

Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Independent Examiner's findings on the significance or substance of the modifications proposed to the Neighbourhood Plan

Context

This note sets out my findings on the significance or substance of the modifications proposed to the Neighbourhood Plan.

It has been prepared in accordance with section 10 (3) of Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. In general terms the examiner is required to make an assessment on proposed reviews of neighbourhood plans on two matters. The first is the need or otherwise for an examination. The second is the need or otherwise for a referendum in the event that an examination is required.

The contents of this note need to be considered by the Parish Council.

Findings

I have read the submitted review of the Neighbourhood Plan and compared it to the 'made' Plan.

In addition, I have read the statements prepared both by the District Council and by the Parish Council on this matter.

Having considered all the information, including the representations received on the Plan, I have concluded that the significance or substance of the modifications proposed to the Neighbourhood Plan by the Parish Council is such that it requires both an examination and a referendum. In this context, I have concluded that the proposed modifications are so significant as to change the nature of the Plan.

I have reached this decision for the following reasons:

- the submitted Plan includes several policies (either new or modified) which are material modifications to the neighbourhood plan;
- in particular, the submitted review of the Plan extends the capacity of the Chiltern Edge Top site (SON 15) and includes an additional reserve site (SON23); and
- the submitted review of the Plan is responding to South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2035 whereas the 'made' Plan responded to the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. In particular, the submitted review has grappled with the housing requirements of the adopted Local Plan.

The Next Steps

Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 section 10 (4) requires the qualifying body to respond to this finding and in particular:

- to advise whether it wishes to proceed with the proposal or withdraw it, and
- to notify the examiner and the local planning authority of that decision.

I would be grateful if the Parish Council would address these matters and advise accordingly.

Other Comments

For clarity, this note relates only to the examination process. It does not address the extent to which the Plan meets the basic conditions.

In the event that the Parish Council wishes to continue with its promotion of a review of the Plan, the examination would proceed in accordance with the Communities and Local Government/NPIERS Guidance for service users and examiners (April 2018).

A link to the document is provided below for the convenience of the Parish Council.

[**npiers-planning-guidance-to-service-users-and-examiners-rics.pdf**](#)

The process would be similar to that which took place on the existing Plan in 2016 along with the refinements introduced in 2018 by the Guidance for service users and examiners.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

25 March 2022