



East Hagbourne

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN - 2018 to 2033

Review versus the SODC Local Plan 2035
February 2021

Summary

The East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan (EHNP) was submitted for referendum on 14 March 2019 and the Plan was supported by 93.5% of those voting on a 41.3% turnout. It was adopted by South Oxfordshire District Council at a full Council meeting on 11 April 2019 and so becomes part of South Oxfordshire District Council's Development Plan.

Section 6 of the EHNP report sets out the provisions for monitoring the Plan and calls for reviews to take place at twelve months, on adoption of the emerging SODC Local Plan, at five years, and towards the end of the Plan lifetime.

A 12-month review was carried out by EHPC in March 2020. The made Plan, incorporating minor factual corrections was prepared on 7 July 2020 and approved by SODC on 22 December 2020.

South Oxfordshire District Council adopted the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 on 10 December 2020.

This document, which constitutes the review against the provisions of the new Local Plan, has been prepared by the EHNP Steering Group and endorsed by East Hagbourne Parish Council (EHPC) at its meeting on 18 February 2021.

The review concludes that the EHNP policies are in accord with the provisions of the new Local Plan and that no changes to the Neighbourhood Plan are needed at this time.

East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan Review

1. Context of this Review.

Since its adoption by SODC, the Neighbourhood Plan has full weight in deciding where any development should take place and the type and character of the development.

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This document, which constitutes the review against the provisions of the new Local Plan, has been prepared by the EHNP Steering Group and endorsed by East Hagbourne Parish Council (EHPC) at its meeting on 18 February 2021.

The review has covered the adopted plan itself, the Inspector's Report and the comments of the EHNP Examiner.

2. Relationship with EHNP objectives and Policies:

The LP2035 is comprehensive and includes many provisions that are supportive of our EHNP policies including

- Sustainable development
- Ensuring high building standards
- Value and conserve rural landscape and heritage
- Focus building on allocated sites
- Ensure development in smaller villages is appropriate.
- Conserve the character of villages
- Support for the DGT concept.

A summary of the LP policies most relevant to this review is contained in the Appendix. In this section, attention is focussed on two areas that require closer study:

Firstly, the Local Gap policies in the EHNP were highlighted by the EHNP Examiner. The Examiner noted that the gaps have been carefully chosen to reflect the Garden Town principles, which are now formally adopted into the LP. He also stated that he was satisfied that the potential coalescence of East Hagbourne and Didcot would not represent sustainable development and that the designation of local green gaps has an important role to play in this matter, but that in the event of any conflicting policy in the LP, the LP would prevail. He therefore specified that the extent of the gaps and the policy wording should be reviewed once the emerging Local Plan has been adopted.

Secondly, the housing policies in the LP strengthen the settlement hierarchy and put firm limitations on development on sites not allocated in the LP. For smaller villages, the provisions are equally firm, limiting development to infill and redevelopment that is appropriate to its location. This is all welcome, but given its importance, it is worthwhile to review the EHNP housing policies in this context.

VILLAGE CHARACTER - Local Gaps

The three Local Gap policies were highlighted for review by the EHNP Examiner, who wrote:

'The proposed local gaps identified in this Plan are an interim approach to this matter. Their extent and policy wording will be reviewed once the emerging Local Plan has been adopted.'

The policies are:

Policy VC1a – Lower End Field Local Gap

Policy VC1b – Coscote Fields Local Gap

Policy VC1c – The Green Corridor Local Gap

The purpose of the Local Gaps as stated in the EHNP is to maintain the distinctiveness of East Hagbourne from the town of Didcot and to conserve the setting of the village, the open landscape and long views of the countryside.

Para 7.8 of the LP states that the countryside and its relationship with our settlements contributes significantly to the district's character and is highly valued.

LP Policy ENV1 gives form to this support, saying that South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development. In particular,

development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire's landscapes this includes the landscape setting of settlements, important views and aesthetic and perceptual factors including tranquillity and enclosure.

The LP is therefore supporting of maintaining open countryside and long views.

The Lower End Field Local Gap (Policy VC1a) lies within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan area. The principles of the DGT Masterplan are adopted in policy STRAT3. This includes the statement that the town will be distinctive from surrounding towns and villages whilst respecting and protecting their rural character and setting. The policy is therefore sympathetic to the concept of Local Gaps.

The housing policies in the LP (see below) support maintaining limited development in small villages and in rural areas and there are no housing allocations in the LP that would impinge on the Local Gaps.

Finally, the LP Policy TRANS3 includes safeguarding of land for a southern Didcot spine road, covering a corridor west of Park Road that lies within the Coscote Fields Local Gap (EHNP Policy VC1b). Policy VC1b seeks to conserve the open landscape character of the area and retain and respect the identified long-distance views. There is no conflict between the two policies.

HOUSING

Para 3.43 of the LP says that the strategic approach for Science Vale includes protection for the distinctive character and heritage of Science Vale's towns, villages and countryside. This is implemented through a number of housing policies or which those most relevant to us are cited here.

LP Policy H1: Delivering New Homes gives general provisions and starts by confirming that residential development will be permitted at sites allocated in the LP or within Neighbourhood Plans. It further says that residential development on sites not allocated in the development plan will only be permitted where it is for one of the specified special purposes or situations. These include specialist housing for older people in suitable locations and infilling and brownfield sites within smaller and other villages as well as special circumstances defined in a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The provisions for smaller villages are set out more specifically in **LP Policy H8: Housing in the Smaller Villages**. This says that the Council will support development within the smaller villages in accordance with Policy H16 (infill, see below) and will support housing allocations within a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

However, the tone is that NPs will need to demonstrate that the level of growth they are planning for is commensurate to the scale and character of their village, expected to be around a 5% to 10% increase in dwellings since 1 April 2011. Allocated sites which are on greenfield sites should consider how development can meet the bespoke needs of their village, including housing mix, tenure and the amount of affordable housing.

EHNP Policy H3 allocates land at the west of the village for a development of up to 74 houses. This is supported by **EHNP Policy H2** which addresses local housing needs, particularly those of first-time and older buyers. The figure of 74 houses is higher than the guideline 5-10%, but these policies were informed by a detailed Housing Needs Assessment as well as the housing needs of the District as prevailing at that time.

The LP provisions for development in smaller villages are set out in **LP Policy H16**. This says that within smaller villages and other villages, development should be limited to infill

and the redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings. 2. Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location.

LP4.82 says that the development of large back gardens or land behind an existing residential frontage may be acceptable in principle, but not if it creates problems of privacy and access.

Brownfield Land (Previously developed land) is defined in NPPF2019 as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, but excluding land occupied by agricultural buildings and land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments.

This aspect is covered in **ENHP Policy H1** which states that development outside the allocated site must comply with the policies of the EHNP and the LP. The EHNP housing policies do not contravene the LP policies outlined above.

3. Conclusions

The SODC LP 2035 is comprehensive and provides clear guidance on planning and development, including in the smaller villages. There is good recognition of the value of village character and conserving heritage, landscape and views. The existing EHNP policies are considered to be robust and complementary to the LP policies and no changes are needed at this time.

APPENDIX: Review of the Local Plan 2035 (LP) provisions.

The introduction to the LP reiterates that where Neighbourhood Development Plans are prepared, they must be in general conformity with the Local Plan. This review does not attempt to describe all the policies in the LP, but rather to highlight those areas which interact most closely with the EHNP.

a) Didcot Garden Town

The LP gives recognition to Didcot's role as a Garden Town (DGT) and the map in Appendix 6 confirms that the New Road area north of Great Mead lies within the DGT Masterplan Boundary, with the rest of the parish lying within the DGT and Science Vale Area of Influence.

Policy STRAT3 incorporates the DGT Principles and outlines how the LP will implement the Garden Town initiative. In particular, the LP will:

- support and the delivery of ambitious Green Infrastructure provision and plan safe, healthy and active spaces;
- support the continued delivery of development in the Science Vale and Didcot Enterprise Zones

To deliver Didcot Garden Town, housing allocations at Didcot are made in Policy H2: these are largely retained from the previous plan and there are no new allocations within our parish.

Proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Area will be expected to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles which cover:

- Design that adds value to Didcot and will endure over time.
- Local Character - The Garden town will establish a confident and unique identity that is distinctive from surrounding towns and villages whilst respecting and protecting their rural character and setting.
- Density and tenure - The Garden town will incorporate a variety of densities.
- Transport and movement - The Garden town will reduce reliance on motorised vehicles. Cycling and pedestrian links will be enhanced.
- Heritage - The Garden town will conserve and enhance heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, within and adjacent to the development area.
- Landscape and Green Infrastructure - New development in the Garden town will enhance the natural environment, creating ecological networks to support an increase in biodiversity and supporting climate resilience.
- Social and community benefits - The planning of the Garden town will be community-focused, creating accessible and vibrant neighbourhoods.

b) Strategic Housing Allocations

2.7 highlights that planning for new development will primarily be at seven strategic locations throughout the District. East Hagbourne is not included in any of these areas.

A number of the key objectives are pertinent to our parish:

OBJ 1.1 Supports the settlement hierarchy, reinforcing east Hagbourne's role as a 'smaller village'.

OBJ 1.4 Focuses growth in Science Vale

OBJ 5.2 Supports development that respects the scale and character of our towns and villages, enhancing the special character of our historic settlements and the surrounding countryside.

OBJ 6.1 Champions neighbourhood planning, empowering local communities to direct development within their area.

OBJ 7.1 Protect and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, the landscape, green infrastructure and our waterways,

Policy STRAT 1

i) . . .focusing major new development in Science Vale including sustainable growth at Didcot Garden town and Culham . . .

viii) supporting smaller and other villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services;

ix) protecting and enhancing the countryside . . . by ensuring that outside of the towns and villages any change relates to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment;

x) supporting and enhancing our historic environment

c) Housing Provisions, including in smaller villages

3.43 says that the strategic approach for Science Vale includes protection for the distinctive character and heritage of Science Vale's towns, villages and countryside.

Policy H1: Delivering New Homes gives general provisions and starts by confirming that residential development will be permitted at sites allocated in the LP or within Neighbourhood Plans.

It further says that residential development on sites not allocated in the development plan will only be permitted where it is for one of the following specific purposes:

i) it is for affordable housing on a rural exception site or entry level housing scheme;

ii) it is for specialist housing for older people in locations with good access to public transport and local facilities;

iii) it is development within the existing built up areas of towns and larger villages:

iv) it is infilling, and brownfield sites within smaller and other villages;

v) it is brought forward through a community right to build order;

vi) there are other specific circumstances defined in a Neighbourhood Development Plan;

vii) it would bring redundant or disused buildings into residential use and would enhance its immediate surroundings;

viii) the design is outstanding or innovative and of exceptional quality and would significantly enhance its immediate setting.

The residential development of previously developed land will be permitted within and adjacent to the existing built-up areas of towns, larger villages and smaller villages.

NOTE: Brownfield Land (Previously developed land) is defined in NPPF2019 as:

"Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

The provisions for smaller villages are set out more specifically in

Policy H8: Housing in the Smaller Villages (presented here in its entirety)

1. The Council will support development within the smaller villages in accordance with Policy H16 (see below). Where a Parish Council wishes to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan and make housing allocations within it to support further growth, the Council will support this.
2. Those Neighbourhood Development Plans will need to demonstrate that the level of growth they are planning for is commensurate to the scale and character of their village, and this is expected to be around a 5% to 10% increase in dwellings above the number of dwellings in the village in the 2011 census (minus any completions since 1 April 2011).
3. Neighbourhood Development Plans allocating sites on greenfield sites in these locations should consider how development can meet the bespoke needs of their village, including housing mix, tenure and the amount of affordable housing.

4.37 says that smaller villages have no defined requirement to contribute towards delivering additional housing (beyond windfall and infill development) to meet the overall housing requirement of South Oxfordshire and that there is a sufficient supply of housing from strategic allocations and from existing planning permissions. However, parishes which wish to proceed with preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan will be allowed to do so, provided that the levels of growth are commensurate to the size of the village.

4.38 specifies that proposals in a neighbourhood development plan must be in conformity with the strategic policies in this Plan, and policies in the NPPF.

Policy H8 (above) says that the Council will support development within the smaller villages in accordance with

Policy H16: Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment

1. Within smaller villages and other villages, development should be limited to infill and the redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings.
2. Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location.
3. Where a proposal encompasses residential development of land behind an existing frontage or placing of further dwelling/s behind existing dwelling/s within the existing site, the proposals should demonstrate that:
 - i) the privacy of existing and future residents will be protected;
 - ii) means of access can be appropriately secured; and

iii) development would not extend the built limits of the settlement.

4.82 says that the development of large back gardens or land behind an existing residential frontage may be acceptable in principle if it meets the criteria in the above policy. However, such development will not normally be permitted if it creates problems of privacy and access.

With respect to employment in rural areas, the LP says:

Policy EMP10: Development in Rural Areas

1. Proposals for sustainable economic growth in rural areas will be supported. The Council will:

- i) support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings;
- ii) promote the sustainable development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- iii) support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses, communities and visitors in rural areas, and which respect the character of the countryside. This will include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- iv) promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

d) Landscape and countryside

Although the AONB and green Belt figure strongly in the LP, the value of other countryside is recognised:

7.3 The whole District is rich in biodiversity . . . and forms a part of a wider ecological network across the County. Maintaining sustainable agricultural land and practices is important in preserving the district’s rural character and landscape.

7.4 The valley and tributaries of the River Thames are highly attractive features of the landscape and its special visual and environmental qualities are for the most part unspoilt. The Thames Valley is noted for its peace, tranquillity, biodiversity and cultural heritage, which is essential to preserve.

7.6 The district has a rich cultural history that has provided South Oxfordshire with over 3,500 listed buildings, 52 scheduled monuments,

Policy ENV1: Landscape and Countryside says that South Oxfordshire’s landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development.

Development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire’s landscapes.

it mentions a number of particular features to be protected including:

- trees, hedgerows and field boundaries;
- irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees;
- the landscapes of the River Thames, its tributaries and flood plains;

- the landscape setting of settlements;
- areas or features of cultural and historic value;
- important views and visually sensitive skylines; and
- aesthetic and perceptual factors such as tranquillity, wildness, intactness, rarity and enclosure.

More specific provisions are given for watercourses:

Policy ENV4: Watercourses , includes:

1. Development of land that contains or is adjacent to a watercourse must protect and where possible, enhance the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity.
3. Proposals should avoid the culverting of any watercourse. Opportunities taken to remove culverts will be supported.
6. Sites for new development with existing culverts will be expected to investigate the feasibility of de-culverting the watercourse. . . .

Policy ENV6: Historic Environment

1. Includes . . . structures or historic landscapes that contribute to local historic and architectural interest . . .
3. Non-designated Heritage Assets, where identified through local or neighbourhood plan-making, Conservation Area appraisal or review or through the planning application process, will be recognised as heritage assets in accordance with national guidance and any local criteria.
- 7.29 specifically includes Conservation Area Character Appraisals as carrying weight.

Policy ENV9: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

7.40 A network of historic routes also exist as archaeological features in the district, ranging from pre-historic tracks, Roman roads, medieval coffin ways, salt roads, and droveways, to later turnpike roads. These routes are integrated into the district's landscape and serve an important function in linking settlements and forming a unique setting for the district's distinctive landscape features and will therefore be protected.

e) Building Design and Quality

8.3 states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, which is an important component of sustainable development.

New development should create a sense of place and enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit there.

8.4 says that SODC is committed to the highest quality of design in new development of all types and scales. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide seeks to define high quality development, the principles to achieving it and raise the profile of high-quality design throughout the district.

A number of policies are set out to achieve this including:

Policy DES2: Enhancing Local Character

8.10 All proposals should take account of the local context, including the local character and existing features.

8.12 The Council encourages communities preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans to consider what the positive features are in their local area and identify them as part of a made plan.

8.13 . . . To avoid developments reflecting previous poor-quality design the Council may undertake its own contextual analysis.

Policy DES6: Residential Amenity

Development proposals should demonstrate that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, when considering both individual and cumulative impacts, in relation to the following factors:

- i) loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight;
- ii) dominance or visual intrusion;
- iii) noise or vibration;
- iv) smell, dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions;
- v) pollution, contamination or the use of / or storage of hazardous substances; and
- vi) external lighting.

Policy DES8: Promoting Sustainable Design

1. All new development, including building conversions, refurbishments and extensions, should seek to minimise the carbon and energy impacts of their design and construction.
2. All new development should be designed to improve resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change.
5. A sensitive approach will need to be taken to conserve the special character of designated and non designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

f) Community and Recreational Facilities

10.1 The ability to access local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship forms an essential part of the quality of life for residents of the district. There are policies for the provision of new community and recreational facilities and for existing facilities:

Policy CF1: Safeguarding Community Facilities sets stringent criteria to prevent loss of an essential community facility or service through change of use or redevelopment.

Policy CF4: Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

1. The Council will seek to protect, maintain and where possible enhance existing open space, sport and recreation, play facilities and land including playing fields to ensure their continued contribution to the health and well-being of visitors and residents.

Supporting text in 10.12 states that this policy is intended to safeguard all existing recreation facilities whether formal or informal or publicly owned, and whether buildings or open land, including allotments.

The LP is, however, silent on public footpaths which are a significant recreational asset in our parish

g) Other Aspects

Policy TRANS3: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes:

1. Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following identified transport schemes, including:

- Southern Didcot Spine Road
