

## **Notes on Neighbourhood Planning**

**Edition 18, October 2016**

### **Ministerial Team**

The Department's Secretary of State is the Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP.

Responsibility for Neighbourhood Planning rests with Gavin Barwell MP as Minister of State for Housing, Planning and Minister for London.

Marcus Jones MP is Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Local Government including parishes

Lord Bourne is Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Lords)

### **Neighbourhood Planning Bill**

Now published at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/housingandplanning.html>

The Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 7 September, with the parliamentary scrutiny process due to begin in earnest at 'second reading' on 10 October.

The Bill will further strengthen neighbourhood planning and also contains provisions to improve the use of planning conditions by LPAs and continue the reforms of the compulsory purchase regime.

More specifically on neighbourhood planning, the Bill will:

- Require local planning authorities and others who decide planning applications to have regard to neighbourhood plans that have been independently examined; once the decision has been taken to put the plan to a referendum;
- Give neighbourhood plans that have passed each applicable referendum full legal effect at the earliest opportunity;
- Introduce a process for modifying neighbourhood plans that is proportionate to the changes proposed;
- Clarify the procedure for modifying the boundary of a neighbourhood area without affecting existing neighbourhood plans or Orders;
- Require local planning authorities to publish their policies on the advice or assistance they will give to neighbourhood planning groups, and
- Require local planning authorities to set out how they would involve communities in the earliest, preparatory, stages of their plan-making activity.

The Bill and explanatory notes are available on the Parliament website, alongside a diagram that tracks the parliamentary progress of the Bill.

A six week public consultation is now underway (closing 19 October 2016) on the regulations required to implement some of the neighbourhood planning provisions in the Bill.

### **Housing and Planning Act 2016**

Following the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the government has introduced regulations to speed up and simplify the neighbourhood planning process. The headlines are as follows:

- Time periods have been introduced for key local authority decisions such as designating neighbourhood forums, sending a plan or Order to referendum and bringing a neighbourhood plan or Order into force;
- There is also a new requirement that the local planning authority must designate the whole of a neighbourhood area applied for in certain cases: where the application is for the whole of a parish, or where the time limit for a decision has expired (13 weeks in most cases, 20 weeks for areas covering more than one local authority);

- Regulations set out the details for the new power for the Secretary of State to intervene and decide whether an order or plan proposal should advance to referendum, where there is a difference of opinion between a qualifying body and local authority;
- Finally, Neighbourhood Forums will have a new right to be notified of planning applications in their area.

The Government consulted on the proposals in advance of the regulations, and a summary of the responses and the government response is available [here](#).

### Neighbourhood Planning capacity building in more deprived areas

We are pleased to fund a second phase to the Neighbourhood Planning Capacity Building in Deprived Areas Project. The project contractors Renaisi are an award winning social enterprise who delivered phase one in 2015-16. Building on the experience from last year our aim is to increase the capacity of local voluntary and community organisations in six further areas in England. The funding includes a small grant to a community organisation in each area to facilitate neighbourhood planning activity and develop a project plan.

Running from October 2016 to March 2017, the project will produce case studies, an evaluation report and learning materials to help the Department understand how best to build capacity in deprived areas across the country.

For more information, contact Renaisi direct through Donna Lightbown, [d.lightbown@renaisi.com](mailto:d.lightbown@renaisi.com)

Case studies from the first phase of this project are now published on the [MyCommunity](#) website, and include great examples of successful neighbourhood planning engagement with a wide range of communities around the country, such as gypsies and travellers and a Bangladeshi Women's Association.

### Raising awareness of Neighbourhood planning

One of the main obstacles preventing greater take up of Neighbourhood Planning is lack of awareness about the power given by the Localism Act 2011. So for 4 weeks from 23 May 2016 DCLG ran a national promotional campaign in 81 local authority areas that met pre-conditions that can make neighbourhood planning easier, such as having a Local Plan, and having a Community Infrastructure Levy.

The campaign connected with 115 local press titles, 18 local radio stations and a wide range of digital media. Images like the one above appeared on 1,080 street posters and 50 tube station billboards.

[www.neighbourhoodplanning.net](http://www.neighbourhoodplanning.net) was launched to introduce neighbourhood planning and inspire people to get started with it.

One of the most effective and innovative channels used was the partnership with Streetlife, the online local community network. Conversations were promoted and maintained in the 81 targeted local authority areas. The audience for these was perfect as the people who join Streetlife's hyper local networks already had interest in their local community.

#### *What were the outcomes?*

Over the campaign period, [www.neighbourhoodplanning.net](http://www.neighbourhoodplanning.net) had 71,839 users and 108,108 page views. This was an increase of **5178%** on the use of previous on-line pages.

Over 2000 comments were posted in 81 Streetlife discussions. Most importantly people began talking about starting neighbourhood planning as a result of the campaign in a number of areas including Haringey, Scarborough, and Eastbourne. A particular success was the engagement with younger audiences as well as the over 55s.

### What next?

It takes time for communities to get neighbourhood planning underway. We will be in contact with some of those who did engage with the campaign to see what it has led to.

### **A map of Neighbourhood Plan Areas from the Local Government Association**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has been loading Neighbourhood Planning Areas (NPAs) into their tools. You can now search for details of local forums and the communities they cover, which is useful as they often extend across local authority boundaries.

For example, [this report](#) shows the NPAs in London and demographic data for those communities. And their [Natural Neighbourhoods map](#) (shown below) now shows Neighbourhood Plans areas across the country.

### **Neighbourhood Planning support**

If you're looking for advice and support on Neighbourhood Planning then your first point of contact is the [MyCommunity Advice Service](#) Telephone: 0300 020 1864.

The website is packed with [Toolkits and 'how to' advice](#) including:

- A [roadmap guide](#) for all those involved in, or thinking about, producing a Neighbourhood Plan;
- Advice on [establishing a neighbourhood forum](#) as the group to lead neighbourhood planning ;
- Guidance on how to [assess a site](#) for neighbourhood plans for groups considering which sites to choose;
- How to [structure your neighbourhood plan and commission consultants](#) to help you;
- How to [gather evidence](#) for your plan and [community consultation](#) as well as [housing needs assessment](#);
- A guide on [how to prepare a character assessment](#) to support design policy;
- [How to write planning policies](#) for inclusion on a neighbourhood plan.

Over £5.8 million of grants and £2million in technical support has now been awarded to groups under the neighbourhood planning support programme, which launched in April 2015.

The grants are for groups preparing neighbourhood plans and can be used for activities such as:

- Developing a website;
- Training sessions for members of the steering group;
- Help with putting together a project plan;

Applications for the current financial year can be submitted on rolling basis and will close on 27 January 2017. Any grants awarded must be spent by 31 March 2017.

Applications for the 2017-18 financial year will open on 1 February 2017. These grants will be awarded from mid-February with the earliest date for spending any funding being 1 April 2017.

For more information and to apply go to [www.mycommunity.org.uk](http://www.mycommunity.org.uk)

### **Neighbourhood Planning on Twitter**

Neighbourhood Plans come in all shapes and sizes - Chris Mountain found [this one](#) from Herefordshire on Twitter. Do you agree with Chris?

If you think you have a good plan, then why not tweet about it too?

To help people to find it, include in your tweets the phrase [#neighbourhoodplanning](#).

### **Who's who in Neighbourhood Planning**

This newsletter is produced by the DCLG team focussed primarily on implementing reforms and supporting communities and local authorities through our funding programmes.

From 26 September Michael Salmon heads up the team

Mike has extensive planning experience at a local and national level. Most recently he has been in a variety of roles at DCLG, Treasury, and the Homes and Communities Agency.

Mike says “It is a privilege to be involved in Neighbourhood Planning. Something that came home to me last week at a Neighbourhood Planning event in Horsham, where I was lucky enough to be in the room with people who are making things happen in their communities. I look forward to learning more in the coming weeks, as I take on this wonderful role”.

Mike takes over from Helen Keen while she is on maternity leave. And we also say farewell to Jonathan Green who has moved to a new role in the Home Office. We wish them both the very best for the future.

### **Neighbourhood Planning GIS Map**

Over 2,000 communities across the country are now actively engaged in neighbourhood planning. Take a look at [the stories of just a selection of them](#) at:

### **Neighbourhood Planning Immersive**

Find out about the process and progress of neighbourhood planning in our interactive feature, including introductory videos, maps and timelines. Follow [this link](#) below to learn more.

All 238 of the neighbourhood planning referendums held so far have been successful. The most recent took place on 22 September in Wingrave with Rowsham (Aylesbury Vale) 78% of voters said Yes to the neighbourhood plan on a turnout of 40%, Southwell (Newark and Sherwood) 93% of voters said Yes to the neighbourhood plan on a turnout of 27% and Arley (North Warwickshire) 91% of voters said Yes to the neighbourhood plan on a turnout of 28%.

Over 364,500 people have now voted in neighbourhood planning referendums. Average Yes vote is 88% and average turnout is 33%.