



PRCC.06 13/14
Prosperous Communities Committee
Date: 4 June 2013

Subject: Designating the Neighbourhood Plan Area of Cherry Willingham

Report by:

Director of Regeneration and Planning

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To receive the report and recommend the designation of the area for the Neighbourhood Plans of Cherry Willingham

RECOMMENDATION(S): To formally designate the Neighbourhood Plan Area of Cherry Willingham and to agree the suggested priorities for assisting communities in bringing forward Neighbourhood Plans

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: This work is a duty under the Localism Act 2010

Financial : Additional financial contributions are available from DCLG to support Neighbourhood Planning

Staffing : Priority for supporting parishes undertaking neighbourhood planning will be given to the Lincoln fringe settlements and the market towns.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : Neighbourhood Plans are the responsibility of Parish Councils and should be subject to equality assessment

Risk Assessment : n/a

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : policies in Neighbourhood Plans should present sustainable solutions for development

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
<http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman) **Yes** **No**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications **Yes** **No**

1 Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.1 A Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of an area. It may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood Plans relate to the use and development of land and associated social, economic and environmental issues. It may deal with a wide range of issues (like housing, employment, heritage and transport) or it may focus on one or two issues that are of particular importance in a local area. In any event these plans are expected to promote growth in the community and cannot be used as an opportunity to prevent it. If there are few local issues that can be resolved say by a simple planning application process, then a neighbourhood plan may prove to be too expensive and too protracted to deal with. An instance of this might be a small area of affordable housing on a pre agreed local site.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood Plans will be subject to full public engagement, examination and referendum and they will then form part of the Local Development Plan. Neighbourhood Plans can thus be several years in the making. This statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans the same weight in the planning process as the Local Plan and far more weight than some other local planning documents, such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

2 West Lindsey Neighbourhood Plan designation application

- 2.2 Cherry Willingham are the latest parish council within West Lindsey to apply for a Neighbourhood Plan area to be approved. The Cherry Willingham area covers the entire parish. The required notifications set out above have been advertised on the West Lindsey website for a 6 week period which finished on March 25th 2013. There have been no observations received regarding the Neighbourhood Plan area request and therefore West Lindsey must formally accept the designation of the area; which conform entirely to the recommended guidance from Department Communities and Local Government (DCLG) above.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 West Lindsey are able to retrospectively claim financial assistance for work incurred in assisting communities to bring forward Neighbourhood Plans; in particular for the 3 statutory stages of: designation, examination and referendum. £30k is currently available for each plan, but this will be

reviewed by DCLG on a year by year basis. £5k will be drawn down for this designation of Cherry Willingham. Successful completion of the independent examination stage of all our plans will create an opportunity to draw down the final tranche of funding of £25k per plan. This income can be used to defray internal staff costs and/or assist communities with their own costs.

- 3.2 There are additional Central Government funds which communities undertaking Neighbourhood Plans can bid for. These funds may be used when devising their plans and policies, and in running consultation events.

4 Staffing implications

- 4.1 The Area Team Manager in Neighbourhood and Developments (Rob Lawton) has currently been assisting the parishes with their Neighbourhood Plan preparations. Caistor is already advanced in the plan making process having started in 2010. Nettleham have undertaken their first round of public consultations and Saxilby have yet to start in earnest. Cherry Willingham have intimated that they want to move on with some haste using their recently prepared 2020 parish plan as a basis for the policies included in their Neighbourhood Plan. Finally Welton has commenced the consultation stage of their Neighbourhood Plan area application.
- 4.2 WL have a duty under the Act to assist and advise parishes on the process, and so as a measure to try and prioritise this work it is suggested those communities under most development pressure receive a degree of priority This equates to the Lincoln fringe settlements and our market towns.

In essence this would look like this:

- 4.3 **Priority One: Caistor and Market Rasen.** These 2 market towns are slated to take a sizable share of the growth in rural areas over the life of the Central Lincolnshire Core Strategy. They will be faced with a wide range of infrastructure requirements to support it in a sustainable way. A Neighbourhood Plan could help plan that growth in a form that is more acceptable to the local community. Officer support will be required at occasional meetings of the steering groups and at consultation events; base plans and display boards may also need providing.

- 4.4 **Priority Two: The Lincoln fringe settlements** of Nettleham, Cherry Willingham, Saxilby, Welton, Dunholme, Sudbrooke, Reepham and Fisketon. These settlements have already experienced demand for housing from Lincoln City overspill. That situation is likely to continue and therefore a Neighbourhood Plan can steer that growth in a more acceptable way from the community perspective and ensure that local infrastructure is planned in to support it. A similar level of support seen in our market towns will be expected for these settlements.
- 4.5 **Priority Three: Other smaller more rural communities.** These may look for a Neighbourhood Plan to deliver specific local priorities. WL advice to these smaller rural communities, who are not facing growth, may be not to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan, but tackle the issue via a different route. However at the end of the day that decision is for the local community to make alone. Support for these single issue Neighbourhood Plans will be less, and maybe limited to say phone support and the offer of paper base plans and material for consultation.
- 4.6 Staff resources will need ramping up to provide this level of support. It is proposed to bring in some of that support from the development management team but the lions share of new capacity is proposed to be found in the localism team. Discussions are at an early stage, and it is acknowledged that in house training and mentoring will be required to up skill staff in their understanding of the legislation. It should also be remembered that DCLG financial support is available for parish councils to buy in help and advice from 4 national agencies appointed by DCLG specifically for this purpose. This DCLG financial assistance is reviewed on an annual basis.

5 **Conclusion**

- 5.1 Despite the additional resource that will be required to provide the level of support for this new area of statutory work, a suite of well conceived and properly prepared Neighbourhood Plans in West Lindsey will considerably assist in the provision of growth over the next few decades. Credible Neighbourhood Plans will help in delivering our corporate growth ambition in a positive and mutually supportive fashion.