

**Chichester District Council's
Support for Neighbourhood Planning
Groups**

August 2013

Introduction

This guidance is written for Town and Parish Councils and community groups who want to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. If you decide to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, we recommend you read this guidance and contact us, so we can help you with this process.

How can Chichester District Council (CDC) help with your Neighbourhood plan?

What we can do:

- provide support and advice
- provide background data
- provide support at public events
- provide support to steering groups
- arrange examinations and referendums

Neighbourhood Plan conformity

In order for Neighbourhood Plans to be adopted, they will need to conform with planning policies and guidance at the district, national and European level. The support of the local community will also need to be demonstrated through a referendum.

What Chichester District Council does:

For areas of Chichester District outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP):

- CDC is the Housing Authority
- CDC is the Local Planning Authority
- SDNP is not the Planning Authority

A Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in general conformity with District policy. The Emerging Local Plan is currently being developed and is due to be completed and adopted in October 2014 and will replace the current Local Plan adopted in April 1999.

For areas of Chichester District inside the SDNP:

- CDC is the Housing Authority
- SDNP is the Planning Authority
- CDC is not the Planning Authority

A Neighbourhood Plan that is wholly or partly within the National Park will need to be in general conformity with the SDNP policy.

For more details please follow this link – <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/>

What a Neighbourhood Plan can deliver

Once adopted by CDC, a Neighbourhood Plan will be used, together with other policies and plans, to help determine planning applications for the Neighbourhood Plan area.

What a Neighbourhood Plan does:

- Enables local communities to shape their locality
- Identifies specific sites for different types of development and can set localised policies on how development should look
- The whole community have a say in the Neighbourhood Plan, voting it through a referendum and then adoption
- Once adopted it will be used by CDC to inform planning decisions and forms part of local planning policy
- A Neighbourhood Plan can only deal with planning issues (see below for other alternatives)
- Requires resources in terms of both time and money
- Due to its statutory weight there are a number of legal requirements that have to be completed in conjunction with plan preparation
- It cannot prevent development from taking place but enables developers to work towards accepted and common goals identified by the community
- Where appropriate, it needs to comply with EU legislation, national and local policy

If a community does not feel there are pressing spatial planning or wider issues to address they may opt to continue to work with the District Council to draft policy and site specific allocations for their area through the emerging Local Plan.

Do all areas have to have a Neighbourhood Plan and what are the alternatives?

There is no statutory requirement for a community to have a Neighbourhood Plan.

There are a number of alternative means in which a community can become involved in the planning of their neighbourhood. These include:

- **Community Led Planning (CLP)** has a long and successful track record, especially where it feeds into master planning or regeneration projects. Locally, we have seen examples of this at Graylingwell Hospital and Roussillon Barracks. Council officers and the developers' teams spent time explaining proposals, listening to the response, and adapting the schemes. In both cases, there was positive community support when the Planning applications were decided.
- **Parish Plans** are useful for setting out local priorities and actions to take within a community. They provide the freedom to look at a very broad range of issues, including those not normally dealt with directly by the Planning system e.g. broadband speeds, rural crime initiatives, staging of events. They can be prepared more quickly and tend to be less costly than Neighbourhood Plans. All parish plans are being used to inform the development of policies in the

Local Plan and to help us establish what has been identified as a local priority. It will be possible for communities to prepare a parish plan and a Neighbourhood Plan to provide a comprehensive coverage of all planning and non-planning related concerns.

- A **Village or Town Design Statement** (VDS) is a tool to help influence decisions on design and development. It provides a clear account of the character of a particular village or town against which planning applications may be assessed. It is not about whether development should take place, but about how development can influence and improve the quality of development that takes place in your area, so that it respects the setting and makes a positive contribution to the local environment. It is also a material consideration that Development Management will use when looking at planning applications.

We hope that you will find this guide useful and should you require any further information on the advice please contact the Neighbourhood Planning Officer on 01243 534594 or tbell@chichester.gov.uk

Support provided by Chichester District Council

This outlines the support available from Chichester District Council to Parishes wishing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan. Additional support is detailed in the complimentary guidance on the stages of delivering a Neighbourhood Plan.

General Support

The Council will:

- maintain an up to date Neighbourhood Plan webpage;
- provide contact details of key officers in the Council that will be dealing with Neighbourhood Plans;
- provide information relating to funding, resources and skills;
- offer explanation and advice to help communities understand Neighbourhood Planning and whether it is the appropriate approach for what they want to achieve;
- offer to attend meetings with groups wishing to pursue producing a Neighbourhood Plan;
- Provide support to Neighbourhood Plan steering groups in producing their plans.
- provide planning advice and guidance, technical advice and advice on planning related aspects of producing the Neighbourhood Plan (drafting policies and undertaking a sustainability appraisal);
- provide publicity on the District Council's website and linked social media sites;
- provide community profiling data, electronic copies of relevant research reports and strategies;
- signpost to relevant contacts in the Council or other stakeholder organisations (West Sussex County Council, Environment Agency, Natural England and local business groups);
- identify and appoint an independent examiner to examine the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- Coordinate a referendum in the parish to identify support for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Designating Neighbourhood Plan Areas

The Council will:

- seek to determine applications for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area as promptly as possible.
- use its website and place a notice in the local newspaper to publicise the Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation application to those who live, work or carry on business in the area; and
- work with neighbouring authorities where a cross-boundary Neighbourhood Area /Neighbourhood Plan is being undertaken.
- designate a Neighbourhood Plan area under delegated officer powers

Neighbourhood Plan Making

The Council will:

- explain where it is with its own plan making activities and share evidence and information on planning issues;
- provide advice on national and local plan policies which the Neighbourhood Plan will need be in conformity with;
- provide electronic maps of Neighbourhood Plan Areas and relevant planning designations;
- provide advice on how to communicate with partners and statutory consultees;
- provide advice and guidance on draft Neighbourhood Plans; and
- provide information and evidence.

Independent Examination

The Council will:

- publish the Neighbourhood Plan on their website and give details of how to respond to it in advance of the Independent Examination (in line with the Neighbourhood Planning regulations);
- appoint an independent examiner;
- fund the inspector's costs and provide a venue for the examination as needed; and
- will consider the inspector's recommendations.

Referendum

The Council will:

- administer and fund the local referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- publish the results of the referendum on their website.

Final Plan

The Council will:

- publish the adopted Neighbourhood Plan on the its website; and
- use the Neighbourhood Plan, as part of the Development Plan to determine planning applications;