

Reviewed Long Wittenham
Neighbourhood Development Plan
2018-2035

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

November
2021

Submission Draft (revised)

INTRODUCTION

1. This Consultation Statement has been prepared in support of the Reviewed Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan (RLWDNP) as part of its submission to South Oxfordshire District Council.
2. The RLWNDP is an update of the original Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan which was made on 12 October 2017. The review is an update and refinement of the 2017 NDP and relies on much of the evidence prepared for that document.
3. The RLWNDP has been prepared by the NDP steering group which is composed of Parish Councillors and members of the Long Wittenham Community.
4. Long Wittenham Parish Council is the “qualifying body” for the NDP and is the project sponsor for the community hub project which is a key delivery objective for the NDP.
5. Since this review is a refinement of previous policy, the level of consultation has been less than for the original LWNDP. The consultation statement for the LWNDP is available as a separate document.

PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

6. The LWNDP was made in October 2017. In November 2017, the Parish Council participated in a Planning Inquiry for the Field Site proposal (now referred to as Fieldside under RLNDP policy LW3; Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/17/3169755). The Parish Council, participating as a Rule 6 Party, relied upon the LWNDP to support its objection to the proposal.
7. Many members of the Long Wittenham community attended the planning inquiry during the Parish Council’s evidence. The Inspector did not agree with the Parish Council’s reasons for objection and the report did not give much weight to the reasons for objection.
8. The Parish Council took advice that the LWNDP could be strengthened, particularly by the inclusion of policies on site allocation and a clarification on the position of the community hub. In January 2018, the NDP Steering Group reconvened and determined to

go into an immediate review of the NDP. This was agreed at the Parish Council meeting on 11 January 2018.

9. Initial drafts of the approach towards site allocation and planning policy context were prepared in January and a meeting was held with Ricardo Rios from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) where the general approach to the review was agreed.
10. The evidence papers were refined by Andrea Pellegram from January to March during which time the Steering Group considered the evidence and suggested changes. From April to July, the evidence was refined and numerous telephone and email communications with SODC planning officers helped to refine the approach. The final Regulation 14 draft was completed in early September 2018.
11. The steering group met again in February. Between meetings, there was email correspondence. A report on progress was put to the Parish Council at every meeting where members of the public had the opportunity to ask questions. Between 4 and 15 parishioners attended for most meetings.
12. Progress has been posted on the Long Wittenham Parish Council website and in the parish magazine ('The Bridge')
13. A public meeting to discuss the progress of the RLW NDP was held in April as an extraordinary Parish Council meeting and 60 villagers attended.
14. A public meeting was held in July and 70 villagers attended, asking questions about the progress and direction of the NDP which the steering group took into account.
15. The Regulation 14 consultation concluded on 11 September which will be discussed in the following section of this statement. A meeting on 11th October was attended by 30 villagers to discuss the changes made as a result of Regulation 14 consultation.

REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

16. Long Wittenham Parish Council undertook Regulation 14 Consultation of the RLW NDP from 1st August 2018 until 11 September 2018. A consultation list was drawn up with the help of SODC and based on the list used at the first LW NDP Regulation 14 consultation. This list comprised relevant national bodies, adjacent parish councils, local and national voluntary bodies and local businesses and clubs. Organisations were contacted by email where an email address was available; if not, contact was by letter. The consultation was advertised within Long Wittenham using notices and local email groups. All documents were displayed on the Parish Council website. Residents without access to a computer were offered to view the documents using the computer of a member of the steering committee.

17. Responses to the Regulation 14 consultation can be classified as two types: letters making specific comments on the RLWNDP and its policies; corrections of fact and detail by members of the community.

- Responses were received from the following organisations and residents:
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Historic England
- The Marine Management Organisation
- National Grid
- Thames Water
- CPRE Oxfordshire
- Sport England
- Oxfordshire Youth
- Highways England
- Didcot Town Council
- Reading University (Barton Willmore)
- Mike Duff (resident)
- Jeremy Croxon (resident)
- Anonymous resident
- Gill Nichol (resident)
- Julia Carberry (resident)
- Dom Jarman (resident)
- Graham Neil (resident)
- Wittenham Against Overdevelopment (a pressure group formed by a number of residents)
- Charlotte Treacy Ben Loxton-Edwards (resident)

RESPONSE TO REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

18. The Regulation 14 consultation highlighted areas where the NDP could be improved or corrected. The Submission version therefore differs significantly from the Regulation 14 draft. The main responses to consultation are set out in Appendix 2 which is a separate spreadsheet, and the manner in which the comments were addressed is also in the appendix.

19. An advanced version of the Submission draft of the RLWNDP was discussed in a public meeting on 11 October 2018 where 30 people attended. Most comments were positive.

LEGAL OPINION

20. Legal opinion was obtained on the wording of the Regulation 14 Draft from Timothy Jones, 22nd October 2018.

EXAMINER'S REPORTS (2019)

21. The Independent Examiner wrote to the Local Planning Authority on 26 February 2019 highlighting concerns that minerals had not been adequately addressed in SEA scoping and subsequent consultation. For this reason, he concluded that the plan did not meet basic conditions.
22. The Independent Examiner wrote again on 6 June 2019 which continued consideration of the minerals issue and raised new concerns regarding representations made by Historic England regarding the potential for archaeological remains being present on the hub site. He questioned how archaeological information had been considered in plan-making and whether the Environmental Report adequately dealt with identified gaps in the evidence base.
23. The matter of minerals safeguarding was subsequently resolved and the County Council as Minerals Planning Authority withdrew its objection in response to changes made to the SEA Environmental Report.
24. The Examiner presented his Update and Preliminary Findings on 2 September 2019. He expressed satisfaction regarding the minerals issue and how it had been addressed in the updated Environmental Report.
25. On the archaeological issue, he remained unsatisfied that the Environmental Report had addressed the matter in a way that was proportionate to the potential significance of the proposed site for the community hub. He concluded that the plan did not meet its basic conditions. He offered three options as next steps and the Parish Council opted to undertake further work on the archaeological significance of the community hub site and to produce further updates to the Environmental Report. In this option, additional consultation would be required.
26. This Regulation revised submission draft RLWNDP has been prepared in response. The neighbourhood plan text has been amended and a new Evidence Paper on Archaeology has been prepared which sets out the detail of discussions with Historic England and additional evidence gathered.