

Statement of Significance following review of Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034

1. Introduction and purpose

Wheatley Parish Council is submitting a proposed revision to the made Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034. This revision is required because South Oxfordshire District Council have adopted the [South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035](#)

2. Regulation 14

Wheatley Parish Council note the Regulation 14 requirement for the parish council, as the qualifying body, to include a consultation statement to the local planning authority, when submitting a Neighbourhood Plan. When the submission modifies an existing, made, Neighbourhood Plan the qualifying body is required to:

- i.) Set out, with reasons why the qualifying body considers that the modifications to the made plan are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and;
- ii.) Submit a document which
 - a) Contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed modified neighbourhood plan
 - b) Explains how they were consulted
 - c) Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by each person consulted
 - d) Describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed within the proposed revised neighbourhood plan.

Wheatley Parish Council have submitted a Consultation Report that covers the points i and ii.

3. Background

The Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was examined between October 2019 and February 2020. In October 2019 the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government issued a temporary Direction on the Council in relation to its intention to withdraw the then emerging Local Plan from the examination process. The temporary Direction was made under the provisions of Section 21A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). This meant that the emerging Local Plan had no effect whilst the direction was in force.

In process terms, the timings involved, and the unusual circumstances experienced did not permit the submitted WNP directly to take account of the emerging local planning context during its examination. Nevertheless, the WNP was prepared within its wider development plan context. In doing so it relied on up-to-date information and research that underpinned existing and emerging planning policy documents from the District Council. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

On 3 March 2020 the Secretary of State issued South Oxfordshire District Council with a Direction under Section 27 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to progress the emerging Local Plan through examination to be adopted by December 2020. Adoption was completed by Full Council on 10 December 2020. It now forms part of the development plan for the district and replaces the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and Core Strategy 2012.

The Council took a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with Wheatley Parish Council to ensure the draft WNP had the greatest chance of success at independent examination.

In line with paragraph 136 of the NPPF, Section 10 of the WNP relied on strategic policies establishing the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries in the area. Policy STRAT 6 of the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan provided the necessary strategic framework for the Section 10 proposals. Policy GBBA1 contained a trigger ensuring detailed amendments to the Green Belt proposed in the WNP would not come into effect until the emerging Local Plan was adopted.

The temporary Direction on the emerging Local Plan, in place during the examination of the WNP meant that the emerging Local Plan had no effect whilst the direction was in force. Within this context, the examiner found that the intentions of the WNP were overtaken by events and as such the proposals to make detailed amendments to the Green Belt boundary did not meet the basic conditions.

The examiner's report, for reasons that were proper at the time, recommended the deletion of Section 10 in its entirety. However, the Local Plan 2035 adopted in December 2020 establishes the need for detailed amendments to the Green Belt to be made by the WNP.

4. Policy Changes/Revisions

Following the examiners recommendation, the qualifying body supported a review of WNP (WNPR). This was carried out during 2021 and 2022. WNPR contains changes of a minor (non-material) nature (e.g., correcting factual information, up[dating references to planning documents) and also major material changes as follows:

- i.) Design and Character principles
A new Design Code and associated policies have been included in Chapter 8. This has been prepared in an effort to address issues of housing design, layout and content, both for new developments and in-fill projects, The Design Guidance and Codes are listed in detail in Appendix 8.
- ii.) Amendment of Green Belt and Village Enhancements
Chapters 10,11 and12 describe the village enhancements that have been reinstated. These relate to the release of Green Belt, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Plan 2035 and the NPPF, rationalisation of the eastern part of the village and the provision of recreational space with a village green route.
- iii.) Parking Provision
Addresses Oxfordshire County Council's relevant car parking standards and design.
- iv.) Preservation of Historic Environment
New policy addresses the need to protect designated historic assets and their settings above and below the ground.
- v.) Energy Projects
Inclusion of individual and community energy projects, in line with South Oxfordshire Design Guide and the Chilterns Design Guidelines
- vi.) SPOBU
Updated to support the redevelopment of Oxford Brookes site, in relation to the adoption of South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2035, subject to plans conforming with development principles, previously addressed.

5. Conclusion

As the qualifying body, Wheatley Parish Council is fully supportive of the changes being proposed to the made WNP as summarised above. The changes are viewed as being substantial in nature and will significantly upgrade the goals and objectives of the current WNP. It is the views of the qualifying body that these changes will improve the character and amenities in Wheatley.

- i.) Provision of much needed housing in a time frame that is likely to be shorter than for the housing project proposed in LP2035 (STRAT14)
- ii.) Repurposing the current small industrial estate in Littleworth for housing
- iii.) Releasing an underused area of Green Belt for housing
- iv.) All new housing subject to a Design Guidance and Codes
- v.) Provision of new, much needed recreational space
- vi.) Rationalisation and consolidation of much of the village light industry to the east end of the village.

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