

# Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood Development Plan

## CONSULTATION STATEMENT

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### 1. Introduction and Summary Overview

This Consultation Statement has been prepared in order to fulfil the legal obligation of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Section 15 (2). Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain. Namely it should:

- Provide details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- Explain how they were consulted;
- Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- Describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

The villages of Oulton and Woodlesford are distinct communities that over time have grown together, to the point where it is difficult to say where one starts and one finishes. Neither has a Parish Council. The Localism Act, 2011, gives communities, including those which have no Parish Council, the right to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

An Open Meeting was held at the Oulton Institute on 28th October 2011, to consider the implications of the Localism Act for the communities of Oulton and Woodlesford. In advance of the meeting, posters were placed in local shops and on village notice boards and an article about the purpose of the meeting was published in the Rothwell Record. The meeting was attended by 60 persons, including Alec Shelbrooke MP, and the Rothwell Ward Councillors. An overview of the content of the Localism Act was presented. Following this, a second meeting was held on 1st February 2012 to discuss the possibility of setting up a Neighbourhood Forum for Oulton and Woodlesford. This meeting was also publicised widely and was attended by over 100 people. There was general agreement among those present, that Woodlesford and Oulton together would make an excellent unit for neighbourhood planning. Neither village on its own, would

be big enough,<sup>1</sup> and inclusion with Rothwell would make too large a district. It was agreed unanimously by those present at the meeting that the villages should seek to set up a Neighbourhood Forum.

A key requirement of a Neighbourhood Forum is that it should be open to all who live, work or carry out business in its area, and it was therefore essential that a Forum was launched at an open public meeting that was very well advertised. It was agreed that such a meeting could not be held until details of how a Forum should be set up, had been published, and it would be especially beneficial to couple a meeting with the launch of the Village Design Statement for Oulton and Woodlesford.

The Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood Forum was therefore launched at an Inaugural General Meeting, held at the Oulton Institute on 4th November 2012. This was widely publicised in advance, with notices being sent to local community groups, to local schools, to Leeds City councillors and to Alec Shelbrooke (who apologised for being unable to attend but giving the Forum his support). Posters were displayed in local shops and post offices and in village notice boards. An article publicising the meeting was included in the Rothwell Record. The meeting was attended by over 110 residents, including the three Rothwell ward councillors and by John Hall, a member of Leeds City Council's Planning Department. A motion to establish a Forum for Oulton and Woodlesford was carried without dissent and a Steering Group was elected. The Forum's Steering Committee comprises members elected at the Forum's AGM. Members are elected for one year but are eligible for re-election. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum are its primary contacts, who may be contacted by telephone or email. Contact details are provided on the Forum's website ([www.oawnf.org.uk](http://www.oawnf.org.uk)) and on the village notice boards.

At this meeting a draft constitution was also adopted.

The Constitution of the Forum recognises the Forum's objectives as:

- to agree a long-term vision for the Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood Area.
- to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood Area.
- to represent the people who live, work or carry out business in the Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood Area.
- to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for the Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood Area in conformity with the Development Plan for Leeds and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Membership of the Forum is open to anyone aged 16 or over, who lives, works or carries out business in the Neighbourhood Area. There are currently 482 members of whom about two-thirds can be contacted by e-mail. Membership is free. Membership application forms are available at all meetings and in local post offices. It is also possible to apply for membership via the Forum's website. Regular contact is made via email for those members who have given an email address.

Annual General Meetings have subsequently been held on 14th April 2013, 27th April 2014, 19th April 2015, 3rd April 2016, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (via a conference call). Each AGM has been advertised by posters displayed locally, by an article in the Rothwell Record, by a notice posted on the Forum's website ([www.oawnf.org.uk](http://www.oawnf.org.uk)) and by a message sent to all members with email addresses. The minutes of meetings are posted on the Forum's website: <http://www.oawnf.org/p/meeting-mniutes.html>.

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<sup>1</sup> The population of both villages is over 8000

The Steering Group has met regularly (usually monthly) and has been responsible for widespread consultation. Meetings of the Steering Committee are open, are advertised by posters on village notice boards and on the Forum's website. Minutes of meetings of the Steering Committee are also posted on the Forum's website.

Members of the Steering Committee, when requested to do so, attend meetings of neighbouring Forums, clubs and other groups, including the local primary schools, secondary school and churches and also support galas and other events in the community so as to freely engage with anyone seeking help or advice.

An initial task of the Steering Group was to establish the boundaries of the Forum. Discussions took place with Rothwell Neighbourhood Forum over the proposed western and north western boundary which were agreed without difficulty. The boundary to the north east of the Neighbourhood Area was already established by the Swillington Parish Council (but contains a curious feature, - Woodlesford Lock is within the Swillington Parish boundary, because the boundary follows the course of the river Aire before it was canalised in the 18<sup>th</sup> century). The eastern boundary is with Methley. Methley had neither a Parish Council nor a Neighbourhood Forum. We therefore liaised with the Methley Residents Association. We also met with residents living in the Clumpcliffe hamlet, who expressed a strong wish to be included within the Oulton and Woodlesford area. After several adjustments, the Methley Residents Association agreed the line of our mutual boundary, with Clumpcliffe being included in the proposed Neighbourhood Area.

On 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014, a joint application for the proposed boundary and neighbourhood forum was submitted to the Council for publicity and designation. Publicity took place between 21<sup>st</sup> March and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. The Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum were designated by Leeds City Council on 15th July 2014. The Officer report recommending the designation of the Neighbourhood Area and Forum reflected on the efforts made to build up Forum membership and early engagement work undertaken by the steering committee. It noted that the engagement and approach to neighbourhood planning in Oulton and Woodlesford was a particular strength of the application.<sup>2</sup>

In 2014, the Steering Committee set up a number of Focus Groups: Community Assets, Housing, Landscape and the Environment, Local Economy, Renewable Energy, Sports and Recreation, Transport and Young People. Each Focus Group had a member of the Steering Committee as its coordinator. These groups included Forum members who had expressed an interest in a particular area. Through these groups, neighbourhood plan policy intentions emerged and an Open Meeting was held at the Oulton Institute on Sunday, 30th November 2014 to canvas input for the emerging policies to develop the key issues and options. A record of this meeting is posted on the Forum's website:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sv1qgxeoihucsq/AAC17iObLOX2vL6MNF4n7qj-a?dl=0>

Based on these inputs, a trial questionnaire was drafted and, in December 2014, distributed for assessment to a structured sample comprising a range of ages and residential areas. As a result of feedback from this exercise, the questionnaire was revised and distributed to every premise in the Neighbourhood Area in March 2015.

A further Open Meeting was held jointly with the Oulton Society on 25th October 2015, specifically to discuss the housing proposals in the Leeds Site Allocations Plan and its potential effect on the Neighbourhood Area. Following this consultation, draft policies were produced, and two walk-in sessions planned to give residents an opportunity to scrutinise the draft policies. Notice of these sessions was posted on village notice boards, in the Rothwell Record and by email to Forum members. The first walk-in session was held on 5th May 2016,

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<sup>2</sup> Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum designation details:

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s119111/Report%20to%20Chief%20Planning%20Officer.pdf>

to coincide with local elections, at the Oulton Institute, immediately adjacent to the polling station. The second session was held on 23rd June, 2016, to coincide with voting on the EU referendum, at the Woodlesford Methodist Church, immediately adjacent to the Polling Station. At each, the public was invited to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each policy. These sessions were open to anyone, but by holding them adjacent to a Polling Station exposure was maximised.

Finally, the plan reached the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation in March 2018: a public consultation of the draft Plan which ran for 6 weeks from 8th March to 19th April 2018. A summary of the plan was delivered to every property in the neighbourhood's area and was sent by email to Forum members. The full Plan was available on the Forum's website and hard copies of the Plan were available in the local Post Offices and in the Oulton Institute. Residents and other stakeholders were given the opportunity to respond directly to the Forum or via an online survey monkey. Following the close of the Pre-Submission Consultation, the draft plan was revised and prepared for submission to Leeds City Council for independent examination.

## 2. Aims of the Consultation.

We employed consultation to ensure our Plan was supported by residents, together with those who work or carry out business in the Neighbourhood Area. We also consulted with Leeds City Council to ensure that our Plan was compliant with local and national policy and other relevant legal requirements. In addition, Leeds City Council commissioned arc<sup>4</sup> to conduct a housing assessment of the Neighbourhood Area in order to provide further evidence to support the draft plan..

We have ensured complete transparency in the processes and procedures that underpinned the development of the Plan by ensuring that the Forum's website have been kept up to date, ensuring meetings are open and welcoming and ensuring that all stakeholders have had multiple opportunities to contribute to the development of the draft neighbourhood plan.

To further those aims, we particularly focussed on engagement methods which:

- Encouraged and created face to face conversation and discussion through meetings and through events such as the Rothwell Gala and the Oulton Fest;
- Ensured full and effective coverage, with questionnaires delivered to every residence and business in the Neighbourhood Area;
- Our questionnaires contained generous space for write-in comments; and
- Our list of external stakeholders was drawn up following consultation with Leeds City Council and making the best use of local knowledge.

While open meetings, newsletters and questionnaires have played an important part in our engagement, the Forum is aware that better use could have been made of social media. The Forum's constitution includes a position of Communications & Press Officer in the officers of our Steering Committee. Until 2019 this post remained unfilled. However, the Forum have now appointed Amanda Beech to this position, and she is making full use of social media to reach out to those who live and work in Oulton and Woodlesford. It's anticipated that this will lead to better contact with groups, particularly the young, that we have been so far, less successful in engaging.

### 3. Initial Consultation – December 2014 to March 2015

The questionnaire drafted following the Open Meeting in November 2014, and assessed by a small structured sample, was modified and delivered to every property, both domestic and commercial, in the Neighbourhood Area, in March 2015. 402 completed questionnaires were received and analysed. The questionnaire is appended at [appendix 1](#) and full details of the questionnaire analysis are at [appendix 2](#). Both are also available on the Forum's website.

At least three quarters of respondents agreed on the following statements:

- Oulton and Woodlesford are friendly places in which to live/work (92% agreement).
- New developments should include space for trees or green areas (91% agreement).
- The appearance of Oulton and Woodlesford is excellent (90% agreement).
- There is already enough "executive style" housing in Oulton and Woodlesford (84% agreement).
- Oulton and Woodlesford are safe places in which to live/work (88% agreement).
- There is already enough terrace housing in Oulton and Woodlesford (86% agreement).
- More facilities are needed for teens (85% agreement)
- More facilities are needed for the disabled (85% agreement).
- There is already enough detached housing in Oulton and Woodlesford (84% agreement).
- Smaller new housing developments are preferred (81% agreement).
- New housing should reflect the styles of buildings in area (80% agreement).
- We need more facilities for older people (79% agreement).
- More car parking is needed at Woodlesford Station (75% agreement).

There was less agreement on some other statements, particularly those relating to traffic:

- 64% agreed that traffic calming in Oulton and Woodlesford was already sufficient, 36% disagreed.
- 60% agreed that lower speed limits were needed, 40% disagreed.
- 78% agreed that better enforcement of speed limits is required, 22% disagreed.
- 38% agreed that the provision for cyclists was sufficient, 62% disagreed.

Following this consultation, the Forum's Steering Committee drafted a series of priorities:

1. All forms of development should be sustainable in terms of their impact on the natural and built environments, the community and the local economy.
2. New housing development should complement the design and needs of the community.
3. New facilities should meet needs that are presently not met, and should be run for and serve the local community.
4. The Forum should assist the relevant authorities in developing sustainable traffic and transport plans that seek to eliminate congestion and enable movement around, in and out of the communities.
5. We should seek to maintain protection for our highly-prized green infrastructure, including parklands, the canal/river corridor as well as the smaller green spaces within our villages
6. Schools and other educational facilities should be encouraged to continue to provide great services .

The plan was drafted on the basis of these priorities. The Forum felt it important to include issues not strictly related to neighbourhood planning policy in order to acknowledge the issues that are important to people, particularly in light of the fact that no Parish Council exists to represent the area. The issues raised have helped to inform the planning policies and the community actions in the Plan.

#### 4. Drafting the Plan

The Steering Committee, taking in to account the feedback obtained through the initial consultation process, drafted policies to be included in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Members were encouraged to participate during this drafting stage, and meetings of the Steering Committee were open to all Forum members. Minutes of Steering Committee were posted on the Forum's website and members could email feedback.

As draft policies became more formulated, the Steering Committee consulted on them by holding walk in sessions. These were held adjacent to a polling station on the day of voting, thereby interacting with constituents. These sessions were independent of the Polling Station, and access was open to all. The first was held on 5th May 2016 at the Oulton Institute, adjacent to the polling station for the local election and the second was held on 23rd June 2016 at the Woodlesford Methodist Church, adjacent to the Polling Station for the EU referendum. Together, responses were received from over 400 people. At each event, the public was invited to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each policy. An analysis of the responses has been posted on the Forum's website and is at appendix 3. It will be seen that most of the draft policies received strong support.

#### 5. Regulation 14 Consultation

The formal Regulation 14 consultation period ran from March 8<sup>th</sup> 2018 to April 19<sup>th</sup> 2018. Prior to this, a newsletter (see appendix 4), was delivered to every property in the Neighbourhood Area. This provided an update on the progress of drafting the Plan. In early March, a copy of the Regulation 14 questionnaire (see appendix 5) was delivered to every property in the Neighbourhood Area. Meanwhile, the draft plan was posted on the Forum's website, and hard copies of the draft plan were made available at the following locations:

- Rothwell Community Hub
- Oulton Post Office
- Woodlesford Post Office
- The Oulton Institute.

The questionnaire was also posted on the Forum's website where it could also be completed. 158 responses were received, 118 from households and 40 from individuals. Analysis of the responses together with the write-in comments are at appendix 6. The questionnaire asked 30 questions relating to whether the respondent agreed or disagreed with the draft policies. All policies received greater than 80% support and 19 were supported by more than 90% of respondents. We conclude that our draft policies are supported strongly by the community.

In addition to consulting residents, on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the following stakeholders were communicated with either by email or by post (see appendix 7):

## Stakeholders contacted by email

Campaign to Protect Rural England  
Carlton Neighbourhood Forum  
Canal and Rivers Trust  
Coal Authority  
Country Landowners Association  
Environment Agency  
Fallons  
Garforth Neighbourhood Forum  
Hallam Land  
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd.  
Highways Agency  
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)  
Homes and Communities Agency  
Internal Drainage Board  
Leeds City Council  
Local Councillors  
    Rothwell Ward:  
        Cllr. Karen Bruce  
        Cllr. David Nagle  
        Cllr. Stewart Golton  
  
    Garforth and Swillington Ward:  
        Cllr. Mark Dobson  
        Cllr. Sarah Field  
        Cllr. Stuart McKenna  
  
    Kippax and Methley Ward:  
        Cllr. Mary Harland  
        Cllr. James Lewis  
        Cllr. Keith Wakefield  
Methley and Mickletown Residents Society  
Methodist Church, Woodlesford  
Mexborough Estates  
National Farmers Union  
Natural England  
Northern Rail  
North Yorkshire County Council  
Oulton Hall  
Oulton Primary School  
Oulton Society  
Oulton with Woodlesford Parochial Church Council  
Patrick Eyres Landscape historian, Expert on Humphry Repton

Pemberstone (Oulton Properties) Ltd.  
Ramblers Association  
Rothwell Footpath Group  
Rothwell Leisure Centre  
Rothwell Neighbourhood Forum  
Royds School  
Swillington Parish Council  
Wakefield Council  
Woodlesford Primary School  
Yorkshire Water  
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

#### Stakeholders contacted by letter

British Telecom  
Network Rail  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

#### Responses were received from the following stakeholders

Campaign to Protect Rural England  
Canal and Rivers Trust  
Coal Authority  
Hallam Land  
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd.  
Leeds Planning Services  
Oulton Society

The responses received, together with the Forum's responses and actions taken, are at appendix 8.

Many, fairly minor, points raised in the Regulation 14 Consultation have been responded to and modifications made to the Plan (see appendix 8 for details). The judicial review of the Leeds SAP, found that Leeds removal of Green Belt sites and their inclusion as sites for housing was unsound, Leeds has subsequently removed such sites from the SAP. This has meant that the two sites within the Forum's area that contained Green Belt, are no longer included in the Oulton and Woodlesford Plan.

## 6. Conclusions

We have engaged with those who live, work or carry out business in the Neighbourhood Area throughout the Forum's existence. At each stage the Forum has engaged with residents, businesses and other stakeholders through a variety of methods. Feedback on the draft plan has been representative and the Forum has sought to address the issues raised where appropriate and feasible. The Forum feels that the neighbourhood plan is a fair representation of the key issues for the communities of Oulton and Woodlesford. Everyone with an interest has had the opportunity to comment and contribute if they wished to do so. It's therefore felt that the neighbourhood plan is supported and underpinned by robust engagement and consultation which has been ongoing since 2013.