

Neighbourhood *Planning*



Neighbourhood Area Description

What is a neighbourhood area?

The area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

What area should it cover?

Where the neighbourhood plan is being prepared by a parish or town council, the neighbourhood area would usually be the Parish. However, it can be just part of the parish, or can cover more than one Parish or can include parts of other parishes or areas.

A parish or town council is the only organisation that can take forward a neighbourhood plan where the neighbourhood area includes the whole or part of a parish. Where the neighbourhood area includes more than one parish (or part of more than one parish) a lead parish will need to be identified, with the formal consent of the other parish council(s) involved.

If the neighbourhood plan is being prepared for an area without a parish council, a neighbourhood forum must be formed and the forum would decide how far the neighbourhood area extends.

The neighbourhood area could be large or small. For example, it could contain a village, town centre, housing estate, employment area or combination of these things. It could be based on an administrative boundary such as a local ward, however it must not overlap with another neighbourhood area.

If the area is wholly or predominantly business in nature it should be designated as a business area, which means that businesses can vote in an additional referendum on whether a neighbourhood plan should come into force. Those eligible to vote are those on the local non domestic rating list at the time of the referendum.

How is a neighbourhood area designated?

The neighbourhood area must be approved by the local planning authority. To gain approval, the following must be submitted to the local authority:

- Map identifying the area;
- Statement explaining the area
- Statement explaining that the body making the area application is a qualifying body under the Localism Act 2011 (i.e. a Parish Council or a neighbourhood forum).

A neighbourhood area [application form](#) can be found on the website.

Where an application is made by a parish or town council for a neighbourhood area that follows their parish boundary, the neighbourhood area can be designated straightaway. In all other cases, for example where a proposed area includes more than one parish; parts of parishes or unparished areas, then the local planning authority must advertise the application for six weeks and take account of any representations made.

For applications which do not follow parish boundaries, the local planning authority will also consider the appropriateness of the proposed boundary for neighbourhood planning purposes. Government guidance suggests that the following may be considerations when deciding the boundaries of a neighbourhood area:

- village or settlement boundaries, which could reflect areas of planned expansion
- the catchment area for walking to local services such as shops, primary schools, doctors' surgery, parks or other facilities
- the area where formal or informal networks of community based groups operate
- the physical appearance or characteristics of the neighbourhood, for example buildings may be of a consistent scale or style
- whether the area forms all or part of a coherent estate either for businesses or residents
- whether the area is wholly or predominantly a business area
- whether infrastructure or physical features define a natural boundary, for example a major road or railway line or waterway
- the natural setting or features in an area
- size of the population (living and working) in the area

The neighbourhood area can be formally designated when:

- the application has been submitted by an appropriate body (parish/town council or prospective neighbourhood forum);
- the local planning authority agree that the proposed area would provide an appropriate basis for a neighbourhood plan;
- the proposed area does not overlap with any existing neighbourhood areas;
- the necessary consent is provided by any other parishes whose boundaries fall within it.

When should the neighbourhood area be designated?

One of the first tasks of the parish council or neighbourhood forum will be to decide the boundary of the neighbourhood area. This will depend on what the aims of the neighbourhood plan will be.

In areas where a neighbourhood forum is required, the neighbourhood area should be established first, to ensure that it is the right area in planning terms and then the neighbourhood forum designated so that it is representative of the designated neighbourhood area.