

Advice Note:

Neighbourhood Planning in Brentwood Borough

The Government has introduced new powers for parish councils and neighbourhood forums to prepare neighbourhood plans and development orders and exercise a community right to build through the Localism Act 2011. These powers are optional and it is up to local communities whether to use some or all of these powers.

The Council has produced this note based on our present understanding of the process to assist groups who are interested in neighbourhood planning, what it entails and what support the Council can offer.

Thinking about preparing a neighbourhood plan or order? Issues to consider...

What are your aims?

You can use neighbourhood planning to influence the design, type and location of new development. Neighbourhood Plans or orders must be in line with strategic matters in the Borough Local Plan and national policy.

Is a neighbourhood plan right for you?

Preparing a neighbourhood plan will require commitment, time and resources. Before committing yourselves, consider whether there are easier, more cost effective ways you could achieve your aspirations for example by:

- Using existing planning policy (where this already supports your aims).
- Influencing future policy by getting involved with the Borough Local Plan process, responding to consultations and development briefs.
- Preparing a parish plan, village design statement, village appraisal, masterplan, concept statement or community action plan.
- Responding to planning applications.

Is your group eligible to prepare a neighbourhood plan or order?

A parish council is automatically eligible to prepare a neighbourhood plan or order. If you live in an area without a parish council, you will need to establish a neighbourhood forum. Minimum requirements are that the forum must be open to everyone living and working in the area, have a written constitution and at least 21 members. You will need to apply to Brentwood Borough Council to approve the neighbourhood forum.

Do you have the resources needed?

- Do you have a budget and volunteers able to commit themselves over a long period, to undertake tasks like collecting evidence, preparing the plan, undertaking publicity and consulting the public? The Government has estimated that preparing a Neighbourhood Plan could take 1-2 years and cost between £20,000 and £86,000, depending on the complexity and size of the Plan.
- Have you explored community funding opportunities and external support that may be available?

Steps to producing a neighbourhood development plan:

Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order Process	Local Authority Role
Step 1	Step 1
Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum initiates process, applies for their area, and if applicable forum, to be designated	Agree the Neighbourhood Plan Area and in areas where there is no parish council, approve the Neighbourhood Forum
Step 2	Step 2
Parish Council or Forum Neighbourhood prepare plan or order	Give advice and assistance
Step 3	Step 3
Extensive community engagement	Carry out check to validate plan
Step 4	Step 4
Light touch examination by independent examiner	Fund examination and consider examiners' recommendations
Step 5	Step 5
Proceed to referendum seeking adoption	Fund and undertake referendum
Step 6	Step 6
Where referendum shows majority support, Neighbourhood Plan or Order is made	Provided the majority supports the Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Local Development Plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions

Brentwood Borough Council role: Duty to provide advice and assistance

Brentwood Borough Council has a duty to advise and assist groups who are undertaking neighbourhood planning. The type of support we can provide, subject to demand, includes the following (nb the following are examples only and not intended to provide an exhaustive list):

- Checking regulations are met for qualifying bodies undertaking Neighbourhood Planning.
- Maintaining a Neighbourhood Planning webpage.
- Disseminating information through briefings, workshops, attending meetings.
- Providing electronic maps (pdf format) of your Neighbourhood area and relevant planning designations (print outs or GIS maps also available, although there may be a charge for providing these).
- Information on planning designations and planning policies.
- Giving advice on assessments and evidence.
- Guidance on designing community consultation exercises and communicating planning issues.
- Support for community planning events (eg facilitation, feedback, presentations).
- Advice on where to go for further information.

Please give good notice for us to respond to your requests.

Brentwood Borough Council is not able to fund groups to undertake neighbourhood planning, but we may be able to advise on community funding opportunities or support available elsewhere.

Further information

Further information on neighbourhood planning can be viewed by clicking on the below items (links to external websites):

[An introduction to neighbourhood planning](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012](#)

[Community rights - neighbourhood planning](#)

[Neighbourhood planning – frequently asked questions](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning - Planning Advisory Service](#)

[Toolkit for Community Led Planning - ACRE](#)

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