

14 February 2019

Planning Policy
South Oxfordshire District Council
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Milton
Abingdon
OX14 4SB

Dear Sir / Madam,

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL REGULATION 19 PUBLICATION VERSION CONSULTATION

Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School, Sonning Common own a large site on the south-western side of Sonning Common (outlined in red on the enclosed plan) which forms part of the school complex. The site is allocated for the provision of 37 homes in the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (made 13th October 2016).

The School have appointed a project team (led by Savills as Planning Consultants) to prepare a planning application to bring forward the allocation. A number of technical reports to support the preparation of the application are currently being undertaken.

In this context these representations:

- support housing growth at larger villages (namely Sonning Common) in accordance with the Council's proposed Spatial Strategy;
- review Policy H4: Housing in the Larger Villages; and
- set out how the existing neighbourhood plan allocation at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School has the potential to support increased capacity to meet the proposed additional growth allocated to Sonning Common in the Publication Version Local Plan.

Spatial strategy

The Spatial Strategy of the Publication Local Plan proposes to principally focus development at Science Vale and sustainable settlements (which include towns and larger villages). The Settlement Hierarchy, at Appendix 7 of the Publication Local Plan, identifies the 'Towns', 'Larger Villages', 'Smaller Villages' and 'Other Villages' within South Oxfordshire. Paragraph 4.13 states that larger villages have a wide range of services and facilities in sustainable locations and that development is being directed to larger villages to complement the spatial strategy.

Sustainable growth in larger villages brings a number of benefits, including supporting important services and facilities in these locations. Sonning Common is categorised as a larger village within the Publication Local Plan. Facilities and services include a health centre, dentist, care home, primary school, Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge Secondary School, Bishopswood Special School, a village hall, children's play areas, retail outlets, public houses, estate agents and various other facilities and services. Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School is a key service within this larger village.

We support the proposal to direct development towards sustainable settlements and the contribution that this growth will make in supporting the services and facilities within larger villages such as Sonning Common.

Policy H4: Housing in the larger villages

The Publication Version of the Local Plan proposes a 15% growth in residential development in the larger villages over the plan period (2011 to 2034). Taking into account completions and existing commitments, Draft Policy H4 'Housing in the Larger Villages' of the Publication Local Plan states that *'a housing requirement of 499 homes will be collectively delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans and Local Plan site allocations at the larger villages...'*. This includes provision for 108 homes at Sonning Common.

The proposals to support and enhance the roles of the larger villages, which includes Sonning Common, to ensure that these places *'continue to grow and support the services and facilities that sustain them'* (para 5.18) is supported.

Paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities, *'to provide a **minimum** of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies...'* (our emphasis). In order to ensure the soundness of the plan and that it is positively prepared, justified and consistent with national planning policy, the following change is therefore requested to Policy H4:

1. *"A housing requirement of at least 499 homes will be collectively delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans and Local Plan site allocations at the Larger Villages delivering at least as follows:
... 108 homes at Sonning Common"*.

Neighbourhood Plan Allocation at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge

Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School is located to the south-west of the village, outside of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Part of the site is allocated for 37 dwellings within the Sonning Common made Neighbourhood Plan (reference SON 15a 'Chiltern Edge Top'). As stated within the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan *"The allocation and development of SON 15a [Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School] is intended to provide funds to enable the school to achieve urgently needed improvements to its infrastructure and facilities thereby ensuring its future viability. This site would be considered to be in the overall interest of the community."*

The school is committed to bringing the allocation forward in order to enable the school to use the funds to undertake urgently needed improvements and provide housing which will make a valuable contribution to housing need within Sonning Common. The school has therefore appointed a project team to prepare a planning application and technical work is currently being undertaken to inform the application. In commencing preparation of an application the school and Savills have met with Sonning Common Parish Council to discuss initial thoughts.

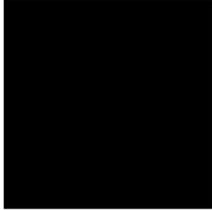
In Sonning Common, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party have already commenced a review of their made Neighbourhood Plan and liaison with the Parish Council will continue throughout this process.

Initial feasibility work undertaken in preparation for the forthcoming planning application is indicating that the existing allocation at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School has the capacity to accommodate a greater number of dwellings within the site area than the 37 dwellings it is currently allocated for. The site therefore has the potential to assist in meeting some of the additional growth proposed for Sonning Common in the publication Local Plan. The provision of additional dwellings on the site would make more efficient use of the site whilst protecting the wider environment and ensuring a high quality development as supported by Paragraph 122 of the NPPF .

We trust these comments form a useful contribution to this stage of preparation of a new Local Plan for South Oxfordshire District Council and wish to be kept informed as the plan progresses through Examination.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathon Peck
Chief Financial and Operations Officer
Maiden Erlegh Trust

Enc. Location Plan.