

# NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

## CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

DATE: 9 APRIL 2018

WHITTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### Report of the Head of Planning Services

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

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To request that the Local Area Council notes the content of the Submission Draft Whittington Neighbourhood Plan which will shortly be undergoing Independent Examination.

#### **Recommendations**

**It is recommended that the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council note the content of the Submission Draft Whittington Neighbourhood Plan 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 Whittington Neighbourhood Plan and its 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 in charge of various Council functions were also consulted. Internal Council comments have been requested by 09 April 2018 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 the pre-submission draft Plan in June 2017. All of the significant issues raised by the County Council at that time have been taken into account by the Parish Council and no new significant issues have so far been identified from a planning policy perspective. It is important to note that:

- The Plan includes policies which seek to protect the natural and built environment and landscapes, but the Plan also includes permissive policies which are supportive of sustainable development;
- There is strong evidence of local support for the Neighbourhood Plan throughout its preparation. In addition, significant County Council officer support has been provided throughout preparation of the Plan;

**As mentioned, extensive consultation within the County Council has been carried out with responses from other Services requested by 09 April 2018. While no internal responses have yet been received, 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.**

## **WHITTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **Background**

1. The Whittington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Whittington Parish Council. The preparation of the Plan has 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 Whittington Neighbourhood Plan**

3. The Whittington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following extensive community consultation and engagement by the Parish Council between 2016 and 2017. The Whittington Neighbourhood Area was designated on 02 March 2016 for the purposes of carrying out neighbourhood planning. The Neighbourhood Area comprises the civil parish of Whittington. Whittington Parish Council are the qualifying body for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
4. The Parish Council carried out early engagement through an Issues Consultation in July and August 2016, followed by a consultation on a draft Vision and Objectives November and December 2016. For each consultation, an event was held in Great Whittington Village Hall and leaflets were distributed to all households and businesses within the Parish. Statutory consultation bodies were also formally consulted as part of both of these consultations.
5. A pre-submission consultation draft plan was prepared and the statutory six week consultation was undertaken by the Parish Council in May and June 2017. A formal coordinated corporate response on behalf of the County Council was submitted to Whittington Parish Council in relation to the consultation on its pre-submission draft Plan.
6. The Plan has been subject to screening for both Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to ensure that the Plan does not have significant effects on the environment, habitats and species. Screening Opinions for both HRA and SEA concluded that no modifications to the

Plan were necessary. These assessments show that the Plan's policies have, to an extent, been tested in sustainability terms prior to Examination.

7. Following a review of representations made to the Pre-Submission Draft Plan, a final draft Plan was endorsed by Whittington Parish Council, and submitted to the County Council in February 2018.
8. Following the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan, 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.
9. This current consultation forms the statutory publicity period, in accordance with legal requirements. The publicity period runs from 09 March 2018 until 23 April 2018. Representations received after 23 April 2018 will not be considered by the Examiner as part of the Independent Examination.

### **Content of the Whittington Neighbourhood Plan**

10. The Whittington Neighbourhood Plan contains 14 planning policies which have been developed to address particular spatial planning and land use issues identified by the local community. These policies are set out under the following headings and cover the following matters:
  - **A conserved and enhanced natural environment:** landscape; tranquility; and biodiversity;
  - **A rich built environment:** design; and heritage assets;
  - **Vibrant and thriving communities:** general location of new development; housing; rural exceptions sites (affordable housing); community services and facilities; and infrastructure;
  - **A strong and diversified economy:** agriculture; and tourism and leisure;
  - **Movement and connectivity:** transport and new developments; and active travel routes.
11. The Submission Draft Whittington Neighbourhood Plan, which was submitted to the County Council for Independent Examination is provided at Appendix 1 with the Policies Map provided at Appendix 2.

## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The Whittington Neighbourhood Plan, when 'made', will form part of the statutory Development Plan. The County Council will submit formal representations on the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan 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.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	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.
<b>Legal</b>	Local Planning Authorities are obliged by statute to publicise any neighbourhood plan for at least six weeks prior to Independent Examination.
<b>Procurement</b>	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.
<b>Human Resources</b>	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.
<b>Property</b>	The emerging Neighbourhood Plan will apply to land and buildings owned by the County Council as they apply to land and buildings owned by others.
<b>Equalities</b> (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 Whittington Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	There are no relevant considerations.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	There are no relevant considerations.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The Whittington 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 Whittington.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	The Whittington Neighbourhood Plan includes policy approaches relating to sustainable development, sustainable design, community services and facilities and support for active travel and use of the Right of Way network.
<b>Wards</b>	Ponteland West

### **Background Papers**

- Whittington Neighbourhood Plan: Submission Draft Plan (Appendix 1)
- Whittington Neighbourhood Plan: Submission Draft Policies Map (Appendix 2)

### **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
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