Welcome to our workshop!

After registering, please help yourself to refreshments and use this opportunity to network before the presentation starts at 1.30pm.
Welcome to our workshop

Policy Writing for Neighbourhood Planners

July 2019
Who’s who and how we can help

Neighbourhood Planning Team

Ricardo Rios
Deborah Bryson
Cheryl Soppet
Robyn Tobutt

Community Engagement Team

Jodie Wales
Anne Richardson
Jess Wilmshurst
Content of workshop

Networking opportunity

Guidance on neighbourhood planning policy writing

Common issues with neighbourhood planning policies

**Activity 1 and 2: Dealing with common issues**
- Lack of clarity and/or precision
- Repetition – less detail, no local distinction

*Short break*

Additional guidance and resources

**Activity 3 and 4: Dealing with common issues**
- Lack of evidence
- Conflict

**Activity 5: Critique and feedback on pre-submitted policies**

Q&A
The workshop will help increase knowledge of:

- **common issues** with neighbourhood planning policies and how to overcome them
- **best practice** and policy writing using real life examples
- how to apply, interpret and identify the **scope of policies** for your plan
- what policy writing **guidance and resources** are available
- what policies **should (and shouldn’t)** be included in neighbourhood plans
- writing **effective** policies
Important legal definitions

A **neighbourhood development plan** sets out policies in relation to the **development and use of land** *(Section 38A of the The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)*

**Development** means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land *(Section 55 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990)*
Important legal requirements

The basic conditions that a draft *neighbourhood plan* must meet if it is to proceed to referendum are:

(a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the plan.

(d) the making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
(e) the making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area.

(f) the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

(g) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan.
Expectations set by National Planning Policy
Neighbourhood plans should:

• be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development

• be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable

• be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between planmakers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees
Neighbourhood plans should also:

• contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals

• serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area

• support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies

• shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.
And finally... Neighbourhood plans should:

• set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.

• shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

• not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.
Neighborhood planning policies should be **clear** and **unambiguous**. They should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications.

The policies should be **concise**, **precise** and supported by appropriate evidence. They should be **distinct** to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area.
A good understanding of the scope, expectations and limitations of neighbourhood plans will help you find the most efficient way to prepare an effective plan.
• New development in Littlefern will be focused on the four proposed housing allocations (site-specific Policies NP1, NP2 and NP3), which will deliver approximately 94 dwellings.

• Development proposals which reflect the scale and character of the village will be supported within the built-up areas of Littlefern where they accord with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district.

• New development elsewhere in the neighbourhood area will only be supported if they are appropriate for a countryside location and are otherwise consistent with other policies in this Plan and in the Development Plan.
Case Study - Common issues Part 1 - Clarity and Precision

- New development in Littlefern will be focused on the four proposed housing allocations (site-specific Policies NP1, NP2 and NP3), which will deliver approximately 94 dwellings.

- Development proposals which reflect the scale and character of the village will be supported within the built-up areas of Littlefern where they accord with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district.

- New development elsewhere in the neighbourhood area will only be supported if they are appropriate for a countryside location and are otherwise consistent with other policies in this Plan and in the Development Plan.
Repetition could lead to: less detail, no local distinction, and conflict.

- Proposals for infill development, which reflect the scale and character of the village, will be supported within the built-up area of NDP Village where they accord with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district.
Case Study - Common issues Part 2 - Repetition

Proposals for housing on sites within the built-up area of NDP village will be permitted provided that:

(i) an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt;

(ii) the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings;
(iii) the character of the area is not adversely affected;

(iv) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections; and

(v) if the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement.
Activity 1 - Writing effective policies - Clarity

On your table you have two sheets, one containing submitted policies and one containing comments from examiners.

1. **Read** through both sheets.

2. In your groups **match up** which submitted policy (Sheet 1) relates to which examiner comment (sheet 2).

3. Identify **one person in your group** to present the findings for your table.

You have 10 minutes…
Activity 2 - Writing effective policies - Repetition

On your table you should have **three examples** with **two policies** on each sheet.

1. Read the **two policies** on each sheet of paper.
2. Out of the **two policies** per example, decide which one is **better** and **why**.
3. Identify **one person in your group to** present the findings for your table.

You have 10 minutes…
Short break
Are there any policies you’ve come across which have really impressed you?

The policies that really impress me are those written specifically for the local area. These are locally distinctive, perhaps addressing key concerns of the community or recognising the attributes of the local area. Policies that are local in nature and something that the local planning authority just couldn’t do on a District wide scale are the ones that work best. These might include identifying important views, designating Local Green Spaces, including a policy on a derelict or run-down site, defining a High Street frontage or area to improve public realm.

Ann Skippers – Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner
Additional Resources
Evidence check

Examples of evidence:
- Surveys
- Issues & Opportunities
- Existing policies
- Studies

Make sure evidence guides your:
- Direction of Travel
- Policy Intent
- Policy Requirements
- Justification

Test your policies against
- National & Local Policies & Guidance
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment, if required
- Human Rights

If you come across any of the common issues we are exploring today, go back to your evidence.
• Residential development in NDP Village will be focused on the four proposed housing allocations (site-specific Policies NP1, NP2 and NP3), which will deliver approximately 87 dwellings. Arrangements will be made to promote the delivery and control of affordable housing on these sites by a community land trust or equivalent body.

• Development proposals for infill, which reflect the scale and character of the village, will be supported within the built-up area of NDP Village where they accord with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district.

• Development proposals elsewhere in the neighbourhood area will only be supported if they are appropriate for a countryside location and are otherwise consistent with other policies in this Plan and in the Development Plan.
Case Study - Common issues Part 3 - Scope

• Residential development in NDP Village will be focused on the four proposed housing allocations (site-specific Policies NP1, NP2 and NP3), which will deliver approximately 87 dwellings. **Arrangements will be made to promote the delivery and control of affordable housing on these sites by a community land trust or equivalent body.**

• Development proposals for infill, which reflect the scale and character of the village, will be supported within the built-up area of NDP Village where they accord with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district.

• Development proposals elsewhere in the neighbourhood area will only be supported if they are appropriate for a countryside location and are otherwise consistent with other policies in this Plan and in the Development Plan.
• Residential development in NDP Village will be focused on the four proposed housing allocations (site-specific Policies NP1, NP2 and NP3), which will deliver approximately 52 dwellings.

• Development proposals for infill, of no more than 10 dwellings, will be supported within the built-up areas of NDP Villages where they accord with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district.

• Development proposals elsewhere in the neighbourhood area will only be supported if it relates to agriculture, forestry or the enhancement of the environment.
Residential development in NDP Village will be focused on the four proposed housing allocations (site-specific Policies NP1, NP2 and NP3), which will deliver approximately 52 dwellings.

Development proposals for infill, of no more than 10 dwellings, will be supported within the built-up areas of NDP Villages where they accord with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the district.

Development proposals elsewhere in the neighbourhood area will only be supported if it relates to agriculture, forestry or the enhancement of the environment.
Proposals for development in South Oxfordshire should be consistent with the overall strategy of:

(i) focusing major new development at the growth point of Didcot so the town can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity;

(ii) supporting the roles of Henley, Thame and Wallingford by regenerating their town centres through measures that include environmental improvements and mixed-use developments and by providing new houses, employment, services and infrastructure;
(iii) supporting and enhancing the larger villages of Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote as local service centres;

iv) supporting other villages in the rest of the district by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment and by the provision and retention of services; and
(v) outside the towns and villages, and other major developed sites, any change will need to relate to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Allocations</th>
<th>Infill</th>
<th>Rural exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger villages</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - no limit</td>
<td>Yes if need shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller villages</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sites of up to 0.2ha*</td>
<td>Yes if need shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other villages</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sites of up to 0.1ha**</td>
<td>Yes if need shown</td>
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<tr>
<td>All other places not</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>listed</td>
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See Appendix 4 for list of settlements within each category

* Equivalent to 5-6 houses
** Equivalent to 2-3 houses
Examples of development that are appropriate for a countryside location

• Homes, provided it relates to:
  – rural worker dwelling
  – viable use of heritage asset
  – enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets
  – re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting
  – subdivision of an existing residential dwelling

• Sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings
### Activity 3 – Scope of policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Protect important public views?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control development that does not require planning permission?</td>
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<td>Improve bus services?</td>
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Activity 4 – Conflict

You have three NDP policies and three national/local policies.

1. Please **read the policies** in your activity pack

2. As a group, please **note any conflicts** you identify

3. Appoint **one person** in your group **to present the findings** for your table

You have 15 minutes…
Top Tips…

…for improving the chances of success of your policies

• Policies should relate to development and/or the use of land
• Any criteria within a policy will be used to decide whether a planning application is likely to be acceptable or not
• The policy should be precise, clear and capable of being applied consistently by the decision maker
• Proposals or requirements should be supported by evidence and not be overly restrictive or unduly onerous
Top Tips…con’t

…for improving the chances of success of your policies

• Policies might set out the ‘criteria’- describing what development should look like and/or the issues development will need to take into account

• Identify the target accurately – e.g. Does the policy apply to all development or just a particular type of development
Activity 5 – critique and feedback on pre-submitted policies

We will review the submitted policies as a group:

- Worksheet 1 – Policy Writing Toolkit
- Common issues
  - Repetition
  - Clarity and precision
  - Scope
  - Conflict

Please use the feedback you receive today to review your draft policy and contact your lead officer for 1 to 1 support.
Any questions?
Thanks for coming!

- Thoughts on the workshop?
- Feedback form