

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

THAME NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2: FINAL DECISION STATEMENT

DATE OF PUBLICATION – 14/02/2025

1. Decision

- 1.1. Following an Independent Examination and a positive referendum result, South Oxfordshire District Council decided at the Council meeting on 13 February 2025:
1. To make the Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.
 2. To delegate to the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, Thame Town Council, the making of minor (non-material) modifications, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated on 12 April 2012.
- 2.2 Following the submission of the Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 Submission Version ('the Plan') to the Council, the plan was publicised, and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders. The consultation period closed on 25 July 2024.
- 2.3 South Oxfordshire District Council appointed an independent Examiner, Andrew Ashcroft, to review whether the plan met the basic conditions required by legislation and whether the plan should proceed to referendum.

- 2.4 The Examiner's Report concluded, subject to the modifications proposed in the report, that the plan meets the Basic Conditions. The council determined on 17 December 2024 that the Plan, as modified by the Examiner's recommendations, should proceed to referendum.
- 2.5 A referendum was held on Thursday 6 February 2025 and 89.0% of those who voted were in favour of the plan.

3. Reason for Decision

- 3.1 Section 38A(4)(a) of the 2004 Act requires the Council to make the neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area. Section 38A (6) of the 2004 Act states that the Local Planning Authority is not subject to the duty if it considers that the making of the Plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights.
- 3.2 The council determined on 17 December 2024 that the Plan, as modified by the Examiner's recommendations, meets the basic conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, is compatible with EU obligations and the Convention rights and complies with relevant provision made by or under Section 38A and B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended.
- 3.3 The council is satisfied that the preparation of the Plan had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European ECHR and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. The Council is satisfied that there has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known.
- 3.4 South Oxfordshire District Council produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination in May 2021 which concluded that the plan was likely to have significant effects on the environment, necessitating the production of a full SEA. As a result of this conclusion, the Qualifying Body commissioned a Strategic Environmental Assessment dated June 2023. The Strategic Environmental Assessment set out the introductions and background in sections 1 and 2. Section 3 sets out the scope of the SEA. Section 4, 5, 6, and 7 set out what the SEA has assessed and section 8 and 9 assess the environmental impact of the Neighbourhood Plan policies. Section 10 sets out the monitoring and next steps of the Plan. An addendum to the Report was published alongside the submitted Plan which set out how the changes made to the Plan following the pre-

submission consultation impacted the Report. The Environmental Report was well considered and detailed. It assessed the environmental conditions in the neighbourhood area and appraised the policies (and reasonable alternatives) against the framework developed through the Scoping Report.

- 3.5 The Council screened the Plan’s potential impact on EU Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and this was completed in May 2021. The HRA screening report concluded that the Plan would not have any likely significant effects on the integrity of European sites in or around South Oxfordshire, either alone or in combination with other plans or programmes and that an Appropriate Assessment is therefore not required.
- 3.6 A referendum relating to the adoption of the Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 was held on Thursday 6 February 2025.
- 3.7 The question which was asked in the Referendum was: *“Do you want South Oxfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Thame to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”*
- 3.8 The result was as follows:

Response	Votes	Per cent of total
Yes	2035	89.0%
No	248	10.8%
Turnout	2286	22.4%

- 3.9 The majority of local electors voted in favour of the plan; therefore, the Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 has become part of the council’s development plan.
- 3.10 As the plan was approved at the local referendum and the council is satisfied it would not breach and be otherwise incompatible with EU obligations or human rights legislation, the council is required make the Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 so that it continues to be part of the council’s development plan.
- 3.11 The Council decided at the Council meeting on 13 February 2025 to make the Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 so that it continues to be part of the council’s development plan.

4. Other Information

- 4.1 In accordance with Regulations 19 and 20 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, this Decision Statement and the made Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 can be viewed on the Council’s website:

www.southoxon.gov.uk/thame

4.2 This Decision Statement and the Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 can be inspected at:

Reception South Oxfordshire District Council Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE	If you would like to view these documents at the Council offices, please contact us on 01235 422600 or email: planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk to book an appointment.
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4.3 In accordance with Regulation 19(b) and Regulation 30 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, a copy of this Decision Statement has been sent to:

- The qualifying body, namely Thame Town Council
- The persons who asked to be notified of the decision

Signed:



Date: 14/02/2025

Ricardo Rios

Planning Policy Team Leader (Neighbourhood)