5: Assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment

1. Characteristics of the plan, having regard to:	
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan would, if adopted, form part of the Statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future development consent of projects. However, the Plan sits within the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework, Oxford's Local Plan (including the saved policies within the Adopted Local Plan 2001-2016, the Core Strategy, Sites and Housing Plan and Area Action Plans). The projects for which the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan helps to set a framework are local in nature and have limited resource implications.
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan will be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies within the document will conform with the Council's strategic policies and complement Oxford's Local Plan. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to influence other plans or programmes within the Statutory Development Plan.
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan contains policies relating to environmental considerations such as biodiversity, the historic environment, housing and sustainable transport. These policies will be in conformity with national and local policies as required by the basic conditions. The Neighbourhood Plan will have to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development to be approved at examination and "made" by the City Council. Development would also be subject to the policies in Oxford's Local Plan and therefore all environmental considerations would be covered by policy.
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>Within the Plan area are the following: Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area Oxford Meadows SSSI Wolvercote Green SSSI Oxford Meadows SAC 19 Grade 11 Listed Buildings, a Grade C listed church and 2 scheduled monuments Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common SAM</p> <p>As the Plan itself does not include developments, nothing in the Plan should affect any of the above environmental or historic protections.</p>

<p>(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection.</p>	<p>The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is not directly relevant to any of these.</p>
<p>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:</p>	
<p>a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>There will not be any negative environmental effects on the environment as a result of the Plan.</p>
<p>b) The cumulative nature of the effects</p>	<p>As there will be no environmental effects of the Plan, there will be no cumulative effects on the environment</p>
<p>c) The transboundary nature of the effects</p>	<p>There will not be any effects from the Plan on neighbouring authorities.</p>
<p>d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)</p>	<p>There will not be any impacts of the Plan on human health.</p>
<p>e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</p>	<p>There will not be any environmental effects of the Plan.</p>
<p>f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use 	<p>The Plan contains no development allocations which will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) affect the special natural characteristics (Oxford Meadows SAC) or the listed buildings, or the Scheduled Ancient Monument designation. (ii) exceed environmental quality standards or limit values, or (iii) involve intensive land use
<p>g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised</p>	<p>The Plan will not impact on any landscapes with a protected status.</p>

national, Community or international protection status	
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Appendix 6

Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
							I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Examination	Timetable assumes that the Examination is undertaken by written representations and takes 6 weeks or less	Threat	External: The Independent Examiner could request that the Examination takes place in the form of hearing sessions,	Delay to project timetable	July 2018	P,SD & R (TM)	2	4	2	4	2	4	Reputational Risk	n/a	December 2018 / January 2019	n/a	n/a	P,SD & R (TM)
Plan found unsound	The Independent examiner could find the Neighbourhood Plan 'unsound'	Threat	External: Independent Examiner	Process of production must begin again. Plan must be revised and resubmitted to the LPA	July 2018	P,SD & R (TM)	2	4	2	4	2	4	Reputational Risk Financial Risk	n/a	February 2019	n/a	n/a	P,SD & R (TM)
Agree Modifications with Neighbourhood Forum	Timetable assumes that any modifications are agreed with the Neighbourhood Forum promptly.	Threat	External: Modifications take longer to agree than anticipated with the Neighbourhood Forum	Delay to project timetable	July 2018	P,SD & R (TM)	2	4	2	4	2	4	Reputational Risk	n/a	August 2019	n/a	n/a	P,SD & R (KP)
Legal Challenge	A legal challenge is submitted following one of the statutory stages.	Threat	External: As with any planning document, there is a risk that a legal challenge could be submitted by a 3rd party.	Delay to project timetable while the legal challenge is processed. Depending on the outcome of the legal challenge, it could result in the plan being quashed.	July 2018	P,SD & R (TM)	2	4	2	4	2	4	Reputational Risk Financial Risk	n/a	October / November 2019	n/a	n/a	P,SD & R (KP)

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To: Cabinet

Date: 09 Oct 2019

Report of: Head of Financial Services
Head of Business Improvement

Title of Report: Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 1 2019/20

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 30 th June 2019.
Key decision:	No
Executive Board Member:	Councillor Ed Turner
Corporate Priority:	Efficient and Effective Council.
Policy Framework:	Corporate Plan
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	Note the projected financial outturn, the current position on risk and performance as at the 30 th June 2019.

Appendices	
Appendix A	Corporate Integrated Dials
Appendix B	General Fund - June 2019 Forecast Outturn
Appendix C	HRA - June 2019 Forecast Outturn

Introduction and background

1. This report updates the Board on the financial, corporate performance and corporate risk positions of the Council as at 30th June 2019. A brief summary is as follows:
2. **Financial Position**
 - a. **General Fund** – the outturn position is forecast to be an adverse variance of £0.270 million against the latest net budget of £22.098 million (1.22%), and £1.355 million against the service area expenditure (4.77%);
 - b. **Housing Revenue Account** – The budgeted surplus agreed at Council in February 2019 was £0.492 million. A revision to the HRA budget and Business Plan was report to Cabinet on the 20th May which outlined and requested approval for the change in budget to reflect the impact of the new acquired dwellings. The revised budget is a surplus of £1.205 million and the outturn position is forecasting a nil variance against this;
 - c. **Capital Programme** – The budget approved at Council in February 2019 was £98.305 million. The Council is now reviewing its capital programme processes, to avoid slippage and underspending. Members have been briefed on the new process. Therefore the capital programme is not included in this report, and instead an update will be provided in Quarter 2. That report will also contain any necessary modifications to go forward to Council for approval.
3. **Performance** – 56% (5) of the Council's corporate performance targets are being delivered as planned, 22% (2) are below target but within acceptable tolerance limits, 11% (1) is currently at risk and 11% (1) is showing as no data available, as described in paragraphs 13 to 16;
4. **Corporate Risk Management** – There is one red corporate risk at the end of quarter one, which relates to Housing, and ensuring housing delivery and supply for the City and enabling sufficient house building and investment . More details of risks can be found in paragraphs 17 to 18;

Financial Position

General Fund Revenue

5. The overall Net Budget Requirement agreed at Council in February 2019 was £23.205 million. Since setting the budget, service area expenditure has increased by a total of £0.322 million which mainly represents release of reserves for transformation projects and repairs and maintenance. The Net Budget Requirement remains unchanged.
6. Virements between service areas, authorised under delegated powers by the Council's Head of Financial Services totalling £0.818 million have also taken place, the most notable of which £0.212 million relates to the release from Transformation funds for ongoing projects, such as Rent Guarantee model; Team Oxford Communications; Corporate Scanning project; Idox upgrade; Business Process Automation pilot and £0.442 million being release of grant funding into the service area for ongoing expenditure. There is no change to the Council's Net Budget Requirement.

7. At 30th June 2019 the General Fund Service area expenditure is projecting an adverse variance of £1.355 million against the latest budget of £29.370 million, this is in part offset by a release from the General Fund Repairs and Maintenance reserve and capital financing reserve, of £1.085 million with an overall adverse variance of £0.270 million against the latest Net Budget Requirement of £23.205 million. The key variances are:
- **Community Services** – £0.030 million adverse variance arising from additional expenditure for the OVO Energy Women's Cycle Tour. Future years' costs will be considered in the budget setting process.
 - **Assistant Chief Executive** – £0.100 million adverse variance which is due to unbudgeted expenditure relating to the Citizens Assembly, these costs have been mitigated by use of reserves in year and therefore have a net impact on the overall adverse variance.
 - **Housing Services** - £0.975 million – adverse variance due to unexpected expenditure relating to surveys for the Town Hall, Asbestos, Health & Safety and ceiling works to the Town Hall. These costs have been funded from earmarked reserves to mitigate any adverse effect on the revenue account.
 - **Environmental Sustainability** – £0.090 million – adverse variance due to unbudgeted expenditure relating to additional officer capacity for scoping emissions reduction across the City Council carbon footprint and external research and modelling.
 - **Oxford Direct Services** - £0.160 million – adverse variance due to savings predicated on the development of the Recycling Transfer Station not materialising in year due to slippage of the scheme.
 - **Transfer to /from Earmarked Reserves** - £1.165 million – use of the General Fund Repairs and Maintenance reserve and capital financing reserve to cover the expenditure relating to Citizens Assembly, climate change and Town Hall surveys and works.

Housing Revenue Account

8. The budgeted surplus agreed at Council in February 2019 was £0.492 million. A revision to the HRA budget and Business plan was approved by Cabinet on the 29th May which outlined and requested approval for the change in budget to reflect the financial impact of dwellings acquired by the HRA from the Councils Housing Company in terms of rental income, maintenance spend, interest payments and debt redemption. The revised budgeted surplus is £1.205 million, and was approved by Council on the 22nd July 2019. The Housing Revenue Account is currently forecasting a nil variance against this deficit. However some budget variations have been made to realign budgets across the HRA and the most notable are:
- Management and Services (stock related) – increased budget to cover the costs associated with increased caretaking at the tower blocks;

- Other Revenue spend (stock related) – budget reduced to cover the pressures in the Management and Services and Responsive & Cyclical repairs lines;
- Responsive and Cyclical repairs –increased budget to cover additional costs relating to security provision at the tower blocks and costs associated with the solar panels such as repairs and meter readings.

Capital

9. There is an exercise underway to review all capital project forecasting, with the likely outcome that there will be a reduction in the year end outturn. Rather than include some of these revisions in the Q1 report, the full results of the exercise will be included in the Q2 report, alongside an explanation for any changes.

Performance Management

10. There are nine corporate performance measures that are monitored during the year. Of these 9 indicators, 5 (56%) are being delivered as planned, two (22%) are below target but within acceptable tolerance limits, and one (11%) is at risk of not meeting their target.
11. One (11%) of the measures is currently showing no data available. This relates to the number of new homes granted permission in the city. No data update has been provided for this measure in time for this report.
12. Of the five that are being delivered as planned, one relates to Cleaner Greener Oxford, two to Meeting Housing Needs and two to an Efficient and Effective Council.
13. The measure that is not meeting its targets is as follows:
 - **Number of people from our target groups using our leisure facilities** – Target of 199,700 and an actual of 189,326 for the first quarter. Officers are working with Fusion and closely monitoring their delivery approach to increase the number of visits.

Corporate Risk

14. There is one red risk on the current Corporate Risk register, which relates to Housing, and ensuring housing delivery and supply for the City and enabling sufficient house building and investment. There are ten amber risks and one green risk.
15. Operational Delivery Group and CMT are undertaking a review off all corporate risks to ensure that they capture the current risk appetite of the organisation. This review will be reported in the next quarterly report.

Financial implications

16. All financial implications are covered in the body of this report and the Appendices.

Legal issues

17. There are no legal implications directly relevant to this report.

Level of risk

18. All risk implications are covered in the body of this report and the Appendices.

Equalities impact

19. There are no equalities impacts arising directly from this report.

Report author	Nigel Kennedy Helen Bishop
Job title	Head of Financial Services Head of Business Improvement
Service area or department	Financial Services/Business Improvement
Telephone	01865 252708
e-mail	nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk / hbishop@oxford.gov.uk

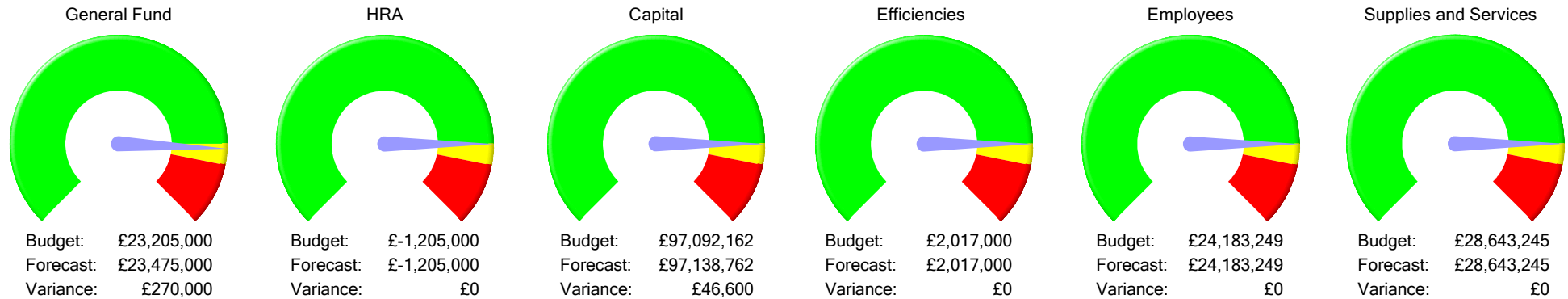
Background Papers: None

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Appendix A

Corporate Integrated Report Q1 2019/20

Financial Performance



Performance Summary

Priority	No Data	Red	Amber	Green
Vibrant and Sustainable Economy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Meeting Housing Need	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (67%)
Strong and Active Communities	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	0 (0%)
Cleaner Greener Oxford	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
An Efficient and Effective Council	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Total	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	5 (56%)

	No Data	Red	Amber	Green
Previous Quarter	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	3 (75%)

Direction of Travel

Priority	No Data	Declining	No Change	Improving
Vibrant and Sustainable Economy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Meeting Housing Need	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Strong and Active Communities	0 (0%)	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	0 (0%)
Cleaner Greener Oxford	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
An Efficient and Effective Council	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)
Total	0 (0%)	3 (23%)	2 (15%)	8 (62%)

Risk Management

Service	No Data	Red	Amber	Green
Vibrant and Sustainable Economy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Meeting Housing Need	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cleaner Greener Oxford	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
An Efficient and Effective Council	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (89%)	1 (11%)
Total	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	10 (83%)	1 (8%)

	No Data	Red	Amber	Green
Previous Quarter	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	9 (75%)	2 (17%)

Direction of Travel

Service	No Data	Declining	No change	Improving
Total				

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GF Outturn Report 19/20 @ 30th June 2019	Approved Budget (per Budget book)	Virements & Ear Marked Reserve Transfers in Q1	Latest Budget	Projected Outturn against Latest Budget @ 30th June 2019	PO Variance	PO Variance (Prev Month)
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<u>Directorates</u>						
Business Improvement	8,865	343	9,208	9,208		
Regulatory Services & Community Safety	1,316	50	1,366	1,366		
Community Services	5,029	(343)	4,686	4,716	30	30
Communities & Customers	15,209	50	15,259	15,289	30	30
Regeneration & Economy	(9,378)	47	(9,331)	(9,331)		
Planning Services	545	8	553	553		
Development	(8,832)	55	(8,777)	(8,777)		
Assistant Chief Executive	783	47	830	930	100	100
Housing Services	5,227	560	5,787	6,762	975	975
Assistant Chief Executive	6,010	607	6,617	7,692	1,075	1,075
Environmental Sustainability	897	17	913	1,003	90	90
Oxford Direct Services	9,142	228	9,370	9,530	160	160
ODS Development Director	10,038	245	10,283	10,533	250	250
Financial Services	3,246	46	3,292	3,292		
Law & Governance	2,745	(49)	2,696	2,696		
Corporate Services	5,991	(3)	5,988	5,988		
Directorate Total Excl SLA's & Capital Charges	28,416	954	29,370	30,725	1,355	1,355
SLA's & Capital Charges	(3,722)	(1,195)	(4,917)	(4,917)		
Corporate Accounts	(2,103)	1,195	(909)	(909)		
Contingencies	382	(247)	134	214	80	80
Total Corporate Accounts & Contingencies	(1,722)	947	(775)	(695)	80	80
Net Expenditure Budget	22,971	707	23,678	25,113	1,435	1,435
Transfer to / (from) Ear Marked Reserves	234	(707)	(473)	(473)	(1,165)	(1,165)
Net Budget Requirement	23,205	(0)	23,205	24,640	270	270
<u>Funding</u>						
External Funding (RSG)						
External Funding (NNDR Retention)	9,263		9,263	9,263		
Council tax	14,202		14,202	14,202		
Less Parish Precepts	(260)		(260)	(260)		
Collection Fund Surplus						
Section 31 Grants						
Total Funding Available	23,205		23,205	23,205		
(Surplus) / Deficit for year		(0)		1,435	270	270

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Appendix C

HRA Report 19/20 @ June 2019	Approved Budget (per Budget book)	Virement and Ear Marked Reserve Transfers in Q1	Latest Budget @ 30th June 2019	Projected Outturn against Latest Budget @30th June 2019	Project Outturn Variance	Project Outturn Variance Mvt from Previous Month
	£000's	£000's	£'000's	£'000's	£000's	£'000's
Dwelling Rent	(41,342)		(41,342)	(41,342)		
Service Charges	(1,467)		(1,467)	(1,467)		
Garage Income	(215)		(215)	(215)		
Miscellaneous Income	(783)	(14)	(796)	(796)	(14)	
Net Income	(43,807)	(14)	(43,820)	(43,820)	(14)	
Management & Services (Stock Related)	9,529	83	9,611	9,611	83	
Other Revenue Spend (Stock Related)	2,246	(118)	2,129	2,129	(118)	
Misc Expenditure (Not Stock Related)	329		329	329		
Bad Debt Provision	646		646	646		
Responsive & Cyclical Repairs	12,728	49	12,776	12,776	49	
Interest Paid	7,957		7,957	7,957		
Depreciation	8,721		8,721	8,721		
Total Expenditure	42,155	14	42,169	42,169	14	
Net Operating Expenditure/(Income)	(1,652)	()	(1,652)	(1,652)		
Investment Income	(153)		(153)	(153)		
Other HRA Reserve Adjustment	(250)		(250)	(250)		
Transfer (to)/from MR/OR	850		850	850		
Total Appropriations	447		447	447		
Total HRA (Surplus)/Deficit	(1,205)	()	(1,205)	(1,205)		

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To: Cabinet
Date: 9 October 2019
Report of: The Head of Community Services
Title of Report: Leisure concessions

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present recommendations to improve how leisure concessions are used.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Linda Smith (Deputy Leader) - Leisure and Housing
Corporate Priority:	Strong Active Communities, Efficient Effective Council.
Policy Framework:	Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy, 2015 to 2020.
Recommendations: That the Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve use of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and or the housing element of Universal Credit as the primary criteria for concessions; 2. Approve implementation of the changes shown in Appendix 2 in parallel with promotion of alternative memberships and discounted prices; 3. Agree that the age that someone is able to qualify for an older person concession should be increased from 60 to 65, and then until it reaches 66 in October 2020 and 67 between 2026 and 2028. 4. Instruct officers to conduct an annual review of concessionary categories alongside the annual fees and charges process; 5. Instruct officers to look to implement improvements to the leisure concessions offer from 1st April 2020; and 6. Instruct officers to review the target groups and decide any changes for when the leisure contract is retendered in 2023. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Leisure sites in Oxford
Appendix 2	Benefits attracting concessionary rates (Bonus) and members
Appendix 3	A comparative benchmark of annual membership fees, 2018/19
Appendix 4	Benchmarking of leisure concessions, 2018/19
Appendix 5	Risk implications
Appendix 6	Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Introduction

1. This report follows on from the June 2019 Cabinet meeting where Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan, which shows how Fusion will manage and develop Oxford's leisure centres, was agreed.
2. Prior to starting the contract with Fusion Lifestyle (Fusion) in 2009, the leisure centres were costing the Council over £2 million per year. This has now reduced to just under £100,000 per year, alongside absorbing increases in Oxford Living Wage, utility costs and adding in additional free swimming sessions for young people.
3. Over this time the Sport England Active Lives survey shows that Oxford has gone from being one of the least active places in the country to one of the most active. This is down to very strong leadership by the City Council, effective partnership working, well-coordinated activities and improved facilities. The facilities part of the leisure offer is shown in Appendix 1.
4. A study was undertaken in 2014 which showed Oxford's leisure centres deliver c£18m of social value; much of this is due to the high numbers of concessionary users at Barton and The Leys Pools & Leisure Centres. Affordable pricing is a key part of the mix to ensure that the leisure centres are accessible for everyone.
5. The leisure contract with Fusion has a pricing structure where we charge the market rate to people who can afford to pay and offer a concessionary scheme to ensure there is equitable access.
6. There are a wide range of criteria that entitle residents to a concessionary membership. The categories and uptake are shown in Appendix 2. With the introduction of Universal Credit it is timely to review concessions to make sure they are effectively targeted to meet the Council's strategic objectives.
7. The Cabinet Member for leisure requested the review to ensure that concessionary rates are supporting people who are most in need of the Council's support and are not available to people on higher incomes.
8. There is also an aspiration to better understand how effective concessions are at increasing usage from people in the Council's target groups – these are young people, older people, people with impairments, BAMER groups and people on low incomes.
9. This report updates on the work that officers have been doing to explore how we can modernise leisure concessions, although the changes to the criteria could apply across Council services.
10. The report recommends that the most effective way to ensure people on higher incomes do not qualify for concessions is to use the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in combination with the housing element of Universal Credit. This means that, apart from the non-income related groups such as people with impairments, only households with an income of less than c£20,000 qualify for concessions.

11. The Council, in partnership with Fusion, is working towards leisure facilities being able to stand alone financially. These changes could help the Council to get to this position.

The national picture

12. Universal Credit was legislated for in the [Welfare Reform Act 2012](#) replacing six means tested "legacy" benefits and tax credits.
13. Most local authorities have similar concessions criteria to Oxford, albeit Oxford has a more comprehensive list of qualifying criteria than most places. A key difference is that while Oxford's standard membership rates (£47 per month) are relatively high cost (shown in Appendix 3) the Council's concessionary prices are low cost (Appendix 4).
14. Officers from the leisure and welfare reform teams have spoken to a number of councils who have reviewed their concessions, but local sensitivities and finding an improved and equitable option has meant only minimal changes have been made.
15. Where local authorities have increased their standard concessionary fees and charges they often bolster their offer with discounted or free sessions to help meet policy objectives in a similar way that The Council offer free swimming to under 17s.
16. Walsall is the only example Officers have found where household income is used; they include a threshold of £18,000 total household income and include other concessionary categories alongside this.

The review

17. The review has involved checking how many people qualify under each criterion and working with Fusion to understand the levels of up take by people in all of the concessionary groups.
18. Any financial benefits from changes in fees and charges are contractually Fusion's as is the risk on achieving the income. The Council can though veto concessionary increases above RPIX, which means a shared benefit can be negotiated.
19. Any annual surplus achieved by Fusion, above that in the contractual agreement, would be shared between the Council and Fusion on the basis of an incremental percentage (i.e. additional surplus up to £50k would equate 60% to the Council and 40% to Fusion).
20. The Councils leisure centres are busy at peak times (4pm to 8pm on weekdays) and in common with many service providers we use off peak pricing to encourage usage at quieter times.
21. The Council has agreed that concessions will be given to people benefiting from Council Tax Reduction Scheme and/or receiving the housing element of Universal Credit. There are also concessionary categories that no longer exist and others that would no longer be relevant if we introduce the new criteria.

22. Officers have compared how many people qualify for the current benefits against how many people would qualify using the new criteria. This is difficult due to some benefits being awarded at a household level, rather than individual level. We know that 13,627 individuals and 11,065 households qualify under the current criteria and this would reduce to 1,600 Universal Credit housing element individuals and 5,500 Council Tax Reduction Scheme households under the proposed changes.
23. Using the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as a qualifying criterion would mean that all the members of a low income household, i.e. young people, would still be able to access the scheme as it would not be reliant on each leisure centre user having their own income type (which young people in education would not have). There are other ways of capturing these groups such as granting all under 17s or 18s etc. concession eligibility but this would mean that young people from high income families would be eligible.
24. The Universal Credit Housing Element is an important qualifying criterion as it means that people living with a housing cost, i.e. renting but who do not have a Council Tax liability, are included. This would affect a large number of single people on a low income and families who do not have a Council Tax liability such as those living in temporary accommodation. The Universal Credit Housing Element is slowly replacing Housing Benefit as Universal Credit is rolled out.
25. Due to the similarity of some of the concessionary categories Fusion have grouped these together when inputting the data into their management information system (highlighted in Appendix 2).
26. Additional to the categories in Appendix 2, over 60s and Council employees receive reduced rates and the Council also provides a number of free swimming sessions for under 17s.
27. Discussions have been held at the Leisure Partnership Board to increase the age criterion to bring it in line with the retirement age. There are an estimated 17,900 residents in the 60-67 age brackets in the city. Fusion's data shows that only 61 over 60s had a Bonus concessionary membership in 2018/19, this is because they can also qualify for a discounted standard membership.
28. Other local authorities offer certain professions discounts (e.g. NHS, police) to meet their policy objectives. This year's budget includes £5,000 to provide free use for people who are on the homelessness pathway.
29. The Cabinet Member has asked that we include a reduced rate for ex-service people; Fusion have indicated they could look to implement the official MOD discount service for UK armed forces and veterans (current and past armed forces, alongside their spouses / parents of currently serving personnel). The offer may include a 10% discount for the full Oxford and family leisure memberships.
30. Officers have explored other options to set an income threshold; this included free school meals and targeting postcodes. Free school meals does not provide as comprehensive a measure as combining the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with the housing element of Universal Credit so is not believed to be a suitable criteria.

31. Postcodes were also explored to see the impact of geographic targeting. 11.2% of Oxford City is located within the 20% most deprived areas nationally (2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation). This equals 17,144 people, or c6,000 households. While this is straightforward, postcodes do not necessarily correlate to individual income.
32. Both Working and Child Tax Credit are being replaced by Universal Credit so there are not any 'new' recipients of these, only people who have been receiving it already. People on a low income who receive one of these tax credits are likely to be in receipt of another qualifying benefit. Tax credits are also a lot more generous than normal welfare benefits so customers qualifying for concessions under these criteria can result in people on higher incomes qualifying for concessions.
33. It is relatively easy for a customer to evidence that they are in receipt of the Housing Element on Universal Credit, but procedures will need to recognise that the benefit doesn't provide letters confirming entitlement. Universal Credit doesn't issue letters regarding entitlement, and customers access this information on the journal via their statements. Customers are able to provide screenshots or print their statements as evidence.
34. A small number of customers will not have access to their journal in circumstances where it is impossible for them to use an online account, for example due to certain disabilities, being in hospital etc. These customers will be able to access their statements through the local Job Centre or any other arrangement they have agreed locally with the DWP.
35. It should be noted Universal Credit is always paid in arrears and offers no forward projection on entitlement. Therefore any verification will have to be for the recent past, this would normally be their last monthly statement, but does not guarantee the customer is currently entitled due to a change of circumstances.
36. The Head of Community Services is working with Sport England to help to improve the advice in their leisure contract procurement tool kit. Sport England are keen to develop advice that helps local authorities develop concessionary schemes that are more effective at achieving strategic outcomes and are more adaptable to changing local needs.
37. Sport England have not found any schemes, or thinking, that are more advanced than what has been covered in this review. As such, Sport England will be working with the National Association for Culture and Leisure (CLOA) to survey local authorities on how concessions can be used more effectively.
38. Concessions are in place to ensure equitable access to try to remove lack of income as a barrier to exercise. There are though a range of reasons why people do not exercise such as lifestyles, motivation and cultural differences. As part of the work on developing a new culture and leisure strategy, Officers are researching local barriers which may then enable a better range of activities to be offered. This strategy may then enable a more sophisticated approach to be taken to reduce inactivity.

Legal implications

39. The contract with Fusion means that any changes need to be agreed with Fusion before they can be implemented.
40. This contract expires in 2024. This means that the Council could ask for costed options which would enable the cost of concessions to be understood.

Financial implications

41. Fusion does not believe there will be any financial implications from the changes, although they will want to monitor this for a year.
42. For Council to be reassured on impact from the changes, data from the previous month prior to implementation will be used as the baseline and monitoring methodology will be agreed with Fusion.
43. If members wish to increase the 10% concession for ex-service people, a budget bid would need to come through the budget process.

Risk register

44. A risk register is included as Appendix 5.

Equalities Impact

45. An equalities impact assessment is included as Appendix 6.

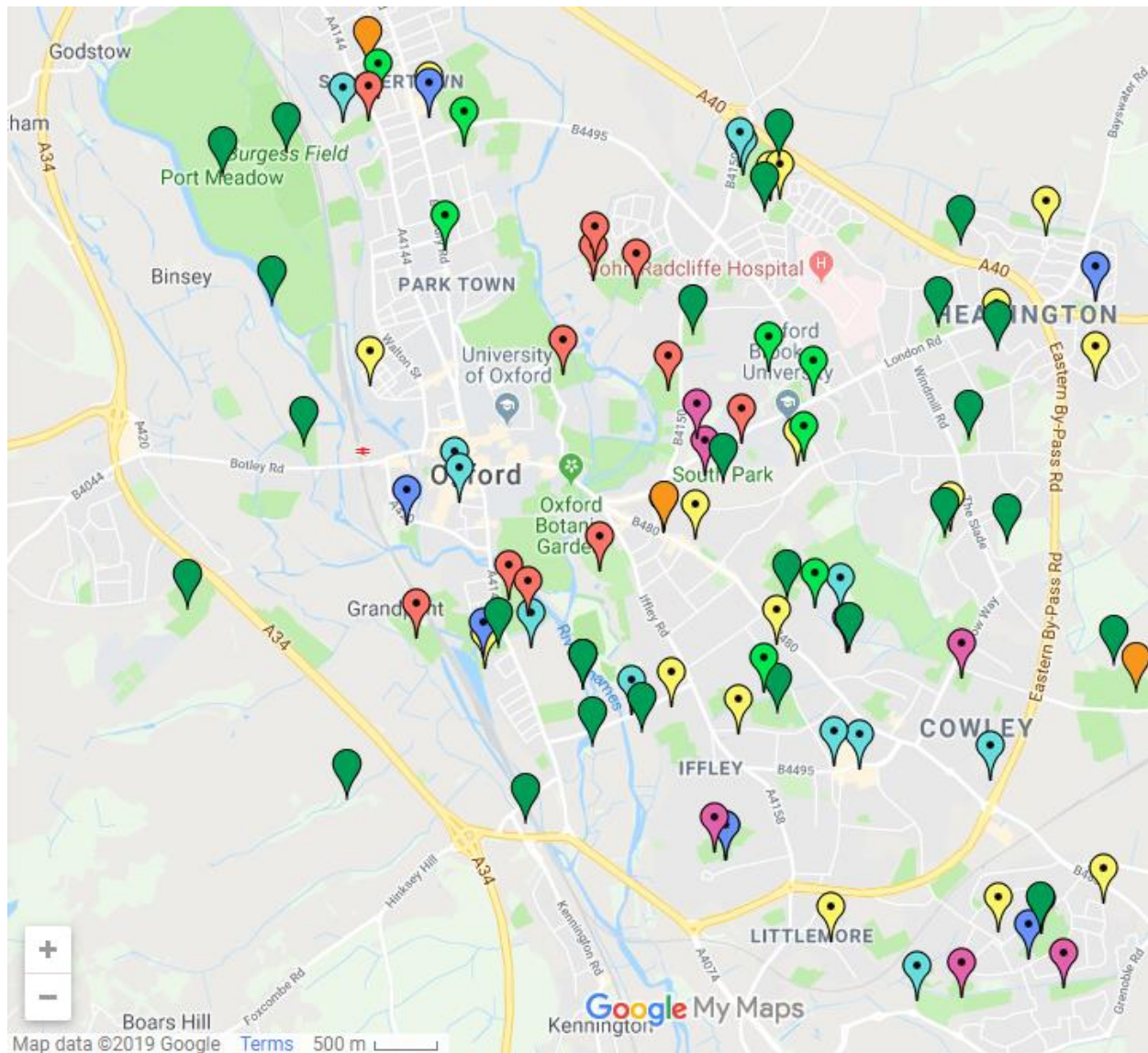
Summary

46. The proposed changes will mean that concessions are limited to people with the greatest need, or where members have made policy choices. The changes will make the concessions scheme simpler for customers and easier for Fusion to promote.
47. Due to the complexities in the data and the assumptions on the impact on usage, it is likely that Fusion would want to monitor any changes for a year to get a better understanding of the impact on usage and income of any changes we ask them to make.









Report author	Lucy Cherry
Job title	Leisure & Performance Manager
Service area or department	Community Services
Telephone	01865 25) 2707
e-mail	lcherry@oxford.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Leisure Sites in Oxford

[Click here for the on-line version with key for each leisure offer type.](#)



Summary key

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Oxford Council Leisure centres Clubs |  Commercial Gyms & Leisure Clubs |
|  Community Centres (charge) |  GO Active Fit Trails (Free of charge) |
|  Outdoor Courts and other Venues |  Parks & Nature Reserves |
|  Schools |  University Sites |

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Appendix 2: Benefits attracting concessionary rates (Bonus card)

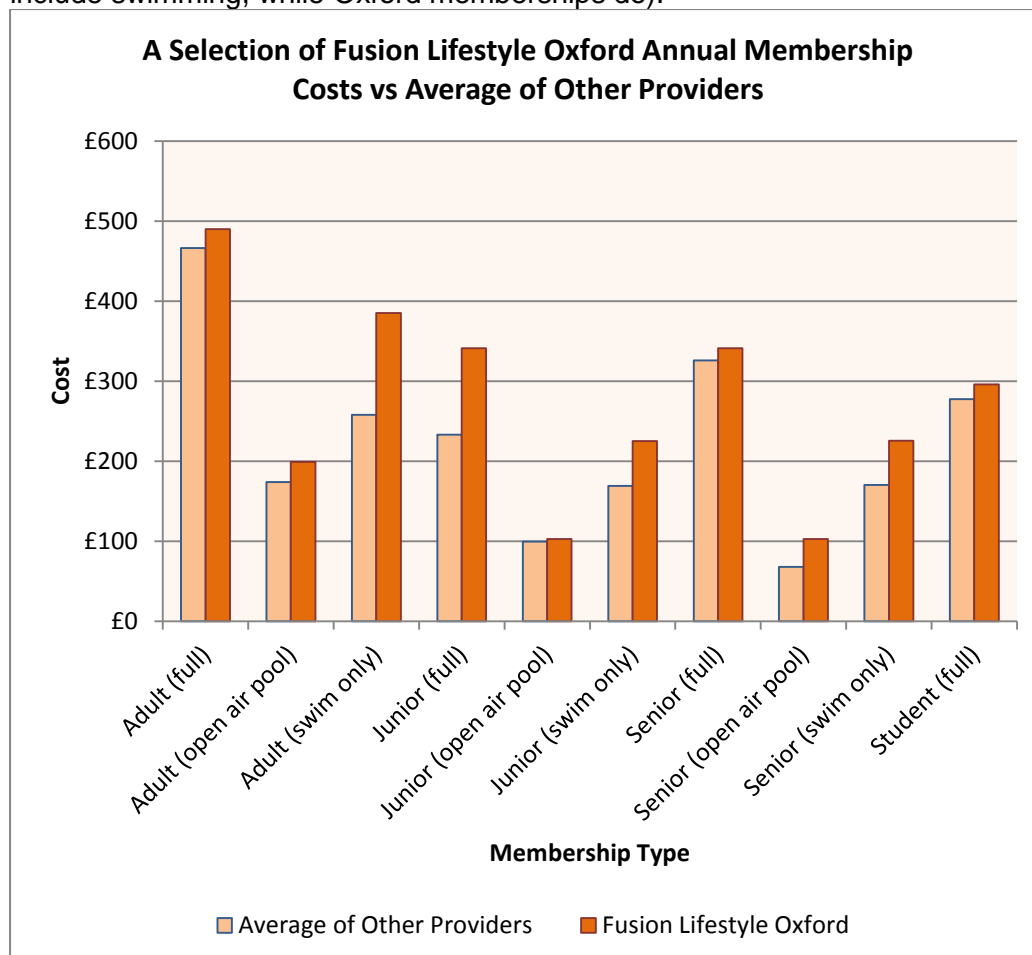
Current Criteria	Numbers eligible	Proposal	Number of memberships in 2018/19
Job seeker's	Not available	Remove as many people claiming JSA will also claim CTRS. JSA is also being replaced over time by the introduction of UC.	60 (10%)
Income support	Not available	Remove as many people claiming IS will also claim CTRS. It is also being replaced over time by the introduction of UC.	19 (3%)
Employment and Support Allowance	3,594	Remove as many people claiming ESA will also claim CTRS. ESA is also being replaced over time by the introduction of UC.	Not known
Housing benefit (pension age)	2,471	Eligible.	Not known
Council tax benefit (pension age)	2,990	Eligible.	Not known
Pension credit	2,038	Eligible.	13 (2%)
Attendance Allowance	2,152	Remove as over 60s can receive a reduced rate through an alternative option.	Not known
Unemployed / interim payment	0	Not a drop down criteria captured by Fusion	Not known
Youth training courses / new deal	0	Remove - no longer exists.	1 (<1%)
Invalid Care Allowance/ Carer's Allowance/ Carers Card Holder	Not available	Carer's Allowance – Eligible. Remove others – no longer exist.	34 (5%)
Working tax credit	Not available	Remove. WTC is not a benefit and some recipients may claim CTRS.	73 (12%)
Child Tax Credit	Not available	Remove. CTC is not a benefit and some recipients may claim CTRS.	80 (13%)
Housing benefit (working age)	5,509	Remove as being replaced by Universal Credit Housing Element.	173 (28%)
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (working age)	5,556	Eligible.	86 (14%)
Universal Credit Housing Element	1,583	Eligible.	Not available
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	2,695	Eligible.	7 (1%)
Disability Living Allowance/ Disability Benefit/ Registered blind or disabled / Severe Disablement Allowance / Incapacity Benefit	3,233	Eligible.	48 (8%)
Universal Credit	3,490	Remove - not eligible.	Not available
Additional groups that are supported			
NHS: AG2, AG3, HC2 or HC3 Certificate holders	Not available	AG2 and AG3 no longer exist. HC2 and HC3 are help with NHS costs such as prescriptions for people on low incomes. As such this would suggest people would probably get CTRS so remove.	11 (2%)
Foster Carers	50	Eligible.	6 (1%)
Asylum Seeker	Unknown	Eligible.	17

Please note that other non-welfare related concessions are available (e.g. full-time students) however these have been excluded from this report.

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Appendix 3: A comparative benchmark of annual membership fees, 2018/19

The graph below shows a selection of annual membership fees in Oxford, along with how they compare to others across the country. Charges do not reflect the 2019/20 increases. It should be noted that membership type is not necessarily like for like (i.e. Buzz Gym does not include swimming, while Oxford memberships do).



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Appendix 4: Benchmarking of leisure concessions, 2018/19

Activity	Oxford		Other leisure centres			
	Adult Pay as You Go	Concession	Average	Min	Max	Oxford price difference vs average of other centres
Casual Swimming	£4.70	£ 2.00	£ 3.38	£ 1.80	£ 5.40	-40.83%
Sauna/Steam	£8.00	£ 2.60	£ 4.88	£ 3.00	£ 7.20	-46.67%
Water Workout	£6.70	£ 2.00	£ 4.80	£ 2.95	£ 6.65	-58.33%
Badminton (1 court / 2 people)	£7.60	£ 4.00	£ 8.62	£ 3.10	£ 15.10	-53.59%
Squash (1 court / 2 people)	£8.60	£ 4.00	£ 4.23	£ 3.90	£ 4.90	-5.51%
Table Tennis (1 table / 2 people)	£7.20	£ 4.00	£ 6.67	£ 3.10	£ 10.50	-40.00%
Beginner Induction	£23.10	£ 5.10	£ 7.95	£ 7.80	£ 8.10	-35.85%
Exercise Class	£6.80	£ 2.00	£ 4.78	£ 3.25	£ 6.65	-58.17%
Gym	£8.50	£ 2.00	£ 6.11	£ 3.50	£ 9.00	-67.29%

The table above shows a selection of concessionary pay and play activity charges in Oxford, along with how they compare to others across the country. Up to 11 centres are compared against in this exercise and it is clear to see that Oxford's concessionary charges are significantly less than others' averages. Charges do not reflect the 2019/20 increases.

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Appendix 5

Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Control description
							I	P	I	P	I	P	
201	Satisfaction		Concessionary users no longer eligible to the offer feel aggrieved by loss of entitlement.	Stakeholder dissatisfaction, loss of income, reputation damage, loss of future opportunity.	17/05/19	Head of Service	1	3	1	3	1	3	An impact data exercise indicated that a minority of concessionary users will be affected; increase promotion for signposting to free or low cost alternatives e.g. GO Active, Green Gyms, Cultural offer, other discounted leisure memberships, free swimming sessions for those under 17 years of age and living in the city and gym only membership offer at RHCC.
	Corporate priorities	Threat	Change in governance and political direction	Unaligned goals	17/05/19	Head of Service	2	2	2	2	2	1	Review the concessionary offer and priorities annually in partnership with the leisure provider and the Leisure Partnership Board, and align where possible. Complete annual benchmarking.
	Financial	Threat	Unprecedented increase in concession uptake	Costs incurred	17/05/19	Head of Service	3	3	2	2	2	1	Concessions are built into the contract and absorbed by Fusion; any significant changes would need to be negotiated
	Reputation	Threat	Failure to manage repercussions following any negative attention	Damage to OCC's reputation	17/05/19	Head of Service	2	3	1	2	1	2	Staff and members will be briefed to explain the changes; any press attention will be dealt with via the Corporate Comms Team

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Appendix 6: Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

Age (older people) – proposal to remove some pension-related eligibility; however other options will remain so that no one in this category will be affected. Existing people receiving concessions may need to show an alternative proof of eligibility in the future.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

The leisure contract with the Council's leisure provider, Fusion Lifestyle, has a pricing structure where we charge the market rate to people who can afford to pay and offer a concessionary scheme to ensure there is equitable access.

With the introduction of Universal Credit it is timely to review concessions to make sure they are effectively targeted to meet the Council's strategic objectives. The primary objective of the review is to ensure that concessionary rates are not accessible to people on higher incomes.

The list of concession eligibility has been reviewed in order to simplify leisure concessions. Some of the existing criteria are out of date, so are being removed or replaced. The proposed removals will not impact those covered under the 9 protected characteristics.

An impact data exercise indicated that a minority of concessionary users will be affected. To mitigate this impact we propose to increase promotion for signposting to free or low cost alternatives e.g. GO Active, Green Gyms, Cultural offer, other discounted leisure memberships, free swimming sessions for those under 17 years of age and living in the city and the gym only membership offer at RHCC.

The concessionary offer and priorities will be reviewed annually in partnership with Fusion Lifestyle and the Leisure Partnership Board, and aligned where possible. The review will also incorporate annual benchmarking with other leisure providers (locally and nationally, public and private).

Staff and members will be briefed to explain the changes; any press attention will be dealt with via the Corporate Communications Team.

The proposed changes would come into effect in April 2020. The responsible person/s is the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Head of Community Services.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

Fusion Lifestyle proposes their fees and charges on an annual basis. These are considered by the Leisure Partnership Board (attendees include users of leisure facilities and other external stakeholders/partners). When endorsed by the Leisure Partnership Board, proposals are submitted as part of the Council's annual budget setting consultation process.

There are no plans to further consult, as so few are impacted.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

No adverse impacts, other than the possibility of concessionary users to show alternative proof of eligibility. Any changes will be clearly communicated with Fusion Lifestyle, whose staff will be trained to help customers with queries.

No adjustments necessary.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

Officers regularly communicate with Fusion Lifestyle and centre users, on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis (sometimes more regularly than weekly).

As such, the impact of the changes will be monitored as part of the Councils routine monitoring and governance arrangements.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Lucy Cherry

Role: Leisure and Performance Manager

Date: 17/05/19

To: Cabinet
Date: 9 October 2019
Report of: Executive Director - Development
Title of Report: Letting of 24-26 George Street, Oxford

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To seek approval for letting of 24-26 George Street
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member for Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	A vibrant and sustainable economy An efficient and effective council
Policy Framework:	none
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the letting of 24-26 George Street on the terms set out in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION appendix; and Delegate authority to the Executive Director - Development , to vary those terms on condition that the revised terms continue to represent the best consideration reasonably obtainable. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Site Plan
Appendix 2	NOT FOR PUBLICATION APPENDIX
Appendix 3	Risk Register

Introduction and background

1. The property which comprises ground floor, basement, and part first and second floor was previously let to Jamies Italian Ltd. The company became insolvent in May 2019.
2. Following a period of marketing a new tenant has been found, the level of rent is over the threshold for officer delegated decisions so approval is sought to proceed with this transaction

Financial implications

3. The level of rent is set out in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION appendix 2

Legal issues

4. The outline commercial terms of the new lease are attached in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION appendix 2. The terms have been agreed following a period of marketing, a request for best bids and were evaluated on factors including rental income, use and income security.
5. The lease is to be surrendered from the previous tenant to allow the new lease to be granted
6. The unit was fully marketed for a period of 3 months, after which bids were sought. The preferred bidder is outlined in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION appendix 2, this bidder best complies with the Council's obligations under s123 Local Government Act 1972 (to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable) as set out in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION appendix 2. This valuation assessment was confirmed by Colliers International our externally appointed agents to market the property

Level of risk

7. The Risk Register is attached as an appendix.

Equalities impact

8. This is a property transaction and as such this is non-applicable

Report author	Julia Castle
Job title	Surveyor
Service area or department	RAMP
Telephone	01865 252223
e-mail	jcastle@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

10 to 12



15 14 13

ESS

PH

63.2m RED LION SQUARE

GLOUCESTER STREET

New Theatre

Threeways House

6

2

24 to 26

22

TCB

30 28

38 36

GEORGE STREET

21 to 27

19

31 29 to

33 to

37

Hotel

PH

35

24

24-26 George Street, 2 & 4 Gloucester Street

Scale: 1:500

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Regeneration & Major Projects

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Appendix 3

Appendix 3: Risk Register

					Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequ ence			I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Non completion	Tenan decicides not to proceed to complete the lease	threat	market, change in company policy etc	need to remark et	August 19	JC	5	4	5	3	5	2	completion as soon as possible after building good relations with the tenant	good communicatio n				
Surrender not taken from James	new lease unable to be granted because of previous lease not surrendered	threat	Administrator not surrendering lease	transact ion maybe lost	August 19	JC	5	2	5	2	5	1		early surrender of the lease				

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To: Cabinet

Date: 9 October 2019

Report of: Executive Director Customer and Communities and Regeneration and Major Projects Service Manager

Title of Report: Oxford Sports Park – Assignment of lease

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	We seek cabinet approval to assign the lease that the Council currently has in place with Fusion Lifestyle for the operation and management of Oxford Sports Park to Oxford United Football Club
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Smith – Leisure and Housing and Councillor Turner – Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	Strong and Active Communities and Efficient and Effective Council
Policy Framework:	Leisure and Wellbeing strategy 2015-2020 and emerging Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the proposal that Oxford United Football Club manage and operate the Oxford sports park; 2. Approve the assignment of the lease to the Oxford sports park from Fusion Lifestyle to Oxford United FC; 3. Grant delegated authority to the Executive Director Customer and Communities in consultation with the Head of Finance to agree the terms of a new management agreement with Oxford United FC, in line with the existing Development agreement and lease for the Sports Ground, including: a community use agreement; business plan; and Governance arrangements for running the Sports park; and 4. Note that the agreement will deliver a saving of £50k for the 19/20 and 20/21 financial years and £25k per year thereafter. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Oxford United FC Community Work
Appendix 2	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 3	Risk Register

Introduction and background

1. The Oxford Sports Park consists of a mix of facilities including grass sports pitches, artificial turf pitches, artificial cricket wickets and cricket nets, sports pavilion and also houses Oxford United Football Clubs (OUFC) changing facilities and offices. It will be fully operational in October 2019.
2. At the outset of the project the primary aims were to enable BMW to expand its site on to the old sports pitches at the Rover Sports and Social Club which would play a part in helping to safeguard the future of the plant. This would be achieved by enabling the development of the adjacent site into sport pitches that would serve two main purposes of being a training and academy facility for Oxford United FC and also enabling there to be some wider community use of the site.
3. OUFC and Horspath Youth Football Club have had permission to use the Park during the final work phases. This has enabled some useful testing of the facilities and of how community sport and professional sport might work together in practice.
4. A tender exercise was originally undertaken in 2016 for the design, build, operation and management of the site and after a competitive process Fusion Lifestyle were announced as the successful tenderer. Only Fusion Lifestyle and OUFC submitted tenders at the time and OUFC were unsuccessful.
5. The Council subsequently entered into a 25 year lease and management agreement with Fusion Lifestyle for the design, build, operation and management of the sports park.
6. Since then the management of OUFC has also changed.
7. Fusion Lifestyle subsequently entered into sub lease negotiations with Oxford United FC. These negotiations are still underway. Over the last year Oxford United has undertaken grounds maintenance on the site as well as using the site as a training ground and for its academy.
8. Fusion Lifestyle has completed the development of the site and has put forward an initial development plan incorporating some community use.

Options

9. As part of the sub-lease negotiations, between Fusion Leisure and Oxford United, further discussions were held on the future management of the park. In the last two months, alternative options for the future management of the park include:
 - OUFC managing the grass pitch areas and Fusion managing the artificial turf pitches and changing rooms.
 - Assignment of lease for the whole of the sports park to OUFC and the development of a new management agreement.

- Arrangements continue with Fusion as lease holder and OUFC as a tenant or license holder.
 - Go back out to market
10. Fusion Lifestyle and OUFC have agreed that their preferred option is for the lease to be assigned to OUFC and that a new management agreement, is put into place with OUFC. Fusion Lifestyle does not wish to continue to have any involvement in the running of the Sports Park.
11. Council Officers are supportive of this proposal. The main variation proposed, which has been agreed with OUFC and will be put in place if it is decided to reassign the lease, is the exclusion of the fee for managing the sports park. This management fee had been put in place to incentivise Fusion Lifestyle to take on the contract.
12. If the lease is assigned to OUFC, as part of its community use agreement, and in addition to its existing community work (see Appendix 3), Oxford United plans to:
- Provide free nutrition classes, fitness classes for vulnerable groups and mental health workshops.
 - Have literacy/numeracy classes with combined training sessions led by their players.
 - Hold Homeless football sessions.
 - Hold all school football finals at the grounds, organised and run by OUFC as well as two football festivals and a kwik cricket festival a year
 - There will also be access to the grounds for community use, with the exception of Sunday mornings when the Youth Academy runs. A requirement of the contract and funding that OUFC receives from the English Football League (EFL) is that there are no other users on site at the same time.

Benefits

13. There are a significant number of benefits to the Council as well as to sport and community development in general with the proposed assignment of the lease and these include:
- OUFC are the main professional football club in the City and for the wider County and have a clear community presence and engagement within the City.
 - The club is well placed given their existing links and community work to reach out and achieve the Council's Sport and Community Development objectives relating to football across the City. Appendix 1 sets out some of the existing activity already undertaken by OUFC as well as its plans for extending its offer. It aligns with the Council's aim of targeting inactive people, ensuring that there are inclusive and diverse programs reaching our target groups and working within our priority areas.

- OUFC community department will staff and run the facility including community bookings and developing the on line booking system. The club will also provide security on site and has trained staff who are DBS checked, have safeguarding training and are experienced in dealing with safeguarding issues.
- OUFC has a very strong brand within the City and this presents some really positive marketing opportunities as well as the ability to attract inward investment such as sponsorship and external funding to the sports park.
- The club will look to work with community clubs on site and there will be added value through coach workshops and through the knowledge and expertise of delivery of professional sport.
- When the Council originally went out to tender for this there was little appetite to manage the site due to the cost and complexity. Since the Council went out to tender, OUFC has a new management team and are now better positioned to manage the Sports Park to achieve our aspirations.
- Entering into this arrangement with OUFC would present the Council with a £50,000 saving in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and then a £25,000 saving a year thereafter for the remainder of the lease.

Governance

14. There would be regular quarterly governance meetings between the Council and OUFC to monitor performance including ensuring the Council's objectives around community use were being met.
15. Any issues, disputes or areas of non-performance that arose would be talked through at this meetings by OUFC and officers from the Councils Community Services area. If these could not be resolved then it would be escalated to Head of Service or Director at the Council and equivalent level at OUFC. In the event of the item remaining unresolved then it would be taken to an external body such as Active Oxfordshire for arbitration before any further more formal approach.

Health and Safety

16. The club are experienced in facility and program management and have managed sites such as the rover sports and social club site previously. The responsibilities under the lease in this area would be assigned to the club including a management and community use plan for the site.

Financial Implications

17. The revenue impact of the deal with OUFC for the operation of the Sports Park is at nil cost to the authority, representing a £50,000 saving for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 and then a £25,000 saving a year thereafter for its 25 year term against the assumptions currently built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan under the agreement with Fusion.
18. There is a bond of £329,000 that the Council has put in place for the County Council roadworks. The section 278 bond is a sum of money that is generally placed with the County Council to ensure that the roadworks necessary for any development meet the required standards and that the works do not fail through poor work within a two year period.

19. We are looking to ensure that Fusion as the current contractor have completed the remaining snagging items on the S278 works before October which would enable the release of 80% of the bond. There is a legal S278 agreement and an indemnity letter that Fusion are signatory to which protects the Council's position on retrieving the bond. To protect the Council's position the lease will not be assigned until we are in receipt of the 80% of the bond.

Legal issues

20. To enable OUFC to manage and operate Oxford Sports Park instead of Fusion Lifestyle, the lease that is currently in place between the Council and Fusion would need to be assigned to OUFC. This would be on the same conditions as the existing lease that the Council have in place with Fusion.
21. The Council would also enter into a new management agreement with OUFC. This management agreement would be based on the existing agreement with Fusion, but would be tailored to meet the particular circumstances of the proposed arrangement with OUFC.
22. The lease agreement states that termination of the 'contract' (management agreement) would similarly mean the determination of the lease, and vice versa. The lease would only be assigned on the basis that the new management agreement was in operation.

Level of risk

23. A community use agreement will be put in place as part of the management agreement. This would ensure the community activity already supported by OUFC would be expanded and integral to the use of the site for the term of the contract.
24. The existing lease agreement with Fusion Lifestyle makes provision for the Council to break the lease and take responsibility for the management of the site. A similar clause will be in place to ensure that the Council can take back the Sports Park should the ownership or priorities of the club change.
25. A business plan has been requested from OUFC as part of our due diligence to ensure that the sports park is managed in a sustainable way meeting our requirements for community use.

Equalities impact

An equalities impact assessment has been completed. In short this presents an improved opportunity to engage more effectively the Council's sport and community development opportunities targeting the inactive, ensuring that there are inclusive and diverse programs reaching our target groups and working within our priority areas

Report author	Hagan Lewisman
Job title	Active Communities Manager
Service area or department	Community Services
Telephone	01865 252706
e-mail	hlewisman@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1 Risk Register: Oxford Sports Park Assignment of Lease

					Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/threat	Cause	Consequence			I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
001	Loss or reduction in community use	T	OUFC change ownership, there are staff changes, or their priorities change	No access or reduced access to the site for community clubs	30.08.19	IB	3	4	3	3	3	3		Community Use Agreement in place - regular stakeholder meetings - clause in lease	Oct 2019		50	HL
002	Variety of sports provided is reduced	T	Facilities such as cricket pitches are replaced by football pitches	Loss of facilities, decreased variety of community use and reputational damage with governing bodies	30.08.09	IB	4	3	3	3	3	3		Insert appropriate clauses within lease that would require penalty costs or replacement of facilities elsewhere	Oct 2019		50	HL/PB
003	Satisfactory repayment of the bond	T	The responsibility for repayment of the bond is made unclear due to the changes with management and leases	It takes much longer for the Council to draw back the financial bond	30.08.19	IB	4	2	4	2	4	2		Ensure the bond is drawn down before lease changes in October, or ensure legal agreement is in place with Fusion.	Oct 2019		50	HL/EB

004	Club leave site	T	OUFC have previously indicated that they have looked at different options for training grounds.	OCC would need to take over the management of the site	30.08.19	IB	4	3	4	2	2	2		Long term agreement in place with specific timescales for break clauses to give sufficient time to forward plan in case of senior management change. Long term usage plans to be agreed by both parties.	Oct 2019		50	HL
005	Redundant items on site (Cricket nets)	T	If there was more of a move towards solely football activities at the site the cricket nets could become redundant and would not be maintain	Cricket nets not maintained and create a future hazard on site	30.08.19	IB								Formally agree with OUFC over management of all existing items on site and put in place management agreement.	Oct 2019		50	HL
006	Potential for cost to impact potential users of the site	T	OUFC price grassroots users out of using the facility	No grassroots team usage at site	30.08.19	IB								Usage plan to have agreed set costs for individual facilities including availability of specific facilities	Oct 2019		50	HL

007	Future growth and development of OUFC	T	Plans for expansion of academy may lead to further requests for support to develop site.	Council are asked to support funding of upgrades to site	30.08.19	IB									Usage plan to include long term planning. Formal agreement to set out all details of site via a conditon survey	Oct 2019		50	HL
008	OUFC desire for further developments on the site	T	Ball stop fencing	Council are asked to install ball stop fencing or other items prior to handover	30.08.19	IB									Formal agreement to set out all details of site via conditon survey	Oct 2019		50	HL
009	OCC being unable to utilise the site	T	Pricing or operational reasons may restrirct usage of site	OCC cannot hold any sessions at the site	30.08.19	IB									Strong and robust usage plan in place with key targets and defaults if targets not met	Oct 2019		50	HL
010	Financial	T	Financial management of the club as well as changes to the income streams for the club could lead to changes in delivery on site.	changes in delivery on site	30.08.19	IB									Seek business plan from the club and financial checks. Usage plan to include long term planning. Ongoing management and governance to be part of proposal to include details of income and expenditure for site.	Oct 2019		50	HL

011	Management of site	T	Ongoing management of the site during negotiations - how will the site be managed while discussions are ongoing	Current bookings are not honored or issues arise	30.08.19	IB										Ensure ongoing management by Fusion is being undertaken as part of the contract and agreed with OCC and OUFC	Oct 2019		50	HL
							3	3	3	3	2	2								

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

Prior to making the decision, the Council's decision makers considered the following: guide to decision making under the Equality Act 2010:

*The Council is a public authority. All public authorities when exercising public functions are caught by the Equality Act 2010 which became law in December 2011. In making any decisions and proposals, the Council - specifically members and officers - are required to have **due regard** to the 9 protected characteristics defined under the Act. These protected characteristics are: **age, disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnership***

The decision maker(s) must specifically consider those protected by the above characteristics:

- (a) To seek to ensure equality of treatment towards service users and employees;*
- (b) To identify the potential impact of the proposal or decision upon them.*

The Council will also ask that officers specifically consider whether:

- (A) The policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults*
- (B) The proposed policy / service is likely to have any significant impact on mental wellbeing / community resilience (staff or residents)*

If the Council fails to give 'due regard', the Council is likely to face a Court challenge. This will either be through a judicial review of its decision making, the decision may be quashed and/or returned for it to have to be made again, which can be costly and time-consuming diversion for the Council. When considering 'due regard', decision makers must consider the following principles:

- 1. **The decision maker is responsible for identifying whether there is an issue and discharging it.** The threshold for one of the duties to be triggered is low and will be triggered where there is any issue which needs at least to be addressed.*
- 2. **The duties arise before the decision or proposal is made, and not after and are ongoing.** They require **advance** consideration by the policy decision maker with conscientiousness, rigour and an open mind. The duty is similar to an open consultation process.*
- 3. The decision maker must be **aware** of the needs of the duty.*
- 4. The **impact of the proposal or decision must be properly understood first.** The amount of regard due will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. The greater the potential impact, the greater the regard.*
- 5. **Get your facts straight first!** There will be no due regard at all if the decision maker or those advising it make a fundamental error of fact (e.g. because of failing to properly inform yourself about the impact of a particular decision).*
- 6. What does 'due regard' entail?*
 - a. **Collection and consideration of data and information;***
 - b. **Ensuring data is sufficient to assess the decision/any potential discrimination/ensure equality of opportunity;***
 - c. **Proper appreciation of the extent, nature and duration of the proposal or decision.***

Appendix 2

7. **Responsibility** for discharging can't be delegated or sub-contracted (although an equality impact assessment ("EIA") can be undertaken by officers, decision makers must be sufficiently aware of the outcome).
8. **Document the process** of having due regard! Keep records and make it transparent! If in any doubt carry out an equality impact assessment ("EIA"), to test whether a policy will impact differentially or not. Evidentially an EIA will be the best way of defending a legal challenge. See hyperlink for the questions you should consider <http://occweb/files/seealsodocs/93561/Equalities%20-%20Initial%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20screening%20template.doc>
1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

Officers consider that there is no adverse impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with their recommendation.

The recommendation would retain the originally proposed outcomes as the initial project

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

No changes are planned to the delivery objectives of the project, the proposals only seek to change the delivery agent for the project

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

There is no planned consultation as the objectives of the project have not fundamentally changed.

Appendix 2

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

There are no planned adjustments which would affect the delivery of the initial project objectives.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

As per initial project proposals –

- CorVu periodic reporting against key performance indicators
- Project Board support (i.e. Leisure Delivery Board)
- Service Management Team periodic key agenda item
- Sport England Active people Survey

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Ian Brooke

Role: Head of Service

Date: 26 September 2019

Note, please consider & include the following areas:

Appendix 2

- Summary of the impacts of any individual policies
- Specific impact tests (e.g. statutory equality duties, social, regeneration and sustainability)
- Consultation
- Post implementation review plan (consider the basis for the review, objectives and how these will be measured, impacts and outcomes including the “unknown”)
- Potential data sources (attach hyperlinks including Government impact assessments or Oxfordshire data observatory information where relevant)

Appendix 3

Appendix 3: OUFC Programmes of work in the Community

Oxford United Football Club already undertake work in the local community including:

(a) Schools work:

- Partner schools in all areas of the county, however the main focus is on the schools in challenging circumstances within the City. Eg in John Henry Newman we will provide support in school for both literacy and numeracy.
- Free training sessions for kids from Blackbird Leys
- An education programme is run with the Oxford Academy that has 60 plus students on it. The majority of these students are on the BTEC Sports programme. We provide mentoring/coaching support etc for the students and teachers.
- Funded and staffed a programme called Sport For Thought in St. Gregory The Great which has had a positive mention in Ofsted reports.
- Established a Community Trust working in over 30 schools across the county. We run a programme in specific schools called Primary Stars which has a literacy and numeracy focus. The trust also offers mascot packages free of charge for students in challenging circumstances.
- A schools day where over 1,000 tickets are given to students in challenging circumstances.
- A 'sensory room' is run for every home match where students with specific learning needs eg Aspergers can get support.

(b) Charity Partnerships including Oxford Food Bank , Sobell House and Helen and Douglas House as well as raising money for things like a defibrillator for the men's and women's walking football teams

(c) Other community activities

- Lead Club for Football for Peace: This is a charity aimed at using football to combat racism etc. One of the club's players Ksh Siddiqi, who is one of the few Asian footballers, will run programmes with the aim of developing Asian football within the city, with a specific focus will be on girls football.
- OUFC football ambassador will work with Real Kashmir FC in India to develop a club partnership with the ultimate aim of alleviating tension in this area.
- Last season our players carried out over 500 visits eg schools, hospitals, presentations etc
- Programmes like Men v Fat are run by the Club

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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