

Report for Interim Director of Development
Author: Rebecca Smith
Tel: 01483 444672
Email: Rebecca.smith@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Councillor responsible: Paul Spooner
Tel: 01252 341666
Email: paul.spooner@guildford.gov.uk
Date: 24/5/16

Proposal for neighbourhood area covering Seale and Sands Parish.

Recommendation

That the Interim Director of Development designates the area enclosed by the Seale and Sands Parish boundary, shown on the map at Appendix 1, as a neighbourhood area, following an application to make this designation by Seale and Sands Parish Council.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

To comply with section 61G (5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), and to reflect the Council's evaluation of the proposed neighbourhood area following public consultation.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out the reasons for the recommendation to designate a neighbourhood area (NA) following the Seale and Sands Parish boundary. This is the boundary proposed by the Seale and Sands Neighbourhood Area application (Appendix 2).
- 1.2 To inform the Interim Director of Development of the current situation following public consultation and consideration by planning officers.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan identifies the priority of promoting sustainability (page 9). Designating a neighbourhood area enables the local community to bring forward a neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood plans must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which will help further this aim.
- 2.2 The Corporate Plan also identifies an outcome of having local communities that are actively working with partners to improve where they live, in ways that matter to them. Neighbourhood planning is a community driven process so designating a neighbourhood area will support this outcome.

3. Background

- 3.1 The borough of Guildford currently has seven designated neighbourhood areas: Burpham and Lovelace wards and the parishes of Effingham, East Horsley, West Horsley, Puttenham and Send.
- 3.2 Planning officers received a formal application from Seale and Sands Parish Council to designate a new NA following the boundary of Seale and Sands Parish on 12 February 2016 (see Appendices 1 and 2).
- 3.3 The application met the requirements specified in Regulation 5(1) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and was accepted.
- 3.4 Consultation on the proposals in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ran from 18 April to 15 May 2016. See paragraph 4.3 for further details.

4. Consideration of the designation

- 4.1 Seale and Sands Parish Council meets the required criteria to be considered a qualifying body for the purposes of section 61G(2) of the Act. Consideration is therefore limited to whether a NA is should be designated as proposed.
- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Guidance states, "*The local planning authority should aim to designate the area applied for. However, a local planning authority can refuse to designate the area applied for if it considers the area is not appropriate.*" (neighbourhood planning, para. 36).

Consultation

- 4.3 The consultation on the proposed NA received zero comments

Further considerations

- 4.4 The proposed NA is considered appropriate in terms of character and land use as.
- 4.5 The alignment of the NA with existing parish administrative boundaries means that local people will easily understand the proposed NA boundary and may have knowledge and experience of the planning issues within them. Therefore the proposed NA is appropriate to facilitate the vision of community led planning sought by central government.
- 4.6 Section 61 H of the Act requires a local planning authority to consider whether to designate the area concerned as a 'business area'. A proposed NA should be designated as a business area if the local authority considers that the area is wholly or predominantly business in nature (section 61 H(3)). Officers consider that the proposed NA is primarily residential and not suitable for this designation.

Conclusions

- 4.7 Officers do not consider that the proposed NA is inappropriate and consider that it should be designated.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Neighbourhood plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders need to pass an independent examination and a referendum. The costs are estimated at £5,000 to £8,000 for an examination and £4,000 to £7,000 for a referendum. These costs are borne by the local authority.
- 5.2 Guildford Borough Council will support the neighbourhood planning process. Support will require planning officers' time and some resources. The cost of this is unknown.
- 5.3 Guildford Borough Council can bid for a neighbourhood planning support grant for each NA. Funds can be claimed at the following stages:
- a. £5,000 after designating a neighbourhood area, limited to the first five (see below)
 - b. £5,000 after designating neighbourhood forum, limited to the first five
 - c. £5,000 after a neighbourhood plan is publicised prior to examination
 - d. £20,000 on successful completion of a neighbourhood plan examination and
 - e. an additional £10,000 after successful examination of a neighbourhood plan in a business area.
- 5.4 In a letter received from DCLG on 9 March 2016, the government stated that from April 2016 Local Planning Authorities will only be able to claim £5,000 for each of the first five neighbourhood areas designated. Guildford has already designated in excess of five neighbourhood areas and can therefore no longer claim funding at stage a.
- 5.5 Neighbourhood forums can only exist in areas without a parish council. Seale and Sands has a parish council so a forum will not be designated. The Council cannot therefore claim funding at stage b.
- 5.6 In the case of Seale and Sands, the total amount available is £25,000 for stages c and d. Designation of a NA does not guarantee that a neighbourhood plan will be completed, pass examination or pass a referendum, so receipt of the payments after the initial £5,000 for NA designation is not certain.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Where a valid NA application is received, section 61G (5) of the Act requires and empowers councils to either designate the proposed NA or designate an amended NA that includes some or all of the applied for area. This must be done after the consultation period ends.

6.2 Councils may designate either through delegated powers or by committee decision. The Council has put delegated powers in place for this purpose. These powers currently sit with the Interim Director of Development.

7. Human Resource Implications

7.1 Seale and Sands Parish Council, through contact with officers, has shown an intention to produce a neighbourhood plan. The Council is obliged to support this process, a role that we view positively and will proactively fulfil. The new Local Plan is not yet in place so officers will need to provide information regarding emerging strategy and emerging evidence. Neighbourhood plans must help meet the strategic needs of the wider local area and should complement the emerging local plan, so the level of contact needed could be significant.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Officers are satisfied that all requirements under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 have been met and that the area is appropriate in planning terms. It is recommended that the NA be designated as proposed.

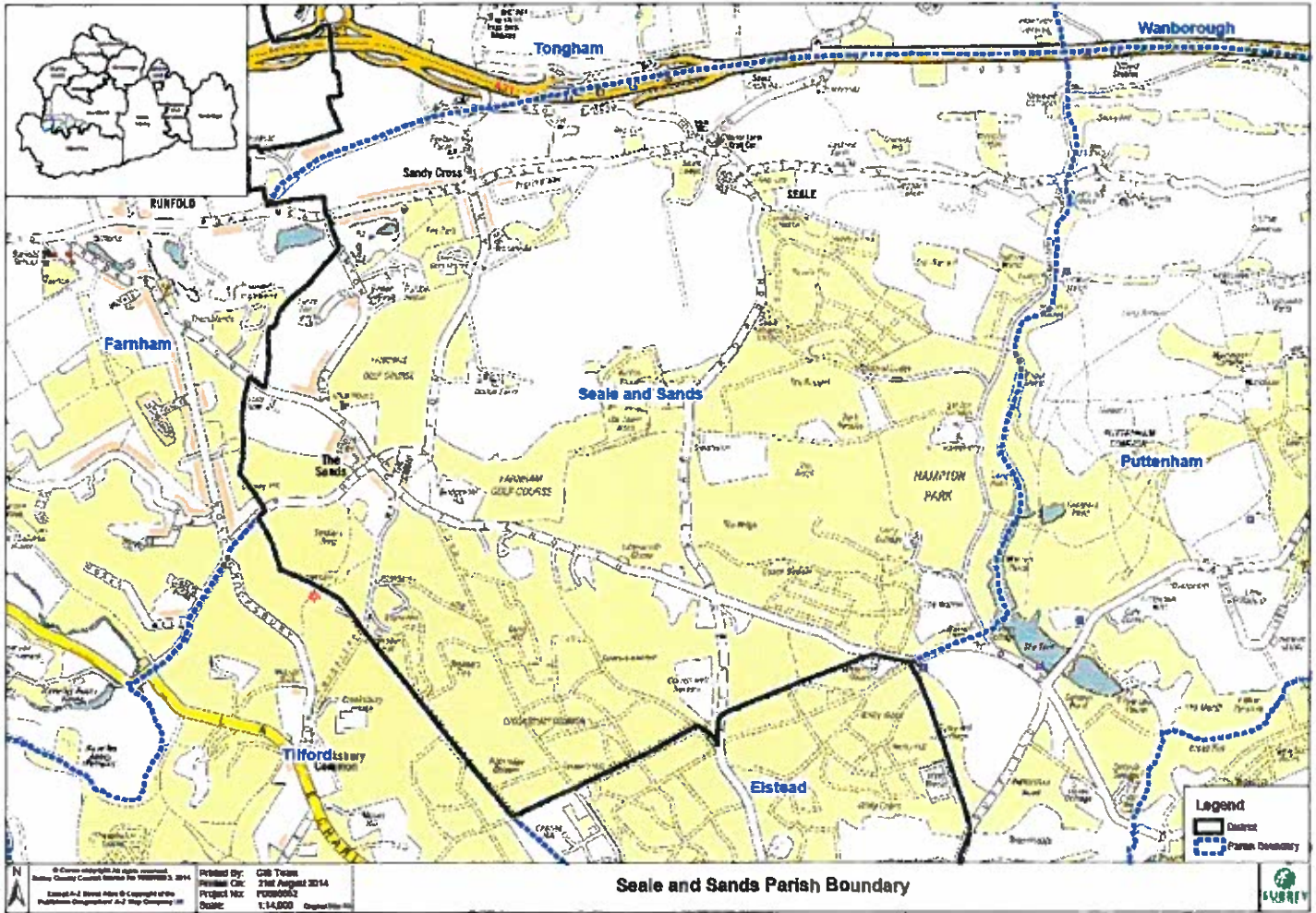
Approved by Neil Taylor
Interim Director of Development

Signed:



Date: 27/5/16

APPENDIX 1 Boundary of Seale and Sands proposed neighbourhood area.



Source: Seale and Sands NA Proposal

Appendix 2: Seale and Sands NA Application

Seale & Sands Parish Council

DATE: 12th February 2016

72 Crooksbury Road, Runfold,
Farnham, Surrey, GU101QD

Phone 01252 782626

E-mail: Bill Nelson - chairman@saspc.info
Margaret Nelson - clerk@saspc.info

Mr Neil Taylor
Director of Development
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead House
Millmead
Guildford
Surrey GU2 4BB

Dear Mr Taylor,

Application for Designation of the Civil Parish of Seale & Sands as a Neighbourhood Area

In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Section 5, Seale & Sands Parish Council formally apply to Guildford Borough Council as the Planning Authority to designate the Civil Parish of Seale & Sands as a Neighbourhood Area, in accordance with Regulation 5 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("The Regulations").

Map - Attached herewith is a map showing the Civil Parish of Seale & Sands, as required by The Regulations.

The Regulations also require the following two statements in support of this application:

Statement 1 - Why the Parish of Seale & Sands is appropriate to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area

The villages of Seale and The Sands are located in South West Surrey, 4 miles from the town of Farnham and 10 miles from Guildford. The Parish Council of Seale was originally set up in 1894 as one of the first parish councils in the country.

Seale and Sands is one of the 24 parishes within the Borough of Guildford and part of the Pilgrims Ward, along with Puttenham, Compton, Wanborough and Shackleford. It is in an area of outstanding beauty within the Green Belt. At the last census it had a population of 887

The Parish Council carried out a Residential questionnaire in 2011 and a Parish Plan was published in early 2012, revised in 2014. In co-operation with the Surrey Community Action a Housing and Community Needs Survey was completed in November 2014.

Statement 2 – Seale & Sands Parish Council is a relevant body for the purposes of Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

We would submit that Seale & Sands Parish is suitable for designation as a Neighbourhood Area under the Regulations. The Parish Council would welcome a decision on this application as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Bill Nelson – Chairman