

# Neighbourhood Plan Scrutiny Working Group Final report

## 1.0 Objectives

- 1.1 Develop a policy in support of the Council's role to provide advice and guidance for designated Neighbourhood Plans within Rutland.

## 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 The development of the Policy will require:
  - 2.1.1 A review of the existing practice to date in providing advice and guidance to designated Neighbourhood Plans, taking account of the Council's responsibilities under Government Regulations;
  - 2.1.2 Consultation with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan bodies; and
  - 2.1.3 A review of good practice from around the country.
- 2.2 The review of advice and guidance will include but will not be limited to:
  - 2.2.1 Requirement in relation to Neighbourhood Plans meeting "basic conditions";
  - 2.2.2 Requirements in relation to the governance and working arrangements of Neighbourhood Plans;
  - 2.2.3 Requirements in relation to consultation on Neighbourhood Plans;
  - 2.2.4 Opportunities to provide training and development to Neighbourhood Plan bodies
  - 2.2.5 Complement the Council's existing development management policies without unnecessary duplication and to identify and address any important gaps.
  - 2.2.6 Help parishes produce a lasting document which has the potential to sit well with emerging Rutland and national policy, with a clear timetable for review.

## 3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The membership of the Task and Finish Group was Cllrs Oxley, Lammie, Bird, Mann and Stewart.
- 3.2 The Planning Policy Manager together with the Neighbourhood Plans Officer will support the Group by coordinating all requests for information held by the Council.

## 4.0 Meetings

Meeting date	Activity
20/10/16	Reviewed Terms of Reference and initial workplan; provided update on NP progress in Rutland; reviewed NP making processes; reviewed Council's approach towards advice and guidance; reviewed Council's legal responsibilities; and suggested next steps including the development of an NP Toolkit.
08/12/16	Presented case studies of best practise in rural areas and historic towns. Discussed initial feedback on NP Toolkit and need for NP Questionnaire to seek customer feedback.
25/01/17	Final feedback on NP Toolkit and discussion of initial responses to NP Questionnaire. The next step is to develop a clear policy on neighbourhood planning for future NP Working Groups.
28/02/17	Consideration of draft report and review of Council decision making procedures in the light of amended Government regulations.
28/03/17	Review and approval of final report to Places Scrutiny
25/04/17	Review of final report including consideration of revised decision making flowchart

## 5.0 Recommendations

5.1 To approve the attached Neighbourhood Plan toolkit as the basis for providing advice and guidance to existing and new Neighbourhood Plan bodies.

5.2 In providing advice and guidance, officers should stress to Neighbourhood Plan bodies the importance of good governance, inclusion and wide engagement in the process of developing Neighbourhood Plans. Advice and guidance should also highlight to community groups that it is the specific planning policies within the Neighbourhood Plan which will have real weight in planning decisions, rather than more general community aspirations which may be included in the plan.

5.3 Taking account of recent revised Government regulations for speeding up Neighbourhood Plans, the attached flowchart for streamlining existing decision making processes is recommended for consideration initially by the Scrutiny Panel. If approved by the Panel, the proposed amendments to the decision making process will be referred to Cabinet/Council to approve and the Council's constitution amended accordingly.

5.4 Given the benefits of the dedicated post of Neighbourhood Plans Officer in terms of providing advice and guidance to Neighbourhood

Plan bodies, the group recognises the benefits of this role and would support its continuation of this role subject to available resources.