

Ashbury Parish
Neighbourhood Plan Group

Report to Ashbury Parish Council (APC) from Ashbury Neighbourhood Plan Group (NPG) Pauline Smith as Chair NPG, for period 20th November 2023 – 15th January 2024

All content to note

Internal Activity:

Planning applications and the Ashbury Neighbourhood plan (NP)

2 x new, both Listed buildings and in Ashbury Conservation Area

- Replacement kitchen extension roof: P24/V0020/LB Triangle Cottage
- Replacement of windows: Retrospective planning application for work already undertaken: P23/V2700/LB Village Hall

1 x ongoing, in Ashbury Conservation Area

- P23/V2372/HH Berrycroft

Changes to the build and repair plans submitted as requested by Case Officer and applicant has been further requested x2 to provide additional information re the product noise levels and site location for the proposed installation of an air source heat pump. The Environmental Officer currently states, 'is not able to verify the suitability of the pump' and recommends delaying decision until all information that has been requested is provided and reviewed.

1. NPG Objectives/projects

B Input and actions for the Digital infrastructure agenda aligned to OCC Digital Infrastructure Implementation Plan specific to Ashbury Parish

B1 Project Gigabit for installation of fibre to the property (FTTP) in hard to reach locations: National award of a contractor for the South Oxfordshire 13.1 site made in December 2023 to Gigaclear. While the Government department Building Digital (BDUK) listed Idstone, all 27 properties, in the number of premises and total contract price of £17 million, Gigaclear are now assessing the contract for what and where can be delivered. Contract delivery is being discussed with and overseen by OCC. Information expected in next few weeks about status of delivery or not for Idstone.

B2 5G Mast and rural settings:

NPG Next Action: to provide some messages to all residents in the parish about the need for a 5G service, the masts and sizes to expect – **for action in February/March 2024** before proceeding any further with OCC (now delivering against the £3.8 million 5G award for specified pieces of work in Oxfordshire and the £250,00 award for testing 5G masts and services via lampposts)

B4. Update on 4G and 3G service

- **3G phase out plans by Operator**

A national survey suggests 2.7 million Brits “*could be without access to mobile [broadband]*” if they do not upgrade their device or follow the steps advised by their provider. The survey suggests Elderly mobile users may be more likely to be affected, with 24% of people aged 75+ not being sure if their phone is 4G or 5G ready, and a further 7% saying they still use a [3G](#) handset.

Vodafone UK has already started to phase out 3G and was aiming to complete this by the end of 2023, but the final phase is actually taking place this month (January 2024).

Three UK are phasing out their 3G network service gradually and switching it off by the end of 2024.

EE (BT) last year began moving customers off 3G rather than switching the network off, but they aim to switch it off by March 2024

O2 (VMO2) will begin the switch-off process in 2025 and complete it by that same year, mainly due to having a larger legacy of 3G devices in their network (e.g. Smart Meters).

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3G services are the first to go because older 2G signals remain necessary for a fair few connectivity solutions, while 3G was a more data centric technology that has fewer dependencies.

- **External/National and District Council planning**

- 1. **NPPF 2023**

Following the Government Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill having been made law (LURAct) last Autumn – with an extensive section on Planning (associated changes now in place and including ongoing consultation re changes to National Permitted Development Rights), the revised National Planning Framework (NPPF23) was published on December 19th 2023

To note that Government has since this publication, already stated on January 3rd 2024, the intention to remove the Heritage section from the NPPF and for these development management policies to be generated at National levels. More exclusions and national development management expected.

- **NPG has mapped out changes and how these will impact our current Ashbury parish NP.**

- Most notably Paragraph 14 confirms our current NP loses all ‘weight’ in any unplanned build applications decision making process as of July 2024 (when 5 year period of being made ends)

While there is support for Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP), the framework reinforces the need for revisions of NDP and District Council Local Development Plans (LDP) at least at 5 year periods.

- 2. **Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) and South Oxfordshire District Council Joint LDP 2041**

This is expected to be made available for Consultation by the time of the APC meeting. Consultation ends on February 21st 2024

It is noted that:

- The Consultation LDP containing all the new policies and options, is a complete reshape and approach from their previous LDP’s. It is heavily shaped by addressing all elements of the build process to achieve zero carbon levels re Climate Change, and Sustainability including Biodiversity and Nature recovery feature heavily
- Housing need is shaped to meet population needs current and projected. For example,
 - The amount of and type of housing for the elderly stated
- The preferred Policy options include statements about how NDP can go beyond the strategic core objective for the subjects in question, what is expected to be agreed at local NDP levels and thus reinforces both the value and contribution of NDP to the build agenda. For example
 - The need for Design codes to be developed at Parish and Town council levels emphasised

NPG action: To progress our NPG Consultation responses already started and submit prior to Feb 21st 2024, as well as to identify any impacts for use of our current NDP if this continues to be the ‘made’ version once the new LDP is adopted, expected by December 2025.

Pauline Smith

Chair Ashbury Neighbourhood Plan Group January 2024