

Offenham Neighbourhood Plan (ONP) – Steering Committee Meeting



MINUTES of a meeting of the Committee held on 3 July 2025 at 7pm

Present: Martin Penny (MP) Chair
 Claire Allen (CA)
 Sharon Graham (SG)
 Doug Keitley (DG)
 Claire Penny (CP)

Item	Minute	Action
1.	Apologies for Absence and Welcome - Apologies from Marc Farmer who was able to attend for a short period - MP welcomed members of the public and Andrew Ford (AF), Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils, and his colleague Ernie Edwards	
2 a.	Minutes of Last Meeting - Minutes of meeting held on 29th May 2025 were approved and signed. - These will now be uploaded to Facebook and the ONP webpage.	MP/CP
2b	Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting 29th May 2025 - Steering Committee terms approved by Offenham Parish Council at June Meeting. These are now to be uploaded to Facebook and webpage - Skills audit completed by SG and steering committee members - Parish Council stand was manned at the Offenham Wake and several leaflets printed and handed out. There were issues printing the large map. The next committee meeting was advertised to as many passers by as possible. - The three page leaflet proposed was used at the Wake and is now to be modified/updated – timescale to be agreed - Facebook page completed. Link to be put on Spotted Offenham. Ascertain what other media platforms are popular to be used. - ONP article for Newsletter completed - Webpage to be added to Parish Council website for ONP – ongoing - Notices/Leaflets for distribution in local pubs/shops/outlets – ongoing - Leaflet drops to be discussed. Members of public at meeting offered assistance to distribute. To be discussed at next meeting. - New email address has been set up, currently accessed by MP	MP/CP MP/MF CP MP MP All

3.	Andrew Ford (AF), Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils • AF was invited to discuss the process to deliver the ONP and take questions from both the committee and members of the public present. • AF's role is to assist in the preparation of the ONP and provide support • Whilst a Parish Plan is in place this does not carry any statutory weight unlike a Neighbourhood Plan • There is no standard template and AF suggested various completed plans from other villages were looked at for suggested layouts e.g. Pebworth, Honeybourne • Suggested areas to include in the ONP: - Supply of housing – allocate areas of land for development - Design, within keeping of other buildings within village - Sustainability/green energy - Conservation/green spaces – allocate areas to be kept green - Historic buildings/areas - Protect specific countryside/building views around the village - May also add items 'would like to have' – this part is not statutory but taken into account when planning requests considered, and may be used to assist with funding appeals • Stage 1 – Parish Council apply to Wychavon DC for approval of the area the ONP is to cover • Parish Council to be requested to do this at July meeting • Within Wychavon the area is the area covered by Offenham Parish and cannot be changed • Attempt to recruit more volunteers, six is not enough! • Stage 2 – After much research first draft of Plan is drawn up and presented to Parish Council who may amend before submitting to Wychavon – 6 week consultation period • AF can assist with a Housing Needs Survey – this is free • Stage 3 – once approved by Wychavon an Independent Consultation takes place to ensure the ONP conforms with the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) and the National Plan (set by government) • The final report may make recommendations for changes • Stage 4 – Referendum. 50% approval of turnout is required to adopt the plan. <i>Q – What is a typical timeline for a Neighbourhood Plan?</i> • 18 months to two years, but could be longer dependant upon the depth of the plan • The SWDP has taken since 2016 to renew and is approx. 6 months away from being adopted. AF recommends the ONP is 'aligned' to the new SWDP, a copy of which is available on the WCC website <i>Q – If the ONP is a 'simple' plan when can it be changed, and are there any benefits to adopting a 'simple' plan to start with?</i> • A plan can be amended at any time after adoption but the consultation timescales still apply so there may be no benefit to starting with a simple plan.	MP
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	• A referendum may not be needed to adopt an amended plan but this will depend upon the amendments <i>Q – Is there any benefit to preparing a plan with planning only and then amending afterward with other areas?</i> • There is no benefit here. The current government have increased the required National Housing figure since the SWDP was prepared which means that the SWDP will probably have to be reviewed again and replaced in three years time. • The aim is to have a plan with five years worth of land for development allocated within it which would be sufficient to meet the housing numbers allocated in the National Plan. The current SWDP (i.e. not the new plan soon to be adopted) was approved in 2012 and only has a 1.1 year supply of land to meet the current housing needs so many speculative sites are being approved by the planners • When the SWDP is updated the ONP would need to be amended to realign • Allocating land for development within the ONP, alongside land in the parish already allocated in the SWDP puts the Parish Council in a stronger position to object to speculative/windfall planning applications and protect other areas <i>Q – What is Wychavon District Council’s policy on green belt vs brown development sites?</i> • There are not currently sufficient brown sites available to meet the housing need figures. • Consideration when allocating sites are towns with access to rail and other services and category 1-3 villages (Offenham is Category 1 – post office/shop, school, buses). <i>Q – Which sites within the village are in the SWDP and can we object/change?</i> • In 2019 and 2022 land owners were asked to put forward sites for development which were considered. Those to be put in the plan were put to public consultation at that time and can be viewed in the SWDP. • It is not possible to change these now but the ONP can influence the planning for these sites e.g. types of building, materials used etc <i>Q – Who controls the housing split for Social Housing and can this be put into the ONP?</i> • It was noted that some recent developments within the village had been amended to 100% social housing which means the village does not benefit from any S106 funding from that development. • The new SWDP states a policy of 4% social housing for each development.	
4.	Designation of Neighbourhood Area • Following advice from AF this is effectively the area to which the eventual neighbourhood plan policies will apply, and for Wychavon it is just the administrative area of the parish. • The Parish Council are to be asked to follow the procedure to provide to Wychavon the following: 1) a letter seeking Wychavon to designate the neighbourhood area and why the parish qualifies, 2) a map showing the neighbourhood area, i.e. the parish boundary.	

	- Committee approved the proposal for the area to be designated - The Parish Council is to be requested to adopt the procedure and submit to Wychavon District Council	MP
5.	Neighbourhood Plan Funding - In the latest spending review (June) the government has withdrawn the £10K grant funding to assist with the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans - Worcestershire Association of District Councils have provided a draft campaign letter which may be completed by Parish Councils and Individual Residents to send to our local MP – Nigel Huddleston – to protest the withdrawal of this funding. - Offenham Parish Council are to be asked to send this letter - Each committee member should consider sending this letter - It was suggested that part filled letters and envelopes be placed in prominent areas around the village and the letter put on Facebook and the Webpage – to be discussed in July meeting - AF advised that following the withdrawal of this government funding Wychavon DC has agreed to fund Neighbourhood Development Plans. The details are still be looked into.	MP All
6.	Identify Stakeholders and Area profile - It was agreed to carry this item forward to the July meeting - SG agreed to start a conversation on social media	ALL SG
7.	Any Other Business <i>Skills Audit</i> – The main area of expertise lacking amongst the existing committee is Planning. MP has agreed to contact Aaron Powell, former District Councillor who had agreed to assist with Planning Consultation in the preparation of the ONP.	MP
8.	Next Meeting Date Thursday 17th July 202, 7pm, at Offenham Church	

Approved.....Date.....

Martin Penny, Chair