

Neighbourhood Plans - Frequently Asked Questions – May 2017

What is a neighbourhood plan?

A neighbourhood plan is a new planning document that communities can put together to set out how they would like their town, parish or village to develop over the next 15 to 20 years or a set time period. It will set out policies relating to how land is used and developed, like the Local Authority development plan but at a much more local level. It will form part of the criteria against which any new planning applications will be judged, hence it has to undergo a number of formal processes to ensure it is robust and well-evidenced. This includes an independent examination and a public referendum. If successful, the plan will be adopted by the Local Authority as part of its development plan and your community will have set out its detailed policies for future development in the neighbourhood area.

Why do we need a neighbourhood plan?

The plan can give you a much greater say on how you want the neighbourhood area to be for future generations: including how new housing is integrated, what it should look like, which land should be set aside for employment, what green spaces should be protected or where new green spaces should be provided.

Can we use the Neighbourhood Plan to stop further housing development?

Neighbourhood planning is not about stopping development, rather shaping it. One of the basic conditions of a neighbourhood planning as stated in the regulations is that it must comply with the strategic policies of the local authority development plan. The plan cannot be used to stop existing development, but to guide future development and can include policies addressing details of what new development might look like such as design and density.

How long will it take to write the plan?

It's not a quick process - the plan is going to last 15 to 20 years so you want to make sure you get it right. The average time to produce a plan is 18 to 24 months.

What area does our neighbourhood plan cover?

A Parish Council can submit an application for a Neighbourhood Area. Alternatively where there is no parish council, a Neighbourhood Forum can be formed and submit an application for a Neighbourhood Area. An application for a Neighbourhood Area must be submitted to the local authority and depending on the application, it may have to go through public consultation before it is formally designated.

What will our neighbourhood plan cover?

You will need to engage with the community and local businesses to understand what the key objectives for the plan should be. It is important that the plan reflects the views and wishes of the community. Generally, a neighbourhood plan will look at issues associated with use and development of land within the neighbourhood area. The policies need to be related to

development, however the plan can include other issues that are not related to land use as an appendix which may help with future provision of facilities such as allotments or other community aspirations.

Who is leading the development of our neighbourhood plan?

The neighbourhood plan has to be formally led by the Qualifying Body which is generally the Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum however a steering group comprising both members of the public and local councillors could also be established as a sub-group of the qualifying body. Working Groups could also be formed to investigate the specific themes that will emerge for the plan.

How much will it cost to develop the neighbourhood plan?

The cost of plans varies widely depending on the size of the population, the complexity of the plan and any additional technical studies that may be required. Funding from central government via Locality is available specifically for communities developing neighbourhood plans.

What are the benefits of producing a neighbourhood plan?

As your neighbourhood plan is written by members of your community you can ensure that it reflects the wants and needs of the local area. An additional benefit of having a Neighbourhood Plan is that the Parish/Town Council can receive 25% of developer contributions (known as Community Infrastructure Levy), compared to 15% where there is no Neighbourhood plan, which can then be spent on providing new facilities or enhance existing facilities for the community.

How can the community get involved?

We would like as many people as possible in the neighbourhood area to put forward their views as to what they would like their community to look like in the future. You can either input your views via one of the consultation events, or you can join the neighbourhood plan steering group or working groups to have a more hands-on role.

Who else has written a neighbourhood plan?

Hundreds of communities across the whole country are in the process of developing neighbourhood plans for their towns and villages. Over 200 Neighbourhood Plans have now been made. To have a look at plans which have gone through the process and have been made, visit:

<http://www.pinterest.com/nplanning/neighbourhood-plans/>