

RESPONSE to the Oundle Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2031, Regulation 14 Consultation Draft (March 2018)

Transition Oundle recognises the quality of the content and structure in the latest (March 2018) version of the Oundle Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2031. Many of the issues set out in our response to the October 2017 version have been addressed. This response sets out some suggestions on how the revised draft could be further improved.

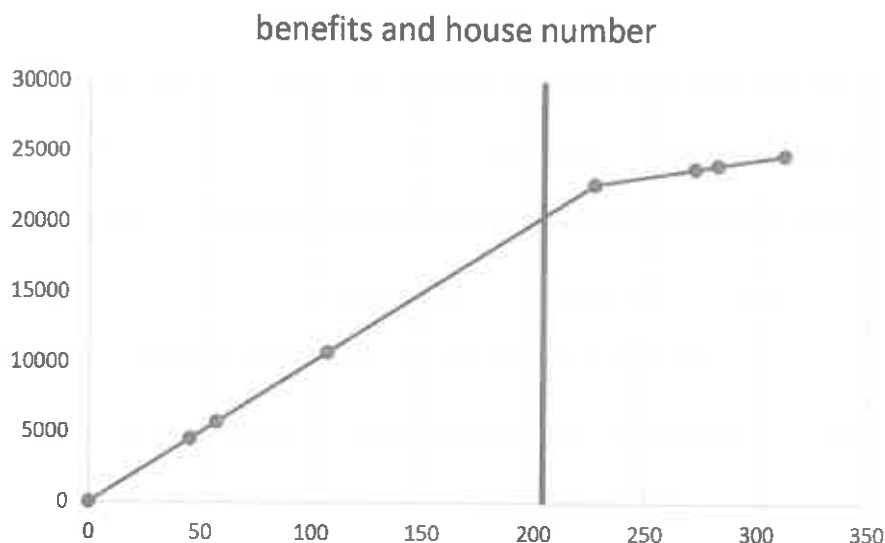
KEY ISSUES

- 1. Oundle is a centre of educational excellence:** in excess of 3,000 children attend pre-school, primary and secondary schooling in the town, and Oundle is recognised as a regional and national centre of educational excellence. This provides employment and access to recreational and cultural facilities for the wider community. Although education is covered in the Plan, an addition to the list of objectives is suggested: *“to maintain Oundle as a centre of educational excellence”*
- 2. On the number of houses to be built:** the Neighbourhood Plan proposes 312 additional dwellings while the Joint Core Strategy asks for 203, so the additional 109 houses needs to be explained, and should not be exceeded during the plan period.
- 3. On developer contributions:** there are significant differences between the benefits offered by developers on their respective sites. The table below sets out the benefits identified in the policies for each site included in the Plan:

Site	Houses	Benefit level	Benefits offered
1	45	Low	Provide a corridor to create a footpath rerouting UF6 as part of the Oundle Circular Route
3	45	High	Provide 4ha for recreational or sports use which can also be used by Prince William School. Create an access with does not conflict with PWS exit. Upgrade UF7 and create a new link to UF6 as part of the Oundle Circular Route.
11	12	High	Provide 0.55ha for allotments with water and an on-site parking area with public open recreational space with access for vehicles cyclists and pedestrians.
12	50	High	Provide 0.5ha extension to the cemetery.

14	10	Low	Upgrade UF3 as part of the Oundle Circular Route.
15N	120	High	Provide c.5.5ha with separate access to enable its use for community events and festivals etc Upgrade UF10 and create a new footpath to facilitate a link to UF11 as part of the Oundle Circular Route.
23	30	Low	Create a footpath from Cotterstock Road to UF1 as part of the Oundle Circular Route.

Based on the tangible benefits identified in the Plan, and using a “high” or “low” benefit classification, it can be seen that there is currently a significantly lower benefit to the community from building 85 (sites 1, 14 and 23) of the proposed 312 dwellings. The graph below illustrates this using a scale of benefits of 100 for “high” sites and 25 for “low” sites, with the minimum number of houses required shown with a vertical line.



The “high” sites (3, 11, 12 and 15N) would deliver 227 dwellings, ie about 12% above the 209 minimum required. Consequently, a case needs to be made for the sites with a low level of benefit.

This could be addressed with a further note to Policy 6 such as: *“Proposals that do not provide a significant tangible benefit will be required to make a higher financial contribution to fund wider community enhancements through the mechanisms available (S106 arrangements or Community Infrastructure Levy) when proposals for planning permission are submitted, otherwise permission will be refused”*.

4. On the housing mix: the strategy for the housing mix of future developments is set out in Policy O.17 and is based on a number of sources including: the Joint Core Strategy, survey feedback, and energy conservation and efficiency standards. This

strategy needs to be substantiated and it is suggested that estate agents, letting agents and social housing landlords could provide evidence of the likely demand for housing of different types and tenures. This could also be reviewed and updated regularly.

The needs of local employers should also be assessed. The need to reduce travel by car is a clear Government priority. It is therefore desirable for local employees to live locally, and knowledge of wages paid by local employers would help to inform the housing mix required to enable more of the workforce to do so.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Neighbourhood Plan benefits: it is most important that people understand what they will be voting for and what it will mean if the Plan is not adopted. We therefore recommend a clear statement, as part of the introduction, to identify the benefits of having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, including: the ability to influence development, the status of the Plan in relation to applications for permission to develop, and the ability to secure control over financial contributions through S106 arrangements, the Community Infrastructure Levy or other mechanisms that may be available at the time an application is considered.

2. School bus movements have a severe impact on traffic flows for short periods in the mornings and afternoons during school terms, and this should be described in the section headed Improving Accessibility and Connectivity that begins on page 42. The management of school bus movements is important and requires continued work with the responsible authorities to coordinate movements, optimise routes and minimise the impacts, as part of the services required to realise the benefits of the Plan.

3. Potential changes in transport patterns and technologies need to be acknowledged. Electric vehicles will become more widespread and accessible charging points will be required to encourage this, particularly where cars are parked overnight. A key challenge will be where cars are parked on the street (eg Rock Road). Driverless cars may also become available; and there will be an increase in the number of mobility scooters.

4. Car parking is a major concern for both residents and businesses that depend on customers and clients coming to Oundle from nearby rural parishes and elsewhere. The options are limited by the character of Oundle and therefore depend on effective management of existing parking opportunities. The Transport Studies include proposals to address this problem.

5. Population growth: a clear description of the expected population growth through to 2031, related to the number of houses proposed, is needed. This must

be for Oundle parish and differentiate between residents in houses and residents in educational establishments. We recognise that this is more complex than simply taking the census totals and extrapolating these based on average numbers per household.

The following table is based on census results and assumes the number of people per dwelling remains stable at 2.4 on average. This is likely to overstate the population as the trend is for gradually declining household size. “Residents of educational establishments” are treated as a distinct category with different needs and therefore make different demands on local facilities. The following table sets out the potential population based on 312 new dwellings at 2.4 people per dwelling and occupants of educational establishments at 1000.

Estimates based on new housing requirements				
Oundle parish data	2001	2011	2021	2031
Population in houses	4586	4868	6108	6857
Population in education establishments	759	867	1000	1000
Houses in Oundle	1935	2127	2545	2857
Total population	5345	5735	7108	7857

6. Festival site: a business case is required for the proposed site for festivals and community events at Site 15N to justify the need, identify the benefits, and explain how the site will be used and managed.

7. Maps: a number of maps, including the Settlement Boundary Map, the Policies Map and the Walking and Cycling Routes Map, are still missing from the draft Plan.

8 Incidentally:

- On page 20 with the “Well Run” it is not clear what “Additional services required to realise the benefits of the Neighbourhood Plan will be in place” means and an example would help to clarify this.
- At the beginning of paragraph 5.45 it is not clear what the transport study is subsequent to (“A subsequent transport study...”).