

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Date:	26 September 2017
Title:	SODC Local Plan 2033: Summary of Publication Draft Local Plan 2011 - 2033
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Purpose of Report

1. To provide a partial summary of the latest consultation draft of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and compare how it the Plan has changed since Second Preferred Options stage. To inform Members of the procedure for commenting on a publication local plan.

Background and representation procedures

2. The Publication Draft of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan has been reported at Scrutiny and Cabinet Committees on 13th and 21st September respectively, and will be reported to the District's Full Council on 28th September.

South Oxfordshire District Council will publish the final draft of the Local Plan on 11 October 2017 for a six-week consultation, ending 5pm on 22 November 2017.

The Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group have each been asked to send a representative to a District-wide briefing on the Plan on the evening of its launch.

The documents currently at South Oxfordshire's committees for agreement are:

- i) The Publication Draft Local Plan, 2011 – 2033, in two parts;
- ii) A schedule of key changes that should be read alongside the Publication Draft Plan (note however that some changes listed have already been made in the Plan, but are strangely not highlighted in the usual way);
- iii) A summary of the consultation received on the last draft of the Local Plan, the Preferred Options stage;
- iv) Two technical notes that explain progress made on the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Another 13 key evidence documents have been published alongside the Publication Draft Plan. These include evidence on transport impacts, infrastructure requirements, water, retail and employment needs and landscape capacity assessments.

The District has published its Plan in order that representations may be made before it is submitted for examination by a Planning Inspector. Representations must be focused on whether the Town Council believes:

- The Plan was prepared in a way that satisfies the legal requirements demanded when making a Local Plan;
- The District has fulfilled requirements with respect to the Duty to Cooperate with certain bodies, including neighbouring planning authorities;
- The Plan is sound, i.e., the plan has been positively prepared, is justified when compared against reasonable alternatives, will be effective over its plan period and is consistent with national policy.

The above means that where the Town Council is seeking alteration of the Local Plan, it will have to state why the change is necessary with reference to legal compliance, the duty to cooperate and one or more of the tests of soundness.

Summary of Publication document

3. Vision and Objectives

- Objective 3.3, to balance economic and housing growth to support sustainable journeys to work now has a clause stating the District cannot determine where people work – and that some of them will choose employment locations outside the district.
- Objective 5.1, to deliver high quality developments now states they should be in accordance with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

The Strategy

4. Housing:

- Wheatley has been added as an area identified for strategic level of growth, along with Berinsfield, Chalgrove and Culham.
- Policy STRAT1: The Overall Strategy – support for and enhancement of the historic environment has been added.
- Text has been changed to explain that although delivery of 750 homes a year would support economic growth, it would not provide for adequate delivery of affordable housing. Provision has been increased to 775, a mid-range figure from the SHMA.
- As Plans have to look at least 15 years ahead, the District have simply rolled onwards the Objectively Assessed Need from the SHMA by an extra two years, to give the Plan a life up to 2033.

Employment:

- The land identified as needed by the Employment Land Review 2015 has changed in this section from between 16 – 25 as identified in the Preferred Options Document to between 33.2 and 35.9 hectares. Figures now include land previously safeguarded from the Core Strategy, plus 5 hectares allocated to Berinsfield, while some account has been taken of completions.
- New broad locations have been identified for this land. Newly mentioned in this section are Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Henley-on-Thames and Wallingford, Crowmarsh Gifford and “supported employment locations at the other larger villages to be identified in NDPs”.
- Specific mention of office space provision in the market towns has gone.

Wider Housing Area:

- Mention of the calculation methodology for Oxford’s unmet need – the District assumed 25% of need – has gone.
- It is now simply stated that Oxford’s needs have been added to the District’s needs, and will “be met in a way that supports our spatial strategy”. They propose a stepped development trajectory that begins provision for Oxford’s unmet need in the 2021/2022 monitoring year, rather than starting from the day the Plan is adopted. Policy STRAT3 has been changed accordingly.
- The Strategy for Science Vale – mention of coordinating development through an urban design framework has been removed.
- Didcot Garden Town – the Didcot Masterplan Area map has been added as appendix 6.
- Strengthening the Heart of the District: STRAT5 has added the need for applications to be supported by the following assessments: landscape and visual impact, transport, air quality, arboricultural, ecological, heritage, archaeological (desktop) on top of the health impact

assessment. The policy adds another 9 criteria each development will have to provide, including high quality public transport facilities, noise assessments, water management plan, etc.

- Land at Culham Science Centre – The District clarifies it will plan for mixed use development across both the allocated site and Culham Science Centre. The District clarifies the review of the Green Belt at Culham will be through the Local Plan only.
 - Additional text states the new river crossing will also help develop proposals in the Vale’s Local Plan, the adopted Part 1 and emerging Part 2. Additional text states this is part of a package of transport infrastructure identified in the Science Vale Transport Strategy and includes the Clifton Hampden Bypass and Didcot Northern Perimeter Road.
 - The District recognise the timings and delivery of this infrastructure is complex, especially as some funding is unconfirmed. More work is being progressed with the County and Vale of White Horse Councils. This will inform any limitations on the level of homes to be provided in initial phases.
 - Policy STRAT6 changes the GB and Developable area to align, at 73 hectares. Text has been added to reduce the visual impact, especially from the openness of the Green Belt and the registered parkland of Nuneham House.
 - Policy STRAT7 now states there will be a significant contribution required for the new Thames crossing between Culham and Didcot Garden Town and the Clifton Hampden bypass. Other changes:
 - Reduced pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, from 12 pitches to 3
 - An increase in employment land is now declared – 7.3ha, rather than the 2ha previously allocated – on top of the 10ha from No.1 site, which will now be distributed across the two strategic allocations at master planning stage.
 - Two primary schools and a secondary school will be needed
 - 2,000 sq. m. of food retail floorspace and 1,700 sq. m. of non-food retail
 - Specific mention of the heritage assets to be respected
 - A layout that recognises the need for improvements to Culham Station and the wider network
 - The number and phasing of homes to be linked to planned infrastructure, and set down through any planning applications
 - Land specifically identified in Appendix 4 to be removed from the Green Belt.

Thame

- Text has been added to the introduction to mention Thame’s strong agricultural base, with its cattle and farmers markets. The good range of independent shops, pubs and eateries and events such as Thame Food Festival are seen to attract visitors.
- Aside from the above, Thame’s strengths are listed as being a finalist in the Great British High Street competition, having a well-preserved historic High Street and market place, a calendar of popular events, and employment opportunities. Our early adoption of a neighbourhood plan gets a mention.
- Thame-specific policies on housing, employment and retail within the Publication Plan are signposted.
- Policy TH1 - The Strategy for Thame – changes:
 - Added to the Policy in the Preferred Options document:
 - Schemes will be supported that conserve and enhance the Town’s heritage assets
 - Support will be given to development that provides new employment opportunities and improves the stock of existing employment areas
 - Removed from the Policy in the Preferred Options document:
 - Development that maintains the quality of place
 - Specific mention of town centre commerce, and the identification of sites suitable for future retail, leisure and community uses

- Mention of support for housing and employment uses above shops
- Allow development on suitable infill and redevelopment sites
- Development that gives support for schools, health and other service providers to meet their accommodation needs
- Development that gives a housing mix that responds to the needs of the housing market.

5. Delivering New Homes

- SODC have kept to their principle of strengthening the “heart” of the District. The remainder of the land for 12,000 homes allocated within the Core Strategy is safeguarded for development.
 - Table 5c Expected sources of housing supply: The numbers of completions shown has risen by 750 units since the Preferred Options document while the number of commitments has dropped by only 26 units.
 - The number of strategically allocated units has fallen though by 1,500 homes to 6,975. Confusingly, this does not align with the number of units described as strategic allocations. This is because the table runs from 2011 – 2033, and the strategic allocations are expected to continue to deliver homes after the plan period ends.
 - The table does not obviously include the allocation for Oxford City’s unmet need. It is assumed this is spread across the market towns and villages; in which case, again, not all the dwellings are completed within the plan period.
 - When the calculations are undertaken using the figures elsewhere in the Plan, table 5c excludes some 2,579 units (outside of the plan period). This makes the total number of units 24,990, not the 22,411 reported.
- Policy H1 Delivering New Homes
 - SODC have added in that housing development is that under use class C3, and accommodation for older people, land use class C2, where need is demonstrated. This will be permitted on allocated land and land identified in NDPs. Where NDPs do not progress planning applications will be considered against the housing targets for each settlement as identified in H3 and H4.
 - A statement has been added, pointing towards the housing completion trajectory in Appendix 8 that demonstrates the expected rates of delivery. This explains dwelling build against the backdrop of infrastructure needs.
 - A clause has been amended to state reuse of vacant or redundant buildings for housing will be permitted where the existing use is not in a viable use “as required by other policies of this plan”. Another states housing / conversions to housing will be permitted on previously developed land in and adjacent to the existing built-up areas of towns and larger villages.
- Market Towns
 - Para 5.13 – This has been amended to emphasise that the 15% growth figure needs to be balanced with social, economic and environmental factors as well as the availability of sites.
 - Para 5.13 – Mention is made of an assessment that was undertaken to “check the capacity of our towns to accommodate further growth”. It claims this took account of evidence collected as part of the plan-making process – including “land availability, infrastructure delivery and landscape capacity”.
- Policy H3: Housing in the towns...
 - The number of homes to be delivered through NDPs at the three market towns has fallen to 1,155. However, Henley’s share has fallen (see notes on commitments) and Thame and Wallingford’s both increased by 94 dwellings. Thame is now supposed to deliver 510 units.
 - A fourth clause has been added to safeguard Land at Wallingford Greenfield Neighbourhood for 555 dwellings.

- A statement has been added in line with others declaring the District will permit planning permissions within the towns if the NDP has not reached submission stage within one year of the adoption of the Local Plan.
- Affordable Housing
 - Para 5.42 – Text added - requests for departure from 40% affordable housing provision will request “robust” viability assessments.
- Policy H11: Housing Mix
 - Correction – dwellings meeting Part M (4) Category 2 (accessibility and adaptability) will be required on sites of 11 or more dwellings, not 10.
 - A statement that the housing mix should be in conformity with the District’s latest evidence, and NDP evidence where applicable, has been added.
- Housing Mix
 - Para 5.47 – New text explains further about how Policy H11 (housing mix) will be implemented. The latest table on mix, derived from the 2014 SHMA is given.
 - Para 5.55 – Text has been added to explain that evidence suggests that within 5 – 10 years the viability of ensuring all market homes are accessible and adaptable to category 2 should be tested. This is aimed at Didcot Garden Town and Berinsfield in order to bring the greatest impact.
- Policy H16: Infill Development
 - Text has been added to define infill development. A table has been added to inform what level of infill is to be permitted, per settlement type.
- Policy H17: Sub-division and conversion to HMOs
 - Text has been added for clarification - to state such development will be added within the built-up areas of the towns and villages, as identified in appendix 7, subject to the existing criteria.
- Policy H19: Re-use of rural buildings
 - A new policy and supporting text has been added. This is providing clarification of the type of existing building that can be converted.
- Policy H20: Rural Workers’ Dwellings
 - A new policy and supporting text has been added. Para 5.86 seems out of place and may be an “orphaned” paragraph that needs moving / deleting.
- Policy H21: Extensions to Dwellings
 - New text has been added to ensure that amenity space that accords with the SO Design Guide is provided for the extended dwelling.

6. Employment and Economy

- Economic Forecasts
 - Paras 6.10 – 6.11 – These paragraphs have been amended to explain an increase in the number of jobs planned for because of an addendum to the Employment Land Review of 2016. Based on the SHMA, the addendum projects an increase of 12,403 jobs 2011 – 2033, with an increase of between 6,227 – 6,734 “B” class jobs.
 - This has led to a higher land requirement from the earlier study which is now planned for.
 - Para 6.18 – In new text, the District list where employment land has been developed. Thame’s 3 hectare site is noted.
- Policy EMP1: Thame’s allocation for employment is lowered from 2.0 ha (Preferred Options) to 1.6 ha. Most of the other employment land is distributed as in the Preferred Options document, with the exception of Crowmarsh Gifford, has over 2.2 ha removed as an allocation.
- Policy EMP3: Retention of Employment Land - new text has been added:
 - where employment uses are causing a nuisance, replacement for alternative uses can only happen when it is clear that all efforts to mitigate the nuisance and / or the proposal secures an alternative site for the employment use.

- Where employment use is no longer viable, mixed-use schemes will be expected. If these are not viable the potential for any development to have employment will be considered as part of the planning application.
- Schemes that improve the stock of existing employment land or buildings and their environment will be supported.
- The Council's ongoing employment monitoring will be used to help determine planning applications.
- Policy EMP6: New Employment Land at Thame
 - The text has been altered to state an additional 1.6 ha will be delivered at Thame, rather than the 2 ha declared in the Preferred Options document.
- Policy EMP10: Community Employment Plans
 - New supporting text provides the basis for a new policy that demands development proposals demonstrate how opportunities for local employment, apprenticeships and training can be created; and how local produce, supplies and services can be sourced during construction and training.
 - Community Employment Plans may be required for any major development sites (as defined in Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning Order 2015. They should cover the above, and also training and work experience for younger people, including NEETs.
- Policy EMP12: Tourism
 - This policy has been amended to introduce scale, i.e., what development is appropriate, and where. For example, in the built-up areas of Towns conference facilities, museums, hotels will be supported, while in the villages more modest attractions of the same type. Hotel accommodation will be supported at service areas on main transport routes.
 - Outside of the towns and villages development including farm diversification projects will be supported as long as they are in keeping with the scale and character of their locality. Larger developments will be supported only in exceptional circumstances such as in support of a significant existing visitor attraction.
 - Para 6.38 – reference is made to a new joint Hotel Needs Assessment, prepared with Vale of White Horse DC. The need for new hotel accommodation in Thame, Henley-on-Thames and Wallingford is recognised.

Action Required

To note the report