

A summary of the key stages in neighbourhood planning (from Planning Practice Guidance)

Step 1: Designating neighbourhood area and if appropriate neighbourhood forum

- Relevant body (parish/town council, prospective neighbourhood forum or community organisation) submits an application to the local planning authority to designate a neighbourhood area
- local planning authority publicises and consults on the area application for minimum 6 weeks (except for where a local planning authority is required to designate the whole of a parish.)
- local planning authority designates a neighbourhood area within the [statutory timescales](#)
- In an area without a town or parish council a prospective neighbourhood forum submits an application to be the designated neighbourhood forum for a neighbourhood area
- local planning authority publicises and consults on the forum application for minimum 6 weeks
- local planning authority takes decision on whether to designate the neighbourhood forum

Step 2: Preparing a draft neighbourhood plan or Order

Qualifying body develops proposals (advised or assisted by the local planning authority)

- gather baseline information and evidence
- engage and consult those living and working in the neighbourhood area and those with an interest in or affected by the proposals (eg service providers)
- talk to land owners and the development industry
- identify and assess options
- determine whether a plan or an Order is likely to have significant environmental effect
- start to prepare proposals documents eg basic conditions statement

Step 3: Pre-submission publicity and consultation

The qualifying body:

- publicises the draft plan or Order and invites representations
- consults the consultation bodies as appropriate
- sends a copy of the draft plan or Order to the local planning authority

- where European Obligations apply, complies with relevant publicity and consultation requirements
- considers consultation responses and amends plan/Order if appropriate
- prepares consultation statement and other proposal documents

Step 4: Submission of a neighbourhood plan or Order proposal to the local planning authority

- Qualifying body submits the plan or Order proposal to the local planning authority
- Local planning authority checks that submitted proposal complies with all relevant legislation
- If the local planning authority finds that the plan or order meets the legal requirements it:
 - publicises the proposal for minimum 6 weeks and invites representations
 - notifies consultation bodies referred to in the consultation statement
 - appoints an independent examiner (with the agreement of the qualifying body)

Step 5: Independent Examination

- local planning authority sends plan/Order proposal and representation to the independent examiner
- independent examiner undertakes examination
- independent examiner issues a report to the local planning authority and qualifying body
- local planning authority publishes report
- local planning authority considers report and reaches own view (except in respect of community right to build orders and proposals for modifications of neighbourhood plans where the modifications do not change the nature of the plan, where the report is binding)
- local planning authority takes the decision on whether to send the plan/Order to referendum

Steps 6 and 7: Referendum and bringing the neighbourhood plan or Order into force

- relevant council publishes information statement
- relevant council publishes notice of referendum/s
- polling takes place (in a business area an additional referendum is held)
- results declared

- should more than half of those voting vote in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area
- should more than half of those voting vote in favour of the Order, the Order only has legal effect once it is made by the local planning authority
- there are narrow circumstances where the local planning authority is not required to make the neighbourhood plan or Order. These are where it considers that the making of the neighbourhood plan or Order would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations (see [section 61E\(8\) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act as amended](#)).
- in respect of proposals for modifications of neighbourhood plans where the modifications do not change the nature of the plan and meet the basic conditions, a referendum is not required. The local planning authority is required to make the modified neighbourhood plan

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