



# **WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

# **MAP and BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT**

# **FOR OXFORD CITY COUNCIL**

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

WNF Document Control Sheet	
Document Title	WNP Basic Conditions Statement
Draft Number	v.2
Task Group and Authors	Project Manager
Date of Version	24. July 2018
Status	Final Document
Date of Public Issue	
Visibility	For Oxford City Council official consultation
File Type	Word
File Name	WNP Basic Conditions Statement

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared by Symons Consulting as part of its work on the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) on behalf of Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum (WNF). The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area (WNPA) has been designated a qualifying area and WNF has been designated as a neighbourhood planning body.

1.2 WNF has developed a vision for the Plan, which is as follows:

*“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.”*

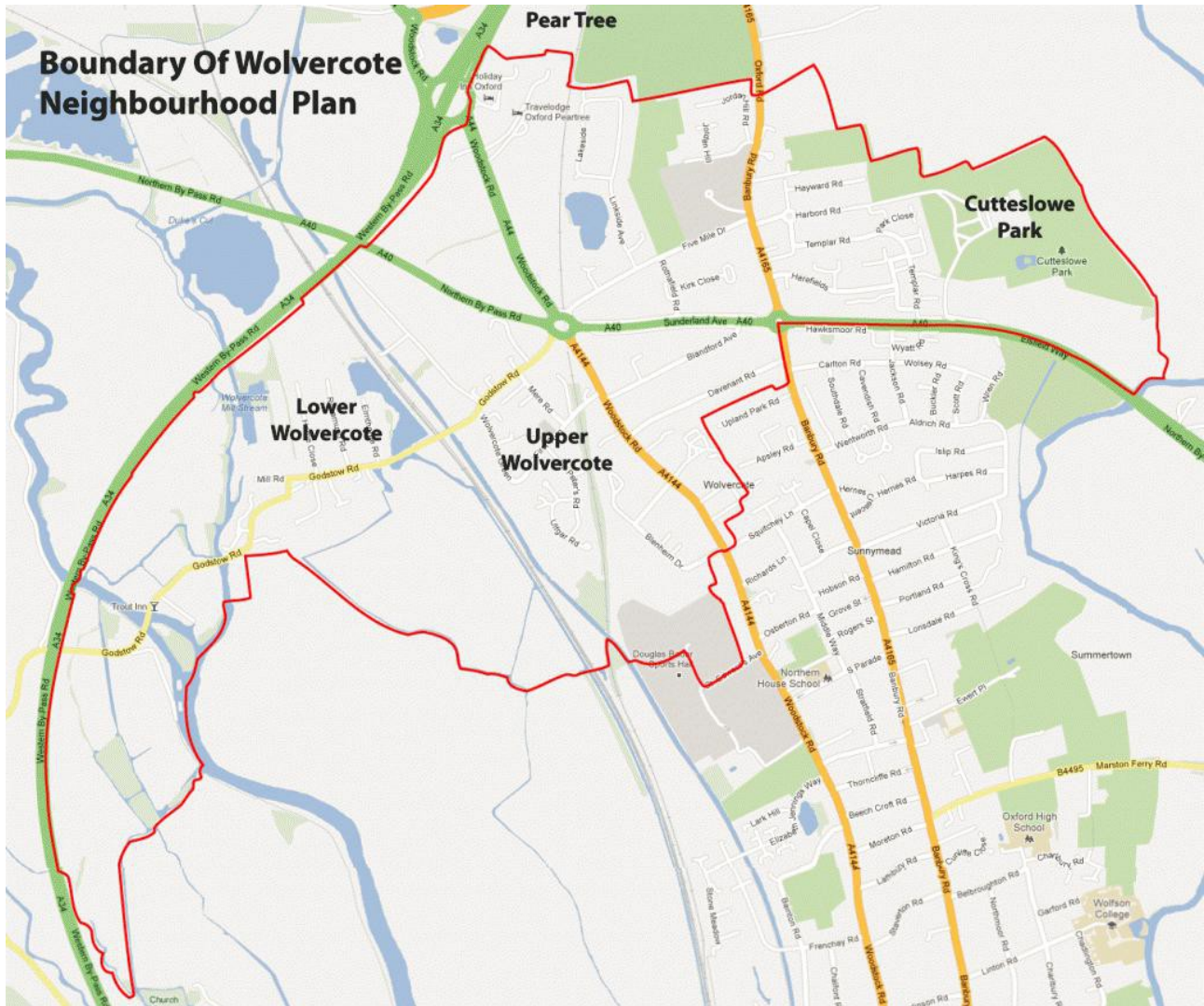
1.3 The Steering Committee has developed the main aims for the Plan:

*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 will also require that adequate precautionary measures are taken to reduce the risk of flooding, in particular in Lower Wolvercote, and especially in any new developments.*

1.4 The Vision and Aims seek to meet the aims of the National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF), and the Oxford City Council Core Strategy, while providing local distinctiveness to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Planning Area (WNPA).

Map 1 – Boundary of Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area



1.5 The map above indicates the area which is covered by the Plan. This area was designated as the WNPA by Oxford City Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014.

## 2. BASIC CONDITIONS

2.1 Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) [excluding 2b, c, 3 to 5 as required by 38C(5)] sets out that Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) must meet the following basic conditions:

*7. Neighbourhood Development Plans must meet the following basic conditions.*

*(1) The examiner must consider the following — (a) whether the draft neighbourhood development plan meets the basic conditions (see sub-paragraph (2)), (b) whether the draft neighbourhood development plan complies with the provision made by or under sections 61E(2), 61J and 61L, (d) whether the area for any referendum should extend beyond the neighbourhood area to which the draft neighbourhood development plan relates, and (e) such other matters as may be prescribed.*

*(2) A draft neighbourhood development plan meets the basic conditions if— (a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan, (d) the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, (e) the making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area), (f) the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations, and (g) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood development plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood development plan.*

*(6) The examiner is not to consider any matter that does not fall within sub-paragraph (1) (apart from considering whether the draft neighbourhood development plan is compatible with the Convention rights).*

2.2 Whether the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions as required by 1(a) and sub-paragraph 2 is set out in Sections 3 – 7 of this Basic Conditions Statement. The remainder of this Section 2 addresses the requirements under paragraphs 1(b), 1(d), and 1(e).

2.3 Paragraph 1 (b) - The provision of 61E(2), 61J and 61L as amended by s38C(5)(b) is a reference to the provision of 38A and 38B. In relation to the provisions of 38 A and 38B the following is submitted:

38A 1) Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum is a designated body and entitled to submit a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the aforementioned designated Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area.

2) The WNP expresses policies relating to the development and use of land within the neighbourhood area. 3) to 12) are essentially post examination procedures.

38B 1) a) The period of the WNP is up to 2034 or 15 years.

b) The WNP does not include any provision for excluded development such as national infrastructure.

c) The WNP does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. It relates to the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Area as designated by Oxford City Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014.

2) There is no other NP in place in this neighbourhood area.

3) Refers to conflicts within the NP.

4) Refers to regulations that the Secretary of State (SoS) may make relating to NPs. Such regulations are 2012 No 637 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 which have been used to inform the process of making the WNP. These regulations set out the process by which neighbourhood plans are to be made and set out:

- the consultation bodies for NPs. These have been included in the Consultation Statement.
- that NPs which are likely to have a significant effect on European Sites (habitats) must be subject to an appropriate assessment. The screening exercise for the WNP concluded that there are no European Sites that would be affected by the proposals within the WNPA, and it was agreed that an Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) was not necessary.
- that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening exercise for the WNP concluded that WNP will not have any significant impacts on the environment.

5) Refers to the publication of NPs.

6) Clarifies what is excluded development

2.4 Paragraph 1(d) - It is not considered that there is any benefit in extending the area for the referendum beyond the Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

2.5 Paragraph 1(e) - There are no other prescribed matters.

### 3. NATIONAL POLICIES AND ADVICE

3.1 The NPPF in sections 183 - 185 refers to Neighbourhood Plans (rather than NDPs as in the Basic Conditions as outlined in the legislation) and seeks that those plans have regard to the policies in the NPPF and to be in 'general conformity' with the Strategic Policies of the Local Plan.

3.2 This section demonstrates that the WNP has regard to relevant policies within the NPPF in relation to:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- Requiring good design
- Promoting healthy communities
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### **Building a strong, competitive economy AND Ensuring the vitality of town centres**

3.3 The NPPF states in paragraph 21 that 'Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth..... Planning policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment, including a poor environment or any lack of infrastructure, services or housing. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- identify strategic sites ... to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- support existing business sectors;
- identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement; and
- facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses in the same unit.'

3.4 The NPPF also states in paragraph 23 that: 'Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.' The NPPF goes on to set out the issues that Local Authorities should consider in drawing up Local Plans, and although Wolvercote does not have a specifically identified town centre, those of particular relevance to Wolvercote are:

- recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality; and
- promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres.

3.5 The WNP has not identified any strategic sites, but sets out the following policies that aim to ensure the continued vitality of the various Wolvercote small retail centres: COS1 – Employment Use, and COS2 – Northern Gateway (Oxford North).

3.6 This policy meet the NPPF’s aims by: supporting the wishes of the retail sector and businesses in Wolvercote, encouraging the use of Wolvercote small retail centres and providing an opportunity for increasing business diversity within these areas.

### **Promoting sustainable transport**

3.7 The NPPF states in paragraph 29 that: ‘The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.’

3.8 The NPPF goes on to state in paragraph 35: ‘Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people.’ The NPPF advises that, where practical, development should be located and designed to take a number of issues into account, including:

- accommodating the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities; and
- creating safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones.

3.9 The NPPF also notes in paragraph 37 that ‘Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.’

3.10 The WNP sets out a series of planning and community policies which seek to meet the requirements of the NPPF as follows: CHS1 – Community Connectivity, CHS4 – Safe Access Routes, CHS6 – Travel Plans, CHC2 – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure, COC1 – Transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North), and COC2 – Public Transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North).

3.11 These policies meet the NPPF's aims by ensuring that transport options where new developments are planned are sustainable, appropriately scaled for the capacity of surrounding infrastructure, and connect with current transport infrastructure within Oxford. These policies give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and promote safe and secure options for active transport.

### **Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes**

3.12 The NPPF sets out requirements in paragraph 47 for local planning authorities to significantly boost the supply of housing. This includes:

- identifying a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15. To be considered developable, sites should be in a location suitable for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged; and

- setting out the local authority's own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances.

3.13 Given the urban and constrained nature of the WNPA, and the fact that significant development sites have already been identified by Oxford City Council in the Local Plan within the WNPA, the WNP has not identified any additional sites.

3.14 The WNP has identified one strategic policy which supports the aims of the NPPF in seeking to boost the availability of properties within the WNPA for all residents: BES6 – Affordable and Key Worker Housing.

### **Requiring good design**

3.15 The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states in paragraph 56 that: 'Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people.'

3.16 The NPPF goes on to state in paragraph 58: 'Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.'

3.17 The NPPF is clear that design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail. The NPPF states in paragraph 60 that: 'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.'

3.18 Therefore the WNP has responded to the community's wishes, by emphasising the need for new development to respond to the local character of the WNPA's built and natural environment. The policies that seek to secure good design are: GBC5 – Front Gardens, BES5 – Development Design Guidance, BEC4 – Design Codes, HES1 – Character and Streetscape, HES2 – Development

Design, HES3 – Demolition, and HEC2 – Heritage Partners.

3.19 The WNP has therefore had regard to the NPPF in setting out clear, comprehensive design policies that seek to reinforce local distinctiveness whilst also providing developers and their design teams with the freedom to pursue innovative approaches.

### **Promoting healthy communities**

3.20 The NPPF recognises in paragraph 69 that creating a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see in their town is important, and encourages local authorities to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans. The process of producing the WNP has involved extensive consultation and engagement with local people, and this is recorded in the Consultant Statement and supporting documents.

3.21 The NPPF provides policy in relation to three key types of community facility:

- community facilities such as meeting places, sports venues and places of worship
- schools; and
- open space.

3.22 Community facilities: The NPPF sets out in paragraph 70 that planning policies should:

- plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and be retained for the benefit of the community; and
- ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

3.23 For community facilities such as meeting places, sports venues and places of worship the WNP sets out these policies which meet the aims of the NPPF: COS1 – Employment Use, CHS2 – Community and Medical Facilities, and CHC1 – Community, Sports and Recreational Facilities.

3.24 For schools: The NPPF states that local planning authorities should 'give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools' to ensure that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.

3.25 One of the general principles (General Principle 2) in the WNP is that "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." However the WNP has not explicitly identified any policies to cover school development, as this role more appropriately belongs to the Local Education Authority.

3.26 For Open space: The NPPF states that: ‘Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.’ It goes on to state: ‘Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.... Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.’

3.27 The NPPF is clear in its protection of existing open space, where it states: ‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.’

3.28 The WNP, in line with the NPPF policies, has sought to protect the open spaces within the WNPA through the following policies: GBS1 – Publically Accessible Green Space, GBS2 – Green Belt, Designated Land (SSSI, SAC, SAM) and Common Land, GBS3 – Playing Fields and Play Areas, GBS4 – Allotments, GBS6 – Green Space in Developments, and GBC4 – New Designated Local Green Spaces.

### **Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change**

3.29 The NPPF sets out in paragraph 95 that, to support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should:

- ‘plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and
- when setting any local requirement for a building’s sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards.’

3.30 As set out in paragraph 3.10 above, in relation to planning for new development the WNP has had regard to the need for sustainable transport, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with travel to and from new development.

3.31 In relation to energy efficiency, building sustainability and dealing with flood risk, the WNP has set out the following policies which meet the requirements of the NPPF: GBC5 – Front Gardens, BES7 – Drainage and Flooding, and BEC5 – Energy Efficiency and Smart Homes.

### **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**

3.32 The NPPF states in paragraph 109 that the planning system should contribute to and

enhance the natural and local environment by a range of means, including:

- ‘protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; and
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.’

3.33 The WNP includes the following policies that seek to conserve and enhance the natural environment: GBS5 – Biodiversity, GBC1 – Wildlife Corridors, GBC2 – Cemeteries, GBC5 – Front Gardens, and HEC1 - Tree Planting.

### **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

3.34 The NPPF sets out in paragraph 126 that: ‘Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment..... In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.’

3.35 There has been considerable community input into developing and delivering Character Assessments to cover the whole of WNPA. The WNP has developed the following policies in order to conserve and enhance the historic environment of Wolvercote: HES1 – Character and Streetscape, HES2 – Development Design, HES3 – Demolition, and HEC2 – Heritage Partners.

#### 4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The NPPF states in paragraph 14 that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF and 'should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.'

4.2 Throughout the plan-making process of the WNP, as identified by the Plan's Aims, the principles of sustainable development have been considered. These are also reflected in the 15 General Principles of the WNP, which provide a social, economic and environmental approach to meeting the needs of the community of the WNPA.

4.3 The WNP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by:

- promoting sustainable transport options throughout the WNPA (Policies CHS1 – Community Connectivity, CHS4 – Safe Access Routes, CHS6 – Travel Plans, CHC2 – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure, COC1 – Transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North), and COC2 – Public Transport to the Northern Gateway (Oxford North));
- provision of appropriate green spaces to improve the quality of life for Wolvercote residents (Policies GBS1 – Publically Accessible Green Space, GBS2 – Green Belt, Designated Land (SSSI, SAC, SAM) and Common Land, GBS3 – Playing Fields and Play Areas, GBS4 – Allotments, GBS6 – Green Space in Developments, and GBC4 – New Designated Local Green Spaces);
- protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment of Wolvercote by: enhancing and conserving biodiversity, and protecting local heritage (Policies GBS5 – Biodiversity, GBC1 – Wildlife Corridors, GBC2 – Cemeteries, GBC5 – Front Gardens, HEC1 - Tree Planting, HES3 – Demolition, and HEC2 – Heritage Partners);
- encouraging high quality development that responds to the distinctive character of Wolvercote (Policies BES5 – Development Design Guidance, BEC4 – Design Codes HES1 – Character and Streetscape, HES2 – Development Design); and
- protecting the community from pollution, flooding and the impacts of climate change (Policies BES2 – Air Pollution, BES3 – Noise Pollution, GBC5 – Front Gardens, BES7 – Drainage and Flooding, and BEC5 – Energy Efficiency and Smart Homes).

## 5. GENERAL CONFORMITY WITH THE STRATEGIC POLICIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE AREA

5.1 The WNP has been prepared taking full account of Oxford City Council's Core Strategy, which was formally adopted in 2011, and having appropriate consideration of Oxford City Council's emerging Local Plan (2016 - 2036). As such the WNP has had regard to the strategic policies in the Core Strategy, ensuring that there is general conformity with it.

5.2 The strategic policies (they have been abbreviated for ease of presentation) particularly relevant to the WNP are:

Policy CS2 - Previously developed and greenfield land - Development will be focused on previously developed land.

Policy CS4 - Green Belt - The general extent of the Green Belt inside Oxford's boundaries will be maintained.

Policy CS6 – Northern Gateway - The Northern Gateway is allocated as a strategic location to provide a modern employment-led site with supporting infrastructure and complementary amenities.

Policy CS9 – Energy and natural resources – All developments should seek to minimise their carbon emissions and development should demonstrate sustainable design and construction methods.

Policy CS11 – Flooding – Development should be avoided in flood risk areas or any development allowed which might increase flood risk.

Policy CS12 – Biodiversity - Development will not be permitted that results in a net loss of sites and species of ecological value. Where there is opportunity, development will be expected to enhance Oxford's biodiversity.

Policy CS13 – Supporting access to new development - Planning permission will only be granted for development that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport.

Policy CS14 – Supporting city-wide movement - The City Council will work with its partners to improve the ease and quality of access to and between the city and district centres, and other key destinations.

Policy CS15 – Primary Healthcare – High-quality and convenient local health services should be provided, particularly in areas of population growth.

Policy CS18 - Urban design, townscape character and the historic environment - Planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high-quality urban design.

Policy CS19 – Community Safety - New developments are expected to promote safe and attractive environments, which reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime.

Policy CS20 - Cultural and community development - The City Council will seek to protect and enhance existing cultural and community facilities.

Policy CS21 - Green spaces, leisure and sport -The City Council will seek to maintain an overall average of 5.75 ha of publicly accessible green space per 1,000 population.

Policy CS23 – Mix of Housing – Residential development to deliver a balanced mix of housing to meet the projected future household need.

Policy CS24 - Affordable housing - Planning permission will only be granted for residential developments that provide generally a minimum of 50% of the proposed dwellings as affordable housing on all qualifying sites.

Policy CS28 - Employment sites - Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of key protected employment sites.

Policy CS31 – Retail – Planning permission will be granted for development that is appropriate in related to the role and function of each retail centre.

5.3 The WNP has ensured that these and other strategic policies within the Core Strategy are supported and respected. The following WNP strategic planning policies accord with and have general conformity with the Oxford City Council Core Strategy in the following way:

**Policy GBS1 – Publicly Accessible Green Space** - accords with Core Strategy Policy CS21 which seeks to maintain the existing level of green space provision within any area of Oxford City and with Core Strategy Policy CS17 which seeks opportunities to provide new green spaces on or near development sites.

**Policy GBS2 – Green Belt, Designated Land (SSSI, SAC, SAM) and Common Land** - this policy supports and strengthens Core Strategy Policy CS4, which seeks to control inappropriate development within Oxford's Green Belt.

**Policy GBS3 – Playing Fields and Play Areas** - accords with Core Strategy Policy CS 20 (Cultural and community development) which states that “The City Council will seek to protect and enhance existing cultural and community facilities. Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of such facilities unless equivalent new or improved facilities, where foreseeable need justifies this, can be provided at a location equally or more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.” Policy GBS3 accords with Core Strategy Policy C S 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.”

**Policy GBS4 – Allotments** - accords with Core Strategy Policy CS21 (Green Spaces, leisure and sport) which states that “Improvements to, or the provision of, public green space.....will be sought in accordance with Policy CS17 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions.” Policy GBS4 also accords with the Oxford City Council Green Spaces Strategy (GSS) Objective 3: to retain the existing number of designated allotment sites.

**Policy GBS5 – Biodiversity** – seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity on both designated and non-designated sites in Wolvercote in accordance with the GSS Objective 21 which seeks the “protection of important and prosaic species in all sites.” In accordance with the NPPF Guidance (109) this policy seeks to minimise the impacts of development on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. This accords with Policy CS 12 which encourages developments which enhance Oxford’s biodiversity.

**Policy GBS6 – Green Space in Developments** - (GSS) Objective 1 which seeks opportunities to increase the provision of green space in Oxford. It also supports GSS Objective 21 which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity in Oxford by identifying areas in which to create new biodiversity habitats. GSS Objective 1 seeks to maintain the quantity of existing green space in Oxford and to seek opportunities to increase this, in part by ensuring that new development contributes to the provision of high quality multifunctional green space. GSS Objective 4 sets standards for local access to green space.

The provision of biodiversity enhancement plans will assist delivery of the GSS objective 21 to protect and enhance biodiversity. The Oxford Local Plan requires larger developments to provide on-site green space where this will enhance the range of green space already available in the area or to make a financial contribution. This Plan favours the provision of on-site publicly accessible green space but enables alternative options for provision where appropriate.

**Policy BES1 – Brownfield Sites** – accords with Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Previously developed and greenfield land) which emphasises that “Development will be focused on previously developed

land.”

**Policy BES2 – Air Pollution** – the issue of poor air quality is recognised in the Core Strategy (Paragraph 5.1.20) which has led Policy CS14 to work towards “implementing a Low Emissions Strategy to improve air quality, which could lead to a Low Emissions Zone (LEZ) in the city centre.”

Although the Core Strategy does not tackle the issue of air quality specifically within its framework, given the concerns of Wolvercote residents, and the expected growth in traffic through the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe access points, mitigating the impact of poor air quality on residents is key to improving the quality of life within the WNPA.

**Policy BES3 – Noise Pollution** – the issue of noise pollution is recognised in the Core Strategy specifically in relation to the Northern Gateway (Paragraph 3.4.32) which identified that if the site were used for residential purposes that “the quality of the residential environment would be affected by problems such as noise and poor outlook, because of the nearby roads and railway. Some housing may be less severely affected by road traffic noise, but overall the site is not considered suitable for a residential-led development.”

Therefore again, although the Core Strategy does not tackle the issue of noise pollution specifically within its framework, given the concerns of Wolvercote residents, and the fact that the current conditions would severely affect any housing in the Northern Gateway, mitigating the impact of noise pollution on residents is key to improving the quality of life within the WNPA.

**Policy BES4 - Building Demolition and conversion and Policy HES3 – Demolition** – seeks to encourage the enhancement of Wolvercote's heritage in line with Core Strategy Policy CS18 by ensuring that demolition and replacement of buildings does not adversely affect the character of the area.

Policy CS 18 also states that “Development must not result in loss or damage to important historic features, or their settings, particularly those of national importance and, where appropriate, should include proposals for enhancement of the historic environment, particularly where these address local issues identified in, for example, conservation area character appraisal or management plans.”

**Policy BES5 – Development Design Guidance** - accords with Core Strategy Policy CS18 which states that “Planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high-quality urban design through:

- responding appropriately to the site and its surroundings;
- creating a strong sense of place;
- being easy to understand and to move through;
- being adaptable, in terms of providing buildings and spaces that could have alternative uses in future;
- contributing to an attractive public realm;

- high quality architecture.”

Furthermore, the policy accords with Oxford Local Plan Sites and Housing Plan HP9 policy which states that “Planning permission will only be granted for residential development that responds to the overall character of the area, including its built and natural features.”

**Policy BES6 – Affordable and Key Worker Housing** – accords with Core Strategy Policy CS24 (Affordable housing) which states that “Planning permission will only be granted for residential developments that provide generally a minimum of 50% of the proposed dwellings as affordable housing on all qualifying sites.” In relation to Key Worker Housing, WNF is aware that Oxford City Council continues to develop options for Key Worker Housing, as set out in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 Preferred Options document. Policy BES6 strongly reflects the views of the community, and WNF seeks to promote affordable and key worker housing, acknowledging the current work being done on the emerging Local Plan.

**Policy BES7 – Drainage and Flooding** – accords with Core Strategy Policy CS11 which states that “Unless it is shown not to be feasible, all developments will be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage systems or techniques to limit runoff from new development, and preferably reduce the existing rate of run-off.

Development will not be permitted that will lead to increased flood risk elsewhere, or where the occupants will not be safe from flooding.”

**Policy COS1 – Employment Use** – follows on from Core Strategy Policy CS28 which seeks to protect key employment sites. Although the local shops identified in Policy COS1 would not be deemed 'key employment sites', they are of considerable importance to the local community, and following on from Policy CS28, should also have a degree of protection.

**Policy COS2 – Northern Gateway (Oxford North)** – compliments Core Strategy Policy CS6 on the Northern Gateway which seeks to control retail development and support “small retail units (of an appropriate local scale up to a total floor space of 2,500m<sup>2</sup>)”.

**Policy CHS1 – Community Connectivity** - accords with Core Strategy Policy CS 14 which states that “The City Council will work with its partners to improve the ease and quality of access to and between the city and district centres, and other key destinations, by:

- supporting further development of an orbital bus network, and associated infrastructure, potentially linking Cowley, Headington and Summertown, the strategic locations for development, and key employment areas;
- promoting greater pedestrian and cycle priority through and to the city centre and Cowley,

Headington and Summertown district centres, potentially incorporating public realm and cycle parking improvements; and

- working towards a joined-up, city-wide cycle and pedestrian network by addressing ‘pinch-points’, barriers and missing links, and providing more extensive 20 mph zones.”

**Policy CHS2 – Community and Medical Facilities** – compliments Core Strategy Policy CS15 which states that “The City Council will work with Oxfordshire PCT to provide high-quality and convenient local health services in all parts of Oxford, but particularly in areas of population growth.”

**Policy CHS3 – Electric Vehicle Charging Points** – provides support to Core Strategy Policy CS14 which aims to work towards “implementing a Low Emissions Strategy to improve air quality, which could lead to a Low Emissions Zone (LEZ) in the city centre.”

**Policy CHS4 – Safe Access Routes** – accords with Core Strategy Policy CS19, which states that “Planning permission will only be granted for development that meets the principles of ‘Secured by Design’, including providing for well-designed public spaces and access routes, which are integrated with their surroundings and respond to the needs of the community.”

**Policy CHS5 – Parking** – aligns with the current Local Plan by stating that “Parking provision in new developments should accord at least with the number of spaces required in the current Oxford City Council Local Plan policy.”

**Policy CHS6 – Travel Plans** - accords with Core Strategy Policy CS13 which states that “Planning permission will only be granted for development that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport. A Transport Assessment and comprehensive Travel Plan must accompany all major development proposals.”

**Policy HES1 – Character and Streetscape** and **Policy HES2 – Development Design** - accords with Core Strategy Policy CS18 (Urban design, townscape character and the historic environment) which states that “Planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high-quality urban design through:

- responding appropriately to the site and its surroundings;
- creating a strong sense of place;
- being easy to understand and to move through;
- being adaptable, in terms of providing buildings and spaces that could have alternative uses in future;
- contributing to an attractive public realm; and
- high quality architecture.”

CS18 also states that “Development proposals should respect and draw inspiration from Oxford’s

unique historic environment (above and below ground), responding positively to the character and distinctiveness of the locality.”

5.4 In conclusion, the WNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of Oxford City Council's Core Strategy.

## 6. EU OBLIGATIONS

6.1 A screening opinion was provided by Oxford City Council (Annex 1) that concluded that the WNP did not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

6.2 The Oxford City Council Core Strategy has undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The screening exercise for the WNP concluded that there are no European sites that would be affected by the proposals within the WNP, and it was agreed that an HRA was not necessary.

6.3 The WNP is considered to be compatible with EU obligations.

## 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the WNP and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the WNP complies with Paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.

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