



Plan for Smaller Communities producing a NDP

Stage	Description	Reason / Explanation	Time taken
1	Initial discussions, presentation by Local Authority Officer. Decision by Town or PC to pursue NDP	Parish Councils can take a long time to decide whether or not to pursue a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP); it is a long and involved process and it is important that you give due consideration as to whether it is the correct approach for your area. There is lots of information online and your Local Planning Authority (LPA) can give initial information, to try to help you to decide whether it is the right tool to meet the ambitions of your community.	Variable
2	Designation of Neighbourhood Plan Area	This is the first formal step in the NDP process whereby the Parish Council requests that the area is designated – where the neighbourhood plan area is the same as the parish boundary, this designation will happen immediately. In cases where the boundary is different, or includes multiple parishes or covers an unparished area, this process will take longer. Other activities can continue whilst the designation request trundles through the process.	0 - 6 weeks
3.	Set up a steering group	This may initially be quite small but is likely to grow as the community engagement strategy takes hold and more members of the community get involved. The Steering Group (SG) must have a chair and will be the body responsible for overseeing the development of the plan. The SG will report to the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum (the Qualifying Body)	Happens alongside the designation process
4.	Initial Community consultation	This will be the first stage in your engagement with your community and your opportunity to tell them about the NDP process and get their views on what is important to them. We suggest that you deliver a paper copy to every house but also have an option to complete the survey online – one benefit of using an online survey tool is that analysis of the results can be done automatically. You should also publicise the survey in newsletters, noticeboards and in the local press. You may want to consider having a separate survey for your local businesses.	6 weeks (4 weeks to consult, 2 weeks to analyse). You can start this work in parallel with the designation.
5.	Evidence gathering	This will happen throughout the process, all community consultation events should be documented as they will provide evidence to support the policy positions adopted in your plan. Other evidence may include quantitative data (e.g. census data) – much of this you may already have in your local community or will be available online; your LPA is also a key source of important data; and qualitative data such as historical evidence, landscape analysis etc, all supported by the views of your community.	Throughout





REVIEW STAGE 1			
6.	Working Groups	As you move through the consultation and evidence gathering phases, you'll probably find that some common themes start to emerge. For many groups these include; housing, open spaces, landscape and the natural environment, economy and jobs, historic and cultural issues, architecture and design, connectivity and infrastructure issues Once common themes have been identified, it is a good idea to form smaller working groups, using volunteers from the community to progress these themes further and to start identifying policy areas.	3-6 months
7.	Draft policy areas	Using community feedback and evidence the working group should start to pull together policy options	
REVIEW STAGE 2 AND 3			
8.	Gather further community views on these themes	Once you have established some common themes and potential policy direction, it is important to establish whether your community supports this direction by seeking feedback. Questionnaires, exhibitions, a stall at an existing community event, newsletters, press coverage etc are all good ways of seeking input. Feedback here can be used to inform those policies, to identify any areas for further work and to provide endorsement of positions adopted.	6 weeks
9.	Produce draft plan	Use the template to start pulling together your draft plan, allocate sections to different members of the SG to write, the working groups should draft their sections, clearly identifying the evidence that supports their policy to adequately justify it. There are likely to be several versions of the draft plan before the SG are happy with it.	6 -12 weeks
10.	Request EIA from your LPA	A formal screening opinion will be given by WCC on whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. This can only be given when there is a near final draft plan available. It can happen once agreement has been reached on policy direction but before the draft is finalised. It is also a good idea to get some feedback from your NDP team at the LPA at this stage so that any immediate concerns with the policy direction can be addressed before the plan is circulated for consultation.	3 weeks
REVIEW STAGE 4			
11.	Presubmission (Reg14) consultation	This is the final community consultation stage. The document must be made available to all members of the community, a number of statutory consultees and your LPA (who will circulate the document to a number of internal departments for comment); any comments should then be used by the steering group to update the document and.	6 weeks
12.	Update draft plan and formally submit to your LPA (Regulation 15)	Use the consultation feedback to further refine your plan. You will also need to produce a Basic Conditions Statement, a Consultation Statement (separate guidance on producing these is available) and provide your evidence as a series of Appendices.	4 weeks

