

WOLVERCOTE  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
FORUM

# DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2019 - 2034

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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

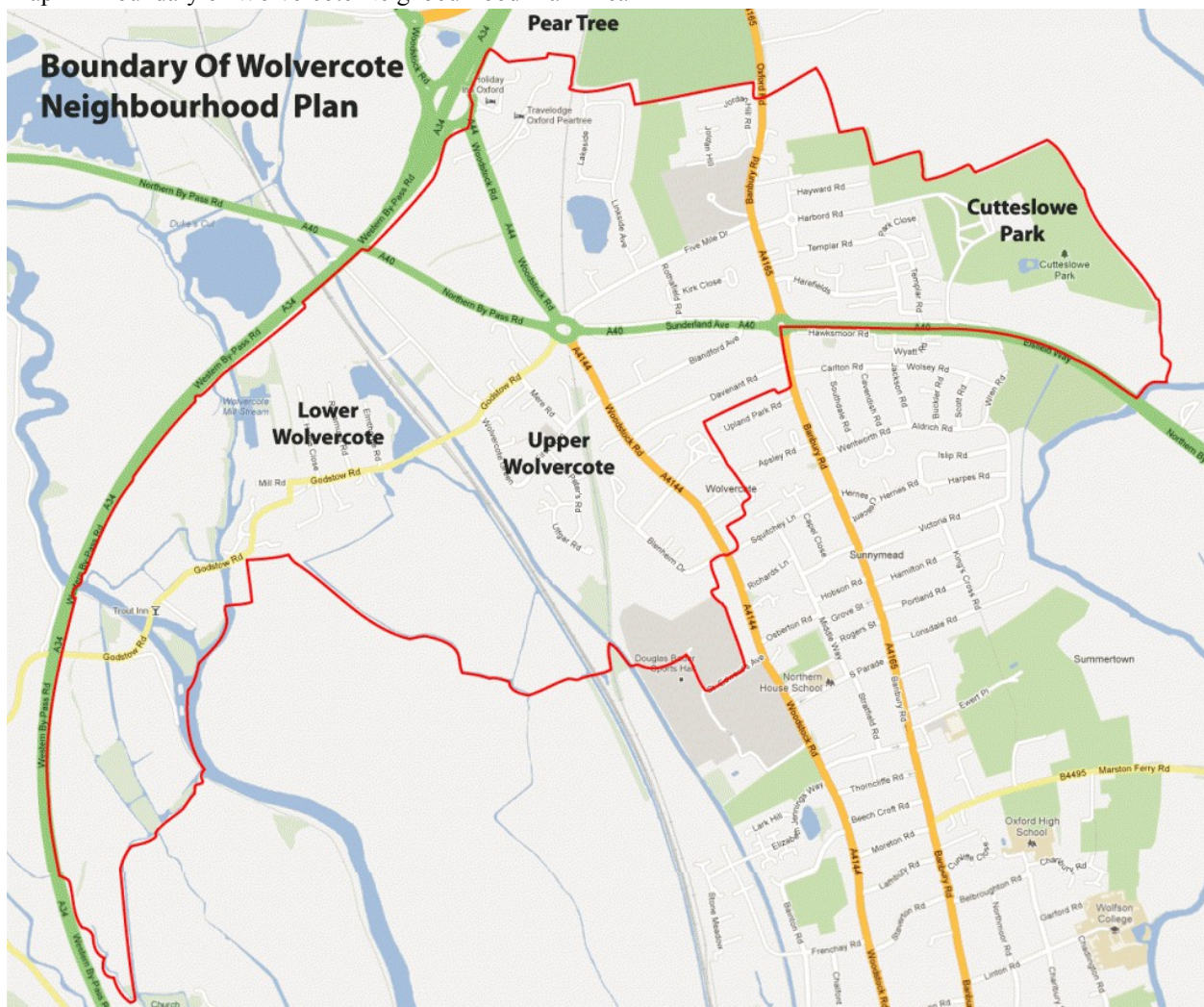
Chairman, Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee

## 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 WNP. This can be in the form of an extension or enhancement of existing public access green space within the WNP.**

## **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 Organisation<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> <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 Organisation<sup>2</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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:

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<sup>2</sup> <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 m<sup>2</sup> 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	Cuttesslowe	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](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 unlisted buildings that are considered to merit care and protection<sup>3</sup>. 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.

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<sup>3</sup> To view this list see Appendix 1 of the report.

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/266/wolvercote\\_with\\_godstow\\_conservation\\_area\\_appraisal](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.

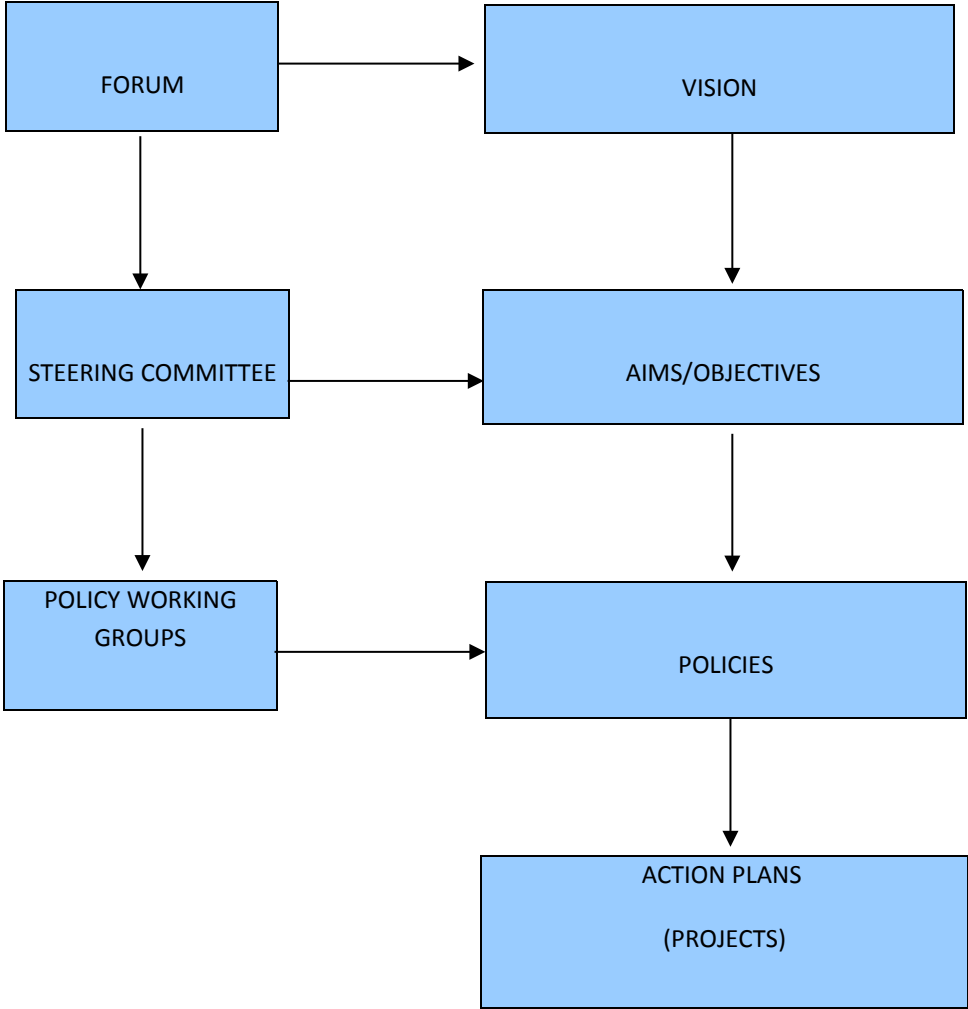
As with all plan-making, neighbourhood planning requires leadership. Where Town and Parish Councils do not cover an area, the Localism Act (2011) has given that leadership role to Neighbourhood Forums, and it is the role of the local planning authority to agree who should be the Neighbourhood Forum for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

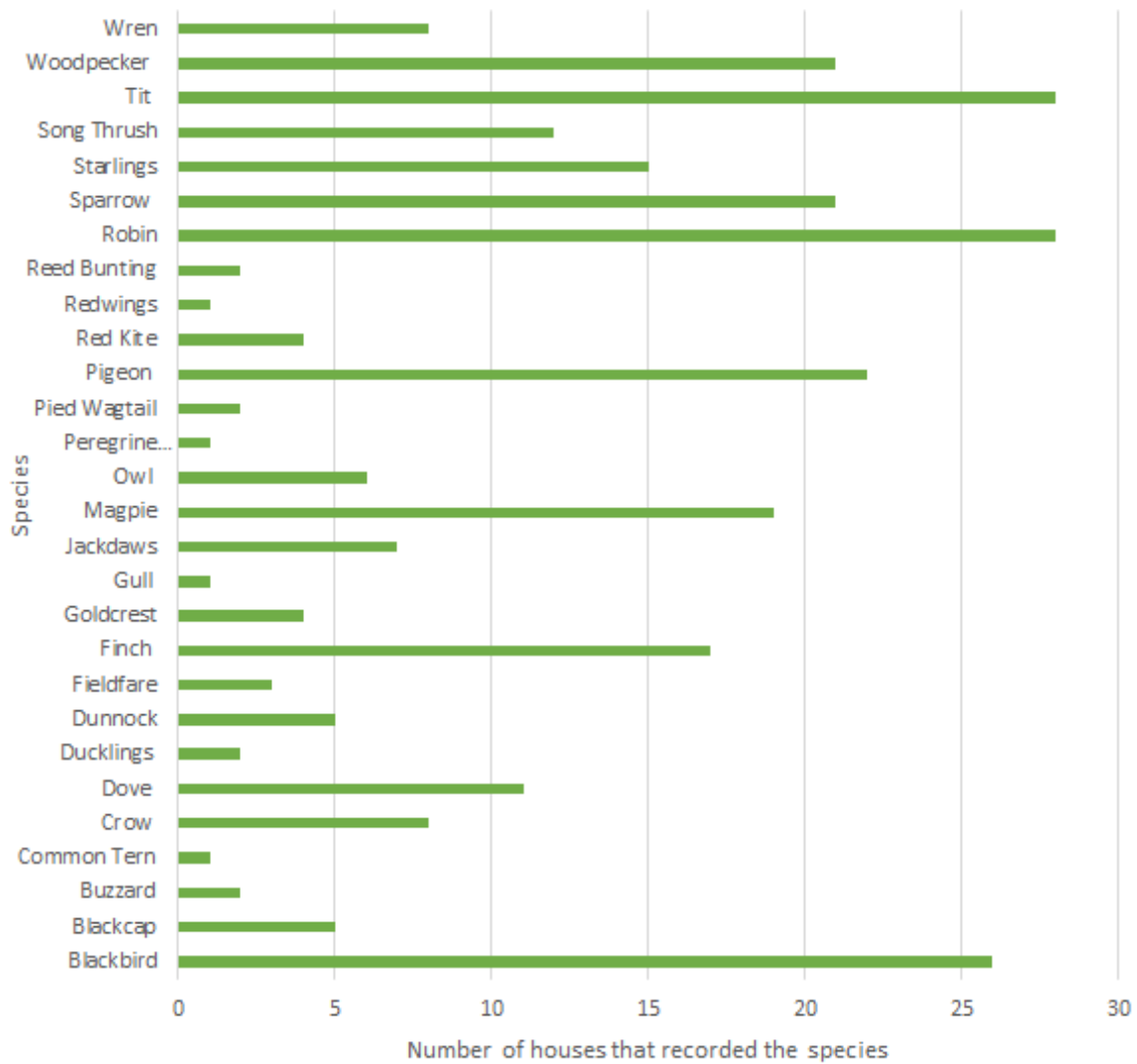
ANNEX 2. Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and Plan Structure



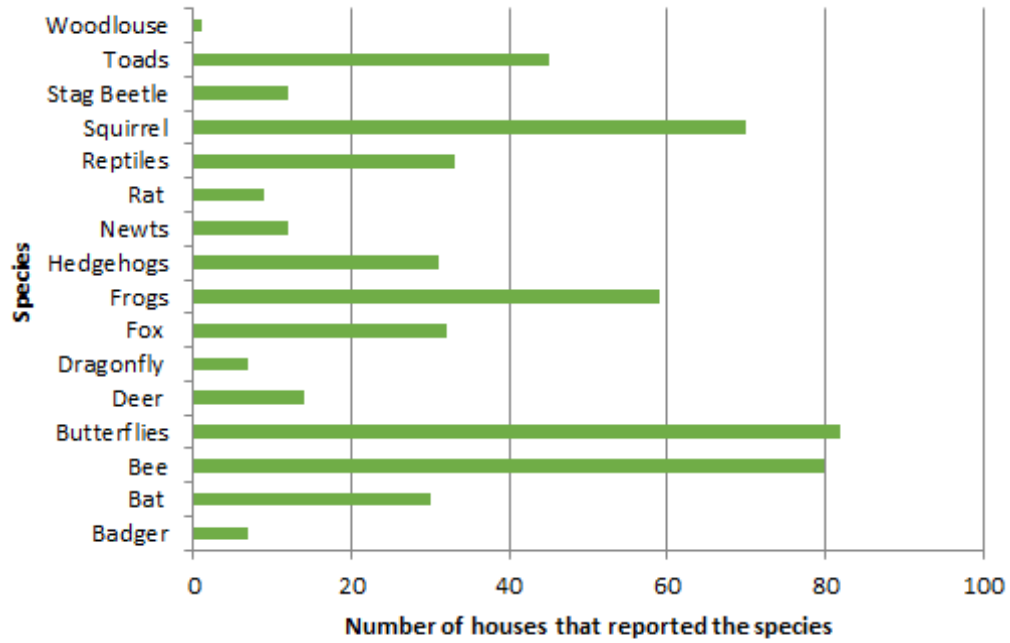
ANNEX 3. Process for developing the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (attached)

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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