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To: Town Clerk [<townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk>](mailto:townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk)

Subject: Council submits Net Zero updates for Salt Cross Garden Village



07 Apr 2025

Council submits Net Zero updates for Salt Cross Garden Village

West Oxfordshire District Council has submitted a revised Net Zero policy for Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP) to the Planning Inspectorate to meet the Council's energy ambitions for the site which will be assessed by the Planning Inspector in the coming months.

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive for West Oxfordshire District Council, said, "Our initial plans for Salt Cross included a policy that would require the whole development to be net zero carbon in operation. These plans were refused by the Planning Inspector at the time, but last year Rights Community Action (RCA) had success in the High Court challenging this decision, and we were given permission to re-submit our policy for examination.

"We have carefully considered the best way forward and decided to continue to promote a net zero carbon approach. Our evidence demonstrates that it is not only financially viable and technically deliverable, but has a number of clear advantages over an alternative low carbon approach.

"Importantly, we are now seeing more and more proposals like ours approved in other areas of the country which is welcome news. We hope the Inspector agrees with our position so we can progress with the garden village."

The planning process requires the Planning Inspector to approve what is known as an Area Action Plan – essentially a blueprint for how the new development should be built.

Most of the Area Action Plan has been approved but the Net Zero policy must now be re-examined.

The Council wrote to the Planning Inspectorate asking to pause the planning process for the Salt Cross AAP in December 2024 while it sought further clarifications on the national policy position of the new Government.

An updated Net Zero policy has now been submitted to be examined, and the Planning Inspector will hold a hearing before deciding whether to approve or modify the policy later this year.

Once the Net Zero policy is approved by the Planning Inspectorate, West Oxfordshire District Council will be able to consider the Salt Cross Area Action Plan for formal adoption. Then planning applications can be submitted in line with the AAP with building on site to follow.

ENDS

Contact Information

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Notes to editors

More information on Salt Cross and the Council's submission to the Planning Inspectorate can be found here - <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/salt-cross-garden-village/>

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