

ESBG NP Update to Residents 9th February 2023

Dear Resident

Further to our [last message](#) on 19th December, the Parish Council is pleased to report some good progress with our Neighbourhood Plan.

In summary, the good news is that we have passed examination and are now proceeding to referendum. This means that plan now has significant weight in planning decisions but the full weight will only come once it has passed referendum. We will communicate more on the timing of the referendum as soon as we hear from B&D BC.

There is more detail below.

Thanks to everyone for their continuing support.

Marian Dain

Chair, ES&BG Parish Council

In more detail.....

After formal submission of the plan to Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council for publication and examination back in October, the following steps have taken place:

- The plan was published on the B&D BC website [here](#).
- The required six week period of consultation took place ending on 19th December. This produced a number of relatively minor comments from B&D BC and other statutory consultees and some claims by developers that the plan was either premature vs the B&D BC Local Plan Update and/or did not meet “Basic Conditions” (i.e. they claimed it is not compliant with the legal requirements for a Neighbourhood Plan).
- With support from B&D BC, it was decided that the plan should proceed into examination. This is a review carried out by an independent planning expert that determines a) whether the plan has been created with suitable involvement/consultation with the community and b) whether the plan meets Basic Conditions. Examination started on 6th January and we received the [final report](#) on Monday (6th February).
- In summary, the examiner’s report says that the plan was properly prepared and, subject to some minor modifications, meets Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.

Last night (8th February), the Parish Council reviewed the examiner’s report and resolved that the plan with the modifications recommended by the examiner should proceed to referendum. A letter to this effect has just been sent to B&D BC.

The recommended modifications to the plan documentation are being made and are nearly complete. These do not change the vision/objectives or the direction of key policies in the plan. In a few policy areas we are only allowed to “encourage” rather than “mandate” areas that are beyond the scope of current

national legislation (for example the policy on zero-carbon buildings). Other changes are mainly textual to improve clarity and full compliance with Basic Conditions.

The next steps towards referendum are as follows:

- B&D BC will review the examiner's report and determine whether they will follow the recommendation to proceed to referendum. Given the positive nature of the report, we expect a decision to proceed but B&D BC are allowed up to 5 weeks to complete this step. We have asked our borough councillor to help ensure the decision to proceed happens as soon as possible.
- Once B&D BC have resolved that the plan should go to referendum, the poll needs to take place within 56 working days. In addition, the referendum version of the plan needs to be published 28 working days before the referendum.

Given the uncertainties in these timings, we do not yet know when to expect the referendum – recent experience with East Woodhay and Ashford Hill & Headley plans is that it has taken 3-3.5 months between receipt of the examiner's report and referendum. We will do what we can to get the referendum to happen as soon as possible but the process is basically out of our hands so we have to wait for the date to be set.