



## CABINET REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	Designation of the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area & Forum for the purposes of neighbourhood planning
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**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Cabinet Meeting Date:</b>	13 September 2017
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Directorate:</b>	Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Tim Hadland
<b>Ward(s)</b>	Semilong and Trinity Wards

### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 To designate a Neighbourhood Area within the Semilong and Trinity wards under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 To designate a Neighbourhood Forum, to be known as the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum, under Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

### 2. Recommendations

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- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the analysis of representations received in response to the publicising of the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum applications (Appendix 1)
- 2.2 That Cabinet designates the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area as published in Appendix 2 for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

- 2.3 That, following the designation of the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area, Cabinet designates Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum (Appendix 3) under Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for a period of five years for the purposes of producing a Neighbourhood Plan, subject to the following conditions:
- Maintaining a written constitution
  - Holding an Annual General Meeting within 12 weeks of the designation
  - Maintaining a minimum of 21 members drawn from each of the subsections set out within the Localism Act section 61F(5)

### **3. Issues and Choices**

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#### **3.1 Report Background**

##### **Introduction**

- 3.1.1 This report requests the designation of (1) the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area and (2) Neighbourhood Forum as per the provisions for Neighbourhood Planning set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 [The Act]. The Act is supported by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 [The Regulations] which came into force on the 6 April 2012.
- 3.1.2 Under the Act and Regulations, Northampton Borough Council has a statutory duty to assist groups wishing to progress Neighbourhood Plans. This includes the designation of the Neighbourhood Area and, in areas where there are no Parish Councils, such as the Semilong and Trinity Wards, a Neighbourhood Forum.
- 3.1.3 The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan must be made in accordance with The Regulations. Once the Council has designated a Neighbourhood Area and Forum, the community are responsible for preparing the plan. This occurs with technical assistance provided by the Planning Department and others, dependent on the issues. Once prepared, the Plan is checked by the Council to determine if the *basic conditions* are satisfied before it is subject to an independent examination and local referendum.

##### **A Neighbourhood Plan for Semilong and Trinity**

- 3.1.4 In 2016 members of the Semilong and Trinity neighbourhoods came together to talk about the anticipated growth and development proposed for these wards and to share a vision for the future.
- 3.1.5 Two new academy schools, the development of the University site and the need to protect and / or enhance vital spaces like the Racecourse and the wildlife site behind St Georges Avenue led to the idea of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area. This will provide a community-led framework to guide future development in the proposed Neighbourhood Area and help tackle associated social, economic and environmental issues arising from that.

## 3.2 Issues

### Designation of Neighbourhood Area and Forum

- 3.2.1 In reaching a decision careful consideration must be given to the following factors:
- (a) Designating a Neighbourhood Area that is suitable for the purposes of Neighbourhood Planning
  - (b) Being satisfied that reasonable steps have been taken to secure a representative Forum to take forward the plan

### Plan Area

- 3.2.2 The proposed Neighbourhood Area incorporates part of the Semilong and Trinity Wards and includes the Northampton Racecourse. It includes the Barrack Road Conservation Area, some diverse and distinctive residential areas, green spaces, a wildlife area, light industrial and commercial units, places of worship for several faiths and educational establishments.
- 3.2.3 In assessing the Neighbourhood Area application the Council has queried the non-inclusion of Monarch Road, Arthur Street and the west end of Balfour Street. The proposed Neighbourhood Forum have confirmed that when drawing the boundary they wanted to focus on a Neighbourhood Area where they could affect a positive change. This is a common practice when determining a Neighbourhood Area and one the Forum supported.
- 3.2.4 The omitted area was discussed for inclusion but left out as it was determined to be an established settlement quite different in character to other streets in the selected Neighbourhood Area. The proposed Forum were of the view they would not be able to affect change and therefore it should not fall within the boundary.
- 3.2.5 The Regulations place the duty to publicise the Neighbourhood Area application on the Council. This is intended to ensure that all groups are properly informed of the intention to designate a Neighbourhood Area and that the area meets the requirements of the Regulations and Act. On Friday 9 June 2017 the Council formally received an application requesting the designation of the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area. In accordance with the Regulations<sup>1</sup> the application was publicised and representations invited from Tuesday 13 June to 5.00pm on Tuesday 25 July 2017.
- 3.2.6 The proposed Neighbourhood Area has been subject to some criticism through the publicising process of the application (see Appendix 1). Of the 47 representations received 37 openly objected to the inclusion of the Racecourse in the proposed Neighbourhood Area. However, upon analysis, the similarity and content of the representations indicate a lack of understanding about the neighbourhood planning process and the benefits that can be brought to a Neighbourhood Area.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 6 (Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012)

- 3.2.7 The principle concern expressed is that if the Racecourse is positioned within the Neighbourhood Area members of the community external to that boundary will have no say in matters affecting the future of it. There is clearly a strong feeling of affection towards the Racecourse but the fear from local people that they may be excluded from taking part in developing ideas to revive it are speculative and misguided; this is not how Neighbourhood Planning works.
- 3.2.8 A good Neighbourhood Plan is founded on a robust programme of community engagement and a strong, proportionate evidence base. The extent to which these foundations have been established and exercised will be examined by an independent examiner. This will ensure appropriate levels of engagement / evidence gathering has been undertaken; it will ensure that the Plan is based on a proper understanding of the area and of the views, aspirations, wants and needs of local people.
- 3.2.9 The proposed Neighbourhood Forum, working in partnership with the Council, is continuing with their programme of community engagement. Their focus is on working with concerned members in the locality to develop a clearer understanding about the process of Neighbourhood Planning and emphasising the benefits and opportunities to be gained. The most recent event, held on 31 August 2017, saw an Officer of the Council make a presentation to the proposed forum and wider community on the process of Neighbourhood Planning and working examples of how other Neighbourhood Plans had resulted in positive outcomes.
- 3.2.10 The concern about being excluded from decisions affecting the future of the racecourse led to the majority of representations wanting to see the Racecourse omitted from the Neighbourhood Area. This is an indication that there is a lack of understanding about the advantages of a Neighbourhood Area. A Neighbourhood Area is sometimes referred to as an Area of Benefit in reflection of the opportunities a Neighbourhood Plan can bring to it.
- 3.2.11 A Neighbourhood Plan can develop policy to support appropriate development opportunities (sport, leisure and recreational) in the right location, for example, on the Racecourse. Community proposals and aspirations about the regeneration and amelioration of the Racecourse, for example enhancing pedestrian links; making entrances and exits more attractive to feel safer; creating key features to encourage footfall can be contained in planning guidance developed to support Neighbourhood Plan policy. This would mean community aspirations are delivered in line with community vision.
- 3.2.12 From a funding perspective, if the Community Infrastructure Levy continues the Neighbourhood Plan can secure 25% of the funding arising through receipts from development in the Plan area. Some of this could be secured to realise community aspirations for the enrichment of Racecourse environ. In addition, Neighbourhood Areas often attract funding streams from alternative sources in support of development, regeneration and enhancement. With these possibilities in mind it would not be appropriate to advise that the Racecourse should be excluded from the Neighbourhood Area

- 3.2.13 The lack of understanding with regard to the Neighbourhood Planning process and benefits that a Neighbourhood Area can bring is a community engagement issue. It is not a sufficient planning reason for the Council to refuse the application for the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, while Members will be mindful of the representations received they are reminded that the independent examination provides a safeguard to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is founded on a robust programme of community engagement and a strong, proportionate evidence base. As a consequence any weight afforded to the objections is weakened.
- 3.2.14 There is no specific provision within the Regulations for withdrawing an area application once it has been submitted. If the proposed Neighbourhood Forum wish to amend the area they must inform the Council who will advise that a new application must be submitted with the revised boundary. If accepted by the Council the new application will be subject to the 6 week publicising process.
- 3.2.15 The Council may, in determining any application, modify designations already made<sup>2</sup> but in determining an application the Council must have regard to the desirability of maintaining the existing boundaries of areas already designated<sup>3</sup>. **Neighbourhood Forum**
- 3.2.16 In addition to designating a Neighbourhood Area for Semilong and Trinity the Council must also seek to designate a Neighbourhood Forum as the Qualifying Body to take forward the Neighbourhood Plan. Once designated the Forum is the only group who may prepare the Neighbourhood Plan for the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.2.17 An application for the Forum which satisfied the requirements of the Regulations<sup>4</sup> was received on Friday 9 June 2017. The application was publicised<sup>5</sup> and representations invited from Tuesday 13 June to 5.00pm on Tuesday 25 July 2017.
- 3.2.18 A small number of representations were received during the publication period suggesting changes to the Constitution with particular reference to the membership and structure (see Appendix 1). The Constitution is considered to be compliant with the Forum's legal obligations, and therefore does not have implications for the determination of the Forum and Area applications. However the need to resolve any disharmony is acknowledged and it is suggested that these issues be addressed within the community. To reflect this it is recommended that should a designation be made, an AGM is held within 12 weeks at which matters relating to the Constitution and any other concerns can be discussed.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 61G (6) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

<sup>3</sup> Section 61G (4)(b) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

<sup>4</sup> Regulation 8 (Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012)

<sup>5</sup> Regulation 9 (Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012)

3.2.19 Without the designation of both the Area and Forum, a Neighbourhood Plan cannot be advanced. The designation of a Neighbourhood Area is required prior to the Forum as a forum's designation is directly linked to a designated area. Therefore, if Cabinet decide to refuse the application for the area then they must too refuse the application for the forum.

### 3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 The options presented below are those that are considered as choices that can be made in accordance with the Act and the Regulations.

**3.3.2 Option 1 [Recommended]: Designate the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area as published (no amendments); designate the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum**

3.3.3 By designating the area as applied for, the Council will be acting consistently in respect of its approach toward designating areas. It should be noted that only one previous application, that of the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Area and Spring Boroughs Voice (as the Neighbourhood Forum) received objections and / or differences in opinion through community representations during the publicising of the proposed Neighbourhood Area and Forum applications.

3.3.4 These were weighed up through the Cabinet Report<sup>6</sup> with the final outcome being the designation of Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Area as published and Spring Boroughs Voice (as the Neighbourhood Forum). This decision has led to a successful conclusion for Spring Boroughs. The Spring Boroughs Voice worked closely with local volunteers to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

At full Council on 18 April 2016 Northampton Borough Council made the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan. It now forms part of the Development Plan meaning that it is the starting point when deciding planning applications.

3.3.5 Once designated, it is recommended that the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum is designated as the Qualifying Body. This will allow the formal stages of Neighbourhood Planning to progress in a timely manner and ensure that the momentum and enthusiasm of the community be retained for the Neighbourhood Planning Project.

**3.3.6 Option 2: Designate a reduced Neighbourhood Area to exclude the Racecourse; designate the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum**

3.3.7 The requirements of the Act mean the Council is required to secure some, or all of the area, for the purposes of Neighbourhood Planning. Having reviewed the planning context, there are no planning matters that would preclude designation of the whole area from Neighbourhood Planning. Excluding the Racecourse from the proposed Neighbourhood Area would only serve to limit opportunities that could be available to the park as set out above in paragraphs 3.2.7 to 3.2.9. If the neighbourhood area designated is not the same as the one originally applied for, a prospective neighbourhood forum

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<sup>6</sup> Northampton Borough Council Cabinet Report 11 December 2013

may have to revisit its membership, purpose or constitution and submit a revised forum application.

### **3.3.8 Option 3: Designate a wider area as the Neighbourhood Area; designate the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum**

3.3.9 47 representations were received as part of the publicising process. Of these two ostensibly approved of the Racecourse forming part of the Neighbourhood Area. Eight representations did not specifically state that the Racecourse should be omitted from the proposed neighbourhood area but they did express concern for its inclusion rather than support. The remaining 37 openly objected to the Racecourse forming part of the Neighbourhood Area.

3.3.10 As noted above in 3.2.11 the principle concern expressed is that if the Racecourse is positioned within the Neighbourhood Area members of the community external to that boundary will have no say in matters affecting the future of it. The following narrative explained this is not the process of neighbourhood planning and concluded that the lack of understanding expressed with regard to the Neighbourhood Planning process and benefits that a Neighbourhood Area can bring is a community engagement issue. It is not a sufficient planning reason for the Council to refuse the application for the Neighbourhood Area.

3.3.11 The Council could consider designating an area wider than that proposed to include all the properties backing onto / fronting the Racecourse as there were representations purposely stating that these residents have a direct relationship with the Racecourse and specific concerns about decision making that may affect them. Streets including the east end of St Georges Avenue, Kingsley Road, East Park Parade, Colwyn Road, Beaconsfield Terrace, Watkin Terrace could all be included but the rationale is questionable.

3.3.12 Firstly, the majority of representations lobbied for the Racecourse to be excluded from the Neighbourhood Area not that properties abutting it should be included. Secondly the inclusion of Watkin Terrace, Beaconsfield Terrace and Colwyn Road would extend the Neighbourhood Area into Castle Ward. If the neighbourhood area designated is not the same as the one originally applied for, a prospective neighbourhood forum may have to revisit its membership, purpose or constitution and submit a revised forum application.

3.3.13 Lastly, this approach would contravene the preferred approach of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum as set out in para 3.2.3. This advocates the drawing of a boundary which focused on a Neighbourhood Area where they could affect positive change. The Forum were of the view at the time of drawing that their potential to influence change relating to these properties was limited and therefore exclusion was justified

3.3.14 Paragraph 3.2.9 established that the development of a Neighbourhood Plan is founded on a robust, programme of community engagement and the development of a strong, proportionate evidence base. At all stages of plan making the proposed Forum will need to look at how development and change influences the surrounding local community and ensure that those local communities are consulted. This would include all residents abutting the Racecourse given its significance to the plan making area. Therefore there are insufficient planning reasons for the Council to seek an expansion to the area.

### **3.3.15 Option 4: Refuse both applications**

3.3.16 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 61G (5) [as amended], Northampton Borough Council is required to designate a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of Neighbourhood Planning or to publish reasons for refusal. Where a valid application is made, the authority must exercise their power of designation to secure some or all of the specified area. This means that there is no option to refuse the designation of the Neighbourhood Area applied for, without designating an area that includes all or part of it.

3.3.16 The Regulations as amended prescribe a date for determination of an area application. The prescribed date for determining the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area application is 13 weeks from the date immediately following that on which the application is first publicised. Therefore the Council must determine the application by 13 September 2017. If the time limit is not met the Council must designate the area applied for.

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

4.1.1 The designation of a Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum will allow residents and local interested bodies to take forward the formal process of Neighbourhood Planning for the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area. Once designated no other Neighbourhood Areas may be designated that overlap with the area.

4.1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan must have appropriate regard to national policy and be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan for the area, namely the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (WNJCS) and the developing Northampton Local Plan (Part 2). Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for Northampton and used in the determination of Planning Applications. Neighbourhood Plans carry significant weight as part of the planning process.

4.1.3 It is expected that the Neighbourhood Plan will provide a local interpretation of WNJCS Policies N1 and N12 for the Neighbourhood Area, with applications for planning permission determined against policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Delivering this plan is subject to the meeting the statutory requirements of the Regulations, including independent examination and a final referendum.

## **4.2 Resources and Risk**

- 4.2.1 The majority of the costs of preparing a neighbourhood plan are the responsibility of the neighbourhood planning group. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 place duties on local planning authorities with regards to neighbourhood planning, including the role associated with supporting local neighbourhood forums in preparing their neighbourhood plans.
- 4.2.2 To assist the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has made available grants to local planning authorities of up to £10,000 for each neighbourhood plan which are paid in stages in accordance with the progress of the Plan. This money can only be used for neighbourhood planning purposes. It is intended to cover staff time and other costs associated with the Council's statutory duties.
- 4.2.3 It should be noted that there is a cap to the number of grants an LPA can apply for. The limit is for five Neighbourhood Plans. The Council has already received three grants for the Spring Boroughs, Duston and Growing Together Neighbourhood Plans. The proposed Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Plan would mean making a fourth application to DCLG.
- 4.2.4 In addition to the DCLG grant the Council has a small budget for Neighbourhood Planning to provide additional resources to meet the Council's statutory duties in relation to neighbourhood planning including publicity and administration costs such as referendums.
- 4.2.5 Publicity costs associated with making the Neighbourhood Plan will be met within the existing Neighbourhood Plans budget and staff resources to implement the Plan will come from the Council's existing staff - primarily within the Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning Directorate.
- 4.2.6 On 21 September 2015 the Council approved the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule for the Borough and that all liable developments granted planning permission, including those allowed by an appeal decision, and submitted on or after 1st April 2016 will need to pay the Levy. Once the Plan is made the Council will engage with the community to agree how the 25% of the CIL receipts from development within the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area should be spent.

## **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 Neighbourhood planning is part of the Government's initiative to empower local communities to bring forward planning proposals at the local level, as outlined in Section 116 of the Localism Act 2011. The Act and the subsequent Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (known as the 2012 Regulations) confer specific functions on local planning authorities in relation to neighbourhood planning and sets out the steps that must be followed in relation to neighbourhood planning.

- 4.3.2 The Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area and Forum applications have been publicised in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The designation of a Neighbourhood Area and related Forum are vital steps in empowering communities to take forward Neighbourhood Planning. Under the Localism Act, Northampton Borough Council has a statutory responsibility to groups who wish to exercise their right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. As such, a refusal of either the area or Forum following submission of a valid application could lead to potential legal challenge.
- 4.3.3 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has introduced additional requirements for neighbourhood planning which have been incorporated into the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016, and the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. These Regulations amend the 2012 Regulations introducing timescales within which the Council must act in relation to the different stages of the neighbourhood planning process.
- 4.3.4 In relation to the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area application the 2012 Regulations (as amended) require the following:

**Prescribed date for determination of an area application**

The prescribed date for determining the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area application is 13 weeks from the date immediately following that on which the application is first publicised. Therefore the Council must determine the application by 13 September 2017. If the time limit is not met the Council must designate all of the area.

**Publicising a designation of a neighbourhood area and neighbourhood forum**

As soon as possible after designating the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area and Forum the Council is required to publish on their website and in such other manner as is likely to bring to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area:

- The name of the neighbourhood area and forum
- A map to identify the area
- A copy of the written constitution of the neighbourhood forum
- Contact details for at least one member of the neighbourhood forum

- 4.3.5 The designation of a Neighbourhood Forum will apply for a period of 5 years unless it is withdrawn voluntarily by the Forum, or by the Council by reference to the conditions under which it was designated. As such, it is necessary to state that these conditions are considered to be:

- That an AGM is held, the first taking place within 12 weeks of the designation so as to discuss matters relating to the constitution raised during consultation

- That the minutes of the AGM are made available for publication on Northampton Borough Council's website
- That a minimum of 21 members are retained at all times throughout the duration of the Forum and names, addresses and eligibility in reference to 61F(5)b is reported to the Council following each AGM

4.3.6 At the Plan submission stage the Council are required with agreement from the Neighbourhood Forum, to appoint a suitably qualified independent person to examine the Plan. At various stages of the plan-making process Planning Officers will review the plan to ensure it is being prepared in a manner consistent with the Regulations and other relevant legislation (such as Human Rights and Environmental requirements).

#### **4.4 Equality and Health**

4.4.1 The designation of the Neighbourhood Area and Forum will allow residents and those who work in the area, to help shape future policies and in turn, improve the physical quality and inclusiveness of the neighbourhood. Moreover, engagement in the process is likely to have a positive impact, giving residents power to shape their own communities.

4.4.2 This report focuses on the formal designation of the Neighbourhood Area and Forum for the purposes of enabling the community to take forward Neighbourhood Planning. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment or Community Impact assessment has not been completed. However, these will be requested, prepared and submitted alongside the draft plan. Measures will be built into the Community Engagement Strategy, which is an element that the Council will continue to provide support with.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

4.5.1 It should be noted that it is not the Council's duty to explain what the applications are for or justify why a Neighbourhood Plan is being progressed for this area, merely to draw attention to the fact that an application for designation has been received.

4.5.2 On Friday 9 June 2017 the Council formally received applications requesting the designation of the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Area and Forum. In accordance with the Regulations<sup>7</sup> the applications were publicised and representations invited from Tuesday 13 June to 5.00pm on Tuesday 25 July 2017. This met the regulatory requirement of publicising for a period of 'not less than six weeks'.

4.5.3 The regulations provide flexibility in terms of publicising applications. Northampton Borough Council made inspection copies available in the One Stop Shop and Northampton's Central Library. The applications were also published through dedicated sections on the Council's website namely the Council's formal Consultations page and the Neighbourhood Planning page hosted by Planning Policy.

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<sup>7</sup> Regulations 6 and 9 (Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012)

4.5.4 In addition to this 'deposit' copies for inspection were made available at locally nominated inspection locations namely: Cathedral Church of St Mary and St Thomas; Umbrella Pavilion; Alliston Gardens Youth and Community Centre; Northampton Bangladeshi Centre; St George's Mosque; Sikh Community Centre. The Council created an 'awareness raising' poster for the proposed Neighbourhood Forum to publicise the applications. These were posted by members of the group in local shops and facilities.

4.5.5 Appendix 1 sets out the full analysis of representations to the publicising process of the Neighbourhood Area and Forum.

#### **4.5.6 Neighbourhood Area**

4.5.7 Of the 47 representations received 37 openly objected to the inclusion of the Racecourse in the proposed Neighbourhood Area. However, upon analysis, the similarity and content of the representations indicate a lack of understanding about the neighbourhood planning process and the benefits that can be brought to a Neighbourhood Area.

4.5.8 Explanations as to the process of neighbourhood planning, the benefits afforded to a Neighbourhood Area and subsequently, the rationale for affording little weight in planning terms to the representations received are set out in Section 3.2: Issues. These details will not be repeated here. It is considered that the explanation set out in Section 3.2 provides sufficient justification behind the recommendation to determine the Neighbourhood Area application as published.

#### **4.5.9 Neighbourhood Forum**

4.5.10 A small number of representations were received during the publication period suggesting changes to the Constitution with particular reference to the membership and structure (see Appendix 1). The Constitution is considered to be compliant with the Forum's legal obligations, and therefore it is recommended that the Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum is designated.

4.5.11 However the need to resolve any discord is acknowledged and as such this Report has recommended that one of the conditions of designation is an AGM to be held within 12 weeks following the designation to discuss these matters and resolve them at a community level.

### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

4.6.1 The designation of a Neighbourhood Area will contribute to a number of Priority Outcomes within the Corporate Plan 2017 - 2022. The following Priorities should benefit particular Safer Communities by empowering the local community to engage with and make a positive contribution to the security of the neighbourhood; Protecting our Environment by empowering the local community to actively plan for and address specific needs for the Racecourse and the look and feel of the neighbourhood;

Housing for Everyone by enabling the local community to inform future developments; and Love Northampton by encouraging and supporting the local community to actively participate in local democracy through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for their area.

#### **4.7 Other Implications**

4.7.1 N/A

#### **5. Background Papers**

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- 5.1 Appendix 1: Analysis of representations
- 5.2 Appendix 2: Application for Neighbourhood Area
- 5.3 Appendix 3: Application for Neighbourhood Forum

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