

### KEY STAGES TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

There are five key stages to neighbourhood planning:

#### 1. Defining the neighbourhood

Local people will need to decide which organisation should lead on coordinating the local debate. In some places, existing community groups may want to put themselves forward. In other places, local people might want to form a new group. In both cases, the group must meet some basic standards. It must, for example, have at least 21 members, and it must be open to new members.

Community groups will then need to apply to the local planning authority identifying the area and submitting information about the group. If the local planning authority decides that the community group meets the right standards, the group will be able to call itself a 'Neighbourhood Forum'. A Neighbourhood Forum can then get going and start planning for their neighbourhood.

#### 2. Preparing the Plan

Next, local people will begin collecting their ideas together and drawing up their plans.

With a **neighbourhood plan**, communities will be able to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood.

With a **neighbourhood development order**, the community can grant planning permission for new buildings they want to see go ahead.

Local people can choose to draw up **either** a plan, **or** a development order, **or both**. It is entirely up to them. Both must follow some ground rules:

- They must generally be in line with local and national planning policies
- They must be in line with other laws
- If the local planning authority's says that an area needs to grow, then communities cannot use neighbourhood planning to block the building of new homes and businesses. They can, however, use neighbourhood planning to influence the type, design, location and mix of new development.

#### 3. Independent Check

Once a neighbourhood plan or order has been prepared, an independent examiner will check that it meets the right basic standards.

#### 4. Community Referendum

The local council will organise a referendum on any plan or order that meets the basic standards. This ensures that the community has the final say on whether a neighbourhood plan or order comes into force.

If more than 50 per cent of people voting in the referendum support the plan or order, then the local planning authority must bring it into force.

## **5. Legal Force**

Once a neighbourhood plan is in force, it carries real legal weight. Decision-makers will be obliged, by law, to take what it says into account when they consider proposals for development in the neighbourhood.

A neighbourhood order will grant planning permission for development that complies with the order. Where people have made clear that they want development of a particular type, it will be easier for that development to go ahead.