

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Planning

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To: CABINET

Date: 18 December 2018

Making the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

1. To make the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.
2. to delegate to the Head of Planning, in agreement with the Qualifying Body, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Cabinet on progress of the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan and to present the relevant considerations in relation to whether this plan should be made (formally adopted).

Corporate Objectives

2. Strongly supporting the development of neighbourhood plans for our towns and villages.

Background

3. Little Milton Parish Council successfully applied for the its entire parish area to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012).

4. The preparation of the plan was led by the parish council ('the qualifying body') and a group of volunteers from the local community.
5. Following the formal submission of the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) to the council, the council publicised the Plan and invited comments from the public and stakeholders.
6. The council appointed Mr. Andrew Ashcroft to examine the Plan. Examiners are tasked with reviewing whether a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions required by legislation and whether it should proceed to referendum. The examiner's report concluded that the Plan meets the basic conditions, and that subject to the modifications proposed in the report, the Plan should proceed to referendum.
7. The modifications proposed by the examiner are largely minor in nature; re-wording and restructuring for clarity and to ensure the basic conditions are met. More significant modifications recommended by the examiner include:
 - (a) Replacing the wording 'will be permitted' with 'will be supported' in various policies to provide the appropriate flexibility to take into account all material planning considerations in determining any planning applications.
 - (b) Modifications and additional supporting text introduced to Policy LM1 (Spatial Strategy and Development Pattern) to ensure the wording in the policy gives more clarity and context in terms of the development plan and its connection with the other elements of this policy. The modifications also future proofs the policy as is the ambition of the Plan. The additional supporting text addresses the emerging Local Plan in general terms in case it is materially different from that envisaged when the Plan was being prepared, ensuring continued conformity with the Development plan.
8. Having considered the examiner's recommendations and reasons for them the Cabinet Member for Planning decided on 26 September 2018:
 1. To accept all modifications recommended by the Examiner;
 2. To modify the neighbourhood plan's Terminology definition of National Policy on page 4 (of the Plan);
 3. To determine that the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan, as modified, meets the basic conditions, is compatible with the Convention rights, complies with the definition of a neighbourhood development plan (NDP) and the provisions that can be made by a NDP;
 4. To take all appropriate actions to progress the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan to referendum. A date for the referendum is set for Thursday 22 November 2018.
 5. The referendum area should not extend beyond the neighbourhood area approved by the District Council on 04 August 2016.
9. The modifications to the plan were made and the referendum version of the Plan was published on 11 October 2018 alongside the decision statements required under Regulation 18(2)(a) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012).

Options

10. The council's options are limited by statute. Paragraph 38A (4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that the council must make a neighbourhood

plan if more than half of those voting at the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area.

11. The only circumstance where the district council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
12. Section 3 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, which came into force on 19 July 2017, amends section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to ensure that neighbourhood plans have full legal effect once they have passed their local referenda. In the very limited circumstances that the council might decide not to make the neighbourhood development plan, it will cease to be part of the development plan for the area.
13. The council's decision on 26 September 2018 (referred to in paragraph 8), published in the decision statement issued on 11 October 2018 (referred to in paragraph 9), confirmed that the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan, as modified by the Examiner's recommendations, would not breach, and be otherwise incompatible with EU obligations or human rights legislation.
14. Therefore, if the majority of those voting have voted in favour of the Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area, to not make the plan would be in breach of these statutory provisions.

Referendum

15. A referendum relating to the adoption of the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan was held on Thursday 22 November 2018.
16. The question which was asked in the Referendum was: *"Do you want South Oxfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Little Milton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"*
17. The result was as follows:
 - a. Yes = 134 votes (97.81%)
 - b. No = 3 votes (2.19%)
 - c. Turnout = 35.31%
18. The majority of local electors voted in favour of the plan; therefore, the Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan has become part of the council's development plan.
19. As the plan was approved at the local referendum and the council is satisfied it would not breach and be otherwise incompatible with EU obligations or human rights legislation, the council is required make the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.

Financial Implications

20. Any financial implications can be accommodated within the existing planning budget.

Legal Implications

21. The decision to make the Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan is a legal requirement in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The only circumstance where the

district council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). There is a requirement that the district council will publish a formal decision statement as required under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

22. It is not considered that the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any such obligation or rights. Therefore, the council should now proceed to make the plan.

Risks

23. The council is required to comply with the statutory requirements (to consider whether the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan should be made following successful local referendum), which this recommendation seeks to achieve. In view of the considerations referred to elsewhere in this report, as the majority of those voting have voted in favour of the plan at its local referendum, a decision not to make the plan would place the council at risk of a legal challenge.

Conclusion

24. On the 26 September 2018, the council decided:

1. To accept all modifications recommended by the Examiner;
2. To modify the neighbourhood plan's Terminology definition of National Policy on page 4 (of the Plan);
3. To determine that the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan, as modified, meets the basic conditions, is compatible with the Convention rights, complies with the definition of a neighbourhood development plan (NDP) and the provisions that can be made by a NDP;
4. To take all appropriate actions to progress the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan to referendum. A date for the referendum is set for Thursday 22 November 2018.
5. The referendum area should not extend beyond the neighbourhood area approved by the District Council on 04 August 2016.

25. The local referendum was held on 22 November 2018 to meet the requirements of The Localism Act 2011 and The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

26. As the majority of those voting have voted in favour of the Plan being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area, it is recommended that the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan is made.

Background Papers

Declaration of results of the Little Milton Neighbourhood referendum