



Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2036

Regulation 18 Decision Statement

Introduction

In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the Council accepts the examiners recommendations in relation to the examination of the Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Plan. The plan can now proceed to referendum subject to the modifications recommended by the examiner.

The Council also agreed with the examiner's recommendation that the referendum area should match that of the Neighbourhood Area which was formally designated by the Council on 26th May 2017.

The Examiner's Report, along with the submission version of the Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Plan and associated documents are available on the Council's website at <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-and-environmental-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

Hard copies of the above documents can also be viewed at the Customer Service Centre, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT.

Background

On the 26th May 2017 Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish was formally designated as a Neighbourhood Area, for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Over the following months Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish Council (the Qualifying Body) prepared the Neighbourhood Plan which included substantial consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

The Plan and supporting documents were submitted formally to the Council on the 25th September 2018. Darlington Borough Council publicised the submitted version of the Plan and supporting documents between 20th November 2018 and 7th January 2019 in line with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

In January 2019, Darlington Borough Council, in agreement with the qualifying body appointed an independent examiner, Tony Burton CBE BA PPhil HonFRIBA FRSA, to undertake an examination of the Plan following the publicity period. The examination was undertaken via written representations and included an unaccompanied site visit of the Neighbourhood Plan Area by the examiner.

The Examiner's Report was received in March 2019 and recommended that, subject to a number of proposed modifications, the Plan should proceed to referendum. The modifications are required to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation. It was also recommended that the referendum area matches that of the Neighbourhood Area.

In accordance with the legislation, the Local Planning Authority must decide what action to take in response to the examiner's recommendations, what modifications to make to the Plan and whether the Plan should proceed to referendum.

If the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the Plan can proceed to referendum, it is also required to consider whether the Referendum Area should be extended beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area.

Local Planning Authority Decision

Having considered the Examiner's Report, Darlington Borough Council accepts the examiner's recommendations, considers the Plan as modified, complies with the legal requirements and can proceed to referendum.

Darlington Borough Council also agrees with the examiner's recommendation that the referendum area should be based on the designated Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Area.

Not less than 28 days before the date of the referendum, Darlington Borough Council will publish on their website and make available, the Plan (as amended) and supporting documents. Hard copies of these documents will also be available at the Darlington Borough Council Customer Services Town Hall, Central Library, Cockerton Library and Low Coniscliffe Telephone Box Book Exchange during the referendum period.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth
Date 29/03/2019