AGENDA ITEM 5

PTE 24/9/25

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE ON WEDNESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT:
Councillor Dawn Johnston - Chairman
Councillor Richard Lees – Vice-Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Graham Taylor
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT:
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO

ABSENT:
There were none

151/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

152/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

Recommended:
That the reasons for absence, for the Councillor(s) listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

153/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

154/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

155/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

156/25-26. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2025.

Recommended:
The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025 were confirmed and signed.

157/25-26. **The following planning applications had been received from Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation/ Kent County Council / Gravesham Borough Council and were responded to by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, during the 2025 recess period** (as per minute 123/25-26).

DA/25/00784/TPO	Application of Horse Chestney tree - fell to stump subject to Tree Preservation Order No13 1991. Verge in Car Park, St Pauls Close, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS:	The Town Council object to this application to fell a perfectly healthy tree. The purpose of TPOs is to protect trees that are considered to have significant visual or landscape value, contributing to the character and appearance of an area and to safeguard trees for the public to enjoy, particularly those visible from public spaces. Despite the applicant's assertion, a look at Google Earth shows a young tree at this location in 1990, before the current residential development was installed, on what was the amenity space surrounding the old council offices. In this sense, while this is undoubtedly a young tree, it connects us with the history of the site – a cultural value that is impossible to replace. Trees in this area of Swanscombe have been lost to disease and vandalism and the felling of a healthy tree is an unnecessary loss. Trees such as this Horse Chestnut provide vital habitat to wildlife, as well as helping combat climate change, both critical needs in an urban setting. The Town Council would support an application for reasonable pruning/pollarding work on the tree, subject to the Planning Authorities tree specialist providing a report and advice.
DA/25/00687/FUL	Conversion of garage into habitable room with associated alterations to rear elevation (Retrospective) 29 Watermans Way, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS:	The Town Council strongly objects to this retrospective application as the application makes no provision for the loss of parking arising from the proposed conversion. This proposed development would result in the loss of a parking space and would be likely to result in undesirable on-street parking in an area with limited on-street parking provision contrary to policies of the Dartford Development Policies Plan, any conversion of the garage would take away the choice of any future tenants from using it as an off-road parking space.

	This loss of parking will undoubtedly have a detrimental impact on the street amenity and, the applicant confirms this by stating that they intend to street park as a form of mitigation for the loss. The built parking spaces were allocated on the number of bedrooms the property had, and this included the parking space in the garage. Watermans Way is an area that already has many difficulties with parking and another recent similar application in the same area, for the conversion of a garage, was refused by the Planning Authority (DA/24/00107/FUL)
DA/25/00664/FUL	Erection of two external canopies Ebbsfleet Academy, Southfleet Road, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
DA/25/00866/FUL	Erection of a part single, part double storey rear extension and new porch to front elevation. 15 Stanley Road, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
DA/25/00867/FUL	Erection of a part single, part double storey rear extension 17 Stanley Road, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
DA/25/00874/FUL	Erection of part two/part first floor side extension. 18 Caspian Way, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
DA/25/00869/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear extension for laundry room. Rosewood, 28 Bean Road, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.

Recommended: That the responses submitted during the recess period be endorsed.

158/25-26 **The following planning applications had been received from Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation / Kent County Council/ Gravesham Borough Council for Members observations** *(full details of these applications can be viewed via the Town Council, DBC, EDC GBC and the KCC websites).*

KCC/DA/0109/205	Section 73 application to vary Condition 2 of planning permission EDC/21/0046 to allow for the use of the site for recycling for a further 5-year period. Land off Watling Street, Eastern Quarry.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations.
DA/25/00950/ FUL	Erection of a part single storey/part two-storey rear extension and loft conversion comprising rear dormer window with Juliette balcony in rear elevation and roof lights in front roof slope in connection with providing additional rooms in the roof space. 93 Knockhall Road, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.

159/25-26. **The following Granted Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC during the summer 2025 recess for members information.**

DA/25/00544/FUL	Conversion of garage into a habitable room. 6 Sara Crescent, Greenhithe.
DA/25/00618/FUL	Erection of a composite, modular garden room to the rear corner of the garden (Retrospective) 6 Peacock Close, Greenhithe.
DA/25/00653/FUL	Erection of a single-storey rear extension. 64 Knockhall Road, Greenhithe.
DA/25/00664/FUL	Erection of two external canopies. Ebbsfleet Academy, Swanscombe
DA/25/00659/LBC	Listed Building application for removal and replacement of sections of stone window mullions and associated works. The Grange Follies, Ingress Abbey, Ingress Par, Greenhithe.
DA/2500593/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear extension. 3 Stonely Crescent, Greenhithe.

DA/24/01421/FUL	Erection of a single storey extension to existing garage / store with a car port and vehicular access, gates and alterations to fencing. 41 Valley View, Greenhithe.
DA/25/00608/FUL	Conversion of garage into a habitable room, addition of a porch area and removal/replacement of first floor balcony door with a window 15 Spring Vale, Greenhithe.

160/25-26. **The following Refused Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC during the summer 2025 recess for members information.**

DA/25/00644/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear extension. 26 Gasson Road, Swanscombe.
DA/25/00117/FUL	Conversion of existing store to a new dwelling (retrospective application). Rear of 64 Stanhope Road, Swanscombe.
DA/25/00615/FUL	Erection of single storey rear/side extension. 44 Church Road, Swanscombe.
DA/25/00682/ADV	Display of 1 no. freestanding 48-sheet internally illuminated poster display of static advertisements Greenhithe Service Station London Road Greenhithe

There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

(Chairman)

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Background

In June 2017 the Regeneration & Quality Sub-Committee (minute 89/16-17 attached) were asked to consider whether the Town Council should undertake the works to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

At the time the Sub-Committee felt that a lot of the areas within the Town were already primed for development with limited opportunity to influence change.

A Working Group was formed to further investigate and had brief meetings in September and October of 2017. Whilst these meetings did discuss the project further it was highlighted that engaging with the Principal Authority (Dartford) on the creation of their Local Plan might be a better way of improving development within the area of Swanscombe and Greenhithe.

Following this work undertaken in late 2017 the Town was subject to a Governance Review in 2018 when a public consultation was held on the future of the Town and its geography at Parish level. As a result of the referendum the areas under the jurisdiction of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation to the South and East of the Town were removed and the Council reduced from 20 to 13 Councillors.

Current Request

On the 3 September 2025 Councillor Graham Taylor emailed the Town Council to request that an item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Planning Committee for the 24 September 2025 to:

'Given the change of Land ownership on Swanscombe Peninsula along with other development and infrastructure issues in the area I would like to table a discussion on revisiting the idea of consulting on a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the next PTE meeting on 24th September. I know the idea was rejected some years ago, but I feel it has merit to strengthen community involvement in strategic planning especially with local Government reorganisation looming'

Following discussion with Councillor Taylor and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee it was agreed that:

'An item will be placed for consideration at the next PTE meeting on the 24 September to discuss the options for Planning Strategy at Parish Level.

This will include the pros and cons etc of both Neighbourhood Plans and Parish Plans'.

Neighbourhood Plans

Attached **(A)** for members information The Good Councillors Guide to Neighbourhood Planning. This gives an overview of the background and rationale for a plan along with the steps involved.

Below are extracts from GOV.UK covering information in relation to both the cost and timescales involved with producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Cost Information

The estimated cost for a community to produce a Neighbourhood Plan ranges from approximately £20,000 to £86,000, though this can vary depending on the plan's scope and the community's resources. This cost covers the preparation of the plan, with the local authority typically covering the expenses for the independent examination and referendum.

Factors influencing the cost

- **Scope and content of the plan:** Larger, more detailed plans with significant community engagement will generally cost more to prepare.

- **Size of the area:** The geographical area the plan covers can influence the overall cost.

- **Volunteer skills and capacity:** A community with volunteers who have strong project management, communication, and organizational skills may reduce external costs.

- **Amount of new information required:** If extensive new evidence gathering is needed, this can add to the cost.

- **Support from the principal authority:** The level of support and resources provided by the local council can impact community costs.

Timescale Information

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan typically takes between two and three years, though the time frame can vary significantly depending on the specific community and the complexity of the plan. The process involves several key statutory stages, including designating a neighbourhood area, consulting with the community, and an independent examination, before it can be approved and used to influence local development.

Stages of a Neighbourhood Plan

The process generally follows these steps, though the specific details can vary:

1. **Designate a Neighbourhood Area**: A local planning authority must designate the neighbourhood area after an application from a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum.

2. **Develop the Plan**: This involves significant community engagement to define the local vision and policies for development.

3. **Community Consultation (Regulation 14)**: The draft plan undergoes a mandatory consultation period, which must be at least six weeks long.

4. **Independent Examination**: The plan proposal is then submitted for an independent examination.

5. **Referendum**: Following a successful examination, the community holds a referendum to vote on the plan.

6. **Adoption**: If the referendum is passed, the plan is adopted by the local authority.

Local Comparison

Stone Town Council embarked on a decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan in 2015. This plan was finally passed by both the Planning Inspectorate and Referendum, and put into effect, on 26 May 2022.

Funding

Until this year Locality have been administering a funding stream available to Town and Parish Councils to produce Neighbourhood Plans. This fund was split into two pots, with a £9,000 grant available for any Council to apply for who was undertaking a plan. The second pot was for up to a further £6,000 for specialist technical support as needed.

From April 2025, following the last spending review the decision was made to remove this funding stream, and no direct funding is available.
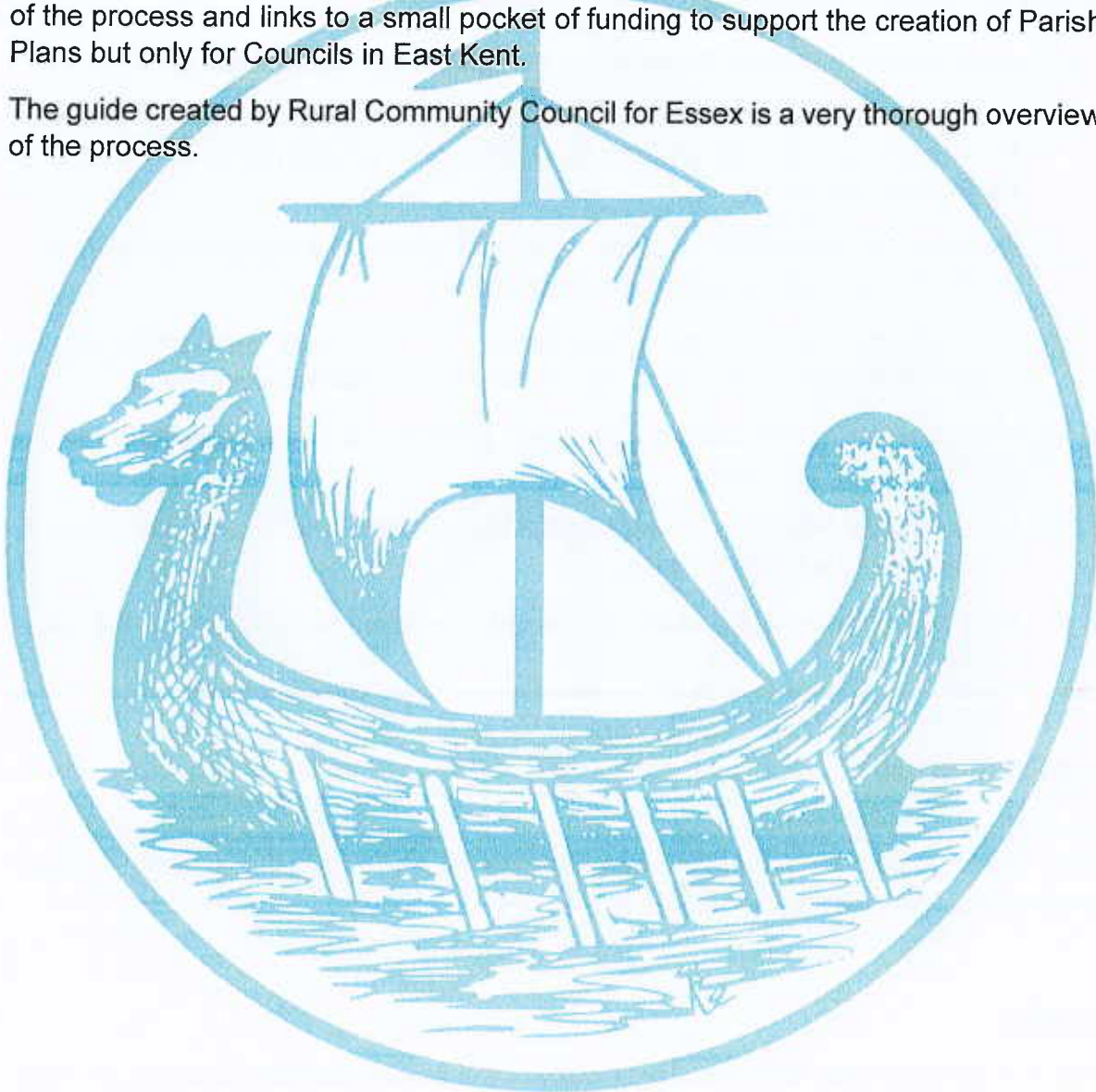
Parish Plans

Attached **(B)** for members information is the Parish Plans – Information Pack, produced by Rural Community Council for Essex. This gives an overview of the background and rationale for a plan along with the steps involved.

The Town Council approached KALC for further guidance on Parish Plans which linked officers to Action for Communities in Rural Kent. This organisation has a brief overview of the process and links to a small pocket of funding to support the creation of Parish Plans but only for Councils in East Kent.

The guide created by Rural Community Council for Essex is a very thorough overview of the process.

Comparison

The following table sets out some key elements of difference between a Neighbourhood and Parish Plans.

KEY AREA	N/HOOD PLAN	PARISH PLAN
The process is led by an independent steering group but facilitated by the Town or Parish Council.	X	X
Creation of the plan involves considerable community engagement.	X	X
It has a statutory role within the planning process.	X	
The production of the plan has a major cost associated with its creation.	X	
The production of the plan has a significant time demand associated with its creation.	X	
The finalised plan would setup a Town wide document focusing on defining needs within the community and actions to address challenges faced.	X	X
The created plan would result in an increase in CIL receipts to the Town Council.	X	
The finalised plan would be a useful tool in demonstrating community engagement and need in relation to external funding applications.	X	X
The finalised plan can be incorporated into the Local Plan from the Principal Authority.	X	X

Neighbourhood Plan Summary

Whilst widely regarded as the top level for planning engagement at Parish and Town level, the withdrawal of funding, expected costs, resources and time implications and likely benefit from CIL receipts given the amount of land left to develop, it might be seen as an initiative that would not offer value for money.

A effectively created plan would assist with identifying infrastructure needs within the Town, whilst highlighting any areas for redevelopment, it is worth noting that the specific extracts from the Dartford Local Plan focusing on East Dartford cover some of these points in highlighting the importance of Swanscombe as a local shopping district, point out the access issues faced with Swanscombe station and specify potential brownfield sites that could be developed going forward.

Parish Plan

Whilst a Parish Plan has no weight in relation to decisions by the Planning Authority, it can form both an intention statement and policy intention for how the Town Council would engage with stakeholders in relation to anything effecting the Town.

A Neighbourhood Plan is set around specific targeted areas, whilst a Parish Plan does have the flexibility to look at wider concerns however small they may be that are identified by the community.

As set out in the guidance attached a Parish Plan gives the community the chance to become involved with identifying areas for improvement, areas for development and challenges facing the Town. The document would also enable the creation of an action plan, with time driven solutions. Whilst they may not be achievable, they can galvanise focus on the key issues raised by the community.

The big comparison point is the cost to create. It is worth noting that to create an effective plan a large amount of time and resources would need to be allocated and consultation, engagement, document creation and publicity. The actual cost to create the final works can be kept down as the detail of the output would not require direct engagement with planning consultants and specialists.

Recommended   To consider whether the Town Council should begin the process of creating a plan for the Parish, and if so, which route to pursue.

Extract of Minutes

89/16-17. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members discussed the documents provided regarding creating a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). The ATC/RFO re-iterated the advice given to him by an independent planning consultant at the KALC NP training event he had attended

Concerns were expressed over the large amount of time and resources involved with creating a NP. Comparisons were drawn to the work undertaken by a neighbouring Parish Council who were currently 2 years into the process of attempting to produce a NP.

Members discussed the previous work undertaken to create both the Town Councils 2005 Masterplan and its Local Development Framework and what the available alternatives were to a NP. The Chairman clarified that whilst these were very useful pieces of work they were not Supplementary Planning Documents.

Members were conscious that whilst NP were a very good scheme a lot of the areas/land within Swanscombe and Greenhithe would not be appropriate for a NP and that this may mean that it did not warrant the resources required to implement a NP.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the issue of producing a NP required further consideration and that this would be best achieved by the formation of a Working Group to assess whether a NP was required or whether alternative options would better serve the Town Council and residents. It was agreed that this work should be member led to ensure the impact on officer time was minimised. The Working Group membership is to be made up of the following members:-

> Councillor R J Lees
> Councillor Mrs S P Butterfill
> Councillor P M Harman
> Councillor B R Parry
> Councillor B E Read

Recommended:

1. That a Working Group be formed to assess whether a Neighbourhood Plan is required.
2. That the Working Group membership be as detailed above
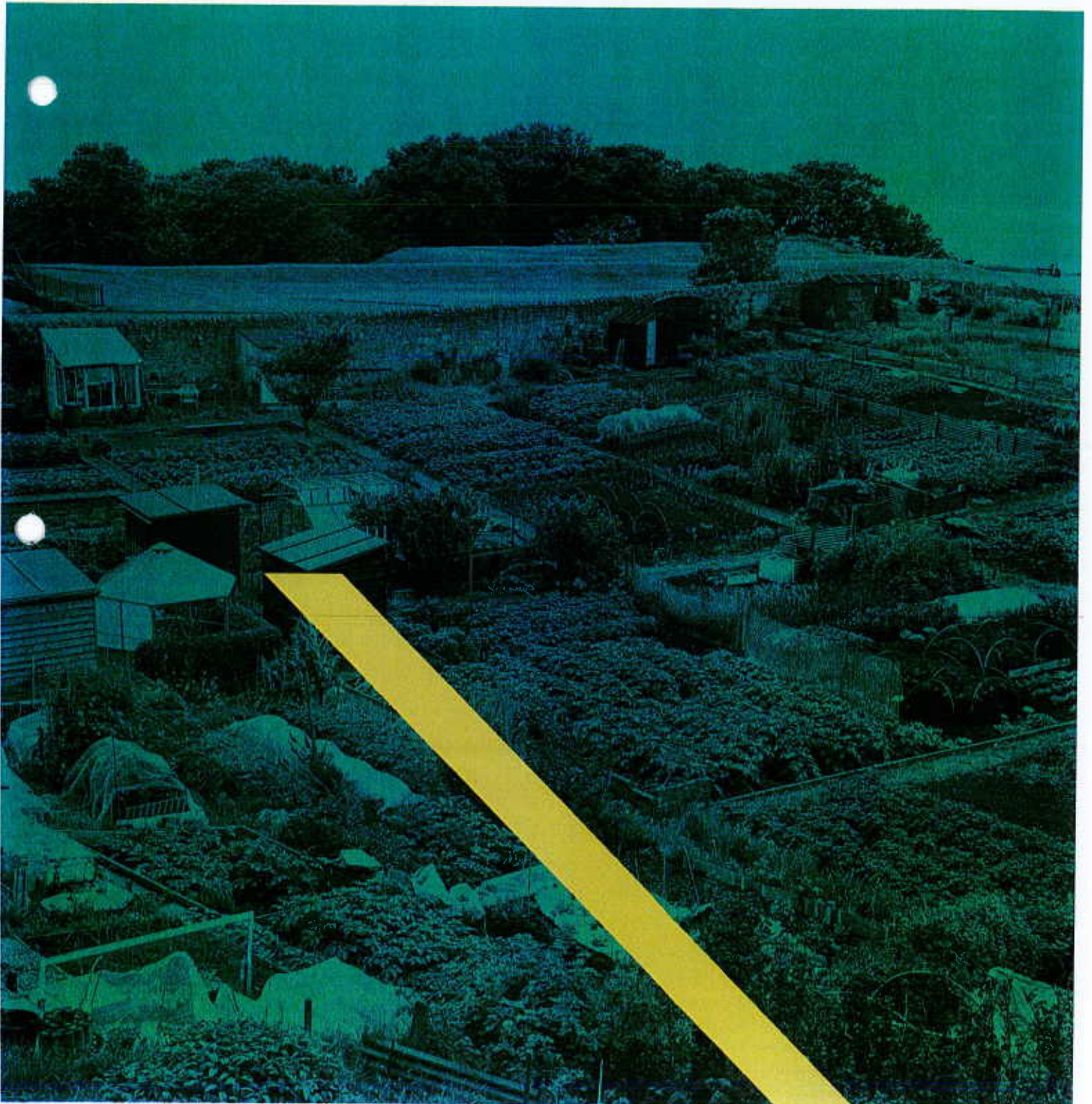3. That the first meeting of the Working Group be held in September 2017.

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2017

THE GOOD COUNCILLOR'S GUIDE TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

This guide is designed specifically to help parish and town councillors support their communities and council in deciding whether or not to produce a neighbourhood plan for their area and, if they decide to go ahead, to guide them through the process of producing the plan and thinking about how it will be delivered.

WELCOME

Tony Armstrong
Chief Executive, Locality

THIS GUIDE IS AIMED at parish and town councillors who are involved in or thinking about, producing a neighbourhood plan and for those who are just curious to find out more. Whilst other guides are predominantly concerned with the legislation and process, we have attempted, wherever possible, to include guidance on good practice for carrying out each part of the plan,

This guide draws upon the experience of Locality and its partners who are working with community groups preparing neighbourhood plans through the national support programme. We have worked with a wide range of organisations, parish councils in particular and neighbourhood forums in urban and rural areas,

Locality is the national network of ambitious and enterprising community-led organisations, working together to help neighbourhoods thrive. Our members work to improve their local neighbourhoods and communities and are very effective in delivering community facilities, regenerating buildings and creating new opportunities across the country.

When local communities are empowered to lead and influence decision-making, it makes a real difference in their area. People with passion and enthusiasm can use neighbourhood planning as a means to change their neighbourhoods for the better. Our hope is that this guide will help you in your endeavours as a local councillor to shape and enhance your local area, improve opportunities and quality of life for all and create more prosperous local economies. This community-led approach is fundamentally what Locality is about.

ON BEHALF OF the National Association of Local Councils it gives me great pleasure to introduce the National Improvement Strategy publication *The Good Councillor's guide to neighbourhood planning.*

This guide is aimed at parish and town councillors who are interested in finding out more about their role in relation to neighbourhood planning or perhaps belong to a council who are embarking on producing a neighbourhood plan for their area.

Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of neighbourhood development plans and other initiatives detailed in this guide.

Given these rights have a huge bearing on how a council engages with its community to undertake the process it is vital that local councillors understand the key principles of neighbourhood planning in order to support their communities appropriately.

For these reasons Locality and NALC have worked together to produce this guide in order local councillors are equipped with the basic information to get them started. However it does not stop here and there will be a need for councillors to find out more as the process unfolds. To assist we have provided a range or links and signposts as to where additional information can be accessed. I wish you every success and I am confident that this guide will help you to develop your role as a good councillor.

Sue Baxter
Chairman of the
National Association
of Local Councils

INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood planning was introduced in 2011. Local communities, via neighbourhood forums in unparished areas and town/parish councils where they exist, can produce neighbourhood plans for their area, putting in place a vision and policies for its future development. This presents real opportunities, but can seem a little daunting.

This guide is designed specifically to help parish and town councillors support their communities and council in deciding whether or not to produce a neighbourhood plan for their area and, if they decide to go ahead, to guide them through the process of producing the plan and thinking about how it will be delivered. The 'roadmap' in section one not only gives guidance on the requirements of the legislation, but also on best practice and how to avoid pitfalls. In particular, it emphasises the need for a robust evidence base and effective community engagement as an essential part of producing a realistic plan seen to be owned by its local community.

The first part of the roadmap describes what neighbourhood planning is about and discusses some of the opportunities and challenges. It contains advice to help communities decide whether a neighbourhood plan is right for them or whether a different type of planning tool, such as a village design statement, might be more appropriate. The second part of the roadmap provides guidance on producing a neighbourhood plan, from getting a neighbourhood area designated to the public referendum and 'making' of the plan.

Section two of the guide has been designed to highlight the specific points in the neighbourhood planning process that councillors can become involved with and offers further guidance on a number of areas critical to a plan's success.

NALC and Locality are extremely grateful to all those who contributed to the writing of this guide. Particular thanks go to **Ron Simpson BEM of Uppingham Town Council**. A Neighbourhood Planning Champion, Ron has over 50 years' local governance experience as both an officer and as a councillor. As a Director of Community Partnership Uppingham First, he was lead author on the acclaimed Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan, a government front runner.

OVERVIEW

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING ROADMAP

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The following guidance gives an overview of the process of writing a neighbourhood plan. For more detailed information about the process of neighbourhood planning please see the Locality neighbourhood planning roadmap at mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-plan-roadmap-guide.

The three main stages of producing a neighbourhood plan are outlined below, however the reality of neighbourhood planning is often more complex, with different stages running in parallel.

STAGE ONE – GETTING ESTABLISHED

MAKING THE DECISION TO PREPARE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Neighbourhood planning enables communities to take the lead in producing part of the statutory development plan for the area. Crucially, unlike a parish plan, these neighbourhood plans are a statutory document and must be used to determine planning applications in a neighbourhood area.

It can represent a serious commitment and any town or parish council considering preparing a neighbourhood plan will need to carefully weigh the advantages and opportunities of writing a neighbourhood plan against

the time and cost implications and other considerations to help make an informed decision.

Opportunities may include:

- The plan's statutory status and greater influence over planning decisions
- More say on detailed matters than the local plan
- Community leadership
- Dialogue with a range of organisations
- Specifying sites to be developed or where growth will be concentrated
- Support for community projects and self-build initiatives
- Receipt of 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies.

The parish council should consider the adequacy of existing policy. If existing policy is robust and relevant to the neighbourhood area in question then there may be no need for a neighbourhood plan, or a simpler and more selective neighbourhood plan could be produced.

Alternatives to a neighbourhood plan can also be taken into account. There are more informal plans such as community or parish plans but these do not have statutory status.

Another alternative is to produce an Area Action Plan in partnership with the local authority.

Consultation fatigue – There may be a reluctance to produce a neighbourhood plan if there have been recent programmes of community engagement for other types of plans such as parish or community plans. However, if such consultation has been done well, and there is plenty of information and views were formally recorded, it could inform the neighbourhood plan, so it would not be necessary to start again.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS

1. GETTING STARTED

Clarify why a plan is needed

Publicise the intention to produce a plan

Identify and contact key local partners

Dialogue with the local planing authority

Produce a project plan with costings

2. NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

Determine the neighbourhood area

Submit area proposal

Local Planning Authority consults*

Local Planning Authority approve the proposal

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Put together a prospective neighbourhood forum

Submit a forum proposal

Local Planning Authority consults*

Local Planning Authority determine the area.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & INVOLVEMENT

Publicity

Engage local partners

Initial community engagement (broad issues)

Provide feedback

Ongoing community engagement (aims, content, detail.)

5. BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

Renew existing evidence

Identify gaps in evidence

Complete new evidence

Analysis of evidence

6. THEMES, AIMS VISION, OPTIONS

Identify key issues and themes

Prioritise key issues and themes

Develop key aims

Look at options

7. WRITING THE PLAN

Policies, proposals, site allocation

Consider sustainability, diversity, equality & delivery

8. CONSULTATION

Consultation on plan*

Amend the plan

9. SUBMISSION

Submit to Local Planning Authority

Local Planning Authority publicises

10. INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

Local Planning Authority appoints examiner

Examination takes place

Examiner's report

THE PLAN IS MADE

* Minimum time: six weeks

In all cases we would recommend you speak to your local planning authority in the first instance to discuss alternatives.

SETTING UP A STEERING GROUP AND DESIGNATING THE AREA

The town or parish council is the qualifying body for leading a neighbourhood plan. However it is very important that the process is open to the wider community and allows them to play an active role in preparing a neighbourhood plan. This helps to ensure that the neighbourhood plan is community-led and engages with a wide range of interests and should ensure a successful 'yes' vote at referendum. Often a town or parish council may choose to establish a separate working group or steering committee to undertake the majority of the work on the neighbourhood plan. This will be done under section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/102.

Members of these steering groups would have voting rights under section 13(3), (4)(e) or (4)(h) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/42/section/13.

The terms of reference for a steering group or other body should be published and the minutes of meetings made available to the public.

It should be noted that although the steering group may undertake work on the neighbourhood plan, the town and parish council is the body ultimately accountable for the formal stages of the neighbourhood plan.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

The first formal step of the neighbourhood planning process is to designate the neighbourhood area. For town and parish councils there is an assumption that the neighbourhood area will be the same as the

parish boundary. However, they may choose a smaller and more focused area, such as a town or local centre. Also, adjacent parish/town councils may agree to work in partnership to produce a joint neighbourhood plan. Once the area has been identified, it will need to be submitted to the local planning authority for designation.

It should be noted, there can be only one neighbourhood area for each neighbourhood plan and only one neighbourhood plan for each neighbourhood area.

DUTY TO SUPPORT

Once the neighbourhood area is designated by the local planning authority, that authority is legally required to produce advice and assistance to those bodies producing a neighbourhood plan in its area. This 'duty to support' is not defined but could include things like:

- Making existing data and maps available for the evidence base
- Identifying key local strategic policies from the Local Plan
- Advising on relevant national policies/guidance
- Sharing information on key contacts, stakeholders and best practice plan-making activity
- Making available venues and helping to arrange community engagement activities
- Checking the plan prior to formal submission
- Providing technical support, such as assistance in laying out and illustrating a plan and writing plan policies
- Setting up a neighbourhood planning web page on the local authority's website.

STAGE TWO – PREPARING THE PLAN

BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

The National Planning Policy Framework requires neighbourhood plans to be evidence based. Planning policies need to be based on clear rational and proper understanding of the place they relate to, if they are to be relevant, realistic and to address local issues effectively. The evidence base needs to be proportionate to the size of the neighbourhood area and scope and detail of the neighbourhood plan. You can find out further information about this at mycommunity.org.uk.

There are two main stages of building the evidence base. The first of these is to review existing evidence. The second is to identify and develop any further evidence required, either because there is no existing evidence or because there needs to be a clearer focus on the particular neighbourhood.

REVIEW EXISTING EVIDENCE

This may include things such as:

* The evidence underpinning the local plan
* Socio-economic data for the parish or ward
* Technical reports
* Mapping of local areas
* Community plans or parish plans for the area.

It may also be necessary to develop new evidence (or update existing evidence) at the neighbourhood level.

In addition there should be a dialogue with the local planning authority, which will be able to provide supporting evidence or signpost to other organisations that can help.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Effective community engagement is essential right from the beginning of the process. Good community engagement will create a well-informed plan and a sense of ownership from the wider community. A failure to do so may increase the risk of an adverse outcome at the formal consultation, publicity and referendum stages. You can read further information about this at mycommunity.org.uk.

Community engagement should be an on-going process of consultation rather than a stop-start series of exercises.

Examples of possible kinds of neighbourhood-level evidence are:

ECONOMIC
» Business surveys
» Vacancy/floor space surveys
» Available sites surveys
» Land values

ENVIRONMENT
» Heritage audit
» Review of local lists
» Urban design analysis
» Open space analysis

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY
» Householder surveys
» Housing conditions and occupancy survey
» Audit of community facilities
» Housing needs assessments

INFRASTRUCTURE
» Transport linkages
» Schools capacity
» Transport capacity
» Traffic/pedestrian surveys

Important first steps are to make sure that the proposal to produce a neighbourhood plan is known about by as many people as possible and to identify potential local partners who can support the plan making process and help to get local people involved.

PUBLICISING THE PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Methods of publicising the intention to produce a plan include:

* Press releases to local papers and radio
* Council newspaper and website
* Local authority newsletter
* Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
* Posters in local shops and public buildings
* 'Piggy backing' at key local social or cultural events.

IDENTIFYING KEY LOCAL PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Local partners and stakeholders should be identified based on their knowledge, expertise, networks and ability to engage with wider groups of people, including minority groups.

They could include:

* Local shopkeepers and business owners
* Community groups, residents associations
* Landowners and developers
* Not for profit organisations representing minority groups – elderly, disabled, young people, low income
* Community activists
* Health, education, transport and social care organisations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

It is useful to prepare a community engagement programme at the beginning of the neighbourhood planning process. The community engagement strategy needs to be designed for the specific community in question. For example, an area with a population of 100 will need a very different approach from one with 50,000. The former could involve direct conversations with all residents. The latter would need to rely more on mass communications, such as web-based engagement.

HARD-TO-REACH GROUPS

It is desirable to target the widest range of people, including both genders and minority or hard to reach groups like: young and elderly, single parents, lesbian and gay, ethnic groups, disabled groups, low income, disadvantaged groups. It is necessary to approach different minority groups to discuss the most effective way of engaging.

WRITING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

There is no standard template for writing a neighbourhood plan. The plan needs to function as a practical tool for development management. You can find out more information about this at mycommunity.org.uk

The following may be useful in informing the process of writing the plan.

* Identify issues and themes
* Identify key issues for the neighbourhood plan by:
  * Analysis of the evidence base
  * Analysis of responses through community engagement
  * Discussions with local partners and stakeholders
  * Assessing existing local policies.

IDENTIFY STRATEGIC LOCAL POLICIES

The local planning authority should be able to identify key strategic local policies, with which the neighbourhood plan will need to be in general conformity.

The local planning authority should also identify key policies in the National Planning Policy Framework to take into account.

DEVELOP THE VISION AND AIMS

You may wish to write a concise and clear vision based on the above analysis, setting out how the area should be at the end of the neighbourhood plan period.

Develop overall aims for the plan, taking into account the key themes and issues identified by the evidence base and community consultation.

DEVELOP PLANNING POLICIES

• Identify the main subject areas for planning policy

• Ensure policies are clear, concise and provide an effective basis for decision making

• If applicable, produce a site allocations plan identifying key sites and allocations for housing, employment and community facilities

• Check the policies against the National Planning Policy Framework and strategic policies in the local plan

• Have the policy checked by a planning/legal expert for clarity and robustness.

You can read more information about writing planning policies at mycommunity.org.uk.

PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION (REGULATION 14)

The neighbourhood planning regulations (regulation 14) require the draft plan proposal to be the subject of a six-week consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination.

This should include consulting with

• Key consultees (e.g. Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England)

• The local planning authority

• Neighbouring districts, town or parish councils

• Significant land owners

• Local community organisations.

The plan will need to be publicised and made available for anyone who wishes to make representations. This should include making available hard copies and making the document available through a website.

MODIFICATIONS

Any comments received by the end of the consultation period should be considered by the parish or town council. A decision will need to be made over whether or not to amend the neighbourhood plan. These decisions and the reasoning behind them should be recorded and incorporated in the consultation statement

STAGE THREE – BRINGING THE PLAN INTO FORCE

SUBMITTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The independent examination and referendum are the last stages in making a plan. Achieving a positive outcome will depend to a large extent on how well earlier stages have been carried out, especially community engagement and involvement.

The submission to the local planning authority from the parish or town council must include the following:

- A map which identifies the area to which the plan relates

- Consultation statement

- The proposed neighbourhood plan

- Statement on meeting legal requirements (a statement on how the plan meets the basic conditions).

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

The independent examination will look at whether the plan meets the basic conditions.

The examination will usually be undertaken by written representations, but may involve a public hearing. The parish or town council will need to agree to the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced person. The local authority pays for the examination.

GAINING SUPPORT IN THE REFERENDUM

If the neighbourhood plan is found to be satisfactory by the examiner then the local authority will arrange for the referendum to take place. This will be organised by the elections unit. The town or parish council may encourage voting and disseminate information on the proposed neighbourhood plan, within reasonable expense limits. Town and parish councils can only use public money to produce factual material about the neighbourhood plan, not to promote a 'yes' vote. However members of the town or parish council and others may act independently using independent funds to campaign for a 'yes' vote.

DELIVERY

Once a neighbourhood plan is brought into legal force, it forms part of the statutory development plan for that area. Consequently, decisions on whether or not to grant planning permission will need to be made in accordance with the neighbourhood plan (as part of the statutory development plan), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Having a neighbourhood plan in place is just the start of the story – just as important is seeing those ambitions materialise as real changes on the ground. You might want to think about putting in place a delivery strategy to realise these ambitions.

FUNDED PROJECTS

Whilst some or many of the aspirations of a neighbourhood plan may be delivered through private or public sector development, other aspirations may only be achieved if the town or parish council delivers its own projects.

It may be possible to apply for loans or grant funding for local projects. Funding sources could include:

Government national programmes – Government programmes are constantly changing, with new funding streams replacing older ones.

Lottery funds – These can sometimes offer grants for projects that deliver their aims. They include the Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery and Arts Council and Sport England.

Private funding – In some instances, it may be possible to obtain funding from private donors, local companies and local institutions or they may be prepared to deliver projects directly.

THE ROLE OF THE PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILLOR

Neighbourhood planning provides an outstanding opportunity to demonstrate the economic and social value of elected parish and town councillors. The process of engaging the local community in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan or development order offers the chance to exercise leadership, community engagement and two way communication. It can also raise a councillor's profile and electoral prospects while enhancing the reputation of their council.

SUPPORTING AND LEADING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS

A decision by a parish or town council to support the development of a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order presents a wide range of opportunities for both council and councillor. In the build up to that decision, a councillor may well have acted as a community advocate for the preparation of a plan. The work necessary to research and compile persuasive evidence to inform the council decision will support the efforts of the parish clerk and place the councillor in a knowledgeable position to make a major contribution to the debate. Once a course of action is determined by the council, a councillor can act as a community champion and council advocate for the project.

COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP

As a member of the community with an electoral mandate, a councillor can act as an authoritative channel

of communication, reporting opinion and progress back to council and community as required. They can also help enable and facilitate joint dialogue with plan stakeholders including local businesses, developers and landowners. Some parish councillors act as the leader or chair of the steering group or committee preparing the plan or order. In these circumstances, it will be important to ensure the plan retains community ownership and is not seen as simply belonging to the council. Where a steering group is led by someone who is not an elected member, there is an important diplomatic role for participating councillors to help build harmony and shared understanding between the council and any community groups involved.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Substantial community involvement and consultation is a key requirement of any successful neighbourhood plan. Given their already significant council role in ensuring citizen participation and engagement in the work of the council, local councillors are often best placed to help ensure that all those who wish to engage with the development of the plan are able to do so. One effective approach may be to make contact with key organisations and encourage them to actively participate in the preparation and delivery of the plan. Once a draft plan is in place, both council and councillors have a duty to actively circulate the draft plan to all interested parties, encouraging feedback wherever possible.

TRANSPARENCY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Evidence from task groups around the country suggests that working together to achieve the successful production of a neighbourhood plan can strengthen community relations and enhance the reputation of both council and councillor. Transparency is a key requirement of the process and will not only help build relationships

but also help ensure statutory public consultation requirements are met. Declarations of councillor interests should be clearly recorded at every relevant plan meeting. Such declarations should be in harmony with the council's public register of councillor interests. Minutes of all meetings should be published online and key decisions and actions recorded. An effective public audit trail of a councillor's contribution to the preparation of a plan will build confidence in his or her input and help protect the councillor in the event of any dispute.

INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

Insurance companies are now taking an active interest in the potential liabilities of neighbourhood plan preparation. Before engaging in neighbourhood plan activity a councillor should make sure they have public liability protection. If participating as a councillor nominated by the council, ensure a public minute records the fact and obtain written confirmation from the parish/town clerk that sufficient public liability insurance is in place. If participating as an individual member or official of a community group or society, equivalent insurance cover is recommended. A councillor may also wish to check that any equipment and facilities used by them in the preparation of a plan have adequate insurance cover.

BUDGETS AND GRANTS

Councillors involved in the preparation of a plan or order may well qualify for reimbursement of any expenses incurred if the plan steering group has a budget and access to finance for such work. If operating as a delegate from the council then parish council procedures should apply. If operating as a community or business representative, care should be taken to ensure transparency and a written public record of any claim.

MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING (TO INCLUDE A TEMPLATE)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is designed to clarify expectations and the working relationships between key parties involved in the preparation of neighbourhood development plan or order. It aims to put working relationships on the best possible footing from the start. An MOU is both a practical and an aspirational document that sets out how key parties will work together where a neighbourhood, town or parish makes a commitment to prepare a neighbourhood plan for its area.

COMMISSIONING CONSULTANTS

You will need to know what you want your neighbourhood plan to achieve before you begin commissioning consultants. This will identify the skills you may need to commission to support the plan making process. The parish and town council will need to understand the range of skills needed to deliver your neighbourhood plan early on.

However, outside expertise does not replace the judgement of the client or the role of the parish/ town council to provide leadership for the production of the plan. Knowing when to draw on the skills of others and what skills you need at the outset of the plan making process will help you to achieve a plan that reflects your neighbourhood, stands up to scrutiny and meets the future needs of your community. There is guidance available from Locality at mycommunity.org. uk which sets out how you can go about commissioning consultants at the different stages of your plan from getting started to researching and writing policies. From different types of consultants and how they can help, how to commission them, how to write a brief and what happens after the consultant is appointed.

MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

While the primary responsibility for implementing and monitoring the delivery of a 'made' neighbourhood plan will lie with the principal authority and parish or town council, once again there is an important role for the engaged local councillor. Councillors who have been involved in the detailed preparation of the plan are best placed to ensure that community aspirations and objectives do not get lost once the plan becomes statutory supplementary planning guidance. Regular monitoring by parish councillors and community champions of the local planning authority's decisions on planning applications relevant to the plan will help identify any divergence and inform future neighbourhood plan updates.

Councillors should ensure that delivery of the local neighbourhood plan is referenced at least annually, perhaps in the parish or town council's annual report. Evolving best practice suggests neighbourhood plans should be updated, at the latest, every five years.

CASE STUDIES

UPPINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Uppingham is a small market town in Rutland. The town has a heritage high street of mainly independent retailers and a small industrial estate. Uppingham neighbourhood plan built on two plans already existing in the area, the Parish Plan and 'Uppingham 2025', 36 ideas for the future'. The Uppingham Neighbourhood plan (UNP) was prepared by a business led task group which became a sub-committee of the town council. It went to referendum in July 2014 with a 92% yes vote. Now that the neighbourhood plan is made the town council have also formed a Neighbourhood Plan Committee that will look at updating the plan.

The plan addressed

- protection for heritage and curtilage of town
- balanced development with new green space
- 6.46 hectares for new homes on greenfield sites and four hectares reserved of greenfield for future homes
- housing densities
- space for a community hub incorporating a library, new sports pitches and three additional hectares of employment land.
- links to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for upgrading an existing industrial estate
- new footpaths and cycle ways including signage and access for the disadvantaged and disabled

- the town's priorities for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The table below outlines the key challenges and outcomes from the neighbourhood planning process that the group experienced.

Neighbourhood planning legislation has allowed Uppingham to take a lead in determining its own future and strengthened working relationships in the town council and with the Local Planning Authority.

Uppingham has published all its documentation, the final version of its plan and a databook of supporting evidence at uppinghamneighbourhoodplan.info.

Challenge	Outcome
Concern about cost	The plan cost less than £10k with grants available to cover much of this.
Lack of relevant skills in the local community	Community has been upskilled through the process
Difficulty in working with developers	Relationships have been built and there is now regular liaison.
Concern whether businesses engage	They were very proactive and actually took the lead in the process.
A wide number of sites to choose from for development	Statistical analysis and community interim voting helped the community choose.
Choices potentially dividing the community?	The process has actually brought people together.
The potential contribution of CIL	It has become a major enabler.
Concern that the local school might not participate	Collaboration has been outstanding.

CASE STUDY 2
WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

Woodcote is an Oxfordshire village in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), halfway between Reading and Wallingford.

Like many villages in England, Woodcote's population is ageing, housing is heavily biased towards large detached properties and high house prices mean younger people couldn't afford to live in the area.

Residents saw a neighbourhood plan as the best way of protecting the AONB and ensuring that the new development was shaped by the community rather than dictated by developers.

The process began in September 2011 with an extraordinary parish meeting attended by over 250 residents.

The plan successfully passed examination in December 2013 and referendum in April 2014. The Neighbourhood Plan has achieved:

- Housing distributed around the village in several small sites which aids community integration – large developments tend to stay communities within communities for many years

- The use of two brownfield sites thus protecting the AONB

» One of the brownfield sites was a derelict bus depot upon which 14 new homes are now nearing completion. Previously new homes could not be built on this site because the Local Authority wanted to use it for commercial development – despite there being no demand for such units locally. The removal of this eyesore was applauded by community, the Planning Committee and the developers — a real win–win — see report from Henley Standard below.

Make allies – work with the local authority, and organisations such as NALC and Locality who are there to help.

Study the Local Plan – it provides both an example of policy writing and your plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of your local plan.

Get stuck in and learn as you go along – don't expect to have all the answers at the outset and problems become less complex once you start working on them.

- The use of a second brownfield site will not only produce some 20 new homes but also enable the parish council to protect an underlying sensitive aquifer that feeds the Woodcote ponds.

- New, smaller homes, designed to be more accessible to young people and young families and to stay accessible to that group

- A higher proportion of part-rent – part-buy than allowed under the local plan

- Green space benefits, such as the gift of woodland attached to the bus depot site to the parish, as amenity space.

- Those needing housing with a strong local connection preferred access to some of the affordable homes and all of the open-market homes.

TOP TIPS FROM WOODCOTE

Have a plan for producing the plan – be clear on what must be provided to the examiner.

Form an advisory group – who can share the load and speed up the production of the plan by dividing into sub-groups and working on planning tasks in parallel.

Engage the community from the start and get good community data – consultation events, workshops, meetings with village groups, a dedicated website — woodcotendp.org.uk, email updates, articles in the local and village press, and meetings with developers all give authority to the plan. The examiner praised the group in his report for their "exceptional amount of care and engagement with the whole community."

Learn from others – look at the 'worked examples' of plans of similar communities and their associated examiner's report. All the plans that have gone through examination and referendum can be found here — mycommunity.org.uk/take-action/neighbourhood-planning

GRANTS AND SUPPORT

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Grants and support are available to help you through the neighbourhood planning process or to prepare a neighbourhood development order.

All parish and town councils are eligible to apply for total grant funding of up to £9,000 over the three year programme from 2015–18. Groups facing a range of complex issues are able to apply for further support from the programme. This support comes in two forms:

Technical support provided by AECOM – there are a range of technical support packages that groups are able to apply for as and when they become needed.

Groups are eligible to apply for further grant of up to £6,000 giving a total grant ceiling of £15,000 in the period 2015–18.

What you can use your grant for:

* Developing a website
* Training sessions for members of the steering group
* Help with putting together a project plan
* Undertaking a household survey
* Help with developing an evidence base
* Engaging a planning expert.

Technical support is a range of support 'packages' delivered by our partners AECOM to help groups complete work on specific technical studies such as

housing needs assessment, strategic environmental assessment or viability.

Technical support is only available for those groups facing more complex issues. To be eligible for technical support groups must meet one of the following criteria:

* They work as a cluster of parishes (three or more parishes working on one plan)
* They are in high growth area (with 500+ additional homes allocated)
* The neighbourhood area shows a high level of deprivation
* The neighbourhood area has a population of over 25,000 people
* Neighbourhood areas have a highly diverse community
* Neighbourhood areas have a highly transient community
* Groups are preparing a neighbourhood development order.

You can read further information about grants and technical support and apply for them here.

USEFUL LINKS

POLICY AND ADVICE

National Planning Policy Framework
planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy

National Planning Practice Guidance
planningguidance.communities.gov.uk

My Community
mycommunity.org.uk

ORGANISATIONS

Locality locality.org.uk

National Association of Local Councils nalc.gov.uk

Urban Vision Enterprise CIC uvns.org

Civic Voice civicvoice.org.uk

Community Matters communitymatters.org.uk

The Planning Portal planningportal.gov.uk

RTPI/Planning Aid rtpi.org.uk/planningaid

Institute of Historic Building Conservation ihbc.org.uk

Design Council CABE
designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/cabe

Historic England historicengland.org.uk

Natural England naturalengland.org.uk

National Planning Forum natplanforum.org.uk

Historic Towns Forum historictownsforum.org.uk

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England cpre.org.uk

National Council of Voluntary Organisations ncvo-vol.org.uk

The Environment Agency environment-agency.gov.uk

Planning Advisory Service pas.gov.uk

The Prince's Foundation for Building Community princes-foundation.org

Action with Communities in Rural England acre.org.uk

KEY RESOURCES

COMMISSIONING CONSULTANTS

This guide describes the process of commissioning consultants to support the town/ parish council or neighbourhood forum, (the commissioning client) in

the production of the neighbourhood plan.
mycommunity.org.uk/resources/commissioning-consultants

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN LEVEL

This guide is aimed at neighbourhood planners. It explains how neighbourhood planners, including parish and town councils and neighbourhood forums, can produce Housing Needs Assessments (HNAs) for their neighbourhood area, why they may need to do so, and the resources necessary to undertake this work.
mycommunity.org.uk/resources/housing-needs-assessment-at-neighbourhood-plan-level

DESIGN IN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

This guide describes the role of good design within a neighbourhood plan, setting out some tools and activities for assessing the qualities and character of a place and guiding the development of design policies within the neighbourhood plan.
mycommunity.org.uk/resources/housing-needs-assessment-at-neighbourhood-plan-level

VIABILITY TOOLKIT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

This toolkit will help neighbourhood groups preparing neighbourhood plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) who are engaging with viability issues.
mycommunity.org.uk/resources/viability-toolkit-for-neighbourhood-planning

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

In this guide you'll find advice on, helping people to imagine the future, engaging with different groups, organising events, engagement events, making the most

of your community's physical assets and hidden talents, and some examples of projects that have pioneered this approach. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-community-consultation

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING

The guide is targeted at people and organisations that are currently preparing neighbourhood plans, or have recently made a neighbourhood plan and are looking at ways to deliver its aims. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-planning-community-led-housing

SITE ASSESSMENT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

This guide is aimed at neighbourhood planning groups who are intending to allocate sites for development within the neighbourhood plan. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/site-assessment-for-neighbourhood-plans

SCREENING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This guide sets out how neighbourhood groups, including parish and town councils and neighbourhood forums, can conclude whether an SEA is required for their neighbourhood plan and the next steps it should take having made this determination. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/screening-neighbourhood-plans-for-strategic-environmental-assessment

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: GENERAL CONFORMITY WITH STRATEGIC LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

This guidance note deals with the need for neighbourhood plans to be in general conformity with strategic local planning policies. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-plans-general-conformity-with-strategic-local-planning-policy

ESTABLISHING A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM

This resource is designed to help groups or individuals who want to establish a neighbourhood forum and to develop a suitable constitution. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/establishing-a-neighbourhood-planning-forum

RESOURCES

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ROADMAP GUIDE

This guide is for all those involved in, or thinking about, producing a neighbourhood plan, and for those who are just curious to find out more. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-plan-roadmap-guide

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROJECT PLANNER

The Project Planner will assist you to set key dates on the neighbourhood planning journey. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-plan-project-planner

The Good Councillor's guide to neighbourhood planning   2017

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GRANT & TECHNICAL SUPPORT GUIDANCE NOTES

These are the guidance notes to apply for neighbourhood planning grants and technical support. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-grant-technical-support-guidance-notes

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

THE POWER OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Taking real world examples from neighbourhood plans across the country, *The Power of Neighbourhood Planning* answers key questions around the scope of neighbourhood planning. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/the-power-of-neighbourhood-planning

WRITING PLANNING POLICIES

Planning jargon can seem like a foreign language so this guide shows how to write planning policies which will address the issues that matter to your neighbourhood. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/writing-planning-policies

QUICK GUIDE TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

This guide gives a concise summary of the process for producing a neighbourhood plan under good practice. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/quick-guide-to-neighbourhood-planning

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

This guide shows how to keep your neighbourhood plan simple. mycommunity.org.uk/resources/keeping-it-simple

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GLOSSARY

mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-glossary

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PARISH PLANS
INFORMATION PACK

INDEX   PAGE

STEPS TO TAKE

APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSP . . . . .County Strategic Partnership

DPD . . . . .Development Plan Document

LDF . . . . .Local Development Framework

LDS . . . . .Local Development Scheme

LSP . . . . .Local Strategic Partnership

MTI . . . . .Market Town Initiative

OS . . . . .Ordnance Survey

PC . . . . .Parish Council

PP . . . . .Parish Plan

PPS . . . . .Planning Policy Statements

RCCE . . . . .Rural Community Council of Essex

RSS . . . . .Regional Spatial Strategy

SA . . . . .Sustainability Appraisal

SCI . . . . .Statement of Community Involvement

SEA . . . . .Strategic Environmental Assessment

SPD . . . . .Supplementary Planning Document

VDS . . . . .Village Design Statement

KEY STAGES IN PARISH PLAN

I	Seek support of Parish Council	
2	Publish article explaining Parish Plan (P. P.) in Parish Magazine or local paper	
3	Advertise, plan and hold P. P. Workshop	
4	Form Steering Group (S.G.) Appoint Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer.	
5	Prepare Constitution or Terms of Reference	
6	Open Bank Account (if applicable)	
7	Prepare a Time Plan	
8	Agree Survey methods and assistance needed	
9	Explore Sources of Funding, Partners and Sponsors; apply for funding	
10	Arrange, plan and hold events to involve young people	
11	Arrange, plan and hold events to involve other target groups	
12	Assess information from workshops and events	
13	Prepare, print and distribute Questionnaire 1. Parishioners 2. Businesses 3. Others	
14	Analyse results of Questionnaire	
15	Research relevant factual information	
16	Exhibition of P. P. progress and results of all surveys and research Establish priorities and ideas for action.	
17	Publish Findings (Appraisal Report)	
18	Contact organisations that will need to be involved in taking actions forward.	
19	Draft an action plan	
20	Circulate action plan to Borough or District Council, other relevant statutory organisations, Parish Council, and local organisations for comment or hold event to gather comments	
21	Draft the Parish Plan, including amended actions	
22	Circulate Parish Plan for approval	
23	Print Parish Plan	
24	Arrange and plan Official Launch. Invite Villagers and Dignitaries	
25	Official Launch	
26	Link to Community Strategy and LDF	
27	Monitor progress and outputs	

✓	**Assess Local Needs**
✓	**Assess Community Aspirations**
✓	**Develop an Action Plan**

Introduction

The Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) was established in 1929 as a registered charity which aims to improve and enhance the quality of life for those who live and work in the rural areas of Essex. It encourages self-help community projects and speaks out to the relevant authorities on issues that matter to people living in rural Essex.

The work of the Rural Community Council of Essex is based on enabling communities to become strong, active and empowered, capable of doing things for themselves – defining the problems they face and then tackling them together. This can be achieved through the preparation of a Parish Plan. The plan will assess local needs and aspirations and include an action plan to improve services and facilities. Parish Plans were promoted by the Countryside Agency from 2000 to 2004 as part of their Vital Villages programme. The Government's Rural Strategy, published in July 2004, outlines the importance of Parish Plans and their links to statutory planning processes and civil renewal.

> **This Pack provides information and advice on how to produce a Parish Plan. Parish Plans have been prepared by towns and villages in Essex for many years and there are examples from across the county.**

Assistance, advice and support is available at all stages of your Parish Plan. Please contact your local field officer at the Rural Community Council of Essex at the address below for further information:

Rural Community Council of Essex
Mackmurdo House
79 Springfield Road
Chelmsford
Essex CM2 6JG

Tel: 01245 352046
Fax: 01245 495427
email: rcce@essexrcc.org.uk

✓	**Vision for the Future**
✓	**Local Action**
✓	**Community Statement**

What is a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan is a document that sets out a vision for the future of the parish and identifies the actions needed to achieve that vision. It is a local, action-based plan which addresses a range of problems and opportunities affecting rural communities.
It is principally for your parish but may also be able to influence statutory planning processes.

A Parish Plan is based on information provided through survey, research, consultation and community participation.

There is no standard format for a parish plan and no prescriptive lists of the subjects it should address. Its content is led by the community.

A Parish Plan is a statement of how the community sees itself evolving over the next few years. It...

- reflects the views of all sections of the community,

- identifies which features and local characteristics people value,

- identifies local problems and opportunities,

- identifies needs, aspirations and priorities,

- prepares a plan of action to achieve identified objectives.

NOTE

A Parish Plan is a type of community-led plan. Another type of community- led plan that may be undertaken by a rural parish is a Village Design Statement (VDS). **There is a fundamental difference between Parish Plans and Village Design Statements.** *As stated above, Parish Plans address a range of social, environmental and economic issues, and produce two main types of outcome — action which can be undertaken by local groups, and proposals to influence actions, decisions and policies of larger organisations.*

A Village Design Statement describes the character of the local area and produces design guidance and practical ways to care for and enhance the appearance of the local area. The VDS, if in accordance with development plan policy, can be adopted as planning guidance and can then be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Specific advice on the production of VDS is contained in the RCCE Information Pack 'VDS'.

Parish Plans within the Planning Process

There are effectively two planning systems at present, which can best be described as "Community Planning" and "Spatial Planning". The systems are managed separately although there are many links and overlaps between them.

"Community Planning" is principally concerned with the delivery of services and provision of facilities. The planning document produced by the District / Borough Local Strategic Partnership is the Community Strategy.

"Spatial Planning" is principally concerned with land use, development and design.
The planning document produced by the District / Borough Council is the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Parish Plans link well with the Community Strategy but they can also influence the LDF. Specific guidance on linking your Parish Plan to the Community Strategy and LDF is included in a separate RCCE Information Pack 'Linking Community-Led Plans to Statutory Plans'.

If your Parish Plan is likely to include strategic issues (e.g. if your parish is located in a potential growth area) the links to statutory plans may be significant. It will be important to work with planning officers to learn more about the planning policy implications on the future of your parish. This will help to ensure that relevant questions and survey work is included in your parish plan.

The 'Protocol' outlined in Appendix 2 shows the assistance that District / Borough Council officers are able to offer. The Local Planning Authority roles and responsibilities have been agreed by the Essex Planning Officers Association. The protocol also shows the roles and responsibilities of other organisations and groups, including your own Parish Plan Group.
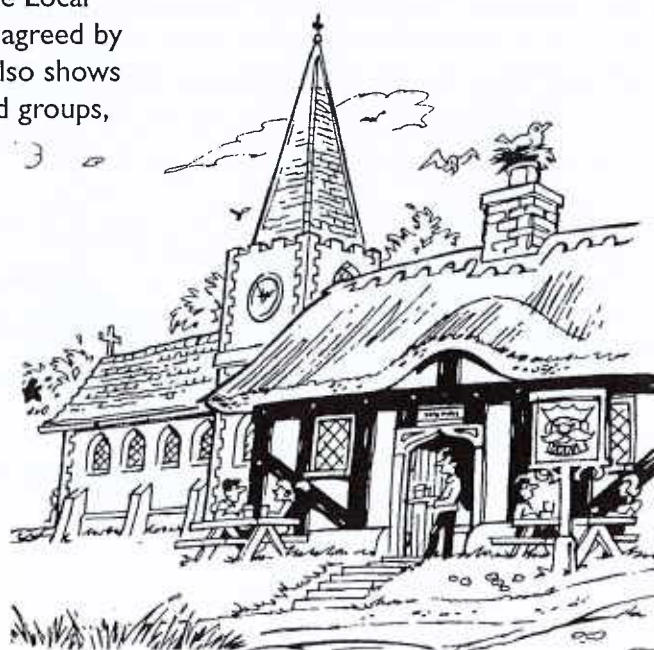
✓	**Whole Community Involvement**
✓	**Creates Community Spirit**
✓	**Plans for the Future**
✓	**Improves Access to Funding**
✓	**Increases Local Voice**

Why do a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan enables a community to be proactively involved in determining the nature of services and facilities it receives. It helps to shape a future that the community wants to see, rather than the one it could have avoided.

It identifies areas of concern within the community and highlights what needs to be improved or conserved;

It gives everyone an equal chance of being heard, not just those who speak up at local meetings;

It helps bring groups and individuals in the community together to work towards a common goal;

It equips communities with the skills and knowledge they need to improve quality of life in the parish;

It enables future projects to be planned with the knowledge that they have community support;

It improves success in funding applications by providing evidence of community involvement in local projects;

It enables local priorities to be fed into the statutory planning processes i.e. the Community Strategy and Local Development Framework (LDF);

It contributes to securing a thriving and viable future for the community.

A Parish Plan Flow Chart

WORKSHOP
Highlighted Priorities and
Sign Up Volunteers

RCCE
Advice and Guidance

FORM
Steering Group

COLLECT AND PROCESS INFORMATION
Factual information, opinion, needs and
aspirations e.g. by questionnaire,
open days etc.

RCCE / Local Authority
Advice and Guidance

CONSULTATION
Involve the community in determining
priorities for action

RCCE
Advice and Guidance

PUBLISH REPORT
Share survey findings and
objectives established

DRAW UP PROPOSALS FOR ACTION PLANS

Service Providers / RCCE
Expertise and Guidance

CONSULTATION
Reaction to detailed proposals.
Modifications.

RCCE
Advice and Guidance

PUBLICATION AND LAUNCH OF PARISH PLAN

LINKS TO STATUTORY PLANS
Community Strategy and LDF

Local Authority / RCCE
Expertise and Guidance

✓	**Collect/Assess Information**
✓	**Draw Up an Action Plan**
✓	**Link to Statutory Plans**

How to Carry Out a Parish Plan

The production of a Parish Plan is broadly a three stage process –
- Collect and Assess Information (Surveys),
- Produce an Action Plan, and
- Link to Statutory Plans.

It is good practice to apply the following principles throughout the process:-

Social inclusion and civil renewal
Provide everyone with the opportunity to get involved and be aware of barriers to involvement e.g. poor literacy, mobility problems etc. This will mean designing consultation methods to target people who don't usually have their say.

Publicity
Keep people informed throughout the process. It is vital to maintaining interest and enthusiasm for the Parish Plan. Create a database of local groups and organisations so you can invite them to send a representative to events and ask for comments on draft documents.

Records
Keep a diary of community involvement, noting the numbers of people receiving information, attending events and responding to surveys (See Appendix 3).

Volunteers
Keep a record of volunteer time spent on the project (see Appendix 3) – volunteer time is a valuable contribution to the project. Ensure that meetings and tasks are arranged to suit volunteers and they are thanked for their efforts. Also be aware of the needs of your volunteers in terms of training and information (e.g. information about how the planning system works).

Quality of output
Each parish is unique; the precise method of producing the plan will vary from one community to another but the quality of output must be consistent. Seek advice to ensure that rigorous and robust processes are used to arrive at the final Parish Plan.

Support is available throughout the process from your RCCE field officer, local authority officers and other sources. Appendix 2 outlines the roles and responsibilities of the main parties involved in the production and use of a Parish Plan.

Terms of the RCCE field officer service will be included in a letter of engagement once the Parish Plan has commenced. The basic service is currently free of charge but quotes may be obtained for any additional work. Contact RCCE for further information.

✓	**Organise Publicity**
✓	**Book Venue**
✓	**Arrange Refreshments**
✓	**Gather Information**
✓	**Sign Up Volunteers**

STEP 1
– Organise Workshop / Drop-In Session

An event or meeting of some kind is needed to initiate the Parish Plan and get the process underway. A small team of people will be needed to make local arrangements for this event (publicity and invitations, booking the venue, organising refreshments etc) although wider community involvement will be necessary as the project progresses.
A more representative steering group will be formed after the initial event. It is important to secure the support of the parish council at the outset as they will be the organisation ultimately responsible for implementing and monitoring the Parish Plan.

The purposes of the initial event are to gather information about local concerns and priorities, and to sign up volunteers to take the process forward; the recommended type of event is either a workshop or a drop-in session (see Appendix 1 for details). Your RCCE field officer can facilitate either event and also type up the information gathered from it.

Both methods are participatory and non-confrontational and most of all, FUN. The choice between a workshop or a drop-in session will depend on local circumstances...

A Workshop is a facilitated meeting lasting approximately two hours. It usually takes place in the evening although some villages prefer to hold a workshop on a Saturday morning.

Advantages
Lively group discussion
Able to vote on / prioritise participant's comments
Verbal and visual explanation of the Parish Plans process to whole group

Disadvantages
Requires participants to attend for the full session
Rarely attended by young people

A Drop-in session is an interactive exhibition that can be open for as long as you wish, on whatever day you wish.

Advantages
Flexible timing to attract variety of participants
Only requires participants to spend a short time at the event
Can attract young people

Disadvantages
No organised discussion of issues
Vote/prioritisation can only be on general issues
Facilitator works one-to-one which can create difficulties when large numbers attend at once.

Note: Whatever event is organised, a risk assessment of the venue and activities should be undertaken (see example in Appendix 3).

| ✓	**Invite Volunteers**
✓	**Set Meeting Date/Agenda**
✓	**Structure Working Groups**

STEP 2 – Form Steering Group

The initiating team will need to invite all those who volunteered themselves at the workshop or drop-in session to a meeting, usually chaired by your RCCE field officer. The aims of this meeting are to agree the structure/type of the group, elect officers and allocate tasks (an example agenda is overleaf). There is a lot of information to absorb and sometimes it takes two or three meetings to achieve these aims.

It is recommended that the group is structured so that working groups undertake the various tasks (listed on the agenda overleaf) with a representative from each reporting to a core steering group. This structure will obviously depend on total numbers of volunteers wishing to be involved in the Parish Plan project – in a small group, one person may do several tasks. It is suggested that the core group is between 5 and 9 people. The role of the core steering group is to keep the process on track and be responsible for timescale and funding. The working groups will be responsible for the detailed processes.

The group needs to consider how it wishes to be established, either as a sub group of the parish council with a working agreement / terms of reference, or as a separate new group with its own constitution and bank account. The decision will usually depend on local perception of relationships with the parish council, and whether a volunteer treasurer is forthcoming. Further information about types of group is contained in the RCCE Information Pack 'Setting up and Running a Project'

The last item on the agenda is to set a date for the next meeting of the core steering group and agree the business of that meeting. It may be helpful to set a rough agenda for that next meeting to include any business not completed at the first meeting and also to take reports from the working groups that have been formed. The working groups can then arrange their own meetings, knowing what tasks they are expected to have completed by the next core steering group meeting.
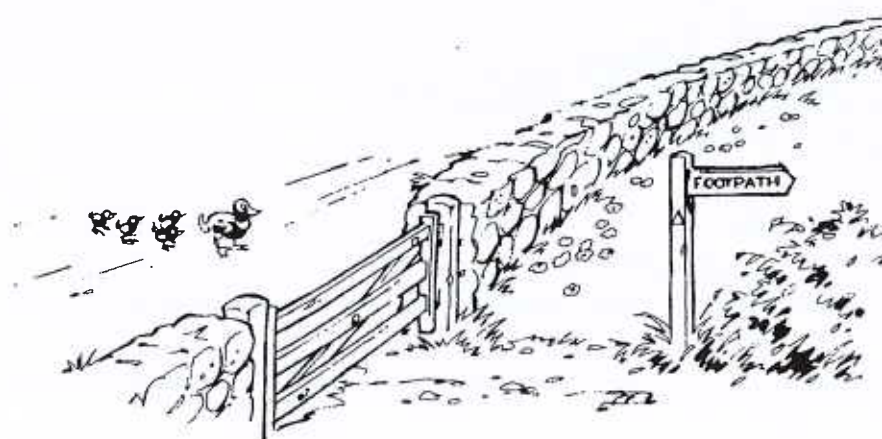
_____ **PARISH PLAN**

First meeting of Steering Group

_____ **date** _____

<u>AGENDA</u>

1. Introductions

2. The Parish Plan process

3. Allocation of responsibilities / formation of working groups
   - Adult Questionnaire ⎫
   - Youth Questionnaire ⎬ and processing
   - Business Questionnaire ⎭
   - Distribution and Collection of Questionnaires
   - Other targeted surveys
   - Factual information and statistics
   - Publicity and Information
   - Constitution and Project Plan (timescale)
   - Funding applications
   - Diary of Community Involvement
   - Volunteer Time records
   - Compiling Reports

4. Election of Officers of the Steering Group
   - Chairman
   - Treasurer
   - Secretary
   - Reps from working groups

5. Dates of next meetings
   - Steering group
   - Working groups (can arrange separately)

✓	15 Months - 2 Years Time Frame
✓	Weather Conditions
✓	School Diary
✓	Other Events

STEP 3 – Consider Timescale and Timing

It will be necessary to draw up a timescale for the project. The first stage of the parish plan is the 'survey', which is often best undertaken in the warmer months with longer daylight hours.

Questionnaires are less successful if distributed during dark evenings or holiday periods. The best distribution months are April to June, and September to October.

Participatory appraisals, where maps and models are taken outside, are better done in warmer months.

Workshops in schools need to be in term time – some terms are busier than others for teaching staff (e.g. run up to Christmas with school plays etc).

Drop-in sessions that 'piggy back' onto existing events are most likely to be in the summer (fetes etc) or at festivals (Easter, Christmas etc).

> **Decide when you will be undertaking the surveys and build your timescale around that, allowing yourselves enough time for preparation. Where visiting other organisations (e.g. schools, youth groups) to gather information, schedule in time to plan the session with teachers / leaders. Build in at least 2 months for formulation of questionnaires, which always take longer than expected, and also allow plenty of time for processing, particularly if being undertaken by volunteers.**

At the action planning stage, allow plenty of time to set up meetings with decision-making organisations, and time for negotiation on specific actions.

Bear in mind that it may be difficult to organise meetings and complete tasks during July, August and December as they are busy months socially.

The whole process usually takes between 15 months and 2 years.

✓	**What are the Costs**
✓	**Fundraising Plans**
✓	**Applying for Grants**

STEP 4 – Consider Funding

A budget will need to be prepared for the project. First estimate the expenditure – consider the tasks and stages of the time plan and consider the costs of each task. Build some flexibility into your cost estimates to cover contingencies.

Costs may include:
- hire of meeting halls
- publicity materials
- printing of questionnaires
- materials for participatory methods
- purchasing of computer software
- publishing of findings

Consider the cost of training and professional support if needed. Initiation of Parish Plans is currently a free RCCE field officer service and includes presentations and explanations about the Parish Plans process, facilitation and processing of an initial event and chairing the meeting to form a steering group. RCCE can be contracted to provide additional professional support e.g. facilitating and processing school workshops and action planning workshops, if these tasks cannot be undertaken by volunteers. Contact your RCCE field officer for information and costs.

Work out a fundraising plan to provide income to cover all your costs. This may include fundraising events, sponsorship, help 'in kind' (photocopying by local businesses etc), requests for funding from parish council and local authority and other grant funding applications.

Also consider the value of volunteer time as this is a 'hidden cost' of your parish plan. Most grant funders require 'match funding' as your contribution to the project; this is usually a mix of cash and a volunteer time value. If you are applying for grants you will therefore need to estimate the number of volunteer days to be spent on the parish plan and include this in your applications. It is important to record volunteer time as evidence for the funding body (see Appendix 3).

Bear the following in mind when making grant fund applications:-
- Grants will not usually cover expenditure incurred before the application.
- Grant schemes will often have restrictions on the timescale of spending e.g. needs to be spent within one year or needs to be spent by 31st March. Your most significant cost (publication of reports) is incurred towards the end of the project so timing of applications is important.
- Some funders operate several grant schemes but will not usually make multiple awards for the same project.

A sample budget for a Parish Plan is shown overleaf.

Sample Budget

Item description	Value of volunteer input		Amount from PC	Fund raising	Grant application	Total
	Days	@ £	£	£	£	£
Public meetings/surveys/consultations						
hire of halls (initial workshop)						
hire of halls (action planning w'shop)						
meetings to develop questionnaire(s)						
meetings to develop actions						
mileage/travel/telephone						
printing questionnaire(s)						
distributing questionnaire(s)						
publicity and information						
Consultancy/professional support						
facilitation by RCCE						
accounting advice						
questionnaire/graphic design						
software/processing design						
Data collection and analysis						
research previous surveys						
research community profile						
collection of questionnaire(s)						
purchase of software						
data input						
analysis of processed responses						
Production & distribution of reports/plans						
drafting report(s) of responses						
printing report						
licence to produce OS maps						
photographs						
report distribution						
drafting action plan						
printing action plan						
action plan distribution						
Other costs						
prize draw?						
launch/celebration event?						

1. Enter cash expenditure into the total column
2. Estimate hours for tasks undertaken by volunteers and calculate the value of this time
3. Enter the total amount contributed by the Parish Council and allocate to relevant headings
4. Enter the amounts of the total costs you can apply for in grant funding (will depend on grant criteria etc.)
5. Determine the amounts you will need to raise from other sources

✓	**Gather Factual Information**
✓	**Review Existing Surveys**
✓	**Carry Out New Surveys**
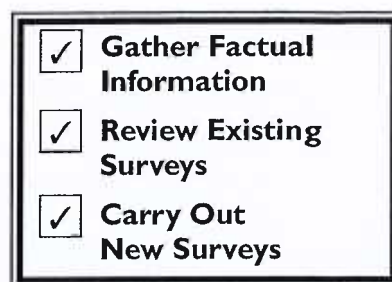
STEP 5 – Collect Information

This 'survey stage' is very important as the information collected will form the basis of the Parish Plan. The initial workshop or drop-in session will have highlighted local concerns and priorities which will provide a focus for the surveys. If the initial event highlighted land-use development and design issues, the group may need to consider producing a Village Design Statement (see note on page 2) as well as a Parish Plan, depending on resources available.

Various types of information about your parish needs to be collected:
  Gather factual information and statistics,
  Review existing surveys,
  Carry out new surveys to establish views and opinions, needs and aspirations.

You will also need to consider related plans and strategies produced by statutory organisations. Your RCCE field officer can help with this.

Detailed guidance on collecting information and undertaking surveys is contained in the RCCE Information Pack "Involving the Community in your Project", including advice on questionnaire design, use of maps and models, and running workshops.

For Parish Plans, a questionnaire is recommended in all but the largest parishes (i.e. up to 5,000 population). This at least provides an opportunity for all residents in the parish to have a say in the process but the larger the population, the greater the burden on volunteers to deliver and collect questionnaires. For parishes of more than 5,000 population, participatory methods using maps and models may be more suitable. Your field officer can advise on appropriate survey methods.

Below are some general notes about surveys and collecting information:

Response Rate

Publicity is important to encourage people to respond. Consider incentives such as a prize draw to increase the response rate. Make sure that local people know when the survey is taking place and that their opinion is valued. If using a questionnaire to gather information, let people know where they can post their completed form if they miss the collection. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to provide pre-paid envelopes for return of surveys. Make it easy for people to respond and for their views and opinions to be included.

Inclusion

Remember that questionnaires are suitable for literate adults but may exclude others from taking part. Your survey stage will need to have a selection of methods to involve specific groups. It is essential to involve young people.

Visiting Venues

When visiting a venue to undertake a survey e.g. sheltered accommodation, gypsy site, school, etc always make advance arrangements. For schools this will often mean a pre-meeting to establish the length of the session and learning objectives for the pupils.

✓	**Processing Data**
✓	**Report Findings**
✓	**Publicise Results**
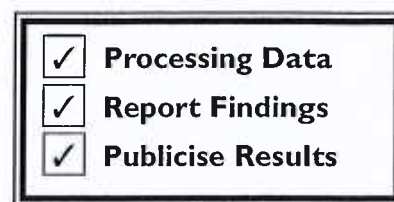
STEP 6 – Assess Findings and Consult on Priorities

During Step 5 a lot of information will be gathered that requires processing. This is usually undertaken by volunteers but may alternatively be contracted to a data processing company. The result either way will be a vast quantity of raw data, both quantitative and qualitative information, to be assessed.

You will have factual information about services and facilities available in the parish to compare with the views and opinions, needs and aspirations of local people.

> **It is recommended that an event is organised to report the survey findings back to the community. This event can also be used to gather further information about priorities and actions in the light of these findings. The suggested format of the event is an Open Day/Exhibition in order to involve the wider community in determining priorities for action and to gather suggestions for specific actions. Such an event can determine areas of consensus and areas of contention.**

The open day / exhibition should include...

* Displays of responses/ results of all surveys (grids and charts),
* Factual information about service provision,
* Conclusions drawn,
* Post it notes for ideas of specific actions to address the problems highlighted – perhaps split between actions that can be taken forward locally and actions requiring the involvement of other organisations,
* List of possible objectives/areas for action and an opportunity to vote on priorities (this can be by using sticky dots to record priorities).

Once again, publicity is essential in ensuring a good turnout for the event. Depending on circumstances, you may prefer to 'piggy back' onto an existing event or hold a series of 'touring' events to ensure a high degree of involvement. There are a number of advantages to piggy-backing onto an existing event - the publicity, venue booking etc is already arranged reducing the burden on the parish plans group and there are often other attractions to encourage a larger audience to attend. Your RCCE field officer can advise on the best approach.

In some circumstances an event is not felt to be appropriate, for example if there is a shortage of resources or if the survey gathered information about priorities and preferred action proposals. It may be that written feedback of the survey findings (as outlined in Step 7) is deemed sufficient.

✓	**Description of Area**
✓	**Community Involvement**
✓	**Survey Results**
✓	**Objectives**
✓	**Next Steps**

STEP 7 – Publish Report of Findings

> The findings of the survey stage should be reported back to the community in a printed form. Something should be distributed to every house – either as a report in a parish magazine or as a separate sheet summarising the 'highlights'. (This may be done before the open day as a way of advertising the event).

A full report of all findings and statistics plus the outcome of the consultation event (outlined in Step 6) should be accessible to local residents who may wish to examine them in detail. This report (sometimes referred to as an Appraisal Report) does not need to be a 'glossy' document. The length and type of the printed report will often be determined by the available funding – colour printing and high gloss paper being expensive. Some parishes sell the full report for a nominal fee.

It is also important to send reports of survey findings to strategic partners and request their input into the next stage of action planning. You may need up to 50 copies of the full report for circulation e.g. to ward members, local authority officers, police, potential funders etc depending on the nature of the findings. Consider putting the report onto CD or in PDF format and/or publishing on a village website if you have one. However you decide to publish the report, make sure you let people know how they can view or acquire a copy.

The full report of survey findings should contain the following:

Description of the Village / Town
> An introduction to "the place", location, character, demographics, services and facilities.

Community Involvement
> Describe the process of collecting information; survey methods, numbers of respondents, efforts made to involve those who don't usually take part.

Survey Results
> Summarise the findings; headlines – main issues raised, priorities, text summarising the statistical information and linking perceptions to factual information; statistics – grids, graphs, bar charts, pie charts (possibly as an appendix).

Objectives / Priorities for action
> Longer term aims to improve quality of life, based on the survey findings. Vision, mission statement or more specific aims linked to the issues raised.

Next steps
> The process for drawing up an Action Plan.
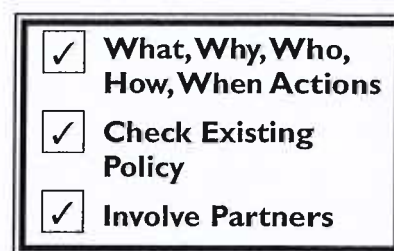
STEP 8 – Draw Up Proposals for Action Plan

Working from the needs and objectives arising from Steps 6 and 7, a draft action plan will need to be drawn up. A set of actions will need to be established to achieve each of the objectives identified in the Appraisal Report (Step 7 publication) showing:-

> **WHAT** the action is,
> **WHY** the action is needed (as evidenced by the survey/appraisal),
> **WHO** will lead on taking the action forward and,
> **WHO** else needs to be involved,
> **HOW** it will be resourced,
> **WHEN** it will be started and an estimate of completion,
> **HOW** success will be measured, how the plan will be monitored and reviewed.

See Appendix 4 for guidance on producing SMART Action Plans.

It is important to include a range of actions; a mix of those that can be undertaken:-

- by individuals and community groups within the village/town,
- by community groups with help/in partnership with larger organisations,
- by statutory or large organisations.

The steering group will need to work with appropriate organisations to draft the action plan. The steering group will also need to ensure that their action plan takes account of existing statutory plans and strategies of service providers. These should have been researched as part of Step 5 – collecting information, but if in doubt, your RCCE field officer can help with this.

It is important to build working relationships with the local organisations and statutory service providers that will be your partners in carrying out the actions in the plan. The statutory partners will welcome the information that the survey provides as it will help them to develop delivery of their services to better meet local needs.

You can involve partner organisations in drafting the action plan by inviting them to a workshop event or to focus group meetings. A workshop event is a good way to bring local people (the inside experts) and professionals (the outside experts) together at one event. Your RCCE field officer can advise on participatory action-planning methods suitable for a workshop event. Focus groups may be preferred and are particularly good for exploring complex issues. In either case, it is important to invite professionals with the relevant expertise to enable informed decisions to be made.

| ✓ | **Allow at Least 8 Weeks** |
| ✓ | **Circulate to Partners** |

STEP 9 – Consult on Draft Proposals

> **The draft Action Plan must undergo a consultation process to provide an opportunity for local people and organisations (within and outside the parish) to comment. Action plan proposals will need to be circulated to partner organisations that are named in the action plan – these may be community groups, business interests, larger voluntary groups or statutory organisations. Resource implications and joint working arrangements will need to be finalised.**

Allow at least 8 weeks consultation period – this is the recommended minimum.

If there was a high level of local input in formulating the actions within the plan, distribution of a draft action plan summary for comment to every house in the parish may be sufficient. However, if the response to the community event in Step 6 and the involvement of the community/partner organisations in Step 8 were low, you may feel it necessary to hold an event or series of events to gather feedback on the draft action plan.

An open day or exhibition may be organised to display the detailed survey findings and invite comment on the related action plan proposals. Such an event can be used to provide information about complex issues. For contentious issues the event can be used to put forward various action plan options on which people can vote and try to arrive at a consensus.

The event can also be used to highlight actions that can be undertaken by individuals and community groups within the village/town and used as an opportunity to sign up volunteers to take those actions forward.

✓	**Draft**
✓	**Publish**
✓	**Distribute**
✓	**Launch Event**

STEP 10 – Publish and Launch the Parish Plan

Once all comments have been dealt with and necessary amendments made, the Parish Plan can be drafted and published. The document should include:-

Description of Village / Town

An introduction to "the place" as in the Step 7 publication.

Community Involvement

Describe the process of gathering information and action planning – build on the information in the Step 6 publication.

Survey Results

Priorities arising from the survey stage. Survey information that evidences need and aspiration in support of the objectives and actions.

Objectives

Vision, mission statement and more specific aims linked to the issues raised.

Action Plan

The actions that will achieve the above objectives, showing who is involved, resources and timescale.

Monitoring and evaluation.

Show the desired outcomes and the indicators that will be used to measure success. State how the community will be kept informed and how/when the plan will be reviewed.

Links to strategic plans

Show how the parish plan relates to and influences wider plans and strategies, particularly Community Strategy and Local Development Framework.

The Parish Plan should be distributed to local people – a bare minimum of one sheet A4 should be sent to each house summarising the 'objectives and the actions in the plan'.
A full report should be produced and made available to local residents who may wish to examine the detail e.g. copies should be lodged in public places such as the village hall, parish office, library, pub, shop etc. Some parishes decide to sell the full report. The full report does not need to be 'glossy'. The length and type of the printed Action Plan will often be determined by the available funding – colour printing and high gloss paper being expensive.

It is also important to send the Action Plan to strategic partners and confirm their input into actions. You may need up to 50 copies of the full report for circulation e.g. to ward members, local authority officers, police, potential funders etc depending on the contents of the action plan. Consider putting the plan onto CD or in PDF format and/or publishing on a village website if you have one. However you decide to publish the plan, make sure you let people know how they can view or acquire a copy.

It is recommended that a launch event is held to celebrate the community achievement and to raise the profile of the Parish Plan. Stress that this is the end of the planning process but the beginning of ACTION. Highlight any actions that are already underway. Such an event can also be used to encourage more local people to sign up for actions that they can get involved in – either as an individual (e.g. commitment to stick to speed limits) or by getting involved in a local group (e.g. setting up a youth club). Displays and relevant information can be made available.

STEP 11
– Link the Parish Plan to Statutory Plans

The Parish Plan has links to Statutory Plans produced for your district/borough.

Links to Community Strategy

The local strategic partnership (LSP) may be able to assist with actions included in the Parish Plan that require help from specific service providers. Any actions within the Parish Plan that relate to wider strategic issues may be included in the district/borough wide community strategy. Full details of how to link the Parish Plan to the Community Strategy is contained in a separate RCCE Information Pack 'Linking Community-Led Plans to Statutory Plans'.

Links to Local Development Framework

The local planning authority will need to gather local factual information and assess local need as part of its evidence base (evidence to enable a thorough understanding of the opportunities and constraints within an area by assessing environmental, economic, social and physical information to identify the characteristics of the locality). This is where much of the information gathered during the production of a parish plan can be of influence. In addition, parish plan actions can inform Development Plan Documents that focus on a particular geographical area such as Site Specific Allocations and Area Action Plans. Full details of how to link the Parish Plan to the Local Development Framework is contained in a separate RCCE Information Pack 'Linking Community-Led Plans to Statutory Plans'.

Linking to Other Strategies

The information gathered as part of the Parish Plan process will often be useful to statutory organisations as input into their consultations e.g. Community Safety Audit and Strategy. Actions may link into their service delivery programmes either through the LSP or independently.

✓	**Hand to Parish Council**
✓	**Track Progress**
✓	**Monitor Timescale**
✓	**Review Action**
✓	**Feedback to Community**

STEP 12 – Monitor and Review

After completion of the Parish Plan, the task of the steering group is effectively over although individual group members often join local groups to take actions forward. The parish council has the responsibility of monitoring progress and success, and reviewing the Parish Plan at a later date.

The plan is monitored to check that actions are being taken forward within the timescale and with the resources set out in the plan. Monitoring also involves measuring the success of the actions in achieving their objectives as established as part of Step 8. It is possible for all the proposed actions to be carried out (all the boxes ticked) but to still not achieve the improvements you had hoped for due to external factors. If this appears to be happening, it may be appropriate to review the actions and modify or introduce new ones in order to achieve your objectives.

The most important thing is to focus on achieving the desired outcomes (refer to Appendix 4). Those are the things that will make a difference to people's quality of life.

> **It is important to provide regular feedback on progress with the Parish Plan – inform local people of completed actions, and of objectives achieved. There should be a mix of 'quick wins' and longer term projects. As well as celebrating successes, be honest and open about any setbacks that occur and explain why proposals have not worked.**

APPENDIX 1 – Workshop / Drop-In Session

The purpose of either event is to:
> gather information about local concerns and priorities, and
> sign up volunteers to take the process forward.

Venue

The local team will be asked to book the hall. It needs to be large enough to accommodate an exhibition space (drop-in) or people sitting around tables (workshop) with still enough room for milling about. Consider provision of refreshments and also the need for surfaces to which flip chart sheets can be attached (usually with blu-tak). Undertake a risk assessment (see record sheet in Appendix 3).

Dates and times

Depends on local circumstances – you know your community best.

Publicity

Prepare and distribute flyers and posters (examples of posters are included on pages 3 and 4 of this appendix, others are available from your RCCE field officer). Write articles for local magazines and letters to local groups and organisations asking them to send a representative to the event.

Format and content of the event

Information is gathered about the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that exist in the parish, based on three questions:
> What is special?
> What are the problems?
> What ideas do you have for improvements?

The answers to these questions are recorded by participants on three different coloured post-it notes and placed on flip chart sheets headed up with different topics e.g. health, transport and traffic, leisure and recreation, shops and services etc. The colours of the post-it notes give an instant indication of the topic areas considered as strengths and weaknesses.

At a workshop, participants will have the opportunity to indicate which of the written post-its reflect their highest priorities. At a drop-in session, where people will be coming and going this will not be possible. Instead, the topic areas of most concern can be the subject of a vote to give some indication of priority.

An explanation of the Parish Plans process will also be provided. At the drop-in session this will be by display of information with specific questions directed at the RCCE field officer. At the workshop there will be a verbal and diagrammatic presentation of the process followed by questions. In both cases, participants will be encouraged to sign up as volunteers to take the process forward.

The materials for all of the above will be provided by your RCCE field officer who will also be present to facilitate the event. The small team who arranged the event will be expected to be present and to offer refreshments to participants where appropriate and venue permitting (a refreshment break is recommended during a workshop – see the programme below).

Workshop Programme

7.30   Welcome and introductions

7.35   Parish Plans - background and description of the evening

7.50   First exercise in table groups (25 mins)
        What is Special?
        What are the Problems?
        What ideas do you have for Improvements?

8.15   Second exercise moving around the hall (15 mins)
        Sort comments by issue headings

Social	Community Networks
	Housing
	Health
	Community Safety and Crime
	Sport, Leisure and Open Space
	Arts, Culture and Heritage
	Local Government
Transport and Traffic	
Economy	Local Economy and Employment
	Education and Training
	Tourism
Environment	"Clean" – air, water, energy and waste
	"Green" – natural environment

8.30   Refreshment break
        – read post-it note comments from other tables

8.50   Third exercise moving around the hall (10 mins)
        Prioritising the comments – vote using sticky dots

9.00   Summary of first three exercises

9.10   The Parish Plans Process

9.20   Signing up

9.30   Thanks and close

THE FUTURE OF BULMER DO YOU CARE?

What is special about Bulmer?
What are the problems?
What ideas do you have for improvements?

Find out how everyone can

Have Their Say and turn **Ideas Into Action**
through an **Appraisal and Parish Plan** at

The Village Hall

on

Friday 21st September, 7:30pm

IT'S YOUR VILLAGE,
COME ALONG AND GET INVOLVED IN YOUR FUTURE

Together we can make a difference

FINCHINGFIELD
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT FINCHINGFIELD?
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?
WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR IMPROVEMENT?

Find out how everyone can
Have their say and turn Ideas into Action
Through an Appraisal and Parish Plan

At

THE VILLAGE HALL
FINCHINGFIELD
On Saturday 8th February
From 10.00am. until 12.00noon

Jan Cole, Appraisals Fieldworker for Braintree District,
will explain how villages like ours can benefit from producing a
PARISH PLAN

It's your village so please come along with your ideas and have your say.
All people of all ages are welcome.

All will be explained at the meeting but if in the meantime you have any questions or would like further
information, please contact ....

PPP 11105

APPENDIX 2 – Essex Protocol for Community-led Plans

Production of a community-led plan requires a variety of skills and resources and is best achieved by working in partnership. This protocol allocates roles to those with the most appropriate skills to ease burden on any of the partners. The community has detailed local knowledge, RCCE has expertise in community empowerment and participatory techniques, and the district/borough council has expertise in community strategy and planning policy. It is also recognised that all the partners involved have limited time and resources available.

1. Local Groups leading the process will...

- Fully engage with the wider local community in production of the community-led plan,
- Respond to LDF consultations published by the local planning authority for comment,
- Comply with the requirements of the LDF Statement of Community Involvement,
- Provide a summary of how the community was involved in the process,
- Keep ward members of the district/borough council informed of progress,
- Seek advice from both RCCE and the Local Planning Authority/LSP Co-ordinator in the production of the plan,
- Produce action plan/guidance and identify delivery partners where appropriate,
- State how the community-led plan will be monitored, evaluated and updated,
- Link with the district/borough Community Strategy by following the LSP 'bridging procedure' and submitting information on the template (see section 6),
- Link with the district/borough LDF by following the procedure for SPD and/or by submitting information for DPD in the suggested format (see section 4),
- Recognise that information may need to satisfy specific assessments before it can be incorporated into strategic plans.

2. The Rural Community Council of Essex will...

- Explain community-led plans, their purpose and benefits,
- Target communities most in need or with local development issues,
- Provide information packs and examples from other communities,
- Advise on funding sources and project management during the process,
- Advise on how to fully engage with the community,
- Facilitate meetings and workshops where required,
- Advise on appropriate delivery agents for actions/proposals,
- Provide access to RCCE's network of contacts,
- Provide information and guidance to local planning authorities as appropriate.

3. The Local Planning Authority will...

- Explain planning processes and links with community-led plans,
- At the appropriate time, prioritise assistance to those parishes in most need or with local development issues,
- Advise on current and emerging development plan policies for the parish at the start of the process,
- Offer advice and explanation on conservation issues such as listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeology, landscape and wildlife,
- Advise on the drafting of questionnaires about land-use development and design issues,
- Provide maps of the parish and detailed maps of village envelope, conservation area, special designations etc (for use during the process),
- Invite group members to planning department reception (to research information) and signpost communities to other sources of information,
- Provide specific advice on draft policy statements and proposals at later stages of the process,
- Use robust and consistent community-led plan information as part of their evidence base when preparing their LDFs/DPDs,
- Include as SPD, consistent and robust community-led plans dealing with land-use, development and design, where they meet the appropriate criteria,
- Inform the local group of their reasons for not including information (e.g. if it does not meet requirements of SCI, SA, SEA etc).

4. The LSP co-ordinator will...

- Explain the community strategy and links with community-led plans,
- Hold a library of completed community-led plans in the district/borough,
- Signpost local groups to relevant LSP partners re action points in the community-led plan,
- Inform the LSP of actions and proposals in the community-led plan that relate to wider strategic issues,
- Inform the local group of how the issues/actions have been addressed by the LSP/individual partners.

5. East of England Planning Aid will...

(subject to a communities eligibility – see national criteria)

- Provide information events and presentations on the planning system,
- Advise and assist on contributing to local development plans,
- Help communities to develop their own strategies, including parish plans,
- Provide training on the planning system and development plans,
- Run educational projects with school children and young people
- Provide a casework service that will support eligible groups and individuals

6. Role of other partners

Other partner agencies (for example, Essex Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks, CPREssex) also support community-led planning initiatives by offering training and professional advice where appropriate.

7. Role of Councillors

Parish councillors and ward members have a vital role to play as community leaders in initiating a community-led plan and forming a working group to take it forward. Ward members should be informed regarding the preparation of community-led plans as they have an important role to play in representing the views of their communities at district/borough level.

8. Named Contacts

It is important that the communities know who is involved in supporting the production of community-led plans. A contact list for your district is included in Appendix 5a of this pack .

NOTE

This protocol has been approved by the Essex Planning Officers Association and adopted as good practice guidance by all local planning authorities in Essex.

APPENDIX 3 – Records

It is important that the following records are kept:

- Minutes of meetings
- Financial records
- Diary of community involvement
- Volunteer time log
- Risk Assessments for events

Minutes of meetings and financial records are standard for all community groups and projects. Further guidance on their preparation can be found in the RCCE Information Pack, 'Setting Up and Running a Project'. Examples of the remaining types of record are included in this appendix.

A Diary of Community Involvement provides important evidence of the communication and information sharing within the community during the process, and of the number of people consulted and responding. An example is on page 2.

The Volunteer Time Log records the number of hours given to the project without remuneration. An example is on page 2. A log will be completed by each volunteer and submitted to a member of the Parish Plan group for collation and summary. A record of volunteer time will provide evidence to funders that the grants they have awarded have been matched by the value of hours donated to the project by volunteers. Such evidence may need to be provided as part of the grant fund monitoring requirement.

A risk assessment should be undertaken prior to any public event e.g. workshop, drop-in session, exhibition, open day. Any potential risks should be identified and steps taken to minimise them. An example is on page 3.

Example of Diary of Community Involvement

Date	Reason for involvement	Type of involvement	Numbers of people	Other comments
20/2/04	Organising	Meeting of PP group	10	
10/3/04	Organising	Meeting of sub group	5	
22/3/04	Informing	Flyer to every house to update on progress	500 houses	
5/4/04	Survey	School Workshop	30 children from years 5 and 6	
18/4/04	Organising	Meeting of sub group	4	
25/4/04	Organising	Meeting of PP group	11	
1/6/04	Survey	Questionnaire distribution	500 houses	
10/6/04	Survey	Collection	350 houses, 600 adults and 150 youth responses	Others may be put in box at shop

Example of Volunteer Time log

Name:...

Date	Activity	Location	Duration
20/2/04	Meeting of PP steering group	Village Hall	2 hours
10/3/04	Meeting of survey sub group	Mary's house	2 hours
22/3/04	Delivery of flyers	High Street	1 hour
5/4/04	School workshop	School	1 hour
8/4/04	Typing up info from workshop	home	1 hour
13/4/04	Drafting youth questionnaire	home	2 hours
18/4/04	Meeting of survey sub group	Mary's house	2 hours
25/4/04	Meeting of PP steering group	Village Hall	2 hours
28/4/04	Finalise youth questionnaire	Home	1 hour

PARISH PLAN

EVENT RISK ASSESSMENT

Event:		Date of Event:
Venue:		Organisers:

AREA AND HAZARDS IDENTIFIED (Specify within each area)	PERSONS AT RISK	RISK FACTOR (H/M/L)	MEASURES REQUIRED TO CONTROL THE RISK	ACTION TO BE TAKE BY (NAME)	DATE COMPLETE AND SIGNATURE
CAR PARK					
MAIN HALL					
KITCHEN AREA					
GENERAL ACCIDENTS					

- 3 -

APPENDIX 4 – SMART Action Plans

What is the difference between an objective, an action and an outcome?

An objective (or aim) is a destination; it is the 'place' you are aiming for. You will have achieved your objective when things are the way you want them to be.

An action (sometimes referred to as a target or an output) is the task that you need to do - or think you need to do - in order to achieve your objective.

An outcome is a measure of what you have achieved, an indication that you have succeeded.

An example...

The objective is to maintain access by road to the village throughout winter, the action is to grit the roads when icy conditions are expected and keep at least one access road clear of snow, the outcome might be that residents are not 'snowed in' during winter.

A **SMART** action plan should contain all three elements and is...

  S = Specific
  M = Measurable
  A = Attainable (achievable)
  R = Realistic/ Relevant
  T = Time Related

Specific

If the action or objective is too vague (e.g. improve 'facilities') it will be difficult for readers and users of the action plan to understand precisely what is being proposed. A 'big' action or project (e.g. build a new community centre), that will be delivered in stages over a long period of time, may need to be broken down into its component tasks so that progress can be monitored.

Measurable (also see Evaluation of Action Plans overleaf)

There needs to be some way of measuring whether the objective has been achieved – there needs to be a clearly defined outcome and an 'indicator' to record success.

Where a piece of equipment is being provided or a specific piece of work is being carried out, success will be measured by completion of the action.

Where the objective is to improve, increase or reduce something, the outcome will need to indicate from 'what' to 'what', and the action will say 'how' this will be achieved; success will then be measurable. It may be difficult to measure objectives that relate to behaviour e.g. improve respect for others; improve relationships. The evaluation of such action plans will have to rely on qualitative rather than quantitative information.

Some behavioural action plans can be quantified e.g. reduce the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour to no more than one a week (the 'indicator') by doing x, y and z.

Sometimes objectives relate to continuation of a service. A target outcome should be added to make the action measurable e.g. 'continue to promote the community information point', may have a target outcome of 'increase the number of information requests to 30 per week'.

Attainable

Short term objectives must be achievable; they must be at the right level. If they are unreachable it will lead to demotivation. If the short term objectives appear impossible, the action plan will be meaningless. Some action plans include longer term objectives or 'visions' that are more of a 'wish list'. This may occur when an objective is important to the community but it is unclear exactly how or when it could be achieved e.g. reduction of traffic volumes that could only be achieved by new highways infrastructure. This may be acceptable provided short term actions are working towards this longer term objective.

Realistic/Relevant

The actions must be feasible in terms of the resources available. If the action is of a specialised nature it must also be technically and legally feasible. The action must be relevant to the objective; it must be capable of delivering the outcome.

Time related

A date for undertaking the action should be included in the plan. Some plans say short, medium or long term, but moves should be made towards stating dates, particularly for short term actions, so that the plan can be monitored. A timescale for achieving the outcomes should also be set. For increase/decrease type outcomes, this may be some time after the actions are undertaken so that 'indicator' data can be collected and assessed. Such evaluation procedures will set a useful review date for the action plan.

The following verbs are useful examples for writing SMART action plans

For Objectives (aims)
Enable, Improve, Increase, Reduce, Maintain, Involve, Promote,

For Actions (targets/outputs)
Complete, Provide, Construct, Identify, Evaluate, Organise, Arrange, Write, Meet, Run, Set Up, Use, Attend, Inspect

The following verbs should be avoided

Consider, Seek, Review, Endeavour, Lobby,

EVALUATION OF ACTION PLANS

Service providers and funders are focusing on outcomes as a way of monitoring and evaluating the success of their involvement in a project. It is becoming increasingly important that measurement of outcomes is included as part of the action plan and that monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place i.e. measurement indicators are in place and there is a method for collecting and recording data.

APPENDIX 5 – INTERESTED ORGANISATIONS

Rural Community Council of Essex
Mackmurdo House
79 Springfield Road
Chelmsford
Essex CM2 6JG
Tel: 01245 352046
Fax: 01245 495427
e-mail: rcce@essexrcc.org.uk

East of England Planning Aid
EEPAS
PO Box 3057
Norwich
Norfolk NR3 4XQ
01603 624145
e-mail: rtpi@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

**The Council for the Protection
Of Rural Essex**
The Garden Office
79 Springfield Road
Chelmsford
Essex, CM2 6JG
Tel: 01245 268667
Fax: 01245 268667
e-mail: cpre@freeuk.com

**Action with Communities
in Rural England (ACRE)**
Somerford Court
Somerford Road
Cirencester, Glos GL7 1TW
Tel: 01285 653477
Fax: 01285 654537
email: acre@acre.org.uk

BTCV *(formerly British Trust
for Conservation Volunteers)*
Unit 5, Jarmin Road Depot
Jarmin Road
Colchester, Essex CO1 1XW
Tel: 01206 764470
Fax: 01206 764470
e-mail: btcv@btcv.org.uk

Essex Association of Local Councils
47 Stortford Road
Dunmow
Essex
Tel: 01371 879722
Fax: 01371 879733
e-mail: ealc@ealc.gov.uk

English Nature
Harbour House, Hythe Quay
Colchester
Essex CO2 8JF
Tel: 01206 796666
Fax: 01206 794466
e-mail: essex.herts@english-nature.org.uk

Environment Agency
Mary Parodi
Partnerships Officer
Cobham Road
Ipswich
Suffolk, IP3 1JE
Tel: 01473 70601
e-mail: mary.parodi@environment-agency.gov.uk

Essex Churchyard Conservation Group
William & Mary Cottages
Witham Road
Cressing, Near Braintree
Essex CM7 8PD
Tel: 01367 584386
Fax: 01376 582278
e-mail: wenlock@compuserve.com

**Essex Farming and Wildlife
Advisory Group**
Writtle College
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 3RR
Tel: 01245 424233
e-mail: essex@fwag.org.uk

Essex Wildlife Trust
Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve
Fingringhoe
Colchester
Essex CO5 7DN
Tel: 01206 729678
Fax: 01206 729298
e-mail: admin@essexwt.org.uk

Open Spaces Society
25a Bell Street
Henley-on-Thames
Oxon
RG9 2BA
Tel: 01491 573535
Fax: 01491 573051
e-mail: hq@oss.org.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ESSEX

Essex County Council
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1LX
Tel: 01245 492211
Fax: 01245 352710
www.essexcc.gov.uk

Basildon District Council
The Basildon Centre,
St. Martin's Square
Basildon
Essex SS14 1DL
Tel: 01268 533333
Fax: 01268 294350
www.basildon.gov.uk

Braintree District Council
Causeway House
Bocking End
Braintree
Essex CM7 9HB
Tel: 01376 552525
Fax: 01376 552626
www.braintree.gov.uk

Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex CM15 8AY
Tel: 01277 312500
Fax: 01277 312743
www.brentwood-council.gov.uk

Castle Point Borough Council
Kiln Road
Thundersley
Benfleet
Essex SS7 1TF
Tel: 01268 8822
Fax: 01268 882455
www.castlepoint.gov.uk

Chelmsford Borough Council
Civic Centre, Duke Street
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1JE
Tel: 01245 606606
Fax: 01245 606747
www.chelmsfordbc.gov.uk

Colchester Borough Council
PO Box 884
Town Hall
Colchester
Essex CO1 1FR
Tel: 01206 282222
Fax: 01206 282288
www.colchester.gov.uk

Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices,
High Street
Epping
Essex CM16 4BZ
Tel: 01992 564000
Fax: 01992 564229
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Harlow Council
Civic Centre
The Water Gardens
Harlow
Essex CM20 1WG
Tel: 01279 446655
www.harlow.gov.uk

Maldon District Council
Council Offices
Princes Road
Maldon
Essex CM9 5DL
Tel: 01621 854477
Fax: 01621 852575
www.maldon.gov.uk

Rochford District Council
Council Offices
South Street
Rochford
Essex SS4 1BW
Tel: 01702 546366
Fax: 01702 545737
www.rochford.gov.uk

Southend-on-sea Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Avenue
Southend-on-Sea
Essex SS2 6ER
Tel: 01702 215000
www.southend.gov.uk

Tendring District Council
Town Hall
Station Road
Clacton-on-Sea
Essex CO15 1SE
Tel: 01255 686868
www.tendringdc.gov.uk

Thurrock Council
Civic Offices
New Road
Grays
Essex RM17 6SL
Tel: 01375 652652
Fax: 01375 652359
www.thurrock.gov.uk

Uttlesford District Council
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex CB11 4ER
Tel: 01799 510510
Fax: 01799 510550
www.uttlesford.gov.uk

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.odpm.gov.uk

www.statistics.gov.uk

www.rtpi.org.uk

www.planningofficers.org.uk

www.countryside.gov.uk

www.defra.gov.uk

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