

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

DATE: 12TH FEBRUARY 2018

STANNINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND LONGHORSLEY
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Report of the Head of Planning Services

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

Purpose of Report

To request that the Local Area Council notes the content of the Submission Drafts of both the Stannington and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plans which will shortly be undergoing Independent Examination.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council note the content of the Submission Drafts of both the Stannington and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plans and the key issues identified within this report. A verbal update on emerging issues will be provided by officers at the Local Area Council meeting.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is particularly relevant to the priorities of the draft Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2017 to 2021 in terms of empowering local communities, involving them in decisions which affect them, and supporting them in embracing change.

Key Issues

The purpose of this report is to make Members of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council aware of the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan and their emerging issues. As part of the formal publicity period, the Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Team have consulted a wide range of external 'consultation bodies' in accordance with legal requirements. In addition, internal consultation has taken place within the County Council; all Members were notified of the consultation on the Plan; and officers with management responsibility for the various Council functions were also consulted. Separately, the Plans will be subject to a report to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team. Internal Council comments have been requested by Friday 26th

January for the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan, and Friday 2nd February for the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan, in order that a co-ordinated County Council response can be provided to the Independent Examiner. All representations, including that of the County Council, must be made to the Examiner within the statutory publicity period.

The County Council made extensive representations on both the Stannington and Longhorsley pre-submission draft Plans in May and July 2017 respectively. All of the significant issues raised by the County Council have been taken into account by the Parish Councils and no new significant issues have been identified from a planning policy perspective. However, outstanding issues currently identified include:

Stannington Neighbourhood Plan

- Assets of Community Value (ACV) - Certain community facilities have yet to be listed which would make the policy difficult to interpret or use effectively once the plan is *made*. The Education Department also objected to the School being listed as an ACV as it would stall the process of selling the asset in the future.
- Concern over the definition of settlements and business areas referred to in the submission plan and identified on the policies map. These could potentially allow un-sustainable patterns of development to occur across the Plan area. Some settlements and business areas are also in the Green Belt which makes the policy unclear and ambiguous to a decision-maker.

Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan

- There are still minor outstanding issues raised by the County Council on the terminologies used to describe the amount of new housing that ought to be developed over the life of the Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan refers to a “total of around 80”. Officers feel this implies there will be a ceiling to development by referring to the word ‘total’ and should be omitted from the policy. The Neighbourhood Plan group disagrees so it will be for the Examiner to decide.

As mentioned above, extensive consultation within the County Council has been carried out with responses from other Services requested by 26th January 2018 (Stannington) and 2nd February 2018 (Longhorsley).

Officers will provide a verbal update on any internal responses received in the coming weeks at the meeting of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council.

STANNINGTON AND LONGHORSLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Background to the Plans

1. The Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared by Stannington and Longhorsley Parish Councils respectively, and in consultation with their local communities. The preparation of the Plans have been supported by Northumberland County Council’s Planning Officers.

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 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.

Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plans

3. The Stannington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following community consultation and engagement by the Parish Council between 2013 and 2017. The Stannington Neighbourhood Area was designated on 18th November 2013 for the purposes of carrying out neighbourhood planning. The Neighbourhood Area comprises the civil parish of Stannington and Stannington Parish Council are the qualifying body for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
4. The Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following community consultation and engagement by the Parish Council between 2014 and 2017. The Longhorsley Neighbourhood Area was designated on 30th September 2014 for the purposes of carrying out neighbourhood planning, The Neighbourhood Area comprises the civil parish of Longhorsley and Longhorsley Parish Council are the qualifying body for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Stannington Neighbourhood Plan

5. Stannington Parish Council have consistently consulted all local businesses, community and voluntary organisations in the Parish as well as residents and landowners during the Plan production. In many cases, due to the size and rural nature of the Parish, the same people may have been residents/business owners/voluntary group members.
6. Early consultation was split into three phases including initial drop-in sessions and a broad questionnaire in March 2014, followed up with ongoing consultation with schools, landowners and businesses at village shows and church events. A Neighbourhood Plan specific questionnaire was drawn up and carried out in November 2014 which helped the group develop a vision and objectives including draft policy areas to consult on in September 2015. As a result, policies related to housing were removed as there was significant opposition to providing more market

housing, particularly in Stannington Station. There was strong support for a policy about relocating or improving the school so this was added.

7. A pre-submission consultation draft plan was prepared and the statutory six week consultation was undertaken by the Parish Council between April and June 2017. A formal co-ordinated corporate response was submitted to Stannington Parish Council in relation to the consultation on its pre-submission draft Plan.
8. The Plan has been subject to both Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to ensure that it does not have significant effects on the environment, habitats and species. Both the HRA and SEA reports concluded that no modifications were necessary. These assessments show that the Plans policies have, to an extent, been tested in sustainability terms prior to Examination.
9. Following a review of representations made to the Pre-Submission Draft Plan, a final draft Plan was endorsed by Stannington Parish Council and submitted to the County Council in November 2017.

Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan

10. Longhorsley Parish Council have embraced consultation from the outset when the need to address local concerns about housing development was first highlighted by parishioners at the Annual General Parish Council Meeting of May 2013.
11. Early consultation was again undertaken in a phased approach beginning with drop-in sessions to capture parish views on the key planning issues. In March 2015 a questionnaire was issued to youth groups to involve them more in the process, and in June 2016 a flyer was distributed around the parish which summarised the issues identified to that point and proposed the vision and objectives for the Plan which had been derived from the previous consultations. By February 2017, a briefing note was ready to be distributed throughout the parish which set out the proposed scope of the Plan, the options the steering group proposed to put forward and the key points which could go into the draft Plan.
12. A pre-submission consultation draft plan was prepared and the statutory six week consultation was undertaken by the Parish Council between 5th June and 31st July 2017. The major face-to-face opportunity to review and feedback on the pre-submission draft plan was at the Longhorsley Village Day on 15th July 2017. A formal co-ordinated corporate response was submitted to Longhorsley Parish Council in relation to the consultation on its Pre-Submission Draft Plan.
13. The Plan has been subject to both Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to ensure that it does not have significant effects on the environment, habitats and species. Both the HRA and SEA reports

concluded that no modifications were necessary. These assessments show that the Plans policies have, to an extent, been tested in sustainability terms prior to Examination.

14. Following a review of representations made to the Pre-Submission Draft Plan, a final draft Plan was endorsed by Longhorsley Parish Council and submitted to the County Council in November 2017.

The County Council's Role following Submission

15. Following the submission of the two Neighbourhood Plans, the County Council's role is to check that all necessary documents have been submitted by a qualifying body; arrange publicity on the Plan for a period of not less than six weeks; and, with the agreement of the qualifying body, appoint a suitably-qualified and experienced person to conduct an Independent Examination.
16. This current consultation forms the statutory publicity period in accordance with legal requirements. The publicity period for the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan runs from 20th December 2017 until 4pm on Friday 9th February 2018. The publicity period for the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan runs from 20th December until 4pm on Friday 16th February 2018. Representations received after these dates will not be considered by the Examiner as part of the Independent Examination.
17. **NOTE: The publicity period for the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan ends on 9th February 2018 and the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council meeting will be held on 12th February 2018. It is advised that any further comments on the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan, following the submission of this report to the Committee papers, are made to the Neighbourhood Planning Team before the Local Area Council meeting on the 12th February.**

Content of the Neighbourhood Plans

18. The Stannington Neighbourhood Plan contains 10 policies covering the following topics: Assets of Community Value, Community Facilities, Stannington First School, Local Green Spaces, Rural Business, Broadband, Road Safety, Cycling and Walking, Infrastructure and Design.
19. The Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan contains 23 policies covering the following topics: Development, Design, Sustainable Housing (amount, location, type), Supporting Business, Supporting Community Facilities, Conservation and Safer Movement.

20. The Submission Drafts of the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan, which were submitted to the County Council for Independent Examination, are provided at Appendix 1 and 2 respectively with the Policies Maps provided in subsequent appendices.

Implications

Policy	The Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan once 'made' will form part of the statutory Development Plan. The County Council will submit formal representations on the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plans to the Independent Examiner. The Examiner will recommend one of three options in their Examination Report: that the Plan can proceed to referendum; that the Plan can proceed to referendum subject to modifications; or that the Plan does not meet the basic conditions and cannot proceed to referendum. The County Council must then consider the Examiner's recommendations before deciding whether to make any modifications and whether to put the Plan to referendum.
Finance and value for money	Support for plan preparation costs have been met within Council budgets. The successful examination of each 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 publicise any neighbourhood plan for at least six weeks prior to Independent Examination.
Procurement	The County Council is obliged by statute to arrange an Independent Examination. Therefore, the County Council must procure the services of a suitably-qualified independent person to conduct the Independent Examination.
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 emerging Neighbourhood Plans 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) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No x N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	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 Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan.
Risk Assessment	There are no relevant considerations.

Crime & Disorder	There are no relevant considerations.
Customer Consideration	The Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan form 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 Parishes of Stannington and Longhorsley.
Carbon reduction	The Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan both include policy approaches relating to sustainable development, sustainable design, local green spaces and sustainable transport infrastructure such as by footpaths and cycle ways.
Wards	Ponteland East and Stannington, Longhorsley

Background Papers

- Stannington Neighbourhood Plan : Submission Draft Plan (Appendix 1)
- Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan : Submission Draft Plan (Appendix 2)
- Stannington Neighbourhood Plan : Submission Draft Policies Map (Appendix 3)
- Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan : Submission Draft Policies Map (Appendix 4)

Report Sign Off

Decisions relating to Neighbourhood Planning are made under delegated authority to the Head of Planning Services apart from the Making of neighbourhood plans, the decision on which lies with the Council's Cabinet. This report has been authorised by the Head of Planning Services and the portfolio holder for Planning, Housing & Resilience.

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Head of Planning Services	MK
Portfolio Holder(s)	JR

Author and Contact Details

Chris Anderson - Planning Officer, Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure
 Telephone: 01670 620362
 Email: chris.anderson01@northumberland.gov.uk