

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING REPORT 2020

SOMERFORD KEYNES & SHORNCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

SUMMARY

Following the successful community consultation on the Neighbourhood Development Plan in Spring 2019, the Plan has now completed a few more legal steps; the consultation hosted by CDC and examination of by an independent examiner. The good news is that Examiner has recommended the Plan be put to a local referendum, the final step on the Plan's long journey before it is made into a formal planning document that must be considered in any future planning decisions in our area. In making his recommendation he has been very complimentary about both the content of the Plan and the way in which it has been developed.

Under normal circumstances the Plan would go to referendum in the near future. However, as we all know, circumstances are not normal. As a result of the Coronavirus Act 2020 no elections or referenda can take place until 6 May 2021 unless circumstances change. Whilst this is extremely disappointing, there is some comfort in that the Government has updated current planning guidance to set out that **neighbourhood plans awaiting referendums can be given significant weight** in decision-making.

BACKGROUND

During the early part of the year discussions and negotiations continued with Cotswold District Council who, as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), is responsible for submitting Neighbourhood Plans for examination. That examination is carried out by an independent expert, who concludes the examination by advising the LPA to take one of three actions:

- (a) the Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
- (b) the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on their recommendations); or
- (c) the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

CHRONOLOGY

2019

October 24 – Submission of draft Plan to CDC under Regulation 16

November 4 – Appointment of Independent Examiner, Andrew Ashcroft B.A(Hons) M.A. DMS, M.R.T.P.I. endorsed by Parish Council.

December 4 – January 24 2020 – CDC conduct formal consultation. This resulted in a small number of representations (2 from residents, 3 from commercial interests and 4 from statutory consultees.)The Parish Council provided responses to all of these representations as appropriate.

2020

February 10 – Examiner raises a number of points on which he seeks clarification.

February 25 – Responses to Examiner submitted.

March 30 – Examiner submits draft report to LPA to check for factual accuracy.

CONCLUSION

We have completed successfully the various stages of scrutiny and examination and must now be patient as we await the final, and most important, hurdle. The referendum, the result of which is determined by a simple majority, will decide whether you, the community, endorse the NDP to which you have contributed so much over the years. Whenever that opportunity arises, we hope that everyone will turn out and make their voices heard by voting.

Ron Munroe
Sarah Powell