



Report To: Planning Portfolio Holder

8 November 2016

Lead Officer: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

Neighbourhood Plans: Stapleford & Great Shelford Neighbourhood Area designation

Purpose

1. To make a decision on the application (see Appendix A) to designate the parishes of Stapleford and Great Shelford as a Neighbourhood Area.
2. This is not a key decision. The Planning Portfolio Holder has delegated authority to make decisions on Neighbourhood Planning matters.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Planning Portfolio Holder:
 - (a) delegates authority to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development to approve the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Stapleford and Great Shelford, following the end of the consultation on 2 November 2016 and assuming that there are no objections received; and
 - (b) makes a decision outside of a meeting, that will be subject to call-in, if any objections are received.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) has received a joint application from Stapleford Parish Council and Great Shelford Parish Council to designate the 'Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Area'. SCDC has thirteen weeks from the start of the consultation, on 5 September 2016, to make a decision whether to designate the area as proposed or to designate an alternative area. The decision therefore must be made by 5 December 2016. If a decision is not made by this date, the area applied for will be automatically designated.
5. There are currently no objections to the application to designate the two parishes as a Neighbourhood Area; however the consultation does not end until 5pm on 2 November 2016. Delegating approval of the Neighbourhood Area to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development, assuming there are no objections received, will ensure that a timely decision is made and allow the parishes to progress the development of their Neighbourhood Plan. If any objections are received, a decision made by the Portfolio Holder outside of a meeting, which will be subject to call-in, would ensure that a decision is made by 5 December 2016.

6. Once the consultation has ended, a written update will be provided to the Portfolio Holder outlining the number of additional comments received, and highlighting whether any objections have been received.

Background

7. A Neighbourhood Area must be designated before a Parish Council can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. There are national regulations guiding how a designation should be considered by a local planning authority, including setting out timescales for making a decision on the designation and the length of time for the public consultation on the application. If the application is from a Parish Council but the proposed Neighbourhood Area is for more or less than the whole of its parish, the local planning authority must determine the application within thirteen weeks of the start date of the public consultation. The regulations also state that public consultation on the Neighbourhood Area boundary must be undertaken for a minimum of six weeks.
8. The process agreed by SCDC to designate a Neighbourhood Area within the district is set out in Appendix B.

Considerations

Application jointly from Stapleford Parish Council and Great Shelford Parish Council

9. Stapleford Parish Council and Great Shelford Parish Council have decided that they would like to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their parish areas. They have applied to SCDC for the whole of both their parishes 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.
10. The proposed Neighbourhood Area follows the Stapleford and Great Shelford parish boundaries. This proposed area is logical in spatial terms and will clearly make sense to the local community being the existing administrative boundaries for the parishes. The Parish Councils have set out clearly in their statement why they consider this to be the preferred option for their Neighbourhood Area (see Appendix A, question 8).

Consultation

11. SCDC is undertaking public consultation on the application for eight weeks between 5 September and 2 November 2016. The consultation has been extended from six weeks to eight weeks as unfortunately some relevant consultees were not informed of the start of the consultation. The Council extended the consultation period to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to comment. SCDC has thirteen weeks from the start of the consultation to make a decision on the proposed Neighbourhood Area; therefore the deadline for determining the application is 5 December 2016. If a decision is not made by this date, the area applied for will be automatically designated.

12. Consultation on the Neighbourhood Area boundary was undertaken by SCDC as required, with support from the Parish Council:
- (a) Prior to the application for area designation, the Parish Council made its local community aware of its intention to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Meetings were held on 23 September 2015 and 21 January 2016 in Great Shelford and 15 March 2016 in Stapleford, and the local community supported the Parish Councils proposals.
 - (b) The application form (which includes a statement of why the area should be designated) and the map from Stapleford and Great Shelford Parish Councils indicating the proposed Neighbourhood Area, was published on SCDC's website on 5 September 2016 with a closing date for comments of 17 October 2016 (later extended to 2 November 2016). Comments can be submitted on the proposed boundary using the online consultation system, by email or by post.
 - (c) The application form and map are available to view during the consultation at the SCDC offices, at the main Stapleford Parish Council noticeboard (outside the Spar supermarket on London Road, Stapleford) and at the main Great Shelford Parish Council noticeboard (outside the Memorial Hall on Woollards Lane, Great Shelford).
 - (d) SCDC consulted with the consultees that are used for Local Plan public consultations.
 - (e) SCDC consulted with all Parish Councils within a three mile buffer zone of the boundary of the proposed Neighbourhood Area.
 - (f) With assistance from the Parish Council, SCDC also contacted local groups, businesses, and schools within the two parishes 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.
 - (g) The consultation was publicised in the Planning Policy monthly update, which goes out to all parishes across the district.
 - (h) The consultation was publicised on posters in the villages and publicised in parish online newsletters and on the parish websites.
 - (i) SCDC issued a press release about the proposed consultation.
13. 3 comments have been received to date, none objecting to the area designation. A summary of each of the comments received so far is included as Appendix C. This low level of response is to be expected given that it was not a consultation on a Neighbourhood Plan itself that would include policies for the area.
14. Comments received from the Sport England include web links to relevant advice they have to assist Parish Councils in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and comments from the Environment Agency provide information relating to the local area.

Consideration by South Cambridgeshire District Council

15. SCDC is supportive of Stapleford and Great Shelford Parish Councils preparing a joint Neighbourhood Plan for the two parishes and is keen for the three Councils to work together in considering the future development of the area.

16. The Neighbourhood Area proposed by the Parish Councils is considered by officers to follow a natural boundary, as it is that of the two parishes and therefore would be an effective Neighbourhood Area for Neighbourhood Plan purposes.

Options

17. The Planning Portfolio Holder could:
- (a) Decide to delegate authority to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development to approve the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Stapleford and Great Shelford, following the end of the consultation on 2 November 2016 and assuming that there are no objections received;
 - (b) Make a decision outside of a meeting, that will be subject to call-in, if any objections are received;
 - (c) Decide to defer a decision on the Neighbourhood Area. However, to meet the regulations SCDC must decide on the Neighbourhood Area within thirteen weeks from the start date of the consultation, therefore by 5 December 2016. If a decision is not made by this date, the area applied for will be automatically designated. The local community have had an opportunity to comment on the proposed Neighbourhood Area and no objections have been received to date.

Implications

18. 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

19. SCDC can claim £20,000 per Neighbourhood Plan once it has been successful through the examination and a referendum date has been set.
20. The Parish Council can access funding to assist it in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Locality provides grants of up to £9,000 for local communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans.

Legal

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

Staffing

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

23. Equality and diversity issues will be considered during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan as appropriate to its content.

Climate Change

24. Climate change issues will be considered during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan as appropriate to its content.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

25. Consultation responses on the proposed Neighbourhood Area are set out in Appendix B.

Effect on Strategic Objectives

Objective 1 – Living Well: support our communities to remain in good health whilst continuing to protect the natural and built environment

26. By preparing a Neighbourhood Plan local communities are being given the opportunity to create planning policies that will protect and enhance the character of their local surroundings and contribute to ensuring an outstanding quality of life.

Objective 2 – Homes for Our Future: secure the delivery of a wide range of housing to meet the needs of existing and future communities

27. Local communities can within a Neighbourhood Plan consider the existing and future needs for housing in their area and positively plan to meet this need through a range of policies and / or allocations in their plan.

Objective 3 – Connected Communities: work with partners to ensure new transport and digital infrastructure supports and strengthens communities and that our approach to growth sustains prosperity

28. This is an opportunity for the local community to shape through neighbourhood planning their local area, and strengthen their communities by working together.

Objective 4 – An Innovative and Dynamic Organisation: adopt a more commercial and business-like approach to ensure we can continue to deliver the best possible services at the lowest possible cost

29. 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. SCDC has a duty to support Parish Councils preparing Neighbourhood Plans and is a great opportunity for the Council to work in partnership and to development new ways of working together with the Parish Councils.

Appendices

Appendix A: Application Form and Map to designate the Stapleford Parish Council and Great Shelford Parish Council parishes as a Neighbourhood Area.

Appendix B: Process for Designating a Neighbourhood Area in SCDC

Appendix C: Summary of the Comments received during the Consultation to date

Background Papers

Planning Practice Guidance relating to the designation of neighbourhood areas:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/designating-a-neighbourhood-area/>

Report Author: Jenny Nuttycombe – Senior Planning Policy Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713184