

Neighbourhood Planning Advice Notes

Grant and Technical Support

1. Introduction

1.1 This advice note describes the support available to neighbourhood planning groups.

1.2 There are two types of support available:

- Grant (financial support); and
- Technical Support (professional assistance and advice).

1.3 This support is provided by 'Locality', the national membership network for community organisations, on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC').

2. Grant Support

2.1 All groups undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) or Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) are eligible to apply for up to £10,000 in grant. The current round of funding is available until March 2025.

2.2 In addition, if you are updating a neighbourhood plan that has already been made by the Local Planning Authority, then you are eligible to apply for the grant allowances again. Any grant support or technical support received in making your previous plan is not taken in to account, with your full allowances reset.

2.3 The maximum value of grants that you can have in progress at any one time is £10,000. We would encourage you to consider your needs during the period to 31 March 2025, so that you do not need to make multiple applications within the year.

Please note: Locality anticipate that demand for neighbourhood planning support will be high meaning that it may be necessary to prioritise applications.

2.4 Certain restrictions apply:

- You must have completed the end of grant reporting for any previous grant received before making a new application;
- Each application should be for an amount between £1,000 - £10,000;
- You can only apply for funds that will be spent before the end of the financial year (31 March 2025). Any grant unspent by this date will need to be returned.

3. Additional Grant

3.1 You can access an additional grant of up to £8,000 if any one of the following is met:

- Allocating sites for housing in the NDP
- Including Design Codes in the NDP
- Preparing an NDP for a cluster of three or more Parishes
- Preparing an NDP for an area with a population of 25,000 or more
- Your group is based in an area with a high level of deprivation (where 30% or more of the neighbourhood area or population is in the 20% most deprived areas in England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation)

4. Technical Support

4.1 In addition to the grant, groups facing complex issues can apply for a Technical Support Package. These packages are free of charge and are usually delivered by AECOM.

4.2 Technical support is available to groups in any of the following circumstances:

- Allocating sites for housing in your NDP
- Proposing to include design codes in your NDP
- Preparing an NDO
- Groups based in areas which have a high level of deprivation (where 30% or more of the neighbourhood area or population is in the 20% most deprived areas in England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation)

4.3 If you meet one or more of the eligibility criteria above, you may apply for a technical support package, which include:

- Housing Needs Assessment
- Site Options and Assessment
- Site Viability

- Environmental Impact Assessments
- Evidence Base and Policy Development
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Masterplanning
- Design including Design Codes

5. Who can apply?

5.1 As the Qualifying Body, a representative of the Town or Parish Council must apply for support.

6. What can you spend the grant on?

6.1 You can spend the grant on costs associated with developing the NDP or NDO. The following list gives some examples of where the grant may be spent:

- Training sessions for members of the steering group
- Consultant support, e.g. to help with putting together a project plan or developing the evidence base or drafting policies
- Undertaking a housing survey
- Developing a website
- Costs associated with planning and undertaking public engagement and consultation
- Contribution towards required specialist studies such as ecology surveys
- Venue hire
- Publicity materials
- Printing

7. What can't the grant money be spent on?

7.1 There are certain types of expenditure that cannot be funded by the grant, including:

- General administration costs, such as arranging and minuting steering group meetings
- Funding salaried posts or compensating for loss of earnings (excepting hiring a planning consultant)
- Paying volunteers (though reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses is eligible)

- Reimbursing expenditure, which has already been incurred (apply for activities, which will start at least one month after you submit your application)
- Funding for issues, which are not within the remit of a NDP or NDO, for example, highways issues
- Capital items, such as computers
- General contingency for unknown costs

8. Consultant support and professional fees

8.1 You must explain what you expect the consultant to deliver as a result of their work and how this contributes to your NDP or NDO. A consultant may charge a daily fee or more likely, a fixed price for a piece of work. In addition, they may charge for reasonable expenses.

8.2 Reasonable expenses must meet these standards:

- Travel: standard class rail fare
- Mileage: 45 pence per mile car, 24 pence per mile motorcycle
- Overnight accommodation: £90 per night maximum

9. Links

9.1 For further information and to apply for grant or technical support, please visit the Locality website: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>

9.2 For information specifically about grant funding, including more detailed guidance on how the money may be spent, go to the Locality grant funding web page: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/grant-funding/>

9.3 For information specifically about technical support, including detailed notes on each technical support package, go to the Locality technical support web page: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/technical-support/>

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