SODC Core Strategy

Implications of the publication of the NPPF on the CS

Comments from Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council

1. The Model Policy

In her letter of 23 April the Programme Officer laid out the “model policy” and asked for comments on its inclusion in the CS. While we support the principle of including wording in the CS we consider that the model wording does not emphasise sufficiently the need for development to be sustainable and integrated within the criteria laid down in the NPPF. We suggest amended wording below which reflects our concerns but stays close to the original model. We have tracked the changes for ease of reference.

“When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants and other stakeholders jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved where wherever possible, and to secure development that improve sustainably the economic, health, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without unnecessary delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole, and in particular that the proposed development should be sustainable; or

Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.”

2. Wallingford

In our representation dated 22 March, 3rd paragraph, we said “Integration is fundamental to good urban design and to sustainable development, and safe access is a key element of integration”. Nothing in the NPPF alters those propositions. Indeed para 61 emphasises the need to “address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”

We referred to draft para 125. In the final document this has become para 69 with only minor change and we emphasise in particular the words “safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes”. Likewise para 58 points to the need to “create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.” And para 32 requires plans to “take account of whether….safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people”.

Site B, in particular the access to it, given its distance from the town centre and poor connectivity, does not meet these fundamental requirements, and the Inspector’s conclusion in ID/34, arrived at after detailed examination of the evidence, that “Site B is therefore not a sound location for a strategic allocation” remains valid.

14 May 2012