

Neighbourhood Planning Newsletter

ISSUE 1 - NOVEMBER 2014

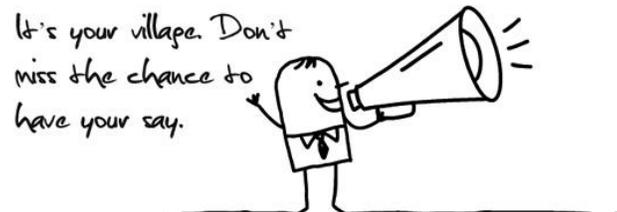


Welcome to the First issue of the EDDC Neighbourhood Planning Newsletter!

With so much Neighbourhood Planning activity, East Devon District Council believes that a regular newsletter will provide an effective and accessible means of keeping the Parishes informed.

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you up to date on how Neighbourhood Development Plans are progressing across East Devon, offering advice and useful links and ensuring communities are kept updated on any changes occurring nationally.

We hope you enjoy the first in a regular series of newsletters from the planning policy team.



We would like your feedback on what content you would like us to include, so if you have any comments or would like to contribute, please don't hesitate to contact us at the following:

☎ 01395 571745
✉ tspurway@eastdevon.gov.uk

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Status of plans in the district

- 24 Neighbourhood areas approved.
 - Dunkeswell, Chardstock, Lymptone, Broadclyst, Woodbury, Uplyme, Axmouth, Beer, Axminster, Luppit, Stockland, Clyst Hontion, Bishops Clyst, Broadhembury, Membury, Cotleigh, Upottery, Yarcombe, Newton Poppleford, Monkton, Otterton, Rockbeare, Aylesbeare, Feniton.
- 1 Neighbourhood Area proposed
 - Ottery St Mary (For cabinet decision 3rd December)
- 1 Draft Plan submitted
 - Lymptone, (Examination complete, report now public with suggested amendments).



Above: Parishes with approved Neighbourhood areas.

Government funding update

As many of you will already be aware, the current tranche of Government funding for supporting groups in developing their Neighbourhood Plans is drawing to a close, with funds needing to be spent by the end of the calendar year.

As a response to the feedback received from groups who are keen to make progress on their Neighbourhood Plan before a new support programme commences in April 2015, the Government have just made available a new bridging grant pot of up to £7,000 to cover Neighbourhood Plan expenditure between November 2014 and March 2015.

Please be aware that these bridging grants are only available to qualifying groups who have not previously received a grant or who have received less than the maximum £7000 in grant during 2013-15. If groups have claimed for the full £7000 and will spend it in full within the calendar year you will not be eligible for a bridging grant.

If a group has previously claimed for £7,000 but won't be able to spend the full amount before 2015, we have received a statement from Locality stating that you may be able to ask for a grant evaluation- this will involve groups paying back what they cannot spend by the end of December. Only if they have spent the revised amount before the end of December (or earlier) can groups apply for a bridging grant. You also cannot extend any existing grant you have received beyond 31 December 2014.

All groups doing a neighbourhood plan will be eligible for the new programme starting April 2015, but we have yet to receive details of the level or form of support that will be made available.

Please note that EDDC are dedicated to supporting you create your Neighbourhood Plans. To aid this, we are producing a series of guides and templates on our website. On a local level, we are still offering a £2000 grant to those parishes that are just starting on the process, and small levels of funding may be secured from your County Councillor.

Alternatively, Parish Council's can also raise money through their precept and if you are situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty, you can apply to the sustainable development fund (more details can be found [here](#))

For more information on the status of funding, please click [here](#).

Plan in focus- Lypstone

We are pleased to confirm that Nigel McGurk (renowned for his consideration of numerous plans across the UK, including Thame, Tattenhall, Ascot and Woodcote) has completed his examination of the Lypstone Neighbourhood Plan.

The examination commenced on 13th October 2014. Mr McGurk considered the Plan against the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements alongside written representations (the material submitted in response to consultation). He did not feel that a hearing was necessary, but could have called one if he wished to consider a particular issue in more depth, or felt that it was required to ensure a particular party had a fair hearing.

Mr McGurk concluded that, subject to some suggested modifications, the Plan should proceed to referendum. You can read the report on our website. We wish the producers of the Plan the very best of luck at referendum, and will ensure that the outcome is shared in the next newsletter!



New look to EDDC website

East Devon District Council is currently going through the process of overhauling the website to make it clearer and simpler to use.

We are taking this opportunity to review the information on our Neighbourhood Planning pages and are looking to include more tools and guidance for communities to use to aid them in the creation of their plan. These will include (but are not limited to):

- *Project Plan template*
- *Good examples of policies and plans*
- *How to conduct a good consultation*
- *Consultation material templates*
- *Developing a strong evidence base*
- *Various templates for supporting documents*



Neighbourhood Planning Seminar

On the 22nd September East Devon District Council held a Neighbourhood Planning Seminar at the Council Offices, inviting all of parishes across the district to attend.

The seminar contained a variety of speakers from different backgrounds discussing the process of creating Neighbourhood plans. Although very in-depth, the day was well received and we hope to build on the enthusiasm shown.

Many attended and upon arrival, we asked each parish to pin up what stage in the plan making process they were on. As you can see from the roadmap below, most of those who attended were in a relatively early stage of the plan making process.

An example of good practice Strumpshaw – Securing Amenities

Strumpshaw is a small parish of 634 residents located in Norfolk with a Neighbourhood Plan adopted in July 2014.

They have included a policy (below) within their plan which has allocated some land for an “enabling” residential development of up to 10 new homes in order to deliver a community facility and allotments.

POLICY 4 (POL 4): An area of land is identified for a new community room, up to 8 allotments and an enabling residential development of up to 10 dwellings, located to the west of Mill Lane, as shown in map 5 in Appendix 1.

By holding consultations and drawing from evidence collected as part of their Parish Plan, Strumpshaw were able to demonstrate a local need for allotments such amenities and then allocated land for an “enabling” development of ten dwellings to secure this financially.

By wording the policy in this way, they are able to tie in the delivery of the community centre with the residential development, so it is clear that the application would not be able to proceed without the inclusion of the community room and allotments.

For those of you looking into allocating land for development in order to secure an amenity, it would be useful to look at the background text to that policy to understand the process that they went through and maybe pursue something similar in your own plan.

Click [here](#) or visit the Broadlands LA website to view the plan.



We also asked attendees to fill out feedback forms on the day. Taking into consideration the responses we received there was considerable demand for each area of help that we proposed, so we are doing our best to provide this. Some of these are going to be implemented in the very near future to coincide with the new look EDDC website!

Heritage Assets

One thing you may want to consider looking into as part of your Neighbourhood Plan is identifying assets of the built environment that are important to the local heritage of your area but are not yet afforded any protection or recognition from official listing system (e.g. Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments etc.). Not just buildings are involved but anything that has historic associations and is locally valued. Post boxes, signs, walls, statues and village greens could all be considered.



East Devon District Council is currently in the early stages of preparing a “local heritage asset register”. Once created, the list will provide a useful source of information for those wanting to identify heritage considerations and the assets included will be regarded as material considerations in any planning applications.

We are currently forming a list of criteria based on the English Heritage “*Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing*” which any asset submitted by the local community will be judged against.

We are asking the Parishes currently in the process developing a Neighbourhood Plan to start thinking about and identifying those assets they might want to consider including on the list. You may also want to include a policy relating to a specific asset if you feel it is of particular importance.

More information on heritage assets and the criteria can be found [here](#).

SEA screening advice

(Don't be daunted by it!)



We have received a number of questions recently from parishes on Strategic Environmental Assessment and whether their Plan requires it. SEA is a statutory assessment process, required under the European Directive 2001/42/EC ‘on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment’ (the SEA Directive). The SEA Directive and Regulations require formal strategic environmental assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects (either positive or negative) on the environment.

Government guidance states that SEA may be required for Neighbourhood Plans, in particular in cases where:

- **A neighbourhood plan allocates specific sites for development.**
- **A neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan.**
- **A neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.**

EDDC are legally obliged to conduct a screening assessment on whether SEA is required regardless of whether you are allocating specific sites or not. This is best done at an early stage of the process when you are developing your plan vision and objectives. At this stage we will have a clearer picture of what you want your neighbourhood plan to deliver and based on that will be able to determine whether SEA is required.

To avoid a delay in progressing your plan, we will endeavour to produce an initial screening opinion within one week of receipt, this will have to go out to consultation with the necessary bodies for six weeks before we can make a final assessment, which we expect to take a further 2 weeks depending on the feedback received.

If your plan does require SEA don't worry! At EDDC we are looking into our ability to provide full support to parishes throughout the process.

Plan in focus- Blackdown Hills

A group of ten parishes in the Blackdown Hills are working together to produce separate Neighbourhood Plans to meet local needs whilst achieving the common aim of protecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which they are all located. It is thought that this is the first collaborative scheme of this type in the country.

The Parishes are: (as shown in the map below)

- Broadhembury
- Chardstock
- Cotleigh
- Dunkeswell
- Luppitt
- Membury
- Monkton
- Stockland
- Upottery
- Yarcombe

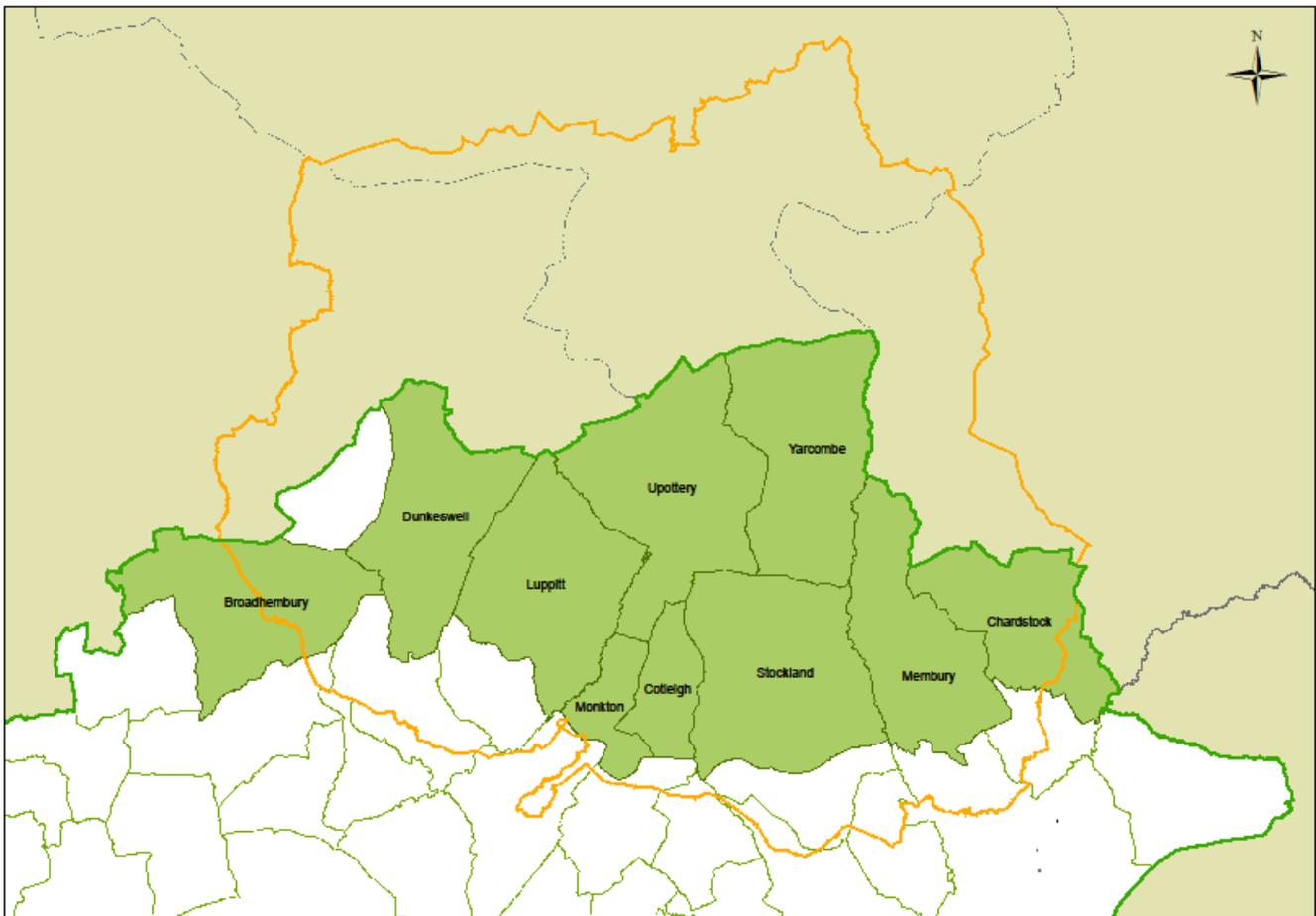
Two further parishes, Sheldon and Combe Raleigh, are located within the Blackdown Hills and expressed initial interest in producing a Plan. Neither parish has a Parish Council (instead they have a 'Parish meeting') and so would need to establish a Neighbourhood Forum, making the process more complicated.

On balance, both communities decided that a Plan was not necessary for their small communities but, if they wanted to undertake the process in the future a more straightforward solution might be to produce a joint Plan with a larger, neighbouring Parish, led by that Parish Council.

The groups are working in partnership with Stuart Todd and Paul Weston, two local consultants, to produce consultation material, an evidence base and policies for their areas.

An initial 'launch' event was carried out in each village, followed by a detailed questionnaire to determine the issues that the Plans should cover. Questions were adapted to reflect local circumstances they follow a similar structure. The issues covered by the questionnaire are likely to be relevant to many other Plans so we will be making it available on our new website shortly. Questionnaire responses were analysed by the Community Council of Devon who produce a report summarizing the results. This can provide a key source of evidence at examination.

A more detailed explanation of the process followed by one of the Blackdown Hills groups- Chardstock- is provided overleaf.



The Chardstock Experience

We recently asked the Chardstock NP steering group to write a small piece for our first newsletter. They kindly agreed and have offered up their experience of producing a Neighbourhood Plan below...

First, get your mandate ...

Many communities in East Devon are using Neighbourhood Plans to shape new development in their locality. But, where do you start?

The Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan Team thinks that to really understand what people want from new housing, it's best to ask them. After all, they - and no-one else - will have to live with it later. So the team designed a process to ensure that the final plan really does reflect local needs and wishes.

Stage 1: In July of this year, the team held an exhibition in the Community Hall explaining the why, what and how of neighbourhood planning. It gave information on the history of the parish, along with displays about the built and natural environments, and dealt with the reasons to have a plan, how it will be brought together and what it will cover. Visitors were invited to contribute to the plan and were asked to leave their thoughts about what should be in it. 112 parishioners attended the event, which was reported in the local press. The exhibition content can be found on the Chardstock website:

<http://mikebooth.eu/Chardstock>.

Stage 2: Later in July, two copies of a 6 page Issues Questionnaire, covering topics of local concern, were delivered to every household in the parish - with more readily available. It comprised questions about conserving built and natural heritage; looking after the Blackdown Hills AONB (in which most of Chardstock is situated); the positioning, number, appearance and size of new houses; the potential impact of development on existing infrastructure; transport, energy conservation, the local economy, communications and so on. Respondents were also asked to raise any other issues, which were important to them. Separate, but consistent, questionnaires were delivered to the local



primary school and the village youth club so that the parish's young could take part too. The questionnaire achieved a 35% response rate from the parish as a whole.

Stage 3: A wide range of other "stakeholders" (e.g. local businesses, public sector agencies, utility companies and so on) were asked their views on what should be in the neighbourhood plan and about any plans



of their own that might affect it. Response from this quarter has been slow.

Stage 4: In late October, there was a second exhibition - feedback on the questionnaire results. This time the medium used was 7 large, professionally designed display boards, each devoted to generic topics covered by the Issues Questionnaire. (e.g. Transport or Built and Historic Environment) Statistical responses to every question were summarised as readily absorbable graphics and every single comment, idea or suggestion (and there were a lot!) was reproduced faithfully and in an unedited form.

The last display board was a statement of some Plan Objectives, based on the questionnaire results, followed by a Vision for the Parish of Chardstock and an indication of what comes next - with a further invitation to contribute.

The Plan Objectives were grouped under four headings (*Build, Improve, Protect, Sustain* - or BIPS to its friends) and set out exactly what Chardstock's residents have said they want any new development to achieve for their parish and also what they do not want it to do to the place where they live.

This feedback exhibition attracted 74 visitors. Everyone was asked to complete a short approval questionnaire to indicate whether or not BIPS is an acceptable way forward. Every household in Chardstock will receive a BIPS statement and two questionnaires in November. The event was reported in the local press and the exhibition content is being prepared to appear on the Chardstock website (<http://mikebooth.eu/Chardstock>) in the near future.

The next step is for the Neighbourhood Plan Team to map out a draft plan for parishioners to consider and upon which the Local Planning Authority can comment, as part of the process of preparing the plan for examination. There will then be one further opportunity for everyone in Chardstock to review, comment on and shape the final plan before it goes for examination. Once cleared, the Plan must go to a local referendum for approval. It is unlikely that the examination and referendum will happen before the adoption of EDDC's new Local Plan.

B Coveney
(for the Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan Team)

We are enthusiastic about getting views from other groups, so if you have any comments or are interested in contributing yourself, please email tspurway@eastdevon.gov.uk.

Top Tips for consultation

Neighbourhood Planning is about communities! The contents of your plan should reflect the resident's aspirations so consultation should be one of the top priorities throughout the plan-making process. Here are some tips to bear in mind. East Devon District Council is also working to put a more comprehensive guide to consultation on our new website which will be available in the near future.

1. Think about your community and residents. Do they have regular meeting places? Are they mobile? Do they have access to computers and the internet? Plan your consultation so that everyone has the opportunity to participate.
2. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate by overcoming barriers that some individuals or groups may face. Recognise any special needs of your community and select any venues and communication methods with care.
3. Make sure the aims of the consultation are clear, and decision makers are all agreed – be clear on what you are trying to achieve.
4. Plan your questions carefully. What information are you looking for – what do you need to know? Who is responsible for acting on any outcomes and are you able to use the results to make decisions? Don't include leading questions and ensure you have the capacity to evaluate and analyse results effectively.



Try to avoid scenarios like the above...

5. Make your consultation easy to understand. Be empathetic when drafting questions, writing in a way that people are comfortable with and that they will understand.

6. Ensure you have set aside enough time to draft, conduct and analyse your consultation. You may need to adapt as the consultation progresses too, e.g. if your schedule changes, let people know about it.

7. Ensure that you comply with the Data Protection Act when handling personal details. Personal questions will help your analysis so ensure you include household size, housing type and geographic location (postcode/village/street name) as well as the usual age, gender etc.

8. Ensure you observe and display any copyright for maps or pictures, including Ordnance survey-based maps.

9. Thank people for their contributions. Don't forget to let them know what you learnt and what you will do as a result.

10. Analyse your consultation process. Have you achieved what you set out to do? If not, why not and how could you have done things differently?

Top Tips for gathering evidence

Whilst the evidence requirements for Neighbourhood Planning are not as rigorous as those for a Local Planning Authority formulating a Local Plan, your plan can still be found unsound at examination if the contents is not supported by a robust evidence base. We have put together a few tips to bear in mind. East Devon District Council is also working to put a more comprehensive guide to evidence gathering on our new website which will be available in the near future.

1. Don't be daunted!

Once you start building your evidence base, it is very easy to start feeling overwhelmed as you are exposed to the depth of potential sources available to you. Whilst evidence is an important part of the plan making process, you only need to present enough evidence to support the approach that you have taken in your plan.

2. Tailor your evidence to your objectives!

Make sure you only gather evidence that is useful. There is no use in quoting figures and facts in your plan out of context that do not necessarily support the decisions you have taken in your plan. Once you have a set of aims and objectives you can begin to think about the kind of evidence you would have to bring forward to justify those in your plan

3. Evidence should be proportionate

Ultimately, the evidence you gather needs to be "proportionate" so the more challenging or unusual the approach you take, the more evidence you'll need to support that decision. Conversely, if a policy is less controversial the evidence required will be less stringent.

4. Evidence should be appropriate

The evidence you do gather should be the evidence should be focused tightly on supporting and justifying the particular policies in your plan. When assessing whether you need to include a particular policy it may be useful to ask yourself the following questions? *Is it relevant to our area and the objectives? Does it support the choice/s made in the plan? What would happen if we didn't use it?*

5. Evidence should be up-to-date

There are no guidelines for how up-to-date the evidence needs to be but it is important to remember that the older the data you are using, the less reliable it may be. If the situation or demographic of your area has changed since the study was undertaken, this should be considered before using it to support key decisions in your plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Examples

At East Devon District Council we have been trawling through plans that have gone through examination that groups can use for ideas. As the size of a parish is likely to impact on the kind of issues tackled by the Plan, we have decided to categorise those we have found by settlement size.

Settlement Size

0-1000 residents

- Strumpshaw, Norfolk- 634 residents

A very accessible plan in a straightforward format. Tackles issues such as the following; protecting the green wedge and settlement boundaries, mixed use allocation for 10 homes (see page 3), protection of green features, highway safety, promoting small scale employment uses, redevelopment of parish room and seeking to develop toilets and kitchen for local church. The full plan can be found [here](#).

- Billesdon, Harborough- 901 residents

A professionally designed plan that utilises a variety of different graphical devices throughout. Tackles issues such as; housing allocations for 45 dwellings, housing design, broadband, business development, parking, congestion and the retention of services and facilities. The full plan can be found [here](#).

1000- 5000 residents

- Tattenhall, Cheshire- 1986 residents.

A well designed plan tackling issues such as; housing allocations for 30 dwellings, local character, green wedge, design, energy efficiency, encouraging employment development, loss of shops, broadband, open spaces and wildlife protection. The full plan can be found [here](#).

- Uppingham, Rutland- 4,500 residents

A plan in a very straightforward format. Tackles issues such as; conservation areas, signage, allocations for 170 homes, employment and recreation developments, extension of the retail area, design, protecting green spaces. The full plan can be found [here](#).

5000+ residents

- Broughton Astley, Harborough- 8940

A professionally designed plan using a variety of maps, graphs and images. Tackles issues such as; mixed use allocations, affordable housing, garden development, protecting the retail centre, provision of new healthcare and community facilities, heritage and village coalescence. The full plan can be found [here](#).

Useful Neighbourhood Planning Guides from Locality

[Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap](#)- A comprehensive guide to producing a Neighbourhood Plan. It takes you through the process step by step, from first deciding to join with people from your local community to submitting the finished article.

[Writing Planning Policies](#)- Writing planning policies can be a daunting experience but one that is crucial to a successful neighbourhood plan. Containing real world neighbourhood plan examples and worksheets, this guide tries to break down the planning speak and takes you on a step-by-step process to writing good planning policies.

[Keeping it Simple](#)- It can be easy to get put off by the scale of work required for a neighbourhood plan or thinking you need to produce a long and complex document. This guide shows how you can keep your neighbourhood plan concise and straightforward.



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