

# Policy and Programmes

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Dear Mr Ashcroft

## **Culham Neighbourhood Development Plan– South Oxfordshire District Council response to Examiner’s Clarification Note of 17 October 2022**

Thank you for your clarification note dated 17 October 2022. In this you raised two overall points for the District Council to address. We will therefore answer these in turn:

- **Policy CUL2**

*I looked carefully at the site during my recent visit. I can see that the policy is attempting to grapple with the tensions of enabling the reopening of a drinking establishment on the site on the one hand and green belt policy on the other hand.*

***However, is the final paragraph of the policy necessary given it largely restates national policy and the matter is already addressed in the third criterion? As an alternative could it be weaved into the opening element of the policy?***

***Does the commentary in paragraph 5.13 inform the third criterion of the policy?***

We do consider the wording in the final paragraph of the policy necessary. As background, previous iterations of the Neighbourhood Plan (including the pre-submission version) indicated that some inappropriate development may be necessary to support the redevelopment of the site. Therefore, to ensure this site-specific policy provides sufficient clarity and precision, the council recommended additional policy text that clearly distinguished between appropriate and inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Taking on your suggestion of weaving the final paragraph into the opening element of the policy, may we suggest the following amended wording:

**CUL2:** Proposals which directly provide or assist in the provision of a public house or drinking establishment use at the former Waggon and Horses Public House, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported, provided: **they are appropriate for a Green Belt location as defined in national policy and:**

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[i. – x. remain as written; with the exception of one suggested addition to criterion iii, explained below]

~~Inappropriate development for a Green Belt location will only be supported as part of proposals to redevelop this site if very special circumstances can be demonstrated.~~

The commentary in supporting text paragraph 5.13 does not directly inform criterion iii (***‘iii. the location and design of any new buildings and structures are such that their height and bulk will not significantly harm the openness of the Green Belt’***). Therefore, may we recommend the following additional supporting text to address the issue of openness, as set out in NPPF paragraphs 149-150, for clarity and consistency:

5.13 The development principles set out in the policy will secure a sustainable scheme that will benefit the village and wider Parish. In the first instance it will be very important for the public house use to be retained in any future proposal and the policy therefore secures this in line with the provisions of Policy CUL1 Community Facilities; **it also highlights the importance that any scheme/redevelopment, in terms of Green Belt openness, does not have a greater impact than existing development, or cause substantial harm.** The landowner has also confirmed that it is intended to retain the ‘Waggon and Horses’ name for the redevelopment scheme.

We also recommend the following minor amendments to criterion iii, to create clarity and ensure consistency with all criterion in NPPF paragraph 149 (g).

iii. the location and design of any new buildings and structures are such that their height and bulk will not **have a greater impact on or substantially** harm the openness of the Green Belt

(As currently written only the second criterion of NPPF paragraph 149(g) was addressed in CUL2 criterion iii).

- **Policy CUL9**

*The approach taken on this matter is both comprehensive and ambitious. As the Plan acknowledges the policy context for encouraging higher energy efficiency standards at a local plan or neighbourhood plan scale is complex.*

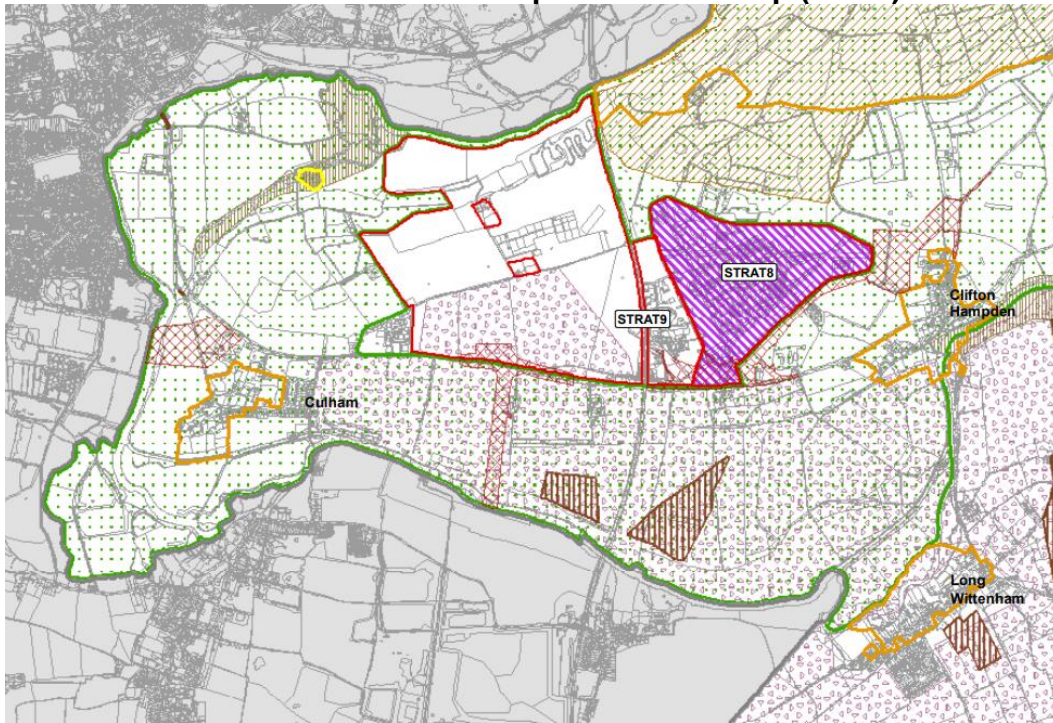
*Does the Parish Council have any comments on the District Council’s representation on this matter? In addition to what extent has the Parish Council assessed this policy against the Written Ministerial Statement of March 2015? In any event, Parts C, D and E of the policy read as supporting text (to Parts A and B) rather than as policies in their own right. Please could the Parish Council explain the basis on which it crafted these parts of policy?*

***Is the policy intended to apply to the development of the strategic site (land adjacent to the Culham Science Centre) in the adopted Local Plan (Policy STRAT9)? If so, has the impact of the proposed neighbourhood plan policy on the viability of that site been tested?***

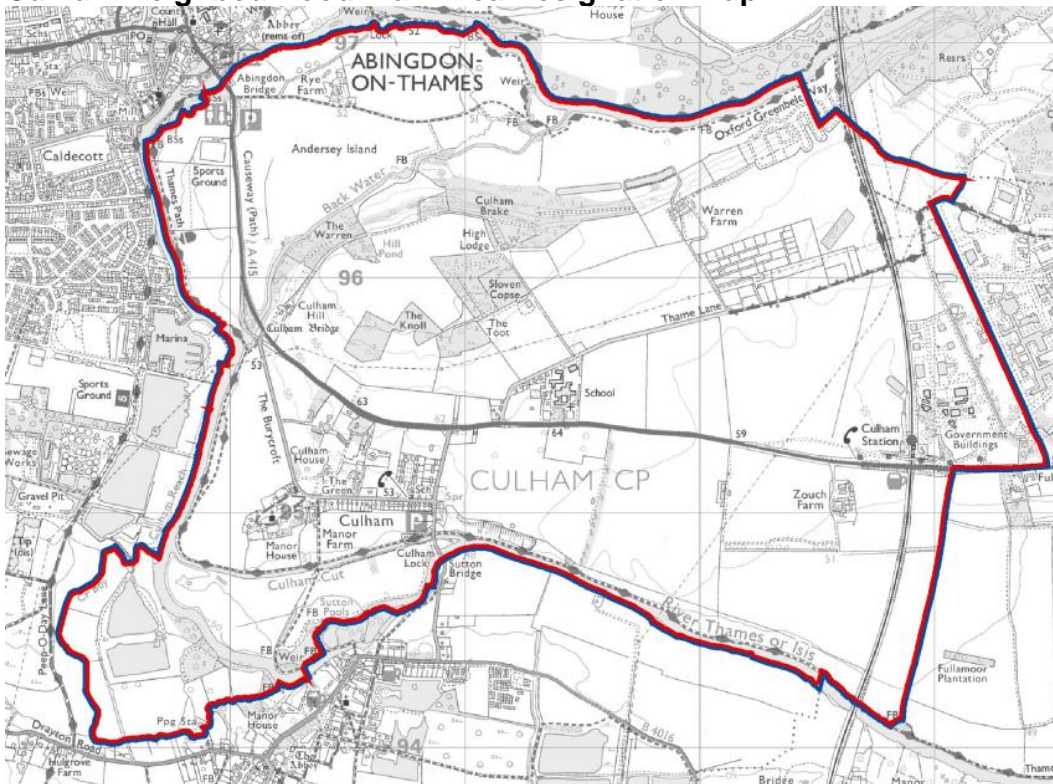
Policy CUL9 applies to the Neighbourhood Plan area as a whole: and this area encompasses the full SOLP STRAT9 strategic site (‘land adjacent to Culham Science Centre’) Policy area, as well as a small western section of the STRAT8 (Culham Science Centre) Policy area. We have provided extracts of the [South Oxfordshire Adopted](#)

[Policies Map](#) and the [Culham Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation](#) below, for reference:

**Extract from South Oxfordshire Adopted Policies Map (North) December 2020:**



**Culham Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation Map:**



With regard to viability, we can confirm that the requirements of SOLP Policy DES10 were assessed and viability tested through [South Oxfordshire Local Plan Financial Viability Assessment Report \(2020\)](#), which found DES10's requirements were viable for Culham STRAT9, confirming 'the full 100% carbon reduction requirement within DES11 [this is now DES10] is viable for Culham' (p74).



We have therefore only tested the viability of requirements in the SOLP Plan, demonstrating that the STRAT9 scheme would be viable. We have not tested the site for *additional* requirements, such as the impact of the proposed neighbourhood plan policy on the viability of the site.

Yours sincerely

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Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood)