

STAUNTON ON WYE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

2nd March 2026

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Introduction

At the December 2025 meeting of the Parish Council (Minute 2025/79) it was agreed that I would report to the March meeting on the extent to which an NDP which did not make site allocations would require a referendum on the timetable for a review and on the likely financial resources required to complete it.

2. Site Allocations

The Staunton on Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan is unusual in Herefordshire in that it does not make site allocations, preferring instead to set out criteria which must be met for development to go ahead. The approach has the advantage of not second-guessing the market whilst avoiding the controversy that usually comes with site allocations. The wording, at the time, of the National Planning Policy Framework, allowed “policies and allocations” which the courts interpreted liberally.

In December 2025 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published proposals for further changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

This policy tightens paragraph 14 of the current Framework, which exempts recently made neighbourhood plans from the ‘tilt’ in favour of permission contained in the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In other words, if a parish has an NDP under two years old it is protected if a proposal would conflict with the neighbourhood plan, and the neighbourhood plan contains allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

Paragraph 14 has been re-worded to make clear that to qualify the neighbourhood plan *should contain allocations to meet the identified housing requirement*.

This change - *that the neighbourhood plan should contain allocations to meet the identified housing requirement* - rules out the kind of NDP Staunton on Wye adopted. an NDP must allocate sufficient sites to meet housing requirements.

A MHCLG consultation is now in progress on this change in wording, which ends on 10th March. The Council may want to consider responding.

3. Referendum

Given the above, which means a revised Staunton on Wye NDP must contain site allocations, it is all but certain that a reviewed NDP would require a referendum.

4. Timetable

The timetable for a revised NDP depends largely on the timetable for the Herefordshire Local Plan, with which it must conform. The regulations that determine Herefordshire's timetable, and the format of its consultations, have been awaited since autumn. They are not yet been published. The timetable is therefore slipping and the slippage is growing.

Simultaneously, Herefordshire Council organised a call for sites – the foundation of their site allocations. The call closed on 31 January 2026. It had been hoped to publish a first sift of sites – e.g. excluding those obviously unlikely to proceed – in the spring. Lack of resources in several specialist teams mean this is now

likely to be published in the summer.

The longer the period before either Herefordshire or Staunton on Wye have a revised plan, the more scope there is for adventitious planning applications.

5. Costs

The total costs likely to face a parish making a revised NDP are not clear: no parish has yet completed a self-funded NDP review, so there is no evidence. The furthest advanced is Cusop Parish Council, who are on the brink of the first statutory consultation and their experience is guides towards an estimate of between £7,000 and £14,000.

Efforts to reduce the costs are being trialled by HALC – Cusop Parish Council, whose draft NDP review is nearly completed, are piloting a reduced-cost site appraisal with Community First.

Many parishes have made additions to their precept for 2026-27 to begin to meet this cost, often by spreading the cost over two or three years.

*David Thame
Clerk
26 February 2026*