



Meeting	Full Council
Date	21 June 2023
Report Title	Neighbourhood Plan Update and Approval
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1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to update Councillors on the progress of Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan since the previous update report in March 2023. It also requires approval of the Plan and supporting documents to be able to submit these to Wiltshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Councillors will recall a previous report providing an update on the Neighbourhood Plan, which was presented to Full Council on 22 March 2023. This report explained that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were in the process of carrying out a repeat of the Regulation 14 public consultation on the Plan, with the addition of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

2.2 The previous report explained that specialist consultants, Three Dragons and McBains, had been employed to produce a Viability Assessment to accompany the Plan. This process involved viability testing of all the Plan policies to ensure that robust evidence on viability can be provided at Examination, in the event that the Plan's policies are challenged on these grounds.

3.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

3.1 The repeat Regulation 14 Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, with the SEA (**APPENDICES H & I**), commenced on 21 February 2023 and ended on 5 April 2023. 11 responses were received from stakeholders (**APPENDIX W**) and one response received from a member of the general public. At the April Steering Group Meeting, the Group reviewed the comments received, agreed responses to the comments (**APPENDIX X**), and modified the Plan and SEA (through consultants AECOM) accordingly. A useful summary of key changes made to the Plan as a result of both the Regulation 14 Consultation and Repeat Regulation 14 Consultation can be found at **APPENDIX T**.

3.2 At the April meeting, the Steering Group reviewed further feedback received from Wiltshire Council Estates on the proposed Local Green Spaces to be designated in the Neighbourhood Plan under their ownership. Steering Group Members agreed that the feedback did not change their desire to pursue these designations. **APPENDIX U** sets out their reasons for pursuing these designations, in relation to each proposed Local Green Space.

- 3.3 At the May Steering Group Meeting, Members agreed the Consultation Statement (**APPENDIX L**). The Consultation Statement fulfils the legal obligations required to demonstrate who has been consulted, how they have been consulted, the main issues/concerns raised by the persons consulted and how these issues/concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.4 The outcome of the Viability Assessment (**APPENDIX J**) was reported back to the Steering Group at their May meeting. The headline was that the Plan's policies should not lead to development being unviable. The values are relatively high in Chippenham which means that development can generally afford to deliver additional benefits if all other costs are relatively standard. The exception is older person homes, which have a higher cost burden. This is not something that can necessarily be resolved by removing Policy H1-Housing Mix and Types. It is more likely that affordable housing policy in the Wiltshire Core Strategy Plan is having the bigger impact, which would be for the Local Plan Review to resolve.
- 3.5 At the May Steering Group Meeting, feedback on several meetings involving the Steering Group Chair and Head of Planning with Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning Officers was reported back to the Group. These meetings resolved two of the three outstanding issues remaining with Wiltshire Council, in respect of the wording of Policy TC1-Bath Road/Bridge Centre Car Park Site as it relates to heritage aspects, and the technical wording on Policy SCC1-Net Zero Carbon Development (assistance was sought from consultants McBains). The third issue, the objections to some of the Local Green Space designations, remains unresolved, as reported in Paragraph 3.1 above, and will likely be challenged by Wiltshire Council Estates at Examination stage.
- 3.6 A Basic Conditions Statement (**APPENDIX K**) has been approved by Steering Group Members. This Statement is a legal requirement and has to demonstrate how the Plan is a) in general conformity with national policies and advice, b) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, c) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for Chippenham and d) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with retained EU obligations.
- 3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan timeline is attached in **APPENDIX A**. There is a one month delay to the timeline when compared to the previous version presented to Full Council. Based on current estimates the Plan will be submitted to Wiltshire Council at the end of this month. Once the Plan has been submitted to Wiltshire Council, the Town Council loses control over the timeline. If all goes speedily and smoothly with the remaining stages of plan making (the Regulation 16 public consultation then Independent Examination), the Plan referendum could be held in January 2024 and the Plan 'made' shortly afterwards. Upon the Plan being 'made' the Steering Group would be deconstituted and the future governance/monitoring of the Plan, and by whom/which group, will be discussed and determined at a future Full Council meeting.

4.0 APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 4.1 As the Town Council are the ‘qualifying body’ for the Neighbourhood Plan, the approval of Full Council to the Plan (**APPENDIX B**), and all of its supporting documents (**APPENDICES C-X**), is sought in order to be able to formally submit the Plan to Wiltshire Council and proceed to the final stages of plan making.

The following Plan documents can be found in the Appendices which accompany this Report:

		Page no.
Neighbourhood Plan	APPENDIX B	33
Neighbourhood Plan Non-Technical Summary	APPENDIX C	177
Chippenham Design Guide (Annexe 1)	APPENDIX D	185
Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Annexe 2)	APPENDIX E	217
Shop Front Design Guide (Annexe 3)	APPENDIX F	397
Tree Planting Guide (Annexe 4)	APPENDIX G	421
SEA Environmental Report	APPENDIX H	427
SEA Scoping Report	APPENDIX I	505
Viability Assessment	APPENDIX J	585
Basic Conditions Statement	APPENDIX K	635
Consultation Statement (Including Appendices A, B, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, T and U)	APPENDIX L	705
Consultation Statement Appendix C: Communication and Engagement Strategy	APPENDIX M	801
Consultation Statement Appendix D: Consultation Log	APPENDIX N	831
Consultation Statement Appendix M: List of Stakeholders Consulted at Regulation 14	APPENDIX O	875
Consultation Statement Appendix N: Regulation 14 Consultation Survey Results	APPENDIX P	885
Consultation Statement Appendix O: Individual Correspondence Received from Statutory Consultees and Stakeholders (Regulation 14 Consultation)	APPENDIX Q	941
Consultation Statement Appendix P: Stakeholder Comments Table (Regulation 14 Consultation)	APPENDIX R	1061
Consultation Statement Appendix Q: Public Comments Table (Regulation 14 Consultation)	APPENDIX S	1127
Consultation Statement Appendix R: Summary of Key Changes to Neighbourhood Plan as a Result of Regulation 14 Consultations	APPENDIX T	1195
Consultation Statement Appendix S: LGS Landowner Objections	APPENDIX U	1209
Consultation Statement Appendix V: List of Stakeholders Consulted at Repeat Regulation 14	APPENDIX V	1245
Consultation Statement Appendix W: Individual Correspondence Received from Statutory Consultees and Stakeholders (Repeat Regulation 14 Consultation)	APPENDIX W	1255
Consultation Statement Appendix X: Stakeholder and Public Comments Table (Repeat Regulation 14 Consultation)	APPENDIX X	1281

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES

5.1 The development of a Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the following corporate priorities:

- Provide and develop facilities and services that are accessible, inclusive and promote health and well-being.
- Play an active role in the future development of the town through collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and our community.
- Help to create a future that is carbon neutral, environmentally sustainable and resilient to the impact of climate change.
- Maintain and create opportunities to enhance our green spaces and provide a clean and safe environment.
- Provide and develop facilities and services that promote Chippenham as an attractive and vibrant market town and celebrate its rich history, heritage, and culture.

6.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Steering Group continues to be supported by the Head of Planning, Planning Consultant(s) (external support), Administrative Officers, the Council's Communications & Customer Services Manager and Corporate Management Team.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 For the financial year 2023/24, in addition to payroll costs, there is a Capital/EMF budget of £17,000 to cover design, consultant and professional fees, to be charged against Community Infrastructure Levy income, and an additional Income & Expenditure budget of £3,300 to cover other items such as website and print costs.

7.2 There has been no spend yet to date this financial year. However, there is committed expenditure of £16,120 for consultant fees on the Viability Assessment, design/formatting of the Plan and Planning Consultant fees.

8.0 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The climate and ecological impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan are set out detail in the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which accompanies the Plan at **APPENDIX G**. It was judged that the Neighbourhood Plan policies would result in '*minor positive effects*' in relation to air quality, biodiversity, climate change, land, soil and water resources.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Full Council:

- i) Approve the Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents referred to in this Report for submission to the Local Planning Authority
- ii) Delegate to the Chief Executive, any minor amendments required to be made to the Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents referred to in this Report, prior to its submission to the Local Planning Authority.