



Department for Communities and Local Government

Our Ref:
Your Ref:

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Local people should have a bigger say in the planning decisions that affect their environment. That is why the Government has introduced new rights giving communities the opportunity to shape that environment by contributing to decisions such as the location of shops, offices and schools or the design standards of new housing.

Neighbourhood planning is designed to be an inclusive process that provides for consultation with, and participation by, local people in the development of neighbourhood plans. There is also an independent examination of the plans. And of course, no neighbourhood plan can come into force unless there is a majority vote for it in a referendum. The referendum is important, not just as a check in the system but as a way of involving the whole community in deciding the future of their neighbourhood.

These powers will ensure that all voices within a community are heard. Only decisions with a broad base of support will get through, giving local people an even stronger incentive to work as a team and achieve better results for their neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood plans enable local people to ensure that they get the right types of sustainable development for their community. However, the plans need to be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area so the Localism Act requires all neighbourhood plans to have appropriate regard to national policy and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local development plan. This will be tested at the independent examination to which local people can give their views.

Once a Neighbourhood Plan is brought into force after an independent examination and referendum it becomes part of the statutory development plan for the local area.

Decision making on planning applications continues to rest with the local planning authority. The community leads on preparing the neighbourhood plan and setting out the policies for development in their area but it is the local planning authority that will grant planning permission in accordance with those policies and be responsible for enforcing them.