

## **SONNING COMMON NDP REVISION OCTOBER 2021 –**

### **STATEMENT ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANGES/MODIFICATIONS/UPDATES TO THE EXISTING NDP.**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Sonning Common parish council is submitting a proposed revision to the made NDP approved in a referendum in 2016, prepared by a working party appointed by the council, for statutory consultation. This statement is submitted as part of the documentation in accordance with Regulation 14 (a/v) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Sonning Common NDP was approved in a village referendum in September 2016 with nearly half the eligible voters taking part. 94% supported it. It was adopted by South Oxfordshire District Council in October 2016. Subsequently a new SODC Local Plan has been put in place and a new version of the national planning guidelines known as the National Planning Policy Framework come into force.

In the light of these significant developments and the government advice issued in 2016 on the statutory weight to be given to neighbourhood plans, Sonning Common parish council decided in 2018 that a revised version of the plan should be prepared. A new working party was set up to undertake this task. It was decided that the revision would include a full review of the existing objectives and policies to consider how they might be changed to meet the current needs of the community. Some policies have been retained, some have been modified, some are new, and some have been deleted either because they have been carried out or are no longer applicable.

This statement has been drawn up to meet the requirement laid down in Regulation 14 for the working party (acting on behalf of the qualifying body which is Sonning Common parish council) to assess whether or not the changes and modifications proposed in the revision are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the existing NDP, and to give reasons for its opinion.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

Settlement boundary This is a new policy. The objective is to fix a settlement boundary to define the shape of the settlement of Sonning Common and allow for appropriate development. The policies implement that objective. There is no such policy in the existing NDP. The addition is therefore considered to be a material change.

Housing The objectives expand on those in the existing NDP but follow the same approach. The policies have been modified to take account of changed circumstances but also maintain the same principles in relation to the need for smaller homes and infill. The modifications amount to a material change.

Design The objective has been expanded to include commitments to mitigate the effects of climate change, but is otherwise unchanged. The policies have been modified to take account of that extra element but otherwise largely follow the approach in the existing NDP. An additional policy requires regard to be paid to established plot widths when proposals for new homes in existing residential streets are considered. The modifications and additions are considered to amount to minor change.

Village centre Objectives and policies follow the same approach as adopted in the existing NDP, although an additional policy on providing electric vehicle charging points is included. The alterations are considered to amount to minor change.

Employment The objective is unchanged from that in the existing NDP. The two policies in the revision build on the one in the previous plan. The alterations are considered to be minor change.

Community, health and social The objectives and policies reflect the approach taken in the existing NDP but have been significantly changed because of changed circumstances. In particular the aspiration to provide land for recreational use has been met as a result of provisions in the NDP. The alterations and additions are therefore considered to amount to material change.

Transport and parking The title of this section has been adapted from 'Movement, road safety and parking' in the original. The objectives have been expanded and refined. The policies – on rationalising parking, improving footpaths and cycle paths, road safety and speed limits – are considerably more precise, although they follow the approach outlined in the supporting text in the original. The additions and modifications are considered to amount to material change.

Environment There is now one objective instead of three as in the existing NDP, but the principles expressed are the same. Policies have been expanded and refined – particularly to take account of the need to do whatever is possible to tackle climate change. But the approach to the protection of the countryside, the AONB, wildlife and trees and hedges remains the same. The alterations are considered to amount to material change.

## CONCLUSION

It is apparent from the above that the philosophy and the thinking that informed Sonning Common's NDP of 2016 are the same as those behind the revision. The overriding aims were then to protect the character of the village while allowing for appropriate growth and development. That has not changed, and it follows that – while many changes, deletions and additions have been made, some of material significance – the nature of the plan has not changed.