



Report To: Planning Portfolio Holder's Meeting
Lead Officer: Director, Planning and New Communities

3 February 2015

Neighbourhood Plans: Gamlingay Area Designation

Purpose

1. To make a decision regarding the application by Gamlingay Parish Council to designate the parish of Gamlingay as a Neighbourhood Area (see Appendix A).
2. This is not a key decision and the Planning Portfolio Holder has delegated authority to make decisions on Neighbourhood Planning matters.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Planning Portfolio Holder approves the designation of the Gamlingay Neighbourhood Area.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Gamlingay Parish Council wants to prepare a neighbourhood plan for their area and in order to do this a neighbourhood area must be designated. A public consultation must be carried out on the proposed boundary of this area by South Cambridgeshire District Council as the relevant local planning authority. After taking into account comments received during this consultation a decision must be made by the District Council on whether it is appropriate to designate the proposed neighbourhood area.

Background

5. A neighbourhood area must be designated before a parish council can prepare a neighbourhood plan. There are national regulations guiding how this designation should be carried out and in the Cabinet Report of 8 May 2014 the approach, that South Cambridgeshire District Council is to use is set out as follows:
 - (a) Parishes are asked to complete the 'application for area designation' form, which can be found at www.scambs.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning. The form asks questions about the proposed area and the early consultation that the parish has undertaken.
 - (b) The Council, as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), must publicise and consult on the application for not less than six-weeks. The form of consultation to be guided by its normal practice for development plan documents and supplementary planning documents as set out in its adopted statement of community involvement (SCI).
 - (c) The Council takes representations into consideration and decides whether to designate the area. This decision has been delegated to the Planning Portfolio Holder.
 - (d) Following designation, the Council publicises its decision on its website, including the name of the parish council(s) nominating it, and a map showing the area.

Considerations

6. Gamlingay Parish Council has decided it would like to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for their area. It has applied to the Council for its parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area supplying a map of the area to be designated, and a statement explaining why the area should be designated.
7. A six week public consultation took place from 3 October until 14 November 2014. It was extended until 16 January 2015 as a change was made to the original application form which was then resubmitted by Gamlingay Parish Council. This consultation was undertaken by the District Council as required, with support from the Parish Council.
8. Prior to the application for area designation, the Parish Council had informed the local community that there were proposals to prepare a neighbourhood plan for the parish. The details of this are included in the revised application form (Question 8) in Appendix A of this report.
9. Letters were sent out by the Parish Council to all villages and towns bordering the proposed designated area to consult with them on the proposed boundary for the neighbourhood area.
10. The application letter and associated area map from Gamlingay Parish Council, which includes a statement of why the area should be designated, was published on the District Council's website on 3 October 2014 and the revised application form on 21 November 2014. Hard copies of these documents were available during this period at the District Council offices and at the Gamlingay Parish Council office, The Eco Hub, Stocks Lane, Gamlingay, Beds, SG1 9 3J.
11. The District Council consulted with the Specific and relevant General Consultees that are used for Local Plan consultations. Also the Council wrote to all parish councils within a three mile buffer zone of the boundary with Gamlingay Parish as well as Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils.
12. With assistance from the Parish Council, the Council also contacted local groups, businesses, landowners and schools in order to meet the requirement to bring the consultation to the attention of people, who live, work or carry out business in the proposed Neighbourhood Area.
13. Representations could be submitted on the consultation in a number of ways, namely via the online consultation system, by email or post. A link to the consultation was also added to the front page of the website to make people aware of it.
14. When the consultation was extended all the consultees were informed of the revised deadline for comments which was 16 January 2015. In the letter / email sent out to them it was highlighted that if they had responded to the original consultation that they would not have to resubmit comments if they were happy for these to be considered by the Council. They were also given the opportunity if they wished to withdraw or revise these comments.
15. The District Council issued press releases regarding the consultation both at the start of the consultation in October and to make people aware of the extended deadline for comments in November. An item advertising the consultation was placed in the Planning Policy monthly update, which goes out to all parishes across the district as well as being included in the Parish e-bulletin in November 2014.

16. The Parish Council assisted the Council by placing posters across the proposed Neighbourhood Area in key locations throughout the consultation period including new posters when the consultation was extended. The Parish Council also included the consultation on their website.

Results of the consultation

17. During the consultation period 8 comments were made on the proposed neighbourhood designation. Of these 2 were objections and the remainder supported the area proposed for designation or commented on the neighbourhood plan process. (See Appendix B of this report for a summary of the representations).
18. One objection was made by an individual who questioned whether the consultation had received wide enough publicity within the village particularly to The Cinques area of the parish. A revised form was submitted by the Parish Council which clarified the local consultation undertaken to determine the boundary of the neighbourhood area. (See response to question 8 in the revised form in Appendix A of this report.) As a result of the new form the Council extended the consultation period which gave the opportunity for the Parish Council to repeat their publicity of the proposed neighbourhood area and to ensure that all parts of the parish were aware of the consultation. As the extended period included the Christmas holidays the extension deadline was taken to 16 January 2015 to ensure everyone in the local community would have the opportunity to respond.
19. The second objection was received from Hatley Parish Council who proposed that the boundary of the area be revised to exclude four fields that belong to Hatley St George. Officers consider that the most logical boundary for the neighbourhood area is to follow that of the administrative boundary of Gamlingay Parish. A neighbourhood plan would not necessarily include policies that would impact on the whole neighbourhood area but national guidance for neighbourhood planning emphasises the need to involve landowners in the plan making process. Officers do not consider the particulars of the ownership of land would justify altering the boundary for the neighbourhood area. In preparing the plan the owner of the four fields could become involved in preparing the plan especially if any proposals were to be made that impact on this part of the parish.
20. Representations commenting on the designation of the neighbourhood area and offering assistance in the future drafting of the plan were received from the Forestry Commission; The Wildlife Trust; Sport England and English Heritage.
21. Officers do not consider that as a result of the representations received that the boundary of the neighbourhood area as submitted by Gamlingay Parish Council should be amended. It is recommended that the Council confirms the designation for the area as included in the application form.
22. The Government is proposing changes to the regulations relating to neighbourhood planning and in particular to introducing a time limit for local planning authorities to work to when designating a neighbourhood area. The current South Cambridgeshire application form is to be revised to ensure that it is as simple as possible to complete and contains all the information that would be required to consult upon the designation of a neighbourhood area. This will assist in making sure the future consultations run smoothly.

Options

23. The Portfolio Holder could
- (a) Approve the area designation for Gamlingay Parish.
 - (b) Decide to amend the boundary of the area to exclude the four fields identified in the objection by Hatley Parish Council.
 - (c) Decide not to designate the neighbourhood area.

Implications

24. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

25. Local planning authorities are able to claim for up to 20 area designations (£100,000) in each financial year. In the 2014/15 financial year, claims can be made at the end of each quarter. For all areas, the basic level of funding per NP is £30,000, to be paid for which £5,000 can be claimed for designation of a Neighbourhood Area.

Separate support is available for communities.

<http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/direct-support/>

Legal

26. The Planning Portfolio Holder has delegated authority to make decisions on Neighbourhood Planning matters.

Staffing

27. Initially support for neighbourhood planning will be delivered within existing resources by the Planning Policy Team and the Sustainable Communities and Partnerships Team, drawing upon the expertise of other staff as required. Depending on demand, and other work priorities, the Council may need to revisit the level of advice and guidance available to parishes or consider additional resources in the future.

Equality and Diversity

28. Equality and diversity issues will be considered during the preparation of the NP as appropriate to its content.

Climate Change

29. Climate change issues will be considered during the preparation of the NP as appropriate to its content.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

30. A summary of the consultation responses on the proposed neighbourhood area are set out in Appendix B.

Effect on Strategic Aims

Aim 1 - Engagement: engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money

31. Neighbourhood planning engages local people in the planning process by giving them a tool to guide the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. Parish councils lead on the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans and

local residents and businesses are engaged throughout the process. The Council has a statutory duty to advise and assist parish councils in the preparation of their neighbourhood plans which supports this Strategic Aim to engage with the local community.

Appendices

Appendix A: The application from Gamlingay to designate a neighbourhood area.

Appendix B: A summary of the representations received during the consultation.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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