

Report to:	Service Director – Planning and Sustainable Development		
Date:	18 th March 2019		
Title:	St Erme Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2030 – Legal Compliance and Examination Stage		
Portfolio Area:	Planning and Economy		
Divisions Affected:	Ladock, St Clement and St Erme		
Local Member(s) briefed:	Y		
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Economic Growth and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
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Approval and clearance obtained:		Y	
For Cabinet and delegated executive decisions only			
Key decision? (≥£500k in value or significant effect on communities in two or more electoral divisions)		N	
Published in advance on Cabinet Work Programme?		Y	
Urgency Procedure(s) used if 'N' to Work Programme?		N	
Date next steps can be taken		Upon publication.	

1. Recommendations

- 1.2 That the St Erme Neighbourhood Development Plan is agreed to be legally compliant and should be publicised under Regulation 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General) Regulations 2012 for consultation prior to being taken forward to Examination.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.2 The Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and orders and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum.
- 2.3 The St Erme Neighbourhood Development Plan (St Erme NDP) was submitted to Cornwall Council, with the endorsement of St Erme Parish Council, on 14th March 2019. The Plan was accompanied by a Basic Conditions Statement, a Consultation Statement, a Local Landscape Character Assessment Part 1 and 2, an Evidence Base document and evidence of compliance with European Environmental legislation, as required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 2.4 Under The Localism Act (2011), the Council is required upon, submission of a Neighbourhood Plan, to check that it meets the legal requirements for those plans before it can progress to formal consultation, examination and referendum.
- 2.5 The Plan has been checked against the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (hereafter referred to as 'the Regulations') and found to be legally compliant. Appendix 1 to this report is a table which details each stage of plan preparation, the relevant regulations and legislation at each stage, how the Plan has met the Regulations and whether or not it is compliant. Having carried out the checks, officer opinion is that the St Erme NDP is legally compliant.

3. Purpose of Report and key information

- 3.1 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and orders and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum.
- 3.2 The Localism Act 2011 (Part 6 chapter 3) sets out the Local Planning Authority (LPA) responsibilities as:
 - 1. Designating the area of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP);
 - 2. Advising or assisting communities in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan;
 - 3. Checking a submitted plan meets the legal requirements;
 - 4. Arranging for the independent examination of the plan;
 - 5. Determining whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements;
 - 6. Subject to the results of the referendum/s bringing the plan into force.

This report deals with stage 3 of the process – checking that a submitted plan meets the legal requirements.

- 3.3 The Plan has been through the statutory stages of area designation and pre-submission draft consultation. The area designation application was

correctly made by St Erme Parish Council, and designated as a delegated officer decision on 31st May 2016.

3.4 Several stages of consultation and public engagement have been carried out during plan preparation (as detailed in the Consultation Statement) and the statutory pre-submission consultation was carried out from 15th October to 25th November 2018. It was publicised and the relevant consultation bodies were contacted, in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Regulations. The St Erme NDP Steering Group have summarised the comments received and their responses in the Consultation Statement submitted with the Plan.

3.5 The current required stage is for the LPA to consider the Plan, determine whether it is legally compliant and, if so, notify the St Erme Parish Council of its decision and progress the Plan by starting the 6 week consultation period and making arrangements for the examination.

The LPA must consider:

1. Whether the Parish Council is authorised to act;
2. Whether the proposal and accompanying documents:
 - a) comply with the rules for submission to the LPA;
 - b) Meet the 'definition of an NDP'; and
 - c) Meet the 'scope of NDP provisions'; and
3. Whether the Parish Council has undertaken the correct procedures in relation to consultation and publicity.

3.6 In respect of these questions:

1. The St Erme Parish Council is the qualifying body authorised to progress a neighbourhood plan. They have made the correct application for the designation of their neighbourhood area and are authorised to act.

2a. The plan proposal and accompanying documents comply with the rules for submission, in that they include a map identifying the area, a consultation statement, a basic conditions statement, an Evidence base document and information to enable appropriate environmental assessments. In this regard a screening opinion was sought from Cornwall Council, based on the Steering Group submitting a draft emerging policies statement. Cornwall Council consulted the statutory bodies, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The consultation bodies concluded that a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) are not required. Cornwall Council issued a screening opinion to that effect on 3rd August 2018.

The screening opinion for the plan proposal was updated on 31st December 2018, in light of a legal judgement, which has implications for the way Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening is carried out. The Regulations have been updated and a new basic condition came into force on 28th December 2018 where the NDP does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(3). The St Erme NDP was rescreened and an

appropriate assessment concluded that there will be no impact on the European Sites.

2b. The 'definition of an NDP' is: "A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development use and of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan". The St Erme NDP contains policies which relate to the development and use of land within St Erme Parish and therefore meet the definition.

2c. The 'Scope of NDP provisions' are that:

The NDP must specify the period for what it is to have effect;

It cannot include provision about development that is 'excluded development'; and

It cannot relate to more than one neighbourhood area or repeat an existing planning permission.

The St Erme NDP specifies the plan period as 2018 – 2030.

It does not provide for any 'Excluded development' which is defined as:

- a) A 'county matter' (Scheduled 1 of TCPA 1990) i.e. relating to Minerals;
- b) Any operation or class of operation relating to waste development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC i.e. Oil refineries, power stations, radioactive waste disposal, iron and steel smelting, asbestos operations, chemical installations, motorways, airports, ports and toxic and dangerous waste disposal; and
- c) Development consisting wholly or partly of a national infrastructure project.

It relates only to one neighbourhood area and does not repeat an existing planning permission.

The Parish Council has undertaken the correct procedure for pre-submission statutory consultation, and relevant statutory consultees were contacted as part of the pre-submission consultation. St Erme Parish Council has also undertaken community consultation throughout the process, as detailed in the Consultation Statement.

The St Erme NDP is therefore considered to comply with the criteria and legislation for a neighbourhood plan and should be taken forward.

If the St Erme NDP is endorsed as compliant, Cornwall Council can commence the regulatory stages, required to progress the Plan through examination and referendum and 'make' the Plan so that it forms part of the adopted policy framework for planning decision making in Cornwall.

4. Benefits for Customers/Residents

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Planning was put into place by the Localism Act 2011 to enable communities to have a direct say in how their area is planned by

creating a formal planning document that will, on making (adoption), form part of the statutory development plan for the area covered.

- 4.2 The confirmation of Legal Compliance, formal consultation and Examination of the Plan will further our objective to support Localism for our communities. The St Erme NDP and its process may also be used as a template which can help other communities in their plan preparation.
- 4.3 Production of neighbourhood plans is a stated objectives in the Planning Policy and Partnerships Team Plan. It supports the objectives of the Cornwall Local Plan, which relies on Neighbourhood Plans to provide the policy framework for delivery of development, particularly in rural areas.
- 4.4 The key positive impacts are promoting sustainable development by providing housing that meets local need including providing single level housing for the elderly and for people with a disability, employment opportunities through new business developments or amenity services, design. The plan includes policies on environment protection and enhancement of the natural built and historic environment, provision or enhancement of community facilities and services to meet local needs.
- 4.5 The overall impacts are considered to be positive, by providing housing that meets local need including single storey or accessible housing for the elderly and for people with a disability, employment opportunities, sustainable transport and design. The plan includes polices on the environment with the provision and extension of recreation facilities, protection of open space, the landscape, heritage and local environment of the parish and to support the use of renewable energy technologies.

5. Relevant Previous Decisions

- 5.1 The Plan has been through the statutory stages of area designation and pre-submission draft consultation. The area designation application was correctly made by the Parish Council, designated by a delegated officer decision on 31st May 2016.
- 5.2 This is the second stage of which the Council must make a decision whether the Plan should proceed in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1 The Plan has been through the statutory stages of area designation and pre-submission draft consultation as referenced above.
- 6.2 The NDP Regulations require that the Parish Council carries out a formal consultation process for a period of six weeks prior to the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to the Council.

- 6.3 Several stages of consultation and public engagement have been carried out during plan preparation (as detailed in the Consultation Statement) and the statutory pre-submission consultation ran from, 15th October to 25th November 2018. It was publicised and the relevant consultation bodies were contacted in accordance with Regulation 14. The St Erme NDP Steering Group have summarised the comments received and their responses in the Consultation Statement submitted with the Plan.
- 6.4 The confirmation of Legal Compliance of the Plan will lead to a further formal stage of consultation, over six weeks, with the community and statutory consultation bodies.

7. Financial Implications of the proposed course of action/decision

- 7.1 There are costs associated with the examination and referendum. The estimated costs for the St Erme NDP are £3,000 for examination and £3,000 for the referendum.
- 7.2 Central Government provides a grant to the LPA of £5,000 at submission (limited to first five neighbourhood areas designated in total) and £20,000 once a date is set for a referendum following a successful examination. These grants are provided until the end of the financial year 2021/22 and will be used to fund the associated costs.
- 7.3 During the financial year, if the accumulated costs for the neighbourhood plans exceed the grants received, then the Service will have to identify funding from elsewhere, within their approved budget, to fund any deficit.

8. Legal/Governance Implications of the proposed course of action/decision

- 8.1 The Council has certain steps that it has to take when seeking to progress a neighbourhood development plan. These are detailed in both the report and Legal Compliance Checklist. The relevant legislation comprises:
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended);
 - Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
 - Localism Act 2011;
 - Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012;
 - The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.
- 8.2 Legal Compliance allows the Plan to progress to the next stage of consultation, but does not necessarily mean that the Plan will be adopted in the form currently submitted, as this may change in accordance with the recommendations of the appointed examiner. The exact content of the Plan may be subject to potential alteration after the authorisation of the plan proposals stage and the Council may make representations on its content prior to examination.

9. Risk Implications of the proposed course of action/decision

- 9.1 Failure to progress the Plan proposal would risk customer dissatisfaction, given our commitment to support communities in the production of neighbourhood plans.

10. Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implication

- 10.1 The Plan has to contribute to sustainable development and be compliant with any European obligations and the European Convention on Human Rights as enacted in the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 10.2 The overall impacts are considered to be positive, by providing housing that meets local need including single storey or accessible housing for the elderly and for people with a disability, employment opportunities, sustainable transport and design. The plan includes policies on the environment with the provision and extension of recreation facilities, protection of open space, the landscape, heritage and local environment of the parish and to support the use of renewable energy technologies.

11. Options available

- 11.1 The St Erme NDP has been assessed against 'the Regulations' and is found to be legally compliant, the Council, therefore has a duty to support and progress the Plan.
- 11.2 In accordance with regulation 15, a further 6 week 'publication' consultation on the St Erme NDP will be carried out by the Council as LPA, to add to the previous community and stakeholder consultation carried out by the NDP Steering Group, so the Plan will be well publicised.
- 11.3 The community has had an opportunity to comment on the Plan and influence its development. Statutory consultees were supportive of the Plan and where they have made suggestions for amendments to strengthen the Plan these have been made where possible. The consultation process has followed the Regulations and there will be opportunity for further comments to be made during the publication: any further comments will be forwarded directly to the Examiner,
- 11.4 If the St Erme NDP proposal is found to be legally compliant, the next steps in the process of 'making' the St Erme Neighbourhood Development Plan are:
- LPA notify St Erme Parish Council of their decision on the Plan's legal compliance;
 - The LPA publicise the NDP Proposal;
 - The LPA appoint an examiner, with the consent of St Erme Parish Council;
 - Following successful examination, the Local Authority hold a referendum;
 - Following successful referendum (simple majority), the Plan is 'made' – i.e. formally adopted by Cornwall Council and will become part of the statutory development plan, as defined by Section 38(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

12. **Supporting Information (Appendices)**

APP1. St Erme Neighbourhood Development Plan Legal Compliance Checklist
APP2. St Erme Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission Draft
APP3. St Erme NDP Consultation Statement
APP4. St Erme NDP Basic Conditions Statement
APP5. St Erme Local Landscape Character Assessment Part 1
APP6. St Erme Local Landscape Character Assessment Part 2
APP7. St Erme NDP Evidence Base document

13. **Background Papers**

None

14. **Approval and clearance**

All reports:

Final report sign offs	This report has been cleared by (or mark not required if appropriate)	Date
Governance/Legal (Required for all reports)	Nadine Gawler	25.03.19
Finance (Required for all reports)	Geraldine Baker	26.03.19
Equality and Diversity (If required)		
Service Director (Required for all reports)	Hayley Jewels – Acting Head of Planning Policy	27.03.19
Strategic Director (If required)		