

### **Question from Member of the Public City Executive Board – 23 April 2014**

#### **Consultation**

The plan has not been adequately advertised, in particular it does not appear on the Oxford City Council Consultations page and process, although residents have made informal efforts to publicise it via social media.

#### **Area**

The historic centre of Headington is St Andrews church, with the parish boundary reaching to Bayswater Brook forming the north boundary of the Barton Park development, it is regrettable this is in another area.

The area should include all quadrants around the Headington Roundabout (Green Road) which clearly identify themselves with Headington – The line of shops to the SE and St Mary's describe themselves as "Headington"

Generally the area adopts the boundaries of the "Urban Village" used in the Green Spaces Survey 2007 and suffers from the same problem, it is essentially practically ungovernable as much important data required for the evidence base does not conform to its boundaries.

Most important government statistics from census information and others come from either electoral or invariable CAS wards (statistical wards), further granularity is normally not possible as this intrudes on privacy.

This means even simple information such as what was the population growth in the Headington Forum area, or more importantly derived information such as how much green space has been lost, or how many HA of space per 1000 persons is almost incomputable, therefore, the next phase of gathering the evidence base will be based on broad assumptions via unclear data, as will grant and funding applications and the like.

The above confusion may have been a major factor in the loss of the former Barton Cricket Ground and the grant of planning permission to the nearby Barton Park development that will have less unrestricted green space than Tower Hamlets in central London - the relevant information was not easily available.

Clearly it is very hard to match the governmental boundaries with those of the community as either approach will lead to illogical outcomes, but further efforts need to be made to reduce these to any absolute minimum or with computable deltas.

Mark Pitt

## **Response:**

### **Consultation**

The original email from Headington Heritage was sent to a different group email address to the one specified in the consultation material, and unfortunately was not received by the officer dealing with this matter in time to be included in the CEB report. A change in committee dates meant that this committee report had to be written immediately after the close of the consultation period.

The consultation on the area application was publicised on the neighbourhood planning section of the City Council's website, and letters and emails were sent to a large number of local groups in Headington and surrounding areas. Many of those groups in turn helped to publicise the proposals, as did local ward Members. A poster was produced and distributed to over 30 community noticeboards in the area, while the area application documents were placed on display at libraries in Headington, Old Marston and Cowley, together with the central library and at the City Council's customer services centre in St Aldate's.

### **Area**

The central thrust of the comments made by Headington Heritage is that the neighbourhood area should be based on established electoral or ward boundaries in order to ensure that census information and other forms of data are available to support the Headington Neighbourhood Plan. The objector is concerned that the evidence base will otherwise be founded on "broad assumptions via unclear data".

These are relevant issues to consider and are already addressed in paragraphs 5-6 of the committee report. The report notes that the Neighbourhood Forum has put a lot of work into attempting to draw up a suitable boundary. It identifies that the proposed area includes the whole of Headington ward, together with the part of Quarry and Risinghurst ward outside of the parish boundary and the part of the Churchill and Wood Farm ward that is outside the Wood Farm regeneration area. The area also includes a polling district in Barton and Sandhills ward that is within the ring road and the part of Headington Hill and Northway ward that falls within the Headington Hill conservation area.

While it will be more challenging to compile statistical data for the proposed area than it would be for an area that simply follows an existing ward boundary, it is possible to obtain detailed statistical data for Super Output Areas that are smaller than ward level. Indeed the City Council has already published on its website a profile of the characteristics of the area covered by the Headington Neighbourhood Forum according to the 2011 Census. This can be accessed from the following link: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Statistics/AreaProfiles/Headington%20Neighbourhood%20profile.pdf>

The committee report also notes that electoral services were consulted with regard to the proposed electoral boundaries, to ensure the referendum can run smoothly.

With regard to the specific geographical comments made, the Barton Park development is considered to fall within the community of Barton, while the shops to the SE of Green Road roundabout cannot be included because they fall within the Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council area. Paragraph 12 of the committee report explains that the Localism Act precludes a neighbourhood forum from being designated if its' neighbourhood area would cover the whole or part of a parish council area. This is because Parish Councils are expected to take the lead on neighbourhood planning within parished areas.

Adrian Roche  
Planning Policy Team Leader

This page is intentionally left blank