

Thame Neighbourhood Plan

The Town Council began the Neighbourhood Plan process in September 2011 and worked hard to create a plan for the people of Thame. Community engagement was a fundamental part of the process and the Plan is a true reflection of the intention behind the localism agenda.

South Oxfordshire District Council appointed Mr Nigel McGurk, a highly qualified chartered town planner to hold an independent examination into the draft Neighbourhood Plan. He was a Planning Inspector for PINS and a Design Council CABE Built Environment Expert and drew on the significant experience from previous roles as a local government planning officer and from senior positions in the private sector.

The Plan passed the examination stage, which meant that the independent examiner was satisfied that the Plan met the basic conditions as set out in the Localism Act (2011). As part of the examination, a hearing was held in Thame Town Hall on 19 February 2013. This hearing was the first of its kind in the country and assisted the examiner in drawing his final conclusions.

The Neighbourhood Plan secured a yes vote at the referendum held on 2 May 2013 where over 76% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan. It was one of the first Neighbourhood Plans in the country to be 'made', meaning that it would carry significant weight when planning applications were considered in the Thame Neighbourhood Area.

The Thame Neighbourhood Plan was formally made part of the South Oxfordshire District Council's development plan on 18 July 2013.

South Oxfordshire District Council started a review of their Local Plan in June 2014. This document, once adopted, will set the next targets for housing and employment land that Thame needs to plan for. After nearly 5 years' work and many rounds of public consultation the Local Plan 2034 has been submitted to Government to allow for its independent examination in public. Once this Plan has been examined, and relevant amendments made, the Thame Neighbourhood Plan will no longer be the prime document used when deciding planning applications in Thame Parish.

In preparation for this the Thame Neighbourhood Plan review was announced at the Annual Town Meeting of 27 March 2018, when the first public consultation event was held. Work on the new Thame Neighbourhood Plan was suspended while late changes to the Local Plan were made. The review has started again though, formally recommencing with a Call for Sites for land that landowners and developers wish to make available for development.