SYDENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2026-2041

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

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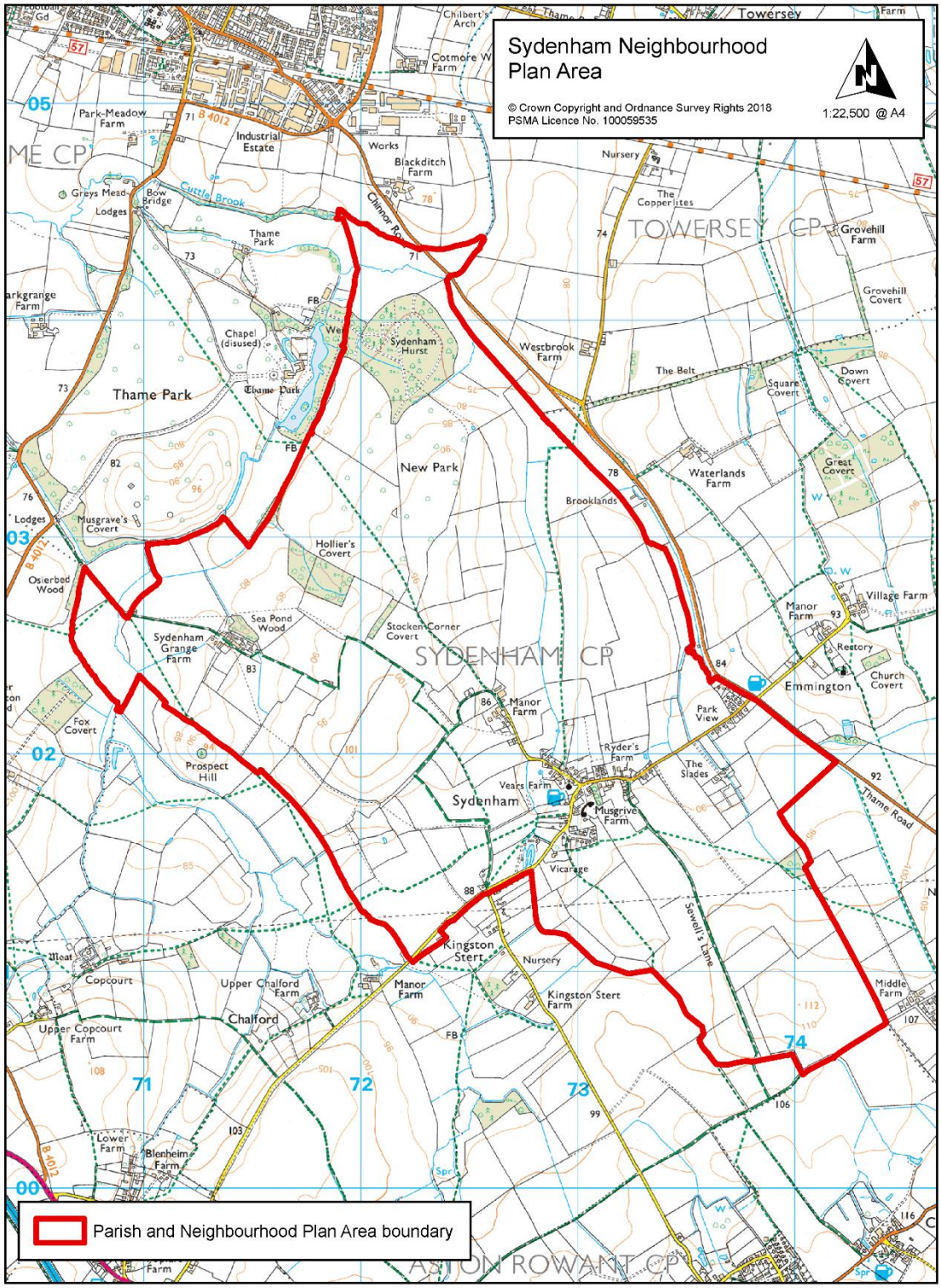
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INTRODUCTION

1. This statement has been prepared by Sydenham Parish Council ("the Parish Council") to accompany its submission of the Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") to the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council ("the District Council"), under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the Regulations").
2. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area, which coincides with the boundary of the Parish of Sydenham and which was designated by the District Council on 2 March 2018 (see Plan A overleaf). The Parish Council has consulted the local community, the statutory bodies and other stakeholders throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, as required by the Regulations. This is detailed in the Consultation Statement, which is published separately as part of the submission documentation.
3. The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area only. They do not relate to 'excluded development', as defined by the Regulations. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 1 May 2026 to 30 April 2041, which aligns with the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041.
4. The statement addresses each of the 'Basic Conditions' set out in Schedule 4B(8(2a-g)) to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as applied to neighbourhood development plans by section 38C(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and as amended by section 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 ("LURA" in force from 25 March 2026), and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets those requirements.
5. The legislation states that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:
   - Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan;
   - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
   - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan would not result in the development plan for the area of the authority proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in that area than if the Neighbourhood Development Plan were not to be made (LURA s.99 paragraph 8(2)(ea));
   - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations
   - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which set out the habitat regulation assessment process for land use plans, including consideration of the effect on Schedule 4b (8(6)) also indicates that it is necessary to consider whether the neighbourhood plan is ''compatible with the Convention rights''. The interpretation section (s.17) in Schedule 4b confirms that ''the Convention rights'' have the same meaning as in the Human Rights Act 1998; and
   - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is compliant with Part 6 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (environmental outcomes reports) (paragraph 8(2)(fa)).

6. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with, in connection with the proposal for the Neighbourhood Plan.



BACKGROUND

7. The decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan was made by the Parish Council in 2017. The original Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2021, covering the period 2018-2034. This 2026 update represents a comprehensive review of that Plan to ensure alignment with current national and local planning policies and to extend the plan period to 2041.

8. The key drivers for this update include:

   – Alignment with the National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 ("the NPPF")

   – Compliance with the basic conditions as amended by sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (in force from 25 March 2026)

   – Alignment with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041

   – The allocation of a site for residential development to meet local housing needs

   – The introduction of new policies addressing climate change, dark skies, landscape character, residential parking, traffic management, historic roofline protection, and development size and form

9. A steering group comprising residents and Parish Council representatives has led the update process. The Parish Council, as the qualifying body, has approved the publication of this updated Submission Plan in October 2026.

10. The Parish Council has consulted local communities extensively over the duration of the update project, including a Call for Sites process in 2025 that evaluated four potential development sites, and a comprehensive community survey in 2025 that received responses from 47 households. The Parish Council has also worked closely with officers of the District Council to collate and examine the evidence base, to design and iterate policy proposals, and to ensure alignment with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041.

11. The Neighbourhood Plan contains sixteen land use policies,. The Plan has deliberately avoided containing policies that unnecessarily duplicate development plan policies or national policies that are used to determine planning applications (see NPPF policies PM6(1)(a) and PM6(1)(c)). The policies are therefore a combination of development management matters that seek to refine and/or update existing and emerging policies to secure their specific application to this Parish, together with a site allocation policy to meet identified local housing needs.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

12. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with full regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published on 17 August 2026, and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of formulating Neighbourhood Plans. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

13. The Plan was originally drafted against the December 2024 version of the NPPF. The Plan was submitted to the District Council under Regulation 15 on 4 September 2026, after the August 2026 NPPF was published, and must therefore comply with it. The Parish Council has therefore re-checked the Plan against the August 2026 NPPF and this statement demonstrates regard to that Framework. The August 2026 NPPF numbers its paragraphs within each policy (restarting at 1 for each policy) rather than continuously through the document as the December 2024 version did. References below therefore give the policy code and paragraph number: for example, 'HO5(1)' means paragraph 1 of policy HO5, and 'PM5(1)(b)' means sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 1 of policy PM5. References to Chapter 1 and to Annex A are to the numbered paragraphs of those sections.

14. The August 2026 NPPF deals with neighbourhood plans in Chapter 2, Plan-making policies - policy PM5, and with plan-making generally in policies PM6, PM8 and PM9. Paragraph 1 of policy PM5 says that Neighbourhood plans allow local communities to plan positively for their areas by allocating land to meet the development needs of their designated area, where appropriate, and by setting out policies that address particular local issues, which may include design requirements, local environmental improvements and the conservation of local heritage assets. Paragraph 2 of policy PM5 provides that the contents of a neighbourhood plan should not result in less development than specified in other parts of the development plan covering the same area.

15. The Neighbourhood Plan contains non-strategic policies to manage development in the Parish. The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively to support the strategic development needs of the District, as framed by the adopted Local Plan 2035 and the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041. This is achieved through:

    - Supporting small scale, infill development within the village boundary (Policy SYD1)
    - Allocating a site for residential development of either a single or semi-detached dwelling (Policy SYD9)
    - Introducing policies that support sustainable development while protecting the Parish's distinctive rural character and natural environment

16. The Parish Council believes the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are aligned with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and effectively anticipate the policies of the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041. The Plan acknowledges the physical and policy constraints of the Parish but plans to accommodate suitable development in the right locations and to be of an appropriate design.

17. In respect of planning for new homes, the NPPF says that, in the case of local plans, a housing requirement figure should also be set for designated neighbourhood plan areas unless it is impractical to do so, in which case the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure instead.

18. The adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 identifies in paragraph 4.37 that there is no defined requirement for smaller villages to contribute towards delivering additional housing

(beyond windfall and infill development) to meet the overall housing requirement for South Oxfordshire. However, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan is more than 5 years old and this is a material change in circumstance. As such, South Oxfordshire District Council have provided an indicative figure of zero as set out in the emerging Joint Local Plan page 78 Policy SP1 bullet point 11. This figure takes into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.

19. The Parish Council has taken a proactive approach to meeting local housing needs through this plan review by allocating Site 1 (approximately 0.06 hectares) for residential development of either a single or semi-detached dwelling (Policy SYD9). This allocation demonstrates the Parish's commitment to sustainable development while maintaining the essential character of this small rural community.

20. None of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have required a balancing exercise to be undertaken in having regard to national policy, as none are considered to be inconsistent with national policy. Table 1 below sets out how each policy in the Neighbourhood Plan supports the relevant policies in the August 2026 NPPF (references are to policy codes and paragraph numbers within that Framework).

Table 1: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Summary

Policy No.	Policy Title	National Planning Policy (NPPF)
SYD1	**Village Boundary & Infill Development**	The policy defines boundaries around both parts of the village, Sydenham East and Sydenham West, to distinguish between the built-up areas and the surrounding countryside to bring clarity and remove ambiguity. This supports NPPF policies S4(1) and S5(1), by directing infill development to the appropriate locations and protecting the countryside. The definition of boundaries follows planning conventions and allows for a scale of infilling consistent with the status of the two parts of the village in the settlement hierarchy. The District Council confirmed the 'indicative housing figure' for the Parish is zero, but defining boundaries assists in directing the location of any future proposals for rural exception sites (policy HO10(1)) and small-scale development.
SYD2	**Housing Mix**	NPPF policy HO5(1) expects the development plan to set out policies addressing the housing needs of different groups in the community, and policy HO7(1) gives substantial weight to the benefits of homes that contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community. The policy is designed to redress the imbalance of the village's housing stock, which is skewed towards larger 4+ bedroom homes and is under-supplied with smaller 2-3 bedroom homes. With house prices already above the district average, this has resulted in an aging population. The policy will send a market signal to those selling and purchasing developable land that this requirement must be factored into land values, supportive of NPPF policy PM8(1) on the evidence that should inform plans.
SYD3	**Design**	The policy has regard to the NPPF's policies on achieving well-designed places (policies DP1 to DP4). Policy DP1(1)(c) supports locally specific design policies that add detail to the key principles in policy DP3 in response to particular local issues, and policy PM5(1)(b) recognises that neighbourhood plans may set out design requirements. The policy requires development proposals to respond to local character as set out in the Character Appraisal, reflecting policy DP3(1), which expects development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting so that it integrates with and enhances its surroundings. The policy supports the NPPF's emphasis on design quality, including the climate, nature and built form principles in policy DP3(2).

Policy No.	Policy Title	National Planning Policy (NPPF)
SYD4	**Local Heritage Assets**	The policy identifies a schedule of non-designated heritage assets of local historic value, reflecting the NPPF's policies on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Policy HE1(1)(e) expects plans to be supported by a local heritage list to identify non-designated heritage assets that are important to the local community, and policy PM5(1)(b) recognises the conservation of local heritage assets as a proper matter for neighbourhood plans. The policy ensures that the significance of these local heritage assets will be taken into account in determining planning applications affecting them, giving effect to policy HE7(2), which requires harm to the significance of a non-designated heritage asset to be weighed against the benefits of the proposal in a balanced judgement.
SYD5	**Local Green Space**	NPPF policy HC2(1) provides for Local Green Space designation through local and neighbourhood plans. Local Green Space should be limited to land that is (a) in close proximity to the community it serves, (b) demonstrably special to the local community and of particular local significance, and (c) local in character and not an extensive tract of land; and, under HC2(2), should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. The policy retains the designation of one space, made in the 2021 Plan and unchanged by this update, which meets these tests: it is in close proximity to the community it serves, is demonstrably special to the local community, and is local in character (0.8 hectares). Policy HC8(1) provides that development affecting Local Green Space is to be determined consistently with national decision-making policies for the Green Belt, and the policy is intended to be read consistently with it. The designation does not unduly constrain development as the settlement boundaries of Policy SYD1 have made provision for appropriate infill development.
SYD6	**Separation of Settlements**	The policy has regard to NPPF's approach to spatial strategy and settlement separation. Policy S2(1)(c) recognises that plans may designate and safeguard gaps between settlements where this is necessary to maintain their separate identities and physical separation. The policy identifies the landscape between Sydenham East and Sydenham West as an important gap whose contribution to the separate identity and character of the two settlements is evidenced in the Character Appraisal. Recent planning appeal decisions have also recognised the importance of the gap in maintaining settlement separation. The policy therefore seeks to conserve the open and tranquil character of the intervening landscape and prevent development which would, either individually or cumulatively, erode the separation between the two settlements. The policy also has regard to NPPF policies N1(1)(b) and N2(1)(a)), which require landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside to be taken into account and opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced.

Policy No.	Policy Title	National Planning Policy (NPPF)
SYD7	**Important Views**	The policy reflects NPPF policy N2(1)(a) on taking into account landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside. The Character Appraisal demonstrates physical attributes within the surrounding landscape that are special in framing views to, from, and between the village. Views of the Chilterns National Landscape escarpment to the south are especially important. In the older part of the village, the views contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area (consistent with NPPF policies HE5 and HE9 on assessing effects on heritage assets, including their setting, and on conservation areas). The policy does not prevent development but requires proposals to avoid unnecessary harm through height, massing, or obstructive location.
SYD8	**Community Facilities**	NPPF policy HC4(1) gives substantial weight to the benefits of new or improved community facilities, and policy HC6(1) provides that development should not result in the loss of key community facilities unless specified tests are met (including, for public houses, evidence that reasonable steps have been taken to market the property for its existing use for at least 12 months). The policy identifies those facilities in the Parish (village hall, church, and two public houses) to which these objectives apply, seeking both to protect and to enhance those facilities, giving support for policies HC4(1) and HC6(1).
SYD9	**Site Allocation**	The policy reflects NPPF policy PM5(1)(a), under which neighbourhood plans may allocate land to meet the development needs of their designated area. The Parish received an indicative figure of zero, but has proactively allocated a 0.06 hectare site for either a single or semi-detached dwelling to meet local needs. This demonstrates the Parish's positive approach to planning (policy S1(1)).The site was selected through an assessment of its availability, suitability and achievability, consistent with policy PM9(2)(b). The policy includes detailed criteria consistent with NPPF requirements on design quality (policies DP1 to DP3), sustainable drainage (policy F8(2)), biodiversity net gain (policy N2(1)(a)), and climate change mitigation (policies CC1 to CC3).
SYD10	**Dark Skies**	The policy supports NPPF policy P3(2)(e), which expects development to limit any adverse impact from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature. The Parish is located in a rural area with intrinsically dark skies that contribute to its character and to biodiversity. The policy requires lighting schemes to minimize upward light spill and unnecessary illumination, reflecting national policy on protecting dark landscapes.
SYD11	**Landscape Character and Setting**	The policy has regard to NPPF policy N2(1)(a) on taking into account landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside. The policy requires development to be sensitively integrated into the landscape, respecting topography, field patterns, hedgerows, and trees. This supports NPPF policy N2(1)(c) on connecting to and

Policy No.	Policy Title	National Planning Policy (NPPF)
		strengthening ecological networks (drawing on Local Nature Recovery Strategies), policy N2(1)(d) on conserving and enhancing established trees and hedgerows, and policy N3(1) on trees in new development.
SYD12	**Development Size and Form**	The policy reflects the objectives of NPPF policy DP3(1), which expects development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting, and with policy DP3(2)(e) (built form), which looks to the pattern of buildings to define streets and other spaces and to create distinctive places. The policy ensures that new development respects the scale, massing, and form of existing development in this small rural village, preventing development that would be out of character with the established pattern.
SYD13	**Rural Roads and Traffic Management**	The policy has regard to the NPPF's policies on street design, access and parking (policy TR4(1)) and on assessing transport impacts (policy TR6). Policy TR6(4) provides that development should be refused if it would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network or an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The policy addresses specific local concerns about highway safety on narrow rural lanes while not preventing appropriate development.
SYD14	**Residential Parking Provision**	The policy reflects policy TR2, under which local parking standards should take into account, among other things, the connectivity of development by different modes of transport and local car ownership levels and travel trends (TR2(3)(a) and (c)). The Parish has limited public transport and high car ownership typical of rural areas. The policy sets appropriate parking standards that reflect local circumstances, prevent on-street parking issues that would harm residential amenity and potentially prevent safety issues.
SYD15	**Protection of Historic Roofline**	The policy reflects the NPPF's policies on the historic environment (policies HE1, HE5 and HE9) and with policy DP3(1), which expects development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting. The village's historic roofline, characterised by traditional pitch, materials, and absence of dormer windows in prominent locations, is a key contributor to character. The policy protects this feature while allowing appropriate development that respects local distinctiveness.
SYD16	**Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**	The policy strongly supports the NPPF's policies on meeting the challenge of climate change (policies CC1 to CC3), the objective of which is to support the transition to net zero by 2050 and to shape places that are more resilient to the effects of climate change. The policy requires development to incorporate renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency measures and sustainable drainage systems. This directly supports NPPF policies CC2(1) (mitigation of climate change), CC3(1) (adaptation to climate change), W3(1) (renewable and low carbon energy development), F8(2) (sustainable drainage systems) and DP3(2)(b) and (c). The policy is also one of the ways in which the Plan meets the requirement in

Policy No.	Policy Title	National Planning Policy (NPPF)
		section 38B(2B) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (see the section below on the requirements introduced by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023).

CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

21. South Oxfordshire District Council has determined that the updated Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. A new SEA/HRA screening determination was issued on 26 March 2026, replacing the 2019 screening statement. The screening concludes that the policies in the updated Plan, including the new site allocation, are not likely to have any significant environmental effects and therefore an SEA is not required.
22. To demonstrate that the Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, this basic condition is addressed in Table 2 below. The NPPF at paragraph 17 of Chapter 1 explains that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social, and environmental. The potential of the Plan to have social, economic and environmental effects – positive (+), neutral (0) and negative (-) – is assessed for each of its policies, together with a summary commentary.

Table 2: Neighbourhood Plan & Sustainable Development

Policy	Policy Title	Social	Economic	Environmental	Commentary
SYD1	Village Boundary & Infill Development	+	0	0	Positive social effect by encouraging small scale infill housing development while respecting village character. Defines clear boundaries for development management.
SYD2	Housing Mix	++	0	0	Strong positive social effect by requiring smaller 2-3 bedroom homes to meet needs of first-time buyers, young families, and downsizers, helping to create a more balanced and sustainable community.
SYD3	Design	+	0	+	Positive social and environmental effects through high-quality design that respects local character, uses appropriate materials, and incorporates sustainable design features.
SYD4	Local Heritage Assets	+	0	+	Positive effects through protecting non-designated heritage assets that contribute to local identity and sense of place and protecting historic environment.

Policy	Policy Title	Social	Economic	Environmental	Commentary
SYD5	Local Green Space	+	0	+	Positive effects through protecting green space of recreational value and wildlife importance, supporting health and wellbeing.
SYD6	Separation of Settlements	+	0	+	Positive effects through maintaining settlement identity and protecting valued countryside gap between village parts, preserving landscape character.
SYD7	Important Views	+	0	+	Positive effects through protecting important views that contribute to character, sense of place, and conservation area setting.
SYD8	Community Facilities	++	+	0	Strong positive social effects through protecting essential community facilities (village hall, church, pubs) that support social cohesion. Positive economic effect through protecting employment at pubs.
SYD9	Site Allocation	++	+	+	Strong positive social effects through allocating site to meet local housing needs despite zero indicative requirement. Positive economic effect through supporting construction employment. Positive environmental effect through policy requirements for biodiversity net gain, sustainable drainage, renewable energy, and landscape buffers. The site is a single modest dwelling on 0.06ha, minimizing environmental impact while meeting need.
SYD10	Dark Skies	+	0	++	Strong positive environmental effect through protecting dark skies important for nocturnal wildlife and rural character. Positive social effect through protecting tranquil rural environment valued by residents.
SYD11	Landscape Character and Setting	0	0	++	Strong positive environmental effects through protecting and enhancing landscape character, supporting biodiversity through protection of hedgerows, trees, and field patterns.

Policy	Policy Title	Social	Economic	Environmental	Commentary
SYD12	Development Size and Form	+	0	+	Positive effects through ensuring development respects local scale and character, maintaining the intimate village form and preventing overdevelopment.
SYD13	Rural Roads and Traffic Management	++	0	0	Strong positive social effects through improving highway safety on narrow rural lanes and addressing local traffic concerns while not preventing appropriate development.
SYD14	Residential Parking Provision	++	0	0	Strong positive social effects through ensuring adequate parking provision appropriate to rural context with limited public transport, preventing on-street parking issues that harm residential amenity.
SYD15	Protection of Historic Roofline	+	0	+	Positive effects through protecting distinctive historic roofline that contributes to village character and identity, supporting conservation of historic environment.
SYD16	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	+	+	++	Strong positive environmental effects through requiring renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable drainage, and biodiversity measures. Positive social and economic effects through creating healthier, more resilient, and lower-cost-to-run homes.

23. The Parish Council considers that the Neighbourhood Plan, taken as a whole, makes a significant positive contribution to achieving sustainable development by balancing economic, social, and environmental objectives in a way that is appropriate to this small rural parish. The Plan provides a framework for managing development that will maintain the distinctive character and environmental quality of the Parish while supporting the needs of the local community for homes, facilities, and services. The introduction of the site allocation (Policy SYD9) and the new climate change policy (Policy SYD16) particularly strengthen the Plan's contribution to sustainable development by proactively addressing housing needs and climate change mitigation respectively.

THE HOUSING CONDITION AND THE STRATEGIC POLICIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

24. Section 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (in force from 25 March 2026 under SI 2026/169) requires by means of (paragraph 8(2)(ea) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38C(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004): that the making of the neighbourhood plan would not result in the development plan for the area of the authority proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in that area than if the neighbourhood plan were not to be made.

25. The Neighbourhood Plan meets this condition. It does not reduce the housing that the development plan proposes for the Parish in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, which makes no housing allocation in the Parish and states at paragraph 4.37 that there is no defined requirement for smaller villages to contribute towards meeting South Oxfordshire's housing requirement beyond windfall and infill development. As the South Oxfordshire Local Plan is more than 5 years old, District Council have confirmed that the indicative housing figure for the Parish is zero. This figure takes into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority. Policy SYD1 supports small-scale infill housing within the defined village boundaries and Policy SYD2 seeks a better mix of smaller homes rather than limiting numbers. Policy SYD9 allocates land for a further single or semi-detached dwelling that the development plan does not otherwise provide. Taken as a whole, the Neighbourhood Plan does not reduce housing provision within the Parish and would not result in less housing being provided than would be the case if the Neighbourhood Plan were not made.

26. Alignment with the strategic policies of the development plan remains relevant as a matter of national policy (NPPF policy PM5(2)), and the Plan has been prepared to align with the strategic policies of the Local Plan 2035, as set out below. References in Table 3 are retained as a descriptive test of that alignment; they are not the statutory basic condition.

27. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to align with the strategic policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, which was adopted in December 2020. The Local Plan 2035 sets out the strategic framework for development in South Oxfordshire up to 2035. The Neighbourhood Plan also has regard to the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041, which is currently at examination stage and will provide the strategic policy framework for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts up to 2041.

28. The Local Plan strategic policies most relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan are those relating to:

    - The Built Environment, Local Plan Design Policies DES1, DES2 and DES8
    - The Natural and Historic Environment, Local Plan Policies EP4, ENV1, ENV3, ENV6 and ENV8
    - The settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy, Local Plan Policy STRAT1
    - Housing, Local Plan policies H1, H8, H9, H11 and H16
    - Community Facilities, Local Plan Policies CF1 and CF2
    - Transport, Local Plan Policy TRANS5

29. Sydenham is classified as an ‘Other Village’ in the settlement hierarchy (Local Plan Policy STRAT1). This reflects the limited range of services and facilities in the village and means

that only small-scale infill development is appropriate. The Neighbourhood Plan fully supports this strategic approach through Policy SYD1, which defines village boundaries to direct infill development to appropriate locations, and through the modest scale of the site allocation in Policy SYD9 (0.06 hectares for a single or semi-detached dwelling).

30. Table 3 below sets out how each policy in the Neighbourhood Plan aligns with the strategic policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

Table 3: Alignment with South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035

SNP Policy	SODC LP Policy	Commentary on Alignment with Strategic Policies
SYD1 - Village Boundary & Infill Development	STRAT1 (Spatial Strategy), H8 (Housing in the Smaller Villages), H16 (Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment)	The policy is in general alignment with the strategic approach to housing in 'Other Villages' set out in Policy STRAT1, which identifies Sydenham as suitable only for small-scale infill development. Policies H8 and H16 support infill housing development within built-up areas of villages where it respects the form and character of the village. Policy SYD1 defines village boundaries to provide clarity on where such infill development is appropriate, supporting strategic housing delivery while respecting settlement character.
SYD2 - Housing Mix	H11 (Housing Mix), H9 (Affordable Housing)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy H11, which requires new housing development to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types, and tenures to meet housing needs. The focus on smaller 2-3 bedroom homes directly responds to identified local needs and aligns with the strategic objective of providing homes for all sectors of the community including first-time buyers and those wishing to downsize.
SYD3 - Design	DES1 (Delivering High Quality Development), DES2 (Enhancing Local Character)	The policy is in general alignment with Policies DES1 and DES2, which require high quality design that responds to local character. The policy specifically requires development to have regard to the Sydenham Character Appraisal, which provides detailed analysis of local character, and to use appropriate materials, scale, and form. .
SYD4 - Local Heritage Assets	ENV6 (Historic Environment), ENV7 (Listed Buildings), ENV8 (Conservation Areas)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy ENV6, which seeks to conserve and enhance South Oxfordshire's historic environment including non-designated heritage assets. The policy identifies a schedule of locally important heritage assets and ensures their significance is taken into account in development management decisions. The policy complements the strategic protection of designated heritage assets (listed buildings and conservation areas) by extending protection to locally valued assets.

SNP Policy	SODC LP Policy	Commentary on Alignment with Strategic Policies
SYD5 - Local Green Space	ENV3 (Biodiversity), ENV4 (Watercourses), ENV5 (Green Infrastructure in New Developments), DES5 (Outdoor Amenity Space), CF4 (Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities)	The policy is in general alignment with strategic policies on protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, biodiversity, and providing recreational space. Local Green Space designation provides additional local protection to a space of particular importance to the Sydenham community, complementing strategic green infrastructure policies.
SYD6 - Separation of Settlements	ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside), STRAT1 (Spatial Strategy)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy ENV1, which seeks to protect the district's landscape character and countryside, and with the spatial strategy's emphasis on maintaining settlement identity. The gap between the two parts of Sydenham village is a distinctive local landscape feature that contributes to settlement identity. The policy ensures development in the gap does not compromise its openness and visual integrity.
SYD7 - Important Views	ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside), ENV8 (Conservstion Areas), DES2 (Enhancing Local Character)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy ENV1 on protecting valued landscapes and Policy ENV8 on conservation areas. The identified views contribute to the landscape setting of the village and, in the older part of the village, to the setting of the Sydenham Conservation Area. The policy does not prevent development but ensures it does not obstruct important views through inappropriate location, height, or massing.
SYD8 - Community Facilities	CF1 (Safeguarding Community Facilities), CF2 (Provision of Community Facilities)	The policy is in general alignment with Policies CF1 and CF2, which seek to protect existing community facilities and support provision of new facilities. The policy identifies the specific community facilities in Sydenham (village hall, church, and two public houses) that are protected under the strategic policies and supports their enhancement.
SYD9 - Site Allocation	H1 (Delivering New Homes), STRAT1 (Spatial Strategy), H8 (Housing in the Smaller Villages), DES1 (Delivering High Quality Development), DES2 (Enhancing Local Character)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy H1 on delivering new homes and Policy STRAT1, which establishes the overall spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy. The site allocation aligns with Policy H8 on housing in smaller villages, which supports small-scale development where it addresses local need and is proportionate to the settlement's size and character.

SNP Policy	SODC LP Policy	Commentary on Alignment with Strategic Policies
		The policy supports Policy DES1 on delivering high quality development and Policy DES2 on enhancing local character, as it includes detailed design criteria requiring development to respect the settlement pattern, local building traditions, and landscape setting. While Sydenham has an indicative housing figure of zero in the Local Plan, the strategic policies support neighbourhood plans in making modest site allocations to meet identified local housing needs, and the 0.06 hectare site for a single or semi-detached dwelling represents a proportionate response to local circumstances.
SYD10 - Dark Skies	ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside), ENV3 (Biodiversity), DES6 (Residential Amenity), DES8 (Promoting Sustainable Design)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy ENV1 on protecting countryside character and Policy ENV3 on biodiversity. Dark skies are an intrinsic part of the rural character of the Parish and are important for nocturnal wildlife. The policy controls light pollution in a proportionate way that supports strategic environmental objectives. The policy also relates to Policy DES6, which requires consideration of external lighting impacts on amenity, and DES8 on sustainable design, which promotes energy-efficient development including appropriate lighting design.
SYD11 - Landscape Character and Setting	ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside), ENV2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy ENV1, which requires development to protect and enhance features that contribute to South Oxfordshire's valued landscapes. The policy requires development to respect landscape character, topography, and landscape features including hedgerows and trees. The policy also conforms with Policy ENV2 on biodiversity, as key landscape features such as hedgerows, trees, and field boundaries are priority habitats that support ecological networks and biodiversity within the Parish.
SYD12 - Development Size and Form	DES2 (Enhancing Local Character), H8 (Housing in the Smaller Villages)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy DES2 on enhancing local character and Policy H8 on housing in smaller villages respecting settlement form and character. The policy ensures that new development in this small rural village does not exceed the scale and form of existing development, preventing overdevelopment that would harm the village character.

SNP Policy	SODC LP Policy	Commentary on Alignment with Strategic Policies
SYD13 - Rural Roads and Traffic Management	TRANS5 (Consideration of Development Proposals), DES2 (Enhancing Local Character)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy TRANS5, which requires development proposals to demonstrate safe and suitable access and to consider impacts on the highway network. The policy addresses specific local concerns about highway safety on narrow rural lanes while ensuring development does not unacceptably impact highway capacity. The policy also conforms with Policy DES2 on enhancing local character, as the narrow rural road network and hedgerow-lined lanes are defining features of the Parish's rural character that the policy seeks to protect.
SYD14 - Residential Parking Provision	TRANS5 (Consideration of Development Proposals)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy TRANS5 and is consistent with the Oxfordshire County Council parking standards. The policy sets parking standards appropriate to a rural context where car ownership is high and public transport is limited. This supports strategic objectives of ensuring adequate parking provision and preventing parking issues that would harm residential amenity.
SYD15 - Protection of Historic Roofline	DES2 (Enhancing Local Character), ENV8 (Conservation Areas), ENV6 (Historic Environment)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy DES2 on enhancing local character, as the historic roofline is a distinctive feature of Sydenham village that contributes significantly to local character. The policy conforms with Policy ENV8 on conservation areas, as the consistent historic roofline is a key characteristic of the Sydenham Conservation Area that requires protection. The policy also aligns with Policy ENV6 on the historic environment, which seeks to conserve non-designated heritage assets, as the historic roofline contributes to the village's historic character and significance.

SNP Policy	SODC LP Policy	Commentary on Alignment with Strategic Policies
SYD16 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	DES10 (Carbon Reduction), DES8 (Promoting Sustainable Design), DES9 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy), EP4 (Flood Risk)	The policy is in general alignment with Policy DES10 on carbon reduction, which requires development to achieve significant reductions in carbon emissions. The policy supports this through encouraging renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures. The policy conforms with Policy DES8 on promoting sustainable design, which requires development to minimize carbon impacts and improve climate resilience through measures such as sustainable drainage and water conservation. The policy aligns with Policy DES9 on renewable and low carbon energy by supporting appropriate renewable energy infrastructure including solar panels and heat pumps. The policy also conforms with Policy EP4 on flood risk by requiring sustainable drainage systems and flood resilience measures as part of climate change adaptation.

31. The Neighbourhood Plan also has regard to the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041, which is currently at examination stage. While this Plan is not yet adopted and therefore its policies do not yet form part of the development plan, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to align with its emerging strategic direction. In particular, the plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan (2026-2041) aligns with the Joint Local Plan period, and the policies support the emerging strategic objectives on settlement hierarchy, climate change, biodiversity net gain, and design quality.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS INTRODUCED BY THE LEVELLING-UP AND REGENERATION ACT 2023

32. Section 98 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, also in force from 25 March 2026, amended section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the content of neighbourhood development plans). The Parish Council has considered each of the new provisions and confirms as follows.

33. Permitted content (section 38B(A1) and (2C)). A neighbourhood plan may include only policies about:

    - the amount, type, location and timetable of development;
    - Policies in relation to the use or development of land in the neighbourhood area which are designed to achieve the objectives of the Plan;
    - Details of any infrastructure or affordable housing requirements to which development in accordance with the policies in the plan would give rise;
    - Requirements with respect to design that relate to development within the neighbourhood area.

34. The Parish Council considers that each of the sixteen policies falls within that content: Policies SYD1, SYD2 and SYD9 concern the amount, type and location of development; Policies SYD3, SYD12 and SYD15 set design requirements; and Policies SYD4 to SYD8, SYD10, SYD11, SYD13, SYD14 and SYD16 are other policies about the use of land. The Plan contains no policy on excluded development.

35. Climate change (section 38B(2B)(a)). A neighbourhood plan must be designed to secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Plan is designed to do so principally through Policy SYD16 (Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation), supported by the design requirements of Policy SYD3, the criteria for the allocated site in Policy SYD9 (which include renewable energy, sustainable drainage and biodiversity net gain), and the protection of hedgerows and trees in Policy SYD11.

36. Local nature recovery strategies (section 38B(2B)(b)). A neighbourhood plan must take account of any local nature recovery strategy for the area. The Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy was published in November 2025. The Plan takes account of it through Policy SYD11, which protects the hedgerows, trees and field boundaries that form part of the Parish's ecological network, and through the biodiversity net gain requirements of Policies SYD9 and SYD16.

37. Environmental outcomes reports (paragraph 8(2)(fa)). Part 6 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 provides for environmental outcomes reports, but operates through regulations that set environmental outcomes and reporting requirements. At the date of this statement the Parish Council is not aware of any such regulations having been made that apply to neighbourhood plans, and the Plan has been screened under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which continue to apply (see the next section). The Parish Council will comply with any requirements that apply.

COMPATIBILITY WITH EU OBLIGATIONS

38. As set out in the preceding sections, the Parish Council has met its obligations in relation to the EU Directive 2001/42/EC (and the associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) on the requirement for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

39. South Oxfordshire District Council issued a new SEA/HRA Screening Statement in 26 March 2026, replacing the 2019 screening statement prepared for the original Neighbourhood Plan. This new screening was necessary because the introduction of a site allocation (Policy SYD9) represented a material change to the Plan that required re-assessment.

40. In making the screening determination the District Council consulted the statutory consultation bodies for SEA (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England) and Oxfordshire County Council on 23 February 2026. Natural England agreed that significant environmental effects are unlikely, Historic England agreed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required, Oxfordshire County Council had no comments, and the Environment Agency made no comment. The Screening Statement is reproduced in the Consultation Statement submitted with the Plan.

41. The District Council's SEA Screening Statement concludes that, based on the assessment of the updated policies including the site allocation, the updated Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment. The allocated site is modest in scale (0.06 hectares for a single or semi-detached dwelling), is located within the existing settlement pattern, and includes comprehensive environmental criteria addressing biodiversity net gain, sustainable drainage, landscape buffers, and renewable energy. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

42. The Parish Council has also met its obligations in relation to the habitats provisions of EU Directive 92/43/EEC (and the associated Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017). Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the 2017 Regulations (in particular regulations 105 and 106) requires an assessment of the implications for European sites of a neighbourhood plan that is likely to have a significant effect on such a site. The District Council's Habitats Regulations Assessment screening, included within the SEA/HRA Screening Statement, concludes that the making of the updated Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the 2017 Regulations) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The nearest European sites are the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (approximately 3.1 km from the Parish) and the Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation (approximately 3.9 km). Given those distances and the modest scale of development proposed (a single dwelling allocation plus limited infill development), the Plan would not result in any significant effects on protected habitats or species.

43. European sites include Special Areas of Conservation, designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and Special Protection Areas, designated under the Wild Birds Directive (2009/147/EC); both are protected by the 2017 Regulations, which continue to give effect to those obligations in domestic law following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. The District Council's screening considered European sites generally and identified no likely significant effect on any of them.

44. The Parish Council has also considered whether the Plan could breach other obligations derived from EU law, including those on environmental impact assessment, water quality, air quality, waste and flood risk. The Plan allocates one small site for a single or semi-detached dwelling, which is far below the thresholds at which project-level environmental impact assessment is required, and its policies (in particular SYD9, SYD11 and SYD16) require

development to accord with national and local requirements on drainage, flood risk and biodiversity. The Plan does not conflict with any such obligation. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) is given effect by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and regulation 15(1)(e) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as addressed above.

COMPATIBILITY WITH CONVENTION RIGHTS

45. The Parish Council has considered the Neighbourhood Plan against the Human Rights Act 1998, which gives effect in United Kingdom law to the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights ("the Convention"), and considers that the Plan is compatible with the Convention rights. The rights most relevant to a neighbourhood plan are addressed below.

46. Article 6 (right to a fair hearing). The Plan has been prepared through an open process. Residents, landowners, statutory bodies and other stakeholders were able to comment on the Pre-Submission Plan and every representation received is recorded, with the Parish Council's response, in the Consultation Statement. Further opportunities to comment arise at the Regulation 16 stage and at independent examination, and decisions on individual planning applications remain subject to the statutory rights of appeal and challenge.

47. Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life and home). The Plan's policies are designed to safeguard, rather than interfere with, people's enjoyment of their homes and surroundings, including through controls on light spill (Policy SYD10), the design, size and form of new development (Policies SYD3, SYD12 and SYD15), and traffic and parking (Policies SYD13 and SYD14).

48. Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) and the public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). The Plan's policies apply equally to all applicants and residents. Policy SYD2 supports a wider mix of smaller homes, which benefits younger households, first-time buyers and those wishing to downsize. Consultation was open to everyone in the Parish, and the Parish Council has had regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The Plan does not disadvantage any group with a protected characteristic.

49. Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Policy SYD5 designates a field as Local Green Space. The designation was made in the 2021 Neighbourhood Plan (which was examined and approved at referendum) and the land designated is unchanged by this update; the 2026 review added policy wording on 'very special circumstances', which restates the protection that national policy already gives to Local Green Space. Designation does not affect ownership or the existing use of the land, which remains grazing land; it is a control on development exercised in the public interest through the planning system, and it is proportionate because the land meets the criteria for designation in NPPF policy HC2 (close proximity to the community it serves, demonstrably special to the local community, and local in character, at 0.8 hectares) and because the settlement boundaries in Policy SYD1 provide for appropriate development elsewhere in the village. The site allocated in Policy SYD9 was put forward by its owner through the Parish Council's Call for Sites, and the allocation of that site is not a deprivation of property.

CONCLUSION

50. This Basic Conditions Statement has demonstrated that the updated Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan:

    – Has appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance;

    – Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by balancing economic, social, and environmental objectives in a way appropriate to this small rural parish;

    – Would not result in proposing less housing taking place in the Parish than is detailed within the strategic policies contained in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035;

    – Complies with the further requirements introduced by sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 concerning permitted content, climate change, local nature recovery strategies and environmental outcomes reports; and

    – Does not breach, and is compatible with, EU obligations including the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, and is compatible with the Convention rights.

51. The Parish Council is confident that the Neighbourhood Plan meets all of the basic conditions and the other legal requirements and respectfully requests that the Independent Examiner finds that it does so, enabling the Plan to proceed to referendum.