

CUMNOR PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Working Party
on Monday 25 November 2025 at 7pm
via zoom

Attendees.

Kathy Davies, Dona Foster, Dianne Rees, Fiona Newton, Chris Westcott, Leani Haim, Planning Director, ONH, Charlotte Morris, Planning and Development Consultant, ONH and Tina Brock, Clerk.

25/25 Apologies for absence. None.

26/25 Declarations of interest. None.

27/25 Minutes of meetings held on. Monday 27 October 2025.

Received and approved.

28/25 Recommendations approved by Council on Monday 3 November 2025.

The group discussed and approved the following actions.

- i. That ONH draft additional wording for the existing policy EBC2 (Farmoor Reservoir) in respect of 'floatovoltaics', to ensure:

- No harm to biodiversity, including migratory and native birds.

- No loss of recreational value from activities such as walking, fishing, sailing etc.

In discussion, the Working Party noted that during Thames Waters presentation to Council it was confirmed that the current proposed scheme was to enable the electricity produced to be consumed onsite and Thames Water would not sell to the grid. The working party discussed whether this could be future proofed to support schemes that don't harm biodiversity and recreational value?

Action. ONH to add a phrase that the plan is supportive of floatovoltaics as long as the location and scale does not impact on biodiversity or recreational value and that schemes are not of a size where electricity sales to the grid adversely impact biodiversity and recreational value.

- ii. Aside from the building-to-plot ratio, measurements will not be included within the design code wrappers (which will now be referred to as design principles)

Action. Keep the graphics and add in descriptive text.

- iii. That existing character assessments should be more visible and integral to the planning policies with the objective of requiring applicants to demonstrate use of the character assessments in their designs.

Action. Concerns raised that developers tend to write their own Character Assessment.

Supporting text to be added that applicants/developers would not be required to write their own Character Assessment but instead show how they have applied the existing Character Assessments.

- iv. As per currently resourced ONH workplan agreed by Council, tighten/re-word current CNP planning policies and place within 'design principles' in light of evidence accumulated thus far, including current policy successes/weaknesses and evolving National Planning Policies (e.g. grey belt', NSIP etc.) and local government Local Plans

Action. Agreed.

- v. To request a view from ONH as to whether improving the current 'greater than 12 rule' for affordable housing could be changed to a lower number (with the intention of making developments of less than 12 dwellings provide affordable housing) without jeopardizing Council's stated direction of 'material changes that do not change the nature of the plan', so minimising the cost/timescale/rejection risk of a referendum.

ONH had provided the following information.

'On lowering the affordable housing threshold, we look to §65 of the NPPF for this. It states that affordable housing should not be sought for developments that are not major and supports reducing the contribution on brownfield sites (which is why you have not seen any provision in Cumnor and why there are no examples of neighbourhood plans lowering the threshold; it is a national policy commitment). There is the opportunity to lower that threshold, including through neighbourhood plans, but only in 'designated rural areas'. The NPPF defines a 'designated rural

area' as National Parks, National Landscapes and areas designated as 'rural' under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985.

The Parish of Cumnor is not in a National Park or National Landscape. I have checked our 'rural' list, and Cumnor has not been designated as 'rural' under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985. Our 'rural' list was last updated in 2021, but I have not heard of VoWHDC pursuing this. We can check with them. This could potentially be one 'way in', but as I understand it, it is not a quick process and requires VoWHDC to do it. There may also be other consequences that may not be supported. It may therefore be more of a longer-term commitment for a future project, unless the Parish Council want to pause this project to understand this more and consider pursuing it separately, restarting the project once it comes to a conclusion on this separate process.'

The Working party concluded it would not recommend to Council that it request a rural designation under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985 as part of this Neighbourhood Plan Refresh

No action.

Action. ONH would amend the document and distribute as a working document for comments from the group by sending the current draft to an online document repository for downloading

Action. Working Group members would add their comments to the current draft which would be collated by early January 2026. A meeting of the working group would be arranged mid-January 2026 to discuss and approve comments for recommendation to Council at its February 2026 meeting.

Action. Clerk to set up share point.

A question of the impact on the plan as the Planning inspectorate has asked for the Joint Local Plan 2041 to be removed was raised. Leani said that the plan may need to be reviewed after Regulation 14, but the Basic Conditions statement would state that the emerging Local Plan has been taken into consideration.

29/25 Regulation 14 procedures.

ONH had sent a Regulation 14 Consultation Advice Note. Proof of publicity would be required; to date there has been a Neighbourhood Plan item on the council's agenda since December 2024, 2 public events were held in November 2024 which were advertised on social media, posters, social media and regular updates in the Cumnor Parish News.

Action. OHN would reach out to Ricardo Rios, VWHDC Planning Policy Team Leader to arrange a virtual meeting to update on progress.

30/25 Recommendations to Council.

The group agreed to recommend to Council the following.

- i. Approval of expenditure of £1,600 + VAT for GWP Consultants to update the Flood Risk Assessment.

Action. Council to reach out to the public for photos of flooding with location and date.

31/25 Next meeting.

Mid-January 2026. Meeting to discuss comments to modification to be arranged prior to this meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

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