

Public Meeting Monday 14th March 2016, 7:30 PM, Longwick Village Hall

Longwick-cum-Ilmer Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Parish Council has arranged this Public Meeting to allow residents and businesses to appreciate why at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 24th February, it was decided that the Longwick-cum-Ilmer Parish Neighbourhood Plan would be formally **withdrawn** from the Local Development Plan process.

The Parish Council took this major and unexpected decision on the recommendation of Wycombe District Council, further to the receipt of the Examiner's Report on the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan by both Councils on 11 February.

The Submission Version of the Plan had been submitted by Wycombe District Council for examination on 8th December 2015 following the end of the six week consultation period. The content and recommendations of the Examiner's Report came as a complete shock, bearing in mind a 'Health Check' on the pre-Submission version undertaken by another independent and qualified inspector had concluded that the Plan was suitable to proceed to Referendum subject to some relatively minor changes.

The District Council assessed the implications of the Examiner's Report and took legal advice. The result of that was to issue its own Report with Recommendations to the Parish Council. An Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council was called at short notice so that the status of the neighbourhood plan could be known and provide clarification for how to assess the existing pending planning applications.

In short, although the Examiner did recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan could proceed to a Referendum, it would be on the basis of accepting significant modifications. In the view of the District Council, taking the Plan forward with those modifications would not achieve sustainable development. Indeed many of the safeguards built in to the Plan to limit the extent of development and make it dependent on improvements to transport provision and infrastructure would be lost.

In the District Council's Report to the Parish Council, four possible courses of action were identified, from the regulatory powers governing Neighbourhood Plans.

1. Make the recommendations as set out by the Examiner's Report and proceed to Referendum.
2. WDC refuse the Examiner's Report, setting out why it fails to meet the Basic Conditions.
3. Rewrite the policies, re-consult and submit the Plan for examination again.
4. The Parish Council to withdraw the plan.

At the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on 24th February, each of these options were discussed and after deliberation, the Parish Council unanimously decided to follow the recommendation of the District Council, to withdraw the Neighbourhood Plan.

This decision was not taken lightly. A great amount of effort had been put in to preparing the Draft and Submission Versions of the Plan, including the consultation exercises. A year ago there was a clear mandate for the Parish Council to proceed and the local consultation on the Draft Version of the Plan showed a great majority of support from those responding, about 4:1.

Wycombe District Council Planners will be attending the Public Meeting on 14th March to explain why it recommended the withdrawal of the Plan, and to answer questions on how development of the community can be planned in the near and medium future, incorporating the main objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan which gained such support. Your Parish Councillors will be there too.

The Examiner's Report and the WDC Report on its implications are being made available on the Parish Council website. The Parish Council encourages you to attend the Public Meeting.