

Progress on Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

At the parish council's May meeting (Min.20.05.16 refers) the current position was summarised:

- The Examiners report had been lodged with MSDC – The Examiner's had noted that there were no significant or substantial alterations. The few minor changes had the effect of strengthening the plan, particularly in respect of heritage.
- The plan was scheduled to be presented to MSDC Cabinet on 9th June for approval.
- The plan would go forward to a referendum, but that this would now be unlikely to take place before May 2021. MSDC would bear the cost of this and it would require 5 weeks notice.
- The plan had effectively been approved by the Examiner and Mid Suffolk DC. It bears weight and so should be used when considering planning applications and drafting responses.
- A referendum ready edition was ready for publication in print and on the council's website.

The meeting also resolved to authorise up to £150 to cover the cost of printing Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan. These have now been delivered, at a total cost of £99.00.

The meeting also noted that:

- The next actions would be to incorporate community actions into the work plan. Some of this work was already underway, e.g. Cllr Selvey's lead on Highways, and Cllr Holborn was happy to take a lead on biodiversity.
- The process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan had uncovered huge talent and expertise which the Parish Council hoped to continue to draw on in the future.
- Final accounts for the plan needed to be produced.

Cllr Penny Otton has also forwarded the advice from Mid Suffolk DC's (MSDC) Neighbourhood Planning Officer, attached as Appendix A, which confirms that MSDC agreed on 9th June that the Drinkstone NP be advanced to a local referendum as soon as it is able to do so (currently delayed until May 2021 due to the COVID-19 emergency and its regulations). The Neighbourhood Plan officer has also confirmed that as a post-examination Plan, it is of significant weight in decision making terms.

The Clerk would like to extend thanks on behalf of the parish council to both Cllr Penny Otton, District and County Councillor for her support, and Mrs Daphne Youngs and all the volunteers who contributed to the development of the Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix A

From: Paul Bryant <Paul.Bryant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk>

Sent: 16 July 2020 17:30

Cc: Tom Barker <Tom.Barker@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk>; Robert Hobbs <Robert.Hobbs@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk>; Claire Philpot <Claire.Philpot@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk>

Subject: FYI: Response to MSDC Cabinet questions on N'hood Plans and website update.

Dear Councillor

The following e-mail is addressed specifically to members of Mid Suffolk Cabinet but also contains notice of an update to our Neighbourhood Planning homepage that may be of wider interest.

On the 9 June, MSDC Cabinet considered a report on the Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan (DNP). After a short debate it was unanimously agreed that this Plan be advanced to a local referendum. The report also explained why that referendum could not take place until May 2021 at the earliest, and that this remains subject to further changes in Government guidance.

As Ward Member, Cllr Otton praised the hard work that had gone into producing the DNP but, with specific reference to the referendum asked why *“we could not have had some degree of guidance about how that [the referendum] could have been done by alternative measures”*.

I wish to assure Cllr Otton that I have been in regular contact throughout the preparation of the DNP with both Daphne Youngs (Chair of the DNP Group) and Ian Poole (the Consultant hired by the Parish Council) and, that between Ian and myself, I trust that the DNP Group feel that they have been kept fully informed on how the evolving Covid-19 emergency was likely to impact on the progress of their Plan towards formal adoption. If the ‘we’ referred to Cabinet, the report presented on 9 June seemed the most logical way to bring that news to Members attention.

In a follow-up request, Cllr Eburne asked if *“the ‘statement’ with regards to what happens between now and the referendum being held be circulated to Members and for the guidance also to be circulated so that other NPs Groups can have their minds put at rest”*. [NB: I have re-phrased the question slightly.]

Our DNP ‘Regulation 18 Decision Statement’ was published on 17 June. (Please see here and follow the relevant links). This not only confirms our commitment to take this Neighbourhood Plan to a local referendum as soon as we are able to do so but also confirms that, as a post-examination Plan, it is of significant weight in decision making terms. Both Daphne and Ian were notified on the day of publication, as were colleagues in our

Hilary Workman
Clerk & RFO
July 2020

Appendix A

Development Management, Heritage and other planning related teams. With apologies to all other Cabinet Members, as I did not include you on the circulation list, Cllr Otton, this was my e-mail of 17 June which I hope you received safely.

NP Referendum delays due to Covid-19

The referendum process is governed by the [NP Referendum Regulations \(2012\)](#) (as amended). In short, these not only set out the format of the question to be asked but they also instruct that such referendums be conducted in the same manner as any other local election. That process has been the subject of much discussion between myself and Electoral Service colleagues but the rules are set and we have no discretion to run these in any other way we see fit. For that to happen, it would require Government to overhaul the process.

More general advice re impacts of Covid-19 for NP Groups

I mentioned at the beginning that we have updated our [Neighbourhood Planning homepage](#).

It begins with a reminder of our key messages around neighbourhood plans being ‘*positively prepared*’ and ‘*adding real value at the local level*’ before highlighting the four areas of the process where relevant Planning Practice Guidance has been updated in response to the Covid-19 emergency. We also refer to the regular engagement we have with the many professional consultants appointed by our NP Groups and conclude with a reminder that we are here to help deliver Neighbourhood Plans that can work for us all.

Such plans continue to make the headlines for all sorts of reasons but if any Member is aware of a NP Group in their Ward that are struggling then do please let us know so that we can respond accordingly.

Thank-you for your time. Stay safe, stay well.

Paul Bryant

Neighbourhood Planning Officer | Planning for Growth
Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together
T: 01449 724771 / 07860 829547
E: paul.bryant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk
W: www.babergh.gov.uk and www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

cc: Tom Barker, Robert Hobbs, Claire Philpot

Hilary Workman
Clerk & RFO
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