



Committee report

Committee	POLICY SCRUTINY – NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
Date	5 JANUARY 2023
Title	PLACE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING
Report of	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Corporate Plan indicates that the Council intends to promote people-orientated place planning for town centres. This report provides an overview so that the Committee can gain an understanding of place and neighbourhood plans as they are being utilised on the island, what the differences are, the costs involved and how such plans might assist rural areas. It reflects some of the experiences of places on the island that have plans and summarise any known feedback on impact, resources, and funding.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning in England is plan-led with a National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) setting out government policy and guidance on practice which local areas should adhere to.

“The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.” 2021 National Planning Policy Framework

2.2 The National Policy Framework has three ‘tiers’ National, Local & neighbourhood

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Local Plans – produce either by an individual authority or jointly by authorities working together - local authorities have the responsibility for strategic planning and determining housing numbers
- Neighbourhood planning

2.3 These are the foundations upon which day to day planning decisions are based

2.4 Having a robust Development Plan in place at an island and at a community level helps to:

- Move from plan-making to place-shaping.

- Provide certainty for communities, developers, and the council.
- Focus councils on delivery.
- Access more funding and attract investment

2.5 Aligning the emerging Island Plan and Local plans with the National Planning policy framework provides an overall Development Plan against which individual planning applications can be considered.

3. Neighbourhood plans

3.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a right for communities to draw up neighbourhood plans NPPF paragraph 29: *‘Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct, and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.’*

3.2 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

3.3 A Neighbourhood plan should support the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan and plan positively to support local development – it is not about stopping development. Neighbourhood Plans are not a requirement under the NPPF but are an opportunity for communities to shape development in their areas

3.4 Some of the benefits of Neighbourhood Plan are that they set ground rules for development in area, e.g., more control over design, layout, and conservation of heritage/local character.

They are...

- A land-use planning document
- The opportunity to embed a local approach to ‘planning issues’
- Based on evidence
- A positively prepared plan
- Non-strategic policies (i.e., not island wide)

They aren’t...

- An answer to every problem in your area
- A blocker to development
- A document that can be completed in a few weeks

3.5 Whilst not an answer to every ‘problem’ in an area, the process can also help identify non-planning issues that we can then draw to the attention of the relevant people, whether they are in the Council or otherwise, to see how they could be addressed.

3.6 Once a Neighbourhood Plan has been made, it has the same legal status as the Local Plan (in our case currently the Island Plan Core Strategy). It becomes part of the statutory development plan (alongside the NPPF and the Core Strategy).

In addition, the NPPF is equally clear at paragraph 12 that *Where a planning application conflicts with a neighbourhood plan that has been brought into force, planning permission should not usually be granted.*

3.7 The draft Island Planning Strategy includes policy C15 which emphasises the importance of Neighbourhood Plans and outlines some of the key issues that such plans could address:.

- a) Identify and allocate land for development to meet the housing requirement within a designated neighbourhood area.
- b) Introduce policy on second home ownership.
- c) Identify sites for self and custom build serviced plots.
- d) Act as a local Design Code / Guide.
- e) identify and allocate previously developed land for residential, commercial, or social purposes.
- f) Set out preferred locations for social and community infrastructure

3.8 The steps to prepare and adopt a NP are set out in legislation and have a number of formal stages, including public consultation and independent examination, however importantly the hurdles to jump over at that NP examination are not as high as those for a local plan

3.9 While there are prescribed documents that must be submitted with a neighbourhood plan or Order there is no 'tick box' list of evidence required for neighbourhood planning. Proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken

3.10 When considering the content of a neighbourhood plan or Order proposal, an independent examiner's role is limited to testing whether or not a draft neighbourhood plan or Order meets the 7 [basic conditions](#), and other matters set out in [paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as amended\)](#). The independent examiner is not testing the soundness of a neighbourhood plan or examining other material considerations.

3.11 The council's Planning policy team are able to offer support and guidance on the process. Recent discussions with some PCs have concluded that the proposed IPS policies would do enough for them at this stage if they are adopted.

3.12 The cost of developing a Neighbourhood Plan can vary depending on the issues being addressed and the supporting evidence base required. Normally a minimum of £20,000 would be expected but plan production averages between £40-£50,000.

3.13 Five areas on the island currently have a Neighbourhood Plan in place

- Bembridge
- Brading
- Brighstone
- Freshwater
- Gurnard

4. Place Plans

4.1 A range of other methods to achieve place making and sustainable development exist as alternative to the time and cost associated with development of a Neighbourhood Plan. One of these, which the councils Regeneration team have helped to promote is “Place Plans”.

4.2 Place Plans should be seen as a process as much as an output. They bring together local stakeholders, town or parish councils, local businesses, community groups to work together with the Isle of Wight council to identify key issues of concern, using data and consultation, and develop an action orientated plan to address the issues.

4.3 They provide evidence of a collaborative shared vision for a place around which collective resources can be dedicated and funding applications submitted to improve that area. UK Government funding programmes usually require this form of evidence base when considering bids.

4.4 Place plans can reference land use and development objectives but tend to focus on tackling the socio-economic issues facing the area.

4.5 They also act as a reference point for interaction with different council departments and other public bodies. In general terms a population of at least 15,000 is required to provide the necessary critical mass to influence service delivery.

4.6 Three areas across the island have developed “place plans” to date, in partnership with the council’s regeneration team

- Newport
- Ryde
- Cowes/Northwood

4.7 Three councils in the Bay area have recently committed to work together to develop a Place plan for that area

4.8 In addition, Ventnor and East Cowes have town plans which seek provide a focus to community improvement in their areas.

4.9 The Place plan is accompanied by the formation of a “place plan steering group” which oversees the development of the plan and the implementation of an action plan.

4.10 As part of its recent UK shared prosperity fund allocation the council has recruited additional staff to act as “area regeneration managers” to help existing place plans deliver their action plans and assist other areas in developing place plans where they see that opportunity as supporting sustainable regeneration of their area.

4.11 A place plan normally takes around 3 months to develop and involves extensive data collection and consultation. The average cost is around £20,000. Ryde and Newport have successfully bid for UK government funds referencing their place plan

as their evidence base.

4.12 Place plans in rural areas – The population numbers in rural areas mitigate against the use of place plans. Villages and small settlements with similar issues may come together to collaborate on tackling these issues using the support of the Isle of Wight council.

4.13 Policy C15 of the Draft IPS also references Place Plans and masterplanning work and notes that if such work is endorsed by the council, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they contribute to achieving the aims of these community led plans.

5. Neighbourhood Priority statements – the future?

5.1 In the recent Levelling Up Bill, the government are proposing to introduce a new simpler neighbourhood planning tool called a “neighbourhood priorities statement”.

5.2 These will allow parishes & communities to identify their key priorities for their local area, including their development preferences, and will provide a simpler and more accessible way for them to participate in neighbourhood planning.

5.3 The local authority will then be obliged to take a NPS into account when preparing its local plan. Further details on this new tool will emerge as the Levelling Up Bill progresses and a new NPPF Prospectus is published.

contact Point: Chris Ashman, Director of Regeneration, ☎ 821000 e-mail chris.ashman@iow.gov.uk

CHRIS ASHMAN
Director of Regeneration

COUNCILLOR PAUL FULLER
COUNCILLOR JULIE JONES-EVANS
Cabinet Members for Planning and Regeneration