

Notes of Neighbourhood Planning Public Meeting

6th February 2024

The meeting was well attended.

In November 2023, the Town Council agreed to create a Neighbourhood Plan subject to community involvement and support and that the plan was to focus on two policies only, being protection of Open Spaces and Conservation of Heritage.

In December 2023, a Neighbourhood Plan Development Order was approved and the parish of Amble was designated:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Neighbourhood%20Planning/Area-Designation-Decision-Document-AMBLE.pdf>

Councillor Weir explained to those present the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan, what it can achieve and what it cannot achieve.

The purpose of the meeting is to ascertain whether there is sufficient interest from those who can commit to the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and to ascertain whether there are any volunteers to create a Steering Group.

It was explained that the Town Council is required to act as the responsible body and would also be responsible for financing the plan with the aid of grant funding. An initial £10k is available subject to central government renewal. Any underspend must be returned. If the grant funding is renewed by central government for the next financial year, Council is able to apply for additional funding year on year. Technical guidance and support is available from the County Council and additional literature can be found here:

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>

Guidance on setting up a steering group is available here:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Neighbourhood%20Planning/Advice-Note-Setting-up-a-Steering-Group-July-2022.pdf>

It would be expected that a Steering Group would meet around once per month, in line with Town Council meetings so that reports can be provided to Full Council. Any financial decisions require the approval of Full Council.

It is expected that a small policy focused Neighbourhood Plan could take up to two years to complete due to the nature and length of public consultations, analysis of information, creation of policies, alignment of policies with Northumberland Local Plan. It was thought that neighbouring parishes who have already gone through the process could be contacted to share their expertise and experience. Town Council could help by supplying relevant documents to aid the process.

It is expected that a steering group should have a minimum of 6 representatives, and it would be useful for at least one representative from the Town Council. It is

recommended that Sarah Brannigan (NCC Planning Officer) is invited to the first meeting of the Steering Group.

It is acknowledged that there may be willing volunteers who cannot commit to the Steering Group but who would still like to be involved in other aspects.

The plan must be driven by the community and must be community led in order to be accepted. It was noted that local knowledge may highlight areas which are not included within the local plan and could be added into the Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group would be expected to adopt Terms of Reference for acceptance by Full Council.

Guidance on Terms of Reference can be found here:

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/write-terms-reference-neighbourhood-plans/>

This is the second time the Council has considered a Neighbourhood Plan. The first being in 2015 when neighbouring parishes were asked whether they would like to do a joint plan together. Some parishes then went on to do their own. At that time, there were already 1400 houses with planning permission in Amble. The idea was put to the community for support. After looking at the costs and lack of volunteers to take on a full plan it was decided not to proceed at that time. It was noted that larger plans such as Alwick had cost over £50,000. A smaller plan such as this may be more appealing to volunteers.

The Neighbourhood Plan cannot run beyond the Local Plan (2036), however like the Local Plan, it can be updated.

It was understood that there was concern within the town regarding second homes and holiday lets, however the town was far below the threshold for action at 8%. Any moratorium would apply to new builds only and therefore may not assist in the areas affected the most.

After allowing time for consideration, it would be appreciated if those willing to take part could confirm this to the Clerk by 9 March 2024 so full Council can make a decision on whether to proceed. If there are volunteers but perhaps not enough to formulate a steering group, this can be advertised again should Council so determine.

Please contact the Clerk on 01665 714695 or townclerk@amble.gov.uk.

Hard copies of information can be available from the Town Council office.