

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 22 January 2025  
**Report of:** Executive Director - Development  
**Title of Report:** Redesignation of the Neighbourhood Forum for Headington

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To redesignate the Neighbourhood Forum for Headington
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning & Cycling Champion
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Support Thriving Communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	A pleasant place to live, delivering housing with a mixed and balanced community; Providing communities with facilities and services and ensuring Oxford is a vibrant and enjoyable city to live in and visit.

<b>Recommendation(s):</b> That Cabinet resolves to:
1. <b>Approve</b> the redesignation of Headington Neighbourhood Forum in respect of the originally designated neighbourhood area to which it related.

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Maps of the designated neighbourhood area that the forum re-designation relates to
Appendix 2	Application received for the redesignation of the Headington Neighbourhood Forum
Appendix 3	Risk Register
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment

## Introduction and background

1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to enable communities to get directly involved in planning for their areas. Neighbourhood Planning allows interested communities to come together through a Neighbourhood Forum to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Once a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted or 'made' it will become part of the statutory development plan, and therefore an important consideration when making decisions on planning applications. Neighbourhood Forums however only last for five years and at the end of the period need to be formally redesignated.
2. The Neighbourhood Area for Headington was approved by City Executive Board (CEB) on 23rd April 2014. The designation of the neighbourhood forum for Headington was approved by CEB on March 2013. Section 61F(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the 1990 Act) provides that a designation of a neighbourhood forum ceases to have effect five years after the date it was designated, therefore in February 2020, the City Executive Board approved the redesignation of the Forum and Neighbourhood Area for Headington. Five years on from this date is February 2025 and therefore redesignation is required again.
3. Cabinet is asked to consider the redesignation of this Neighbourhood Forum which has been in existence for over a decade and has adopted its own Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Forum applications must link to a designated neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood area and forum applications relate to Headington. These are identical to those originally designated and shown in Appendix 1.
4. Planning regulations set out the requirements for the designation of a neighbourhood forum and their redesignation is required to go through the same process. The neighbourhood forum application received (see Appendix 2) should be judged against these criteria. The proposed neighbourhood forum has been subject to public consultation on the City Council's website. The consultation was advertised via a press release and the Neighbourhood Forum group were notified along with other relevant stakeholders.

### **Compliance with planning regulations**

5. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 specify the criteria that must be met and included in neighbourhood forum applications –
  - the name of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
  - a copy of the written constitution of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
  - the name of the neighbourhood area to which the application relates and a map which identifies the area;
  - the contact details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum to be made public under regulations 9 and 10; and
  - a statement which explains how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F(5) of the 1990 Act.

6. The Neighbourhood Planning regulations as mentioned above also state that a local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority are satisfied that it meets the following conditions:
- It is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned (whether or not it is also established for the express purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in such as area).
  - Its membership is open to:
    - individuals who live in the neighbourhood area concerned;
    - individuals who work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise); and
    - individuals who are elected members of a county council, district council or London Borough any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned.
  - Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom:
    - lives in the neighbourhood area concerned;
    - works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise); or
    - is an elected member of a county council, district council or London Borough Council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned
  - it has a written constitution.
7. The application received is attached in Appendix 2. A map is provided that shows the designated neighbourhood area the forum application relates to (Appendix 1). Information is provided for each application and within the existing constitution for the respective neighbourhood forums to show that the conditions outlined above are met. Each is established for the purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area; has an open membership; includes more than 21 members (ward councillors having all been involved) and has a written constitution that endorses all these requirements.

### **Consultation details**

8. The City Council has a statutory requirement to publicise for 6 weeks any qualifying applications received to redesignate a neighbourhood forum. The public consultation period took place between Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October to Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The requirement is to advertise the application to those that live, work, or run a business in the area.
9. The receipt of the forum application was published with the intention of raising awareness within and around the relevant areas. The comments were published on the City Council's website and sent to the neighbourhood forum. In addition, the City Council's communications team published a press release and relevant local groups were also notified. In total, there were 18 responses to the Headington Neighbourhood forum redesignation, summarised as follows:

- 9 respondents were in support of the redesignation.
- 4 responses were from statutory bodies (Historic England, Natural England, National Highways, Canal & Rivers Trust) which were general remarks and no specific comments on the redesignation application.
- 5 respondents called for the neighbourhood area to be extended to include Wood Farm.
- 1 respondent raised queries on the reporting on the utilisation and disbursement of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

10. The responses have been considered alongside the other matters in this report and the comments will be shared with the Neighbourhood Forum. None of the comments received change the fact the forum meets the statutory legislation and the criteria required.

### **Financial Implications**

11. The City Council is obliged to offer a certain degree of help to groups as they produce their plans. As well as this, the City Council must consult on draft plans, organise an examination and run the Referendum. Given that both plans have been adopted over a number of years ago the Planning Policy team has already met these requirements. It is possible that in time the forums will wish to review their plans and costs could be incurred as such. However, grants from central government to district councils for each neighbourhood plan provide support for this.

12. The adoption of the neighbourhood plan has meant that the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy receipts generated within the forum area and spent locally increases from 15 to 25%.

### **Legal issues**

13. Officers consider that the information provided by the neighbourhood groups is adequate to show that the statutory requirements for the redesignation of neighbourhood forums are met.

### **Level of risk**

14. The Risk Register is attached as Appendix 3. There are no abnormal risks.

### **Equalities impact**

15. There are no area of concerns for any of the outlined areas listed on the Full Equalities Impact Assessment form (Appendix 4). Making this decision will not negatively impact anyone with protected characteristics or human rights issues and legislation.

### **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

16. Once designated, Neighbourhood Forums can produce Neighbourhood Plans which can address specific environmental considerations within their neighbourhood areas in line with the City Council's existing environmental policies and guidelines.

<b>Report author</b>	Arome Agamah
Job title	Senior Planner
Service area or department	Planning and Regulatory Services
Telephone	x2360
e-mail	<a href="mailto:aagamah@oxford.gov.uk">aagamah@oxford.gov.uk</a>

<b>Background Papers:</b> None

This page is intentionally left blank