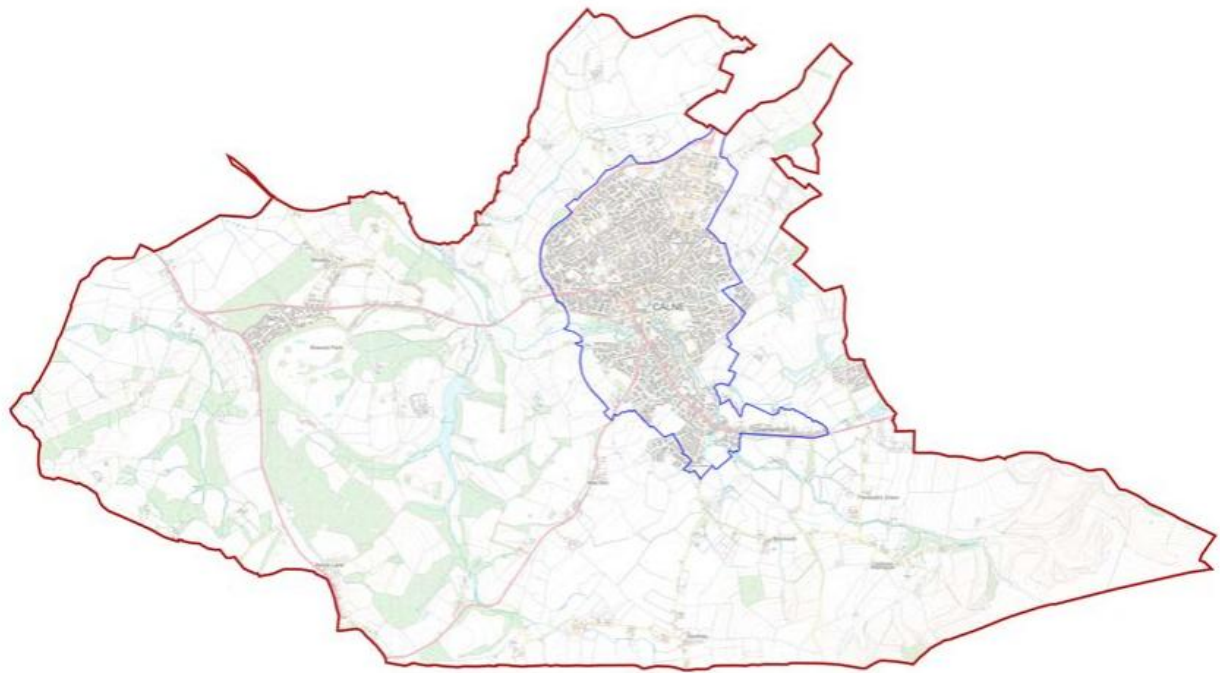


The Future of Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan Discussion Paper

1. Introduction

The Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan (CCNP) was first “made” in 2018. To retain their influence in the planning system, Neighbourhood Plans have to be regularly reviewed. The first review was started in 2021, and completed in February 2025, when CCNP2 was passed by referendum.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is legally defined and currently covers the area of Calne Town Council and the former Calne Without Parish Council:



Following the implementation of the Community Governance Review in May, this area is now covered by Calne Town Council and Derry Hill & Studley Parish Council, as well as parts of Bremhill, Hilmarton, Compton Bassett, Cherhill and Heddington Parish Councils.

The Council, in consultation with its neighbours, will need to determine how future revisions of the Neighbourhood Plan are to be undertaken.

2. Background

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced in 2011 and empower communities to shape the development and growth of a local area. A Neighbourhood Plan is a document that sets out planning policies for an area and can:

- Protect local green spaces.
- Encourage better designed places.
- Shape new development to genuinely meet local needs.

It is written by the community. Once a Neighbourhood Plan is “made” (or adopted), it has to be consulted when making planning decisions. It sits within the planning system alongside the National Planning Policy Framework and the local authority’s Local Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot:

- Stop all development.
- Set unreasonable requirements for developers.
- Conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework or the Wiltshire Core Strategy (or its update, the Wiltshire Local Plan, once it is made).

The Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan was first “made” in 2018 and was one of the early Neighbourhood Plans. As with other plans from this time, it lacked some clarity and local evidence. Climate Change had become more urgent as an issue and needed to be addressed within the Plan, and working and shopping habits had changed, accelerated by the Covid pandemic.

The Neighbourhood Plan Review was started in 2021 and completed in February of this year, when CCNP2 was approved by public referendum. CCNP2 was described by the Examiner as “an excellent example of a Neighbourhood Plan Review”, safeguarded 27 new green spaces and included an extensive set of localised design guidelines for new developments.

As plans become older, the weight they hold in the planning process reduces. While there isn't a mandatory 5-year review period for neighbourhood plans, it is best practice for a qualifying body to consider reviewing and updating their plan to maintain general conformity with the local plan and ensure its continued effectiveness.

3. Options

Options for future Neighbourhood Plan Reviews are as follows:

Option A – Do Nothing

Description:	Undertake no future update to the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan.
Advantages:	No effort or cost involved.
Disadvantages:	CCNP2 would remain in place and would remain part of the planning framework. Policies may lose relevance if they conflict with newer, more authoritative local plans or if the evidence base becomes outdated. Other material considerations may be given greater weight in planning decisions when the evidence for a neighbourhood plan's policies is weak. Over time, the Neighbourhood Plan would gradually become irrelevant. In time, the Parish Council’s share of CIL funding from local developments would reduce from 25% to 15%.

Option B – Derry Hill & Studley Neighbourhood Plan

Description:	Use the next Review to create a standalone Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Derry Hill and Studley.
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Advantages:	Single qualifying body. Neighbourhood Plan tailored to the specific needs of the community of Derry Hill and Studley.
Disadvantages:	Significant effort would required from within the community to deliver a standalone Neighbourhood Plan. The cost would be carried entirely by the Parish Council.

Option C – Calne + Derry Hill & Studley

Description:	For the next Review, redraw the Neighbourhood Plan boundary to include Calne TC and Derry Hill & Studley PC only.
Advantages:	Only two qualifying bodies. Builds on existing strong working relationship between the two councils. Shares cost and effort between the two councils.
Disadvantages:	Little logic to include Derry Hill & Studley PC in with Calne, but not other councils. Risk that Neighbourhood Plan becomes primarily focussed on Calne to the detriment of Derry Hill & Studley.

Option D – Retain Current Boundaries

Description:	Retain the current Neighbourhood Plan boundary in the next Review.
Advantages:	Continuity with previous revisions of the Neighbourhood Plan. Effectively covers Calne and the surrounding rural area. Costs and effort are shared.
Disadvantages:	Multiple qualifying bodies. Bremhill, Compton Bassett, Cherhill and Heddington Parish Councils are unlikely to commit to a Review that only covers part of their parishes.

Option E – Expand to incorporate adjacent parishes

Description:	Expend the CCNP boundary for the next Review to incorporate Bremhill, Hilmarton, Compton Bassett, Cherhill and Heddington Parish Councils. This would correlate to the area covered by Calne Area Board.
Advantages:	Effectively covers Calne and the surrounding rural area. Correlates to the area covered by Calne Area Board. Costs and effort are shared. Provides a plan for parishes currently without one.

Disadvantages:	Multiple qualifying bodies. Dependent on willingness of other parish council to participate in the process.
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Option F – Coalition of the Willing

Description:	This is similar to Option E, but would consist of a Neighbourhood Plan Review covering Calne TC, Derry Hill & Studley PC, as well as any additional parish councils willing to participate.
Advantages:	Would cover Calne and some of the surrounding rural area. Costs and effort are shared. Provides a plan for parishes currently without one.
Disadvantages:	Multiple qualifying bodies. Dependent on willingness of other parish council to participate in the process.

4. Additional Considerations

Site Allocations

Neighbourhood Plans may “allocate” sites for housing to meet the housing allocations for the area set out in the local authority’s Local Plan. This was done for CCNP1, but not for CCNP2.

When the Neighbourhood Plan makes allocations, it provides planning protection against speculative housing developments on non-allocated sites under the NPPF Paragraph 14. This assumption applies as long as the Neighbourhood Plan is less than five years old, and it includes allocations to meet the housing requirement for the area. If the housing allocations are deemed out-of-date, the presumption in favour of sustainable development under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) may apply, meaning that the general need for housing could lead to a "tilted balance" in favour of approval.

No allocations were made under CCNP2, due to time constraints imposed by the governance review and because housing allocations for area were in a state of flux, under Wiltshire Council’s Local Plan Review. This Review is currently undergoing examination by the Planning Inspectorate. However, the housing allocations contained in this Plan are significantly lower than the new targets set by the Government. It is understood that Wiltshire Council will therefore be required to embark on a further Local Plan Review, as soon as the current Plan is made.

Neighbourhood Plans are increasingly being made without housing allocations.

Qualifying Bodies

The Neighbourhood Plan must be approved and signed off by each and every Qualifying Body (town or parish councils) within the Plan Area.

Decisions therefore need to be made by consensus. The greater the number of Qualifying Bodies, the greater the risk of a consensus not being reached. This risk would be high if site allocations are being made within the Plan but would be lower if the Plan was being reviewed without site allocations.

Cost

The recent Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 Review cost a total of £63k, of which £18k was funded by central government through the Locality Funding Programme. The balance of the cost was funded by Calne Town Council and the former Calne Without Parish Council, based on an 80%/20% split.

Locality Funding for Neighbourhood Plans has now been ended by the Government, meaning that future Neighbourhood Plan Reviews would need to be funded entirely by the qualifying bodies.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council considers these challenges with the aim of determining a preferred way forward at a future meeting.

Cllr John Barnes