

**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Committee of
North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on
Monday 13th July 2026 at 4:00 pm in the Turner Hall**

Committee Members Present:

Paul Evans – PE
Steve Legg (Secretary) – SL
Kevin Swann (PC) – KS

Sherard Veasey (Chair) - SV
Judith Wardle - JW
Adrian Watts – AW

NP385. Apologies for absence

David Harris

NP386. Public Forum

District Councillor Sarah Veasey (DC) provided an update on the present status of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, the LP2043, the NPPF and the upcoming introduction of a Unitary Authority. DC also provided comments on the compliance of the housing policies in the draft North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the forthcoming changes in the wider planning environment.

NP387. Declarations of Interest

SV mentioned that the landowner of part of the proposed Shakenoak Local Green Space adjoins his land, thus making discussion over this proposal difficult for him.

NP388. To Agree and sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed by the chairman.

NP389. To Consider Actions of Last Meeting

NP 376 – Thankyou message to Suzanne – SV - Done

NP381 – Communicate results of the Reg14 consultation – KS - Ongoing

- Drafting subgroup for statutory responses – housing policies – DV, SV, SL - Done
- ChatGPT investigation – SL - Done

Shakenoak Roman Villa LGS – request parish clerk to write to landowner – SL - Done

NP390. To consider the processing of responses from the Reg 14 Consultation

Responding to Comments from Individuals and Local Organisations

KS has produced the following documents:

- North Leigh Consultation Response Schedule v1.0.xlsx – This lists all comments from all respondents along with an assessment of whether the comment should be reviewed as possibly requiring a change to the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan All Responses.docx – this document contains the draft text of the proposed emails to be sent to each respondent. For those respondents that had specific comments on the draft neighbourhood plan document, there is a draft of the text to be emailed to them to describe the committee's action.

There was a discussion of these documents. Although the committee is not obliged to reply to respondents who made no specific comments, it was decided that we would do so anyway.

It was agreed that KS would create the emails to be sent out to all respondents based on the documents he has produced.

ACTION: KS

The committee recorded their thanks to KS for the large amount of work he has done in producing the draft responses to individuals.

Drafting subgroup 1 report (Housing Policies)

District Councillor Sarah Veasey (DC) provided an overview of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan situation, the prospects of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the imminent government pronouncement for new Unitary Councils in Oxfordshire.

DC had reviewed the draft Reg 16 Neighbourhood Plan document that the Housing Policy drafting group had recently updated.

WOLP 2031 – this should in theory be the active local plan, but is now classified as “out of date” because the large housing schemes that are in the 2031 plan have in some cases not been delivered leading to a failure in the 5 year housing supply pipeline. The current planning situation amounts to a policy vacuum and allows for so-called “Windfall Housing” whereby developers will propose schemes that they claim will fulfil general NPPF requirements for sustainability, etc. DC expects that there will be a number of such schemes coming forward for planning consent in the next few months, as is already the case in North Leigh.

WOLP2043 – this will have more emphasis on small sites in view of the fact that large sites take so long to gain approval.

There are 5 “Tiers” governing housing policy. Settlements are classified based entirely on the number of houses rather than the level of available facilities.

Thus, North Leigh becomes Tier 3 (Large Village) although its facilities are more typical of a Tier 4 (Medium Village).

Although North Leigh is classified as a Tier 3 Large Village, no sites have been identified for new housing.

If WODC continues to fail to meet its 5-year housing supply, then the fact that North Leigh has no designated sites will become irrelevant and we will be back into a Windfall housing regime. In Tier 3, this will be capped at 10% of the number of houses at 1st January 2025. WODC are trying to progress the WOLP2043 rapidly in order to be examined in December 2026 against the present NPPF rather than the future one due next year. The examination process will take about 12 months, so the WOLP will at the earliest become effective in March 2028. Until then we will be in a Windfall situation.

The new Unitary Councils for Oxfordshire will come into effect on 1st April 2028, so WODC is hoping to get the WOLP2043 go live before that date.

There are three options for the Unitary authorities a) All in one b) Two – one with WODC+Cherwell+Oxford, the other with S.Oxon+Vale of WH+Ridgeway c) Three – Oxford, Cherwell+WODC, VOWH+S.Oxon+Ridgeway. The government will pick which one on 16th July. Options a & b put WODC with Oxford, which will want to export a large number of the houses it has to build but does not have the space for.

The government has told WODC to build 16,290 new homes by 2043, which will be impossible to meet even if the land could be obtained because of shortage of capacity in the planning, building control and developer’s manpower resources.

DC went on to provide specific comments to the draft Reg 16 Neighbourhood Plan document:

- The Reg 16 draft Neighbourhood Plan document should include a Housing Needs Assessment – see handout provided. We have 120 affordable homes waiting to be built (40% of Rectory Rise + Manor Oak). This exceeds the number of clients waiting for a home in North Leigh (85). It was noted that the figures provided by DC support the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Mix policy.
DC will make enquiries at WODC to find out what the Housing Needs Analysis should contain. **ACTION: DC (SV)**
- The Reg 16 draft Neighbourhood Plan document states on pages 22, 24 and 26 that “*North Leigh parish does not meet the criteria promoted within “Core Policy 3 – Spatial Strategy” of the Draft Local Plan 2043*”
DC recommends that this statement should be replaced by one which states that under the WOLP 2043 North Leigh will not have any houses allocated to it, since the Tier 3 criteria are based solely on housing numbers in January 2025.
- The OCC Flood Risk assessment is clearly wrong (refers to a postcode in the Bicester area) and there should be a response to OCC which makes this point.
- In the Reg 16 draft Neighbourhood Plan document states on page 24 the sentence beginning “If the 5-year land supply falls short...” is incorrect and should instead state that in that case, the planning situation will allow for any Windfall housing to be considered, to make it consistent with the latest draft WOLP2043.
- Page 25 – refers to a live planning application for land west of Common Road – this should state it is an “expected planning application.”
- Throughout – use the term “Cotswold National Landscape” rather than Cotswold AONB.
- Page 30 – “70 to 150” houses -> 80 + 75.

All of the above changes will be incorporated.

ACTION: SL / SV

Document Control

- There was a discussion of the procedure that SL had proposed for document control over the editing of the Reg16 draft and the associated documents.
- It was resolved to add a change control log as an appendix to the Reg 16 document to make it easier to find out who changed what, when and why. **ACTION:** SL

NP391.

To consider draft timeline of activities over the coming 12 months

- Consultancy Support – we will obtain a quote for the work to produce a Basic Conditions Statement that is required for the Reg 16 submission. **ACTION:** SL
- Plan for further response drafting:
AW and PE will meet on 20th to draft responses to the Statutory Consultee comments on the RS policies along with Policy N4.
JW will draft responses to the comments from Statutory Consultees on Policies N1, N2, and N3.
KS will draft responses to the General comments.
All the above will coordinate taking control of the master document to avoid out of sync edits. **ACTION:** AW, PE, KS, JW

NP392.

To agree actions to be carried out prior to next meeting

See above.

NP393.

Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the full Neighbourhood Plan committee will be in the Turner Hall at:

- 4 p.m. on Monday 27th July.

There will be drafting subgroup meeting as follows:

- SG2 (RS policies) – 4 p.m. Monday 20th July

Meeting closed at 18:20