

Review of the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan

Background

The current Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) runs from 2014 to 2039. It is an unusual NHP as it covers two parishes and crosses a county boundary. It's stated in the NHP that "The Freshford and Limpley Stoke Parish Councils believe their combined community requires a cohesive strategy for future development", and there is further explanation of the reasons for the joint NHP at the beginning of the plan.

Review

There is no statutory requirement to review a NHP, but it's suggested that it would be helpful to review a plan where it has been in place for a long time or become out-of-date with planning policies etc. Government guidance on this is included at the end of this document.

At the January Freshford PC meeting it was reported that Limpley Stoke Parish Council was looking to review the joint NHP, starting before Spring 2024.

Since then, Limpley Stoke Parish Council (LSPC) has proposed that Limpley Stoke and Freshford draw up separate NHPs. This idea is supported by their Unitary Councillor. LSPC has spoken with Wiltshire Council Planning Officers who've confirmed this approach would be acceptable.

The Chair of Limpley Stoke Parish Council has outlined the following reasons for reviewing and separating out the NHP:

- It's 10 years old & needs updating;
- LSPC would like to include additional themes – ecology, habitat, destruction of wildlife, community well-being etc.;
- Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Plans that need to be reflected in a NHP;
- LSPC feel that Limpley Stoke and Freshford face different challenges in terms of planning, e.g. Freshford includes an area with Conservation Area status.

Actions

Freshford PC needs to consider what actions to take in light of the proposal by Limpley Stoke Parish Council to move to separate Neighbourhood Plans.

To date:

- The Chair of LSPC has been asked for an informal meeting to discuss ideas
- Planning Officers at B&NES have been contacted for advice
- Local residents involved with the original plan / planning knowledge have been contacted for input
- The local Ward Councillors have been made aware

Government Guidance on Neighbourhood Plans

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#updating-neighbourhood-plan>

When will it be necessary to review and update a neighbourhood plan?

A neighbourhood plan must set out the period for which it is to have effect ([section 38B\(1\)\(a\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)). Neighbourhood plan policies remain in force until the plan policy is replaced.

There is no requirement to review or update a neighbourhood plan. However, policies in a neighbourhood plan may become out of date, for example if they conflict with policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area that is adopted after the making of the neighbourhood plan. In such cases, the more recent plan policy takes precedence. In addition, where a policy has been in force for a period of time, other material considerations may be given greater weight in planning decisions as the evidence base for the plan policy becomes less robust. To reduce the likelihood of a neighbourhood plan becoming out of date once a new local plan (or spatial development strategy) is adopted, communities preparing a neighbourhood plan should take account of latest and up-to-date evidence of housing need, as set out in [guidance on preparing a neighbourhood plan or Order](#).

Communities in areas where policies in a neighbourhood plan that is in force have become out of date may decide to update their plan, or part of it. The neighbourhood area will already be designated, but the community may wish to consider whether the designated area is still the most suitable area to plan for.