



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

17 November 2015

Neighbourhood Plans: West Wickham Area Designation

Purpose

1. To make a decision regarding the application to designate the parish of West Wickham as a Neighbourhood Area (see Appendix A).
2. This 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:
 - (a) The designation of a Neighbourhood Area for West Wickham as proposed by the Parish Council.
 - (b) An amendment to the neighbourhood area addendum of the Local Development Scheme that was approved in August 2015 so that West Wickham can be added to the list of Neighbourhood Area designated within the District.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) has received an application from West Wickham Parish Council (PC) to designate the 'West Wickham Neighbourhood Area.' SCDC has eight weeks from the start of the consultation, on 2 October 2015, to make a decision whether to designate the area as proposed or to designate an alternative area. The PC has applied to have the whole of its parish designated. The decision must be made by 27 November 2015.
5. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved in February 2014. An addendum was approved by the Planning Portfolio Holder in August 2015 to include a list of the neighbourhood area that have been designated within the district. There are now additional neighbourhood areas recommended for designation which if approved will need to be included in this list.

Background

6. A NA must be designated before a PC can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). There are national regulations guiding how this designation should be carried out which were revised in February 2015 to introduce time limits within which a Local Planning Authority (LPA) must make a decision on designation depending upon the nature of the application. If the application is from a PC and the NA proposed is their parish boundary the designation must be decided within eight weeks from the start date of the actual consultation. In turn this public consultation must be for a minimum of four weeks according to the regulations.

7. The process agreed by SCDC to designate a NA within this district is set out in Appendix B.

Application from West Wickham

8. West Wickham Parish Council has decided that it would like to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for its area. They have applied to SCDC for their parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area (NA) supplying a map of the area to be designated, and a statement explaining why the area should be designated. The consultation started on 2 October until 30 October 2015.
9. The proposed NA follows the West Wickham parish boundary. This proposed area is logical in spatial terms and will clearly make sense to the local community being an existing administrative boundary for the parish. The PC has set out clearly in its statement why it considers this to be the preferred option for its NA. (See Appendix A – NA application question 8)

The Consultation

10. SCDC has eight weeks from 2 October to make a decision on the proposed area – the deadline for a decision is 27 November 2015
11. Consultation on the area application was undertaken by SCDC as required, with support from the PC:
 - (a) Prior to the application for area designation, the PC made its local community aware of its intention to prepare a NP. Discussions were held between the PC and community members to consider the extent of the NA and issues for consideration in any future NP.
 - (b) The application form and the map indicating the proposed NA from West Wickham PC, which includes a statement of why the area should be designated, was published on SCDC's website on Friday 2 October 2015 and gave a closing date of 30 October 2015. Representations could be submitted on the consultation in a number of ways, namely via the online consultation system, by email or post.
 - (c) The application to designate the West Wickham Neighbourhood Area was available during this period at the District Council offices and at The village noticeboards in West Wickham and Streetly End
 - (d) SCDC consulted with the consultees that are used for Local Plan consultations.
 - (e) SCDC consulted with all PCs within a three mile buffer zone of the boundary with West Wickham Parish.
 - (f) With assistance from the PC, SCDC 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 NA.
 - (g) Posters were displayed across the proposed NA in key locations throughout the consultation period.
 - (h) The PC also publicised the consultation in their local area.
 - (i) An item advertising the consultation was placed in the Planning Policy monthly update, which goes out to all parishes across the district.
 - (j) SCDC issued a press release about the proposed consultation. Three applications have been received by SCDC from Cottenham, Foxton and West

Wickham PCs. The consultation on these three areas has been carried out jointly.

12. 5 representations have been received, none objecting to the area designation. This low level of response is to be expected given that it was not a consultation on a NP itself with policies and proposed site allocations. Of the representations received the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England and the Woodland Trust have all offered general support to neighbourhood planning and web links to relevant advice they have to assist PCs in preparing a NP. In addition the Environment Agency and Historic England have provided local information relating to the proposed area. A summary of the representations received between 2 October 2015 and 30 October 2015 are attached as Appendix C.

Consideration by South Cambridgeshire District Council

13. South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is supportive of West Wickham PC preparing a NP for its parish. The NA proposed by the PC is considered by officers to follow a natural boundary as it is that of the parish and therefore would be an effective NA for neighbourhood boundary purposes.

Local Development Scheme

14. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved in February 2014 and sets out the planning documents that SCDC proposes to prepare. An addendum was agreed by the Planning Portfolio Holder in August 2015 to include a list of the NAs that have been designated within the district. There are now additional NAs being recommended for designation and therefore the August addendum should be revised to add these NAs if they are all approved. (See Appendix D)

Options

15. The Portfolio Holder could
 - (a) Decide to designate the NA as proposed by West Wickham PC
 - (b) Decide to designate an alternative NA to that applied for by West Wickham PC. However the proposed NA is logical and clearly recognisable to the local community as it is the parish boundary and no objections have been received to suggest an alternative area.
 - (c) Decide to defer a decision on the NA. However SCDC must decide on the area within 8 weeks from the start date of the consultation. The local community have had an opportunity to comment on the proposed NA following the process agreed by the Cabinet in May 2014 and no objections have been received.

Implications

16. 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

17. SCDC has a neighbourhood planning budget and can claim from DCLG for up to 20 area designations in each financial year. The basic level of funding per NP is £30,000, of which £5,000 can be claimed for designation of a Neighbourhood Area.

18. The PC can access funding to assist it in preparing a NP. Locality provides grants of up to £8,000 for local communities preparing NPs.

Legal

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

Staffing

20. Support for neighbourhood planning is 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.

Equality and Diversity

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

Climate Change

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

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

23. Consultation responses on the proposed NA are set out in Appendix B.

Effect on Strategic Aims

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

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. PCs lead on the preparation of NPs and local residents and businesses are engaged throughout the process.

25. **Aim 2 – Partnerships: Work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation.**

The designation of a NA for West Wickham is the first stage in preparing a NP for West Wickham. This is an opportunity for the local community to shape through neighbourhood planning their local area whilst working with all parties engaged in developing the strategic site and involvement in planning for strategic transport needs.

26. **Aim 3 – Wellbeing: Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life to our residents.**

By preparing a NP local communities are being given the opportunity to create policies in their NP that will enhance the character of their local surroundings to contribute to ensuring an outstanding quality of life.

Appendices

- Appendix A: The application from West Wickham PC to have their parish designated as a NA.
Appendix B: Process for designating a neighbourhood area in South Cambs DC
Appendix C: Summary of the representations received during the consultation.
Appendix D: Revised addendum to the Local Development Scheme

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.

National Planning Practice Guidance relating to the designation of neighbourhood areas
<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/designating-a-neighbourhood-area/>

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