



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

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Local Government**

By Email Only

**Subject: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

Dear Local Planning Authority Colleagues,

I am writing to outline some funding opportunities available to Local Planning Authorities in England, which aim to encourage the take up and preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

Neighbourhood planning empowers our communities to shape the places where they live and work. Over 1,000 communities have now progressed through the stages of neighbourhood planning and have a 'made' plan or order in place, and more than 2,740 communities have started the process. Local Planning Authorities play a crucial role in this process through: designating areas, advising and assisting on plan preparation, holding referendums, 'making' plans and using neighbourhood plans in planning decisions.

To encourage and increase the take up of neighbourhood planning across England we have introduced four new forms of support this year (financial year 2021-22), including two funding streams that Local Planning Authorities can submit bids for, as outlined below.

***Bidding Fund for Local Planning Authorities in Under-represented Areas***

A new £2.1m fund focussed on increasing the uptake of neighbourhood planning, which aims to enable Local Planning Authorities with low levels of uptake by providing some resources to support neighbourhood planning, through the hiring of:

- a dedicated neighbourhood planning officer;
- a project manager; or
- an engagement specialist.

This is in response to recent research by the University of Reading which found that only 5% of 'made' neighbourhood plans are in urban areas and only 6.7% of designated neighbourhood planning areas are in the most deprived parts of the country. Therefore, the aim of this fund is to help spread the reach of neighbourhood planning into under-represented areas.

***Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot***

A £330k fund has been launched to test a simpler approach to neighbourhood planning. This aims to overcome the perceived complexity of the neighbourhood

planning process and lack of volunteer capacity, that can contribute to a low uptake for neighbourhood planning despite strong appetite in local communities to shape their areas. All Local Planning Authorities will be welcome to apply, as we are keen to elicit insight from a range of diverse perspectives.

### ***Further Support***

As well as the funding detailed above, we have also launched two support programmes available to neighbourhood planning groups:

- We are offering dedicated technical support packages and grants to help groups to achieve ambitious high street regeneration or social infrastructure proposals. This will provide support to communities who want to redevelop buildings or sites for social or economic uses in town and village centres. The aim is to foster tangible high street regeneration or provide useful social infrastructure that offers demonstrable benefit to the community.
- We have also launched tailored site viability support, which will provide technical support packages to neighbourhood planning groups who wish to bring forward development, particularly on less viable sites. The support will help groups to understand what policy choices and investment requirements would be necessary to bring such sites into viable use.

We would like to encourage your Local Planning Authority and neighbourhood planning groups in your area to make applications for this new support, as we believe it can provide real benefit to a range of communities across England.

You can find more details on the new funding available to Local Planning Authorities, including guidance on what is being looked for within applications [here](#).

You can find more details to aid applications for the additional support available to neighbourhood planning groups here: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/apply/>.



**Joanna Averley, Chief Planner**