

# Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan

Helping to shape the future of Wallingford



## WALLINGFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

Consultation Dates: 3rd and 5th March 2016

Prepared on behalf of Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and  
Wallingford Town Council

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## 1. Introduction

Wallingford Town Council (WTC) held two drop-in style public consultations of the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). The event was open to all Wallingford residents, businesses and stakeholders. Attendees were invited to comment on the Baseline Report, to suggest ideas for the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan and to register for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups.

This report summarises the feedback and outlines the key issues arising from the public meetings. This will be used to inform the direction of the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Working Groups that will be formed to develop the vision, objectives and policies.

### 1.1 Approach

The public meetings were held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March between 10am-4pm / 6pm-8pm and 5<sup>th</sup> March from 2pm until 5pm. The meetings were intended to capture the thoughts of the wide range of individuals who use Wallingford at different times.

The public meetings included:

- A presentation introducing the neighbourhood plan process to residents and stakeholders
- Printed copies of the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Baseline Report
- Consultation boards outlining the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan boundary, details about the process and potential themes for the plan

This information, with support from councillors and consultants, provided residents and stakeholders with all the tools needed to share their thoughts on the direction of the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan and ultimately to shape the future of the town.

Residents and stakeholders were able to feedback via comment forms and Post-it notes. Residents were invited to stick Post-it notes onto the consultation boards with their ideas for the plan, as well as any general thoughts/priorities for Wallingford.

The attendees wrote extensively on a wide number of issues, with children drawing pictures depicting their vision for the future of the town.

Attendees were also given the opportunity to register for the Working Groups and to leave their details to be kept informed about any news relating to the neighbourhood plan.

## 2. Consultation Findings

During the two-day event a total of 452 comments were made by residents. 111 residents registered their interest in staying up to date with the Neighbourhood Plan process via email, with many also confirming their interest in taking part in one of the working groups.

Figure 1 outlines the spread of comments which have been categorised into a number of emerging themes that will help form working groups and the shape and focus of the Neighbourhood Plan.

*Figure 1: Emerging themes*

Theme	Number of related comments
Leisure	78
Retail	61
Parking	48
Transport	53
Cycling and Walking	38
Housing	51
Development	5
Design and Character	13
Sustainability	19
Environment	29
Health	17
Education	15
Other	25

The following sections are grouped by the emerging themes, detailing specific comments and sub-issues communicated by Wallingford residents at the public meetings.

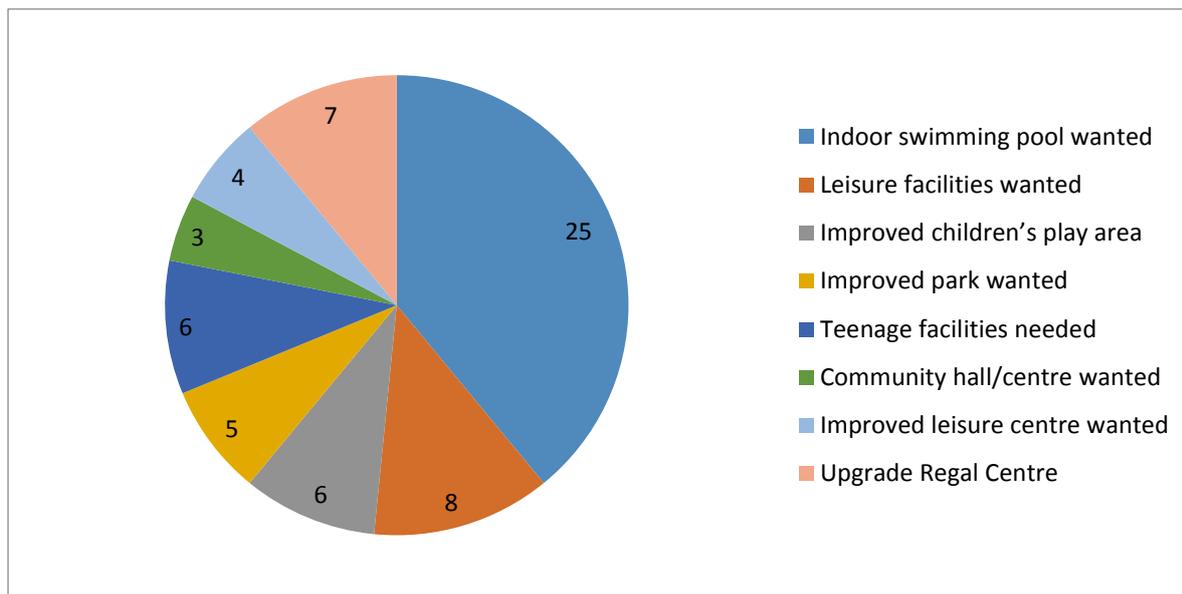
### 2.1 Leisure & Retail

This was the most commented upon theme among Wallingford residents; the quality of the leisure and retail offer in Wallingford is clearly an important factor for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider.

#### 2.1.1 Leisure

The majority of comments relating to leisure were associated with residents' focus on improving the array of facilities, in particular an indoor swimming pool for the town (25 comments) which accounted for almost a third of all leisure related comments.

Figure 2: Key leisure related comments



Other comments related to the creation of more allotments, improving the night life with restaurants and providing more sports facilities such as an outdoor gym. Two residents flagged the importance of keeping the day care centre for elderly residents in the community.

### 2.1.2 Retail

Residents and stakeholders highlighted the importance of increasing the variety of shops in Wallingford (18 comments) and also the need for an additional supermarket to compete with Waitrose (33 comments) of which a number highlighted that this needs to be an affordable option for local people (17 comments).

Residents highlighted that there is need for more multinational shops, not only independents, and that initiatives such as pop-up shops should be encouraged to increase activity and flexibility in the town.

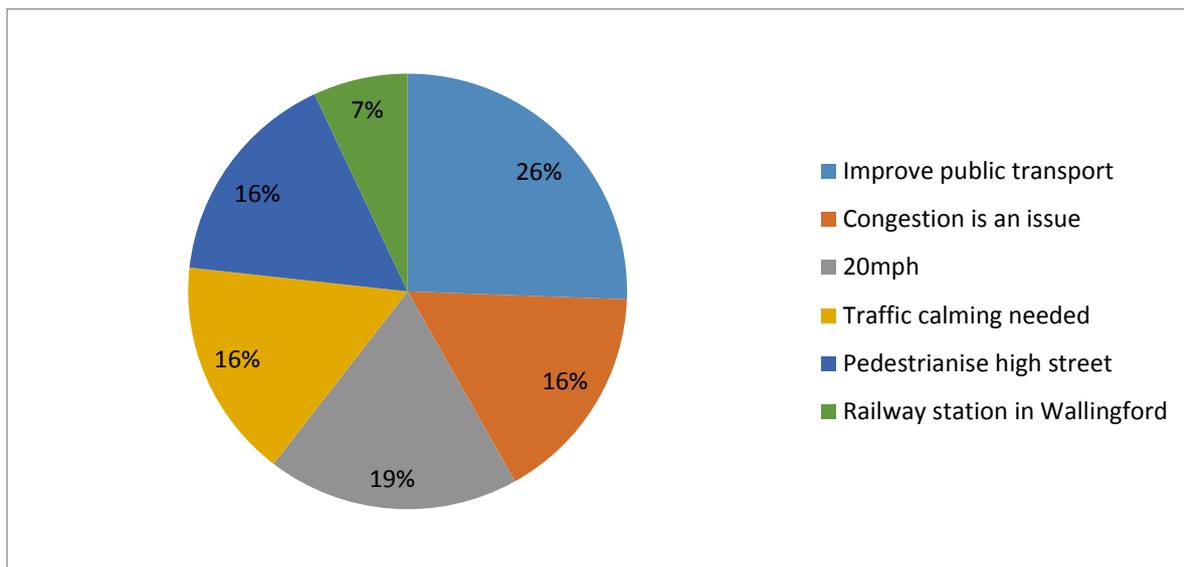
A key criticism of the town was that there are too many charity shops in the town centre as well as a need for the provision of more shops aimed at younger people in the community.

## 2.2 Transport and Movement

### 2.2.1 Transport

53 comments relating to transport were expressed by local residents and stakeholders. Figure 3 outlines the key transport issues and aspirations.

Figure 3: Key transport related comments



Issues that are seen as particularly important to Wallingford residents include improving public transport (11 comments) which was the most common response. Residents suggested options such as improved routes and frequency of services to encourage reduced car use and improve transport options for young and older members of the community.

Other comments related to improving the existing road network and better planning for larger vehicles, with one comment suggesting a one-way system was implemented in the town.

### 2.2.2 Parking

Parking attracted 48 comments from Wallingford residents, with many flagging the issue of a lack of parking to support the town centre and local residents (17 comments). Comments included those such as *“Please consider more car parking. Wallingford is ‘getting a name’ as a difficult place to park”*

Parking on residential roads around the town appears to be a key challenge (15 comments) along with parking at the hospital and at the GP surgery (4 comments).

Several residents called for the provision of a multi-storey or decked car park to help meet the demand (8 comments).

### 2.2.3 Cycling and Walking

Wallingford residents had many comments about the facilities for both cycling and walking in the town. A number requested an increase in cycle routes around the town (20 comments). One comment called for a ‘fitway’ which *“could encircle Wallingford to provide optional distances for running, walking and cycling safety”*

10 comments were received relating to improvement and maintenance of pavements, with some residents noting that these are unsafe for the elderly and those with pushchairs and wheel chairs.

## 2.3 Housing and Development

Wallingford residents were generally positive about the provision of new housing, with 12 comments indicating that the town needs new housing and 18 indicating that new housing must be affordable for local people. A number of individuals advocated that the housing was spread across the town and not constrained to a single site (4 comments).

Some residents suggested the provision of more building plots for self-build projects and that these should promote sustainable and contemporary design features.

Other comments included references to specific sites, some suggesting different housing locations based on previous site consultation, including 'Site A' and 'Site E' (site labels associated with previous consultation on housing sites around Wallingford). Further comments related to the need for family housing and mixtures of tenure in new developments (2 comments).

In terms of development in the town, a number of residents talked about the potential of the old Waitrose site (5 comments), which is currently under consideration for redevelopment, with suggestions relating to new retail, housing and ensuring adequate parking is provided.

## 2.4 Sustainability and Design

### 2.4.1 Sustainability

Residents talked about a range of sustainability issues in the town. The most frequently discussed was the importance of improving air quality in the town and reducing pollution (12 comments).

3 comments related to the provision of development plots specifically for eco-friendly development and a number of other comments referred to ensuring that new development in the town meets high energy efficiency standards and utilise renewable energy sources. One other comment discussed the idea of a sustainable energy policy/strategy for the town as a whole,

### 2.4.2 Design and Character

There were several comments aimed at ensuring the character of Wallingford is retained in new and existing dwellings (6 comments) with 3 individuals suggesting that no new development should happen within Wallingford's Conservation Areas.

One comment encouraged local housing associations to improve design quality in their developments and another suggested that a materials palette should be established for Wallingford.

## 2.5 Environment

There were 29 comments from local residents regarding environmental conditions in Wallingford. The majority relating to the protection and enhancement of green spaces within the town (14 comments), specifically protecting assets such as the trees in the Bullcroft, the creation of more outdoor play areas in linked green spaces and ensuring that the green belt and agricultural setting around the town is protected. Other responses included those that felt that more should be made of the town's river setting (3 comments)

Many comments related to residents' concerns about sewage capacity in the town (7 comments). This was in part fuelled by the potential increase in demand associated with the 'Site B' planning

application currently being considered by the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) at the time of this report.

## 2.6 Health

Residents talked about the current facilities available for healthcare, highlighting a lack of capacity in local GP's and Doctor's practices in the town, with all 17 comments focused on this issue.

## 2.7 Education

The need for additional school places and associated facilities was a much commented on element in terms of education provision in Wallingford (12 comments). This included discussions around the provision of 2 new primary schools to replace inadequate facilities at St Nicholas and St Johns.

Some responses also suggest that a new secondary school will be needed and that the single entry primary school as part of the 'Site B' development proposal will only meet existing demand and not accommodate for the 555 new homes.

3 comments highlighted that additional adult education facilities are needed in the town.

Another specific comments referred to *'vital importance to maintain children's centre in Wallingford for vulnerable parents and children'*

## 2.8 Other

A number of themes did not fit into a specific category.

Residents touched upon funding and the economic function of the town, highlighting the need to explore funding options in Oxfordshire. A number of comments referred to job creation, with one suggesting that a hotel would create jobs and improve the profile of the town.

Some residents talked about long term thinking, particularly regarding Wallingford's aging population and to consider the approach of comparable riverside market towns.

Other issues included: planning conditions, tourism and diversity.

### 3. Conclusions

There was a clear focus amongst Wallingford residents on issues/themes that should be addressed in the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan. Most notably there is a clear desire to improve as well as protect Wallingford's retail and leisure offer (136 comments).

In addition to this, residents felt the plan should address issues surrounding parking, public transport and pedestrian and cycling movement. The need for increased parking capacity (a main concern for the future) and improved pavements and cycle paths, amongst other issues, should be tackled through the plan's policies.

There was positivity around the provision of new housing, with residents identifying the need for housing in many cases and also highlighting the importance of affordability and sustainability of new development. Although there was some concern around development on certain sites, overall residents demonstrated a clear appreciation that housing is needed in the town.

The issue of employment was one that did not prompt a significant number of responses. Further discussions with local employers on the Hithercroft Estate and other employers should be consulted on ways to safeguard and grow the local employment offer.

The emerging themes outlined in Figure 1 and analysed in Section 2 demonstrate the breadth of issues that Wallingford residents and stakeholders feel need to be addressed by the Neighbourhood Plan.

## 1. Appendix: Summary of Comments

The following tables outline specific comments within each identified theme. The number of comments is only listed where 3 or more comments were provided for the specific topic.

### Leisure

Comment	No of comments
Indoor swimming pool wanted	25
Leisure facilities wanted	8
Improved children's play area	6
Improved park wanted	5
Teenage facilities needed	6
Community hall/centre wanted	3
Improved leisure centre wanted	4
Upgrade Regal Centre	7

### Retail

Comment	No of comments
More variety of shops needed	18
Affordable supermarket wanted	17
Another supermarket wanted	16
Too many charity shops	4

### Parking

Comment	No of Comments
More town centre parking needed	17
Parking in residential roads an issue	15
Multi-storey / decked car park needed	8
Parking at the hospital an issue	4

### Transport

Comment	No of comments
Improve public transport	11
Congestion is an issue	7
20mph	8
Traffic calming needed	7
Pedestrianise high street	7
Railway station in Wallingford	3

### Housing

Comment	No of comments
Affordable housing needed	18
Housing needed	12
Housing spread throughout Wallingford	4
More building plots for sustainable housing	3

### Cycling and Walking

<b>Comment</b>	<b>No of comments</b>
Cycle routes wanted	20
Paving improvements needed	7
Improve maintenance of footpaths	3

### **Environment**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>No of comments</b>
Protect open / green spaces	14
Make more of the river setting	3
Concerns raised regarding sewage capacity	7

### **Health**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>No of comments</b>
More doctors/GP surgeries required	17

### **Education**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>No of comments</b>
More school places required	12
Adult education facilities needed	3

### **Sustainability**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>No of comments</b>
Improved air quality	12

### **Design**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>No of comments</b>
Retain character of Wallingford	6
No development within the Conservation Area	3

### **Development**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>No of comments</b>
Development needed on the old Waitrose site	5