

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	24 May 2018
By	Director of Countryside & Policy Management
Title of Report	Newton Valence Parish Plan
Purpose of Report (Decision)	To recommend the endorsement of the Newton Valence Parish Plan

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to endorse the Newton Valence Parish Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Community Led Planning gives people the opportunity to shape the environment in which they live and have more influence in how their community changes or develops. There are a wide range of tools on offer to help communities plan for the future of their town, village or parish. Currently the tools available to a community include; Town and Village Design Statements, Local Landscape Character Assessments, Market Town Health Checks, Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.2 There are over 100 active community led planning groups in the National Park, many of these are preparing Neighbourhood Plans (52). However, for a lot of our communities a Neighbourhood Plan is not the appropriate tool, therefore we encourage communities to look at the other plans they can prepare to help them plan for the future of their community.
- 1.3 Launched by the Rural White Paper in 2000, Parish Plans were intended to give communities a framework for assessing the current state of their parish. They provide a methodology for analysing the positive and negative aspects of community life and usually include a detailed action plan which sets out how issues/challenges identified can be resolved. Parish Plans are the best community planning tool for addressing the full range of community issues. In many of the smaller communities in the South Downs National Park, they will be the most appropriate way of looking at local matters on a parish scale and provide an alternative to a Neighbourhood Plan or Village Design Statement.

2. Background

- 2.1 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has set out its commitment to support the development of high quality Community Led Plans in the South Downs Partnership Management Plan (PMP). The PMP sets out the ambition to encourage more communities to take an active role in planning for their future, Outcome 8 states that: 'more direct action and responsibility is taken by visitors and residents to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the South Downs National Park'. Community Led Plans are one mechanism that Parish Councils can employ to assist them in contributing to this outcome by identifying opportunities for action at a local level.
- 2.2 On 15 October 2013 the SDNPA set out their position in relation to the adoption or endorsement of Community Led Plans. The report recognised that local communities were frustrated that certain community led plans (Parish Plans and Local Landscape Character

Assessments) were not formally recognised by statutory authorities such as the SDNPA. In response to this concern the SDNPA established a process for the endorsement of community led plans which were not eligible for adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents. More detail relating to the process for endorsement can be found in a link to the report in Background Documents below.

- 2.3 The endorsement of community led plans is reserved specifically for Parish Plans, Market Town Health checks and Local Landscape Character Assessments, because these plans do not focus purely on spatial planning matters, and are therefore not appropriate for adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents. Initially the SDNPA's intention was for the endorsement of Parish Plans to be considered by Planning Committee. However, following the establishment of an approach for endorsing Whole Estate Plans at Policy and Resources committee it was considered appropriate for Parish Plans endorsement to be considered by the same committee. More information on this matter can be found in the NPA paper presenting the endorsement of non-planning related community plans which can be found as a link in the background papers below.
- 2.4 The endorsement of Community Plans provide the community with the reassurance that the SDNPA are aware of the plan and will make use of it in appropriate ways. Parish Plans were used extensively in the preparation of the PMP. They were a useful source of local intelligence which was used to inform the objectives and outcomes set out in the PMP. The endorsement of a Community Led Plan will allow a community to use that plan as a formal piece of evidence to support applications to the Sustainable Communities Fund. If endorsed, the SDNPA can use these plans in the preparation of external funding bids to ensure local needs are reflected in our strategic projects. A review of Parish Plans informed the bids for the LiDAR project and Nature Improvement Area amongst others.
- 2.5 A Parish Plan is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application and can provide officers and applicants with a useful background to the concerns and aspirations of the community. Once endorsed by the SDNPA the Parish Plan will remain a materials consideration, but it will not be given any extra weight in the determination of planning applications. Whilst it is unlikely that there will be material pertinent to a planning application, Parish Plans do provide a useful context and local intelligence to inform an applicant or decision maker. Parish Plans will not be afforded the same weight in decision making as an adopted supplementary planning document, such as a Village Design Statement, nor will they have the same level of influence as a Neighbourhood Plan which forms part of the Development Plan once it is made by the Local Planning Authority.

3. Newton Valence Parish Plan (Appendix 1)

- 3.1. The Newton Valence Parish Plan is the first Community Led Plan to be prepared in the Parish. Newton Valence is an active community with a number of groups and societies. The community felt that a Parish Plan would allow them to articulate the aspirations and concerns of the local community and set out a series of actions which could be implemented by the Parish Council and partners to improve the quality of life for local residents as well as contributing to the two purposes of the National Park Authority.
- 3.2. In February 2013 the Newton Valence Parish Council (NVPC) took the decision to prepare a Parish Plan which would set out a vision for their community in 2030. The plan highlights what resident's value locally, what aspects of community life should be protected or enhanced and where there were concerns or issues which should be addressed.
- 3.3. The preparation of the Parish Plan has involved an extensive programme of public consultation, including:
 - A series of presentations to the local community to launch the process and seek volunteers
 - Likes and Dislikes questionnaire distributed to all households in the Parish
 - Detailed household questionnaire asking a range of questions under 13 topic headings
 - A consultation draft was distributed to all households for final comment
- 3.4. A total of 40% of households in the village responded to the 'likes and dislikes'

questionnaire. The more detailed questionnaire was more successful with a 67% response rate, giving the steering group preparing the Parish Plan confidence that the scope of the plan was correct and fairly reflected the concerns and aspirations of the wider community.

- 3.5. The Newton Valence Parish Plan, titled Vision 2030, sets out the key issues and challenges facing the community as well as community aspirations. The plan covers a wide range of topics including:
 - Ambience & Surroundings (Conservation and Environment)
 - Business & Employment
 - Community Activities
 - Footpaths and Bridleways
 - Housing & Development
 - Safety and Crime
- 3.6. The plan presents each topic with a background to the issue, reference to the household questionnaire findings and where relevant reference to other secondary data / evidence which had been gathered to support the Parish Plan.
- 3.7. The Parish Plan covers a wide range of issues, however there are some areas which are more relevant to the SDNPA and are likely to require our support / advice in order to progress these matters, more detail of these uses can be found in the Parish Plan at **Appendix I**. The key matters for the SDNPA include:
 - Maintenance and improvement of key habitats including the village pond, woodlands, hedgerows and road verges
 - Control of street lighting to protect the 'Dark Night Sky'
 - Maintenance and improvement to existing Public Rights of Way
 - Establishing new Public Rights of Way to improve public access to the SDNP
 - Use of redundant agricultural buildings
 - Communication with the SDNPA
- 3.8. The Newton Valence Estate have prepared a Whole Estate Plan (WEP) which was endorsed by the SDNPA's Policy and Resource Committee on 19 September 2017. The WEP includes reference to the Parish Plan with suggestions for ways the estate could assist in the delivery of some of the identified actions. The Parish Plan includes no reference to the WEP as it was prepared in advance of the WEP.
- 3.9. SDNPA officers have provided advice and support throughout the preparation of the Parish Plan. The Countryside and Policy Manager, Planning Link Officer and Communities Lead provided feedback on an early draft and final draft of the plan. All SDNPA recommendations were considered and modifications made to the plan by the Parish Plan steering group.
- 3.10. The Newton Valence Parish Plan was endorsed by East Hampshire District Council's Community Forum (Alton & Surrounding Villages) on 26 January 2016.
- 3.11. The Newton Valence Parish Plan has been reviewed in detail by officers at the SDNPA and has been submitted to the SDNPA Policy and Resources committee for endorsement.
- 4. Options & cost implications**
 - 4.1 There are no direct cost implications associated with the consideration of the endorsement of the Parish Plan. There will be a likelihood once endorsed that the Authority may be expected to work with the Parish to realise some of the projects identified.
- 5. Next steps**
 - 5.1. If the Parish Plan is endorsed, it will be placed on the SDNPA website and officers will be made aware that is now a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	N/A
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	<p>There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. If the Newton Valence Parish Plan is agreed and endorsed it would be published on the South Downs National Park Authority webpage. Hard copies of the Parish Plan would be made available in the South Downs Centre library, and copies made available for the Development Management team, who can refer to the plan when assessing relevant planning applications if appropriate. Costs associated with this would come from existing budgets.</p> <p>Officer time and staff resources have been used in the production of the Newton Valence Parish Plan; therefore the number of Parish Plans that can come forward for endorsement is limited by available staff resources.</p> <p>Once endorsed the Newton Valence Parish Plan can be used as a recognised form of evidence to support applications to the Sustainable Communities Fund</p>
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	<p>Yes, Newton Valence Parish Council have set out very clearly how they have engaged with the wider community and all those that will be affected by the Parish Plan and offered all parties an opportunity to influence the objectives and general content of the Parish Plan. Page 5 of the Parish Plan sets out the process that has been undertaken in the preparation of the plan and demonstrates how all residents have been able to influence the preparation of the Parish Plan.</p>
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
<p>Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly 	<p>The Newton Valence Parish Plan has been prepared under the Governance of the Newton Valence Parish Council. Appropriate consultation with the wider community has been carried as per the guidance set out in the South Downs National Park Authority Community Planning toolkit</p>

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
The content of the Newton Valence Parish Plan could conflict with the National Park purposes or duty.	Low	Medium	SDNPA officers have reviewed the Parish Plan on several occasions and made appropriate recommendations to the Parish Council, these amendments have been agreed by the Parish Council.
The content of the Newton Valence Parish Plan could conflict with other plans endorsed by the SDNPA	Medium	Low	Officers have worked closely with the Parish Plan group and other organisations that are preparing other plans relevant to the parish of Newton Valence. We encourage Estates to review Parish Plans (where they exist) when they are preparing Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) to ensure the documents comply with each other's objectives wherever possible. There will be occasions where the objectives of Parish Plans do not comply entirely with an objective of a WEP. It will be for officers to work closely with both parties to see how these conflicts can be resolved when taking projects forward. The Newton Valence WEP refers to the Newton Valence Parish Plan and sets out areas where there is potential for joint working, this can be seen on page 37 of the WEP, the Parish Plan was prepared in advance of the WEP so was not able to review the WEP content in advance of its preparation. However the Parish Council have commented on the WEP and been engaged throughout the WEP development.
Potential reputational risk for the SDNPA associated with not endorsing the Newton Valence Parish Plan. The plans offer the SDNPA invaluable local intelligence, and adopting or endorsing these plans will demonstrate the SDNPA commitment to empowering local communities.	Low	Medium	SDNPA to endorse the Newton Valence Parish Plan.

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Appendices I. Newton Valence Parish Plan - (Separate Document)

SDNPA Consultees	Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services,
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	National Park Authority Report – Adopting or Endorsing Community Led Plans National Park Authority Report – Endorsement of non-planning related community plans SDNP Partnership Management Plan 2014-2019 Minutes of East Hampshire District Council Community Forum (Alton & Surrounding Villages) setting out the endorsement of the Newton Valence Parish Plan