



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# **The Power of Neighbourhood Planning**

**A toolkit for neighbourhood  
planners**



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April 2026

## **The Power of Neighbourhood Planning**

Neighbourhood planning is designed to provide a powerful set of tools to ensure you get the right types of development in the right place for your community.

Local residents and businesses are now in a position to make planning policies that reflect your priorities, deliver tangible local benefits and have real weight in the planning system.

Communities around the country are being ambitious in using this new power. There are examples of communities putting policies in place that:

- capture what is distinctive about their neighbourhood
- break new ground and take a new approach
- address big issues like the location and scale of new development
- provide for enhanced local services and infrastructure through development benefits.

All the following examples are taken from plans that have been passed at examination. They are real world examples from communities like yours that have successfully used the power of neighbourhood planning in a host of innovative ways. Hopefully they can inspire you to exploit the full potential of neighbourhood planning to benefit your community.

### **Can a neighbourhood plan designate more housing than the local authority?**

Yes, The Winsford Neighbourhood Plan contains the largest allocation of new housing yet - identifying room for 3,362 dwellings. When added to existing plans, this will provide 200 additional homes compared to the number contained in the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan. This was in recognition of the investment that new housing would bring, helping the town achieve its aspiration of regeneration.

### **Can a neighbourhood plan choose where new housing should go?**

Yes, The Thame Neighbourhood Plan allocates 770 new homes to six sites dispersed around the town, departing from the local planning authority's proposal to put almost all of the housing on one site on the edge of Thame. The plan also sets out what infrastructure (roads, schools, community facilities, etc.) are needed to make development acceptable.

### **Can a neighbourhood plan manage new community projects?**

Yes, Exeter St. James Forum produced a successful neighbourhood plan in 2013, then created a Community Trust to enable the projects identified in the plan to be turned into reality. Their first successful project was the regeneration of the Queen's Crescent Gardens, and new projects include the development of sustainable homes, improving allotments and heritage walks.

**Can a neighbourhood plan grant planning permission for the development the community wants?**

Yes, The Cockermouth Neighbourhood Development Order permits the change of upper floors of shops to flats with up to four per premises.

**Can a neighbourhood plan protect and enhance the high street?**

Yes, The small town of Woburn Sands used its neighbourhood plan to support the High Street. It contains a policy to support developments and changes of use in the town centre that promote the vitality and viability of the High Street. Developments outside of the town centre that impinge on the health of the High Street will not be permitted.

**Can a neighbourhood plan regenerate an inner-city neighbourhood?**

Yes, Heathfield Park's neighbourhood plan contains a range of policies specific to its inner-city location in Wolverhampton. These include policies that will improve the quality of the public spaces in the area and preserve the historic and heritage assets of the community.

**Can a neighbourhood plan decide how to spend Community Infrastructure (CIL)?**

Yes, in areas where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been adopted, communities with a neighbourhood plan in place will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area. In Cringleford in Norfolk, the community has identified priority projects that the parish council will fund using CIL money. These include playing fields and changing facilities, an extension to the community centre, and new allotments and a community orchard.

**Can a neighbourhood plan choose where new industry and employment go?**

Yes, Arundel Neighbourhood Plan approves proposals to turn particular disused buildings into office space and also supports the development of business within the built up area boundary of the market town. The plan also encourages the use and development of Live Work Units that are especially suited to small businesses in the arts and cultural sectors, which are common to Arundel.

**Can a neighbourhood plan protect gaps between our towns and villages?**

Yes, The Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan means that any gaps between villages should be protected to maintain the separation of the villages and to complement the landscape.

**Can a neighbourhood plan define and secure what makes up local heritage?**

Yes, The Central Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan explains in detail the specific features that make up the town's classic infrastructure. Policies support retaining this heritage while allowing flexibility for truly exceptional development.

## **Can a neighbourhood plan protect the green spaces communities value the most?**

Yes, Felpham's neighbourhood plan protects eight areas of local green space in the Sussex seaside village. The spaces have been identified for their environmental, recreational, or historic significance to the community, and no development will be permitted on them except in very special circumstances.

These examples represent just a sample of the many policies that communities have devised to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

Hopefully these policy examples demonstrate the power and scope of neighbourhood planning and can inspire you to take up that power and plan creatively for the future of your neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood planning policies must meet certain basic conditions. Full details of these can be found here [Neighbourhood planning - GOV.UK](#)

Full guidance on neighbourhood planning can be found in the government's planning guidance documents can be found here [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK](#)

To find more information on neighbourhood planning and other helpful neighbourhood planning toolkits, please visit [Neighbourhood planning toolkits - GOV.UK](#)