



## Step 2: Identifying the issues to address in your Neighbourhood Plan

What changes would improve your community way of life?

You are likely to want to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan because you want things in your community to change for the better. Even in neighbourhoods that have a high quality of life there are always improvements that can be made.

It's therefore important to identify what the issues are that you want your Neighbourhood Plan to address. If you don't already have a Parish Plan or Village Appraisal, a good way to start is to describe:

- ▶ The strengths and positive features of your neighbourhood - things that people value and would like to keep.
- ▶ The negative features of your neighbourhood - things that people don't like and would like to get rid of or improve.
- ▶ Those things that your neighbourhood doesn't have which it would like.

You may feel that your parish or town council, or the neighbourhood forum, has a good sense for what the issues are without the need to consult the wider community. Although there is no requirement to consult your community at this stage you will have to demonstrate how you have consulted the community and how they have participated when you submit your proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

In any event, it will be helpful to gain the views of local people on the issues. You could do this by holding an event where they can



**YOU MAY HAVE A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT OR CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL WHICH DESCRIBES THE CHARACTER OF YOUR VILLAGE, OR A PARTICULAR**

express their opinions, by going on a walking tour of the neighbourhood taking notes as things are pointed out, or by asking people to complete a questionnaire, or submit their thoughts by some other means. It may be useful to take or ask for photos to be submitted to illustrate the issues concerned. Marking the issues on a map can help to show where there are particular problem 'hot spots' or areas of opportunity.

## PART OF IT, IN DETAIL

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### Top tip

When gathering views on issues, ask people to try and be as specific as possible, giving examples of what they mean. Using techniques such as those demonstrated by the community planning tool [Planning for Real](#) can help to bring issues 'alive' for local people, although these may incur a cost.

The Sustainable Community Strategy for your area will identify some of the big issues for the council's area as a whole, and may be a useful source of background information. In addition, the local planning authority may have undertaken technical work that will be useful to your Neighbourhood Plan, such as studies of flood risk, housing need and potential development sites (these will usually be on the local planning authority's website - if not, ask a planning officer).

You will need to decide which of the issues your Neighbourhood Plan can address, and which are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan. For example, a Neighbourhood Plan cannot address the frequency of dustbin collections, or where people get their energy supplies from. But they can identify land to be used for community recycling facilities, where renewable energy generation should be encouraged, or where school buildings should be expanded.

Remember that your Neighbourhood Plan will have to generally conform with the strategic policies in the Local Plan. You will therefore need to check the Local Plan and identify those parts that are relevant to your Neighbourhood Plan. This may include, for example, policies on the amount and type of housing and employment land to be developed, which neighbourhoods have been identified as retail or service centres and earmarked for growth, and policies about open space, nature conservation and the environment.

Decide what policies from the Local Plan are relevant and what they mean for your Neighbourhood Plan. See if there is anything

that has been picked up in your assessment of the issues that is not mentioned in the Local Plan, or that could potentially conflict with the policies in the Local Plan.

 [Step 3: Develop a vision and objectives](#)

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