

**Stone Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement by
Dartford Borough Council
Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General)
Regulations 2012**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (the 1990 Act) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) (the Regulations) and all other relevant legislation, Dartford Borough Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to consider the Stone Neighbourhood Plan following its examination. The Council is responsible for making the decision in respect of the Examiner's report. This decision is delegated to the Head of Planning Services in consultation with the Chairmen of the Cabinet and Development Control Board.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Stone Neighbourhood Plan (the Neighbourhood Plan) relates to the Neighbourhood Area that was designated by Dartford Borough Council on 14 October 2016. This area was coterminous with the boundaries for Stone Parish at that time and is entirely within the Local Planning Authority area. It should be noted that the Parish boundaries were amended on 1 April 2019 but the Neighbourhood Area remains the same as designated on 14 October 2016. Stone Parish Council is the designated qualifying body for the Plan.
- 2.2 Stone Parish Council undertook pre-submission consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with Regulation 14 between 21 February 2019 and 5 April 2019. Following significant changes to the Neighbourhood Plan and concerns raised by the Council about the first consultation not fully meeting statutory requirements, the Parish Council carried out a further pre-submission consultation under Regulation 14 between 9 March 2020 and 27 April 2020.
- 2.3 Stone Parish Council submitted the Neighbourhood Plan to the Council, along with supporting documents, on 1 April 2021. The Council published the Neighbourhood Plan for a six week period on 14 May 2021, and representations were invited in accordance with Regulation 16. The consultation ended on 25 June 2021.

3. Independent Examination

- 3.1 With the agreement of Stone Parish Council, the Council appointed an independent Examiner, Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) MRTPI FHEA FRSA AoU, to examine whether the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Act, and whether the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum.
- 3.2 Given the publication of a revised National Planning Policy Framework in July 2021, the Examiner requested that the Council carry out a further focussed consultation on the implications of this on the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council carried out the consultation from 2 September 2021 to 16 September 2021.
- 3.3 The Examiner decided to deal with the Neighbourhood Plan via written representations and made a site visit to the Neighbourhood Area on 24 November 2021.

- 3.4 The Examiner's Report was received on 13 January 2022. The Examiner's Report concludes that, subject to making the modifications recommended by the Examiner, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation and should proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum. The Examiner also recommended that the referendum area should be based on the designated Stone Neighbourhood Area which comprises the previous boundaries of the Stone Parish area.

4. Dartford Borough Council's Decision

- 4.1 Regulation 17A of the Regulations requires the Council to decide what action to take in response to the each of the recommendations made in the Examiner's Report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. Regulation 18 requires the decision statement and the Examiner's report to be published.
- 4.2 The Council has considered the Examiner's proposed amendments and the justification for these. It is satisfied that subject to the modifications set out in the Examiner's Report, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the 1990 Act. On this basis, the Council has decided to accept the Examiner's modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan and to submit the modified Plan for a referendum in the designated Stone Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.3 The referendum will pose the question "Do you want Dartford Borough Council to use the Stone Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Stone Neighbourhood Area?" It will take place on 26 May 2022.
- 4.4 This decision statement and the Examiner's Report can be viewed online Dartford Borough Council's website at: www.dartford.gov.uk/stone-neighbourhood-plan

Delegated Decision

I, Sonia Collins, Head of Planning Services, having consulted the Chairmen of the Cabinet and Development Control Board, agree that the Stone Neighbourhood Plan should be modified in accordance with the recommendations in the Independent Examiner's Report and that the Neighbourhood Plan as modified should proceed to referendum.

Signed:



Dated: 18 February 2022