

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 may 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.

A Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the statutory development plan for the 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 have regard to national policy and be in general conformity with existing 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 greater 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 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 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.

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 the basic conditions, including general conformity with local policy.

SOURCE – Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide (www.locality.org.uk)