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What a Neighbourhood Development Plan can and cannot do

A Neighbourhood Development Plan can...

- Decide where and what type of development should happen in the neighbourhood.
- Promote more development than is set out in the Core Strategy
- Include policies, for example regarding design standards that take precedence over existing policies in the Local Plan for the neighbourhood – provided the Neighbourhood Development Plan policies do not conflict with the strategic policies in the Core Strategy.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan cannot...

- Conflict with the strategic policies in the Core Strategy prepared by the Harborough District Council
- Be used to prevent development that is included in the Core Strategy.
- Be prepared by a body other than a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum.

Helping you deliver successful Neighbourhood Development Plans

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

The purpose of this guidance is to give communities an overview of the Neighbourhood Planning process, and the issues that can be included when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

The information gives a brief outline of the decisions that need to be made by communities when undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan.

It also summarises the key statutory stages and the role of the District Council in completing these.

Information on alternatives to Neighbourhood Plans are also



Old Grammar School Market Harborough

given in this leaflet, as a Neighbourhood Plan may not be the most appropriate document for the community to produce after your priorities and aspirations have been assessed.

Contact details have been given and additional information can be found on the Council website or by calling officers at the Strategic Planning Team

WHO CAN PREPARE A NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Development Plans are not prepared by Harborough District Council.

There are two types of

‘qualifying body’ that can prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan:

These are Parish and town councils and

Neighbourhood forums which are referred to as **Relevant Bodies**.

See further information inside

RELEVANT BODIES

Neighbourhood Development Plans are optional:

There is no legal requirement for a community to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The policies in the Core Strategy will still apply to your neighbourhood, whether you decide to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan or not.

Parish and town councils:

In areas where a parish or town council exists, these are the only bodies that can prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan. A Neighbourhood Development Plan produced by a parish or town council does not have to cover the whole area of the parish or town but can cover just part of your parish or town if you prefer. Alternatively, a Neighbourhood Development Plan can extend across parish boundaries but only with the agreement of the neighbouring parish.

Neighbourhood forums:

Where a parish or town council does not exist, community members, including those with business interests in the area, can come together to create a neighbourhood forum. Only one neighbourhood forum is allowed to exist

for each neighbourhood to be covered by a Neighbourhood Development Plan. There are certain rules that will determine whether a neighbourhood forum has been correctly set up. For example, a neighbourhood forum must have at least 21 members and, even if it is



Lutterworth Country Park

based on an existing community group, it must be open to new members. You should check with HDC what these rules are to make sure they are all followed.

Neighbourhood Development Plans are time consuming:

Be prepared for a great deal of hard work over two years or more to prepare a successful plan. It is most important to have a strong and committed team with the necessary skills and enthusiasm to fulfil the requirements of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL?

Harborough District Council (HDC) is required to give you assistance and advice but it cannot control your Neighbourhood Development Plan preparation process. We also cannot produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan on behalf of your local community. It is the responsibility of the parish or town council, or the neighbourhood forum, to prepare the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is your communities plan and as such should be written by members of the community in consultation with residents and other

stakeholders to reflect the aspirations and needs of the community.

Harborough District Council will, however, have to agree and formally designate the neighbourhood area that is to be covered

by your Neighbourhood Development Plan. HDC will also have to formally approve the neighbourhood forum where relevant.

HDC may have information which could help in the preparation of your Neighbourhood Development Plan. This information may be data about the community and surrounding district, as well as maps and plans of the neighbourhood area. Further information can be obtained from Harborough District Council.



George Street Lutterworth

EXAMINATION AND REFERENDUM

Harborough District Council is required to check your proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan to ensure that it meets all the relevant legislation and regulations. It will also check that it generally conforms to the strategic elements of its own Core Strategy adopted in 2011.

Once HDC is happy that your Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared correctly, we will arrange for an independent examination. If your Neighbourhood Development Plan passes the ex-

amination, HDC will be responsible for arranging a local referendum concerning support for the plan. The costs incurred by the examination and the referendum will be paid for by HDC.

If the referendum supports your Neighbourhood Development Plan, then HDC must adopt it as part of the overall devel-

opment plan (which includes the Core Strategy and associated documents).



Medbourne

Typical things that a Neighbourhood Development Plan might include

- *The development of housing, including affordable housing (affordable housing is housing that is not normally for sale on the open market), and bringing vacant or derelict housing back into use.*
- *Provision for businesses to set up or expand their premises.*
- *Transport and access (including issues around roads, cycling, walking and access for disabled people).*
- *The development of schools, places of worship, health facilities, leisure and entertainment facilities, community and youth centres and village halls.*
- *The restriction of certain types of development and change of use, for example to avoid too much of one type of use.*
- *The design of buildings.*
- *Protection and creation of open space, nature reserves, allotments, sports pitches, play areas, parks and gardens, and the planting of trees.*
- *Protection of important buildings and historic assets such as archaeological remains.*
- *Promotion of renewable energy projects, such as solar energy and wind turbines*

DECIDING IF YOU NEED A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

If you have already been involved in public consultation when the Core Strategy was being prepared, all your concerns and aspirations may already be reflected in this document. If you are happy with what the Core Strategy says, then you may decide that there is no need to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

If you feel that the Core Strategy does not really address what you would like to happen in your community then you should seriously consider preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. For example the Core Strategy may not mention your neighbourhood, or you would like more things

to happen that aren't in the Strategy, or you would like things to happen more quickly.

It is important, however, to be aware that Neighbourhood

Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are not your only options. For example, you could ask Harborough District Council to prepare a Local Development Order or a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (also known as Supplementary Planning Guidance).

If you are considering these approaches you should be aware that HDC is not obliged to prepare these documents and your community may have less control over the process and the resulting documents.



Whittle Airplane

Harborough District Council

Council Offices
Adam and Eve Street
Market Harborough
Leicester
LE16 7AG

Phone: 01858828282
E-mail: planningpolicy@harborough.gov.uk

*See more information on Harborough District Councils website—
www.harborough.gov.uk*



Helping you deliver successful Neighbourhood Development Plans

ALTERNATIVES TO A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Other alternatives to a Neighbourhood Plan are the development of a Parish Plan, Village Design Statement or Community Action Plan and your local area may already have one of these in place. Check these documents if they are available and consider drafting a new version that reflects the current needs and aspirations of the neighbourhood. Parish Plans, Village Design Statements or Community Action Plans are non statutory Neighbourhood Development Planning tools so the main difference to consider is that they will carry less weight in the planning and decision making process than a formally adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan. Parish Plans and Village Design Statements can, however, be adopted as SPDs but this will require the agreement of Harborough District Council.

An advantage of a non-statutory Neighbourhood Development Planning tool such as Parish Plans, Vil-

lage Design Statements or Community Action Plans is that their scope does not have to be limited to matters covered by planning law. For example they could cover social issues or activities as part of the vision for your local area.



The Point Business Park

If you do decide a Neighbourhood Development Plan is the best tool for your area you should not enter into that decision lightly. Preparing a plan will require a lot of time and effort and be an expense for the community, so full consideration should be given to whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan will meet the aspirations of

the community before embarking on the process. The time a Neighbourhood Development Plan will take will vary depending on the issues you want to cover and the size of your community. Developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan may take between 1 and 3 years. You will need to involve other people who may not agree with your views and it will require your community to reach a broad consensus on the objectives, key issues and desired outcomes.

The team should be prepared for the amount of work that is going to be involved. There will no doubt be frustrations along the route, but the final result could be very rewarding. A Neighbourhood Development Plan should help your community come together, be stronger and more united. It should be a positive force for change and will give you more control over what happens in your neighbourhood.

Further information about Neighbourhood Planning can be found in the full Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit and Resource Pack obtainable from Harborough District Council