

Weston-sub-Edge Village Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led planning document that sets out how a parish or local area should develop in the future. Once approved by residents and adopted by the local authority, it becomes part of the statutory planning framework used to decide planning applications.

Pros

More influence over development - helps shape where and how housing, employment and community facilities are delivered.

Legal weight - once adopted, it becomes part of the development plan and is used in planning decisions.

Access to funding - communities with a neighbourhood plan receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts (where CIL applies), compared with 15% without a plan.

Community engagement - gives residents a formal opportunity to influence the future of the parish.

Protects local character - can identify valued green spaces, heritage assets and design expectations.

Cons

Time consuming - typically takes 2–4 years to prepare, consult on, examine and adopt.

Costly - often requires external planning consultants, evidence studies and administration.

Volunteer burden - significant commitment from councillors and residents.

Limited powers - cannot block development required by higher-level local plans and national policy.

Risk of becoming outdated - changes to local plans, housing targets or national policy may require review.

Summary

A neighbourhood plan is most worthwhile if a parish expects significant development pressure and wants greater influence over how growth is managed. If development pressure is low, the cost and effort may outweigh the benefits.

Process of developing a neighbourhood plan

- Parish Council resolution to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Designation of the neighbourhood area by the local planning authority.
- Establish a steering group and governance arrangements.
- Secure funding and a project budget.
- Gather evidence (housing, transport, environment, heritage, local needs).
- Engage and consult with residents, businesses and stakeholders.
- Develop a vision, objectives and planning policies.
- Draft the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Conduct statutory consultation (Regulation 14).
- Submit the plan to the local planning authority (Regulation 15).
- Independent examination.
- Local village referendum.
- Formal adoption by the local planning authority.

- Typical timescale: 18 months to 3 years.

- Potential cost: £5-£25k

Main cost drivers

- Planning consultant support (often the biggest cost)
- Evidence studies (housing needs, environment, heritage, transport)
- Community consultation events and materials
- Printing, surveys, website and engagement tools
- Examination costs (paid to independent examiner)
- Referendum costs (covered by local authority but sometimes indirect support costs fall on parish)

Recommendation

Discuss at next Parish Council meeting