

An introduction to Neighbourhood Plans (Localism Act 2012).

Information Sheet No 1

What is new about a Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan is a new way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work.

It can be used to:

- develop a shared vision for your neighbourhood
- choose where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built
- identify and protect important local green spaces
- influence what new buildings should look like.

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

Unlike Local Plans, neighbourhood Plans are not prepared by the local planning authority. In areas where a parish or town council exists, these are the only bodies that can prepare a neighbourhood plan.

What is the role of the local planning authority?

Your local planning authority (for us this is West Devon Borough Council) is required to give you assistance and advice but it cannot control your neighbourhood plan preparation process, nor can it produce a neighbourhood plan on behalf of your community. It is the responsibility of the Parish or town council to prepare this. It is your community's own plan, although your local planning authority will have to agree and formally designate the neighbourhood area that is to be covered by it.

Once your local planning authority is happy that your neighbourhood plan has been prepared correctly, it will arrange for an independent examination of it to take place. If the plan passes the examination, your local planning authority will be responsible for arranging a local referendum on the plan. The costs for this will be borne by the local planning authority.

If the referendum supports your neighbourhood plan, then your local planning authority must adopt it as a part of its own local plan. It will then play a statutory role in deciding the planning decisions in the neighbourhood.

These notes have been extracted from the guidance booklet *How to shape where you live*, produced by the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the National Association of Local Councils (2012).