

**To:** City Executive Board  
**Date:** 15 August 2017  
**Report of:** Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services  
**Title of Report:** Littlemore Neighbourhood Area Application

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To designate the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of delivering a Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Executive Board Member:</b>	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Strong and Active Communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	The designation of a neighbourhood area is the first step in producing a neighbourhood plan. When adopted, neighbourhood plans will form part of the planning policy framework for the area and will be used in the determination of planning applications.
<b>Recommendation(s): That the City Executive Board resolves to:</b>	
1. Designate the proposed Littlemore Neighbourhood Area	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Proposed neighbourhood area boundary
Appendix 2	Littlemore Parish Council's rationale for the proposed neighbourhood area
Appendix 3	Littlemore Parish Council's relevant body statement
Appendix 4	Risk assessment

## Introduction and background

1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced rights and powers to enable communities to be directly involved in planning for their areas through the production of neighbourhood plans. Producing neighbourhood plans allows communities to develop a shared vision for their area and to shape future growth. When a

neighbourhood plan is adopted it becomes part of the statutory development plan for the area and is an important consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

2. Littlemore Parish Council intends to produce a neighbourhood plan. The first step in this process is to decide the area that the neighbourhood plan will cover. This is known as the neighbourhood area. Littlemore Parish Council has proposed that the neighbourhood area follows the Littlemore parish boundary exactly, to include the whole parish area (see Appendix 1).
3. It is a legal requirement that neighbourhood plans are in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan. The City Council is working on producing a new Local Plan to guide development in Oxford up to 2036. The new Local Plan is currently at the preferred options stage, with consultation on the draft Local Plan due to take place in Summer 2018, and the new Local Plan expected to be submitted to the Government for examination by the end of the 2018. It should be noted that the timeline for producing the new Local Plan is likely to coincide with the timeline for producing the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan. This could make the production of the Neighbourhood Plan more challenging, as the new Local Plan is likely include new strategic policies which the neighbourhood plan will need to be in conformity with when the Local Plan is adopted (expected to be in 2019).

### **Compliance with Planning Regulations**

4. The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations set out the information that must be provided when an application to designate a neighbourhood area is submitted:
  - i. A map showing the proposed neighbourhood area;
  - ii. A statement explaining why the area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area; and
  - iii. A statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body (a parish council or neighbourhood forum).

The neighbourhood area application submitted by Littlemore Parish Council (Appendices 1, 2 and 3) is considered to meet these requirements.

5. As a parish council, Littlemore Parish Council is considered a 'relevant body' to make a neighbourhood area application and to lead the production of a neighbourhood plan (in accordance with Section 61G(2) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Localism Act 2011).
6. As the neighbourhood area application submitted by Littlemore Parish Council consists of the whole of the parish council area, and there are no other neighbourhood areas within this, the Regulations are clear that the City Council must designate the neighbourhood area. In these circumstances there is no requirement to undertake consultation on the neighbourhood area application.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

7. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tariff in the form of a standard charge on new development to help the funding of infrastructure. The CIL Regulations require a proportion (15%) of CIL money collected to be used to provide neighbourhood level infrastructure to support areas where development is taking place. This neighbourhood portion of CIL rises to 25% in areas with an adopted

neighbourhood plan. In areas with a parish council, as an accountable body, this money is passed to the parish council to spend.

### **Business Area Designation**

8. When the City Council designates a neighbourhood area it is required to also consider whether the area should be designated as a business area. An area should be designated as a business area only if the City Council considers that the area is wholly or predominantly business in nature. Whilst the proposed neighbourhood area includes some employment areas (such as the Oxford Science Park), it also includes a significant number of residential properties. Therefore the proposed neighbourhood area is not considered appropriate for designation as a business area.

### **Financial implications**

9. The City Council is obliged to offer a certain degree of help to neighbourhood planning groups as they work on producing their neighbourhood plans. As well as this, the City Council must consult on draft plans, organise an examination and run the referendum. These requirements will be met from the current resources of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services, supplemented by grants available from central government to district councils to support neighbourhood planning.

### **Legal issues**

10. As outlined above, the neighbourhood area application submitted by Littlemore Parish Council is considered to comply with statutory requirements, and in particular the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended in 2015.

### **Level of risk**

11. A risk assessment has been undertaken. No significant risks were identified.

### **Equalities impact**

12. 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.

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