

What is a 'Neighbourhood Plan'

"A Neighbourhood Plan is a community led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area.

A neighbourhood plan is about the use and development of land and many contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development.

It may deal with a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues (such as housing, employment, heritage and transport) or it may focus on one or two issues only. These may be issues that are relevant to the whole neighbourhood or just to part of the neighbourhood. This is for those producing the plan to decide.

A Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the statutory development plan for that area, if successful at Referendum. This statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans far more weight than some other local documents, such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with European and national legislation and must have appropriate regard to national policy and be in general conformity with existing strategic local planning policy. It should not promote less development than that identified in the development plan for the local area (such as new housing allocations). It can allow great growth levels. Also, it can specify policies and guidance on how new development should be designed, orientated and located. Neighbourhood Plans can be a powerful tool in shaping the development of a neighbourhood. The timeframe for the Neighbourhood Plan will be for communities to decide, for example whether it is a 5, 10, 15 or 20 year plan.

A robust programme of community engagement and proportionate evidence base should help to make sure that a Neighbourhood Plan is based on a proper understanding of the local area and of the views, aspirations, wants and needs of local people. Producing a clear project plan with key milestones could be very helpful in guiding the plan-making process.

Once a Neighbourhood Plan has been completed, it will have to be submitted to the local authority and then be subjected to an independent examination. This will make sure that the proper legal process has been followed and that the plan meets with the basic conditions, including general conformity with strategic local policy." (Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide - Locality)

The Neighbourhood Plan has 4 main 'Phases':

1. Community Consultation - where the wishes of our community are gathered and agreed
2. Call for Sites - landowners are invited to put forward proposals for development that take the community's wishes into account, followed by formal assessment, shortlisting, consultation and sustainability checks
3. Neighbourhood Plan - various draft stages, community consultations, amendments, approval by local authorities and Independent Examiner
4. Referendum - the whole community votes on whether to accept the Plan or not. Needs >50% support to become a statutory document.