South Northamptonshire Council

Council

16 December 2015

Proposed Designation Of Ashton Parish as a Neighbourhood Area

Report of the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

For Council to consider the representations received during the Council’s consultation on the designation of Ashton Parish as a Neighbourhood Area and agree the designation of Ashton Parish as a Neighbourhood Area.

1.0 Recommendation

The meeting is recommended:

1.1 To agree the designation of Ashton Parish as a Neighbourhood Area.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The Localism Act 2011 gave Town and Parish Councils the powers to produce Neighbourhood Plans. They are seen as a way of enabling communities to shape their local areas and may be drawn up by Parish Councils. Once adopted these plans will carry full statutory weight as part of the Development Plan for the area, and due regards must be had to them when making decisions on planning applications.

2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations came into force in April 2012 and set out the steps that Town and Parish Councils must complete in order to progress their Neighbourhood Plans. The first step is to obtain agreement to the area that the Plan will cover. This can be the whole parish or part of a parish. There is also the opportunity for Town and Parish Councils to prepare a Plan jointly if it includes land in more than one parish. Within parished areas such as South Northamptonshire applications must be made by the Parish or Town Council.

2.3 In South Northamptonshire 5 parishes have been designated as Neighbourhood Areas. In order to obtain approval of designation as a Neighbourhood Area, Town and parish Councils must apply to the local planning authority with the following information:
A map which identifies the area to which the area application relates;
A statement explaining why this areas is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area; and
A statement that the organisation or body making the application is a relevant body for the purpose of section 61G of the 1990 Act.

2.4 Ashton Parish Council submitted an application for Ashton parish to become a Neighbourhood Area in April 2015. The designation as a Neighbourhood Area is the first step in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. A copy of the application from Ashton Parish Council is attached in Appendix 1.

2.5 The proposed designation of Ashton as a Neighbourhood Area was considered by the Council’s Planning Policy and Regeneration Strategy Committee on 18 November 2015. At that meeting the Committee resolved:

That Full Council be recommended to agree that Ashton Parish is approved as a Neighbourhood Area. (Minute 45)

Publication of the Ashton Neighbourhood Area

2.6 The application for designation of Ashton Parish as a Neighbourhood Area has been advertised in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan (General) regulations which came into force on 6 April 2012 for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

2.7 Responses received to the consultation on Ashton Neighbourhood Area are attached at Appendix 2. Four responses were received to the consultation.

- Natural England – advised that they have published advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans and development proposals. This is available at https://www.gov.uk/consulting-on-neighbourhood-plans-and-development-orders
- Crime Prevention and Design Officer - Northamptonshire Police has no formal objection to the application for designation of a Neighbourhood area for Ashton.
- Northampton Borough Council – had no comments on the designation of a Neighbourhood area for Ashton
- Grafton Regis Parish Council – advised that Grafton Regis is a conservation area and has a number of Grade 2 listed buildings

3 Next Steps in the Neighbourhood Plan Process

3.1 Once a Neighbourhood Plan area is agreed and designated, and if the Parish then wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, the next stage is for the Parish Council to engage with their community and prepare their plans. The process requires at least one formal 6 week consultation period on their draft plans. The Local Authority will provide technical advice and support in accordance with the “duty of care” obligation under the Neighbourhood Plan process. However the Localism Act makes it clear that Neighbourhood Plans should be led by Parish and Town Councils in consultation with their communities.
3.2 A draft Neighbourhood plan will be submitted to the Local authority that will check it to ensure that it has been prepared correctly and then initiate a further 6 week publication period.

3.3 The Neighbourhood plan must meet certain “basic conditions” before it can come into force. These are:

- Must have regard to national policies and advice, such as the National Planning Policy Framework
- Should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- Must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area, which includes any adopted local plans;
- Should be compatible with European obligations and human rights requirements

3.4 Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the parish, the District Council will facilitate and fund the independent examination into the Plan and advise of any representations received during the publication period. Providing that the Examiner recommends that the Neighbourhood Plan is taken forward, a referendum will be called; the Local Authority will be responsible for facilitating and funding this part of the process. The Plan requires the support of a majority of those who vote in the referendum.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 It is considered that the proposed Neighbourhood Area for Ashton is appropriate and it is recommended that Council confirms the designation of Ashton Parish as a Neighbourhood Area.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 The following consultation took place:

- Site notices erected in the Parish giving details of the application, including parish noticeboards;
- Advert placed in the relevant local newspaper;
- All application material and adverts made available on the Council’s website;
- Letters sent to Ward Councillors and County Councillors and neighbouring Parish Councils, Northamptonshire County Council highway officers and planners, and statutory bodies such as English Heritage, Highways Agency and the Environment Agency.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The Council could choose not to approve the designation of Ashton parish as a Neighbourhood plan area if it is considered that the area is not appropriate.
7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial or resource implications at this stage of the Neighbourhood Area designation, however in line with guidance as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the local authority must take key decisions in the neighbourhood planning process and provide advice or assistance to a parish neighbourhood area.

Comments checked by:
Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement, 0300 003 0106, Paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

7.2 There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of the recommendation of this Report. There may be a need for some legal support if the Parish prepares a Neighbourhood Plan in the future.

Comments checked by:
Christopher Mace: Solicitor, 01327 322125
Christopher.mace@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

Ashton

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

- Strategic Priority: Preserve what’s special
- Growing the Economy
- Strategic Priority: Protect the vulnerable
- Key Theme: Environmental well-being

Lead Councillor

Cllr Rebecca Breese - Portfolio holder for Planning and Environment
## Document Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix No</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>Application for Designation of Neighbourhood Area for the Parish of Ashton as a Neighbourhood Plan area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>Responses received on the consultation to Designation Ashton as a Neighbourhood Plan area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Background Papers

None

### Report Author

Jacqueline Brooks – Planning Policy Officer

### Contact Information

Adrian Colwell - Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy  
Adrian.Colwell@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk  
Tel 0300 003 0110

Andy D’Arcy – Lead Officer: Planning Policy  
Andy.Darcy@southnorthants.gov.uk  
Tel 01327 322267

Jacqueline Brooks – Planning Policy Officer  
Jacqueline.brooks@southnorthants.gov.uk