

Guide to producing a Neighbourhood Plan



Introduction

Neighbourhood Plans enable communities to take the lead in producing the part of the statutory development plan for the area in which they live or work.

Good points:

Community Led – and in a good consultation the whole community look at development together to decide how they want the community to look like in the future

Give the community more influence - the neighbourhood plan carries weight as a consideration in planning decisions, effectively giving the local community more influence and control over the development of their area.

Local relevance – the Local Plan gives a district wide view of development and the Neighbourhood Plan adds the local detail to shape development

Opening conversations – Anyone producing one of these plans will be talking to a lot of organisations about a wide range of local issues which may not have happened otherwise and this may lead to further action.

Site allocation – the community get the chance to look at sites and think about how they want them to be used for development or amenities.

Things to consider:

Producing a plan requires a significant commitment in terms of time and energy over roughly a period of 3+ years. They are not quick.

General skills for producing a neighbourhood plan include:

- ✓ leadership
- ✓ project management and organisational skills
- ✓ an ability to engage a diverse range of members of the public and to listen
- ✓ communication and negotiation
- ✓ analytical skills
- ✓ the ability to work as part of a team

Neighbourhood planning needs people who can collaborate, compromise, and see the value of differing viewpoints because consultation and communication are essential.. It's advisable to do a skills audit to see what skills the committee have between them.

It is also essential to have a project plan to estimate the time needed for the different stages of the plan-making process, the tasks required and how much time will be needed.

Neighbourhood Plans are flexible so you can adapt and do a simpler plan with a few policies which would then require less resources if needed.

For further information look at the Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide:

<http://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-2016.pdf>

Funding for these plans is also available from “Locality:

<https://mycommunity.org.uk/take-action/neighbourhood-planning/support-grants/>

Neighbourhood Plan Stages	Processes and tasks	Who leads?
Initial steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community consultation/events to find out what the issues are (Perhaps do a Parish /Town Review). ✓ gauge whether there is community support to embark on a plan and what sort of plan would be best (it may not be a Neighbourhood plan) ✓ Engage with the community to inform everyone about what a Neighbourhood Development Plan is and is not ✓ Inform the community on why you feel it is beneficial to have some control over future development ✓ Explain why you think the plan will be a good opportunity ✓ Look for volunteers for a steering group to work with the Parish/Town Council to work on the plan (various skills are needed so a skills audit can help identify what skills you have as a group and where training would be useful) ✓ Set up a communications strategy (a stakeholder analysis will help) to keep everyone informed 	Parish/Town Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What area do you want your plan to cover? ✓ Consider an appropriate area (whole parish/part of parish) ✓ Make a note of why the area has been chosen and what other areas were considered ✓ Consult with District Council and other parishes involved if you wish to cross parish boundaries ✓ Page 19 of the Locality Roadmap Guide gives further information on choosing your area (web link at end of Page 1) 	Parish/Town Council
Stage 1	Submit an area application to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) get your area designated. You can carry on with all your preparation work, while waiting.	Parish/Town Council Local planning Authority (LPA)
	Local Planning Authority to designate your area	LPA
Stage 2	Community Consultation & Draft plan	
	Getting the evidence. See what evidence is already available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the evidence under-pinning the Local Plan • socio-economic data for district/ward (Suffolk Observatory) • technical reports (e.g. retail studies) • transport studies and public transport data • mapping of local area • conservation area appraisals and statutory lists (listed buildings, historic environment record 	Parish/Town Council

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	<p>and scheduled ancient monuments)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of environmental protection designations, such as tree preservation orders and sites of special scientific interest • plans from other public bodies • any existing plans for an area, such as a community plan/parish plan <p>Do a full community consultation which may include getting further information to update those above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Questionnaires – take time and care over these ✓ Other forms of engagement – be creative, use a wide range of media – it should be stimulating and enjoyable ✓ Housing needs survey ✓ Audit of community facilities ✓ Business surveys, viability/floor space, employment survey ✓ Services such as schools, health etc. ✓ Sites for possible future development ✓ Talk to a range of organisations, departments and local partners – what is planned already and what is actually possible? 	
	<p>Work around identifying sites for possible future development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ land ownership ✓ call for sites to landowners/agents ✓ consultation (can be part of the consultation as above) ✓ Have sites been allocated in the Local Plan? 	Parish/Town Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ From the evidence and depending what you are including in your plan, work with the Local Authority on what kinds of assessments are needed for your plan ✓ Look at how various possible developments would affect the community, services, infrastructure – possibly use a SWOT analysis to help with this and do some sort of community consultation event to see what other people think 	Parish/Town Council and Local Planning Authority
	<p>Having got a wide body of evidence, if you haven't already done so, write the "Vision and Aims" of your plan (Page 28 of the Locality Roadmap gives ideas for content for your plan) and write a draft Neighbourhood Plan</p>	Parish/Town Council
	<p>Town/Parish Council carry out a six week consultation on the draft plan – send this out to the community, and other parties such as the Local Authorities, service providers etc</p>	Parish/Town Council
	<p>Update the plan as necessary from the comments received during the consultation</p>	Parish/Town Council

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Stage 3	Submit the plan to the Local Planning Authority	Parish/Town Council
	Local Planning Authority will look over your plan and may need you to do some changes before they publish your submitted plan for 6 weeks	LPA
	You may need to revise the plan depending on the comments received in the 6 weeks before it can go to examination	Parish/Town Council
Stage 4	Independent Examination of the Plan	LPA
	The Local Planning Authority organises and pays for the examination	LPA
	Both the Local Planning Authority and the Town/Parish Council may need to respond to written requests from the examiner or appear at an Examination hearing	Parish/Town Council and Local Planning Authority
	The examiner may have recommendations which need to be dealt with before the plan can go to referendum – be prepared to spend some time revising the plan again	Parish/Town Council
Stage 5	The community Referendum	LPA
	The Local Planning Authority organises and pays for the referendum	LPA
	The community are asked to vote on whether they support the plan – this is done on a straight majority vote so if more people say “yes” the plan can then go to the Local Planning Authority to be “made”	LPA
Stage 6	The Local Planning Authority approves the plan and it comes into force as a legal document and forms part of the District Local Plan	LPA

For further information, please contact:

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