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## ***HELP DECIDE THE FUTURE OF STEBBING!***

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# **Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan FAQ's**

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**September 2016**

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### **IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN NEEDED?**

Neighbourhood planning is a new part of the planning system in England and Wales under The Localism Act 2011. It will represent a vision with policies, developed in consultation with the community, to describe how Stebbing will develop over the next 20 years. It is a legal document that Uttlesford District Council (UDC) will have to consult when making planning decisions and have equal weight.

It now gives the residents of Stebbing Parish the opportunity to create binding plans for managing future sustainable development in our immediate area. The Plan sits alongside the UDC Local Plan and while it cannot stand in contradiction to it, has full status as part of the statutory development plan.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan must be compatible with national and local planning policies and is first, the product of a consultation process, then is subject to an independent examination and a local referendum. If the residents of Stebbing Parish vote in favour, then the plan is adopted by UDC, being our Planning Authority.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out policies on local development and land allocations in our neighbourhood area. Without a Plan, Parish growth and development over the next 20 years would

be guided by the UDC Local Plan alone, which may not have the protection of our village, its facilities and its character as its primary concern.

So, establishing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Stebbing Parish will represent positive steps for the community to take and help create. Input from as many members of the community as possible will lead to the creation of the best possible Neighbourhood Plan for **OUR** Parish.

### **WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?**

The Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan will be able to ensure that any future sustainable development in the Parish will meet the needs of the village and its residents, while preserving its character for future generations. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is a means of ensuring that plans, both local and neighbourhood, are positively prepared to achieve the best social, economic and environmental outcomes for an area

The Neighbourhood Plan can extend beyond land development use to address aspirational issues, such as transportation links, preservation of village character, enhancing community facilities and siting of potential businesses.

There is no mandatory time limit for the duration of the Neighbourhood Plan; this can be decided by the community but must be included in the plan.

### **WHO CARRIES OUT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING?**

Stebbing Parish Council is automatically the "qualifying body" responsible for preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the Parish.

To assist it, Stebbing Parish Council has established a Steering Group whose function is to coordinate information, data, the views of residents and then draft the Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Council's approval, and submission to referendum. For this reason, it is important to engage the wider community of Stebbing early on to make sure the Neighbourhood Plan represents their views.

As this is a local initiative, with extensive consultation, any volunteers who can lend their skill and enthusiasm are invited to assist the Steering Group in collecting together the community's ideas, gather evidence and documentary proposals.

Everyone living and working in the Parish will be consulted. This will include residents, landowners, the School, businesses, the Church, clubs and societies and other relevant agencies and organisations. There will be regular and ongoing outreach to and consultation with the community.

We are at the beginning of the exercise, the Steering Group having been appointed in early Summer 2016. The exercise is expected to take until the end of 2017/beginning of 2018 before coming to a conclusion.

### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL?**

UDC has a duty to support and advise Stebbing Parish Council in its undertaking of neighbourhood planning. UDC has to check that the draft Neighbourhood Plan is legally compliant ie that all the procedural steps have been followed. There are timetables for publication and representations to be made upon the draft. UDC is also required to fund the referendum process, the costs of running the examination and appointing and funding the independent examiner for an examination.

### **WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UTTLESFORD DISTRICT PLAN AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?**

The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the (yet to be) adopted UDC District Plan, which will comprise the long-term development vision and strategic objectives for the Uttlesford District for the period 2016 to 2033. The Neighbourhood Plan should support the strategic development needs set out in the UDC District Plan, including the area's objectively assessed housing need. Neighbourhood planning is about shaping the development of an area in a positive manner. It is not a tool to stop new development proposals from happening and also must reflect local and national policies. Neighbourhood Plans may not promote less development than is included in the UDC District Plan or undermine its strategic policies. The Neighbourhood Plan may promote more development than is set out in the District Plan, as long as it remains in conformity with national policy.

As is the current case, the Parish Council will not have any decision making responsibilities for planning applications, appeals or enforcement etc., which remains with UDC. The Parish Council is however and will be always consulted by UDC and its views considered and taken into account.

### **THE COST OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING & WHO PAYS?**

The costs are associated with three key stages of neighbourhood planning: producing a draft Neighbourhood Plan, examination of the draft, and holding a referendum. The Parish Council is responsible for funding the consultation process, commissioning additional evidence which is not already available in the UDC evidence base, printing materials and producing drafts of the Plan. In terms of the examination, UDC will pay for the Inspector's costs.

Stebbing Parish Council anticipates that its costs to prepare the Plan will be reimbursed to it from UDC (between £5,000 and £10,000 is available) and other governmental agency funds (up to £9,000 is available).

UDC has to pay for and arrange the examination of the draft Plan and will also be responsible for running and funding the Referendum.

### **WHAT IS AN EXAMINATION AND WHO EXAMINES THE PLAN?**

All neighbourhood plans will be submitted to an independent examination. Examinations will determine whether the plans meet the necessary criteria and accord with national and district policy. The examiner will be a person with a good understanding of the planning system, such as an academic, a planning officer from a different planning authority or a planning inspector, who will be appointed by UDC.

Stebbing Parish is likely to represent itself at examination (potentially with expert assistance as it deems necessary). The costs incurred by the examination will be paid for by UDC. Examinations are only expected to consider whether a plan complies with basic conditions and legal requirements, and aligns with national and district policy. Any significant problems should have been resolved through support offered by UDC prior to the examination beginning.

### **HOW DOES THE REFERENDUM WORK?**

Community support is essential before any neighbourhood plan is adopted and used in planning decisions. If the Neighbourhood Plan is found to be satisfactory (with any modifications necessary) at examination, then UDC will arrange for a referendum to take place. At Referendum, all Stebbing Residents (ie those eligible to vote in local elections) will have the final say in voting for or against the Neighbourhood Plan.

If the majority of those who vote support the Plan, UDC is required to adopt it. If the majority votes against, UDC would not be able to adopt it. There is no minimum turnout figure for the voting threshold.

### **WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING?**

There is a range of information available on and via the UDC Neighbourhood Planning webpage:

<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans>

We have also reviewed some of the available information and guides from Government, other local authorities, and organisations and have provided links to these below. This resource will be updated as and when new information and guidance becomes available:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-planning](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-planning)

[www.uttlesford.gov.uk/backgroundstudies](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/backgroundstudies)

[http://stebbingparishcouncil.org.uk/presentation\\_20160413.pdf](http://stebbingparishcouncil.org.uk/presentation_20160413.pdf)

[www.locality.org.uk/projects/building-community](http://www.locality.org.uk/projects/building-community)

[www.mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning](http://www.mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning)

[www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/home](http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/home)

[www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/your\\_place\\_your\\_plan\\_guide.pdf](http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/your_place_your_plan_guide.pdf)

Meanwhile, you are invited to keep up to date with the progress and status of the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan at:

[www.stebbingneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.stebbingneighbourhoodplan.co.uk)

Your ongoing input and comments on the Neighbourhood Plan process will always be appreciated and considered. Volunteers will be very welcome to assist in the exercise ahead. Please contact us via:

[info@stebbingneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](mailto:info@stebbingneighbourhoodplan.co.uk)