

To: Cabinet
Date: 15 April 2026
Report of: Director of Planning Services and Regulation
Title of Report: Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan

| Summary and recommendations | |
|---|--|
| Purpose of report: | Cabinet is requested to recommend to Council to agree to “make” the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan |
| Key decision: | Yes- affects more than one ward |
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture |
| Corporate Priority: | Support Thriving Communities |
| Policy Framework: | Once approved at referendum, the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory development plan and should be used to assess planning applications in the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area. |
| Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to recommend that Council: | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Make” the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan (set out in Appendix 1 of this report). The Plan has been approved at referendum it and now forms part of the statutory development plan in helping to determine planning applications for the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area. The ‘making’ of the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan would formalise this process in line with the relevant legislation. 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan prior to final publication. This will include a final desktop published version of the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan. | |

| Appendix No. | Appendix Title | Exempt from Publication |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 (referendum version) | No |
| Appendix 2 | Risk register | No |

Introduction and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the 'making' of the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1).
2. 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 parish council or Neighbourhood Forum to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan comes into force as part of the development plan once it has been approved at referendum and it is therefore an important consideration when making decisions on planning applications from that date. The Council has 8 weeks from the date of the referendum to "make" the plan if approved at referendum.
3. There are detailed statutory requirements for the process both prior to the referendum taking place and once the plan has been approved at referendum.
4. The draft Neighbourhood Plan was submitted on behalf of Littlemore Parish Council on 5th October 2024. The content of the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan was developed under the direction of a Working Group appointed by the Parish Council. The Plan area was formally designated as a Neighbourhood Area on 15th August 2017 and comprises of the entire area within the Littlemore Parish boundaries.
5. Cabinet, at their meeting on 9th April 2025, granted approval to officers to proceed with the independent examination of the Littlemore Neighbourhood plan and also delegated the Director of Planning and Regulation authorisation to proceed with the referendum.
6. The City Council appointed an independent Examiner to examine whether the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and whether the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum. They submitted a report on 1st August 2025 which recommended a series of modifications so that the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan is able to comply with the 'basic conditions' and other relevant statutory provisions, and that the draft plan as modified can be submitted for referendum.
7. Having considered the recommendations made by the examiner's report, and the reasons for them, the Director of Planning and Regulation took the delegated decision to accept the modifications made to the submitted draft plan and proceed to the referendum stage within a reasonable timescale.

The referendum

8. On Thursday 29 January 2026, the referendum on the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan took place. The question asked of residents within the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan Area was:

Do you want Oxford City Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Littlemore to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

The results were as follows:

- Votes in favour of adopting the neighbourhood plan (Yes): **547**
- Votes against adopting the neighbourhood plan (No): 79

(Turnout: 13.5%)

Oxford City Council's responsibility following the referendum

9. As more than half of those voting in the referendum voted in favour of the Plan the Council has a duty to 'make' the plan. This is a legislative requirement (*Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 s38A (4a)(as amended)*).
10. Oxford City Council would not be under a duty to 'make' the Plan if they consider that the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998) (*Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 s38A(6)*). This is not considered to be the case and therefore the Council has a duty to 'make' the Plan.
11. Officers are satisfied that the Neighbourhood Development Plan has been supported by the community and recognise the hard work undertaken by the Littlemore Parish Council through their Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to get to this position.

Environmental Impact

12. A combined Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Statement, has been submitted as part of the supporting evidence to the examination. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has concluded that none of the policies within the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have adverse effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SEA / HRA Screening Opinion was previously sent to the Statutory Consultees, including the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. As no site allocations have been proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that an SEA is not required. The statutory bodies also concurred with this conclusion.

Financial implications

13. The Community Infrastructure Regulations (CIL) (Regulation 59A) requires the charging authority, Oxford City Council, to pass 15% of CIL receipts (known as the Neighbourhood Portion) within the area where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was generated to the parish council.
14. Once the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy receipts generated locally that must be passed to the parish council increases from 15% to 25%. This increase would apply in respect of planning permissions granted after the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made'.
15. The Neighbourhood Portion of the levy can be spent by the parish council to support the development of the parish council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.

Legal issues

16. Under Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Oxford City Council has a statutory duty to support the neighbourhood planning process. Timely decision taking is important particularly at the start and at the end of the process and certain decisions must be taken within prescribed time periods. These are set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as

amended). Importantly, Councils must now “make” a neighbourhood plan within 8 weeks of a “yes” vote at Referendum.

17. The scheduling of the next available Council meeting on 13 July 2026 would mean that the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan would not be ‘made’ within the 8-week period as prescribed in the regulations referred to in the previous paragraph. Whilst this is not ideal, unfortunately it cannot be avoided. The Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan comes into force as part of the development plan for the area concerned following its approval at referendum. Given that the delay in formally ‘making’ the Plan does not impact on the timing of when it comes into effect, the implications in not meeting this 8 week timeframe are considered to be negligible.

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

18. There are no direct impacts anticipated by the ongoing local government reorganisation. The regulatory framework governing neighbourhood plans would not be affected by changes in the local authority structure, and there would be no administrative boundary changes at parish level that would follow directly as a result of the reorganisation. Policies within the neighbourhood plan would remain statutory planning policies for the plan area.

Level of risk

19. The Risk Register is attached as Appendix 2.

Equalities impact

20. Consideration has been given to the public sector equality duty imposed by s149 of the Equalities Act 2010. An equalities impact assessment of the plan was carried out prior to examination. Having paid due regard to the need to meet the objectives of that duty the view is taken that the duty is met.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Report author | Arome Agamah |
| Job title | Senior Planning Officer |
| Service area or department | Planning Policy |
| Telephone | 01865 332360 |
| e-mail | aagamah@oxford.gov.uk |

Background Papers: None