

We want your views!

Should Rowlands Castle Parish develop
a Neighbourhood Plan or not?

If you think we should, how could you
support it and/or get involved?

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Courtesy of Rowlands Castle Photography Group

Should we develop a Parish Neighbourhood Plan



Why a Neighbourhood Plan?

The existing Parish Plan covers the period 2008 to 2018 and will therefore soon "expire". A new plan of some sort is going to be needed and Rowlands Castle Parish Council (RCPC) is considering what that might be. The options we have are:

1. Develop a New Parish Plan
2. Do nothing and rely on East Hampshire and the SD National Park's Planning Policies
3. Make a Neighbourhood Development Plan, commonly known as Neighbourhood Plans and introduced by Government in 2012.

RCPC favours the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) approach because such a Plan would have to be taken into account by planning authorities in the consideration of planning applications, unlike a Parish Plan.

So what is the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan would have statutory weight and legal force in planning terms. Its aim would be to influence any development proposals within the Parish. It would not be necessary to start from scratch as it would build on the provisions of the existing Parish Plan, and also make use of the existing Village Design Statement of 2000 and the Local Landscape Character Assessment of 2012, to ensure continuity where appropriate.

It would set out planning policies that can be used when planning applications are being considered for the Parish. Some of these might encourage development proposals for the benefit of the local community; others may be designed to preserve the special character of the Parish. For example, policies may be needed to protect the Parish from more housing development and to maintain the green areas between Rowlands Castle village and neighbouring areas, or to provide local people with the opportunity to downsize and continue to live in the Parish. Traffic and parking issues may also be addressed.

There may well be other issues that you as residents consider important, and that is why the involvement of members of the public in the preparation of the NP is so essential. At the end of the process, the Rowlands Castle Parish community must feel that it is their Plan not one imposed on them.

It is important to note that an NP cannot go against the policies of the local planning authorities ie EHDC and SDNP. Likewise, it would have no impact on developments already permitted within the Parish

What is the procedure for making such a Plan?

The rules require that RCPC consults the residents of the Parish to ascertain whether there is public support for producing an NP. If there is insufficient support, no further action will be taken.

If there is sufficient support then the next step is to establish a Project Group to prepare the NP – it must be prepared as a community document, RCPC cannot undertake it alone. For example, the Group could comprise 9 people including a maximum of three councillors. The Group could also ask other members of the public with specialist knowledge to work on specific issues.

Once prepared, the NP will have to be approved by a referendum of all the residents of Rowlands Castle Parish and over 50% of those voting must support it before it becomes effective.

East Hampshire District Council's Planning team is prepared to assist and the Parish Council will need to make funds available for the employment of a consultant as and when necessary.

The Next Steps

Parish councillors are speaking to local organisations to brief their members on the Project and gauge initial levels of support. RCPC will also include information on its website and Facebook page with the aim of reaching as many residents as possible on this topic.

A Presentation and Consultation will take place in the Parish Hall in February 2017 to assess public support and how many people might volunteer to work on the project. RCPC is asking all local organisations to support this event and do what they can to bring it to the attention of residents.

An NP cannot and must not be produced by RCPC alone so it is essential that members of the community are fully involved in its preparation.

RCPC is keen to hear your views on whether or not the Parish should develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

Please let us know your thoughts and/or whether you'd like to get involved — see back page for contact details