

Neighbourhood Development Plans

Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Neighbourhood planning, introduced under the Localism Act 2011, allows Parish Council's to develop land-use planning documents for their local areas and neighbourhoods. The following document answers 12 of the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The consultants are happy to try and answer any further questions you might have, their details are included at the end of this document. If in doubt, please ask!

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a new level of planning policy which will be used to guide land-use planning decisions (i.e. planning applications) within an identified Neighbourhood – usually a Parish boundary. Neighbourhood Plans are an element of the Localism Act (2012) which offers opportunities for more local involvement in decision making about their neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood Plans are developed through community consultation and should reflect the community's aspirations for their neighbourhood.

2. What does the Neighbourhood Plan cover?

A typical Neighbourhood Plan will cover all types of relevant development – including new building, conversions and changes of use – proposed within the plan area, not just within built up areas. At present it is envisaged that this Neighbourhood Plan, when it comes into force, would cover the same period as the adopted Local Plan. So, any planning application, however big or small would have to consider this Neighbourhood Plan until the end of this plan period (or at least until it is reviewed). Of course, it cannot predict every eventuality over this period, but most types of development can be covered.

3. How is the preparation of the Plan being funded?

The Parish Council have successfully applied for a Central Government Locality grant to fund the Neighbourhood Plan process. This money has to be used to prepare a draft Plan for submission to the Borough Council, paying for consultancy fees (including technical experts), room hire and printing. The Local Planning Authority pay for all matters after submission including the referendum.

4. Has the Neighbourhood Plan been finalised?

No. The Neighbourhood Plan is still being developed and drafted. So far there have been a number of consultation exercises have been undertaken focused on finding out what matters to the people of Thrussington. This included a questionnaire and further community consultation will take place. This feedback will be used to create an outline or framework for the plan which draws this all together. This will form the basis of the draft neighbourhood plan.

5. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to a referendum?

Yes. The Neighbourhood Plan is subject to a referendum to decide whether or not the community want it to be used in the determination of planning applications within the parish. It will be subject to a simple 'yes' or 'no' vote which will happen sometime in the future. Before this however, the Neighbourhood Plan must be submitted to the Borough Council, subject to six weeks publicity and comment, examined by an independent person (who provides a written report of changes necessary) and then changes made before proceeding to referendum based on their advice. Once submitted to the Borough Council the process to referendum takes about 5 – 6 months.

6. What difference will the Neighbourhood Plan make?

If the Neighbourhood Plan passes referendum then it will be used to determine planning applications. Schemes will have to make sure that they comply with the guidance contained in the Neighbourhood Plan or offer very good reasons why this cannot be the case. The Neighbourhood Plan will be a fully-fledged planning policy document and hold equal weight to the Council's own Local Plan. It will allow the Local Planning Authority to adequately reflect and respond to the community's wishes through upholding the planning strategy contained in the Neighbourhood Plan.

7. How are decisions about what is in the Neighbourhood Plan made?

The final decision about what is included in the Neighbourhood Plan lies with the Parish Council who are the democratically responsible body or 'designated body'. However, the Neighbourhood Plan should clearly link to the consultation undertaken with the wider community. The Parish Council need to be sure that the Neighbourhood Plan best represents the views of the majority of residents. They are supported by a Steering Group made up of local people (all of whom are volunteers - who meet regularly to discuss the content of the Neighbourhood Plan) and the consultants who help ensure that the evidence is correctly gathered and presented, in planning terms.

8. Who are the Steering Group?

The Steering Group are a group of local people who have volunteered their time and experience. All of the members are committed to creating the best Neighbourhood Plan possible for Thrussington. Many of the Steering Group have lived in the parish for many years. They include members of the Parish Council, members of local groups and organisations and local residents. A full list of the Steering Group members is available by contacting the Parish Council.

9. What role do the consultants play?

The planning consultant, Urban Imprint, have been working with the Steering Group, Parish Council and the community to help them to understand the legal and practical implications of the Neighbourhood Plan. Their role is to set out the benefits and drawbacks of certain strategies and make sure that the community's ideas are presented in a coherent manner which meets the technical planning requirements. Urban Imprint are independent from the Borough Council and central government and do not work for any developers in the area. They are not there to define the content of the Neighbourhood Plan – that is the role of the community as guided by the Steering Group.

10. Who uses the Neighbourhood Plan once it is brought into force?

The principal user of the Neighbourhood Plan will be the planners at the Borough Council, who will use the Neighbourhood Plan in order to determine relevant planning applications within the parish. In addition, the Parish Council and the community can use it to help support any representations they wish to make on planning applications in Thrussington. It may also be used by developers and other third parties to ensure that they reflect the community's wishes.

11. What does the Neighbourhood Plan have to comply with?

The Neighbourhood Plan has to meet a series of tests known as the Basic Conditions. These are not the same as tests for soundness or robustness which are imposed on the Borough Council's Local Plan but do mean that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot have a free reign. The Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in 'general conformity' with the policies contained in the Council's Local Plan and the broad principles of sustainable development which are set out within the National Planning Policy Framework. It also has to make sure that it does not contravene human rights and habitats directives from the European Union.

Other sources of information

There are lots of websites hosted by a number of different groups and organisations where you can find out more about Neighbourhood Planning and how it works, these are set out below. Please feel free to browse these in your own time.

- **Planning Practice Guidance** – The government website, run by the Planning Portal Service which gathers together all the guidance on plan making and decision taking:
<http://Planningguidance.Planningportal.gov.uk/>
- **Locality** – A community organisation who are responsible for the delivery of Neighbourhood Planning support on behalf of central government:
<http://locality.org.uk/>
- **Campaign for the Protection of Rural England Planning Help** – A website prepared by the pressure group which offers details how planning affects rural areas and rural communities:
<http://Planninghelp.cpre.org.uk/>

Contact the Neighbourhood Planning Team:

You can contact the Neighbourhood Planning team at Urban Imprint in a number of ways. We will make every effort to respond to you in a timely manner and answer any questions or queries you may have.

By Telephone: 01625 265232

By Email: bob@urbanimprint.co.uk