

THAME NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2 OVERVIEW – JUNE 2022

Work on TNP2 commenced in April last year

It has involved a number of different strands of work, which have now been brought together in the draft version of the Plan.

These have included reviewing the effectiveness of policies in the 'made' Plan, looking, for example, at how these have been used and referred to in planning applications and decisions since the first Neighbourhood Plan was made.

That indicated, for example, that policies on housing mix were not being used effectively, as there was room for developers to justify their own mix

As such, the draft of TNP2 has been informed by a Housing Needs Assessment, providing a breakdown of housing types and tenures that should be provided in new development.

The current made Plan also includes policies on design and references to local character, but without really saying how that character is defined.

So, for TNP2, a character area assessment has been undertaken. It forms a supporting document to the Plan and is cross-referred to in policies.

In response to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan the Neighbourhood Plan identifies sites to be allocated for development.

Identifying the sites has involved assessment of all potential development sites submitted to the Town Council and South Oxfordshire for consideration. This process has been subject to several rounds of consultation, with the preferred sites emerging from that process now included in the draft of the new Plan.

The Plan also includes policies to be used should proposals for windfall development come forward in addition to or instead of the sites allocated in the Plan.

Alongside this, a Strategic Environment Assessment of the Plan and sites has been undertaken. This has been prepared independently, with the draft findings of that supporting the preferences identified in the Plan.

The consultation exercise also asked for additional ideas for inclusion in the Plan, and whether any changes had taken place since the first Plan was prepared that now need to be addressed.

The key message was around climate change and how we should respond to this.

The Thame Green Living Plan signals the Council's commitment to climate change and includes ideas and strategies that have been incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan, either within policies or where they are not strictly related to matters of land use of development, project ideas and aspirations. These are ongoing strategies that you might like to explore further and to which the Neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy might be directed.

By including them as projects the profile of these is raised and they may also become ideas that funding partners and service providers can help deliver.

Policies and projects are clearly defined in the Neighbourhood Plan through the use of different coloured boxes. It is the policies which are used for determining planning applications.

In terms of climate change, policies and projects in the Plan are included around matters such as flooding, biodiversity, active travel, sustainable construction and street greening.

The consultation also emphasised the importance of Thame retaining, and indeed strengthening, its identity as a compact, walkable place. This aligns well with emerging thinking around the idea of the '20-minute Neighbourhood', and the Plan seeks to show how we are responding to those initiatives.

There are some gaps in the Plan. These are primarily around design guidance for the allocated sites. Work is currently ongoing via the Locality Neighbourhood Plan support package to prepare these. The outcomes will be embedded in policies, similar to how site specific guidance was included in the first Neighbourhood Plan.

This approach also aligns well with the increasing importance attached to design at the national level.

Following receipt of this information the Plan will be ready for the next round of consultation.