

## 10 golden rules for a successful neighbourhood plan making journey

Neighbourhood plans have been incredibly successful, with over 800 made plans across the country. Most groups have had very positive plan making journeys. Here are our 10 golden rules that we think if you follow will make your journey as smooth as possible:

### 1. The local planning authority (LPA) should be your friend

It is important to build a strong working relationship with your LPA from the get go. This will help avoid problems down the line. Lots of groups set up a terms of reference with their LPA setting out exactly what the role of the neighbourhood planning group is, vs. the role of the LPA. These also tend to set out who does what and how much support the LPA will provide as part of their duty to support. Getting this nailed down upfront can make the entire process much smoother.

### 2. Know what support is out there

You don't have to do it alone. The neighbourhood planning support programme offers grant funding to all groups preparing neighbourhood plans, as well as neighbourhood development orders. You can use this to buy in consultancy support to help with evidence gathering and policy writing, plus much more. Groups with more complex issues can unlock even more grant funding as well as technical support to help build your evidence base.

### 3. Proper consultation and engagement

The examiner will check that you have undertaken appropriate consultation and engagement. You will need to reach as much of the local community as possible. Consider using social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to advertise events. Don't forget about young people- they can bring a fresh perspective. Good

consultation will give you community buy in. This will give you confidence that you will likely get a positive result at referendum.

#### **4. Know the environmental requirements**

Plans may require strategic environmental assessment and habitats regulations assessment. Talk to your LPA and ask them about this. You will need to make sure you meet the environmental requirements, otherwise you might run into problems down the line. Some groups in the past have even had to re-run Regulation 14 consultation (the pre-submission consultation).

#### **5. Have a strong evidence base**

You need evidence to underpin your policies otherwise they will not make it through examination. Evidence needs to be proportionate, it doesn't need to be over the top or excessive. Some policies will need more evidence than others, especially if they are likely to be contentious or really deviate from the local plan.

#### **6. Make sure mapping is crystal clear**

This is especially important if you are allocating sites or designating local green spaces for example. These need to be clearly shown on maps and the boundaries very easy to see. Failing that, you risk the examiner deleting those policies. Or if they do make it through examination there is a risk that planning officers find it difficult to apply those policies when assessing planning applications.

#### **7. Policies that bite**

Don't write policies just for the sake of it. If you are happy that the local plan policies address your issues, then you don't need to repeat or duplicate in the neighbourhood plan. They won't add any value and will most likely be deleted by the examiner. Focus your neighbourhood plan policies on policy voids in the local plan and local issues.

#### **8. Know the limits of land use planning**

Planning policy can't do everything, so it pays to know what you can and can't do through neighbourhood planning policies. For example, you can't reduce the

speed limit through planning policies and you can't deal with rubbish collection frequencies.

## **9. Know the basic conditions**

A plan needs to meet basic conditions for it to pass examination and for it to be made. It is important that you check your plan to make sure you are confident it meets these conditions. You may want to consider a health check. Doing this will help pave the way for a successful examination.

## **10. Having a made neighbourhood plan is just the beginning**

Once your plan is made you will need to think about implementation and monitoring. This means checking that you are happy that your policies are doing what you wanted them to do in the real world. It also means checking that the LPA are properly considering your plan policies when making decisions on planning applications. Over time you may decide you need to update your made neighbourhood plan.

**To find out what support we have on offer, visit:  
[neighbourhoodplanning.org](http://neighbourhoodplanning.org)**

# Neighbourhood Planning

brought to you by

locality

Locality is the national membership network supporting community organisations to be strong and successful.

## Unlock the power in your community with us

### Locality

33 Corsham Street, London N1 6DR

**0345 458 8336**

Locality is the trading name of Locality (UK) a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 2787912 and a registered charity no. 1036460.

©Locality

The content of this guidance is for your general information and use only. It is subject to change without notice. Neither we nor any third parties provide any warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy, timeliness, performance, completeness or suitability of the information offered in this guidance for any particular purpose. You acknowledge that such information may contain inaccuracies or errors and we expressly exclude liability for any such inaccuracies or errors to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Your use of this guidance is entirely at your own risk, for which we shall not be liable. It shall be your own responsibility to ensure that this guidance meets your specific requirements.

For formal Government guidance on Neighbourhood planning please visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk)