

Woodstock Community and Infrastructure  
Delivery Plan 2019

JUNE 2019 CONSULTATION EVENTS  
SUMMARY REPORT

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## ABOUT THE WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Woodstock Town Council and Blenheim Estate have appointed Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) to consult the community about the current and future needs of the town. CFO is a locally-based community development charity.

The Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan will take shape across 2019. The first six months will see a wide range of opinion and ideas gathered, while the second will see projects identified and prioritised, with strategies for delivering them set out.

Several new housing sites will be developed in the next decade; it is important to ensure that the special character of the town is preserved, facilities are enhanced where necessary and the new developments successfully integrate with the existing communities in Woodstock.

Some projects that emerge from the community conversation may be achievable through:

- developer contributions process (section 106) on new development sites
- being designed into new developments
- Some may need a different approach, perhaps more long term.

It is important to say that not all projects will be achieved via forthcoming development.

## WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

Consultation was launched with five events and information sessions in March 2019. Over 200 residents attended. A detailed report on these events is available at:

<https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/woodstock-community-plan>

Since February, CFO has also met with 50+ community groups and organisations, across a range of age groups, interest groups and other demographics. We're also liaising with the business community, with a flurry of recent activity. A lot of consultation is ongoing and other feedback reports will be available in due course.

## JUNE 2019 CONSULTATION EVENTS

### Overview of events

Three community consultation events were held in June 2019:

- Saturday 1 June 2019, 10am until 2pm @ Woodstock Community Centre
- Tuesday 4 June 2019, 2-4pm @ Oxfordshire Museum
- Wednesday 5 June, 7-9pm @ Woodstock Social Club

The events combined presentations, a Q+A and discussion on specific themes. Presentation slides are available at: <https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/woodstock-community-plan>. CFO staff were in attendance, plus a representative (at the Saturday event) from Terence O'Rourke Planning, which will be working with Blenheim on forthcoming planning applications.

Just under a hundred people attended these events, with 56 signing up to be involved in next steps discussions/ workshops.

The presentations set out the intent of the plan, progress to date, 'headline' survey results, an overview of the process of working up planning applications on specific sites and a summary of the more community-oriented projects emerging from the consultation to date and how to take these ideas forward.

### 'Elephants in the Room'

The presentation directly addressed some 'elephants in the room':

- **Why doesn't the plan ask people if they want development in the first place?**

The starting point for the Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan was set by the position of the Town Council, which fought, along with many residents, against development from at least 2004. However, when West Oxfordshire included Blenheim's plans in its official 'local plan' the TC decided it should consult with Blenheim and consult with the people of Woodstock about the manner and priorities of these developments.

Planning applications will be forthcoming on at least two developments, Hill Rise and north of Banbury Road, and potentially at SE Woodstock.

However, the intent of the Plan, what CFO has been asked to help the community achieve, can be summed up in this way. We are where we are, planning applications will be forthcoming on various sites. With that in mind, the offer to the community is to positively explore how development can be made to work best for the town as a whole and what improved or new infrastructure could be provided.

- **All the community is going to get from development is a new surgery**

The final package of what Blenheim will be expected to pay for will be decided in negotiations between Blenheim, Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, taking into account the Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

There are always items that a developer must contribute towards, such as education and highways improvements, but there are always items up for discussion too. This is why, throughout the Plan consultation, the community has been asked what improvements/ additions to infrastructure that they'd like to see.

The best way to illustrate what will happen in Woodstock is to point to an example. In Long Hanborough, on a scheme of 169 houses, a new surgery is being provided. In addition, significant contributions are being made to primary and secondary education, the library, local public transport, and to sport and recreational uses, with the surgery costing just over 50% of the total funding available. This was agreed in the context of delivering 35% affordable housing to help offset the significant overall infrastructure costs (including the surgery).

There was (sometimes robust) debate about these points and others. A list of questions that were asked at the June events and through other community conversations is presented at Appendix 1.

## The April 2019 Community Survey

There were over 500 responses to the survey (a response rate of 25% on a distribution of 1987). An interim set of results was presented from some 380 respondents. A large number of surveys was received after the deadline, which we did not have time to process before the events.

A selection of interim headline findings was presented at the June events. Copies of the full report were also made available to attendees. The interim report can be found at <https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/woodstock-community-plan> and CFO will produce and circulate a final report based on all responses in due course.

We realise that for some people a survey is the first they might have seen of the plan. However, as noted above, wider consultation has also been happening. The survey is not the be all and end all and these other conversations are ongoing.

## Breaking down the feedback

Taking an overview of all the consultation to date, including the survey, it is clear there are three broad dimensions to feedback, with overlap between them:

- Specific concerns and ideas in relation to the various housing development sites
- 'Big ticket' infrastructure considerations
- More community-focused initiatives and ideas (e.g. new interest groups, volunteering and organizational concerns).

Presentations and follow-up discussions went into these subjects in more detail. Those attending were encouraged to be involved in and help shape next steps.

**Planning applications** will be forthcoming on sites at Hill Rise and north of Banbury Road. An overview of how this process will happen in practice was given, including the multidimensional, interlinked elements of masterplanning which have to be investigated (e.g. transport, ecology, landscape, heritage) and the stakeholders which must be involved (e.g. community, county and district councils, Historic England, Natural England).

An offer was also made to residents to get involved in the master-planning process by taking part in workshops to help shape things like biodiversity in design; the overall aesthetic; connectivity throughout the site; location/ distribution of greenspace and buildings; and landscaping, and also to explore options for mitigation of key issues/ concerns.

**Infrastructure** was also discussed, particularly the complicated developer contributions/ Section 106 process.

As noted above, there are always items that a developer must contribute to (like highways, education) but there are always items up for discussion too, such as larger infrastructure projects. The final package of what Blenheim will be expected to pay for will be decided in negotiations between Blenheim, Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, taking into account the Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

As a brief snapshot, the table below shows findings from the interim survey report for a selection of 'bigger ticket' infrastructure which people think is needed in Woodstock. The opinion is scored on a scale of 1-5, where 1= not important at all (not a priority) and 5= most important (top priority). Also included is the % of people who don't agree with the idea.

COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR 'BIGGER TICKET INFRASTRUCTURE'	OPINION FROM COMMUNITY SURVEY	DO NOT SUPPORT IDEA
<b>380 respondents</b>		
New surgery at Police Station site	<b>4.5 / 5</b>	<b>6%</b>
Develop new buildings on the library, fire station and police station site for community use	<b>4.2 / 5</b>	<b>7%</b>
Develop new library as a community hub	<b>4.3 / 5</b>	<b>3%</b>
Indoor swimming pool	<b>3.8 / 5</b>	<b>6%</b>
Multi-storey carpark at Hensington Road	<b>3.3 / 5</b>	<b>34%</b>
Increase and improve school parking	<b>3.4 / 5</b>	<b>12%</b>
More parking in central Woodstock	<b>3.8 / 5</b>	<b>18%</b>
Improve Marlborough School sports facilities (and make available for community)	<b>4.2 / 5</b>	<b>1%</b>
Community Development Worker for new housing sites	<b>3.0 / 5</b>	

From a general reading of such findings, it is clear that much begs further questions. This is logical, the Plan process is all about testing opinion and moving from general ideas to specific solutions. There is

much emerging about infrastructure that needs further discussion: what might more parking at a new surgery mean in practice?; what could a community hub including a library look like? etc.

However, the total amount available to pay for infrastructure items is extremely difficult to estimate at this stage. It will be heavily informed by whether or not the site at Woodstock south-east comes forward, which we should hear about quite soon. Nevertheless, community feedback to date regarding infrastructure (and other matters) has been passed to Woodstock Town Council and Blenheim to inform their wider discussions. As more becomes clear, there will be further community opportunities to discuss infrastructure.

Specific comments on masterplanning and infrastructure which were expressed at the June events and elsewhere, and which can be explored at events over the next few months, including masterplanning workshops, are noted at Appendix 2.

**Social action and community-focused initiatives and ideas** that have emerged from consultation to date were also presented.

This is very important. The plan is not just about new houses but is also a community plan, looking to build on the already fantastic range of community activity taking place; for example:

1. *How can we explore better ways of working together?*
2. *What about challenges of volunteering?*
3. *What new groups might be needed?*
4. *What other activities and ideas do people want to get off the ground?*

These and other issues were discussed, with an offer made for people to sign up and be involved in taking these ideas forward.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Before the local schools break up in July CFO will be holding more events. These will focus on:

- **Master-planning on new housing sites**
- **Taking forward community projects**

There is, of course, overlap between these elements and everyone is welcome to take part in both. 56 people have already signed up. If you would like to be directly invited, please let us know via the email below. More information about these events will also be circulated to the community via Facebook pages, website, posters, email lists etc. in the near future.

We're continuing to talk to Woodstock groups and organisations and feel free to get in touch at any time: [woodstockplan@communityfirstoxon.org](mailto:woodstockplan@communityfirstoxon.org).

**You can find lots of background information, including links to Local Plan documentations, details and maps about housing sites, a list of FAQs etc. on the CFO website: <https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/woodstock-community-plan>).**

## APPENDIX 1- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How can we ensure that the commitments agreed by Blenheim (or other developers) will be upheld?**

Blenheim could have worked up planning applications without going through this consultation exercise. It is up to people to decide if Blenheim would do so, to then simply ignore it, with all the risks of local annoyance that would bring and the negative implications for their 'brand'.

### **Will we get everything we ask for?**

Some projects that emerge from the community conversation may be achievable through what's called the Section 106 process. This process leads to an agreement whereby a developer will agree to pay for certain things to make a proposal acceptable in planning terms. Things like new community buildings and schools can be included in Section 106 agreements.

There are always items that a developer must contribute to (like highways, education) but there are always items up for discussion too, such as larger infrastructure projects.

In Woodstock, the final package of developer contributions will be decided in negotiation with Oxfordshire County Council and the District Council/s, informed by the Community Plan. The total amount available to pay for these things is extremely difficult to estimate at this stage. It will be heavily informed by whether or not the site at Woodstock south-east comes forward.

### **Will we encourage further development through this process?**

Three development sites are allocated in the West Oxfordshire DC Local Plan (Hill Rise, north of Banbury Road and Woodstock East). The principle of development on these sites has therefore been established. Blenheim will be bringing forward specific planning applications on these sites.

### **Can you explain what is happening with the Cherwell DC site?**

This site at South-East Woodstock (adjacent to Woodstock East) is an allocated site in the draft Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 Partial review: Meeting Oxford's Need.

This Plan is currently being examined with a decision expected c. July. Development is opposed by Woodstock Town Council. Until the examiner's report is received, it cannot be certain that this allocation will go ahead.

### **Will there be a coordinated development strategy?**

That is a definite aspiration of the Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The big development sites are all owned by Blenheim Estate, presenting a unique opportunity with a single landowner, with an ongoing interest in the town, to implement holistic, joined-up infrastructure improvements in the town.

### **Will there be houses allocated to key workers?**

In the Section 106 agreement with West Oxfordshire DC on the Woodstock East site, it is stated that the council may approve an affordable housing scheme which provides for 'variations to the Local Connections Requirement'. This opens the door to key worker allocation (which is already happening on a Blenheim development in Long Hanborough).

### **Can Blenheim ensure housing is affordable?**

When people talk about affordable housing they often mean cheaper housing, e.g being able to buy a 2-bed semi for £100k instead of £300k. However, the price of homes is to a large extent driven by market forces and developer expectations of a certain financial return (profit). However, there is an expectation on the allocated Woodstock sites that up to 50% of homes will be for affordable housing.

In this context, 'affordable' has a specific definition as set out in the government's National Planning Policy Framework. It means housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the open housing market. It includes:

- **Affordable housing for rent:** the rent is set in accordance with the Government's policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent (or is at least 20% below local market rents) and the landlord is a registered provider. A Registered Provider is more commonly known as a housing association.  
*NOTE: West Oxfordshire DC has agreed that delivery of affordable housing could be made by a provider which is not a RP. This could be Blenheim Estate.*
  - Affordable rented properties are let at a rate that is no more than 80% of local rents.
  - Rental costs for social rented properties are based on relative property values compared to the national average, and on relative local earnings compared to the national average.
- **Shared Ownership:** shared ownership properties are usually offered for sale by housing associations. You buy a share of a property and pay rent to the housing association for the remainder. Monthly outgoings will include repayments on any mortgage you have taken out, plus rent on the part of the property retained by the housing association.
- **Starter Homes:** the Starter Home scheme is a new government plan, where 200,000 new build homes will be available to first-time buyers under 40 years old with at least 20% off the market price.

### **What would a community development worker do?**

Typical responsibilities of a CDW include; working with community groups providing a range of activities; identifying and building on communities' assets and capacities; helping communities to share knowledge and resources effectively; setting up new services by liaison with interested groups; making funding applications; facilitating self-help in the community; 'building bridges' between existing and new residents.

### **Are people interested in developing a scout group?**

Yes, in the interim community survey report (June 2019), a scout group was the second most popular new community group that people wanted to see.

**Can you tell us how many responding to the survey were against development?**

From a total response of 381 to the interim community survey, 33 respondents (9%) stated they did not want development on SE Woodstock, 20 (5%) on Hill Rise and 18 (5%) on north of Banbury Road.

**Does S106 funding include on-costs for projects?**

Potentially. This would be dependent on the detail of a particular proposal.

**If we have less social housing will we have more S106 monies?**

Potentially. S106 agreements are subject to detailed discussion and sometimes trade-offs. As an example, in Long Hanborough, on a scheme of 169 houses a new surgery is being provided. In addition, significant contributions are being made to primary and secondary education, the library, local public transport, and to sport and recreational uses, with the surgery costing just over 50% of the total funding available. This was agreed in the context of delivering 35% affordable housing to help offset the significant overall infrastructure costs (including the surgery).

**What do you think are the constraints of the Hill Rise (Site 3) and north of Banbury Road (Site 4) housing development sites?**

- (Both sites) how on earth do you get traffic in/ out?
- (Both sites) safe access to new sites is very difficult given existing road layouts
- (Both sites) reduce impact on existing dwellings
- (Both sites) access to Woodstock centre for vehicles and pedestrians: safety and capacity
- (Both sites) consider the impacts on existing residents
- (Site 3) maintain existing footpaths/ routes
- (Site 3) green buffer zone between new and old housing
- (Site 3) must be free flow for residents between the communities – green walkways
- (Site 3) the playpark should be extended and central
- (Site 3) there must be a facility to walk into Woodstock safely
- (Site 3) please maintain open space so as to nurture well-being and an enriched for children
- (Site 4) please protect the beautiful, curving stone wall along the east end of Banbury Road. Do not broach it to let in trucks or make new roads.

**Given these costs, and that not everything will be able to be delivered, does this alter what you think should be provided as community infrastructure priorities?**

- Solutions must be found to the problems of traffic on the A44. Safe access to the centre of Woodstock from the Hill Rise site must be addressed (pavements narrow etc.). Possible solutions include a priority system allowing wider pavements or two off-road new footpaths, one towards the schools and one towards the town
- Consider the significant impact on current homes, landscape and infrastructure- why such speed with huge scale of new developments. Let it happen over 50 years so the impact can be absorbed and monitored
- Put a roof on the swimming pool

**How can we welcome wildlife into new developments?**

- This is extremely important- we are a countryside town. Loss of green, wildlife is awful, particularly given climate change