



**AGENDA ITEM: 13**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>11th February 2014</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Grovehill Future – Designation of the Grovehill Neighbourhood Forum</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	Cllr Andrew Williams , Portfolio Holder for Planning & Regeneration  Author/Responsible Officer: James Doe, Assistant Director, Planning, Development and Regeneration  Jo Deacon, Hemel Evolution Team Project Co-ordinator
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Members on the progress of the Grovehill Neighbourhood project and to designate the Neighbourhood Forum as the next formal stage of preparing a neighbourhood plan.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the application by Grovehill Future to be designated as the Neighbourhood Forum for the Grovehill Neighbourhood Area is approved.
<b>Corporate objectives:</b>	The Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan supports the Council's vision and in particular the corporate objectives of Building Community Capacity, regeneration and affordable housing.
<b>Implications:</b>	<u>Financial</u> In May 2011 Dacorum Borough Council was awarded a £20,000 grant from the Neighbourhood Planning Front Runners Scheme to support a neighbourhood planning project. Following the successful Neighbourhood Plan Area designation in December 2012, £5000 was allocated to DBC to help progress the Neighbourhood Plan. During 2013, DBC successfully assisted the group to secure £4,540 of grant funding to help them progress their plan, DBC is currently administering these monies on behalf of the group. DCLG has announced that successful Forum applications would also attract £5,000 and a further £25,000 on successful completion

	of the neighbourhood planning examination. The costs of preparing a neighbourhood plan are currently estimated at between £42,000 - £70,000
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u> None arising from this report.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment included within the PID for this area of work.
Equalities Implications	An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the project documentation.
Health And Safety Implications	None arising from this report.
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p><b>Monitoring Officer:</b></p> <p>The designation of Grovehill Future as a Neighbourhood Forum will enable it to submit a proposal to the Council for the making of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). A NDP is essentially a plan which sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the whole or any part of a particular Neighbourhood Area (in this case the Grovehill Neighbourhood Area).</p> <p>Parish or Town Councils can submit proposals for the making of NDPs, but in unparished areas (such as Grovehill) proposals for NDPs can only be made by a designated Neighbourhood Forum.</p> <p>The Council has a duty to support a Neighbourhood Forum in the preparation of a NDP. This includes providing technical support, expertise and resources. The Council is also responsible for arranging an independent examination of the draft NDP and to meet the cost of the examination.</p> <p>If the NDP meets all the necessary criteria it can only come into being if more than 50% of those voting in a referendum vote in favour of it. If the referendum is in favour of the NDP it must be adopted by the Council. The Council is responsible for arranging the referendum which must take place in the Grovehill Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p><b>Deputy S.151 Officer</b></p> <p>The cost of Council support for the development of the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan is not expected to exceed existing budgets. The development of future Neighbourhood Plans within the borough are unlikely to attract central government funding and this may result in budgetary implications for the Council.</p>
Consultees:	

Background papers:	Cabinet report- December 2012
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

## Background

1. The Localism Act 2011 provides the foundation for neighbourhood planning. This aims to give local communities more control over housing and planning decisions. A neighbourhood plan sets a vision for the future and can be detailed or general depending on what local people want. A neighbourhood plan is prepared by the local community but is adopted by the local authority and becomes part of the local planning framework.  
  
Neighbourhood planning can be taken forward by either town or parish councils or 'neighbourhood forums'. These forums will be community groups that are designated to take a plan forward.
2. In February 2011 Dacorum Borough Council made a bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government neighbourhood planning front runners scheme to support the development of a plan for Grovehill in Hemel Hempstead. In May 2011, Dacorum was awarded a £20,000 grant as part of the third wave of the scheme. DBC invited the local community of Grovehill to create a Neighbourhood Plan and since its inception meeting in December 2011, the group now known as Grovehill Future have been progressing their plan, supported by DBC. In January 2013, DBC were awarded £5,000 for the successful Plan Area Designation of the Grovehill Future Group.

## Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation - Cabinet December 2012

3. On 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012, Dacorum Borough Council received an application from Grovehill Future to designate the Grovehill Neighbourhood Area, This application was approved for designation by Cabinet in December 2012, and part of the criteria is that the group making the application is, or is capable of becoming, a qualifying body or Forum.
4. Grovehill Future's terms of reference provide evidence of its purpose of establishment, written constitution and eligibility for joining the group. Grovehill Future currently has the required 21 voting members (residents, ward Members and business or organisation representatives who have attended three meetings) with further individuals who are eligible.

## Neighbourhood Forum Application - Cabinet February 2014

5. On 31 October, as result of reaching compliance with the forum criteria, the application to 'Designate the Neighbourhood Forum' was deemed to be valid and a consultation took place from 20 November 2013 to 3 January 2014. The application was advertised in the Gazette, on the Dacorum Borough Council website, and locally in Grovehill through posters, notice boards and networking.
6. Following completion of the consultation, DBC must ensure that the Neighbourhood Forum meets the criteria set out in section 61F(5) & (7) of the Town and Country

Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act). An application to designate a Neighbourhood Forum area can only be refused if there are valid planning reasons.

Under section 61F(5) a local planning authority may designate an organisation, in this case Grovehill Future Project as a Neighbourhood Forum if it is satisfied that it meets the following conditions:

- a) It is established for the express purpose -
    - I. of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of, or
    - II. includes the neighbourhood area concerned (whether or not it is also established for the express purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in such an area).
  - b) Its membership is open to individuals who -
    - I. live in the neighbourhood area concerned, or
    - II. work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise), or
    - III. are elected members of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,
  - c) Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom either –
    - I. lives in the neighbourhood area concerned, or
    - II. works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise), or
    - III. is an elected member of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned.
  - d) It has a written constitution.
7. Under section 61F(7) in deciding whether to designate an organisation or body as a Neighbourhood Forum, DBC:
- (a) Must have regard to the desirability of designating an organisation or body-
    - (i) that has taken reasonable steps to secure membership that includes at least one person from each of the three membership groups identified,
    - (ii) that has membership drawn from different places in the area and different sections of the community in the area, and
    - (iii) whose purpose reflects the character of the area.
  - (e) May only designate one organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum for a neighbourhood area, and only if the body has applied to do so, and only where the area does not include part or all of a parish.
  - (f) If DBC refuse an application it must give reasons for the decision to the applicant.
8. Dacorum Borough Council received 43 responses to the forum application, attached as appendix C. The consultation responses have not raised any valid issues which

would lead to refusal. It is therefore, recommended that Members approve the application to designate the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Forum.

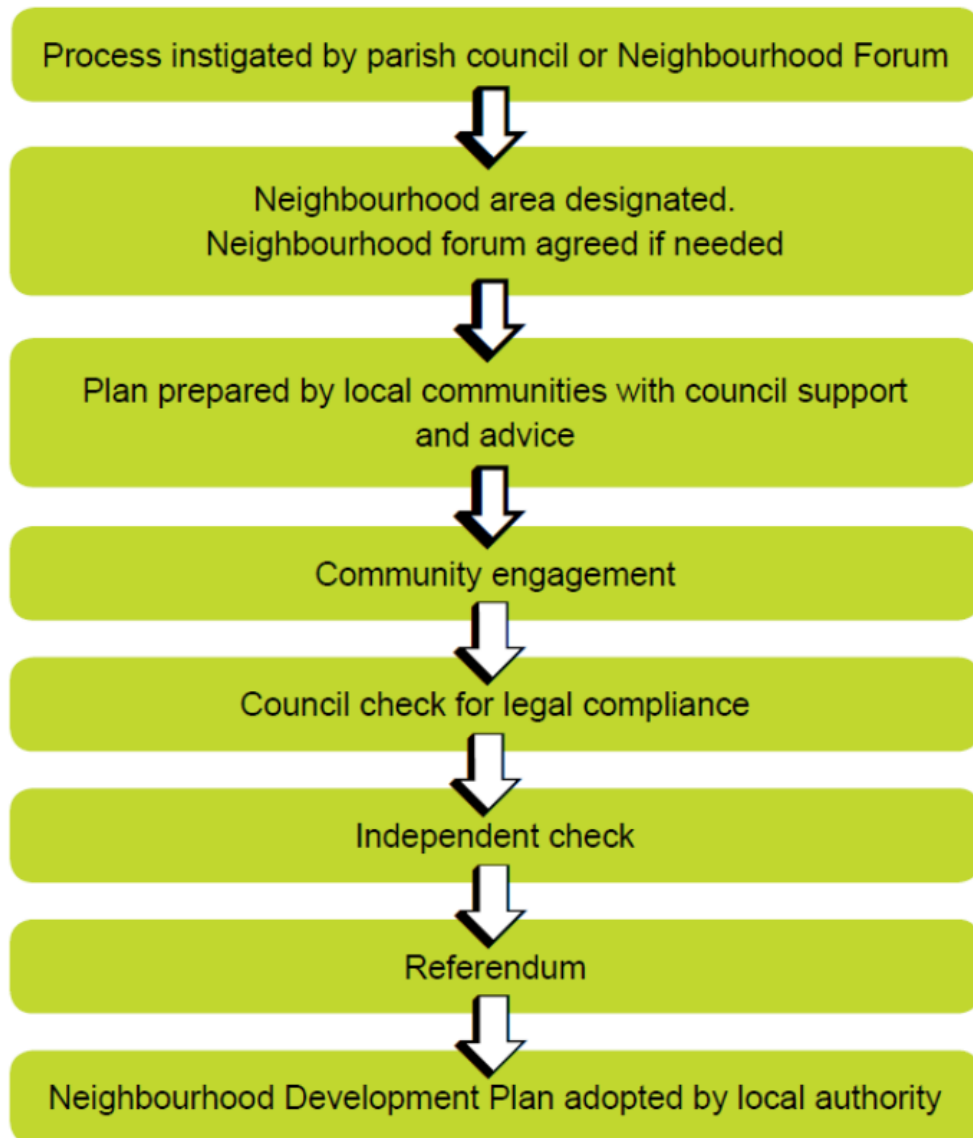
### **Next steps**

9. Neighbourhood Planning is a lengthy process with many steps (see Appendix A on the next page), some of which are now complete. The following are still to be completed:
  - Preparing and consulting on a draft Neighbourhood Plan for Grovehill
  - Appointing and organising the examination
  - Holding a referendum on the neighbourhood plan
  - Adopting the neighbourhood plan where all the requirements are met

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## Process map

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**Appendix B – Consultation statement (separate document)**  
**Appendix C – Consultation Analysis (separate document)**