

Cabinet – 20 October 2026

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Lead Cllr: Executive Councillor for Planning



Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
Alconbury and Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley Wards (parishes of Great and Little Gidding, Hamerton and Steeple Gidding, and Winwick)	Open	Yes

Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan examination outcome and progression to referendum

Executive Summary: Following the examination of the joint Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan this report proposes acting upon the Examiner's report to accept the modifications proposed and progress to referendum.

Recommendations

- 1.1. That Cabinet agree that the District Council should act upon the Examiner's report to accept the recommended modifications and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum.

Key Corporate Plan Priorities

- 1 Improving quality of life for local people.
- 2 Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations.

Place Strategy Priorities

- 1 Pride in Place.

Report Author(s)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** The report seeks agreement to act upon the Examiner's report into the joint Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton 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. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 2.1** The joint neighbourhood plan covers the parishes of Great and Little Gidding, Hamerton and Steeple Gidding, and Winwick. Great and Little Gidding Parish Council has taken the lead in preparing the joint plan for the three parishes and, with the consent of the two other parishes, is authorised to act in relation to the neighbourhood area.
- 2.2** A submission version of their Neighbourhood Plan which was available for comment between 11 May 2026 and 23 June 2026. The Examiner's Report on the Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan was received on 27 August 2026. 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.
- 2.3** The Examiner proposed a number of modifications to the submitted neighbourhood plan. These have been discussed and agreed with representatives of the Parish Councils.
- 2.4** 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.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1** 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.
- 3.2** 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.

3.3 Having regard to the options set out in paragraph 3.2:

- It is considered that the modifications will enable the 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 3.2 should be followed.

4. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1** Following approval by Cabinet, preparations will be made for a referendum to be held on the Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Regulations.
- 4.2** 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 Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan area, approved by the District Council.
- 4.3** 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 (Great and Little Gidding, Hamerton and Steeple Gidding, and Winwick Parish Councils) have agreed. A potential date for the referendum has been discussed with Democratic Services. Holding the referendum on 3 December 2026 is proposed, which would meet both time requirements. This provisional date has been discussed with representatives of the Parish Councils, and they have indicated that they support this date.
- 4.4** At the referendum residents will be able to vote on the question: 'Do you want Huntingdonshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Great and Little Gidding, Hamerton and Steeple Gidding, and Winwick to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'
- 4.5** 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 3 December 2026, would be on 16 December 2026. The plan will then become part of the statutory development plan for Huntingdonshire.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

5.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1** The Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities of 'improving quality of life for local people; and 'creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations' as it will be used to shape the growth in the area up to 2036 alongside other plans in the Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

5.2 Financial Implications

- 5.2.1** 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.

5.3 Policy Implications

- 5.3.1** If successfully made, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of Huntingdonshire's Development Plan used to determine planning applications.

5.4 Legal & Constitutional Implications

- 5.4.1** 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 Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton 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.

5.5 Community Impact

- 5.5.1** The Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan has a significant potential community impact for the Neighbourhood Plan Area through shaping the growth in the area up to 2036 alongside other plans in the Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

5.6 Environment & Climate Change Implications

- 5.6.1** The Examiner's report concludes that the Neighbourhood Plan policies do not conflict with the aims of securing development which contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

5.7 Equality & Diversity Implications

- 5.7.1** The Examiner's report concludes that the Neighbourhood Plan policies do not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998) and meets all relevant legal requirements including those relating to equality.

5.8 Implications on Resources

- 5.8.1** 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.

5.9 Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 5.9.1** The Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan has potential to enhance health and wellbeing within the Neighbourhood Plan Area through shaping the growth in the area up to 2036 alongside other plans in the Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

5.10 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

- 5.10.1** Progressing the Neighbourhood Plan towards Referendum does not result in implications for Local Government Reorganisation.

- 5.10.2** It is expected that adopted plans will remain in force for the part of the new unitary area to which they relate until they are superseded by a new unitary wide plan.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1** Not progressing the Neighbourhood Plan to referendum could result in a challenge from the Parish Councils as this would deviate from the recommendations made by the independent Examiner where it was concluded that the Plan, once modified, meets all relevant legal requirements.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

[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 \(Neighbourhood Planning\)](#)

8. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan (as modified)

Appendix 2 – The Examiner's Report of The Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton 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.