

## North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan



# North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2031

**Made version  
May 2021**

- ❖ **Achieving controlled, sustainable and appropriate development.**
- ❖ **Protecting elements that are key to the efficient functioning and well-being of the local community.**
- ❖ **Making North Hinksey Parish an even better place to live and work in, now and for future generations.**

**This Neighbourhood Plan is dedicated to the  
memory of Philip Stevens: 1937 to 2018.**

**Our community has benefitted immensely from  
the time and effort that he gave freely, working  
with numerous local organisations over many years.**

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# Abbreviations

**NHPC** = North Hinksey Parish Council

**NHPNP** = North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031

**NPPF** = National Planning Policy Framework

**Vale** or **VOWH** = Vale of White Horse District

**VOWHDC** = Vale of White Horse District Council

**Core Policy** = Core Policy within the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031

**Policy** = Neighbourhood Plan Policy within the North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2031

# 1. Introduction, including development and structure of the Plan

## 1.1 Introduction:

1.1.1 North Hinksey Parish is in many ways a slightly confusing conundrum that could easily fail to work as a community. Neither a village, nor an independent town in its own right, it sits in a semi-rural location that operates partly as a suburb of Oxford, and is strongly impacted on by this large neighbour. A further complication, however, is that North Hinksey Parish lies within the Vale of White Horse District, rather than falling under Oxford City. The community is also fractured and truncated by a combination of the A34 physically cutting off elements to the east of the Parish (North Hinksey Village and Old Botley), and the allocation of the western section of the area (as it practically functions) to neighbouring Cumnor Parish. Even the name itself could be considered confusing as most of the residents have the name Botley rather than North Hinksey included in their postal address.

1.1.2 Given all of the above, it is slightly surprising that in fact North Hinksey Parish has a strong sense of community and local identity, a good record of participation, an active Parish Council, good levels of local communication (including a free monthly magazine called 'The Sprout' distributed to all parishioners, and a comprehensive Botley and North Hinksey Community website), and a high level of long-term residents. Overall it has a well-balanced and integrated mix of residents from a socio-economic and cultural viewpoint, and is not overly dominated by any particular grouping in the way that has occurred historically within other areas of Oxford (e.g. University students, nurses, workers at the car plant). One significant grouping that should be recognised, however, is the elderly. The higher than average numbers of residents in the 70 plus age group do have specific requirements that should be recognised and catered for within the community.

1.1.3 An earlier community project resulted in the North Hinksey Parish Plan (2009), which highlighted the good and bad points about living and working in this area at that time, and also recommended a number of solutions for identified specific issues. Unfortunately, many of the solutions were not actually implemented, and a number of issues remained unresolved, thus providing a useful starting point for identifying current issues at the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process.

1.1.4 This North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2031 has been developed through the hard work of many local residents over a period of several years, and is based on extensive research, and influenced by robust engagement with the local community. It covers the period up to 2031, in line with the Vale of White Horse District Council (VOWHDC) Local Plan 2031, and in conjunction with that document it informs how development should take place, and helps to influence the type, quality and location of that development, ensuring that change brings with it local benefit.

1.1.5 The overall aim of this Neighbourhood Plan is to achieve controlled and sustainable growth through appropriate development, to protect the elements that are key to the efficient functioning and well-being of the local community, and to make North Hinksey Parish an even better place to live and work in, now and for future generations.

## 1.2 Location and Background:

### 1.2.1 General Location Information:

North Hinksey Parish lies to the western side of Oxford City, but outside of its legislative boundaries. Many aspects of its historic development have resulted from its location on rising ground to the west of the Thames floodplain, including its long-term administrative ties to the Vale of White Horse and Abingdon-on-Thames, to the south. Up to 1974 the whole of the Vale of the White Horse fell within the County of Berkshire, only transferring to Oxfordshire in that year.

Significant housing and commercial development within the Parish only started after 1900. Before that time the area contained two small villages (North Hinksey Village and Old Botley) together with a number of farms. Most residents were involved in some aspect of agriculture, with that industry dominating people's lives until relatively recently. The aerial views below give some indication of the expansion of housing between 1918 and 1961, the period of greatest growth.



View from S 1918



View from NE 1947



View from S 1961

Further significant fill-in housing developments and conversion of single house sites to multiple houses or flats have continued to the current day. The largest of these in recent times are two estates built off Lime Road, and off Tilbury Lane (half of which lies in neighbouring Cumnor Parish).

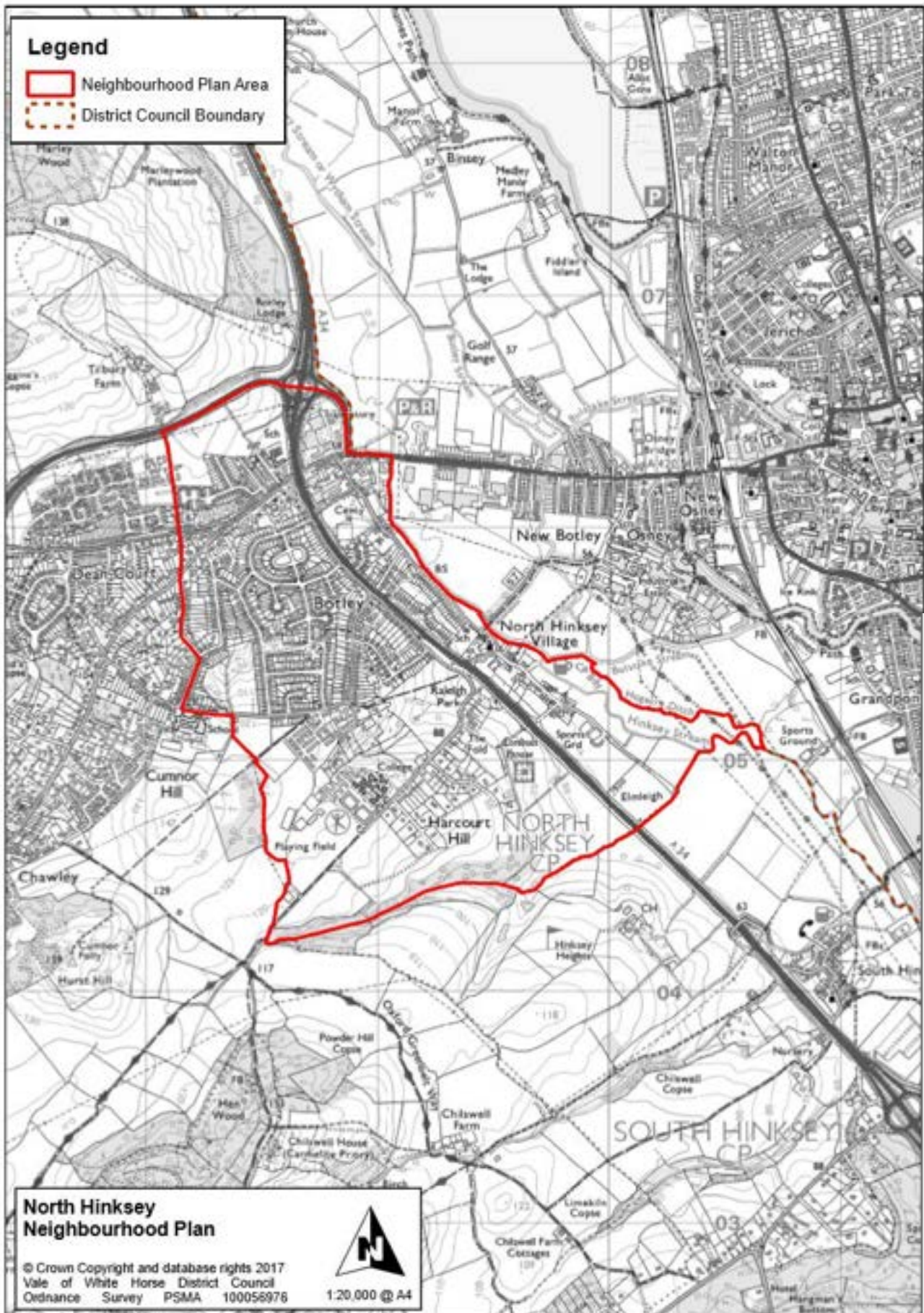
### 1.2.2 Population Size:

By 2016 the number of residents had risen to around 4,750, but these latest additions, combined with smaller scale developments have resulted in a current local population of over 5,000. The approved Botley Centre redevelopment planning application will result in a further significant increase to over 5,500 by 2022 when it is due to be completed. No large-scale sites remain unbuilt on within the Parish apart from green spaces and agricultural land, most of which lies within the Green Belt and/or provides much-needed leisure facilities. Despite this the population is forecast to reach over 5,700 by 2031 as a result of further infill and densification.

### 1.2.3 Area Designation and Current Land Use Maps:

As indicated on Map 1.1 below (the designation area map), the eastern boundary of the Parish with Oxford City mainly follows the Seacourt Stream, an offshoot of the Thames. To the south lies the Parish of South Hinksey, but there are no direct physical ties between these two Parishes, with open fields and golf course lying between the two, and no direct local road connecting them. To the west lies Cumnor Parish, with the seemingly arbitrary western boundary running north to south a short distance to the west of the West Way / Eynsham Road / Cumnor Hill junction.

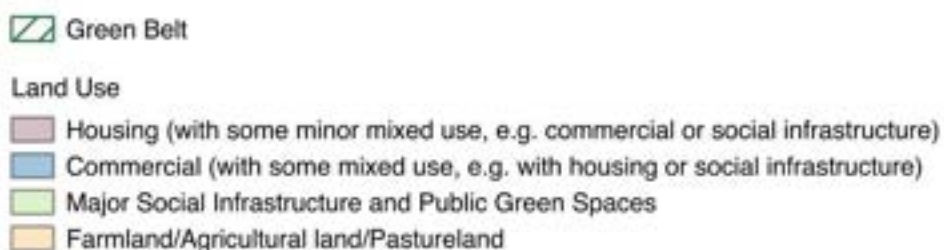
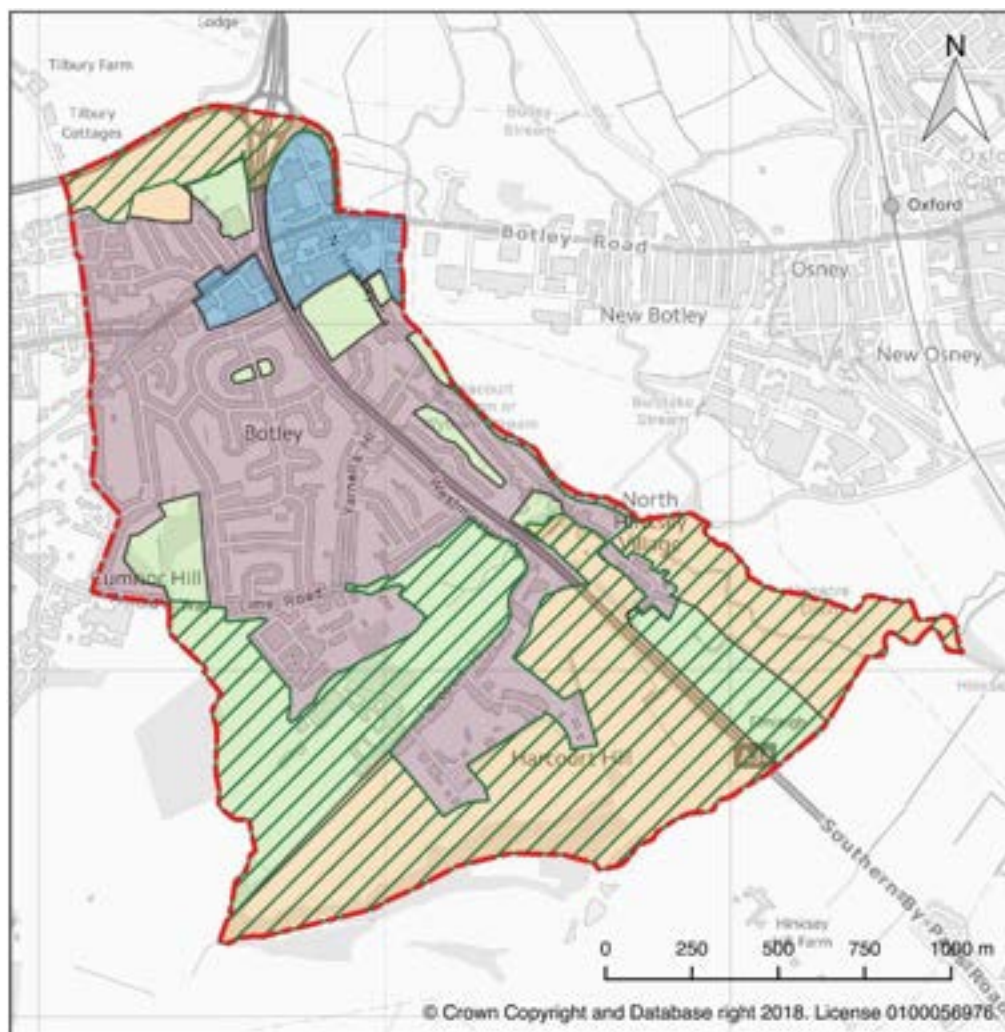
Map 1.1- designation area:



The following Map 1.2 provides a simplified view of current land use combined with an indication of areas within the Green Belt. This clearly shows the following:

- Green Belt land covering most of the southern half of the Parish, and a small area next to the A420 in the north,
- Commercial sites concentrated in the north-east of the Parish around the West Way / A34 junction,
- A number of major social infrastructure sites to the east of the Parish close to the A34 and in an arc to the south-west running from the Louie Memorial Fields via Brookes University Harcourt Hill site to Raleigh Park, with most of this land falling within the Green Belt,
- Areas of farmland mainly to the south-east of the Parish, with a small area next to the A420, virtually all within the Green Belt,
- The majority of the housing lies in the centre and towards the north-west of the Parish.

**Map 1.2 – Current Land Use within North Hinksey Parish, plus the Green Belt**



### 1.2.4 Parish Character Assessment and Additional Parish Maps:

A separate detailed North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (final version January 2018) has been produced by the Neighbourhood Plan team. In addition to featuring a more detailed history of the local area and its development over the ages, this document identifies the following Character Areas within North Hinksey Parish:

1. West Way / Botley Centre
2. Old Botley
3. Seacourt Tower and Retail Park
4. Westminster Way
5. Elms Rise Estate
6. Cumnor Rise
7. North of West Way
8. North Hinksey Village
9. Harcourt Hill
10. Tilbury Fields Estate

Map A.1 within Appendix A indicates the locations of the ten Character Areas. Of these, areas 1 and 3 are commercial / retail, area 2 is a mixture of a historic village and industrial estates, and areas 4 to 10 are predominantly residential, although Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus is also a significant presence within area 9.

Additional Parish maps included within Appendix A include Map A.2 showing contour lines and Map A.3 which is a satellite image of North Hinksey Parish.

### 1.2.5 North Hinksey Parish as a Functional Unit:

In terms of functionality there are significant connections with both Cumnor Parish and Oxford City covering many aspects of life. In particular the following should be noted:

- Despite the name of the Parish, most residents living outside of North Hinksey Village itself would describe themselves as living in 'Botley' rather than North Hinksey as Botley incorporates all of the Character Areas listed above apart from area 8.
- There is a considerable throughflow of traffic from both Cumnor Parish and Oxford City residents into and through the Parish, as well as from residents of North Hinksey Parish into Oxford City and onto the A34, and to a lesser extent up Cumnor Hill and along Eynsham Road (primarily for work, shopping and leisure purposes), which impacts strongly on local road conditions.
- Retail and leisure sites within North Hinksey Parish itself are also used heavily by residents of Cumnor Parish, particularly those living in Dean Court and Cumnor Hill, many of whom have stated that they feel more closely associated with the entity 'Botley' (N.B. not North Hinksey Parish), rather than with Cumnor Village or Cumnor Parish.
- North Hinksey Parish has no secondary school within its boundaries, but Matthew Arnold School lies immediately outside the western boundary, within Cumnor Parish, and many North Hinksey children are educated there, along with younger children from the Parish attending Cumnor Primary School. Similarly, many younger children living in Cumnor Parish and West Oxford attend the two Primary Schools located within North Hinksey Parish.



- Oxford Brookes University has a campus at Harcourt Hill, which, following the closure of Wheatley will be its second campus. Headington Hill is the University's main campus in east Oxford. The two campuses are connected with cross-City direct bus connections that also serve the local community. The presence of the campus also means that staff, students and visitors contribute to the vibrancy of existing commercial and retail services within the Parish.

### 1.3 Development of the Plan:

This Plan has been prepared primarily by individual residents and members of North Hinksey Parish Council who joined together initially to form a Steering Group to oversee the process, and subsequently expanded through the addition of further volunteers to form several Working Groups which carried out the detailed work of developing the Plan.

Consultation has played a major role throughout the process, and this is detailed further in a separate North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement. A summary of the main elements of consultation is also included here and under each of the topics in Section 4 of this Plan detailing the policies. The following subsections highlight the key steps involved in the production of this Plan, and provide a timeline of main actions.

#### 1.3.1 Initiation of the process:

- Discussions and investigation of the process began within North Hinksey Parish Council (NHPC) in May 2013, and continued for a period of almost a year. During that time a public meeting was held to gauge the level of enthusiasm for production of a Plan.
- In March 2014 a letter was sent to all parishioners to establish more accurately the level of support, and likely numbers of volunteers. This produced a very positive response, leading to a decision by NHPC in April / May 2014 to establish a Steering Group including two NHPC representatives, which held a pre-meeting in July 2014.
- North Hinksey Parish was identified by the Steering Group as the area to be requested for designation in October 2014. Additionally, the officers were elected, and the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group and any subsequent Working Groups to be set up were agreed at the first official meeting of the Steering Group on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.
- November 2014 saw a detailed questionnaire sent to all parishioners and local businesses asking them to identify major local issues, and to list good and bad points about the area plus appropriate and inappropriate locations for future development.
- Given the positive response to this questionnaire the Steering Group produced an Initial Scoping Report, and asked NHPC in December 2014 to request that North Hinksey Parish be designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area. The area was formally designated on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

#### 1.3.2 Establishing Working Groups and producing a Vision Statement and draft policy aims:

- In March 2015 the Steering Group established a set of six topics, and assigned each of the identified local issues to one of them. The six topics were Housing, Economy & Employment, Transport, Social Infrastructure, Utilities, and Green Spaces & the Natural Environment. A further topic of Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus was added later that year. These topics have remained as the themes under which issues were investigated and policies developed throughout the process.
- A public meeting was held in May 2015 at which the Neighbourhood Planning process was explained and volunteers assigned to Working Groups covering the above topics.

- During the remainder of 2015 the Working Groups began collecting evidence and producing a draft Vision Statement and general policy aims. These elements were put to the public at a drop-in feedback event in January 2016, which attracted over 100 attendees. Based on the positive feedback and additional information gathered at that event a slightly revised Vision Statement was produced, and a clear base established for potential policies and community actions to be developed in the next phase.

### 1.3.3 Developing detailed policies, community actions and an overall Plan:

- A lengthy process followed during which draft policies and community actions were produced and refined a number of times to reflect feedback obtained from further public consultation in July 2016 and October / November 2017. The draft Vision Statement was also refined and split into a Vision and a set of Objectives. In addition, further evidence was gathered from a widespread range of support documents and informal consultation with key stakeholders within the Parish, and in neighbouring areas. Also GWP Consultants were employed to produce a detailed groundwater assessment of the Parish in support of one of the policies.
- Input from VOWHDC planning representatives has been obtained throughout the process, with more detailed reviews of the policies occurring both after the October/November 2017 consultation, and again in May 2018 prior to finalising this version of the Plan. SEA screening also took place in 2018, resulting in confirmation that no SEA was required for this Plan.
- During this period the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1 was adopted in December 2016, and the details of the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 2 were put to the public in September 2017 with the aim of achieving adoption in late 2018. These documents will eventually supersede the whole of the former Local Plan 2011, and their gradual emergence has significantly complicated the process of producing this Plan.
- The final consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan was put to parishioners, statutory bodies and local stakeholders during the final six week pre-submission public consultation period running from 18 June 2018 to 31 July, and feedback from that consultation was incorporated to produce the submission version of the Plan.
- The submission version of the Plan was approved by NHPC in a Council meeting held on 29 November 2018, submitted to the VOWHDC, and then reviewed by an Independent Examiner over several months in 2019.
- Following Independent Examination the changes required by the Examiner were implemented in a process that was further lengthened by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. As no referendum could take place from the start of the pandemic a referendum version of the Plan was only finalised in early 2021.
- The public referendum subsequently took place on 6 May 2021, and achieved an 88% vote in favour, with the Plan then being made by the VOWHDC in a Council meeting held on 18 May 2021.

### 1.4 Documents that support the Neighbourhood Plan process:

The following documents have been produced by local residents at various stages leading up to, and within the Neighbourhood Plan process and support the approach that has been taken in the development of this Neighbourhood Plan:

- North Hinksey Parish Plan (2009)

- North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation confirmation (June 2015)
- North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Initial Scoping Report (December 2014)
- North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement (in production)
- North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (final version January 2018)

All of the completed documents above are downloadable from the North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan website Resources page at <http://www.nhinkseynp.org.uk/resources/>

## 1.5 Structure of the Plan:

This Neighbourhood Plan sets out:

- The overall Vision and Objectives for the future of North Hinksey Parish, identifying how the local community would like the area to develop in the period up to 2031.
- The Neighbourhood Plan strategic and policy overview, setting out the broader policy aims and how that has impacted on the approach taken in developing this Plan.
- The detailed policies within each of the identified topic headings. These provide the local policy framework for managing new development, working in conjunction with the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031, so that it contributes to the vision, aims and strategy for the Parish and wider District.
- Plan delivery and implementation, including a number of important ongoing community actions intended to encourage appropriate development, and to maximise the benefits to the local community. These actions reflect a holistic approach taken to the Neighbourhood Planning process, and relate to development of all aspects of the local community, and not solely those developments emerging through the formal planning process.

## 2. Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

### 2.1 Neighbourhood Plan Vision:

By 2031, North Hinksey will be an inclusive Parish of high quality design containing a wide-ranging mix of services and facilities, both commercial and social, to service the local community. It will foster diverse employment and a healthy economy. It will encourage, and improve the infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, and reduce reliance on private car journeys. It will make best use of utilities, and benefit from new low carbon and energy-efficient technologies. It will protect and enhance its green spaces, wildlife, and the semi-rural nature of its location. It will retain its own identity and role within the Vale of White Horse, and its historic setting, while at the same time developing its relationship with neighbouring Oxford City. Development as a whole will aim to improve the health, wellbeing and available lifestyle choices for people living in, working in, or visiting North Hinksey Parish.

### 2.2 Neighbourhood Plan Objectives:

**The North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan aims to deliver its long-term vision for the community through the following objectives:**

#### 2.2.1 Attractive housing that meets the needs of the whole community:

Our vision is for low rise sustainable developments, mainly up to a maximum of three storeys, rising higher in the Local Centre, which are well designed. We expect high quality architecture that avoids over-densification and which provides safe, healthy, and attractive designs in harmony with the distinctive green character of North Hinksey Parish. Our objective is housing and affordability that meet the requirements of parishioners and key workers at all stages of their lives.

#### 2.2.2 A good place to work and do business in, and for shoppers:

A redeveloped Central Botley Area that meets community needs and desires with a diverse range of shops and eating places including independent local outlets. Foster diverse employment and economy with a mixture of services / retail / professions / self-employment and sufficient offices and units for start-ups. Make North Hinksey Parish *the* place for smart businesses looking to work with Oxfordshire's knowledge-based economy, and an attractive, more easily accessible alternative to central Oxford.

#### 2.2.3 A fully integrated and effective transport system that copes fully with local demands:

Improved infrastructure and encouragement for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport to reduce reliance on private car journeys and reduce congestion, particularly on local roads, despite

the pressures of a growing population. Make the Parish a safer place for all public highway users through effective management of parking and associated issues.

#### **2.2.4 Appropriate levels of social infrastructure for a community of our size and mix of demographics:**

Along with a good mix of community facilities (including medical services, education, leisure facilities and library provision) introduced in a timely manner, North Hinksey Parish should remain a safe environment for all residents and workers at any time of night and day, with a cohesive, caring and diverse community and low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

#### **2.2.5 Affordable and sustainable access to water, electricity and gas meets the needs of current residents in a way that secures their provision for the future:**

Warm, comfortable and energy efficient homes, commercial and social buildings ensure that North Hinksey Parish is an enjoyable place to live and work while also reducing carbon emissions. Energy provision, water supply and management, and waste water disposal are designed into development to ensure a good, affordable, reliable and sustainable supply. The benefits of new low carbon and energy efficient technologies will be applied to current and new buildings in a way that enhances our environment and well-being, while reducing less desirable aspects such as flooding which is currently an issue in some parts of the designated area. Excellent internet connectivity should be available to residents and businesses throughout the whole Parish.

#### **2.2.6 Retention of the current semi-rural feel to the area, with good public access to green spaces and the local countryside:**

Protection of current Green Belt land and recreational green spaces within the Parish combined with green spaces designed into all major new developments providing opportunities for enjoyment by all local residents. Encouragement of biodiversity and protection of wildlife corridors and habitats ensuring continued healthy populations of flora and fauna. Increasing green routes for walkers and cyclists.

#### **2.2.7 A flourishing Oxford Brookes University Campus on Harcourt Hill, acting both as an educational establishment, and as a provider of infrastructure for the local community.**

Encouraging appropriate development of the Campus site that enables it to function effectively in its prime role as an educational establishment without impacting negatively on the local environment and transport network to a significant degree. Increasing the level of self-sufficiency of the campus in terms of facilities would be a major factor in helping to minimise any negative impacts. Oxford Brookes University is also recognised as a long lease holder of a significant area of land within the Parish providing local employment opportunities and social infrastructure such as sports facilities, and ongoing improvements to these aspects will be sought over the long term.

## **3. Neighbourhood Plan Strategy and Policy overview.**

### **3.1 Strategy and Policy overview**

#### **3.1.1 Neighbourhood Plan themes:**

The following suite of policies in Section 4 of this Plan has been developed to manage the future development of North Hinksey Parish in order to achieve the vision, objectives and overall strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan. The policies are separated into seven themes, each researched by a separate Working Group during the preparation of this Plan and as presented to parishioners throughout the lengthy consultation process. The seven themes are as follows:

- Housing
- Economy & Employment
- Transport
- Social Infrastructure
- Utilities
- Green Spaces & the Natural Environment
- Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus

#### **3.1.2 National and District Planning Context:**

All policies have been framed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2. To aid interpretation each policy is accompanied by supporting text setting out the context, the local community's feedback on that subject, references to specific sections of the above National and Local policies, and other relevant documentation and evidence, plans and strategies that offer support and evidence for its approach.

#### **3.1.3 Major Factors Impacting on the Overall Strategy:**

During the development of this Neighbourhood Plan an overall strategy has emerged which attempts to balance, and avoid conflict between the following five factors:

- (i) The desires of the local community, which can lead to expectations of a utopian, ideal future position that is not realistically achievable.
- (ii) Achieving sustainable development in line with national legislative requirements. This requires a Neighbourhood Plan to take into account Economic, Social and Environmental dimensions.
- (iii) Restrictions on what can be achieved through this Neighbourhood Plan given a lack of control over a number of major factors impacting on the functionality of this area (e.g. regional or national control over key transport issues such as the A34 / Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and the proposed Oxford Rapid Transit system (i.e. the Local Transport Plan), and major redevelopment of the two largest retail sites already approved and subject to detailed guidelines contained within the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 and supporting Botley Centre SPD).
- (iv) Physical restrictions in terms of a lack of available undeveloped space for new developments, with Green Belt covering a large portion of the Parish.
- (v) The requirement for additional housing in line with externally imposed targets which results in pressure on transport networks that are already straining to cope, and a need for significant improvements to other areas of infrastructure in line with population growth.

### **3.1.4 Local Issues:**

Identifying the desires of the local community proved to be a relatively simple exercise, and a clear picture was quickly obtained of the types of issues people cared about most strongly, and what they thought was good and bad about this area. The issues mostly fell within the areas of transport (capacity on major roads, parking, and improvements needed by pedestrian and cyclists), housing (inappropriate buildings and overdevelopment), and the shortfall in other infrastructure supporting the ever-increasing local population (primarily medical, education and leisure facilities). What people liked mainly revolved around the good community spirit, the green, semi-rural feel to the location, which they wished to protect, and the environment in general.

### **3.1.5 Policies vs. Community Actions:**

This information led to a wide range of policy aims, which it was hoped could be incorporated within this Plan, and wherever possible policies have been developed to meet these needs.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document which will inform planning applications, a number of important additional issues falling outside of the planning system's remit were identified by the local community during the preparation of this Plan. Therefore, alongside its policies the Plan also includes a number of community actions to be implemented by North Hinksey Parish Council, volunteers from the community and other stakeholders. These are included within section 5 on Plan Delivery and Implementation.

### **3.1.6 Economic and Housing Growth:**

The above factors helped to strongly influence the social and environmental dimensions to the Plan, but had little impact on the economic element. Also the restrictions mentioned in 3.1.3 (iii) above have limited the impact that this Plan can have on some aspects of economic growth as major developments in the retail sector have already been decided on.

The housing targets mentioned in 3.1.3 (iv) above have not in fact proved to be a significant factor as the VOWHDC Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 do not contain any identified sites for housing within North Hinksey Parish, which reflects the fact that a number of large housing developments have either already been built in recent times, or have received planning approval awaiting implementation (in the case of the Botley Centre redevelopment), combined with the lack of large-scale sites appropriate for new housing developments within the parish.

In order to counter these influences a deliberate attempt has been made throughout the process of developing this Plan to take a positive attitude in terms of growth, and contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. Options for growth may well be limited due to physical constraints (leading to a position where no undeveloped areas of land have been identified within this Plan as suitable for new housing or commercial developments), but that should not deter the local community from identifying ways to maximise the economic benefits through efficient development and usage of current sites.

### **3.1.7 Key Elements in the Overall Strategy:**

Overall a strategy has emerged that contains the following key elements:

- Policies that provide protection for identified important green spaces and leisure facilities, and encourage expansion of these elements, combined with community actions to promote better usage of them, leading to improved social interaction, health and well-being of local residents and visitors to the Parish.

- Policies and community actions that promote excellent design of housing and commercial developments, which are low rise and appropriate to the character of the local area, take account of localised flooding / groundwater issues, and incorporate environmentally friendly design features that help to improve the environment, and the health of the local community.
- Housing policies that reinforce the need for appropriate levels of affordable housing, and encourage the provision of smaller scale buildings, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of young individuals and families, the elderly, and key workers.
- A range of policies aimed at improving local transport networks, linking in with larger regional schemes, and encouraging better use of public transport and increased levels of walking and cycling to further improve health and the environment in addition to resolving local road capacity issues, and having a positive effect on the local (and wider) economy.
- Policies that encourage a vibrant local economy, with a good mix of businesses that complement each other, and maximise the benefits of the location of the Parish with its easy access (in terms of long distance travel) and closeness to Oxford City. One key element is the protection of current commercial sites that have been designated for business use in the face of financial incentives to convert to housing. Additional community actions aim to promote the local economy more effectively, and build on connections being built up between local businesses, and with businesses and organisations involved in major commercial redevelopment schemes within Oxford.

## 3.2 National and District Level plans, documents and strategies that support North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Community Actions

### 3.2.1 National and District Level documents:

The North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan is fully consistent with the following documents, which support the approach taken when identifying policies and community actions:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2 (plus associated support and consultation documents)  
<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/local-plan-2031/>
- VOWHDC Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) January 2016  
<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/botley-ce>

### 3.2.2 Context:

The following are key elements of the documents listed in section 3.2.1 above that relate specifically to North Hinksey Parish.

VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1:

- Section 4 on Spatial Strategy including Core Policy 3 on Spatial Hierarchy identifies Botley as a Local Service Centre, and North Hinksey as a Smaller Village. Also this section of the Local Plan clearly identifies that there are no significant development sites available within the Parish to meet housing needs. This has been further reinforced by no additional new housing sites being identified in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
- The Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area Strategy in section 5, including Core Policy 8 further clarifies the Spatial Strategy for this area. Core Policy 9 comments on the



proposed redevelopment of the Harcourt Hill Campus of Oxford Brookes University, with a masterplan currently being developed that will need to respect its Green Belt setting, and deal with localised transport issues. Core Policy 11 relates to proposals for a retail-led, mixed-use redevelopment of Botley Centre (see also the Botley Centre SPD below).

Botley Centre SPD (January 2016):

- This document clearly identifies the area designated as Botley Centre and provides vision and objectives plus development principles for any proposed redevelopment of the site. It should be noted that the Botley Centre area forms the bulk of, but not all of, Character Area 1 in the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment, but it is in turn larger than the redevelopment area for which planning approval has already been obtained by the Botley Development Company. These approved redevelopment plans include significant levels of student and non-student flats, a hotel, and various community facilities in addition to an expansion of retail provision.

In addition to these location-specific Core Policies other District wide Core Policies covering topics such as The Green Belt, promoting use of Public Transport, cycling and walking, and Infrastructure issues as a whole impact on many of our Neighbourhood Plan Policies, and are referred to in detail within relevant topics of section 4 of this document.

## 4. Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### 4.1 Housing

#### 4.1.1 Context and community feedback

4.1.1.1 North Hinksey Parish (consisting of North Hinksey Village and the majority of the area commonly described as Botley) is essentially a suburb of Oxford. It is within easy reach of Oxford City Centre and major employment areas, to which it is directly linked by the Botley Road. Its character is typical of inter and post-war development, being mainly two-storey detached and semi-detached houses with large gardens. This provides a very green environment, enhanced by existing vegetation and woodland to ensure a low-density well-treed character, as described in the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018).

4.1.1.2 Note should also be taken of the Locally Important Buildings and Features Assessment (August 2018) which highlights the heritage assets lying within North Hinksey Parish. These include a number of Grade II Listed buildings and features, the majority of which (11 in total, including St Lawrence Church) lie within the North Hinksey Conservation Area. This Conservation Area was designated on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1969, and it contains a particularly homogenous enclave, with around one third of the buildings there being Grade II Listed. Map B.1 in the Appendices to this Plan shows the location of the Conservation Area. Further information about the heritage assets of the Parish can be found in section 4.4 Social Infrastructure.

4.1.1.3 There is considerable pressure for new housing in the local area. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 seeks sites for 20,560 houses in the Vale's territory. Additionally, Oxford City Council cannot fully meet its' own targets, and is seeking for a further 2,200 new dwellings to be built in the Vale. The target total number of new dwellings to be built in the Vale by 2031 is therefore currently standing at 22,760.

4.1.1.4 Over the last 5 years two major developments have been completed. 136 dwellings have been built off Lime Road and 150 dwellings have been built off Tilbury Lane (75 of which are within North Hinksey Parish). In these two areas alone, the population of the Parish has been increased by approximately 520 people. Also, when 140 flats are built in accordance with the approved Botley Centre Development this will add more than 250 people to the Parish population. Overall a large proportion of recent housing growth has taken the form of flats (including many house conversions), leaving a relative shortage of smaller houses suitable for families, and this is an area that needs to be addressed over the longer term. The recent change in stance by VOWHDC regarding the removal of provision of new on-site affordable housing at Botley Centre reinforces the social imbalance in Botley.

4.1.1.5 Initial community feedback on housing developments from the November 2014 Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire suggested that housing should remain low rise outside of the Botley Centre area, and of appropriate design to match the local character. In addition, there were comments suggesting that adequate permanent affordable housing and housing for the elderly should be focused on. Finally, there was a strong opinion that new housing developments should not impact negatively on green spaces (including the Green Belt, playing fields and allotments), or on important social infrastructure facilities (e.g. leisure, health and education facilities).

4.1.1.6 Positive feedback on the emerging Housing policies at subsequent public events has helped to refine the wordings of those policies, but not required any significant changes to the overall policy aims on Housing. A number of sites suggested as potentially suitable for housing developments were put forward by individual parishioners during the consultation process, and nine of these sites were investigated further to ascertain their suitability – see Table B1 in

Appendix B - Housing. Further comments about these sites are also included in sections 4.1.3 below.

4.1.1.7 Also the needs of the local people as expressed in the community consultation held in January 2016 and October 2017 showed a preference weighted towards

- Homes and flats for young families and key workers.
- A greater number of 2-3 bedroom family homes.
- Permanent affordable housing.
- Sheltered, Assisted or Flexi-care housing.
- Shared equity, co-ownership.
- Limited private rental sector.

Achieving a better balance in provision of these housing types will help provide this Parish with a variety of homes to meet the diverse demand and create a balanced community.

#### **4.1.2 The following plans, documents and strategies support Housing Policies**

- Vale of White Horse District Council Design Guide March 2015.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire 2014; a County-wide assessment that also provides guidance on housing mix and affordability for the District.
- Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 Core Policies 22-26, and 37-38.
- 2018-28 Joint Housing Delivery Strategy for South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse.
- North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018).
- Locally Important Buildings and Features Assessment North Hinksey Parish (August 2018)

#### **4.1.3 Further justification and evidence, and Housing Policies**

##### **4.1.3.1 New Housing on Undeveloped Land.**

4.1.3.1.1 The VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 confirms that there are no sites for large scale development within this Neighbourhood Plan area, and a recent Green Belt review has reinforced the existing Green Belt boundaries around the Parish, most of which are drawn tightly around existing houses.

4.1.3.1.2 The undeveloped parcels of land in sites 1 to 6 (as listed in Table B.1 in Appendix B – Housing) identified through public consultation were assessed by the Housing Group to identify if any of them offered opportunities for smaller to medium sized housing developments, but none are being put forward for housing use as part of this Plan. On investigation all six sites proved to have considerable issues associated with use for development as they are currently either in the Green Belt (see Local Plan Core Policy 13), or designated in this Neighbourhood Plan as local green spaces or important leisure facilities, giving rise to conflicts with Green Spaces Policies GS1 and GS2 and Social Infrastructure Policy SI1. In addition, Transport Policies TR1 and TR2 would need to be adhered to, and access issues further reinforce the non-viability of several of these sites. Also site 5 lies within the groundwater high-risk zone as defined under Utilities Policy UT1 and shown as Map F.2 in Appendix F - Utilities. However this lack of sites is leading to a continuing densification of existing housing and a potential risk to Botley's character.

4.1.3.1.3 Where any appropriate new sites for housing are identified in the future they are likely to be relatively small scale given the current situation outlined above. Any new development must reflect and add to the present character of the Parish. This especially applies to the Conservation Area of North Hinksey Village and the Listed Buildings, many of which are in the Conservation Area. These issues are dealt with through Policies HS1, HS2, and HS3 below. In addition, new housing stock should help to balance an appropriate mix of typologies, as covered by Policy HS5, whilst Policy HS4 encourages increased flexibility.

#### 4.1.3.2 Redevelopment/ Extensions to Current Housing, and Densification

4.1.3.2.1 This second section relates to changes on existing sites and extensions to existing properties. Much current development involves extensions of existing houses to the rear or into the roof. On larger plots the existing house is demolished and replaced with two or more houses. Significant parts of the Parish are characterised by post-war 'custom built' housing, and this form of housing redevelopment is encouraged but not at the expense of the Parish's green character.

4.1.3.2.2 Redevelopment of sites involving the replacement of a single house by one or more blocks of flats has already significantly increased the density of housing on some sites. In some locations (e.g. along West Way) this may be reasonable, within limits, however in other Character Areas it would often result in inappropriate designs that are completely out of character, combined with over-densification / overdevelopment of the site, which should be discouraged.

4.1.3.2.3 A series of potential sites for new housing were investigated following public consultation. These have been set out in Table B.1 in Appendix B – Housing. No major sites for housing were identified. All the sites have constraints, most related to Green Belt and flooding issues. This currently limits NHPNP to respond to existing housing pressure; and therefore the housing policies are geared mainly to maintaining the green character of the Parish and ensuring over development does not take place.

4.1.3.2.4 Sites 7 to 9 listed in Table B.1 in Appendix B – Housing relate to two potential significant redevelopments, namely of Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus and of Field House. As Field House lies within Botley Centre it is considered further in section 4.1.3 below, however the Harcourt Hill Campus is covered in this section.

4.1.3.2.5 A major exercise is currently being carried out by Brookes to develop a masterplan for redevelopment of the Harcourt Hill Campus (of which sites 7 and 8 form a part) in line with the Local Plan Core Policy 9. The Local Plan Inspector stated that all development (including any housing / accommodation) must be sited within existing Brookes developed boundaries, an approach which the Local Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan uphold. This alone would make specific development of sites 7 and 8 (for housing / accommodation or buildings for any other purpose) appear to be unviable, as both lie outside of the major development site boundary. This situation is reinforced by other factors as follows.

- The whole Harcourt Hill Campus lies within the Green Belt, which needs to be taken into account in line with the Local Plan Core Policy 13 on this topic. In addition, Policies SI1, GS1 and GS2 of this Plan would require the removal of sports facilities such as playing fields through development to be matched by providing land to relocate that facility elsewhere on Campus.
- The level of housing / accommodation on the Campus will also need to take into account the potential impact on transport in the vicinity,

and careful attention will need to be taken of Transport Policies TR1 and TR2 to ensure compliance. In practical terms any development on the current car park would require similar facilities to be provided elsewhere on the Campus. See section 4.7 of this Plan for further details about the Brookes Harcourt Hill site.

#### **4.1.3.3 Issues Arising from the Botley Centre SPD.**

4.1.3.3.1 Within the Botley Centre area of North Hinksey Parish (as defined in the relevant SPD and in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031) planning permission was granted in 2016 for a proposed redevelopment by the Botley Development Company. The plans passed show 140 housing units in the form of flats. This is a very useful addition to the new dwelling units proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan, NHPNP recommends that they should preferentially be occupied in line with Policy HS4. In addition, there are 262 rooms (including only a few flats) which are to be built for academic staff, graduates and students.

4.1.3.3.2 Redevelopment of Field House (site 9), which lies within Botley Centre, but outside of the approved redevelopment would be appropriate if it continued as sheltered / elderly housing, thereby maintaining an appropriate level of that housing type in line with Housing Policy HS4, and if it also met the requirements of the Botley Centre SPD and the Local Plan Core Policy 11 on Botley Centre. North Hinksey Parish contains a significantly higher percentage of elderly residents than other areas within the Vale of White Horse, and it is imperative that suitable housing is retained for that purpose. Currently both Field House and a number of bungalows in Seacourt Road provide sheltered / elderly housing within easy reach of the facilities in Botley Centre.

4.1.3.3.3 Overall within the Botley Centre area for any further developments subsequent to the current approved redevelopment, housing should be provided that is suitable for occupants as described under Policy HS4 below.

#### **4.1.4 Housing General Planning Principles**

4.1.4.1 This section relates to changes to existing housing sites as well as new developments. Any proposals for densification of one or more houses shall have regard to the effect on neighbouring properties, the existing landscape and biodiversity of the immediate locality and be in keeping with the character of the locality. Over-dense development will not be acceptable. NHPNP expects design to be of the highest standards. There must be adequate on-site parking - but not at the expense of the local streetscape. The design shall be of a standard that improves on local authority guidance on climate change, renewables, and low-carbon development.

4.1.4.2 NHPNP encourages the development of housing that reflects the needs of 'downsizers', (those in large houses wishing to move to smaller accommodation, who often have no access to appropriate housing and therefore do not move, thus reducing the availability of family housing). Current occupancy rates would appear to show that there are three times more dwellings with 2 spare rooms than one spare room. Developers are therefore encouraged to follow HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation, see website for details - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-our-ageing-population-panel-for-innovation>) design principles and provide more useful space rather than numbers of rooms. This points to a reduction in the proportion of 4 and 5 bedroom houses in favour of smaller dwellings.

4.1.4.3 Overall the aim is to help provide Botley with a variety of homes to meet the diverse demand and create a balanced community. Precedents in NPs elsewhere (e.g. St Ives) promote housing policies geared to ensuring local access to appropriate housing.

4.1.4.4 New houses should be built to comply with minimum space standards as set out in the Vale's Design Guide, and Appendix I: Nationally Described Space Standards Level 1 of the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2 as well as reflecting NHPNP Policies HS1 to HS5. As storey heights are unreliable, the maximum height shall respect the character of the locality, and not exceeding 12 metres in height from ground level to ridge, outside the Botley Centre area of the Parish, with a lower limit of 10m in Character Areas 7 and 8.

4.1.4.5 The following general planning principles reflect, and expand on those contained in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1 adopted in December 2016 and the 2018-28 Joint Housing Delivery Strategy for the whole of South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse adopted in 2018. It is considered very important to reinforce support for these principles in the North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan as the pressure for both new and housing is great and is likely to increase.

1. Any proposal to replace one or more existing dwellings or blocks of flats shall be considered in the light of its effects on neighbouring properties and the development shall have adequate on-site parking provision.
2. Any proposed extension shall respect the amenities of neighbours, and must ensure that it does not seriously affect a neighbour's sunlight and daylight.
3. Any proposed extension must not have an overbearing effect on neighbouring properties and must not result in excessive overlooking.
4. Any proposal must not be detrimental to the character of the immediate locality and must not exacerbate ecological problems caused by underground streams, which are common locally.
5. NHPNP encourages the highest quality design and built environment. All new housing should use design review and other such mechanisms as Identified in NPPF guidance on 'Good Design'. Design Review can be obtained from BOB-MK which represents and draws on local expertise and of which The VOWHDC is a subscriber. BOB-MK Urban Design Network is an organisation of Local Authority officers who are involved in different aspects of planning and urban design, website <http://bobmk.org.uk>. It provides training, mutual support, and design review amongst other functions.
6. A Green Belt review conducted by VOWHDC in support of the Local Plan 2031 resulted in Green Belt land in the Parish remaining untouched, however, following future reviews Green Belt land could potentially subsequently be released for housing.
7. Proposals for self-build housing and community led housing are supported, and landowners encouraged to offer land in the first instance to community led housing projects. A nearby example of community led housing is the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust's Dean Court Project in Cumnor Parish.
8. This NHPNP supports the provision of housing which meets the needs of local people and their families, and individuals moving to work the area to support sustainable growth in the local economy. In order to achieve this it is necessary to provide an appropriate balance in housing types through the provision of adequate affordable housing and a presumption in favour of

housing suitable for elderly persons, young persons, families seeking a first step on the housing ladder, and key workers\* for whom there is an established requirement in the local area. The listing of key workers includes carers to recognise the importance, from both a health and social perspective, of enabling people to maintain their independence for longer.

\* A Key Worker is defined in this Neighbourhood Plan as any person who is in paid employment solely within one or more of the following occupations:

- NHS: all clinical staff except doctors and dentists.
- Schools: qualified teachers in any Local Education Authority school or sixth-form college, or any state-funded Academy or Free School; qualified nursery nurses in any Oxfordshire County Council nursery school.
- Universities and colleges: lecturers at further education colleges; lecturers, academic research staff and laboratory technicians at Oxford Brookes University or any college or faculty within the University of Oxford.
- Police & probation: police officers and community support officers; probation service officers (and other operational staff who work directly with offenders); prison officers including operational support.
- Local authorities & Government agencies: social workers; occupational therapists; educational psychologists; speech and language therapists; rehabilitation officers; planning officers; environmental health officers; Connexions personal advisors; clinical staff; uniformed fire and rescue staff below principal level.
- Others; carers for disabled or elderly parishioners.

#### 4.1.5 Housing Policies

##### **Policy HS1 – Characteristics of New Housing**

**New developments should respect and enhance the character of the area in which they are located, and make a positive contribution to the identity of North Hinksey Parish. Any proposal for new housing should take account of the scale, grain (the general shape and direction of building footprints - as set out in VOWHDC Design Guide glossary), and size of existing development in accordance with the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018). Developers should ensure that sites provide an enhanced and improved local streetscape such as verges, tree planting, reduced area of drop kerb, and appropriate parking facilities to match the existing green character of North Hinksey Parish.**

##### **Policy HS2 – Low-Rise Housing Design**

**Any new housing must reflect the predominantly low-rise character of North Hinksey Parish, through a diversity of housing typologies. Any new housing should be in accordance with the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment**

(January 2018), and should not normally exceed the existing buildings heights of the relevant Character Area\*. Specifically they should also meet the following guidelines:

- In the two areas of the Parish with the lowest average housing heights, namely Character Area 7: North of West Way (excluding Nursery Close which contains higher blocks of flats), and Character Area 8: North Hinksey Village, new housing should not exceed 10 metres in height\*\*, allowing for a 2-storey house with pitched roof.
- In Botley Centre area, as defined in the Botley Centre SPD, heights of dwellings must reflect the requirements of that SPD.
- In all other areas of the Parish new housing should not exceed 12 metres in height\*\*, allowing for a 3-storey house with pitched roof.

\*Character Areas are as defined in the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018).

\*\* Height being defined as ground floor to ridge height.

### **Policy HS3 – Housing Density**

New housing developments will be supported where they incorporate a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (net) unless specific local circumstances indicate that this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area, highway safety or the amenity of neighbours. New housing developments will be supported at densities above the minimum figure identified in the first part of this policy in the following locations:

- (a) in Botley Centre, as defined in the Botley Centre SPD, where density of dwellings must reflect the requirements of that SPD; and
- (b) in other parts of Character Area 1\* immediately along West Way (the major bus route), and in Nursery Close, where a maximum density level of up to 100 dwellings per hectare (net) should not be exceeded.

\*Character Areas are as defined in the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018).

### **Policy HS4 – Flexibility, Future-Proofing, and Sustainable Design**

Proposals for new housing development should comply with policies TR2 and UT2 of this Neighbourhood Plan in relation to porous drainage materials, electric vehicle charging points, low carbon design and energy efficiency. Proposals for new housing which include any of the following features will be particularly supported.

- Facilities to allow ‘homeworking’ and local customisation;
- Flexible and adaptable spaces to ensure resilience;



- Incorporation of smart technology, including access to superfast broadband;
- Green roofs or other sustainable means of rainwater retention; and
- As a minimum to meet the requirements of the Department for Communities and Local Government's Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard Level 1, and Category 1 standard as set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document M Part 2, or similar space and access standards as set out in any subsequent superseding regulations or guidelines.

## **Policy HS5 – Balance of Housing Types**

Development proposals will be supported where they are principally designed to meet one or more of the following identified local housing needs:

- Older persons (including Flexi-care) in accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 26; or
- Young persons and families seeking a first step on the housing ladder; or
- Key workers in North Hinksey Parish (as defined in section 4.1.4 of this Plan), including but not limited to those in healthcare, education, local government and policing, where this need is demonstrated through the VOWHDC local housing register; or
- Any additional disadvantaged groups where a shortage of appropriate housing within the Parish is identified within the lifetime of this Plan.

Proposed developments should demonstrate through appropriate and up-to-date evidence the way in which they address local housing needs in the neighbourhood area.

## 4.2 Economy & Employment

### 4.2.1 Context and community feedback

4.2.1.1 Strategic employment sites within North Hinksey Parish are predominantly located alongside the main highways (the A34 and West Way) within Character Areas 1, 2 and 3 as identified within the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018). They are shown on Maps C.1(a) and C.1(b) of business sites in Appendix C - Economy & Employment and listed in Table 4.2 below along with a number of other identified business sites.

**Table 4.2 Sites for Business Use in North Hinksey Parish.**

Ref	Name	Strategic Employment Site in VOWHDC Local Plan Part 1	Development Plans
CS1	Botley Centre		Planning permission granted for redevelopment by Botley Development Co (MACE/Doric) to mixed use: retail, leisure, hotel, university-related accommodation and residential
CS2	Seacourt Retail Park		Planning permission granted for drive-thru coffee shop and removal of petrol station to allow improved access and parking. Planning application to allow food use in certain units.
CS3	Seacourt Tower	✓	
CS4	Curtis Industrial Estate	✓	Unknown

CS5	Hinksey Business Park	✓	No Planning application outstanding
CS6	Minns Business Park	✓	Planning application outstanding for mixed use (flats / offices) redevelopment of Riverside Court
CS7	Richer Sounds (site of George PH)		No Planning application outstanding
CS8	Raleigh Park Clinic site, 45 Raleigh Park Road		No Planning application outstanding
CS9	Seacourt Bridge and surrounding business premises on north side of West Way		No Planning application outstanding
CS10	Laburnum Road Convenience Store (currently Lucky House, 49 Crabtree Rd)		No Planning application outstanding
CS11	McDonalds site and Surroundings		No Planning application outstanding
CS12	Travis Perkins / Enterprise site		No Planning application outstanding

4.2.1.2 Retail stores are concentrated primarily within Botley Centre (CS1) and Seacourt Tower Retail Park (CS2), industrial units within Curtis Industrial Estate (CS4), Hinksey Business Park (CS5) and the Travis Perkins/Enterprise site (CS12), and offices within Seacourt Tower itself (CS3), Minns Business Park (CS6), the west and southern edges of the McDonalds site (CS11), and Botley Centre (CS1).

4.2.1.3 The policies generated by the Economy and Employment working group are designed to create a sustainable and versatile business environment which serves the needs of the local community and will flourish in the longer term. Botley hosts a diverse range of businesses including retail, light industrial and service based companies, many of which are interdependent. As indicated in the table above, four of the locations are listed as strategic employment sites in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031, and a list of the businesses operating there is included in Table C.1 of Appendix C - Economy & Employment.

4.2.1.4 Sustainability is an increasing focus for planning and versatile business facilities will ensure that the economy of the area does not stagnate or decline. To support the continued success of business in the local area all of the locations CS1 to CS12 in the table above are being designated as '**sites for business use**'. Although mixed use may be appropriate on some of these sites (and is identified as such for Botley Centre in the SPD on that topic) it is extremely important to the local economy that there is not a significant gradual seepage of use away from business to housing as that would undermine the business sector and lead to serious long term issues.

4.2.1.5 Initial community feedback on commercial developments from the November 2014 Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire focussed primarily on the planned Botley Centre redevelopment, but this issue has subsequently been handled in detail in Core Policy 9 within the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1, and a supporting Botley Centre SPD, with a planning application approved in 2016 awaiting implementation. Other comments arising from that questionnaire were limited, but suggested that commercial developments should remain low rise outside of the Botley Centre and Seacourt Tower sites, of appropriate design, and if larger scale or representing an intensification of use, should be sited within recognised business use locations CS1 to CS12 (as identified above). As with housing there was a strong opinion that new commercial developments should not impact negatively on green spaces (including the Green Belt, playing fields and allotments), or on important social infrastructure facilities (e.g. leisure, health and education facilities).

4.2.1.6 A survey run by the West Way Community Concern in 2015 was used to help develop a vision for the future of the West Way precinct and the surrounding area. The statement relating to the economy of the local area arising from that survey reads: "An easily accessible location with a full range of local services makes Botley the place for smart businesses looking to work with Oxfordshire's knowledge based economy, and an attractive alternative to central Oxford". (From <https://westwayconcern.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/the-vision-agreed.pdf>)

4.2.1.7 Feedback from public meetings organised by the neighbourhood plan groups revealed a desire to support the development of environmentally conscious businesses with intelligent transport policies for each site. Respondents expressed an interest in maintaining the mixture of businesses currently in the area e.g. retail, light industrial, cafes and food shops, by providing flexible units. Provision of adequate broadband to help develop smart businesses was identified as a key issue.

4.2.1.8 Further engagement with tenant businesses and landowners in September 2017 demonstrated the need for key amenities that support employees working on the businesses sites. The attendees spoke about the need for a broad range of service provision and particularly identified a lack of child care facilities and an excessive need for car usage as significant draw back to working in the parish. There was a lot of discussion about the suitability of cycling and walking as a transport mode, however, the professional people at the meeting made it clear that these modes were not always an option when carrying papers and laptops. The group highlighted the inefficiency and unreliability of the current bus network.

4.2.1.9 The NPPF has specific expectations relating to business sites. Therefore in addition to our vision we are seeking to build upon the strengths already evident on our business sites. We currently have a predominance of professional service companies trading in our parish and we would like to further cluster other businesses of this type to serve the broader needs of the Oxford City investment deal. We would like to create a professional services and IT company hub in our Parish. Our central location within the knowledge spine of the Oxford City Deal and geographical proximity to Oxford central station and A34 arterial route gives North Hinksey substantial advantages for companies of this type seeking to invest in Oxford. The community does, however, recognise that there are some inadequacies in support (amenity) services and transport infrastructure. The NPPF does refer to housing on business sites. However, we deal with housing policy separately in our neighbourhood plan and the close proximity of the residential areas of the parish to the business sites means that we do not and should not dilute our business sites with new housing. Transport is also dealt with in detail in this neighbourhood plan. However, unlike housing, transport infrastructure should be integrated into the business sites. There are also some specific needs for business in terms of the level of service required from a transport solution that are described later.

4.2.1.10 All future development on our business sites should conform to the above principles. In particular the community would also like to see refurbishment of the ageing and poorly-structured light industrial areas in Old Botley to create a new 'smart centre' focusing on professional services and IT companies and linking to the needs of the many scientific businesses around Oxford.

4.2.1.11 In this Neighbourhood Plan primary businesses are defined as those that are directly related to achieving the overall economic vision of a professional services / IT hub. For example a firm of solicitors might be classified as a professional service primary business. In addition there are two types of secondary business that support the activity of the primary businesses as follows:

- a type 1 support service is an organisation that provides support services to the primary businesses, for example vehicle hire/repairs or printing (N.B. these services may also be beneficial to the business employees),
- a type 2 support service is an organisation that provides support services to business employees and the wider community and not the primary businesses themselves, for example cafes, doctors surgeries and child care.

#### **4.2.2 The following plans, documents and strategies support Economy & Employment Policies**

- VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (Core Policies 6 and 8, sections 5.28 to 5.31 and Core Policy 11 plus the supporting Botley Centre SPD, sections 6.27 to 6.54 and Core Policies 27 to 32).
- VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2 publication version November 2017 (sections 3.57 to 3.103 and Development Policies 10 to 15).
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) Strategic Economic Plan:  
<http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/content/strategic-economic-plan>

- Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/276205/Oxford-Oxfordshire-City-Deal.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276205/Oxford-Oxfordshire-City-Deal.pdf)
- J3016, Taxonomy and Definitions for terms Related to On-Road Motor Vehicle Automated Driving Systems published by SAE International in 2014

### 4.2.3 Further justification and evidence, and Economy & Employment Policies

#### 4.2.3.1 NPPF (2019):

The community are seeking to build upon what the latest version of the NPPF describes as ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’ (section 6 page 23). Clause 81 (a) of this document stresses the importance of a clear economic vision. Clause 81 (b) we need to identify sites suitable for inward investment and make provision for clustering or networks of knowledge driven industries. Clause 81 (c) says we should seek to address the potential barriers to investment.

#### 4.2.3.2 VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2:

4.2.3.2.1 The main elements of the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2 (and its supporting documents) that relate specifically to Economy and Employment within North Hinksey Parish are:

- Core Policy 8 which identifies four strategic employment sites within the Parish,
- Core Policy 11 on the mixed use Botley Centre site plus the supporting Botley Centre SPD,
- Development Policy 15 which aims to restrict the use of units in Seacourt Tower Retail Park to stores selling bulky goods.

Together with the District-wide Policies in the Local Plan these have been taken fully into consideration in the development of a set of Neighbourhood Plan Policies for Economy and Employment, and where possible strengthened to guide future use of business sites.

4.2.3.2.2 Two of the key central elements of the Policies in this document are the identification of a wider range of ‘**sites for business use**’, and the addition of further protection from inappropriate change of use planning applications. The ongoing pressure for additional housing is likely to cause an increase in the number of change of use requests in the future. The following Policy EE3 adds restrictions on the proportion of floor space that could be used for housing (or other non-business use) should sites subsequently become mixed use.

#### 4.2.3.3 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) Strategic Economic Plan:

This has at its core a Vision of Oxfordshire as a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence: all of which are supported by the various elements of Policy EE1. Enterprise is further supported by community action CAEE2, which fosters a single business identity for the local area.

#### 4.2.3.4 Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal:

North Hinksey is situated in the centre of the “Knowledge Spine”, an area linking Bicester, Oxford and the Science Vale near Harwell, which will be the subject of significant transport initiatives

fostered by the City Deal to improve connectivity for businesses in the area. The objectives of Policy EE2 will be supported by such initiatives.

#### **4.2.3.5 Government Telecom Infrastructure Review**

There is a national strategy that seeks to upgrade Telecom infrastructure across the country that this plan seeks to make developers and planners aware of. This strategy includes a target for all of the UK to have full-fibre broadband coverage by 2033. Detail can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-telecoms-infrastructure-review>

#### **4.2.3.6 Policy Summary**

The following Economy and Employment Policies that have arisen from this process strongly reflect the principle of sustainable development, and the requirements of National and Local planning legislation.

Policies EE1 and EE2 aim to provide an environment that promotes a healthy local economy through factors such as flexibility, business clustering and appropriate design and infrastructure. Policy EE2 sets out a series of principles which proposals for employment development should seek to incorporate as appropriate to their scale and design. They should be included with the details of the proposal at the planning application stage either through the design and access statement or through the production of separate evidence.

Policy EE3 identifies the key principle of sites designated for business use, and aims to protect their ongoing usage for this purpose. This is to be achieved by restricting changes of use to only those that will benefit the local economy, and also highlights appropriate ancillary uses. Overall ancillary uses will be supported on 'sites for business use' in accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 29 and emerging Development Policy 10. The location of North Hinksey Parish with its close proximity to Oxford and central location within the Oxford City Deal's Knowledge Spine and the fact that the communication and transport infrastructure supporting the area is very likely to be improved beyond the above average provision that already exists means that developers would need an overwhelming and compelling case to demonstrate that there is no prospect of continued employment on any of our business sites resulting in a requirement to change the nature of developments on the site. That is the case whether they are strategic (as defined in the Local Plan) or otherwise in nature.

Policy EE4 highlights the identified specific need for child care facilities to be located on or near to business sites in order to support local business employees.

#### **Policy EE1 – Flexible Design & Mix of Business Types**

**New employment development within the built-up areas of North Hinksey Parish will be supported where they provide new office and light industrial uses that are flexible in design to attract a range of businesses.**

**New developments should support clustering with existing businesses in the area, and should seek to maintain the current mix of retail facilities and services and to future proof developments.**

## Policy EE2 – Key Principles of New Employment Developments

Proposals for new employment developments arising through the redevelopment or intensification of existing strategic sites, or on unallocated new sites, will be supported where they deliver the following principles as appropriate to the development concerned:

- Promote business clustering between new and existing enterprises in the area.
- Improve air quality through the provision of electric vehicle charging points.
- Ensure acceptable provision of superfast communications from the outset as defined by the new national telecoms strategy drawn up by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in their Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review.
- Promote sustainable transport and accessibility in accordance with Core Policy 33 of the Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

## Policy EE3 – Designated Sites for Business Use

Sites CS1 to CS12 as listed in Table 4.2 of this Neighbourhood Plan and indicated on Map C.1 in Appendix C - Economy & Employment are designated as '*sites for business use*'.\*

Proposals for the use of buildings and premises within the identified '*sites for business use*' for non-business use will only be supported where they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- (a) The proposal contributes to the goal of creating, or supporting the commercial needs of, a new 'smart centre' focusing on professional services and IT companies; and/or
- (b) The proposal contributes to supporting the type 1 support service needs (as defined in section 4.2.1.11 of this Neighbourhood Plan) of a new 'smart centre' focusing on professional services and IT companies; and/or
- (c) The proposal contributes to supporting the type 2 support service needs (as defined in section 4.2.1.11 of this Neighbourhood Plan) of both new and established businesses; and/or
- (d) The proposal results in a net gain of useable employment floor space.

In addition, the following specific ancillary uses have been identified as requirements for the North Hinksey Parish, and proposals for integrating them within '*sites for business use*' will be supported:

- (e) A re-fuelling station, which should include charging facilities for electric and/or hydrogen fuelled vehicles. The station should also be designed to accommodate any level 4 or 5 autonomous vehicle protocols (as defined by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE)) relevant to West Oxford and North Hinksey.



**(f) Infrastructure for short distance, turn up and go (less than 3minute waiting time), environmentally friendly public transport systems serving the community and locally located businesses.**

\*Site CS1 is appropriate for mixed use, including a considerable proportion of non-commercial units. Proposals on this site will need to comply with the requirements of Core Policy 11 in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and the VOWHDC Botley Centre SPD.

Site CS2 serves a dedicated retail function for the area. Development proposals for part or all of this site will need to comply with the requirements of Development Policy 15 in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

Sites CS3 to CS6 are Strategic Employment Sites. Development proposals on these sites will need to comply with the requirements of Core Policies 6 and 8 in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

## **Policy EE4 – Child Care Facilities**

**Proposals for new child care facilities will be supported on or in close proximity to land designated as ‘sites for business use’.**

## 4.3 Transport

### 4.3.1 Context and community feedback

4.3.1.1 The Parish of North Hinksey is divided by the major A34 strategic highway which links the South Coast to the Midlands, and also forms part of Oxford City's Ring Road. There is only one full transport route from east to west running through the Parish (West Way), which runs beneath it, though there is a traffic interchange with the A420 at the northern limit of the Parish. The A34 has two pedestrian underpasses in the Parish, one from Montague Road to the A34 east side near Stanley Close which is not fully accessible to disabled people, and one from Westminster Way near its junction with Raleigh Park Road to the Southern Bypass, providing a route to North Hinksey village and Oxford City, which is fully accessible. Partial junctions with the A34 to the south of this underpass allow traffic from the northbound A34 carriageway to access Harcourt Hill and Westminster Way, and traffic from the southbound A34 carriageway to access North Hinksey Lane.

4.3.1.2 Botley Road (A420) is the only westward traffic artery from Oxford city, continuing as West Way from the Seacourt Bridge, with a link road to the Cumnor Hill Bypass, and as the B4044 to the West Way shopping centre, Dean Court, Farmoor and Eynsham, with Cumnor Hill continuing to the west.

4.3.1.3 Traffic flows on the A34 are very high, with frequent congestion that spills over into neighbouring roads in the Parish. An Air Quality Management Area alongside the A34 to the south of Botley Centre has been in place for many years, and this Plan supports measures to reduce air pollution, including the adoption of infrastructure to support electric vehicles and encouraging use of other sustainable methods of transport (walking, cycling and public transport). With Botley Road being the only access road to Oxford City from the west, traffic levels are high, often leading to congestion through the centre of the Parish to Cumnor Hill and Eynsham Road.

4.3.1.4 Public transport is concentrated on services to Oxford City. A variety of bus services operated by the Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach provide good connections between the West Way shopping centre and Oxford City, two of which continue through the City (routes 4, 4A, 4B, 4C to Headington and Wood Farm, and the Brookes Bus U1 to Headington and Wheatley campuses of Oxford Brookes University). Route 4A serves the Elms Rise estate and Matthew Arnold School twice (until recently 3 times) an hour. Route 4C runs hourly to the Dean Court estate. Routes 4 and 4B serve Cumnor and Abingdon half-hourly, and S9 Cumnor and Wantage approximately half-hourly. Service S1 runs to Eynsham, Witney and Carterton up to 4 times/hr, linking N.Hinksey with schools in Eynsham. Service 6 goes to Faringdon and Swindon half-hourly. All frequencies are reduced at weekends and public holidays, and in many cases during evenings.

Route 11 runs from Oxford City Centre to Witney via Elms Parade, currently five times per day. The 3B and 35A limited services run through the Parish from Rose Hill and Kennington respectively, linking them with Matthew Arnold School, however these only operate around the School's start and finish times. Route 400 runs from the City Centre to nearby Seacourt Park and Ride on Botley Road, but does not enter the Parish. Service 44 via North Hinksey Village to Boar's Hill and Abingdon has recently been withdrawn as part of County Council economies. Current bus routes are shown on Map D.1 in the Appendices section of this document. It should be noted that bus routes, numbering and timetables frequently change so the information contained in this section and Map D.1 is only indicative of likely bus services in the long term.

4.3.1.5 Despite the relatively good public transport to Oxford City, many parishioners use cars, and some commuters from outside the Parish use free parking in side roads to avoid paying fees at

Park & Ride sites. These restrict traffic flow in relatively narrow residential roads, sometimes to the extent of denying access to emergency and refuse vehicles.

4.3.1.6 Cycle use is fairly high, despite the hilly nature of part of the parish, but could be increased for local journeys if safer and better marked routes were available. Current recognised cycle routes are shown on Map D.2 in Transport Appendix D of this document. Where appropriate extensions of the cycle path network will be encouraged within the Parish, together with links to other cycle paths in neighbouring areas. These include cycle paths into Oxford City (which are currently undergoing an improvement scheme through Government funds allocated for use along the Botley Road), and the proposed B4044 Community Path. Support for, and input to any consultation processes relating to such schemes should be provided where positive benefits to the Parish can be identified.

4.3.1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire in November 2014 clearly identified a number of transport related issues which predominantly fell under the headings of car parking (with a number of hotspots identified), public transport issues, insufficient or inappropriate infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians (including cycle racks and cycle lanes), and problems with wider transport links (including the A34 and links into Oxford City Centre).

4.3.1.8 Subsequent public feedback events have reinforced concerns on many of these issues and helped to shape the emerging Transport policies within this Neighbourhood Plan. In particular the 2016 feedback events showed 90% plus levels of support for most of the emerging policies relating to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Majority support was indicated for all of the emerging policies, however those issues with lower levels of support (e.g. Controlled Parking Zones) have resulted in revisiting and rewriting policies to take account of concerns voiced by parishioners.

### 4.3.2 The following plans, documents and strategies support Transport Policies

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1; Core Policies 7, and 33 to 35
- Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4
- Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, prepared by AECOM for the Oxfordshire Growth Board, November 2017
- Botley Road Corridor study by WS Atkins for Oxfordshire County Council

### 4.3.3 Further justification and evidence, and Transport Policies

#### 4.3.3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

The revised NPPF (2019) supports the use of sustainable travel modes. Of particular relevance are paragraphs 102 to 106 in Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport.

The main requirements of the NPPF that are relevant to, and support policies in this Neighbourhood Plan relate to the following topics:

- Provision, and promotion of sustainable transport including appropriate cycle and walking networks, cycle parking, and public transport.
- Supporting improvements to the transport network that increase safety, have a beneficial environmental impact (e.g. improve air quality), and/or make the area more attractive. The adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles is highlighted as a key element.
- Ensuring that adequate parking is provided as an integral part of the design for new developments.

#### 4.3.3.2 VOWHDC Local Plan 2031:

No sub-area strategies refer to specific transport issues in North Hinksey Parish, but three Core Policies are relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan’s transport policies as set out below:

**Core Policy 33:** Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility says that the Council “will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to: Actively seek to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network are minimised.” It confirms a commitment to the NPPF requirements relating to safety, environmental impact, and attractiveness of the area.

**Core Policy 34:** A34 Strategy states:

“The Council will continue to work with Highways England, Oxfordshire County Council and other partners to develop and implement a Route Based Strategy for the A34, which enables it to function as a major strategic route thereby reducing consequential congestion on the local road network. The Council will continue to work with Highways England, Oxfordshire County Council and other partners to develop an air quality monitoring framework associated with the A34 within the Vale of White Horse District to monitor any impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC.”

**Core Policy 35:** Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking confirms a commitment to promote sustainable transport methods (e.g. cycling, walking and public transport), and to ensure adequate parking within new developments in line with the NPPF.

Of the above three Core Policies only Core Policy 34 adds significant local detail to the overall NPPF requirements for transport, with any major actions impacting on the A34 being highly significant for North Hinksey Parish.

### Policy TR1 – Cyclists, Pedestrians & Public Transport

As appropriate to their scale and location, development proposals should:

- Provide safe access for cyclists and pedestrians, and wherever possible improve existing standards;
- As a minimum provide secure bicycle storage in both residential and business developments, preferably under cover;
- As appropriate contribute towards the provision of, or deliver, improved signage and road markings and dedicated cycle lanes on key cycling routes within the parish; and

- **As appropriate contribute towards the provision of, or deliver, improved public transport services and bus stops, including real time information at all bus stops.**

## **Policy TR2 – Parking, Access and Electric Vehicle Charging**

**As appropriate to their scale and location development proposals should:**

- **Provide adequate off-road parking for cars, and where appropriate or necessary, for commercial vehicles, in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council’s Parking Standards;**
- **Include parking spaces designed to ensure maximum landscaped green infrastructure, with sustainable urban drainage;**
- **Make provision for charging electric vehicles, including electric bicycles, within the curtilages of dwellings; and**
- **Provide safe vehicular access to the proposed development site.**

## 4.4 Social Infrastructure

### 4.4.1 Context and community feedback

4.4.1.1 As described in section 1.2 of this Neighbourhood Plan and in the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018), the area currently falling within North Hinksey Parish has expanded hugely in terms of population size and the number of housing units since 1900. This expansion will continue over the lifetime of this Neighbourhood Plan with a forecast population of over 5,700 by 2031. The Social Infrastructure supporting the community has not expanded to the same degree, and is now severely under strain.

4.4.1.2 The main areas of concern within the local community have been identified through the Parish-wide questionnaire in November 2014 and subsequent public feedback events as the following:

- Leisure Facilities – a clearly identified long term lack of suitable facilities for sections of the community (primarily teenagers, the elderly and parishioners with restricted mobility). Options being looked into include adventure playgrounds and skateparks for teenagers, and indoor activities and facilities linked to the new community building being built in the Botley Centre redevelopment, plus a redevelopment of the current Louis Memorial Pavilion and Scout Hut.
- Leisure Facilities and Education – uncertainty over potential expansion plans at Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill site and the impact on various aspects of the local community including possible changes to the strategically important public sports facilities on that site.
- Education – a shortage of spaces in the two primary schools within the Parish and the secondary school on the border of the Parish, although expansion plans are in hand to cover short term needs.
- Health Care – a shortage of GP's, with much higher numbers of patients registered with each of our 3 GPs than the county and national averages and a requirement to raise the numbers to 4 GPs immediately and 5 GPs in the longer term. N.B. There are plans for physical expansion of the Medical Centre in Elms Road in the near future using S106 funds allocated for this purpose (see Planning Application P17/V3393/FUL at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P17/V3393/FUL>)
- Health Care – a lack of dentists carrying out NHS work in this Parish.
- Library Facilities – currently too limited to cover the community's needs adequately, although a new Botley Library planned for inclusion within the community building in the redeveloped Botley Centre will provide more appropriate facilities in a larger space than currently available.

4.4.1.3 A number of the above issues (e.g. the shortfall in leisure facilities) can primarily be assisted through community actions, and this process is already well under way. Others such as capacity issues for health care and education are controlled through identified processes and requirements in place outside of the planning process, but community actions can still be implemented to help avoid significant delays in terms of increasing infrastructure levels to match population growth. Additionally VOWHDC should ensure that in major redevelopments any required amenities such as play areas, outdoor green spaces, walkways etc. are installed at an early phase of development and not left unenforced for a lengthy period after completion of housing has occurred.

4.4.1.4 In terms of education provision North Hinksey Parish contains two Primary Schools (Botley School and North Hinksey CE Primary School), with the former identified as running at capacity, and few spare places forecast at the latter. These schools lie within a wider school Planning Area

named Cumnor, which also includes several further Primary Schools in Cumnor Parish and beyond. One of these other schools is West Oxford Community Primary School, which has been significantly over-subscribed in recent years, with much of the excess being catered for at Botley School. Secondary School provision in the Cumnor Planning Area consists solely of Matthew Arnold School, which lies in Cumnor Parish, just outside the boundary with North Hinksey Parish. Matthew Arnold School has expanded its capacity in recent years but additional population growth is likely to require further expansion in the mid to long term.

The Oxfordshire County Council Pupil Place Plan (2017-2021) states the following about capacity in the Cumnor Planning Area.

“Several primary schools have been expanded in response to a recent shortage of places in this area, and to meet the needs of planned and proposed housing growth. The catchment areas of Cumnor Primary School, North Hinksey Primary School and Botley School were reviewed for 2012 to better match changing patterns of demand with the availability of places. Additional pressure on places in this area has been caused by a previous shortage of places within Oxford, and this is being alleviated as more school capacity is provided within the city, but local housing development will increase the pupil population. Forecasts indicate that the level of spare places in this area will still be very low in some years. The combined effect of rising pupil numbers already at primary school in this area and local housing growth requires an increase in secondary school capacity, and Matthew Arnold School is expanding by one form of entry in the first instance. Longer term, it may become necessary to review whether the school could expand by another form of entry.”

As there are no major housing developments in the surrounding area identified in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 there are no plans for additional schools to be built within the Cumnor Planning Area, and certainly no suitable land available for that purpose within North Hinksey Parish. Additional forecast required capacity in the period up to 2031 will therefore need to be met through expansion of facilities on current sites, which will require retention of all the land currently allocated for these purposes.

4.4.1.5 The Oxfordshire Health Care Transformation Programme website at <http://www.oxonhealthcaretransformation.nhs.uk/> provides details on proposed restructuring and improvements to Health Care provision in Oxfordshire. Currently this Programme has only identified proposals in Phase 1 for overall hospital provision requirements, and treatment of specific major conditions, such as for stroke victims. These areas of Health Care are not relevant in terms of provision within North Hinksey Parish and have not been considered in the development of this Neighbourhood Plan. When Phase 2 proposals are put forward these will include GP provision and this will be of more relevance in terms of local facilities.

In addition the NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group is consulting on a series of Locality Place Based Primary Care Plans. In this context the Botley Medical Centre falls within the Oxford City Locality – see <https://consult.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/gf2.ti/-/867490/33274853.1/PDF/-/oxfordcitylocalityplacebasedplan.pdf>. This document is currently under consultation until December 2018. Although it highlights general concerns that are relevant to the Botley Medical Centre (insufficient space, too few GPs etc.) there are few references specific to this area.

Overall it should be noted that medical treatment is only one aspect of health care, and the health and wellbeing of residents, workers and visitors can all benefit from actions such as those included in community action CASI2, and increased social interaction / reduction in isolation through proposed additional youth facilities and indoor space for community activities. This is in addition to the straightforward positive impact of increased levels of physical activity.

The main areas that can be improved through policies within this Plan are those which can benefit from protection of current facilities and encouragement of planning applications to provide necessary expansion of facilities, which is the strategic approach that has been adopted.

#### 4.4.2 The following plans, documents and strategies support Social Infrastructure Policies

Relevant sections of national and local planning legislation that support the approach being taken in this Neighbourhood Plan include the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2019, paragraphs 96 and 97 highlight the need to assess requirements for sports and recreational facilities and make good any shortfall, with a requirement to protect current facilities. Paragraphs 91 and 92 also contain relevant references to sports and recreational facilities.
- VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 part 1:
  - Spatial Strategy – sections 4.40 to 4.48
  - Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services
  - Core Policy 13: The Green Belt
  - Leisure – sections 6.125 and 6.126.
- VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2:
  - Development Policy 8: Community Services and Facilities
  - Development Policy 33: Open Space
  - Development Policy 34: Leisure and Sports Facilities
  - Appendix K: leisure and open space standards
- Various additional support documents on leisure facilities, strategy and provision which have been produced for the 2011 and 2031 VOWHDC Local Plans include:
  - VOWHDC SPD on Open Space, Sport & Recreation Future Provision 2008 (N.B. now replaced by Developer Contributions SPD).
  - VOWHDC Kit Campbell Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy Background Report January 2009 (N.B. no longer used by VOWHDC, but contains useful background information).
  - VOWHDC Leisure & Sports Facility Strategy 2012-29, adopted in 2013 and the updated VOWHDC Leisure and Sports Facilities Study 2013-31 (November 2014).
  - Support documents for the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, consisting of a Local Leisure Facilities Study (June 2016), an Open Spaces Report (November 2016), and a Playing Pitches Study (October 2015).

The following documents also support the Social Infrastructure policies and community actions:

- North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Supplementary Document on Provision of Leisure Facilities. This document deals in depth with provision of leisure facilities (including venues used for leisure activities), but does not cover other social infrastructure facilities. Further information about all of the above National and Local Planning Legislation is included here.
- Oxfordshire County Council Pupil Place Plan (latest version 2017-2021 available at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/educationandlearning/schools/ourworkwithschools/pupilplaceplan/PupilPlacePlan.pdf> but reviewed annually).
- Oxfordshire Health Care Transformation Programme documents at <http://www.oxonhealthcaretransformation.nhs.uk/>
- NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group “Locality Place Based Primary Care Plan: Oxford City Locality” (draft January 2018 under consultation) – see <https://consult.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/gf2.ti/-/867490/33274853.1/PDF/->



### **4.4.3 Further justification and evidence, and Social Infrastructure Policies**

4.4.3.1 The documents listed in section 4.4.2 above focus mainly on the protection of current social infrastructure facilities, and the timely provision of additional infrastructure, primarily through developer funding in terms of Section 106 monies and CIL. The Social Infrastructure policy SI1 and community actions within this Neighbourhood Plan have been developed by applying these two elements (protection and expansion) on a more detailed local basis and by identifying shortfalls that have not been catered for by the current process.

#### **4.4.3.2 Protection of identified strategically important Social Infrastructure sites:**

4.4.3.2.1 Although protection provided by current legislation has, to date, proved adequate, the increasing pressure on land use resulting from housing needs could have serious negative impacts on social infrastructure sites in the future, particularly on larger open spaces. For this reason, a strong focus has been placed on providing further protection of strategically important sites.

4.4.3.2.2 A listing of 'North Hinksey Parish facilities, infrastructure, buildings and other locations of significant importance to the community' has been produced, together with accompanying maps clearly identifying the sites in question (see Appendix E - Social Infrastructure). This list includes not only Social Infrastructure related sites, but also some historic & miscellaneous sites. Policy SI1 has been developed to provide protection for these sites.

4.4.3.2.3 The sites on this listing strongly reflect the wishes of parishioners as identified in a November 2014 questionnaire where they were asked to identify the things that made this area a desirable place to live and work, and the sites they thought ought to be protected. In addition, these sites are also considered key elements necessary to achieve our Vision and Objectives. Further community feedback obtained through consultation held in January and July 2016, and October to November 2017 confirmed that the sites included in this listing were the correct ones. Overall they help to define our community and are central to achieving both our short and long term plans as incorporated within the vision for our Parish. The schedule of facilities included in Policy SI1 includes the Harcourt Hill Campus. It acknowledges that the leisure facilities at the Campus are ancillary leisure uses associated with a university campus.

4.4.3.2.4 A separate support document, the Locally Important Buildings and Features Assessment North Hinksey Parish (August 2018) has also been produced in order to have a clear idea of a wider range of historical and locally important buildings and monuments within the Parish. Most of these structures are already registered as Grade II Listed buildings or features, or National Monuments (Conduit House), and therefore gain significant protection from those designations, which is why they have not been included in the listing mentioned above which relates to Policy SI1 in this Plan.

#### **4.4.3.3 Expansion of Social Infrastructure to meet community needs in a timely manner:**

4.4.3.3.1 The current process for identifying and meeting the needs of North Hinksey Parish for additional infrastructure through usage of developer funding has proved to be of limited success, leaving a number of major shortfalls

4.4.3.3.2 Recent major housing developments such as those off Lime Road and Tilbury Lane have included some play facilities for younger children, but otherwise have not to date impacted on other elements of Social Infrastructure. Section 106 funds have been allocated for provision of additional facilities and staff at the Botley Medical Centre in Elms Road with plans for the use of those funds now being progressed, which will hopefully help to resolve the current severe

shortage of GPs.

4.4.3.3.3 The redevelopment of Botley Centre by the Botley Development Company, due for completion by 2022, will result in a new community building containing replacement facilities for the community hall, Botley Library and Botley Baptist Church which will represent a significant improvement.

4.4.3.3.4 Other Social Infrastructure facilities in the Parish will not benefit from the new developments described above and require additional actions to resolve the identified issues. The community actions within this Neighbourhood Plan aim to encourage appropriate expansion of Social Infrastructure facilities, and particularly in the case of leisure facilities they aim to deal with provision shortfall and encourage more widespread usage of facilities.

### Policy S11: Leisure and Social Facilities

This Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following facilities, which carry out one or more identified social or leisure functions as important to the community of North Hinksey Parish. Their locations are identified on the maps provided in Appendix E of this document.

#### Leisure

LF1 – Louie Memorial Playing Fields (including Pavilion and Scout Hut)  
LF2 – Oxford Rugby Football Club  
LF3 – Oxford Sports Lawn Tennis Club  
LF4 – Seacourt Hall  
LF5 – SS Peter & Paul Church Hall  
LF6 – The WI Hall  
LF7 – The Rosary Room  
LF8 – Hall in Seacourt Road

#### Social

SF1 – Elms Road Medical Centre  
SF2 – Botley School  
SF3 – North Hinksey School  
SF4 – Botley Library  
SF5 – Botley Cemetery

#### Academic with ancillary leisure

AF1 - Brookes University Harcourt Hill

#### Historic buildings and monuments, churches and other miscellaneous sites

HM1 – St Lawrence’s Church (C of E)  
HM2 – SS Peter & Paul Church (C of E)  
HM3 – Botley Baptist Church  
HM4 – Our Lady of the Rosary Church (R.C.)  
HM5 – Elms Parade  
HM6 – Commonwealth War Graves in Botley Cemetery

Developments involving a change of use or loss of function(s) at these locations will be refused unless at least one of the following applies:

The proposed development is ancillary and complementary to the main use of the facility, and would not result in a negative visual impact on the site and surrounding area; and/or

Replacement land and facilities / infrastructure suitable for carrying out the identified role of the site, of at least equal benefit to the local community in terms of scale, quality and accessibility would be provided elsewhere within North Hinksey Parish.

Development proposals for the provision of new or extended Leisure and Social Facilities will be supported, particularly where:

- i) They are located within or adjacent to the built-up areas of Botley (in the parish of North Hinksey) or North Hinksey village;
- ii) They clearly meet an identified local need;
- iii) They are accessible for all members of the community and promote social inclusion;
- iv) They comply with the requirements of Core Policy 13 if located in the Green Belt; and
- v) They do not conflict with the NHPNP Brookes University Policy BU1.

## 4.5 Utilities

### 4.5.1 Context and community feedback

#### 4.5.1.1 Flooding

4.5.1.1.1 There is a complex hydrology in North Hinksey Parish, with unmapped underground streams and a long history of flooding within certain areas. The fact that much of the residential area is built on a hill also contributes to run-off on the flood plain below, exacerbated by tarmacked roads and paved front gardens.

4.5.1.1.2 One of the major issues identified in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire of November 2014 was the need for a detailed hydrogeological survey across the whole parish to identify high risk areas where more rigorous investigation of potential groundwater implications should be required to support any applications for development. This issue has also arisen on many occasions within meetings of the Planning Committee of NHPC when dealing with applications on sites that were known to have a history of groundwater complications in the vicinity. The lack of hard evidence to back up local knowledge has often resulted in the approval of planning applications without adequate consideration of potential groundwater problems that could arise during and after building works.

4.5.1.1.3 To clarify water issues on Elms Rise, NHPNP commissioned a study, *North Hinksey Parish Groundwater Assessment*, in July 2017. This detailed hydro-geological survey analysed the geology of the area, and established that water flowing down the hill reached an impermeable layer of Oxford Clay about halfway down which had caused it to form valleys over time, near what is now Hurst Rise Road and in Raleigh Park, as well as other small streams. Building in the area from 10m above to 10m below this belt would have consequences on the flow of water, which was likely to impact on neighbouring buildings, and any development within the affected area needs to take account of this.

4.5.1.1.4 The lower part of the parish to the east of the A34, and west of Seacourt Stream is situated on sand and gravel which is permeable. This means that groundwater levels here are primarily controlled by water levels in the Seacourt Stream. Where houses are situated below the 60m contour line, specifically in Old Botley and along North Hinksey Lane, the water table is high. When the ground is saturated after a period of heavy rain, the water table rises above floor level in the houses above it, which are then flooded. Individuals have made their homes as flood resistant as they can, but externally there are several small streams in the area of Old Botley, culverted in places, which are crucial to drainage during floods. It is vital to keep these streams clear of debris and undergrowth so they can do their job, and planning applications within this area will be required to show they are aware of the problem, and have taken measures to address it.

4.5.1.1.5 Flood risk assessments and adequate drainage are particularly important in North Hinksey for the reasons shown in the *Assessment*. Residents are therefore strongly supportive of core policies 42 and 43 in Local Plan 2013 Part 1. The complex hydrology also means that developers will need to show that they are not disrupting underground streams, and Policy UT1 has specific recommendations.

4.5.1.1.6 As heavier rainfall linked to climate change will contribute to flooding at the foot of the hill there is also support for rainwater harvesting and for residents to refrain from paving over drive ways and gardens so that run off can be absorbed.

4.5.1.1.7 There is a huge project in train to alleviate flooding in Oxford (the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme) which would change the course of the Seacourt Stream in North Hinksey, with

implications for our allotments, as well as for the actual integrity of the Parish (as the stream is the ancient boundary). Residents have concerns about the impact of the scheme on existing trees which play an important role on the flood plain in flood alleviation, strengthening river banks, biodiversity and amenity value; the historic Willow Walk and its handsome bridge (which are used and loved by many people from the Parish and Oxford); and on views from (and to) the parish. The project is not expected to reduce flooding in the vulnerable parts of North Hinksey Parish.

#### **4.5.1.2 Sewerage**

Botley's sewers were extensively renewed and upgraded in 2012. It was the completion of this scheme which enabled the subsequent building of houses off Tilbury Lane and Lime Road. Thames Water/Optimise wrote a detailed account of the operation: *Botley Sewer Renewal, 2012 (online at [www.WaterProjectsOnline.com](http://www.WaterProjectsOnline.com))*. This gives a comprehensive account of the thinking behind the major project to re-lay Botley's sewers along North Hinksey Lane, and the installation of two huge holding tanks at the far end to contain excess foul water in times of floods.

#### **4.5.1.3 Sustainable Design and Construction**

4.5.1.3.1 There are compelling reasons why our community wants to maximise sustainability and energy efficiency standards in local developments. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is now unequivocal that the world is warming, and leaves little room for doubt that this is predominantly caused by burning fossil fuels. Reducing the rate of climate change depends on reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from electricity generation. Both the IPCC and the Paris Climate Change Agreement have highlighted the closing window of opportunity to prevent dangerous climate change and hence the need for urgent and deep action on climate change.

4.5.1.3.2 With respect to our local community there is increasing evidence that climate change may increase local winter flooding, exacerbating the challenges posed by hydrology in North Hinksey. The climate system is complicated with many different effects at work but Met Office climate scientists predict that over the next half century Oxfordshire can expect: hotter, drier summers; warmer, wetter winters; more frequent extremes of temperature, rainfall and wind; reduced air quality; and higher levels of ozone (Met Office; Vale of White Horse; Oxford City Council), and a range of negative impacts elsewhere in the UK and around the world.

4.5.1.3.3 At the same time North Hinksey, like other communities, faces a number of energy challenges such as fuel poverty/cold homes, high energy bills, and possible risks of energy insecurity. Elderly people are often particularly vulnerable to these problems. Saving energy and generating clean energy can simultaneously help reduce our community's contribution to climate change, address energy challenges, and generate practical benefits for the community such as reduced fuel poverty, lower fuel bills, warmer homes, improved health and local jobs.

4.5.1.3.4 A considerable level of interest in these topics has been shown in all public consultation exercises throughout the process of developing the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, from the initial questionnaire in November 2014 through all of the drop-in events to gain community feedback. Emerging policies have been supported by a majority of attendees, and in addition their input and enthusiasm have encouraged the wide range of proposed community actions that sit alongside the policies.

4.5.1.3.5 In particular there is strong support for the highest standards of sustainable design and energy efficiency among those members of the community consulted for the Neighbourhood Plan beyond the minimum standards set out in Building Regulations. Community members also

expressed a desire to ensure proper implementation of sustainability standards outlined in local plans.

4.5.1.3.6 There are also, of course, compelling scientific, legal, economic and social reasons why high standards are necessary:

- They are imperative to help address climate change and fulfil the legal obligations on government to reduce carbon emissions laid out in the 2008 climate change act, carbon budgets, and other legal instruments and policies outlined below.
- These legal obligations on government means that where local plans which comply with these legal duties are challenged by planning inspectors, for example on the grounds of viability, the burden of proof is on the inspector to demonstrate how the plan would comply with the duty if the policy were to be removed.<sup>1</sup>
- Failure to introduce high sustainability and energy efficiency standards will push the cost on to Parishioners in the form of higher fuel bills, colder homes and may contribute to fuel poverty.
- There is a substantial body of evidence that the social, environmental, economic and health benefits to society of addressing climate change will outweigh the costs of taking action<sup>2</sup> and specifically that the economic and health benefits of home energy efficiency programmes outweigh the investment costs<sup>3</sup>.

4.5.1.3.7 High standards of sustainable design and energy efficiency may marginally increase short term development costs. But the additional costs are marginal. (see the CAR report for SHAP, May 2018 at <https://shapuk.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/costing-energy-performance-enhancements-beyond-building-regulations.pdf>)<sup>4</sup>. It will also be much more expensive for developers to subsequently retrofit existing dwellings to achieve the higher standards that will be subsequently required by legislation to meet the UK's carbon reduction targets, than to introduce them at construction stage.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning for Climate Change: A Guide for Local Authorities, TCPA, RTPI, May, 2018)  
<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/2852781/TCPA%20RTPI%>

<sup>2</sup> (a) Smith, A. et al. Holland, M., Korkeala, O., Warmington, J., Forster, D., Apsimon, H., Oxley, T., Dickens, R. and Smith, S. (2016) *Health and environmental co-benefits and conflicts of actions to meet UK carbon targets*. Climate Policy, 16(3): 253–283, and (b) Clarke, L. et al. (2014) *Assessing Transformation Pathways*. In: *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Edenhofer, O. et al (Eds)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, US

<sup>3</sup> International Energy Agency (2014) *Capturing the multiple benefits of energy efficiency*, OECD/IEA. EA, 2014;

<sup>4</sup> A report by Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd (CAR) for Oxford City Council (OCC) shows that it is possible to achieve a 40% carbon saving in regulated energy using a 1.82kWp PV array alone, which would cost around £3,583. A similar report by CAR for Sustainable Housing Action Partnership (SHAP) shows that the increase in costs for a 40% carbon saving is likely to be in the region of £7,000–£14,000 through improved fabric (double glazing, MVHR ventilation, energy efficient boiler) and a solar PV array. (<https://shapuk.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/costing-energy-performance-enhancements-beyond-building-regulations.pdf>). Removing the MVHR system would reduce this cost to between £3,200 to £10,200 although there would be an air quality penalty. For larger scale projects the costs would fall due to economies of scale, and such reductions would be accelerated if lots of councils insisted on higher standards. Above-ground construction costs for the 84m<sup>2</sup> semi-D house are between £50,000 to £100,000 and average sale price for such a house in North Hinksey is around £400,000. The OCC report finds that whole-life cost analysis showed that increased construction costs are small: less than 10% of the 30-year costs for the house. Even at the higher end costing for SHAP a 40% reduction accounts for 3.5% of sale price and at the lower end costing for OCC at less than 1%. The costs for both reports are based on a 84-7 m<sup>2</sup> three bedroomed semi-detached house which is relevant to North Hinksey. In practice the precise costs will depend on multiple factors including how many units the developer is building, the measures included, the orientation of roofs (for PV), how the savings are achieved, and the density of the site

## 4.5.2 The following national and local policies, plans, documents and strategies support Utilities Policies

### 4.5.2.1 In support of policy UT1:

#### 4.5.2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2019:

At national level, Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states: “Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for... infrastructure for waste management, water supply, wastewater...”

Paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF states: “Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary....”

#### 4.5.2.1.2 The web based National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) published in March 2014:

The NPPG includes a section on ‘water supply, wastewater and water quality’ and sets out that Local Plans should be the focus for ensuring that investment plans of water and sewerage/wastewater companies align with development needs. The introduction to this section also sets out that: “Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development” (Paragraph: 001, Reference ID: 34-001-20140306)

#### 4.5.2.1.3 The VOWHDC Local Plan 2031:

At district level VOWHDC Core Policy 40 says all new development, including building conversions, refurbishments and extensions, should seek to incorporate climate change adaptation and design measures to combat the effects of changing weather patterns. ‘Wherever practicable, measures to provide resilience against higher temperatures and intense rainfall should be used and their application’ to the development outlined in the Design and Access Statement’.

VOWHDC Core Policy 42 says that the risk and impact of flooding will be minimised through:

- directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding
- ensuring that all new development addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk
- ensuring that development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, and
- ensuring wider environmental benefits of development in relation to flood risk.

It also says all development proposals must be assessed against the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to address locally significant flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented.

Also, all development will be required to provide a drainage strategy which incorporates a sustainable drainage system and ensures that run-off rates equate to greenfield run-off rates. Higher rates would need to be justified and the risks quantified. Developers should strive to reduce run-off rates for existing developed sites. Sustainable drainage systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Developers must also consider the net effect of their projects on water and waste demand further down the network, which they can do with the help of Thames Water’s free pre-planning service (<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/preplanning>). This service estimates at an early stage the ability

of water and wastewater networks to serve a development and reduces delays to housing delivery programmes by enabling early adjustments to the network when needed.

VOWHDC Core Policy 43 on the Efficient Use of Natural Resources says all developers will be encouraged to make provision for the effective use of natural resources where applicable, including making efficient use of water, for example through rainwater harvesting and grey water.

#### 4.5.2.1.4 NHNP Groundwater Assessment July 2017:

At community level, in July 2017 NHNP commissioned a Groundwater Assessment of the whole of North Hinksey Parish from GWP Consultants to explain the Geology of the area and understand how this affects the Hydrology. The main Hydro-Geological issues covered by the Assessment involve water movement triggered by excavation within new developments, with groundwater having the potential to destabilize buildings in the vicinity. Also two areas to the east of the A34 (Old Botley and the most southerly section of North Hinksey Village), are underlain by superficial sand and gravels of the Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member and alluvium comprising a mixture of clay, silt, sand and gravel. These are permeable, and groundwater levels within them are primarily controlled by water levels of surface water features, i.e. Seacourt Stream. Groundwater levels within the superficial sediments can exceed ground levels in the wet season, and this combines with heavy rainwater run-off from the Elms Rise Estate leading to these areas being subject to large-scale flooding in prolonged wet weather.

The complete Assessment is available as a separate support document to this Neighbourhood Plan. Two maps from this Assessment (Drawings No. 4 and No. 6) are attached in Appendix F of this document as Maps F.1 and F.2, showing respectively a geological map of the Parish, and the Zone of potential groundwater flood risk. Both of these maps are directly referred to in Policy UT1. The wording of section (3) of Policy UT1 is primarily taken directly from the recommendations in Section 7 of the Groundwater Assessment.

#### 4.5.2.2 In support of Policy UT2:

##### 4.5.2.2.1 Carbon reduction and sustainable development

###### 4.5.2.2.1.1 The Climate Change Act 2008:

At national level the Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK to a reduction of at least 80% in CO2 emissions by 2050, compared to 1990 levels, with interim targets set through five yearly carbon budgets of 37% by 2020, 51% by 2020 and 57% by 2030 The UK government has recently pledged to enshrine a net zero target in law.<sup>5</sup>

###### 4.5.2.2.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2019:

The NPPF states that in achieving sustainable development, the planning system should contribute towards protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment including the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change and moving towards a low carbon economy. In particular, paragraphs 148 to 154 of the NPPF (2019) expect local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings and designing policies to maximise renewable and

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/04/17/uk-path-zero-carbon-economy/>



low carbon energy development. Footnote 48 in Paragraph 149 makes clear that decisions should be taken in line with the 2008 Climate Change Act.

Local Authorities are bound by the legal duty set out in section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the 2008 Planning Act, to ensure that taken as a whole, the plan contributes to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. includes a duty on local plan-making to mitigate and adapt to climate change. These duties should be discharged in line with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008 and NPPF.

#### 4.5.2.2.1.3 The VOWHDC Local Plan 2031:

At district level the Vale of the White Horse District Council Local Plan (VOWHDC) 2031 part 1 contains a core presumption in favour of sustainable development which is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means that we should consider the long-term consequences of development alongside our short-term priorities. It also identifies a number of key challenges and opportunities faced by the District that are central to the Local Plan 2031, including building healthy and sustainable communities, supporting sustainable transport and accessibility, protecting the environment and responding to climate change (in addition to supporting economic prosperity).

Part 2 of the VOWHDC Local Plan (p 27) says that the Vale will need to play its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through low carbon and renewable energy generation, improving the energy efficiency of development and promoting more efficient use of materials and natural resources and equipping new development to adapt to the warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers that are predicted for the UK.

#### 4.5.2.2.2 Sustainability and Energy Efficiency standards

##### 4.5.2.2.2.1 Government Housing Standards Review 101:

At national level the Government Housing Standards Review 101 has indicated that the Government will put less emphasis on the Code for Sustainable Homes and will instead set equivalent standards through Building Regulations. Minimum energy efficiency standards for new housing are henceforth set out in the Building Regulations.

##### 4.5.2.2.2.2 The VOWHDC Local Plan 2031:

At district level the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 provides a policy framework for the delivery of sustainable development across the District. Section 6.99 says that through the planning process the Council is **seeking to achieve a low carbon Vale** including **by improving the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings**.

Vale Core Policy 43 on the Efficient Use of Natural Resources says that developers will be encouraged to make provision for the effective use of natural resources where applicable, including:

- (i) minimising waste and making adequate provision for the recycling of waste on site;
- (ii) using recycled and energy efficient materials;
- (iii) maximising passive solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and re-use of materials; and

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<sup>6</sup> Planning Update HCWS488 Written Statement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, March 2015 <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-03-25/HCWS488/>

(iv) making efficient use of water, e.g. through rainwater harvesting and re-using grey water.

#### 4.5.2.2.3 Renewable Energy

##### 4.5.2.2.3.1 The EU Renewable Energy Directive:

The EU Renewable Energy Directive sets a target of 15% of total energy to come from renewable sources by 2020, representing a seven-fold increase on 2008 levels.

4.5.2.2.3.1 National guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2018: At national level **Government foresees renewable energy providing: more than 30% of UK electricity; 12% of UK heat; and 10% of transport energy** by 2020 to meet the EU target. Higher levels of renewable energy will be needed beyond this timescale. (Source: DECC 2009 The Renewable Energy strategy). Various schemes were put in place by the previous government to increase and accelerate the use of renewable energy in the UK: a Feed-in Tariffs (FIT) scheme which paid energy users who invest in low carbon electricity generation systems for the electricity they generate and use, and for unused electricity they export to the grid; the Renewable Heat Incentive, which supports renewable heat, etc.

The NPPF states:

“To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should: provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts); b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.” (Paragraph 151)

Paragraph 152 states that local planning authorities “**should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.**”

In planning terms, renewable energy options include building integrated and freestanding designs. In technology terms, options include solar photovoltaics (to generate electricity), solar thermal (to generate heat), wind turbines (to generate electricity) and sustainable biomass and heat pumps to generate renewable heat. Heating schemes could be individual to a building or linked together in a heat network.

The previous government placed significant policy emphasis on increasing **community ownership of renewable energy** with a community energy strategy (see: <https://www.gov.uk/community-energy>). The strategy included a shared ownership taskforce with industry (see: <http://www.renewableuk.com/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=CB5A9C2C-FA70-46CE83757D293D992E3E>). In setting up the taskforce, the Secretary of State said “We expect that by 2015 it will be the norm for communities to be offered the opportunity of some level of ownership of new, commercially developed onshore renewables projects. We will review progress in 2015 and if this is limited, we will consider requiring all developers to offer the opportunity of a shared ownership element to communities.” The Infrastructure Act 2015, if exercised, would require commercial renewable electricity developers in Great Britain to offer communities the

opportunity to invest in new commercial renewable electricity schemes being developed in their area.

At district level, Section 6.99 of the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1 says that through the planning process the Council is seeking to achieve a low carbon Vale including by promoting the development and use of decentralised renewable and low carbon energy.

#### 4.5.2.2.3.2 The VOWHDC Local Plan 2031:

Vale Core Policy 41 (p120) says that the Council encourages schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation. Planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be supported provided that they do not cause a significantly adverse effect to:

- (i) landscape, both designated AONB and locally valued;
- (ii) biodiversity, including protected habitats and species and Conservation Target Areas;
- (iii) the historic environment, both designated and non-designated assets, including by development within their settings;
- (iv) the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt;
- (v) local residential amenity; and
- (vi) the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians.

At community level residents consulted were supportive of renewable energy and in particular their potential for community projects, an issue not mentioned in Core Policy 41

Policy UT2 sets out a positive context within which sustainable and energy efficient developments can be assessed. It has been designed to be future-proofed throughout the Plan period in the event that the Building Regulations are changed.

While planning permission is not required for smaller scale renewable energy projects if they meet certain limits and conditions, some larger scale or stand-alone projects may require permission. Additionally, although there are no new large-scale developments currently envisaged or planned in North Hinksey beyond the redevelopment of Botley Centre, there may be opportunities for the community to jointly develop renewable energy projects with existing building owners, as has happened in other areas.

In practice, most renewable energy elements are likely to be put in place in individual households and those small developments where single houses are replaced by small blocks of flats. In such cases efforts to include solar PV and grey-water harvesting will be supported.

Where other opportunities arise, such as the renovation of Parish Council facilities like the Louie Memorial Pavilion and Scout Hut, we would encourage them to be models of sustainability.

## **Policy UT1 – Flooding & Groundwater**

### **(1) Flooding from main water courses.**

**Development proposals will be supported if they can demonstrate that they will not contribute to flood risk within North Hinksey Parish, in accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 42. Areas of Old Botley and North Hinksey Village lie within the Thames flood zone as identified in the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031.**

**(2) Localised flooding from minor streams and rainwater run-off.**

The areas of Old Botley and the most southerly section of North Hinksey Village underlain by Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member and alluvium (as identified on Map F.1 in Appendix F) are prone to large-scale localised flooding in prolonged wet weather. All development proposals in this area will be required to produce evidence that they have taken account of water movement in the local streams and rainwater run-off from the Elms Rise Estate, and will not contribute to flooding.

**(3) Groundwater Flood Risk.**

Development proposals within the 'Zone of Potential Groundwater Flood Risk' identified on Map F.2 in Appendix F that are likely to have an adverse impact on groundwater levels (i.e. through excavation) will need to consider the recommendations of the North Hinksey Groundwater Assessment (July 2017). A fully detailed drainage assessment must be submitted with any relevant planning application which will need to address the following:

(a) A minimum of 3–6 months of groundwater level monitoring (minimum of 3 boreholes within the site to confirm groundwater depths and establish groundwater flow directions), including monitoring seasonal groundwater fluctuations during the dry and wet season. Groundwater monitoring information can be augmented or replaced by local Environmental Agency groundwater level monitoring information, if found to exist;

(b) Groundwater monitoring information should be used to investigate whether or not maximum groundwater levels will come into contact with the proposed development. If so, dewatering requirements during the construction phase should be evaluated and an impact assessment undertaken to identify any risk to local properties in the area, and include identification of any necessary mitigation measures.

## **Policy UT2 – Sustainable Design, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**

Development proposals which incorporate higher sustainable design, energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives than those included in the Building Regulations at that time will be supported. Proposals which provide the highest standards of sustainable design and energy efficiency and/or renewable energy and heating sources will be particularly supported.

Development proposals for free-standing shared and/or community renewable energy initiatives will be supported.

## 4.6 Green Spaces & the Natural Environment

### 4.6.1 Context and community feedback

The Parish of North Hinksey lies within the Vale of White Horse and is surrounded to the North, West and South by green belt and to the east by the floodplains and green belt of the city of Oxford. It is adjacent to the City's boundary and development within the Parish during the 1930s to 1950s served to provide homes for those working in the city. The topography of the Parish includes low-lying floodplain along the Seacourt Stream, the eastern boundary of the Parish, from which land to the west rises gently, and at times steeply, up into Harcourt and Cumnor Hills from which protected views to the City and across to a panorama over Oxfordshire are visible. There is a variety of land use within the Parish with industrial units and commerce, including a local retail centre, located in the north-eastern quadrant; housing occupying much of the northern, western and central areas of the parish, agricultural and amenity land in the south-eastern and southern quadrants, including the Westminster College campus of Oxford Brookes University.

The Parish's location adjacent to the historic city of Oxford to the east and the rural, largely agricultural nature of the Vale of White Horse to the west and south has given rise to its semi-rural character which is recognised and valued by parishioners. The development of the Elms Rise estate before and after the Second World War included design features that enhanced this character (such as grassed verges, front gardens with low walls, grassed shared areas on corners of roads and within crescents) that are retained and valued today but are at risk from incremental development and parking demands. Within the estate is an area of woodland, protected by development through time to the present day which is of significant local wildlife value for many species including small tortoiseshell and brimstone butterflies, goldfinches, foxes and species of mammals with legal protection.

There are three significant large green spaces that were bequeathed to the Parish and the wider population of Oxford: The Upper and Lower Louie Memorial Fields and Raleigh Park. These contribute to the semi-rural character and provide amenity space for recreation, are wildlife-rich habitats that act as corridors and reservoirs for wildlife to pass through or settle in, and which include areas of rare habitat. The lower Louie Memorial Fields provide important habitats including scrub woodland with native trees and a significant, rare fenland that is fed by springs rising from the juncture where upper Corallian limestone meets the lower Corallian sandstone. The Fen habitat has been described as "rich with a diverse range of wetland species" that have been studied and identified in ecologists' reports.

North Hinksey Parish Council owns further amenity land in the Parish that provide valuable leisure and recreational opportunities for parishioners, as well as contributing more green spaces and habitats for wildlife. There are two allotment sites, both accessible from North Hinksey Lane on which the easterly site lies alongside Seacourt Stream and often experiences the combined benefits and disadvantages of winter flooding. The other set of allotments lie between North Hinksey Lane and Southern Bypass Road. Land adjoining the Minns Business Park that had previously been disused allotments was redeveloped in 2003-4 as a local nature reserve. Since the first phase of pond, drainage and path creation, the reserve has been enhanced with native hedging, a sheltered seating area, wildflower meadow and a community orchard featuring a wide variety of fruit trees. The reserve offers several different habitats and is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, including the amphibians and moorhens who successfully raise young in and on the pond every year. It also offers people the opportunity to learn new skills such as harvesting, hedge-laying and small-scale haymaking.

Responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire in November 2014 clearly identified the quiet and peaceful suburban / semi-rural location with good access to green spaces and the nearby countryside as being important factors that make North Hinksey Parish a desirable location to live and work in. Green spaces, including the Green Belt, parks, nature reserves, allotments and playing fields were identified as inappropriate locations for future developments. Subsequent public feedback events have further reinforced the approach taken in developing policies in this Neighbourhood Plan which focuses on the protection, maintenance and enhancement of the green infrastructure within the Parish wherever and whenever possible.

#### **4.6.2 The following plans, documents and strategies support Green Spaces & Natural Environment Policies**

Relevant sections of national and local planning legislation that support the approach being taken in this Neighbourhood Plan include the following:

##### **4.6.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019:**

The NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other methods, “recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland” and “minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures” (Section 15, part 170 b and d).

The NPPF emphasises the promotion of healthy, safe communities that have access to a network of high quality open spaces and recreational facilities, including designated Local Green Spaces, including safe and accessible Green Infrastructure.

Green infrastructure is “a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities” (NPPF, 2019). It describes the natural rather than built physical environment and covers any green environments from those that are designed, planted and rigorously controlled to lightly managed semi-wild scrubland.

Also of particular relevance to this Parish is the “great importance” of Green Belt land, which serves five purposes, one of which is “to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns”. The NPPF defines the protection that it is afforded against Green Belt boundary alteration and any development proposals that affect it.

These are just a few extracts from a wealth of relevant material within the NPPF, key sections include:

3. Plan-making
5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
13. Protecting Green Belt land
14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

#### 4.6.2.2 VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 part 1:

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Abingdon-on-Thames%20and%20Oxford%20Fringe%20Sub-Area.pdf>

- Adopted Policies Map including Green Belt, Views of Oxford and wildlife areas
- Core Policy 13: Green Belt relates to open spaces not covered by the NHNP. This core policy states that inappropriate development will not be approved in the Green Belt except in very special circumstances.
- Core Policy 44: Landscape – which sets out the Council’s approach to protecting and enhancing the important landscape setting (including watercourses, trees, hedgerows, woodland) of the Vale.
- Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure – which seeks to ensure the appropriate provision of Green Infrastructure through new development seeking a net gain in biodiversity.
- Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity – which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity across the district.

#### 4.6.2.3 Emerging VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2:

[http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2017\\_10\\_09%20LPP2%20Appendices\\_FINAL%20with%20Covers.pdf](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2017_10_09%20LPP2%20Appendices_FINAL%20with%20Covers.pdf)

- Appendix F: Conservation Areas
- Appendix K: Leisure and Open Space Standards
- Appendix N: Monitoring Framework with regards to emerging Development Policies DP30: Watercourse; DP31: Protection of Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas; DP33: Open Space; DP34: Leisure and Sports Facilities; DP35: New Countryside Recreation Facilities

#### 4.6.2.4 The following documents also support and inform the Green Spaces policies and community actions:

- North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018)
- Local plan evidence base on the VOWHDC <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031/evidence-base>
- Oxford Conservation Volunteers website: <http://www.ocv.org.uk/sites.php?id=95>
- North Hinksey Parish Council website: <https://northhinksey-pc.gov.uk/allotments-committee/nature-reserve/>
- Louie Memorial Fields ecological reports held by North Hinksey Parish Council & available on their website: <https://northhinksey-pc.gov.uk/recreation-amenities-committee/r-a-reports-surveys/>
- Oxford City Council [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20064/conservation/876/oxford\\_views\\_study](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20064/conservation/876/oxford_views_study)

### 4.6.3 Further justification and evidence, and Green Spaces & Natural Environment Policies

4.6.3.1 There will be a strong presumption against housing or commercial building on the Local Green Spaces in line with section 8, part 101 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states: Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts. A map showing locations of all sites is included as Appendix G Map G.1. These sites are defined under the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Their assessment against the criteria is provided in Appendix G Table G.1. The Local Green Spaces referenced in the Neighbourhood Plan are sites outside of the Oxford Green Belt and are therefore not protected under Green Belt legislation.

Policy GS1 designates various areas as local green space and applies the national policy approach in the NPPF. Plainly circumstances may arise during the Plan period where very special circumstances may exist and therefore support limited new development within the designated areas. This will be a matter of judgement for the District Council based on the evidence included in relevant planning applications. However, proposals which might be considered to be very special circumstances include those which are ancillary to the use of any of the sites for public recreational or community purposes or where replacement land and facilities of an equivalent size, quality and accessibility are provided as part of the wider development proposal.

4.6.3.2 The grassed areas and verges designed into the Elms Rise estate are an important feature and contribute to its character, adding to the distinctive open feel, enhancing views over the hillside and reinforcing the sense that you are in a semi-rural area. Comments received after the October 2017 consultation event highlighted residents' concerns that the views to and from the Parish need to be protected, identifying the easterly views towards the city of Oxford, and the northerly views towards open fields and woodland. The North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018) recognises that "the streets of North Hinksey Parish were laid out with generous provision for greenery in the public realm". It goes on to describe as one of the Key Positive Features, the importance of Greenery in Residential Streets and quality of public green open space highlighting:

"A number of large green spaces (including Raleigh Park, allotments and playing fields either side of Arnold's Way provide access to green spaces that are fragments of the open space that characterised the area prior to the residential developments of the early 20th century onwards. [...] Pockets of woodland, formerly managed as coppice lie within and between the housing estates and on the edge of the suburb. They are now pockets of high biodiversity value habitat."

However, the report notes that Parish today is vulnerable to the loss of Green Character and the impairment of views to green space and the area's rural setting. The October 2017 consultation event prompted comment from residents that greater recognition be given to the woodland areas between houses on the Elms Rise estate. To preserve the original green, spacious, semi-rural character, the green spaces and sites listed in Policy GS1 have been identified as of particular value.

4.6.3.3 Policy GS2 covers all green spaces and their associated biodiversity and viewpoints. In line with the requirement to conserve biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy (Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and section 15 parts 170d, 174b & 175d of the National Planning Policy Framework) developments and initiatives that actively increase biodiversity, enhance natural habitats and enrich the quality of green spaces will be encouraged and supported. Initiatives to maintain and increase the rural character of footpaths, bridleways and cycle-ways throughout the Parish will also be encouraged



and supported.

4.6.3.4 The objective of Policy GS3 is to enhance and protect from inappropriate development, the views and prospects of local, regional and national value or of special interest that contribute to the character of the local and wider landscape.

This policy is accommodating of any form of development, built or vegetative, but requires that full consideration be given to the key views in terms of its position, design and scale, none of which should significantly detract from or obstruct the key views. The key views to and from our Parish contribute to defining both its character and that of the historic City of Oxford and have been categorized into three classes:

Representative: views that may be glimpsed or have detracting features or be aspects that are typical of our Parish and may be seen elsewhere in the vicinity.

Special: views including panoramic, elevated, long-distance vistas, affording an understanding of the Parish's setting in the wider landscape.

Exceptional: views include regionally valued long views across the skyline of the City of Oxford or capturing a quintessential rural village scene at the tranquil heart of North Hinksey.

North Hinksey Parish lies adjacent to the historic city of Oxford, internationally renowned for its skyline as the city of "dreaming spires". The City has initiated and implemented a planning methodology to define and protect the most significant and precious views across the city, using view cones that capture a sweep of landscape from a specific viewpoint. One such view cone lies within our Parish, in Raleigh Park.

4.6.3.5 The varied topography of the Parish creates a variety of vistas, from the low-rise residential roads in the valley at the northern side to the high hilltops that rise to the southern boundary. Our public consultations revealed that Parishioners place high value on a number of views within and without the Parish that are particularly distinctive to its character, location and context:

From Raleigh Park down to North Hinksey village & on towards Oxford  
From the corner of Sweetmans Road and Raleigh Park Road towards Oxford

From the fields south of Grosvenor Road (owned by Oxford Preservation Trust) east & south over Oxford

From North Hinksey Lane towards the lines of trees along Seacourt Stream

From Louie Memorial Fields over Port Meadow towards north Oxford and beyond

From the east end of Chestnut Road north to the Botley Interchange, Wytham Woods, Port Meadow and North Oxford

From Hurst Rise Road towards Wytham Woods and the fields below

From the north and west side of the hill towards Tilbury Farm and fields above it

From Louie Memorial Fields west to Wytham and north to Seacourt Tower

From St Paul's Crescent north towards Wytham woods

From the private road into Brookes Sport looking towards Cumnor Hurst and Boars Hill

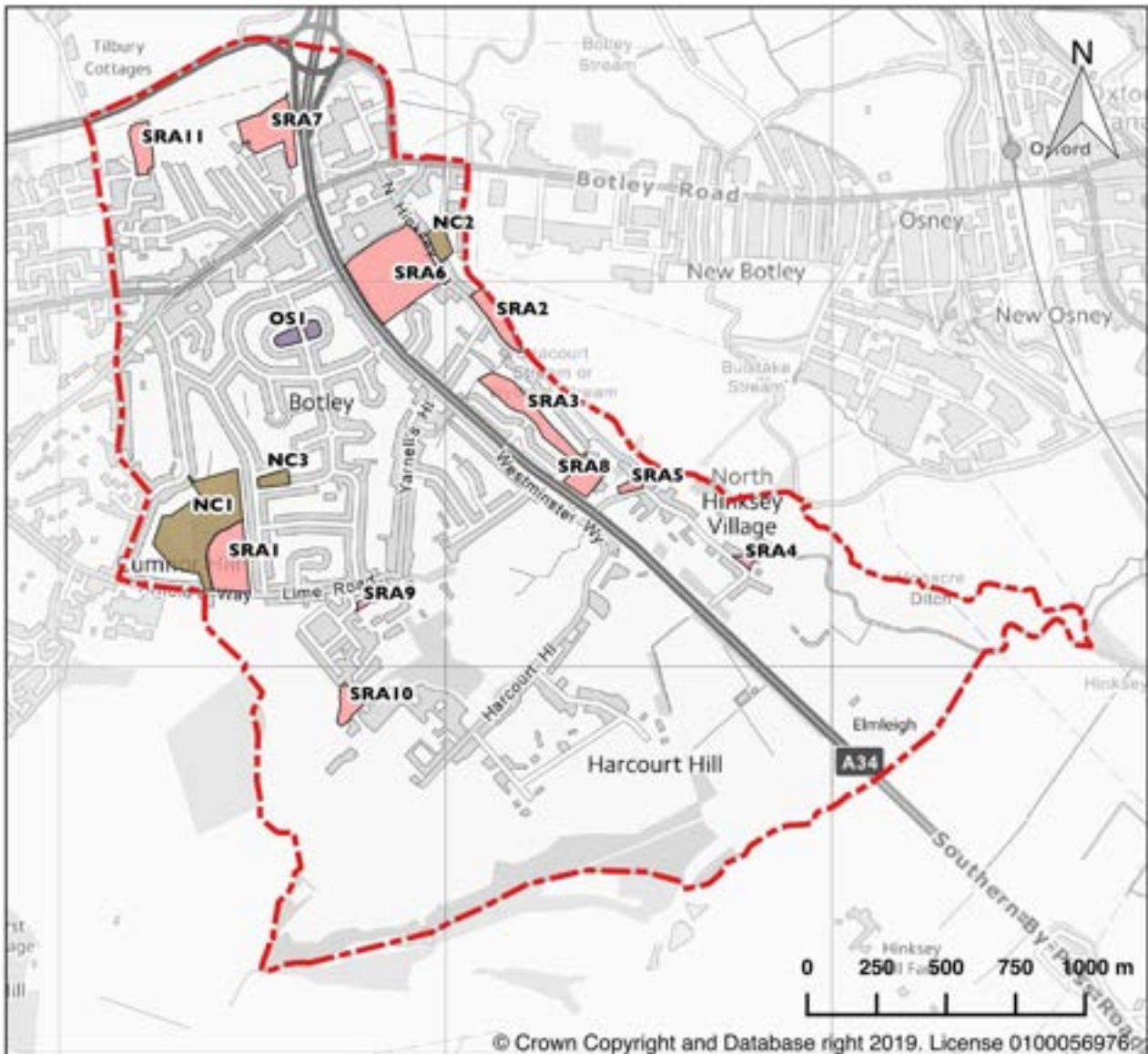
From Poplar Road looking over Elms Parade and up Elms Rise estate across the hillside

From the Bridleway leading west from Harcourt Hill looking towards Hinksey Heights, Boars Hill and south-east Oxford beyond

From North Hinksey Village Green north through the village

From the footpath between Murdoch Place and Hazel Road east over Oxford

Map 4.1 Local Green Spaces in North Hinksey Parish:



- Sites of Sport, Recreation & Amenity Value
- Sites of Nature Conservation Value
- Sites of Open Space Value

### Policy GS1 - Local Green Spaces

The following areas within North Hinksey Parish are designated as Local Green Spaces and are identified in Appendix G Map G.1 and Table G.1, and Map 4.1:

**SRA1 & NC1** Lower Louie Memorial field, copse and fen

**SRA2** Allotments on North Hinksey Lane

**SRA3** Allotments between North Hinksey Lane and Southern Bypass Road

**SRA4** North Hinksey Village Green

SRA5 St Lawrence's churchyard

SRA6 Botley Cemetery

SRA7 Botley Primary School playing fields

SRA8 North Hinksey Church of England Primary School playing fields

SRA9 Turner Drive grassed area

SRA10 Ruskin Close recreation ground

SRA11 Tilbury Fields playground and recreation area

NC2 North Hinksey Nature reserve & community orchard

NC3 Chestnut Road copse

OS1 St Paul's Crescent lawns

Development will only be supported on the designated local green spaces in very special circumstances.

## GS2 – Biodiversity, Wildlife Corridors, TPOs and Tree Canopy Cover

Development proposals will be supported where they meet the following criteria as appropriate to their location in the neighbourhood area:

- i. They include initiatives that actively increase biodiversity, enhance natural habitats and enrich the quality of green spaces wherever practical. Where planting schemes are included as part of the development, they should include the use of native species.
- ii. Existing green routes and wildlife corridors should be retained and enhanced where possible (see Appendix G Maps G.2 and G.3).
- iii. Trees with existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) within the Parish should be retained and protected where possible.
- iv. Where there are corridors of tree canopy cover along publicly accessible roads, footpaths and cycle-ways and between private and public land, these should be retained and where possible enhanced to increase arboreal green infrastructure.

## Policy GS3 - Locally Important Views

The Plan identifies the following Locally Important Views and as shown on Map G.4.

VP1: From Raleigh Park down to North Hinksey village & on towards Oxford

VP2: From the corner of Sweetmans Road & Raleigh Park Road towards Oxford

VP3: From Harcourt Hill Fields towards Oxford and south Oxfordshire

VP4: From North Hinksey Lane towards the lines of trees along Seacourt Stream

VP5: From Louie Memorial Fields over Port Meadow towards north Oxford and beyond

VP6: From the top of Crabtree Road north to Wytham Woods, Port Meadow and North Oxford

VP7: From Hurst Rise Road towards Wytham Woods and the fields below

VP8: From the north and west side of the hill towards Tilbury Farm and fields above it  
VP9: From Louie Memorial Fields north west to Seacourt Tower, Port Meadow & Wytham Woods  
VP10: From St Paul's Crescent north towards Wytham Woods  
VP11: From the top road into Brookes' campus towards Cumnor Hurst and Boars Hill  
VP12: From Poplar Road looking over Elms Parade and up Elms Rise estate hillside  
VP13: From the bridleway towards Hinksey Heights, Boars Hill and south of Oxford  
VP14: From North Hinksey Village Green north through the village  
VP15: From the footpath between Wytham View and Hazel Road eastnortheast

**Development proposals should take account of the Locally Important Views insofar as they would be affected by the proposed development.**

**Development proposals which would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on an identified Locally Important View will not be supported.**

**Development proposals which would make a positive contribution to an identified Locally Important View will be supported. Proposed developments which have the potential to have a detrimental impact on a Locally Important View should be accompanied by a Visual Impact Assessment which addresses the impact of the proposal on any of the identified Views.**

## 4.7 Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus

### 4.7.1 Context and community feedback

4.7.1.1 The former Westminster College site on Harcourt Hill was taken over by Oxford Brookes University (OBU) on a 60-year lease in 2000. Up to that time the College had been used by the Methodist Trust to teach Education and Theology. OBU continued to use the campus for the same purposes and based part of their Departments of Education, History and Theology on the site. Gradually the Education Department has been decreasing in numbers as funding for teaching Education has changed with successive Government policies to the extent that it is no longer viable for the campus to be used primarily for that purpose. In 2012 OBU published a masterplan for development of the campus with the aim of having this adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the local planning authority. It became apparent once this document had been published that this plan had not been adequately consulted upon with the relevant authorities and stakeholders and was not considered 'fit for purpose'. Although not officially withdrawn the document was not pursued.

4.7.1.2 Since that time OBU has undertaken a review of their estate and decided to close the campus at Wheatley and move the departments based there elsewhere. This process is ongoing and the transfer of the Business school from Wheatley to the Headington campus occurred in September 2017, with the remaining faculties vacating by 2020. This has also led to a review by OBU of the location of various faculties and departments within their estate and they have expressed the desire to develop the facilities at Harcourt Hill.

4.7.1.3 Core Policy 9, of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1), supports the principle of upgrading or redeveloping the Harcourt Hill Campus provided it meets the University's longer term business needs for predominately educational uses in a manner that respects its Green Belt setting and urban-rural fringe context.

4.7.1.4 Regarding the retention of the site within the Green Belt, the Local Plan Inspector concluded, when considering the LPP1:

*"...that the campus's continued inclusion within the Green Belt is unlikely to significantly prejudice or make difficult appropriate redevelopment at the campus. The retention of the site within the Green Belt for the present time is therefore soundly-based."*

4.7.1.5 Core Policy 9 also sets out that an agreed master plan, including a clear vision for the future of the site, should be prepared. North Hinksey Parish Council and Harcourt Hill Estate Residents' Association will continue to work with Oxford Brookes University and the Vale of White Horse District Council to facilitate the creation of a masterplan that will encourage a thriving campus experience which is a good place to live, study and teach. This could include:

- The safeguarding of the green open spaces;
- The involvement with the local community in education; and,
- The formation of links with the knowledge and leisure activities of the University.

4.7.1.6 Public consultations throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process have consistently resulted in 90% plus support figures for developing a policy for the OBU campus. Comments have raised particular concern about potential worsening of traffic issues related to any expansion of the Harcourt Hill Campus.

## 4.7.2 The following plans, documents and strategies support Brookes Harcourt Hill Policy BU1

- VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 1, in particular Core Policies 9, 13, 33, 34, 35, 38 and 44.
- Vale of White Horse District Council Design Guide March 2015.
- North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment (January 2018).

## 4.7.3 Further justification and evidence, and Brookes Harcourt Hill Policies

4.7.3.1 Building on the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Core Policy 9 the key elements of the following Policy BU1 have been developed to focus on:

- Seeking to avoid adverse impacts on traffic by encouraging fewer journeys to the site, and promoting the use of public transport and other sustainable modes of travel in preference to car use.
- The Campus's Green Belt location; preserving openness as necessary and ensuring good design and landscaping; and,
- Energy efficiency and carbon neutrality.

4.7.3.2 As noted previously the primary concern of many Parishioners relates to traffic issues, and several sections of Policy BU1 have been developed to engage with these issues. It is reported in successive iterations of the VoWH Evaluation of Transport Impacts (final reports published in 2014 and 2017) that:

*"... the A34 is forecast to be operating at or above operational capacity in the northbound and southbound directions between Botley and Lodge Hill and between Marcham and Milton in the morning peak. In the evening peak the northbound section between Chilton and Botley is operating at or above operational capacity. In the southbound direction the A34 is operating at or above operational capacity between Botley and Lodge Hill.*

*"The A34 is forecast to operate at capacity at the following approaches and junctions:*

*In the morning peak hour at Botley interchange:*

- *The A34 northbound towards the Botley interchange*
- *The A34 northbound mainline through the junction*
- *The northbound on-slip to the A34 and the merge*
- *The southbound off-slip from the A34*

*In the evening peak hour at Botley interchange:*

- *The A34 northbound mainline through the junction*
- *The northbound on-slip to the A34 and the merge"*

And,

*"...the A420 westbound is generally forecast to be operating below operational capacity in the morning peak in both direction but at or above operational capacity on short stretches near Buckland, Fyfield and Cumnor in the eastbound direction. In the evening peak the A420 is forecast to be operating below operational capacity except at Buckland where it operates at or above operational capacity in both directions. The westbound sections near Fyfield and Cumnor are also forecast to operate at or above operational capacity in the evening peak.*

*"The A420 is forecast to operate at capacity at the following approaches and*

*junctions:*

- *In the morning peak hour, the eastbound direction towards Buckland, Southmoor, Fyfield; northbound direction towards Bessels Leigh and Cumnor.*
- *In the evening peak hour, the westbound directions towards Tubney Wood, Fyfield, Kingston Bagpuize, Pusey, Caswell.”*

Increase in traffic to the site could impact negatively on the local, and already busy, narrow minor roads system. Local concerns include Westminster Way and Harcourt Hill, alongside the potential issues recorded above on the nearby A34, and pinch points on the A420. The development of a masterplan that considers these matters at any early stage to provide context for subsequent Transport Assessments (TA) will be of particular value.

4.7.3.3 As reported above, the site has a relatively long history of different educational uses and tenants. Oxfordshire County Council reported in response to the 2012 draft Brookes Masterplan shows that they had considerable transport concerns relating to any expansion. OBU has been reviewing the activities and faculties to be housed there. Given this level of change, and indeed changing requirements, attitudes and behaviours toward travel, a review of parking arrangements on the site might be appropriate. It could be that previous uses required more parking than what might be proposed in the future. This is a matter that should be considered through the master planning process.

4.7.3.4 The master planning process provides for an opportunity to consider a more innovative approach to managing transport access and parking. Encouraging a higher percentage of students (and possibly staff) housed on the campus and a larger number using public transport, car sharing schemes or other sustainable methods of transport could reduce the number of staff and students finding it necessary to travel to the site using their own personal car. Managing the overall number of parking spaces on the site would also help to enhance and promote more sustainable alternative travel to the private car. Appropriate parking for the site will be determined in line with Oxfordshire County Council parking standards.

4.7.3.5 As is also noted above, opportunities for development on the Campus should not be prejudiced by its Green Belt location. However, the Green Belt is protected by both national and local planning policy. Any development on the Campus must be appropriate to its location and help maintain a sense of openness. Furthermore, the overall prominent landscape setting of the campus is discussed in policy GS2 of this plan and must be considered in any masterplan and subsequent planning application.

4.7.3.6 A local character assessment has been undertaken alongside the production of this plan and informs its policies. The prevailing character of North Hinksey should be considered and reflected as appropriate in any masterplan and associated planning applications for the campus.

4.7.3.7 The community of North Hinksey has a clear aspiration – which is set out in this plan – to encourage the best practices in sustainable and energy efficient development, construction and resource use as we move towards a carbon neutrality. There is an exciting opportunity on the Campus, especially as a place of higher education and learning, to create exemplar development from which others can follow. Strong encouragement is therefore included in policy BU1 for innovative and forward thinking design and use of materials and energy.

4.7.3.8 North Hinksey Parish Council and the local community will work proactively with the developers and Local Planning Authority to help facilitate this process.

## Policy BU1 - Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus

Any masterplan or subsequent proposals should clearly identify and address the following key issues (amplifying those set out in Core Policy 9):

- i) Transport: An assessment of likely transport impacts that includes, but is not limited to, the A34, A420, Westminster Way and Harcourt Hill. Subsequent Transport Assessments and Travel plans, for the scale of development proposed, should include mitigation measure as appropriate.
- ii) Landscape and setting: A landscaping and tree planting strategy which:
  - Reflects the Campus's Green Belt location and helps maintain a sense of openness.
  - Ensures the integration of the campus' built form into the landscape and to maintain its rural aspect as viewed from the surrounding hills to the west
  - Conserves and enhances views across Oxford, especially those recorded in the Oxford View Cones study 2015 (or subsequent updates).
- iii) An Integrated Water Management Strategy should be considered for the whole campus to consider, in particular flood risk and water- related constraints including sewerage capacity and drainage strategy.

Development should;

- (a) Be focused on the previously built up part of the site,
- (b) Minimise parking provision,
- (c) Encourage the use and where appropriate enable the provision of sustainable modes of transport,
- (d) Maximise opportunities for students (and/or staff) to live, work and study on campus and;
- (e) Utilise sustainable means of utilities and services including but not restricted to energy, waste and surface water.

Development proposals should have regard to the Vale of White Horse District Council Design Guide and the North Hinksey Parish Character Assessment.



## 5. Plan Delivery and Implementation

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This Neighbourhood Plan provides a framework for achieving the aims, vision and objectives of the local community in North Hinksey Parish. It will be implemented throughout the period of the Plan up to 2031 by a variety of stakeholders, and where additional opportunities arise or circumstances change significantly the Plan will be reviewed to ensure that it best meets local needs for the future. These further reviews will not occur after set periods, but as and when the need arises.

5.1.2 The policies set out in section 4 of this document will help to ensure that adequate protective measures are in place for green spaces, leisure facilities, sites designated for business use and other infrastructure key to the ongoing health of the local economy and the well-being of local residents. A number of community actions detailed in section 5.2 below aim to build on the current base by, amongst other things,

- encouraging expansion of, and other improvements to, infrastructure
- publicising facilities and promoting better use of them
- encouraging better communications, and links between key stakeholders in the community.

5.1.3 The organisation primarily responsible for initiating and implementing many of these community actions is North Hinksey Parish Council, and this body has supported the production of the Neighbourhood Plan throughout the lengthy process of its development, as well as identifying the following in June 2016 as one of its key objectives:

- To actively support the production and full implementation of an effective Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish.

5.1.4 In addition, the community actions will rely on ongoing involvement and support from a range of other stakeholders to ensure efficient implementation. These will include local businesses, educational establishments and local residents, such as the current volunteers involved in the Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups. Various forums and other support groups (some already set up during the development of this Plan) will ensure that community involvement in the implementation process remains strong.

### 5.2 Community Actions

#### 5.2.1 Joint Housing and Economy & Employment:

**CAHE1:** Where a large new commercial or housing development is to be constructed (as defined in Development Policy 20 of the VOWHDC Local Plan 2031 Part 2), developers should be expected to contribute a minimum of £5000 toward projects related to public art. This could include provision of public art on the site itself, production of art based historical records of the site as it develops from the original condition to the final redevelopment, or any of a wide range of other possible artist actions that the community feel would be worthwhile, and of long-term benefit to the local community. The commissions should be placed on local artists wherever possible, and the selection of one or more of these commissions should involve NHPC and wider consultation with parishioners, for example by holding a public vote at the end of a display weekend where local artists present their proposals including the costs of bringing the idea to fruition.

### 5.2.2 Economy & Employment:

**CAEE1:** NHPC to encourage the setting up of an ongoing business strategy forum to encourage discussion and cooperation between stakeholders in conjunction with Working Group 2 (Economy & Employment). Through the business forum, development owners to be encouraged to allow units that have been empty for prolonged periods to be used by social enterprises / charities or for arts / crafts purposes.

**CAEE2:** Working group 2 (Economy & Employment) in conjunction with NHPC will continue to engage with the Economic development teams and other relevant bodies in the Vale and Oxford City to promote the development of a business identity for the area including a business hub focussing on professional services and the knowledge economy.

**CAEE3:** NHPC and VOWHDC to support the continued existence in North Hinksey Parish of infrastructure, leisure facilities and secondary businesses that support the business sector such as:

- (a) Post office
- (b) Cafes
- (c) Hairdresser
- (d) Vehicle repairs and servicing
- (e) Sufficient car parking
- (f) Childcare services
- (g) Professional services

### 5.2.3 Joint Economy & Employment and Transport:

**CAET1:** NHPC to promote a significant improvement in the efficiency of the local transport network to drive economic development by encouraging

- (a) Improvements to public transport:
  - Provide sufficient capacity now and in the future
  - Turn up and go solution i.e. near zero waiting time
  - Part of a transport policy integrated with local and regional plans
  - 99% reliability
  - Should interconnect the business sites with journey times less than 15min
- (b) Improvements to cycle routes and bike parking, preferably that conform to Oxfordshire County Council walking and cycling standards.
- (c) Seek support for a new survey of people movement in the area (all transport modes including pedestrians). Commercial development proposals should include the funding of a thorough study of transport issues along the Botley Road with a view to defining the need and ultimately designing a solution. Such a solution could include a vehicle refuelling station offering fossil fuels, hydrogen and electric charging facilities.
- (d) VOWDC to negotiate direct access from the A34/A420 interchange to Seacourt Park&Ride without the need to travel along the Botley Road to enable zero parking business development on their strategic employment sites in North Hinksey. This would enable a substantial productivity improvement in land already developed for business use.

#### 5.2.4 Transport:

**CATR1:** NHPC to participate, where appropriate, in consultations on wider transport related projects that will impact on North Hinksey Parish such as reviews of the A34 and Botley Road, the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and East-West Rail, and the proposed Rapid Transit System.

**CATR2: West Way Junctions & Traffic Control.**

Improvements on any section of West Way passing through the Parish to junctions and traffic control, or to pedestrian crossings, that aim to improve overall pedestrian and cycle safety will be supported.

**CATR3: Connectivity.** Proposals for a joined-up public transport system for central Oxfordshire to improve connectivity, as outlined in the County's Local Transport Plan LTP4 (or any subsequent Local Transport Plan), will be supported, including the proposed development of a Rapid Transit System to serve the West Way Shopping Centre and other key locations in the parish.

**CATR4: A34 Improvements.** Proposals for improvement of the A34 will be supported provided they do not conflict with Policies SI1 and GS1 of this Neighbourhood Plan; and they would lead to better access between different areas of the parish; and reduced pollution from traffic noise and emissions.

#### 5.2.5 Social Infrastructure:

**CASI1:** NHPC to identify and implement a provision strategy for shortfall in leisure facilities (including facilities for teenagers, the elderly and mobility impaired parishioners, plus a redevelopment of the current Louie Memorial Pavilion and Scout Hut buildings) via a masterplan developed by appointed consultants working with the Leisure Working Group / the Recreation and Amenities Committee. The aim is to increase provision to an acceptable level by 2019 where possible, and for longer term projects (e.g. the Pavilion redevelopment) they are to be implemented by 2031 at the latest.

**CASI2:** To increase usage of leisure facilities and promote a healthier lifestyle through:

- (a) Improving public awareness of available leisure facilities.
- (b) NHPC to encourage more community involvement in Social Infrastructure facilities from decision making on provision through to managing facilities.
- (c) NHPC to raise public awareness with the help of The Sprout, the Botley and North Hinksey Community Website, the Association for Botley Communities and other appropriate local organisations aimed at encouraging healthier lifestyles amongst parishioners through:
  - Increased levels of walking and cycling, both as an alternative to vehicular transport and as a leisure activity in their own right.
  - Increased participation in other physical activities, particularly those taking place within the parish.

- Including wider issues such as eating more healthily, reducing food waste, reducing carbon footprints and other 'green' issues.

See also CAGS2 and CABU2.

**CASI3:** NHPC to retain all of the land suitable for the placement of leisure facilities currently under its ownership and also consider taking on ownership of additional amenity land within new developments where possible and practical, and subject to financial implications. All land and facilities owned by NHPC should be maintained to an appropriate degree and improved wherever practical given financial and other restrictions.

**CASI4:** NHPC to implement a review of Public Rights of Way in the Parish to identify those not currently included in Oxfordshire County Council's Definitive Map and Statement, and subsequently get them officially recognised.

**CASI5:** NHPC to monitor, where practical, likely population growth arising from major new housing developments and lobby the relevant authorities both to ensure that adequate levels of social infrastructure are put into place in a timely manner to provide the required cover for that growth, and to influence the uses of Section 106 and CIL funds to maximise benefits for the parish as a whole. This process should include participation in relevant consultations, such as proposals on GP provision within Oxfordshire expected to be developed within Phase 2 of the Oxfordshire Health Care Transformation Programme.

### 5.2.6 Utilities:

**CAUT1: Raise awareness of sustainability, energy efficiency and renewable energy**

NHPC to raise awareness, through relevant communication channels such as the NHPC website and The Sprout, about relevant sustainability issues e.g. :

- (a) grants and practical advice on energy efficiency
- (b) that small scale renewable energy does not require planning permission
- (c) the environmental benefits of not paving over gardens and environmental friendly alternatives.

**CAUT2: Encourage the set-up of a sustainable energy group**

The purpose of the group would be to encourage and support residents to live a more sustainable lifestyle and to advocate for sustainable infrastructures and policies such as a solar powered noise/pollution barrier along the A34. This may be able to be done as project run by the Association of Botley Communities. The sustainable energy group or other local organisations could also assess the desirability and feasibility of setting up a community energy company. Ties with Low Carbon West Oxford should be sought.

### 5.2.7 Green Spaces & the Natural Environment:

**CAGS1:** Increase awareness of green spaces and their value by using all available relevant local media channels to communicate Neighbourhood Plan findings to parishioners.

See also CAS12 and CABU2.

**CAGS2:** Encourage the retention and addition of green elements in front gardens by leading by example. For example: include planting which encourages biodiversity, retention of 'gardens' rather than paved-over parking spaces, creatively design a space that combines permeable hard-standing suitable for parking with planting surrounding it, using vertical structures to grow plants up, growing vegetables & herbs amidst flowers. Be aware of the law that "hard surfacing of more than five square metres of domestic front gardens [comes under] permitted development only where the surface in question is rendered permeable. Use of traditional materials, such as impermeable concrete, where there was no facility in place to ensure permeability, requires an application for planning permission."

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/permeable-surfacing-of-front-gardens-guidance>).

**CAGS3:** Further suggestions of additional green spaces, wildlife corridors, ancient trees or hedges and other significant natural features of value, or suggestions for new cycle-ways, pathways and enhancements to our green infrastructure and natural environment are welcomed.

### 5.2.8 Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus:

**To identify and implement a strategy to:-**

**CABU1:** actively promote links and co-operation with local secondary education establishments.

**CABU2:** encourage participation of sports, games and leisure activities at Brookes by local residents.

**CABU3:** actively promote links between the Oxford knowledge based economy and research and study at the University.

**CABU4:** To promote these actions a joint action board consisting of members of the local community and the University should be encouraged to be formed.