

Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan

Terms of Reference

1. PURPOSE OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Neighbourhood Development Plans come out of the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions which affect them. The idea being that local people will drive, and then help to shape, how their local communities grow and develop over the next coming years.

2. THE WHEATLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND COMMITTEE

- i. The Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) includes Wheatley and the Oxford Brookes site in the Parish of Holton.
- ii. The WNP Committee includes representatives of Wheatley and Holton together with residents, community and businesses organisations and other stakeholders.
- iii. The purpose of the WNP Committee is to;
 - a. Design, manage and produce the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan (including any revisions as a result of the on-going consultation process).
 - b. Progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum.
 - c. Work with the Wheatley Parish Council and cooperate with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) for the WNP to be adopted and become planning policy. Officers from SODC will be able to assist the group but will not be full members.

3. THE ROLE OF THE WNP COMMITTEE

In summary to achieve its objectives the WNP Committee will:

- i. Elect a Chair and Deputy Chair from the Committee members. Both the Chair and Deputy shall remain in that position following their election until completion of the project. If this is not possible then suitable notice is required.
- ii. Meet on a regular basis (at least once per month) and at key stages in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. WNP Committee meetings will be called by the Chair or their absence the Deputy Chair. The dates and regularity of meetings will be set by the WNP Committee depending on the stage of the process and workload.
- iii. Establish working groups (teams) and identify a leader to represent the team at WNP Committee meetings or nominate a representative. If a member of the WNP Committee or WNP Team is unable to attend a meeting they should arrange for a substitute to attend in their place.
- iv. Receive agenda papers for meetings at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. Any documents which are to be considered / discussed prior to a meeting should be circulated at least 5 working days prior to a meeting.
- v. Record minutes of all meetings (responsibility of the Minutes Secretary). These will be kept on file for reference and available to the Independent Examiner and members of the public. Draft minutes of meetings will be circulated following each meeting after clearance by the Chair; any matters arising should be emailed to the Chair 3 working days prior to the next scheduled WNP Committee meeting.
- vi. Agree a programme of community engagement and public consultation at appropriate stages to ensure that the information gathered is representative of those living within the community.
- vii. Prepare a road map supported by a WNP project plan, governance procedures, standard templates to be used and feedback progress to the Wheatley Parish Council and other key stakeholders as to achievement of timescales and objectives.

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- viii. Agree the Tasks, Terms of Reference and Roles and Responsibilities of the WNP Committee and WNP focus groups/teams.
- ix. Have regard to relevant national policies, strategic policies of the SODC, EU and Human Rights legislation.
- x. Ensure planning related documentation complies with the SODC Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and is appropriate for adoption and, if required, conduct a sustainability assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) or Habitat Regulation Assessments (HEA).
- xi. Submit the final WNP for independent examination by the SODC, the referendum and terms of adoption.
- xii. Once adopted by SODC make recommendations for a managed handover of the final WNP for implementation.
- xiii. Agree financial arrangements and budgetary control procedures with the Wheatley Parish Council.

4. THE WNP COMMITTEE IS TO ENSURE THERE IS:

- i. Access to existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Parish, commission and any technical evidence, e.g. housing and infrastructure needs to support the development of a neighbourhood plan, and identify gaps.
- ii. "An effective on-going community engagement and public consultation, with all segments of the community. This must ensure a comprehensive evidence base is gathered from all stakeholders and documented, to ensure the final WNP is representative of those residing and working in the community to ensure the deliverability of the project and of proposals included in the final WNP plan."
- iii. "Stakeholders will include for example residents, business and community groups, police authorities, schools, local landowners, and utility services".
- iv. Adequate communication with the Parish Council to ensure that it is fully informed throughout the process, and appropriate decisions referred to it when applicable.
- v. Appropriate analysis, interpretation and reporting of the results from community engagement and public consultation activities and ensuring that they inform decision-making (either directly, or with the aid of consultants).
- vi. An appropriate level of governance is put in place to ensure the viability of the project and of proposals included in the final plan.
- vii. Suitable monitoring of the workload and resources required and raise issues where the process is not working effectively.
- viii. An issue log is updated after each meeting by the focus group lead and submitted to the Chair. The aim is to monitor and assess issues and provide a basis to recommend how these can be addressed/ mitigated and resolved.
- ix. A process to co-opt additional members or specialist advisors to provide expertise on particular issues where required (on an-ad-hoc basis), to fill vacancies, or enhance representativeness of the WNP.
- x. A process whereby the WNP Committee may invite individuals to attend its meetings in roles such as advisers, witnesses and observers. Persons attending in these roles will not be counted as WNP Committee nor have the right to vote. Their participation in the business of the meeting will be regulated by the Chair.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE WNP COMMITTEE

Members of the WNP Committee:

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- i. Must reside in the parishes of Wheatley and Holton. A person living outside the parish but running an established local business may be invited to join, subject to there being no conflict of interest.
- ii. Must include representatives from Wheatley Parish Council and Holton Parish Council. SODC officers, as well as other agencies appointed by the Council to support the process cannot be voting members of the WNP Committee but are able to attend meetings and contribute to the discussions as required.
- iii. Need to apply strategic thinking and be willing to make decisions and recommendations on behalf of their body/ organisation committed to helping to guide the preparation of the WNP.
- iv. Need to be constructive in supporting and working on the Committee to the project, the process and its implementation.
- v. Be able and willing to work with the group, accommodating views that are different from their own, seeking consensus and accepting compromise to reach agreement on the issues before the group.
- vi. Be open minded and able to consider the whole picture, not seeking simply to promote sectional interests.
- vii. Able to attend all meetings or delegate a replacement in the event that they are unavailable.
- viii. Able to consider progress reports and work undertaken and agree appropriate course of action.
- ix. Able to agree a programme of community engagement and public consultation at appropriate stages to ensure that the information gathered is representative of those living within the community.
- x. Able to consult and co-operate with key stakeholders to ensure the deliverability of the project and of proposals included in the final WNP plan. Need to work constructively with the Parish council to ensure the plan is in conformity with the adopted development plan and in auditing the project plan or the use of any grant funding from the Parish council.
- xi. Be prepared to work with other groups/agencies in a constructive way to achieve the best outcomes for the area.

6. COMMITMENT FROM SODC OFFICERS

SODC Officers will undertake an advisory role and should seek to ensure all recommendations or outcomes of this process are in compliance with current policies and/or strategies, and are used to inform the future development of policies, strategies or direct implementation of work.

7. DECISION MAKING

- i. All members of the WNP Committee, with the exception of co-opted members e.g. SODC employees, will have an equal vote in decision making. However, it is likely that some decisions will be in the form of a recommendation to the SODC, for their consideration.
- ii. Decisions made by the WNP Committee should normally be by consensus at Committee meetings. If this is not possible then decisions will be taken by vote, with each member present having one vote and a simple majority will be required to support a decision.
- iii. A minimum of one-half of the WNP committee must be present to form a quorum and enable decisions to be taken. This shall include a representative from each working group and a Parish Councillor. The Chair, or in his absence the Deputy shall have the casting vote.

8. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Conflicts shall be recorded and the Chair shall exclude members from participating in parts of

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the meeting where a conflict has been declared. The rules for disclosure and conduct will conform to the guidance given to parish councils as local democratically elected bodies. All members will show courtesy and respect to each other.

The WNP Committee and all its proceedings and communications (including emails in whatever system) shall be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

9. CLOSURE OF THE WNP PROJECT

Once the WNP is accepted for adoption by SODC, the WNP Committee will assess and document outcomes, achievements and lessons learned and ensure working papers and documentation are lodged with the Parish Office.

Upon dissolution of the WNP Committee, the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, will discuss with Wheatley & Holton Parish Councils the allocation and distribution of any remaining funds. No individual member of the group shall benefit from the dispersal.

If the need arises to dissolve the WNP prior to completion of the project Committee members will agree by a majority vote at a WNP Committee meeting, to call a Special General Meeting for the sole purpose to dissolve the group.

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Authors / Reviewers:

Version #	Created / updated by	Purpose	Dated	Approved by
01	Cyril Newton in consultation with: John Fox, David Harverson, Andrew Johnson & Tim Davies	Draft for WNP Committee	26 Jan 2016	
02	Cyril Newton in consultation with: Paul Willmott & Rebecca Beadman	2 nd draft for WNP Committee	9 Feb 2016	