

Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt, matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan provides a clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. In addition, it is a positive response to the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035.

The presentation of the Plan is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Plan makes good use of various maps and photographs.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise issues for clarification with the Parish Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of the examination report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

Selection of housing sites

Please can the Parish Council explain its approach towards the assessment of potential housing sites in the review of the Plan (as captured in the Traffic Light summary)?

Does the Parish Council wish to make any observations on the representation from L&Q Estates on this matter in general, and how it assessed SON 26 in particular?

In a more general context, should the Plan now refer to the appeal decision (June 2021) for 133 dwellings on Sparrows Hill (APP/Q3115/W/20/3265861) in relation to the overall commitments for housing development in the parish. Similarly, has the Parish Council assessed the extent to which this appeal decision may have any direct implications on the way in which the Plan meets the strategic housing requirements for the parish in the Local Plan?

What does the Plan mean in commenting that 'the permission given to the Little Sparrows retirement village should not influence the conclusions reached about Sonning Common's true housing need'?

Housing delivery

What assurance does the Parish Council have that site SON 15 is available and deliverable within the Plan period? A response which relies on information from the landowner/developers/ third parties (in whole or in part) would be acceptable.

How would the release of the identified reserve sites be triggered?

Is there an order in which the two reserve sites would be released if the trigger point was reached?

Policy RENV1

This policy reads more as an objective than as a land use planning policy.

Please can the Parish Council advise of its intentions for the policy?

Policy RDE1

This policy reads more as a process than as a land use policy.

Please can the Parish Council advise of its intentions for the policy?

SON1

For my clarity, does the Plan intend to restate the designation of the site as a local green space?

If so, has the Parish Council refreshed and updated its assessment of the local green space to establish if any changes have arisen on this matter since the Plan was 'made'?

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

In particular, does it wish to comment on the representations made by:

- Davis Planning Limited;
- Chilterns Conservation Board;
- Deanfield Homes
- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Johnson Matthey plc;
- L&Q Estates; and
- Oxfordshire County Council

The District Council's representation proposes a series of revisions to certain policies in the Plan. Does the Parish Council have any comments on the suggested revisions?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 10 May 2022. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

In the event that certain responses are available before others, I would be happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled, please could it come to me directly from the District Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy or the matter concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

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22 April 2022