

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

The Localism Act puts local councils at the heart of planning – providing the opportunity for communities to shape the areas in which they live and work and have a say on what basis development will be accepted.

Directions Planning Consultancy can help your community to be effective and to make the most of these new powers by making sure you have the necessary knowledge and support.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

The Government has created new powers for local communities:

- *Neighbourhood Plans*: policy documents to set out a framework for future development, including infrastructure and planning gain requirements, and design standards.
- *Neighbourhood Development Orders*: granting of planning permission by a community without the need for a planning application to be submitted by a developer.
- *Community Right to Build*: a community is able to develop or buy assets to hold in perpetuity, subject to certain thresholds.

Who is Responsible?

To be able to use one of the three powers communities will need to establish an organisation. There are a number of ways to do this:

- *In areas with a parish or town council*: in the first instance the town or parish council for an area should take the lead on neighbourhood planning.
- *In areas without a parish or town council*: 'neighbourhood forums' can be created to lead on neighbourhood planning, subject to a number of requirements.
- *Community Trusts*: a Charitable Trust can be created to build, hold and manage any assets resulting from neighbourhood planning. It is subject to certain requirements.

FRONT RUNNERS

The government has already provided money to help communities and local authorities familiarise themselves with the new powers.

Directions Planning Consultancy approached Leeds CC, Harrogate BC and Ryedale DC on behalf of community organisations who had expressed an interest in preparing neighbourhood plans. Subsequently, the bids for £20,000 per community were successful.

Community Engagement

For the plan or order to be successful the community organisation will need to ensure the community has been fully engaged and is in support of the proposals. This will be important if the plan or order is to receive the necessary level of support through a referendum.

Responsibilities of Local Authorities

Communities will need to work with local planning authorities to meet the requirements of the process.

Before drafting the plan or order, the local authority will need to approve the community organisation and the boundary of the plan area.

The local authority will also ensure that the draft plan or order is taken through an examination and referendum, and then publish the final version on behalf of the community organisation.

What Neighbourhood Planning can do

There is no standard format for neighbourhood planning. Community organisations can use the powers to address a range of local issues and concerns, including levels of housing, design standards, the local economy and town centre improvements.

Specific points to note:

- Plans can also prioritise community facility and infrastructure improvements for future investment.
- Plans must be in conformity with the local development plan but can add more local detail.
- Orders can be used to bring forward specific proposals contrary to the local development plan.
- Plans will be subject to technical assessments including an environmental impact assessment.

CASE STUDY

Malton & Norton Neighbourhood Plan

Malton and Norton Town Councils instructed Directions Planning Consultancy to help consult on a Draft Neighbourhood Plan for the two towns. The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to identify what those who live and work in Malton and Norton want for the future of the two towns. Issues include: the location of a new supermarket, the number of new houses, what should happen to specific vacant sites and what new facilities and infrastructure might be required.

A number of consultation techniques were used to engage with as many individuals as possible who work and live across the two towns. An interactive website was created, along with a number of exhibitions designed to help people respond to a specially designed questionnaire.

The results of the questionnaire will be used to inform the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan. The document will then be used as the basis for discussions with Ryedale District Council and North Yorkshire County Council. It will also be used to influence the drafting of the Ryedale Local Development Plan

WHAT NEXT?

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 were published on 1st March and will come into effect on 6th April 2012.

This means that from the 6th April, communities will be able to progress preparation of a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order.

The process must however start with an application to the local planning authority for designation of the community organisation. The local planning authority will then need to publish the application before it is approved.

Without appropriate designation, the community organisation will not be able to progress a neighbourhood plan or development order through the statutory process to the point where it is published and adopted for use.

OUR CREDENTIALS

- Specialist expertise and experience of working with communities to deal with issues of concern.
- Successful production of various Parish Plans, Community Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, and Village Design Statements. Encompassing rural and urban areas, towns and villages, housing estates and mining communities.
- Successful training of local Councillors, voluntary and community group members in the 'black arts' of the planning system.
- Assisting and representing Town and Parish Councils, and local community groups in the Local Development Plan process.
- Specialist expertise and experience in the interpretation and application of legislation, and drafting and influencing planning policy.
- Knowledge of local planning issues in Yorkshire, gained from working across the whole of the Region.

CONTACT DETAILS



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