

Littlemore Neighbourhood Development Plan 2025-2040

A report to Oxford City Council on the Littlemore Neighbourhood Development Plan

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by Oxford City Council in March 2025 to carry out the independent examination of the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2 The examination proceeded by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood area on 30 April 2025.
- 3 The Plan seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. It includes a series of policies to safeguard its natural and historic environments.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. All sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum area should coincide with the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
1 August 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Littlemore Neighbourhood Development Plan 2025-2040 ('the Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan was submitted to Oxford City Council (OCC) by Littlemore Parish Council (LPC) in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises because of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted Plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the existing development plan. It seeks to provide a context in which the neighbourhood area can maintain its character and appearance.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above, this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the neighbourhood area and will sit as part of the wider development plan.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by OCC, with the consent of LPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both OCC and LPC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. I have 42 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level, and more recently as an independent examiner. I have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan, I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan as submitted should proceed to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Section 8 of this report.

Other examination matters

- 2.6 In examining the Plan, I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report and am satisfied that they have been met.

3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan.
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement (and its annexes).
- the OCC Strategic Environmental Assessment screening report (May 2024).
- the OCC Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report (May 2024).
- the representations made to the Plan.
- LPC's responses to the clarification note.
- the adopted Oxford Local Plan.
- the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023 and December 2024).
- Planning Practice Guidance.
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 30 April 2025. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations, I concluded that the Plan could be examined by written representations and that a hearing was not required.

The update of the NPPF in 2024

3.4 The NPPF was updated on 12 December 2024. Paragraph 239 of the NPPF 2024 sets out transitional arrangements for plan-making. It comments that the policies in the Framework will apply for the purpose of preparing neighbourhood plans from 12 March 2025 unless a neighbourhood plan proposal has been submitted to the local planning authority under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) on or before the 12 March 2025.

3.5 On this basis, the examination of the Plan against the basic condition that it should have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State is based on the 2023 version of the NPPF. Where NPPF paragraph numbers are used in this report, they refer to those in the December 2023 version.

3.6 Paragraph 6.2 of this report sets out the full extent of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is examined.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development management decisions. As such, the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), LPC prepared a Consultation Statement. It is a very good example of a document of this nature. The Statement is concise and is underpinned by a package of annexes.
- 4.3 Section 1 of the Statement records the various activities that were held to engage the local community between 2017 and 2023 and the feedback from each event.
- 4.4 Section 3 comments on the extensive consultation processes that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (May to June 2024). Appendix A provides details about the engagement processes which were used.
- 4.4 Annex 7 summarises the comments received on the pre-submission Plan and then advises about the way in which LPC refined the Plan because of the comments received at this stage. This analysis helps to describe how the Plan evolved and progressed to the submission stage.
- 4.5 I am satisfied that consultation has been an important element of the Plan's production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan's preparation. From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I conclude that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. OCC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Consultation Responses

- 4.6 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by OCC and ended on 9 December 2024. This exercise generated representations from the following organisations:
 - Sport England
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Canal and River Trust
 - Advance Oxford
 - Oxfordshire County Council
 - The Pioneer Group
 - Thames Water
- 4.7 Several other comments were received from people living in and around the neighbourhood area. I have taken account of all the representations in preparing this

report. Where it is appropriate to do so, I refer to specific representations on a policy-by-policy basis.

5. The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area is the parish of Littlemore. It is located approximately two miles to the south of Oxford City Centre. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 15 August 2017.
- 5.2 The Plan advises that Littlemore became part of Oxford City Council in 1991 following changes to administrative boundaries. In recognition of its important historic character, a conservation area was designated in 1995. The conservation area boundary is tightly drawn to encompass the historic core of Littlemore, along the three main arterial roads of Sandford Road, Oxford Road, and Cowley Road.
- 5.3 More recently, the neighbourhood area has experienced a significant expansion of leisure, business, and housing uses. The Kassam Stadium (currently home to Oxford United Football Club), hotel accommodation, and retail and leisure facilities, and the Oxford Science Park have all been developed in the southern part of the parish. The Oxford Science Park is a major international centre for the life sciences and has brought significant new employment opportunities locally. In the round the neighbourhood area is an interesting and diverse area within which to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The development plan context for the neighbourhood area is both complex and evolving.
- 5.5 The Oxford Local Plan was adopted in June 2020 and covers the period to 2036. The Plan includes a series of strategic allocations in the neighbourhood area as follows:
- Policy SP9: The Oxford Science Park (Littlemore & Minchery Farm)
 - Policy SP11: Sandy Lane Recreation Ground and Land to the Rear of the Retail Park
 - Policy SP12: Northfield Hostel
 - Policy SP13: Edge of Playing Fields, Oxford Academy
 - Policy SP14: Kassam Stadium Sites
 - Policy SP15: Knights Road
 - Policy SP44: Littlemore Park
 - Policy SP51: Oxford Stadium
- 5.6 Other relevant policies in the Local Plan include:
- Policy H5: Development involving loss of dwellings
 - Policy H6: Houses in Multiple Occupation
 - Policy RE1: Sustainable design and construction
 - Policy G5: Existing open space, indoor and outdoor sports, and recreation facilities
 - Policy DH1: High quality design and placemaking
 - Policy M1: Prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport
 - Policy V1: Ensuring the vitality of centres
 - Policy V7: Infrastructure and cultural and community facilities

- 5.7 In January 2025 OCC withdrew the emerging Local Plan 2040 after the hearings had concluded.
- 5.8 OCC is preparing a new Local Plan for the period up to 2042. The Local Development Scheme anticipates that the Plan will be submitted for its own examination in August 2026 and adopted in Spring 2027. In this context the emerging Local Plan is not sufficiently advanced to have affected the preparation of the neighbourhood plan. I comment on the implications of these timings later in this report.
- 5.9 The submitted Plan has been prepared within its up-to-date development plan context. In doing so, it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing planning policy documents. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

Visit to the neighbourhood area

- 5.10 I visited the neighbourhood area on 30 April 2025. I approached it from the Oxford Eastern By-Pass to the north. This helped me to understand its position in the wider landscape and its accessibility to the road network.
- 5.11 I looked initially at Sandford Road/Cowley Road. I then saw the significance of the shops in St Nicholas Road to the local community.
- 5.12 I then drove to the south along the A4074 to Grenoble Road. I looked at the Science Park and then the Football Stadium and the associated recreation, leisure and hotel uses.
- 5.13 I then looked at the residential areas further to the east off Grenoble Road. The visit highlighted that the neighbourhood area was one of great interest and contrasts.
- 5.14 I left the neighbourhood area and drove along the A4074 to the south. This highlighted the way in which the southern part of the neighbourhood area abutted the South Oxfordshire administrative area, and the surrounding Green Belt.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions

Statement has helped in the preparation of this section of the report. It is an informative and well-presented document.

6.2 As part of this process, I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
- not breach, and otherwise be compatible with, the assimilated obligations of EU legislation (as consolidated in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023; and
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings:

National Planning Policies and Guidance

6.3 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF).

6.4 The NPPF sets out a range of land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are particularly relevant to the Littlemore Neighbourhood Development Plan:

- a plan-led system - in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the development plan context as described in Section 5 of this report;
- building a strong, competitive economy;
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
- taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
- highlighting the importance of high-quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
- conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.6 In addition to the NPPF, I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and the recent ministerial statements.
- 6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance subject to the recommended modifications in this report. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area and includes a series of policies that address a range of development and environmental matters. It has a focus on safeguarding its built and natural environments.
- 6.8 At a more practical level, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This is reinforced in Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-041-20140306) which indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Planning practice guidance also advises that planning policies should be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.9 As submitted, the Plan does not fully accord with these practical issues. Most of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.10 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes a policy on new infrastructure (Policy BES1)). In the social dimension, it includes policies on sheltered housing (Policy BES2) and allotments (Policy NES4). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built, and historic environment. It includes policies on historic buildings (Policy BES5), energy efficiency (Policy BES6), green and blue spaces (Policy NES1) and wildlife (Policy NES2). This assessment overlaps with the details on this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in Oxford in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.
- 6.12 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the adopted development plan. Subject to the recommended modifications in this report, I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.13 The Neighbourhood Plan (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.14 OCC's SEA screening opinion of May 2024 concluded that the proposals within the Plan will not have any significant impacts on the environment and as such the Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 6.15 OCC also prepared a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan at the same time. It assesses the potential impact of the Plan on three protected sites.
- 6.16 The HRA screening report takes a similarly comprehensive approach to that taken on SEA. It concludes that the proposed policies in the Plan are unlikely to have significant environmental effects on any protected sites. This includes consideration of any in-combination effects, which have also been assessed through the HRA of the Local Plan. It also concludes that the Plan will not lead to likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the protected sites and no further or appropriate assessment is required.
- 6.17 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of neighbourhood plan regulations.

Human Rights

- 6.18 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Summary

- 6.19 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report, I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. It makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.

- 7.2 The recommendations focus on the policies in the Plan given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. However, in some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the neighbourhood area. The wider community and LPC have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (Section 41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan.
- 7.6 For clarity, this section of the report comments on all the policies.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial parts of the Plan (Sections 1-5)

- 7.8 The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the subsequent policies.
- 7.9 The Introduction sets out a clear background to the Plan. It identifies the Plan period and neighbourhood area. It also comments about the way in which the Plan reflects community views. In the round, it is a very good introduction to a neighbourhood plan.
- 7.10 Thereafter the Plan comments about the following matters:
- the history, character, and identity of Littlemore;
 - the statistical profile of the neighbourhood area;
 - why the Plan was prepared; and
 - how the Plan was prepared.
- 7.11 The Vision and Objectives of the Plan are then described. The Vision neatly summarises the approach taken as follows:

'Littlemore, with its historic village and farming origins, occupies the southernmost sector of the City of Oxford. Our Neighbourhood Plan aims:

- *to respect and reflect the views of its community;*
 - *to influence how Littlemore evolves and expands;*
 - *to include the provision of infrastructure; and*
 - *to meet the economic, social, and environmental requirements for an outstanding quality of life that will benefit current and future generations of residents, visitors and working people.'*
- 7.12 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

General Comments on the policies

7.13 A key element of the examination has been the extent to which the policies are land use in their nature. In its helpful response to the clarification note LPC advises that the community policies (those with a C suffix) are aspirational and are not intended to be directly applied to spatial planning decisions. It also commented that in many cases the purpose of the community policies is to reflect community opinion, with a view to calling on other agencies and partners to work collaboratively with Littlemore Parish Council to achieve the intended outcome.

7.14 This approach is very commendable and is a natural outcome of the Plan preparation process. Such a scenario is anticipated in national guidance. That guidance also comments that:

‘Wider community aspirations than those relating to the development and use of land, if set out as part of the plan, would need to be clearly identifiable (for example, set out in a companion document or annex), and it should be made clear in the document that they will not form part of the statutory development plan. (Planning practice guidance ID: 41-004-20190509).

7.15 In these circumstances I recommend that the following policies (and their supporting text) are deleted from the Plan and repositioned into a separate section of the Plan:

- Policy C1S1
- Policy C1S2
- Policy C1S3
- Policy C1C1
- Policy C1C2
- Policy C1C3
- Policy NEC3
- Policy TCC1
- Policy TCC2
- Policy TCC3
- Policy TCC4
- Policy TCC5
- Policy TCC6
- Policy HWS1
- Policy HWC1
- Policy HWC2
- Policy HWC3

7.16 I do not repeat this explanation on a policy-by-policy basis.

7.17 In terms of detail and presentation, I recommend the initial section of the Plan explains the distinction between the land use policies and the community aspirations. I also recommend that the policies listed in paragraph 7.15 of this report (and their supporting text) are incorporated within a new section of the Plan (between the Policies and the Appendices).

In the 'About the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan' section and immediately after 'We have tried to identify aspects which we believe should be protected or improved' add: This is achieved by the development of a series of land use planning policies and a series of non-land use community aspirations. The land use policies form part of the development plan and will be used to make decisions on planning applications in the neighbourhood area.'

Insert a new section in the Plan after the policies to read:

'Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan Community Aspirations

The preparation of the Plan allowed the community and the Parish Council to comment about a range of related matters which are not directly land use matters, and as such have not been included in the main body of the Plan. They are aspirational issues and are not intended to be directly applied to spatial planning decisions. They will not form part of the statutory development plan.

The various issues are addressed in this part of the Plan. In addition, they are presented as a call to other agencies and partners to work collaboratively with the Parish Council to achieve the intended outcomes. The Parish Council will monitor progress on the various matters throughout the Plan period.

[Thereafter list the relevant submitted policies and their supporting text]'

BES1 Encouraging improved and new infrastructure

- 7.18 The supporting text comments that Littlemore has a shortage of integral infrastructure to serve the local community effectively. There is a particular shortage of health provision, nursery and preschool places, retail options, and community spaces that support community meetings and activities.
- 7.19 The resulting policy has two parts. The first comments that development proposals that improve existing community infrastructure or provide new infrastructure to meet local community needs as identified in this Plan and future reviews will be supported. The second advises that development proposals that promote greater community safety by effective layout and lighting of the proposed development and the surrounding area or such improvements to existing infrastructure will be supported.
- 7.20 I am satisfied that the policy takes a positive approach to these matters and meets the basic conditions. The policy will contribute to the local delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

BES2 Sheltered and supported housing

- 7.21 The supporting text advises that it is important to provide sheltered housing for older people, and specialist and supported housing for those with disabilities, to enable them to live safe and independent lives. It also comments that there is currently limited

sheltered or supported housing, with Cardinal House, Alice Smith House, and Eastern House being the only large such facilities.

- 7.22 The policy comments that the expansion of existing sheltered and supported housing or construction of new such facilities will be supported where need for such sheltered and/or supported housing is identified within the Oxford City area.
- 7.23 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to energy efficiency and has regard to Sections 5 and 8 of the NPPF. I recommend that the policy is recast so that it more closely relates to the development management process. I also recommend that the final element of the policy on the need for such sheltered and/or supported housing should be identified within the Oxford City area is deleted for three reasons. The first is that this element of the policy is not supported by any evidence in the Plan. The second is that the need and demand for such accommodation will find its own level in local investment decisions by the public and private sectors. The third is that the approach taken in the submitted policy would be difficult to apply through the development management process.
- 7.24 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with: ‘Proposals for the expansion of existing sheltered and supported housing or the construction of new sheltered and supported housing will be supported.’

BES3 Parking pressure

- 7.25 The Plan advises that the context to the policy is that most on-street parking in Littlemore is not controlled and that development can lead to pressure on on-street parking, particularly in respect of houses in multiple occupations where there can be more cars per household.
- 7.26 The policy comments that development proposals will be required to demonstrate that there will be no likely significant additional on-street parking because of the application.
- 7.27 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to the delivery of parking spaces associated with new developments and has regard to Sections 8 and 9 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, the planning process cannot control (or limit) on-street parking. On this basis, I recommend that the policy comments that development proposals are required to provide the appropriate level of off-street parking within the application site (which is capable of control). In reaching this conclusion I have carefully considered LPC’s response to the clarification note.
- 7.28 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with: ‘Development proposals should provide the appropriate level of off-street parking within the application site.’

BES4 Resisting large HMOs and avoiding family houses becoming short-term letting properties

- 7.29 The supporting text advises that Policy H6 of Oxford Local Plan 2036 already sets out that excessive density of HMOs should be resisted due to the adverse impact on parking pressure. It also advises that in Littlemore the parking pressure created by HMOs is exacerbated by the absence of controlled parking in most of the parish. The Parish Council suggests that the Local Plan policy should be strengthened in relation to Littlemore and that large HMOs should be counted as two dwellings for the purposes of measuring HMO density.
- 7.30 The policy advises that development that will result in a new large House in Multiple Occupation (with 7 or more bedrooms) in an area without controlled on-street parking will only be supported when it can be shown that the expected extra parking demand resulting from the development will not result in an unacceptable increase in on-street parking pressure. It also comments that development that would involve the net loss of residential floor space or residential units of any family housing will be resisted.
- 7.31 The policy addresses a specific local issue and has regard to Sections 5, 8 and 9 of the NPPF. In this broader context, I recommend the following modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow OCC to be able to implement the policy through the development management process:
- the recasting of the first part of the policy so that it more closely relates to the development management process;
 - ensuring that the focus on any extra demand for on-street parking relates to the immediate locality; and
 - bringing clarity to the second part of the policy so that it relates to non-multiple occupancy housing rather than the more loosely defined family housing in the policy
- 7.32 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals that would result in a house in multiple occupation with seven or more bedrooms in an area without controlled on-street parking will only be supported when it can be shown that the expected extra parking demand resulting from the development will not result in an unacceptable increase in on-street parking in the immediate locality.

Development proposals that would result in the net loss of residential floor space or non-multiple occupancy housing will not be supported.’

BES5 Enhancing historic buildings

- 7.33 The supporting text comments about the importance of heritage assets in the neighbourhood area and specific issues associated with Littlemore Priory.

- 7.34 The policy advises that planning applications which preserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings (particularly those identified in the Littlemore Conservation Area Appraisal) that contribute positively to the historic character and identity of Littlemore will be supported, including those seeking a change of use where the building has been disused for more than a year. It also comments that proposals to restore the derelict Littlemore Priory will be supported. Conversion to other commercial or residential uses will be supported where the historic fabric is preserved.
- 7.35 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to heritage assets and has regard to Section 16 of the NPPF. In this context I recommend that the general element of the policy is recast so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF. I also recommend that the element of the policy on Littlemore Priory is presented separately.
- 7.36 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals that preserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings (particularly those identified in the Littlemore Conservation Area Appraisal) and which would contribute positively to the historic character and identity of Littlemore will be supported.

Proposals for the restoration of Littlemore Priory will be supported. Proposals for its conversion to other commercial or residential uses will also be supported where its historic fabric is safeguarded.’

BES6 Encouraging energy efficiency retrofit

- 7.37 The context to the policy is that fitting and retrofitting of homes to encourage energy efficiency is encouraged to ensure that existing and proposed development minimises its environmental impact and is resilient to the consequences of climate change.
- 7.38 The policy advises that where possible and appropriate, existing buildings should be retrofitted with insulation, double glazing, or other measures to reduce energy usage and proposals to do this will be supported. However, to ensure that historic assets, their views, and settings are conserved and enhanced, any significant adverse impacts from such development proposals would need to be mitigated.
- 7.39 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to energy efficiency and has regard to Sections 14 and 16 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, I recommend the following package of recommended modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow OCC to be able to apply its details through the development management process:
- a recasting of the emphasis of the policy so that it advises about the types of development which would be supported;
 - identifying that several elements of retrofitting may not need planning permission; and
 - ensuring that the element of the policy in relation to impacts on heritage assets has proper regard to national policy.

- 7.40 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with: ‘Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for the retrofitting of existing buildings with insulation, double glazing, or other measures to reduce energy usage will be supported. Any such proposals which affect historic assets should ensure that their character and appearance are conserved, and any impacts are properly mitigated.’

CIS1 Replacement of community facilities

- 7.41 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

CIS2 Improvement of existing community assets

- 7.42 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

CIS3 Infrastructure needs and cooperation

- 7.43 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

CIC1 Improvements to the range and quality of local shops and eating places

- 7.44 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

CIC2 Improved range of and access to recreation opportunities especially for young people

- 7.45 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

CIC3 Working with businesses and others to promote lifelong learning

- 7.46 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

NES1 Protection of, and access to, green and blue spaces

- 7.47 The context to the policy is that the neighbourhood area encompasses two large public parks as well as some smaller parks and green spaces and a limited amount of blue (water) spaces. It also contains a Conservation Area with historical significance and links to Saint John Henry Newman, who instigated the planting of many of Littlemore's trees. This area with its associated green spaces should be protected, especially to ensure that there is no overall reduction in tree cover.
- 7.48 The policy has two parts. The first comments that where development is planned the protection and creation of improved access to green and blue spaces will be supported. Additional local parks and spaces proposed as part of development proposals will also

be supported. The second advises that the green spaces in the Conservation Area should not be adversely impacted by development projects, and the character and historic importance of the natural environment within the Conservation Area must be respected and enhanced.

- 7.49 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to energy efficiency and has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, I recommend the following package of recommended modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow OCC to be able to apply its details through the development management process:
- a recasting of the emphasis of the policy so that it advises about the way in which development proposals should respond to green and blue infrastructure;
 - breaking the policy into its relevant sections; and
 - ensuring that the element of the policy in relation to the conservation area has proper regard to national policy.
- 7.50 The supporting text also comments about work on green infrastructure which was proposed to be included in the Plan but which is now intended to be carried out at a later point. Plainly the level of detail of that work is not known at this stage (other than the remit as identified in Appendix 3). The supporting text advises that this work will be produced as an addendum to the Plan. I recommend that this wording is modified so that it properly reflects the neighbourhood plan process. For example, the suggested designation of local green spaces would involve any made Plan being reviewed rather than an addendum being prepared.
- 7.51 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals should safeguard the green spaces in the Littlemore Conservation area, and preserve or enhance its character and historic importance.

Wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate improved access to existing green and blue spaces.

Development proposals which include additional local parks and spaces will be supported.’

Replace the final paragraph of the supporting text with: ‘The intention was to complete the process of designating green and blue spaces in Littlemore to be protected as part of the preparation of the Plan. Whilst this has not been possible, the Parish Council intend to carry out this work at a future point. Appendix 3 provides further detail of the issues to be addressed. This work may generate the need for a partial review of the Plan.’

NES2 Protection of wildlife, habitats/biodiversity

- 7.52 The supporting text comments that there should be no net loss of trees because of development projects. In addition, it advises that with the growing threat of climate

change and a global climate emergency, the necessity to preserve and enhance green spaces by trees and other planting is of paramount importance. A series of areas have been identified as wildlife habitats which while not of sufficient significance to be protected by national legislation need to be protected.

- 7.53 The policy advises that proposals which affect the wildlife habitats identified in the accompanying text above will be supported only if these are protected and where possible enhanced. In keeping with the aspiration to achieve net gain of biodiversity greater than 10%, applicants will be expected to justify why a net gain of 15% or more is not possible when this is not proposed. Proposals which entail any loss of biodiversity will be supported only if any gains elsewhere are within Littlemore.
- 7.54 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to biodiversity and has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF.
- 7.55 I sought advice from LPC on the policy's commentary that biodiversity net gain should be delivered beyond the 10% enhancement required by national legislation, and the extent to which it is supported by appropriate evidence. In its response to the clarification note, LPC advised that:
- 'some general evidence about the importance of increasing biodiversity was presented on page 27. We have not conducted a viability assessment. This policy is not intended to prevent development taking place, but to indicate the importance of increasing the level of biodiversity above 10% where possible.'*
- 7.56 I have considered LPC's response to this matter and the contents of the wider policy very carefully. In this context, I recommend the following package of recommended modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow OCC to be able to apply its details through the development management process:
- the deletion of any reference to biodiversity net gain given that there is no local evidence to justify an approach which requires developers to deliver beyond the 10% required in national legislation; and
 - the inclusion of a more general approach towards mitigation measures.
- 7.57 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development

Replace the policy with:

'Proposals which affect the wildlife habitats identified in the supporting text will be only supported if the habitats concerned are protected and, where practicable, enhanced.

Proposals which entail the loss of biodiversity will be only supported where appropriate mitigation is secured.'

NES3 Tree cover and protection

- 7.58 The context to the policy is that Littlemore is among the areas with the lowest level of tree cover in Oxford. Therefore, the Plan comments that the level of tree cover should

be maintained and increased where possible, in line with Oxfordshire County Council's Tree Policy.

- 7.59 The policy comments that proposals will be expected to maintain and where possible increase the existing level of tree cover. Where a development requires removal of trees, these shall be replaced on or very near the site, but within the neighbourhood area, by at least the same or a higher number of a locally appropriate species that are resilient to climate change. Finally, it comments that proposals include planting additional trees suitable to the area this will be supported.
- 7.60 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to tree cover and has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF. I recommend that the first part of the policy is recast so that it can be applied in a proportionate way, and that the approach towards replacement trees has the clarity required by the NPPF. I also recommend that the second part of the policy is modified to bring the clarity required by the NPPF.
- 7.61 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development

Replace the policy with:

'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should maintain and where practicable increase the existing level of tree cover. Where a development proposal involves the removal of trees, they should be replaced on or very near the site by at least the same or a higher number of a locally appropriate species that are resilient to climate change.'

Development proposals which incorporate the planting of additional and appropriate trees will be supported.'

NES4 Protection of allotments

- 7.62 The supporting text advises that there are three allotment areas in Littlemore. The physical health benefits of gardening, and of growing fruit and vegetables has become well understood, and can be of great benefit to improving community mental health and well-being. The policy advises that development proposals that propose the loss or significant overshadowing of existing allotments will not be supported. It also comments that proposals for additional allotments will be supported.
- 7.63 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to allotments and has regard to Section 8 of the NPPF. I recommend that the order of the parts of the policy is reversed so that it has a positive rather than negative approach. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

'Development proposals for the provision of additional allotments proposed will be supported.'

Development proposals that would result in the loss or significant overshadowing of existing allotments will not be supported.'

NEC1 Protecting and enhancing local parks and green spaces

- 7.64 The Plan comments that the context to the policy is that local parks and green spaces are very important to Littlemore residents, especially as many do not have easy access to areas of natural beauty and the countryside. It also advises that the loss of biodiversity is a further issue in Littlemore and attention should be given to providing habitats to support wildlife by maintaining and improving trees and hedgerows.
- 7.65 The policy advises that measures to protect and enhance existing local parks and green spaces within the neighbourhood area for people of different ages and abilities and for wildlife will be supported. It also comments that proposal which will maintain and increase biodiversity will be supported.
- 7.66 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to these matters and has regard to Sections 8 and 15 of the NPPF. I recommend that both elements of the policy are recast so that they acknowledge that several of the anticipated measures in the policy will not need planning permission.
- 7.67 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the first part of the policy with: ‘Insofar as planning permission is required, development proposals which protect and/or enhance existing local parks and green spaces for people of different ages and abilities and for wildlife will be supported.’

Replace the opening element of the second part of the policy with: ‘Insofar as planning permission is required, development proposals which would maintain, and where practicable increase, the level of biodiversity and wildlife will be supported, including:’

NEC2 Provision of, and safe access to, green spaces

- 7.68 The Plan advises that the context to this policy is based on the qualitative responses made by residents in the Issues and Options Survey indicated their desire to access green spaces, and to have good signage/maps to know where to walk. It also comments that this feedback was frequently linked to aspects of improving health and well-being.
- 7.69 The policy advises that measures to ensure that mental and physical health and well-being are enhanced by the provision of and safe access to green spaces will be supported. This includes the provision of improved signage, clearance of footpaths, maps, wheelchair access, benches, play and exercise equipment to aid access to, and enjoyment of, the natural environment.
- 7.70 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to these matters and has regard to Section 8 of the NPPF. I recommend that the policy is recast so that it more closely relates to the development management process. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals that would result in the enhancement of mental and physical health and well-being by the provision of and safe access to green spaces will be supported. This includes the provision of improved signage, clearance of footpaths, maps, wheelchair access, benches, play and exercise equipment to aid access to, and enjoyment of, the natural environment.’

NEC3 Community support to protect the Natural Environment

- 7.71 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

TCS1 Reducing additional car journeys

- 7.72 The supporting text advises that increased motorised traffic because of new development is a concern to residents of Littlemore and that there are currently several traffic bottlenecks within Littlemore. LPC considers that the existing road capacity is not sufficient to support any significant increase in motorised vehicle traffic. The resulting policy is wide-ranging.
- 7.73 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to these matters and has regard to Section 9 of the NPPF. I recommend that the first two parts of the policy are recast so that they more closely relate to the development management process.
- 7.74 The third part of the policy comments that businesses seeking to introduce new parking provision for employees rather than encouraging alternative modes of transport will be expected to justify its necessity. On the one hand, such an approach would assist in promoting sustainable development. However, on the other hand, the proposed approach may not need planning permission and, if permission is required decisions will be a matter for OCC to consider on a case-by-case basis. In these circumstances I recommend that this part of the policy is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text.
- 7.75 The fourth part of the policy advises that proposals to reduce employee parking facilities will be welcomed, provided that this does not put additional undue pressure on the provision of residential on-street parking. It also comments that proposals will be expected to provide sufficient secure, conveniently located cycle storage. The same circumstances apply to this element of the policy as I have set out in relation to the third part of the policy. In this case, the reduction in the number of parking spaces is likely to be beyond planning control. In these circumstances I recommend that this part of the policy is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text.
- 7.76 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with

‘Development proposals should minimise additional motorised traffic and incorporate measures to reduce additional car journeys caused by the development.

Wherever practicable, development proposals should provide for and support walking, cycling and public and community travel as the prime modes of transport’

At the end of the supporting text add:

‘Policy TCS1 sets out the Plan’s approach to reducing car journeys. In this broader context, proposals to reduce employee parking facilities will be welcomed, if this does not put additional undue pressure on the provision of residential on-street parking. Wherever practicable proposals will be expected to provide sufficient secure, conveniently located cycle storage. Businesses seeking to introduce new parking provision for employees rather than encouraging alternative modes of transport should provide information to justify the need for additional parking.’

TCS2 Net improvements in connectivity

- 7.77 The Plan advises that neighbourhood area straddles both the A4142 Eastern Bypass (Ring Road), and the Cowley Branch line, both of which often represent obstacles to safe and straightforward travel between the different areas of the parish despite their geographic proximity. Likewise, while access to other parts of the Ring Road and A34 by motor vehicle is comparatively easy, this is more difficult by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 7.78 The policy comments that development proposals that improve the existing connectivity and preserve opportunities for future connectivity for walking, cycling and public and community transport between major road networks and transport routes between key sites within and around the neighbourhood area will be supported.
- 7.79 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach to these matters and has regard to Section 9 of the NPPF. I recommend that the policy is recast so that it more closely relates to the development management process, and fully explains its purpose. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals that would improve the existing connectivity in the neighbourhood area, and/or safeguard opportunities for future connectivity for walking, cycling and public and community transport between major road networks and transport routes will be supported.’

TCC1 Safe Travel

- 7.80 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I

recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

TCC2 Cowley Branch Line

- 7.81 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

TCC3 Access to Cowley Centre

- 7.82 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

TCC4 Air and Noise Pollution

- 7.83 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

TCC5 Improved Bus Services

- 7.84 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

TCC6 Discouraging through traffic

- 7.85 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

HWS1 Primary health care facilities

- 7.86 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

HWC1 Fostering community cohesion

- 7.87 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

HWC2 Enhancing the safety of the community

- 7.88 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

HWC3 Addressing poverty and health inequality

- 7.89 This is one of a series of policies in the Plan which is aspirational rather than land use in its nature. Based on the commentary in paragraphs 7.13 to 7.17 of this report, I recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted and repositioned into a new section of the Plan.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

Reposition the policy and the supporting text into an additional section of the Plan on Community Aspirations

Monitoring and Review

- 7.90 The Plan is largely silent on the need for monitoring and review. This is particularly important as the emerging Local Plan will affect the development plan context in Oxford City. I recommend that the Plan includes appropriate commentary on these matters.

As additional paragraphs at the end of the 'How is the Plan being prepared' section add:

'The Parish Council will monitor the effectiveness of the policies throughout the Plan period.

The Plan has been prepared in the context of the adopted Oxford Local Plan. The City Council is now working to produce a new local plan which will cover the period to 2042. It is anticipated that the Plan will be submitted for examination in August 2026 and adopted in Spring 2027. This process will update the strategic planning policy context in the City.

In this context the Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise for the neighbourhood plan to be reviewed within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.'

Other Matters

- 7.91 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly because of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan because of the recommended modifications to the policies. Similarly, changes may be necessary to paragraph numbers in the Plan or to accommodate other administrative matters. It will be appropriate for LPC and OCC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies and to accommodate any administrative and technical changes.

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2040. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community to safeguard the character and setting of the neighbourhood area.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination of the Plan, I have concluded that the Littlemore Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

Conclusion

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report, I recommend to Oxford City Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Littlemore Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Other Matters

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by Oxford City Council on 15 August 2017.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to the examination of the Plan. The Parish Council's responses to the clarification note were both comprehensive and helpful.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
1 August 2025