

Paper to be approved.
CUMNOR PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Working Party
on Thursday 22 January 2026 at 7pm
in Fogwell Road Pavillion, Fogwell Road, Dean Court

Attendees.

Kathy Davies, Dianne Rees, Fiona Newton, Chris Westcott and Tina Brock, Clerk.

01/26 Apologies for absence.

Dona Foster (prior commitment). This apology was approved.

02/26 Declarations of interest. None.

03/26 Minutes of meetings held on. Monday 25 November 2025.

Received and approved.

04/26 Modifications to the plan and Character Assessments.

Following the ONH online seminar 'Navigating the new NPPF' held on Tuesday 20 January 2026 which covered the most important aspects of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) currently out for consultation, including the impact on neighbourhood plans and planning decisions, there were two papers to be considered:

1. The original modifications to the November 2025 draft NP from ONH which had comments/suggestions from the working group and a resident and
2. following the ONH seminar a client briefing note from ONH that proposed amendments to the draft NP which aligns the proposed policies with the consultation version of the NPPF.

The revised NPPF would carry full weight upon its publication, no date had been given but it is expected to be by the Summer of 2026.

Annex A of the revised NPPF section on Neighbourhood Plans, states '*The qualifying body may choose to withdraw the plan and update it to take account of this Framework*'. This makes it clear that NP policies not in accordance with the revised NPPF will only carry limited weight in decision making from summer 2026

The challenge would be to make Cumnor's draft NP refresh fit with the revised NPPF which makes it clear that NPs should not duplicate, restate or modify policies. Also the refreshed NP would need to be published in a searchable digital format.

The following was discussed..

- Compared with NP that have just been made or are further along in the process than Cumnor's refresh, Cumnor is in least-worse place as the NP hasn't yet gone to reg 14 consultation, giving an opportunity to make the draft policies compliant with the new 2026 NPPF.
- Reworking the policies to fit the revised NPPF would give a better chance of the NP being approved by the Inspector and last longer.
- In revising the draft plan (and subject to Council's approval of the funds to do so) ONH to consider the comments to the original November 2025 draft modifications to check for alignment with the revised NPPF.
- The modifications made by ONH in the client briefing note do not, in ONH's opinion, change the nature of the modified NP and so fits with Council's agreed strategy of accomplishing a NP refresh without the added time and complexity of a referendum.
- In contrast if Council decided a new strategy – for example setting out locations for new development – this would trigger the requirement for repeated consultation and a referendum.

This would increase the time between the current NP losing its weight in planning decisions and a new refreshed plan being made – assuming it was passed at referendum.

- Grey Belt has been further defined in the revised NPPF and will most likely be a challenge for Cumnor Village as it is defined as a village in the settlement hierarchy and Green Belt has been more tightly aligned with towns only.

- ONH revised modifications aligned to the revised NPPF waters down the current NPs clear reflection of local wishes as expressed through parish wide surveys and consultation. This will be true for many neighbourhood plans.
- VWHDC currently has a 5 year land supply so this does raise the bar for speculative development.
- For current policy DBC5 the rewording to align it to the revised NPPF was felt to strengthen the policy.

It was agreed that Clerk and Chris Westcott would raise the following questions with ONH:

- Would modifying the Flood Risk policy be seen as changing or modifying a policy in the revised NPPF?
- Whether 'backland' information (e.g. schematics) could be moved to the Character Assessments?
- Could/would the Character Assessments be included within the digital version of the NP?
- Will planning applications include Design and Access statements anymore if the presumption is that all applications be approved?

Next steps:

- Virtual meeting arranged with ONH on Tuesday 27 January at 2pm to update on this meeting to discuss next steps including quotes to build a NP website for the Reg14 consultation and thereafter to act as the NP's digital repository, and further work on the revisions to the draft NP to make it NPPF 2026 compliant.
- Chris Westcott and Clerk would attend VWHDCs Neighbourhood Planning Event on Wednesday 28 January 2026.

The group agreed to:

1. Continue with the plan refresh as per Council's agreed strategy
2. Make modifications to align with the revised NPPF but request that ONH considers the comments in the original modification to see if they align with the revised NPPF.
3. To request quotes from ONH to build a website and for further work on the revision of the NP.
4. Approved the following recommendations to put to council.
 - Approve continuing with the modification to the draft refreshed plan to make it NPPF 2026 compliant.
 - Approve a quote from ONH for the additional work required to rewrite the draft plan to make it NPPF 2026 compliant
 - Approve quote from ONH to build a website to publish the plan in a searchable format.

05/26 Next meeting.

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed.....Date.....2026