



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

DIRECTORS BRIEFING	03 APRIL 2017
SCRUTINY COMMISSION	24 APRIL 2017

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

UPDATE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN PREPARATION PROGRESS

Report of Director (Environment and Planning)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the current status of neighbourhood plans being prepared by parish councils and neighbourhood forums and additional resources that are being put in place by the borough council to aid qualifying groups.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Commission notes the report and the additional resources that are being put in place by the Borough Council in order to fulfil their statutory duty to support those undertaking neighbourhood planning.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced in the Localism Act 2011. It allows communities to help shape new growth and development in their area by preparing neighbourhood development plans which can then become part of the statutory development plan for the borough. Neighbourhood plans can allocate land for development and be referred to when deciding planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

- 3.2 Preparation of a neighbourhood plan includes a number of formal (i.e. statutory) stages. These formal stages are:

- Designation of a neighbourhood area and if appropriate neighbourhood forum;
- Preparation of a draft neighbourhood plan or order;
- Pre-submission publicity & consultation;
- Submission of a neighbourhood plan or order proposal to the local planning authority;

- Independent Examination;
- Referendum; and
- Making the neighbourhood plan or order (i.e. bringing it into force)

3.3 The borough council provides officer resources to aid qualifying groups in bringing forward neighbourhood plans. Limited support has also been provided by the Rural Community Council (RCC), at a cost of £8,760 under a Service Level Agreement (SLA), particularly in relation to supporting communities with their consultation procedures. However, in order to improve support to the borough's parishes and neighbourhood forums, additional dedicated resources were deemed necessary.

3.4 On 6 September 2016, Council resolved to provide additional staff resources to support the council's neighbourhood planning functions in the form of an additional officer or officers, where the following trigger points are met:

Number of Neighbourhood Plans	Potential Additional Resource
10-20 designated areas	1 dedicated neighbourhood planning officer
20+ designated areas	2 dedicated neighbourhood planning officers

This support was originally envisaged to be delivered through appointing an additional planning officer (Grade 7) whose role would be dedicated to neighbourhood planning as per the Council resolution. However, it was considered that this might not be the most cost effective or efficient way of delivering the most effective type of support that would benefit communities. Following consideration of the issues and discussions with the RCC it has been agreed to expand the current SLA for a period of three years at an additional cost of £31,240 per annum to allow the RCC to provide a dedicated support service to qualifying groups and thus take some of the burden for the early stages from the planning service.

3.5 The new RCC SLA will take effect from 1 April 2017. Members have been invited to a special Planning Policy Member Working Group on Thursday 6 April 2017 to hear a presentation about this service from the RCC.

Existing Neighbourhood Plan progress in Hinckley and Bosworth

3.6 There are currently seven formally designated neighbourhood areas for the purposes of producing a neighbourhood plan and all are at different stages. The plans are:

a. Market Bosworth

- Identified by Central Government as a neighbourhood planning frontrunner.
 - Designated as a Neighbourhood Area in February 2013
 - Draft plan published for consultation in early 2015 and was deemed appropriate in an Examiners Report in February 2015
 - A referendum on the making of the plan took place on 3 September 2015 and, following a majority 'yes' vote, the plan was made by the Borough Council on 4 September 2015
- The neighbourhood planning group are working on keeping their plan and evidence continually up to date and regularly attend other parish meetings to talk about their experience.

b. Burbage

- Area designated in February 2014

- Evidence gathering and public consultation work has been completed and a draft plan is in progress
- The neighbourhood planning group have had critical friend support via a consultant working with Planning Aid to help refine their draft plan prior to formal consultation

c. West Clarendon, Hinckley

- Forum and Area designated in May 2014
- Work on the plan was halted due to the unfortunate passing of the Chair and co Chair. A meeting was held in autumn 2016 between officers and other members of the neighbourhood forum to discuss a way forward but essentially it is for the group to decide whether to proceed.
- Recent contact with the council has been made suggesting other parties may be interested in taking the plan preparation over so contact details for the Planning Manager (Policy) have been forwarded. No further contact has been received to date.

d. Desford

- Designated in September 2015
- Evidence gathering and undertaking public engagement
- A consultant has been engaged as at March 2017 to aid production of the plan.

e. Sheepy

- Designated in October 2015
- Evidence gathering and undertaking public engagement is ongoing
- As at March 2017 a questionnaire seeking views has begun circulating and a consultant has been engaged to aid production of the plan.

f. Stoke Golding

- Designated in June 2016
- Evidence gathering and undertaking public engagement
- The neighbourhood planning group keep up regular consultation with the council and as at March 2017 they have engaged a consultant to aid production of the plan.

g. Newbold Verdon

- Designated in August 2016
- Evidence gathering and public engagement is ongoing
- The neighbourhood planning group have been liaising closely with officers recently to decide the best way forward for their plan

h. Witherley

- Application for area designation concluded on 20 March 2017 and agreement will be sought from Members to accept the designation shortly.

i. Markfield

- Application for designation has been made and consultation period concludes on 14 April 2017

j. Barlestone

- Application for designation has been made and consultation period concludes on 2 May 2017

k. Bagworth and Thornton

- Initial meeting to discuss preparing a Neighbourhood Plan will take place on 23 March 2017

l. Stanton under Bardon

- Initial meeting to discuss preparing a Neighbourhood Plan will take place on 30 March 2017

m. Higham on the Hill

- An application for area designation was consulted on between 15 April and 27 May 2016. However, an objection was received from Horiba MIRA Enterprise Zone about its inclusion in the proposed neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood planning group are re-considering their application but no further contact with the council has been made to date.

- 3.7 Interest in neighbourhood planning has also been expressed by three other communities (namely Ratby, Twycross and Groby) although no formal application for area designation has been received to date. Under the new arrangement, the RCC, as part of the SLA, work pro-actively with parish and town councils to ascertain if there is any continued appetite and promote the benefits of neighbourhood planning. They will also work with communities to identify sources of funding to help with the production and implementation of plans.

4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

- 4.1 None

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [TF]

2017/18

- 5.1 Currently, in 2016/17 there is a grant funded expenditure budget of £31,453 which is available. This element can be carried forward to fund Neighborhood Planning Support. If agreed, this element will be approved as part of the year end Out turn reported to Council July 2017.
- 5.2 As mentioned in paragraph 3.3 there is currently a service level agreement with the RCC costing £8,760. If these funds are also allocated to project, a virement will require sign off by the Head of Finance.
- 5.3 For 2017/18 the costs will therefore be met from existing funds.

2018/19

- 5.4 It was agreed by Council in September 2016 that once a trigger point of 10 designated planning neighbourhood areas are reached an additional planning officer would be required at grade 7. This is anticipated to happen in 2018. If a second year is commissioned, £8,760 will be funded using the existing RCC budget. The balance £31,240 will be funded by not recruiting the new planning officer (Grade 7 post) before the end of the commission.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [AR]

- 6.1 Contained within the body of this report.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Corporate Plan (2017-2021) seeks to support rural communities through a range of measures, including taking forward Neighbourhood Planning. The provision of a full support service for local communities to develop NDPs would help achieve these aspirations.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Throughout the production of neighbourhood plans, multiple consultations are undertaken with effected communities. Effective public consultation is essential in the development of plans as they require a positive result at referendum in order to be made.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failure to provide additional support for qualifying groups could result in groups not having sufficient support and assistance to take forward successful neighbourhood plans.	Ensure that support is provided.	Kirstie Rea

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The provision of additional support and assistance to qualifying groups to assist with development of neighbourhood plans will help communities more fully engage with planning and the future of their community more widely, and help encourage greater participation and community cohesion.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: None

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