**Blackbird Leys Neighbourhood Plan Guide**

**Introduction**

Blackbird Leys Parish Council has initiated the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, a powerful statutory document that will help shape the future development of our area through to 2040. Unlike other types of community plans, a Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the legal framework used to determine planning applications in our parish.

The plan comes at a crucial time as Oxford City faces significant development pressures. Our area will be affected by several major proposals, including:

1. The Cowley Branch Line development
2. Changes to the Kassam Stadium area
3. Developments at Sandy Lane Recreation Ground
4. Blackbird Leys Central Area regeneration
5. Knights Road development

**Working Group**

To lead this important work, the Parish Council has established a dedicated Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, chaired by Cllr Newman with Cllr Edosomwan as Vice Chair. The Working Group includes all parish councillors and will work closely with appointed consultants to:

1. Gather and analyse data about our area
2. Engage with the community and stakeholders
3. Draft the plan's policies and proposals
4. Provide regular updates to the full Parish Council

The Working Group meets monthly at the Leys Pool and Leisure Centre and held the first scoping session held on October 22nd, 2024. While Working Group meetings are closed sessions, you can apply to join the working group by contacting the clerk on clerk@blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk or on 07311 311 980.

**Powers and Influence of the Neighbourhood Plan**

**Planning Powers**

1. Gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood
2. Creates statutory planning policies that must be used to determine planning applications
3. Provides greater influence over detailed local matters than the general Local Plan
4. Allows communities to specify where development should occur and its nature

**Community Benefits**

1. Secures 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money from developments for local use
2. Can protect important local green spaces and infrastructure
3. Helps preserve the area's distinct identity
4. Enables support for community projects and self-build initiatives
5. Can include policies about:

 - Housing location, type and design

 - Protection of green spaces and wildlife habitats

 - Community facilities and services

 - Local infrastructure needs

 - Design standards for new development

**Strategic Role**

1. Helps communities plan proactively for changes through to 2040
2. Enables better coordination between different developments and stakeholders
3. Gives the community more control over how their area develops
4. Creates opportunities for "win-win" outcomes between development needs and community benefits

**Types of Community Needs Covered**

Built Environment & Development

1. Housing needs and affordability
2. Design standards for new buildings
3. Location and type of development
4. Protection of historic/heritage features
5. Community facilities placement and requirements
6. Town centre and retail spaces

**Transportation & Access**

1. Active travel infrastructure (walking/cycling routes)
2. Public transport connectivity
3. Parking provisions and management
4. Road safety improvements
5. Accessibility for disabled residents
6. Integration of transport networks

 **Community Facilities & Services**

1. Community centres and meeting spaces
2. Sports and leisure facilities
3. Healthcare facilities
4. Educational facilities
5. Library services
6. Youth facilities and services
7. Cultural spaces

**Green Space & Environment**

1. Protection of local green spaces
2. Nature conservation areas
3. Parks and recreation grounds
4. Green infrastructure networks
5. Flood risk management
6. Wildlife habitats and corridors
7. Environmental sustainability measures

**Economic Development**

1. Local employment opportunities
2. Business space requirements
3. Training and skills development
4. Retail and commercial needs
5. Support for local businesses
6. Mixed-use development opportunities

**Infrastructure**

1. Utility services improvements
2. Digital connectivity
3. Waste management facilities
4. Community safety measures
5. Public realm improvements
6. Sustainable infrastructure needs

**Specific Focus for Blackbird Leys**

The Neighbourhood Plan can specifically address:

1. Managing integration with surrounding major developments
2. Securing and locating new community facilities
3. Enhancing existing recreation grounds and green spaces
4. Improving connections between different parts of the parish
5. Supporting local economic growth and employment
6. Ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with population growth

**Note:** All policies must be based on clear evidence of local need and developed through community consultation. The success of the plan depends on active community engagement and robust evidence gathering throughout the process.