

Report to:	<b>Service Director – Planning and Sustainable Development</b>	
Date:	<b>26 August 2019</b>	
Title:	<b>St Stephens by Launceston Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan: Plan Proposal Decision – Post Examination Report Modifications and Referendum</b>	
Portfolio Area:	<b>Culture, Economy and Planning</b>	
Divisions Affected:	<b>Launceston North and North Petherwin</b>	
Local Member(s) briefed:	<b>Y</b>	
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: <b>Economic Growth and Development</b>		
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Approval and clearance obtained:	<b>Y</b>	
<b>For Cabinet and delegated executive decisions only</b>		
Key decision?	<b>N</b>	
Published in advance on Cabinet Work Programme?	<b>Y</b>	
Urgency Procedure(s) used if 'N' to Work Programme?	<b>N</b>	
Date next steps can be taken	<b>Upon publication</b>	

**Recommendation:**

That the St Stephens by Launceston Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan is modified according to the Examiner's recommendations, the Plan proposal decision is published and the Plan progresses to Referendum.

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The St Stephens by Launceston Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan (the NDP) has been successful at Examination, with the Examiner recommending that the Plan should proceed to referendum, subject to a number of recommended modifications.

The NDP has been modified in line with the Examiner's recommendations and the Council can now proceed to referendum on the making of the NDP.

## 2. Purpose of Report and key information

- 2.1 The Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA) is responsible for deciding what action to take in response to the Examiner's recommendation. This report details the recommendations and the modifications made to the NDP, which have been made with the involvement of the NDP Steering Group (the Group).
- 2.2 Cornwall Council, with the agreement of St Stephens by Launceston Rural Parish Council, appointed Mr Martin Lee as Examiner. The Examination commenced on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019, by means of written representations and by an initial assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documents. A site visit was carried out to the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 2.3 Mr Lee supplied the final examination report on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019. The report concluded that the St Stephens by Launceston Rural NDP could proceed to Referendum, subject to some recommended modifications to make the wording of policies and their application clearer and to ensure that the NDP meets the basic conditions. The main recommendations concern:
- Policy 1: The Housing Target will be reworded to provide clarity to enable easier interpretation.
  - Policy 2: Locations and Scale for New Housing Development will be reworded and enable development as set out in criteria
  - Policy 3: Successful Housing on Farms is altered in order to provide clarity of phasing and more practicable to use for development management
  - Policy 4: Principal Residency Requirement is deleted due to the lack of robust evidence
  - Policy 5: Housing Size and Layout is reworded to enhance the effectiveness of the policy for development management.
  - Policy 6: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Local Element is not a development management tool for controlling proposals for physical development or land use. The policy should be deleted and re-named as an objective of the NDP.
  - Policy 7: Infrastructure and Facilities. The examiner has suggested policy wording to provide a robust and effective development management tool
  - Policy 8: Design Principles requires minor rewording and re-ordering to ensure its effectiveness.

- Policy 9: Non-designated Heritage Assets will be reworded to make the policy more effective for development management purposes
- Policy 10: Development in, or within the setting of, the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) requires amendment and restructuring to increase its usability for development management
- Policy 11: Safeguarding and Enhancing Biodiversity Through Development with minor amendments to ensure constituency
- Policy 12: Employment Development with minor rewording for legibility and effectiveness
- Policy 13: Commercial Development in Dutson. The rephrasing of the policy will ensure it is more effective and robust for development management
- Policy 14: Local Green Space Designation- Truscott Parish Ponds and Verges and Policy 15: Local Green Space Designation – Langore Village Green, Copse and Recreation Ground are merged into one policy to provide a more effective policy for development management
- Policy 16: Footpaths and Access is to be reworded for effectiveness
- Policy 17: Renewable Energy minor adjustment to structure to improve its strength as a development management tool
- The basic conditions statement will be amended so it is in line with the changes set out above. The amended basic conditions is set out in appendix 4.

The full schedule of modification recommendations is included in a table in Appendix 2 Schedule of Modification Recommendations.

St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council agrees with Cornwall Council that all the modifications should be made to the Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents. A further amendment will be made to policy 2 Location and scale of new housing as a settlement boundary will not be drawn for Dutson as set out in the examination report. It has been agreed that the criteria will be set out for new housing development within the settlement of Dutson where it represents infill, rounding-off and/or brownfield site development, of no more than two dwellings on any individual or cumulative site. Cornwall Council and St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council agree with the amendment.

- 2.4 Mr Lee's overall Recommendation is that the Neighbourhood Plan, as amended following the recommendations set out in the examination report, be submitted to a Referendum and that the referendum area should be the same as, and not extend beyond, the NDP area. The full Examination report is attached as Appendix 1.

### **3. Benefits for Customers/Residents**

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for the local community to influence place making and planning decisions in their local area. The Cornwall Local Plan supports the production of neighbourhood plans and the spatial strategy requires development proposals to 'assist the creation of resilient and cohesive communities' and as part of this 'Support[ing] the delivery of made Neighbourhood Plans and other community based

initiatives that help to make communities more resilient.’ (Cornwall Local Plan, Policy 2 – Spatial Strategy.)

- 3.2 Residents of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish, have had the opportunity to be involved in the research for and writing of the NDP and through the consultation and engagement associated with the NDP’s development have been able to contribute their ideas and views.
- 3.3 For applicants, agents and developers wishing to submit proposals in the area, the NDP adds extra detail to the strategic policies for the area, so that applicants will have information about community expectations when preparing an application and can tailor their proposal accordingly.

#### **4. Relevant Previous Decisions**

- 4.1 The preparation and making of a Neighbourhood Development Plan is governed by Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended and The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended (2012 Regulations) as follows

NDP Area Designation – Portfolio Holder Decision 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016

The first regulatory stage of the NDPs – the Parish Council submit an application and a map to notify of their intention to produce a neighbourhood plan.

Legal Compliance: Portfolio Holder Decision 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019

After the Parish Council submit their plan, the LPA carries out a legal compliance check and publishes the plan for Regulation 16 ‘publication’ consultation

All previous reports and versions of the Plan are available on the Cornwall Council website on a page dedicated to [St Stephens by Launceston Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan](#)

#### **5. Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.1 The first statutory round of consultation occurs at area designation stage. St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council submitted an application and map to designate their Neighbourhood Area on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Cornwall Council consulted residents and other interested stakeholders on the designation between 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016. Copies of the application letter and statement that explains how the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Area met the conditions of Section 61G(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the 1990 Act), were made available to view at Launceston Library and Information Service (formerly One Stop Shop) during the six week consultation period. The Cornwall Council then formally designated the Neighbourhood Area.
- 5.2 After this notification that a Parish Council is preparing a NDP and until the point that the NDP is submitted to Cornwall Council the responsibility for consultation and engagement on the NDP falls to the qualifying body, which is St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council. This process is

tested for compliance at the independent examination and the Qualifying Body is required to submit a Consultation Statement, which evidences that the Regulations have been complied with.

The Consultation Statement contains:

(a) details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan;

(b) explains how they were consulted, which included the distribution of surveys for each household and a separate survey targeting young people. Open days and exhibition events were held to provide residents with an opportunity to speak to the steering group and statutory organisations were also consulted during the development of the plan.

(c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and

(d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan.

- 5.3 The next statutory consultation stage is the pre-submission consultation on the draft Plan, (which was carried out by the Parish Council, in compliance with Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations) the representations on which have to be received not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the plan proposal is first publicised at this stage. The statutory pre-submission consultation was held from 25<sup>th</sup> June until 6<sup>th</sup> August 2018 where the 'Consultation Bodies', as set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations are consulted. Any comments submitted during this consultation must be summarised and included in the Consultation Statement, with a note of what action was taken in response.
- 5.4 Once the Plan is submitted and judged to be legally compliant, Cornwall Council publicises the draft NDP in the next round of statutory consultation, (in accordance with Regulation 16 of the 2012 Regulations) the representations on which have to be received not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the plan proposal is first publicised at this stage. The statutory consultation by Cornwall Council was held from 30<sup>th</sup> January until 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
- 5.5 The Plan proposal included a copy of a map and a statement which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates; a Consultation Statement; the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan, a statement explaining how the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (the Basic Conditions Statement and a Design guide. Copies of the documents were available to view on the website, or through the Planning Register (planning application number PA19/00004/NDP) and hard copies were available from Langore Village Hall, Launceston Library, and Homeleigh Garden Centre during the consultation period. The Council sent the Plan proposal and representations to the Independent Examiner on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and on

1<sup>st</sup> August 2019 the Independent Examiner issued a report to the Council and the St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council.

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

- 6.1 There are costs associated with the examination and referendum. The final cost for the St Stephen by Launceston Rural NDP Examination is £5,314 and the estimated cost for the Referendum is £4,000.
- 6.2 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 the end of the financial year 2021/22 and will be used to fund the associated costs.
- 6.3 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 occurred. 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 Stephen by Launceston Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan costs.
- 6.4 During the financial year, if the accumulated costs for the neighbourhood plans exceed the grants received, then the Planning 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**

- 7.1 The next stage of the Regulations requires the Council to:
- Decide what action to take in response to the recommendations of the Examiner
  - Publish the decision and their reason for it
  - Publish the Examiner's report
- 7.2 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires in Regulation 18 for the Local Planning Authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of an Examiner made in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by Section 38A of the 2004 Act) in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.3 This report is the Council's decision on how to incorporate the Examiner's recommendations. The power to decide whether the Examiner's

modifications are incorporated or not, lies with the Local Planning Authority. However the Examiner's report has been discussed in detail with the NDP Steering Group and the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed modifications to the Plan in response to the Examiner's report have been developed with the Group's involvement.

- 7.4 Having considered each of the recommendations made in the Examiner's report and the reasons for them, the Council, with the consent of St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council has decided to accept the modifications to the draft Plan. Appendix 2 outlines the alterations made to the draft Plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by Section 38A of 2004 Act) in response to each of the Examiner's recommendations.
- 7.5 Amendments to these Policies will allow them to meet the Basic Conditions and therefore be retained in the Plan. The Council is satisfied that the Plan as modified meets the Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town And Country Planning Act 1990 and is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights obligations.
- 7.6 The Plan has been screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the Screening Opinion was that SEA and HRA were not required. A Comprehensive Impact Assessment (CIA) was undertaken at the Legal Compliance Check stage.

The Examiner confirmed in his report that he was satisfied that the NDP was compliant with European and Human Rights Legislation.

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

- 8.1 Failure to take the Plan forward to referendum would risk customer dissatisfaction and would be a failure of the Council's duty to support communities in the production of neighbourhood plans.

## **9. Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications**

- 9.1 The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not. The protected characteristics are Age, Disability, Gender Re-assignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation and in Cornwall an additional characteristic, Cornish Status.
- 9.2 The NDP has been developed to be in general conformity with the Cornwall Local Plan, which was subject to Examination in Public and found to be sound. The Cornwall Local Plan provides for the objectively assessed need for housing to meet the needs of all the community, against which the conformity of the NDP has been tested.

- 9.3 The Cornwall Local Plan has been subject to Comprehensive Impact Assessment. This concluded that the current and future businesses and residents of, and visitors to, Cornwall will be affected by the land use policies in terms of provision of jobs, homes, infrastructure, access to services and the protection of the environment. The Policies' objectives are to plan for the needs of the whole community now and in the future, the Plan period is to 2030. In addition, where evidence demonstrates a need, a number of protected characteristic groups are positively planned for with specific provision made for older people and the disabled.
- 9.4 The housing and affordable housing targets aim to ensure appropriate housing is available to meet local needs over the Plan period. Failing to provide sufficient housing will impact most on disadvantaged groups.
- 9.5 A Comprehensive Impact Assessment of the St Stephens by Launceston Rural NDP was carried out as part of the Legal Compliance Check and has been updated following the examination of the Plan. The CIA concluded that the St Stephens by Launceston Rural NDP provides a strategy for the development of the Neighbourhood Area, and a range of policies, which will result in positive benefits for the local community.
- 9.6 The key positive impacts are promoting sustainable development by providing housing that meet local need including providing affordable housing, providing a house on farms to support farm enterprises and to allow retired farms to live on their land, protection of the natural and historic environment, biodiversity and green infrastructure, the designation and safeguarding of local green space, footpaths, rights of way and cycleway's and support for renewable energy schemes.

## **10. Options available**

- 10.1 Cornwall Council has a duty to support communities who are preparing neighbourhood plans. The 2012 Regulations detail the Council's responsibilities. The NDP has been independently examined and found to meet the Basic Conditions subject to the recommended Modifications. The Examiner has recommended that the NDP should proceed to Referendum.
- 10.2 The Council is required to make a decision as to what action it proposes to take in response to each recommendation as detailed in the Examiner's Report by 6<sup>th</sup> September 2019 being the date as prescribed in Regulation 17A of the 2012 Regulations. It is not clear as to what the outcome will be if that date is missed but it is clear that the Council's reputation would be damaged.

Failure to take the NDP forward to referendum would risk customer dissatisfaction and would be a failure of the Council's duty as set out above.

## **11. Supporting Information (Appendices)**

Appendix 1: St Stephens by Launceston Rural NDP Examination Report

Appendix 2: St Stephens by Launceston Rural NDP Recommended Modifications Table

Appendix 3: St Stephens by Launceston Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan modified after examination

Appendix 4: St Stephens by Launceston Rural NDP Basic Conditions Statement with examination amendments

## 12. Background Papers

None.

## 13. Approval and clearance

### All reports:

<b>Final report sign offs</b>	<b>This report has been cleared by (or mark not required if appropriate)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Governance/Legal (Required for <b>all</b> reports)	Simon Mansell	29:08:19
Finance (Required for <b>all</b> reports)	Geraldine Baker	05/09/19
Equality and Diversity (If required)	N/A	
Service Director (Required for <b>all</b> reports)	Hayley Jewels	06/09/19
Strategic Director (If required)		