



Northumberland
County Council

Neighbourhood Plans - Lessons Learnt

21 Jan 2022

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Your 'Lessons Learnt'

Parish Cllr comments given in preparation for briefing on 20/01/2022

Neighbourhood Plans - Your 'Lessons Learnt'

What went well?

+ Add Card

Community engagement, housing needs survey, consultancy support, support from NCC planning mentor and the impact of the draft Plan on inappropriate planning applications. 👍0 🗑️0

We now have a tool that makes our parish council planning discussions more focussed and relevant. 👍1 🗑️0

Though time consuming community participation has given more validity to our policies. 👍1 🗑️0

developing policies that are specific and appropriate for our parish. 👍1 🗑️0

Working closely with NCC planning policy officers 👍1 🗑️0

Identify where detail is important...and where it isn't 👍1 🗑️0

If it isn't important - don't include it 👍0 🗑️0

Keep it as simple as possible 👍1 🗑️0

Picking the right consultant. Someone who speaks at your level. 👍2 🗑️0

Example: localised policies 👍4 🗑️0

What could be improved?

+ Add Card

Greater consistency in advice from consultants and NCC advisers, turn round time for action from NCC. 👍0 🗑️0

More training for the NCC planning team to ensure they recognise Neighbourhood Plans as material. 👍1 🗑️0

Local and other consultation on the "final" submission is labour intensive and time consuming. 👍2 🗑️0

Take some time to understand the grant claim process and timelines 👍0 🗑️0

Terminology is quite daunting 👍0 🗑️0

Don't underestimate the resource and time requirement. 👍3 🗑️0

Example: examination flexibility 👍0 🗑️0

Next Steps

+ Add Card

Several parts of the Plan have been approved for NCC finance, but COVID-19 has held up implementation. Negotiations with reluctant landowner necessary to take forward next steps. 👍0 🗑️0

review planning applications since the plan was made to understand whether the NP has been taken into account. 👍2 🗑️0

Review is important but needs to be light touch. 👍0 🗑️0

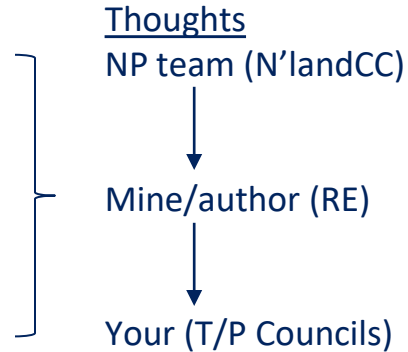
Ensure that Planners and Developers recognise and adhere to the NP Policies. 👍3 🗑️0

Review and amend the NP after a couple of years, though recognise that any amendments will probably require the full consultation process and the consequent time/effort 👍1 🗑️0

Example: upcoming monitoring 👍0 🗑️0

Aims

- What are Neighbourhood Plans?
- Take up in Northumberland?
- What went well?
- What could be improved? (lessons learnt)
- Next steps?



What are Neighbourhood (Development) Plans?

PART 5

Neighbourhood development plans

Pre-submission consultation and publicity

14. Before submitting a plan proposal [F1 or a modification proposal] to the local planning authority, a qualifying body must—
- publicise, in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area—
 - details of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan [F2 or modification proposal];
 - details of where and when the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan [F2 or modification proposal] may be inspected;
 - details of how to make representations; F3...
 - the date by which those representations must be received, being not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the draft proposal is first publicised; [F4 and]
- [F4(v) in relation to a modification proposal, a statement setting out whether or not the qualifying body consider that the modifications contained in the modification proposal are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan which the modification proposal would modify, giving reasons for why the qualifying body is of this opinion.]
- consult any consultation body referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan [F2 or modification proposal], and
 - send a copy of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan [F2 or modification proposal] to the local planning authority.

F1 Words in reg. 14 inserted (31.1.2018) by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017/1243), regs. 1, 4(2) (with reg. 13)

F2 Words in reg. 14 inserted (31.1.2018) by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017/1243), regs. 1, 4(3) (with reg. 13)

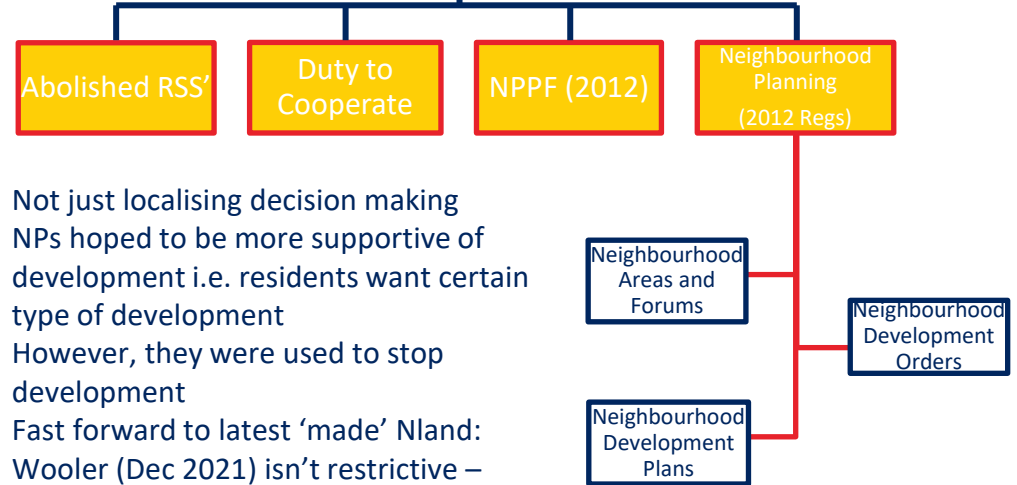
F3 Word in reg. 14(a)(iii) omitted (31.1.2018) by virtue of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017/1243), regs. 1, 4(4) (with reg. 13)

F4 Reg. 14(a)(v) and word inserted (31.1.2018) by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 2017/1243), regs. 1, 4(5) (with reg. 13)

Plan proposals [F5 and modification proposals]

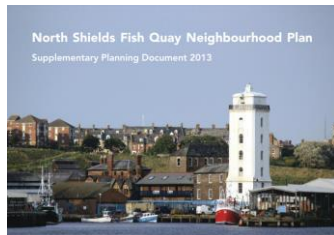
- 15.—(1) Where a qualifying body submits a plan proposal [F6 or a modification proposal] to the local planning authority, it must include—
- a map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan [F7 or neighbourhood

LOCALISM ACT (2011)



- Not just localising decision making
- NPs hoped to be more supportive of development i.e. residents want certain type of development
- However, they were used to stop development
- Fast forward to latest 'made' Nland: Wooler (Dec 2021) isn't restrictive – doesn't have settlement boundary and encourages more housing

Who can make one?



Fish Quay – process started before legislation so SPG not NP

Neighbourhood Area

(S61 G TCPA 1990)

Neighbourhood Forum

(S61 F TCPA 1990)



Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan

2015 – 2031

Made 1st July 2015



Rural (generally)

Urban (generally)

Parish or Town Council (can incl multiple)
Or body capable of being N'hood Forum

Group of 21 people meeting conditions

No consultation on designation

Consultation on designation

Whole Parish or Town Council area
Or part of that area (organisational body)

Not part of Parish or Town Council area

Allendale NP was part of Gov 'Front Runners' pilot project



Exeter St James first Neighbourhood Forum to have a 'made' NP

What can they do?

Basic conditions

(Sch4B 8(2) TCPA 1990 as applied to NPs by S38A PCPA 2004)

NPs must:

- a) Regard to national policies and guidance
- b) = NDOs (N/A)
- c) = NDOs (N/A)
- d) Contribute to achievement of sustainable development
- e) General conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan
- f) Not breach and compatible with EU Obligations (e.g. SEA)
- g) Prescribed conditions are met

Emerging NLP 47 strategic policies e.g.

Policy STP 1

Spatial strategy (Strategic Policy)

For extant Development Plans the NP Team determined what Policies were strategic



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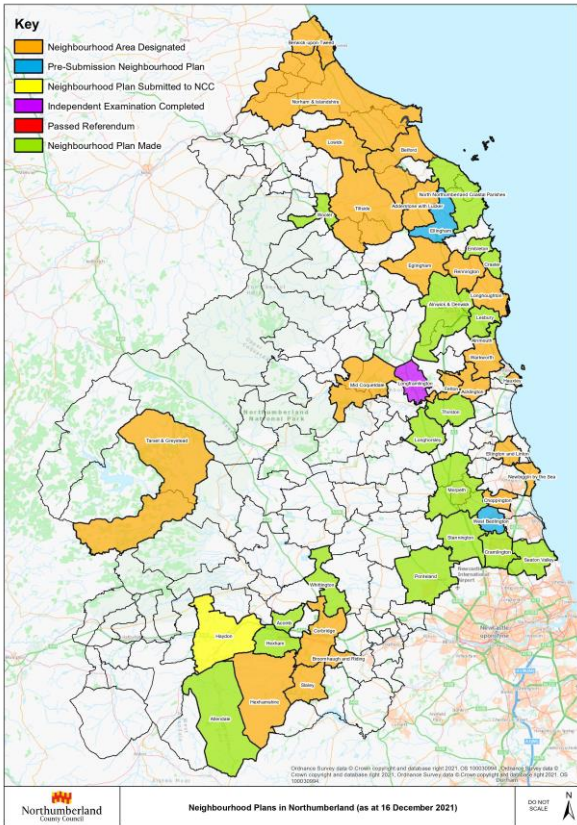
Could Neighbourhood Planning do more?

Oct 2021 NP newsletter

Neighbourhood plans can't plan for less housing than the minimum amounts set out in the new Local Plan

But they can go further than the Local Plan and provide locally specific planning policies. Where the Local Plan ends could be the start of some new local planning policies in your Parish

Take up in Northumberland



What went well? – NP team

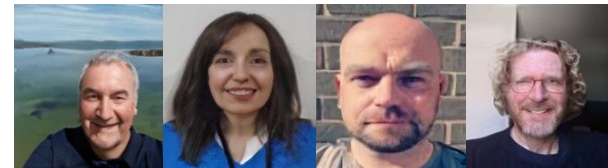
- Dedicated Neighbourhood Planning team

With Link Officer (a Planning Officer from the NP team) for each NP helps with plan preparation - consistent advice and support

Link Officer

Link Officer assigned from day one

Having one assigned Officer stops Steering Groups contacting other areas of the Council – everything goes through link



David English
Manager

Sarah Brannigan
Senior Officer

Rob Naples
Officer

Chris Anderson
Officer

ALL ARE LINK OFFICERS

- Evidence Gathering

NP Team can offer advice on gathering necessary evidence to help ensure that Plans are robust and based on sound evidence and, therefore, pass examination

NPs Making a difference locally (NP team)

- Community benefit
- Neighbourhood Plans used in the decision making process
 - Development Management
 - Parishes using it in their comments
 - Also Policy comments

Working with Karbon Homes, we are looking to plant a small community orchard, on one of the Local Green Spaces identified in the neighbourhood plan.

Are you still referring to the Acomb Neighbourhood plan in any comments on planning applications?

Yes, very much so. A recent planning application for housing development in the parish mentioned everything but our neighbourhood plan in the application (N.B. agents don't determine planning applications – the Council's DM Team do!)

FOCUS on: Acomb Parish



[Dec 2021 newsletter](#)

One of our newer parish councillors prepared a thorough set of comments and referred to the relevant parts of the neighbourhood plan in our response. We certainly don't want the neighbourhood plan to become a shelved and dusty document.

Making a difference locally (NP team/RE)

Principal residence housing

“A dwelling that is occupied as the sole or main home of the occupants and where the occupants spend the majority of their time when not working away from home” – emerging NLP Glossary

Emerging NLP Policy HOU 10 restrict occupancy new market dwellings in parishes 20% no permanent residents

NP area	Year 'made'	No. Policies	% dwellings with no residents (2011)
North N'land Coast	2018	13	39.6
Alnmouth	2021	1	35
Craster	2021	1	39.2
Embleton	2021	14	27

Nationally, St Ives NP was the first to include a Policy on principal residence housing in 2015

North Nland Coast NP was the in the County, 2018

Potential knock-on effect:

N'hood Area has Principal Residence Policy → threat of second homes developments in next Parish along → encourage neighbouring Parishes to develop a NP of their own
e.g. NNlandC 2018 → Alnmouth and Craster 2021

2011 census is used because using Council Tax could bring risk of legal challenge regarding GDPR

2021 census figures will be used once they're published

Making a difference locally (NP team/RE)

Prematurity – prejudice forthcoming Plan



Grounds for prematurity, NPPF para 49:

- granting permission would undermine the plan-making process (scale, location or phasing of new development); and
- emerging plan is at an advanced stage

Land North of Lesbury, Alnwick Road, Lesbury

APP/P2935/W/20/3248070 – appeal dismissed 09/11/2020

18/04527/OUT – application refused 17/01/2020

Proposed 41 homes

- NP has passed independent examination and the Council had received the Reg 18 decision statement meaning that the NP was ready for referendum
- Emerging NLP Policy HOU 4 indicated 45 dwellings need in N'hood Area over Plan period (2016-2036)
- Lesbury NP shortfall 7 dwellings until 2036 – NP settlement boundary could accommodate this
- NPPF housing figs not maximum but 41 = almost NLP requirement

“I find that the grant of planning permission would undermine the plan-making process of the LNP given the scale and location of development, and that the LNP is at an advanced stage in its preparation” - para 61 Inspector report

What went well? – T/P Councils

Community engagement, housing needs survey, consultancy support, support from NCC planning mentor and the impact of the draft Plan on inappropriate planning applications.

👍0 💬0

We now have a tool that makes our parish council planning discussions more focussed and relevant.

👍1 💬0

Though time consuming community participation has given more validity to our policies.

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Keep it as simple as possible

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Picking the right consultant. Someone who speaks at your level.

👍2 💬0

Example: localised policies

👍4 💬0 

National funds and specialists

Consult as many groups and individuals as you can identify at every stage

Good chair, recruiting members of public to steering group

Talking to other PCs

What could be improved? (lessons learned) – NP team

- Evidence

NP must be community-led but also based on appropriate evidence

Insufficient evidence → failure examination → clear evidence = vital

NCC support and advice = geared towards your NP being successful at examination and effective

Can use evidence prepared for emerging NLP = most up to date

[Studies and evidence reports](#)

This page provides details on a range of studies and background information relevant to informing planning applications and which may also be of value to other organisations and communities.

Home > [Planning & building](#) > Studies and evidence reports

Page Contents:

> [Growth and Spatial Strategy](#)

> [Economic Development](#)

> [Retail and Town Centres](#)

> [Housing](#)

> [Transport, connectivity and movement](#)

> [Environment and Landscape](#)

> [Water Environment and Flooding](#)

> [Minerals](#)

> [Waste](#)

> [Energy](#)

> [Infrastructure](#)

> [Viability](#)

> [Monitoring Reports](#)

> [Quick Links](#)

Northumberland Local Plan Examination

[Examination Library](#)

Version: Updated 14 September 2021

Inspector: Susan Heywood BSc (Hons) MCD MRTP
Inspector: Stephen Norrington BSc DipTP MRICS FIQ FHE

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c/o Planning Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
Email Programme_Officer@northumberland.gov.uk
Telephone 01670 420294

What could be improved? (lessons learned) – NP team

- Evidence cont.

Larger areas told how much housing to plan for = saves negotiations

- Gov sets housing figures for counties, NlandCC divides that up to Delivery Areas and then parishes where Main Towns and Service Centres (Policy STP 1) are located. Emerging NLP para 7.18 explains process and table 7.1 provides indicative housing requirements

Technical support funding – need one of:

- housing allocation
- affordable housing
- design code
- help Neighbourhood Forum designation (N/A)
- designation Neighbourhood Forum (N/A)
- high deprivation level (30% in 20% most deprived areas)

Table 7.1 Indicative distribution of housing requirements, 2016 to 2036

Location	Number of dwellings indicative requirement 2016 to 2036	Average number of dwellings per annum ⁽¹⁾
South East Delivery Area	9,000	450
Amble Parish	540	27
Ashington Parish	1,600	80
East and West Bedlington Parishes (includes Bedlington and Bedlington Station)	840	42
Blyth Parish	1,800	90
Cramlington Parish	2,500	125
Choppington Parish (includes Guidepost, Stakeford and Choppington)	340	17
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Parish	360	18
Seaton Valley Parish (includes Seaton Delaval/Holywell, New Hartley, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley and Seghill)	540	27
Rest of South East	480	24



Neighbourhood Planning Advice Notes Grant and Technical Support



What could be improved? (lessons learned) – NP team

- Evidence cont.

Can't just be anecdotal

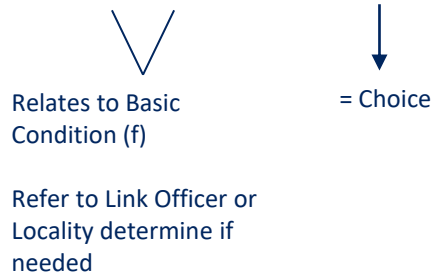
- NPs are independently examined and, therefore, they need to be based on sound evidence
- Example: tour of N Nland Coastal Area between Steering Group and Link Officer. Steering Group member to Link Officer, "you can tell what houses are second homes because they have a ship in a bottle in their windows"
- This may be true; however, this anecdotal evidence won't stand up at examination – it needs to be demonstrated with statistics



Can't just be anecdotal

AECOM contract with Gov for HRA, SEA and Design Codes

AECOM contract with Gov for HRA, SEA and Design Codes



What could be improved? (lessons learned) – NP team/RE

• Engagement

By Parish Councils = when preparing NP

Independent examination → referendum, local people must vote on the Plan

More people engaged = more awareness = more successful

No minimum turnout for referendums, they're done on a simple majority

Possible engagement timeline:

Drop in (early) → vision/objectives → **Reg 14 Pre-Submission Draft** →

Reg 16 Submission Version

= potential consultation fatigue

Managing expectations improves early engagement

Realistic and proportionate

Works best if T/P Council knows area, knows people and best way to engage

If physical, then engage where people will already be and/or want to meet! e.g. market square (leaflets), pub (meeting)

Area	Yes	No	Electorate	% yes	% turnout
Alnmouth	166	60	383	72.8	59.5
Hexham	3,603	702	9,184	81.1	48.4
Craster	81	13	219	86.2	42.9
NNCoast	767	85	2,162	89.8	39.5
Lesbury	327	26	890	92.6	36.7
Embelton	192	25	622	88.5	34.9
Whittington	103	10	364	91.2	31.0
Thirston	125	18	464	87.4	30.8
Morpeth	4,099	283	4,388	93.4	29.5
Ponteland	2,629	101	9,264	96.2	29.5
Longhorsley	163	19	753	89.6	24.2
Alnwick and Denwick	1,174	277	6,500	80.7	21.6
Acomb	173	13	947	93.0	19.6
Stannington	177	52	1,284	77.3	17.8
Seaton Valley	1,784	268	12,400	86.5	16.6
Cramlington	3,121	584	23,015	84.9	16.0

What could be improved? (lessons learned) – NP team/RE

- Engagement cont.

Common understanding that larger electorate = harder engagement

Area	Yes	No	Electorate	% yes	% turnout
Hexham	3,603	702	9,184	81.1	48.4

However, Hexham = 4th largest electorate but 2nd highest turnout
- best practice?

[May 2021 newsletter](#)

Neighbourhood
Planning in
Hexham



8 tips – 4 relevant to engagement:

1. Make public aware of purposes, scope and limitations of NPs
3. Clarify NP objectives early and target consultation and production accordingly
4. Keep NP focussed, otherwise relevance and coherence in hard to achieve
6. Make no promises beyond timescales in Steering Groups power

What could be improved? (lessons learned) – T/P Councils

Greater consistency in advice from consultants and NCC advisers, turn round time for action from NCC.

👍0 💬0

More training for the NCC planning team to ensure they recognise Neighbourhood Plans as material.

👍1 💬0

Local and other consultation on the "final" submission is labour intensive and time consuming,

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Take some time to understand the grant claim process and timelines

👍0 💬0

Terminology is quite daunting

👍0 💬0

Don't under estimate the resource and time requirement.

👍3 💬0

Example: examination flexibility

👍0 💬0 

Took ages - 5

Challenge experts/specialists/consultants

Working between T/P Councils

Evidence e.g. getting questionnaire responses

Transparency

Anticipating future changes and needs e.g. business premises, housing etc.

Check specialists/consultants work

Next steps? – NP team

- NPs review

After 'made'

Why? - changes in national and local policy (NLP) changes, and changes in legislation, → NP no longer align = reduced effectiveness can reduce the effectiveness of neighbourhood plans where no longer align. Currently reviewing:

- Allendale
- Hexham

All NPs to be reviewed after emerging NLP adoption to ensure conformity – where appropriate

NP Team can offer bespoke training to Parish Councils on certain aspects of NPs

NP Team continues to provide support and guidance to all Parish Councils wishing to prepare (or thinking of preparing) a NP = FREE

ISSUE
02
Winter
2020/21
[Link](#)

Neighbourhood Planning Update

How to CONTACT us

We are here to support parishes through the neighbourhood planning process.

For further information

This issue

- Reviewing your neighbourhood plan P.1
- The future of planning? P.2
- County Round Up P.2
- Environment Bill progress P.3
- Impacts of neighbourhood planning P.3
- Neighbourhood Development Orders P.4
- Eye on NDOs in practice P.4

When should you review your Neighbourhood Plan?

Headlines (at time of writing)

- Wooler NP made since presentation draft
- Draft Newbiggin, Eglinham, Lowick, Ellingham, Berwick
- Gov funding May? – something happening
- West Bedlington Design Code, prepared by AECOM. More consultation needed, e.g. other NCC teams, needs to happen earlier. Haydon DC demonstrates. Guidance not strong on consulting stakeholders incl locals and Historic England

Next steps? – Rob Murfin

- Review NPs after Nland Local Plan adoption (expected month of so) – update where necessary
 - NP team happy to attend T/P Councils to discuss about starting or reviewing NP
- Look to improve digital community engagement e.g. Citizen Space – used in Northumberland Line consultation
- Community-led housing: affordable housing only required on developments of 10 (5 in AONB) or more market units → gap in supply in rural areas = smaller sites promoted/allocated in NP
- Nland Local Plan open space review – details to follow, T/P Councils asked to input

Several parts of the Plan have been approved for NCC finance, but COVID-19 has held up implementation. Negotiations with reluctant landowner necessary to take forward next steps.

👍0 💬0

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👍2 💬0

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👍1 💬0

Example: upcoming monitoring

👍0 💬0 ✎

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?