



Welcome to the second edition of *Notes on Neighbourhood Planning*: updates from the team in the Department for Communities and Local Government.

We hope it will be of interest to all who are doing or thinking about neighbourhood planning and those providing support to communities. We use the updates to let you know what we are up to, how we can help you, and how your varied and exciting work on the ground fits with the national picture.

We want the updates to be part of two way communication between you and the team here in the Department. See below for details of how to drop us a line or give us a call.

For general information on neighbourhood planning go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-communities-more-power-in-planning-local-development/>

News

- DCLG recently held a networking and information sharing event on 8 November with 26 community members and planning officers, representing 16 of the more advanced neighbourhood planning areas. Planning minister Nick Boles opened the day and spoke of how neighbourhood planning can transform how the country is governed. He also stressed that he wanted to learn about how the process could be made faster and easier from those directly involved, and reiterated the Department's support. More events of this kind will be taking place on 17 December (London areas), 14 January and 15 February at DCLG in
- London. If you are interested in attending, or would like to host an event, please contact [Jenny Frew](#).
- Locality has produced a Roadmap for neighbourhood planning, designed to help those involved in, or thinking about producing a neighbourhood plan: <http://www.planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/resource/neighbourhood-plans-roadmap-guide>.
- DCLG has published a tender to run a Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning Programme from April 2013 - March 2015. Proposals include: the extension of direct, hands-on support in preparing a plan; and grants of up to £7,000 to communities to contribute to the costs of neighbourhood planning. More information can be found here: <http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/Common/View%20Notice.aspx?site=1000&lang=en&NoticeId=739020>
- RICS (with support from ACRE, Locality, RTPI, PINS and DCLG) is setting up a



Nick Boles speaking about neighbourhood plans at the 8 November event



sector-led panel of independent examiners for neighbourhood plans. The first training and assessment event for potential examiners took place on 16/17 November. The first members of the panel are expected to be announced shortly. Further information is available from: ptaylor@rics.org

- Various events are being run over the coming months by support organisations. [Locality](#) are holding an event in Exeter on Community rights in the South West on 5 December. [RTPI](#) are holding a neighbourhood planning event in Sheffield on 6 December and a further event in Bristol on 25 January. Contact these organisations directly for more information.

Plans, Plans, Plans

The number of places publishing full draft plans for consultation continues to grow. These include Winsford in Cheshire where the emerging Local Plan suggests at least 3,150 new homes should be provided and Thame where the Inspector of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy has decided to remove a strategic allocation of 600 homes from the Core Strategy and to hand responsibility for allocating sites for all 775 new homes required in Thame to the Neighbourhood Development Plan. South Oxfordshire District Council have agreed with this approach and are about to adopt their Core Strategy.

See below for links to ten pre-submission consultations. Our congratulations to all concerned on reaching this important milestone. Click on the name of the neighbourhood to go direct to the draft plan.

Balsall Heath

<http://www.planningbalsallheath.info/>

Central Milton Keynes

<http://www.cmkalliance.co.uk>

Upper Eden

<http://www.eden.gov.uk/>

Exeter St James

<http://exeterstjamesforum.org>

Lyton & Lynmouth

<http://www.lynplan.org.uk/>

Norland

<http://www.norlandconservationsociety.co.uk>

Tattenhall

<http://tattenhallpc-org.temp.connectedcheshire.org.uk/>

Thame

<http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/>

Walton

<http://www.walton-pc.gov.uk/>

Winsford

<http://www.winsford.gov.uk>

The next step following consultation is, of course, submission of your plan to the local planning authority for publicity and independent examination. Upper Eden is already there: examination is underway and the outcome should be known next month.

Meanwhile, hundreds of neighbourhoods have submitted applications for area and forum designation in recent months, many of which have already been accepted. We hope that you can learn and take encouragement from seeing other areas now getting to consultation on a full draft.

In order to get a plan you've got to inspire the community and make the consultation fun. We like this booklet with 101 ideas for getting people motivated to make our towns, villages and cities great places to live: http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/1_01_civic_ideas_1.pdf

Neighbourhood Planning & Community Rights

Neighbourhood planning is a vital part of planning reform as a whole. Along with the **Community Right to Build**, which allows communities to bring forward small developments in their area, it is also one of a



suite of rights introduced through the Localism Act.

Through the **Community Right to Bid** you can now register an asset that your community cherishes such as the local shop, playing field or village hall, so that it can't be sold without you being told about it, giving you the time to organise a bid to buy it.

The **Community Right to Challenge** gives you the legal authority, as a community group or social enterprise, to challenge the delivery of local public services and enter a contest if you think you can deliver them differently and better.

You can find out more about all of these rights and the support available here <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/>

The drive to disperse power widely and allow decisions to be made as close as possible to the people affected does not end there.

Neighbourhood Community Budgets are another way of taking greater control and doing what you think is right. Twelve pilot areas are testing whether devolving budgets, decision making and participation in design of services to local communities results in improved services, increased customer satisfaction, cost savings and a greater sense of community well-being.

Town and Parish councils also offer an important voice for local communities and are democratically elected local champions. However, only 37% of the population has a parish council, we have started a consultation on how to make it easier to set one up. This includes a quicker route for neighbourhood forums who have put a neighbourhood plan in place:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/making-it-easier-to-set-up-new-town-and-parish-councils-discussion-paper>

Neighbourhood Planning Online

There is more and more activity online about neighbourhood planning¹.

You can find forums for exchanging ideas and good practice about neighbourhood planning on [LinkedIn](#), on the [Locality](#) and [Planning Aid](#) websites, and on the [LGA Knowledge Hub](#). Planning Aid also publish a monthly e-bulletin [Up Front](#) which DCLG regularly contributes to. A number of neighbourhood forums and parish or town councils in the thick of neighbourhood planning have also taken to Twitter to spread the word, including [@ThameTownPlan](#), [@ExeterStJames](#) and [@TatenhillNP](#). You will also find the DCLG neighbourhood planning team tweeting more and more on [@CommunitiesUK](#), using [#neighbourhoodplanning](#), to provide the latest news and insight.

There is also a new Facebook site for neighbourhood planning groups to share information and get to know each other, set up by Malmesbury neighbourhood plan - <http://www.facebook.com/groups/419305441457804/> - while Much Wenlock have compiled a handy list of neighbourhood plan websites: <http://www.wenlockplan.org/links>

Finally, you may have noticed that DCLG is one of the first Government departments to have moved its website – including all the planning content – to the new GOV.UK site. See link at the top of the bulletin.

If you have found any new places online that are helping you with neighbourhood planning, or indeed have started up something yourself, please email [Kieran Watkins](#). We would be very interested to hear *where* you are talking about neighbourhood planning and will try to feature as many useful links as possible in future editions of Notes on Neighbourhood Planning

¹DCLG is not responsible for the content of external sites

The DCLG team

Our team brings together planning expertise with experience in decentralisation and communities work. Contact us also if you feel there are ways in which we can help you out or there is information we can provide, especially as you approach critical junctures in developing your plans and seeing them through to completion. Most importantly, pass this on. **In a localist world we only have your details if you let us have them.**



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Alternatively, you may find it easier to contact [Susan Peart \(030 3444 1651\)](mailto:susan.peart@communities.gsi.gov.uk) or [Kate Thompson \(030 3444 1241\)](mailto:kate.thompson@communities.gsi.gov.uk) and they will be happy to put you in touch with the best person to deal with your query. We work in a flexible way and have different specialisms (The assistance the team provides is to help local planning authorities and qualifying bodies through a new process. It is not meant to be a substitute for your own professional or legal advice).

You can contact any of us via email, following the format: firstname.secondname@communities.gsi.gov.uk (e.g. mick.duggan@communities.gsi.gov.uk). Or you can call us, using 0303 44 followed by the five digit extensions above.

We continue to get out and about recently, visiting leading communities around the country, and their local planning authorities. Our thanks to all of those who have hosted us so far. We hope that we have been able to offer useful advice and assistance along the way.

We are very keen to accept invitations to attend or take part in events that you may be holding in your area to promote neighbourhood planning.

And finally...

Congratulations to John Hatton and Tony Snelling, of Chalfont St Peter neighbourhood plan team, who last month took on the challenge of trekking up Everest and taking neighbourhood planning to new heights! <http://chalfontstpeter.buckinghamshireadvertiser.co.uk/2012/11/village-men-scale-everest.html>