

Report to:	Service Director – Planning and Sustainable Development	
Date:	18th August 2017	
Title:	St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan - 2017 to 2030 - Legal Compliance and Examination Stage	
Portfolio Area:	Planning and Economy	
Divisions Affected:	Gwinear-Gwithian and St Erth	
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Economic Growth and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
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Approval and clearance obtained:		Y / N
For Cabinet and delegated executive decisions only		
Key decision? (\geq £500k in value or significant effect on communities in two or more electoral divisions)		N
Published in advance on Cabinet Work Programme?		Y
Urgency Procedure(s) used if 'N' to Work Programme?		N/A
Date next steps can be taken		5 clear working days after decision

Recommendations:

1. The St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan is agreed to be Legally Compliant and should be publicised under Regulation 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and taken forward to Examination.

1. Executive Summary

The Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and orders and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum.

The St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan (St Erth NDP) was submitted to Cornwall Council, with the endorsement of St Erth Parish Council, on 25th July 2017. The Plan was accompanied by a Basic Conditions Statement, a Consultation Statement, an Evidence base document and evidence of compliance with European Environmental legislation, as required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Under The Localism Act (2011), the Council is required upon submission of a Neighbourhood Plan to check that it meets the legal requirements for those plans before it can progress to formal consultation, examination and referendum.

The Plan has been checked against the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (hereafter referred to as 'the Regulations') and found to be legally compliant. Appendix 1 to this report is a table which details each stage of plan preparation, the relevant regulations and legislation at each stage, how the Plan has met the Regulations and whether or not it is compliant. Having carried out the checks, officer opinion is that the St Erth NDP is legally compliant.

2. Purpose of Report

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and orders and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum.

The Localism Act 2011 (Part 6 chapter 3) sets out the Local Planning Authority (LPA) responsibilities as:

1. Designating the area of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)
2. Advising or assisting communities in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan
3. Checking a submitted plan meets the legal requirements
4. Arranging for the independent examination of the plan
5. Determining whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements
6. Subject to the results of the referendum/s bringing the plan into force

This report deals with stage 3 of the process – checking that a submitted plan meets the legal requirements.

The Plan has been through the statutory stages of area designation and pre-submission draft consultation. The area designation application was correctly made by St Erth Parish Council, publicised by Cornwall Council and designated by Portfolio Holder decision on 02nd July 2013.

Several stages of consultation and public engagement have been carried out during plan preparation (as detailed in the Consultation Statement) and the statutory pre-submission consultation was carried out from 22nd August- 7th October 2016. It was publicised and the relevant consultation bodies were contacted in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Regulations. The St Erth NDP

Steering Group have summarised the comments received and their responses in the Consultation Statement submitted with the Plan.

The current required stage is for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to consider the Plan, determine whether it is legally compliant and, if so, notify the St Erth Parish Council of its decision and progress the Plan by starting the 6 week consultation period and making arrangements for the examination.

The LPA must consider:

1. whether the parish council is authorised to act
2. whether the proposal and accompanying documents
 - a. comply with the rules for submission to the LPA
 - b. meet the 'definition of an NDP' and
 - c. meet the 'scope of NDP provisions', and
3. whether the parish council has undertaken the correct procedures in relation to consultation and publicity

In respect of these questions:

1. The St Erth Parish Council is the qualifying body authorised to progress a neighbourhood plan. They have made the correct application for the designation of their neighbourhood area and are authorised to act.

2a. The plan proposal and accompanying documents comply with the rules for submission, in that they include a map identifying the area, a consultation statement, a basic conditions statement, an evidence base document and information to enable appropriate environmental assessments. In this regard a screening opinion was sought from Cornwall Council based on the Steering Group submitting a draft emerging policies statement. Cornwall Council consulted the statutory bodies, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The consultation bodies concluded that a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) are not required. Cornwall Council issued a screening opinion to that effect on 24th August 2016.

2b. The 'definition of an NDP' is: "A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development use and of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan" The St Erth NDP contains policies which relate to the development and use of land within St Erth Parish and therefore meets the definition.

2c. The 'Scope of NDP provisions' are that:

- The NDP must specify the period for which it is to have effect;
- It cannot include provision about development that is 'excluded development'; and
- It cannot relate to more than one neighbourhood area or repeat an existing planning permission.

The St Erth NDP specifies the plan period as 2017 - 2030

It does not provide for any 'Excluded development' which is defined as:

- a) A 'county matter' (Schedule 1 of 1990 ACT) i.e. relating to Minerals;
- b) Any operation or class of operation relating to waste development Development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC i.e. Oil refineries, power stations, radioactive waste Disposal, iron and steel smelting, asbestos operations, chemical installations, motorways, airports, ports and toxic and dangerous waste disposal; and
- c) Development consisting wholly or partly of a national infrastructure project.

It relates only to one neighbourhood area and does not repeat an existing planning permission.

3. The Parish Council has undertaken the correct procedure for pre-submission statutory consultation, but some statutory consultees appeared not to have been notified during this stage. This has now been corrected and the Council is satisfied that all statutory consultees have been notified. St Erth Parish Council has also undertaken community consultation throughout the process, as detailed in the Consultation Statement.

The St Erth NDP is therefore considered to comply with the criteria and legislation for a neighbourhood plan and should be taken forward.

If the St Erth NDP is endorsed as compliant, Cornwall Council can commence the regulatory stages required to progress the Plan through examination and referendum and 'make' the Plan so that it forms part of the adopted policy framework for planning decision making in Cornwall.

3. Benefits for Customers/Residents

Neighbourhood Planning was put into place by the Localism Act 2011 to enable communities to have a direct say in how their area is planned by creating a formal planning document that will, on making (adoption), form part of the statutory development plan for the area covered.

The confirmation of Legal Compliance, formal consultation and Examination of the Plan will further our objective to support Localism for our communities. The St Erth NDP and its process may also be used as a template which can help other communities in their plan preparation.

Production of neighbourhood plans is a stated objective in the Planning Policy and Partnerships Team Plan. It supports the objectives of the Cornwall Local Plan, which relies on Neighbourhood Plans to provide the policy framework for delivery of development, particularly in rural areas.

4. Relevant Previous Decisions

The Plan has been through the statutory stages of area designation and pre-submission draft consultation. The area designation application was correctly made by the Parish Council, publicised by Cornwall Council and designated by Portfolio Holder decision on 2nd July 2013.

This is the second stage at which the Council must make a decision whether the Plan should proceed in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

5. Consultation and Engagement

The Plan has been through the statutory stages of area designation and pre-submission draft consultation as referenced above.

The NDP Regulations require that the Parish Council carries out a formal consultation process for a period of six weeks prior to the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to the Council.

Several stages of consultation and public engagement have been carried out during plan preparation (as detailed in the Consultation Statement) and the statutory pre-submission consultation as carried out from 22nd August- 7th October 2016. It was publicised and the relevant consultation bodies were contacted in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Regulations. The St Erth NDP Steering Group have summarised the comments received and their responses in the Consultation Statement submitted with the Plan.

The confirmation of Legal Compliance of the Plan will lead to a further formal stage of consultation over six weeks with the community and statutory consultation bodies.

6. Financial Implications of the proposed course of action/ decision

There are costs associated with the examination and referendum. The estimated costs for the St Erth NDP are £5,000 for examination and £4,000 for the referendum.

Central Government provides a grant to the LPA of £5,000 at submission (limited to first five neighbourhood areas designated in total) and £20,000 once a date is set for a referendum following a successful examination. These grants are currently provided until 31 March 2018 and will be used to fund the associated costs.

The value of the grant is fixed, irrelevant of the actual examination and referendum costs, so for smaller neighbourhood plans the grant is usually in excess of the costs incurred. This is retained by the Service to cover the cost of the larger towns, where the costs are higher. The current budget is sufficient to accommodate the St Erth NDP costs.

During the financial year, if the accumulated costs for the neighbourhood plans exceed the grants received, then the Planning and Sustainable Development

Service will have to identify funding from elsewhere within their approved budget to fund any deficit.

7. Legal/Governance Implications of the proposed course of action/decision

The Council has certain steps that it has to take in progressing a neighbourhood development plan. These are detailed in both the report and Legal Compliance Checklist. Relevant legislation comprises of:

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Localism Act 2011
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Legal Compliance allows the Plan to progress to the next stage of consultation, but does not necessarily mean that the Plan will be adopted in the form currently submitted as this may change in accordance with the recommendations of the appointed examiner. The exact content of the Plan may be subject to potential alteration after the authorisation of the plan proposals stage and the Council may make representations on its content prior to examination.

8. Risk Implications of the proposed course of action/decision

Failure to progress the Plan proposal would risk customer dissatisfaction, given our commitment to support communities in the production of neighbourhood plans.

9. Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications

The Plan has to contribute to sustainable development and be compliant with any European obligations and the European Convention on Human Rights as enacted in the Human Rights Act 1998.

The NDP Steering Group has carried out an Equality Impact Assessment, and identified positive or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics. The Council's appraisal has not identified any negative impacts.

10. Options available

The St Erth NDP has been assessed against 'the Regulations' and is found to be legally compliant; the Council, therefore has a duty to support and progress the Plan.

In accordance with regulation 15 a further 6 week 'publication' consultation on the St Erth NDP will be carried out by the Council as LPA, to add to the previous community and stakeholder consultation carried out by the NDP Steering Group, so the Plan will be well publicised.

The community has had an opportunity to comment on the Plan and influence its development. Statutory consultees were supportive of the Plan and where they

have made suggestions for amendments to strengthen the Plan these have been made where possible. The consultation process has followed the Regulations and there will be opportunity for further comments to be made during the publication: any further comments will be forwarded directly to the Examiner.

If the St Erth NDP proposal is found to be legally compliant, the next steps in the process of 'making' the St Erth Neighbourhood Plan are:

- LPA notify St Erth Parish Council of their decision on the Plan's legal compliance.
- The LPA publicise the NDP proposal
- The LPA appoint an examiner, with the consent of St Erth Parish Council
- Following successful examination the Local Authority hold a referendum
- Following successful referendum (simple majority) the Plan is 'made' –i.e. adopted by Cornwall Council and will become part of the statutory development plan as defined by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

11. Supporting Information (Appendices)

- APP1. St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan Legal Compliance Checklist
- APP2. St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission draft
- APP3. St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation Statement
- APP4. St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan Basic Conditions Statement
- APP5. St Erth Neighbourhood Development Plan Evidence Base Report

12. Background Papers

None

13. Approval and clearance

All reports:

Final report sign offs	This report has been cleared by (or mark not required if appropriate)	Date
Governance/Legal (Required for all reports)		
Finance (Required for all reports)		
Equality and Diversity (If required)		
Service Director (Required for all reports)		
Strategic Director (If required)	N/A	