

The Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Val Keitch, Strategy and Housing
Ward Member(s) Cary - Cllr. Henry Hobhouse; Cllr. Kevin Messenger
Director: Netta Meadows, Director, Strategy and Support Services
Lead Specialist: Jan Gamon, Lead Specialist, Strategic Planning
Specialist: Leisa Kelly, Specialist, Strategic Planning
Contact Details: Leisa.kelly@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462641

Purpose of the Report

1. To agree the Independent Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications; and to set out the process for 'making' the plan following a favourable local referendum to be organised by the District Council.

Forward Plan

- 2 This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of June 2019.

Public Interest

- 3 The Neighbourhood Plan represents the views of Castle Cary Town Council, Ansford Parish Council and other stakeholders on the preferred approach to future development in the town. This Plan has been the subject of Independent Examination by a qualified person and, if the Council agrees with the Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications, the Plan will be subject to a referendum of all those in the community on the Electoral Register. The referendum will ask whether local residents agree with the modified Plan's content and if it should be used in the determination of planning applications.
- 4 The Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of various events and meetings which have been used to engage with interested parties and public consultations. The Town and Parish Councils also have a dedicated website for the Neighbourhood Plan: [Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan](#)

Recommendations

- 5 That the District Executive:
 - a. agrees the Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications to the Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan.
 - b. agrees to officers organising a referendum for local people on the Electoral Register. The aim of the referendum is to ascertain whether local residents want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Castle Cary and Ansford to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area.
 - c. delegates responsibility to the Director for Strategy and Support Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make any final minor text amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan, in agreement with Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Background

- 6 Neighbourhood planning helps local communities play a direct role in planning for the areas in which they live and work. The plan can show how the community wants land in its area to be used and developed. If a plan is 'made' following a successful referendum, it becomes part of the development plan for that area. Planning applications are determined by local planning authorities in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7 The Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Area designation was approved by the District Council in June 2015. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan for the area was prepared and a 'Pre-Submission' Plan was consulted upon by the local Steering Group in February 2018 (Regulation 14). This initial consultation was followed by formal submission of the Plan in November 2018 and the District Council carried out formal consultation in line with procedures set out in the relevant Regulations (Regulation 16). The Plan has now been the subject of independent examination and this report relates to the District Council's decision on the Examiner's recommendations and the next step of a local referendum.

The Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan

8. The Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the Town & Parish and the Stakeholders' main objectives. The Plan summarises the consultation process and evidence base which informed its preparation. It also includes policies seeking to guide future development in the Town & Parish relating to Housing, Employment and Business, Traffic Transport and Infrastructure, Community Services and facilities; and Built and Natural Environment.
9. The Neighbourhood Plan's objectives are set out as follows~;

Designing for the Neighbourhood – the aim is to ensure that all new development respects the special character of the market town of Castle Cary and the parish of Ansford, in particular that new housing developments are of good quality, are energy efficient and have as low an environmental impact as possible

Housing – the main aims are to support the level of new dwellings required by the South Somerset Local Plan, giving priority to the re-development or re-use of brownfield sites within the existing urban area, and to affordable and social housing to meet local needs, with a mix of shared ownership/tenancy types. To ensure that the growing community is supported by the necessary infrastructure, with new housing provision, employment growth and provision of roads and additional community facilities progressing in an integrated manner

Employment and Enterprise – the main aims are to broaden the employment base of the town by supporting an environment in which enterprise can flourish, attracting new employers and creating new jobs for local people of all ages. To ensure that the growing community is supported by the necessary infrastructure, with new housing provision, employment growth and provision of roads and additional community facilities progressing in an integrated manner.

Tourism – the main aim is to support increased tourism to the town and the wider area by preserving and promoting the area's heritage and retaining its special character.

The Town Centre - the main aims are to support, encourage and promote a range of shops and businesses in the town centre, protect the market, and maintain the free parking and public toilets. To promote and support safe travel for all, by better management of traffic movements into and through the town centre; seeking improvements to public transport, cycle paths, footpaths and rights of way, parking provision;

Transport Infrastructure & Accessibility - the main aims are to promote and support safe travel for all, by better management of traffic movements into and through the town centre; seeking improvements to public transport, cycle paths, footpaths and rights of way, parking provision; and improving links to town centre shops, schools and the railway station.

Education, Social & Community Assets – the main aims are to foster and promote opportunities for education, training, sporting activities, cultural stimulation and fun - for people of all ages. To ensure that the growing community is supported by the necessary infrastructure, with new housing provision, employment growth and provision of roads and additional community facilities progressing in an integrated manner.

The Natural & Built Environment – the main aim is to maintain and enhance the urban green spaces and the natural environment within the countryside surrounding both parishes, for the enjoyment of all.

- 10 Alongside the Neighbourhood Plan itself, the Regulations require that a statement is submitted which states how the Plan meets the specified 'Basic Conditions', a Consultation Statement; and confirmation that the Plan meets the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations and other European legislation.
- 11 On receipt of the Submission Documents, the District Council carried out the required public consultation for a period of six weeks under Regulation 16 in November 18/ January 2019; this included a notice in the press; and hard copies of the Submission documents being made available at Castle Cary Library. The District Council also wrote to all authorities, utility providers, a wide range of stakeholders and other bodies considered to have an interest in the Plan, including those that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had consulted themselves. The submission documentation was also made available on the Council's website.
- 12 A total of 8 responses were received and the District Council also presented its own comments; these were all sent to the Examiner.
- 13 The Examiner's Report concludes that the correct procedure for the preparation and submission of the Castle Cary and Ansford Plan was followed and that it meets the 'Basic Conditions', subject to the policy modifications being made. The Examiner has proposed 16 minor modifications which we are content to accept. The Examiner's Report (Appendix A) and document (Appendix B) in accordance with these proposed changes is appended to this report. The original Submission Plan, supporting documents and summary of representations received are all available on the District Council's website <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>
- 14 If the District Council accepts the Examiner's recommendations, the next stage would be to hold a local referendum in Castle Cary and Ansford. The prescribed question that needs to be asked is:

"Do you want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Castle Cary and Ansford to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

If more than 50% of those who vote say Yes, the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' (or adopted); and it becomes part of the statutory Development Plan for the District Council and needs to be taken account of in the determination of planning applications.

Financial Implications

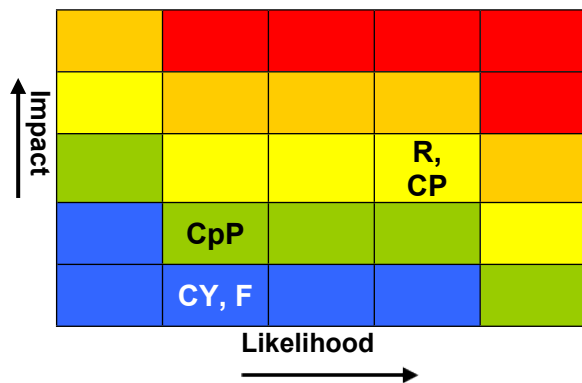
- 15 Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts are generally passed directly to those parish and town councils (in England) where development has taken place. In England, communities that draw up a neighbourhood plan and

secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area.

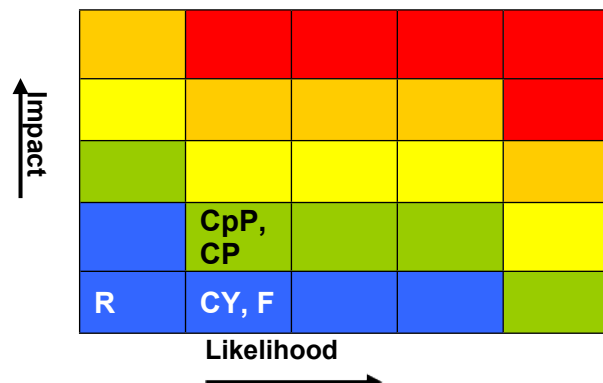
- 16 The District Council does not have the option to decline to hold the Referendum as this is required by legislation; and the associated costs will need to be absorbed into existing budgetary arrangements. However, the Council will claim a grant of up to £20,000 towards the costs of progressing the Neighbourhood Plan from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government once the date of the Referendum has been set.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

- 17 The Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan accords with the Council's aims to increase the focus on jobs and economic development, protect and enhance the quality of our environment; and to enable housing to meet all needs. The District Council's values include supporting people and communities, enabling them to help themselves; and the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the local community who wish to have an influence on future development in the town. The Council Plan states that it will focus on supporting communities to develop and implement Neighbourhood Plans.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

- 18 The Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan does not directly address carbon emissions or climate change and no such issues arise.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 19 No significant changes to a Service, Policy or Strategy are proposed, directly and, therefore, it is not necessary to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

Privacy Impact Assessment

20 It is not necessary to process personal data so, therefore, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not needed.

Background Papers

Appendix A – Examiner’s Report

Appendix B – Castle Cary and Ansford Neighbourhood Plan