

LEEDS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GUIDANCE

Version 1 – June 2012

This guidance note will:

- Outline the keys stages and requirements that you must follow if you want to produce a neighbourhood plan
- Advise on other aspects of neighbourhood planning, such as Neighbourhood Development Order, Community Right to Build or Local Green Space designations
- Clarify how the Council (and others) can work with and support you at different stages of the process
- Help you decide on the type of plan that may be suitable for your neighbourhood
- Provide helpful information and links to sources of information that you may find useful

What is neighbourhood planning?

The Localism Act 2011 introduced major reforms to the planning system that gives local communities new rights to shape and plan their neighbourhood.

The Act introduces a new initiative called the **neighbourhood plan**. These plans are optional – if local communities choose, they can be used to set out policies for the development or use of land but they must be ‘pro development’.

The Act also includes new powers for local communities to prepare a **Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)** for their area, which will be able to promote a particular type of development.

Related to the NDO, is the **Community Right to Build Order (CRtB)** and this will provide for community-led site development.

Local communities may also be interested in applying to the Council to have a valued area designated as a **Local Green Space**.

This guidance note focuses mainly on neighbourhood development plans, as that is the greatest level of interest in Leeds at the moment. However, this note will be updated to reflect local needs as they change.

For regular updates on neighbourhood planning check www.leeds.gov.uk/Planning.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Neighbourhood plans can not be used to stop development already allocated or permitted, or propose less development than that in the Local Development Plan (The Core Strategy and the Site Allocations Plan). They can, however, propose more development than the Local Development Plan.

This new process provides an opportunity for local communities to work with the Council in the preparation of the Site Allocations Plan as well as other corporate objectives, such as improving equality, cohesion and

integration and recognising diversity. More generally, neighbourhood planning allows local communities to:

- choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built
- have their say on what those new buildings should look like
- include other matters in their plan that are important to them

Appendix 1 provides a useful list of simple tips ('10 tips for a successful neighbourhood plan').

Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)

A **Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)** is a new tool intended to streamline the planning system and stimulate economic development. It will permit certain types of development without the need for planning permission (in a similar way to the Local Development Orders promoted by the Council in respect of the Enterprise Zone). This could relate to a particular type of development (for example, low carbon) or it could relate to a particular use (for example residential or retail). They can apply to all or part of a neighbourhood area and can be included as part of a neighbourhood plan, but can also be brought forward separately. They can also be linked to the Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

The procedure that will lead to the adoption of a NDO is in many respects identical to that for making a Neighbourhood Plan, including independent examination, consultation with and participation by the public and holding of a referendum.

Community Right to Build (CRtB)

A **Community Right to Build Order (CrTB)** is a particular type of neighbourhood development order and these are intended to allow local communities to build, design and run a facility which they feel is needed in their neighbourhood. The community right to build organisation must be a constituted group of at least 10 un-related members who live in the particular area (i.e. living in different dwellings to each other) and set out a clear statement that the organisation will carry out its activities for the benefit of the community. Any profits made as a result of community right to build orders must be distributed among the organisation's members.

Local Green Space

Local communities are also now able to apply to the Council to have a valued local green area designated a **Local Green Space (LGS)** as part of neighbourhood plans. To be designated a Local Green Space, sites must meet the following criteria:

- Will be in reasonably close proximity to a centre of population
- Is demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular local significance
- Is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

What can neighbourhood planning do for my community?

Developing a neighbourhood plan can help communities play a greater role in how their area changes in the future and will bring together a wide range of people who live, work, visit or do business in an area.

The preparation of the plan will help create new and lasting partnerships, for example between public services, business and the voluntary sector.

Neighbourhood planning could help local communities agree a vision for their area, agree planning priorities and prioritise projects to be delivered when funding comes along.

Although neighbourhood plans are primarily about the use of land and other planning matters, they are also an opportunity to establish community priorities, improve service delivery and enhance local regeneration initiatives.

Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan may not be right for every community. There may be other type of plan that are more suited to meeting the needs of your neighbourhood, including:

- Parish/Town Plans
- Village /Neighbourhood Design Statements
- Conservation Area Appraisals
- Local design guide

- Community led action plans
- Vision statement

The neighbourhood planning team can offer further advice on this.

Timescales

From start to finish it will take about 2-3 years to get your neighbourhood plan adopted. The timing will generally depend on the issues and complexity of your plan and if any objections have been made to it.

Costs

The cost of preparing a plan will vary widely depending on the complexity and size of the neighbourhood. The Department for Communities and Local Government has estimated that the average cost will be £17,000. Appendix 3 outlines some of the main costs. These figures are based on work undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The type of costs that would be incurred include hiring of rooms for meetings, publicity, professional fees (perhaps for a sustainability appraisal), public consultation events, the preparation of an up to date evidence base as well as the actual drafting and printing of plans.

Some communities will need to consider sponsorship and fundraising to assist in the preparation of the plan.

There are a number of organisations that are able to assist communities with the preparation of their plan. Appendix 2 outlines some of these and other sources where practical assistance may be found.

Who can be involved?

Parish or town councils will initiate and lead on the process and in non-parished or town council areas, a neighbourhood forum will need to be set up (see xxx for guidance on how to set up a neighbourhood forum).

Whether you are a parish council, town council or a neighbourhood forum you should seek to involve a wide variety of interests in the preparation of your plan, including:

- Residents (including those who rarely get involved in planning/community matters)
- Elected representatives
- Community organisations
- Business
- Landowners
- Developers
- Voluntary organisations
- Special interest/amenity
- West Yorkshire Police
- Health practitioners

Working together

The Council, local communities and business will need to work together if neighbourhood planning is to be successful. This table outlines the main responsibilities and the type of approach that is needed from all parties:

Key responsibilities and Working Together

Leeds City Council	Parish/Town Council, Neighbourhood Forum
Key responsibilities	Key responsibilities
1. 'Duty to support' 2. Designate Neighbourhood Boundary 3. Designate Neighbourhood Forum 4. Consider compliance with statutory and EU requirements 5. Advise examiner on representations received and other matters 6. Fund and organise examination 7. Consider examiner's recommendations 8. Fund and undertake Referenda's 9. Duty to adopt	1. Identify the need to prepare plan 2. Submit application to be neighbourhood forum (if relevant) 3. Submit application for neighbourhood area 4. Identify key issues 5. Prepare evidence to support proposals 6. Consult and engage 7. Prepare documents/plans 8. Ensure compliance with EU directives and national policy/local plan (including carrying out sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment as necessary) 9. Submit plan for Independent examination
Working together	
Cooperation Support Transparency Face-to-face contact Plain English Building trust Understanding Learning lessons	

The Council will work with communities to support them through the neighbourhood planning process by:

- **Quick and transparent decision-making** (on the designation of neighbourhood areas, designation of neighbourhood forums);
- **The effective management of Council responsibilities** (for example, appointment of independent examiner, arrangements for a referendum);
- **Implementation** (planning approvals will be granted in accordance with adopted neighbourhood plans and other aspects where possible)

More specifically, the Council's '**duty to support**' will include the following:

- Enhance existing working relationships with town and parish councils and build new relationships with neighbourhood forums;
- Meet local communities interested in neighbourhood planning at an early stage, setting out the general and area specific level of support that can be provided ;
- Assist local communities to prepare a plan that will be fit for Independent examination. This will include advising on planning issues and ensuring that other issues are 'joined up';
- Attendance at briefings and meetings (subject to officer availability);
- Provide advice and mediate as required;
- Advise on consultation and engagement;
- Advice on how neighbourhood planning can support regeneration, service delivery and other matters.

The Council will also assist all communities with specific requests for **technical assistance**. Subject to reasonable requests, the Council will provide copies of the following:

- Area and site plans (subject to printing charge);
- Technical reports/extracts (subject to printing charge);
- Technical information held on sites (subject to printing charge);
- Any other technical information that is in the public domain (subject to printing charge).

The Role of the Parish Council, Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum

The parish council, town council or neighbourhood Forum will initiate and lead the process of formulating a Neighbourhood Plan. It is important that the plan is not prepared in isolation from the rest of the community. There is a need to consider how to engage all residents, as well as , for example: community groups, local ward members, local authorities, statutory agencies (Highways, Environment Agency etc), local organisations, landowners, development interests, social networks and enterprises who might have an interest in the neighbourhood. It is also important to engage with groups often described as ‘hard-to-reach’ who may have specific needs that should be reflected in the plan.

A Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group could prepare the plan and bring in expertise as appropriate. Members of a steering group could include elected members, local landowners/ developers, other stakeholders (amenity/environmental groups) as well as members of the community.

The role of business, developers and landowners

Business, developers and landowners have an important role to play in the neighbourhood planning process by working with local communities:

- Advising (for example, on viability, delivery, sustainability)
- Assisting (for example, with fundraising)
- Sponsorship
- Early consultation and engagement

Making neighbourhood planning documents complementary

The Core Strategy

Consultation on the draft Core Strategy took place Spring 2012. However, due to the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the resulting changes in national planning policy, it will be necessary to consult again on how well the Core Strategy conforms with the NPPF. This is programmed to take place during

Autumn 2012. It is anticipated that the examination will be scheduled for Spring/Summer 2013.

Site Allocations Plan

A report went to Executive Board on 16th May 2012 seeking members' approval on the scope of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SA DPD). A copy of this report can be found on the neighbourhood planning website (leeds.gov.uk/Planning). This report outlines the scope of the SA DPD - retail, housing, employment and greenspace. There will also be selective Green Belt review in relation to housing and employment requirements.

The SA DPD and neighbourhood plans will be produced in parallel. Work on the SA DPD is currently underway and officers would welcome input from communities, particularly in relation to possible sites for retail, housing, employment and greenspace in their areas.

Consultation on issues and option is expected to take place towards the end of 2012/early 2013. However, local communities are encouraged to come forward with their ideas and thoughts at any time.

Vision for Leeds

Leeds City Council's Vision for 2030 is to be the best city in the UK, that 1) Leeds will be fair, open and welcoming; 2) Leeds' economy will be prosperous and sustainable; and 3) All Leeds' communities will be successful. The Council will continue to work in partnership with others and with local communities to achieve the best for the people of Leeds. It will promote strong communities with confidence and a clear sense of belonging, where people are active and involved in their local area and give power to local people to make decisions that affect them. Neighbourhood planning fits well into this approach and will help to deliver the principles and ambitions of the Vision for Leeds.

How to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

STAGE 1 – EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

Neighbourhood Plans must be initiated and prepared by a 'qualifying body'. Where there is a Parish or Town Council for the whole or any part of the area to be covered by a Neighbourhood Plan then they will be the

‘qualifying body’. Where there is no existing Parish or Town Council a **Neighbourhood Forum** needs to be set up.

Setting up a Neighbourhood Forum

A community forum must be a constituted group of **21** people with the aspiration that this covers a cross section of the community including interest groups and key stakeholders. Business and developers can also take the lead in preparing a NP.

To become a Neighbourhood Forum an application to Leeds City Council has to be made.

Each Neighbourhood Area needs to set up a working group responsible for drafting the Neighbourhood Plan and for securing engagement and input from the community and stakeholders. Applications could be used to assist for inviting residents and business owners etc the opportunity to sit on the working group.

1. Establish a neighbourhood planning team or steering group – include cross-representation of people who live, work or do business in your community, including
 - residents
 - representatives of community organisations
 - business owners
 - landowners
 - local councillors
2. Consider who can help you prepare your plan. Balance those with ideas with those who can offer practical skills, such as minute taking, design, report writing etc.
3. Produce a project plan or programme for developing the Plan, for example:
 - § What activities will need to be carried out at each stage - meetings, publicity, surveys, events
 - § What resources will be needed to carry out these activities - people, materials, funding
 - § How much time should be set aside to accomplish each stage?

4. Develop a communications strategy – good publicity and communication both at the start of the process and throughout are key to keeping the community involved & getting their support. Think about how engagement will happen with the wider community even at this early stage.

TIP – To encourage people to join your forum, show how neighbourhood planning can be relevant to their needs and desires

Agreeing a Neighbourhood Plan boundary

The Neighbourhood Plan area must be one that includes the whole or any part of the area of the parish. It is also possible to work with neighbouring parishes to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for a cluster of villages covering two or more parish areas. If the Neighbourhood Plan includes any part of the area of another parish council, the lead parish council is only authorised to prepare a plan if the other parish council(s) have given their consent.

TIP – speak to local people about the issues that are important to them, this will help to decide where the neighbourhood area boundary should be

Application for designation as a neighbourhood area

A Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum is required to make an application to Leeds City Council for designation.

On receipt of an application Leeds City Council will advertise the proposal for 6 weeks. An advert will be placed in the local newspaper and the proposed boundary and supporting statement will be available to view in a local facility and on the Council's website.

The publicity should focus on the immediate area affected by the proposal.

- A statement confirming that the organisation making the application is either a parish council, a town council or a neighbourhood forum
- A map which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood plan will relate
- A statement stating why the boundary is an appropriate one (this can be as long or as short as required)

TIP – when you submit your application, include a clear statement on why you think the proposed boundary is the right one

TIP – When the application is being advertised (6 week period) use this period to raise awareness

Designation as neighbourhood area

Once Leeds City Council confirms a Neighbourhood Area designation, the ‘qualifying body’ (parish/town council or Neighbourhood Forum) is then able to formally progress their neighbourhood plan to the next stage – **preparation of ‘pre-submission’ draft neighbourhood plan**

STAGE 2 – PREPARING THE PLAN

There is no rule on what a Neighbourhood Plan should look like but it should contain a plan and clear policy statements and proposals (where relevant), alongside relevant accompanying maps. Once the Neighbourhood Plan is drafted the steering group will also need to produce a simple report on the sustainability appraisal process (and Appropriate Assessment, if necessary) that it has gone through, explaining why the policies it has included in the plan are the most appropriate ones. In addition, they plan must satisfy the examiner that equality issues have been considered from the start.

TIP – In your plan be clear on what is a proposal and what is an aspiration

TIP – The Council and others can advise on how best to ensure that your plan promotes equality in your neighbourhood

Step 1

Community Profiling

- Gather together relevant information and evidence – from both official statistics (suggested list of websites at Appendix 4) and surveys of local people;
- Community profiling – gather statistical data to build up social portrait of neighbourhood & community characteristics e.g.:

- § Gather information from any existing plans, strategies or studies relating to the neighbourhood (see Appendix 2 for detail);
- Initial discussions with stakeholders
 - There may be a need to tailor techniques for different sectors of the community (e.g. online survey for young people, visiting an elderly persons' home to meet with individuals to hear views on the neighbourhood.)
 - Identify the area's strengths and weaknesses

TIP – look at www.westyorkshireobservatory.org for up to date statistics for your neighbourhood

TIP – a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a good starting point to understand your neighbourhood better and to establish early agreement

Step 2

Developing Vision and Objectives

The Vision will be an overarching statement, or series of statements, describing what the community will be like to live and work in, within 15-20 years time. The time scale should reflect the Core Strategy which plans up to 2026.

The objectives should set out what the community wants to achieve in order to help realise the vision. It is important that the vision is realistic and achievable and that it is based on the information gathered.

- Analyse information gathered including what implications these plans have for the neighbourhood;
- Draft the vision and objectives – these should be realistic and achievable and based on the information gathered;
- Check draft vision and objectives with community – endorsement could be sought in a variety of ways including;
 - o Making copies available for public distribution and asking for comments;
 - o Meeting with community groups and asking for their feedback;
 - o Organising informal discussion groups;
 - o Holding public meetings or drop-in events;
 - o Publishing information in the local newsletter/magazine/website and providing an address to receive people's feedback.

TIP – ensure that proposals are backed up by evidence as the examiner will require this when assessing your neighbourhood plan

Step 3

Sustainability Appraisal

Any planning proposals in a neighbourhood plan must include a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This is required in order to become part of the adopted development plan for Leeds. Sustainability appraisals must consider the environmental, social and economic implications of proposals. Further advice on the preparation of a sustainability appraisal can be found in Appendix 4.

TIP – Undertaking a sustainability appraisal will be much easier, if you consider environmental, economic and social sustainability when you are considering issues and options at an early stage

Step 4

Consultation and engagement (on the draft plan)

Two key points:

- Check proposals with landowners or site-owners to ensure any proposals are deliverable and realistic
- Check draft Neighbourhood Plan with community and other stakeholders to ensure there is general support

At this stage, before submitting the plan to Leeds City Council, the neighbourhood planning steering group should check that residents, businesses and other stakeholders are happy with the content of the plan. The report of the Sustainability Appraisal (and Appropriate Assessment, if necessary) should also be made available for comment.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan should also be sent to wider stakeholders including Leeds City Council, the Environment Agency, Water Utilities, Natural England, West Yorkshire Police etc, as well as the local community. These organisations can offer valuable advice and guidance on the content of the plan..

Officers at Leeds City Council will be able to assist in the identification of wider stakeholder organisations that should be consulted.

Neighbouring parishes, forums, local authorities should also be consulted as appropriate.

Once consultation has been carried out an analysis of comments should be made. Consider any amendments that need to be made to the draft plan as a result of the consultation before submission to Leeds City Council.

TIP – prepare a consultation report which sets out who was consulted, what was said and how the draft plan has changed as a result.

Step 6

Submission of Plan and check for legal compliance

Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted by the qualifying body it is checked by the Council to ensure that it has been prepared correctly and is suitable to go forward to formal consultation and then Independent Examination. Neighbourhood Plans must comply with a number of EU and Human Rights Directives and this ‘legal compliant’ check also includes checks on whether the minimum consultation requirements have been undertaken and that necessary documentation including sustainability appraisals have been prepared.

Step 7

Independent Examination

Leeds City Council is responsible for facilitating and funding the independent examination into the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will decide, in collaboration with the qualifying body, who should be appointed to undertake an independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. The main function of the examination will be to check that the Neighbourhood Plan conforms with:

- The strategic content of the Local Plan and neighbouring Neighbourhood Plans
- The National Planning Policy Framework and/or other national policies and advice (including a demonstration that the proposals in the Plan are evidence based, deliverable and viable)

- European Directives on subjects such as International Nature Conservation designations, Sustainability, Human Rights and Equalities
- National and international designations (e.g. listed buildings and Conservation Areas)

The result of the examination will be a report that will have one of the following recommendations for consideration by Leeds City Council:

- That the draft Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum
- That it should proceed to a referendum, subject to certain amendments
- That the proposed Neighbourhood Plan should be refused.

Step 8

Referendum

Leeds City Council is responsible for facilitating and funding the local referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan. The referendum will normally be open to any individual registered to vote in the parish, but the referendum may be extended to a wider area if appropriate.

For the plan to be adopted, 50% of those who vote must register their support for the plan. If this happens, Leeds City Council will adopt the neighbourhood plan.

Step 9

Adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan

Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted it will become part of the statutory development plan for Leeds and will be used to determine planning applications.

Step 10

Implementing & Monitoring the Plan

The Council and the qualifying body will work together to implement and monitor the plan. The details of this will depend on the plan itself but will largely relate to decisions on planning applications, enforcement (where

necessary), service delivery (where appropriate) and regeneration (where appropriate).

TIP – prepare an implementation plan and work with the council and others on delivery, including timescales, viability and monitoring

Appendix 1

10 Tips for a Successful Neighbourhood Plan

Agree local issues

Before you put pen to paper, spend time speaking to people who live and work locally and agree the important issues

Agree a timescale

Think about what you would like to see and when

Work with the Council

The Council will support and guide you through the process, keep them informed throughout

Involve others

It's important that you involve people who live, work and do business in your neighbourhood as well as those who can help you deliver your plan, for example voluntary organisations and business

Be realistic

When preparing your plan be clear what it can and can't do, clarify what is a proposal and what is an aspiration

Follow local and national policy

In particular, the Unitary Development Plan, The Core Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework

Follow legal requirements

The Council can advise you on equality and human rights issues

Be Pro-growth

Your plan can't promote less growth than the Core Strategy

Promote sustainability

Make your neighbourhood more sustainable by focussing on meeting needs locally

Consult and engage

Consulting and engaging is not only a requirement but it will help make your plan as good as it can be, tailor-made to your local needs

Appendix 2

Frequently asked questions

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan is a plan which is produced by a community to shape the future development of their local community. In short, it allows local people to have a greater influence on the future of their area. Neighbourhood plans will contain specific policies to guide development and the use of land and, once adopted, will be a formal part of the development plan for Leeds. As such, they will be a key consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Does my community have to produce a Neighbourhood Plan?

No. Communities have the right to produce one but it is up to individual communities to decide whether they feel such a plan would benefit their area. There are a number of other community-led plans which could be suitable alternatives e.g. village design statements, parish plans.

Who can produce a Neighbourhood Plan?

Any community can produce a neighbourhood plan, though there are certain procedures which must be followed to ensure plans are securely founded on actual evidence, are the result of extensive and comprehensive community involvement, stand up to independent scrutiny at a public inquiry and are supported by the local community through a referendum.

Can there be more than one Neighbourhood Plan for an area?

No.

Can a Neighbourhood Plan cover more than one community?

Yes, providing that all communities are in agreement and work together.

How can I get involved and have my say?

If you live in an area with a parish or town council, contact the Clerk to the Council to find out what, if anything, is going on in that area. Many parish and town councils have websites or details may be available at parish halls, in parish news letters, on community notice boards or in the local shop or post office. Alternatively you may contact the City Council as they may be aware of any work being done. Those leading on the production of neighbourhood plans will welcome volunteers and will be keen to engage all members of the community.

What will Leeds City Council do?

Officers of the City Council cannot write neighbourhood plans as that is the role of local communities. They are, however, committed to helping in any way they can, particularly through providing technical advice and information and more general support. The City Council does have certain statutory responsibilities within the process and will carry out its duties professionally and with integrity.

What do we need to consider?

Any neighbourhood plan must be "in conformity" (in agreement) with other European, national and more local planning documents, such as the National Planning Policy Framework and Leeds City Council's LDF documents, especially the Core Strategy. Neighbourhood plans must therefore reflect and fit in to the content of these more

strategic documents. It should be noted that neighbourhood plans cannot promote less housing and economic development than what is envisaged in the Council's development plan.

The final plan will be scrutinised by the Local Planning Authority and then an independent inspector at an examination to assess all elements of the process followed and the final plan document produced. Following this, the whole community will have an opportunity to vote whether to adopt the plan in a local referendum. Effective community engagement throughout the process is vital.

Can a Neighbourhood Plan stop development?

No, it can only guide where development should go and help to deliver more locally appropriate development. Plans should at least provide for development to meet local needs and provide the opportunity to identify an increased level of development within their area if appropriate.

What might a Neighbourhood Plan look like?

There is no standard template therefore the onus is on each community to decide what their particular neighbourhood plan contains and how it is set out. They could have high level visions and objectives for the future of an area, policies addressing specific issues, identify small projects for change or a larger scale framework.

Who will pay for the neighbourhood planning process?

The local community will have to pay for the preparation of their neighbourhood plan. However, the Government has awarded funding to four organisations with expertise in planning, to assist communities in developing Neighbourhood Plans. These organisations are:

The Prince's Foundation - assistance with community engagement and finding local solutions to issues. www.princes-foundation.org

Locality - provision of support and networking to community groups through online resources and other networking tools, practical workshops and seminars, and tailored advice through a telephone advice line. www.locality.org.uk

The Royal Town Planning Institute - via the Planning Aid service, the provision of free, independent, impartial, professional planning advice to people who do not have the means to pay professional fees. Provision of support and training to local communities to influence and contribute to planning strategy, policy and decision-making at all levels. www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid

The National Association of Local Councils in partnership with the Campaign to Protect Rural England - provision of basic information about the planning system via a website, phone line and publications. Establishing a programme of local events to inform the public and parish councils about how to influence local plans. www.cpre.org.uk

Furthermore communities may want to explore securing contributions from the local business community. The Council will pay for the independent examination and referendum.

What is the timeframe?

There is no set timeframe therefore individual areas can set their own timescales. The process is likely to take between one and two years.

How much work will be required to produce a Neighbourhood Plan?

This will largely depend on the number and scope of issues identified and how much detail the plan goes into. This will be decided at the local level although there are minimum statutory requirements such as a Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal that will need to be completed.

Who would be responsible for providing evidence at the independent examination stage?

The key people involved in producing the plan would need to supply the evidence, however there is a clear intention that this will be a “light-touch” approach with issues ideally being resolved through the presentation of written evidence rather than holding a formal inquiry.

How do neighbourhood plans inform the broader planning policy framework for Leeds (LDF/Core Strategy/Site Allocations DPD)?

The City Council has a responsibility to produce the Local Development Framework for Leeds which, along with Neighbourhood Plans and other statutory planning documents, makes up the Development Plan for the city. Each element must be in compliance with the others and each must inform the others. The overarching requirements, strategies and policies set out in the Core Strategy provide a foundation, but the more detailed local work done by communities through the neighbourhood planning process must feed back into the wider policy framework, particularly through the Site Allocations DPD.

Where can I get advice?

1) Leeds City Council contacts:

The key contacts in Forward Planning & Implementation for Neighbourhood Planning support are:

Ian Mackay - Team Leader
Telephone: (0113) 2478079...
Email: ian.mackay@leeds.gov.uk

Heather Suggate
Telephone: (0113) 2478084
Email: heather.suggate@leeds.gov.uk

Other Support
Andrew Birkbeck (Localism Officer, East North East Area Support Team)
Telephone: (0113) 3367642
Email: andrew.birkbeck@leeds.gov.uk

2) Best Practice elsewhere

a) Other local communities

Networking with other groups involved in neighbourhood planning is encouraged. The Planning Advisory Service has is a good source of information on neighbourhood planning and best practice across the country.
<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=1562794>

The following websites give useful information on what other communities are doing:

<http://www.cernevalley.org/>

<http://www.wenlockplan.org/>

www.chapelvision.org

<http://www.wton-partnership.org.uk/microsites.php?identity=microsites>

<http://www.bookhamvanguard.co.uk/>

<http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org/>

b) Other Local Planning Authorities

Broadland District Council produced their Neighbourhood Planning Guidance in June 2011. It sets out the process, giving advice on what communities need to think about and do at each stage. There is help on writing visions, objectives and policies.: <http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/Policy%20and%20Priorities/Broadland%20DC%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20Guidance.pdf>

Aylesbury Vale District Council has produced a similar document and a 'tool kit' to help community consultation:

[Aylesbury Vale District Council • Neighbourhood planning](#)

[Aylesbury Vale District Council • Toolkit for consulting your community](#)

Winchester City Council has produced a Blueprint: engagement tool for use by planners, community etc. It's a 'self service pack' that can be downloaded and used, independently, by anyone running a consultation event. It's free to download from: www.community-blueprint.co.uk

c) Other national organisations

Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) Rural Community Action Network members are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, which support and enable initiatives in rural communities: <http://www.acre.org.uk/about-rcan>

Community Development Foundation – offers funding for small community groups all over England through a range of programmes. Recently taken lead on the Big Local: a ten year programme working with and supporting communities, in up to 150 selected areas, to make where they live and work a better place now and in the future. £50 million budget: www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/funding

ACRE: Action with Communities Rural England – “Making the Most of Community Led Planning”: sets out a structured process that enables them to meet with others locally and collectively research, discuss and then agree priority actions for improving their neighbourhood, taking into consideration a wide range of social, economic, environmental and cultural factors. www.acre.org.uk

Action for Market Towns (AMT) - has designed as part of Big Lottery a “Towns Alive” programme which offers a diagnostic tool and training programme: The Market Towns Academy. It has developed 36 training modules, which can be adapted to provide you with a training programme that meets your needs: www.towns.org.uk

CABE – offers an enabling session with a number of experts to explore design ideas early on in the plan preparation: www.designcouncil.org.uk

Planning Consultants

Some communities will wish to employ Planning Consultants to assist in the process and these can also act as facilitators in the Neighbourhood Plan process. Leeds City Council are unable to advise or make recommendations on who to appoint, however The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) provide an online directory that can be used to source the details of planning consultancies that work in the North East region. This can be viewed at

<http://www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk/static/files/regional/NorthEast.pdf>

Appendix 3

Indicative costs to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

Duty/Stage PC (Parish Council); TC (Town Council); NF (Neighbourhood Forum); LCC (Leeds City Council)		Likely Costs / time
PC/TC or NF	Publicity/consultation	£1,500 -£10,000* (Will depend on methods of consultation used and size of neighbourhood plan area)
LCC	Advertisement of applications for neighbourhood area/forums & Designation of Neighbourhood Forums	£1,000-£2,000** 5days staff time***
PC/TC or NF	Preparation & production of draft plan	£1,000 to £40,000* (Will depend on issues to be covered by the neighbourhood plan and any associated evidence costs/consultant fees)
LCC	Support for preparation of Plan	15-20 days staff time*** (More time may be needed to assist with establishment of neighbourhood forum in Holbeck as well as more bespoke assistance to all the pilot areas to assist in progressing the preparation of plans)
LCC	Validation of Neighbourhood Plans	5-10 days staff time***
LCC	Examination by an Independent Inspector	£5,000 - £8,000**** 5 - 8 days Inspector time and potentially staff time***
LCC	Referenda	£1.80/head***** £5000-£20,000 (Will depend on electoral role and size of the neighbourhood plan area)
LCC	Adoption of Neighbourhood Plans	5 days Staff time***
LCC	Final publication of document and any necessary amendments to Proposals Map	Printing Costs 5-15 days staff time*** (including GIS staff time)

**Based on core costs set out in the DCLG's Impact Assessment – Neighbourhood Plans and community Right to Build. DCLG estimates that the average total cost of preparing a neighbourhood plan at £20-86k per plan. The cost to community groups in bringing forward a community right to build scheme is estimated at approximately £40k.*

***Advertisement costs based on costs paid for formal adverts for LDF documents in the Yorkshire Evening Post. Variable due to length of text.*

****Staff time primarily based in Planning & Sustainable Development but also other service areas as relevant to the issues in the Neighbourhood Plan. Indication of days based on current best practice for staff involvement on VDS/NDS's.*

*****Examinations costs based on current charges for daily rate for Planning Inspectorate Inspector.*

****** Source: fees and charges for counting officers in regional and local referendums. ODPM 2004 £1.80/head) Indicative figures calculated on LCC Electoral services estimate based on local elections electoral role and postal vote information*

Appendix 4

Sustainability Appraisal

i) What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

A sustainability appraisal (SA) is a process which ensures economic, social and environmental impacts of emerging neighbourhood plans are fully assessed to promote sustainable development and to bring positive benefits. They are required under law, though whether your plan requires one will depend on factors such as the extent of its environment, social or economic impacts, whether it will lead to future major projects and whether it will affect special nature conservation sites. SA's need to be an integral part of the neighbourhood planning process and be planned for at an early stage. You could be challenged if you do not undertake one.

ii) What is a Sustainability Appraisal Framework?

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework sets out the method which will be used to critically assess how proposals and policies will contribute to sustainable development. It consists of various tailored objectives, indicators and targets against which proposals and draft policies will be assessed to determine how they will contribute to the sustainable development of the area. It is important that **all** work is appraised right from the very earliest stages so that emerging ideas, content and policies can be assessed, and inform the final plan. Areas containing European sites of ecological importance (Natura 2000 sites) will need to undertake an Appropriate Assessment. These appraisals need not be complicated, but should be carried out by someone independent of the Neighbourhood Plan process e.g. a local resident or a planning consultant. Leeds City Council can also assist .

iii) What are the main stages of Sustainability Appraisal?

Stage A – Scoping Report (the scoping stage)

- This sets the context, objectives, baseline and scope for the SA.
- It highlights how the draft neighbourhood plan and the planning policies contained within it will be appraised
- It presents information which you have used to determine the 'baseline environment' of your neighbourhood – this could include evidence of what is in your neighbourhood, what is important to local people and how these might change in the future without the plan.

Stage B – Commentary Report (developing and refining plan options)

- The framework set out in the Scoping Report is used to appraise various options relating to the draft neighbourhood plan and planning policy
- The appraisal will determine which option is most sustainable and how it can be improved.

Stage C – Sustainability Appraisal Report (the appraisal stage)

- This stage is similar to Stage B though only the preferred version of the neighbourhood plan and the planning policies will be assessed.

- The report will state if the policy could be improved to be more sustainable.

Stage D – Consultation

- The SA will need to be circulated to get feedback on whether the community thinks the SA is correct, or if anyone feels the policy could be made more sustainable.

Stage E – Monitoring the implementation of the plan

- It is important for planning policies to be monitored, to make sure they are sustainable and to check there are no negative impacts.

Further guidance can be found in “DIY SA”: Sustainability Appraisal (Also Known As Strategic Environmental Assessment) Of Neighbourhood Plans August 20122, Levett Therivel. This can be found at <http://www.levett-therivel.co.uk/DIYSA.pdf>