



Local Plan Committee

Item
10

7 November 2016

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Beverley McCleane 
Title	Adoption of the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan		
Wards affected	Rural North		

The Local Plan Committee is asked to recommend that Full Council makes (adopts) the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating the Planning Inspector's Main Modifications

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To recommend to Full Council that it makes (adopts) the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan (attached as Appendix A), following its approval at examination and referendum. Once adopted, the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan will become part of Colchester Borough Council's Local Development Plan.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To ensure the Council's planning policies provide a robust basis for decisions on future planning applications in the Borough.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The alternative would be to recommend to Full Council that it does not adopt the Neighbourhood Plan. This alternative, however, would be contrary to the positive approach to Neighbourhood Plans found in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paras 184-185).

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 On 8 October 2012, Colchester Borough Council designated the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan Area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (in accordance with Part Two of the Town and Country Planning (England), Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulations 2012). The plan area includes the whole of Boxted Parish.
- 4.2 The Boxted Neighbourhood Plan Working Group carried out extensive consultation to support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. This included a drop in event early in July 2012, attended by 250 people which generated 350 responses and the distribution of a household survey during

October - December 2012 which received 226 responses. The questionnaire informed the following aspects of the plan;

- Housing development at Hill Farm, Boxted Cross
- Support for appropriate small scale employment in Boxted, including smallholdings.
- Environment should be protected and enhanced through the provision of a new Village Green.
- Improvements to community infrastructure including sports & leisure facilities, open space, a village shop and broadband
- Highway improvements
- A Travel Plan to manage traffic issues at the village school.

4.3 Further consultation was carried out including a pre-submission consultation in September 2014, and an initial Submission consultation in November 2014. Following this consultation the developer/owner of Hill Farm, lodged an appeal against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission to develop the only site being proposed for housing in the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan. This delayed the Neighbourhood Plan and required changes to be made to the document. As a result of these changes, it was necessary to undertake a 2nd Submission consultation during February-March 2016. In total 24 responses were received to both Submission consultations.

4.4 Colchester Borough Council appointed an independent examiner, Mr Richard Hill, to examine the Neighbourhood Plan in April 2016. The Inspector concluded that subject to minor amendments the plan satisfied all the Basic Conditions i.e. it promoted Sustainable Development, was in general conformity with national Planning Policy & Guidance and with strategic policies in Colchester's adopted Local Plan and complied with EU Regulations. The Inspector also recommended that the draft plan could proceed to Referendum.

4.5 The Referendum on the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan was held on 15 September 2016 with the following results: 305 in favour of the plan and 69 against, or 81.5% in favour.

4.6 Information gathered by Planning magazine indicates that 199 Neighbourhood Plans had been adopted nationwide as of September 2016. The adoption of the Myland/Braiswick and Boxted Neighbourhood Plans will add to this total and make Colchester the first Essex authority to adopt Neighbourhood Plans.

5. Proposals

5.1 It is proposed that the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan is made (adopted) to form part of the Council's Adopted Local Plan in accordance with Section 19 of the Town and Country Planning (England), Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulations 2012).

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Strategic Plan Action Plan includes a commitment to regenerating the Borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure. There are also commitments to attract investment and provide more affordable homes. The Boxted Neighbourhood Plan will contribute towards achieving these objectives.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The preparation of the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan was underpinned by extensive public consultation. The consultation process was documented in a Consultation Statement submitted along with the Neighbourhood Plan document as part of the examination process. On adoption, the document will be made available on the Colchester Borough Council and Boxted Parish Council websites, and stakeholders will be notified, in accordance with Section 20 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 Both Boxted Parish Council and Colchester Borough Council have publicised the Neighbourhood Plan on their respective websites. News of the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be published.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 Colchester Borough Council is financially responsible for organising the examination and referendum for Neighbourhood Plans in their areas. The Council however, can reclaim £20,000 from DCLG for all Neighbourhood Plans once a date is set for a referendum following a successful examination. These payments have been made by Central Government to Local Authorities to reflect the additional financial burdens associated with supporting Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Plan Forums prepare Neighbourhood Plans. The Government has recently announced that only the first 5 Neighbourhood Plans Area Designations in any LPA area will receive a grant £5000. This has financial implications for planning authorities like Colchester where more than 5 Neighbourhood Plans are being progressed.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Development Framework and is available to view on the Colchester Borough Council website by following this pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments > Commercial Services > Local Plan.
- 10.2 There are no particular Human Rights implications.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 None identified.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 None identified.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 The adoption of the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan will help ensure that the Council's planning policies are robust and up-to-date and help to reduce the risk of inappropriate development being permitted.

14. Disclaimer

14.1 The information in this report was, as far as is known, correct at the date of publication. Colchester Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any error or omissions.