

NOTES on NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

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EDITION 15

Produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government



Welcome back to *Notes on Neighbourhood Planning*, following our break for the election. The Department has a new Secretary of State in Greg Clark, but Brandon Lewis retains responsibility for Neighbourhood Planning as part of his role as Housing and Planning Minister.

Support remains high for the 1,500 communities across England who have already begun preparing their neighbourhood plan, and every effort will be made to ensure many more communities in England have the opportunity to join them.

The new [Housing Bill](#), which aims to 'simplify and speed up the neighbourhood planning system, to support communities that seek to meet local housing and other development needs through neighbourhood planning.'

The new support contract, worth £22.5 million for Neighbourhood Planning and £3.5 million for Community Buildings, came into effect in April. All communities can apply for up to £8,000, and those in priority areas are eligible for a further £6,000 and technical support from a planning expert.

Take up of support through the new programme has been high. Over 350 applications for the Neighbourhood Planning Grant have been submitted, and £1.5 million of funding and £220,000 of technical support has already been handed out. For information on how to apply, click [here](#).

There have been more than 100 applications for Community Buildings project and pre-feasibility grants, with over £300,000 awarded. You can apply [here](#).



Neighbourhood Planning Resources

All the resources your community needs to successfully complete its neighbourhood plan can now be easily accessed in one place, including guides, templates, videos and links to numerous other publications. Click on the image to view.

The [Planning Aid website](#) also has loads of resources, including their latest podcast on how to work with consultants.

New Support Contract

The community rights support website, operated by Locality, has been given a makeover.

You can find all the information you need on neighbourhood planning, along with the means to apply for funding and technical support.

You can also sign up to join the [My Community Network](#), where you can connect with others who are also passionate about their communities. It's a great place where you can chat to experts, take part in discussions and share your own experiences. Make sure you bookmark the new www.mycommunity.org.uk site



Follow the conversation on Twitter at [#NeighbourhoodPlanning](#)

Send your questions to the team at decentralisation@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Working with young people

We take a look at working with young people when preparing your neighbourhood plan

Why?

- Neighbourhood plans should aim to best represent the views of all who live in the area. Young people are an important part of every community and should be given the chance to express their views.
- The views of young people offer a different perspective on important issues.
- Young people can offer more than just their views, contributing their time, energy and skills as volunteers. This benefits both young people and the community as a whole.
- Engaging with young people ensures your plan will have the support of people of all ages, helping to better secure its future.

How?

There's no one way to engage and work with young people in your community, and over the page you'll find two case studies of the very different ways in which two communities went about it.

However, consider what the best forums for talking to young people might be sports clubs, societies and schools are easy examples. You may be able to get permission to talk to classes about your neighbourhood plan, or to circulate questionnaires for them to fill out.



Having an active social media presence is also a great way to engage people of all ages, but especially the young. Twitter and Facebook can provide a great way for you to show what your community is doing and gain feedback.

Young people can also contribute their time and skills to help you prepare your plan. Across England, university students have been providing invaluable research time and new ideas, helping communities both save money and think about their plan in different ways. You can find out more information on working with students at the [RTPI website](#).

There is also a wide range of youth organisations across England whose members might be willing to offer their help. In Oxford, the [Student Hub](#) organisation has sought to get involved in local neighbourhood plans, and they have branches around the country. [Young Advisors](#) is a social enterprise that allows young people to stimulate social action by engaging young people in community life, local decision making and improving services.

The Uppingham Experience

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A different perspective

When preparing a neighbourhood plan how do you ensure its content is relevant to members of the community who are going to have to live with its proposals and policies? How do you ensure that a Plan's content not only reflects the views of the elderly and the middle aged, but also meets the needs of the younger members of the community?

Given that we are planning for tomorrow, how does a community ensure its neighbourhood plan reflects the views of children as well as adults? Would their views be different to that of the voting electorate?

This was the challenge faced by the Task Group preparing the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan. The results of their efforts to meet the challenge were somewhat surprising.

During the data collection stage of the Task Group's work, teenagers and young adults were readily responding on social media but one group remained silent, children of primary school age. Recognising this as a lack of appropriate engagement, a plan was formulated to offer the two local primary schools the opportunity of a school visit.

The offer was enthusiastically embraced by the Lichfield Academy who allowed two CRB-checked Group members, both themselves qualified teachers, to host 30 minutes discussion sessions with several age groups in the school.

The engagement was modelled on a modern primary school lesson with each class session starting with a brief outline of the aims of neighbourhood planning and then discussion based around a series of open-ended questions. One member of the Task Group led the debate. The other took note of the responses and the themes raised by the children.

A number of interesting issues emerged with the children producing some surprising and valuable data. In particular, they made us aware of: Where they did not feel safe, how green spaces could be improved, what was good and bad about local play equipment, good and bad housing design, speeding hotspots and where broadband and wireless signals were poor.

A high level of interest in the Plan was demonstrated by pupils, parents and teachers and the exercise deemed a huge success. Most importantly the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan was enriched by a series of strategic insights on the part of the children. A valuable lesson was learned: neighbourhood planning is not just for grownups, the whole community should contribute and benefit. That's what the move toward localism has delivered in Uppingham.

Many thanks to Ron Simpson

The Tattenhall Experience **Schools, surveys & a rave**

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At an early meeting of the steering group, a discussion was held as to which members of the community we needed to consult and the best ways to go about it. We first considered visiting all the clubs and societies until we realised how many there were!

We therefore decided that all consultations would be in hard copy and would be delivered to every household. However one group stood out as finding that method “dull and boring” and that was the mid-teens to mid-twenties group.

A member of staff at Bolesworth Estates, a local property owners who sat on the steering group, suggested a rave for the young people – the Parish Council provide a venue and some music and the “entry fee” would be to fill in the questionnaire.

It was held during our first round of consultation and took place on a freezing cold February evening. Bolesworth had provided a warehouse that they had empty. From their corporate event contacts they had sourced (loud, pounding) music, flashing lights, and smoke machines. The steering group having made a financial contribution toward these from the neighbourhood plan grant money.

A room just off the warehouse was provided for steering group members and the young people passed through this on their way in. We explained a little bit about what we hoped the plan would achieve, asked them to fill in the questionnaire and after that the night was theirs.

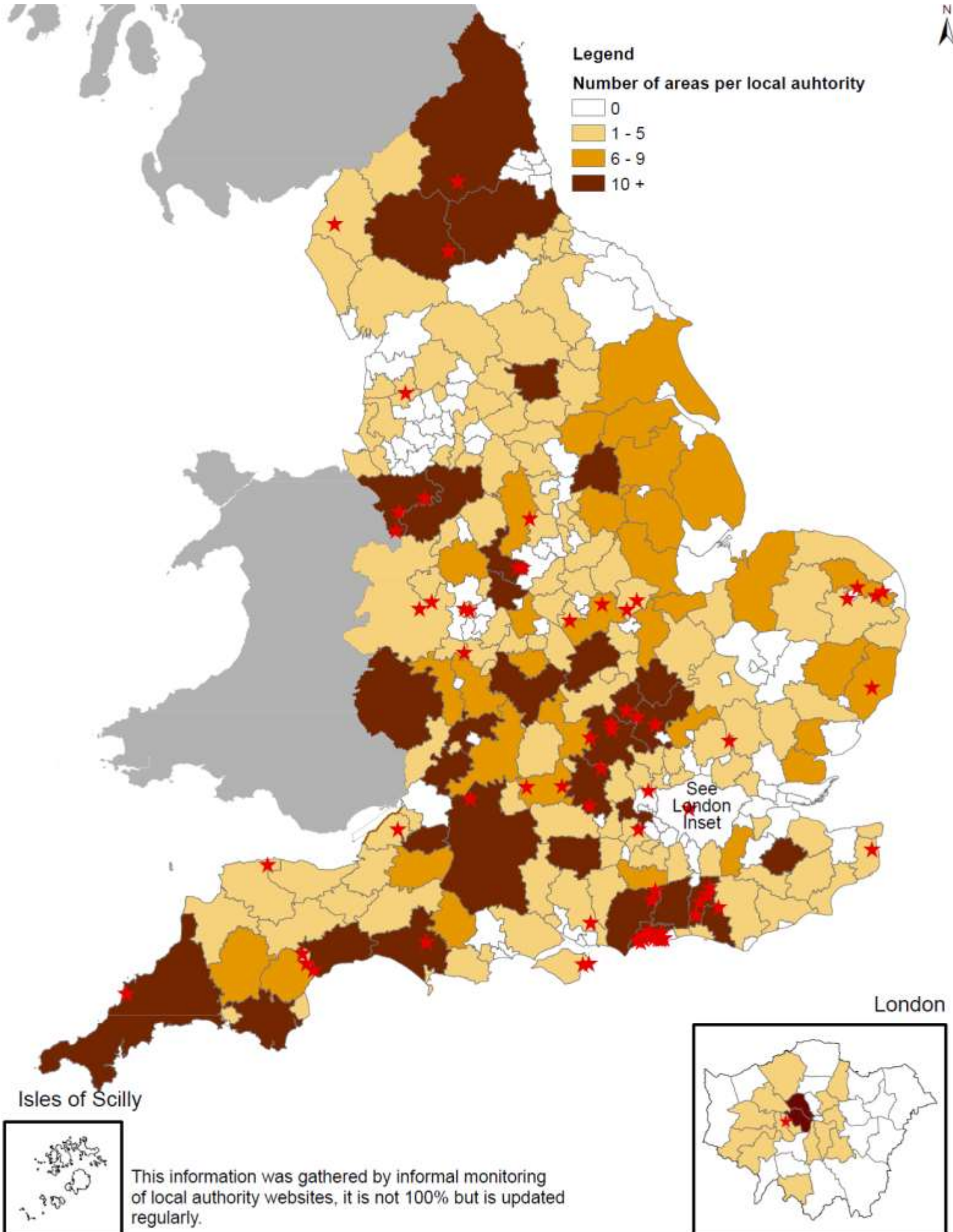
We got 62 responses, and could have got more but we underestimated how popular the event would be and we ran out of forms. Some answers were a little silly but the majority were excellent with comments about the retail facilities, sports facilities and the bus service (or lack of it) featuring heavily. During this consultation we also went into both the local primary and secondary schools to talk about the neighbourhood plan and invited the children to fill in the questionnaire and give us their thoughts. Overall it was a very worthwhile experience, providing good ideas and satisfaction that young people had been given the chance to contribute and participate.

Many thanks to Carol Weaver and Graham Spencer

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Referendum News

Since the last edition of Notes there have been 23 new referendums, taking the total to 75



Super Thursday

On Thursday 5th March, a record seven referendums took place, all of which were successful. Congratulations to Rendlesham, Denmead, Horninglow & Eton, Chalfont St Peter, Ardingly, Great Horwood and Wing.

Central Milton Keynes Business Neighbourhood Plan

Central Milton Keynes has become the first area in the country to pass a Business Neighbourhood Plan. This required two referendums, one for residents and another for businesses. Both passed with resounding majorities, and over 100,000 people voted, the most ever at a neighbourhood planning referendum.



New interactive referendum map

We have created a brand new interactive map showing all the details of all 75 referendums to have taken place so far, along with links to the plans themselves. Click on the map to view it in full.

Upcoming referendums

There will be 11 neighbourhood planning referendums in July. The most recent was in West Hampstead on 9th July, only the second referendum in London. On 23 July, East Staffordshire will be hosting three elections on one day.

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