

NEWTON ON THE MOOR & SWARLAND

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Neighbourhood Plan? - A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document which guides and shapes development in the local area and is created by local people.

More info

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided.

Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood Plans are about local development issues, for example, where new homes and community buildings should go. They must focus on guiding development rather than stopping it and need to be in general conformity with national policy and Northumberland County Council planning policies.

Who will prepare our Neighbourhood Plan? - Our Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by a group of local volunteers working with the Parish Council.

More info

Newton on the Moor and Swarland Parish Council have applied to NCC for the Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area. Having done this, it will now work with other members of the community who are interested in the neighbourhood planning proposals to allow them to play an active role in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish have formed a "Steering Group" for this purpose and the terms of reference for the Steering Group are published on the Parish Council website as are the minutes of meetings.

Do we have to have a Neighbourhood Plan? - No, but without one, all Planning Applications, in our Parish, will only be judged against the Northumberland County Council Local Plan.

What a Neighbourhood Plan can do? - It can decide where and what type of development should happen in the neighbourhood. It can identify planning issues that are important for the preservation of that which makes each community within the Parish individual and the Parish as a whole a desirable place to live in.

More info

The Northumberland Local Plan (NLP) is a document that gives a broad approach to planning issues across the county. There are some issues that are important to local people that are not specifically covered by the NLP but which can be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Many planning applications decided under the NLP will be challenged on the basis of design but the decision will be made by the Planning Officer who may not have a feel for the local area. The SG can incorporate in the Neighbourhood Plan a full Design Code that will mean that all application will have to have regard for the design standards identified in that document. Any such policies will have been considered against the Northumberland Local Plan and, if they do not conflict with the strategic policies in the Northumberland Local Plan will have been approved as additional to the NLP and have statutory effect.

How does neighbourhood planning work? - Neighbourhood planning in Northumberland starts with a parish council, which takes on the responsibility of creating a neighbourhood plan. The process involves conducting research, consulting with local residents, and developing policies and proposals for the future development of the area.

What is the purpose of neighbourhood planning? - The purpose of neighbourhood planning is to empower local communities to have a greater say in the planning and development of their areas. It aims to ensure that development is in line with the aspirations and needs of the local community while considering sustainability, housing, infrastructure, and other key factors.

Who can get involved in neighbourhood planning? - Anyone who lives, works, or has a business interest in the neighbourhood can get involved in the neighbourhood planning process. It encourages the active participation of local residents, businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders.

What can be included in a neighbourhood plan? A neighbourhood plan can include a range of policies and proposals. These may cover land use, housing, transportation, community facilities, conservation, environmental considerations, and other local priorities. The plan should reflect the specific needs and aspirations of the neighbourhood.

How does a neighbourhood plan become official? - Once a neighbourhood plan is developed, it must go through a formal process of examination and local referendum. An independent examiner reviews the plan to ensure it meets legal requirements. If approved, the plan is then put to a local referendum. If the majority of voters support the plan, it becomes an official planning document, providing a legal basis for shaping development in the neighbourhood.

How does a neighbourhood plan influence planning decisions? - A neighbourhood plan carries legal weight and must be taken into account by local planning authorities when making decisions on planning applications and development proposals in the neighbourhood. It provides a framework for guiding development in a way that aligns with

the community's vision and priorities.

Can a neighbourhood plan prevent all types of development? - While a neighbourhood plan can influence planning decisions, it cannot completely prevent all types of development. It must conform to national planning policies and cannot be used to block development that meets these policies. However, it can help shape the scale, design, and location of development to better suit the needs and preferences of the local community.

Can neighbourhood plans be revised or updated? - Yes, neighbourhood plans can be revised or updated. As circumstances change and new challenges or opportunities arise, the parish council can undertake a review of the plan. This allows the community to ensure that the plan remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the neighbourhood.

Is neighbourhood planning mandatory? - Neighbourhood planning is not mandatory, but it is a voluntary process that communities can choose to engage in. It provides an opportunity for local residents to have a direct say in shaping the future of their neighbourhood, but it is not a requirement imposed by the government.

How long does the neighbourhood planning process typically take? - The length of the neighbourhood planning process can vary depending on various factors, including the size of the neighbourhood, the complexity of issues, community engagement, and the resources available. On average, it can take around 1-3 years.

Can multiple neighbourhoods collaborate on a joint neighbourhood plan? - Yes, it is possible for multiple neighbourhoods to collaborate and develop a joint neighbourhood plan. This can be beneficial for addressing shared issues, coordinating development policies, and creating a cohesive vision for a broader area. Collaboration can enhance the influence and effectiveness of neighbourhood planning.

Can a neighbourhood plan address environmental sustainability? - Yes, a neighbourhood plan can address environmental sustainability. It can include policies and proposals related to renewable energy, green spaces, biodiversity, waste management, and other environmental considerations. Neighbourhood planning encourages sustainable development practices that minimise environmental impacts and enhance the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

How does neighbourhood planning impact infrastructure development? - Neighbourhood planning allows communities to consider the infrastructure needs of their area. The plan can identify and prioritise infrastructure improvements, such as transportation, utilities, healthcare facilities, schools, and community services. By integrating infrastructure planning with land use policies, neighbourhood planning can support the development of sustainable and well-connected communities.

Are neighbourhood plans legally binding? - Once a neighbourhood plan is adopted through a local referendum, it becomes a legally binding planning document. Local planning authorities are required to consider and take into account the policies and proposals of the neighbourhood plan when making planning decisions. However, it is important to note that neighbourhood plans must be in line with national and local planning policies.

Can neighbourhood planning help preserve historic or cultural heritage? - Yes, neighbourhood planning can include policies to preserve and enhance the historic or cultural heritage of a neighbourhood. It can identify and protect important heritage assets, promote conservation areas, and encourage appropriate design and development that respects the character and heritage significance of the area.

What are the benefits of Neighbourhood planning? - Neighbourhood plans offer several benefits for communities:

- 1. Local Control:** Neighbourhood plans provide an opportunity for local communities to have a direct say in shaping the development and growth of their area. It empowers residents to take control of their neighbourhoods future, ensuring that decisions align with their aspirations and priorities.
- 2. Community Engagement:** Neighbourhood planning encourages active community engagement and participation. It brings residents, businesses, community groups, and stakeholders together to collaborate, share ideas, and work towards a shared vision. This strengthens community bonds and fosters a sense of ownership and pride.
- 3. Customised Development:** By creating a neighbourhood plan, communities can tailor development policies and proposals to suit their specific needs. It allows for a more customised approach, taking into account local priorities, character, and identity. This can result in development that better reflects the desires and values of the community.
- 4. Preservation of Local Character:** Neighbourhood plans can include policies to preserve and enhance the unique character and heritage of an area. This helps protect important landmarks, historic buildings, green spaces, and cultural assets that contribute to the local identity and sense of place.
- 5. Improved Quality of Life:** Through neighbourhood planning, communities can influence the provision of amenities and services that enhance the quality of life for residents. This can include improved infrastructure, access to green spaces, community facilities, transportation options, and the protection of environmental assets. It helps create vibrant and sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 6. Greater Certainty and Influence:** Neighbourhood plans have legal weight and must be considered by local planning authorities when making decisions on development proposals. This gives communities greater certainty and influence over the scale, design, and location of new development. It helps ensure that development aligns with the neighbourhood's vision and priorities.
- 7. Long-term Sustainability:** Neighbourhood plans can promote sustainable development practices, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, green infrastructure, and sustainable transportation. By incorporating environmental considerations, neighbourhood plans contribute to long-term sustainability and resilience.

8. Economic Benefits: Neighbourhood planning can stimulate local economic growth and vitality. It can identify opportunities for new businesses, job creation, and investment. By shaping development in a way that aligns with local economic priorities, neighbourhood plans can support a thriving local economy.

Overall, neighbourhood plans empower communities, promote inclusive decision-making, and create a framework for sustainable and well-designed development that reflects the aspirations and needs of the residents. They contribute to stronger, more resilient, and cohesive neighbourhoods.