

Hannington Guidance Note on Neighbourhood Planning

Introduction

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced via the Localism Act in 2011. Neighbourhood Planning is not compulsory but allows communities to have a say about the future of their area, agreeing common aims and objectives to formulate policies relating to the terms of use and the development of land within their parish.

Neighbourhood Plans become part of the Development Plan upon vote of a successful referendum and are then used alongside the Local Plan for decisions within that parish.

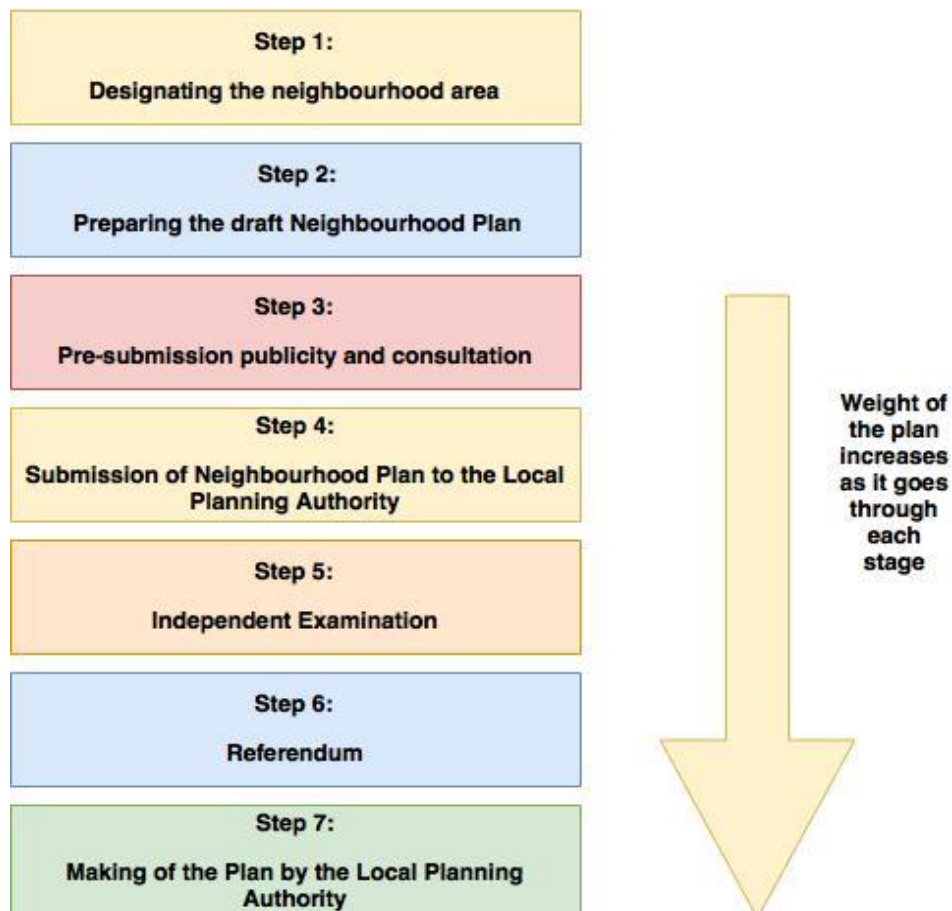
Local Context

The council now have nine made neighbourhood plans in the borough, with a number of other designations at various stages of the neighbourhood plan process. A map of the progress of neighbourhood plans in the borough can be seen on the council's website via: www.basingstoke.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplansprogress.

The council provide support and assistance to neighbourhood planning groups. A lead officer is designated who liaises directly with the neighbourhood planning group, and provides support and assistance as and when required.

Neighbourhood Plan process

There are a number of stages to the neighbourhood plan process, many of these are statutory and will need to be completed. The community must be consulted throughout the process. A short summary is provided below.



Pros

- Neighbourhood plans can provide locally distinctive policies, if there are any local issues these may be able to be addressed via policies in the neighbourhood plan. Many plans have included housing mix policies which seek smaller dwellings for downsizers and families. This in turn could improve aspects of community cohesion and bring in a younger population to the village.
- Neighbourhood Plans can provide a clear vision for a parish, there is the opportunity to have a strong vision for the future which is endorsed via the community at referendum.
- A significant amount of funding is available for neighbourhood planning groups, every neighbourhood planning group is eligible for £9,000 worth of funding which if eligible could increase if plans seek to allocate development within their plan.
- Those parishes with a neighbourhood plan in place can receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arising from development in their area, those that don't receive 15% of CIL revenue.
- Government continue to provide support for neighbourhood planning groups, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in 2018 to provide more protection to those parishes where neighbourhood plans have allocated development sites (see paragraph 14 of the NPPF).
- The process is very established in the borough and officers are more than happy to assist neighbourhood planning groups.

Cons

- The process takes a number of years to complete due to the statutory stages. As it is volunteer led it may be difficult to find a number of residents who would commit to the whole process and it is very dependent on volunteers and their time.
- The plan needs to be examined against the basic conditions and therefore needs to undergo independent examination, this is a light touch examination but if the NP is not in compliance with the basic conditions it may not make it through examination. The same principle applies at the referendum stage as the NP needs to be endorsed by the community. Without sufficient support from the community it may need to be revised.

General comments

- The Town or Parish Council are the qualifying body and responsibility of the neighbourhood plan is held with them. They appoint the steering group who lead on the neighbourhood plan, this consists of local people.
- Neighbourhood Plans need to meet 5 basic conditions, and the NP will be tested by an Independent Examiner to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions. These can be found via
- Any neighbourhood plan needs to be in conformity in the Local Plan (which the council is currently updating) and national planning framework and guidance.
- Need to be aware of neighbourhood plans can and cannot do. Government is pro-growth and neighbourhood plans cannot be used as a tool to restrict development.
- Policies need to be robust and justified, this means that they need to be realistic and democratic, as well as being backed up by a sufficient evidence base.

I would also encourage the use of Locality resources, they have produced a number of resources, many of which would be of use to yourselves. In the first instance I would recommend reading:

- Step by step roadmap guide: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/create-neighbourhood-plan-step-by-step-roadmap-guide/>
- Neighbourhood Planning Grant and Technical notes: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/neighbourhood-planning-grant-technical-support-guidance-notes/>

If you have any further questions or queries, please contact Robyn Kelly via 01256 845175 or email robyn.kelly@basingstoke.gov.uk.

I will attend the Parish Council meeting on 10th September and will be happy to provide more information and answer any questions on Neighbourhood Planning.