

Neighbourhood Planning in Devon



November 2014

What are Neighbourhood Plans?

Producing a neighbourhood plan gives you the opportunity to formalise your community's wishes for the development of your neighbourhood in the planning system.

A neighbourhood plan becomes part of the formal planning policy for the area and holds much more weight than any other local documents produced such as parish or community plans. Neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land and be in general conformity with your local plan.

Your neighbourhood plan will be used for decision making about proposals for development in your community. As a result, producing a plan gives you a real opportunity to shape your local area.

For more in-depth information on the preparation of neighbourhood plans, the government has guidance on the [Planning Practice Guidance Website](#).



Credit: Jenny Bowden

This guide

If you are considering preparing a neighbourhood plan, or have started already, the support your district council, or national park authority, can give you and their role in the process should be clear as they have a legal duty to provide support for groups looking to prepare a neighbourhood plan. This means that your district council, or national park authority, should be your first point of contact. What may not be clear is the role of the county council and the support that may be available.

This guide is to provide you with an understanding of the county council's responsibilities and the role we can play in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan. There is also a section that contains useful links and information which may be helpful to you. Finally, the contact details for the Strategic Planning team are at the end of the guide if you have any further questions on any of the topics raised in this document.



Devon County Council

Our responsibilities

Although the county council is not responsible for setting out where housing, employment and retail development may be located (this is the job of the district, borough or city councils or national park authorities), we have a significant role in securing new, and maintaining existing, infrastructure and services for the people of Devon. The county council is also responsible for minerals and waste planning in Devon. The main planning functions of the county council include:

Minerals and waste planning – the county council produces minerals and waste plans which form part of the development plan. The council also determine all minerals and waste applications;

Infrastructure planning - the county council has a role in providing and maintaining roads and other transport infrastructure, schools, recycling centres, libraries, care for the elderly and youth provision; and

Other related services – the county council has functions involving flooding, public health and the historic environment.

Our role in preparing Neighbourhood Plans

Within your neighbourhood, there may be allocations for new development within the local plan. However, you may wish to propose additional development that is not in the local plan, or you may have a vision or aspiration that is associated with one of the county council's roles.

For development that is allocated within a local plan, the infrastructure and services required to support the demands of the new development will have already been identified. However, if you wish to propose additional development there may be the need for more services or infrastructure to meet the requirements of this new development. This may require the involvement of the county council to assist you with understanding the demands that may be placed on your neighbourhood.

It may also be the case that your neighbourhood wants to improve or expand existing services or infrastructure that is within the scope of one of the county council's roles, and we may need to be involved to provide advice and information.

Finally, the county council may need to make sure that any proposed new development will not negatively impact on Devon's minerals and waste policy and development.

The county council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority; this means the council prepares the planning policy for minerals and waste development and also makes decisions on mineral and waste development.

Although neighbourhood plans cannot include policies that cover minerals and waste development, it may be the case that your neighbourhood contains an existing or planned minerals or waste site. The county council can provide information on these operations or any future development planned for your neighbourhood.

You should also be aware of Mineral Consultation Areas, contained within the adopted Minerals Local Plan and Waste Consultation Zones proposed in the new Devon Waste Plan. These zones are there to ensure that non-waste and non-minerals development takes place in a way that does not negatively affect mineral resources or waste operations. The county council can provide guidance on this if your neighbourhood plan is allocating development in these areas or if any proposed neighbourhood plan policies may impact on minerals and waste provision.

Minerals and Waste Planning



The Strategic Planning team coordinates the county council's input into local plans prepared by district councils, national park authorities and neighbouring planning authorities and also any comments on major development proposals. This ensures the identification, and the timely delivery, of infrastructure for which the county council has responsibility (including schools, roads, cycleways and libraries).

It will be important to ensure that any development which may be proposed as part of the neighbourhood plan is supported by the necessary infrastructure, and therefore engagement with the county council may be needed.

Infrastructure Planning



Credit: Still Imaging

Transport



As the Local Highway Authority and the Local Transport Authority, the county council has a number of transport related roles. These include:

- Undertaking highway management and maintenance;
- Developing strategies to ensure that infrastructure has the capacity to support proposed growth;
- Delivering transport schemes;
- Providing highway responses to planning applications;
- Managing on street parking;
- Developing public transport improvements and options for encouraging more sustainable transport; and
- Planning and maintaining Public Rights of Ways and multi-use trails (including cycle routes).

Not all these roles are directly related to planning and therefore some are outside the scope of a neighbourhood plan. The county council can advise on the transport and highways issues that may be addressed in a neighbourhood plan. For non-planning issues, the county council can also advise on how best to raise these concerns.

If you have specific transport related aspirations for your local area and you propose a transport related policy in your neighbourhood plan it will be important to make contact with the county council.

Health and Wellbeing



The county council is responsible for the overall health and wellbeing of people and communities in Devon. In particular, the council works with the NHS and others to improve the health of the people in Devon, by promoting health equality, supporting people to make healthy life choices and providing accessing the right healthcare and preventative services. The county council does not, however, provide or commission direct clinical services such as doctors' surgeries or hospitals.

The county council also produces a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for each town area and more detailed community level profiles which focus on the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the local population. These provide information that could inform what your neighbourhood plan could address to meet the needs of your community, such as encouraging green infrastructure or improving the design standards which encourage walking and cycling.

As Education Authority, the county council is responsible for planning and providing a sufficient number of school places to meet Devon's need.

The county council has produced an Education Infrastructure Plan which outlines the approach taken to providing, and planning for, pupil places and the key new infrastructure requirements to support Devon's planned growth.

Depending on the level of development proposed in your neighbourhood plan, there may not be the capacity in your local school to accommodate the expected pupil numbers. This could mean additional infrastructure may be required, such as an extension to an existing school if there is capacity and land available to accommodate growth.

If you require more information on the capacity of existing schools, any future plans for the provision of school places or the impact that policies or proposed developments in your neighbourhood plan may have in on education provision, the county council would be able to advise.

The county council holds significant information about the county as a whole, its towns and villages, and its people. This may be helpful to form part of the evidence base for your neighbourhood plan.

The county has been split up into 29 'town areas', and there are a series of documents for each area that provide a statistical overview of the people and place. This includes census statistics, more detailed social, economic and environmental characteristics of the towns and their population and information on the people's perception of their areas. This information may be helpful in developing your neighbourhood plan.

Although the district council, or national park authority, is responsible for setting out the policies in relation to protecting the landscape and biodiversity, the county council's website may provide supplementary information on Devon's landscape, biodiversity and green infrastructure.

Education



People and Places



Libraries



The county council has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to people living, working and studying in the local area.

After extensive consultation, the council is implementing a new strategy to develop ways to sustain professionally staffed libraries by working closely with communities to increase access to buildings, generate higher levels of use, make savings and raise income. Where appropriate other services may be co-located with libraries and 'Devon Centres' created to provide a number of complementary services in one location. Further information on what is happening to the library in your community is available from Devon Libraries.

A Neighbourhood Plan can support the provision of libraries by allocating land for the use of community facilities, or supporting existing facilities. It is, however, important to remember that a Neighbourhood Plan cannot directly result in the delivery of this service by the council.

There are alternative ways to the planning system which your community could use to help maintain or provide library services, including through the community rights mechanisms. The council is also looking at ways to actively work with communities to deliver these services, including a pilot scheme with 10 communities.

Youth Service Provision



The county council aims to provide youth services that allow young people to have access to information, advice and guidance, and that assist in providing activities and entertainment. Additionally, the services provide social education programmes to individuals and groups of young people according to their needs. From 2014, the county council are providing eight Youth Hubs which will be developed for broader community use and will continue to support other community organisations to deliver youth services.

Waste Management



The county council is the Waste Disposal Authority, which means the county council is responsible for managing the waste that is collected from households. The county council also provides the household recycling centres. District councils are responsible for household waste collection.

A neighbourhood plan cannot cover non-planning related issues and waste development, but could include policies associated with design that reduce the generation of waste or encourage recycling.

There are a number of organisations that have roles in flood risk management. The county council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for its area and is responsible for taking a strategic overview and managing local sources of flood risk in Devon, such as surface water, groundwater and minor rivers classed as Ordinary Watercourses. This excludes flood risk from the sea and most large rivers classed as Main Rivers, which come under the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

If there are areas susceptible to any type of flooding in your neighbourhood, neighbourhood plans will have to take this, and any necessary flood management, into account if allocating any additional development. The Environment Agency's website provides interactive maps, including the risk of flooding from surface water.

For the types of flooding the county council is responsible for, such as surface water, neighbourhood plans should encourage new development to apply the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to ensure new development does not increase the surface water flood risk to adjacent properties or land.

If you require advice about for any development in areas that suffer from surface water, ground water and minor rivers, you can contact the county council.

The county council has a role to provide care for the elderly, vulnerable children, people with disabilities, and people with poor mental health. Whilst the majority of the council's assistance is through community based personal care and support services, it also has a commissioning role in respect of residential and nursing care home provision, extra care housing, and various models of supported living or 'housing with care'. The county council works with the district councils to make sure extra care housing and supported living is delivered through Local Plans.

The county council has a Commissioning Strategy for extra care housing, which sets out the level of need for this based on future projections of the population. The Strategy also highlights which towns will need this provision. The council is also currently developing a broader Accommodation Strategy for adult social care that covers all 'housing with care' options.

A neighbourhood plan could support the needs of vulnerable adults and children in your community by considering the types of new housing with care that would be required. The county council can provide guidance on this if required.

Flooding



Social Care



Historic Environment



Devon's historic environment, its buildings, archaeological sites, landscapes and streetscapes, is exceptional in its quality and diversity. The county council helps to ensure the preservation, enhancement and accessibility of Devon's historic environment.

A neighbourhood plan could identify important aspects of the historic environment in your neighbourhood and how the future of the assets could be managed through setting out specific local policy .

The county council maintains the Devon County Historic Environment Record (HER). This contains a constantly growing record of known heritage assets and is a great resource that can help you prepare your plan and see what is present in your neighbourhood.

The county council can help to identify the presence and significance of the heritage assets that define and characterise your area, as well as any assets that may be directly affected by any future developments or policies that your neighbourhood may propose.

What we can and can't do

As already suggested, the county council is involved in a variety of activities relating to neighbourhood planning. As a result we can provide some information and advice in the process of developing your plan. However, there are over 400 parishes within Devon County Council's jurisdiction, therefore over 400 potential neighbourhood plans. Limited resources will restrict our ability to deliver the aspirations for your area and provide detailed ongoing support for developing your neighbourhood plan.

We can, however, help with the preparation of your plan if you think your aspirations relate to the responsibilities of the county council outlined in this guide and if you think we have information which may be helpful - we will be able to help with your queries and set out the likely involvement which we may be able to realistically provide.

Funding for local services and infrastructure is currently very tight and the county council will not always have the resources to deliver the infrastructure your community wants. As already mentioned, if development in your neighbourhood is allocated through your Local Plan, new infrastructure will have already been identified and is likely to be funded through the development. It is important to keep in mind that generally new, or improved, infrastructure only comes with additional growth in order to secure funding. This funding will often come forward from the Community Infrastructure Levy, if in place. We can discuss how to align local and county investments in infrastructure and services to ensure the needs of the community are met with appropriate provision.

This table outlines what we see as achievable with our resources, and what is not, at each stage of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process.

What we can do	Stage	What we can't do
Respond to the area designation consultation if we believe there could be a need for the county council's involvement	Designating the neighbourhood area and, if appropriate, the neighbourhood forum	Respond to all area designation consultations
<p>Provide advice in the context of the county council's responsibilities</p> <p>Help identify the exact evidence needed and advise you of existing data and information</p>	Preparing a draft neighbourhood plan	<p>Provide assistance to neighbourhood groups that do not have county council related issues raised</p> <p>Collect large amount of new evidence or information</p> <p>Attend a large number of meetings</p> <p>Write sections of the plan or specific policies</p>
Respond to the pre-submission consultation with suggested amendments if needed	Pre-submission publicity and consultation	<p>Respond to all pre-submission consultations</p> <p>Attend all pre-submission events</p>
Respond to the consultation if there is a specific county council related issue	Submission of a neighbourhood plan to the local planning authority	Respond to, and attend, all consultation events
Independent examination		
Referendum and bringing the plan into force		

Useful information

Minerals and Waste Planning

The adopted Minerals Local Plan can be found [here](#), with the chapter on Minerals Consultation Zones [here](#). The maps of these areas can be found under the heading Inset Plans on the page of the adopted Plan. Progress on the emerging Minerals Plan can be found [here](#).

The adopted Devon Waste Local Plan, along with the site allocations, can be found [here](#). The progress on the emerging Devon Waste Plan can be found [here](#). This proposes Waste Consultation Zones. The council is looking to provide an online map in the future, this guide will be updated when this is available.

Minerals and waste planning applications can be found [here](#).

Infrastructure Planning

Each of Devon's districts have an Infrastructure Delivery Plan that has been prepared with the county council's input. These will contain the planned infrastructure in your district and may be useful if significant development is planned in your neighbourhood.

The council are also preparing the Transport Infrastructure Plan: Delivering Growth to 2030. This sets out the planned investment in transport infrastructure across Devon, which will guide the focus and prioritisation of resources within the council. This document will be available [here](#) once completed.

Transport

The general webpage for transport and roads in Devon can be found [here](#).

More specific webpages that may be useful include:

- The [Local Transport Plan 3](#) provides the aspirations of the county council and the projects that are envisaged over the period to 2026.
- The council has an online [map](#) showing collision data in Devon for the past 5 years.

- [Public Rights of Way](#) in Devon can be found on this [map](#), and the Improvement Plan for these rights of ways can be found [here](#). The council have also produced a [guide](#) for how communities themselves can improve paths.
- The map of Public Rights of Way also has the option to view cycle paths, but more detailed information on cycle routes can be found on the [Cycle Devon](#) website.
- Information on road maintenance can be found [here](#).

The Devon Health and Wellbeing pages on the county council's website can be found [here](#).

More specifically, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Town Health Profiles can be found [here](#) and the Community Baseline Profiles which provide a more detailed level of information can be found [here](#).

The Education Infrastructure Plan that outlines the approach taken by the council to provide, and plan for, pupil places can be found [here](#).

The [Education Section 106 Infrastructure Approach](#) produced by the council can help you understand the cost and impact of new development in terms of providing new school places.

The council's [landscape](#), [biodiversity](#) and [green infrastructure](#) webpages provide various information and guidance. The [Community Toolkit for the Natural Environment](#) may also contain useful information and suggestions. The green infrastructure [map](#) will help you to identify any key designations in your area.

The [State of the Environment Report](#) produced by the Devon Local Nature Partnership contains a series of papers providing a succinct description of the condition of Devon's environment, identifying key issues that need to be considered in decision making.

Statistical information for each of Devon's Town's can be found [here](#) in the Devon Town Profiles.

Transport

Health and Wellbeing

Education

People and Places

Libraries

General information on Devon's Libraries can be found on the [webpages](#).

More information on the current pilot scheme for local communities to work in partnership with the council to deliver library services can be found [here](#).

Youth Provision

Information on Devon's Youth Services can be found [here](#).

Waste Management

The Waste Management pages of the website can be found [here](#), with more information on recycling found [here](#). The Waste and Resource Management Strategy for Devon is available [here](#) for further information.

Flooding

The county council's webpages on flooding are available [here](#).

On these pages are Devon's [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#), further [reports and studies](#) and the county council's [role](#) is explained further. Information and guidance on Sustainable Drainage Systems can be found [here](#).

The Environment Agency's website has an interactive [map](#) of flooding and on this there is also the option to view the risk of flooding from surface water.

Social Care

The Extra Care Housing Strategy is available [here](#).

Historic Environment

The [Historic Environment webpages](#) provide more information on the activities of the team and their current projects.

The [Devon Historic Environment Record](#) is a useful resource which provides a comprehensive overview of the historic environment in Devon. It provides information about archaeological sites, historic buildings, historic landscape and other heritage features in Devon.

The Historic Environment team are also preparing [Historic Market and Coastal Towns Surveys](#) for 17 of Devon's historic towns.

Need more information? Contact us

If you think Devon County Council may be able to assist in either providing evidence or advice in the preparation of your neighbourhood plan then get in touch with the Strategic Planning team who will assist you with your query or will pass you on to the relevant team.



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Need to contact your District Council or National Park Authority?

Each of Devon's district council and the national park authorities have web pages on neighbourhood planning. These should provide locally specific information and contact details.

East Devon

South Hams

Dartmoor National Park

Exeter

Teignbridge

Mid Devon

Torridge

Exmoor National Park

North Devon

West Devon

