

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING NEWS

For expert help and advice call Kirkwells on 01282 872570

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£9.5 MILLION FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

In March Don Foster, Communities Minister, announced £9.5 million of funding to support areas who wanted to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

Groups of residents seeking to create a neighbourhood plan will soon be able to bid for up to £7,000 of funding each to contribute to the costs of preparing their proposal.

Neighbourhood planning groups will find full details about the new 2-year programme from 15 April on the My

Community Rights website. Communities will be able to submit applications for support and grants from 1 May 2013.

Announcing the measure Don Foster said:

“This government is all about giving power back to people locally to allow them to shape their community, and these powers are kicking in. We’ve already seen overwhelming support for the first neighbourhood plan in Upper Eden and there is real appetite in hundreds of communities across the country to follow suit. This funding will pro-

vide practical help to people to make neighbourhood plans a reality in their community.”

First payments and direct support packages are expected to be agreed in May.

Kirkwells are one of the country’s leading consultancies helping to support neighbourhood plans.

To find out how we could help you with your plan, or your application for neighbourhood plan funding via one of the new support grants contact Michael or Louise on **01282 872570**.

DAWS HILL DEFEAT

Daws Hill Residents Association have failed in their attempt to seek a judicial review of Wycombe Council's decision to exclude RAF Daws Hill from their neighbourhood plan boundary.

Paul Stinchcombe, QC, representing the Forum had said that the Council was in effect telling the forum: "These sites are too important for you to get your mitts on" despite council documents acknowledging that both RAF Daws Hill and Handy Cross were a key part of the area and not two "isolated islands".

He added: "A rhetorical

question; what would be the point of the Localism Act and Neighbourhood Planning if councils were able to simply exclude from a Neighbourhood Forum's remit the most important development sites? It would be a dead letter.

"[Allowing the decision to stand] would be a green light to local authorities to prevent forums from undertaking Neighbourhood Planning on developments marked for sites of strategic importance."

Unfortunately, for the Residents Association this argument has not won through. In delivering his judgment on Wycombe's decision on

the appropriate neighbourhood planning area Mr Justice Supperstone said:

"The discretion given to the authority is a broad one. The exercise of discretion turns on the specific factual and policy matrix that exists in the individual case at the time the determination is made. In my judgment the Council properly had regard to the specific circumstances that existed at the time when the decision was made to designate a Neighbourhood Area which excluded the RAF Daws Hill site and the Handy Cross Sports Centre site."

"These sites are too important for you to get your mitts on"

MALMESBURY PLAN GIVEN LITTLE WEIGHT, OR WAS IT...

We have been watching with some interest the preparation of the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan.

Something that has not surprised us was the limited weight it was given in Gleeson's appeal on land south of Filands. The draft neighbourhood plan literally going out for consultation after the appeal inquiry concluded.

Nor, in the current climate, with growth being paramount, and local planning authorities without a five-year housing supply, and/or an up to date plan, being in a very weak position there can be few surprises in the Inspector's conclusions at this inquiry:

"on the balance of probabilities, there is likely to be a shortfall in the 5 year supply of deliverable housing in the North and West Wiltshire HMA for the period up to April 2017. It follows that the DP is either silent, or out-of-date, on these matters. The appeal scheme is the kind of sustainable development to which the presumption in its favour, under paragraph 14 of the NPPF, applies. Taking all this into account, and including my deduction that any adverse impacts caused by allowing this appeal would not significantly, and demonstrably, outweigh the benefits (when assessed against the po-

lices of the NPPF as a whole)..."

But bizarrely this decision was issued by the Planning Inspectorate in error.

Secretary of State Eric Pickles will now decide on the fate of this particular housing development. It will be interesting to see if he reaches a different conclusion. Although all the evidence would suggest this will not be the case.

With an out of date Local Plan it is difficult at this stage to see an emerging neighbourhood plan given any significant weight. One to watch, with potentially some real lessons for all of us.

Horninglow and Eton Launch

Horninglow and Eton parish council in East Staffordshire will be launching their neighbourhood plan later this month. One of the Government's front-runners, Horninglow

and Eton are being assisted in their community engagement by Kitkewells.

The launch events will take place at the following:

Monday 22nd April 3-

7.30pm at the St Chads Community Centre, Hunter Street.

Wednesday 24th April 3-7.30pm at St Johns Parish Rooms, Rolleston Road.

UPPER EDEN SAYS YES

In the landmark vote the residents of Upper Eden have voted "Yes" in their neighbourhood plan referendum.

In response to the question:

"Do you want Eden District Council to use

the Neighbourhood Plan for the Upper Eden area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

The vote went as follows:

Yes: 1,310

No: 138

But the real boost for neighbourhood planning, and one Ministers must have been waiting for with hands over the eyes, was the turnout: 1,452 (33.67%).



We must admit we had been thinking this could have been in the low teens. After the dismal Police Commissioner turnout of 15%.

Welcoming the result Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said:

"This really is localism in action and a fantastic result for people in Upper Eden who have worked hard to make sure they are in the driving seat by deciding what's

best for their community.

"A momentous moment has now been reached and I would urge people to join the hundreds of other communities already looking to reap the many benefits from having a neighbourhood plan."

So a success in what will be the first of many neighbourhood plan referendum.

"A momentous moment has now been reached and I would urge people to join the hundreds of other communities already looking to reap the many benefits from having a neighbourhood plan."

CHERWELL BEST PRACTICE?

Local councils have to offer" appropriate support" to those preparing neighbourhood plans. From our work with many parished and non-parished areas we know that there are a lot of grumbles about just how much support is on offer from some local councils. So we are always interested when we find a local council going that extra mile.

Cherwell in North Oxfordshire fit that description. They have produced a Protocol for Preparing Neighbourhood Plans. This covers everything from:

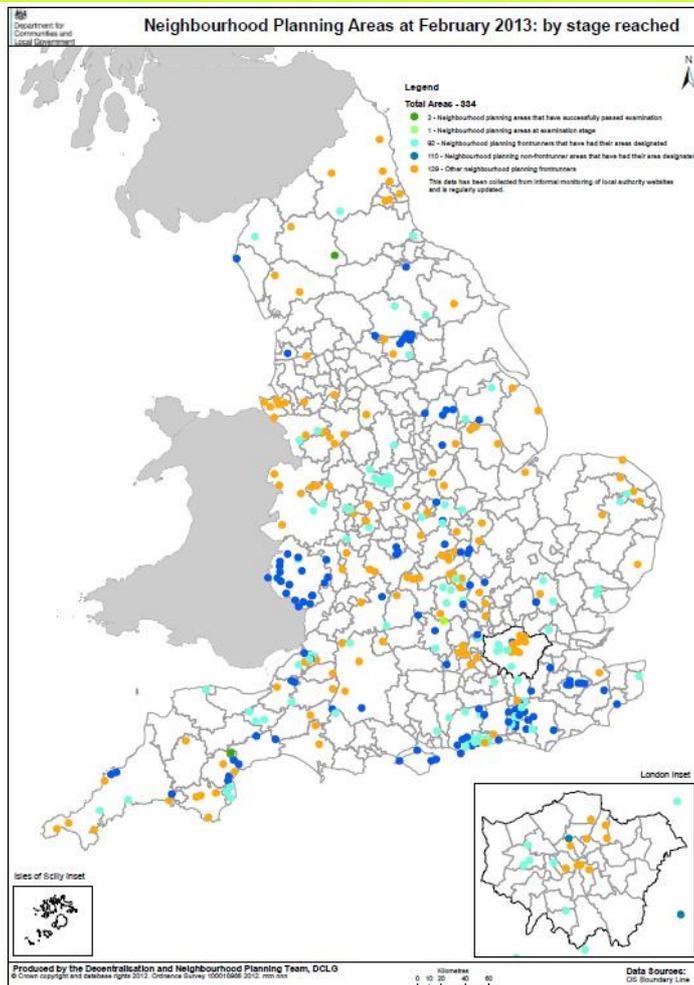
- An introduction to Neighbourhood Planning
- Status of Neighbourhood Planning
- Relationship between a Neighbourhood Plan and Core Strategy
- How to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan

- Neighbourhood Development Orders
- Community Right to Build Orders
- The role of the Parish Council
- The role of Cherwell District Council

Is your local council helping support your neighbourhood plan in a novel way? Let us know. Or are you a local planning authority going that extra mile to support your local community? Once again let us know.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING THE STORY SO FAR

Is your local council helping support your neighbourhood plan in a novel way? Let us know.



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IN DAVENTRY

Kirkwells has been appointed by Daventry District Council to provide neighbourhood planning services.

This framework for accessing neighbourhood planning services from Kirkwells allows town and parish councils, and other qualifying bodies (i.e. Forum) to access this service without the need for separate procurements. It also provides neighbourhoods with access to a known set of consultancy services at known costs.

Louise Kirkup, Kirkwells Director on announcing Kirkwells selection said:

This type of agreement will save the towns and villages in Daventry who use Kirkwells' neighbourhood planning services considerable time and money. Unfortunately, procurement seems to be one of the "hidden extras" that is not factored in when groups are thinking of preparing neighbourhood plan. A "hidden extra" that can take many months. With the Daventry Framework we can get

start on work with towns and parishes almost immediately."

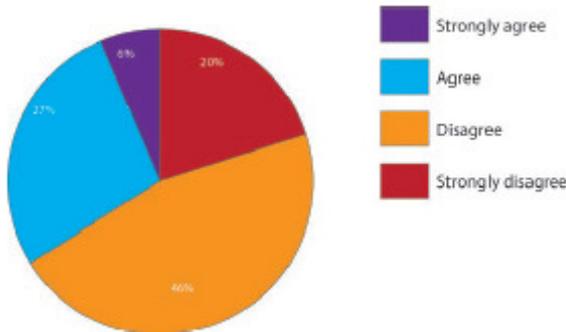
The award criterion was based on Kirkwells' planning policy experience and cost.

If you are a town or parish council, or a neighbourhood group and would like to know more call Michael or Louise on 01282 872570. Or request a leaflet.

Local planning authority, and wondering how this could work for you? Call Michael on 01282 872570.

LOCALISM AT RISK?

Table 3: How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The introduction of the Localism Act's Neighbourhood Planning provisions will have a positive impact on my authority's ability to delivery development that reflects local concerns and priorities."



Localism at Risk LGIU

A jointly commissioned report produced by the Local Government Information Unit and the National Trust: Localism at Risk: Is the NPPF Delivering Planning for People? has identified three key challenges for neighbourhood plans.

The need to be in gen-

eral conformity with Local Plans and to take account of the NPPF; The difficulty faced by non-parished areas in establishing neighbourhood fora; and

The limited resources available to those wanting to prepare neighbourhood plans (something being ad-

ressed by the Government - see this issue's front page) The research also found that local government was not convinced that

⁵ Neighbour-

hood Planning would deliver real benefits to communities. Two thirds of survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that Neighbourhood Planning will have appositive impact on their council's ability to deliver development that reflects local concerns and priorities.

"With the Daventry Framework we can get start on work with towns and parishes almost immediately."

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUILD—SLOW START

Planning picked up on the very slow start to community take-up of the Community Right to Build. Something the Government have pushed both through their rhetoric and allocation of the public finances.

Thus far, only 4 applications have been submitted. When asked why? Locality, in part, charged with supporting this initiative on DCLG's behalf, opined - well there have been 900 enquiries about Right to Build. But at 0.004% that is a pretty poor conversion rate.

OK. And we do think that this is the main reason - it is early days for Community Right to Build. And we had the good fortune to be asked for expert opinion on this by Planning. Even to the point of publishing this juicy morsel.

"Grant Shapps seemed to sell it [Community Right to Build] like you could get up on Monday morning, start work on the Order and then by Friday you could complete it.

"That was never going to happen."

Typical breezy Shapps. But if Community Right to Build is to take-off, in the way the Government would like, we do think it is worthwhile airing some of the other reasons we identified with Planning, but due to space restrictions

were not published, for the slow take-up of Right to Build.

Complexity - for most areas what a neighbourhood plan is, and how to go about preparing one, is something they can get their heads

around. But Community Right to Build is a very new and different challenge. One that, because, ultimately, you are granting planning permission will require expert help.

Mixed message - this is one the Government can sort out. The messages on Community Right to Build have been mixed. Not just in underplaying how much work is involved, but in terms of the scale of what Community Right to Build can achieve. At one time these Orders seemed to be the solution to the nation's housing crisis. That would have meant they were big, brash and bold. Urban extensions even? But in more recent announcements they have been downplayed as small village extensions and infill sites. So come on DCLG - just what are these Orders for?

Giant Leap - related to the first point, but slightly different, in the 30 or so parishes and potential fora we have worked with, or provided training, this is a giant leap. To

go from possibly never having prepared a plan to now granting planning permission! You should see some of the expressions when we say this. And that has a related point about "do we lose control"?

People want to plan for their whole area - again, our experience is, that even where areas see the value, or are tempted to prepare a Community Right to Build Order - they, and huge credit to them, feel their responsibility is firstly to prepare a plan for their whole area, not just one site. A huge feather in neighbourhood planning's cap this one. And an example of how certainly within their neighbourhood people see the "bigger picture".

Developer interest? - where are the intrepid developers ready to throw in their lot with the local community and plan with them a future development? Thus far nowhere to be seen. Come on someone has to be first.

Early days then for Community Right to Build. Doomed? Not at this stage. The cash is there, through the HCA and GLA, and with some decent tweaking this can be made to work.

STOP PRESS:
SINCE THIS ARTICLE WAS PENNED GOVERNMENT HAVE MORE THAN TWEAKED COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUILD. THE FUND IS NOW OPEN TO SELF BUILD PROJECTS.

FREE TRAINING

Want to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan? But not sure where to start?

Why not get help from our award winning team.

BOOK NOW for our special offer of **FREE** Neighbourhood Planning training. Delivered around England here are just a few comments:

“very useful and a lot to think about!” (Bentham Parish Council).

“helpful and informative... ..a valuable source of information” (Simonstone Parish Council).

“everyone got something out of it and they ended up with a greater understanding of the new system.” (Washburn Parish Council)

“thank you... .. everyone was pleased and impressed.” (Pontefract Town Council and Pontefract Groups Together)

To book your **FREE** session call **01282 872570** or email Michael.

Specially designed for parish and town

councils, and neighbourhood groups our seminars deal with all aspects of neighbourhood planning: including the neighbourhood planning process, how to work with your local council, how to engage land owners and developers, and consult the rest of your community.

Our seminars also have the added benefit that one of our team will come to you - we discuss the issues you want to discuss in your town or parish at a time and place of your choosing.

Call 01282 872570 to benefit from our FREE neighbourhood plan training

MAKING LIFE EASY

Following on from our piece about local council best practice in Cherwell we also came across this from Basingstoke.

An application form for designating a neighbourhood area. Simple. Seems odd that no one else has come up with the same idea.

Now we have flagged it up perhaps some local councils will crib this one. May be even some potential applicants!

Kirkwells

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Kirkwells believe town planning is about making things happen. Whether that be redeveloping a difficult brownfield site, or protecting beautiful countryside. We only do well planned, high quality sustainable development. Development that creates great places.

Planning can often feel complex and bureaucratic. So we use our knowledge and expertise to take the strain - taking the load off you, making things clearer, and steering your neighbourhood plan through the planning system so you achieve your goal. If you need help from expert RTPI chartered town planners to make something happen call 01282 872570.

To help you further our web site provides regular, free, easy to understand updates on all the big issues - just keep an eye on our news, and Kirkwells' comment pages. When you do have an issue you need to talk about - get in touch. We provide a free, initial, consultation service - just call 01282 872570, or simply send your query to

michaelwellock@kirkwells.co.uk

We are always happy to help and for all our clients provide the benefit of on-going advice and support.

NEED TO GET ON TOP OF ALL THIS?

Neighbourhood Planning is the biggest change to the planning system in a generation.

Neighbourhoods and communities now have the right to plan.

And up and down the country many places are already exercising this right and preparing their own neighbourhood plan.

At Kirkwells we have year's of experience of preparing neighbourhood plans. Plans to regenerate places, plans to protect valuable heritage assets and the countryside. We only do well

planned, high quality, sustainable development.

Neighbourhood planning can appear daunting at first—lots of process and procedure and technical detail.

But it is not brain surgery and we can help your community get to grips with things and assist you in producing a plan for your neighbourhood.

Our planners can help you:

- * Prepare planning policies;
- * Consult and engage your local community;
- * Bid for and secure funding for your

neighbourhood plan;

- * Prepare maps, plans and drawings;
- * Ensure general conformity with your local council's planning policies;
- * Make sure your plan is in line with national planning policy; and
- * Work with your local council, land owners, developers and people such as English Heritage.

Just telephone Michael Wellock on 01282 872570 or email:

michaelwellock@kirkwells.co.uk

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