

# Southwell Neighbourhood Plan Review 2025

## Concise summary of changes to policies

*Note provided by Southwell Town Council in response to the Examiner's request*

### Purpose of this note

1. This note summarises the changes to the Southwell Neighbourhood Plan ("made" in 2016) being proposed in the draft modified Plan submitted in June 2025. It has been prepared to assist the Examiner's determination under paragraph 10(1) of Schedule A2 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Town Council is providing this summary describing the balance and effect of the changes to assist the examination

### Overall balance of changes

2. Most of the changes, by volume, consist of routine updating. The draft Plan refreshes dates, statistics and supporting evidence; reflects the 2021 Census and more recent studies; updates terminology and references to national and local policy; corrects or rationalises policy numbering; and removes or revises text that has become out of date. The opportunity has also been taken to make grammatical, punctuation and cross-reference corrections. These changes generally bring the document up to date or make it easier to use rather than introduce a new policy direction.
3. The three-part vision is retained, as are the Plan's broad themes of sustainable development, environment, design and heritage, transport, community facilities, housing and employment. The review does not propose additional housing allocations. Three housing allocations are deleted because they have been completed, while the three remaining site allocations are carried forward with amendments.
4. Alongside those updates, several policies have been rewritten or expanded. The most extensive changes concern the Plan period; flood risk and drainage; biodiversity; climate change; design codes; archaeology and the Conservation Area; sustainable transport and parking; Local Green Space; the town centre; housing mix; the remaining site allocations; and monitoring. These changes are summarised below.

### Principal policy changes

#### Plan period objectives and policy structure

5. The end date of the Plan is extended from 2026 to 2033, with the next review due to commence in 2030. The supporting text explains the 2020 to 2025 review and the changes in circumstances since the made Plan. The six objectives retain their former subject areas but are rewritten to refer more clearly to social, economic and environmental outcomes, climate adaptation, biodiversity improvement, design quality, reduced transport pollution and congestion, services as well as facilities, and the relationship between homes and employment. The policy structure is also rationalised to remove completed or obsolete entries and to renumber the employment policy.

#### Sustainable development flood risk biodiversity and climate

6. Policy SD1 retains its role as the Plan's general sustainable development policy but changes several of its decision-making criteria. It replaces the Design Guide with the Design Codes, adds the Local Flood Designation, gives greater emphasis to access by walking, cycling and public transport with less reliance on private vehicles, strengthens the wording on wellbeing, and adds protection for best and most versatile agricultural and horticultural land.

7. Policies E1 and E2 retain the existing aim of avoiding increased flood risk, but they use current Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority evidence and current climate-change allowances. They add protection for Southwell Local Drainage Designations, clearer provision for natural flood management, a more detailed surface-water disposal hierarchy, protection of existing flood infrastructure, and arrangements for adoption and lifetime maintenance of drainage measures.
8. Policy E3 is recast around the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain system. It now addresses the biodiversity metric, Biodiversity Gain Plans, the preferred order for delivering gains on site or as locally as possible, baseline safeguards, management and monitoring. It also contains more detailed provisions for protected species, habitat features, hedgerows, buffers, trees, replacement
9. Policy E4 continues to protect and enhance public rights of way and wildlife corridors, but introduces specified widths and design standards for footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths and shared routes.
10. Policy E5 continues the Green Link strategy with updated route descriptions and implementation wording.
11. Policy E6 is expanded from renewable and low-carbon energy and energy-saving construction into a broader climate policy. It now covers renewable generation, energy-efficient and zero-carbon design, sensitive retrofit of historic buildings, a hierarchy for avoiding and managing overheating, water efficiency, and adaptation to extreme weather.

### **Design public realm and heritage**

12. Policy DH1 replaces reliance on the former Southwell Design Guide with a set of sustainability and sense-of-place principles supported by the revised Southwell Design Codes. Development is expected to follow the Codes or demonstrate equivalent outcomes through a design statement.
13. Policy DH2 keeps the established approach to public realm but gives more explicit attention to disabled access, the integration of public spaces within development, prevention of litter and anti-social behaviour, and maintenance for the life of the development.
14. Policy DH3 retains the existing protection for listed buildings and established Prebendal plots and adds requirements concerning archaeological assessment and discoveries, together with explicit protection for the character and appearance of the enlarged and updated Conservation Area.

### **Transport and parking**

15. The transport policies retain their emphasis on walking, cycling, public transport, highway safety and mitigation, but several tests become more specific. Policy TA1 adds protection and enhancement of existing routes and supports off-road cycling where feasible.
16. Policy TA2 requires larger residential schemes to include walking and cycling corridors and normally to be within 300 metres or a five-minute walk of public transport, or to contribute to a new or extended service. It also provides for contributions from developments of more than 50 dwellings towards public transport and links to rail or other long-distance services.
17. Policy TA3 adds highway design and traffic-calming criteria, while TA4 expressly addresses residential parking by reference to District Council standards. A separate operative TA5 is introduced to assess significant additions to or losses of visitor and employee parking and to guide improvements to existing car parks.

### **Community facilities open space and the town centre**

18. Policy CF1 adds schools to the community facilities protected by the policy. Its exception for the loss of facilities changes from alternative conditions linked by 'or' to cumulative conditions linked by 'and' (the schedule identifies this wording for confirmation because it changes how the exception would operate if retained).

19. Policy CF2 continues to protect and seek open space and burial provision, and now designates Local Green Spaces through Appendix 4, applying the corresponding national policy approach.
20. Policy CF3 is comprehensively updated following changes to the Use Classes Order and the removal of the Primary Shopping Frontage designation. It supports Class E uses in the Core Town Centre, sets tests for other uses, and adds criteria for retail proposals outside the District Centre. The tourism policy is largely retained, with updated accessibility wording and the removal of dated supporting material.

### **Housing employment and site allocations**

21. Policy HE1 replaces separate brownfield and greenfield dwelling-type and density tables with a single target mix based on the number of bedrooms: 6.2 per cent one-bedroom, 24.1 per cent two-bedroom, 48.3 per cent three-bedroom, 16.2 per cent four-bedroom and 5.3 per cent five or more bedrooms. The provisions concerning viability, bungalows and accessible housing, and self-build homes are retained. The supporting text and policy still require reconciliation over whether the policy applies only to schemes of 11 or more dwellings and over references to density standards that no longer appear in the table.
22. The former employment policy is renumbered HE2. Its broad economic approach is retained, but the treatment of allocated employment land is adjusted following removal of the safeguarded bypass line.
23. Policies SS1, SS2 and SS3 are deleted because the allocated developments have been completed. The supporting text records completion of the SS6 development and states that the former Minster School site associated with SS8 is to become a Main Open Area. SS4 and SS5 retain their approximate capacities of 45 and 60 dwellings, with added requirements for lifetime landscape maintenance and consideration of their combined effect on the Kirklington Road and Lower Kirklington Road junction. SS5 no longer requires a central connection to the Southwell Trail. SS7 increases the indicative capacity of the Southwell Depot site from about 15 to about 18 dwellings, removes the former bypass boundary requirement, and requires access to be allowed to the adjoining former-depot land so that possible future expansion across the wider site is not prevented.

### **Monitoring implementation and drafting corrections**

24. The monitoring chapter adds a policy-by-policy method for recording whether planning approvals comply with policies or involve differing degrees of departure, and applies a similar approach to the Design Codes.
25. The implementation framework based on partnership working, planning obligations, the Community Infrastructure Levy and external funding is retained, while the dated list of individual projects is removed in favour of annual review and a rolling five-year programme.
26. The Schedule of Modifications also identifies a limited number of drafting matters requiring correction or confirmation. These include inconsistent contents entries and policy titles; obsolete cross-references; the missing HE1 threshold and retained density commentary; the 'and' wording in CF1; numbering and internal cross-references in E3; duplicated standards in E4; and outdated policy numbers in the implementation section. Correcting typographical, numbering and cross-reference errors would improve clarity. Where a correction would determine the intended scope or operation of a policy, the intended wording will need to be confirmed.

### **Closing statement**

17. The draft Plan combines routine factual, evidential and editorial updating with focused changes to a number of operative policies and site-specific provisions. It retains the vision, thematic structure and continuing allocations of the made Plan, while updating the period, evidence, policy mechanisms and development-management tests in the areas described above.