

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Neighbourhood planning

The rural frontrunners: Case studies and tips

April 2013



Contents

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Image on front cover kindly provided by the Fosse Villages neighbourhood plan working group

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Introduction

This report

This report presents a series of case studies and tips that communities considering neighbourhood planning can consult as they develop their own neighbourhood plans and development orders. It has a particular focus on rural planning issues and is based upon research into the progress made by, and lessons being learnt from, the rural-based neighbourhood planning frontrunners.

It is based upon research into the most advanced rural-based neighbourhood plans, where good information is available to help inform others, and where the issues being addressed are those that might be faced by other communities.

We recognise that neighbourhood planning is still in its infancy. As more plans come forward, more learning, knowledge and practical examples will come to light. The case studies and findings presented in this report reflect early practice and will need to evolve over time. Until then, we hope this provides a useful reference point for others.

Who should read these case studies?

These case studies and tips will be of interest to anyone thinking about or currently working on a neighbourhood plan. The focus of the case studies is on how neighbourhood planning can help address particular rural issues, but some of the findings on aspects related to process and outputs may be of interest to those involved in neighbourhood planning in urban areas too.

The case studies are primarily aimed at helping community groups, but may also be of relevance to local authority officers and members, as well as the wider planning and development industry.

The case studies form part of a wider research project, the report of which is freely available and can be read alongside the case studies.

Rural planning issues

Over the past decade there has been much research into the planning, socio-economic and environmental issues affecting rural areas and communities. These have been widely reported upon - for example, in the Taylor Review¹, by the Rural Coalition² and in previous research for Defra and DCLG³.

These have identified concerns with regard to the provision of affordable housing, protecting and retaining shops and community facilities, and the need to diversify and grow the economy but, at the same time, retaining the very character and qualities that define our rural communities.



Many rural areas are caught in what has been termed the 'sustainability trap': many are identified in local plans as inherently unsustainable locations because they lack services and facilities and have limited transport accessibility. This has denied them the ability to provide new homes and jobs which might help sustain services, facilities and local shops. Without these, some places are becoming even less sustainable locations, with polarised demographics. Because of a lack of affordable housing and jobs, many lower income households are being excluded from rural areas, and which is detrimental to the social and economic vitality of these areas.

How can neighbourhood planning help?

Neighbourhood planning provides communities with a much greater say in how the places where they live and work should change and develop over time. Through the neighbourhood plan, communities can influence the amount, type and location of any new development, what uses should be provided, and where.



A neighbourhood plan can be a very powerful document: if successfully brought into force it will be used to inform planning applications and decisions for an area. It will sit alongside the local development plan prepared by the district, presenting more locally specific policies responding to local concerns and objectives.

For example, some of the neighbourhood plans looked at for this research have been establishing policies that promote the provision of locally affordable housing. Others have been identifying land for development and establishing how many new homes should be accommodated in an area. Others have been seeking to strengthen the local economy by promoting the provision of business space and protection of local services. In all plans, extensive consultation with residents, businesses and others is being undertaken so that the neighbourhood plan reflects the community's wishes.

Case studies and tips

A wide range of neighbourhood plans are coming forward, addressing different issues and following different processes. However, a number of common themes have emerged. These form the basis of our case studies. The case studies are:

Case study 1:
A dispersed housing strategy: allowing modest development in small villages

Case study 2:
Where should housing go? Identifying land for development

Case study 3:
Limiting second homes: restricting the use of new housing as holiday homes

Case study 4:
Providing affordable homes for the local community

Case study 5:
Plan areas that cross boundaries: how parishes can work together

Case study 6:
Increasing interest and involvement in the plan: using community champions

Case study 7:
Community consultation: how to involve younger people

In addition to the case studies the research has drawn out a series of useful tips that may prove useful to communities in both rural and urban areas.

Throughout the report and case studies, a selection of links to neighbourhood plans, advice and guidance material is provided.

1 Taylor, M. (2008) *Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing*, DCLG, July

2 See for example The Rural Coalition (2010) *The Rural Challenge: Achieving Sustainable Rural Communities for the 21st Century*, TCPA, August

3 See for example Colin Buchanan et al for Defra (2010) *Research into Rural Housing Affordability*

Far left: The Allendale neighbourhood plan is one of the most rural of the emerging plans. It has particular issues around local housing need. See case study 4.

Left: The Butter Market Thame. The Thame neighbourhood plan has identified sites for new development around the town. See case study 2.

Case study 1:

A dispersed housing strategy: allowing modest development in small villages

Summary messages

- Small-scale development is permitted in small villages and settlements rather than being solely focused in and around the main centres. It overcomes the concept of the 'sustainability trap' of not permitting development in small centres.
- Development caps or rates have been established to ensure that the quantity of development does not change the character of the village.
- This approach presents a locally responsive policy but remains in general conformity with the strategic objectives of the local plan.

What, why, how

The plan

The Upper Eden Plan covers a group of seventeen parishes in Cumbria. It is one of the most sparsely populated and isolated areas in the country. It also has the most advanced neighbourhood plan in the country. The neighbourhood plan passed through the examination stage in late 2012 and was the first neighbourhood plan to go to referendum. It was approved at referendum in March 2013.

Upper Eden plan information

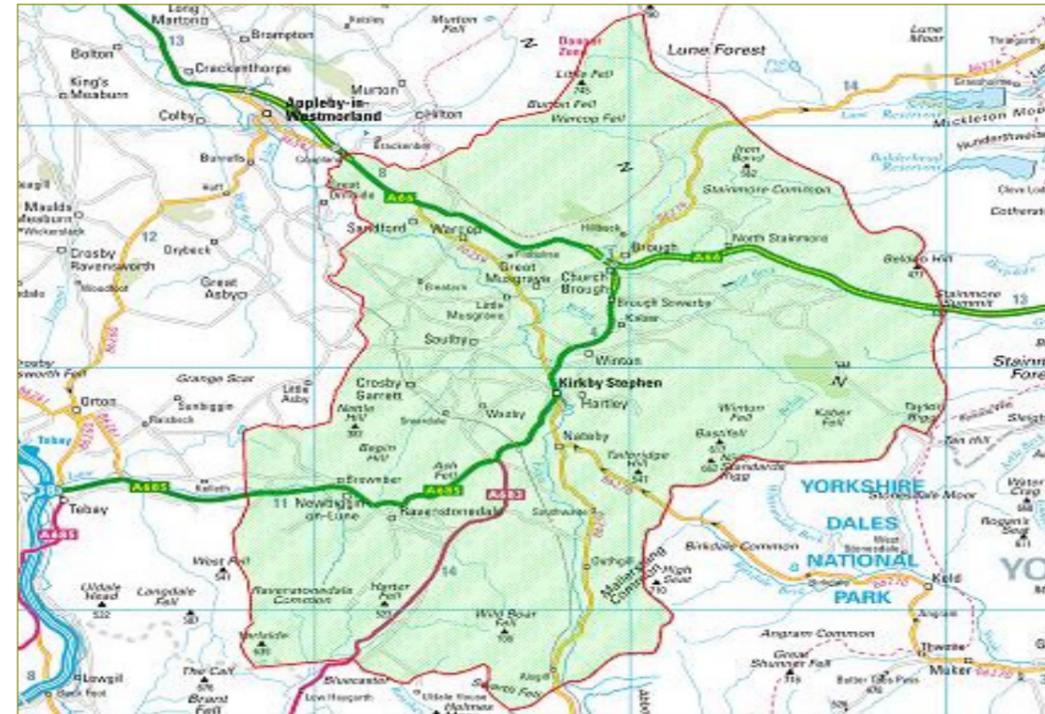
Neighbourhood plan: Upper Eden http://uecp.org.uk/upper-eden-neighbourhood-development-plan/
Frontrunner wave and date: Upper Eden was selected as a Big Society vanguard (July 2010) and developed the neighbourhood plan as part of this.
Area designation: Application approved August 2012
Status of plan at time of writing: Plan approved at referendum
Local planning authority: Eden District Council http://www.eden.gov.uk/planning-and-development/eden-local-development-framework/neighbourhood-planning/

The plan builds upon work on the Upper Eden Community Plan published in 2006 and concerns expressed within this about the need to plan for a small amount of housing in areas considered unsustainable because of their location, size and limited local facilities, but where there is a pressing need to meet local housing need. The provision of locally affordable housing has been the long standing issue for the community.

The neighbourhood plan builds upon the culmination of a long and ongoing engagement process. Consultation that first started on the Community Plan has been ongoing and supplemented by a programme of consultation carried out for the neighbourhood plan. The consultation response showed general support for the plan amongst the local community. No comments were reported to have been received during the production of the plan that either opposed it or objected to the proposed policies.

A focus on local housing

The plan is very focused, seeking to address specifically local housing issues. It recognises that within local plans, a settlement hierarchy model is often used to distribute housing growth, focusing growth in primary settlements and built-up areas which have a range of existing services, facilities and infrastructure and are therefore able to support additional development. However, this approach considers many smaller settlements as inherently unsustainable and thus unsuitable for housing. This is particularly acute in Upper Eden. The local plan allocated most development to key centres, but there is a need to provide locally affordable housing in settlements across the area.



Left: Area covered by the plan

'The remoteness of some of the area requires a particular set of planning policies to ensure that it does not lose the opportunity to be sustainable'

The neighbourhood plan has sought to address this. Whilst being in general conformity with the local plan in terms of wider housing distribution and emphasis on larger settlements, it sets policies which allow some growth to take place in the smaller rural settlements. However, the level of growth proposed is in keeping with the scale and size of individual settlements. Again, in this way, the neighbourhood plan still remains in general conformity with the local plan as it is considered that relatively small-scale development will not transform the character or identity of the individual villages and settlements.

The use of development 'caps'

The plan seeks to allow small-scale housing in dispersed areas to address local housing need, but also to support local facilities and services. It does not allocate any land for development, but instead establishes a series of caps or rates on development, which allows a small number of new homes to be built in each village across the plan area. This is based on a percentage of the existing number of dwellings in a particular village. The caps still accord with the local plan settlement hierarchy by providing for the greatest level of growth in key service centres but, importantly, they do not preclude development taking place in other villages and service centres.

Interestingly, and although only by a modest amount, the small scale of development permitted by the neighbourhood plan allows for more development that set out in the local plan. The cap is not a target that must be met. Rather it is the amount of development considered to be a sustainable rate of change for the local communities but beyond which the nature of the communities might change.

Signposting:

The Upper Eden Plan, associated background material and consultation papers are available on the neighbourhood plan page of the Upper Eden community website:

<http://uecp.org.uk/upper-eden-neighbourhood-development-plan/>

Case study 2:

Where should new housing go? Identifying land for development

Summary messages

- Every effort should be made to involve landowners, developers, businesses and residents when identifying suitable and deliverable sites for inclusion in the neighbourhood plan.
- This approach has enabled the community to influence the form and location of development and consider wider impacts, benefits and any trade-offs needed. It is shaping, influencing and informing policies and proposals.
- Neighbourhood plans are, in some places, taking the form of mini-local plans and site allocations documents, providing locally derived solutions and responses alongside the more strategic nature of the local plan.

What, why, how

Responding to the local plan

Several neighbourhood plans are actively identifying and allocating land for housing development. This appears to be occurring where the local plan has identified that the area needs to accommodate significant new housing growth, but the community wishes to have greater control over the mix and type of housing to be developed and where it should be located. Neighbourhood plans in Much Wenlock and Thame are examples of this approach.

Much Wenlock plan information

Neighbourhood plan: Much Wenlock http://www.wenlockplan.org/
Frontrunner wave and date: 1 (April 2011)
Area designated: Application approved September 2012
Status of plan at time of writing: Pre-submission consultation on the draft plan now closed: comments are being considered prior to submission
Local planning authority: Shropshire Council http://shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy.nsf/open/6272970BABE985BE80257922004CC91F

Much Wenlock

In Much Wenlock, the local plan has established the overall housing requirement for the area. Much of this has already been delivered through windfall development. To meet the strategic objectives of the local plan, the neighbourhood plan did not need to allocate any more land for housing development. However, there is an unmet need for locally affordable housing.

A series of nine objectives have been established within the emerging neighbourhood plan. These include providing for a limited amount of housing to meet local needs, allowing small scale mixed housing development to come forward.

Consultation with the community showed support for development within and around the town, but that it should be of an appropriate scale and style, responding to the character of the area. There was no overwhelming support for large scale development: the view was expressed that no single development should be greater than 25 units in size to help retain local identity.

Signposting:

The draft Much Wenlock plan objectives, policies and site assessments:

<http://www.wenlockplan.org/policies-and-sites/>

The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group met landowners and developers and invited them to suggest possible locations for new development. More than twenty sites were put forward. These were mapped and assessed by the Steering Group against the nine objectives in the emerging plan. The merits of the sites are now being consulted on.

Thame

In Thame, the emerging local plan had identified one large housing site to accommodate the majority of new development. The community, however, wanted to spread development more evenly around the town, representing a more balanced approach.

Thame plan information

Neighbourhood plan: Thame http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk
Frontrunner wave and date: 4 (August 2011)
Area designation: Application approved December 2012
Status of plan at time of writing: Plan submitted for examination
Local planning authority: South Oxfordshire District Council http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/thame-neighbourhood-pl

A sifting exercise of available land and constraints was undertaken to identify potential housing sites. Building upon technical background work already undertaken by the local authority for its local plan¹, a composite map of layers was developed, 'sifting out' land which should not be developed, such as in the floodplain, and identifying areas where the sensitivity of development would need to be considered, such as areas of potential visual impact. Overlaying this, bus routes, walking and cycling routes were mapped. Through this sifting approach, a series of potential development sites were identified. These were then assessed in terms of the suitability, availability and deliverability² of development, which included discussions with landowners and developers.

Options and assessment

Following this assessment process, a series of development options was consulted upon, including the sites most likely to come forward within the plan period and which contributed to the community's objectives for Thame. In parallel to the site identification, assessment and options consultation, a Sustainability Appraisal was also prepared, with development options being assessed against a set of sustainability objectives.

The outcome of the sustainability appraisal and feedback from the consultation exercise informed the preferred option and allocation of sites in Thame. In support of these, a suite of mini site design briefs has been prepared establishing the key development principles for each site, in terms of development quantum and mix, layout, scale and views. It was reported that one of the outcomes of this has been much greater community cohesion, with residents coming together and compromising on what is best for the town.

Examination

The Thame plan has been examined and was the first in the country to be subject to a hearing. At the hearing the merits or otherwise of different sites were questioned by participants. This highlighted the need to engage as widely as possible in the process, including with developers and landowners as well as residents, businesses, local organisations and relevant statutory consultees. A thorough and comprehensive programme of consultation was undertaken in Thame. It is not possible to please all the people all the time, but the process for site identification and justification has been logical and transparent.

During the hearing the examiner asked participants whether or not the proposed sites and policies complied with the basic conditions³. Participants appearing on behalf of Thame Town Council explained how they had embedded thinking about the basic conditions from the start of the plan making process.

Signposting:

The approach to site identification, sifting, assessment and options consultation in Thame is presented in the Evidence Base Summary that accompanies the submitted neighbourhood plan for examination purposes:

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Evidence%20Base%20Summary-RD.pdf>

Neighbourhood plan format

In both Much Wenlock and Thame it is the neighbourhood plan that is identifying and allocating land for new development, as opposed to the local plan. Given the scale of growth to be delivered, both are taking the form of a mini local plan. They include policies for a range of related development issues, including the need for supporting uses, open space, walking and cycling networks. The neighbourhood plan is essentially making local plan policies and allocations far more locally specific.

1 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), for example, which is a technical background document identifying potential housing sites.

2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that 'to be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged. See paragraph 47 of the NPPF. In many places, these issues will have been considered through the local authority's SHLAA. For those neighbourhood plans looking to allocate housing sites, this can provide helpful background evidence.

3 The neighbourhood plan must meet certain basic conditions. These include having regard to national policy and ensuring the plan is in general conformity with the strategic objectives of the local plan.

'One of the principal functions of the Thame plan is for residents of the Parish of Thame to determine how best those homes [required in the local plan] should be delivered across Thame'.

Case study 3:

Limiting second homes: restricting the use of new housing as holiday homes

Summary messages

- The neighbourhood plan allows for both affordable and open-market housing to be delivered, providing a choice of housing types.
- The plan seeks to limit the sale of open market housing for use as a second or holiday homes, through planning conditions.
- The viability of development is not affected by issues of local affordability or local need, but new market housing must be used as the permanent home of the house buyer.

What, why, how

The issue

Located in the Exmoor National Park, the Lynton and Lynmouth area is an attractive holiday destination. Indeed, much of the local economy is intrinsically related to the tourism industry and many people own second or holiday homes here. These are only occupied for short periods during the year.

The use of housing as a second or holiday home has had the effect of increasing house prices and reducing the availability of housing for local people. It also makes limited contribution to the sustainability of the local economy, community and maintenance of local services. There are also physical and policy constraints within the area that limit the potential for new development. Not only is it within a national park but there are also special areas of conservation, local wildlife sites and conservation areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and areas susceptible to flooding. It is therefore argued in the plan that any housing that does come forward in the area should make as full a contribution as possible to the creation of a more sustainable local community.

Lynton and Lynmouth plan information

Neighbourhood plan: Lynton and Lynmouth: The Lyn Plan http://www.lynplan.org.uk/
Frontrunner wave and date: 1 (April 2011)
Area designation: Application approved October 2012
Status of plan at time of writing: Consultation on the draft plan ran between November 2012 and January 2013. Comments are now being considered prior to submission.
Local planning authority: Exmoor National Park http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy

'We need to retain and attract more young people and families, and be somewhere new businesses want to come to, making the best use of the limited opportunities we have for development and growth. New development should be good for our economy, community and environment at the same time'.

Affordability and open market housing

Lynton and Lynmouth is one of the more advanced frontrunners to be working without an up-to-date Local Plan or housing numbers from the Local Authority. This constrained the town's ability to address their identified issues by allocating sites for development or limiting it to a specified number of homes. However, the plan recognises that local affordable housing needs should be met. It is acknowledged that the delivery of affordable housing will need to be paid for or cross-subsidised, potentially through open-market housing. However, the community do not want to allow open market housing to be used to cross-subsidise affordable units because they are concerned that open market housing would be used as second homes.

The plan therefore introduces a 'primary residence housing' policy. This allows for some open market housing to be developed within the plan area and which is unburdened by affordable housing price controls or local connection requirements. However, it does require that any new open market home must be used as the primary place of residence of the person buying it.

The policy also seeks to ensure that any open market housing that does come forward responds to local housing needs, bringing a mix of housing types onto the market. If the housing ceases to be used as the primary residence, the plan then requires it to be offered for sale or rent as affordable housing. Essentially, any market housing that does come forward, and which helps subsidise the delivery of affordable housing, must be occupied on a permanent basis.



Left: The attractive setting of the three towns in the neighbourhood plan area - Lynton, Lynmouth and Barbrook - make it a highly sought after location for the holiday and second home market



Legal advice

This is an innovative and bespoke approach to a locally specific issue – which is one of the aims of neighbourhood planning. However, because it seeks to restrict the use of open market housing the local authority sought a legal opinion as to the lawfulness of the approach. The advice was that it is lawful, and that the reasons for it are well explained in the plan: that it can be regarded as necessary in the interests of sustainable development.

Enforcement

The bigger issue for the plan is perhaps how this policy might be implemented and enforced in practice. This would work through the use of a planning condition registered on the lease of the property. This would be noted by solicitors and mortgage lenders whenever the property is sold on. In the case of the mortgage lender, that might reduce the security valuation of the property. That does not stop the cash buyer taking a risk, but if found to be violating the condition, the local authority could take enforcement action. An indirect consequence of this policy approach might be that, in the long term, some property prices would stabilise and become more affordable as they are not influenced by the second home buyer.

Signposting:

Policy H3 of the draft Lynton and Lynmouth Plan - The 'Lyn Plan' - presents the local policy approach to second and holiday homes:

<http://www.lynplan.org.uk/Lynton-and-Lynmouth-Plan/draft-lyn-plan>

'This is an innovative and bespoke approach to a locally specific issue'.

Case study 4:

Providing affordable homes for the local community

Summary messages

- Locally specific definitions of 'local person' and 'local need' have been produced to ensure that affordable housing is delivered for, and accessible to, those who need it.
- Existing County-wide definitions have been used as a starting point but refined through consultation and assessment to reflect local circumstances.
- Where open-market housing is allowed in the plan, policies can ensure that a mix of housing types and sizes are developed, responding to current and future needs.

What, why, how

The issue

Most neighbourhood plans express support for the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of 'local' people. In most instances, where affordable housing is provided, a cascade arrangement is promoted through emerging policies, where new housing will, in the first instance, be offered to people already living within the area who are in housing need, then to those in neighbouring areas and then, if not already taken up, to those in need across a wider area. The issue here is what the definition of 'local' is.

Defining 'local'

The provision of affordable housing for local people is a key objective within the Allendale neighbourhood plan. Three policies have been drafted that address: (1) the delivery and location of affordable housing; (2) the retention of affordable housing; and (3) financial contributions to affordable housing. The appendix to the neighbourhood plan defines 'local connection' and 'local need' (see box on facing page).

Allendale is located within the Northumberland National Park. As a starting point, the neighbourhood plan took the definition of local need as set out in the National Park Core Strategy¹. This was then amended with input from the County Council Housing Enabler², based on information of known local need and lettings policies applying to social rented accommodation in the area.

Allendale plan information

Neighbourhood plan: Allendale http://www.allenvalleys.co.uk/
Frontrunner wave and date: 1 (April 2011)
Area designation: Application approved January 2013
Status of plan at time of writing: Pre-submission consultation is closed: comments are being considered prior to submission
Local planning authority: Northumberland County Council http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=10909

The emerging definitions of local need and connection were then tested and amended at discussion group meetings with the community, businesses and the voluntary sector. Amendments made following feedback were agreed by the neighbourhood plan steering group prior to publication for pre-submission consultation purposes. At the time of writing, the plan is still out to consultation.

'The plan is saying yes to housing development, but the landscape is our USP. Whilst wanting to encourage local development the area must maintain its characteristics which are what draw people to Allendale'.

The Allendale neighbourhood plan defines 'local connection' as people aged sixteen years or above who meet two or more of the following criteria:

- The person was born in Allendale Parish or lived in the area as a child up to the age of sixteen; and/or
- The person normally resides in the parish and has done so for at least three years; and/or
- The person has family who are currently resident in the Parish of Allendale and have been so for at least fifteen years; and/or
- The Parish of Allendale is the person's permanent place of work.

It goes on to define 'local need', by which it means people who meet the 'local connections' criteria and who are in need of housing locally, but cannot meet those needs locally because they either cannot afford to buy a suitable home that may be currently available or cannot identify a suitable home in the parish that meets their needs to rent or buy, and they fall within one of the situations listed below:

- An existing resident or family who have lived in the Parish of Allendale for at least the last three years and is seeking to establish a separate household; or
- People from outside the parish who meet the criteria of having a 'local connection'; or
- Households currently living permanently within the Parish in a dwelling which is either shared but not self-contained, overcrowded, or is otherwise unsatisfactory by health standards; or
- People who have to leave tied accommodation within Allendale Parish; or
- People who are taking up permanent employment in an already established business within the Parish; or
- People who do not live in the parish but who are proposing to locate a viable business in the Parish which will help promote the sustainability and viability of Allendale Parish

Above: Definitions of local person and local need.
Source: draft Allendale neighbourhood plan

Planning application requirements

The Allendale neighbourhood plan does not allocate any sites for development. Where neighbourhood plans are doing this, some are including policies that influence the provision and location of affordable housing.

In Thame, for example, where the neighbourhood plan is allocating land for a large amount of housing (both affordable and open-market), a policy has been drafted that requires developers to submit a 'Thame-specific affordable housing and dwelling mix strategy' with any planning application that would result in a net gain of six or more homes³.

The purpose of this is twofold: firstly to ensure that new development responds to the needs of current and future households, and secondly, to avoid building large areas of uniform housing types and sizes. A delivery strategy accompanies the Thame neighbourhood plan. This states that the affordable housing and dwelling mix strategy should be discussed with and agreed by Thame Town Council and the local planning authority (South Oxfordshire District Council) before submission, and that it should include:

- a review of existing information;
- modelling current and future need in Thame; and
- a postal survey of a sample of Thame residents.

Signposting:

Policies ANDP3, ANDP4 and ANDP5 in the Allendale neighbourhood plan (pre-submission draft) address the provision of additional affordable housing in the area. The appendix contains a locally specific definition of local connection and local need:

<http://www.allenvalleys.co.uk/front-runner-overview/>

The Thame neighbourhood plan delivery strategy sets out how policies in the plan will be delivered and monitored over time. It includes the requirement for applicants for development to submit locally specific housing assessments:

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Delivery%20Strategy.pdf>

¹ See page 32: http://www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/144275/cs_march_2009.pdf

² Northumberland County Council employ Enabling Officers within their Housing Strategy Team. The Team is responsible for assessing the housing market in Northumberland and to identify the need for different types of housing in different areas.

³ See policy 7D-P2 of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan Examination Version, November 2012

Note: For further information on the Thame plan see case study 2

'Support has been expressed for the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of existing residents in the parish who are currently unable to access housing at a cost they can afford'.

Case study 5:

Plan areas that cross boundaries: how parishes can work together

Summary messages

- Clusters of parishes can work effectively together on a neighbourhood plan under the right circumstances, and where there are common planning issues.
- A joint working group should be established, including equal representation from all parishes. Terms of Reference should be agreed, with a project lead identified.
- A neighbourhood planning consultation road show can be an effective way of engaging the community across a number of parishes.

What, why, how

Shared issues across the plan area

The Fosse Villages neighbourhood plan was one of the first seventeen frontrunners. The plan area is a collection of eleven Parishes. The plan area is unique in that it was the only cross-boundary plan in the first wave of frontrunners.

The cluster of Parishes is a natural grouping for a neighbourhood plan area. Whilst the area covered by the neighbourhood plan is essentially rural, it is surrounded by built up and developed areas that have been identified for a large amount of development under the local plan. The Parishes have common planning issues to address. The two major issues that unify the group are (1) large-scale development that does not take into account the character/nature of the area, and (2) traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles travelling through the area.

Fosse Villages plan information

Neighbourhood plan: Fosse Villages http://www.leicestershireforums.org/bsouth/fosevillages.html
Frontrunner wave and date: 1 (April 2011)
Area designation: Application approved February 2013
Status of plan at time of writing: Drafting and consulting on issues and options. An application to be designated as a plan area has been submitted.
Local planning authority: Blaby District Council http://www.blaby.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/planning-and-building/planning/neighbourhood-planning/

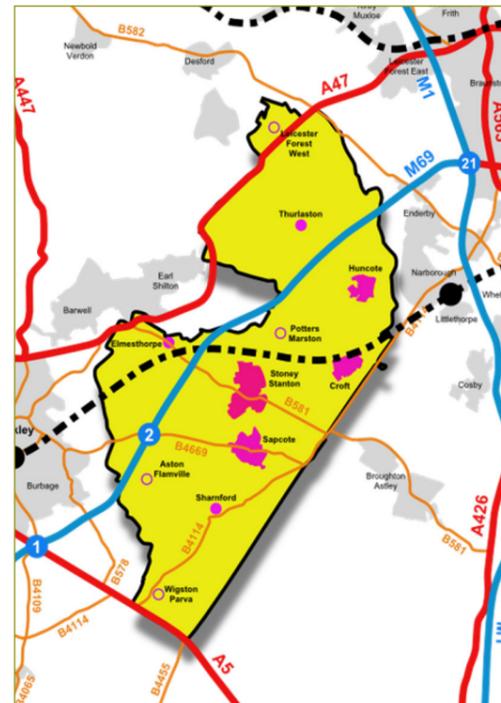
Working arrangements

Crucially, the Parishes have worked together before on planning matters and thus have experience of how to manage cross-boundary relationships. A Joint Working Board (JWB) was set up to lead the neighbourhood planning process. This consists of the Chair or deputed member of each Parish and their Clerk. Each Parish has a vote, whilst the group chairman has the casting vote.

The JWB agreed Terms of Reference to ensure that the Board operates in a clear and transparent manner. The Parish Council of Sapcote was appointed as the project lead. In line with the neighbourhood planning regulations, it is the 'qualifying body' for leading the plan. On behalf of all eleven parishes they made the submission to the district council to have the area designated for plan-making purposes. This submission was signed by all eleven parishes.

Project support

The JWB employed a planning consultant as Project Manager of the neighbourhood plan, and has also received support from both Blaby District Council and Leicestershire County Council. This support has come in many forms, including: professional advice on the planning process; updates on Core Strategy developments; arranging neighbourhood planning meetings; coordinating meetings; taking minutes; helping the JWB to identify funding sources; and supporting stakeholder events by providing maps, photos and area plans.



It has always been important for the group to maintain its sense of independence. It was considered important for the consultations not to be seen as County/District Council events.

The JWB recognised the importance of gaining community involvement throughout the process.

'We need the residents' input to develop a robust, strongly supported plan, and all the Parish Councils and meetings have been working very hard to progress the programme.'

Reflecting local concerns in a cross-boundary area

A neighbourhood planning road show event took place in each parish in September and October 2012. The events were advertised widely across the villages and the attendance was good; around 100 people attended each event. The road show events aimed to give residents as much information as possible about the purpose, methodology and objectives of the neighbourhood planning process. Other information, on issues and opportunities for example, was tailored to be locally specific to each parish.

Signposting:

For more information on cross boundary working in the Fosse Villages and the neighbourhood planning road show events:

<http://www.leicestershireforums.org/bsouth/fosevillages.html>

Top left: The parishes in the plan area share common concerns, including the impact of traffic on the villages

Middle left: The neighbourhood plan area

Bottom left: A series of roadshows have been undertaken to ensure that individual village concerns are addressed as well as area wide issues

'The Fosse Villages include lively, highly active communities which share common concerns which provide a cohesive and collective impetus to work together on a forum wide basis'.

Case study 6:

Increasing interest and involvement in the plan: using community champions

Summary messages

- Community champions can provide wide outreach, generate interest and help create ownership of the Plan. They can represent wider interest groups and members of society, such as the young.
- Community champions should report to and form part of wider steering groups, so that messages can be fed directly back and can influence decisions and the direction of the Plan.
- Initial training and generation of job descriptions can help empower volunteers.

‘People respond better to familiar faces. This builds ownership of the project.’

What, why, how

The plan

The Lynton and Lynmouth neighbourhood plan, located within the Exmoor National park, is for a remote rural community of about 1,800 people. The neighbourhood plan, which is currently being reviewed prior to submission for examination purposes, has been built upon strong community consultation and involvement, with the community involved at all stages of the plan-making process.

Lynton and Lynmouth plan information

Neighbourhood plan: Lynton and Lynmouth: The Lyn Plan http://www.lynplan.org.uk/
Frontrunner wave and date: 1 (April 2011)
Area designation: Application approved October 2012
Status of plan at time of writing: Consultation on the draft plan ran between November 2012 and January 2013. Comments are now being considered prior to submission.
Local planning authority: Exmoor National Park http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy

Plan leadership and the champions

The Parish Council is responsible for leading production of the plan. They have set up a steering group, which is chaired by the local County Councillor, and which includes members from the community, parish council and local authority.

Alongside the steering group, people were asked to volunteer and act as community champions. Twenty people are acting as champions, representing a cross section of the community and having their own links to community groups and networks, including, for example, the tennis club, church and local schools.

‘Make full use of neighbourhood representatives, community champions and volunteers - people respond better to familiar faces. This builds ownership of the project.’

Role and purpose

Their purpose has been to publicise the emerging plan at the most local of levels. They have been leafleting, attending and facilitating drop-in sessions, printing and circulating questionnaires, and generally raising interest and involvement in the plan amongst their family, friends, neighbours and any organisations they represent. The champions have helped motivate the wider community to become involved.

It is recognised that the neighbourhood planning process can be lengthy: the community champions have been seen as a very useful way of helping to maintain momentum and interest

The champions have been used since the start of the neighbourhood plan process. Feedback from them has helped inform the focus of the plan and the policies within it. Indeed, as the introduction to the consultation draft of the neighbourhood plan states:

‘It is a Plan specifically for this parish, put together from what local people and businesses have said they need and want.’

The champions are all unpaid volunteers, although any out-of-pocket expenses are covered. At the outset of the process they received some initial training on the role and purpose of a neighbourhood plan, helping them to talk about wider project and process matters. An outline job description for the community champions was also prepared.

Signposting:

For more information on the Lynton and Lynmouth community champions, and the associated job description:

<http://www.lynplan.org.uk/Lynton-and-Lynmouth-Plan/neighbourhood-representatives>



Top left: Plan champions and steering group members

Bottom left: The neighbourhood plan area



Case study 7:

Community consultation: how to involve younger people

Summary messages

- Consultation events and exercises should be designed to encourage interest and involvement of younger people.
- Attempts should be made to go out and engage with young people at places, clubs and events they attend.
- Engaging school children with neighbourhood planning can have wider benefits in that it can lead to increased awareness and interest amongst friends and family who they will talk to about the plan.

What, why, how

Neighbourhood planning network

Leicestershire County Council is particularly keen to address the involvement of younger members of the community in neighbourhood planning. They have set up a neighbourhood planning network for all neighbourhood planning groups in Leicestershire, where people can share and exchange knowledge.

The first neighbourhood planning network event took place in November 2012 and was attended by 30 Parish representatives and twenty representatives from other organisations engaging in the neighbourhood planning process. Each front runner group presented the lessons they have learnt from neighbourhood planning to date. Networking discussions allowed attendees to discuss their experiences and issues.

Following on from the success of the first neighbourhood planning networking event, Leicestershire County Council decided that it would run such events on a quarterly basis.

One of the key questions that emerged from the events has been how to engage young people in the consultation process.

Engagement techniques

Different neighbourhood planning groups are using a range of methods to engage younger generations in the neighbourhood planning process. Strategies raised in discussion included:

- Using organised events that are attended by all generations as an opportunity to consult on the neighbourhood plan. For example, one group actively consulted on their neighbourhood plan at the Big Jubilee Lunch that was held in the village to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Families and people of all ages attended, allowing the views of a wide range of age groups to be collected.
- Working with the Guides who are able to earn a badge for Community Engagement. As well as raising awareness among younger generations, this helps the neighbourhood planning group with the delivery of questionnaires.
- Organising a school competition to design a village logo, using Planning Aid England to engage with the schools.
- Asking the opinions of school children at sessions held at local primary schools.
- Other groups have been making use of 'Planning for Real' ®. This method of consultation, which often takes place in schools, involves the creation of 3D models which are used as a focus for people to put forward their own ideas and thoughts about the area. This technique is often combined with village walks that enable young people to identify various characteristics of their village and take photos of particular points of interest.



School visits

The Fosse Villages Joint Working Group actively engaged with children at three primary schools in the neighbourhood plan area. The events involved children in years five and six (ages nine to eleven). They sat in small groups and were asked to participate in four activities:

- Activity 1: Locating where they live on large maps.
- Activity 2: Listing what they like about the village they live in, and why.
- Activity 3: Listing what they don't like about the village they live in and why.
- Activity 4: Listing what they thought should be improved.

If time allowed, the children were asked to think about where any new housing could be built. The events were relatively short, so children did not lose interest, but long enough to capture useful information. In all, the events lasted for 45 minutes.

The events were attended by one or two members of the neighbourhood planning steering group, who provided a brief introduction to the purpose of the neighbourhood plan. School teachers were in attendance and helped organise the sessions. Children attending one of the schools lived in two different villages. The children were encouraged to mix so they could share views.



Outreach

Key recommendations from the network events and from the Fosse Villages school exercises are that attempts should be made to go out and talk to young people at schools, clubs and events, and that you should be honest about how the feedback will be used. One of the benefits of running events specifically for younger people is that it can help generate wider interest: some of the school children who participated in the Fosse Villages events for example told their parents about the neighbourhood plan and this encouraged them to attend and respond to other consultation events.

Signposting:

To find out more about Leicestershire County Council's neighbourhood planning networking events, visit:

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/neighbourhoodplanning/npnetworkingevents.htm>

Left: Images from the Kirby Muxloe planning for real ® event organised by the Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council

Note: For further information on the Fosse Villages plan see case study 5

'Young people and older people alike want to be informed in a positive and creative way.'

From the frontline: Tips from the frontrunners

Introduction

Our research has drawn attention to some 'tips' that communities may wish to consider before commencing work on a neighbourhood plan and during production of the neighbourhood plan itself.



'This is an exciting area and can achieve a wide range of ambitions'.

As a new area of planning, practice and experience is rapidly evolving: as more neighbourhood plans progress through examination and referendum new areas of learning will come to light. It will be useful to monitor progress and supplement the findings contained within this study at a later date. In the meantime, the following provides some useful prompts.

Signposting:

Locality has prepared a Roadmap for Neighbourhood Plans. This includes a useful overview of the neighbourhood planning process.

<http://locality.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-guide/>

Is a neighbourhood plan right for you?

A neighbourhood development plan is a land-use planning document and, if successfully adopted, will form part of the statutory development plan. The neighbourhood plan can of course include more than just land-use policies, but it is only the land-use policies that will be tested at examination and be subject to referendum. In many instances neighbourhood plans are emerging that include a chapter presenting land-use policies and then others which address wider matters, such as community policies and aspirations. If the neighbourhood plan will not be including land-use policies then it might not be the right mechanism for the community to use.

Some respondents have said to us that, on reflection, the neighbourhood plan approach was not right for them, that their concerns are not land-use related, that the local plan adequately addresses their concerns, or that scope exists to influence the local plan rather than following the neighbourhood plan approach. As one respondent said to us:

'A neighbourhood plan can be the right thing to do in many circumstances, but it is important that from the outset the local community is quite clear about what it wants to achieve, and they need to work out whether the neighbourhood plan is the right mechanism for working out what they want to do'.

This is important. In many instances, neighbourhood planning will be the right approach. But sometimes it won't. Neighbourhood planning can, in some cases, be costly, time-consuming, and resource intensive. Depending on the nature of the plan being produced, it could require significant effort and commitment, as well as knowledge of the planning system. Indeed, given the referendum at the end of the process, there is no guarantee that the plan will be taken forward and adopted. One respondent suggest asking two questions at the start:

'(1) 'can we get what we want without a statutory NP?' (2) 'are we 100% sure we can win a referendum?'

The underlying message here is that if a neighbourhood plan is the right vehicle for the community to achieve their goals then it should focus on what the key issues are for the local area, how the plan can address those, and what skills and resources are available to help do that.

Signposting:

Shropshire Council has produced a Community-led Planning Guide which looks at the alternatives to preparing a neighbourhood plan and the questions you might want to consider before deciding which route to go down.

<http://shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy.nsf/open/D49C58BDEF57B3AC80257ADA00554BF3>

What are you trying to achieve?

If a neighbourhood plan is the right approach for you, then as one respondent said:

'it is an exciting area and can achieve a wide range of ambitions, many of which are beyond what we normally think of as being in the planning realm'.

However, it is a significant undertaking and requires a big commitment from all those involved. A recurring message from our research is the need to focus on what you are trying to address through the neighbourhood plan. One respondent told us:

'Don't go down the route of looking for evidence and then seeing what policies you can write... Look at the decisions that are being taken in your area and pull out the ones that you disagree with and then write policy that corrects those decisions'.

This will not be relevant to all – you might not disagree with an existing policy in the local plan for example, but you might want to make it locally relevant, influencing the mix and location of housing for example. Another respondent told us:

'Too many groups get involved with neighbourhood plans because they want to influence policy or stop development. Not enough have a clear objective or want to effect change themselves... Some have made life difficult for themselves by not determining their objectives early enough in the process and have gone off on several tangents to gather more evidence than is appropriate'.

We have seen a wide variety of types of neighbourhood plan emerging. Indeed, earlier research by DCLG has pointed to six different types of neighbourhood plan coming forward¹, including for example mini local plans, setting out comprehensive coverage of policy issues, single issue policy documents and neighbourhood development orders. There is no right or wrong approach, but there are programming, time and cost implications associated with these: the wider the coverage of the plan, the longer it is likely to take. Equally, those plans where there is little focus can take time to evolve. Again, this will have time and cost implications, and also potentially contribute to people losing interest in the process. The key message is to focus on what you want to do and why.

¹ See DCLG presentation at Planning Aid for London Neighbourhood Plannign Event, 9 May 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/ckty6jx>

Far left: Consultation on the Fosse Villages neighbourhood plan

▼
‘Think about how objectives might be delivered’.

Plan the Plan

Some groups have started work on their neighbourhood plan without fully understanding what is involved, what the stages are and how long it should take. Respondents to our research have suggested that an important first step should be to ‘plan the plan’, with realistic timeframes established and resource requirements understood. This is particularly important where many people involved in the neighbourhood plan will be volunteering their own free time.

‘Have realistic expectations. The length of time and level of consultation required cannot be underestimated’.

‘It will be difficult to maintain the momentum of the wider community when it [the neighbourhood plan process] will take a few years’.

‘Time needs to be managed. Groups should be mindful of administrative process’.

The project plan should build-in any statutory requirements and necessary regulatory processes, such as formal consultation and production of a sustainability appraisal, if relevant. The local authority may be able to help. Indeed, our research has shown that local authorities are spending large amounts of time helping communities develop their neighbourhood plans. As we note below, good working relationships can lead to better plan-making. Developing a programme with the local authority can help make sure the right resources and advice is provided at the right time.

Time spent up-front on the programme can help deliver the neighbourhood plan on time, identify who is responsible for different tasks, how those tasks should be approached, what the outputs from the tasks will be, when, and how they all come together. Where funding is limited, the programme can help avoid any unexpected costs or overruns.

Signposting:

The ‘getting organised’ section of Cornwall County Council’s online neighbourhood planning guide provides advice on the timeframes and stages involved in preparing a plan as well as showing which tasks the community and local authority are responsible for.

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=32700#Stage1>

Is it enough to be in ‘general conformity’ with the Local Plan?

Preparing a neighbourhood plan that is in ‘general conformity’ with the strategic objectives of the Local Plan may satisfy the independent examiner and comply with the regulations, but it might not help deliver what you want it to. As one respondent said to us:

‘The neighbourhood plan needs to be clearly understood and interpreted so that it can be implemented successfully.... The outcomes will need to be monitored over time so that the work of the community is not undermined in the future’.

Some of the emerging documents we have looked at contain policies that express the community’s wishes for the area and read as objectives. It is of course good to have these recorded and embedded in the plan, but the more ambiguous the policy, the more it is open to interpretation and the less value it will have when determining planning applications.

The goal of the process should be to have a neighbourhood plan brought into legal force that truly can and does shape the future of the area. The challenge is to think about how objectives might be delivered. So policies, and any associated implementation or action plan, should help guide and steer what will happen and how your objectives will be achieved. Indeed, as another respondent told us:

‘The whole point of the neighbourhood plan is not just to write a plan but to actually influence decision making’.

The practical consequences of the words used in policies need to be carefully considered, with suitable evidence also in place to back up the wording used. The use of the words ‘must’ and ‘should’ do something in policies can lead to very different responses. Where the neighbourhood plan presents policies, thought will need to be given to the wording of the policy and the supporting text justifying its inclusion.

A concern has been expressed during our work about the ability of parish councils and community groups to draft policies that can withstand scrutiny at appeal and examination. One local authority officer we spoke to who has worked extensively alongside the community to help write robust policies for the emerging neighbourhood plan commented that:

‘It is too much to expect parish councils to write planning policy documents that will be used in legal situations’.

This won’t be the case everywhere and may depend on the ambition and complexity of the policy issue. As more neighbourhood plans progress communities could also refer to these and see how policies are being framed. There may be elements in some of the more advanced plans – those in Thame and Upper Eden for example – that could be transferred and adapted for other areas.

Many communities have also been able to draw upon the skills, knowledge and expertise of people residing within the neighbourhood plan area to draft policies. Where they haven’t (and to some extent, even where they have), support has been provided by the local authority. The development management team at the local authority could be asked to review emerging policies in the neighbourhood plan. They might be able to advise on how they would use the policies to determine planning applications and whether the policies are clear enough in delivering their intentions.

The message underpinning this is to focus on a few key issues where you would like to make a change, and focusing on having the right skills, knowledge and help in place at the right time to do this.

Signposting:

The Neighbourhood Planning Guidance produced by Broadland District Council provides some helpful steers on the link between visions, objectives, policies and implementation.

<http://www.broadland.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans/>

Think about the ‘basic conditions’ from day one

When the neighbourhood plan is ready to be examined it needs to be accompanied by a ‘basic conditions’ statement. Before a neighbourhood plan can come into force it must meet certain basic conditions. The basic conditions statement will set out how the plan meets these. They are²:

- The plan has regard to national planning policies.
- The plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area.
- The plan is compatible with European Union law and human rights obligations.

The independent examiner will consider whether the plan meets these conditions. It is helpful to think about these from the outset. This will help set the context for the plan and help ensure that any emerging ideas and policies align with and do not constrain any important strategic policies.

‘It is clear to me that the reasoning behind the use of the concept of general conformity is to allow a degree of flexibility in drawing up neighbourhood plans and proposals. Without such a concept drawing up a neighbourhood plan to reflect local priorities and conditions would be a futile exercise’.³

At the hearing of the Thame neighbourhood plan participants were asked to explain why they thought the proposed policies met the basic conditions or not. The participant representing Thame Council stated that thinking about the basic conditions was embedded into the production of the plan from day one. This helped identify any and all policy issues that might need considering in the Plan, particularly those where issues of general conformity might arise, and how the communities objectives could best be met. Early thinking about the basis conditions will help you avoid being tripped-up later in the process.

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² The legal source of the basic conditions is the Localism Act 2011, which inserted Schedules 4A and 4B into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Schedule 4B relates to neighbourhood development orders. Schedule 4A relates to neighbourhood development plans and applies parts of Schedule 4B to Plans.

³ Report by Examiner John Glester, December 2012, Upper Eden neighbourhood development plan, Examination proposal

▼
‘The whole point... is to actually influence decision making’.

▼
‘Get your local planning authority on board up front as you are going to need a lot of information from them’.

Work in partnership with the Local Authority

Although neighbourhood planning is intended to be community-led, the local authority has a key role in the process: they need to agree the proposed neighbourhood area for plan-making purposes, they have a ‘duty to support’ communities through the plan-making process, and, if the neighbourhood plan is successfully adopted, it will be used by the local authority to inform planning decisions.

What the ‘duty to support’ means in practice is not really defined, and will vary from place to place, often depending on the availability of staff time and resources, both within the local authority and those preparing the neighbourhood plan. However, most of the neighbourhood plans we have looked at have benefited from help and input from the local authority: not in terms of influencing what the community want, but helping to facilitate the process.

Many local authorities have helped provide background information and evidence, mapping and graphics, attended meetings and workshops, reviewed and advised on emerging policy and the relationship with the local plan. This has also included appraising emerging neighbourhood plan policies to see whether they are in general conformity with the strategic policies within the local plan. Some local authorities have published lists of and links to background documents and information sources that community groups can use to inform the neighbourhood plan. Others have printed material for consultation events and helped facilitate those. The local authority can of course benefit from this too as some communities are now taking forward policy documents for areas which the local authority may have prepared.

All the community groups we have spoken to have acknowledged the help and assistance provided by the local authority, and many said this assistance has led to a better product. It is in the interest of both the local authority and the community to ensure that the neighbourhood plan is successful at examination. One respondent commented that:

‘Neighbourhood planning is a shared process between the local community and the local planning authority. The results can be far greater than the sum of the parts if they [the local authority] can share resources and act as enablers’.

It does though require a collaborative approach to planning, with the roles of the community and local authority respected, with the level and type of assistance that can realistically be provided established at the outset and, as one respondent said to us, ‘expectations managed’. Indeed, we know of one example where a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ has been agreed between the community and the local authority. Developing good working relationships at the outset can lead to positive, proactive plan-making.

Use existing evidence

The neighbourhood plan should be supported by robust evidence that supports the policies and proposals in the plan. The local authority will have much evidence and information available that can be used to help inform the neighbourhood plan.

Through the production of local plans and core strategies, technical evidence relating to matters such as housing growth and need, land supply, economic growth, transport and infrastructure provision will have been prepared. Rather than starting again, you should use this as a basis for creating locally specific policies.

As an example, in some neighbourhood plans land is being identified for housing. The local authority will, through its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, have identified potential sites for housing and assessed their suitability for development in policy terms and also whether they can be realistically delivered. This should be used to inform the identification of sites in the neighbourhood plan. Reference to this information and any associated documents, such as environmental mapping should be used to help understand the development constraints and opportunities when identifying sites.

Much, if not all of the local authority’s evidence will be publically available. They may be able to provide you with this information or provide pointers to it.



Share and exchange knowledge with your neighbouring areas

The research has highlighted that in some instances, rural communities feel isolated. This is not just in terms of geography, but access to information, skills, advice, and what the production of a neighbourhood plan entails.

Neighbourhood planning has been and continues to be a learning curve for communities and councils. But many of the challenges and issues faced, particularly in terms of process, are common to many areas. Some communities are grappling with the sustainability appraisal process, for example; others with how to get younger members of the community involved. Knowledge sharing and exchange can be invaluable here.

Signposting:

Leicestershire County Council has set up a neighbourhood planning network. This allows all Parish Councils, community groups, professionals and organisations working on neighbourhood plans in the county to come together, share views and exchange experiences.

It is hosted by the Council and takes place on a quarterly basis. Each event has a theme, supplemented by topic papers prepared by the County.

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/neighbourhoodplanning/npnetworkingevents.htm>

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Bottom left: The High Street, Thame. The Thame neighbourhood plan has made extensive use of the existing evidence base for the local plan

Appendix A:

Useful sources

A wealth of useful material is available for communities and Councils interested in preparing Neighbourhood Plans to refer to. These include introductions to Neighbourhood Planning, 'how to' guides, discussion groups and forums, and links to other plans and evidence being prepared by communities across the country. The list below is by no means definitive, but provides a helpful starting point for those wanting to find out more.

Selected rural neighbourhood plans

Provided below are links to a selection of some of the more advanced rural based neighbourhood planning frontrunners. Their inclusion on this list is not an endorsement of the plan, but rather to provide an opportunity to view the different types of plan that are coming forward, how different issues are being addressed, and policies framed.

Allendale Neighbourhood Plan (Northumberland):
<http://www.allenvalleys.co.uk/front-runner-documents/>

Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan (West Dorset):
<https://sites.google.com/site/cernevalleynp/home-page>

Cringleford Neighbourhood Plan (Norfolk):
<http://www.cringlefordparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood.php>

Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan (Blaby, Leicestershire):
<http://www.leicestershireforums.org/bsouth/fossevillages.html>

Lynton and Lynmouth Neighbourhood Plan: 'The Lyn Plan' (Exmoor):
<http://www.lynplan.org/Lynton-and-Lynmouth-Plan/draft-lyn-plan>

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan (Shropshire):
<http://www.wenlockplan.org/>

Slaugham Parish Neighbourhood Plan (Mid-Sussex):
<http://www.slaughampc.co.uk/NHPtheplan.html>

Thame Neighbourhood Plan (South Oxfordshire):
<http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk>

Upper Eden Neighbourhood Plan (Cumbria):
<http://uecp.org.uk/upper-eden-neighbourhood-development-plan/uendp-referendum-version/>

The website of the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan (Shropshire) provides a useful list of links to other parishes and groups preparing neighbourhood plans:
<http://www.wenlockplan.org/links/other-neighbourhood-planning-frontrunners/>

Similarly, a list of and links to many emerging neighbourhood plans can be found on the communityplanning.net website:
<http://www.communityplanning.net/neighbourhoodplanning/frontrunners/frontrunners.php>

Neighbourhood planning guides signposted in this report

Broadland District Council, Neighbourhood Planning Guidance, 2012
<http://www.broadland.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans/>

Cornwall County Council, online neighbourhood planning guide, 2012/13:
<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=32700#Stage1>

Leicester and Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, incorporating Community Top Tips, 2013 (forthcoming):
<http://www.leics.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>

Locality (2012) Neighbourhood plans roadmap guide, November:
<http://locality.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-guide/>

Shropshire Council, Community Led Planning Guide, 2012:
<http://shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy.nsf/open/D49C58BDEF57B3AC80257ADA00554BF3>

Rural planning issues

Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research and Land Use Consultants for Defra (2006) The Extent and Impacts of Rural Housing Need, Defra, December

Colin Buchanan, Gallent, N, and Robinson, S. for Defra (2010) Research into Rural Housing Affordability: Final Report, Defra

Commission for Rural Communities (2009) Rural proofing guidance, CRC, April

Commission for Rural Communities (2010) State of the countryside 2010 summary report, CRC, July

DCLG (2009) The Government Response to the Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, DCLG, March

Defra and HCA (2010) Rural Affordable Housing Project, Final Report, HCA, July

Defra (undated) Rural Economy Growth Review, Enabling Businesses to Grow and Diversify: Rural Growth Networks, Defra

Defra (2012) Rural Statement 2012, Defra, September

HCA (2011) Rural Masterplanning Fund: Lessons Learned, HCA, August

The Rural Coalition (2009) Prospectus: The future is rural too, The Rural Coalition (ACRE, CPRE, CLA, LGA, RTPI, TCPA), Commission for Rural Communities and CABE, September

The Rural Coalition (2010) The Rural Challenge: Achieving sustainable rural communities for the 21st century, TCPA, August

Taylor, M. (2008) Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, DCLG, July

Government neighbourhood planning material

DCLG (2011) An Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning, DCLG, October

DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG, March

DCLG (2012) Statutory Instruments 2012 No. 637, Town and Country Planning, England, The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, HM Government, March

DCLG (2012) Statutory Instruments 2012 No. 2031, Town and Country Planning, England, The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012, HM Government, August

DCLG (2012) Notes on Neighbourhood Planning, Edition One, DCLG, September

DCLG (2012) Notes on Neighbourhood Planning, Edition Two, DCLG, November

DCLG (2013) Notes on Neighbourhood Planning, Edition Three, DCLG, January

DCLG (2013) Notes on Neighbourhood Planning, Edition Four, DCLG, March

Online Government resources and information

DCLG, Planning and building:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/planning-and-building>

DCLG, Neighbourhood Planning:
<https://www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

Defra, Rural economy and communities:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/economy/>

Appendix B: Acknowledgements

Selected neighbourhood planning 'guides', briefing notes and commentary

ACRE (2011) ACRE Briefing: Neighbourhood Plans and the Localism Bill, ACRE, June

ACRE (2011) ACRE Localism Bill Commentary: Neighbourhood Planning, ACRE, February

Action for Market Towns (AMT) (undated) Neighbourhood Planning: including Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders; Briefing, AMT

CPRE and The Localism Network (undated) Planning and Localism: Choices & choosing, The Localism Network

CPRE (2012) Planning Briefing 1: Development Plans, CPRE, July

Eardley, A. And Vincent, P. (2011) Making the most of Community Led Planning: a best practice guide for local authorities, AMT with ACRE and DCLG

Land Use Consultants (2011) How to shape where you live: a guide to neighbourhood planning, CPRE with NALC, December

Locality (2012) Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide, Locality, November

Locality (2012) Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide: Worksheets, Locality, November

SKM Colin Buchanan with Urban Forum and The Young Foundation (2011) Neighbourhood Planning: Questions and Answers, Colin Buchanan, March

SKM Colin Buchanan (2011) Briefing note for Local Authority Planners: Seven principles for a successful Neighbourhood Plan, Colin Buchanan, February

TCPA (2011) Your place, your plan, TCPA, March

Urban Vision (2012) Building Community and Locality, Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Planning, Urban Vision, March

On-line discussion groups and forums

LinkedIn Neighbourhood Planning group:

<http://lnkd.in/aVatYm>

Locality neighbourhood planning knowledge hub:

<http://planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/>

Planning Aid England forum for neighbourhood planning:

<http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/>

Project team

The research and case studies have been carried out by consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff (Jon Herbert and Alex Lloyd) on behalf of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Fiona Forgham, Karen Williams and Sam Rule) with support from the Department for Communities and Local Government (Mick Duggan, Gareth Bradford and Susan Peart).

Reference group

A wider reference group was established for the research, acting as peer reviewer and critical friend. The reference group included representatives from organisations providing neighbourhood planning support to communities, being: ACRE (Philip Vincent), CABE at the Design Council (Nicola Mathers), CPRE (Alex Munro), Locality (Carole Reilly), Planning Aid England (Catherine Middleton) and The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment (Biljana Savic).

Image credits

The following organisations are gratefully acknowledged for the figures listed below:

Front Cover, pages 13 and 18: Images provided by the Fosse Villages neighbourhood plan joint working group

Page 2: Image sourced from the Allendale neighbourhood plan (Allendale Parish Council).

Pages 3 and 23: Images provided by Thame Town Council

Page 5: Image sourced from Upper Eden Community Plan website

Pages 9 and 15: Images sourced from Lynton and Lynmouth neighbourhood plan website

Page 17: Images provided by the Rural Community Council (Leicestershire and Rutland)



Neighbourhood planning is an exciting new initiative. It provides communities with the opportunity to have a much greater say in how the places where they live and work should change and develop over time.

This report presents a series of case studies and tips that communities considering neighbourhood planning can consult as they develop their own neighbourhood plans.

It has drawn upon research into the most advanced rural based neighbourhood plans, where good information is available to help inform others, and where the issues being addressed are those that might be faced by other communities.

This report will be of interest to anyone thinking about or currently working on a neighbourhood plan. The case studies are primarily aimed at helping community groups, but may also be of interest to local authority officers and members, as well as the wider planning and development industry.

The focus of the case studies is on how neighbourhood planning can help address rural issues, but some of the findings and tips presented will be of interest to those involved in neighbourhood planning in urban areas too.

