

## Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) Strategic Report and Meeting Notes

Meeting Date :13<sup>th</sup> April 2026,

Venue : Cotswold Gate Care Home

### 1. Meeting Metadata and Objectives

This strategic session was convened to evaluate the proposal submitted by Tom McCullik and to establish a robust operational framework for the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) following the upcoming administrative transition.

- **Attendees:** Geoff Haines , Gordon Jolly, Corinne Hoge, Tony Jones, Andrew Foster, Michael Taubenheim, Paul Newman, Jenny Craven.
- **Core Purpose:** To assess the technical feasibility of the current proposal and to formulate a post-election strategy. This approach aims to secure the project's future under the new council by demonstrating established momentum and professional rigour.

### 2. Strategic Timeline and Election Planning

To mitigate the risk of project cancellation by the incoming administration, the NPSG will employ a "Councillor Onboarding Toolkit" (the 'Bible'). This document will provide a legacy record of logic, structure, and momentum to ensure continuity.

| Date                 | Strategic Event/Action                                                         |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7 May                | Local Elections                                                                |
| 13 May               | Statutory First Council Meeting (Goal: Present high-level justification paper) |
| 20 May (Evening)     | Annual Town Meeting (Goal: Public engagement and forum recruitment)            |
| Early June (1st/3rd) | Budget approval and formal appointment of consultancy                          |

**Post-Election Positioning:** The group will present a "logical and structured" plan to the new council immediately. By framing the project as an advanced programme with significant community investment, the NPSG aims to prevent the "scrapping" of the initiative during the transition of power.

### 3. Thematic Forums and Policy Development

The steering group has identified several strategic priorities to be addressed through specialist forums. While the Steering Group remains a small executive body, each forum requires a minimum of 21 members to meet statutory engagement standards.

- **Character and Design Assessment:** This is a priority workstream utilising the "Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit" and the "Historic Area Assessment." A pilot programme for Whitney Street will launch immediately, leveraging the "Tools archives" and their detailed historical assessments completed in March.
- **Infrastructure and Utilities:** Key focus areas include sewage capacity (Fullbrook), water security, and flood defences. Digital infrastructure is identified as a vital "technological enabler" to support mobile signals required for modern parking applications.
- **Traffic and Parking:** A critical distinction was made between congestion management and the "Mobility Hub" concept. Framing parking as a "Mobility Hub" is the specific strategic mechanism required to bypass resistance from the Cotswold National Landscape regarding traditional parking expansion.
- **Other Thematic Forums:** Environment & Sustainability (climate and biodiversity); Leisure & Sport (redeveloping the Rec Centre); Community Hub (securing a town hall/public space); and School/Medical Care (targeting shared facilities and a potential theatre space via the Burford School Foundation).

### 4. Regulatory and Legal Framework

- **The 18-Month Target:** By opting to avoid specific housing site allocations, the NP can reach examination within 18–24 months, significantly reducing the standard development timeline.
- **Financial Implications:** A primary justification for the NP is the financial uplift in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). An adopted plan increases the town's share of CIL receipts from a 15% capped rate to 25% uncapped, representing a substantial revenue increase for local projects.

### 5. Public Engagement Strategy: The Annual Town Meeting

The 20 May meeting serves as an "unofficial consultation" to build the mandate.

- **Engagement Methodology:** The workshop will use flip charts and post-it notes for idea generation across nine themes, with sign-up sheets to recruit the 21-member minimum for each forum.
- **The "Two-Rail" Approach:** The plan will be communicated as two parallel tracks: the legal Neighbourhood Plan (land-use) and a "Community Action Plan."

The latter acts as a safety net to capture community aspirations even if the legal plan faces external delays.

## 6. Action Item Summary

- **Onboarding Toolkit:** Finalise the introductory handbook for new councillors to protect project momentum.
- **Council Proposal:** Andrew Foster to circulate a two-page draft justification paper for the 13 May meeting.
- **Communication Strategy:** Deploy a multi-channel approach via the mailing list (200+), BTC website, and *The Bridge* magazine.