

# Neighbourhood Plan process

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There are seven key steps in producing a Neighbourhood Plan:

## 1. Designating the Neighbourhood Area and Forum

Parished areas are automatically designated for as a Neighbourhood Area however the Parish Council must register an interest with us to become a qualifying body to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

In an unparished area it is up to the community to draw the Neighbourhood Area boundary. The proposed Neighbourhood Area is submitted to us and we will consult on the proposal for a statutory 6 week period and will decide, upon receiving comments from the public, whether to designate the area or to amend the boundary.

A community group can apply to us to become a designated Neighbourhood Forum providing it meets the following criteria:

- 21 members (minimum) that live and/or work in the Neighbourhood Area
- At least one ward member in the Forum, or evidence to show efforts made to include them where this has not been possible
- A written constitution (see [example Constitution from Locality](#))
- A statement explaining how you meet the criteria and why you are suitable to be designated as a Neighbourhood Forum
- Open membership

We will consult on the proposal for a statutory 6 week period and will then decide, upon receiving comments from the public, whether the Forum meets the required criteria and whether to designate the Neighbourhood Forum.

Both the Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum applications can be submitted and consulted upon at once.

## 2. Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan

Once the Forum is designated, it will need to identify the aims and objectives for the plan, begin community engagement and start to pull together an evidence base. Once the evidence base is established the Forum will start to draft policies and proposals for the plan.

This process can take on average 18 months to 3 years as applications for funding and commissioned evidence and analysis can take time to come forward.

It is important that you keep engaging with communities and keep them up to date with your progress throughout this period. It is also important that you regularly meet with the planning team at Wigan Council throughout this process to ensure that your plan meets the basic conditions and conforms to the Local Plan.

### **3. Pre-submission consultation on the plan**

Once a draft plan is produced it will need to be consulted on for a 6 week period, this is carried out by the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum and must be evidenced in the consultation report submitted to us. This consultation will allow you to make any necessary changes that come forward from comments made by the public in advance of submitting the plan for examination.

### **4. Submission of the plan**

Once you are happy that you have completed your plan and have carried out the statutory 6 week consultation, the plan will be submitted to us to publicise and consult on the plan for a further 6 weeks.

At this stage, the documents submitted will include:

- A copy of the Neighbourhood Plan
- A statement explaining how the plan meets the [basic conditions](#)
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment report or a statement explaining why one is not needed
- A consultation report outlining all of the engagement undertaken throughout the plan process.

### **5. Independent examination of the plan**

We will appoint an independent examiner to check the plan meets the basic conditions and standards. The examiner will take into account any formal representations submitted to us during the consultation period. It is not expected that a public hearing will take place during the examination unless the examiner feels it necessary to do so.

The length of time taken during the examination will depend on the number of policies and the complexity of the plan. On average it takes 3-4 weeks from appointing an examiner to receiving the examiners report.

The examiner will recommend that the plan proceed to referendum, requires modifications (to be made by us) in advance of a referendum, or to not proceed to referendum.

## **6. Referendum**

We will organise the referendum of any plan deemed to meet the basic conditions. Any person living within the Neighbourhood Area that is registered to vote in local elections will be able to vote on the plan, if more than 50% of the people voting in the referendum support the plan then the plan will be made.

## **7. Adoption or making of the plan (bringing it into legal force)**

If the plan passes referendum it will become a part of the statutory development plan or Local Plan for Wigan and will be given substantial weight in considering planning applications in the area.

## **Further information**

### **Neighbourhood planning process and examples of documents to be submitted**

- [Basic conditions](#)
- [Constitution example from Locality](#)
- [Locality roadmap guide](#)
- [Locality roadmap worksheets](#)
- [A guide to keeping your Neighbourhood Plan short, simple and straightforward by Locality](#)

### **Legal requirements**

- [The Localism Act 2011 \(schedules 9, 10 and 12\) \(external link\)](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012 \(external link\)](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) Regulations 2012 \(external link\)](#)
- [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015 \(external link\)](#)

## **General information**

- [My Community \(external link\)](#)
- [Locality \(external link\)](#)
- [Planning Practice Guidance \(external link\)](#)
- [Planning Aid / Royal Town Planning Institute \(external link\)](#)