

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
7 OCTOBER 2014	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Marco Cereste Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement	
Contact Officer(s):	Simon Machen – Director of Growth and Regeneration Emma Naylor – Senior Strategic Planning Officer	Tel. 453475 Tel: 863881

**APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA
(AILSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL)**

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM : Director of Growth and Regeneration	Deadline date : 7 October 2014
<p>1. That Ailsworth Parish Council’s application to designate a neighbourhood area is approved without amendment (Option A - approval without amendment).</p> <p>2. That the neighbourhood area is not designated as a business area.</p>	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Committee following the receipt of an application from Ailsworth Parish Council to designate a neighbourhood area, in accordance with the procedures contained in the adopted Peterborough City Council Statement of Community Involvement (2012, page 36).
- 1.2 Members will recall that you recently approved the Castor Neighbourhood Area (September 2014) and that you approved five neighbourhood areas in 2013, namely Bretton, Deeping Gate, Glinton, Northborough and Peakirk. This area, if approved, would then become the seventh neighbourhood area to be designated in Peterborough.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with recommendations for the determination of Ailsworth Parish Council’s application to designate a neighbourhood area. The reasoning behind said recommendations is included within this report. It is expected that the Committee will determine the application following consideration of the recommendations and the reasons provided.
- 2.2 This report is for the Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference in paragraph 2.5.1.1 and Schedule 2.5.3 of part 3, section 2, of the Constitution, to exercise the functions of the Council under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, specifically “Determination of applications to designate a neighbourhood area (including whether the designated area should be a business area).”

3. **TIMESCALE**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	N/A
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4. **CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION**

4.1 The Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 introduced (into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) the concept of neighbourhood development plans and neighbourhood development orders. Neighbourhood development plans and orders can be prepared by a 'relevant body' (notably a parish council or recognised neighbourhood forum), for a designated neighbourhood area.

Neighbourhood plans and orders are optional. There is no statutory requirement for a plan or order to be prepared for any area.

Following the enactment of the Localism Act 2011, relevant bodies can opt to apply for the designation of an area as a neighbourhood area and, subject to the successful designation of the neighbourhood area, subsequently prepare a neighbourhood plan and/ or order for said area.

4.2 Application

As a parish council, Ailsworth Parish Council automatically qualifies as a relevant body under section 61G(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Ailsworth Parish Council proposes that the whole of the parish area be designated as a neighbourhood area.

The reason put forward by the parish council for the area proposed was:

“The whole parish is specified as the designated area, in order to create a neighbourhood plan inclusive of the whole parish.”

4.3 Factors for consideration

The appropriateness of the proposed neighbourhood area has been considered: consequently, the recommendations outlined at the start of this report are put forward for consideration by the Committee.

In line with section 61 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the following factors have been taken into consideration as part of the assessment of the appropriateness of the area.

- i) Whether the specified area falls entirely within Peterborough City Council's area.
- ii) Whether the specified area, in whole or part, has already been designated as a neighbourhood area, and whether there are any other outstanding applications to designate any part of the area specified as a neighbourhood area.
- iii) The reasons provided by the parish council as to why the area is appropriate.
- iv) All representations received during the six week consultation period.
- v) Whether the proposed area should be designated as a business area.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Ailsworth Parish Council's application to designate a neighbourhood area was received on 11 July 2014. A six week consultation period on the application ran from Tuesday 29 July to 12 noon on Tuesday 9 September 2014. The application, and the opportunity to comment, were advertised on the Council's website and on the Ailsworth village notice board. The adjoining parish councils, Castor, Marholm, Helpston, Ufford and Sutton were notified. Relevant ward Councillors and portfolio holders were also notified.
- 5.2 One response (submitted on behalf of three people) was received during the six week consultation. However, this response made no reference to the proposed area (instead commenting on matters such as the "urgent need for a neighbourhood plan" and "concerns at the possibility of losing the lovely countryside"): as the consultation was solely on the appropriateness of the area proposed, comments relating to any other matter are not relevant and therefore should not be taken into consideration. A copy of the response is included below, for information purposes.

	Comment
<p>1 (submitted on behalf of 3 members of the public)</p>	<p>"We would like to express our concerns at the possibility of losing the lovely countryside that Peterborough has around Castor and Ailsworth and WE therefore BELIEVE THERE IS AN urgent need for a neighbourhood plan for the community to work TOGETHER to save this wonderful rural area near Peterborough.</p> <p>This area, as it is, is one of the main reasons that tourists are attracted to Peterborough and THE LOCAL Ferry Meadows PARK AND NATURE RESERVE. A housing estate on a large scale would destroy this area as a tourist attraction AND FACILITY FOR THE RESIDENTS OF PETERBOROUGH. It would be a highly impossible area to police, making it a no go area for many residents of Peterborough and tourists to the city, this alone needs careful thought and planning. The infrastructure of the village would not take much more traffic and the main road through the village would become dangerous.</p> <p>A neighbourhood plan is essential to enable to keep England's rural neighbourhoods for the benefit of future generations and to preserve a wonderful attraction and keep the community alive, other than a city.</p> <p>There is also to be considered as well as the wonderful nature reserves that surrounds all the village, the historical significance of Castor and Ailsworth of which there is an abundance of history (PARTICULARLY ROMAN AS DISPLAYED IN PETERBOROUGH MUSEUM) some of which we are sure lays undiscovered still.</p> <p>We feel, as do many others who live in and around Peterborough, that it would be catastrophic to destroy what no one can deny is one of the most beautiful areas AROUND Peterborough and would be madness to spoil on a large scale, again therefore for these reasons, it is essential we have a neighbourhood plan."</p>

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Committee will determine the application to designate a neighbourhood area following consideration of the recommendations and the reasons for these recommendations made herein.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to choose one of the following three options for the application: Option A, 'area approved, without amendment'; Option B, 'area approved, with minor amendments'; Option C 'minded to approve an area, but only if significant amendments are

made which are subject to a further round of consultation'. The Committee is not permitted in law to reject the proposal outright.

- 6.3 The Committee must also decide whether it is appropriate to designate the area as a business area.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Recommendations:

- 1) That Ailsworth Parish Council's application to designate a neighbourhood area is approved without amendment (Option A - approval without amendment).
- 2) That the area is not designated as a business area.

7.2 Reasons for recommendations:

- i) The specified area falls entirely within Peterborough City Council's area.
- ii) The specified area, in whole or part, has not already been designated as a neighbourhood area, and there are no other outstanding applications to designate any part of the area specified as a neighbourhood area.
- iii) The reason stated on the application form is considered justified.
- iv) No comments were received during the consultation period in objection to or in support of the proposed area (one response was received during the consultation period however this response made no reference to the proposed area: as the consultation was solely on the appropriateness of the area proposed, comments relating to any other matter should not be taken into consideration).
- v) Paragraph 4.4.25 (page 37) of the city council's Statement of Community Involvement states that in reaching its decision on whether to designate a neighbourhood area as a business area, the city council will take into account whether the area is wholly or predominantly business in nature; the number of people residing in the area; and the results of public consultation. The parish of Ailsworth is not wholly/ predominantly business in nature. Furthermore, no representations in relation to the designation of the area as a business area were received during the consultation period. In light of these considerations, it is not deemed appropriate to designate the area as a business area.

- 7.3 Summary: It is considered that the whole of the parish is a logical and appropriate area for designation as a neighbourhood area and that the neighbourhood area should not be designated as a business area.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 As outlined in Section 6 'Anticipated Outcomes', the options from which recommendation '1' above is selected and which are available to the Committee are:

Option A: 'area approved, without amendment';

Option B: 'area approved, with minor* amendments';

Option C: 'minded to approve an area, but only if significant* amendments are made which are subject to a further round of consultation'.

** Page 36 of the Statement of Community Involvement outlines what is classed as a 'minor' and 'significant' amendment.*

- 8.2 It is recommended that Options B and C are discounted. It is considered that minor or significant amendments would not result in a more appropriate or strategic neighbourhood area, and therefore it is not considered that either minor or significant amendments to the area would derive any significant benefits.

- 8.3 In relation to recommendation '2', the alternative option is that the neighbourhood area is designated as a business area. It is recommended that this option is discounted in light of

the fact that the parish is not wholly or predominantly business in its nature, as is the criteria stipulated in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 61H(3), as inserted by Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011) for the designation of business areas.

9. IMPLICATIONS

The designation of the Neighbourhood Area will have some implications.

9.1 Legal Implications

The Council must act in accordance with the legislative requirements regarding neighbourhood planning (introduced via the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 during the processing of applications to designate neighbourhood areas; and in accordance with the consultation and engagement arrangements described in the Peterborough Statement of Community Involvement. These processes have been adhered to. The Committee must approve Option A, B or C for the application, but is not permitted to refuse the application outright.

9.2 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the designation of a neighbourhood area. There are however financial implications associated with the subsequent provision of assistance to the parish council and delivery of statutory requirements during the preparation and adoption stages of their neighbourhood plan and/ or order. These will be met from existing budgets.

9.3 Cross-service Implications

The designation of a neighbourhood area has implications for the Communications Team: it will be required to prepare and issue a press release detailing the designation.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

One electronic response, held on file.

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