

# Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans

## What is it?

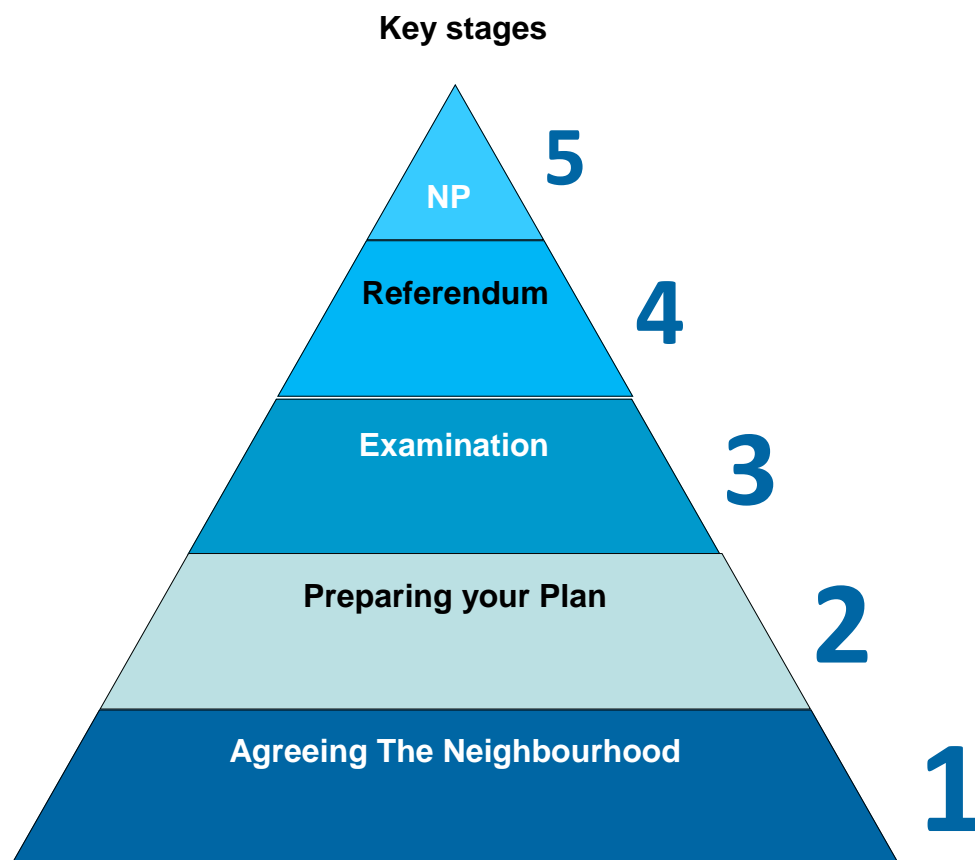
A community led plan that sets out the vision and policies for the future development of a local area. Once 'made' by the local planning authority it forms part of the statutory development plan and must be used in making decisions on planning applications.

## Why produce one?

- Community can set out where development should go and the type and quality of it
- Gives local people greater ownership of planning policies
- Brings the community together to share ideas and priorities for the area
- Provides a detailed evidence base about the community
- Helps raise funds/grants
- and many other benefits...

## Who produces it?

Legally it is the parish or town council or a 'neighbourhood forum' in those areas without parishes. In practice a steering group made up of local councillors, volunteers and other representatives from the community manage the process.



Although there are 5 key stages to making a neighbourhood plan there are many steps to take, including various statutory requirements, along the way:

### **1. Agreeing the neighbourhood**

The parish or town council or neighbourhood forum must apply to the local planning authority (lpa) to get the neighbourhood area designated. The lpa must then publicise the application for a 6 week period and as soon as possible thereafter make a decision.

### **2. Preparing your plan**

This stage is about gathering evidence and engaging with the community. It is advisable to draw up a project plan and budget before applying for funding and beginning a programme of publicity. The work usually starts with identifying broad **issues**, before moving on to drafting a **vision and objectives**, assessing alternative **options** and then finally preparing the planning **policies**. Once your draft plan is produced you must formally consult on it with the community and statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency for 6 weeks. Following any necessary minor amendments the plan must then be submitted to the lpa along with other evidence for a further 6 weeks' publicity period. The lpa will check that the plan complies with various criteria including that the correct procedures for consultation and publicity have been followed.

### **3. Examination**

The Examination may take the form of written representations or a public hearing. An independent examiner will consider whether the plan meets basic conditions, including that it complies with European obligations, national and local planning policies. The examiner will make recommendations to the lpa on whether or not the plan should proceed to referendum, subject to modifications. The Examiner's report is not binding on the lpa.

### **4. Referendum**

If the lpa regards the plan to be satisfactory, with modifications if necessary, it will arrange for a local referendum to be held. The authority must publish information on the plan and give notice of the referendum. More than 50% of those voting in the referendum must vote 'yes' for the plan to be made.

### **5. Plan is made**

The neighbourhood plan comes into force and will be used by the local planning authority when deciding planning applications.

### **How long will it take to prepare?**

Typically around 2 years.

### **What funding is there?**

Specific funding for neighbourhood plans in the form of grants and direct support is available from Locality:

<http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/>

Other potential sources include: the parish council precept, ward councillor budgets, Small Lottery grants eg Awards for All and some local authorities offer funding.