

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Bassetlaw
DISTRICT COUNCIL
— North Nottinghamshire —

1. What is a Neighbourhood Plan and who can write one?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of plan which will focus on local areas rather than the District as a whole.

Neighbourhood Plans will be prepared by communities, although the District Council will provide technical advice and support.

The plan making process must be led by the local Parish/ Town Council, or a Neighbourhood Forum. Neighbourhood Plans mustn't overlap - there may only be one Neighbourhood Plan per neighbourhood.

Policies included in Neighbourhood Plans must be related to the use of land in the area, or to spatial matters (i.e. aspects that affect how a place works).

If 'made' they will form part of the overall development plan for the District and will be used to assist in the determination of all planning applications in that area, along with other relevant planning policies.

2. What is a Neighbourhood Development Order?

Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) allow certain kinds of development to take place without the need to apply for planning permission.

This could include built development, such as new housing (the Community Right to Build).

3. Is it compulsory to produce a Neighbourhood Plan?

No. Every community will have the right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan but it is recognised that not all areas will want to.

It will be up to each community to decide if a Neighbourhood Plan would benefit their area, and this will depend on local circumstances.

You may decide that producing a Neighbourhood Plan isn't the right approach for your community, however there are many other 'tools' available to help you shape your community.

If you are considering undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, Bassetlaw District Council will be happy to come and speak to the Parish/ Town Council or community group about the process.

4. Who will pay for the Neighbourhood Planning process?

It will be up to the community to pay for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Localism Act suggests that the business community could contribute towards the costs.

The District Council will pay for the independent examination and referendum.

A new government funding programme to support communities in preparing Neighbourhood Plans has recently been launched, and is being administered by "Locality"

from 31st March 2018. Grants of up to £9000 - £15,000 per plan area are available for groups to apply for.

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

5. How much will a Neighbourhood Plan cost?

Bassetlaw District Council may be able to assist with providing maps, some printing and we have a dedicated Neighbourhood Plan Officer to assist group where necessary. The cost for an examination, public referendum and the adoption of the Plan will be met by Bassetlaw District Council.

A number of consultants offer support to Neighbourhood Plan groups, often at a cost. It is not intended that the Neighbourhood Planning process requires professionals, but instead relies on the skills available from local people.

Bassetlaw District Council's Planning Policy team can offer support and advice on planning issues, involving the local community and the Neighbourhood Plan-making process.

Typically, for a small village, say the size of Elkesley or Claborough cost around £10,000

Larger villages or small towns will cost more.

6. How long does it take to write a Neighbourhood Plan?

It will be up to individual areas to decide on the pace at which they wish to progress their plans.

However, it is anticipated that on average the process is likely to take between one and two years. Some larger, more complex Plans can take longer to develop.

7. Will I get help from Bassetlaw District Council?

Bassetlaw District Council is committed to supporting groups who wish to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan.

If you or your community group or Parish Council are thinking about writing a Neighbourhood Plan, the Council strongly advises you speak to the Planning Policy Team first. The Council has produced a "Terms of Reference" – detailing the level of assistance available to groups in the District.

The Council's Planning Officers may be able to help with the following:

- Sharing evidence and information on planning issues;
- Providing advice on national and local plan policies;
- Helping with consulting the community;
- Providing training and advice, for example on writing the plan, or how to consult with the local community;

- Helping communities communicate with external partners where this is required.

8. What is the role of National Policy in Neighbourhood Planning?

All Neighbourhood Development Plans and Orders will need to take national policy into account.

The Government has published national planning policy, known as the National Planning Policy Framework, or NPPF, which can be downloaded for free from the Department for Communities and Local Government website.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

Bassetlaw District Council has written guidance to help you understand the relationship between Neighbourhood Plans and the NPPF.

9. What does "Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development" mean?

The National Planning Policy Framework includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

All plans, including Neighbourhood Plans, must positively and sustainably seek to meet the development needs of their area.

Neighbourhood Plans should enable new developments, which demonstrate that they are sustainable, to be approved without delay.

Critically, the presumption in favour of Sustainable Development means that Neighbourhood Plans must support the strategic development needs for housing, infrastructure and economic development set out in local development documents, such as the Bassetlaw Core Strategy.

<http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/everything-else/planning-building/planning-policy/core-strategy-development-management-policies/core-strategy/the-core-strategy.aspx>

10. Can a Neighbourhood Plan stop development?

A Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the Council's development plan documents, plans and strategies from other public bodies, utility and service providers.

Neighbourhood Planning cannot prevent development where this has been identified in the Core Strategy.

However, Neighbourhood Planning can influence where new development is located, and the design, layout and materials used. Neighbourhood Planning can help to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the surrounding area and meets the needs of the local community.

The Government is very clear that it will not be possible to use Neighbourhood Plans to stop development.

Indeed, it is the Government's expectation that Neighbourhood Plans will at least provide for development to meet local needs and provide the opportunity to identify an increased level of development within their area if appropriate.

11. What is a Sustainability Appraisal and do we need to do one?

A Sustainability Appraisal is an assessment of plans and policies.

The Sustainability Appraisal should highlight any likely impacts on the environment, society or the economy, and look for ways to mitigate any potential harm, or recommend ways in which the plan or policy can achieve further positive outcomes.

Carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal of the type required of the Council's Development Plan Documents is not a legal requirement of Neighbourhood Plans. However, ambitious and complex Neighbourhood Plans may trigger various EU Directives (including the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Habitats Directive), and may need additional procedures and assessment, depending on the scale and impact of the plan proposals.

Neighbourhood Plan groups should ask the Planning Policy team to help them screen their draft plan proposals to see if a Sustainability Appraisal is needed.

It is good practice to consider in detail the effects on sustainability of your proposals as part of developing your plan, and may help to ensure the success of your plan at the examination/"independent check" stage.

The Sustainability Appraisal is not performed as a 'one off' check, but is an iterative process revisited throughout the plan-making process.

The Planning Policy team can provide further advice on this issue.

12. What weight (importance) will be given to a Neighbourhood Plan?

Once adopted, Neighbourhood Plans hold full legal status. Planning decisions will be taken in accordance with Neighbourhood Plans and the other plans and strategies which make up the "Local Plan", unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For further information on the Neighbourhood Plan process, please contact the Planning Policy Team at Bassetlaw District Council on 01909 533533 or email will.wilson@bassetlaw.gov.uk