



## A guide to neighbourhood planning

1. The [Localism Act 2011](#) introduced statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England giving communities more say in the development of their local area, (within certain limits and parameters). Neighbourhood plans must also meet 'basic conditions'<sup>1</sup>.

These are the key elements of Neighbourhood Planning:

**(i) Neighbourhood development plans** - set the vision of a neighbourhood for the future and allow communities to produce planning policies for the development and use of land in a defined neighbourhood area.

They can determine where new homes, offices and shops are built and what they should look like. The plans can be general or detailed. Neighbourhood plans can not stop development that has been identified in the Purbeck District Local Plan, but they can help to determine the most appropriate way to deliver it. They can also promote more development than has been identified in the Purbeck District Local Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to independent examination and referendum. If adopted by the local planning authority they become part of the Local Development Plan. This statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans far more weight than other local planning documents, such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

**(ii) Neighbourhood development orders (NDO)** - can make provision in relation to all or any part of land, or a specific site in the neighbourhood area. NDOs can apply to all or part of a neighbourhood area and can be included as part of a neighbourhood plan, or they can be brought forward separately. The NDO must be agreed by the community through a referendum, before it can come into force.

**(iii) Community right to build orders (CRtB)** - is a particular type of neighbourhood development order which allow local communities to build, design and run a facility which they feel is needed in their neighbourhood.

The CRtB must be led by a constituted group of at least 10 un-related members who live in the particular area (i.e. living in different dwellings to each other). They must make a clear statement that the organisation will carry out its activities for the

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) [excluding 2b, c, 3 to 5 as required by 38C (5)].

benefit of the community. A CRtB must be agreed by the community through a referendum.

2. Communities can choose to produce a neighbourhood development plan, or can produce an NDO or a CRtB as part of a neighbourhood development plan or independently.



3. Neighbourhood plans and NDOs must be in general conformity the Purbeck District Local Plan and national planning policy. Plans must also demonstrate extensive engagement with the community, statutory bodies and relevant stakeholders and a referendum with more than 50% of those voting in favour of the plan. On adoption neighbourhood plans and NDOs become part of the Purbeck District Local Plan.

### The benefits of neighbourhood planning

4. The main benefit of neighbourhood planning is that communities can:

- have more influence in shaping the future of their area;
- determine local planning priorities within the wider planning system;
- bring together residents, businesses, local groups, landowners and developers to share ideas and build a shared vision for an area; and
- build greater levels of trust and confidence within the community, creating lasting partnerships to help to put the plan into practice.

### Who takes the lead?

5. As Purbeck is a parished district only town or parish councils can initiate and lead neighbourhood plans and NDOs. Parish meetings do not have the same status as town and parish councils so they must establish a neighbourhood forum. Alternatively they could work together with adjacent parish council/s to develop a neighbourhood plan or order that covered all of part of the parish council/s area and parish meeting area.

## Who else will be involved?

6. Here are some of the organisations and individuals that the town or parish council are likely to be involved in developing the plan:

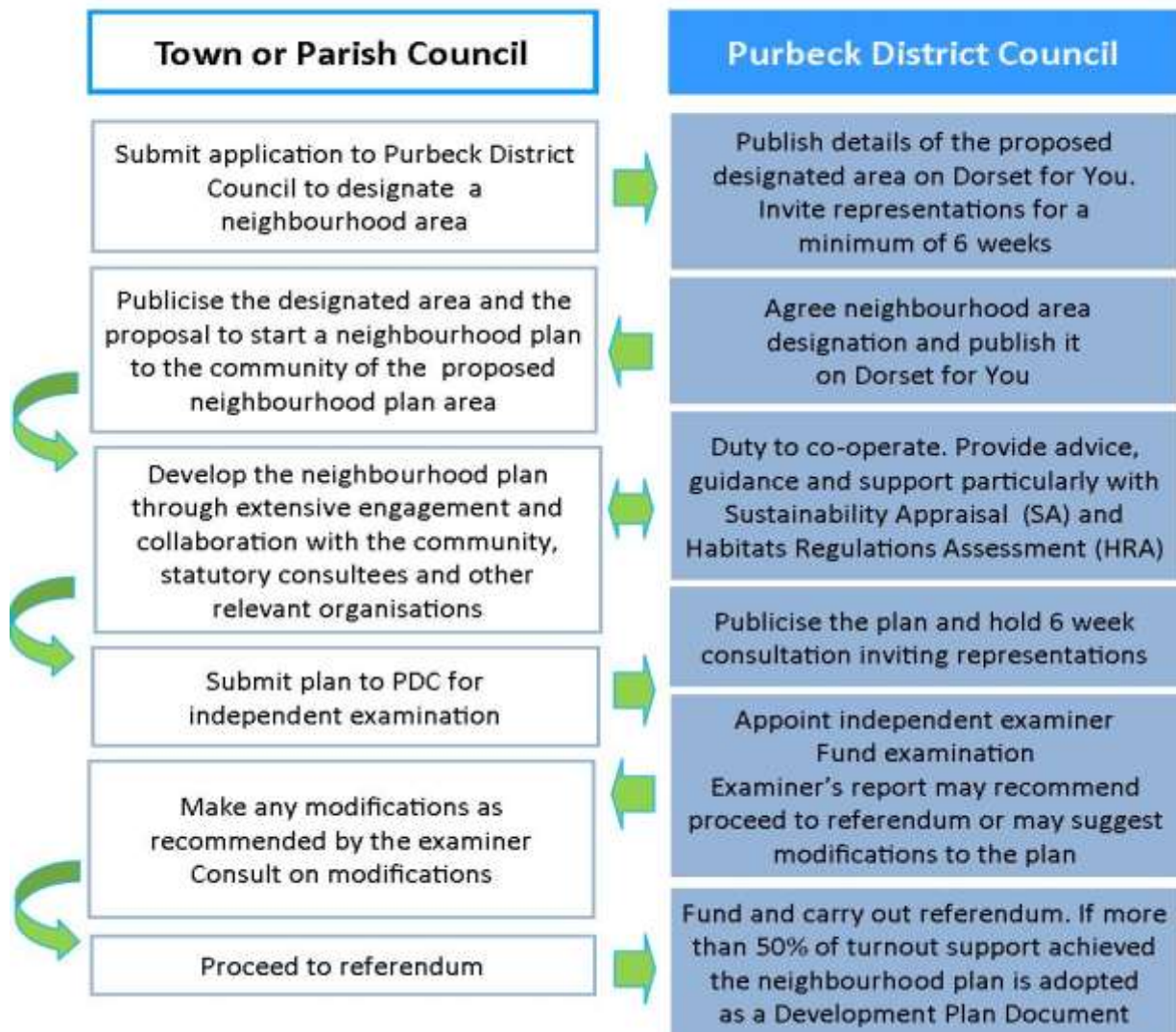
- Purbeck District Council;
- neighbouring district and borough councils;
- neighbouring parish and town councils
- Dorset County Council;
- Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils;
- Statutory consultees
- Service providers, e.g., health and care;
- community and voluntary groups;
- residents;
- businesses;
- landowners; and
- developers

*(This list is not exhaustive; other organisations may be involved depending on the proposals being developed. The council has contact details for many of those listed)*

## Who does what?

7. This table summarises the process and explains who does what and at what and when. More detailed information is available from the Council's Planning Policy Team.

## Neighbourhood plans - who does what?



### How much will it cost and who pays for what?

8. The cost of neighbourhood plans will vary depending on their size, scope and complexity. The Council can help towards some of the cost by providing:

- free advice and expertise (officer time)
  - interpreting policy
  - mapping
  - strategic environmental assessment (if required)

Other costs will include:

- Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Consultation (e.g. survey printing and distribution, venue hire).

9. The Government provides local planning authorities with funding to help meet the examination and referendum costs and to provide advice and technical support throughout the development of the plan. All other costs will be the responsibility of the

parish or town council. A template setting out each of the stages and who will do what is shown in Appendix 1. C.

## **Funding your plan**

### **10. Locality - Neighbourhood plan grant and direct support**

Locality offers two different types of support to help prepare a neighbourhood plan or a neighbourhood development order:

- Technical Support
- Neighbourhood Planning Grant

All groups writing a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order will be eligible to apply for up to £9,000 in grant from Locality - Neighbourhood Planning fund to help fund their plan. Locality can also provide direct practical support for groups facing a range of complex issues. If you would like us to help you submit an application to Locality please contact Purbeck Planning Policy Team.

## **Getting started**

### **Bring the community on board**

**11.** The community should be involved right from the start, and then throughout the plan's development. This will ensure that the final plan reflects the community's priorities and aspirations, and will ultimately get their support at the referendum.

**12.** A good way of raising community awareness and explaining the neighbourhood planning process is to hold a public meeting (consider more than one if you are covering a large or split geographical area). This also provides the opportunity to recruit community volunteers to help in the production of the plan. It's also a good idea, even at this early stage, to contact local groups and businesses to both capture their interest and invite their participation and ideas.

### **Set up a steering group**

**13.** A successful plan will have strong leadership. The parish or town council should establish a steering/neighbourhood planning group to co-ordinate the project. This should have parish/town council representation and also include members of the community. Select people with varied relevant skills and experience in areas such as planning, community engagement and business. The steering group may devolve the project to a project group and/or working/task groups which could have even wider community representation.

### **Adopt terms of reference**

**14.** The steering group should adopt terms of reference which define its:

- vision, objectives and scope;
- roles and responsibilities;
- resources and finance; and
- project and work programme.

### Define the neighbourhood plan area

**15.** The parish or town council must submit an application to Purbeck District Council to designate the neighbourhood plan area, this is a requirement of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 that ensures that the suggested boundaries don't overlap with other neighbourhood plan areas. The council will publicise the proposed area and invite representations during a 6 week public consultation period.

**16.** In most cases the neighbourhood plan area is likely to be the same as the parish boundary. However, the plan's designated area can cover more than one parish, even crossing district boundaries. If this is the case all of the affected town or parish councils and local authorities must be in agreement.

### Produce a plan programme, timetable and budget

**17.** Consider what needs to be done at each stage, for example:

- the initial publicity, meetings, surveys, events;
- identify the resources needed such as people, funding, materials and venues;
- set timescales and milestones for tasks; and
- set up working/task groups to tackle specific issues.

**18.** Producing a programme and timetable will help the steering group to focus and monitor the activities of the plan and set up and coordinate working groups to deal with specific elements and issues. The Planning Advisory Service has produced a [project management toolkit](#) which help to guide and manage the project.

### Develop a communications strategy

**19.** Effective communication is vital and providing regular updates to the community and stakeholders is essential. Try to be as honest and transparent as possible to avoid people feeling that things are being decided behind closed doors. Some negotiations, particularly with landowners, developers and businesses may need to be kept confidential at times but be clear about the reasons for this

**20.** Produce and publish a communications strategy that sets out how and when the steering group will communicate with the community and other stakeholders. This is not the same as the engagement strategy which sets out how you will encourage the community to be involved in developing the plan. Communication methods could include

- posters and notices.
- flyers/leaflets;



- head to head talking to individuals, groups and businesses;
- town/parish websites, social network sites (Facebook, Twitter), emails;
- town/parish newsletters or magazines;
- local media - newspapers, free publications, radio, TV; and
- information events and stands at other events.

### Develop an engagement/participation strategy

**21.** Produce and publish an engagement strategy detailing how, where and when the community can be involved. Methods will depend on the size of the parish but aim to be as inclusive as possible, providing opportunities for people from all geographic areas, social backgrounds and age groups to be involved. For example make sure you:

- hold meetings and events in local accessible venues;
- vary meeting times so that people who work in the day or evening can be involved;
- provide activities to engage and occupy children;
- consider how you will engage with young people
- identify communities of interest and consider how to engage them;;
- make materials clear and easy to understand; and
- make sure you provide feedback from events and invite responses.

### Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment

**22.** Neighbourhood plans will be subject to a sustainability appraisal and, if required, a habitats regulations assessment, before they are adopted as part of the Purbeck District Local Plan.

- (i) The sustainability appraisal (SA)** looks at the economic, social and environmental impacts of an emerging plan, and should result in a plan that has the least negative impact on an area. It should be started early on in the process so that any impacts from emerging ideas, content and policies can be assessed, minimising the risk of a legal challenge at a later stage.
- (ii) A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)** follows a similar principle but will only be relevant to certain neighbourhood plans. HRAs specifically consider the wider impacts of particular emerging policies and plans on European sites of ecological importance within the area.

The Planning Policy Team can help with the Sustainability Appraisal

### Starting to draft the plan

#### Gather relevant information

**23.** Produce the vision and objectives for the area to get a clear understanding of the community and neighbourhood. Gather statistical data to help build up the social profile

of the community. Asset mapping might include community centres, village halls, playing fields, sports facilities and footpaths.

### **Review existing plans and strategies**

**24.** The Planning Policy Team can help with identifying relevant strategies and studies, including those produced by Dorset County Council. Also be aware of, and consider the plans of other organisations and agencies.

### **Discussions with stakeholders**

**25.** Establish contacts and have initial discussions with a range of stakeholders, to understand whether there are any other aspirations for the area that have not yet been developed into a plan or strategy. Here is a list of some of the stakeholders you should consider consulting or working with.

- local community groups;
- local businesses;
- local landowners and/or their representatives;
- officers at Purbeck District Council, e.g. environmental and housing services;
- officers at Dorset County Council, e.g. highways and education);
- other organisations, e.g., Environment Agency, Natural England, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, etc.; and
- local health authority and other service providers.

### **Identify the area's strengths and weaknesses**

**26.** Find out what people think about the area and their community. What do they like or dislike? What do they want or need? What are the opportunities to change or make improvements? Is there anything missing?

This can be done through:

- surveys (paper or web based)
- street surveys;
- interactive community events; and
- focus groups or discussions at meeting of local groups and with communities of interest.

The Council's Planning Policy Team can offer advice on community led planning methods.

### **Develop a vision and objectives**

**27.** Developing a vision and objectives for the community is an important stage in producing the neighbourhood plan.

**28.** The vision is an overarching statement describing what the neighbourhood will be like in the future. The objectives set out what the community wants to achieve in order to



help realise the vision. Detailed policies and actions can then follow on from these objectives. The vision should consider:

- what the area will look like in the future, e.g., in 15 or 20 years time;
- what facilities there will be, e.g., parks, shops, schools; and
- what will the social and economic outlook for the area be, e.g., demographics, jobs, tourism.

**29.** The objectives are more specific and set out how the vision is achieved. There may be one or a number of objectives to each element of the plan, depending on the different priorities of the community. Other issues may arise which are important to the community but do not fit with the neighbourhood plan. These could be parked and addressed later through a separate actions plan, or through the town or parish plan.

**30.** Once the steering group has drafted the vision and objectives, it is important to check that they don't stray too far from, or conflict with the Purbeck District Local Plan.

**31.** Before going any further check that the community supports the draft vision and objectives and ask for their feedback. There are a number of ways to do this:

- deliver copies to all households;
- meet with community groups;
- set up an online poll; (e.g. survey monkey)
- hold a public meeting or drop-in event; or publish information in the parish newsletter/magazine.

**32.** Following consultation on the draft vision and objectives, make any necessary amendments before moving to developing the detail of the plan.

### **Developing policies and options**

**33.** Build on the vision and objectives to start to think about the detailed content of the neighbourhood plan. This will include policies, a proposals map and possibly an implementation plan for the area.

**34.** The Government is clear that the intention of neighbourhood plans should be to set out policies on the development and use of land in a neighbourhood area. This is similar to the Purbeck District Local Plan, but is written and applied at the parish, town or neighbourhood level.

**35.** The draft policies that are included within the neighbourhood plan should be based on the information gathered during previous stages of evidence gathering and community and stakeholder engagement. Policies should ultimately seek to achieve the vision and objectives. For each objective that has been agreed, the steering group should consider what policies could be put in place to try and achieve them. For example:

- Policies that identify and/or allocate sites for particular types and scales of development, e.g. residential, employment and community facilities.
- Policies that specify particular requirements relating to each allocation. e.g., for landscaping.
- Policies that protect and /or enhance identified sites within the neighbourhood area
- Policies could be more generic and apply to longer term future development within the neighbourhood area. e.g., set out local design policies.

**36.** All policies must be achievable, particularly those that relating to the future use of particular sites within the neighbourhood area and must be drawn up in negotiation with the relevant landowners or site promoters.

**37.** Remember to keep checking for conformity with strategic policies in Purbeck District Local Plan as you proceed.

## Mapping

**38.** The neighbourhood plan will need to include a map(s) showing proposed site locations and boundaries. This will help in communicating plans and ideas to the community and can help with getting their views on particular sites. Town and parish councils that don't currently have an Ordnance Survey license can sign up to a Public Sector Mapping Agreement from Ordnance Survey, which will allow them to produce maps free of charge. The Council's Planning Policy Team can help with drawing up and producing maps.

## Develop an implementation plan

**39.** An implementation plan, shows what actions are required 'on the ground' in order to achieve the vision and objectives of the neighbourhood plan. This does not need to be part of the main neighbourhood plan itself, but could form an appendix to the main document, which can continue to evolve as actions progress and new ones are agreed. Consider the following principles:

- Priority                      Is the action a high, medium or low priority?
- Responsibility              Which organisation is the lead for delivering this action?
- Timescale                    By what date should the action be carried out?
- Partners                      Does the action require support from partners?
- Resources                    Is funding or any other resource required?

**40.** Certain actions may require input and assistance from a variety of stakeholders, e.g., Purbeck District Council, Dorset County Council, landowners, service providers, as well as groups from within the community and agreement should be reached with them before the action plan is published.

**41.** Once the policies and the implementation plan have been drafted, then you can start to produce the submission draft of the neighbourhood plan. There is no set format

for a neighbourhood plan but it should have clear policy statements with accompanying maps where needed. It should have a report on the sustainability appraisal process (and appropriate assessment (HRA) if needed), explaining why the policies included in the plan are the most appropriate ones.

### **Meeting the Basic Standards - Check for conformity with Purbeck District Local Plan and the community**

**42.** Check any emerging policies and actions to ensure they are in conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan. Continuous liaison with the Planning Policy Team should ensure there is no discrepancy between plans.

**43.** Before submitting the final neighbourhood plan to Purbeck District Council, check that residents, businesses and other stakeholders agree with the content of plan, the sustainability appraisal report and appropriate assessment. Stakeholder organisations include:

- Dorset County Council;
- The Environment Agency;
- Natural England;
- Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- adjacent town or parish councils;
- neighbouring districts and boroughs;
- service providers; and
- community and voluntary groups.

Analyse the responses and carry out any amendments needed.

### **Submit the neighbourhood plan to Purbeck District Council for independent examination**

**44.** Purbeck District Council will check the neighbourhood plan, to ensure that the process has been followed in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act and associated regulations, and to ensure that it conforms to the Purbeck District Local Plan. If the neighbourhood plan meets these requirements Purbeck District Council, in consultation with the steering group, will arrange for an independent examination of the document.

**45.** The main function of the examination is to check that the neighbourhood plan conforms to:

- the strategic policies in the local development plan;
- the National Planning Policy Framework;
- relevant European Directives; and
- neighbouring and other neighbourhood plans

**46.** It is likely that the examiner will consider written, rather than oral representations. However, in the case of the latter a public hearing will be held.

## The Examiner's Report

- 47.** The Examiner's report will recommend one of the following:
- the draft neighbourhood plan should proceed to a referendum;
  - the draft neighbourhood plan should proceed to a referendum, subject to certain amendments; or
  - the draft neighbourhood plan should be refused.
- 48.** The Examiner's report will be issued to both the town or parish council and Purbeck District Council. Where the examination shows that the neighbourhood plan is not compliant with the strategic policies in the Purbeck District Local Plan, legal requirements or national policy, then Purbeck District Council will not be obliged to carry out a referendum or adopt the plan. The neighbourhood plan will therefore have no statutory status.

## The Referendum

- 49.** The referendum will normally be open to any individual registered to vote in the parish, but the independent examiner (or Purbeck District Council) may decide to extend it if for example, certain policies within the plan impact on surrounding communities. If the plan receives the support of more than 50% of voters at the referendum, the neighbourhood plan must be adopted by Purbeck District Council.

## Adoption

- 50.** Purbeck District Council will adopt the neighbourhood plan, as soon as reasonably practicable, in line with the democratic process. The adopted neighbourhood plan will become part of the Purbeck District Local Plan. Future planning applications will be judged against the policies in the neighbourhood plan.

## Implementing and monitoring the plan

- 51.** The town or parish council should continue to monitor the neighbourhood plan's implementation, to check that progress is being made against the plan's objectives.
- 52.** As the plan will be adopted as part of the Purbeck District Local Plan it makes sense for the neighbourhood plan timescales to be similar, i.e. up to the year 2027. This doesn't mean that the neighbourhood plan cannot be reviewed during that time but a refresh must include further consultation, a fresh examination and referendum.

## Additional support

There are several sources of advice and support for communities that are interested in neighbourhood planning. Purbeck District Council is obliged to help people draw up their neighbourhood plans.

Developers, landowners and local businesses may be interested in sponsoring and getting involved in neighbourhood planning, particularly CrTB orders.

## Neighbourhood Plan grants

The government has recently announced a new neighbourhood planning funding and support programme. For the latest news on Neighbourhood Planning grants go to <http://locality.org.uk/news/locality-deliver-support-95m-funding-communities-create-neighbourhood/>

## Other useful websites

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)  
[www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/neighbourhoodplanningvanguard/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/neighbourhoodplanningvanguard/)

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) frequently asked questions about neighbourhood planning  
[www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=2298881](http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=2298881)

Planning Aid Forum for Neighbourhood planning  
[www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/](http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/)

English Heritage  
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/hpg/historicenvironment/neighbourhoodplanning/>

CPRE Neighbourhood planning guide  
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=172494&filetype=pdf>

The Eden Project  
[www.edenproject.com/whats-it-all-about/places-and-regeneration/neighbourhood-planning?gclid=CL60xa\\_nk64CFeontAod31LULg](http://www.edenproject.com/whats-it-all-about/places-and-regeneration/neighbourhood-planning?gclid=CL60xa_nk64CFeontAod31LULg)

Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Forestry Commission joint advice on neighbourhood planning  
[http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/LIT\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf)

## Appendix 1 - Neighbourhood plan process summary and estimated costs

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan		Who does it?		Any costs?	
		Parish Council	District Council	Parish Council	District Council
<b>Getting started</b>	Get the community on board.	✓		✓ Room hire	
	Form a steering group.	✓		✓ Clerk time ✓ Parish news ✓ Room hire	
	Agree project plan with District Council	✓	✓	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Training	✓	✓	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Define the neighbourhood plan area and apply to Purbeck District Council to designate the neighbourhood plan area	✓ apply by letter	✓ provide maps and arrange consultation	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time ✓ Maps ✓ Posters
	Produce a communications strategy.	✓	✓ advice	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Produce an engagement strategy.	✓	✓ advice	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
<b>Developing the vision and the objectives</b>	Gather together basic information and data.	✓	✓	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time ✓ Housing needs survey
	Identify strengths and weaknesses.	✓	✓ advice	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Draft the vision and objectives.	✓	✓ advice	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Check for conformity with Local Plan		✓ advice		✓ Officer time
	Agree the vision & objectives with the community.	✓	✓ support consultation & exhibition materials	✓ Clerk time ✓ Room hire	✓ Officer time ✓ Exhibition maps and materials (graphics)
<b>Developing</b>	Develop the options/policies	✓	✓ support for consultation	✓ Clerk time ✓ Room hire	Officer time Exhibition



Producing a Neighbourhood Plan		Who does it?		Any costs?	
		Parish Council	District Council	Parish Council	District Council
the plan	including consultation.		& exhibition materials	✓ Printing and delivery costs	maps and materials (graphics)
	Collate responses	✓	✓	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Develop the implementation plan.	✓	✓ advice	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Habitats Regulations Assessment.	✓	✓ advise on engaging consultants	✓ Consultants fees ✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Assess if plan needs a Strategic Environmental Assessment and undertake one if required.		✓		✓ Officer time
	Finalise the draft plan	✓	✓ mapping & graphics	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time ✓ Consultation and exhibition maps and materials (graphics)
	Check again for conformity with Local Plan.		✓	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time
	Agree the final draft with the community and partners (consultation)	✓	✓	✓ Clerk time ✓ Room hire ✓ Printing and delivery costs	✓ Officer time
	Collate responses	✓	✓ optional	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time (if asked to do so)
<b>Statutory Stages</b>					
Submission and independent examination	Submit plan to Purbeck District Council	✓		✓ Clerk time	
	Appoint independent examiner	✓	✓	✓ Clerk time	✓ Officer time ✓ Examination costs*
	Examiner's report published.	✓		✓ Clerk time	✓

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan		Who does it?		Any costs?	
		Parish Council	District Council	Parish Council	District Council
<b>Referendum</b>	Referendum (if passing examination)		✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Officer time</li> <li>✓ Referendum costs**</li> </ul>
<b>Adoption</b>	If referendum has a majority of more than 50% of those voting yes, the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted by Purbeck District Council		✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Officer time</li> </ul>
	Publish Neighbourhood Plan	✓	✓ mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clerk time</li> <li>✓ Printing and delivery costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Officer time</li> <li>✓ Update maps (if necessary)</li> </ul>