

# North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan

## Initial Scoping Report

Produced by:

North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

December 2014

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## **1. Introduction:**

Discussions about the benefits of producing a Neighbourhood Plan covering North Hinksey Parish (and potentially other surrounding areas) have occurred in a number of North Hinksey Parish Council (NHPC) meetings during 2013 and 2014 to date. In order to properly ascertain the level of support for a Neighbourhood Plan within the local community the following initial actions were carried out by NHPC:

- November 2013 - a public meeting was held to identify support for a Neighbourhood Plan and also individuals likely to be willing to carry out work in support of this. This meeting was attended by over 40 North Hinksey parishioners who showed a considerable degree of enthusiasm for this proposition and almost unanimously volunteered their services.
- A subsequent questionnaire distributed to all North Hinksey parishioners and businesses by NHPC in April 2014 produced a limited response, but those who did respond indicated their support for producing a Neighbourhood Plan with none objecting to this proposal.

Based on the above actions the NHPC unanimously agreed in their AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014 to progress further by setting up a Steering Group to initiate the Neighbourhood Plan process for the North Hinksey parish area.

## **2. Establishment of the Steering Group**

Initial guidelines for the size and make-up of the Steering Group were identified by NHPC during their AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and a number of individuals were identified who were to be asked to join the Steering Group.

It was also agreed at that stage that the number of Parish Councillors within the Steering Group should normally be limited to two and Councillors Andrew Pritchard and David Kay agreed to act as the NHPC representatives.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 the initial meeting of the North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was held. During this meeting and subsequently the Neighbourhood Plan process has been progressed as follows:

- Full Terms of Reference for the Steering Group and Working Groups have been agreed by the Steering Group and subsequently approved by NHPC. These Terms of Reference incorporated suggestions from the NHPC together with recommended content identified by Vale of White Horse District Council guidelines. Copies of both sets of Terms of Reference are attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this document.
- The possibility of including part of Cumnor Parish (Dean Court and Cumnor Hill) in this Neighbourhood Plan was discussed within the Steering Group. Following discussions with neighbouring Cumnor Parish Council, however, it was identified that they would have no wish to participate in producing a joint Neighbourhood Plan of any type. Subsequently it was agreed that the area to be designated for this Neighbourhood Plan would consist solely of the whole of North Hinksey Parish.
- It was agreed that, on the recommendation of the Vale of White Horse District Council Planning Department, further initial scoping actions would be beneficial prior to asking for designation of this area. In order to clearly identify the major issues impacting on the local community and ensure that they were primarily planning related (which would lead to the conclusion that producing a Neighbourhood Plan was the appropriate course of action) a further questionnaire was distributed in November 2014 to parishioners and local businesses (see Appendix 3). Further details relating to this questionnaire and the responses received are contained in the following section of this document.

### **3. November 2014 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire distributed to North Hinksey parishioners and local businesses in November 2014 had as a main aim the identification of those issues perceived to be most important in terms of local impact. In addition to printed forms the survey was also available online via Survey Monkey.

In order to provide a reasonably widespread list of examples a comprehensive list of all issues arising within the 2009 North Hinksey Parish Plan was added to all other issues arising subsequently within the public domain (in Parish Council meetings, in the parish magazine and community website or in other local media). This list was reduced to a more manageable level by removing all issues that were obviously no longer relevant and by combining over-detailed issues into more general categories.

As a result a total of 34 example issues under 4 categories were included in the questionnaire. In addition the identification of further issues not included within the examples plus extra details on any issues was positively encouraged throughout the questionnaire. This opportunity was eagerly grasped by many individuals who added considerable detail to their simple scoring of example issues.

Several more general questions about good and bad features of the area, and suitable and unsuitable sites for development were added in line with recommendations within Neighbourhood Planning guidelines such as the Locality Roadmap, and these too elicited a significant number of detailed responses.

Following the end of the 4 week survey period an initial analysis of the responses has been undertaken to identify major issues. Further more detailed analysis will continue over coming months to provide more information as the Neighbourhood Planning process progresses further.

#### 4. Questionnaire responses:

A total of 247 responses were received, c.45% on handwritten forms and c.55% via online submissions. Although a few households sent in several responses the vast majority only sent in one so the number of individuals represented by the responses overall was considerably larger than 247. These responses were c.94% from parishioners and c.6% from local businesses. Responses from parishioners showed a good spread of representation across all age groups and also locations, including residents of more than 40 roads.

Scoring on example issues was from 1 up to 3 for the most important issues and three levels of importance were assigned based on average scores:

- Level 1 (average score >2.33) was issues of major importance which would form the backbone of any subsequent Neighbourhood Plan.
- Level 2 (>1.67 but <2.33) was issues of importance but lesser than Level 1.
- Level 3 (<1.67) was to be issues of negligible importance not to be considered in any future plan, however none of the example issues scored that low.

Level 1 and Level 2 issues are listed in Appendix 4.

The vast majority of additional comments throughout the questionnaire were details relating to the example issues, which together with the high scores suggests that these did indeed fully reflect the concerns of the local population. Further analysis of these comments will ascertain whether any additional issues need to be added to those issues in Appendix 4 for further consideration.

Overall there were a particularly large number of comments about concerns relating to the following three topics:

- Housing and commercial overdevelopment, particularly regarding the redevelopment of the West Way retail site.
- Traffic congestion, primarily on West Way/Botley Road and the A34.
- The lack of infrastructure improvements to match growth in local population.

No doubt these three areas will feature strongly in any future plan, however the wide range of other comments show that there are many other issues, mostly of a planning nature, that will also need to be taken into consideration.

## 5. Conclusions

The public meeting and two questionnaires already issued as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process have clearly identified significant support for the idea of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for North Hinksey Parish. Over 70 individuals (including members of the Steering Group) have indicated in responses to the latest questionnaire that they would be willing to help develop a Neighbourhood Plan, which is a very healthy number to utilise in further in-depth scoping work.

A wide range of important issues have been identified as major concerns within the community and the majority of those fall clearly within the area of planning. As such producing a Neighbourhood Plan would be the most appropriate route to pursue. Supplementary documents may be needed to cover additional non-planning issues.

There is also support from the North Hinksey Parish Council to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their parish, and given the lack of interest from Cumnor Parish Council in producing a joint Neighbourhood Plan of any sort the area in question should clearly be limited solely to North Hinksey Parish.

Given the above facts the North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group conclude at the end of this initial scoping phase that the most appropriate way forward would be to request that the North Hinksey Parish Council send a letter and other required documentation to the Vale of White Horse District Council Planning Department to ask for North Hinksey Parish to be designated as an area within the Neighbourhood Planning process. That request will be made at the North Hinksey Parish Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2014, with this report given to them as supporting documentation.

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Terms of Reference for the North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE GROUP**

The North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group brings together representatives of North Hinksey Parish and stakeholders and members of the local community.

Officers from the Vale of White Horse District Council will be invited to assist the group but will not be full members and will not have voting rights.

The main role of the Steering Group is to manage the production of a Neighbourhood Plan and / or other appropriate planning documents for North Hinksey Parish or an identified sub-section of that area.

#### **ROLE OF THE GROUP**

The role of the group is to:

- define the neighbourhood area
- agree a budget, and how this will be funded and manage any expenditure during the project
- agree the governance structure for the project e.g. any working groups and what their specific responsibilities will be
- prepare and agree a project plan which complies with the legislative requirements for producing a Neighbourhood Plan
- oversee management of the project until its conclusion, either resulting in a Neighbourhood Plan (or other appropriate planning documents) or a decision to not proceed any further with production of such documents.

#### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP**

Membership of the Steering Group will initially consist of Parish Councillors, representatives of local organisations and other individuals as shown in the table below.

These initial members have been identified by the North Hinksey Parish Council (NHPC) as the relevant authorising body for setting up a Steering Group to administer the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for this area, and invited by NHPC to join this Steering Group.

Name	Organisation
Andrew Pritchard	North Hinksey Parish Council
David Kay	North Hinksey Parish Council
Richard Holmes	Co-op
Sue Holmes	Brookes University
David Mason	North Hinksey C of E
Alan Reeve	Parishioner and town planner
John Rowland	Parishioner and architect
Stephen Sensecall	Kemp & Kemp
Phillip Stevens	Parishioner and ex-SODC planner
Ruth Swift	Age Concern
David Wyatt	Parishioner and Harcourt Hill Residents Association

The following rules apply regarding membership of the Steering Group:

- The Steering Group will have a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 15 members at any time. A recommendation of around 10 members has been suggested by the NHPC.
- A majority of members of the Steering group must either live or work in the area under consideration.
- Although NHPC Councillors may also be members of the Steering Group they should not form a majority of members at any time and a recommendation of two NHPC Councillors has been suggested by the NHPC.
- The Steering Group should not include members solely aiming to represent single issue or political party viewpoints and care should be taken to ensure that overall there is no dominance of the Steering Group by any single organisation.
- The Steering Group can co-opt additional members to discuss particular issues where necessary or to join the Steering Group if required to bolster the skills base. These may be voting or non-voting members e.g. a district council officer could be identified as an advisor to the group and could become an informal member of the Steering Group.

The Steering Group may also form Working Groups to undertake various aspects of the work involved in producing the Neighbourhood Plan. The Terms of Reference for these Working Groups are detailed in a separate document. Members of the Steering Group may also be members of any number of its Working Groups.

## **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The decisions made by the group will undoubtedly require compromise and consensus building; consequently members should ensure they are:

- able and willing to make decisions and recommendations on behalf of their body/organisation
- committed to helping to guide the preparation of the neighbourhood plan
- supportive and committed to the process and its implementation
- 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
- open-minded and able to consider the whole picture, not seeking simply to promote sectional interests
- able to represent the group and its work in a positive light to the wider community
- prepared to work with other groups/agencies in a constructive way to achieve the best outcomes for the area

Also they are responsible for ensuring that they attend all meetings, or whenever possible to delegate a replacement in the event that they are unavailable.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STEERING GROUP**

- assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Parish, commission any technical evidence, e.g. housing and infrastructure needs to support the development of a neighbourhood plan, and identify gaps
- consider progress reports and work undertaken and agree an appropriate course of action.
- agree a programme of community engagement and public consultation at appropriate stages to ensure that the information gathered is representative of those living within North Hinksey Parish
- undertake analysis, interpretation and reporting of the results from community engagement and public consultation activities and ensuring that they inform decision-making (either directly, or within the aid of consultants).
- ensure that any planning related documentation complies with the relevant district council requirements and is appropriate for adoption.
- ensure consultation with and co-operation from key stakeholders to ensure the deliverability of the project and of proposals included in the final plan
- promote the appropriate development of North Hinksey Parish in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Work closely with the NHPC, fully briefing them on a regular basis to retain their support and co-operation, and to ensure smooth progress of the Neighbourhood Planning process

- work positively with the district council to ensure the plan is in conformity with the adopted development plan.

## **CHAIRMAN AND OTHER OFFICES**

The Steering Group will elect a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from amongst the Steering Group members and inform NHPC of their choices. To encourage wider involvement individuals not on the NHPC should be encouraged to stand for these positions in preference to NHPC Councillors.

Both the Chairman and Deputy shall remain in that position following their election until completion of the project or until they decide to stand down from that role. Following a decision to stand down a further election of a replacement Chair or Deputy Chair would take place in line with the original election procedures.

The Chairman or in his absence the Deputy will be responsible for chairing any meetings of that Steering Group, for overseeing the project management of the Neighbourhood Planning process, for liaising with the media, and for keeping the NHPC up to date with progress of the group's work. N.B. NHPC Councillors on the Steering Group will also be expected to aid in the role of liaising with the NHPC.

The Steering Group may also elect a Secretary and / or Treasurer if desired. The elected Chair and Deputy Chair would also be able to hold either of these positions as a joint role if no other suitable candidate were available.

## **SUBSTITUTES**

If a member of the group is unable to attend a meeting they should arrange for a substitute from the organisation they are representing to attend in their place whenever possible.

Where no suitable substitute is available then representations or comments will be accepted via email. This should be submitted to the group no less than 3 days prior to the date of a meeting.

## **COMMITMENT FROM DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS**

District Council Officers will be performing an advisory role and should seek to ensure that 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. Other responsibilities include:

- Proactively suggest options and opportunities to overcome barriers to delivery.
- Bring in resources as required from other teams across the District Council to provide additional specialist advice.

## **MEETINGS**

The group will meet at key stages in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The dates and regularity of meetings will be set by the group depending on the stage of the process and workload.

The Steering Group members will receive an agenda paper for meetings at least 5 days prior to the meeting.

Any documents which are to be considered prior to a meeting should be circulated at least 5 working days prior to a meeting.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded and kept on file for reference, draft minutes of meetings will be circulated following each meeting after clearance by the Chair.

## **DECISION MAKING**

All members of the Steering Group, with the exception of co-opted non-voting members e.g. district council 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 NHPC or the district council, for their consideration particularly when required by the Neighbourhood Planning process.

Decisions made by the Group should normally be by consensus at group 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.

A minimum of four members must be present to enable decisions to be taken. The Chair, or in their absence the Deputy Chair shall have the casting vote.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Steering Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, or their company / organisation arising from the decisions or recommendations of the group.

## **REVIEW OF THE GROUP**

The decision to disband the Steering Group upon completion of the project, or for any other reason, will be taken by the NHPC, who will then inform members of The Steering Group of their decision.

## **Appendix 2:**

### **Terms of Reference for North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups**

#### **ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUPS / RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STEERING GROUP**

Working Groups (WGs) will be set up by the North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process with identified remits and objectives.

WGs will report back their findings on a regular basis to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will have the final decision on how these findings are incorporated into the Scoping Report, final Neighbourhood Plan and other associated documents, however this should be done in liaison with the WGs.

Any WG responsible for actions involving community engagement must gain clearance from the Steering Group before implementing any proposed consultation plans.

All expenditure by WGs must be approved beforehand by the Steering Group.

#### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING GROUPS**

Working Group may consist of any individuals volunteering for membership, without any input from either NHPC or the Steering Group, however the following rules apply:

- WGs will have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members.
- A majority of members of any WG must either live or work in the area under consideration.
- Members of the Steering Group may also be members of WGs.
- Individuals may be members of any number of WGs.

In the event of too many individuals wishing to be members of a specific WG then the Steering Group have the final say in the choice of members.

#### **CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

All WGs must choose a Chair and Deputy Chair from amongst their number at their first meeting and inform the Steering Group of their choices. To encourage wider involvement

individuals not on the Steering Group should be encouraged to stand for these positions in preference to members of the Steering Group.

The Chair (or in their absence the Deputy Chair) is responsible for chairing any meetings of that WG, for ensuring that any actions and findings are clearly documented, and for liaising with the Steering Group.

## **MEETINGS AND DECISION MAKING**

The majority of the work carried out by WGs will occur outside of formal meetings in terms of gathering data and writing reports for submission to the Steering Group, however when decisions need to be made by the WG as a whole then meetings should be held operating under the following rules:

Decisions made by the Group should normally be by consensus at group 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.

In the event of a tied vote the Chair (or in his absence the Deputy Chair) will have the casting vote.

A minimum of three members must be present to enable decisions to be taken. The Chair, or in their absence the Deputy Chair shall have the casting vote.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Steering Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, or their company / organisation arising from the decisions or recommendations of the group.

## **REVIEW OF THE GROUP**

The decision to disband any WG once they have fulfilled their objectives, or for any other reason, will be taken by the Steering Group, who will then inform members of that WG of their decision.

## Appendix 3:

# North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan

## **A Questionnaire** from the North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

A Neighbourhood Plan is a way for local people to get more control of planning developments in their area. To create it, we need to find out what issues you think are most important in the future. With this information we aim to create a Neighbourhood Plan which reflects your opinions subject to the need to conform generally to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan. Once approved, a Neighbourhood Plan has legal force and should make it easier to prevent speculative developments that are not in accord with local wishes.

*Data will be treated in the strictest confidence and only used for statistical analysis.*

**For questions 1 to 4 below please tick to rate the importance of these issues: 1=unimportant, 3=important**

<b>1. Housing, Commercial and other Developments in North Hinksey.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Building new houses & flats in existing gardens / overdevelopment of sites			
Subterranean streams / high groundwater and lack of hydrogeological surveys for the area			
Overall impact of major recent housing estates (e.g. Lime Road, Tilbury Lane)			
Architectural design which is atypical for the area / not in harmony with the surroundings			
Converting or extending houses to create flats			
Number of houses rented out to more than 1 unrelated person or family			
Current proposals to re-develop the West Way shopping centre (as amended Sep 2014)			
Proposed expansion of the Brookes University Campus on Harcourt Hill			
Proposals to take surrounding land out of the Green Belt			
Adequate sheltered housing for the elderly			
<b>Please add further details and other housing / development issues that concern you:</b>			
<b>2. Transport and Traffic.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
A34 - Noise			
A34 – Congestion and ease of access onto and off the A34			
A34 – Use of Westminster Way and North Hinksey Lane as “rat-runs” to the A34			
Botley Road / West Way, Eynsham Road and other local roads - congestion			
Air quality – impact of traffic fumes			
Parking - cars parked in residential streets by commuters & shoppers, dangerous parking etc.			
Bus Services – Frequency and reliability			
Bus Shelters – Number, positioning, state of repair			
<b>Please add further details and other transport issues that concern you:</b>			
<b>3. Services and infrastructure.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Availability of places for nursery, primary and secondary schools			
Expansion of Botley School to include pupils who live in Oxford City			
Availability, accessibility and quality of GP services			
Provision of Library services, need for larger premises			
Availability of general leisure and recreational facilities			
Retention of, and expansion of Parish Council owned recreational land			
Variety and range of local shops			
Broadband speeds			
<b>Please add further details and other services / infrastructure issues that concern you:</b>			

<b>4. Environmental and Other Issues.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Flooding &amp; management of rainwater run-off</i> (including Western Relief Channel)			
<i>Sewerage</i> – Overflows, leaks, odours			
<i>Winter provision</i> – Grit bins, arrangements for providing grit, volunteers to spread grit			
<i>Crime</i> – Burglary, Scrap metal theft, Vandalism, Graffiti			
<i>Antisocial behaviour</i> – Disorderly or intimidating conduct, littering			
<i>Pedestrians</i> – adequate provision and maintenance of paths/ramps			
<i>Cyclists</i> – adequate provision of cycle paths, cycle racks			
<i>Local Government issues</i> - the emerging Local Plan and boundary reviews			
<b>Please add further details and other local issues that concern you:</b>			
<b>5. What are the features that make this area distinctive and a desirable place to live or work in, <u>and</u> what are the less desirable features that you would like to see changed over the next 25 years?</b>			
<p><b>Good features:</b></p>  <p><b>Less desirable features:</b></p>			
<b>6. Which specific sites within this area do you think would be suitable for new housing developments, <u>and</u> which buildings, places or views do you believe are important to protect, where new housing or commercial development would be inappropriate?</b>			
<p><b>Suitable sites:</b></p>  <p><b>Unsuitable sites:</b></p>			

<b>Name</b>	<i>Tick if you would like to help develop the Neighbourhood Plan --&gt;</i>									
<b>Home / business address and postcode (home if resident, business if non-resident working here)</b>										
<b>How many individuals of each age group live in your household? (add numbers in boxes)</b>	0-4		5-11		12-17		18-24		25-34	
	35-44		45-54		55-64		65+			

Please return completed questionnaire **by 13<sup>th</sup> December** to **Botley Library** or post box at **Seacourt Hall**, or post to: **North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan, c/o 17 Poplar Road, Botley OX2 9LA.**

Alternatively, respond online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/S57HFW2> If there is more than one person in your household please feel free to photocopy the blank questionnaire and send in extra responses. If you need extra space for any of your responses please attach an additional sheet.

## Appendix 4:

### Major local issues identified by responses to the November 2014 questionnaire

#### Level 1 issues (of most importance).

#### Housing and Commercial Developments:

Building new houses & flats in existing gardens / overdevelopment of sites
Subterranean streams / high groundwater and lack of hydrogeological surveys for the area
Overall impact of major recent housing estates (e.g. Lime Road, Tilbury Lane)
Architectural design which is atypical for the area / not in harmony with the surroundings
Current proposals to re-develop the West Way shopping centre
Proposals to take surrounding land out of the Green Belt
Adequate sheltered housing for the elderly

#### Transport and Traffic:

A34 – Congestion and ease of access onto and off the A34
A34 – Use of Westminster Way and North Hinksey Lane as “rat-runs” to the A34
Botley Road / West Way, Eynsham Road and other local roads - congestion
Air quality – impact of traffic fumes
Parking - cars parked in residential streets by commuters & shoppers, dangerous parking etc.
Bus Services – Frequency and reliability

#### Services and Infrastructure:

Availability of places for nursery, primary and secondary schools
Availability, accessibility and quality of GP services
Provision of Library services, need for larger premises
Availability of general leisure and recreational facilities
Retention of, and expansion of Parish Council owned recreational land
Variety and range of local shops
Broadband speeds

#### Environmental and other local issues:

<i>Flooding &amp; management of rainwater run-off</i> (including Western Relief Channel)
<i>Sewerage</i> – Overflows, leaks, odours
<i>Winter provision</i> – Grit bins, arrangements for providing grit, volunteers to spread grit
<i>Crime</i> – Burglary, Scrap metal theft, Vandalism, Graffiti
<i>Antisocial behaviour</i> – Disorderly or intimidating conduct, littering
<i>Pedestrians</i> – adequate provision and maintenance of paths/ramps
<i>Cyclists</i> – adequate provision of cycle paths, cycle racks
<i>Local Government issues</i> - the emerging Local Plan and boundary reviews

**Level 2 issues (of lesser importance, but still significant).**

**Housing and Commercial Developments:**

Converting or extending houses to create flats
Number of houses rented out to more than 1 unrelated person or family
Proposed expansion of the Brookes University Campus on Harcourt Hill

**Transport and Traffic:**

A34 - Noise
Bus Shelters – Number, positioning, state of repair

**Services and Infrastructure:**

Expansion of Botley School to include pupils who live in Oxford City
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**Environmental and other local issues:**

None.