

## Neighbourhood Planning Summary Report

At its February meeting the parish council considered an update on progress with the preparation of the Neighbourhood plan:

Noting that the planning consultant had produced a draft list of policy changes identified by the working group, and further additional policy changes which Places4People recommended be made as a result of the Worlington NP and other recent NP examinations which have used the same draft policies, (to give the draft plan the best chance of success), the meeting resolved:

**Subject to the incorporation of any required changes arising from the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment before the Plan is submitted;**

- i. the Parish Council approves the proposed modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan; and**
- ii. agrees the submission of the Plan to West Suffolk Council**

Minute 25.02.07.3 refers.

The Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan Submission consultation (Regulation 16) commenced on Tuesday 8 April (9am) and will last to Friday 23 May (5pm) 2025. The plan and supporting documents can be viewed and commented on online at [Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan Submission \(Regulation 16\) consultation – West Suffolk Planning Policy Consultations](#). Hard copies of the plan and the SA and HRA are also available to view at West Suffolk House and the Mildenhall Hub, and available locally at The BT Call Box, Shop Hill and in the foyer of the Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre.

The parish council has an opportunity to state to West Suffolk Council its preferred Examiner and the clerk has asked our planning consultant to request his recommended examiner, Andrew Ashcroft (who has recently examined two plans in West Suffolk prepared by Places4People and is currently examining the Plan prepared by Barrow Parish Council. As such, he is familiar with the area.

The timescale therefore is now out of the parish council's hands as it is reliant on West Suffolk Council and the workload of the Examiner. However, following the completion of the current consultation the Plan will follow these remaining steps:

- Independent examination and publication of Examiner's Report identifying required changes to the Plan
- Parish Council agree that Plan, as amended, should proceed to Referendum (the alternative is to withdraw the Plan)
- Preparation of Referendum Plan incorporating any changes required by the Examiner
- West Suffolk Council call and organise the Referendum (held in same way as an election). The date will be arranged in order that West Suffolk Council can make a decision to "make" (adopt) the Plan at a Full Council meeting within eight weeks of the Referendum.
- If majority "yes" vote at Referendum, West Suffolk Council make The Plan.

During the examination it is quite likely that the Examiner will seek clarification on some matters in the Plan. Typically, a period of 2-3 weeks is given to respond to those matters. Places4People will prepare the response on behalf of the Parish Council in agreement with the clerk in consultation with Cllr Tracey Turner as there would not be sufficient time to bring those matters to a formal parish council meeting.

At the time of the Referendum, the Parish Council is restricted on the type and nature of publicity it can carry out as election regulations apply. It cannot promote a "yes" vote but can publicise the Referendum. It would be able to hold an information event before the Referendum is called to remind residents what is in the Plan.

A project plan for community engagement in the run up to the Referendum will be prepared with the clerk.

**Powers:**

Powers to act as lead body for a neighbourhood development plan or a neighbourhood development order:

- Localism Act 2011, Sch. 9; Town & Country Planning Act 1990, s.61F(1), (2);
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, s.38C(2)

**Funding**

**Revenue Budget(s)**

Neighbourhood Plan           £500

Community Engagement       £500

Additionally, see agenda items 13 (WPC.25.04.09) and 14 (WPC.25.04.10) which make provision for the unspent Neighbourhood Plan budget in 2024.25 to be moved to Earmarked Reserves and the budget for the current year to be subsequently adjusted (resulting in a total budget of £2370 for the current financial year).

**Action:**

**Cllrs are asked whether they wish to arrange for one or more information events in the run up to the Referendum.**

**Recommendation:**

- The parish council authorise expenditure under the various categories of the budget attached as Appendix A to report WPC.25.04.02 4 for payment on submission of relevant invoices to the clerk to a sum of not more than £2370.00 plus VAT in accordance with the categories.**
- The parish council delegate to the clerk, in consultation with Cllr Tracey Turner, authority to agree responses prepared by its planning consultant, (Places4People), to any requests for clarification submitted by the Planning Examiner.**