

Policy and Programmes

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Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan Review – Modification Statement

Under Regulation 17(e)(ii) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the local authority must submit to the examiner a statement setting out whether or not the authority consider that the modifications contained in the modification proposal are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan which the modification proposal would modify, giving reasons for why the authority is of this opinion.

The Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was made as part of the district council's development plan on 15 May 2014. Since the adoption of the Woodcote NDP, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 was adopted in December 2020. Since the Woodcote NDP was made the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has also been updated, with the latest revision dated 20 July 2021.

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 set out a housing requirement for the Large Village of Woodcote. Policy H4 states:

'1. A housing requirement of 257 homes will be collectively delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans and Local Plan site allocations at the Larger Villages as follows:

- 46 homes at Nettlebed
- 96 homes at Sonning Common
- 115 homes at Woodcote

2. If a Neighbourhood Development Plan has not adequately progressed with allocating sites to meet these requirements within 12 months of adoption of this Local Plan, planning applications for housing in that Larger Village will be supported provided proposals comply with the remainder of the policies in this Development Plan.*

the Plan has reached submission stage and has allocated sufficient housing sites.

The Woodcote NDP Review is seeking to respond to these local and national planning policy changes. The following policy changes have been made:

- Policy C4: Community Facilities and Services – Minor text changes.
- Policy C5: School – Proposed new policy.
- Policy T1: Traffic Congestion – Minor text changes.
- Policy T2: Parking for the Library and Community Centre – Minor text changes.
- Policy T7: Residential Car Parking Spaces – Policy text updated.
- Policy E1: Green space and Landscaping – Policy text updated.
- Policy E3: Biodiversity and Wildlife Support – Proposed new policy.
- Policy E4: Settlement Boundary – Proposed new policy.
- Policy E5: Local Green Spaces – Proposed new policy.
- Policy E6: Important Views – Proposed new policy.
- Policy E7: Solar Energy Arrays – Proposed new policy.
- Policy H1: Number of New Homes – Policy amended to include new allocations.
- Policy H2: Tenancy Mix – Minor text change.
- Policy H3: Affordable Housing – Policy text updated.
- Policy H4: Allocation of Affordable Housing – Policy text updated.
- Policy H5: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites – Minor text change.
- Policy H7: Size of Homes – Policy text updated.
- Policy H8: Scale of New Development – Policy text updated.
- Policy H9: Infill Housing in the AONB – Policy text updated
- Policy H10: Backland Infill development in the AONB – Proposed new policy.
- Policy D1: Good Design – Minor text change.
- Policy D3: Secure by Design – Minor text change.
- Policy D4: Renewable Energy – Proposed new policy.
- Policy D5: Sustainable Homes – Proposed new policy.
- Policy D6: Sustainable Transport – Proposed new policy.
- Policy HS1: Site Allocations – Policy text updated.
- Policy HS2: Chiltern Rise Cottage and surrounding land – Policy text updated.
- Policy HS3: Woodcote Garden Centre, Reading Road – Policy text updated.
- Policy HS4: Former Reservoir Site, Greenmore – Policy text updated.
- Policy HS5: The Smallholding, Land at the end of Wood Lane – Policy text updated.
- Policy HS6: Behind Yew Tree Farmhouse 1 – Proposed new residential allocation.
- Policy HS7: Behind Yew Tree Farmhouse 2 – Proposed new residential allocation.
- Policy HS8: Beechwood Court – Proposed new residential allocation.
- Policy HS9: Land to the east of Church Farmhouse – Proposed new residential allocation.
- Policy ES1: The Old Coal yard – Proposed new employment allocation.
- Policy ES2: Church Farm – Proposed new employment allocation.
- Policy ES3: Wards Farm – Proposed new employment allocation.

Whilst a number of policy modifications are being proposed, the most significant modifications relate to the introduction of a settlement boundary around the built-up area of Woodcote, the allocation of 53 dwellings across 4 sites, the allocation of 0.80 Ha of employment land, and the introduction of policies covering biodiversity and climate change.

The Planning Practice Guidance sets out the types of modifications which can be made to the neighbourhood plan. These are:

- *Minor (non-material) modifications to a neighbourhood plan or order are those which would not materially affect the policies in the plan or permission granted by the order. These may include correcting errors, such as a reference to a supporting document, and would not require examination or a referendum.*
- *Material modifications which do not change the nature of the plan or order would require examination but not a referendum. This might, for example, entail the addition of a design code that builds on a pre-existing design policy, or the addition of a site or sites which, subject to the decision of the independent examiner, are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan.*
- *Material modifications which do change the nature of the plan or order would require examination and a referendum. This might, for example, involve allocating significant new sites for development.*

The council consider the proposed modifications materially affect the policies in the plan. However, although material, the proposed modifications are not considered to be so significant or so substantial as to change the nature of the plan. The goals and objectives of the plan have been updated, but they remain largely unchanged in their nature. Therefore, in the council's opinion, the plan should undergo an independent examination but it should not require a new referendum.