



Northumberland  
County Council

## Neighbourhood Planning Advice Note

### *Reviewing a Neighbourhood Plan*

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#### **1. When should a Parish Council review its Neighbourhood Plan?**

- 1.1 A neighbourhood plan must set out the period for which it is to have effect (section 38B(1)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Neighbourhood plan policies remain in force until the plan policy is replaced.
- 1.2 There is no requirement to review or update a neighbourhood plan. However, policies in a neighbourhood plan may become out of date, for example if they conflict with policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area that is adopted after the making of the neighbourhood plan. In such cases, the more recent plan policy takes precedence. In addition, where a policy has been in force for a period of time, other material considerations may be given greater weight in planning decisions as the evidence base for the plan policy becomes less robust.
- 1.3 The decision to review a neighbourhood plan must be taken by the qualifying body based on a consideration of factors such as:
  - How the plan's policies are being applied to decisions on planning applications and appeals.
  - Whether the plan's aims are being achieved;
  - The adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan in March 2022;
  - Changes to national planning policy, including the September 2020 amendments to the Use Classes Order and the July 2021 revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and
  - The changing local context. More recent evidence may indicate significant changes in economic, social and environmental conditions, for example, significant new employers moving into the area, opportunities arising from new or improved infrastructure, changes in house prices or population changes.

- 1.4 Consideration of any of these factors could indicate a need to revise a neighbourhood plan.

## 2. The review process

2.1 There are 3 types of modification which can be made to a neighbourhood plan. The process will depend on the degree of change which the modification involves:

- i. A **Minor Review** is for non-material updates, for example, for minor typographical errors or adding information for clarification.
- ii. A **Material Modification Review** is for changes which do not alter the overall strategy of the plan but add additional details to the existing policies. This might, for example, entail the addition of a design code that builds on a pre-existing design policy, or the addition of a site or sites which, subject to the decision of the independent examiner, are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan.
- iii. A **Substantial Modification Review** is for significant changes including new site allocations, a new settlement boundary or new policy areas. Consultation, examination and referendum would be required. Northumberland County Council (NCC) would need to publicise and consider the examiner's report in the same way as for a new neighbourhood plan.

### *Minor Reviews*

2.2 Minor (non-material) updates to a neighbourhood plan would not materially affect the policies in the plan. NCC may make such updates at any time, but only with the consent of the qualifying body. Consultation, examination and referendum are not required.

### *Material Reviews*

2.3 If a qualifying body wish to make modifications that do materially affect the policies in the plan, they should follow the process set out in guidance, with the following additional requirements:

- i. the qualifying body must (at the pre-submission publicity and consultation stage and when the modified plan is submitted to NCC) state whether

they believe that the modifications are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and give reasons.

- ii. NCC must (when sending the modified plan to the independent examiner) state whether they believe that the modifications are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and give reasons. NCC must also submit a copy of the original plan to the independent examiner.
- iii. The qualifying body must decide whether to proceed with the examination after the examiner has decided whether the modifications proposed change the nature of the plan.

#### *Is a Referendum required?*

- 2.4 A referendum may not be required if an examiner decides that the modifications are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and would meet the basic conditions (with modifications if necessary). In this circumstance, NCC must make the plan within 5 weeks of receiving the examiner's report (or as agreed, in writing, with the qualifying body).
- 2.5 Where material modifications *do* change the nature of the plan, NCC would publicise and consider the examiner's report in line with the procedure for making a new neighbourhood plan. A decision must be made by NCC on whether the plan should proceed to referendum in the same way that new neighbourhood plans are brought into force.

#### *What support is available?*

- 2.6 All groups undertaking a neighbourhood plan are eligible to apply for up to [£10,000 in basic grant](#). If a parish council is updating a neighbourhood plan that has already been 'made' by NCC then they are eligible to apply for the grant allowances again. Any grant support or technical support received in making the previous plan is not taken in to account, with the full allowances 'reset'. In addition, the parish council may be eligible for an additional grant of £8,000 to address more complex issues such as proposing to include a design code in their neighbourhood plan.
- 2.7 Officers at NCC would offer support to any parish council wishing to review their neighbourhood plan.

### 3. Examples of Neighbourhood Plan Reviews

3.1 Because the introduction of neighbourhood planning is fairly recent, there are few examples of plans that have been reviewed (there are currently none in Northumberland). However, four examples are described here. For more information, click on the link to access the individual plan website.

Neighbourhood Plan	Made	Triggers	Main Changes	Issues experienced during Review	Review Type
<a href="#">Arundel</a> , Sussex (LPA – Arun District Council and South Downs NPA)  <b>Review made in Jan 2020</b>	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADC’s ‘vulnerabilities’</li> <li>• Desire to plan for a ‘Green Infrastructure’ network</li> <li>• Local Plan adopted in Jul 2018 doubled number of homes to be provided within the district. ATC wished to protect town from unwanted development.</li> </ul>	10 new policies including allocated housing sites to accommodate 100 additional new dwellings over Plan period	Process was exactly the same as for first plan  Community engagement	Material (examination + referendum)
<a href="#">Great Glen</a> , Leicestershire (LPA - Harborough District Council)  <b>Review made in Jan 2020</b>	Nov 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Plan adopted in 2019</li> <li>• New NPPF – ‘strengthens role of NP’, desire to allocate a small site for residential development to afford protection against inappropriate development (should 5-yr housing land supply fail)</li> </ul> <p><i>Decision to review taken in Jan 2018</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A housing allocation (previously none)</li> <li>• Introduced a settlement boundary</li> <li>• Added a local green space</li> <li>• Strengthened policies on environmental enhancements.</li> <li>• New policy to mitigate the impact of development on locally important views.</li> </ul>	Generally, it was more straightforward. Recommend only changing policies that are not working or need updating. Lack of information / guidance on process. Valued the input of consultants and LPA	Material (examination + referendum)

Neighbourhood Plan	Made	Triggers	Main Changes	Issues experienced during Review	Review Type
<a href="#">Farnham</a> , Surrey (LPA – Waverley Borough Council)  <b>Review made in Apr 2020</b>	Jul 2017	At Local Plan examination in 2018, housing target raised by 450	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of 5 housing sites.</li> <li>• The end of the Plan has been adjusted by one year, to align with the adopted Local Plan.</li> <li>• The Built-Up Area Boundary has been slightly adjusted to include two sites granted at appeal.</li> <li>• Maps have been updated to include new evidence base.</li> <li>• No policies were changed or added but figures were updated and minor changes were made to the text, to update information.</li> </ul>	Found definitive advice on reviews impossible to find therefore repeated what they had done first time around.	Material (examination + referendum)
<a href="#">Pluckley</a> Neighbourhood Plan  <b>Ongoing</b>	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to review plan every 5 years. The PC has regularly monitored the PNP for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Some housing applications approved, which were contrary to what the Parish intended, suggesting the housing policies need clarifying.</li> <li>• Updated Local Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates, reflecting what has been achieved against the goals of the PNP;</li> <li>• Co-ordination, to tally with the since-adopted Local Plan and National policies;</li> <li>• Clarification, of policies that have been seen not to deliver as intended;</li> <li>• Additions (new sites) reflecting updated evidence and community engagement.</li> </ul>	None identified.  (PC are consulting on the pre-submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan Review. The consultation closes on 31 October 2021).	TBC