

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan examination outcome and progression to referendum

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth)
– 3 November 2021
Cabinet – 18 November 2021

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning

Report by: Strategic Growth Manager

Ward(s) affected: Great Staughton (Grafham and Ellington Parishes)

Executive Summary:

Following the examination of the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan this report proposes acting upon the Examiner's report to accept the modifications proposed and progress to referendum.

Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet:

1. Agree that the District Council should act upon the Examiner's report to accept the recommended modifications and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report seeks agreement to act upon the Examiner's report into the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan leading to a referendum on whether or not it should be brought into force as part of the statutory development plan. It also sets out a timetable for this process.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the examination of a neighbourhood plan the Examiner sends their report to the local planning authority and the town/parish council preparing the neighbourhood plan. The examiner is required to set out one of three options:

1. That the neighbourhood plan proceeds to referendum as submitted
2. That the neighbourhood plan is modified by the local planning authority to meet the basic conditions and the modified version proceeds to referendum; or
3. That the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to referendum as it fails to meet the basic conditions and/ or legislative requirements and cannot be modified to do so.

- 2.2 The local planning authority has limited options in how to respond to the examiner's recommendations:

- a) Act upon the Examiner's report and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum, whether or not the Examiner recommends modifications are necessary to meet the basic conditions;
- b) Propose to take a decision substantially different from the Examiner's recommendation which is wholly or partly as a result of new evidence or a different view taken by the local planning authority about a particular fact; or
- c) Decide not to progress the neighbourhood plan in light of the Examiner's report - this is only permissible where '3.' above is the case.

- 2.3 Grafham and Ellington Parish Councils produced a submission version of their Neighbourhood Plan which was available for comment between 12 July and 27 August 2021. The Examiner's Report on the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan was received on 4 October 2021. The Examiner recommended that with appropriate modifications the neighbourhood plan would meet the basic conditions against which it is required to be tested and so should progress to referendum.

- 2.4 The Examiner proposed a number of modifications to the submitted neighbourhood plan. These have been discussed and agreed with representatives of Grafham and Ellington Parish Councils.

- 2.5 The modified version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Examiner's report and draft Decision Statement setting out the modifications considered by the Examiner as necessary to enable the submission neighbourhood plan

to meet the required basic conditions are all included as Appendices to this report.

2.6 Having regard to the options set out in paragraph 2.2:

- It is considered that the modifications will enable the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan to meet the basic conditions required; and
- There is no new evidence or a different view taken by the local planning authority about a particular fact to indicate that option 'b' in paragraph 2.2 should be followed.

3. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Following approval by Cabinet, preparations will be made for a referendum to be held on the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Regulations.

3.2 In addition to considering whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions the Examiner is required to recommend on the area to be covered by the referendum. In this instance he recommended that the referendum area be the same as the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan area, approved by the District Council on 3 September 2019 following consultation.

3.3 There is a statutory requirement through The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended) for 28 working days' notice to be given before the referendum is held. There is also a requirement that the referendum is held within 56 working days of the decision that the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum, unless there is an existing planned polling opportunity that the referendum could be combined with which the qualifying body (Grafham and Ellington Parish Councils) have agreed. A potential date for the referendum has been discussed with Democratic Services. Holding the referendum on 27 January 2022 is proposed, which would meet both time requirements. This provisional date has been discussed with representatives of Grafham and Ellington Parish Councils, and they have indicated that they support this date.

3.4 At the referendum residents will be able to vote on the question: 'Do you want Huntingdonshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Grafham and Ellington to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

3.5 If a majority of votes cast by residents are 'yes', Full Council will be asked to 'make' the neighbourhood plan at its next available meeting, which, assuming that the referendum is held on 27 January 2022, would be on 23 February 2022. The plan will then become part of the statutory development plan for Huntingdonshire.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Planning Referendum at its meeting on 3rd November 2021.
- 4.2 In response to a question by Councillor Roberts, the Panel heard that entry level sites were classified differently to rural exception sites.
- 4.3 Councillor Chapman praised the report and how far Neighbourhood Planning Referendums have developed over time having being involved in the first referendum.
- 4.4 The Panel welcomed the report and encourage the Cabinet to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 Progressing the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan through to referendum links to and supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan (2018-2022) specifically:
- People – Develop stronger and more resilient communities to enable people to help themselves
 - Support community planning including working with parishes to complete Neighbourhood Plans

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Neighbourhood Plan must meet the basic conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Examiner's report has confirmed that the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan, as proposed to be modified, meets all the basic conditions. Officers are satisfied that there are no conflicts with the basic conditions and legislative requirements.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As in previous years an Extra Burdens Grant of £20,000 can be claimed following the referendum, intended to meet the costs of the referendum and other resources involved in supporting the production of the neighbourhood plan.

8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 8.1 The recommended decision is necessary to enable the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.

9. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan (as modified)

Appendix 2 – The Examiners Report of the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix 3 - The draft Decision Statement setting out the modifications considered by the Examiner as necessary to enable the submission neighbourhood plan to meet the required basic conditions.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as amended\)](#)

[Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)

[Localism Act 2011](#)

[The Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#)

[National Planning Practice Guidance \(Neighbourhood Planning\)](#)

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Natalie Elworthy, Planning Policy Officer
Tel No: 01480 388434
Email: Natalie.elworthy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk