

Full Council Report 09/12/2025

**Full Council
9th December 2025**

PART I

**Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan: Result of Referendum
(DoF)**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is following a positive referendum result, to enable Full Council to 'make' the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan (SNDP) part of the Development Plan for Three Rivers District Council in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. In this context 'make' refers to adopting the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That:

- Full Council acknowledges the results of the referendum where 96.7% voted YES to the question 'Do you want Three Rivers District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Sarratt to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'
- Full Council make the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan in accordance with Section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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3 Details

- 3.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011. New powers allowed qualifying bodies (Parish, Community or Town Councils) to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). NDPs allow communities to set planning policies for their area.
- 3.2 Once adopted, NDPs become part of the development plan for the district and they must be considered when planning decisions are made, along with the Local Plan and national planning policy.
- 3.3 NDPs must be examined by a suitably qualified independent person, appointed by the council and agreed by the qualifying body (Parish/Community Council). Neighbourhood plans must also pass a referendum of local voters by a simple majority. If a plan passes referendum, the council must 'make' (adopt) it, unless it breaches EU¹ obligations or human rights legislation.
- 3.4 The SNDP has been produced by Sarratt Parish Council in conjunction with the local community. The Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing but provides policies which are to be considered in the determination of planning applications for development within the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Area.

¹ Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

- 3.5 In September 2025 the Policy & Resources Committee resolved to agree that modifications to the SNDP be made in accordance with the Examiner's Report and that the modified Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan (Appendix 1) proceed to referendum.
- 3.6 The SNDP referendum took place on 6 November 2025. Voters were asked 'Do you want Three Rivers District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Sarratt to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?' Voters were given the opportunity to vote 'Yes' or 'No'.
- 3.7 The results were as follows:

	Votes Recorded	Percentage
Number of votes cast as Yes	666	96.7%
Number of votes cast as No	23	3.3%

- 3.8 The electorate was 1494, total votes cast was 689. The turnout was 46.1%.
- 3.9 The Declaration of Result can be found at Appendix 2.
- 3.10 As seen above the percentage of "yes" votes was very high and the turnout of 46.1% was high for a neighbourhood plan referendum.
- 3.11 In terms of next steps, the legislation² and regulations³ require that were more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote 'yes', then the council is required to 'make' the Plan within 8 weeks. The SNDP would then form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. In this context 'make' refers to adopting the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 3.12 The Plan has been screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Screening Opinion was that SEA is not required. Officers are satisfied that the making of the SNDP does not breach any EU obligations or the European Convention on Human Rights, as enacted in the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 3.13 Officers recommend that the SNDP should therefore be 'made'.
- 3.14 It must be noted that given more than half of those who voted in the referendum have voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, significant weight can be given to the plan in Decision Making, even before it is officially 'made' by Full Council.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The SNDP has been independently examined and has been found to meet the Basic Conditions. The SNDP has been endorsed by the community at referendum and otherwise complies with all the legal requirements of Plan production. It is considered that the SNDP meets European legislation and is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998. The council has therefore no option but to comply

² Section 34A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

³ Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

with the legislation and proceed the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan to be 'made'.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Producing an NDP allows Parish and Town Councils to increase the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds they receive from developments within their area from 15% to 25%.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Not choosing to 'make' the plan could leave the council vulnerable to legal challenge.

8 Environmental Implications

- 8.1 Part of the role of the Independent Examiner is to consider whether the neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with retained European Union obligations⁴. The Examiner was satisfied that the neighbourhood plan meets this requirement.

9 Communications and Website Implications

- 9.1 All the documents relating to the referendum of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan are available on the council's website.

10 Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre Implications

- 10.1 None specific.


11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 11.1 The council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Planning Policy and Conservation service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

⁴ Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
If the Council decides not to proceed the SNDP to be 'made' it may result in a legal challenge	Legal costs	Agree to 'make' the NDP	Tolerate	6

- 11.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely  Likelihood Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

- 11.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

Background Papers

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011)

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Planning Practice Guidance

Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan and supporting documents

Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan Independent Examiner's Report

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan (Referendum Version)

Appendix 2: Declaration of Result

