

## Neighbourhood Planning

# 5 Steps Guide to Neighbourhood Planning

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This is a summary of the main stages involved in the neighbourhood planning process. The 5 stages consist of:

1. Set up a Neighbourhood Forum and agree its Area of Coverage
2. Prepare your Neighbourhood Plan or Development Order
3. Independent examination
4. Community referendum
5. Legal adoption of your Neighbourhood Plan or Development Order

This document is a basic guide to the neighbourhood planning process. If you are considering preparing a neighbourhood plan you should contact the City Council to discuss this using the contact details at the end of this guide.

### **Step 1: Set up a Neighbourhood Forum and agree its Area of Coverage**

You will need to establish the 'Neighbourhood Area' that you wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for. The only bodies that can produce a Neighbourhood Plan are:

- A Parish Council
- A Neighbourhood Forum (in areas where there is no Parish Council)

There are six Parish Councils within the City Council's boundary. Only the Parish Council can produce a Neighbourhood Plan in these areas. Further information on parished areas can be found on the [Parish Councils](#) page on the City Council's website.

If your area is not within a Parish, then you will need to establish a 'Neighbourhood Forum'. This should be a community group of at least 21 unrelated people who live in or run businesses in your local neighbourhood area and are sufficiently representative of that area. This may be an existing community organisation or you may wish to form a new group - the group must nevertheless have a formal constitution. Contact your local ward councillors to ask them to be involved too. This community group must be formally approved by the council as a Neighbourhood Forum for the purposes of doing neighbourhood planning.

If your neighbourhood area is predominantly business in nature, then the City Council may also designate this as a 'Business Area'. This will mean that businesses will be involved in the referendum on the plan or order (see Step 4).

Both the Neighbourhood Area and (if applicable) the Neighbourhood Forum will need to be approved by the council, to ensure they make sense for planning purposes and

do not overlap with any other neighbourhood planning area. Application forms are available from the City Council from our website or by using the contact details at the end of this guide.

## **Step 2: Prepare your Neighbourhood Plan or Development Order**

You will need to collect together your community's ideas for the neighbourhood area and draw up your proposals for a neighbourhood plan or development order.

You will need to ensure that everyone living and working in and around your local community are appropriately consulted on your proposals - including residents, local businesses and landowners, as well as relevant local, regional and national organisations and agencies. You may need to adjust your proposals in response to your consultation feedback.

Your proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in accordance with:

- international, European and national designations (e.g. heritage and natural environment), and European environmental and human rights laws;
- national planning policies and laws, including the National Planning Policy Framework;
- the strategic policies and designations of the council's statutory Local Development Plan - you can plan for more but not less development than is required for your area by the adopted Local Plan.

The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan is the most significant stage in this process. The City Council can advise and guide you on plan preparation and assist with aspects such as the consultation process. We may also be able to identify potential sources of support. The Government has also funded four independent community organisations who you may wish to approach to get help and advice.

- [Royal Town Planning Institute](#)
- [Locality](#)
- [National Association of Local Councils in partnership with the Campaign to Protect Rural England](#)
- [Prince's Foundation](#)

Information is also available on the following links:

- [Newcastle City Council - Neighbourhood Planning](#)
- [Department for Communities and Local Government](#)
- [Design Council](#)

## **Step 3: Independent Examination**

Once a draft Neighbourhood Plan is prepared, it will need to be checked by an independent examiner. He/she will check that it meets the right basic standards, including according with the above provisos and considering any representations of objection to your proposals.

The independent examination will usually just involve a consideration of representations in writing, rather than a public inquiry. However, the examiner may choose to listen to different viewpoints at an open hearing session if he/she considers it to be desirable.

If the examiner considers that your plan or order doesn't meet the right standards, he/she will recommend changes and recommend if it should proceed to a referendum. The City Council will then need to consider the examiner's views and decide whether to make those changes. If significant changes are recommended then you may wish to re-consult your local community again before proceeding.

The City Council can help you in arranging for this independent examination, and also give your plan or order a pre-examination check if you wish before it is submitted to the planning inspector.

#### **Step 4: Community referendum**

Once independently approved by the examiner, your neighbourhood plan or development order will need to be put to a community referendum. This will ensure that your local community has the final say on whether your plan or order is to come into effect.

The referendum will be organised and funded by the City Council.

Everyone living in the area of coverage of the neighbourhood plan, who are registered to vote in local elections, will be entitled to vote in the referendum. In some cases, it may also be appropriate for people from neighbouring areas to be allowed to vote on your plan or order, such as where the proposals for your area might significantly impact on them too.

In the case of a Neighbourhood Plan for a 'Business Area' a separate referendum will also be held for businesses (i.e. non-domestic rate payers). Each business will have one vote.

Your neighbourhood plan will simply need to achieve more than 50% of the vote in its favour in the referendum for it to be taken forward for formal adoption by the City Council.

#### **Step 5: Legal adoption of your Neighbourhood Plan**

If more than 50% of people voting in the referendum support your neighbourhood plan, then the council must bring it into effect and legally adopt it as part of the statutory Local Development Plan for the area. If there is a conflict between the results of the resident and business referendums then the decision on the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan will rest with the City Council.

Once your plan or order has been formally adopted by the council and brought into legal effect, decision-makers will be legally obliged to take what it says into account

when considering planning applications and other proposals for development in your neighbourhood area.

Where your local community has made clear through your neighbourhood plan or development order that you want development of a certain type, it will then be easier for that sort of development to go ahead. A neighbourhood order will in itself grant permission for any development that complies with that order.

**Contact:**

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