Somerset West and Taunton

Information on Parish Plans, Neighbourhood Planning and links to further information for Stogursey Parish Council to inform their discussions on which route to take to influence development.

Neighbourhood Plans or Parish Plans, which is the right tool?
There are many tools which communities can use to influence development and some can be used to shape the social and economic wishes of your community but it is important to establish which is right for the Parish. These tools include: Neighbourhood Plans (also referred to as Neighbourhood Development Plans), Parish/Town/Village Plans, Design Statements, involvement in shaping Local Planning Policy (Core Strategy, Site Allocations Plan, Local Plan), Neighbourhood Development Orders, Community Right to Build Orders or direct engagement with developers,

What resources (people, financial) are available?
The resources available to the parish council, both financial and in terms of people wanting to be involved, are important considerations.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) requires a significant amount of time (average 2 years) and expertise (technical and administrative). There are legal requirements and processes which must be adhered to, and technical documents (i.e. Sustainability Appraisal, Ecological Assessments, Flood Risk Assessment, etc) may be required. Department for Communities and Local Government have estimated that each Neighbourhood Plan could cost the community between £7,000 and £63,000 depending on the scope and complexity of the Plan. A recent average was established as £13,000.

Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) is required to pay for some of the legal requirements of a Neighbourhood Plan such as: the statutory consultation at designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and Regulation 16 publication for representations, the examination and referendum. The rest of the costs are borne by those undertaking the Neighbourhood Plan, in this case the Parish Council.

A Parish/Town Plan could take the same amount of time but cost are lower at between £2,500 and £10,000.[1] There are no legal requirements or processes for the plan to go through, although there are recommended procedures.

A Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) and Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO) are recent planning tools, as such there is little data about the costs of producing one. As with the Neighbourhood Plans the District Council is required to pay for some of the legal requirements of a Neighbourhood Development Order such as: the statutory consultation at designation of the Neighbourhood Area and publication of the draft Order. Cost the community would incur would be around any site specific surveys or assessments which were required to establish the scope and

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[1] Maidstone Borough Council assessment of parish Plans in 2006

viability of the NDO (i.e. SEA, contamination, ecological) or support the deliverability of the development (i.e. viability).

There is currently no financial support from SWT for the however we will advise and share any evidence base and information that we have with you. Central Government currently has two funding streams open to communities undertaking Neighbourhood Plans, a grant and direct support scheme. This is being delivered through Locality and details of the scheme can be found at: https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/grant-funding/

What does the local planning policy say?
SWT has an adopted Local Plan covering the former West Somerset Council area. It sets out the principles for development including which communities will have development and approximately how much.

Stogursey is a rural Parish in West Somerset and is defined as a Primary Village in policy SC1 of West Somerset Local Plan. As such limited development of individual schemes of up to ten dwellings providing about a 10% increase in a settlement's total dwelling number (c.12 dwellings) during the Local Plan period, limited to about 30% of this increase in any five year period. It is expected that development will contribute to wider sustainable benefits for the area. Local Plan policy CV1 requires that development be designed to form an integral, harmonious addition to the settlements existing character, and help to maintain or enhance the level of service provision, balanced community, appropriate to the settlements role and function. Outside of this village development is classes as being on the open countryside and is therefore subject to policy OC1. OC1 states that development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: it is essential for rural workers, for employment or tourism purposes, local needs or exceptions site affordable housing.

It is important to note that under the Regulations and Act a NDP must be in broad conformity with Local or National Planning Policy. It can propose locally specific policies for development, or alternative requirements, if it is supported by locally specific, robust evidence.

The NDP when "made" becomes statutory planning policy document, like the Local Plan, it is used to determine planning applications.

What does your community want to achieve?
Allocate land for housing, employment, community facilities? Allocate additional development to the Local Planning Policy? Tackle the amount of Vehicle Traffic or Cycle Lanes? Influence the health of your community (green space, exercise)? Influence access to service and facilities (shops, allotments, buses)? Strengthen the sense of Community (events, clubs, support)? Secure a children's play area? Reduce amount of waste created by businesses and residents, tackle littering? Promote and develop tourism? Support local businesses?

A Neighbourhood Plan must be predominantly land use based, i.e. your plan can have an objective to encourage more participation in sport but it must be linked to delivery of a land use based action, such as protection of existing playing field or provision of changing facilities for the playing field. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to restrict or prevent development, polices must be locally specific, it can provide additional detail to WSC Local Plan policies, it can allocate land for development, and it can designate Local Green Space.

When adopted a Neighbourhood Plan becomes a statutory planning policy document which is used in the decision making process for planning applications.

A Parish Plan can cover a broader range of issues (social, economic, as well as land use planning if appropriate), i.e. your plan can have an objective to encourage more participation in sport and that could be delivered by providing support to the local team, Fostering Community Spirit could be delivered through setting up monthly community events, Promoting/supporting local farmers or locally grown produce could be delivered by the Community shop sourcing produce from the Blackdown Hills and being a delivery/collection point for veg & meet boxes,

Affordable Housing can be delivered though undertaking a Needs Assessment and working directly with an affordable housing provider. Affordable Housing is something which the West Somerset Local Plan permits in rural areas.

Village Design Statement sets out how the settlement has developed and what are the key shape, styles and materials of buildings and structures. This document can be used when assessing planning applications to steer the look, form and layout of a development.

Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order can grant planning permission for specific types of development on a specific site or in a specific neighbourhood area. Development types include material changes of use to land or buildings, engineering operations, building operations (i.e. structural alterations, construction, demolition, etc). A CRtBO can be used for example to approve the building of homes, shops, businesses, affordable housing for rent or sale, community facilities or playgrounds. Where the community organisation wishes to develop the land itself (subject to acquiring the land if appropriate), then the resulting assets can only be disposed of, improved or developed in a manner which the organisation considers benefits the local community or a section of it.

Whichever route you take you need:
A Plan Group
It's important that you try to secure a broad membership for the Group. Who has a range of connections within your community? Who has a broad range of contacts in your community? Who has specific skills which can help us with your Plan? It's also important that you document who is on the steering group and why. It establishes transparency and will help prove evidence that the steering group is representative of the community.

Initial Scoping of Qualitative and Quantitative Information
To determine the vision, objectives and potential policies you need to establish the issues which the Plan will cover.

It's important that when you are accumulating initial data about the community you look at both at the quantitative (statistical; i.e. household profiles, landscape designation, employment in the area, Indices of Multiple Deprivation, demographics, services, community facilitates) as well as the qualitative (broad range of residents, businesses, communities' groups' views) information. The quantitative will supplement and enhance the qualitative information that you obtain from your community; to prove a comprehensive profile of your Neighbourhood Area.

Quantitative

Somerset Intelligence Network web site holds a range of statistical data and intelligence from a range of organisations. There will be a significant amount of data at a Ward and Parish Level in the Neighbourhood Profile sections - http://www.sine.org.uk/

Census 2011 data http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html

WSC has a range of documents and data from Flood Risk and Habitat Assessments to Employment Land Reviews and Landscape Character Assessments as well a numbers of people on the electoral role. Extracts from these can be provided; due to the variety of data please e-mail to discuss what information you may require so we can be clear what WSC have and how long it will take to extract and send the data.

Qualitative

How you establish the qualitative information is up to you, there are a variety of ways to gather qualitative information. Wiveliscombe spent 6 months drafting a paper questionnaire which went out to all people on the electoral register and businesses in their Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Questionnaire contained c.25 questions and covered a range of topics including Affordable Housing, Employment, Community Services and Facilitates, Youth and Open Market Housing. Wiveliscombe Primary and Secondary School set a question each for the survey. Wellington used the Town Council Web site, their Twitter and Facebook accounts to establish what residents and businesses think are the issues for their area. Other options included: a) consultation day event; a day in a village hall with maps, post it notes and questions centred on land-use planning. b) Drop in session to find out about Neighbourhood Planning and get residents views on issues. However you scope qualitative information it is important that you make clear what a Neighbourhood Plan can and can not do (i.e. Neighbourhood Plan must be primarily land use, social issues (unless linked to land use i.e. increased participation in sport – deliver changing pavilion and protect village recreation ground from development) are for a Parish Plan).

If you have an existing Parish Plan, this may be a good starting point for discussion and ask if issues are still relevant to the community.

Web links to useful publications and organisations:
Government Initiatives, Regulatory matters for Neighbourhood Planning on Gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning and http://www.legislation.gov.uk/all?title=neighbourhood%20planning

Useful links to good best practice across the country are in the Planning Advisory Service website: http://www.pas.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning

Matters covered include; Guidance for Qualifying Bodies, Community Led Planning – alternatives to NPlans, Building Working Relationships, Early Engagement, Different Approaches to NPlanning, Councillor involvement and Community Impact.

Government Grants for Neighbourhood Planning - Details on application process are available on the My Community Rights web site: https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/

CPRE Guide to Neighbourhood Planning - https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/2689-how-to-shape-where-you-live-a-guide-to-neighbourhood-planning

Locality Road Map for Neighbourhood Planning -
http://locality.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-guide/

RTPI Planning Aid - http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid/

Planning Advisory Service – www.pas.gov.uk and Neighbourhood Planning
https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/pas-topics/neighbourhood-plans

Parish Plan Guidance: Community First - http://acre.org.uk/rural-issues/community-planning.php and http://www.communityfirst.org.uk/index.php/community-development/community-first-parish-plan-help

Parish Plan Guidance:
http://cornwallrcc.org.uk/downloads/crcc_gc001_creating_a_parish_plan.pdf

The Countryside Agency Guidance on Parish Plans -
http://www.cprelancashire.org.uk/uploads/reports/Parish%20Plans%20-%20Guidance%20for%20town%20and%20parish%20councils.pdf

Community Council for Village Design Statements -
http://www.essexrcc.org.uk/Docs/Community%20Led%20planning/VDS%20Info%20Pack.pdf

NDO and CRtBO -
http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/what-is-neighbourhood-planning/what-is-a-neighbourhood-development-order/

Summary
The Parish should first ask itself, "what is it that it wants to achieve?" This will then inform which of the number of tools it can use is most appropriate for what it wants to do. Some tools influence development and some shape the social and economic wishes of your community, but it is important to establish which is right for the Parish.

I hope the above proves useful to Stogursey Parish Council. If you wish to discuss any of the above or would like me to clarify anything please don't hesitate to contact me.

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