

Neighbourhood Planning Support

Neighbourhood Plans are led by the qualifying body from the local community (the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum) and should be tailored to fit local circumstances. The essence of localism is that communities can create a plan which meets local needs.

Consequently it is not for Local Planning Authorities to write these plans, it is for representatives of the community. We will provide support as set out below but if you require further advice with steps in the process or the detailed drafting of your Neighbourhood Plan you may wish to seek independent advice.

Maidstone Borough Council Support

We will offer support to all Parish Councils and designated Neighbourhood Forums in preparing neighbourhood plans and the different types of support available are set out below:

- Providing a named contact officer
- Consulting on the proposed Designated Area
- Consulting on a proposed Neighbourhood Forum, where proposed
- Advising on national and local plan policies
- Advising on locally available evidence
- Mapping / GIS support
- Scoping the draft Neighbourhood Plan (in liaison with statutory consultees) to advise on whether it is necessary to undertake an environmental assessment of the plan and whether a Habitats Regulation Assessment is likely to be needed
- Publicising the proposed neighbourhood plan for a period of 6 weeks (Regulation 16)
- Commenting at the Regulation 16 stage on matters of conformity with adopted policy, and any other pertinent issues
- Arranging for the independent examination of the plan and (in liaison with the Parish Council or Forum) appointing the Examiner. The Borough Council is responsible for paying the costs of the examination.
- Making the necessary arrangements for the independent examination
- Considering each of the examiner's recommendations and the reasons for them and deciding what action to take in response to each, including modifications to the plan where appropriate
- Making the necessary arrangements for the Referendum. The Borough Council is responsible for paying the costs of the referendum.
- Subject to the results of the referendum, bringing the plan into force

Neighbourhood Planning Advice

There are a number of organisations that can give advice to communities considering carrying out a neighbourhood plan. See the links below to various websites.

Locality <http://locality.org.uk/projects/building-community>

Locality's Supporting Communities and Neighbourhoods in Planning Programme helps local groups develop neighbourhood plans through grants or direct support.

Grants can be spent on costs associated with developing the neighbourhood plan, such as:

- start-up costs, including setting up a neighbourhood forum in an unparished area, or developing a website
- help with developing the evidence base and analysing it to identify issues and aims for your plan
- contributions to required studies for example housing need, environmental assessment
- engaging an external facilitator for community consultation and /or workshops
- engaging a planning expert to help you to with the process or drafting relevant policies
- help with understanding whether your plan is ready for examination (meeting the basic conditions and other legal requirements)

The **direct support** element of the programme enables you to receive expert advice tailored to the individual needs of your area to help you to complete the various stages of your neighbourhood plan. This support is provided by Locality and Planning Aid England. Planning advice will be given by qualified planners, although their work may be supplemented by community engagement specialists.

RTPI Planning Aid England <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/neighbourhood-planning>

Planning Aid England (PAE) helps communities through the key stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process. PAE works directly with neighbourhood planning groups to provide general

support, advice and professional input through the development of web based guidance and templates.

Groups looking for neighbourhood planning support currently should apply through Locality.

The following websites provide a range of tools and case studies, including examples of innovative ways of raising funding,

Shared Learning activities, and online bulletins Neighbourhood Planning Community Knowledge Hub <http://www.communityplanning.net/neighbourhoodplanning/npwebsites.php>

Planning Aid England's Forum for Neighbourhood Planning
<http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk>

ACRE <http://www.acre.org.uk/rural-issues/community-planning>

Action with Communities in Rural England is the national umbrella body of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN). Community-led planning has always been at the heart of rural communities; whether it's a Parish Plan, Community or Village Design Statement or a Neighbourhood Plan. The ACRE Network provides support and resources to communities to ensure they can produce high-quality plans that meet the needs of all members of the community.

Rural Kent Community Council <http://www.ruralkent.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

Works with local communities to plan for their future, by supporting parish councils and community groups in the production of Community-led Plans.

Planning Consultants <http://www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk/listing/region/13/36>

If you need assistance with the neighbourhood planning process or you require help with the detailed drafting of your Neighbourhood Plan you may wish to seek independent advice from a Planning Consultant.

Locality grants can be used to engage consultants to support your neighbourhood plan but you are strongly advised to ensure that they are appropriately qualified for the work, whether it be facilitation skills for community engagement, or planning expertise.

This would mean using a qualified planner, preferably a chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI), with relevant experience and expertise in Neighbourhood Planning.

Useful Publications

Department for Communities and Local Government Neighbourhood Planning Guidance can be found here:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/>

The **Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Planning** gives a short, step by step overview of the neighbourhood planning process. <http://locality.org.uk/resources/quick-guide-neighbourhood-planning>

Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide is for all those involved in, or thinking about, producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Roadmap is a comprehensive step by step guide to producing a Neighbourhood Plan, from first deciding to join with people from your local community to create a Neighbourhood Plan, to submitting the finished article.

<http://locality.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-guide/>

Historic England has produced a document called **Knowing Your Place: Heritage and Community-Led Planning in the Countryside**, which gives useful advice.

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/knowning-your-place/>