



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

to
**COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY)
30 JUNE 2021**

MAKING THE WICKHAM BISHOPS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan has successfully passed its referendum. Following the referendum it automatically became part of the statutory Development Plan for the district. Maldon District Council now needs to formally 'make' the WBNP part of the Development Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council 'makes' the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38(A)(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Referendum

- 3.1.1 On 18 March 2021, the District Council made the decision to accept the Examiner's recommendations and that the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan (as modified by the Examiner's Report) should proceed to referendum (Minute No. 337 refers).
- 3.1.2 The District Council published its decision statement on 19 March 2021 to confirm that the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, met the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.
- 3.1.3 The referendum was held on 6 May 2021. The Referendum asked the question "Do you want Maldon District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Wickham Bishops to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"
- 3.1.4 91.6% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan.

Referendum Results

YES	708
NO	52
Rejected ballots	13
Total votes cast	773

3.2 Decision and reasons

- 3.2.1 Under section 38A (4)(a) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the District Council is required to 'make' a Neighbourhood Plan if more

than half of those voting have voted in favour of the Plan. 91.5% of the votes cast were in favour of this Plan.

- 3.2.2 Under section 38A(6), a council is not subject to this duty if the making of the Plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation (as transposed into UK law) or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). Maldon District Council has assessed that the Plan, including its preparation, does not breach, and is not incompatible with these obligations.

3.3 **Neighbourhood Development Plan status**

- 3.3.1 Planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area must be considered against the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Development Plan, as well as existing planning policy such as the approved Maldon District Local Development Plan (2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan was developed by the Parish Council through extensive engagement with the local community, culminating in a Referendum on the Plan on 6 May 2021. The majority of those who voted, voted for the Neighbourhood Plan. Following the referendum, the Plan automatically became part of the development plan for the District. The Council now needs to complete the statutory process and formally 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for the district.

5. **IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

- 5.1 The making of the Neighbourhood Plan will have positive impacts on the following corporate outcomes: (1) Promote civic pride and maintain the District's environmental quality; (7) Supporting existing local businesses; (9) Working with our communities and partners to improve the physical health and well-being of our residents; (13) Building on the strengths of our communities and what they can do to support themselves and help each other to thrive. (18) Meaningful engagement - the Neighbourhood Plan has been successful at referendum and will now be used the consideration of planning applications in the Parish.

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the opportunity to directly plan the future of their area.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Neighbourhood Planning has the potential to identify and manage local equalities issues and must be prepared taking into account relevant equalities legislation. The Neighbourhood Plan has been independently examined for its compliance with relevant legislative requirements including human rights. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed on the Plan in February 2021 and is available on the Council's website.

- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Neighbourhood Plans can reduce risk in the development management process by providing support for the Council in determining planning applications and defending planning appeals.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Maldon District Council is financially responsible for organising the Examination and Referendum for Neighbourhood Plans in their area. The Council can claim a grant from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for each Neighbourhood Plan, once the Decision Statement on sending the Plan to Referendum is published. This claim was made in March 2021 and is due to be paid in summer 2021. These payments are made by Central Government to Local Planning Authorities to reflect the additional financial burdens associated with supporting Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Plan Forums to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The Neighbourhood Plan adds to the development plan documents used in the determination of planning applications, and it further strengthens the planning policies for the parish. Neighbourhood Plans can reduce risk in the development management process by providing support for the Council in determining planning applications and defending planning appeals.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – Neighbourhood Plans have the potential to improve the local environment where plans are being produced. The making of the Neighbourhood Plan will help reduce the impact on the environment from inappropriate development.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** - Neighbourhood planning is intended to strengthen communities by giving them the opportunity to prepare statutory plans that shape the future development of the community.

Background Papers:

Information on the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan is available at:

https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/8112/community_led_planning_and_neighbourhood_plans/11

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