

Neighbourhood Planning Question and Answer Session

Q1. HOW TO DEAL WITH DEVELOPERS WHO OWN LAND IN YOUR VILLAGE AND WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS PROCESS?

It is likely that you will be approached by developers/land owners whilst writing your Neighbourhood Plan, particularly if you intend to allocate sites. This can often help gain information often essential to justify allocations. However there are a few points to remember:

- All developers/land owners need to be treated equally
- Contact with developers/land owners should be undertaken in a neutral way (i.e. neither promoting or dismissing a development proposal)
- You should maintain impartial to avoid accusations of bias
- All meetings should be informal (i.e. not a public parish meeting)
- Two or more representatives of the neighbourhood planning team should be present at meetings
- A record of the meeting should be taken
- You may find it useful for any written correspondence have a disclaimer stating 'that views given by parish councillors/officers are not binding to the parish council when it makes formal decisions'.
- Once you have got to the stage in your plan where a decision has been made on preferred site(s), it will then be a good idea to create a developer forum to discuss more detailed matters such as viability and deliverability

Q2. WHAT EVIDENCE IS REQUIRED TO ALLOCATE HOUSING SITES?

It is important to have robust evidence to identify which site(s) is the best for development. This will be particularly important at the examination process when defining why a particular site has been chosen. For allocating a typical housing allocation the following evidence would be required:

- Firstly a parish level **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment** – this considered all potential sites for development in the parish. For each site the suitability, availability and achievability is considered to see whether development could be delivered on the site and at what time
- Once site options have been narrowed down into 'preferred site(s)' an **Environmental Character Assessment** should be undertaken– this document includes evidence on landscape, ecology and heritage. This helps to compare the relative impacts of each site
- It is likely that a **Flood Risk Assessment** will be needed to identify site specific details. Some evidence may be in our district wide Flood Risk Assessment. It is also likely a **Transport Impacts Assessment** will be needed to identify access to the site
- **Viability Assessment** will also be required to show the site is financially viable
- The level of detail required in each of these evidence documents will depend on the size and location of the site

Q3. HOW TO AMEND A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA BOUNDARY?

A new Neighbourhood Area application will need to be submitted with the amended boundary. Once submitted to AVDC, it will undergo a six week consultation period before the Council makes a decision.

Q4. WHAT OTHER EXAMPLES ARE THERE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS?

BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Broadlands's has five Front Runners and already has an adopted Core Strategy, therefore more advanced in their Neighbourhood Plans compared to most authorities

http://www.broadland.gov.uk/housing_and_planning/3615.asp.

Their Neighbourhood Plans have used national resources such as Placecheck and Enquiry by Design. Enquiry by Design is run by 'The Design Council' who help Neighbourhood Planning teams in masterplanning of sites and policy writing. For further information please visit <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/cabe/services/plan/enabling/>. For further information about the Placecheck exercises please visit <http://www.placecheck.info/>

Richard Squires is leading on Neighbourhood Planning at Broadland District Council and has presented at a number of conference. Please see this link for a copy of his presentation <http://districtcouncils.info/files/2012/04/John-Walchester.pdf>

DAWLISH, TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Dawlish is one of the most advanced Neighbourhood Plans which has been through an examination, although has been found 'unsound'. To see the Neighbourhood Plan please visit this website <http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=13658>

The plan allocated land for 5 housing sites the largest being for 810 homes and one site purely for a care home.

The evidence documents for the Neighbourhood Plan consisted of:

- Earlier drafts of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Consultation statements and a video produced for their website
- Steering group meetings notes
- District-wide technical evidence provided by Teignbridge District Council
- Sustainability Appraisal for the Neighbourhood Plan
- Their Frontrunner submission

THAME, SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Thame are using Tibbalds Urban Design (private consultant) to write their Neighbourhood Plan. So far they have completed their Neighbourhood Area application, undertaken an issues consultation and are currently on a supplementary 'Preferred Options' consultation stage to provide further information on specific site options. This examples highlights where costs can amount and the issues of being advanced of the Core Strategy.

Please see the following links for further evidence

Evidence - <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans>

Website - http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1136&Itemid=111

'Preferred Option' consultation

<http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/images/stories/siteimages/neighbourhoodplan2011/preferredoptionsa5.pdf>

Work Programme May 2012-April 2013 adoption -

<http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/images/stories/pdfdownloads/thameworkprogramme.pdf>

Topic Areas - <http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/images/stories/4thetopicgroup.pdf>

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR& MAIDENHEAD

There are six Neighbourhood Plans in preparation for Windsor and Maidenhead District Council. For further information please visit: http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/pp_neighbourhood_plans.htm.

These Neighbourhood Plans include Hurley and Ascot which are at an early stage and they have not been through any formal consultation stages http://hurleyandthewalthams.org/hurleyandthewalthams/Steering_and_Topic_Groups.html.

Ascot have started compiling evidence documents looking at 'topic areas' and the 'vision' following an initial public consultation on ideas. For further information please see <http://ascotandthesunnings.com/library/evidence/>.

GROVEHILL, DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan commenced in December 2011. Further details can be found at <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/Digest/default.aspx?page=940>. They have recently been conducting Design workshops. No formal consultation stages have been undertaken yet. This is an adjoining district therefore one to keep an eye on.