

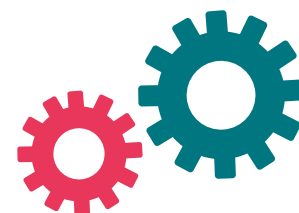
Leicester and Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit





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Introduction

The Leicester and Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit has been developed by the nine local authorities and local Neighbourhood Plan Groups to guide communities to the relevant information and organisations they need for Neighbourhood Planning in Leicester and Leicestershire.

There is a wealth of Neighbourhood Planning information available and this Toolkit signposts to these key resources, supplementing with locally specific information and advice where necessary. The Toolkit outlines the new planning powers available to communities setting out what a Neighbourhood Plan can and cannot do and also summarising other popular community planning techniques used in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Key local organisations are identified along with their main roles and responsibilities in the Neighbourhood Planning process, followed by an overview of main steps in making a Neighbourhood Plan. The final section of the Toolkit summarises the roles and expectations of Parish, District/Borough, City and County Councils when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Toolkit is supplemented by “Community Top Tips” throughout, to bring real life Leicester and Leicestershire specific advice from those undertaking the process. The Toolkit is intended to be a web based resource to be updated to learn from experiences and respond to future changes. In addition to the Toolkit there are Neighbourhood Planning Topic Notes and the Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Networking Events, information on both can be found at www.leics.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning



PART 1

Neighbourhood Planning Background



The Localism Act brought in a range of new powers, giving greater control to communities. Some of these relate to planning (Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders, Community Right to Build), other initiatives that relate to wider community issues (Community Right to Buy, Community Right to Bid, Community Right to Challenge). These broader initiatives will not be considered in this Toolkit but sources of further information can be found in the ‘want to know more’ section below.

Neighbourhood Planning is one of the new tools introduced; this term includes two broad categories; Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders.

1.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans

Neighbourhood Development Plans create a vision for an area or site and set out planning policies for the use and development of land that will help deliver this vision. The Neighbourhood Plan should consider local and not strategic issues; policies should be focused on the community it covers without negatively impacting on the policies of the Local Plan that it must conform to.

It is a spatial document; it can make policies about the uses and activities that take place on areas of land and what the buildings / spaces on them should look like, considering social, economic and environmental issues. For example, it can say where things like shops and houses should go and what features or style they should represent.

The Neighbourhood Plan needs to be in broad conformity with national policies and the policies in the authority’s Local Plan. A Neighbourhood Development Plan is about shaping and directing future development, it cannot influence development that is already permitted or allocated and cannot be used as a tool to block future growth. It should focus on guiding development rather than stopping it. If adopted it will become a formal planning document and part of the statutory plan for the neighbourhood and will be used in making decisions on planning applications.

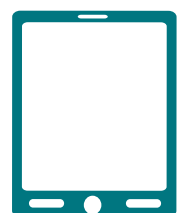


1.2 Neighbourhood Development Orders

Neighbourhood Development Orders allow Parish / Town Councils (or Neighbourhood Forums) the ability to grant planning permission for a specific development or type of development, for example, homes, employment / shops or community facilities. Where there is a Neighbourhood Development Order in place there would be no need to apply to the council for planning permission for the development it covers. This is the same principle as a Local Development Order that a council can use. Community right to Build Orders are a type of Neighbourhood Development Order. These allow appropriately constituted community groups can grant planning permission for new buildings they want to see go ahead, without the need to apply to the council for permission.



This guide will deal only with Neighbourhood Development Plans, which we have seen generate the greatest interest locally and nationally. Neighbourhood Development Plans, or Neighbourhood Plans as they are usually known, are unlike other formal planning policy documents, in that they are designed to be prepared by communities and will only be brought into force if they are supported by the majority of the community they cover. Neighbourhood Plans can vary in content and detail; they are able to cover a range of planning issues or focus on a single topic of importance to the community.

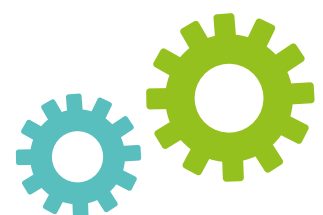


1.3 A Neighbourhood Plan CAN....

- ✓ Be a single issue or a range of topics
- ✓ Propose more development than in the Local Plan
- ✓ Take precedence over the Local Plan on non-strategic issues
- ✓ Shape and direct future development
- ✓ Help to determine what type of development should take place
- ✓ Identify the most suitable local sites for development
- ✓ Encourage more development than proposed for the area
- ✓ Identify key areas for protection (e.g. historic buildings, open spaces)
- ✓ Set out the improvements required alongside any development
- ✓ It must be aligned to the district / borough / city council's Core Strategy / Local Plan
- ✓ It can add more detail to support the policies within the district / borough / city plan and give it more local relevance
- ✓ Only be successful at the independent examination if the formal process for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan has been adhered to
- ✓ Only be adopted if the Plan wins 50% of public support at a referendum.

1.4 A Neighbourhood Plan CANNOT....

- ✗ Prevent any development from ever taking place in an area
- ✗ Be prepared solely by a developer or landowner
- ✗ Be in conflict with local, national, or EU policies
- ✗ Be prepared with no input or support from the local community
- ✗ Propose less growth than the district / borough / city council's Plan
- ✗ Deal with county matters, such as minerals and waste or major infrastructure
- ✗ Be in conflict with national policy or strategic policies in Local Plan
- ✗ Be used to block development
- ✗ Make policies beyond the Plan area



Want to
know more...

New Community Rights

For information on the new range of powers available to communities, the Department for Communities and Local Government website should be the first port of call.

www.communities.gov.uk/communities

For key features of the Localism Act- which is much wider than just the planning system try...

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localismplainenglishupdate

The Localism Act also sets out the guidelines of how Neighbourhood Plans should be prepared; it is focussed on the process that needs to be undertaken and the roles of the different organisations in this process. The Localism Act can be viewed in full at

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted

For what is happening more locally Leicestershire County Council residents should see

www.leics.gov.uk/big society

Planning and the New System

For a general overview of the planning system, including Local Plans, planning applications and appeals, try a Handy Guide to Planning 2012

www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1454776/planning_handy_guide_2012_5_final.pdf

The Government's overarching planning policy is described in the National Planning Policy Framework. This also gives more of an idea about what a Neighbourhood Plan can include

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf

For what is happening more locally Leicestershire County Council residents should see

www.leics.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

PART 2

Is a Neighbourhood Plan right for the community?



Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is a big undertaking, before committing to produce a Plan, it is important to think about what your community wants to achieve. Neighbourhood Plans are set to be a helpful tool for communities to achieve some goals described in the previous section, but there are plenty of other tools that may be more appropriate, less costly or less time consuming. The section below considers some of the many other tools that a community may choose to use.

2.1 Parish Plans

Parish Plans have a long history in Leicestershire. A Parish Plan is a comprehensive plan, which addresses issues of concern to the community, together in one document. It must be prepared by the community working together (a bottom up approach) and based on information provided through research, survey and consultation. It must be focused on action, and contain a clear statement for the future including - What? Where? Who? and When?

The end result must contain an action plan which includes ways of addressing identified needs. The plan may address housing needs, services, transport, local green space and countryside access, design and land use, local amenities e.g. village hall, playing fields, health and community care, business and employment. The Parish Plan will form a blueprint for use by the Parish Council and evidence for bidding for funds in the future as well as an indicator for delivery of services from statutory service providers e.g. councils.

2.2 Village Design Statement

A Village Design Statement (VDS) sets out clear and simple guidance for future development in the Parish. A VDS is a community prepared document, which gives guidance to developers and individuals to encourage good design of the type that will enhance and protect the individual character of the locality, without preventing future growth.

COMMUNITY TOP TIP

Diseworth Village Design Statement www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/diseworth_village_design_statement/Diseworth%20Village%20Design%20Statement.pdf

Appleby Magna Village Design Statement www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/appleby_magna_village_design_statement/Appleby%20Magna%20Village%20Design%20Statement.pdf

A successful VDS must complement existing planning guidance to give communities a recognised voice in the planning process. Preparing a VDS may lead to a better understanding between the local community and the Local Planning Authority, and assists the Parish Council in commenting on planning applications.

In some areas VDSs may be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents and become part of the Local Plan. In order to achieve this, the Parish Council must work closely with the Planning Department of their Local Planning Authority.

A Neighbourhood Plan can fulfil a similar function but the preparation process through to adoption is slightly different.

2.3 Town / Village Health Check

The Healthcheck process was originally devised by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) to assess rural service centres. The Healthcheck is a process by which the local community examines the 'health' of its settlement to:

- Identify the economic, environmental, social and transport strengths and weaknesses of a rural centre and its surrounding area
- Identify the impact of changing local circumstances
- Provide a sound basis for creating an action plan for revitalisation

A series of worksheets were used to gather information on aspects of the town; including the economy, environment, social & community and transport & accessibility, to provide a snapshot of a settlement. These highlight the strengths and weaknesses of a community and provide a basis for the community to develop projects for the action plan.



2.4 Delivering a Project

If your community are coming together to work on a common issue, then there may be no need to produce a formal planning document, other ways to shape and influence this topic may be more appropriate. If the issues and options have been assessed and a particular project is the way forward to achieve the Groups objectives, focusing on delivering this project may be the right activity for the community (the 'want to know more' of section 4.5 may be of use for general project planning and funding).

2.5 Getting involved in the your areas Local Development Plan Documents

A Neighbourhood Plan is just one way of influencing development in your area. City, District and Borough Councils in Leicestershire all produce documents that shape the future development of their area; these are known as the Local Development Plan Documents. Combined, Local Development Plan Documents form the (new) Local Plan, of which the Core Strategy provides the overarching framework of policies which all other Development Plan Documents must align with. Underneath this sit more detailed documents such as Area Action Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents and now Neighbourhood Plans.

To find out which documents your Local Planning Authority are preparing check their website (*see section 3.2 on page 13 for details*).



2.6 Community Forums (County) / Ward Meetings (City)

Leicestershire Community Forums

There are 25 Community Forums which cover the whole of Leicestershire. These Forums play an important role in ensuring that services provided in your area match the needs and wants of your local community.

A Community Forum meeting gives you the opportunity to discuss local services with your County, District and Parish Councillors and representatives from other agencies such as the Health Service and the Police. If you would like you to come along to these meetings and have your say about how local services can be improved, see www.leicestershireforums.org

Leicester Ward Meetings

Ward community meetings take place in the main at quarterly intervals, bringing the Council closer to communities in the 22 wards that cover Leicester. They give residents the opportunity to work with Council departments and other agencies, such as the Police and Primary Care Trust, to identify local issues and improve their neighbourhoods. As such, local residents are welcome to turn up and talk to councillors and officers about anything that's affecting their ward.

Each ward meeting has produced and maintained a Ward Action Plan. These plans highlight priorities identified by local residents and determine how the ward meeting can make a difference against those priorities. www.leicester.gov.uk/wards/index_wards.asp



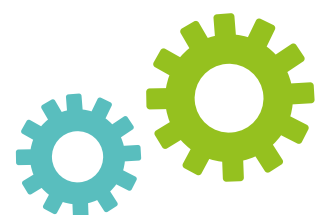
Want to
know more...

The Big Society Rural Advisory Service is funded by Leicestershire County Council and provides free initial advice to community groups on the appropriate type of community consultation. This should be the first step for a community starting out.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council (RCC) were chosen to deliver the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) Rural Advice Service. Funded by Leicestershire County Council the service will provide the following support to help progress Big Society initiatives in rural areas:

- Advice and guidance to communities on a range of rural issues
- Specialist advice on community consultation, action planning and project development activity (including Neighbourhood Plans)
- Signposting to other organisations and support services that may be able to provide further support and advice in specialist areas

The Leicestershire Rural Partnership Big Society Rural Advice Service
www.ruralcc.org.uk/rural-advice-service



PART 3

Neighbourhood Planning in Leicester & Leicestershire - Roles and Responsibilities



Leicestershire has a 3-tier system of local government, consisting of the County Council, seven Borough or District Councils, and Parish Councils. This arrangement applies across most of the county except where the Parish level does not exist.

The City of Leicester is a separate authority performing all the functions of the three Leicestershire tiers.

3.1 Parish / Town Council

The responsibilities of Parish and Town Councils typically include allotments, cemeteries, footpaths, recreation and any other functions delegated by the County Council or District/Borough Council.

In Neighbourhood Planning, the Parish or Town Council (or Neighbourhood Forum in non-parished areas) is the driving force. They will be responsible for preparing the Plan and submitting it to the Local Authority for independent examination. The Parish or Town Council will engage with the community it represents to ensure views are reflected and the Plan is supported. Many other partners will have a role to play in the development of the Plan. www.leicestershireparishcouncils.org

3.2 District / Borough Councils

There are seven Districts and Borough Councils in Leicestershire. The main responsibilities of these are local planning, housing, waste collection, environmental health and leisure and amenities.

In terms of Neighbourhood Planning the District or Borough is the Local Planning Authority. The District / Borough Council has defined roles to play in the formal process of Neighbourhood Plan preparation and will advise and support the Parish / Town Council in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. If a Plan is successful through examination and community referendum, it will be adopted by the District / Borough Council and form part of the Local Development Plan.





Local Planning Authorities Map and Contact Details

Leicestershire

Blaby District Council

www.blaby.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/planning-and-building/planning/

Charnwood Borough Council

www.charnwood.gov.uk/

Harborough District Council

[www.harborough.gov.uk/
planning-local_plans](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/planning-local_plans)

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

[www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/
planning_policy](http://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/planning_policy)

Melton Borough Council

[www.melton.gov.uk/
environment_and_
planning/planning/
planning_policy.aspx](http://www.melton.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy.aspx)

North West Leicestershire District Council

[www.nwleics.gov.uk/page/
planning_policy](http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/page/planning_policy)
[www.nwleics.gov.uk/page/
focus](http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/page/focus)

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/oadby_and_wigston_local_development_framework

Leicester

Leicester City Council

www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/ep/planning/plansandguidance/



3.3 Leicestershire County Council

The main responsibilities of the County Council are highways and public transport, education, social services, libraries and museums, recycling/waste sites and environment.

The County Council's role in Neighbourhood Planning hinges on its ability to deliver the services and facilities it is responsible for. More widely the County Council also shares the aspirations that underlie Neighbourhood Planning; the commitment to ensure your neighbourhood is a vibrant and sustainable place for your community.

www.leics.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

3.4 Leicester City Council

Leicester City Council is a separate authority. It is a "unitary" authority and is responsible for all local government in the city; it performs all the functions of Parish, District and County Council within the City boundary.

www.leicester.gov.uk

3.5 Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council (RCC)

The RCC provides help and support to those who live or work in Rural Leicestershire and Rutland. To this end the RCC are involved in a wide range of projects and issues, all of which are becoming of increasing importance as the quality of rural life, and the services provided for rural communities, deteriorate. The RCC are also currently delivering the County Council's Big Society Rural Advice Service (see 'want to know more section of part 2).

www.ruralcc.org.uk

3.6 Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC)

LRALC is constituted to support local councils and parish meetings in the delivery of services to their communities. Membership of the Association can also provide affiliation to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) which seeks to represent local councils at national level as well as providing advice on legal and procedural matters, national publications and regular information bulletins.

www.lralc.org.uk



3.7 Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL)

Voluntary Action LeicesterShire provides support and guidance to get people volunteering and to help local voluntary and community groups to thrive.

What VAL do:

- Run the Volunteer Centre for Leicester and Leicestershire so individuals can find the right volunteering opportunities for them
- Provide support and information for voluntary and community organisations so that they can carry out their work
- Enable the voluntary and community sector to influence and shape policy and help local groups understand the implications of policy decisions
- Deliver a number of successful services including our VALUES project for people with learning disabilities and the Parent Partnership Service
- Run Orange Rooms, a flexible and accessible space for conferences, meetings and events

www.valonline.org.uk

3.8 Other Key Partners to consider

Depending on the location and features of your area and the issues your Plan will cover, there are other key partners you may want to engage with through this process. Some key national organisations to consider include:

- Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- Natural England www.naturalengland.org.uk
- English Heritage www.english-heritage.org.uk
- Highways Agency www.highways.gov.uk

There are likely to be many more organisations and groups that will be interested and able to contribute to your Neighbourhood Plan, depending on its scope/content.



PART 4

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan in Leicester and Leicestershire



This section provides an overview of the Neighbourhood Planning process in Leicester and Leicestershire. It will give you an indication of the steps required to make a Neighbourhood Plan, but focus more on locally specific information. There are many comprehensive Neighbourhood Planning Toolkits and Guides available, a selection of which can be found at the end of part 4 in the 'want to know more' section.

Before getting started on the steps below, speak to your Local Authorities; the Community Top Tip is the key point. The Local Authorities will be able to advise on any issues / activity in your area that may impact on your intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. They will also be able to offer some support and guidance on the process ahead of you.

4.1 Getting the basics right

Once you have a clearer idea of what you want to achieve with a Neighbourhood Plan, and feel that the Neighbourhood Plan process is the appropriate tool, it's time to get your house in order. Spending time considering the project and its implications before getting started will save time in the long run and hopefully reduce risks of errors and miscommunication. The amount of planning you need to do will depend on the size and complexities of your area, the topics you wish to cover in your Neighbourhood Plan, skills in your group and many other factors.

It's helpful to get the structures and planning right before you begin. For example, does the community have the skills, resources, commitment to produce a Neighbourhood Plan? Do you have the necessary mechanisms for the governance of the project?

COMMUNITY TOP TIP

Speak to your local council(s) before starting any of these steps.

COMMUNITY TOP TIP

It took Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan group a long time to get the governance and remit of the group clear... don't reinvent the wheel, speak to similar groups about their structure and how that works for them.



4.2 Fitting in with the Local Plan

Section 3.2 identifies the eight Local Planning Authorities of Leicester and Leicestershire. Each Planning Authority is responsible for preparing a Local Plan and other planning documents to support its delivery. Each Authority will be at a different stage of development or review of their planning documents, and the ability to influence them will depend on the stage in this process. If an up to date Plan is in place, a Neighbourhood Plan can add more detail to help deliver this, if the Local Plan is being developed there is an opportunity to shape the content through engaging with the Local Planning Authority.

Want to know more...

To find out what is happening in your Local Planning Authority, see the relevant website in section 3.2 on page 13.

4.3 Deciding to make a Neighbourhood Plan

There are two slightly different routes for making a Neighbourhood Plan for areas with a Town / Parish Council and those without. If you're unsure which route will apply to your community speak with your Local Planning Authority.

Parish / Town Council areas

In Leicestershire, most areas are parished and have elected Town / Parish councillors that represent their area. No areas of the City or the Borough of Oadby and Wigston are parished so a Neighbourhood Forum would need to be established for any Neighbourhood Plan (see Neighbourhood Forum areas section below). For a Parish or Town Council to produce a Neighbourhood Plan the first formal step in the process is to submit an application to their Local Planning Authority (see section 3.2 on page 13 for your Local Planning Authority details).

A call or email to your Local Planning Authority in the early stages of your preparations is a good idea, as the support available may vary from area to area.



Neighbourhood Forum areas

Some areas of the County (including areas with Parish Meetings or some of the larger towns) and all areas in Leicester City do not have a Town / Parish Council; these areas will need to establish a Neighbourhood Forum to produce the Neighbourhood Plan.

A Neighbourhood Forum must be a constituted group consisting of at least 21 members who will seek to represent the diversity of their community. The group should ideally include a cross section of the community and can be an entirely new group, or developed from an existing group, provided that in either case it is open to new members. The group should include a councillor and a mix of people who live / work in the area, including:

- Residents
- Businesses and their employees
- Community groups / volunteers
- Local landowners and developers
- Local councillors

The steps below set out an overview of the process for producing a Neighbourhood Plan in Leicester and Leicestershire.

4.4 Making it official - Applying to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory planning document. The process for producing the Plan is set out clearly and must be followed in order for it to be successfully adopted by the Local Planning Authority.

The first stage for any appropriate group is to have their intention to produce a Plan agreed by the Local Planning Authority. In the case of a Parish or Town Council, they must submit:



COMMUNITY TOP TIP

Try not to get bogged down in the process, keep focused on what you want to achieve and keep the community motivated.

- A map showing the area they wish to cover; this area can be all or part of a parish or ward.
- The reasons they have chosen this area, and
- Confirmation that the group meet the criteria for preparing a Plan set out in the Localism Act, i.e. a Parish / Town Council.

For non-parished areas, the group must also apply to be designated a 'Neighbourhood Forum' as part of the process. This will require the group to submit

- What their Neighbourhood Forum will be called
- A copy of their constitution and contact details for at least one member of the group
- A map showing the area they wish to cover, this area can be all or part of wards.
- Confirmation that the group meet the criteria for preparing a Plan set out in the Localism Act, i.e. the Neighbourhood Forum criteria.

The Local Planning Authority will publish this information for a six week consultation. Once the group preparing the Plan and the area it covers has been agreed by the Local Authority, the process is the same for both Neighbourhood Forums and Town /Parish councils.

4.5 Before you Begin Plan Making

As with carrying out any project, preparation is vital. To help understand the process and the resources needed it is helpful to prepare a project plan. This doesn't need to be anything too onerous or overly formal, just enough to help guide you and the community through the process. The level of detail needed will vary but some key issues to consider at each of the key stages will be;

- Actions, activities and their sequences
- Timescales
- Costs
- Resources





The project plan will give you a clearer idea of what things need to be done, how and by whom. It will also help the Local Authorities and other stakeholders plan their input into the process. It should provide some practical steps of how to achieve the aims of the group, should highlight where your strengths are and perhaps where you have resource gaps.

Funding

Leicestershire County Council's Big Society Grant Fund is 'helping communities to help themselves'. The Big Society Grant Fund (totalling £340,000) is intended to support grassroots, community and voluntary organisations to develop ideas, projects and initiatives which will help to make the Big Society a reality at a local level in Leicestershire.

The 'Big Society' Grant will make funds (maximum £10,000 for Neighbourhood Planning) available for projects which:

- enable communities to identify and meet their own needs – "helping them to help themselves"
- provide the best local solutions to tackle local problems
- demonstrate local community commitment and involvement
- create active and empowered citizens

Projects which also meet the following key Leicestershire Together and Leicestershire County Council strategic priorities will be strongly considered for funding:

- An ageing population (including vulnerability and mental health)
- Troubled Families
- Unhealthy lifestyles
- Economic Growth (including worklessness / unemployment)

For full details please visit the County Council website:

www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/big society/big society grant fund



BigSociety
Grant Fund

LEICESTERSHIRE
together

Want to
know
more...

The Voluntary Action Leicestershire Publication 'Funding in the Voluntary & Community Sector' helps groups to start out in applying for grants and includes good practice advice on completing funding applications and information on preparing a budget.

www.valonline.org.uk/your-guide-funding-voluntary-community-sector

'Project Planning in the Voluntary & Community Sector' guide builds on themes in the Funding in the Voluntary and Community Sector guide and provides a step by step guide to project planning, setting out how to design, plan and monitor your project.

www.valonline.org.uk/your-guide-project-planning-voluntary-community-sector

COMMUNITY TOP TIP

Speak to the community about the issues that are important to them.

4.6 Making the Plan

Understanding the Local Issues

Planning policy needs to be based on evidence. One of the first steps in plan making will be to explore the issues in your community and start collecting evidence that will inform your Plan.

These early stages will need to explore local aspirations and concerns, with an understanding of whether a Neighbourhood Plan is the right tool to achieve these. Community engagement is key at this stage and should reflect the diversity of your community, including hard to reach groups.

This community engagement will be complemented by existing evidence. As part of the Local Plan preparation there will be a wealth of information available for your area on your Local Planning Authorities' website. This will be a great starting point but is likely to need supplementing with your local evidence and knowledge.

Clarifying the Aims

The early stages of the plan preparation should help to define what the community are seeking to achieve with the Plan. It is important that the aims are contributing towards sustainable development and that social, economic and environmental aspirations are considered. Topics to explore may include housing, employment, design,



transport and the natural and historic environment. The vision and aims will set the framework for the policies that develop as part of this process; they can be aspirational but must be realistic.

Translating Aims into Policies

The policies will provide the means for delivering the aims of the Plan. The community should be involved in shaping the policies and assessing the merit of any options that are considered. Neighbourhood Plan policies can interpret or add further detail to the Local Plan or National Planning Policy Framework, but must not repeat or be in conflict with them. Policies should be written with a view to how they will be implemented and monitored; to ensure the aims are achieved.



Other Process Requirements

In some cases, it may be necessary or advisable to carry out technical assessments, such as Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) and Sustainability Appraisals (SAs), to support the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Your Local Planning Authority will be able to advise on the most appropriate route for your Plan.

Want to
know
more...

For a brief overview of whether Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) or Sustainability Appraisals (SA) are likely to be needed, see the information sheet contained on the link below:
www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/neighbourhoodplanning/npnetworkingevents

A useful starting point for Sustainability Appraisals (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) advice on Neighbourhood Planning is the Levett Therivel 'DIY SA': Sustainability Appraisal (including strategic environmental assessment) of Neighbourhood Plans. Please note that this was published in August 2011, so should be supplemented with current Neighbourhood Planning advice and guidance.

www.levett-therivel.co.uk/DIYSA.pdf

Pre-Submission Consultation

Consultation and engagement will be an integral part of the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, but in addition there is the formal 6 week pre-submission consultation that must be undertaken. This will be undertaken when the Neighbourhood Plan Group are satisfied that they have a complete and appropriate Neighbourhood Plan for their area. This is the final stage of consultation and opportunity to amend the Plan before it is submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Submission to the Local Planning Authority

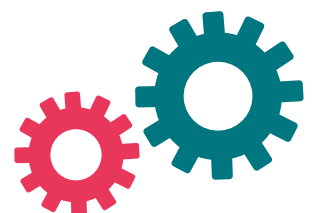
On receiving the Plan, the Local Planning Authority will check that the necessary procedural and legal requirements have been met and make arrangements for the publicity and independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.7 Independent Examination

The Local Planning Authority and the Neighbourhood Plan Group will agree on a suitably qualified and experienced person to carry out the independent examination of the Plan. The examiner will assess the Plan against the 'basic conditions':

- A Plan must be appropriate having regard to national policy;
- It must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Development Plan for the local area;
- It must be compatible with human rights requirements;
- It must be compatible with EU obligations;
- It must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The Plan will be publicised by the Local Planning Authority and any responses received will be sent to the examiner to consider. The examination will usually be considered by written representation but can be explored through a public hearing if this is deemed necessary by the examiner. The examiner will prepare a report for the Local Authority. This can propose the plan progresses to



COMMUNITY TOP TIP

The NP process is all about getting communities involved in shaping the future of their area, the process cannot be successful if the community are not in full support of the plan. Don't leave it to the referendum to get people on board.

referendum with no change, progresses to referendum with some amendments to ensure it meets the basic condition, or that it should not proceed to referendum.

4.8 Community Referendum

Community Top Tip

The NP process is all about getting communities involved in shaping the future of their area, the process cannot be successful if the community are not in full support of the plan. Don't leave it to the referendum to get people on board.

Throughout the process the community should be involved in shaping their Neighbourhood Plan as it develops. The referendum is the stage put in place to ensure that the Plan reflects the aspirations of the community.

The Local Planning Authority is responsible for arranging the referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the set processes for carrying out this poll. Those eligible to vote on the Plan will be asked the following yes / no question:

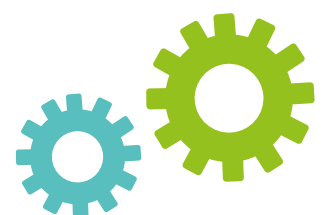
“Do you want [the Local Planning Authority] to use the Neighbourhood Plan for [the Neighbourhood Plan area] to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

If more than 50% of voters in the referendum vote ‘yes’ in favour of the Plan, the Local Planning Authority is required to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.9 Applying the Plan

Once the Plan is adopted, it will form part of the Local Plan and be used by the Local Planning Authority in considering to planning applications.

There may be some aspirations that the community can take an active role in achieving and it may be useful to produce an action plan to deliver these objectives.





Want to
know more...

The most comprehensive Neighbourhood Planning guide available is the Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide, www.locality.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-guide

Department for Communities and Local Government's guide to Neighbourhood Plans is www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/introductionneighbourplanning

The Campaign to Protect Rural England / National Association of Local Council's guide is called "How to shape where you live: a guide to neighbourhood planning"
www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/download/1629

Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Planning
www.uvns.org/sites/default/files/UVNS_Guide_to_Neighbourhood_Planning.pdf

The Planning Advisory Service's Frequently Asked Questions on Neighbourhood Planning and other useful information can be found at www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=1802659

PART 5

Working Together on Neighbourhood Planning



This section will help clarify the roles and expectations of the tiers of local government in Leicester and Leicestershire that will be involved in the process of Neighbourhood Planning. The protocol focuses on the interaction between the tiers as part of this process and does not include all activities required to make a Neighbourhood Plan. There will be other key stakeholders to include and consideration should be given to the most appropriate method and time to do this.

The Parish or Town Council / Neighbourhood Forum will:

Deciding to Make a Neighbourhood Plan

- Liaise with the Local Authorities to advise of the intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and suggested boundary.
- Provide a project plan outlining the intended process and timescales to the Local Authorities.
- Where possible outline an indication of the likely scope of the Plan.
- Variations to / further detail on the project plan should be submitted to the Local Authorities as appropriate to maximise the authorities ability to engage in this process.

Making it official - Applying to Prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

- Submit an application and associated information to the Local Planning Authority for approval to be a Neighbourhood Forum and / or to define the Neighbourhood Area.

Making the Plan

- Invite views from the Local Authorities as the Plan develops; ensuring adequate time (3 weeks minimum) is given for responding to consultations / attending meetings.
- Seek advice from the Local Planning Authority on meeting the 'basic requirements' as the scope of the Plan becomes clear.
- Carry out a 6 week pre-submission consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan

Independent Examination

- Following the 6 week consultation, and any amendments as a result, submit the Plan and associated information to the Local Planning Authority for examination.
- Liaise with the Local Planning Authority to agree a suitable qualified person to carry out the examination.

Community Referendum

- Receive the Examiner's Report and liaise with Local Planning Authority on next steps.
- Promote the Neighbourhood Plan referendum, within reasonable expenses limits.

Applying the Plan

- Work with the Local Authorities to deliver the Neighbourhood Plan.

The District / Borough / City Council will:

Deciding to make a Neighbourhood Plan

- Offer advice on suggested boundary for Neighbourhood Plan and proposed project plan, highlighting any potential issues.
- Provide the Neighbourhood Plan group with progress update on the Local Development Framework / Local Plan.
- Signpost the Neighbourhood Plan group to relevant sources of evidence / policy.
- Provide details of the officer(s) to contact for Neighbourhood Plan issues.
- Advise on the likely level of direct support that can be offered indicating minimum officer hours to be available each month.

Making it Official - Applying to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

- Check submission of the application to ensure the necessary requirements are met; advise Neighbourhood Plan Group if they are not.



- Acknowledge receipt of the relevant information and publicise for a 6 week consultation on the Local Planning Authority website and inform the Neighbourhood Plan group of the date a decision will be made on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.
- Issue the Neighbourhood Plan Group with a decision to designate the area or not, as soon as possible after the consultation
- Publicise a map of the designated Neighbourhood Plan area on the Local Planning Authority website.



Before you Begin Plan Making

- Provide advice on the legal requirements for Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act.
- Provide advice / recommendations on meeting and EU and human rights obligations.

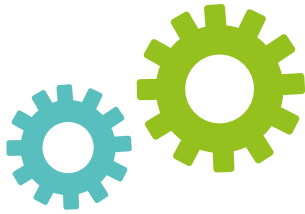
Making the Plan

- Coordinate input into the Neighbourhood Plan on Local Planning Authority services, functions, plans and policies, including local planning, housing and leisure and amenities.
- Respond to the pre-submission consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Independent Examination

- Receive the submitted Plan and check that the necessary information has been submitted and the required process has been followed.
- Publicise the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for at least 6 weeks, inviting written representations to be made.
- Respond with written representations to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Appoint a suitably qualified examiner (to be agreed by the Neighbourhood Plan Group).
- Provide the Examiner the necessary documentation and all written representation received on the Plan.





- Receive the Examiner's Report and advise Neighbourhood Plan Group on next steps.
- If the Examiner's Report requires modifications, make these modifications in line with Inspectors report.

Community Referendum

- If referred for referendum, receive advice from the Examiner on proposed referendum area.
- Arrange and cover costs of the Neighbourhood Plan referendum.
- Publish the Neighbourhood Plan information at least 28 working days before and the date of the referendum at least 25 working days before the poll.



Applying the Plan

- If successful at referendum, adopt the Plan as soon as possible to form part of the Local Planning Authority's Development Plan.
- Where appropriate, work with the Neighbourhood Plan Group to deliver the Neighbourhood Plan.

The County / City Council will:

Deciding to Make a Neighbourhood Plan

- Offer advice on suggested boundary for Neighbourhood Plan and proposed project plan, highlighting any potential issues.
- Signpost the Neighbourhood Plan Group to relevant sources of evidence / policy.
- Provide details of the officer(s) to contact on Neighbourhood Plan issues.
- Advise on the likely level of direct support that can be offered indicating minimum officer hours to be available each month.

Making it Official - Applying to Prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

- Offer the Neighbourhood Plan Group the opportunity to publicise the area designation consultation through Community Forum and County Council webpages.

Before you Begin Plan Making

- Offer the Neighbourhood Plan Group the opportunity to publicise their Neighbourhood Plan area designation through the Community Forum and County Council webpages.
- Offer community consultation support / advice through the Big Society Rural Advice Service.
- Offer potential funding to support Neighbourhood Plans through the Big Society Grant Fund.
- Coordinate Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Networking events to support Neighbourhood Plan Groups in Leicestershire.



Making the Plan

- Coordinate input into the Neighbourhood Plan on County Council services, functions, plans and policies, including highways, assets, education and minerals and waste.
- Assist with understanding and application of the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Green Spaces Toolkit.
- Respond to the pre-submission consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Independent Examination

- Respond with written representations to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Community Referendum

- Offer the Neighbourhood Plan group the opportunity to publicise the referendum through Community Forum and County Council webpages.

Applying the Plan

- Where appropriate, work with the Neighbourhood Plan Group to deliver the Neighbourhood Plan.



