

Broads Authority

24 September 2021

Agenda item number 13

Beccles Neighbourhood Plan- for adoption

Report by Planning Policy Officer

Purpose

The Beccles Neighbourhood Plan has been examined. The Examiner made some changes to the Plan, and Beccles Town Council made some further minor changes. The Plan was subject to a referendum on 16 September.

Recommended decision

The result of the referendum will be reported verbally to this meeting. If more than 50% voted in favour of the Plan, it will be recommended that the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan be made/adopted.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The submitted Beccles Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the Broads Authority's Planning Committee in December 2020. This was followed by a statutory publication period between 14 December 2020 and 8 February 2021, in which the Plan and its supporting documents were available to the public and consultation bodies online at [East Suffolk Council – neighbourhood planning](#) and in hard copy at Beccles Town Hall (by appointment only).
- 1.2. During the publication period, representations were received from 28 different organisations/individuals. The representations may be viewed, together with the late representations, via the following links:

[Responses to Beccles Neighbourhood Plan Reg 16 \(excluding late representations\)](#)
[Responses to Beccles Neighbourhood Plan Reg 16 \(late representations\)](#)
- 1.3. These representations were submitted, along with the Neighbourhood Plan and supporting information, to the independent Examiner, Mr Nigel McGurk. The examination was conducted via written representations during March/April (the Examiner deciding that a public hearing would not be required).
- 1.4. Legislation directs that an Examiner considers whether:
 - a) the draft plan meets the [basic conditions of a Neighbourhood Development Plan](#);

- b) the draft plan complies with the definition of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the provisions that can be made by such a plan;
- c) the area for referendum should extend beyond the neighbourhood area; and
- d) the draft plan is compatible with the Convention rights.

2. The Examiner's Report

- 2.1. The [Examiner's Report on the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan](#) concluded that, subject to amendments (as set out in the report), the Plan can proceed to referendum. The Examiner also concluded that the area of the referendum does not need to be extended beyond Beccles. While it is disappointing that the Examiner did not take forward [the Authority's comments on the Plan](#), the changes proposed by the Examiner seem reasonable and are useful.

3. Referendum

- 3.1. The referendum for the [Beccles Neighbourhood Plan](#) was held on 16 September. As this date is after the deadline for this report, the result will be reported verbally. If more than 50% voted in favour of the Plan, it will be recommended that the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan be made/adopted by the Broads Authority.
- 3.2. It should be noted that, due to the required timings to make decisions on various parts of producing a Neighbourhood Plan, there is not the opportunity to take the result of the referendum to Planning Committee before a Broads Authority meeting. A paper was taken to the [July meeting of the Planning Committee](#) (held before the referendum) to explain this, and the Committee supported this approach. While not the ideal order, this is a pragmatic approach that ensures the Plan is made/adopted in the timeline set by regulations.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. If both the Broads Authority and East Suffolk Council make/adopt the Neighbourhood Plan, it becomes part of the Development Plan for the area. The policies have the same weight as Local Plan policies when making decisions.

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