

Business Case

Project Name:	HFTC Neighbourhood Plan		
Project code/JN:	Project Code	Customer:	Higham Ferrers Residents
Project Manager:	Philip Toogood	Project Sponsor:	Higham Ferrers Town Clerk
Project Description	A 20 year plan for the development of Higham Ferrers		
Author:	James Wilson/ Philip Toogood		

Executive Summary

The Localism Act was passed by Government in November 2011 and final regulations relating to the Act and regulating the process came into force in April 2012. The Act allows local areas to produce a spatial development plan for their area and if adopted future planning applications would have to have regard to the policies within this plan.

Higham Ferrers Town Council has decided that it requires a Neighbourhood Plan and wishes to have one in place as quickly as possible. Realistically this may take between 12 and 18 months to achieve.

Reasons

- To create local planning policies for Higham Ferrers which development proposals need to adhere to
- To protect against inappropriate and speculative development, provide greater control over development
- To bring forward facilities and improvements which are needed by the town

Business Options

- Do nothing (leaves town more vulnerable to unacceptable development doesn't allow community to be proactive)
- Let District Council 4 Towns Plan direct policies (this may not provide sufficient control or produce a plan quickly enough)
- Create a Neighbourhood Plan for Higham Ferrers (This option appears to give the right element of control and timescale)

Expected Benefits

- Provide community support for various land-use policies, housing and commercial development allocations
- Potentially release funding and allow for facilities which are required in the town
- Generate additional resources for the town through the New Homes Bonus and CIL contributions

Timescale

The projected timescales for producing the Neighbourhood Plan assuming that the process is already somewhere in Stage 2 would be between 12-18 months depending on the scope of the plan and how much resources are applied. This would give a target date for adoption around Sept/Oct 2014.

Costs

Costs to be approved at each stage of the plan.

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Not to exceed £51050 unless additional resources can be procured.

Investment Appraisal

There is no Investment Appraisal required for this project.

Major Risks

- Cost of the project may escalate due to unforeseen issues or evidence requirements.
- Community engagement may be poor and may not lead to approval of the plan at referendum.
- That the planning process is seen not as a local community plan but one imposed by the Town Council
- Lack of engagement by landowners or developers able to bring forward the most acceptable areas for development.