



neighbourhood planning



A guide for Wiltshire's parish
and town councils

2013

Contents

The policy framework	1
What is neighbourhood planning?.....	3
Environmental and sustainability requirements for neighbourhood planning	7
Exploring the neighbourhood planning process.....	9
Where can we get further information and advice?.....	22
Glossary.....	23

The policy framework

The government has brought about significant changes to the planning system through the Localism Act 2011. These reforms seek to achieve a reduction in the volume, complexity and prescription of the planning system and ensure that communities are better able to benefit from development they welcome, with new homes matched by jobs and investment. The proposals are founded on the principles of localism, with less 'top-down' prescription and more 'bottom up' involvement by both planning authorities themselves, and by local people and businesses.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's priorities for planning in England. It is a single comprehensive planning document that includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Neighbourhood planning is a tier of the planning system which seeks to give communities more control over the future of their area.

Neighbourhood planning is intended to provide an opportunity to help change attitudes towards development through positive engagement by local communities. The government envisages that through neighbourhood planning, communities can bring positive benefits from new development.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy will provide communities with a solid framework within which appropriate community-led planning policy documents, including neighbourhood plans, can be brought forward. However, neighbourhood planning is optional, not compulsory. As such the council will support communities to plan successfully and cost effectively for their areas by helping to identify the approach that best suits the needs of each community. This document seeks to help communities in this decision making process and provide a guide on developing a neighbourhood plan.

'The presumption is not a green light for development. All proposals will need to demonstrate their sustainability and be in line with the strict protections in the draft framework. Strong environmental safeguards remain as part of the planning system, including protecting communities and the environment from unacceptable proposals. The presumption is principally about good plan making. Once a local plan is put in place, local decisions should be made in line with it.' National Planning Policy Framework: Myth-Buster, DCLG, 2011



Planning policy documents (now known as ‘local plans’) are developed by local planning authorities such as Wiltshire Council. They must be based on clear evidence and assessments of needs, such as new housing provision, and are subject to comprehensive public participation and engagement. They must also be compliant with the requirements of the NPPF. Once adopted the Wiltshire Core Strategy will form part of the development plan for Wiltshire.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy is well advanced and has been developed to be compliant with the NPPF. The core strategy seeks to deliver an appropriate level of development across Wiltshire in a sustainable manner. Development proposals which do not accord with the core strategy will be considered unsustainable.

Whilst many local planning authorities have a local plan in place, or in advanced stages of preparation, the government will require all authorities to ensure up-to-date compliance with the NPPF.

When there is no up-to-date local plan in place, there will be a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, with the presumption being that development will be allowed to proceed providing the development meets the policy requirements in the NPPF.

This guide is based, in part, on experience within Wiltshire and wider experience from organisations such as the Planning Advisory Service.

‘Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work.’ An introduction to neighbourhood planning, DCLG, 2011



Neighbourhood plans can only be prepared by a ‘qualifying body’. In areas where a parish or town council exists, these are the nominated qualifying body.



Photo courtesy of Prince’s Foundation for Building Community

What is neighbourhood planning?

Neighbourhood planning is a way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work. The Localism Act introduces new permissive rights for local communities to prepare a neighbourhood plan, instigate neighbourhood development orders and exercise a community right to build.

A neighbourhood plan can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a defined neighbourhood area. The plan might specify, for example, where new homes and offices should be built, and what they should look like. The plan could also set a vision for the future, and can be detailed or general depending on what local people want.

A neighbourhood development order can directly grant planning permission for certain specified kinds of developments within a neighbourhood area. Permission could be full or outline, could have conditions attached and could be site specific or grant more generalised development rights across the neighbourhood area. Where people have made clear that they want development of a particular type, it will be easier for that development to go ahead.

The **community right-to-build** process is instigated by a 'community organisation' where the community decides to bring forward specific development proposals for the benefit of the community. This might include community facilities and affordable housing. Proposals which have the agreement of the local community through a 'community referendum', and meet minimum standards, will not need to go through the normal planning application process.

The process for preparing a neighbourhood plan, neighbourhood development order and the community right-to-build process are very similar. So although this guide refers to neighbourhood plans, much of the information presented is relevant to all neighbourhood planning processes.

'Neighbourhood planning is an incredibly important new right and one that provides a real opportunity for people to bring about the homes, shops, and facilities they want to see to make their community thrive.'

Nick Boles 8th March 2013



There are 253 town or parish councils within Wiltshire. In many cases collaborative working with neighbouring parish and town councils will be beneficial to make best use of resources and to ensure that planning is undertaken at the right level. For example - plans which identify sites for development, in or adjacent to neighbouring parish or town councils, should consider reciprocal working arrangements.



If you want to get involved in the development of planning policy you are encouraged to sign up to the Wiltshire spatial planning contact database. You can register your details at: consult.wiltshire.gov.uk



Is neighbourhood planning compulsory?

The table below illustrates what a neighbourhood plan can and cannot do. This can assist in helping to decide whether a neighbourhood plan is the right planning tool to use for the needs of your community.

Table 1: What Neighbourhood Plans Can and Cannot do.

A Neighbourhood Plan CAN...	A Neighbourhood Plan CANNOT...
Propose more development than in the Wiltshire Core Strategy	Propose less growth than in the Wiltshire Core Strategy
Shape and direct future development	Prevent any development from ever taking place in an area
Help to determine what type of development should take place	Be prepared with no input or support from the local community
Identify the most suitable local sites for development.	Be in conflict with local, national or EU policies

The table above is not exhaustive and further information regarding how to decide if neighbourhood planning is right for you can be found on Wiltshire's neighbourhood planning portal at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning.

Neighbourhood planning is optional not compulsory. It is important that communities do not make any assumptions at the start of this process about whether a plan is needed and what it should include as this could lead to abortive work and unnecessary costs.

Alternative planning tools are available to help you meet your objectives. As such this guide seeks to help parish and town councils explore the different options available to help meet your communities' goals and aspirations. Alternative options include village design statements and community plans. Deciding if you need a neighbourhood plan is one of the most important steps of the process.

Who will lead on neighbourhood planning in Wiltshire?

Neighbourhood plans can only be prepared by a 'qualifying body'. In areas where a parish or town council exists, these are the nominated qualifying body. Outside these areas, neighbourhood planning can be undertaken by a designated 'neighbourhood forum'. In order to involve the community it is important that the plan is not prepared in isolation. There is a need to consider how to engage with the wider community as well as groups often described as hard-to-reach but which might have specific social needs which should be considered.

Wiltshire Council therefore advocates a steering group approach led by the qualifying body. Members of a group should include the parish or town council(s), other local stakeholders as well as members of the community. A

spatial planning officer will be allocated to each steering group and will act as a 'link officer' to help inform the council's duty to provide support and advice. They will act as the single point of contact at Wiltshire Council to assist communities by providing advice and support where appropriate.

It is important, however, that the plan is approved by the qualifying body as stated within the Localism Act 2011.

How is development managed if we don't have a neighbourhood plan?

The Wiltshire Core Strategy sets the strategic policies for the whole of Wiltshire once adopted. This will remain the key document for determining development proposals.

The council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) details how Wiltshire's communities should be involved in developing planning policy and how the council expects developers to involve the community in development proposals.

What is the role of Wiltshire Council?

Wiltshire Council has a number of roles to undertake in order to fulfil its duty to support. These include:

- confirming the geographical area of proposed neighbourhood plans
- providing expertise and advice to parish and town councils
- holding referendums
- adopting neighbourhood plans where all legal requirements have been met.

Each neighbourhood planning group will be allocated a link officer where requested. They will not act as formal member of the steering group but as a single point of contact at Wiltshire Council providing support and advice where possible.

Additionally, from time to time the council will run interactive events to provide the community with knowledge and understanding to successfully undertake the work involved in producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Details of any forthcoming events can be found on the neighbourhood planning portal at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning.

'Strong and effective partnership working between the local planning authority and the community is the heart of successful neighbourhood planning. Accordingly the Government has not sought to prescribe how local authorities should meet the duty to support requirements. This means the authorities have the discretion to tailor their support to take account of local circumstances, such as the complexity of the Neighbourhood plan being prepared and the skills and resources of the local authority and local groups'.

Planning Advisory Service 2013



It is important to carefully consider the need for a neighbourhood plan. This should include exploring various alternative options. Reflection should be given to available resources and cost implications.



What is the relationship between neighbourhood plans and the local plan?

The development plan sets out the statutory planning policies and proposals for the whole of Wiltshire.

Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the development plan. It is important that communities work closely with Wiltshire Council when developing plans. Wiltshire Council will take an active role in advising and supporting local communities in their plan preparation by sharing evidence and information and ensuring the neighbourhood plan fits with the strategic policies of the Wiltshire development plan and national policy.

What should a neighbourhood plan look like?

There are no set guidelines which describe what a neighbourhood plan should contain or look like. However, neighbourhood plans must conform to the development plan including the core strategy. The content of a neighbourhood plan is likely to contain a series of explanatory text, policies and maps. The policies and objectives of the plan must principally be related to the use of land and development. Neighbourhood plans may:

- identify local allocations for development – such as employment and residential uses – the core strategy for Wiltshire identifies the level of residential and employment growth
- outline specific requirements for local allocations – such as open space and community facilities
- include policies which relate to all development within the plan area - such as local design policies.

How much work is involved in creating a neighbourhood plan?

The amount of work will be largely dependent on the content and scope of the plan. For example the neighbourhood plan could focus on a single issue such as identifying development sites in line with the core strategy. However, preparing a neighbourhood plan is likely to take a considerable amount of time and effort. Wiltshire Council estimates that it is likely, depending on its complexity, to take between 1-2 years to produce a neighbourhood plan. Local communities will need to make decisions along the way and work towards building a consensus.

Who will pay for neighbourhood planning?

Wiltshire Council has a responsibility to organise and meet the cost for the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation, consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, examination arrangements and for the Community Referendum (stages 7, 11, 12 and 13 of the diagram set out on page 10). All other costs will need to be met by the 'qualifying body'.

Information regarding funding and grant opportunities can be found on the councils neighbourhood planning portal at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning.

A series of frequently asked questions can be found on Wiltshire's Neighbourhood Planning Portal at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning



Environmental and sustainability requirements for neighbourhood planning

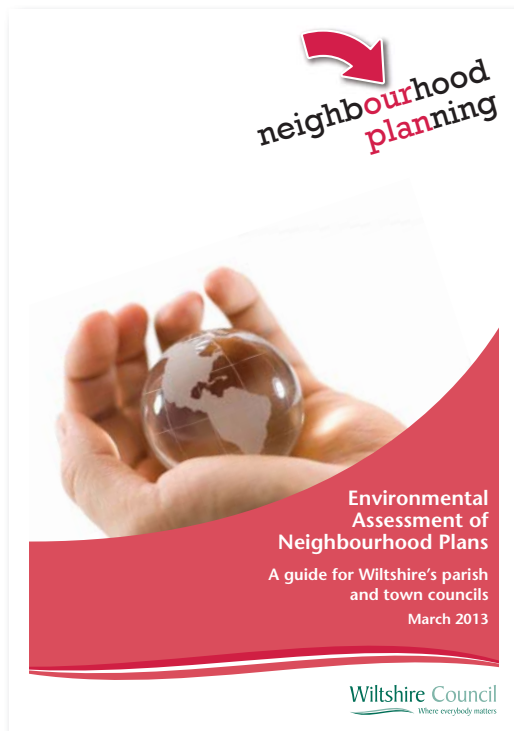
There are certain requirements to consider and potentially assess the environmental effects of neighbourhood planning including those set out below:

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

In some circumstances assessments such as the SEA and HRA are a legal requirement. Other appraisals such as Sustainability Appraisals can be helpful in selecting suitable sites for development. Wiltshire Council will help you determine whether they need to undertake an environmental assessment of your neighbourhood plan or not.

Detailed guidance on 'Environmental Assessment of Neighbourhood Plans', is provided on the Wiltshire Neighbourhood Planning Portal online www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning.

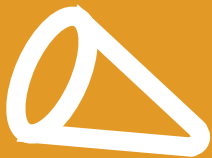


You should be aware that the above assessments (where required) should form an integrated part of the neighbourhood planning preparation process in order to influence the plan properly and to reduce the risk of any legal challenge at a later date. It should be transparent and open to public participation.

Exploring the neighbourhood planning process

'A fundamental principle of neighbourhood planning is that it is community-led. This means that the community is kept fully informed of what is being proposed and is able to make their views known throughout the process.' Draft

neighbourhood planning regulations, DCLG, 2011



Wiltshire Council wants to help communities to plan successfully and cost effectively for their areas and so first identifying the most appropriate approach is very important.



Getting started

In Wiltshire, it will be the parish and town councils which will initiate and lead the process of developing a neighbourhood plan. However, it is important that the plan is not prepared in isolation from the rest of the community. There is a need to consider how to engage with the community as well as groups often described as hard-to-reach such as the young and elderly.

To achieve this, Wiltshire Council advocates a steering group approach led by the town or parish council. Members of a steering group could include local residents, community groups, local organisations and businesses. The parish or town council(s) should consider carefully the make-up of the steering group to ensure an adequate and fair representation of the local community.

In many cases, collaborative working with neighbouring parish and town councils might be beneficial to make best use of resources and/or to plan. This should be considered from the outset before any preparatory work is undertaken.

The steering group should be governed by a lead 'qualifying body' i.e. a parish or town council – or councils working in partnership with one another. The steering group will then be jointly responsible for managing the various stages of the process including scoping and delivery.

Why plan?

Communities sometimes start by saying they want to produce a town or a neighbourhood plan. However, it is first important to consider why?

It is essential that communities do not make any assumptions at the start of this process about whether a plan is needed and what it should include.

Although there may be several stages to producing any particular type of plan, such as a neighbourhood development plan, we would suggest that in more simple terms there are two key stages. These are scoping and delivery.

Stage 1: Scoping

Stage 2: Delivery

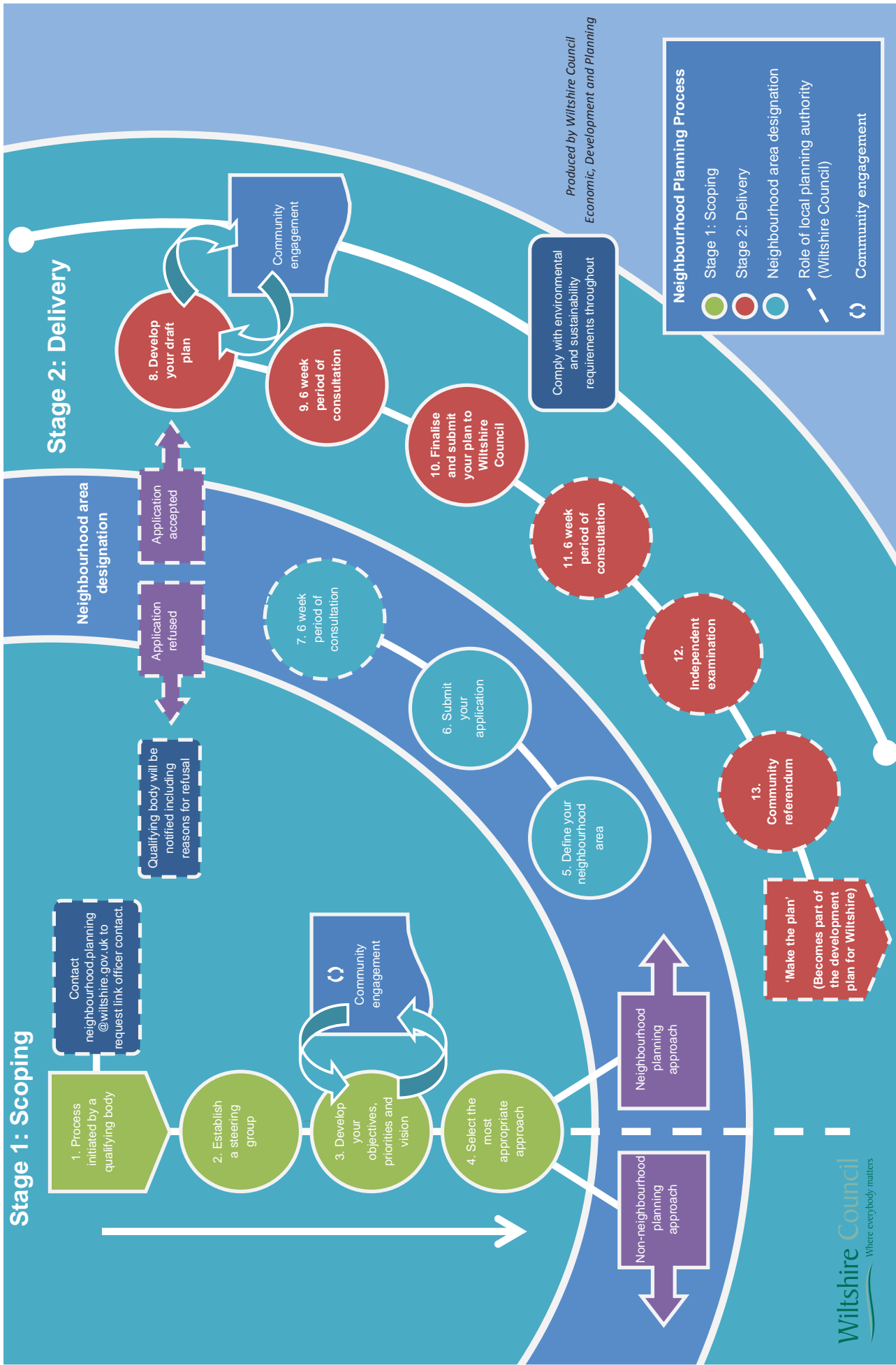
The scoping stage should be undertaken from the outset to help communities decide on the best course of action and the most appropriate approach to deliver their objectives.

We anticipate that communities will want to carefully scope and identify their own priorities to help establish the most appropriate approach. They will also want to look at what existing evidence is available for planning in the area.

The delivery stage involves implementing the actions identified in the scoping stage. Stage 2 should commence only once the scoping stage has been completed and when, after careful consideration, the steering group has selected the most appropriate approach to meet the identified objectives.

Neighbourhood planning should be seen as just one of the options available to meet your objectives.





Stage 1: Scoping

The scoping stage is used to identify the key issues of concern at an early stage in the process. The results of scoping will help determine the range, detail and terms of reference to be addressed by any subsequent neighbourhood planning approach. It is vitally important not to prejudge this stage. The most appropriate approach might be a 'non-planning' based solution (see 'select the most appropriate approach to deliver your vision and objectives' page 13).

The objective is to create a clear 'delivery plan' which will identify the most appropriate means of delivering the communities vision and subsequent objectives.

Although there is no prescriptive one-size-fits-all approach the scoping stage might include the following steps:

1. Process initiated by a qualifying body

Parish and town councils will lead neighbourhood planning in areas which include all or part of a parished area.

Outside parished areas, neighbourhood planning can be undertaken by a designated 'neighbourhood forum'. The forum should have a written constitution and should comprise a minimum of 21 people. All of the members should:

- live in the neighbourhood area subject to the plan
- work in the neighbourhood area
- be an elected member of a council body within which the plan area falls.

2. Establish a steering group

Wiltshire Council advocates a steering group approach when developing a neighbourhood plan. This should be led by the parish or town council(s) for the area being considered and also have wider representation from the community to ensure that there is a balance of interests so that social, environmental and economic interests are represented. This will help give confidence to local communities that the work is being taken forward by those providing a broad representation of the community as a whole.

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

1. Initiate process
2. Establish steering group
3. Request 'link officer' contact

Wiltshire Council role

1. Allocate link officer

The steering group will be allocated a 'link officer' to provide informal advice and support. The lead qualifying body should email neighbourhood.planning@wiltshire.gov.uk before the steering group is formed to be allocated an officer.

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Administer and manage steering group

Steering group role

Establish terms of reference

Prepare project plan

Develop communications strategy

Develop your vision / objectives

Wiltshire Council role

Provide advice and support

Clear terms of reference should be agreed at the outset. The terms of reference could reflect emerging best practice based on examples developed by the front runner projects. Your link officer can provide example terms of reference.

Your steering group might include:

- local residents
- local business owners
- other key stakeholders including schools and religious or cultural groups.

At this stage you might want to consider how the steering group is going to consult with the wider community and begin to prepare an action plan and timetable for the following stages.

3. Develop your objectives, priorities and vision

Your neighbourhood vision will define what you want to achieve for your community today and in the future. It should be realistic, clear and inclusive.

In simple terms, the visioning stage can be summarised by the following three questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?

To answer these questions you might want to:

- gather information about your area
- assess your area's strengths and weaknesses
- draft a vision statement for your community
- identify a series of objectives.

The visioning stage is used to identify the key issues of concern at an early stage in the plan-making process. The results will determine the range, detail and terms of reference to be addressed by any subsequent approach. The objective is to create a clear vision which defines what you want to achieve for your community today and in the future.

Community engagement (2)

Early endorsement of your objectives, priorities and vision with the local community will help gain support and consensus. You could consider talking to local residents, stakeholders and community groups. This stage is not a requirement of the draft regulations and therefore the scope of any consultation should be determined by the steering group. However, it is important to keep the local community fully informed of what is being proposed so they can make their views known throughout the process.

4. Select the most appropriate approach

Producing a neighbourhood plan is a big undertaking, so before committing to produce a plan, it is important to think about what your community wants to achieve. Neighbourhood plans are set to be a helpful tool for some goals but there are other tools that may be more appropriate less costly or less time consuming. Further information about the variety of planning tools available to local communities can be found on Wiltshire's neighbourhood planning portal. Some of the approaches available include:

- village design statement
- community plan
- action plan
- **neighbourhood development plan**
- **neighbourhood development order**
- **community right-to-build order**

} **Neighbourhood
planning**

It is important to remember that the core strategy produced by Wiltshire Council contains a series of policies and proposals. These alone, or in conjunction with one, or several, of the non neighbourhood planning approaches above, will potentially deliver your communities objectives. Some of the approaches outlined above will require considerable less resource to implement. The scope of these approaches can also often be widened to include objectives which do not relate to the use of land and development.

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Administer and manage steering group

Steering group role

Undertake wider community engagement on draft vision/objectives

Select the most appropriate approach

Wiltshire Council role

Provide advice and support

Neighbourhood area designation

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Administer and manage steering group

Submit neighbourhood area application to Wiltshire Council

Steering group role

Consider the most suitable neighbourhood area

Validate steering group membership against proposed neighbourhood area

Wiltshire Council role

Provide advice and support

Validate neighbourhood area application

5. Define your neighbourhood area

If a neighbourhood plan is considered the most appropriate approach to deliver your vision and objectives, the first stage is defining your neighbourhood area.

The steering group should consider the most suitable area to plan for. A large scale map of the area and a discussion with the steering group is a good place to start.

You might want to consider:

- the physical boundaries of the area
- social, economic and other characteristics of the area
- and most importantly interactions with neighbouring town and parish councils.

As a consequence, the membership of the steering group will possibly develop to reflect the plan area. This might include working in collaboration with neighbouring parish and town councils. For example if the proposed neighbourhood area covers more than one parish, then consent must be sought from each of the affected parish and town councils. This will also have implications for representation on the steering group and the scale of community engagement that the process will require.

The steering group should liaise closely with the 'link officer' when defining an appropriate neighbourhood area. The lead qualifying body will then need to submit an application to Wiltshire Council. **The link officer will be able to provide the qualifying body with a neighbourhood area designation application form.**

6. Submit your application

Application must include:

1. a map which identifies the neighbourhood area
2. a statement which considers why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area
3. a statement that the application is made by either a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum.

7. Six week period of consultation

Wiltshire Council will publicise the application on its website and in such a manner as is considered likely to bring the application to the attention of people who live, work and undertake business to which the area application relates.

At this stage the information submitted to support the neighbourhood area application will be made publicly available for comment for a period of not less than six weeks.

The application will then be considered alongside any representations made to the neighbourhood area consultation. The qualifying body and neighbouring parishes will be notified of the outcome and the decision will be published on the council's website.

Stage 2: Delivery

The delivery stage involves implementing the actions identified in the scoping stage. If a neighbourhood development plan has been identified as the most efficient and cost-effective way to address the objectives identified. This should be prepared in accordance with the appropriate legislation and regulations.

The following summarises the anticipated approach which steering groups will take to develop neighbourhood plans in Wiltshire.

8. Develop your draft plan

Although there are no set guidelines for what a neighbourhood plan should contain it is likely that a plan will contain a series of policies, associated explanatory text and maps which detail the policies and proposals. The policies must be linked to the development and use of land. Your neighbourhood plan might:

- identify areas of land for housing and/or economic development in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy
- outline specific requirements for development including characteristics such as design and density
- include distinct local policies to help meet the specific issues and challenges identified through the scoping exercise.

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Administer and manage steering group

Steering group role

Develop draft plan / order

Wiltshire Council role

Provide advice and support

Notify qualifying body of designation outcome

Publicise neighbourhood area

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Administer and manage steering group

Publicise draft plan

Steering group role

Consider conformity with national and local planning policy

Consider Environmental and sustainability requirements

Undertake wider community engagement on draft proposals

Wiltshire Council role

Provide advice on general conformity with local and national policies and evidence requirements

Policies and proposals contained within a neighbourhood plan should be realistic and achievable. They must also follow some ground rules including:

- generally conforming with local and national planning policies
- being in line with other laws including various EU Directives, namely Environmental Impact Assessment/Strategic Environmental Assessment/Water Framework Directive/Habitats Directive.

Your link officer will be able to advise the steering group on general conformity and meeting legislative requirements.

Community engagement

Before consulting formally on your neighbourhood plan the steering group should consider the benefits of engaging with the local community before undertaking formal consultation required by the regulations. This will help build consensus with the local community.

There are many effective ways to seek community input and endorsement. The steering group might want to consider various options including:

- running a series of public exhibitions
- meeting with community groups
- undertaking online consultation
- using established networks and newsletters to publicise activities.

9. Six week period of consultation

At this stage the lead qualifying body must publicise the draft plan in a manner which is considered likely to bring the plan to the attention of people who live, work and undertake business in the neighbouring area.

This qualifying body must provide and publicise:

- the neighbourhood development plan
- details of where and when the plan can be inspected
- details of how to make representations on the plan
- the date by which representations must be received, allowing not less than six weeks.

If your plan needs strategic environmental assessment, or has other legislative requirements, this should also be made available for consultation at this stage.

You will need to provide details of how to respond to the draft plan and how to make representations on it. This should include a 'representation form' for people to submit their comments on. The steering group could also consider making this available online.

You will also need to consider if your plan will affect any of the 'statutory consultees' listed within the Neighbourhood Plan regulations. You will need to consult those who may be affected and also to submit the plan to Wiltshire Council.

The minimum period of consultation at this stage is six weeks. However, the steering group may decide to extend this period.

When you submit your plan for independent examination you will need to provide the responses made on the draft plan and detail what changes have made in light of the representations made. As a result it is important that the steering group prepare for, and organise, this stage of the process carefully.

10. Finalise and submit your plan to Wiltshire Council

At this stage the steering group should review the consultation responses and make any necessary changes to the plan.

It is likely that the independent examiner will want to review the representations made and see how you have addressed these issues and concerns. The steering group should, therefore, consider how to present this information in an accessible form which can be distributed easily and made publicly available.

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Submit the draft plan to relevant statutory consultees

Submit draft plan to Wiltshire Council

Steering group role

Provide details of how to respond to the plan

Process and collate representations made against the draft plan

Review the plan in light of representations made

Wiltshire Council role

Provide advice and support

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Verify submission requirements

Agree the appointment of an independent examiner with Wiltshire Council

Steering group role

Aid qualifying body with submission requirements

Wiltshire Council role

Validate submission and notify qualifying body

Publicise the proposal

Arrange for independent examination

Once you are ready to submit the plan you must include the following with your submission to Wiltshire Council.

The qualifying body must submit:

- a map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates
- an environment scoping assessment of SEA to comply with environmental regulations.
- a consultation statement which:
 - contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan
 - explains how they were consulted
 - summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted
 - describes how these issues and concerns have been addressed in the proposed neighbourhood plan.
- the proposed neighbourhood development plan
- a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

11. Six week period of consultation

Wiltshire Council will validate your submission and verify it with the qualifying body.

As soon as possible after receiving the proposed neighbourhood development plan (including all of the documents referred to in stage 10) Wiltshire Council will publicise on its website the proposal for consultation - for a period being not less than six weeks. Any representations made during this period will be passed to the independent examiner.

12. Independent examination

Once the consultation period has ended and the council has collated all of the representations made to the plan an independent examination will be arranged.

The examiner will be appointed by Wiltshire Council in agreement with the parish or town council(s).

The examination process is described as being 'light touch' and it is, therefore, likely to be a written exercise, although the examiner can decide to visit sites or hold a public hearing.

The independent examiner will assess:

- the plan against national policy
- whether the plan is in general conformity with policies in the Wiltshire Local Plan
- whether the plan is compatible with EU obligations and the proposal is consistent with the convention for human rights
- the geographical extent of the referendum.

The examiner will also consider any representations made to the plan and how these issues and concerns have been addressed.

The examiner may recommend changes to the plan or order. If significant changes are suggested you may need to re-consult your community to endorse these changes.

If the independent examiner recommends that a referendum is held, the council must hold a referendum. However, the examiner may also recommend that your plan does not proceed to referendum if the plan is not aligned with:

- the strategic elements of the local development plan
- legal requirements
- national policy.

Wiltshire Council will notify the qualifying body whether a community referendum will be held or not in light of the independent report.

The examiner may recommend changes to the plan or order.



✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Liaise with Wiltshire Council over the examination arrangements

Steering group role

Support the qualifying body with the examination

Wiltshire Council role

Advise the qualifying body of the examination outcome

✓ Key stages

Qualifying body role

Liaise with Wiltshire Council with regards to the referendum arrangements

Steering group role

Support the qualifying body

Wiltshire Council role

Arrange the community referendum
Make the plan

13. Community referendum

If the examiner has recommended that the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum, and any necessary changes have been made based upon his/her findings, Wiltshire Council will arrange for a community referendum.

Individuals will be eligible to vote if they are on the electoral roll for the plan area. If the proposals affect a wider area the referendum will be reflective of the areas concerned.

Where more than 50% vote in favour, Wiltshire Council will have a duty to make the plan or order.

Make the plan

If the referendum has been positive, with more than 50% of those who vote in favour of the plan, Wiltshire Council will make the plan.

Wiltshire Council will publish the plan on its website and provide details of where the plan can be viewed. The neighbourhood plan will also need to be made available at council offices for members of the public to view.

A simple majority vote is needed.



Where can we get further information and advice?

Applying for funding:

The Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning programme, which is run by Locality (in association with the RTPI, Planning Aid England, the Community Development Foundation and other partners) is now the main provider for Neighbourhood Planning assistance. It is funded by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and runs for two years. From May 2013 groups have been able to apply for advice to support them through the Neighbourhood Planning process, and a grant of up to £7,000 to create their own Neighbourhood Plan and shape development in their local area.

Applications can be made through the Community Rights Network <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

Further Advice and Information:

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

The DCLG website contains a number of key document and information - <https://www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning#funding-and-support>

Planning Aid England

Planning Aid England (PAE) offers planning advice and support to individuals and communities. Planning Aid are part of a consortium led by 'Locality' which is funded by the DCLG to support groups involved in Neighbourhood Planning. PAE offer to help communities through the key stages of Neighbourhood Planning and will work directly with groups to provide support, advice and professional input into the plans being prepared by communities.

Prince's Foundation

Established in 1998 by HRH the Prince of Wales and governed by a group of independent trustees, the Prince's Foundation for Building Community is an educational charity which promotes the development and improvement of sustainable urban environments that involve community engagement and their development. Over the period from April 2011 – March 2013 the foundation worked closely with over 50 communities selected for funding from DCLG in developing Neighbourhood Plans. The work was delivered through workshops with local residents and businesses

and the case studies delivered under this programme are provided online
<http://www.princes-foundation.org/>

Locality

Locality runs a wide range of projects supporting members to create community-led change and local regeneration in their neighbourhoods. Their website "<http://www.locality.org.uk>" www.locality.org.uk provides a useful range of resources on neighbourhood planning.

You can also find out more information on the Neighbourhood Planning Portal online: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

Glossary

Community Plan	Community plans are produced through collaboration between local residents and representatives of public, voluntary and private sector organisations and businesses. Community plans seek to influence and inform public bodies, organisations and other service providers about the priorities for people in the plan area.
Core Strategy	A plan setting out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an area.
Habitats Regulation Assessment	This is a requirement for plans that are likely to lead to significant effects on European sites of nature conservation importance.
Link Officer	Neighbourhood plan steering groups will be appointed a 'link officer' to act as a single point of contact for the community, and to provide support and advice where appropriate.
Local Planning Authority	A local planning authority is the local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise statutory town planning functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom.
Localism Act	<p>The Localism Act includes five key measures that underpin the government's approach to decentralisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community rights • Neighbourhood planning • Housing • General power of competence • Empowering cities and other local areas <p>The full act can be viewed online at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted</p>
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	<p>The NPPF sets out the planning policies for England. This was a key part of the reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth.</p> <p>The Framework sets out planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It provides guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers, both in drawing up plans and making decisions about planning applications.</p>

National Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes	<p>Planning Policy Guidance notes, and their replacements Planning Policy Statements, are prepared by the government after public consultation to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system.</p> <p>The majority of planning policy statements and guidance notes have been superseded by the national planning policy framework.</p>
Neighbourhood Area	A neighbourhood area has to be formally designated for neighbourhood plan or order to be produced. See page 14.
Neighbourhood Planning Front Runners	Over 200 Front Runner projects have been established by the government to help local communities, local authorities and the government gain insight into how neighbourhood planning is working in practice. Under this scheme, a grant of up to £20,000 has been made available towards the cost of each project.
Neighbourhood Plans	New type of plans introduced by the Localism Act. They will be prepared by town/parish councils, or constituted Neighbourhood Forums, and develop detailed planning policies for a town/parish (or part of them) in general conformity with the council's Local Plan or LDF.
Planning Advisory Service	The Planning Advisory Service helps councils provide faster, fairer, more efficient and better quality planning services. See www.pas.gov.uk
Statement of Community Involvement	A document setting out how the authority will consult and involve the public at every stage in the production of the Local Development Framework.
Statutory Consultees	Statutory consultees for the purposes of neighbourhood planning are defined within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
Strategic Environmental Assessment	An assessment of certain plans and policies on the environment.
Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal of the impacts of policies and proposals on economic, social and environmental issues. This can also be a useful tool to assist selecting suitable sites for development.

Sustainability Appraisal (including Environmental Appraisal)	An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development. (Environmental appraisal covers only environmental impacts)
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is an act of the British Parliament regulating the development of land in England and Wales.
Village Design Statement	A Village or Town Design Statement [VDS] is a practical tool to help influence decisions on design and development. Prepared correctly, a VDS will provide a clear statement of the character of a particular village or town against which planning applications may be assessed.

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