

Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan

Report to Wheatley Parish Council January 2017

1. Neighbourhood Plan Drafting Workshops

- a) Three Workshops were held in November-December, allowing 12 hours discussion to formulate the Vision and Objectives for the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan.
- b) Community representatives from Holton joined the Workshops: Doris Pridmore, Alan East, Polly Davidson, Clare Wright. Their contribution has been invaluable.
- c) Three more Workshops in January will allow up to 9 hours discussion of strategies and policies needed for the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan.
- d) The framing of policies is the sharp end of a Neighbourhood Plan. They can be formulated as principles now, even though the size timing of any Oxford Brookes U. development is undecided. Policies have to be couched in precise language which can stand a legal challenge. SODC advisors will help with the wording, but the content remains ours.
- e) Road Map. Once our Draft NP has taken its first shape (end of January), it will be passed to SODC Planning and our new NP Advisers (see **3 c**) below) for the professional wording of policies we believe the community wants, and to confirm compliance with national and District policies. This will take up much of February. We hope then to offer the Draft NP to the communities (Holton and Wheatley) in March for the required 6-week Consultation before we submit it to the Examiner.
- f) The Oxford Brookes U. site has been the focus of development talk since 31 May 2016. It should be noted that WNP Land Use and Housing Team has also investigated pockets of land potentially available in Wheatley. We have also pressed to keep alive the ‘mixed use’ proposal for the OBU site, alongside housing (*Preferred Sites, Draft LP32, June 2016*). ‘Mixed use’ was barely heard in SODC pronouncements after the summer Consultation..

2. Three Unknowns

- a) The new Bill on Local and Neighbourhood Planning went to The Lords in December after its 3rd Reading in The Commons. The intention is to streamline NPs.
- b) White Paper on Land Use due out in January. We will know more soon. (See below **3 d**)
- c) Consultations. See **4 a**) below, re. *Consultations on Preferred Sites 1 and Preferred Sites 2*.

3. SODC and WNP

- a) Neighbourhood Plan Adviser left early in August.
- b) On 7 September, at WNP request, two SODC Planning officials were questioned by WNP full Committee (and Chairman HPC). Details were minuted and sent to both Parish Councils.
- c) Again at WNP request, on 6 December, a meeting was held with SODC Chairman John Cotton and six members of WNP committee. Informal minutes were sent by WNP to both Parish Councils. We met the two new NP advisers who made an immediate impression.
- d) Local MP, SODC Chair, new NP Advisers and District NP reps (including WNP) are due to meet on 20 January for clarifications and updates. WPC / HPC will be kept informed.

4. Oxford Brookes U. Site News

- a) We still await feedback on the June-August SODC Consultation on *Preferred Sites LP32*. SODC and WNP hosted this for Wheatley/Brookes on 13 July in *The Merry Bells*. The scale of response has delayed publication until February, along with a revised *Preferred Sites (2), LP32* and further Consultation. These SODC-led Consultations are the last major community feedback which remain to be absorbed by WNP into the Plan if and where relevant.

b) OBU student and professorial involvement (*Town Planning Degree Course, Final Year Project*) in OBU site investigation. This group collaborates with full knowledge of OBU and is welcomed by WNP. The first student exhibition (findings and recommendations) was held in December and WNP members were there to respond.

c) OBU is to convene a meeting on 6 February with reps from the two parish councils and WNP. The subject will be the Environmental Impact Assessment announced in November as part of Brookes' applying for Outline Planning Permission for the site before selling.

d) Housing figures bandied around about the Oxford Brookes U. site since 31 May, ranged from '300+ - 600+' (June) to '750 maximum' (November). Parish councillors and WNP Committee members owe it to the community not to scaremonger on hypothetical or capacity-testing figures. I explained the '750' on WNP Website in November. *Real* figures will come soon enough.

5. Community Consultation.

a) results of SODC Consultation *Preferred Sites 1 LP32* and of future Consultation *Preferred Sites 2 LP32* are still in the pipeline. (See **4 a)** above.)

b) All the WNP body of evidence including surveys, consultations, group encounters and sourced information on Wheatley is being collated. It will be made available during our public Consultation (see **1 e)** above) in March before Draft WNP submission to Examination.

6. When may a Neighbourhood Plan take effect ?

Increasingly, but unpredictably, NPs are being acknowledged by Planning authorities pre-submission, that is after Examination, but before they are finalised (or 'made') by District Council and Local Referendum. After March, WNP will be approaching Examination.

My thanks go to the many people in both communities who have supported us up to now and in so many different ways. I must also name Gareth Morris, retiring Clerk to Wheatley P.C., who has been helpful beyond the call. WNP wish him a happy, fulfilled retirement.

John Fox
Chairman
Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan
3 January 2017

Copied to: HPC councillors
WNP Committee members
Holton Workshop reps