

Planning services

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Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan Review – Modification Statement

South Oxfordshire District Council believes the Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan Review proposal contains significant modifications in relation to the made Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan (2017). The most significant modifications relate to the introduction of principles to guide development in the countryside, the identification of a green gap, and the allocation of a site to accommodate a community hub comprising of a primary school, village hall, playing fields, and enabling housing development (approximately 40-45 dwellings).

The made Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan 2017 supports the principle for a community hub where it fulfils a site of criteria, however it does not specially allocate a site. The Plan Review proposes to allocate a site to accommodate the community hub and set out relevant site specific criteria. Although the principles of the community hub was included in the original Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan (2017), the proposed site allocation in the Plan Review is believed to constitute a significant change. This change is so significant, it triggered the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment alongside the Plan Review preparation.

Other significant proposed changes include: safeguarding the existing 'school' and 'village hall' sites for residential development if necessary to help deliver the proposed community hub, principles to guide development in the countryside (defined as outside the built-up area of Long Wittenham village) and a substantial green gap between the settlements of Didcot and Long Wittenham.

The proposed site allocation and safeguarded sites sets the principles for additional development in Long Wittenham. The proposed countryside principles and green gap introduce additional restriction and policy tests for development outside the built up area of the village. Combined the proposals in the Plan Review significantly change the nature of the made neighbourhood development plan. Therefore, in the council's opinion, the plan should undergo an independent examination and, subject to the examiner's recommendations, it should require a local referendum.

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