

	REPORT TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 18 APRIL 2013 AND TO CABINET TO BE HELD ON 23 APRIL 2013	
	Key Decision	NO
Corporate Aim Quality Environments	Forward Plan Ref No	N/A
	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Cllr D Bastiman

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE – 13/157

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – FINAL REPORT OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING TASK GROUP SCR/13/02

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To present the findings and recommendations of the Neighbourhood Planning Task Group, as endorsed by the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 25 March 2013. Report reference SCR/13/02 attached.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To the Planning and Development Committee and to the Cabinet

- (i) that the Local Planning Authority adopts an impartial stance towards neighbourhood planning underpinned by the four key principles in the report and with close reference to Locality's 'Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide' and worksheets, as the basis of a predominantly web based guide on the Council's website;
- (ii) that all councillors receive some basic training on neighbourhood planning and associated activities, to ensure they are clear on the Council's overall approach to neighbourhood plans, and that this training be incorporated in the induction process for new councillors;
- (iii) that the proposed decision-making process for designating a neighbourhood area or forum set out in paragraph 6.10 of the report be incorporated in the next raft of changes to the Council's Constitution to be considered by the Cabinet and full Council in due course; and

- (iv) that the Local Planning Authority place significant emphasis on engaging with local communities as part of the ongoing review of the Local Plan, and that when the draft Local Plan is released for consultation later this year, efforts be made to secure effective and meaningful engagement with local communities with a view to gaining a greater understanding of issues of local concern and responding accordingly as the Local Plan is subsequently refined.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To enable the Local Planning Authority to adopt a clear, consistent and considered stance towards the concept of neighbourhood planning which is then translated into well-informed advice to interested parish councils and community groups

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS:

That without this clear and consistent approach shared by both planning officers and local ward councillors, the Council could run the risk of misleading or confusing interested groups, or of failing to set neighbourhood planning options within the context of the Local Planning Authority's own work and recently revised Local Development Scheme.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task Group to assess the pros and cons of Neighbourhood Planning - a new approach to land-use planning introduced through the Localism Act 2011 which offers communities a direct route for including their own ideas for development (relating to land-use or spatial matters) within the broader planning system.
- 1.2 The main source of evidence for this investigation was a public half day review which took place on 27 September 2012 in the Town Hall, in addition to the growing body of information available on the web. The report before the Planning and Development Committee and the Cabinet is the result of this investigation.



Chief Executive

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Background Papers: None

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT OR WISH TO INSPECT ANY OF THE BACKGROUND PAPERS, PLEASE CONTACT ST JOHN HARRIS (SEE CONTACT DETAILS ABOVE)