



Northumberland

County Council

CABINET

DATE: 10 MARCH 2020

Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan

Report of the Chief Executive

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle, Planning, Housing and Resilience

Purpose of report

To seek approval to formally 'make' the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed an independent examination on 16 September 2019. A local referendum held in the Parish of Cramlington on 30 January 2020 returned a majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council is now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that doing so would breach European Union obligations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Notes the referendum outcome of 30 January 2020;
2. Agrees to formally 'make' the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
3. Approves the decision statement (attached at Appendix 1) required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended; and
4. Agrees that both the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan and the decision statement are published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere in order to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the neighbourhood area; and for the decision statement to be sent to the qualifying body and anyone else who asked to be notified of the decision.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is particularly relevant to the priorities of the Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2018-21 in terms of empowering local communities, involving them in decisions which affect them and supporting them in embracing change.

Key issues

1. The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan is the tenth neighbourhood plan in Northumberland to pass a referendum.
2. The Plan has been prepared with significant Officer support provided to Cramlington Town Council and has been informed by extensive community consultation and engagement between 2014 and 2019. It passed the Independent Examination in September 2019, subject to modifications recommended by the Examiner. The County Council accepted these modifications.
3. A local referendum was held in the Parish of Cramlington on 30 January 2020, where 3716 people (16% of the registered electors) in the Parish voted. 584 people voted no and a majority 'yes' vote of 3121 people (84%) were in favour of making the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. Since a majority vote at the referendum was in favour of the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan being used to make decisions on planning applications, the County Council is obliged by regulations to formally make the plan within 8 weeks of the date of the referendum.

Background

1. The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Cramlington Town Council, and supported by Northumberland County Council Planning Officers. The Plan is the tenth neighbourhood plan in Northumberland to pass a referendum.
2. The process for preparing a neighbourhood plan is set out in legislation and national guidance. It is based on principles of extensive community engagement. The intention of neighbourhood planning is that local communities will engage in preparing plans which address their particular local needs. Support should be secured from residents in a neighbourhood area for those policies intended to be included in the final version of the plan. The need for community support is essential because, unlike other planning policy documents, once a neighbourhood plan passes an independent examination it is subject to a local referendum. Only a plan that passes a referendum with a majority of support from the electorate is able to be 'made' (brought into legal force). Once a plan has passed referendum the local planning authority is obliged to 'make' the neighbourhood plan, unless doing so would breach or otherwise be incompatible with EU obligations.
3. The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 gained Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. Section 1 of the Act gives additional weight to "post-examination draft neighbourhood plans" and requires that such plans must be taken into account in deciding planning applications. Section 3 of the Act confirms that, prior to a draft neighbourhood plan being made after

succeeding at referendum, it is now the case that the Plan forms part of the development plan unless the local planning authority decides not to make the Plan.

Preparation of the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan

4. The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following extensive community consultation and engagement by the Town Council between 2014 and 2019. Three drop-in sessions were held in March and April 2014 to seek the views of the local community on what issues the Plan should address. In April and June 2014, workshops were held with the community to discuss development at the South West Sector which would comprise the completion of the New Town as originally envisaged. In September 2014, there was a vision and objectives workshop. This early engagement informed the preparation of the pre-submission draft plan.

5. The pre-submission draft plan was subject to a six-week consultation during September and October 2018. Following a review of representations made to the Plan, a final draft Plan was endorsed by the Town Council and submitted to the County Council in April 2019. The Plan was publicised by the County Council between June and July 2019, in accordance with legal requirements.

6. Following submission, the County Council appointed an Independent Examiner. The Examination was undertaken by written representations and the final report was published in September 2019. This report found that, with some modifications, the Plan passed the necessary legal tests and it could be put to local referendum. Northumberland County Council and the Town Council accepted these modifications.

7. A local referendum was held in the Parish of Cramlington on 30 January 2020.

8. In accordance with the regulations, at the referendum the question was asked “*Do you want Northumberland County Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Cramlington to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?*” In order to pass referendum a majority of over 50% of those turning out to vote must vote ‘yes’ in response to this question. A total of 3716 people voted, representing 16% of the registered electors. A total of 584 people voted ‘no’, giving an overwhelming majority of 84% of those voting being in favour of making the neighbourhood plan.

9. Since a majority vote at the referendum was in favour of the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan being used to make decisions on planning applications, the County Council is obliged by regulations to formally make the plan within 8 weeks of the date of the referendum, unless this would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with EU obligations.

9. The County Council published a Decision Statement on 22 October 2019 prior to arranging the referendum, confirming the Council is satisfied that the Plan, as modified, meets all legal requirements and that it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

10. Section 3 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 confirms that, *prior* to a draft neighbourhood plan being made after succeeding at referendum, it is now the case that the Plan forms part of the development plan (unless the local planning authority decide not

to make the Plan) and decisions on planning applications in the Parish must be made in accordance with the policies in the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Once the Plan is 'made' it will become a formal part of the statutory development plan for the Parish of Cramlington, and decisions on planning applications in the Parish must continue to be made in accordance with the policies in the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Content of the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan

11. The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan contains 25 planning policies which have been developed to address particular spatial planning and land use issues identified by the local community. The policies set out in the Plan cover the following matters:

- Sustainable development
- Design
- Development in the open countryside
- Extending housing choice
- Affordable housing
- Housing design
- Existing housing
- Growth in employment and the economy
- Protecting the main industrial areas
- Ensuring a vital and vibrant town centre
- Improving the quality of the town centre environment
- Sustainable and active travel
- East- west link roads
- Green infrastructure networks
- Local Green Space
- Open space
- Trees and woodland
- Allotments
- Cramlington Village Conservation Area
- Community facilities
- Infrastructure
- Healthy communities

Process for 'making' the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan

12. In order to comply with regulations, once the Plan is made by the County Council a decision statement must be published on the County Council's website. This decision statement must also be made available using other available means to demonstrate that the County Council has resolved to make the Neighbourhood Plan. The County Council must also make the Parish Council aware of their decision and bring it to the attention of any other person or organisation who asked to be informed about the decision. A copy of the decision statement is attached at Appendix 1.

13. The County Council must also publish a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan and make it available on the website and through other media. The Council is required to formally resolve to make the Neighbourhood Plan through its Cabinet to meet the obligations set out in legislation.

14. The final version of the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan which was presented for referendum is provided at Appendix 2, with the Policies Map shown at Appendix 3.

Implications

Policy	The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan when 'made' will form part of the statutory Development Plan.
Finance and value for money	Support for plan preparation costs have been met within Council budgets. The successful examination of a Neighbourhood Development Plan currently attracts £20,000 in government grant. Grant funding is being used by the County Council to provide officer support to emerging plans.
Legal	Local planning authorities are obliged by statute to make any neighbourhood plan once a local referendum has taken place and the result is in favour of the plan being used in the determination of planning applications.
Procurement	There are no relevant considerations.
Human Resources	Work on Neighbourhood Plans is carried out by members of the community through Town and Parish Councils; Northumberland County Council has a duty to support the preparation of plans.
Property	The made Neighbourhood Plan will apply to land and buildings owned by the County Council as they apply to land and buildings owned by others.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) No	Northumberland County Council has regard to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment and the promotion of equality under the Equality Act 2010 and related statutes. There are no implications arising from the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan.
Risk Assessment	There are no relevant considerations.
Crime & Disorder	There are no relevant considerations.
Customer Consideration	The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan forms the most local level of planning policies in the development plan. The policies reflect the needs and aspirations of residents in shaping the future development of the Parish of Cramlington.
Carbon reduction	The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan includes policy approaches relating to sustainable development, green infrastructure and walking and cycling.
Health and Wellbeing	The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan includes policies that support development that provides or retains green infrastructure including open space, allotments and recreational facilities; the retention and provision of active travel

	opportunities; the protection of woodland; the protection of community facilities and; and the provision of affordable housing. All of these policies contribute to supporting the health and wellbeing of current residents, workers and visitors and will support new residents. The Plan contains a specific policy which requires all new development to be considered in the context of health and wellbeing impacts.
Wards	Cramlington West, Cramlington Village, Cramlington Eastfield, Cramlington South East, Cramlington East and Cramlington North.

Background papers:

- Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement (Appendix 1);
- Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version (Appendix 2);
- Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version Policies Map (Appendix 3).

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Liam Henry
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APPENDIX 1: Regulation 19 Decision Statement

Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 19 Decision Statement

Northumberland County Council has resolved to ‘make’ the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan. The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan has been brought into legal force. It now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Cramlington Neighbourhood Area which comprises the whole of the civil parish of Cramlington. Decisions on planning applications must now be made in accordance with policies in the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Northumberland County Council in April 2019. Publicity was undertaken in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. A report following the Independent Examination of the Plan was published on 16 September 2019. This report found that, with some modifications, the Plan passed the necessary legal tests and it could be put to local referendum. The County Council accepted these modifications. A local referendum was held in the Parish of Cramlington on 30 January 2020. A majority of those voting were in favour of the Plan being used by the County Council in making decisions on planning applications.

The submission version of the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan, as modified following Independent Examination, complies with legal requirements governing the making of neighbourhood development plans introduced through the Localism Act 2011 and associated Regulations. Accordingly, I hereby confirm that the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan has been made by resolution of the County Council’s Cabinet on 10 March 2020. Decisions on planning applications in the Cramlington Neighbourhood Area must now be made in accordance with policies in the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed on the County Council’s website:
www.northumberland.gov.uk/ourplan

_Signed:

Daljit Lally

Chief Executive, Northumberland County Council

Date: