

# **The 'Making' of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan**

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## **Purpose of the Report**

1. To note the result of the Referendum in relation to the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan and to confirm that the Plan be 'made' (or adopted).

## **Forward Plan**

- 2 This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of March 2018.

## **Public Interest**

- 3 The Neighbourhood Plan represents the views of Wincanton Town Council and other stakeholders on the preferred approach to future development in the town. This has been the subject of Independent Examination by a qualified person and proceeded to a Referendum by the local electorate, with the result being one in favour of the Plan. Once the making of the Plan is confirmed by the District Council, it will become part of the Statutory Development Plan with equal status to the Local Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications.

## **Recommendation**

4. That the District Executive agrees to the making of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Background**

5. Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. The plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area.
6. The Wincanton Neighbourhood Area designation was approved by the District Council in March 2014. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan for the area was prepared and a 'Pre-Submission' Plan consulted upon in November 2016 (Regulation 14). This was followed by formal submission of the Plan in April 2017 and the District Council carried out consultation in line with procedures set out in the relevant Regulations (Regulation 16). The Plan was then the subject of independent examination and the District Council agreed on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 with the Examiner's recommendations for Proposed Modifications and that the next step should be a local referendum.
7. The Referendum took place on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018, with 838 votes cast. Of these, 750 voted in favour of the Plan, with 87 against and one 'spoilt'. The Plan can therefore now be 'made' (or adopted). Once confirmed, it will have equal status to the Local Plan and be part of the Statutory Development Plan. Planning applications are determined by local planning authorities in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan sets out the planning policies for the development and use of land.

## The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan

- 8 The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the town and the Plan's main objectives; places the Plan in the context of national and local planning policies; and includes a short summary of the town's physical, demographic and historic context. The Plan summarises the consultation process and evidence base informing its preparation; and policies seeking to guide future development in the town relating to what are considered to be the most sustainable locations, securing housing suitable for Wincanton's population, employment, the town centre economy; and the local environment.
- 9 The main objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan are the following:
  - Identifying the most sustainable locations for development
  - Housing suitable for Wincanton's population
  - New employment space near the A303
  - Make the town centre more attractive to users
  - Protect open spaces & improve walking & cycling routes
- 10 The Plan seeks to protect visually sensitive areas, key buildings and spaces, trees and hedgerows; and river and stream corridors. It states that development on the outskirts of the town should be softened by landscaping and that, where opportunities exist, heritage assets should be sensitively incorporated and a site's role in the history of the town explained.
- 11 The Plan states that new housing should be predominately of relatively smaller units, include 'Starter Homes' for local people and custom and self-build homes; and that accessible and adaptable homes would be supported.
- 12 New employment sites outside the town's development area may be supported as long as specified criteria are met; and parking at employment sites should meet adopted parking standards, but solutions that help alleviating existing difficulties regarding poor access and inadequate parking provision will also be encouraged.
- 13 The Town Council, in collaboration with South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council as the Highways Authority, will as a priority seek to implement two modest public realm enhancements and an extended 20 mph zone in the town centre area, to improve shopper & visitor experience and the safety of pedestrians.
- 14 The Plan designates four green spaces as 'Local Green Spaces' for special protection, but also refers to other green spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of the Wincanton Conservation Area; and other green areas and open spaces which are to be retained. The network of existing pedestrian and cycle routes through the town will be protected; and where development allows, opportunities are encouraged to connect to and improve the existing network.
- 15 On receipt of the original Submission Documents, the Council carried out the required public consultation for a period of six weeks under Regulation 16; this included a notice in the press and at Wincanton Town Hall and writing to all authorities, utility providers, a wide range of stakeholders and other bodies considered to have an interest in the Plan, including those that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had consulted itself. The submission documentation was made available on the Council's website and hard copies were made available at Wincanton Town Hall.
- 16 A total of seven responses were received and the District Council also presented its own comments; these were all sent to the Examiner.

- 17 The Examiner’s Report concluded that the correct procedure for the preparation and submission of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan was followed and that it meets the ‘Basic Conditions’, subject to several Proposed Modifications being made. The Plan, supporting documents and representations received are all available on the District Council’s website - [South Somerset District Council - Wincanton Neighbourhood Area Designation](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/spatial-policy/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-area-designations/wincanton-neighbourhood-area-designation/).  
<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/spatial-policy/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-area-designations/wincanton-neighbourhood-area-designation/>
- 18 The District Council has accepted the Examiner’s recommendations and a local Referendum was held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018. The prescribed question that was asked was:

*“Do you want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Wincanton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area”.*

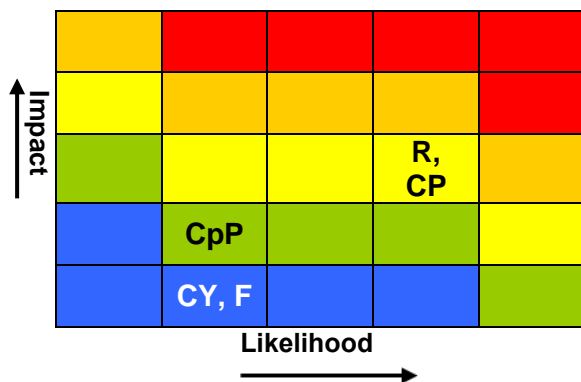
More than 50% of those who voted said Yes, so the Neighbourhood Plan can now be ‘made’.

### Financial Implications

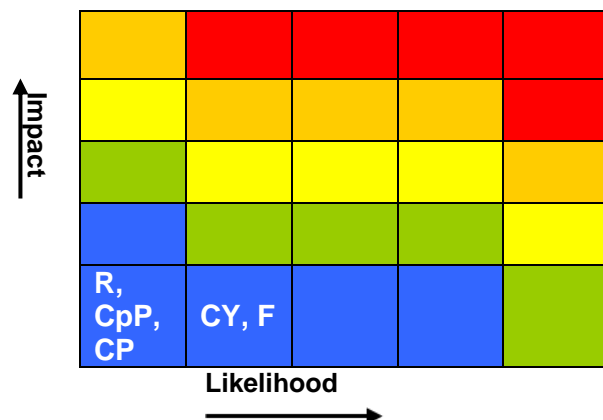
- 19 Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts are generally passed directly to those parish and town councils (in England) where development has taken place. In England, communities that draw up a neighbourhood plan and secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area.
- 20 There is no SSDC funding involved in the recommendation specifically referred to in this report.

### Risk Matrix

**Risk Profile before officer recommendations**



**Risk Profile after officer recommendations**



### Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

## **Council Plan Implications**

- 21 The Neighbourhood Plan accords with the Council's aims to increase the focus on jobs and economic development, protect and enhance the quality of our environment; and to enable housing to meet all needs. The District Council's values include supporting people and communities, enabling them to help themselves; and the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the local community who wish to have an influence on future development in the town. The Council Plan states that it will focus on supporting communities to develop local, parish and neighbourhood plans.

## **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

- 22 The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan does not directly address carbon emissions or climate change and no such issues arise.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 23 No significant changes to a Service, Policy or Strategy are proposed directly and it is therefore not necessary that an Equality Assessment is undertaken.

## **Privacy Impact Assessment**

- 24 No personal data handling is involved.

## **Background Papers**

Report to District Executive – December 2017

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