

**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Committee of
North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on
Tuesday 1st September 2026 at 4:00 pm in the Turner Hall**

Committee Members Present:

Paul Evans – PE
Steve Legg (Secretary) – SL
David Painter - DP

Kevin Swann (PC) – KS
Judith Wardle - JW
Adrian Watts – AW
Sherard Veasey (Chair) - SV

NP421. Apologies for absence

None

NP422. Public Forum

Lewis Crowther (LC) attended the meeting as an observer. He expressed an interest in becoming a committee member, and was welcomed onto the committee.

NP423. Declarations of Interest

None.

NP424. To Agree and sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed by the chairman.

NP425. To Consider Actions of Last Meeting

NP408 –Bluestone Planning (BP) for Basic Conditions Statement work –

SL – **COMPLETED** – contract - signed off and BP have started work.

- Proofreading - DP, JW - **DONE** - their observations were passed to Tony Chan (TC) who will apply them at the final document finishing stage.
- JW queried one of the view definitions in which the wording mentioned the view was "towards Wilcote", although Wilcote is not visible. Agreed to modify wording to "In the direction of Wilcote (not itself visible from here)" **ACTION CONTINUES:** SL will apply this clarification
- An issue with the Character Assessment appendix in the map which showed extents of the EE and Wilcote character areas having the same label. Also noted in the Local Green Space appendix that the "Beach Field" was used with a Local Green Space that no longer has this name. SL agreed to fix this. **ACTION CONTINUES:** SL
- Incorporating above changes - **ACTION CONTINUES:** SL.

NP409 – Design process to create the Consultation Statement (see below) – SL / KS - **DONE**

KS had circulated an updated spreadsheet "*Reg 14 Checklist AL 1.09 updated KSSL 11 Aug AL Updated 11 & (17 with individuals)Aug.xlsx*". Contains Individuals, Statutory and Local business responses. Not all of the Local Business responses have been processed. Some of these will require further document changes.

KS has circulated the email about further SEA / HRA assessments not being required. The document set will be updated to mention this.

KS has also circulated a draft Consultation Statement, which he presented later in the meeting (see discussion below).

KS circulated copies of other statutory responses – Witney Town Council, Natural England, Ramblers, Thames Water. These will need processing and any required documentary changes to be included

ACTION – the Committee - **CONTINUES**

NP426. To consider the work on the Consultation Statement for Reg 14 Consultation

KS had circulated four documents:

- (A) – MS Word document describing the overall process by which comments had been recorded and where necessary implemented.
- (B) - Three spreadsheets, one for Individuals' comments, one for businesses and one for statutory consultees. These detail the responses and how each was dealt with.

KS conducted a walk-through of the documents:

- Some spreadsheet rows have text coloured orange – these are mainly responses suggested by AI, and will be deleted if not particularly relevant.
- Flood risk comments – we have decided to simply include the text recommended by OCC. In addition, the local knowledge of flooding seems not to have been recognised by some

development proposals – including Lioncourt and Elivia. It was noted that a resident in Cuckamus Lane had mentioned their house sits on top of some land drains carrying away substantial amounts of water from the springs under Cuckamus Green – the former village pond. As these springs are not shown on the OCC Definitive map, developers are unaware of the need to provide additional flood alleviation capacity.

- Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10 of (A) – It was noted that our responses to the comments received need not precisely identify any changes we made to our document – the onus should be on the statutory body to check our revised draft during the Reg 16 consultation, to identify where (or if) we have made changes in response to their comments, and to confirm that the changes we have made satisfy their comments made during the Reg 14 consultation.
- It seems that during the Reg 16 process, and after our plan has succeeded in getting approved by WODC to go to the Inspector, there will be an additional stage at which the Inspector could issue a “Clarification Note” to allow us to correct minor issues. (See further detailed explanation appended). Historically, there have been no Neighbourhood Plans that were rejected by the Inspector – the earlier stages having eliminated any major issues.
- JW asked if it was possible that there would be a delay in processing our plan by WODC during the Reg 16 phase since there are several plans advancing to this stage. Moreover, WODC is occupied with getting the 2043 Local Plan completed before local authority reorganisation.
- SV observed that there are challenges with going forward now to Reg 15. These include the major disruptions coming from the NPPF update, the 2043 LP, and Unitary Authorities. SV concluded that we should proceed as fast as possible regardless of these threats.

LC having been accepted as a new committee member, it was suggested he might review the OCC and WODC comments on the Reg 14 consultation against the updates we made to the NP and apply a “fresh pair of eyes” to what we have done.

ACTION – LC

KS will make some further changes to the set of documents that make up his draft Consultation Statement, to tidy them up and improve the integration between the spreadsheets and the main MS Word document.

ACTION – KS

NP427. To consider the work required to update the Neighbourhood Plan for consistency with the new NPPF

JW had circulated a document comparing the new version of the NPPF against the previous version and summarising some of the principal changes relating to our Neighbourhood Plan.

JW will develop her analysis by looking further into the new emphasis on sustainability in the new NPPF as this could be used to sharpen out arguments about the need for new housing to meet these objectives. JW will share with DH for his comments.

David Harris had emailed his opinion that the changes would have no material impact on our Policies. SL had produced a summary via AI of where we might consider making changes. These are largely minor, other than a significant comment about HD1.

SL will pursue the research with AI to obtain a recommendation of a possible revised text of HD1. It was noted that WODC have prepared the 2043 Local Plan based on the previous NPPF version. SV will ask our District Councillor if it is known how WODC propose to deal with the update.

ACTION – JW, SV, SL

NP428. To consider draft timeline of activities over the coming 12 months

It had been decided at the previous meeting to **aim for submission of the Plan by 30th September**. It was felt that this date remains optimistic, but we should stick with it at present.

The remaining tasks to be carried out prior to reg 15 submission consist of:

- Apply the comment responses already prepared by AW/PE, KS, JW, etc to the NP document (SL – 2d?)
- Pass main NP document to TC for final document formatting / spelling corrections (TC - 5d)
- Consultation Statement (KS, All – 5d?)
- NPPF version impact assessment (JW, DH – 2d?)
- Review of the Basic Conditions Statement to be delivered by BP (All – 1d?)
- Assemble / package / check all documents for sending to WODC (SL – 2d)

NP429. To agree actions to be carried out prior to next meeting

See above.

NP430. Date of Next Meeting

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

- 4 p.m. on Tuesday 15th September.

Meeting closed at 17:40.

What type of things can be fixed after the Inspector has issued a Clarification Note?

You **do not have to get the plan completely flawless** the first time for the reg 15 submission, but you cannot rely on a clarification note to save or completely rewrite a policy that has major structural flaws. [1]

The examiner **will not use a clarification note to invite a policy rewrite**. Clarification notes are strictly intended to clarify evidence or resolve minor ambiguities, not to serve as an interactive drafting session for the committee. [2, 3]

Understanding the boundaries of how the process manages errors provides a clearer picture of what to expect:

What the Examiner Can and Cannot Do

- **They cannot let you rewrite policies:** If a policy fundamentally lacks evidence, contradicts strategic local plan policies, or breaches national guidance, the examiner will not give you a second chance to draft a better policy via a clarification note. [4]
- **They can write modifications for you:** If the *intent* of your policy is completely sound and backed by solid evidence, but your wording is a bit clumsy or lacks the exact technical precision required for planning decisions, the examiner will simply **rewrite or modify the text themselves** in their final report. [1, 5]
- **They can delete failing policies:** If a policy has a "major problem" that cannot be easily fixed with a modification (e.g., trying to restrict development without any supporting evidence), the examiner will simply recommend that the policy be **deleted entirely** from the final plan.

What is the Clarification Note actually for?

An examiner issues a clarification note for very narrow, specific reasons. Common examples include: [2]

- Asking where a specific piece of data or mapping constraint mentioned in a policy can be found in your evidence base.
- Asking you to confirm a specific boundary or planning term used in your draft.
- Asking how a policy is intended to operate alongside a newly updated local planning policy. [2, 3]

Your Best Strategy Before Submitting (Reg 15)

Because you cannot fix major policy issues during the examination, you should take advantage of the time before your **Regulation 15 submission** to ensure your most critical policies are ironclad.

- **Check the Evidence Link:** For every single policy in your draft, ask: *"If a developer challenges this policy, which page of our evidence base proves we need it?"* If you cannot point to exact data, a survey, or a technical code, the policy is at risk of being deleted.
- **Request a Health Check:** If you have budget remaining from your [Locality grant funding](#), apply for an **Independent Health Check**. A professional planning consultant will review your draft *before* submission and tell you exactly which policies will fail an examination, giving you the chance to fix them safely.
- **Lean on your LPA:** Work closely with your Local Planning Authority (LPA) officer. If they tell you a policy is legally unenforceable or structurally flawed, fix it now, as the examiner will likely agree with them. [6]