

WOLVERCOTE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
FORUM

DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2018 - 2033

FOR EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

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1. Welcome to the Draft Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

The ability to create Neighbourhood Plans was created by the Localism Act 2011. They are used to decide the future of the places where people live and work, giving opportunities to:

- choose where people want new homes, shops and offices to be built;
- have a say on what new development should look like; and
- encourage the granting of planning permission for the new buildings or developments you want to see go ahead.

The purpose of this document is to enable the community to be consulted on the draft Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). This 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 on the Plan are open throughout the Plan preparation process.

2. Introduction for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum (WNF) represents Wolvercote Ward residents in planned developments for the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Area. This area covers the whole of Wolvercote Ward, not just what might traditionally be thought of as Wolvercote village.

3. 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 (Oxford City Council) assessment of housing and other development needs in the area.

However, it 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, the project requires leadership. Where Town and Parish Councils do not cover an area, the Localism Act (2011) has given that leadership role to Neighbourhood Forums. These are community groups that are designated to take forward neighbourhood

planning in areas where there are no Parish or Town Councils. It is the role of the local planning authority (Oxford City Council) to agree who should be the Neighbourhood Forum for the Neighbourhood Area. In this instance, Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum is the designated body to develop the Neighbourhood Plan.

This carries significant responsibility in terms of producing a plan that is representative of the community. The way in which the process is led and implemented will need to secure confidence from the community in the Wolvercote area and those organisations and businesses that serve their needs. Confidence in the process and support for the outcomes will be more certain by starting this process in a demonstrably transparent way and continuing in that way through all stages of plan preparation.

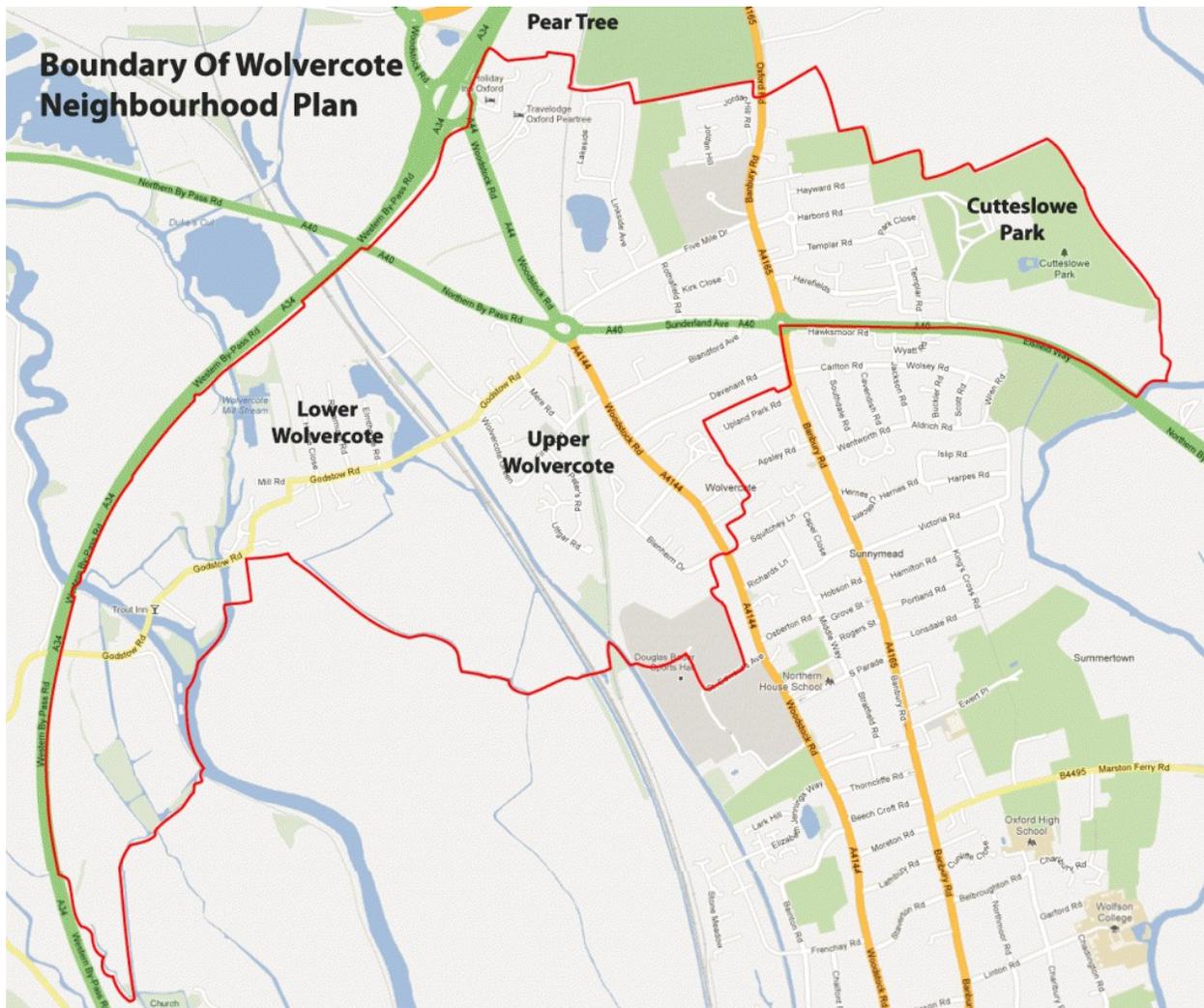
A Neighbourhood Forum can do this by:

- 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 respond 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.

4. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and Plan Area

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum is the designated body for developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wolvercote (the Plan). It was designated by Oxford City Council in January 2014. The Forum has been established as an organisation whose purpose is to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. The Forum's structure is set out in Annex 1.

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, or travel through Wolvercote. WNF also has a responsibility to be mindful of the impacts of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan on the neighbouring parishes, city areas, and other neighbourhood forums.

5. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033

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 2018 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 2033.

The Plan which WNF is producing is a spatial plan which has 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 strategic 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 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.

6. 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 did 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 communities now have 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 look to 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 be used to make decisions on all planning matters coming forward in Wolvercote and its adjoining areas (in relation to development proposals that may have a potential impact upon the Wolvercote area and its community).

Given the range of issues that the Wolvercote community faces, having a Neighbourhood Plan provides a fantastic 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.

7. 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 2.

8. 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 1).

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

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. Research is needed to establish if there are sufficient local facilities in some areas of the Ward (e.g. between Woodstock Road and Banbury Road and to the north of Sunderland Avenue). Facilities (social, sports, worship 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 of 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 the City’s policy on Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). Land should be made available for specialized 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. Also 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 nearby buildings or groups of buildings of historical significance, whether listed buildings and/or within 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 should encourage 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 will require 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, Goose Green and Port Meadow,

the Plan will support 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 will seek 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 will seek 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.

9. 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

Throughout the whole Plan development process, the achievement of sustainable development has been embedded within policy formulation. At the heart of our 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.

10. Delivering the Plan

Delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan will take place through two distinct elements:

Firstly, the Spatial Planning Policies as set out from section 12 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 also identified a number of Community Policies and Projects, which are also set out from section 12 below. These Policies and Projects cannot be delivered through development (i.e. when planning applications are made) and therefore will need to be delivered directly by WNF, or by WNF working with partners/stakeholders. WNF will seek to deliver these through working with external organizations, or accessing funding.

11. Why consult on a Neighbourhood Plan?

The consultation process which neighbourhood plans need to 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 has produced a draft Plan, as set out in this document, to enable the formal consultation process to proceed.

WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DRAFT POLICIES

12. Green Spaces and Biodiversity (GB)

The aim of the Green Spaces and Biodiversity policies are to protect and enhance green space and biodiversity for residents' well-being. Green space should be maintained to mitigate the effects of climate change. Public green space should be available for recreational purposes (including playgrounds, allotments, etc.) to 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

Policy GBS1 – Publicly Accessible Green Space

All existing public access green space in the Plan Area as shown on the Green Spaces Plan will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced 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:

- **a public access green space(s) of an equivalent size and amenity as near as possible to the original in the Plan Area is provided; or**
- **access to the public of existing private green space(s) of an equivalent size and amenity is provided as near as possible to the original in the Plan Area.**

Port Meadow, Wolvercote Common and Wolvercote Green are designated as Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), as well as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM). GG, The Playing Field in Lower Wolvercote village, and the land on which the surgery stands, are designated as common land. Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green and GG have no registered owner under the Commons Act 1965.

Areas of green belt form are also very important sanctuaries of biodiversity. Care must be taken at the edges of the Green Belt, which could gradually be lost to development.

Policy GBS2 – Green Belt and Designated Common Land

Development will not be permitted on any green space designated as Common land or any land designated as 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.

While Wolvercote cemetery is full, it 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, OUP Sports Ground, Banbury Road North Recreation Ground) should remain as areas of public amenity, and be protected from development.

All new developments of more than 10 dwellings should include children’s play areas that are safe, and nearby (within 100m).

Policy GBS4 – Allotments

Existing and designated allotment land will be retained. Proposals that seek to increase the number of allotments in the Plan Area or extend existing allotment sites will be encouraged. Allotments should be provided in accordance with current City Council Policy as a minimum.

New development should result in no net loss in the number of trees and hedges. Any work likely to result in the removal of trees or hedges would ideally be subject to planning permission. Private gardens are an important characteristic of the Plan Area. They form an extensive network of habitats and wildlife corridors throughout Wolvercote.

Any development affecting private gardens should ensure that the visual and physical connectivity of private green space provided by gardens is maintained; and the enhancement of biodiversity and of green space corridors should be fully taken into consideration.

In granting planning permission, the importance of private gardens to the overall green character of the Plan area should be taken into consideration.

Policy GBS5 – Biodiversity

Development proposals that seek to conserve and enhance land which has a significant wildlife or ecological value will be approved.

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 any future policy in a subsequent development plan document will not be permitted, unless the developer can demonstrate that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss, and this loss can be mitigated for and compensated for elsewhere within the Plan Area by providing a replacement habitat on an equivalent or higher ecological value.

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 Plan Area:

- 1. Development proposals which increase public access green space and enhance biodiversity within the Plan Area will be approved, including incorporation of biodiversity in and around developments.**
- 2. Significant 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 Biodiversity Enhancement Plans which include the provision of measures to increase the biodiversity of the site and provide arrangements for their maintenance.**

The Plan favours the provision of public access green space on site. However, where it can be demonstrated that public access green space cannot be provided on site as part of significant developments, then alternative public access green space must be provided as near as possible to the original in the Plan Area. This can be in the form of an extension or enhancement of existing public access green space within the Plan Area.

GB COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy GBC1 – Wildlife Corridors

Grass verges must be properly maintained with a view to the protection of biodiversity and as wildlife corridors. Appropriate planting should be carried out on verges, with a view to increasing the number of pollinating insects. The importance of trees and shrubs in the reduction of air pollution and temperature should be reflected in new developments. Trees and hedges on verges should be retained, and street planting should be an important part of new developments, with proper arrangements made for their maintenance.

Policy GBC2 – Cemeteries

Wolvercote and other cemeteries must remain places of quiet contemplation and respect, free from intrusive development. Cemeteries should be managed with biodiversity in mind.

All of the waterways and the surrounding paths 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.

Policy GBC3 – Watercourses and associated land

The Oxford Canal should be retained for recreational use and appropriate maintenance of the towpath, Wolvercote Lock and bridges undertaken accordingly.

The River Thames and Mill Stream should be conserved as a recreational waterway and as an important resource for wildlife and biodiversity.

The Wolvercote Picnic Site (previously the Bathing Place) should be retained as a publicly accessible site, and maintained, together with the fencing, to prevent the ingress of grazing cattle and horses.

Policy GBC4 – New designated local green spaces

Cotteslowe and Sunnymead Parks will be designated as local green spaces.

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 this function must be permeable.

13. 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 be prevented. 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 encouraged. Where proposals for development on Greenfield sites are submitted, a written justification of why the development has not been proposed on a Brownfield site will be required.

In the Wolvercote NPA air pollution is largely caused by motor vehicles powered by internal combustion engines. Private car and goods traffic continues to grow, 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 worst at peak times, when traffic is often slow moving or stationary.

Development proposals may be effective in reducing the impact of traffic using that particular development through the creation of travel plans and design, but where traffic levels are already high, it is questionable whether they would have any overall effect.

The long-term goal should be for air pollution to be reduced to agreed limits. This will take some time and in the meantime people's health is suffering. 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 and 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 should not be allowed. If in the future air pollution levels can be brought down locally to acceptable levels a review of the planning application could be made.

Policy BES2 – Air Pollution

Residential development will not be permitted where, at the time of the application, air pollution levels are found to be above levels considered injurious to health, as defined by The World Health Organisation. All such proposals will need to provide evidence concerning the present state of air quality conditions at peak times and demonstrate how developments will offset any additional adverse impacts.

This policy deals with noise pollution largely caused by traffic noise, such as tyre noise from motor vehicles and engine noise from some internal combustion engines. 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.

The means commonly used to minimize noise intrusion are numerous, ranging from the broader infrastructure level (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 the more local level of individual buildings (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 broad level, they will also be expected at the localized level to design the layouts and construction of the development itself for the aural comfort of residents and workers.

Aural comfort needs to be considered with health and well-being. Therefore developers will be expected to deploy a number of measures, working together. It will not be 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.

A condition of any planning consent for buildings of whatever size located near to a trunk road or roads will be the presentation by the developer to the planning authority of an acoustic report by a reputable consultant detailing the noise mitigation measures that will be deployed in that development.

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 not only while they are in their homes, but also whilst in their private gardens or yards.

Demolishing a building which can be repaired or converted is unsustainable, however current vat laws discourage this.

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

Where possible, refurbishment and conversion will be preferred to demolition and rebuilding.

“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 Neighbourhood Area, existing houses were built in a variety of styles, a few dating back to the 16th Century, but most built post war. In the Neighbourhood Area they are generally two storeys high. Attic conversions taking houses to 3 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.

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 OCC Sites and Housing Plan HP9. This may include consideration of aspects such as bulk, materials, scale, siting use, layout, form, design and intensity of activity within the built environment and setting of the Plan Area. Where development is within or close to existing built-up areas, most buildings should be two storeys high and none more than three storeys. Where development is adjacent to major roads and railway lines, they may be taller, particularly where they are partly intended to function as barriers to noise from the transport infrastructure, provided that the existing sight lines are considered and respected. The privacy of occupants of adjacent lower buildings, especially dwellings, must be respected.

Where development proposals are required to submit a Design and Access Statement, they will be expected to demonstrate how their design and layout responds to the local character of the area.

There is an increasing demand for HMOs, reflected in the need for control in the Local Plan.

The mix of dwelling sizes and types should reflect current local need and should be reviewed every five years. The strategic policies on HMOs, set out by the Local Authority, should be reviewed regularly in consultation with the local community.

On large developments land should be set aside for less mainstream types of dwelling, such as those that would accommodate single people living communally rather than alone. Such accommodation will provide shared facilities and will have car-parking allowances additional to those allocated to family homes of equivalent size.

Policy BES6 – HMOs and Mix of Dwellings

Provision should be made in new developments for people who want to share accommodation (but not students, who are expected to be catered for elsewhere in the City). An allowance for this should be made in the Mix of Dwellings for the development.

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 BES7 – Affordable, Specialised 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.

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 and must make specific provision for the elderly, such as bungalows, sheltered housing and extra care housing. Proposals within developments, depending on scale, which provide for warden controlled dwellings and nursing home care facilities, will be favourably considered.

Policy BES8 – Developer Contributions

Where the need is identified, new development must provide appropriate new facilities and infrastructure onsite and fund or directly deliver offsite facilities as required by the Oxford City Council core strategy policy and those identified by Oxfordshire County Council.

Development should be phased in tandem with the timely provision of infrastructure to help support sustainable growth.

Parts of the Plan area are adjacent to the Cherwell River and the Thames. Much is on the flood plain and residents of Oxford have often experienced the results of historic building on the flood plain. To reduce the risk of surface water flooding, minimum contribution to water run-off is therefore required along with the need to facilitate maximum infiltration into the soil.

Therefore all developments will be required to adopt best practice. Developers will need to be sure that the foul sewerage system is sufficient to cope with a large development by 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 BES9 – Drainage and Flooding

All proposed developments will be required to demonstrate that they do not decrease rain water infiltration. Those which demonstrate that they increase infiltration, or reduce run-off to watercourses, will be encouraged. All run off water should be infiltrated into the ground with permeable surfaces (SUDS), or using 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 of existing property resulting from the new development

Any new development on brownfield sites, regardless of type and size, in areas likely to be flooded must incorporate flood resilience techniques in design and construction

There should be no new development on green field sites in areas likely to be flooded.

BE COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy BEC1 – Planning Watch System

No new development of any kind shall be considered by the planning authority without 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' first published in 1961 by the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

Policy BEC2 – Space Standards

Improved interior space standards should be introduced for all new dwellings, and these standards should be made mandatory and will be encouraged. 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 significantly influence in a positive way the local environment, so that it becomes an asset to the Neighbourhood Area. 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 – Development Layout

New buildings should be laid out on site for the benefit of both new and existing residents, both to safeguard privacy by minimising overlooking, and to maximize natural light within dwellings and gardens. Living rooms with a northerly aspect in new dwellings should be avoided.

The Local Authority will be encouraged to introduce 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 design codes.

All buildings are expected to conform to the national Building Regulations and 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. Proposals for properties need to embrace appropriate pre-installed fittings, effective forms of internet connection to enable devices for “smart home living”, which could be part of energy efficiency improvements.

14. Commerce

Background

At present, Wolvercote does not have a wealth of commercial activities within its boundary.

Within Wolvercote, at the 2011 census, 3,111 adults were recorded as economically active, which represented 73.4% of the population above the national average of 69.9%. Of these, 13.5% of these were self-employed, well above the national average of 9.8%.

It has a number of small centres providing retail services to the local community as well as a number of office and workshop activities. A higher proportion of residents, than found in many areas, work from home.

Also, it has four public houses, three hotels and several guest houses. All of the public houses are situated in the village of Wolvercote in the western half of the neighbourhood plan area.

It should be noted that in the village, the two shops, one being a post office, the other having been a post office, have struggled to survive in recent years and yet they are a lifeline for many. One of the public houses has become a community pub and is also facing challenges to survive.

CO COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy COC1 – Existing Businesses

Every encouragement should be given to retain the number of existing business outlets, including post offices. Where possible, there could be small enhancements in already developed areas to ensure sufficient services are available to local residents. There should be no change of use that could introduce nuisance through extra noise and traffic.

Policy COC2 – Transport to Employment Areas

Safe and separated footpaths and cycleways must be provided to and within major employment areas, with adequate and suitable cycle parking, to help reduce vehicular traffic movements.

Policy COC3 – Large Commercial Areas

Good public transport with sufficient links to transport hubs and residential areas need to be available to and from the larger commercial areas within the plan's boundaries.

Policy COC4 – Economic Development

Any economic growth development must meet the requirements of the relevant Local Plan and other development plan policies.

Policy COC5 – Northern Gateway

The new employment activities designated for the Northern Gateway should provide a mix of job opportunities and be self-supporting as much as possible.

15. Community, Transport and Health

The aim of these policies is to promote and encourage a more vibrant, healthy and well-balanced community. The Plan looks to ensure that the community of this area has the most appropriate services, community facilities, and most suitable housing to meet the needs of residents through all stages of their lives, and that will 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 5 geographically separate areas immediately identifiable as distinct and having different characteristics (see segments of the WNF logo). Their populations are each of sufficient size to justify local provision of basic facilities. 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.

CH STRATEGIC POLICIES

Policy CHS1 – Community Connectivity

Development proposals which seek to expand or improve community connectivity will be supported, subject to appropriate consideration as to the impact upon adjoining properties.

Policy CHS2 – Community and Medical Facilities

Developers of properties of 100 or more dwellings will be expected to pay for any improvements necessary to upgrade existing community and medical facilities so present communities are not disadvantaged due to increased demand for services. Additional community meeting halls and social facilities to encourage community integration will also be required.

Policy CHS3 – Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Community housing development proposals must include a suitable number of charging points for electric vehicles.

Policy CHS4 – Safe Access Routes

All developers must contribute to safe access routes between schools, community facilities and new homes, regardless of the size of the development.

Developers of 100 or more dwellings will be expected to pay for improvements to cycle ways, road crossings and junction access to roads approaching the development site.

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. There should be no reduction in parking spaces for existing residents.

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 Design and Access Statement will be expected to state whether car-free 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 – 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.

Policy CHC2 – Cycling Infrastructure

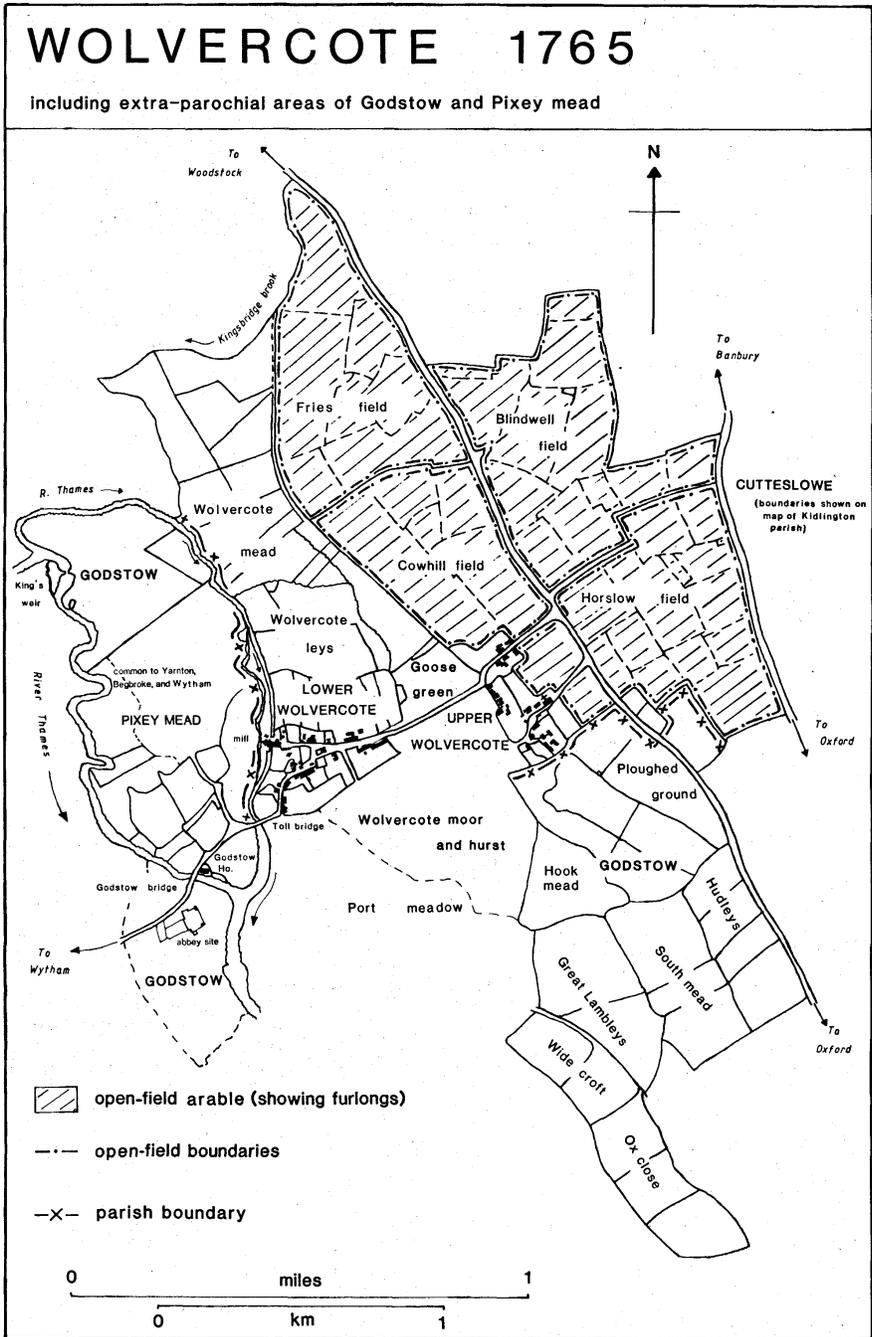
Encouragement of walking and cycling must be made through dedicated cycle tracks and foot paths and provision of secure and sheltered cycle racks and storage.

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.

16. Heritage

Introduction

Wolvercote started as an ancient parish lying to the north-west and about 2.5 miles from the city centre of Oxford. It contained two settlements, Upper and Lower Wolvercote with the adjoining extra-parochial areas of Godstow, Cutteslowe, King's Weir, and Pixey Mead being incorporated in the later 19th century. Parts were absorbed into the city and the whole of the parish became part of Oxford in 1929, at which point it lost its parish status.



The current area contained within the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan is rich in heritage, both in buildings and numerous open spaces and their various settings.

It stretches from Godstow Abbey in the west to Cutteslowe Manor Farmhouse in the east and is made up of several distinctive parts all with their own characteristics.

It includes three scheduled monuments, several grade II listed buildings and many other buildings considered worthy of care and protection, including Godstow Lock and several bridges.

A designated conservation area exists covering parts of Godstow, Lower and Upper Wolvercote.

We have identified 5 distinct areas (Lower Wolvercote, Upper Wolvercote with the Woodstock Road Area, the Lakes, Jordan Hill, Templar Road Area) within Wolvercote. With help from Oxford Brookes University students, we are carrying out a character assessment for each street in these areas.

HE STRATEGIC POLICIES

Policy HES1 – Local Character

Development should be appropriate in scale and material to the neighbouring built environment as set out in the Character Assessments of the local area.

Policy HES2 – Infilling

The replacement of large residential dwellings and associated gardens through infilling will not be supported where it has a detrimental effect on the character of the area.

HE COMMUNITY POLICIES

Policy HEC1 - Historic Buildings

Measures to protect and enhance the historic buildings and street landscape within Wolvercote will be identified and implemented.

Policy HEC2 – Conservation Area

The current Conservation Area with Oxford City Council will be reviewed to ensure that it is sufficiently robust. The area will be further enhanced through various measures, including the use of traditional materials, improving or removing street furniture and replacing dying trees as necessary.

Policy HEC3 – Local Heritage

The Forum will promote the heritage of Wolvercote by improving the knowledge of local people and visitors and, by giving it greater prominence, providing support to the local economy.

(Continuing to work with Oxford University, the Ashmolean Museum, the Oxford Preservation Trust and others to further explore the historic legacy of Wolvercote).

ANNEX 1 – Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and Plan Structure

ANNEX 2 - Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Process