

Final Report

OUNDLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – OBJECTIVES REVIEW PANEL **Final Report (7th September 2015)**

A Review was initiated on 14th August 2015 to examine the work done to support two of the objectives for the Oundle Neighbourhood Plan (Housing and Green Spaces).

The Objectives Review Panel was required to examine the housing allocation process and confirm that it is appropriate and has been executed fairly and in a way that takes due account of all potential sites to be allocated for housing. In addition, the Review Panel was required to examine the process used to allocate sites as green space as opposed to housing and confirm that the process used is also appropriate and has been fairly executed.

The Review team identified risks that might have an impact on the effectiveness of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and which could leave the NP open to challenge by stakeholders. The management of these risks was tested by examination of the evidence documentation provided (see References Files list attached).

An opinion has been provided as to whether each risk has been effectively managed as well as an opinion on the overall objective management process. In addition, recommendations have been made on how to address the key improvement opportunities identified. Plans to implement these recommendations should be developed in conjunction with the more detailed comments contained in the Risk Assessment summary (B-NP Review assessment v2.1 final).

Housing Objective Review

Total number of risks tested	17
Number of risks where significant improvement required	7
Number of risks where little or no improvement is required	10

Review Opinion (housing objective): The overall opinion is **Fair** - the process has been executed reasonably but some improvement actions are required to enhance its effectiveness.

The steps used to determine the future housing allocations in Oundle are contained in the various documents reviewed. It is clear that additional steps have been incorporated into the initial process (both explicitly and by practice) in order to arrive at the final result. The apparent absence of a clear process may result in challenge.

Recommended action 1: The detailed matrix to assess developability and sustainability should be supplemented by the additional steps to be undertaken in order to determine the final allocation so that the whole process is clear. (Risk Assessment H3)

The results of the current assessment process are documented in a number of different places. It is not always clear how information has been used to shape the

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outcome. This will inhibit effective communication and may result in challenge of the outcome.

Recommended action 2: The detailed assessment analysis and results should be captured in a single document location. (Risk Assessment H3)

It is inevitable that most of the volunteer working party members will live or work in Oundle. Their detailed knowledge will positively contribute to the outcome. However, from time to time they may have greater personal interest in a particular final decision. Stakeholder challenge may arise if it cannot be demonstrated that these interests have been properly managed.

Recommended action 3: A register of working party members should be maintained which includes a record of when their contribution to the finalisation of key decisions has been restricted. (Risk Assessment H3)

Multiple versions of the objectives for housing and other NP streams are recorded. This demonstrates a healthy process where thinking evolves as a result of evidence examination and feedback from stakeholders. A single simple objective for each stream may not be sufficient to articulate the thinking used to determine final outcomes. If the objectives are not collated, ratified and finally adopted, then stakeholders may challenge on the basis that the outcome has not incorporated consultation feedback.

Recommended action 4: An interim gathering of current objectives across all streams should take place to help finalise the NP. Factors from consultation exercises that will/will not be taken into account should also be recorded. As the draft NP is prepared, the NPWP should confirm that the workstream evidence and documentation fully supports the final objectives and consultation feedback. (Risk Assessment H7)

There are requirements to engage with statutory consultees and stakeholders during the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. There are a number of existing and potential developments within neighbouring parishes but in locations that adjoin the Oundle parish boundary. Without proper consultation, these developments may not be aligned with the Oundle NP.

Recommended action 5: Ensure that local parishes are consulted at the same time as all other statutory consultees and stakeholders to ensure their rightful engagement with the process. (Risk Assessment H10)

All appropriate stakeholders should be engaged during the development of the NP. If any stakeholder feels that their engagement has not been effective, then they may challenge the outcome. Landowners/developers are traditionally one of the more vociferous group and so maintaining and monitoring a record of their engagement will help demonstrate that engagement has been both consistent and fair.

Recommended action 6: Maintain a record of all engagement with landowners/developers and the resulting actions. (Risk Assessment H11)

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Recommended action 7: Maintain a record of all engagement with statutory and other consultee bodies and the resulting actions. (Risk Assessment H13)

Proposals must be assessed to determine whether the Plan is likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment or on a European site (also known as a “Natura 2000” site) including Special Protection Areas (SPA). These processes are referred to as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) respectively.

Recommended action 8: Seek advice from ENC on their preferred approach to SEA/HRA. (Risk Assessment H14)

Green Space Objective Review

Total number of risks tested	13
Number of risks where significant improvement required	13
Number of risks where little or no improvement is required	0

Review Opinion (green space objective): The overall opinion is **Unsatisfactory** - the process has not been executed effectively and significant improvements are required in order to correct this shortfall.

There is no process in place for the review and identification of green spaces in Oundle. Currently the review of the external factors is partially complete but this has not been translated into a set of targets for Oundle so that they can be tested against the current inventory and proposals made to fill any gaps. The proposals would be refined based on the objectives elsewhere in the NP and quantified feedback from residents and other stakeholders. Without a defined process which is populated with evidence leading to proposed outcomes, challenge by stakeholders may take place.

Recommended action 9: A process should be written to describe how green spaces will be inventorised and proposals made for them to be augmented. The factors to be taken into account in determining the final outcome should be described. (NB the NPPF only describes how to protect existing local green space, if new green space is to be created then this also needs to be justified and included in the process.) (Risk Assessment G2)

Recommended action 10: Evidence used to apply the process and formulate the final proposal should be documented. This should include consideration of other relevant workstream objectives and feedback from stakeholders. (Risk Assessment G2)

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Recommended action 11: A register of working party members should be maintained which includes a record of when their contribution to the finalisation of key decisions has been restricted. (Risk Assessment G2)

In addition, a contribution should be made by Green Spaces team to the completion of **recommended actions 4, 6 and 7**.

General

A draft Oundle NP is in the process of preparation. In due course the report will be presented to an external examiner for review. At this stage process shortfalls similar to those identified in this review may come to light and result in a requirement for re-work.

Recommended action 12: In reviewing and deciding on the actions from this review, it is recommended that careful consideration is given to the implementation approach to be taken: 1 fully internally resourced or 2 internal implementation followed by external review or 3 fully externally resourced.

Report endorsed by Objectives Review Panel members on 7th September 2015:

Alex Munro

David Wood

Mike Haybryne

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Reference Files

Scope of work:

- A-ObjRevPan14Aug15 v1.4 final

Risk assessment, observations and improvement opportunities:

- B-NP Review assessment v2.1 final

Evidence documents reviewed:

- 01-OUNDLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY ON GREEN SPACES restored (Autosaved)
- 02-Housing Site Allocation Summary-V1.1
- 03-Site Assessment Housing Allocation
- 04-V4 Appendix 3 Site Assessment Table
- 05-Oundle 2020 neighbourhood plan policy on residential devt.
- 06-Oundle NPWP composite plan acad 2007 V 2-green spaces
- 07-site-assessment-methodology-report-2013-09-04
- 08-Oundle NPWP composite plan Aspirational Sites
- 09-Proposals May 2015
- 10-OUNDLE TOWN COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY
- 11-Evidence Paper Connectivity-V5 FINAL