

COUNCIL MEETING - 15 OCTOBER 2019

EPPERSTONE AND FISKERTON-CUM-MORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REFERENDUMS

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek the Council's approval to call separate referendums for the Epperstone and Fiskerton-cum-Morton Neighbourhood Plans.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Following its Examination the Independent Examiner has concluded that the Epperstone Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other relevant regulatory requirements. It has therefore been recommended that the Plan proceed onto referendum. The Fiskerton-cum-Morton Neighbourhood Plan is currently being examined, but this process is anticipated to conclude around the time of this meeting of Full Council.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet the Basic Conditions set out at paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as well as a range of other regulatory requirements. It is through their Examination by an Independent Examiner that final conclusions are drawn over whether this is the case. Where a Plan is successful at Examination then it is able to proceed onto referendum, with eligible persons being able to vote over whether it should be brought into force.

Epperstone Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.2 The Epperstone Neighbourhood Area was designated on 24 April 2015, with the first stage of public consultation being carried out between 7 December 2018 and 1 February 2019. Submission of a Draft Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council occurred in April 2019 with public consultation following from 8 May – 19 June 2019, with a second round of consultation from 27 June - 8 August 2019. The second consultation was to allow comments on an updated Basic Conditions Statement. The Plan was initially submitted for Examination on 19 June 2019. The Examination was suspended to allow for the second round of consultation and was resumed on 9 August 2019. Subject to the recommended modifications being accepted the Examiner has concluded that the Plan should proceed onto referendum. Confirmation has been provided by the Parish Council that they are content with the recommended modifications.

Fiskerton-cum-Morton Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.3 The Fiskerton-cum-Morton Neighbourhood Area was designated on 15 March 2017, following which the Parish Council undertook their first stage of public consultation from 27 January – 10 March 2019. This led to Submission of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council in April 2019. Following public consultation between 3 July – 15 June 2019 the Plan was submitted for Examination on 19 August 2019. At the time of the writing the Examination is yet to conclude, however given the scope for the Examiner to recommend modifications it is not anticipated that the Plan will fall short of meeting the Basic Conditions. Given the need to secure Full Council approval for the holding of a referendum and the desire to avoid any delay to the 'making' (adoption) of the Plan, it is considered prudent to proceed on the basis that this will prove to be the case. An update will be given at the Council Meeting.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Approval is therefore sought for separate referendums to be arranged and held for the Epperstone and Fiskerton-cum-Morton Neighbourhood Plans, on a date to be determined in liaison with the Parish Councils. In the case of Fiskerton-cum-Morton this will be dependent upon the Neighbourhood Plan passing its Examination, and the Parish agreeing to any recommended modifications. The Referendums will require a publicity period of six weeks post-approval, so the earliest they could occur would be Thursday 28 November 2019. The first stage in the referendum will be the publication of the Information Statement and the Notice of Referendum. After this, polling cards will be sent to all electors. Any date for the referendums may also be affected by any snap Parliamentary election being called for the autumn.
- 4.2 It is the District Council's responsibility to prepare a version of the Neighbourhood Plan incorporating any modifications from the Examiner, and it will be this version which goes to referendum. The Plan to be put referendum and its associated Examination report will be published on the District Council's website in advance of the Notice of Referendum being issued.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The District Council will be responsible for paying for the referendums, but funds will be provided by central Government to cover the full referendum costs.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) the report be noted; and**
- (b) the Chief Executive, acting as the Returning Officer, be authorised to arrange separate referendums for the Epperstone and Fiskerton-cum-Morton Neighbourhood Plans on a date no earlier than Thursday 28 November 2019.**

Background Papers

Submission Epperstone Neighbourhood Plan
Submission Fiskerton-cum-Morton Neighbourhood Plan
Epperstone Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report
Fiskerton Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report (if finalised by 15 October 2019)

Available at: <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/planningpolicy/neighbourhoodplanning/>

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