

Headington Neighbourhood Plan

Initial comments of Independent Examiner

Prepared by

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Introduction

1. As you will be aware I have been appointed to carry out the examination of the Headington Neighbourhood Plan. I have carried out my initial assessment and I have concluded that I can examine the plan without the requirement of a public hearing. I have already carried out a site visit to the area.
2. However, there are a number of matters where I have either questions or issues upon which I would invite further submissions. Some may be more appropriate for the City Council to address and some will fall squarely on the Neighbourhood Forum to respond to. Other points may lend themselves to both parties giving me their comments from their respective positions. I will leave the two parties to decide who is to respond to each.

General Matters

3. In the section *How the Plan was Prepared* it states that the forum had decided to conduct an Assessment of Sustainability, post submission. Has that document been produced and can I be provided with a copy if it has?

Green Spaces and Amenity Spatial Policies

4. Would it be possible for all existing public access spaces set out in Appendix A to be shown on a map, so the extent of the areas covered by the policy is clear? I note that the inventory refers to map references but that indicates the general location but not necessarily the extent of the areas protected by the Policy GSP1
5. I would be interested to receive views from both parties on the implications for housing delivery of the increase in on-site open space required by Policy GSP2 from the 10% figure set out in the Local Plan to the proposed 15%. Will this result in the sites delivering less units than if the Local Plan provision was applied or is the Plan suggesting that development could take place at a higher density to compensate? I note that the whole issue is advised by the City Council's Green Space Strategy – was that evidence available to inform the Local Plan figure of 10%?
6. The other element of the same policy is that the requirement to provide on-site open space has been extended to non-residential development – is that to provide for the specific requirements of the development e.g. amenity space for the workers on a site or is it to be generally for the benefit of the residents. In such cases who would likely to own and manage these open spaces within non-residential development- is it expected that they would be handed over to the city council to maintain or be retained in private ownership. The policy allows the enhancement of existing open space in lieu of on-site

provision – would this be something that could be expected to be funded by CIL payments (including the neighbourhood element).

7. In Policy GSP5 the policy refers to the “green setting of Headington”. How would that be defined – is it the areas outside the Plan area or is it the area within. I am not sure as written it would give the decision maker sufficient clarity to be able to come to a view as to whether a development proposal would be affecting “the green setting”.
8. Policy GSP6 refers to *designated* allotment land. Can you let me know what sites are designated allotments, which are not already existing allotments?

Character and identity Planning Policies

9. I need to be satisfied as to the planning status of the Character Assessments. Is it intended that they form part of the development plan or are they intended to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance or are they just advisory and for guidance? I note that some character areas do not have a neighbourhood plan assessment yet the Policy CIP1 requires that “new development will *only* be permitted where they respond to and enhance the local distinctive character as identified in the Character Assessment”
10. In Policy CIP2, the plan refers to *established landmarks, local points of interest and important views*. Is it possible to identify on a plan what these are, so an applicant will know easily whether the proposal needs to take account of them and a decision maker will be able to assess whether a proposal needs to be judged against that policy?
11. Does the Oxford Heritage Asset Register identify sites as non-designated heritage assets for the purpose of paragraph 135 of the NPPF? Are there any in Headington at present?

Transport Planning Policies

12. Does the LPA consider that a requirement to provide one parking space to be reserved for a car share vehicle to meet the 6 tests set out in para 206 of the NPPF?
13. In terms of Policy TRP3, is there a plan which establishes the boundary of central Headington?
14. Under Policy TRP4, in residential multi-unit developments, who will be responsible for periodically updating travel plans and is that a reasonable requirement?

Concluding Remarks

15. These matters do not necessary cover all the matters that my examination will be addressing, which you will be aware, is focussed on the “basic conditions” and the legislative tests, However additional submissions covering these specific matters will greatly assist me in carrying out this examination.

16. In the interest of openness and transparency I would ask that a copy of this note and the subsequent responses be placed on the respective forum and the city councils' websites. It would be helpful if the City Council would take the lead in circulating this note and co-ordinate the responses back to me as soon as possible, to enable me to complete my report within a reasonable timeframe. It may be helpful to the Forum ,if the LPA could assist with the mapping of the matters I refer to in this note.

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