

Neighbourhood Plan.

Since 2012 communities have been able to produce a plan for the local area to help influence planning decisions in and around the area where they live.

It is used to develop a vision for the future, selecting locations for new housing, offices, shops etc. It can also influence design.

How it works.

It's a community led project with a committee of not more than 21 people made up of (normally but not always) members of the Parish or Town Council who first tell the Local Planning Authority (LPA) they want to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The LPA agree the Plan area and processes based on available national guidelines.

5 stages of plan are:

1. Defining the Neighbourhood
2. Preparing the plan
3. Independent check
4. Community referendum
5. Legal aspects.

You need a 50 % yes vote from the community to put the plan into place.

Takes up to 3 years

It could cost up to £20,000 in our case. Central Government can make funds available as can other organisation such as The Princes Foundation and the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Most of cost must be raised locally and a lot of volunteer time is required.

The plan is about having a say and being positive about changes we would like to see.

They are not about saying NO to new development.

So do we ask the locals to set up a committee with representation from the Parish Council.

Do we have the expertise to for fill the requirements of a plan?

Do we need professional support?

How useful would a Neighbourhood Plan be considering the imminent conclusion of the Local Plan and decisions already made on local housing developments?

How useful have the 1000 already processed plans been in massaging local planning decisions?

Can we find the necessary funding locally (very little industry)

Would the 3 to 4 year time scale be too late to influence the Local Plan in our area?

The Uppingham Plan (Rutland) had an application made to the high court by Larkfleet Homes, seeking a review not to go past the referendum stage.

This was dismissed by the hearing judge in July 2014 with no right to appeal.

What if they had succeeded and won the application. What would be the future for Neighbourhood Plans.?

10 Frequently Asked Questions about Neighbourhood Plans

1. What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a new way of helping local communities influence planning decisions in the area where they live and work.

It can be used to develop a vision for the future of the neighbourhood, to select locations for new houses, offices, shops and facilities, to protect green spaces and to influence design.

If you want to read more – try *An Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning*, which you can download from the Communities and Local Government (CLG) website www.communities.gov.uk. However, please remember that the whole concept is new and new guidance notes keep appearing ...

2. Essentially, what is the process to create a Neighbourhood Plan?

Community representatives (normally, but not always, the Parish or Town Council) tell the local planning authority (LPA) they want to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The LPA agree the area and process based on available national guidelines. The Neighbourhood Plan team prepare a document – encompassing physical plans and associated policies, through working with local residents and other stakeholders. Typical consultation processes will include questionnaires and workshop meetings. The completed Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed by an independent planning inspector, who can agree with it – or recommend changes. When the inspector, LPA and Neighbourhood Plan committee are happy with the plan, it is proposed that plans will be endorsed by a local referendum. If the majority of local residents support the plan, it will be adopted by the LPA. Like all local plans, a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to cover a set period of time – probably 15–25 years.

3. Who decided to do a Neighbourhood Plan?

Looe Town Council together with the wider community.

4. What area will the plan cover?

At this stage the area covered by Looe Town Council. However there will be discussions with other parishes where our boundaries meet as each can affect the other.

5. Who can be involved in the Neighbourhood Plan team?

Anyone interested in the Neighbourhood Plan can get involved. It has been recommended that the neighbourhood planning committee should not be more than 21 people.

6. What sort of things will the plan include?

It is important to stress that the plan must conform generally with the strategic goals of the LPA and central government. Therefore we have to accept the general targets for development in the local area. However, the Neighbourhood Plan can influence where development is located, building density, design style, access provision (e.g. roads and paths), open space provision, protection of historic sites / buildings / facilities / natural habitats, etc. Neighbourhood Planners should be able to establish policies and initiatives to support business, education, community facilities, recreation, biodiversity and other important matters in the area. However – please note – the process is new and many of the details are still being established.

7. How long will it take?

Indications from other towns and parishes who have completed a Neighbourhood Plan indicate between two to three years however this is a provisional timeline.

8. Will this plan have any influence?

The whole point of the Neighbourhood Plan process is that at the end of it, what the community has agreed becomes the adopted ('official') plan for the area. Developers then have to follow the plan. This is in contrast to previous community led initiatives – such as 'Parish Plans', where the community ideas were not adopted by the planning authority.

9. Who pays for all this?

Central government have stated they will make funds available to support communities. They have recently pledged some money to LPA's to help them support and administer Neighbourhood Plans. Money has also been made available to some organisations to help provide services – e.g. the Princes Foundation and the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). However, we expect additional costs and there will be a lot of volunteer time required ...

10. How can I help / get involved?

The Neighbourhood Plan process offers an excellent chance for all residents to have a say in the future of the community. Even if you don't have a lot of experience of planning matters, we would ask that you help in the following ways:

- i. Take the time to fully answer and return any questionnaires we may send from time to time.
- ii. Please try to attend community meetings that we may arrange and contribute fully to discussions and ideas exercises.
- iii. Please check the parish websites and keep up with news and reports. We will post meeting minutes and news updates.
- iv. Talk to your neighbours about ideas and pass your views (preferably written) to your town councillors or nominated committee members..
- v. Keep an open mind! Remember there are around 5,500 people in West and East Looe. We need to make decisions that give the best outcomes for the most people – and that includes future generations.