

# OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

## Neighbourhood Plan Preparation : Evidence Base / Site Allocations

King's House , 245 Ampthill Road, Bedford

07 March 2016



# Planning Aid England (PAE): Who we are

- Part of the Royal Town Planning Institute
- Provide free, independent, professional planning advice to people who do not have the means to pay professional fees
- Provide support and training to local communities so they can influence and contribute to planning strategy, policy and decision making
- A staff team supported by over 500 volunteers



# Planning Aid England (PAE): What we do... provide a valuable service



**PLANNING AID ENGLAND**

Empowering communities and individuals to positively engage with the planning system

Over 40 years of experience in working with communities

Over 500 dedicated volunteers with a range of skills, interests and expertise

**What those who have worked with us say:**

“Planning Aid were extremely helpful in providing guidance to our community team. Their workshops were well prepared and helped get the team rapidly up the learning curve on some key aspects of neighbourhood planning.”

David George, Whitchurch Town Council

“Reliable, up-to-date advice and guidance are invaluable when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Planning Aid England provided us with independent, flexible support whilst fully respecting the needs and ambitions of our community.”

Sue John, Rottingdean Parish Council

**How we can help you**

Planning Aid England provides free, independent and professional planning advice to individuals and communities. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to get involved in planning their local area.

Our services include:

- A free web resource called Planning Aid Direct
- An advice line offering a limited amount of free, professional, general planning advice that can be accessed via [advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk) or 0330 123 9244
- Bespoke support for eligible individuals and communities
- Outreach and capacity building, which can include:
  - Training on the planning system
  - Advice on how to play a part in the development of plans and policies at the national, local and neighbourhood level
  - Support with comments on planning applications and development proposals
- Online resources and guides

**Find out more at:**

 [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

 [@PlanningAidEng](https://twitter.com/PlanningAidEng)

 [info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)



# Programme for this evening:

**First, a presentation on two key aspects of preparing your plan:**

- **GETTING EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR POLICIES**
- **SITE DESIGNATIONS – WHAT'S INVOLVED**

**Then a workshop will follow on:**

- **WRITING POLICIES**



# GETTING EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR POLICIES



# Planning Advisory Service - Templates

## Neighbourhood plans - Advice on evidence

- The Localism Act states that all local planning authorities (LPAs) have a duty to support and advise neighbourhood groups which are seeking to take forward a neighbourhood plan. This resource focuses on the support that LPAs might give to community groups on the collection of evidence to support their planning policies. Prepared by Chris Bowden at Navigus Planning on behalf of PAS.
- It assists LPAs to give effective and efficient support to neighbourhood groups on the evidence needed to underpin policies in their plans. LPAs can use the topic template provided to create an 'off the shelf' resource on local evidence for neighbourhood planning, which we hope will provide benefits to both LPAs and neighbourhood groups.

## Advice on evidence

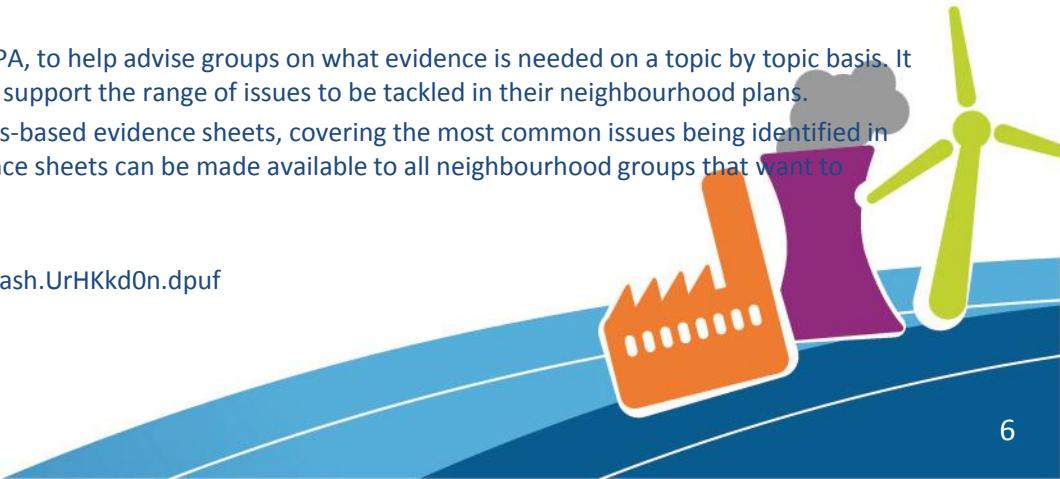
- A neighbourhood plan must comply with the basic conditions in the Localism Act and the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. While the evidence requirements are not as rigorous as those for an LPA in its plan making, the need for evidence to underpin a neighbourhood plan is important. Neighbourhood groups should use evidence that is already in the public domain, along with evidence that they collect themselves, to prepare their plans. It is the process of determining what is needed and how to collect it where many neighbourhood groups are likely to need support and guidance.

## Taking a consistent approach

- Ideally the evidence collected at the neighbourhood level should benefit the neighbourhood group and the LPA. By taking a structured and consistent approach to evidence gathering at the community level, it can build up a framework of data that can:
  - inform strategic policy in a way that district-wide evidence cannot
  - enable like-for-like data to be compared and also ensure consistency of interpretation and terminology used
  - help interpret strategic policy, particularly in development management for a specific proposal.

## Providing advice

- This document provides a template, to be completed by the LPA, to help advise groups on what evidence is needed on a topic basis. It will cover what information is available and what is needed to support the range of issues to be tackled in their neighbourhood plans.
- Using the template, the LPA can then develop a series of issues-based evidence sheets, covering the most common issues being identified in the emerging neighbourhood plans in their area. These evidence sheets can be made available to all neighbourhood groups that want to address those particular issues:
- [Advice on evidence: templates](#)
- See more at: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/advice-on-evidence#sthash.UrHKkd0n.dpuf>



# Sources of information about your neighbourhood

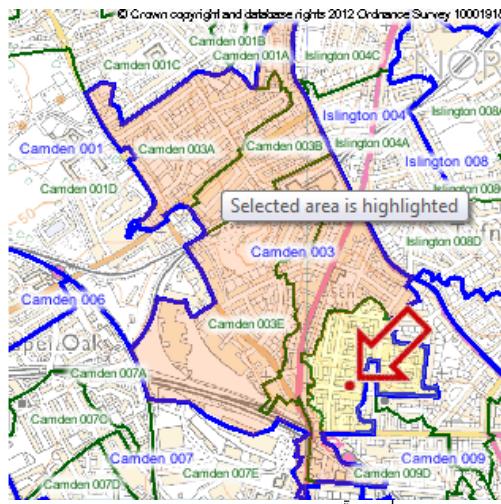
- OS Maps – Bedford BC
- Census 2011 – Neighbourhood Statistics
- Natural environment – MAGIC
- What's in your backyard? – Environment Agency
- Your Square Mile



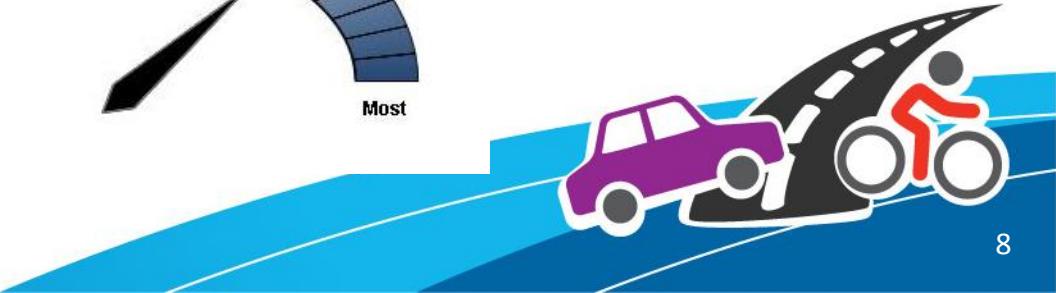
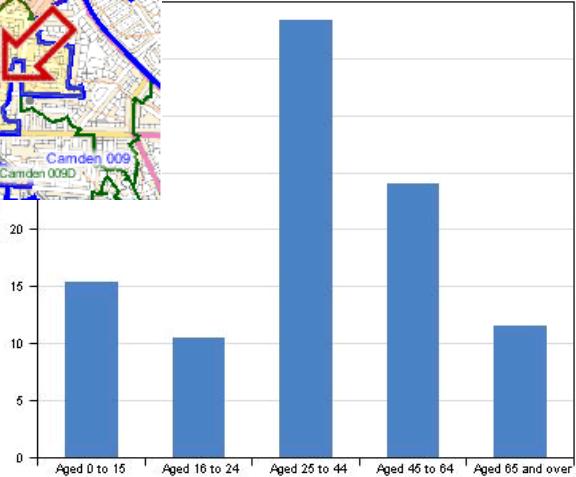
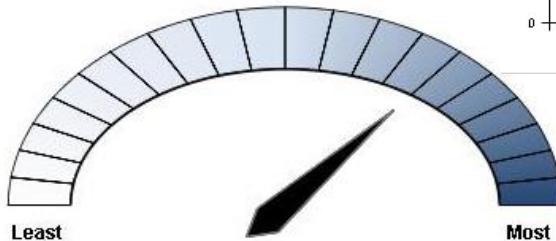
# Census 2011 – Neighbourhood Report

[www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

- People & places
- Health
- Local economy
- Education
- Housing
- Crime & safety



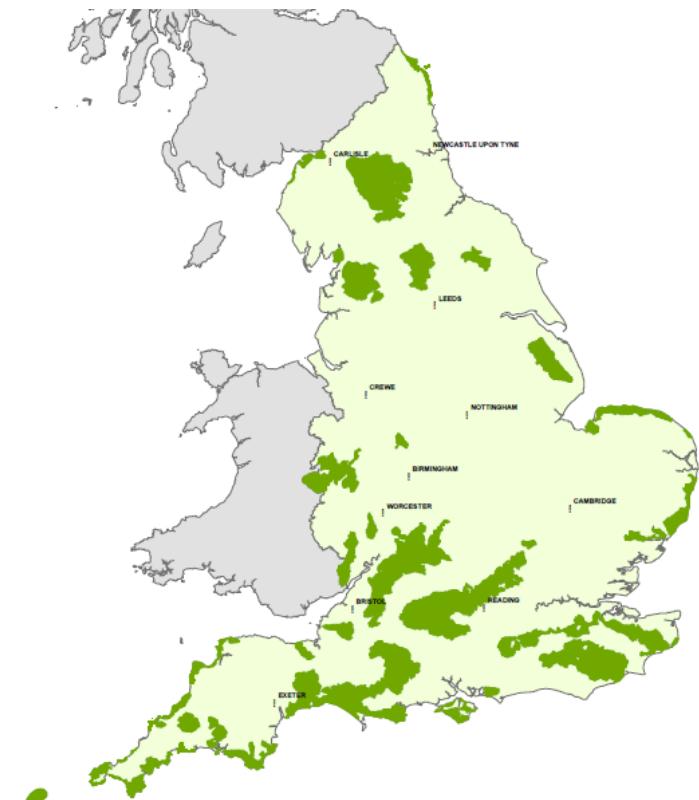
Total Deprivation



# 'MAGIC' - <http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

Interactive map showing key environmental designations

- AONB
- Ancient woodland
- Agricultural Land Classification (provisional)
- Landscape typology
- National Cycle Network
- National Nature Reserves
- Scheduled Monuments
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest



# What's in your backyard?

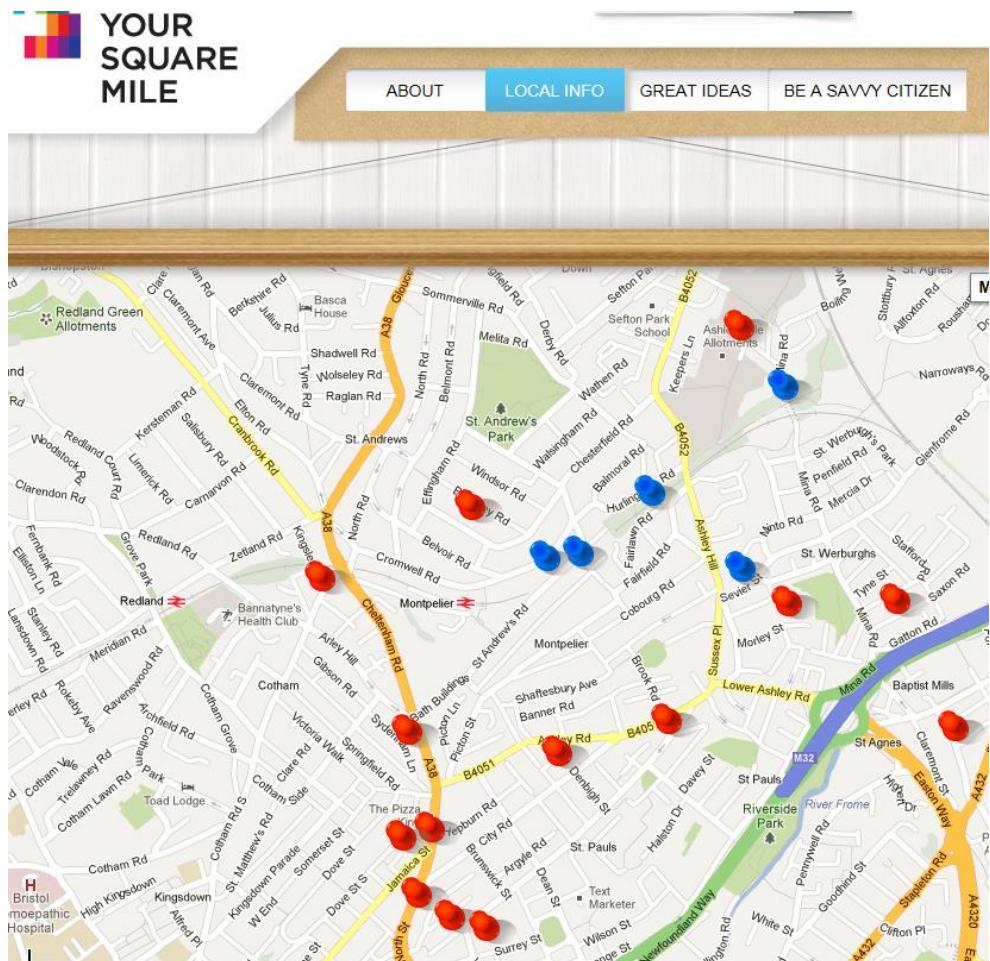
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

- Flooding
- Coastal erosion
- Pollution
- Air Pollution
- River water quality
- Historic landfill sites



# Your Square Mile

- See and upload photos taken in your community
  - Fix My Street - see things that annoy your neighbours
  - See local volunteering projects



# SITE ASSESSMENTS – WHAT'S INVOLVED



# Why should we assess sites in our neighbourhood plan?



The National Planning Policy Framework states:

- “...Plans should set out the opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted **and where**. Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to the development proposal should be included in the plan.” (*paragraph 154*)

# Working through your site assessment in stages makes it easier...



Desk Based Work

On Site Work

Desk Based Review

# First, select your sites, then.....

- **Can a Neighbourhood Plan come forward before an up-to-date Local Plan is in place?**
- Neighbourhood plans, when brought into force, become part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area. They can be developed before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its Local Plan.
- A draft neighbourhood plan or Order must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in force if it is to meet the basic condition. Although a draft Neighbourhood Plan or Order is not tested against the policies in an emerging Local Plan the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process is likely to be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested. For example, up-to-date housing needs evidence is relevant to the question of whether a housing supply policy in a neighbourhood plan or Order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an up-to-date Local Plan is in place the qualifying body and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in:
  - the emerging neighbourhood plan
  - the emerging Local Plan
  - the adopted development plan
  - with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance.
- The local planning authority should take a proactive and positive

approach, working collaboratively with a qualifying body particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues to ensure the draft neighbourhood plan has the greatest chance of success at independent examination.

- The local planning authority should work with the qualifying body to produce complementary neighbourhood and Local Plans. It is important to minimise any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and those in the emerging Local Plan, including housing supply policies. This is because section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the conflict must be resolved by the decision maker favouring the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the development plan. Neighbourhood plans should consider providing indicative delivery timetables, and allocating reserve sites to ensure that emerging evidence of housing need is addressed. This can help minimise potential conflicts and ensure that policies in the neighbourhood plan are not overridden by a new Local Plan.

## Planning Practice Guidance

Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20160211

Revision date: 11 02 2016

# ...select some more.

# (Desk Work)

## Site Assessment – record the basics

- Site address
- Site Area (Hectares)
- Estimated developable area
- Site planning history
- Proposed land use
- Neighbouring land uses
- Historical land use(s)
- Give the site a reference number
- Give the site a short description
- Draw the boundary of the site on a map
- What is the existing land use?

# (Desk Work)

## Site assessment – “strategic fit”

Any relevant planning policy? Including...

- National policy
- Evidence relating to old regional strategies
- Local Plan site allocations
- Local Plan designations e.g. green belt
- Other designations e.g. AONB, Village Green
- Other local planning documents e.g. SPDs, Village Design Statement, Conservation Area Appraisal?
- Local Plan assessments e.g. SHLAA, Sustainability Appraisal
- Local standards e.g. parking standards
- Emerging local plan policies or strategies?



# (On Site Work)

## Site Visits: things to remember

- Organisation - brief all surveyors beforehand
- Aim to record characteristics of site & surroundings - SYSTEMATICALLY
- Collect information on standard pro-forma



# Site Visits – things to record

How is the site accessed?

Is there easy access from the highway?

Any physical constraints e.g. slope, pylons

Any natural features e.g. trees, hedgerow, watercourse

Any features of biodiversity value?

Any existing buildings which could be retained / converted?

Any important views into or out of the site?

Impact of development on the skyline?

Any public rights of way affecting the site

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# Tips for a Successful Site Assessment

- Site Plan showing the site boundary
- Plan showing the site and the wider area
- Aerial photograph
- Assessment form (some of this will already be completed).
- Clipboard
- Pens/pencils – use different colours to indicate different features e.g. trees, footpaths, buildings etc.
- Camera – take photos from a number of directions. Use a standard lens, do not use a telephoto or wide-angle lens as this will distort site features. A photograph can be used as evidence.
- It is a good idea to do the survey with at least one other person.
- Check permission with landowner about access rights