

Parish Council meeting 17th November 2021 – discussion paper for Item 5

A neighbourhood plan for Swanbourne?

At the last Parish Council meeting it was proposed that before committing to developing a Neighbourhood Plan a briefing paper should be prepared for discussion at the November PC meeting, setting out the steps that need to be taken to prepare a neighbourhood plan and the pros and cons of doing so. This is set out below.

The purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan

The purpose of a neighbourhood plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area. Neighbourhood plans provide local communities with the chance to manage the quality of development of their areas.

Unlike the parish, village or town plans that communities may have prepared, a neighbourhood plan is a statutory part of the development plan and sits alongside the local plan prepared by the local planning authority, carrying significant weight in how planning applications are decided.

Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans and wider development strategies. The National Planning Policy Framework states that neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.

Preparing a neighbourhood plan

The neighbourhood plan preparation involves local residents (not just those on the PC) in a steering group set up to investigate and prepare the plan with a vision for the future; residents also have their say in consultations and a referendum. The steps involved are:

1. PC submits an application to the local planning authority to designate the area of Swanbourne parish. Local planning authority publicises and consults on application (6 weeks).
2. Prepare draft neighbourhood plan. Collate baseline information and evidence; consult residents (could include a questionnaire/ parish meeting); consult landowners; prepare the proposal document.
3. PC publish the pre-submission draft plan and invites representations.
4. Submit the plan to the local planning authority which checks the plan conforms to requirements and if so, consults inviting representations
5. Independent examiner appointed to examine the proposal and report back. Based on the report the local planning authority decide whether or not to put the plan to a referendum
6. The relevant council organises referendum. Should more than half of those voting vote in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Examples of neighbourhood plans

Local example – Mursley:

[mursleypresubmission-plan-finalversion010621.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#)

An indication of the detailed work carried out by the steering group/advisory committee set up by a PC and material used in community engagement – Bitteswell:

[Neighbourhood Plan | Bitteswell with Bittesby Parish Council](#)

Pros and cons for a neighbourhood plan for Swanbourne

For

Neighbourhood planning enables Swanbourne residents to play a much stronger role in shaping the parish and in supporting new development proposals. Achieved by setting set out a positive vision for how we want our community to develop in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for our community.

A neighbourhood plan will provide a binding planning framework for the village for the next 20 years; identifying site(s) for any future housing in the village and give the people a say in what type of housing and style of housing they would prefer. It could help to protect the Conservation Areas from unsuitable development and give the people a say in the development of the village in other ways, e.g., traffic control, recreation, footpaths

As a statutory part of the local planning process, a Swanbourne neighbourhood plan must be taken into account and would carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided.

Developing a neighbourhood plan can be an opportunity for the village to come together developing a spirit of community engagement that can be used as a driver for other village activity.

Against

The special nature of Swanbourne with its relationship with the Swanbourne Estate, means that we can discuss what we want for the village without the need for a neighbourhood plan, using existing planning controls and consultations to make representations.

Neighbour plans have to conform and support with higher level planning policies; they need to be taken into account but cannot determine an application – consequently there may be more effective ways of achieving what we want. This could involve the use of Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.

The cost to the PC in developing a neighbourhood plan (additional admin support and possibly consultants) when currently PC finances are stretched, could mean that villagers are asked to pay an increase in council tax to provide additional PC funding.

Mike King November 2021