

Summary of Changes to the Southwell Neighbourhood Plan since the June 2023 Consultation Version.

General.

We analysed the comments received during the Regulation 14 Public Consultation. We also received comments from our liaison officer at the District Council and from an independent consultant appointed by Locality who undertook a “Health Check”. The latter comments are advisory but highlighted areas likely to be picked up by the Planning Inspector so we ignored them at our peril. We have responded to most of the comments with changes to the Plan. In making decisions we are grateful for the advice of our own consultant, Steve Kemp of Open Plan.

We have updated census information, references to the NPPF, the emerging NSDC A&DM DPD, and other changes to Planning Legislation.

The wording of several Policies has been simplified and adjusted to suit new legislation or informed comments. We have deleted the list of future CIL funded projects as it was felt it committed the Town Council unnecessarily.

The Evidence Base has been updated.

NB there are still formatting issues and the header to be dealt with.

Green and Open Spaces.

Probably the most significant change is the deletion of the Main Open Areas and several Local Green Spaces which are outside the Urban Boundary.

Comments received advised that there were no lawful grounds for such allocations under the definitions in the NPPF. Most of the Main Open Areas are already protected by their status as part of the Conservation Area, and the few remaining ones are in any case outside the Urban Boundary. The Local Green Spaces outside the Urban Boundary are all defined as “Important open spaces” in the Conservation Area appraisal. 2023 and are thus afforded a level of protection.

Crew Lane Employment Area and Reserved Land.

Following comments from our liaison Officer at NSDC that it would be difficult to refuse an application for development on the land we allocated as Reserved Land on Crew Lane, the Working Group decided to delete this and to revert to the original Plan with employment land both north and south of Crew Lane. Given the lack of uptake of any new employment lands since the previous Plan it was felt that in practical terms it could probably be changed to housing in the future should we be allocated any additional houses.

Environmental Policies.

The Plan has responded to recent changes in Legislation, notably those requiring Biodiversity net gain. There have been numerous adjustments to wording and target figures following the “Health Check”.

Design Codes.

Following criticism of the Design Codes document produced for us by AECOM, particularly from Southwell Civic Society, the basis for changing the Design Guide into Codes became undermined, i.e. the evidence for many of the Codes was called into question.

We originally thought that we were faced with the choice of either dropping the Codes or providing a robust evidence base and at first decided to revert to the Design Guides.

However on reflection we were concerned about the robustness of the Guide so then decided to change the AECOM document to reflect the comments received and to adhere to the change to Codes.