



HEADINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM steering committee meeting
Meeting held at All Saints' Church Hall on 11 December 2025 at 7pm

Present: 7

Patrick Coulter PC Chair HA/HNF (Headington Neighbourhood Forum),
Liz Grosvenor Admin Support HA/HNF
Sumukh Kaul SK (HA/HNF)
Fiona McKenzie (HA/HNF)
Mike Ratcliffe (HNF)
Cllr Roz Smith RS (HA/HNF)
Peter West PW (HA/HNF)

Apologies: 2

Cllr Chris Smowton CS (HA/HNF)
John Nealon JN Press/Communications Officer (HA/HNF)

1.	<p>Chair's welcome. Update and Agenda</p> <p>PC welcomed all to the meeting, convened to plan for the future of the Plan with a possible progression to a Parish Plan.</p>	
2.	<p>Review of the Plan based on the findings of the following</p> <p>CS looked at the priorities and end goals (attached)</p> <p>PW looked at the business element (attached)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He expanded on his report to advise that he is in touch with 70 businesses locally together with having talks with other areas of Oxford. Their concerns include the congestion charge, the working place levy, actual income rather than footfall, parking charges, closing businesses, and prolific shoplifting. • He feels that about 15-20% of local businesses would be interested in forming a business association but pressures of work mean that face-to-face meetings are unlikely to emerge. Next year he will endeavour to make regular one-on-one meetings with these businesses. • Specifically, car parking needs to be reviewed so that there is some free parking as well as long-term. Currently there are 	

three types: short-term parking for shoppers, parking for workers, and parking for commuters. In terms of the HNP we need to update the Community Policy on parking.

- Currently 10% of the shops/businesses in Headington are empty.

SK looked at the character assessment

Character assessments look fine - maybe need updating with new student developments, ie in area 7 of Brookes student village which was delegated to council and has seen major change, etc but nothing major. Links need updating across websites

Oxford Heritage Asset Register has seen new additions in 2022, but not many in Headington Stronger and better community asset list, as well as a bigger push to get more on, Bury Knowle, more in old Headington etc

Next Local Plan 2045 – there will be clearly signposted focus on densification and upward building. Evolution of character is perfectly fine in centre - something to focus on wrt CP1 as Chris said. But this is a **major** change and will require community input and agreement – there was huge opposition to Co-op redevelopment despite it retaining shop and post office, there will be very difficult political discussion needed to retain support for future councils etc

Centre vs periphery difference. New developments where they have also have a tangible positive benefit to community identity and/or cohesion

CIP2 Viewpoint Map - No 1 Old High Street/Larkins Lane, No 2 Barton Lane issues, are they under threat from ? No 7 on Warneford site definitely under threat. Maximise opportunities to create new views - how can we do this? What does this mean? Has this been done before?

CIP3 - fine. But more focus on environmentalism, green issues, Chris on solar eg. heat pumps, retrofitting. Local Plan, conflict? Retrofitting already identified by council as big future area to focus on. Biodiversity targets good, something to include for sure

CIP4 - fine

CIC1 - Market and festival, both as most tangible Headington community things and as biggest expressions of diversity, food, groups etc

Flowers - sunflower project

HMOs - link to HCG2 - more regulation of HMOs? More or less purpose built student housing, more or less extensions for HMOs? Many landlords get around existing laws by using Airbnb for parties, short term lets etc

Leaflets - with directory we now have this, to great and very positive effect. Practitioners are very glad it exists, huge impact

Seating - Courtside has shown us how vitally important this is; Cinema could not survive

Shark symbol unites and defines us. Local shark currency? Inbuilt symbol without political or religious connotations, rebellious spirit, fun etc

Diversity of businesses and food - Headington as a 'destination'

Hubs - Headington as centre of social wellbeing for young, old, heat, food, banking hubs etc

Identity and belonging - shark signage, but will be little buy-in from shop owners on storefront consistency

Next steps: use directory and street contacts to talk informally about what Headington means

RS looked at green spaces and education

- **Educational** provision has been affected by the lower birth rate, for example, two primary schools have merged – Quarry and Wheatley.
- With the raised cost of living and low wages since the Plan was made there has been a greater need of child care so that parents can go out to work. Consequently we need new nurseries.
- The implementation of VAT on private schools has had an effect being one of the reasons for the merging of Headington School with Rye to make the Headington Rye School. The former junior Headington school is currently housing the 6th Form but this may not always be the case and that property could eventually come to the market.
- The number of students enrolling at Brookes is levelling off and thought needs to be given to the potential use of some of their buildings.

- We need to improve the provision of **green spaces** for all ages. We also need to strengthen the value of the unique site of the Lye Valley.
- More thought needs to be given to the siting of trees that do not thrive close to traffic or in asphalt. A case of the right tree in the right place.
- We talked about our urban village – many of the photos in the plan are out-of-date.
- We need to increase the number of allotments too and look at the legislation that underpins them.
- We need to get the larger institutions (eg Unite) to look at the way they deal with their frontages, and might there be scope for Headington Rye to let some of their green places to undertake a rewilding project?

PC looked at housing and transport

- There is a need to concentrate more on affordable housing rather than key-worker housing.
- We need to look at the planning applications for the local area too.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we did the Plan there were few potential sites for housing. Since then the Blanchford's site has come on the market – this is likely to be for housing and could generate some substantial CIL funds. • We are concerned about the proliferation of Airbnb's in the area and the effect it is having on housing availability for local people. • Our extensive Headington Central Improvement Plan needs to be incorporated in the revision. 	
3.	<p>Summarise and next steps</p> <p>We will organise an follow-up meeting in January to see how we can take these ideas forward.</p>	
7.	The meeting closed at 8.07pm	

LG 13/1/26