



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - 3 DECEMBER 2019
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 10
Subject	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Rachel Coxcoon / Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, Climate Change and Energy Email: Rachel.coxcoon@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Tel: 01285 623146 Email: joseph.walker@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update of progress/activity with neighbourhood planning, since July, when this topic was last reported to Overview and Scrutiny.
Annexes	None
Recommendation/s	Please write recommendations using letters and italics as below. <i>a) To note the report</i>
Corporate priorities	Ensure that all services delivered by the Council are delivered to the highest standard
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	N/A
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

1. BACKGROUND

Overview and Scrutiny considered a report on Neighbourhood Planning at its meeting in July, providing background to the area of work, and a summary of progress and activity in the district. This report provides an overview of progress since that date, and updates on a requested action

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1.1.** The power to prepare parish level planning policy remains attractive to Cotswold communities, with quite a few of our parishes accessing community planning workshops delivered by GRCC under our Service Level Agreement to review their options, and a few taking the decision to undertake a neighbourhood development plan (NDP). Ampney Crucis and Andoversford have both committed to preparing a NDP, although neither have yet sought to designate their neighbourhood areas.
- 2.1.2.** Work continues across the designated neighbourhood areas, with a number reaching or getting close to the statutory stages which serve as useful milestones for progress. We have been liaising with communities which are looking to undertake their full pre-submission consultation – effectively the last formative consultation before submission for examination – Preston and South Cerney are both expected to launch their pre-submission consultations soon. Fairford and Stow and the Swells are likely to follow on soon after.
- 2.1.3.** Since July Kemble and Ewen has carried out their pre-submission consultation, to which this Council has responded. We can anticipate formal submission of their plan in the next few months, once they have reviewed and responded to the points raised.
- 2.1.4.** Somerford Keynes has submitted their plan for examination. At the time of writing, a decision on this is due in order to launch the ‘Regulation 16’ consultation¹, whereby consultees have a chance to make representations to be considered by the independent examiner in their review of the plan.
- 2.1.5.** Looking more broadly at progress beyond the procedural milestones, the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan will formally launch shortly, and is looking to co-ordinate initial consultation along a Local Plan ‘Issues and Options’ consultation. Chipping Campden has been in touch to advise that following a hiatus of around two years, they are keen to redraft their plan. Moreton-in-Marsh continues to progress, and has recently appointed planning consultants to assist.
- 2.1.6.** We have also heard from Tetbury – which has a ‘made’ plan (the NDP equivalent of ‘adopted’) that they are looking to review their plan. Nationally, many of the early plans have commenced and indeed delivered plan reviews - there is now a good body of guidance and government grant to facilitate this for both qualifying bodies (that is, the authors of neighbourhood plans) and local planning authorities. Neighbourhood plans will frequently require review and refresh – typically where they have allocated sites which may have been delivered or where the Local Plan context has changed.

¹ A statutory consultation phase, set out in Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

Local Plan Review

- 2.2.** One of the Basic Conditions against which a Neighbourhood Plan is tested at examination is that it needs to be in 'general conformity' with the Local Plan. This means that while it can create policy which is distinctly different where the impact is largely restricted to the neighbourhood area, it cannot undermine the strategic policies of the Local Plan.
- 2.2.1.** Any neighbourhood plan going to examination now is tested against the Council's adopted Local Plan. The Council is required to keep its adopted local plan up-to-date and is required to undertake a review within five years to conclude whether an update to the adopted local plan is required. . It is important to reflect on this and updated evidence and emerging needs– certainly, communities and the Council will wish to guard against NDPs being successful at examination but becoming rapidly outdated thereafter.
- 2.2.2.** For many policy areas, this is a theoretical risk – changes to strategic policies within the Local Plan are unlikely to outdate many of the common NDP policies, such as those protecting community facilities, or requiring high quality design. The most critical and complex relationship between the Local Plan and neighbourhood plans is in the area of residential land delivery.
- 2.2.3.** The current Local Plan contains full site allocations. It is open to NDPs to propose additional site allocations to drive up housing delivery, or indeed to seek to propose alternative sites to accommodate the need laid out in the Local Plan, but there is no expectation or requirement on them to make site allocations.
- 2.2.4.** Other local planning authorities have defined the scale of development expected to be delivered in their settlements, but left it up to NDP to allocate the sites that deliver this need. Such an approach is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework, which sees NDPs as a key tool in making small and medium sized site allocations.
- 2.2.5.** Subject to the Council concluding an update to its adopted Local Plan is required and during an early 'Issues and Options' consultation phase of the Local Plan update, we will need to explore with our communities and other stakeholders what approach the Local Plan should take.
- 2.3.** At its meeting in July, Overview and Scrutiny requested that a document be produced that would highlight the lessons learnt on neighbourhood planning, and the reasons why a NDP might or might not be of value to communities. Such a document will need to serve as guidance on the relationship between NDP and the Council's Local Plan, and be clear about the opportunity and alternatives to neighbourhood plan site allocations. It would advantageous to prepare this document following an 'Issues and Options' consultation. In the meantime, there is a robust and well-used guide to neighbourhood planning published by Locality, the organisation contracted nationally to support communities on neighbourhood planning, and communities can access GRCC's options workshop.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1.** None direct from this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.** None direct from this report.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.** None direct from this report.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT (IF REQUIRED)

- 6.1.** None direct from this report.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

- 7.1.** Neighbourhood planning can present an opportunity to drive forward environmental projects and to seeks to lift standards. Any further guidance from the Council will be likely to advocate such activities.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1.** Not relevant to this report

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1.** The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:
- Report 09 to Overview and Scrutiny dated 23 July 2019 and associated minutes
- 9.2.** These documents will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Trinity Road during normal office hours for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting. Please contact the author of the report.