

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE CORE STRATEGY (CS)**INSPECTOR'S REVISED CONCLUSIONS ON CHANGES TO THE CS TO BE ADVERTISED FOR PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS IN RELATION TO TOPIC AREA 5 (Thame)****Topic area 5 Thame****Discussion**

The SA scores reliance on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) less positively than the CS strategic allocation at Thame (as proposed for change through the Post Exploratory Meeting Changes). This is on the grounds that housing delivery could be jeopardised if the NP were not to be adopted in time to ensure the maintenance of a 5-year supply in step with the annualised target. However, the SA suggests that this negative effect could be mitigated by incorporating a contingency/reserve allocation in the CS.

In other respects the SA effectively states that the comparative effects of delegating allocations to as-yet unknown sites, rather than making an allocation at site F, cannot be assessed at this time.

According to the current programme and expectations, Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) should be adopted in plenty of time to avoid a hiatus in land supply even if adoption were to be delayed considerably beyond its original programmed date. Although I was previously inclined to agree with SODC that inclusion of a contingency/reserve allocation could mitigate any negative effects arising from failure to adopt TNP by April 2014, any such action needs to be proportionate to the degree of risk. The NP process appears to have been widely welcomed and there is no evidence to suggest that TNP will not succeed in reaching timely adoption. Nor has there been any opportunity to discuss the need for, or the form and scope of, any contingency measure. I therefore reach the revised conclusion that, in relation to the risk, it is unnecessary and inappropriate to include the requested contingency measure: in short, the CS would not be unsound without one. The District Council will be closely engaged at all stages of the NP process and would have the opportunity, in accordance with policy CSC1, to consider the implications for land supply and the way that any likely future shortfall should be addressed in the (currently unlikely) event that the TNP did not make progress as reasonably expected.

Conclusion

Proposed changes/main modifications should proceed to be advertised as set out below (ie with minor presentational changes)

5.1 Policy Csth1 Rerword the 8th bullet point as follows:

Identify land for 775 new homes through a Neighbourhood Plan (see policy Cstha2)

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5.24 Policy CSTHA2 Reword as follows:- 'New allocations at Thame

The Neighbourhood Plan for Thame will allocate land for 775 new homes on land selected through that process as the most appropriate and sustainable.

5.32 Paras 11.14 to 11.16 Reword as follows:-

'11.14 Provision of additional housing will help to support the town centre's attraction in relation to nearby centres and maintain Thame's services and facilities. The overall strategy is to provide 775 additional houses to 2027 on sites selected by a neighbourhood plan.

11.15 The selected sites will need to have a form and character which meet identified needs and be planned comprehensively in accordance with agreed design briefs reflecting policies CSQ1-4 and other relevant policies in the Local Development Framework. The developments should avoid building on areas of land within flood zones 2 and 3, provide safe pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre, and make provision (or provide contributions towards) such necessary supporting infrastructure as is set out in the infrastructure delivery plan.'

5.4 Maps 11.1 and at p165 of the CS The above change would necessitate appropriate change to the former and deletion of the latter.

23 January 2012