

Neighbourhood Planning: The process and experience so far

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Overview

- What is a neighbourhood plan and how are they made?
- What can and can't a neighbourhood plan do?
- What has been the take up of neighbourhood planning?
- What are the common pitfalls neighbourhood planning groups face?
- What can neighbourhood plans achieve on the ground?

Who we are....

Locality is the national network of ambitious and enterprising community-led organisations, working together to help neighbourhoods thrive.

Membership led - 600+ members

We run major national programmes which support and empower local communities

Neighbourhood Planning and Community right to build
£24 million over 3 years.

2015 - 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvAHhrKNVt0>



What is a neighbourhood plan?

- Community led plan
- Statutory document
- Guides the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area.
- Vision, set of aims and a list of policies
- Forms part of the local development plan for the area
- Can't be **anti-growth**
- Must promote sustainable development

What is the process for preparing a neighbourhood plan?

- **Stage 1: Getting established**

- Parish or set up Forum
- Neighbourhood area
- Forums designated **Stage**

- **2: Preparing the plan**

- Consultation and engagement
- Evidence base
- Vision and Aims
- Policies
- Pre-submission consultation and necessary amendments are made to the plan

- **Stage 3 - Bringing the plan into force**

- Submitted to LPA
- LPA check procedure
- LPA consult on the plan
- Independent examination
- Plan proceeds to referendum
- Subject to a majority yes vote at referendum- plan is made

What can and can't a neighbourhood plan do?

- Land use planning policies
- Only development that requires a planning application
- Can't deal with mineral or waste, highways issues.
- Must have regard to national issues - Green belts etc.
- Must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan

Can have projects - kept separate, not statutory, not examined.

What has the take up of neighbourhood planning been so far?

- 2000+ areas have been designated
- 300+ made neighbourhood plans
- 10 million people in NP area.
- Majority are Parishes. However Forums are increasing.
- North/South divide - 75% in South

What support is there for groups preparing neighbourhood plans?

All groups - £9k grant

Complex issues - Technical support and additional grant - £15k

Resources and toolkits

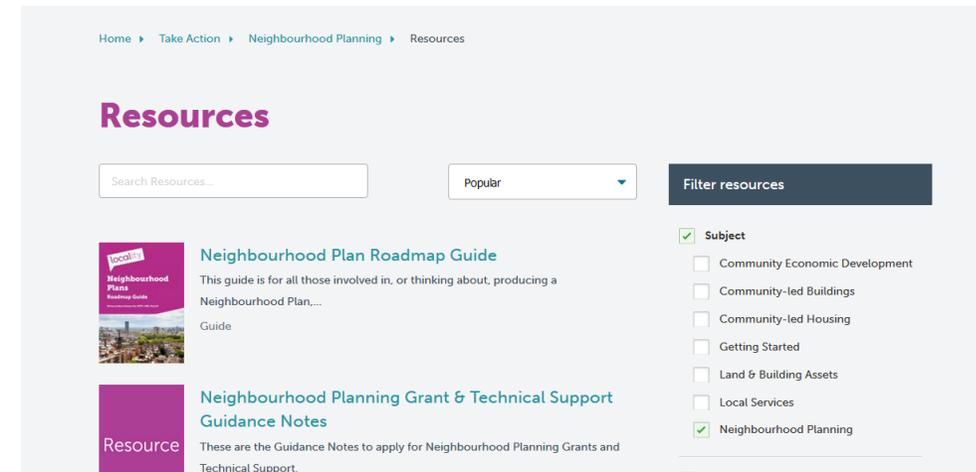
Advice line

0300 020 1864

The My Community Advice Line is open:

Monday – Thursday, 9.30am – 12.30pm
(local call rate)

Champions



The screenshot shows the 'Resources' page for Neighbourhood Planning. It features a search bar, a dropdown menu set to 'Popular', and a 'Filter resources' button. A list of resources is displayed, including 'Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide' and 'Neighbourhood Planning Grant & Technical Support Guidance Notes'. A filter sidebar on the right shows 'Subject' filters, with 'Neighbourhood Planning' selected.

What are the common pitfalls neighbourhood planning groups face?

Developing a robust evidence base

- The evidence underpinning policies in a neighbourhood plan need to be robust. Inappropriate evidence can have serious implications on plans.

The Haddenham Neighbourhood Plan- made in September 2015. A developer stated that there were ‘serious errors’ in the scoring system used to allocate areas for development in the plan, meaning that one site was deemed to be suitable for significantly less houses than it realistically could. Outcome- Chapter 6 of the plan (which included the housing policies) was quashed.

The Wantage Neighbourhood Plan- Independent examiners report published June 2016. Examiner recommended that the plan does not proceed to referendum. Examiner concluded that many policies were not supported by proportionate, robust evidence and should therefore be deleted from the plan. This included policies that sought to establish a development boundary to set out where development can and can’t be located. The examiner concluded: *‘the plan is overly focused on protection of the locality’s many features, too often without sufficiently robust evidence to do so.’*

What are the common pitfalls neighbourhood planning groups face?

Community engagement

- **Targets just the usual suspects-** children and young people have a different perspective on the area and may come up with new ideas- they are often not involved
Hebden Royd neighbourhood planning group- Held a children's workshop that highlighted how much value the children placed on nature in the area, the type of jobs they hoped could be created and the type of home they would like to live in
- **Inappropriate/traditional engagement techniques-** having a lecture style meeting, with a speaker at the front, may be off putting for some people and they may be less likely to speak out or give their views.
Tulse Hill neighbourhood planning group- have done lots of informal small scale engagement- this has included developing a tree and asking the community to add leaves to it indicating what they would like to see protected in their area
- **Lack of a social media presence-** Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest- this might help reach new audiences

What are the common pitfalls neighbourhood planning groups face?

Getting the plan policies right

- **Scope of plan policies-** Neighbourhood planning groups have tried to include policies that: improve local train and bus services, introduce 20mph speed zones, restrict the routing of heavy goods vehicles through their villages, and improve rubbish collection services. These are outside the scope of land use planning and at examination the examiner will recommend that these policies are deleted from the plan, or they may recommend that some are listed as a community aspiration in a separate section of the plan. The policies in the plan will be the only things that carry legal weight in planning decisions- however the process of debating and agreeing projects/community aspirations may well help them get delivered. However as they don't carry legal weight it is worth carefully considering how much energy to invest in these during the plan production process
- **Policies need to be locally distinctive-** there is little point in repeating national or local policy. A local plan may have a policy regarding urban design considerations. A neighbourhood plan policy can add further detail to this policy, specifying additional requirements more fine tuned to the area

What are the common pitfalls neighbourhood planning groups face?

Meeting the environmental requirements (part of Basic Condition F)

- A neighbourhood plan will need either: a statement of reasons as to why strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is not required (i.e. screening determination), or, where an SEA is deemed necessary, an environmental report which documents the findings of the SEA. SEA will likely be required if the plan is likely to lead to significant effects.
- Issues groups have encountered with this:
 - Plan goes to examination without it being screening to determine if SEA was required- plan fails to meet the Basic Conditions
 - Screening of the plan should be done as early as possible and prior to pre-submission consultation. Some groups have screened their plan after pre-submission consultation and it has then been determined that SEA is required. This has caused delays in making the plan

Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan

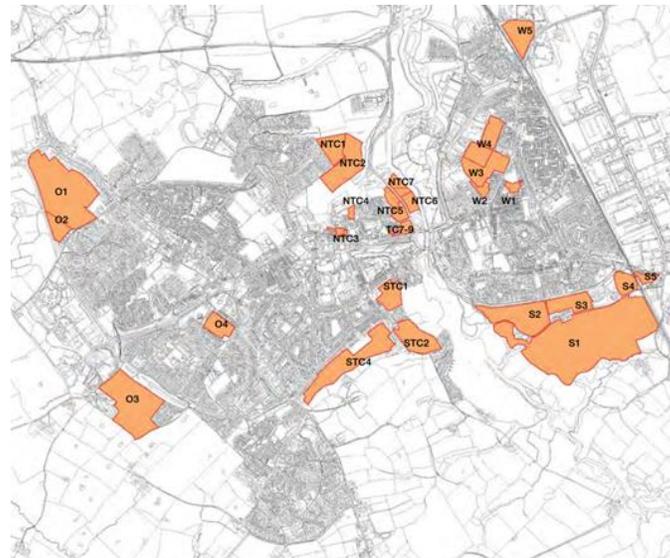
Successful legal challenge by Crownhall Estates- developer argued plan should not be put forward to referendum on the grounds that the LPA did not carry out the formal screening opinion process.

Consequences: parish council had to repeat a number of steps:

- Statutory consultation
- Independent examination

Examples of what neighbourhood plans are doing

- Housing- specifies where new housing should go; identifies the amount of housing required; outlines the type of housing needed- including affordable housing, flats/apartments, detached, semi detached etc.

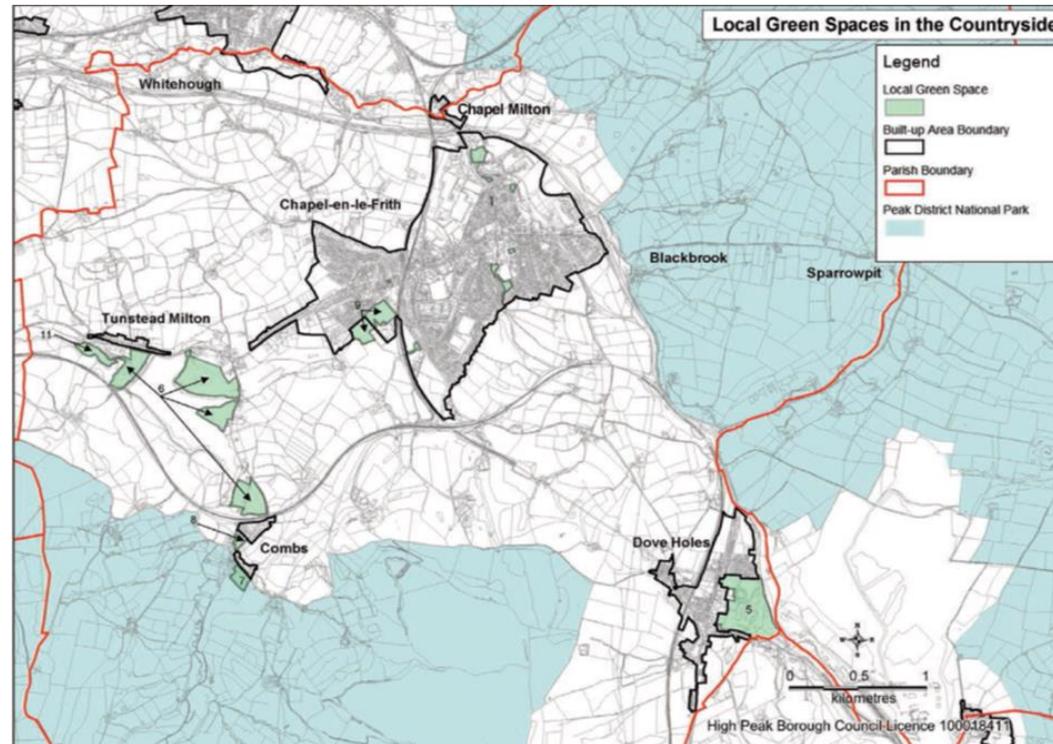


Winsford Neighbourhood Plan

- **The Thame Neighbourhood Plan**- allocates 770 new homes to six sites dispersed around the town, departing from the LPA's proposal to put almost all of the housing on one site on the edge of Thame.

Examples of what neighbourhood plans are doing

- **Environment and green space-** identifies local green spaces that are important to the community and protects them from development through designation as a ‘Local Green Space’



Chapel-en-le-Frith Neighbourhood plan

The benefits.....

Communities are positive and passionate about places they live

- Managing new community space
- Granting planning permission – Cockermouth NDO – upper floors of shops to flats
- Protecting the high street
- Improve public realm
- Allocate new employment sites
- Protect green gaps between settlements
- Protect community green space

Any Questions?