

Document Information

This guide will be edited and added to in response to experience of using it and as necessary in response to any future changes in the regulatory framework. A summary of the changes included in each version will be recorded here.

Version Schedule

Version	Date	Summary
1	December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes all changes identified from the committee process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being), 8 December 2015 Cabinet, 10 December 2015
2	April 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes changes identified since first published, and in particular following neighbourhood planning workshop, 15 March 2016
3	May 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixes a series of broken web links Identifies and links to newly added NPPG content on updating neighbourhood plans
4	July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes changes relating to new neighbourhood planning regulations which came into force in autumn 2016 Fixes a series of broken web links
5	January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial updates to nationally provided guidance now hosted by 'Locality' Updates to reflect 2018 NPPF and NPPG Minor additions to guidance in Stage 2, Step 6 regarding policy writing Minor revisions to guidance in Stage 4 regarding CIL
6	August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor revisions throughout removing reference to the Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan following the adoption of the Local Plan to 2036 in May 2019 Removal of Community Planning proposals policy in Community Planning Tools following the adoption of the Local Plan where the policy was removed Minor revisions to reflect changes to NPPF 2019 Revisions and additions throughout to reflect updates to the NPPG - including housing requirement figures and EU obligations Additions to Stage 4 updating a neighbourhood plan to reflect NPPG changes Fixes to any broken web links
7	May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update to amount of funding available Additional weblinks and references to other guidance available from Locality and organisations such as Historic England Minor revisions throughout updating references from NPPF 2019 to NPPF 2021 Update to Appendix 2 - Resources available Update to template application letter Fixes to any broken weblinks

Summary

Summary

Neighbourhood planning in a nutshell

What is it?	A plan for the neighbourhood area (most often the town/ parish area) including policies that inform planning decisions regarding development proposals.
Scope	Physical environment and development
Responsibility for action on the completed plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Huntingdonshire District Council assesses and determines planning applicationsCommunity addresses non-planning actions
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has statutory weight as part of the development plan: planning applications are judged against the local plan and neighbourhood plan togetherCan include at the back of the plan non-planning community-led actions which would previously have been included in a parish planParishes with a 'made' neighbourhood plan receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts, instead of the default 15%. The plan-making process can include identifying shared spending priorities for CIL.Process can bring the community together
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Time and resource intensive: the need to meet statutory tests adds time into the processPlanning expertise/support required
Rough costs	~£5,000 to ~£30,000 (average is ~£14,000; £10,000 government grants are available, with potential of a further £8,000 subject to meeting the eligibility criteria)
Time estimate	2-3 years

Is a neighbourhood plan right for my area?

- If the primary issues of importance to your community relate to planning, and there is volunteer capacity to do one, a neighbourhood plan can be a powerful tool for shaping new development.
- Other community planning tools are available which may be better suited to meeting your community aspirations. In particular, if the primary issues of importance to your community relate to things other than planning, then a parish plan is a quicker and lighter-touch process than a neighbourhood plan for creating a plan of action for improving your community.

Support for neighbourhood planning

- Guidance:** there is a wealth of excellent neighbourhood planning guidance available online. The Huntingdonshire Neighbourhood & Community Planning Guide provides links to some of this, plus a wide range of other sources of advice and information.
- Funding:** all groups writing a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order are eligible to apply for up to £10,000 in a neighbourhood planning grant. For groups meeting the [eligibility criteria](#), they can apply for an additional grant of up to £8,000 (in addition to the basic grant). This will take the total amount of grant available to you to £18,000. This is correct as at May 2023.
- Consultancy advice:** you may feel that you would value more intensive planning support from an independent expert to help you with specific parts of the process.

Neighbourhood planning process & HDC support

HDC has a statutory requirement to provide support to town and parish councils preparing neighbourhood plans. See below for details:

taking decisions: at key stages in the neighbourhood planning process, and leading on the formal stages of the neighbourhood planning process

providing advice: providing support in meeting the statutory tests for neighbourhood plans, and commenting on draft versions of the plan

providing assistance: explaining the process, and pointing to evidence and other sources of support

Stage	Step	HDC can...	
Getting started	1: Getting organised	Meet with you to discuss your options	
	2: Applying for a Neighbourhood Area	Provide a template neighbourhood area application letter and area map	
	3: Consultation on the Application	If necessary, run consultation on area application	
	4: Designation of the Neighbourhood Area	Formally designate the neighbourhood area	
Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan	5: Community engagement and evidence		
	6: Developing Plan Content	Advise about policy writing	
	7: Consulting on the Draft Plan	Provide a health-check of your plan before you consult on it	
Getting the Plan in place	8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan	Provide a health-check of your revised plan before you submit it	
	9: Consulting on the Submitted Plan	Run consultation on the submitted plan	
	10: The Examination	Appoint Examiner	Appoint the Examiner
		Independent examination	
		Examiner reports	
	11: Progressing to Referendum	Formally recommend that the plan progresses to referendum	
	12: The Referendum	Organise and publicise the referendum	
	13: Adoption of the Plan	If a majority vote 'Yes', the plan is 'made' by Full Council and comes into force as part of the Development Plan	
Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan	Implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan	Decide planning applications in your area in accordance with the district-wide local plan and your neighbourhood plan	

Contact: for more advice and information, contact local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

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Introduction

What does this Neighbourhood and Community Planning in Huntingdonshire Guide do?

Helps you to identify the right community planning tool for your area

This guide first asks what you want to achieve in your community, and briefly sets out a range of community planning tools which can help you achieve your goals, highlighting the benefits and disadvantages of each tool.

Sets out Huntingdonshire District Council's support offer for a particular community planning tool: Neighbourhood Plans

A number of communities across Huntingdonshire and nationally are using neighbourhood plans to set out a shared vision for how they want to see their area develop. Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has a key role in providing support for this particular community planning tool. This guide sets out:

- An overview of the process for completing a neighbourhood plan in Huntingdonshire;
- How HDC can help you; and
- What town and parish councils preparing neighbourhood plans will be expected to do.

What does this guide not do?

There is a wide range of excellent community planning and neighbourhood planning resources freely available online. This guide is not intended to replicate existing online guidance but to focus on setting out the particular neighbourhood planning support offer for Huntingdonshire. Links are provided throughout to more detailed guidance.

Relationship with other Huntingdonshire community planning documents

This guide provides additional detail about neighbourhood planning to that provided in the 2013 Huntingdonshire Town & Parish Charter.

Document Information

For any queries about this document, please contact the planning policy team:
local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

This guide includes a range of links to websites providing supporting information, data or guidance. Every effort has been made to ensure that these links are up to date. As websites change these links can become invalid. In circumstances where links have become invalid please use a suitable search term for an internet search. Alternatively please contact the Local Plans team at the email address above for guidance.

Cross references have been included in the text as clickable internal links in electronic versions (pdf and web).

Picking the right tool for the job

Picking the right tool for the job

What do you want to achieve?

There are a wide range of community planning tools available, of which neighbourhood plans are just one. It is important to consider what your community's aspirations are, and what community planning tool would best achieve them.

Deciding which tool is best for your community is a matter of judgement. The following example community aspirations below are intended to guide your thinking. More detail on each community planning tool is set out in the next section.

Community aspiration	Community planning tools which could achieve that aspiration
Development is likely to take place in our town/parish in the foreseeable future, and we want to influence where it goes and what it looks like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Neighbourhood Plan'• 'Neighbourhood Development Order'• 'Village Design Statement'
Our community wants to promote a number of developments across our town/parish.	
Our community needs a specific new development (e.g. a new community building, or affordable housing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Exceptions Housing'• 'Community Right to Build (CrTB)'• 'Community Land Trust'
Our community wants to address a range of local issues which don't directly relate to the physical environment (e.g. speeding problems, anti-social behaviour issues, the need for a new community group).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Parish/ Community Plan'
Our community wants to save and run a village community facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value)'

Is there sufficient volunteer capacity in your community?

Having considered what you want to achieve, a further question to consider is whether there is sufficient volunteer capacity within your community for undertaking your proposed community planning tool. Successfully completing a neighbourhood plan in particular will require a significant and sustained commitment from a number of volunteers.

If you don't know whether there is sufficient interest and commitment for undertaking a particular community planning process, you can always advertise the idea and see what interest you get. If there isn't sufficient interest now, there is nothing to stop you trying again in a year or two.

Community Planning Tools

Neighbourhood Plan

What is it?	A plan for the neighbourhood area (often the town/ parish) including policies that inform planning decisions regarding development proposals.
Benefits	<p>Gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.</p> <p>The plan has statutory status: providing influence over planning decisions; giving the opportunity to specify sites for development; and enabling communities to add detail to Local Plan policies to shape development in their area.</p> <p>Community consultation can also identify non-planning goals which communities can tackle themselves.</p> <p>Areas with a neighbourhood plan in place receive more infrastructure funding arising from development in their area than areas without a neighbourhood plan.</p>
Disadvantages	Time and resource intensive: before the neighbourhood plan comes into force, the community must follow a set process and meet a number of statutory tests, which lengthen the process, add costs, and require planning expertise.
Support organisations	<p>Huntingdonshire District Council - Planning Policy team</p> <p>Nationally provided support is available from Locality</p>
First step	Read this guide, then contact the Planning Policy team: local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Exceptions Housing

What is it?	Housing development targeted at meeting the needs of local people at less than market cost, on land where development would not normally be granted. The site should be well related to the existing settlement and the houses should be occupied by people having a local connection to the settlement. N.B. The Local Plan policy LP 28 Rural Exceptions Housing allows for an element of market housing on an exceptions site, in order to encourage more sites to come forward.
Benefits	Provides additional low-cost housing in areas where it is needed, targeted to local people. Less resource intensive for communities than a Neighbourhood Plan or Community Right to Build; process can be completed in partnership with a Housing Association.
Disadvantages	Only delivers housing; can't be used for other community development proposals.
Support organisations	<p>Huntingdonshire District Council - Housing Strategy team</p> <p>Cambridgeshire ACRE</p>
First step	Contact the Housing Strategy team: housing.services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Development Order

What is it?	Grants planning permission for specific types of development in a specific neighbourhood area. Created as a part of a neighbourhood plan.
Benefits	Enables communities to deliver small scale, site specific development within a neighbourhood plan without the need for a separate planning application (e.g. small scale rural exceptions affordable housing or a community building such as a village hall).

Community Planning Tools

Disadvantages	See above for neighbourhood plans.
Support organisations	Huntingdonshire District Council - Planning Policy team
First step	Contact the Planning Policy team: local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Community Right to Build (CrTB)

What is it?	A form of Neighbourhood Development Order that can be used to grant planning permission for small scale development for community benefit on a specific site or sites in a neighbourhood area.
Benefits	Enables communities to deliver small scale, site specific development without the need for a separate planning application (e.g. small scale rural exceptions affordable housing or a community building such as a village hall).
Disadvantages	Time and resource intensive: before the Right to Build Order comes into force, the community must follow a set process and meet a number of statutory tests, which lengthen the process, add costs, and require planning expertise. The process is similar to that required for Neighbourhood Plans, but is focused on a single site.
Support organisations	Huntingdonshire District Council - Planning Policy team Locality
First step	Read the Locality Guide: Understanding Community Right to Build Orders

Community Land Trust

What is it?	Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are local organisations set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to that community, like community enterprises, food growing or workspaces.
Benefits	A helpful organisational structure enables communities to deliver their own services, housing, pubs or community enterprises. CLTs can be used in combination with another of the community planning tools set out here (e.g. rural exception site or Community Right to Build). Potentially beneficial for land/ organisations having charitable status. A way for communities to deliver their own services
Disadvantages	Can be complex to set up and resource intensive over a long period. Some parish councils may not be sufficiently resourced. Replicates what Registered Providers (housing associations) do.
Support organisations	Huntingdonshire District Council - Planning Policy team; Housing Strategy team Community Land Trust
First step	Contact the Planning Policy team: local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value)

What is it?	Enables communities to nominate public or private community assets of value to their community (e.g. a village pub). Once the community has nominated them they will be identified by the Local Planning Authority on a list of 'Assets of Community Value'. Once on the list, if an asset comes up for sale or lease, a community group has a period of time in which they can register their interest as a potential bidder, delaying a sale on the open market.
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Benefits	Gives some protection to valued community facilities, by providing an extended window of opportunity for the community to get organised if such an asset is put up for sale.
Disadvantages	Just because an Asset is added to the list does not mean that the community will definitely be able to buy it for community use; they will need to be able to meet the asking price. Not all nominated Assets will be added to the formal list: to be added to the list, the Asset must meet certain tests relating to community value.
Support organisations	Huntingdonshire District Council - Corporate team: acv@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
First step	Read the Community Right to Bid page on the HDC website .

Village Design Statement

What is it?	A document created by the community informing the design of new development in an area.
Benefits	When adopted, it can become supplementary planning guidance. This means that they are a consideration which the council must take into account when determining planning applications.
Disadvantages	Unlike neighbourhood plans, village design statements do not become part of the statutory development plan, and therefore do not have much weight in determining planning applications.
Support organisations	Huntingdonshire District Council - Planning Policy team
First step	Contact the Planning Policy team: local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Parish/ Community Plan

What is it?	A comprehensive plan for the area identifying community priorities and actions to address these.
Benefits	Enables communities to produce a comprehensive vision for their area, addressing all issues of interest to the community. Identifies non-planning goals which communities can tackle themselves. Non-development focused community goals can be achieved more quickly than development focused goals, which must follow a statutory process. No formal process to follow. Could be a helpful steppingstone to a Neighbourhood Plan or other community planning initiative.
Disadvantages	No influence over planning decisions. Time intensive: although there is no formal process to follow, most parish plans still take well over a year to produce, including getting started, consulting the community, and identifying priorities and actions. Non-development focused actions can also be identified and addressed alongside the neighbourhood planning process.
Support organisations	Cambridgeshire ACRE Huntingdonshire District Council - Planning Policy team
First step	Contact the Planning Policy team: local.plan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Introduction to Neighbourhood Plans

Introduction to Neighbourhood Plans

This guide seeks to explain HDC's approach to neighbourhood plans and how they can fit with the Development Plan. The advice is intended for town/parish councils that are contemplating drawing up a neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Process Overview

Stage	Steps	Time required ⁽¹⁾	Responsibility of:	
Stage 1: 'Getting started'	'Step 1: Getting organised'	6 weeks⁽²⁾	Town/ Parish Council	
	'Step 2: Applying for a Neighbourhood Area'			
	'Step 3: Consultation on the Application' (only necessary in certain circumstances)			
	'Step 4: Designation of the Neighbourhood Area'			
Stage 2: 'Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan'	'Step 5: Community engagement and evidence'	6 weeks	Town/ Parish Council	
	'Step 6: Developing Plan Content'			
	'Step 7: Consulting on the Draft Plan'			
Stage 3: 'Getting the Plan in place'	'Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan'	6 weeks	HDC	
	'Step 9: Consulting on the Submitted Plan'			
	'Step 10: The Examination'	Appoint Examiner	~11 weeks	HDC + Town/ Parish Council jointly
		Independent examination		Examiner
		Examiner reports		
	'Step 11: Progressing to Referendum'	~11 weeks	HDC	
	'Step 12: The Referendum'			
	'Step 13: Adoption of the Plan' If a majority vote 'Yes', the plan is 'made' by Full Council and comes into force as part of the Development Plan			
Stage 4: 'Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan'	Implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan		HDC + Town/ Parish Council jointly	

1. Only statutory timescales are shown here. The time taken to produce your plan will be much longer than the sum of these time periods. Some statutory timescales are not shown here as these are open to negotiation. See the steps for more details.
2. Only relevant for neighbourhood areas other than a single town or parish.

Stage 1: Getting started

The first stage of producing a neighbourhood plan is to get an area designated for it. There are four steps in this stage:

'Step 1: Getting organised'

'Step 2: Applying for a Neighbourhood Area'

'Step 3: Consultation on the Application'

'Step 4: Designation of the Neighbourhood Area'

Step 1: Getting organised

Who leads neighbourhood planning in Huntingdonshire?

In nearly all areas of Huntingdonshire, town and parish councils are responsible for neighbourhood planning⁽¹⁾. However, guidance recommends that such councils get involvement from the wider community so that interested community members can play an active role in shaping the plan. The relationship between any group and the formal functions of the town/ parish council should be clear to the wider public.

Creating the best neighbourhood plan possible

Before getting started it is worth considering why you want to do a neighbourhood plan, and what you could achieve through the plan itself and through the plan-making process.

The best neighbourhood plans are:

- Based upon strong community engagement, and are owned by the wider community;
- Uniquely local;
- Complementary to Local Plan policies, providing additional policy detail;
- Not just about creating a nice-looking document, but have a focus on the implementation of community projects and ideas.

The Neighbourhood Planning process can:

- **Inform communities:** developing a neighbourhood plan can educate and inform the steering group and wider community about planning and the process of planning for the local community.

How can HDC help?

The Council will offer to meet you to help you consider how to get started on your neighbourhood plan. This meeting might cover matters such as:

- a run through of the process for preparing a neighbourhood plan
- the requirements to fit in with national planning policy
- what neighbourhood plans can cover, but also what they can't
- what may be involved in terms of technical work
- expectations of effective community engagement
- the requirements to fit in with the Local Plan and how this might shape the content of the neighbourhood plan
- possible resource and capacity considerations

¹ Areas with a parish meeting as opposed to a parish council will need to go through an extra step of applying to be designated as a [neighbourhood forum](#). This designation is subject to certain tests. If you live in an area with a parish meeting please contact HDC in the first instance.

Stage 1: Getting started

- **Tackle non-planning issues:** community consultation often flags up issues of importance to the community that are not related to the planning system, such as speeding or the need for new community groups. These should not be lost, and can be addressed separately to the creation of the planning-focused document.
- **Bring people together:** working with others over a period of time in the steering group can connect people, and if done well, community consultation events can also be enjoyable social occasions.

To create the best neighbourhood plan possible, it is important to get organised.

Likely time-scales for neighbourhood planning

Neighbourhood plans do not take a set amount of time. How long it takes to complete your neighbourhood plan is essentially down to you. When considering time-scales, it may be helpful to consider the following issues:

- **A serious time commitment:** Given the time requirements for getting organised, community engagement and evidence gathering, in addition to the statutory processes, your neighbourhood plan could take perhaps 2-3 years to complete. This is a significant time commitment for any group, so you will need to be committed and persistent to see it through to completion.
- **Quality over speed:** Your primary goal should be to create the best plan possible, based on comprehensive community involvement and solid evidence. This should be the main driver for how long your plan takes, rather than trying to get it done as quickly as possible.

You also need to think about the period which your neighbourhood plan will cover.

Likely costs of a neighbourhood plan

Based on experience nationally, the average cost of producing a neighbourhood plan is £14,000. This average figure masks the great variation between the costs of different neighbourhood plans. [Case studies](#) are available setting out individual plans' spending.

Funding is available to all groups preparing a neighbourhood plan. See the 'Support for Neighbourhood Planning' section for more details.

Project planning

Given the length of time the neighbourhood plan will take to produce, good project management is essential. This will enable you to manage the workload, and the wider community's expectations if things get delayed. It may therefore be useful to draw up a simple project plan to help you get organised. The project plan could set out:

- When you think you will be able to complete the different steps in the process
- Who will work on different parts of the plan
- Who will be the main point of contact with HDC

Some of these matters are considered in more detail in other parts of this guide. The initial meeting may not need to cover all of these items, but it is suggested that you make some preparation for the meeting and inform us if you will want to discuss other matters so that we can do any research or other work in order to be prepared to deal with your questions.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: neighbourhood planning](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide](#),

Part B and Part C - Stage 1

[Locality - Frequently Asked Questions a toolkit for Neighbourhood Planners](#)

[Locality - Project Planning Tool](#)

[Case studies providing breakdowns of spend on neighbourhood plans](#)

Time needed

No time constraints: take as long as you need.

- Who will be responsible for taking actions at specific points
- Who you could get to help you draw up the plan
- 'Community engagement' in the plan-making process

The project plan doesn't have to be particularly detailed and you can leave parts that you will decide on later. The project plan can, and probably will, change as you go through the process.

You should also remember that you will mostly be relying on the time of volunteers so you will have to work within the limited time that they have. This means it may not be possible to make progress as quickly as you might like.

As shown in the 'Neighbourhood Plan Process Overview', some of the formal neighbourhood planning steps have specific time requirements. In each section of this guide, look for the orange box on the right to see whether there is a set timescale associated with that step.

Further tips for getting organised

- **Get help:** use available online resources referenced in this document, and take advantage of the support on offer.
- **Learn from the best:** read other neighbourhood plans to work out what you think works, and what doesn't. You can ask us for contacts from other neighbourhood planning groups that are further ahead in the process to learn from their experience.
- **Gather as broad a steering group as possible:** members of a diverse steering group will provide different perspectives, and their backgrounds will also help the group engage with different sections of the wider community.
- **Think about how to recruit and manage volunteers:** consider targeting people in your community with specific skills to help with particular tasks, and parcel up tasks into manageable chunks that might attract volunteers more than undefined roles which could last for several years.
- **Be creative, and have fun:** if you're going to put significant time and effort into this process, make it fun for all involved. Celebrate reaching milestones, and if you get bogged down in the process, remember why you are doing this!

Legal Requirements for Neighbourhood Plans

The Basic Conditions

To be successful at examination, a neighbourhood plan must meet a number of tests, known as Basic Conditions. At submission, a statement about how the plan meets the Basic Conditions should accompany the plan (See 'Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan'). In summary, the neighbourhood plan must demonstrate that it is consistent with:

- **National planning policy:** as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG);
- **Sustainable development:** contributing to improvements in environmental, economic and social conditions, or showing how consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from the proposals may be prevented, reduced or offset;
- **Strategic policies set out in the adopted development plan:** the strategic policies for Huntingdonshire are in the Local Plan;
- **EU obligations;** and
- A number of other basic conditions.

More information about some of the Basic Conditions is provided below.

Sustainable development

Your neighbourhood plan must demonstrate how it contributes to sustainable development, using sufficient and proportionate evidence. You may be able to use the Council's Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal to provide some of this evidence.

Sustainability Appraisal

A sustainability appraisal is a systematic process which can help you select the most sustainable options in your neighbourhood plan policies. It assesses the extent to which your emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. While sustainability appraisal is not required for neighbourhood plans, and can involve a significant amount of work, it can help you make evidence-based decisions when writing your plan, particularly if you are choosing between sites for allocating development.

How can HDC help?

We can advise you at the start of the process about how to meet the basic conditions.

Guidance and Regulations

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)
[NPPG: The basic conditions](#)

How can HDC help?

We can discuss with you the options for evidencing how your plan delivers sustainable development.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Meeting the Basic Conditions](#)

Other Resources

[Local Plan to 2036: Final Sustainability Appraisal \(December 2017\)](#)

Strategic policies in the local plan

Neighbourhood plans need to be in "general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area".

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

- The Council adopted the Local Plan which covers the period up to 2036. This replaces the Core Strategy and previous development plans.
- The Local Plan includes both strategic and non-strategic policies. The strategic policies are all policies in the Development Strategy (policies LP1-LP9), all site allocation policies, policies LP11 Design Context and LP24 Affordable Housing Provision.
- It is accompanied by an [interactive policies map](#).

Neighbourhood plans can be brought forward before an up to date Local Plan. Where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before the emerging Local Plan is adopted, the Council is expected to work positively with the town/parish council to minimise any conflicts between the emerging plan.

How can HDC help?

We can discuss with you at the start what the requirement for general conformity with the development plan's strategic policies means. We will check your draft and submitted plan to assess how it meets the requirement for general conformity.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: general conformity](#)

Other Resources

[Development Plan for Huntingdonshire](#)

EU obligations

Your neighbourhood plan must be compatible with EU obligations in order to be legally compliant. The main relevant obligations relate to the environmental impacts of your plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) integrates consideration of environmental impacts into the process of preparing a plan. Your neighbourhood plan will need to be 'screened' to check whether or not it will have certain impacts that trigger the need for a full SEA. This includes consultation with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

Other EU obligations (see below) may also be triggered, depending on:

- the presence of protected species or habitats in or close to your area, and
- what your neighbourhood plan contains

Habitat Regulation Assessment

Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) assesses the potential effects arising from a plan against the conservation objectives of any site designated for its nature conservation importance.

How can HDC help?

We will discuss with you the steps that you need to take, and what evidence needs to be produced in order to comply with the EU obligations.

We will complete SEA and HRA screening for your neighbourhood plan at the appropriate stage as well as carry out consultations on these with the relevant bodies. This is free of charge.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: EU obligations](#)

Other Resources

Stage 1: Getting started

Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a procedure to be followed to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any significant effects to the environment and so that the public can participate early on in the process. This assessment has been completed as part of the preparation to the Local Plan so this would only be relevant when allocating additional large scale developments in your neighbourhood plan.

[Locality Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 2
[Locality - Understand if your Plan requires SEA](#)

Habitats and Wild Bird Directives

These aim to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species. This will only be triggered if such protected species or habitats are within or close to your neighbourhood area.

EU obligations are complex, and if triggered, could require a substantial amount of work in order to address. It is important to discuss with us early in the process whether your plan is likely to trigger the need for a full SEA and assessments relating to other EU obligations.

Support for Neighbourhood Planning

Overview of support from Huntingdonshire District Council

HDC has a statutory requirement to provide support for neighbourhood planning, which is known as the 'Duty to Support'. This includes two specific roles:

- taking decisions at key stages in the neighbourhood planning process; and
- providing advice and assistance to the town and parish councils preparing neighbourhood plans. The advice and assistance we provide comprises a number of roles as set out below:

Advice	Assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical expertise (e.g. explaining how you can meet the legal requirements for neighbourhood plans; providing advice in policy writing)• Critical friend (e.g. commenting on draft questionnaires, reviewing the draft plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process guidance (e.g. explaining the timescales and processes for examination and referendum)• Provide and point to evidence (e.g. population and housing evidence sources and data)• Point you towards further support and funding (e.g. connecting you with groups that are further ahead in the process)• Please note we will need about 2 weeks notice to review a draft plan before meeting to discuss it

Our support for neighbourhood planning is set out at each stage of the process in this guide, and is summarised at Appendix 1: 'Support from HDC'. In each section of this guide, look for the blue box on the right to see what assistance HDC can provide.

Keep talking to us!

Setting aside the detail of our neighbourhood planning support offer, it's important to remember that the best neighbourhood plans which make a real impact to development in their area, are the result of a constructive and ongoing conversation with HDC. Keeping in touch with HDC, and in particular at key points in the process will ensure that your neighbourhood plan:

- is based upon the most relevant evidence;
- is additional and complementary to local plan policies; and
- has teeth, in terms of influencing planning decisions.

A caveat

HDC is required to provide the neighbourhood planning assistance it considers appropriate. The planning policy team is responsible for the preparation of the local plan, including supporting evidence and other documents such as supplementary planning documents as well as for neighbourhood planning support.

Neighbourhood planning by definition is led by the community; we cannot and should not write your plan for you. The support offer set out in this guide is therefore focused on providing specific support at key points in the neighbourhood planning process.

Other support and funding

Online guidance

There is a wealth of excellent neighbourhood planning guidance available online. The following list provides links to some of these (N.B. this is not intended to be exhaustive):

Locality Neighbourhood Planning Key Resources	Consolidated nationally produced advice on preparing a neighbourhood plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explanation of neighbourhood planning • toolkits and resources to support your preparation of specific elements of your plan, for instance choosing site allocations, good design and how to write planning policies • case studies of adopted neighbourhood plans
National Planning Practice Guidance: Neighbourhood Planning	Sets out the national requirements for the neighbourhood planning system including key stages and decisions (e.g. deciding neighbourhood areas, the legal tests for neighbourhood plans, and the process of independent examination and referendum).
Department of Communities & Local Government: Notes on neighbourhood planning	Update bulletins on neighbourhood plan progress nationally, including links to new resources as they become available.
Twitter #neighbourhoodplanning	Good for getting inspiration and following links to other's activities.

Funding

There is a significant amount of funding available to support neighbourhood planning:

Stage 1: Getting started

- All groups writing a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order will be eligible to apply for up to £10,000 in a neighbourhood planning grant (correct as at May 2023).
- Groups facing more complex issues can apply for specific packages of '[Technical Support](#)' where needed, and may also be eligible for further £8,000 in grant if allocating housing; carrying out a housing needs assessment, design codes, site options and assessment; or wanting a plan health check.

Visit the [Locality Neighbourhood Planning funding](#) web-pages to find out more, and to fill in an Expression of Interest form.

In addition, the Council also receives funding from government for each neighbourhood plan produced. The funding pays for the examiner and referendum, as well as for some of the support we provide. This means that these formal stages of the neighbourhood planning process are free to groups preparing their plans.

Further practical support

As noted above, producing a successful neighbourhood plan requires some planning expertise. While the Council can provide a range of support as set out in this guide, you may feel that you would value more intensive planning support for specific parts of the process. The [My Community grants and support web-page](#) identifies some of the things that the grant funding available could be used for, including to engage an independent planning expert.

Step 2: Applying for a Neighbourhood Area

The town or parish council will need to apply for an area to be designated as a neighbourhood area.

Deciding on the 'Neighbourhood Area'

The most straightforward approach to producing a neighbourhood plan is to produce it for the whole of a single town or parish area. In nearly all cases, where a town or parish council applies for the whole their area to be designated as a neighbourhood area, HDC must designate it straight away.

However, the neighbourhood area does not have to follow existing administrative boundaries. An area can either be smaller or larger than the area of the town or parish:

- **Alternative Scenario 1 - smaller area:**
A town council may decide that one particular area of their town is particularly cohesive and has its own identity so might consider drawing the area smaller than the area of the town council.
- **Alternative Scenario 2 - larger area:**
Two or more adjacent parish councils for villages that are close together may decide that drawing up a neighbourhood plan for both parishes would have benefits because the plan could tackle issues shared by both villages.

There can be benefits to working together as a group of councils:

- Common issues can be tackled together
- There will be more people with a wider range of experience that can help with creating the plan
- Costs can be shared
- It can build upon one or a number of individual parishes' Parish Plans

You can even choose a neighbourhood area that goes across district council boundaries. However, you should be aware that this will be challenging as the neighbourhood plan will need to be in conformity with the local plan for each district.

If you decide that a larger area would make sense all the town or parish councils involved will need to agree, with one being the lead council that would make the area application.

You should also check whether there are other neighbourhood areas nearby. If you think that part of an area that is already designated as a neighbourhood area should be part of your area you will need to talk to us about how to proceed.

Whatever area you decide upon you will need to say why you have chosen it when you make your application.

How can HDC help?

We can advise you on things to consider when deciding upon the area for the neighbourhood plan.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Designating a neighbourhood area](#)

Other Resources

[Neighbourhood Planning on HDC website](#),
[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 1

Time needed

No time constraints: take as long as you need.

Stage 1: Getting started

Making an application

To make an application for the designation of a neighbourhood area the town or parish council needs to write a letter to Huntingdonshire District Council. We have set up a 'Template Area Application Letter' to get you started.

The letter needs to include:

1. a statement explaining why the proposed neighbourhood area is considered to be an appropriate area; and
2. a statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act. Town and parish councils are relevant bodies⁽²⁾.

A map showing the area that the application is for will need to be included with the letter. We can prepare this for you on request.

If the area being applied for is the same as the town or parish then all you need to do is tell us and we will provide the map. If you decide on a different area you can talk to us about producing a map.

How can HDC help?

We can provide the map needed for the application

Guidance and Regulations

[Regulation 5](#)

Other Resources

'Template Area Application Letter'
[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 1

Time needed

No time constraints: take as long as you need.

Step 3: Consultation on the Application

For applications for new neighbourhood areas covering the whole of a single parish or town area, HDC will process the application as soon as possible without the need for consultation.

For applications for new neighbourhood areas covering something other than a single parish or town area, HDC is required to consult the public and relevant consultation bodies. An application will be subject to public consultation for at least 6 weeks.

Consultation events will be held online on the Council's [Consultation Portal](#).

We will tell you beforehand when the consultation will start and finish. You should publicise and promote the consultation locally.

How can HDC help?

This step is our responsibility.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Designating a neighbourhood area](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 1

Time needed

² Areas with a parish meeting as opposed to a parish council will need to go through an extra step of applying to be designated as a neighbourhood forum. This designation is subject to certain tests. If you live in an area with a parish meeting please contact HDC in the first instance.

We aim to process an application for a single parish or town boundary within 2 weeks.

For applications other than for a single parish or town area, we aim to set up and start the consultation within 2 weeks of receiving a complete application. The consultation takes at least 6 weeks.

Step 4: Designation of the Neighbourhood Area

For applications for new neighbourhood areas covering the whole of a single parish or town area, HDC will designate the application as soon as possible without the need for consultation, publicising the designation to everyone registered on the [Consultation Portal](#).

How can HDC help?

This step is our responsibility.

For applications for new neighbourhood areas covering something other than a single parish or town area, after consultation the responses will be considered. A report detailing the main issues raised in responses will be prepared for the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Economic Development. In most circumstances, this report will have a recommendation for the area to be designated.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Designating a neighbourhood area](#)

Where the application is for a neighbourhood area wholly within Huntingdonshire, the Council has a total of 13 weeks to determine the application from the date that the consultation started. If the area extends outside Huntingdonshire we will have 20 weeks to determine the application.

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 1

Time needed

We aim to process an application for a single parish or town area within 2 weeks.

In most other cases we have 13 weeks from the start of the consultation to determine the area application.

Stage 2: Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

Stage 2: Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

The second stage of producing a neighbourhood plan is to draw up a draft plan. There are three main steps in this stage:

'Step 5: Community engagement and evidence'

'Step 6: Developing Plan Content'

'Step 7: Consulting on the Draft Plan'

Step 5: Community engagement and evidence

This is possibly the single most important step; the content of the neighbourhood plan depends on finding out what is needed for your area, from both community views and secondary evidence.

Community engagement

What is community engagement for neighbourhood planning?

Community engagement is the range of activities aimed at involving everyone in the community in the development of your neighbourhood plan. Your aim should be that all members of your community have the opportunity to shape what your neighbourhood plan says, and that they feel ownership over the final document.

Who to involve?

Community engagement should aim to involve everyone who might be affected by the neighbourhood plan. This will mainly be residents but it will also include anyone who travels into the area to work and visitors to the area. You should engage with businesses in the area as they may have different views. You should also seek to include landowners or their agents if you are thinking about designating land for any reason, or if development is proposed anywhere. A priority early on in the plan-making process should therefore be to list all the people and groups you can think of who you will need to involve.

Community engagement process

There are no hard and fast rules about how, or how many times, to ask for community views when developing a neighbourhood plan. However, before going ahead to write your plan, it may be helpful:

- At the start, to focus on informing people about what a neighbourhood plan is, that a neighbourhood plan is being prepared for their area, and how they can get involved;
- Early on in the process, to ask open questions, enabling everyone to say what is important to them, rather than limiting views to specified issues;
- Building on that initial engagement, to delve deeper into the issues people have highlighted as being important.

How can HDC help?

We can help you decide how best to involve the community and get their views. We can help you design a questionnaire, or comment on one you have prepared.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Consulting on, and publicising, a neighbourhood plan](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 1

[Locality - How to Consult with your Community](#)

[Locality - How to Write and Conduct Social Surveys to Gather Data for your Neighbourhood Plan](#)

[Locality - How to Use Social Media to Engage your Local Community](#)

Stage 2: Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

Community engagement methods

What engagement methods to use is up to you. Be creative to engage people's interest and imagination. It may help to research methods set out in other community planning guides. Methods could include:

- Polls or surveys (paper and/ or online)
- Online discussion forums, social media comments
- Market/ street stalls/ stalls at community events
- Open workshops
- A walk round your area, with people taking pictures of what they like or don't like
- Making a 3D model of your area, using approaches like [Planning for Real](#)

Time needed

No time constraints: take as long as you need.

Evidence

There are a large number of sources of information on a wide range of topics that can support your plan, including:

- **Plans and Strategies:**
As explained in 'Strategic policies in the local plan', your plan must be consistent with the development plan for the district. In addition, there are a number of other plans and strategies for the district and wider area which to a greater or lesser extent may affect your town or parish. Your goal should be to ensure that your plan is consistent with and complementary to (e.g. adds detail to) these plans and strategies. See 'Plans, Strategies and Designations' for links and advice.
- **Designations:**
Policy designations for buildings (e.g. listed buildings), sites (e.g. scheduled ancient monuments), routes (e.g. public rights of way) and areas (e.g. local nature reserves) highlight what is special in your area, and what should therefore be protected or enhanced when planning for development. You need to take account of these kinds of designations when preparing your plan. See 'Plans, Strategies and Designations' in Appendix 2 for links and advice.
- **Evidence:**
The policies you include in your plan must be based upon robust evidence as well as upon community views. There is a huge range of evidence sources available in different formats, including written reports, data presented as interactive mapping or charts, and raw data. Given the breadth of information available, it is important to think carefully about what is the most relevant evidence that will actively inform your plan. In addition, see if you can minimise the collection of your own data: you may be able to use or build upon evidence gathered for the local plan, or for other nearby neighbourhood plans. See 'Evidence' for links and advice.

If you need technical studies completing, for instance to support a Design Code on site selections, check the ['Technical Support'](#) package from Locality as this work may be available for you through the government's support service for neighbourhood plans.

How can HDC help?

We can point you to potentially relevant evidence sources for your plan.
We can provide a set of initial maps to help you consider the planning issues in your area

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Evidence](#)

Other Resources

Appendix 2: 'Useful Resources'
[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 1

[Locality - How to Consult your Community](#)

[Locality - Listing of Neighbourhood Planning Guidance available](#)

Time needed

No time constraints: take as long as you need.

Stage 2: Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

Striking a balance between community engagement and secondary evidence

The best neighbourhood plans are built upon a balance of community views and secondary evidence:

Don't go overboard on community engagement:

Secondary evidence can help inform community discussion, moving the debate beyond one based solely upon personal opinion. Particular issues to consider include:

- Don't ask people questions you could find the answer to elsewhere: are there other sources of information providing answers to the questions you're asking, perhaps in existing evidence?
- Be aware of consultation fatigue: has community engagement happened recently in your area which might mean people are less willing to spend the time providing their views again? Can you use responses from other recent community engagement to inform your plan?
- Have things changed? If events happen or circumstances change or even just over time people's view change. You should think carefully about how best to re-consult if you think views have changed.

On the other hand, don't get swamped by evidence and data:

There is a huge amount of interesting evidence and data available and it's easy to get a bit overwhelmed by it and/ or to explore it in great detail. When looking through what evidence to use to inform your plan, it may be helpful to:

- Consider what story the evidence is telling you and why you're using it. In particular, it's important not to overwhelm the wider community with loads of figures and statistics that are not particularly relevant to the plan you're developing;
- Remember that informing your plan with this type of evidence is only one part of the story: making sure that the community is fully involved in shaping the plan is just as important.

Step 6: Developing Plan Content

What to consider when writing your plan

Once you have gathered community views and evidence, there is a wide range of things to think about when drawing up the draft plan:

- **Identify key issues/ themes for the plan to address -**
This should be based on the engagement and consultation you have done and the evidence that you have collected.
- **Consistency with the strategic local plan policies -**
The strategic policies are identified on page 4 of the Local Plan. These are the policies in the Development Strategy (policies LP1-LP9), all site allocations, policy LP11 Design Context and LP24 Affordable Housing Provision. National guidance prohibits a neighbourhood plan from promoting less development than is set out in these policies.
- **Develop clear aims for the Neighbourhood Plan -**
These should seek to tackle the issues and themes bearing in mind that the policies with which to achieve these aims can only deal with planning matters.
- **How best to use processes such as Sustainability Appraisal -**
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) can be a useful process to help demonstrate that the neighbourhood plan will contribute to sustainable development. The content of your neighbourhood plan will influence whether there is a need to think about SA, SEA and other EU obligations (see Legal Requirements for Neighbourhood Plans).
- **Write planning policies and guidance -**
Policies should clearly identify the circumstances in which they apply. Guidance is available on how to write planning policies to help ensure you develop clear, positive policies that achieve the aims of your community and provide specific guidance for those wanting to develop. There is no need to replicate Local Plan policies as decisions will take both plans into account together.
- **Identify any projects or proposals for the neighbourhood area -**
Do the projects you have in mind need to be enabled by policies?
- **Consider allocating specific sites for different uses -**
If there are different options for where the development you want can go you should think about which is best. If you identify one option as better than the alternatives it is probably worth specifically identifying that in the plan. You will need to provide evidence explaining why the chosen site is the most sustainable option. Allocating specific development sites can be an empowering process which provides a good degree of certainty over future development but can be contentious. The government's ['Technical Support'](#) package can help you with this part of your plan. You can ask us for an indicative housing requirement figure to help you shape your housing policies and any allocations you may choose to make. If you are allocating development you will also need to consider any extra infrastructure needed to ensure it is delivered in a sustainable way.
- **Guidance from other organisations -**

How can HDC help?

We can provide support on issues such as:

- Making best use of the evidence
- What makes a good policy
- The role of supporting text
- The pros and cons of Sustainability Appraisal

We can advise about:

- The potential need to gather more evidence to support your plan.
- Whether you need to take additional work to address EU obligations.
- The use of monitoring indicators.

We can provide a health-check of your draft plan, advising you on whether changes may be needed to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions.

We will screen your plan to see if it requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment under 'EU obligations'.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Preparing a neighbourhood plan](#)

Other Resources

Appendix 2: 'Useful Resources'

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 2

Stage 2: Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

Detailed guidance is also available from organisations such as [Historic England](#) and [Anglian Water](#). These provide more focussed guidance on how neighbourhood plans could look to address issues relating to heritage and water.

Considering the implementation of your neighbourhood plan early on

When drafting your neighbourhood plan it is important to ensure that the priorities in it have a realistic chance of being delivered. To achieve this, you may wish to consider putting together an action plan for how to achieve the aims you have identified in the plan.

An action plan could also be a good way to identify your priorities for spending Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts. More information on CIL is available in Stage 4: 'Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan'.

You should also consider setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-set) indicators to monitor the priorities in your plan. On the other hand, it may be more manageable to measure the implementation of your plan's priorities using indicators already included within the Council's Annual Monitoring Report, which provides information on issues such as housing delivery and a range of environmental measures.

Draft neighbourhood plan health-check

As set out in the 'Legal Requirements for Neighbourhood Plans' section, your plan will need to meet 'The Basic Conditions' in order to pass examination and be adopted ('made'). Please share with us drafts of your plan, so that we can advise you whether or not changes may be needed to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions. We will also advise on a number of additional considerations including whether the policies:

- deliver the plan's stated aims;
- are development-related (some plan aims may be achieved more successfully through community action rather than through a planning policy);
- are complementary to national and local planning policies (ie they provide additional detail and don't replicate);
- are locally specific; and
- are realistic (ie does the policy address development that is likely to come forward?).

We would particularly value providing input on your draft plan when you've finished writing it and are preparing to consult on it (see 'Pre-submission consultation'). This is the last opportunity to have a fully open discussion about all options and, if necessary, to make substantial changes to policies with no effect on the wider community's expectations. It's therefore important to consider the big questions at this point (e.g. what is the plan and its policies aiming to achieve?), and grapple with any difficult issues.

SEA and HRA Screening

[Locality - How to Write Planning Policies for Your Neighbourhood Plan](#)

[Locality - How to keep your Neighbourhood Plan Simple](#)

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning for the Environment](#)

[Locality - How to consider the Environment in Neighbourhood Plans](#)

[Locality - Low-Carbon Neighbourhood Planning: How to Create Happier, Healthier, Greener Communities](#)

[Locality - How to Undertake a Housing Needs Assessment](#)

[Locality - How to Assess and Allocate Sites for Development](#)

[Locality - Testing the Viability of Proposals in your Neighbourhood Plan](#)

[Locality - What Transport Matters can a Neighbourhood Plan Address](#)

[Locality - Good Design in Neighbourhood Planning](#)

[Locality - Making Local Green Space Designations in your Neighbourhood Plan](#)

[Locality - How To Commission Consultants to work on your Neighbourhood Plan](#)

[HDC Annual Monitoring Report](#)

Time needed

No time constraints: take as long as you need.

Stage 2: Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

This point is also often the most appropriate time to screen your draft plan as to whether it requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment or a Habitats Regulations Assessment under EU obligations. We can do the screening for you free of charge, including completing consultation with relevant bodies; please contact us for more details.

Step 7: Consulting on the Draft Plan

Pre-submission consultation

The town/ parish council is required to undertake consultation for a period of at least 6 weeks on the draft neighbourhood plan.

You should try to publicise the consultation as widely as possible. You should specifically contact:

- HDC - all departments
- key consultees (e.g. Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England)
- neighbouring district, town or parish councils, as applicable
- significant land-owners, particularly if you are proposing to allocate their land for any reason
- local community organisations

For everyone that comments you should record contact details (an email address is usually sufficient) so that you can inform them of any changes you make in order to address their comments, but also to send to HDC as part of the Consultation Statement when you submit the neighbourhood plan (See Stage 3: 'Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan'). When gathering contact details you should clearly set out how they will (and will not) be used.

Other things to think about:

- Would a comment form help make sure you collect all the details you need?
- Where will you have copies of the plan available, both printed and electronic versions?
- Would it make sense to have a longer consultation period?
- Does the timing of the consultation make sense?

Responding to the consultation: are changes needed?

You should identify the main issues raised in comments on the draft plan. You should then decide whether you want to change the plan to try to address these issues. You may find that people raise issues that are not related to anything that is in the plan, in which case it is OK to decide that you will not change the plan to address those issues.

It may be a good idea to prompt people to suggest how the draft plan could be changed to address the issue they raise. However, you don't have to change the plan as they suggest.

How can HDC help?

We can help you publicise the consultation by providing contact details for key consultees. We can also use our social media and other online tools to help publicise the consultation. We will comment on the draft plan.

Guidance and Regulations

[Regulation 14](#), [Regulation 21](#) and [Schedule 1](#).
[NPPG: Consulting on, and publicising, a neighbourhood plan](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C- Stage 2

Time needed

The consultation has to last at least 6 weeks. There are no time constraints on how long responding to issues raised in the consultation should take.

Stage 2: Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

We will comment on the revised draft plan. We will concentrate on whether or not the plan meets the Basic Conditions and in particular its consistency with the Local Plan.

You will need to set out information about the consultation in the Consultation Statement (see Stage 3: 'Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan'). You may find it beneficial to look at how other town/ parish councils have done this or how we have done it for the [Local Plan](#) or our Supplementary Planning Documents.

Stage 3: Getting the Plan in place

This stage of producing a Neighbourhood Plan is the boring official bit where most of the actions are taken by HDC. There are six steps to this stage:

'Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan'

'Step 9: Consulting on the Submitted Plan'

'Step 10: The Examination'

'Step 11: Progressing to Referendum'

'Step 12: The Referendum'

'Step 13: Adoption of the Plan'

Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan

This step is when the town/ parish council passes over the neighbourhood plan to HDC.

What's required at submission?

You will need to send us a:

- **Basic Conditions Statement** - a statement setting out how the neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions. See 'Legal Requirements for Neighbourhood Plans' for advice on what is included in the Basic Conditions. Please note that some of the Basic Conditions apply only to Neighbourhood Development Orders.
- **Consultation Statement** - a statement setting out who and how you consulted on the neighbourhood plan, the main issues raised and how you have addressed them in the final version of the plan. This should include a list of all the people/ organisations that made comments on the draft plan.
- **Consultees' contact details** - the contact details, usually an email address, for all the people/ organisations that made comments on the draft plan (See Pre-submission consultation) - this is important as we need this information when we consult on the submitted plan. This should not be part of the Consultation Statement as the contact details need to be kept private.
- **Copy of the Neighbourhood Plan** - It is advisable to send us a printed copy and an electronic version as we will need to publish your plan on our consultation portal.

The submission documents also need to include a map of the neighbourhood area but we can provide this.

How can HDC help?

We can advise on what needs to be included in each of the submission documents. We can provide the map of the neighbourhood area. Once submitted, we will check that the submission documents include everything that is required.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Submitting a neighbourhood plan](#)
[NPPG - Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plan](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 3

Time needed

No time constraints: take as long as you need.

Stage 3: Getting the Plan in place

It will take us about 2 weeks to check the submission documents include everything that is required.

It will take us about 2 weeks to check the submission documents.

Step 9: Consulting on the Submitted Plan

HDC will publicise the neighbourhood plan and consult on it for a period of at least 6 weeks. We will run an online consultation event on our [Consultation Portal](#).

How can HDC help?

This step is our responsibility.

You can help us by publicising the consultation locally to ensure residents in your area are aware of the consultation to maximise their opportunities to comment. We will directly notify all people whose contact details you supply who have made comments earlier on in your plan's preparation.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Submitting a neighbourhood plan](#)

We will make comments on the submitted plan if we consider that there are parts of the plan that do not meet the Basic Conditions.

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 3

Time needed

The consultation must be open for at least 6 weeks

Step 10: The Examination

Choosing an Examiner

We will discuss the appointment of the examiner with you. There are two main options:

1. We can contact independent companies providing examiners, who will send us details of examiners, based on any specialisms we specify.
2. We can contact directly anyone we think would be a good examiner, for example someone who has examined other neighbourhood plans in Huntingdonshire.

How can HDC help?

We will discuss appointing the examiner with you
We will jointly decide who to appoint

We will discuss with you who we think is most appropriate and available within a reasonable timeframe. The decision of whom to appoint is the responsibility of HDC but we will decide jointly with you.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: The Independent Examination](#)

Stage 3: Getting the Plan in place

Send items to the Examiner

HDC will send all the comments received during the submission consultation to the examiner along with all the submission documents.

Other Resources

[Intelligent Plans and Examinations](#)
[NPIERS - Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service](#)

Time needed

There are no constraints on how long this should take.

The Examination

The examination will probably be conducted by what is known as 'written representations' but could include hearings. The examiner will decide if hearings are necessary based on the complexity of the issues raised and the impact on whether the plan will meet the 'The Basic Conditions'.

How can HDC help?

We will check through the examiner's 'fact check' report and provide or correct any factual information

The Examiner's Report

The examiner writes a report that sets out whether:

- the plan meets the Basic Conditions as it stands;
- modifications will be necessary for the plan to meet the Basic Conditions; or
- modifications can't be made to enable the plan to meet the Basic Conditions

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: The independent examination](#)

If the plan meets the Basic Conditions as it stands or if modifications are needed the recommendation is that the plan can proceed to a referendum.

However, if the examiner concludes that it is not possible to modify the plan to enable it to meet the Basic Conditions the recommendation will be that the plan cannot proceed to a referendum.

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 3

The report will be sent to the town/ parish council and to HDC in draft for 'fact checking', when basic information in the report, such as dates, sequence of events or names can be corrected before publication. It is not an opportunity to query or question the examiner's conclusions. This is a 'not for publication' version and should be kept confidential to HDC and the town/ parish council.

Once the final version of the Examiner's report has been received we will discuss with you how to proceed.

Time needed

The examiner will take as long as they need to properly examine the plan. The examiner will ask us to 'fact check' their draft report usually allowing us 1 or 2 weeks.

Where modifications are necessary they will need to be incorporated into the plan. Ideally, you will prepare an updated version but HDC can complete this if necessary as long as you provide an editable version of the document. We can help by providing any additional maps and plans requested by the examiners. Factual updates and correction of typos can be addressed at this stage.

Stage 3: Getting the Plan in place

Step 11: Progressing to Referendum

HDC has a procedure in place for when an examiner's report is received.

Although the examiner's report is not binding we have limited options available to us at this stage. We can:

- 1. Act upon the examiner's report and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum:**
This option should be taken when the examiner either recommends that the plan meets the Basic Conditions as it stands or can meet them subject to modifications.
- 2. Propose to take a substantially different decision from the examiner's recommendation:**
This option can only be taken as a result of new evidence or a different view taken by the Council about a particular fact. In this case the Council must notify all those identified in the consultation statement (see 'Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan') and invite representations on the alternative decision for a period of 6 weeks. Where necessary as a result of these representations the examination may need to be reopened.
- 3. Decide not to progress the neighbourhood plan in light of the examiner's report:**
This is only permissible where the examiner has recommended that the plan does not proceed to referendum as it fails to meet the basic conditions or legislative requirements and cannot be modified to do so.

We are required to make a decision about whether to progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum within 5 weeks of receiving the examiner's final report, or to agree with the town/ parish council a different timescale. Whether or not 5 weeks is realistic to consider, discuss, agree and make modifications depends upon the scale of modifications recommended by the examiner.

The decision as to whether the plan proceeds to referendum is an important one, since the neighbourhood plan will, subject to a majority 'yes' vote, become part of the development plan. Soon after receiving the examiner's final report we will therefore arrange to meet with you to discuss:

- The scale of modifications proposed by the examiner;
- Based upon the above, a realistic timescale for making modifications and taking the decision of whether or not to proceed to referendum, whether that is 5 weeks or a longer period; and
- A suitable target date to hold a referendum on the neighbourhood plan (see 'Step 12: The Referendum').

Once we have agreed an approach with you a report will be prepared for Cabinet to formally determine the course of action to be taken, in most cases agreeing to progress a modified version of the neighbourhood plan for referendum.

How can HDC help?

We lead on this step, but we will involve you in the discussion. We will arrange to meet with you soon after receiving the examiner's final report to discuss potential modifications and next steps.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: The independent examination](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#), Part C - Stage 3

Time needed

5 weeks, or a different timescale agreed with you.

Step 12: The Referendum

Setting up the Referendum

As set out above, we will work with you to decide on a suitable date for the referendum. In most cases the referendum must be held within 56 working days of the formal decision to proceed to referendum, unless:

- the date is postponed within a limited time period to combine the referendum with another polling event; or
- a different date is agreed with the town/ parish council.

Assuming a majority 'Yes' vote, there is a requirement for the neighbourhood plan to be 'made' within 8 weeks of the referendum. As neighbourhood plans are 'made' by Full Council this may influence when we decide to hold the referendum.

The examiner may advise that the area for the referendum should be enlarged from the neighbourhood area. If this is the case those residents living in the larger area outside the neighbourhood area would be eligible to vote in the referendum in the same way as those living within the neighbourhood area.

We will do all the necessary administration for setting up the referendum and cover its costs. It is our responsibility to publicise the details and arrangements for the referendum 28 working days ahead of the date. All material published by us is limited to factual information and cannot support or oppose the neighbourhood plan.

If more than 50% of those voting vote in favour of the plan it can then be 'made'.

Gaining Support in the Referendum

A campaign organiser may promote a 'Yes' or 'No' vote in the referendum. Factors that will make a 'Yes' vote more likely include:

- publicity at all stages, so that the voting population know about the plan
- involvement of a range of partner organisations
- robust community involvement and engagement from the beginning and throughout the plan-making process
- involving and engaging with as many people as possible, including minority groups, land owners and their agents as well as local businesses
- basing the content of the plan on firm evidence and on the outcomes of community engagement and explaining how this has been done
- explaining key decisions made in producing the plan
- openness and transparency in the plan-making process
- clearly explaining the choices and compromises made in the plan
- addressing the diverse range of local needs and wants

There are limitations on things like campaign expenditure. We will be able to advise on this.

How can HDC help?

We will discuss with you when the referendum should be held. We can advise on the limitations on campaign expenditure.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: the referendum](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide, Worksheet 7](#)

Time needed

In most cases the referendum must be held within 56 working days of the formal decision to proceed to referendum, unless a different date is agreed with the town or parish council.

We have to give at least 28 working days notice that a referendum is going to take place.

The result of the referendum should be available within 1 week.

Stage 3: Getting the Plan in place

Step 13: Adoption of the Plan

If more than 50% of those voting vote in favour of the plan it can then be 'made' by Cabinet.

Following a successful referendum, HDC Full Council will formally adopt the plan at their next scheduled meeting.

Once the neighbourhood plan is 'made' it becomes a part of the 'development plan' for Huntingdonshire. This means that it is a statutory material consideration in guiding future development and in the determination of planning applications within the neighbourhood plan area.

How can HDC help?

This step is our responsibility.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: the referendum](#)

Other Resources

[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#),
Worksheet 7

Time needed

Within 8 weeks of a successful referendum.

Stage 4: Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan

Your neighbourhood plan has been 'made'- well done! This is a great achievement, so remember to make a point of celebrating this milestone.

However, the neighbourhood plan being 'made' is not the end of the story; the final neighbourhood plan stage is about delivering the priorities identified in your plan. Set out below are a number of things to consider to ensure that your neighbourhood plan creates positive change on the ground, as opposed to just being a nice-looking document.

Implementation of policies

Development management decisions

HDC will determine planning applications in your area in accordance with the development plan for the area, which will include the Local Plan and the neighbourhood plan.

Allocations of land for development

Allocating land for development in a neighbourhood plan does not automatically mean that the housing, shop or community building you want to see developed will magically pop up. Even as you write your neighbourhood plan you could start thinking about how you will ensure that the development you want to see happens. This could involve talking to landowners, talking to HDC about how the development could be delivered, or starting to consider how a project might be funded.

How can HDC help?

We can discuss with you how to ensure that neighbourhood plan priorities result in development (e.g. working with you to deliver exceptions housing).

Community Infrastructure Levy

Under the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), 15% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) collected as a result of development in a given parish area will be passed to the relevant town/ parish council, this is commonly known as the 'meaningful proportion'. Payments will be capped to £100 per council tax dwelling per year, for example, a town/ parish with 500 dwellings cannot receive more than £50,000 of CIL receipts per year.

For areas with an adopted neighbourhood plan the amount to be passed to the town/ parish council is 25% with no cap.

The 'meaningful proportion' is required to be used to support the development of the local area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

To ensure transparency town/ parish councils must publish for each financial year:

- their total CIL receipts;
- their total expenditure;

How can HDC help?

We can advise on how and when you should spend the meaningful CIL proportion. We can also advise on what is required for the financial reporting.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Spending CIL receipts](#)

Other Resources

[CIL on HDC website](#)
[Locality Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#),
Worksheet 8

Stage 4: Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan

- a summary of what the CIL was spent on; and
- the total amount of receipts retained at the end of the reported year from that year and previous years.

The CIL report must be published and sent to us by 31 December following the end of the reported year.

Time needed

Financial reporting needs to be done at the end of each financial year

Addressing community priorities which don't relate to planning

As noted earlier, neighbourhood plans often identify community priorities that don't relate to the planning system. Such priorities might include things like tackling speeding, addressing anti-social behaviour, or setting up a community group. These can often be addressed more quickly than priorities linked to the planning system. You can start to work on these actions even before your plan is 'made'.

Consider setting up a new working group to take forward community-based actions. The neighbourhood plan working group may feel in need of a rest!

How can HDC help?

We can point you to sources of help in addressing community priorities which don't relate to planning, both within the Council and in other organisations.

Time needed

No time constraints: take as much time as you need.

Monitoring and reviewing your neighbourhood plan

Monitoring

Keeping track of the progress of the objectives and policies included in your plan, monitored either by you or in our Annual Monitoring Report, will help you assess whether your plan's aims are being achieved, and if not, whether you need to do anything different to achieve them.

Reviewing/ refreshing your neighbourhood plan

There is no requirement to update your neighbourhood plan, however, after a few years circumstances in your area may change, and you may wish to review or refresh your neighbourhood plan to bring it up to date.

The National Planning Practice Guidance identifies three ways in which neighbourhood plans can be updated; the process of doing so varies depending on the degree of change:

- 1. Minor (non-material) modifications to a neighbourhood plan** – the Council can with the consent of the town/parish council update the plan. Such updates can include correcting any spelling errors or minor errors within the plan. Consultation, examination and referendum are not required.

How can HDC help?

We can discuss with you whether there is a need to refresh or review your plan and the appropriate course of action.

Guidance and Regulations

[NPPG: Updating a neighbourhood plan](#)

Stage 4: Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan

To make more substantial updates to the neighbourhood plan, consultation and examination are required as set out in the guidance with some additional requirements:

- the town/parish council must state whether they believe these modifications change the nature of the plan or not during the consultation and submission of the modified plan; and
- HDC, when sending the modified plan to the examiner, must state whether we believe the modifications change the nature of the plan.

Depending on the examiner's decision, one of the following courses of action will apply:

2. Material modifications which do change the nature of the plan – if the examiner decides that the proposed modifications do change the nature of the plan, the town/parish council must decide whether to continue with the examination. HDC are required to publicise and consider the examiner's report in line with the procedure of making a new neighbourhood plan. A decision can be made whether to take the modified plan to referendum, where if successful, the modified plan can be adopted as part of the development plan.

3. Material modifications which do not change the nature of the plan – such modifications can include the addition of a design code to support an existing policy. If the examiner decides the modifications do not change the nature of the plan and the basic conditions are still met, the plan does not need to go to referendum. HDC will be required to make the modified plan within 5 weeks following receipt of the examiner's report (unless otherwise agreed with the town/parish council). The modified plan will then form part of the development plan.

Appendix 1: Support from HDC

Appendix 1: Support from HDC

HDC support at each stage of the process

Stage/ Step	HDC support	
	Taking key decisions/ formal process	Advice and assistance
Stage 1: 'Getting started'		
'Step 1: Getting organised'		<p>A meeting, providing advice and information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neighbourhood area options • The legal requirements that neighbourhood plans must meet • The neighbourhood planning process • Initial evidence sources • Sources of additional support and funding
'Step 2: Applying for a Neighbourhood Area'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a template neighbourhood area application letter (see 'Template Area Application Letter') • Provide a map for neighbourhood area application
'Step 3: Consultation on the Application'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For applications for something other than a single town or parish area, run consultation on neighbourhood area application 	
'Step 4: Designation of the Neighbourhood Area'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For applications for a single town or parish area, formally designate the neighbourhood area as soon as possible. • For applications for something other than a single town or parish area, assess responses to the consultation on neighbourhood area application, and • Formally designate the neighbourhood area 	
Stage 2: 'Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan'		
'Step 5: Community engagement and evidence'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a set of initial maps to help you consider the planning issues in your area • Comment on a draft survey before it is used with the community
'Step 6: Developing Plan Content'		<p>1 workshop, covering issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making best use of the evidence • What makes a good policy

Appendix 1: Support from HDC

Stage/ Step	HDC support	
	Taking key decisions/ formal process	Advice and assistance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of supporting text The pros and cons of Sustainability Appraisal <p>Targeted advice about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the potential need to gather more evidence to support your plan. whether you need to take additional work to address EU obligations. the use of monitoring indicators. <p>Complete SEA screening of your draft plan.</p> <p>Provide all mapping required for the draft plan.</p>
'Step 7: Consulting on the Draft Plan'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a 'health-check' of your plan before you consult on it. Provide contact details for key consultees. Help publicise the consultation using our social media and other online tools Provide a 'health-check' of your revised plan before you submit it.
Stage 3: 'Getting the Plan in place'		
'Step 8: Submitting the Neighbourhood Plan'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise on what needs to be included in each of the submission documents before you submit them. Provide the map of the neighbourhood area. Provide all mapping required for the submission draft plan Once submitted, check the submission documents include everything that is required.
'Step 9: Consulting on the Submitted Plan'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run the consultation on the submitted plan Collate comments from the examination consultation and submit them to the examiner 	
'Step 10: The Examination'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally appoint the neighbourhood plan examiner Complete a 'fact check' of the examiner's report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and decide jointly with you which examiner to appoint.
'Step 11: Progressing to Referendum'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally recommend that the plan progresses to referendum (depending on the outcome of the examination) 	A meeting to discuss:

Appendix 1: Support from HDC

Stage/ Step	HDC support	
	Taking key decisions/ formal process	Advice and assistance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential modifications in response to the examiner's report, the provision of any additional mapping requested by the examiners, and next steps in the process including dates for a referendum
'Step 12: The Referendum'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise and publicise the referendum 	
'Step 13: Adoption of the Plan'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally 'make' (adopt) the plan 	
Stage 4: 'Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan'		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide planning applications in your area in accordance with the Local Plan and your neighbourhood plan, as the development plan for the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with you how to ensure that neighbourhood plan priorities result in development (e.g. working with you to deliver exceptions housing). Advise on how and when you should spend the meaningful CIL proportion. Advise on what is required for the financial reporting. Point you to sources of help in addressing community priorities which don't relate to planning. Discuss with you whether there is a need to refresh or review your plan.

Appendix 2: Useful Resources

Plans, Strategies and Designations

Plans and Strategies

Planning

Huntingdonshire adopted development plan and interactive map	<p>As explained in 'Strategic policies in the local plan', your plan must be consistent with the development plan for the district.</p> <p>You will also need to work with us to minimise conflicts between your neighbourhood plan and the Local Plan.</p>
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Economy

Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Strategy and Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025 and Invest Huntingdonshire webpage	<p>Sets out the Council's economic priorities to 2025, it is accompanied by the Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025. The key themes and priorities are focused on: inward investment; conditions for growth; fuelling our economy; maximising our skills; vibrant town centres; and supporting our business sectors.</p>
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Environment

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy	<p>Designed to assist in shaping and co-ordinating the delivery of green infrastructure in the county, to provide social, environmental and economic benefits now and in the future. While the priority areas identified in the Strategy are large scale, the ideas and principles set out here can apply at a local level too.</p>
Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy (2020-2030) and 10 year Action Plan	<p>Sets out HDC's approach to the care and protection of existing trees and planting of new trees in the district.</p>

Landscape & Design

Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD	<p>Sets out important design principles and explains key design requirements of HDC. Designed as a manual to inform and inspire, and is taken into account by the Council when considering planning proposals. Your neighbourhood plan should seek to add detail to, rather than repeat, principles set out here.</p>
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)	<p>Provides information on the visual character of Huntingdonshire's landscape and larger settlements. Intended to raise awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the district, and assist the Council and others in considering future priorities for the conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the area's countryside, villages and towns. It includes a methodology for neighbourhood planning groups to produce their own landscape and townscape assessments to support policies within neighbourhood plans.</p>

Local

Existing plans for your area	E.g. a parish plan or village design statement. The evidence, community views or priorities identified in these documents could form a starting point for your neighbourhood plan.
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Appendix 2: Useful Resources

Places

Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy	This strategy will shape a vision for the future of the district by incorporating People, Place, the Economy and Environment. The strategy articulates Huntingdonshire's aspirations and ambitions, and maps out plans for place, people, economy, and the environment. It will also guide future strategy and policy developments as well as investment decisions made by the council and its partners to enable better outcomes for residents, communities, and businesses.
Market Towns Programme	The Market Towns Programme includes economic-led interventions to support Huntingdonshire's town centres to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, while also looking forward to renewing and reshaping our town centres and high streets for the future in a way that promotes growth, improves experiences, and ensures sustainability.

Transport

Market Town Transport Strategies	Produced for Huntingdon and Godmanchester, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey. Developed to provide a five year programme of transport improvements to contribute to the prosperity and wellbeing of each town. While some of these strategies are a little dated, they may include content and ambitions that are still relevant and which could inform your plan.
Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy	The Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy sets a transport vision for the area, promoting and enhancing safe active travel, to support a thriving economy and improve quality of life across Huntingdonshire.

Designations

Environment

Environmental protection designations	E.g. Ramsar sites and sites of special scientific interest. Available from the online mapping system Magic.gov.uk .
Agricultural Land Classification	Information about the classification of land quality for agriculture is available from the online mapping system Magic.gov.uk
Tree Preservation Orders	HDC information about Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), which may affect trees in your area.

Heritage

Listed buildings Historic England mapping	This HDC web page provides information about listed buildings including an interactive map. You can also see scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings on a map via the Historic England website.
Conservation areas	This HDC web page provides information about conservation areas including an interactive map.

Transport

Appendix 2: Useful Resources

Public Rights of Way	A layer available from the online mapping system My Cambridgeshire . Select Leisure & Culture/Public Rights of Way.
Cycle routes	Information about designated cycle routes compiled by the cycling charity Sustrans.

Evidence

General evidence sources	
2021 Census and Census 2011	The Census 2021 provides the most wide ranging, small area, and reliable dataset available for socio-economic statistics. The parish profile linked here is a good place to start when thinking about your parish. Only certain datasets have been published to date, but more will become available over time. In the meantime, data from the 2011 Census can be utilised.
Cambridgeshire Insight	Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group's evidence website provides lots of useful data in various formats including reports, spreadsheets and interactive data atlases. Many of the links below are from this website.
Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2017	This document identifies the infrastructure items required to support the allocations in the Local Plan to 2036. It identifies requirements for the following types of infrastructure: transport, education, libraries and lifelong learning, health and social care, emergency services, community facilities, sports facilities, green infrastructure and open space, utilities, waste management and flood protection and drainage.

Topic specific evidence sources	
Crime	
Cambridgeshire interactive crime atlas	A wide range of crime information at ward level.
Police.uk	Local crime map. Use the 'Find your neighbourhood' button to see information on crime in your area.
Deprivation	
Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019: England IMD Cambridgeshire data atlas	Seven indices of deprivation are combined to form the composite Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD2019). The indices include: income, employment, education, skills and training, health deprivation and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment. N.B. IMD 2019 is provided at Lower Super Output Area level, which is smaller than a ward. These areas do not neatly match parish boundaries.
Economy	
Economy data atlas	Includes ward-level data on employees and employment (which includes self-employed workers).
Environmental	
Huntingdonshire Water Cycle Study Update	A study of water cycle constraints (water supply, waste water treatment and surface water drainage management) in relation to planned growth in Huntingdonshire. This study can tell you in broad terms whether there are

Appendix 2: Useful Resources

Topic specific evidence sources	
	water cycle constraints in your area. (See 'Hunts_WCS Report Update' on the linked page.)
Air quality	The Council's Environmental Health team carries out air quality monitoring and pollutant dispersion modelling to ensure that traffic and industrial pollutants do not put public health at risk. A few small pockets in Huntingdonshire are designated Air Quality Management Areas, due to poor air quality, and a number of other sites considered to be at risk air pollution are also monitored annually. Read the annual Air Quality Assessment reports here to find out if there are any air quality issues in your area.
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment interactive map	Use the map to explore flooding issues in your area.
Geology	Interactive map of geological layers in Britain, available from www.magic.gov.uk/ .
Health	
Cambridgeshire JSNA Public Health Atlas	A range of health and wellbeing data, available at ward level.
Heritage	
Conservation area character assessments	For each of Huntingdonshire's conservation areas, the character assessments set out: its heritage significance, the historic development of its built environment and analysis of its character. Some also include identification of opportunities for future enhancement.
Heritage Gateway	Online search engine drawing on national and local heritage evidence sources, including Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record.
Local libraries, archives and web sites	May hold additional local historical information for your area.
Housing	
Cambridge sub-region Housing Data Atlas	A wide range of housing information at parish and ward level.
Cambridge sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment	Comprehensive housing data resource setting out the need for market and affordable housing across a wide area including Huntingdonshire. This document has a strategic focus, so most data is at district, rather than town/parish level.

Planning

Appendix 2: Useful Resources

Topic specific evidence sources	
Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal	The sustainability appraisal assesses the economic, environmental, and social effects of the Local Plan to 2036 at every stage of the preparation process. Its purpose is to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development. The sustainability appraisal scoping report could be particularly helpful in giving you a head start in gathering evidence for your neighbourhood plan. It brings together evidence on a range of topics for Huntingdonshire, including identifying all plans relevant to the local plan, the district's broad characteristics and sustainability issues and problems.
Housing & employment completions monitoring	Data on past housing and employment land completions in Huntingdonshire is contained in the Annual Monitoring Report.
Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)	Assessments of the potential for development in broad areas and specific sites within Huntingdonshire. This document supports the Local Plan to 2036. The HELAA was published in December 2017.

Population

Census 2011 parish profiles - data from the 2021 census will become available overtime	Provides data by age, ethnicity, and employment status by town and parish. N.B. These characteristics aren't linked together in the profile so you can't really interrogate them.
www.nomisweb.co.uk Census 2011 ward profile	If you want to dig further and are confident with statistics then most Census 2011 outputs are available from the NOMIS website. The 2011 ward profile is a good place to start, as you can click on 'query dataset' to get more detail such as data by age. N.B. Census wards may not match your neighbourhood plan area.
Cambridgeshire County Council population and dwelling estimates and forecasts	Available by parish/ward for estimates and wards by age bands; single year of age is available on request.

Traffic and travel

Census Travel to Work data	The Census parish profiles referred to above show how people travelled to work in 2011.
Bus services	County Council bus timetable, which can be searched for information for your area.
County Council traffic count data	Search for 'traffic count'. Download the data and check by road name for traffic monitors in your area. Look at changes between the years for which data is provided. You can see where the traffic monitors were by using the Eastings/ Northings in the spreadsheet and putting these into a web map such as magic.gov.uk/

Appendix 2: Useful Resources

Template Area Application Letter

The following text can be used as a template for letters applying for designation of a neighbourhood area. Text marked **~text~** should be replaced with appropriate information.

Clara Kerr

Chief Planning Officer
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

~Date~

Dear Ms Kerr,

~town/ parish council name~ : application for designation of a neighbourhood area

~town/ parish council name~ has resolved to produce a neighbourhood plan and formally applies for designation of a neighbourhood area as set out in Part 2, paragraph 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Attached is a map showing the area to which this application relates. This follows the parish boundary. This area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area because it is a properly constituted parish within the planning area of Huntingdonshire.

I confirm that **~town/ parish council name~** is the relevant body authorised to act in relation to this proposed neighbourhood area, as defined by Schedule 9, Part 1, paragraph 61(3), 2(a) of the Localism Act 2011.

Yours sincerely

~signed by town/ parish council chair~

Chair of **~town/ parish council name~**

Appendix 3: Glossary

Affordable housing

A range of housing types provided at below market rates in order to meet the needs of those who can't afford housing on the open market.

Agricultural Land Classification

Classifies agricultural land in five categories according to versatility and suitability for growing crops. The top three grades, Grade 1, 2 and 3a, are referred to as 'Best and Most Versatile' land, and enjoy significant protection from development.

Annual Monitoring Report

A document produced each year to report on progress in producing the development plan and implementing its policies.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their areas. Money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure such as transport schemes, schools and leisure centres.

Community Right to Bid

Aims to give community groups the time to develop bids and raise money to buy public assets that come onto the open market.

Community Right to Build

Allows local people to drive forward new developments in their area where the benefits (e.g. profits from letting homes) could stay within the community. These developments must meet minimum criteria and have local support demonstrated through a referendum.

Conformity

One of the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans is that they be in general conformity with strategic local policy.

Conservation Area

An area of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which are preserved and enhanced by local planning policies and guidance.

Consultation

A communication process with the local community that informs planning decision-making.

Core Strategy

A development plan document forming part of a local authority's Local Plan, which sets out a vision and core policies for the development of an area.

Development Management

The process of administering and making decisions on different kinds of planning application.

Development Plan

A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the area.

Evidence Base

The evidence upon which a development plan is based, principally the background facts and statistics about an area, and the views of stakeholders.

Green Infrastructure

Landscape, biodiversity, trees, allotments, parks, open spaces and other natural assets.

Green Space

Those parts of an area which are occupied by natural, designed or agricultural landscape as opposed to built development; open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens, allotments, and the like.

Housing Associations

See Registered Providers

Independent Examination

An examination of a proposed Neighbourhood Plan, carried out by an independent person, set up to consider whether a Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions required.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Infrastructure

Basic services necessary for development to take place e.g. roads, electricity, water, education and health facilities.

Legislation

The Acts of Parliament, regulations, and statutory instruments which provide the legal framework within which public law is administered.

Listed Buildings

Any building or structure which is included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

Local Plan

The name for the collection of documents prepared by your local planning authority for the use and development of land and for changes to the transport system. Can contain documents such as development plans and statements of community involvement.

Local Planning Authority

Local government body responsible for formulating planning policies and controlling development; a district council, metropolitan council, a county council, a unitary authority or national park authority.

Material Considerations

Factors which are relevant in the making of planning decisions, such as sustainability, impact on residential amenity, design and traffic impacts.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The government policy document adopted in March 2012 intended to make national planning policy and guidance less complex and more accessible. The most recent version of the NPPF was produced in July 2021. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied and seeks the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, environmental and social sustainability), which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

An online resource giving guidance on planning practice in support of the NPPF.

Policy

A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission.

Planning Permission

Formal approval granted by a council allowing a proposed development to proceed.

Qualifying Body

Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of Neighbourhood Planning.

Referendum

A vote by the eligible population of an electoral area may decide on a matter of public policy. Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are made by a referendum of the eligible voters within a neighbourhood area.

Registered Providers

These are independent housing organisations registered with the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1996. Most are housing associations, but there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies.

Site Of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A protected area designated as being of special interest by virtue of its flora, fauna, geological or geomorphological features. SSSIs are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by the official nature conservation body for the particular part of the UK in question.

Stakeholders

People who have an interest in an organisation or process including residents, business owners and government.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. Has been in place since the European SEA directive (2001/42/EC).

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

An assessment of the environmental, social and economic impacts of a Local Plan from the outset of the preparation process to check that the plan accords with the principles of sustainable development.

Strategic Policy

A policy that is essential for the delivery of a strategy, for example, the overall scale and distribution of housing and employment in an area.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Provides detailed thematic or site-specific guidance explaining or supporting the policies in the Local Plan.

Sustainable Development

Contributing to improvements in environmental, economic and social conditions, or showing how consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from the proposals may be prevented, reduced or offset

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