

WYCHAVON

Neighbourhood Planning

Protocol for neighbourhood plan preparation



September 2025

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Purpose of the protocol

Local people are able to have a major say in helping to shape development in the areas in which they live. Neighbourhood planning empowers communities to shape the development and growth of a local area through the production of a neighbourhood plan. Once adopted by Wychavon the neighbourhood plan will become part of the local statutory Development Plan, i.e. the South Worcestershire Development Plan and will form part of the basis for determining planning applications in that area.

Other approaches can also be used by local communities to achieve the development they want. These include Neighbourhood Development Orders that enable the grant of planning permission for a specific type of development, or a Community Right to Build Order that identifies a specific site for a certain type of development.

This protocol has been put together to help set out what resources we will give to parish and town councils to engage in the neighbourhood planning process and what you can expect in terms of support from Wychavon.



Introduction to neighbourhood planning

Neighbourhood planning sits within the wider local planning framework, i.e. the South Worcestershire Development Plan and encompasses several community rights, through the 2011 Localism Act, that will help communities to inform and manage new development in an area.

Neighbourhood Plans (NP)

Neighbourhood plans in Wychavon can only be prepared by a parish or town council. Neighbourhood plans allow a partnership of neighbourhoods, including businesses, residents and interested parties to develop policies that, subject to an independent examination and community referendum, will become part of the planning framework for land uses in their local area. Meaning that areas themselves have more control over development in their locality.

Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO)

Neighbourhood Development Orders follow the same process as neighbourhood plans. Whilst a neighbourhood plan sets out the policy for an area, the neighbourhood development order can actually grant outline or full planning permission for specified development.

Community Right to Build (CRB)

This is a special type of neighbourhood development order. Appropriately constituted community groups in a parish or neighbourhood will be able to identify land for new, small-scale development such new homes, shops or other community facilities. If the proposal is agreed in a referendum by a simple majority and basic planning criteria are fulfilled, then planning permission from the council will not be required and building work can begin more quickly.

Funding sources



A grant of £10,000 is available from Wychavon for neighbourhood plan groups, i.e. parish and town councils to support the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. Further information can be found on the council's neighbourhood plan webpage for [Funding Guidance](#).

Wychavon's responsibilities

Wychavon has worked with local communities on a proactive basis to deliver neighbourhood plans since they were introduced in 2012. The We Are Wychavon Plan, under the Place Promises, commits to the future promotion, support for the preparation, funding and coverage of neighbourhood plans across the district to 2028. Read the [We Are Wychavon Plan](#) for more information.

- As the local planning authority our main role is to provide advice, support and give direction to help communities produce their neighbourhood plan, or any of the other rights.
- We will formally designate the 'neighbourhood area' following an application by a town or parish council. This establishes the area that the neighbourhood plan will cover.
- Work with groups to understand the scale and scope of prospective neighbourhood planning in our area.
- Manage community's expectations and what they can or cannot do by providing clear and concise information about the role of neighbourhood plan.
- Share evidence and information on planning issues and on funding or skills for neighbourhood/ community planning.
- Help or facilitate consultation events. Advise on appropriate community engagement techniques, survey analysis, and appraising feedback.
- Provide advice on assessments and evidence base documents.
- Provide advice on national and local plan policies as well as other appropriate regulations or legislation.
- Help to interpret economic and housing need and liaise with external partners where appropriate.
- Pay for and arrange for the independent examination and referendum of the neighbourhood plan.
- If a neighbourhood plan subsequently passes the referendum by a simple majority of votes (i.e. more than 50% of the turnout), fulfil the legal duty to adopt the neighbourhood plan as part of the development plan and publish them on the Wychavon website.



Local Authority responsibilities

Agree and approve the neighbourhood area designation.

Provide advice, support and guidance during the preparation of the neighbourhood plan.

Validate the neighbourhood plan against the NPPF, local planning policy and identify any issues in relation to other legislation/strategies.

On receipt of the draft neighbourhood plan publicise on Wychavon's website and consult any relevant bodies highlighted in 'The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012'.

Organise and fund the independent examination and consider the examiners recommendations.

Fund and organise the community referendum. If supported by the referendum adopt the neighbourhood plan as a Development Plan Document at Council and employ the neighbourhood plan when determining planning applications as a material planning consideration.

Checklist for neighbourhood plan preparation



Required before submitting for examination and referendum:

- Consult on an initial draft neighbourhood plan
- Does your neighbourhood plan have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework e.g. national planning policy?
- Are the policies set out in your neighbourhood plan supportive of the strategic policies set out in the South Worcestershire Development Plan. Your neighbourhood plan cannot promote less development than set out in the South Worcestershire Development Plan but can put forward more or provide guidance on how the development should look.
- Is your neighbourhood plan compatible with the saved EU obligations and human rights requirements?
- If required has a Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment been undertaken.
- Is your neighbourhood plan flexible enough to manage the needs and expectations of the local community?



Community responsibilities

Define what you would like to achieve in your neighbourhood plan.

Meet with planning officers for advice and support on the content of your neighbourhood plan.

Apply for designation of a neighbourhood area and seek grant funding as required.

Prepare the neighbourhood plan with effective community engagement in line with the approved business plan.

Undertake an appropriate assessment of the neighbourhood plan.

An independent qualified person will then examine the neighbourhood plan to assess if it is appropriate before it can be voted on in a local referendum. This is to make sure that referendums are only held when proposals are workable, based on sound evidence and of a high quality.

Consider the examiners report.

Consult on modifications if required.

Referendum on the neighbourhood plan.

If supported by the referendum the town/parish council will adopt the neighbourhood plan and submit it to Wychavon for adoption by the council.



Further information

Contact the planning officers in the Policy Plans Team for initial discussions and advice on preparing and funding your neighbourhood plan.

Email: NeighbourhoodPlanning@wychavon.gov.uk or call: 01386 565565.

Formal Regulations and government information

For the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, visit [The Neighbourhood planning page on the government website.](#)

You can also read the legislation for [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012.](#)

For sources of independent advice and guidance you can visit the [Locality website.](#)