

## **APPROVAL OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREAS FOR OTFORD AND SEVENOAKS**

### **Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013**

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For consideration

Key Decision: No

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#### **Executive Summary:**

Otford Parish Council and Sevenoaks Town Council have applied to designate the parish and town as Neighbourhood Plan areas, in order to potentially bring forward Neighbourhood Plans. This report outlines the details of these requests.

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#### **This report supports the Key Aims of the Community Plan**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Ian Bosley

**Contact Officer(s)** Kirsti Johnson ext. 7134 / Mikyla Smith ext.7357

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#### **Recommendation to Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee:**

The Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee advise that the Portfolio Holder approve the designation of Neighbourhood Plan Areas for Otford Parish and Sevenoaks Town for the areas set out in Appendices B and C.

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#### **Reason for recommendation:**

To allow for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans in accordance with government guidance.

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#### **Introduction and Background – Neighbourhood Planning**

- 1 Members will be aware that under the provisions of The Localism Act a town or parish council can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, which once adopted, will form part of the Development Plan for the Local Planning Authority (LPA). One of the first steps is to apply to the District Council to designate the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The District Council must then go out to public consultation for a six week period and invite representations. In order for an area to be appropriate it should be coherent, consistent, and appropriate in planning terms. The Act states that unless there are valid planning reasons for refusal, the LPA should designate proposed neighbourhood plan areas.

## **Neighbourhood Area Designation Requests**

- 2 Otford Parish and Sevenoaks Town Council have submitted proposed Neighbourhood Areas for consideration. The Otford area reflects the future boundary of Otford Parish, following boundary changes recommended by the 2012 Community Governance Review, which will take place in 2015. The designation requests from both councils, which include a map of the proposed areas, can be seen in Appendices B and C.
- 3 A Consultation Statement has been prepared for each area (Appendices A and B) which illustrates that the proper procedures have been followed. (to follow once the consultation on the proposed Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan Area is complete).
- 4 The six week consultation period for Otford ran from 25 July 2013 to 5 September 2013. The six-week consultation period for Sevenoaks ran from 1 October 2013 until 11 November 2013, and therefore this report will be updated once the consultation period closes.
- 5 The proposed areas are appropriate in planning terms for the long term planning of the area and it is recommended that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan Areas should be designated.
- 6 It is recommended that Portfolio Holder approval is sought for the designation of Neighbourhood Plan Areas for Otford Parish and Sevenoaks Town, and that in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (7) the following are published as soon as possible after designation:
  - the name of the neighbourhood area,
  - a map which identifies the area, and
  - the name of the relevant body who applied for the designation.

## **Other Options Considered and/or Rejected**

None

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

Funding for local planning authorities to support neighbourhood planning can be applied for from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Any cost will be met by the existing budget and DCLG funding, which will be applied for in due course.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Neighbourhood Plans are prepared under planning legislation. The regulations regarding notification of adoption/approval of these documents will be followed.

The designation of Neighbourhood Plan Areas following existing or future parish boundaries is an administrative procedure that in itself holds minimal risk to Sevenoaks District Council.

Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The designation of Neighbourhood Plan Areas following existing or future parish boundaries is an administrative procedure that in itself has no equalities implications.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?	N/A	

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Consultation Statements (to follow)

Appendix B – Otford Neighbourhood Area Designation request

Appendix C – Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Area Designation request

**Mr Richard Morris**

**Chief Planning Officer**