

Template for smaller communities producing a Neighbourhood Plan

This template gives an indication of the format that your neighbourhood plan could take, including all of the key topic areas that your plan should consider (not all of these will be relevant to your community and there may be some additional local priorities that you want to consider).

The final design and layout are up to your group to determine but by using the content in this template should ensure that you have a plan that includes enough detail and considers key issues. Using maps and pictures where appropriate will make your plan more readable. All of the evidence gathered as part of the plan making process will need to be submitted as Appendixes.

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Introduction

Explain what a Neighbourhood Plan is – the legal background and the reasons why your parish has decided to produce one. Identify the Local Planning Authority and briefly set out the legislative framework, including any applicable Local Plan.

This should introduce the parish, its location, key features including population and housing numbers. Set out what the purpose of the plan is and what you hope it will achieve. You could include some history and background here.

Explain the structure of the Steering Committee and include the steps taken so far in producing your Plan, along with relevant dates. Explain how the local community has been involved and the types of consultation that you have carried out.

The Plan Area

Include a map here showing the designated Plan area.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan, and why do we need one?

What is the purpose of Neighbourhood Planning, the legal framework that underpins it and how the NDP policies must relate to both local and national planning policy.

Identify any housing growth that your plan needs to accommodate and any other growth or infrastructure needs. You should also reveal the key issues and themes that were identified as part of your community consultation.

Background and History

Use this section to give some history of your parish, identify the key settlements and landscape and heritage assets; the people who live there and the type and number of homes. Give some information under each of the headings below. Where you have used data to back up your assertions, you should explain where the data has come from, what reports and other sources you have used.

History

A brief history of the parish will help to give context to your Plan. If you have an old parish plan, you may be able to use much of the information that has already been compiled. Are there any archaeologically important sites?

Heritage

Think about the built environment, is there a conservation area, any listed buildings. What is the architectural value of the area – do most houses date from the same era or is there a mix of old and new. How has new development fitted with the older parts? Describe the nature of the settlements within the plan area – how has the town or village expanded? What documentation have you reviewed and what process did you follow to carry out an assessment of the character areas of your community.

Landscape and natural environment

Comment on the landscape, including any waterways or open spaces, are there any land designations (AONB, SSSI, AGLV etc) are there any county wildlife sites? Which areas are valued by the community and used for recreation. Is your area coastal; if so, comment on the beaches, cliffs and dunes. Are there any flood zones, is land used for agricultural purposes? What green spaces are used by the community, are there any compelling views. A map showing key landscape areas and identifying wildlife or protected sites may be useful. What open spaces are used and valued by the community?

Population and demographics

It's useful to provide some background information here to give the plan some context.

How many people live here, how many houses are there? What is the age profile; how many elderly people and children are there? Is the community ageing; is your community growing or shrinking?

Employment and Economy

What employment opportunities exist within the parish – do people commute in to work or do they commute out to work elsewhere? What businesses exist within the parish- how many

people work from home, how many commute in and out of the parish for work? Could your parish support more employment - if so, where? What kind of work is available nearby, what are the local wages like – can local people afford to buy or rent a home? Is the area dependent on tourism or industry or agriculture? Do people work from home – are there lots of small businesses; how many empty shops are there; how many are charity shops? Is there a business park or industrial estate – if so, is it thriving or are there vacant units? Have you asked the local business community for their views on the neighbourhood plan and the steps that might be necessary to improve the economy or employment prospects of your area.

Facilities and amenities

Schools – where do the local children go for their primary and secondary schooling – are these schools at capacity or do they have spaces? Comment on doctors, hospitals, shops, pub, Post Office, libraries, play facilities, community centres or halls, sports facilities etc. Do these exist, are they thriving? Do any of them need to be protected? Where do people go for their main shopping needs? Are there any allotments? Where are most of the facilities based – if they are all or mostly located in a single settlement then this is likely to be the most sustainable location for further development.

Transport and parking

What public transport exists, where does it go and how frequently. Is a car a necessity or could you exist with just public transport? Is there parking near to facilities? Think also about connectivity in terms of foot and cycle paths. Are there any dangerous or busy roads or junctions?

Housing

Consider the needs of the local community in terms of affordable housing. Are there large numbers of second or holiday homes? Can local people afford to buy homes? How many dwellings are there – what is the density, what tenures are most common – is there a shortage of any particular type of accommodation? What has been built within the parish recently – have these developments been successful – have they included affordable housing. Are there suitable homes for people to downsize to as they get older? Is there an existing settlement boundary? Does this need to expand to allow for some additional growth? Do you want to allocate specific sites for housing or employment – this will give you maximum control over development in your area but can be an involved and difficult process.

Community

What markets, festivals and events are regular features in the calendar – how do these contribute to the sense of place?

Other significant local factors (tourism, agriculture, fishing, harbour, industry etc).

Comment on any area-specific issues or concerns. What is special about your parish?

Conclusions

From your analysis and understanding of your Parish, what factual conclusions can you draw from the evidence presented so far? Is the population ageing, are house prices beyond the reach of local workers, are facilities stretched etc?

Vision and Objectives

Use this section to explain your community's vision for the future; what do you want your neighbourhood to look like in 20 years? Which aspects need to be protected; what development is required? What changes will be required in terms of housing to ensure that the needs of the community will continue to be met? How much new housing will be required and what proportion of this should be affordable? Do you need to plan for more development to protect or enhance community facilities or amenities?

How have you arrived at this vision?

A vision statement is optional but a simple statement setting out the key aspirations for the future of your neighbourhood can be a useful way of summarising the wishes of the community.

Objectives

Set out each of the key objectives that will help you to achieve your vision. Objectives should be specific and identify what it is that the Neighbourhood Plan wants to achieve. Once you have identified the key objectives, your policies will help you to meet them. Remember to check the policies of your Local Plan – there is no point in including policies that simply repeat what is already addressed there.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Comment here on the outcome of the EIA and whether it was identified that Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) were required. If either SEA or HRA were required, then explain here the reasons for the study and the outcome in the final report.

Community Projects

Your NDP can only have policies that relate to the use of land but it is likely that as you go through the consultation process, you will identify other issues that are important to your community. You may want a separate section on Community Projects where these issues that cannot be addressed through planning policies can be captured and taken forward outside of the plan. You may also want to set out the areas that the NDP cannot directly influence, or those issues that are adequately addressed by the Local Plan.

The key issues

Using your evidence base and responses from the consultation, what have you identified as the key issues for your neighbourhood? Once you have identified the issues and proposed a way of dealing with it, we can consider the wording of a policy that will achieve this – your LPA may be able to help with the drafting of actual policy.

Use the section headings (you may not need all of them) below to think about some key issues and add in any other relevant areas. Using the table format at the bottom of this section, set out the problem, proposal and justification for each issue that you want to address. It is likely that you will need to complete more than one table for each section to address a wide variety of policies

Housing including affordable housing

What types of housing will be required in the future, how much new housing is required? Where should new development be built? Which sites would you like to see protected from development? Do you want to have a say on how new housing should look? Are there residents within your community that are finding it hard to find a suitable home? Do you need to develop new tourist accommodation or student accommodation, perhaps additional supported housing for older residents is key. Consider the current settlement boundary – is this still the best boundary, does it need to be reviewed to allow for additional growth?

Sustainability

How can you ensure that development in your community is sustainable? This section should have regard to the social, economic (including the viability of development) and environmental implications of development (including the consequences of not developing).

Infrastructure

Is there a requirement for new infrastructure, or a need to safeguard existing infrastructure. Are there sufficient school places nearby? Are the roads sufficient to support any planned expansion in housing? Should the town or village centre be protected, should there be restrictions on shops or pubs being converted to residential, on the development of edge of town retail etc.

Facilities, Amenities and Services

What should be protected? This can include shops, leisure facilities, green spaces and parks, transport links, play parks, sports fields, pubs, doctors surgery etc. Is there a village hall or should there be one? Is there enough car parking?

What local facilities are missing – what new facilities could your community support? How would these be funded and where would they go? How do you know that there is sufficient demand for such a facility?

Commercial Development

Is there a need to develop additional land for employment uses, if so what kind of development should be encouraged and where should this development go? Are there local businesses or industries that might need space to expand? What steps can you take to encourage new businesses to set up or to ensure the survival of existing ones? Do many of your residents work from home?

Renewable Energy

Have you considered a community energy policy? What forms of renewable energy might be appropriate in your local area? If there are to be large scale renewable projects in your area, where would you like them to be sited?

Use of CIL

Communities with a Neighbourhood Plan benefit from an increased share of the Community Infrastructure Levy (where adopted). This can be used to fund community projects and the way in which this money is spent can be consulted upon and included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Landscape (inc Open Spaces)

The natural environment is fundamental to many rural areas and an understanding of the surrounding landscape, including any national or local designations is important. This can often be achieved without the need for a complex and lengthy Landscape Character Assessment, particularly in areas where large scale development is unlikely. There may also be green spaces or recreation areas that you would like to protect and this can be done by allocating these sites as 'designated green spaces' in your NDP.

Heritage

The historic fabric of an area is key to its character. There may be elements that you want to ensure are protected. Listed buildings and those within conservation areas already have significant planning protection but you may want to consider any other ways of protecting important areas of historical or cultural importance.

Allocation of Sites

Preferred sites for development can be set out in your plan, along with the type of development that you would like to see on that site. The process to allocate sites can be quite involved.

Further guidance on this process is available here: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NP-Site-Assessment-Toolkit-Final-version.pdf>. You can restrict development to inside your settlement boundary (and amend this boundary if appropriate); development outside the boundary could then be limited to exception sites which would normally attract a higher proportion of affordable housing.

Other

There may be other issues, or parish specific concerns that do not fall under the headings above.

Consultation and Evidence base

Use this section to summarise the consultation events that have taken place and the key outcomes. When you formally submit your plan, you will need to include a Consultation Statement which will contain full details of all your consultation activity, including analysis of responses.

What other evidence have you used to inform the conclusions reached? This could be census data, information from Cornwall Council, surveys of local business, information gathered through community events, specific land or environmental assessments etc. There could be an existing parish Plan that you are using to inform the process.

Consultation events

Summarise your consultation strategy; the surveys that you have sent out (put copies of these in an appendix, along with the analysis of the responses), open days that have been held, interaction with schools and community groups. Try and explain how your plan has tried to fully engage with the community. Put full details of all your consultation events into your consultation statement.

Evidence

Give an overview of the evidence sources that you have used; put full details into an Appendix.

Policies

Once you have identified and evidenced all of the issues, you need to set out your proposals to address them. This will form the basis of your policies. Using a template such as that in Appendix 1 will help to clarify your approach.

In this policies section, you will need to set out each of your policies along with an explanation of what your policy is expected to achieve and the evidence that you have to justify the approach taken.

It makes your plan much easier to read if your policies are clearly labelled and set out in boxes or otherwise marked so that they are easy to find. You may want to have a separate section for policies or you could include them in the key issues section.

Community Projects

Use this section to write about issues that were identified through your community consultation that are important to the community but are not land-use planning policies. It means that important community priorities are captured and acknowledged even though they will not be directly addressed through the policies in this plan, they are flagged as important issues for the community to follow up. You could use CIL money (that the parish receives for all new development) to fund some of these projects.

Monitoring and Review

Comment here on how you intend to monitor and review your plan over the plan period to assess its effectiveness.

Appendix A: Policy Template

Use a table like the one below to set out the issues, proposed solution and other comments/information to justify the position adopted. This can then be used as the basis for drafting a policy to be used when determining planning applications.

You should set out the issues in plain English but try and explain what the concern is, what evidence that you have to demonstrate that it is a real (rather than perceived) problem, and the action that you think can help to address it. Where appropriate, use maps or pictures to illustrate your policy.

Once the issues and objectives have been identified and there is evidence to support the position taken, you can draft your planning policies (your LPA may be able to assist here). The policies will be used by the Council to make decisions when planning applications are received for your area.

EXAMPLE Issue template

Use this template for each issue that you have identified. Set out clearly what the issue is, the evidence that you have and the options considered as a solution. The templates should be included as an Appendix. Using this table helps to make sure that the issue has been fully explored and evidenced and helps to ensure that your policy has the greatest chance of meeting the community's objectives.

Policy Area	
Policy	
Issue	
Objective	
Evidence	
Policy direction	
Policy wording	
Links to NPPF and Local Plan	
Similar policies in	
Comments	

Once you've been able to identify the specific issues, you can start looking at the potential solutions and from there, rank the options, according to the feedback and evidence that you have, at the public consultation stage the public can then be asked for their views on whether the draft policy is one that they would support.