



## BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### CONSULTATION STATEMENT

JUNE 2024

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This Consultation Statement has been prepared for the submitted Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan 2024 – 2035 (NP2) by the qualifying body, Berinsfield Parish Council (BPC).
2. The legal basis of the statement is provided by Regulation 15 of Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), which requires that, “where a qualifying body submits a plan proposal to the local planning authority, it must include a consultation statement”. It then states that a statement means a document which:
  - “Contains details of the persons and bodies that were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
  - explains how they were consulted;
  - Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
  - Describes how those issues and concerns have been considered and where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan”.
3. The statement comprises a summary of the stakeholder engagement process and a number of appendices of supporting information.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

4. The project has had two phases. The first commenced in 2013 and culminated in the withdrawal of the first plan (NP1) from its examination in 2016. The NP2 project commenced in 2019.
5. For completeness, a copy of the submitted Consultation Statement of October 2015 for NP1 is attached in Appendix A. BPC notes that the examiner was satisfied that NP1 had met its consultation obligations.
6. As that statement explains, NP1 itself was a follow on from a series of public engagement activities by the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), and by BPC in the years before with a view to regenerating the village and its facilities. NP1 sought to bring those proposals together following the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy in late 2012 and with the (then) emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
7. With NP2, BPC sought to plan for the consequences arising from the anticipated adoption of the Local Plan 2035 (adopted in December 2020). The Local Plan contains proposals releasing 132 Ha of land from the Oxford Green Belt at Berinsfield for the creation of a ‘Berinsfield Garden Village’ (BGV) of 1,700 new homes and 5Ha of new employment land.
8. As those proposals were evolving and after the Local Plan was adopted BPC explored with SODC and its new BGV team whether or not NP2 may play a role in bridging the gap between the allocation policy and planning applications aligned to a BGV Masterplan.

9. During those discussions both the BGV team and the main land promoter, Ptarmigan Ltd, carried out extensive engagement activities to inform the BGV Masterplan. BPC therefore decided there was a high risk of 'consultation fatigue' within the community if it chose to carry out additional engagement on NP2.

10. Instead, it took informal soundings from local people and organisations to decide if NP2 should look to exert a significant role in the BGV initiative or should only bring forward those proposals in NP1 that were positively examined. BPC has strong, longstanding relationships with the other key public and private stakeholder organisations in what is a tight knit village – taking soundings in this way is therefore effective.

11. The discussions indicated that stakeholders continued to support the key principles and proposals of NP1 and they considered a majority of the local community would do too. In summer 2023 BPC therefore decided to follow the second of these options, with the confidence that a majority of the community would be happy for it to do so. SODC gave its support to that approach and assisted in identifying those proposals of NP1 that should form NP2. BPC approved the publication of NP2 for its statutory consultation under Regulation 14 for an eight week period commencing on 25 September 2023 and ending on 20 November 2023.

## **THE NP2 REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION**

12. On the first date of that period, BPC published the document on its website and emailed every statutory consultee per Schedule 1 of the Regulations notifying them of the deadline and contact address for receiving representations and providing a link to the document webpage.

13. It also emailed every local organisation and business in the Parish boundary that it had the contact details for and placed posters around the village (see Appendix B). A printed copy was placed in the library to view and everyone was given the opportunity to post responses to the Parish Clerk at BPC if they were not able to use email.

14. BPC logged all of the responses submitted during the consultation period. They were received from:

- Avison Young for National Grid Electricity Transmission
- Avison Young for National Gas Transmission
- Phil Bridge, a local resident
- Sarah Dodd for the Berin Centre
- David Eldridge, a local resident
- David Greenaway of the Berinsfield Community Association
- Historic England
- Lichfields for the Vistry Group, Corpus Christi College and S. J. Farrant & Son
- Natural England
- Oxfordshire County Council
- CBRE for Ptarmigan Ltd
- Queenford Lake Water Sports Centre
- Daniel Scate of the Berinsfield Community Association
- South Oxfordshire District Council

- Thames Water
- Alan Woodington of the Berinsfield Community Association

15. All of the responses were reviewed by both BPC and its professional advisors, ONH. ONH produced a report (see Appendix C) summarising the main comments made with recommendations for main modifications to be made to the final version of NP2. This was discussed by BPC and the recommendations approved at its meeting on 4 December 2023.

16. In general the comments were supportive of NP2 with only a couple of objections relating to affordable housing and potential conflicts between the plan and the Local Plan 2035. These problems were the result of some inadvertent ambiguity in policy and supporting text drafting, which were straightforward to correct. The report concluded that by making the modifications it recommended those objections should be resolved.

17. Despite its best efforts to publicise the consultation in accordance with Regulation 14, BPC's concerns of 'consultation fatigue' were borne out with few very local people making comments. It is expected that the recent and further engagement activities on the BGV Masterplan, which will tackle more specific spatial proposals than was made possible for NP2, will generate healthier engagement.

## **SUMMARY**

18. BPC has been committed to representing the local community through the planning of proposals that will have profound effects on the future of the village. Berinsfield will change as a settlement more than any other in South Oxfordshire over the next decade.

19. With hindsight, it sought to do so with a little too much enthusiasm and haste with NP1, which was brought forward too far ahead of the then emerging Local Plan 2035, which had not yet made the necessary changes to the Green Belt. But the community was very supportive of the vision, objectives and policies of NP1, which was trying to be positive about the future regeneration of the village.

20. But the last decade has exhausted the community as the length of time it has taken for the BGV Masterplan and its crucial regeneration proposals to emerge has been much longer than originally planned. BPC considers that NP2 continues to have some land use policy value and is supported by a majority in the community.

21. Although it would always have wanted to achieve greater success with its NP2 engagement activities, BPC remains satisfied that it has met the obligations of the Regulations in this regard throughout of the project.

## APPENDIX A

SEE

[https://www.berinsfield-pc.gov.uk/\\_UserFiles/Files/Neighbourhood%20DP/Consultation%20Summary.pdf](https://www.berinsfield-pc.gov.uk/_UserFiles/Files/Neighbourhood%20DP/Consultation%20Summary.pdf)



## **BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Visit the website  
[www.berinsfield-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood](http://www.berinsfield-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood)

### **NOTICE OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR THE BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

(Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012)

**Berinsfield Parish Council is pleased to announce the launch of the first round of statutory consultations (Regulation 14 pre-submission) of the Neighbourhood Plan which will open on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 and close at 4 p.m. on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2023. (the consultation has been extended by two weeks)**

The pre-submission draft of the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan can now be viewed on the Parish Council website :

[www.berinsfield-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood](http://www.berinsfield-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood)

Paper copies are available for viewing in Berinsfield Library, Green Furlong, Berinsfield, OX10 7NR, which is open at the following times :-

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday	10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Thursday	2 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Saturday	10 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

**Comments should be submitted by 4 p.m. on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2023:**

**By email:** [Clerk@berinsfield-pc.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@berinsfield-pc.gov.uk)

**By post:** Berinsfield Parish Council, Highsett, Alchester Road, Chesterton, Oxon, OX26 1UN

## APPENDIX C

### BERINSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 ANALYSIS: STATUTORY BODIES

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 This note summarises the representations made by the statutory bodies and landowners on the second Pre-Submission version of the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan (NP2) during its recent 'Regulation 14' consultation period. It concludes by recommending main modifications to Berinsfield Parish Council (BPC) on how to modify NP2 so that it may be submitted to the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), to arrange for its examination and referendum.

#### 2. Representations

2.1 Representations have been received from:

- a. SODC
- b. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)
- c. Natural England
- d. Berinsfield Community Association (three separate comments received)
- e. Berin Centre
- f. Thames Water
- g. Historic England
- h. National Gas Transmission
- i. National Grid Electricity Transmission
- j. Queenford Lake Water Sports Centre
- k. CBRE for Ptarmigan
- l. Lichfields for Vistry Group, Corpus Christi College and S. J. Farrant & Son

2.2 Other statutory bodies were consulted but none have made representations.

#### 3. Analysis

3.1 This note focuses only on the representations that have raised significant issues. In Section 4 of this note are a small number of recommendations on those modifications. All other matters are considered to be of minor consequence, including document structure and wording changes, which can be addressed in finalising the document.

##### Key Issues

3.2 The representations made by SODC, OCC and Ptarmigan (the Mount Farm developer) have raised some important matters of principle on:

- The relationship between NP2 and the adopted Local Plan, most especially its policies STRAT10i (the Mount Farm strategic allocation) and H9 (on housing mix)
- The future strategy for primary school place provision
- The future strategy for community hub provision



3.3 These matters affect most policies in NP2 but especially H1 and H2 (on housing); L1 and L5 (on healthcare and retail/leisure); R1-R6 (on recreational facilities, including the 'community hub' proposal); and C1 and C2 (on community facilities). In each case, there remain differences in how the Garden Village vision should be translated into locational policies that have yet to be resolved by the masterplanning work.

3.4 This is most obvious in the options for delivering additional primary school places and a 'community hub'. NP2 expects both to be achieved in such a way as to ensure they serve the whole village – existing and new – from a single location, per policies C2 and R6 (and implied in others). SODC, OCC and Ptarmigan wish to leave open the option of having two primary schools and two hubs, each serving the existing and the new communities.

3.5 Although not explicit in the NP2 vision and objectives, it is understood BPC and local community have been keen not to let the strategic allocation scheme run the risk of creating an 'us and them' two villages. Hence, the desire in policies C2 and R6 to create the essential social 'glue' of single facilities, likely located at what would be the new centre of the village on or near Fane Drive.

3.6 The choice of which approach to use could make a profound difference to the future success of Berinsfield as a sustainable community. If SODC etc will not support the NP2 preferred approach, then BPC will have to modify its policies accordingly – it is very unlikely the NP2 examiner will support policies that will shape a strategic allocation in this way if the planning authority at least does not agree.

3.7 These matters point more generally to an unresolved question of how NP2 and Local Plan relate to each other. BPC has adopted a pragmatic approach to completing NP2 and SODC has been reluctant to use the plan pro-actively to formalise and implement its Garden Village masterplanning work. But NP2 has sought to influence some of that work and some policies – notably C2 and R6, but some other too to a certain extent – have been 'caught between two stools' as a result.

3.8 Ptarmigan have also queried this matter and have objected to Policy H1 setting out a specific affordable housing mix for the strategic allocation. However, SODC has only suggested improved wording for clarity, and has not considered the policy to be in conflict with H9. There appears no need to amend it but it would be helpful for the supporting text to explain how the mix has been evidenced.

#### Other Matters

3.9 The document requires updating and correcting, as pointed out by a number of respondents, but this should be straightforward.

3.10 NP2 is missing a Policies Map, which is necessary to identify a number of the policies 'on the ground'. A Policies Map should therefore be appended to the final document. The use of thematic policy coding (e.g. R3) can be confusing as that method has been used in the adopted Local Plan. Most NPs adopt policy coding that is distinctive to their locality, in this case BERIN1, BERIN2 etc. though they can continue to be ordered by policy theme.

3.11 On other specific policy comments, SODC suggests a modified EM3 to support a broader range of employment development than just at the Deacon's Estate, which seems a reasonable point to consider. For other policies, there is a need to tighten wording and to update the supporting text to take account of more recent data.

3.12 In terms of other respondents, it is noted that a number of members of the Berinsfield Community Association wish NP2 to be clearer in its support for its existing facilities having a distinct social purpose in the village. The operator of Queenford Lakes has suggested a new reference to its business and land in respect of support future employment development. The Parish Council should consider modifying NP2 accordingly.

3.13 It is noted that Vistry Group has made representations on land it controls covering much of the rest of the parish to the north and east of the village. It correctly observes that NP2 is not able to release land from the Green Belt for allocation, but wishes to draw BPC's, and of course SODC's, attention to what it regards as the potential for that land to contribute to the Garden Village.

#### **4. Conclusions & Recommendations**

4.1 For the most part, NP2 has been supported by the key stakeholders. There are a number of modifications to make across the document to correct errors and omissions and to improve its clarity (see Annex A). These will be straightforward to make and many respondents have suggested rewording for that purpose. In which case, therefore, it is considered NP2 may proceed to the submission stage with no need for major modifications that would require another consultation under Regulation 14.

4.2 However, the consultation document has also highlighted some important, unresolved matters of the future functioning of the village, of a nature and scale that cannot be left unaddressed in the final version.

4.3 It is therefore recommended that:

1. The straightforward, relatively minor modifications are made in line with the suggestions of the respondents
2. The policy coding is modified as suggested above, policy titles are used (see Annex A) and a Policies Map is added
3. There is no modification to the affordable housing policy
4. Further discussions are held with SODC on the resolution of those key matters identified above before deciding on the final approach taken in the submitted NP2
5. Subject to the conclusion of that recommendation, NP2 is modified and submitted for examination.

ANNEX A

New Policy No.	Policy Title	Existing Policy No.	Recommendations
BERIN1	Affordable Housing	'H1'	§7.2 etc converted into proper policy
BERIN2	Housing Mix	H2	Modified per SODC (Mod 31)
BERIN3	Water	H3	Modified per SODC (Mod 34)
BERIN4	Self Build & Custom Build Homes	H4	Minor mods
BERIN5	Brownfield Land	H8	Retitled and minor mods
BERIN6	Community-led Renewable Energy	ENV1	add reference per SODC (mods 38 and 39)
BERIN7	Biodiversity	ENV2	no change
BERIN8	Light Pollution	ENV3	no change
BERIN9	Crime Prevention & Reduction	ENV4	Modified per SODC (Mod 41)
BERIN10	Traffic	T1	no change
BERIN11	Roman Road	T3	no change
BERIN12	Parking	T4	Modified per SODC (Mod 45)
BERIN13	Health Facilities	L1	TBC with SODC
BERIN14	Communications Infrastructure	L2	no change
BERIN15	Local Shops & Services	L5	no change
BERIN16	Allotments	L8	no change
BERIN17	Cemetery	L7	no change
BERIN18	Sports & Recreational Facilities	R1, R2, R3 and R6	merge into one policy and modify TBC with SODC
BERIN19	Community Facilities	§11.16, C1, C2 and CA2	merge into one policy and modify TBC with SODC
BERIN20	Employment Uses	EM3 and EM5	merge into one policy and modify per SODC (Mod 66)