

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

– Advice for non-parished areas

A guide for non-parished communities
who wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan



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What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan that is prepared by the community that will be subject to an Independent Examination and Referendum. If local people vote for the plan at referendum it will be adopted by the Council as a statutory development plan (this means the Council will have a legal obligation to use it to determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area). A neighbourhood plan could be able to :

- Agree a vision for the area
- Choose where new homes, shops and offices should be built
- Have a say on what new developments should look like
- Include non-planning issues which the community feel is important

What are the main requirements in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan?

To pass independent examination a Neighbourhood Plan must meet these basic conditions:

- Be in general conformity with local and national planning policy
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- Be compatible with human rights requirements
- Be compatible with EU obligations

How to apply to be designated a neighbourhood area/forum

To prepare a neighbourhood plan you must be designated a neighbourhood area and forum. You can apply to be designated a neighbourhood area and forum at the same time, but you will need to work with the Council on your application. But it is best to apply for these separately.

To be designated a neighbourhood area an application must be made to the Council and include :

- a map showing the proposed neighbourhood area
- a statement outlining why the proposed area is an appropriate one
- a statement stating the group applying is capable of being designated a neighbourhood forum

To be designated a neighbourhood forum an application must be made to the Council and include :

- the name of the proposed neighbourhood forum
- a copy of the written constitution of the proposed forum
- a map identifying the proposed area
- the contact details of at least one member of the proposed forum
- confirmation that the proposed forum will have at least 21 members that live, work and carry out business in the neighbourhood area.

What are the benefits of preparing a neighbourhood plan?

These are some of the things that people in Leeds have said about neighbourhood planning so far:

“For the first time in our community’s history we now have an agreed local vision for our area”

“Preparing the plan has brought all sorts of local people together who have never met before, helping to restore a sense of community spirit”

“We have exciting ideas to promote sustainable change and investment to benefit the whole community”

“We want to work with the Council and others to complement existing regeneration initiatives”

“We feel that neighbourhood planning gives a genuine say to the local community”

“Our plan will allow us to identify and help deliver community priorities”

“Having a neighbourhood Plan will give the community a say on planning decisions”

How can local people get involved?

There are many ways to get involved and the level of involvement will depend what is right for you (this may vary over time). You may wish to be involved in any of the following ways depending on the amount of time that you are able to give:

- By Attending neighbourhood forum meetings/task groups – either as a voting member or not
- By contributing to the preparation of the plan (for example, advising on local issues, taking photographs, raising local awareness of the plan)
- By leading on a topic area (for example, you may have a particular interest in housing issues or a particular skill for research).

Getting off to a good start...

The first step is for the local community to agree that they want a neighbourhood plan and then to:

- Promote local awareness of neighbourhood planning
- Encourage a wide range of local people to get involved
- Inform local business and ask them to get involved
- Ask local people what matters to them and how they would like the area to change
- Seek support and funding to prepare your neighbourhood plan
- Agree the issues that your plan could address (A SWOT analysis can help and it is a low cost, easy and fun way to think about the areas Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
- Agree the area that the plan will cover

What other support is available?

Locality and Planning Aid England can offer a wide range of support, including up to £7k funding. For more details and to apply for support, go to mycommunityrights.org

What area should your plan cover?

The area that your neighbourhood plan will cover is called the 'neighbourhood area'. You should work with the Council to agree an appropriate boundary for your plan. There are 3 key principles to think about in deciding the area that your plan will cover:

- It is an area that local people can identify with
- It has boundaries that make sense on the ground (railway line, roads etc.)
- It covers an area that will allow you to deliver your vision

Note : Only parish councils can prepare a neighbourhood plan for parished areas

How will the Council support non-parished areas?

The Council will agree an appropriate level of support with you, but responsibility will lie with the community to prepare the plan. The Council will be responsible for the following:

- Designation of the Neighbourhood Area
- Designation of the Neighbourhood Forum
- Advise on the draft plan (sustainability, conformity, equality, human rights issues)
- Organise and pay for the Independent Examination
- Organise and pay for the Referendum
- Assist with delivery as appropriate

What examples are there of good practice in Leeds or elsewhere in the country?

Holbeck is a non-parished inner city area in South Leeds - <http://holbeckneighbourhoodplan.wordpress.com/>

Aireborough is a non-parished area made up of Guiseley & Yeadon in West Leeds - <http://aireboroughnf.wordpress.com/>

Balsall Heath is non-parished area in Birmingham, one of the first non-parished areas in the country to be designated - <http://www.planningbalsallheath.info/>

The St James neighbourhood plan in Exeter is one of the first plans to be prepared and has been well received - <http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org/What%20we%20do>

Inner East Preston - <http://www.friendsoffishwickandstmatthews.org.uk>

Tips based on experience so far in Leeds

- Consider other options that are available – a neighbourhood plan may not be the right approach for your neighbourhood
- Agree a vision for the plan at the earliest possible stage
- Work with the Council to agree an appropriate neighbourhood area
- Work with the Council's Area Support Team who can advise on representation, consultation and non-planning opportunities
- Invite local Elected Members to be members of the neighbourhood forum
- Involve the voluntary sector
- Involve business
- Set up a website and use social media to raise awareness and improve consultation
- Keep a record of all meetings, agendas and actions

Further information and support

1) Leeds City Council:

Ian Mackay - Team Leader
Telephone: (0113) 2478079
Email: ian.mackay@leeds.gov.uk

Heather Suggate
Telephone: (0113) 2478084
Email: heather.suggate@leeds.gov.uk

Website: www.leeds.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

2) Locality:

Manages neighbourhood planning funding and support nationally.

Website: www.mycommunityrights.org
Tel: 0845 345 4564
Mon-fri 9.30am - 12.30pm

3) Planning Aid England:

Provides independent planning advice and support to communities preparing their neighbourhood plans.

Website: www.rtpi.org.uk

4) Planning Advisory Service:

A free online resource for planners and communities.

Website: www.pas.gov.uk

5) Department for Communities and Local Government:

A useful resource for neighbourhood planning, policy announcements and more.

Website: www.gov.uk

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