

Neighbourhood *Planning*



Neighbourhood Area Description

What is a neighbourhood area?

The area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

What area should it cover?

Where the neighbourhood plan is being prepared by a parish council, the neighbourhood area would usually be the Parish. However, it can be just part of the parish, or can cover more than one Parish or can include parts of other parishes or areas.

A parish council is the only organisation that can take forward a neighbourhood plan where the neighbourhood area includes the whole or part of a parish. Where the neighbourhood area includes more than one parish (or part of more than one parish) a lead parish will need to be identified, with the formal consent of the other parish council(s) involved.

If the neighbourhood plan is being prepared for an area without a parish council, a neighbourhood forum must be formed and the forum would decide how far the neighbourhood area extends.

The neighbourhood area could be large or small. For example, it could contain a village, town centre, housing estate, employment area or combination of these things. It could be based on an administrative boundary such as a local ward, however it must not overlap with another neighbourhood area.

If the area is wholly or predominantly business in nature it should be designated as a business area, which means that businesses can vote in an additional referendum on whether a neighbourhood plan should come into force. Those eligible to vote are those on the local non domestic rating list at the time of the referendum.

How is a neighbourhood area designated?

The neighbourhood area must be approved by the local planning authority. To gain approval, the following must be submitted to the local authority:

- Map identifying the area;
- Statement explaining the area
- Statement explaining that the body making the area application is a qualifying body under the Localism Act 2011 (i.e. a Parish Council or a neighbourhood forum).

Where a valid application is made, the local planning authority must advertise the application for six weeks and seek representations. The local planning authority may decline to consider the application if the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum has already made an area application and a decision has not yet been made on that application.

The local planning authority can designate an area or can refuse to designate because they consider that the specified area is not appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area. Where the neighbourhood forum is refused, the local planning authority must ensure that some or all of the area is designated as a neighbourhood area(s). The decision must be published on the website, with a map of the designated area or reasons for the refusal to designate.

When should the neighbourhood area be designated?

One of the first tasks of the parish council or neighbourhood forum will be to decide the boundary of the neighbourhood area. This will depend on what the aims of the neighbourhood plan will be.

In areas where a neighbourhood forum is required, the neighbourhood area should be established first, to ensure that it is the right area in planning terms and then the neighbourhood forum designated so that it is representative of the designated neighbourhood area.