

APPROVAL of Pitstone Parish Council Neighbourhood Area application

Background

1. A Neighbourhood Development Plan is being prepared by Pitstone Parish Council, which commenced in summer 2014.
2. The Plan is in its early stages, work has started on gathering information and getting a group of people together to produce the plan. It is not yet confirmed whether there will be allocated sites for development.

Content

3. The Plan is being led by Pitstone Parish Council with support from a consultant and AVDC planning officers. To progress the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the parish must apply to AVDC to designate the parish as a Neighbourhood Area. The proposed Neighbourhood Area follows the existing parish boundary.
4. The decision on whether to accept and designate a Neighbourhood Area has been delegated by Cabinet to the Planning Manager (Forward Plans), after consultation with the relevant local Members and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning. This report seeks agreement for confirming the Neighbourhood Area.

Representation and Response

5. The Neighbourhood Area Application which has been consulted upon is attached to this report. Two representations have been made, by Gladman Developments and the National Trust.
6. Gladman Developments make no specific comments on the application for Neighbourhood Area designation but highlight what in their view are key requirements in national guidance and legislation that a neighbourhood plan should have regard to. These reiterate the Basic Conditions tests that will be part of the neighbourhood plan examination and potential Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that may be required from the Pre Submission stage depending on the neighbourhood plan that comes forward. No objection is made to the neighbourhood area itself. AVDC will work with the parish council as the plan is prepared to advise on the neighbourhood plan meeting the Basic Conditions. AVDC will confirm through a Screening Assessment in due course whether an SEA is required following further engagement with the parish council on the neighbourhood plan.
7. The National Trust comment relates to the Ashridge Estate, part of which is within Pitstone Parish. All of the land in the Ashridge Estate is National Trust owned land and is partly within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Green Belt. The National Trust suggest to simplify matters and because the land is protected through these national designations that it should be excluded from the Neighbourhood Area. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states at paragraph 32 that the local planning authority should have regard to the desirability of designating the whole of the area of a parish. It also states at paragraph 34 that the local planning authority should aim to designate the area applied for. A Neighbourhood Plan can not make amendments to the Green Belt, this can only be carried out through the Local Plan process. Similarly Neighbourhood Plans cannot make changes to the AONB. As such these designations would need to be taken into account when preparing the neighbourhood plan as they will restrict what influence the neighbourhood plan can have on these areas. However land ownership and AONB/Green Belt designations aren't adequate reasons to amend the neighbourhood area from what was applied for, that of the parish boundary.
8. Both comments have been forwarded to the Parish Council for their records.

Process of Consultation

7. Following the introduction of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and the Localism Act 2011, in a parished area like Pitstone, it can only be the Parish Council that can be the 'relevant body' for a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Because of this, Pitstone Parish Council have submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council an application to designate a Neighbourhood Area under Regulation 5 of the 2012 Regulations.
8. A six week consultation commenced 22 September 2014 to 3 November 2014. The following consultation processes were undertaken to publicise the Neighbourhood Area application:
 - (a) Neighbourhood Area application published on AVDC and Pitstone Parish Council website
 - (b) Neighbourhood Area application posted on the Parish notice board
 - (c) Details of Neighbourhood Area application published in AVDC's Planning Bulletin stating where the application can be inspected; and
 - (d) Details of Neighbourhood Area application issued in a press release stating where the Neighbourhood Area can be inspected.

Approval

9. In accordance with the above, I approve the Neighbourhood Area application

.....*A. Kirkham*.....

Andy Kirkham, Planning Manager (Forward Plans)

Date: 20/11/2014

In consultation with Cllr Mrs Carole Paternoster, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Forward Plans

Date: 20/11/2014

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