



Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit Guidance Note 4

Neighbourhood Planning: Getting a Neighbourhood Area Designated

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Adopted December 2017

This document includes hyperlinks to a range of websites, and the hyperlinks can be accessed using the published version of this document, which is available to view via: www.scambs.gov.uk/npguidance. Every effort has been made to ensure that these hyperlinks are up-to-date, however as websites change these hyperlinks can become invalid.

Herefordshire Council has kindly given permission for us to provide links to their guidance on neighbourhood planning.

Huntingdonshire District Council has kindly allowed us to take inspiration and wording from their Neighbourhood Planning Guidance.

If you have any queries relating to this document, please contact us via neighbourhood.planning@scambs.gov.uk or 01954 713183.

Introduction

A parish council which wishes to do a neighbourhood plan will need to apply to South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) for an area to be designated as a 'Neighbourhood Area'.

SCDC strongly recommend that you have a discussion with us before you decide on applying for a neighbourhood area to be designated. We want to ensure that a neighbourhood plan is the correct tool to achieve the aims you have for your area. You will need to have the support of your local community right from the start.

Step One: Deciding on a Neighbourhood Area

When deciding on a neighbourhood area you have the following options:

1. Whole Parish option:

There are advantages to choosing the **same area as the parish**. These are:

- If a parish council applies to have its parish as a neighbourhood area this does not need to be consulted upon by SCDC.
- It is more likely to be supported by the local community.
- The choice of area will be easy to justify in your neighbourhood area application form.

2. Alternative options:

The neighbourhood area does not have to follow existing administrative boundaries. There are other alternatives, whereby a neighbourhood area can either be smaller or larger than the area of the parish. For example:

- **Alternative Scenario 1 - smaller area:**
A parish council may decide that one particular area of their parish is particularly cohesive and has its own identity, so might consider having a neighbourhood area specifically for this smaller area rather than for the whole of the area of the parish.
- **Alternative Scenario 2 - larger area:**
Two adjacent parish councils for villages close together may decide that a joint neighbourhood plan, covering both parishes would have benefits because the neighbourhood plan could tackle issues shared by both villages. This can even include a neighbourhood area that covers several parishes and goes across local authority boundaries.

There are benefits to working together as a group of parish councils:

- Common issues can be tackled together.
- There will be more people with a wider range of experience that can help with creating the neighbourhood plan.
- Costs can be shared.
- It can build upon one or a number of individual parishes' Parish Plans.

However, there are things that you should consider:

If you decide a larger area would make sense, you would need all the parish councils involved to agree on the neighbourhood area. One parish council would then become the lead parish council and would make the neighbourhood area application on behalf of all parishes involved.

A neighbourhood area that crosses local authority boundaries will be challenging as the neighbourhood plan will need to be in conformity with the Local Plan for each local authority.

You should also check whether there are other neighbourhood areas nearby. If you think part of an existing designated neighbourhood area should be part of your neighbourhood area you will need to talk to SCDC about how to proceed.

Locality grant: If a joint plan is to be prepared only one grant can be applied for from Locality as they allocate their support per plan. Each individual parish council would not be eligible for a separate grant.

Once you have decided on your neighbourhood area **you will need to say why you have chosen that area** when you make your neighbourhood area application to SCDC.

How can SCDC help?

Before you decide on what neighbourhood area you are going to apply for it is worth talking to SCDC. We want to be sure that doing a neighbourhood plan is the correct option for your local community. There may be adjoining parish councils that have asked for advice from SCDC and we could link you up with them.

Guidance and Regulations

Neighbourhood Planning Regulations

- Original (April 2012): [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#)
- Amended (February 2015): [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#)
- Amended (October 2016): [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) and Development Management Procedure \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

These regulations may occasionally change or new regulations introduced

National Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning

National Planning Practice Guidance – [Designating a Neighbourhood Area](#)

Other Resources

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit](#)

Is a Neighbourhood Plan the Right Tool for your Parish

Maps for Neighbourhood Plans

Locality [their website is called [My Community](#)] – they have a [Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide](#) which provides a good introduction to neighbourhood planning.

Step Two: Making an Application to get a Neighbourhood Area Designated

To make an application for the designation of a neighbourhood area, the parish council should complete and submit the neighbourhood area application form.

The application should be accompanied by a map showing the area that is being proposed as a neighbourhood area.

How can SCDC help?

SCDC can provide the map needed to accompany the application as we have included this as part of our Support Offer to parish councils.

The map needs to clearly show the proposed area and the copyright permission for the map especially if an OS map has been used. This is because the application form and map will be published on the SCDC website, so requires these permissions.

Guidance and Regulations

Neighbourhood Planning Regulations

- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012: [Regulation 5](#)

These regulations may occasionally change or new regulations introduced

Other Resources

Application form for Neighbourhood Area designation is available to download on [SCDC Neighbourhood Plan Toolkit webpage](#)

[SCDC Neighbourhood Plan Toolkit:](#)

Maps for Neighbourhood Plans
Support Offer

Locality [their website is called [My Community](#)] – they have a [Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide – Worksheet 2](#) about neighbourhood areas.

Top Tip

If you need any assistance with completing the neighbourhood area application form or creating the map showing the proposed neighbourhood area, please contact SCDC who will help answer questions / create maps.

Step Three: Consultation on the Neighbourhood Area Application

If a parish council is **proposing the whole of its parish as the neighbourhood area** it must submit an application to SCDC **but there is not the need to carry out a consultation.**

If the application is '**valid**' the Local Planning Authority must designate the proposed neighbourhood area.

A **valid application** will:

- have a map showing the proposed neighbourhood area;
- have a statement explaining why the proposed area is considered an appropriate neighbourhood area; and
- be from the 'relevant body', which for South Cambridgeshire is a Parish Council.

A consultation is required if the proposed neighbourhood area is smaller or larger than a single parish.

In these cases, SCDC will publicise the application by publishing it on its website and also send out notifications to all the consultees we use when consulting on Local Plan issues.

If asked to do so by the parish council, we will notify local contacts relevant to the proposed neighbourhood area submitted by the parish council. We will need the parish council to provide us with this list of local consultees.

SCDC will ask the relevant parish council to help publicise the consultations by placing posters we have prepared around their village. SCDC will also ask for information about the consultation to be published in a parish newsletter and/or on the parish website, if one exists. We consider this publicises the consultation within the area and there is not the need to notify individual local contacts unless asked to do so by the relevant parish council.

How can SCDC help?

This step is SCDC's responsibility, but we do need your help to provide local publicity for the consultation.

Guidance and Regulations

Neighbourhood Planning Regulations

- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012: [Regulation 6](#)
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015: [Regulation 2](#)
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016: [Regulation 2](#)

These regulations may occasionally change or new regulations introduced

Other Resources

Locality [their website is called [My Community](#)] – they have a [Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide – Worksheet 2](#) about Neighbourhood Areas.

Timescale If a consultation is required it will be for a **minimum of six weeks.**

Step 4: Designation of the Neighbourhood Area

Designating a neighbourhood area for the whole parish:

If the application submitted by the parish council to SCDC is valid and proposes the whole of its parish to be designated as a neighbourhood area the area will be designated.

Designating a neighbourhood area for an alternative scenario:

A consultation will be required, and then SCDC must make a decision on designating a neighbourhood area within the **following timescales to meet national regulations**:

- **Decisions will be made within 20 weeks of the start of the consultation** where the proposed area falls across two or more Local Planning Authorities.
- **Decisions will be made within 13 weeks of the start of the consultation in all other cases.** For example, if only part of a parish boundary is proposed as the neighbourhood area or a few parishes join to form one large neighbourhood area.

If SCDC does not make a decision within the required timescale, the neighbourhood area is automatically considered to be designated.

How can SCDC help?

This step is SCDC's responsibility.

Guidance and Regulations

National Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning

National Planning Practice Guidance – [Designating a Neighbourhood Area](#)

Neighbourhood Planning Regulations

- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012: [Regulation 7](#)
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016: [Regulation 2](#)

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Other Resources

Locality [their website is called [My Community](#)] – they have a [Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide – Worksheet 2](#) about Neighbourhood Areas.

Timescale

SCDC aim to designate your neighbourhood area as quickly as we can.

If the proposed neighbourhood area is for the whole of the parish boundary there is no need to do a consultation and therefore the process is speedier.