





Neighbourhood Planning in West Suffolk

**Information
for parishes**

What we will cover

- Neighbourhood Plan overview
 - The Process
 - Our offer and role in the process
 - Neighbourhood Plans currently being prepared in West Suffolk
 - Where to look for guidance
 - Questions
- 

Neighbourhood Plan Overview

- Gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.
 - They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built
 - Provides a set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community
 - Aligns the ambition of the neighbourhood with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.
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A neighbourhood plan is...

Pro-growth – a tool which allows a community to plan for more growth than proposed in the council's Local Plan;


- community led;
- evidence based;
- locally specific;
- contains policies focused on development and land use;
- a tool for allocating sites;
- a plan to identify community goals that can be met by planning for development;
- aligned with the strategic policies in the council's Local Plan and meet other basic conditions;
- subject to public consultation, examination and a referendum.

A neighbourhood plan isn't...

- a tool to prevent development that is included in the Local Plan;
- a means of setting out community aspirations – include activity that may be about development but cannot be delivered in the plan period;
- a tool to set out non land-use projects and proposals

Neighbourhood Plans cannot be used to stop growth

Must comply with:

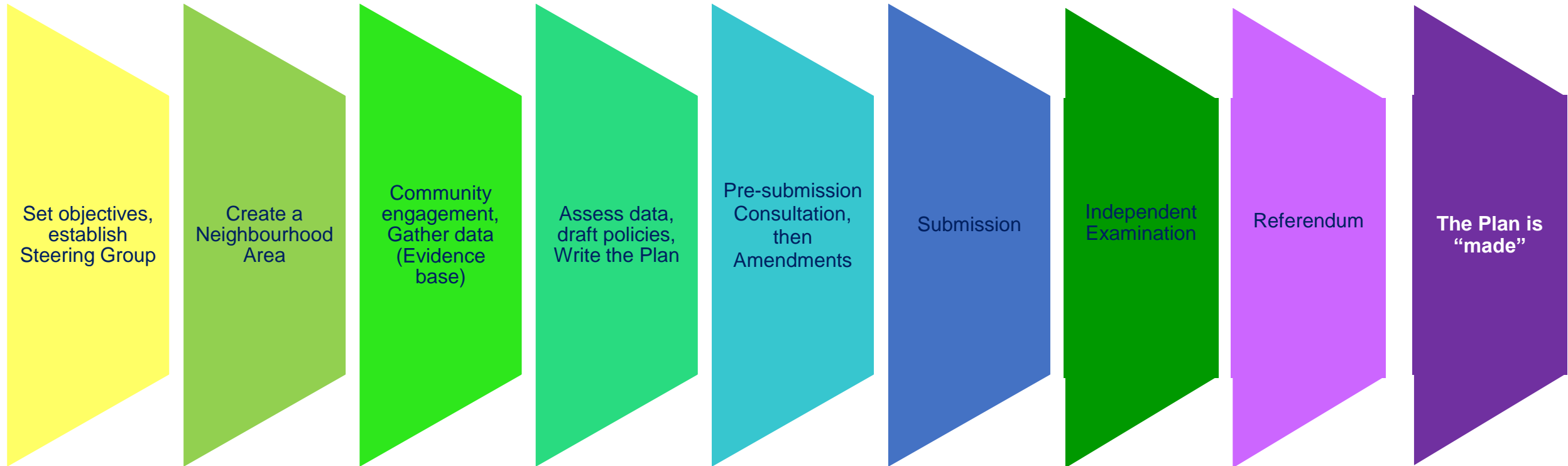
- European Directives/legislation (!)
 - National Legislation (Planning & Other)
 - National & Local Planning Policy
-
- They **cannot** propose lower levels of growth, housing etc.
 - But can help inform, direct and shape development
 - Should be community led and evidence based
 - Subject to independent examination & referendum
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What are the benefits?



Grant information and Technical Support Locality –
<https://neighbourhood.planning.org/>

How to develop a Neighbourhood Plan?



Neighbourhood Area


The neighbourhood area has to be proposed by the Parish/Town Council and approved by the Local Planning Authority(s)

Parish/Town Council administrative boundary


Options:

- All of area
- Part of area
- Link with adjacent parishes

Engagement

- Must engage with the community and other stakeholders:
 - Residents
 - Business Groups
 - Interest Groups
 - Public agencies
- 

Must be based on sound evidence

- **Demographic** - who lives here? current and trends
 - **Socio-economic** - who works? where? & at what?
 - **Environmental issues** - flooding, air quality
 - **Designations** - heritage, landscape, wildlife
 - **Transport** - services, capacity, usage
 - **Infrastructure** - capacity, fitness for purpose, need
 - **Housing stock** - type, tenure, condition, need
 - **Land uses** - potential development sites
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Draft Plan is submitted for examination to an independent Inspector who:

Checks that it meets the basic conditions:

- Conformity with EU and UK law
- Conformity with the NPPF and local policy
- Contributes to sustainable development

Recommends:

- Whether it's put to referendum
- Who is included in the vote

Referendum

- LPA to meet costs & make arrangements for referendum.
- Where referendum results in a majority 'Yes' vote (50% + 1) LPA must make the plan & bring into legal force
- No requirements for minimum turn out
- Referendum asks one yes/no question such as "Do you want West Suffolk Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Newmarket to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

Status of Neighbourhood Plans

- West Suffolk uses policies, (including the Local Plan), and any other relevant 'material planning considerations' to assess the planning applications it receives
- Adopted Neighbourhood Plans are part of this assessment, informing decisions and/or any appeals arising

Our offer and role in the process

- Provide a named officer as a first point of contact for advise and technical support;
- provide advice to parish and town councils on:
 - The legal procedures to be followed;
 - Relationship with current planning policy in West Suffolk;
 - Methods of consultation and engagement;
 - Contacts for statutory undertakers or other key consultees;
 - The requirements of other legislation such as the Habitats Regulations and Strategic Environmental Assessment;
 - emerging drafts of plans;
 - funding and grants available;
 - digitising the final proposals/policy maps;
 - getting the best from any paid support from contracted consultants

Neighbourhood Planning in West Suffolk (May 2020)

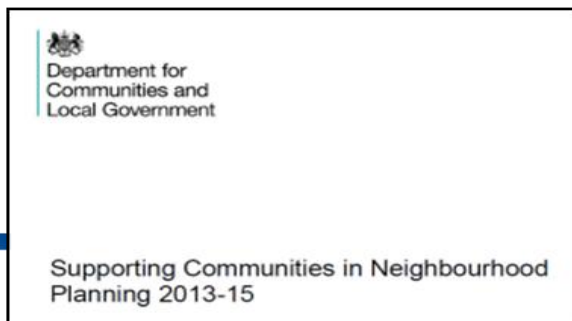
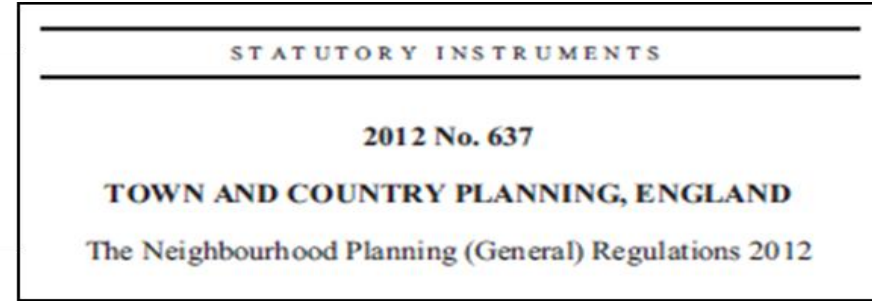
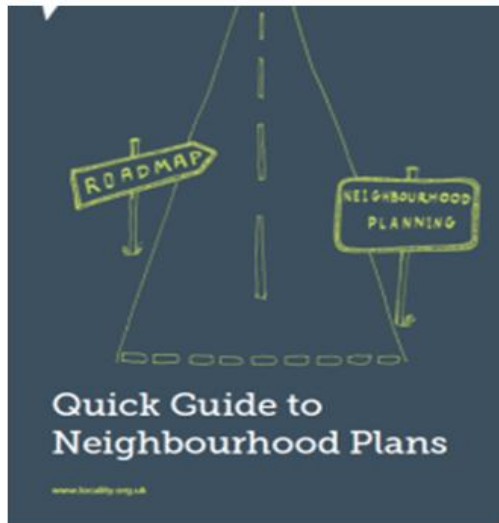
- **Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan – Made July 2018**
- **Newmarket Town Council – Made February 2020**
- Barrow cum Denham – area designated June 2019
- Barningham Parish Council – area designated April 2017
- Exning Parish Council – area designated June 2018 (decided not to pursue plan)
- Freckenham – area designated November 2018
- Great Barton Parish - area designated June 2016 (updated January 2019)
- Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council – area designated July 2017
- Withersfield – area designated January 2020

Information on all Plans being produced in West Suffolk can be seen at

www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

Guidance

My Community 



Covid-19 and Neighbourhood plans

April 2020 government update

- [Regulations linked to the Coronavirus Act 2020](#) mean that **no elections or referendums can take place until 6 May 2021**. This includes neighbourhood planning referendums. These provisions will be kept under review and may be amended or revoked in response to changing circumstances.
- [current planning guidance](#) has been updated nationally to set out that **neighbourhood plans awaiting referendums can be given significant weight** in decision-making.
- There will be delays in progressing neighbourhood plans due to the social distancing measures currently in place across the UK. The updated planning guidance also provides further advice on the implications for conducting publicity and consultation, and examinations.
- **Grants and technical support will continue to be available** to support communities during the next financial year, and [Locality's advice service](#) continues to operate as normal.

Questions?

Contact: neighbourhood.planning@westsuffolk.gov.uk