

Notes on Neighbourhood Planning

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Policy Update

New funding available to help communities plan for more affordable homes for sale

Housing Minister Kit Malthouse MP has announced that communities across the country are set to benefit from £8.5 million of additional funding to provide more homes for local people to buy at prices they can afford.

Building on the successful £26 million neighbourhood planning support programme already in place, the additional funding will be used specifically to support neighbourhood planning groups in providing for affordable homes for sale through their plans.

Funding packages ranging from £10,000 to £50,000 will be made available to neighbourhood planning groups to support them in identifying suitable sites for affordable homes for sale and even to grant permission through a neighbourhood development order. Extra training and advice will also be provided to groups.

Housing Minister, Kit Malthouse MP, said:

“Home ownership is out of reach for many aspiring home owners who are unable to obtain a mortgage for the full market price of a home. Through a neighbourhood plan, communities can set a vision for the development of their area and provide sites for the homes, green spaces and employment they want to see. I want to see more communities using their neighbourhood plans to support the aspiration of people who wish to buy their own home – and this new funding will help them do this.”

Information about the affordable homes pilot funding programme and details about eligibility and how to apply are available at

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>

Government publishes updated neighbourhood planning guidance

The Government has recently published updated neighbourhood planning guidance to support communities in the preparation of their plans.

The amended guidance includes changes to reflect the updated National Planning Policy Framework which is clear about the important role that neighbourhood plans play in our plan-led system.

Amendments include additional guidance on how local authorities should set housing requirement figures for neighbourhood plans and how they should be used,

how plans can be updated and changed, and an explanation of how certain plans are protected from speculative development.

The updated guidance is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

Front cover taken from the front page of the Norland Neighbourhood Plan

Images under 'Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan' section taken from Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan



Neighbourhood Planning News

It's been a busy time for neighbourhood planning!

750 successful neighbourhood plan referendums!

In February 2019 the **750th** successful neighbourhood planning referendum took place. Based on our informal monitoring, the honour went jointly to communities in Milton Keynes, Herefordshire, Bristol, Leeds, Harrogate, Cheshire, and Lancashire who all went to the polls on the same day. Those communities planned for various priorities:

West Bletchley proposes to retain and develop new sites for employment.

Ocle Pychard and **Burghill** allocated land for homes.

Putley has proposals for the provision of communications and broadband infrastructure.

Hengrove & Whitchurch increases the protection of valued open space.

Bramham has proposals to protect and enhance existing community facilities.

Kippax sets out policies for High Street Regeneration.

Scarcroft has policies to protect and maintain the area's public pathways, walkways, cycle routes and bridleways.

Ripon supports growth and regenerating key parts of the city.

Moston and **Wennington** set out rural economy policies.

Longridge sets out design principles for new development.

Key statistics

Over **750** successful neighbourhood planning referendums have taken place.

The average 'yes' vote is **89%**.

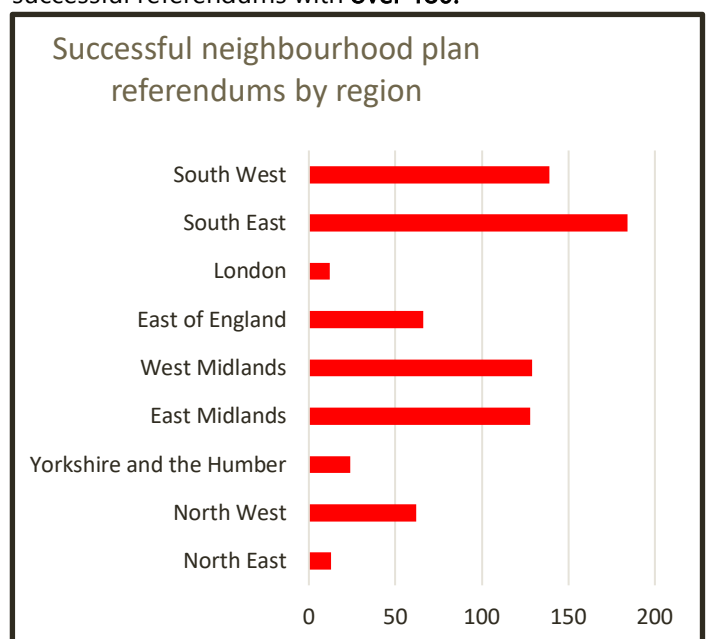
The average turnout is **32%**

Over **800,000** votes have been cast.

Over **170** (**51%** of total local planning authorities) have at least one successful neighbourhood plan referendum

There have been **20 or more** successful referendums in **Herefordshire, Cornwall, Wiltshire, Cheshire East and Aylesbury Vale**.

The **South East** region has had the highest number of successful referendums with **over 180**.



Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan

Congratulations to the Harpenden neighbourhood group. Following a 'YES' vote at referendum on 7 February 2019, the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the Development Plan for St Albans City and District Council. After commencing work on their plan, Harpenden made rapid progress and took less than a year to submit their plan to the local authority. Philip Wright, the Projects and Community Manager at Harpenden Town Council agreed to answer some questions about the production of the neighbourhood plan.

1. How did you make such rapid progress with preparing the plan?

The key elements that ensured the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan was delivered relatively fast were:

- Having the clear project plan and ensuring it was properly communicated to those who needed to know about it
- Clear leadership, focus and drive from the Town Clerk
- Treating this work as the high priority that it was, and ensuring that all activities were completed efficiently and swiftly in line with the project plan
- Having regular Steering Group meetings to provide governance of the project. If an activity looked as if it required more time or resource than had been originally anticipated, the Steering Group ensured whatever needed to happen happened. It would then identify opportunities to amend the schedule to bring the project back on time if necessary
- Ensuring that the right structure and resources were in place to deliver the project i.e. Town Clerk leading and driving the work, Steering Group governing, Themed Working Groups producing visions, objectives and policies for their themed areas, a project officer coordinating all activities (me), and expert consultants on hand to provide the correct advice and support
- Participation by members of the community on the Steering Group and in the Themed Working Groups to develop the Neighbourhood Plan

2. Tell us a bit about your local area and the people that live there.

The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan covers both Harpenden Town and Harpenden Rural Parish. Just over 30,000 people live in approximately 13,500 households.



The affluent medium sized town is built around a small historic core, with the majority of housing consisting of 20th century detached and semi-detached dwellings. Harpenden rural is comprised largely of farmland. The area is well connected by both roads and rail, and served by high quality schools and leisure facilities, leading to it being a popular place to live. This is reflected in the high property prices. In terms of age, the population is relatively balanced, but the 18-29 age group is lower than nationally. Residents aged over 60 grew significantly this century. The number of residents working in managerial and professional roles is much higher than the national average. A small number of residents work in low skilled roles.

3. What are the issues you wanted to address with your neighbourhood plan?

There had been examples where local resident opposition to developments had proved unsuccessful for the residents. It was desired to ensure new development was in the right places, affordable, of good design and supported by appropriate infrastructure. The plan was created to give Harpenden residents some control over developments during the next 15 years.



4. How have you addressed these issues?

The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan contains over 60 policies intended to achieve the desired local control which are taken into account during the planning process. This should achieve the purposes for which it was produced.



5. How did you get the community involved in the plan-making process?

Engagement of local residents was fundamental to the production of the plan. We tried to engage with and involve as many Harpenden people as possible during this journey:

- February 2017 – recruited Harpenden residents to be members of the five Themed Working Groups to design the visions, objectives and policies
- April 2017 – Four weeks community engagement. Surveys delivered to all Harpenden households (strong return rate), drop in engagement events advertised in the local newspaper and on all HTC noticeboards
- June/July 2017 - Four weeks community engagement. Surveys delivered to all Harpenden households, drop in engagement events advertised in the local newspaper and on all HTC noticeboards

- October/November 2017 - Six weeks statutory community engagement. Leaflets delivered to all Harpenden households inviting people to complete a survey, public presentation at Park Hall, drop in engagement events advertised in the local newspaper and on all HTC noticeboards
- The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan has featured in a number of Forum magazine articles and the Town Clerk has spoken at a variety of community group events
- Information about The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan, including the plan itself, was on our website throughout the entire life of this project
- 3625 completed surveys were received and about 760 people gave their views at Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan events
- The composition of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group included three community members

6. What advice would you give to other groups who are embarking on the process?

Extensive community engagement proved essential and resulted in influential local groups supporting the plan despite expressing concerns at the outset of the process. Involve those who may be opposed to the neighbourhood plan in the development process. We also found the guidance from professional planning consultants very useful.

7. What impact has the neighbourhood planning process had on your community?

This process attracted the interest of a lot of individual residents and local groups who had their say on the plan. Towards the later stages of the process we saw community groups adopt a supportive stance and encourage their members to vote in favour of the plan



8. Would you recommend neighbourhood planning to other communities?

We would recommend neighbourhood planning to other communities as not only did it result in achieving the desired purpose of the process i.e. a plan that gives local control over development, but it provided many opportunities of interaction between the Council and local people.

Call for information on community-led housing projects

Homes England is collecting information on the potential appetite to deliver community-led housing projects over the coming years. The data collected will only be used to understand the potential requirements for Government support across the community-led housing sector in future.

Projects that we want to hear about may include new build or conversions/refurbishments, community land trusts, co-operatives or any other form of community-led housing. We are keen to hear from as many prospective community-led groups as possible about your plans.

All community-based groups (including parish councils) in England (outside London) are invited to provide summary information about your plans and the progress you have made to date.

If you are a community-based group that expects to need financial support to take forward a local housebuilding project over the next few years (and has not already submitted a formal application to the Community Housing Fund) please

tell Homes England about your plans by using the form at the link below.

Please send us your response by Friday May 31st 2019

Please visit the webpage below for more information:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-for-information-on-community-led-housing-projects-by-may-31st>



Social Network and Support

The latest on our social network and more news on the support for neighbourhood planning.

#neighbourhoodplanning on Twitter

Twitter is a great place to share your neighbourhood planning progress and news. If you have a good story, need help, want to collaborate or seek views, why not tweet about it? To help people to find it, please include the hashtag: #neighbourhoodplanning. Just some of many recent posts are shared below!

Cambridgeshire ACRE @camsacre · Feb 12

It's a busy evening for our staff - our Rural Housing Enabler is in Great Gransden running a [#NeighbourhoodPlanning](#) workshop and our @NewLifeOldWest project officer is meeting Over Parish Council. @SouthCambs

Neighbourhood planning Retweeted

Tony Burton @Tony4Place · Feb 21

Delighted to see @FitzWestForum consulting on its [#neighbourhoodplan](#) - it has been well worth the effort behind the scenes. [#neighbourhoodplanning](#)

Fitzrovia West Forum's Neighbourhood Plan sets the priorities for th...

The FitzWest Neighbourhood Forum was set up in 2015 and one of its main functions is to prepare a neighbourhood plan for that part of Fitzrovia lying ...
news.fitzrovia.org.uk

Neighbourhood planning @Nbrhoodplanning · Feb 22

[#NeighbourhoodPlanning](#) Guide: Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan!

What will I learn?

- What a local green space is & how it's designated
- How they work as part of your plan
- The importance of green space & infrastructure

Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan ~...

Local Green Space is a way of designating local green areas, which meet a set of criteria, in order to protect them from development. This guide expl...
neighbourhoodplanning.org

Arches Local @ArchesLocal · Feb 14

Many of our older cities are enjoying the benefit of large, old canopy volume trees how did it happen?
greenblue.com/gb/the-victori... As part of our [#neighbourhoodplanning](#) conversations we want to plant more [#Urban](#) [#Trees](#) in the @ArchesLocal area for future generations to benefit from

Neighbourhood Planning Champions

We recently caught up with Chris Edwards a neighbourhood planning champion supporting groups in Suffolk. He had recently been advising and working with the Stradbroke neighbourhood group that had a successful referendum result on 31st January 2019. He had useful advice for groups involved with the production and delivery of neighbourhood plans.

We asked Chris what he thought are the top issues faced by neighbourhood planning groups

"There is a need for a strong admin support at all times in the process. Continuity is key to delivery. Without a good paid administrator, a plan will experience delay and lack of continuity even if there is a good consultant to write the plan. There is such an amount of organising over a long time period with so many different individuals and groups and different formats to ensure the plan moves forward in a legally compliant way that it is hugely demanding on anyone but especially volunteers."

When asked whether he would recommend neighbourhood planning to other communities, Chris said "Yes definitely but they do need to count the cost in time and resource commitment, and also possibly in personal cost as not everyone likes a plan nor will agree with it."

Chris had also found the available resources to be helpful and has sign-posted grant funding and various technical support packages.

Our champions collectively supported hundreds of groups last year. For more information about our champions network, including where they are and how to get in touch with one, please visit the dedicated web page:

<https://mycommunity.org.uk/help-centre/champions-map/>.

New Neighbourhood Planning Resources

The library of online resources continues to grow as we learn more about neighbourhood planning and respond to suggestions from communities around the country. The new and recently updated resources are:

1. Neighbourhood Planning for the environment

This toolkit sets out how to consider the natural and historic environment when making a neighbourhood development plan.

2. How to establish a neighbourhood planning forum

This toolkit aims to provide a clear and concise overview of the steps and requirements for those seeking to establish a neighbourhood forum. In an area that does not have a town or parish council, a neighbourhood forum must be established in order to produce a neighbourhood plan.

3. Viability toolkit for neighbourhood planning

This toolkit aims to provide an understanding of the importance of testing viability of proposals and how to undertake viability assessments when considering whether to access and allocate sites for development.

This summer we will be updating toolkits on design and site assessments for neighbourhood and launching a new toolkit on implementation and monitoring of adopted neighbourhood plans.

Other online resources are available at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/resources/>.

4. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) review exercise

A number of toolkits and online resources for neighbourhood planning were updated in order to reflect the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These resources are:

How to address regeneration in your neighbourhood plan;

Frequently asked questions by neighbourhood planners;

Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan;

Planning for Community-Led Housing;

General conformity with strategic local planning policy;

How to write planning policies for your Neighbourhood Plan;

Understanding Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Neighbourhood Planning Team at MHCLG

Helen Keen and Rebecca Miles lead the team. Stephen Wright, Patricia Bongani and Sujata Talukdar lead on support programmes and finance; Robert Griffith and Jen Beresford lead on plan making policy. If you wish to get in contact regarding Departmental issues, please send MHCLG a message via <http://forms.communities.gov.uk/>.

Locality continue to provide advice directly to groups on neighbourhood planning through their website at <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>.

