Baildon Neighbourhood Plan

**What is a Neighbourhood Plan (NP)?**

Neighbourhood Plans are documents produced by parish and town councils, in consultation with local residents and interest groups, that set out the agreed policies the local residents wish to be taken into account when planning matters are considered by the planning authority who makes the decisions on development (Bradford Council in our case). Where a town has a completed Neighbourhood Plan this forms part of the development plan for the area and carries “statutory weight” when planning decisions are made. It therefore has greater weight than a consultee comment, the current system by which the Town Council has influence in planning applications, and must be taken into account by the planning authority when applications are being considered.

**What are the benefits of having an NP?**

Having an NP gives a community more control over the type of development in their area, including issues such as housing types and density, infrastructure needed to support development and protection of green spaces and local heritage. The planning authority has a statutory duty to take the NP into account when deciding planning applications and it will have equal weight to the Local Plan prepared by the planning authority.

A second benefit is that towns with an adopted NP receive a greater share of any community infrastructure levy (CIL) money that is charged by the planning authority on some housing developments (25% of CIL rather than 15% where there is no NP).

**What type of policies would an NP contain – not an exhaustive list!**

Designation and protection of green spaces  
Allocation of certain areas to retail/businesses or similar and a presumption that these should not change use – to encourage a thriving commercial centrePromotion of walking and cycling routes when development takes place  
Protection of allotment sites  
Style of new housing and materials used  
Proportion of affordable housing in new developments  
Preservation of distinctive character of a place and protecting key views from development  
Control of development to ensure it is in proportion to the infrastructure available (e.g. highways)

**An outline of the process:**

1 Town council applies to have a neighbourhood area designated (sometimes more than one TC combine to make an area) - already done for Baildon

2 Evidence is gathered for basis of plan (housing allocations, land use, infrastructure etc)

3 Policies drafted for inclusion in plan (all with public/group consultation)

4 Prepare Draft Plan

5 Pre-submission consultation

6 Submission to Local Planning Authority (Bradford Council)

7 Consideration by independent examiner

8 Public hearing if required by examiner

9 Proceed to referendum if recommended by examiner

10 Referendum

**Results of research – information from other Local Councils and agencies**

**Other Local Councils – Burley in Wharfedale**

Public consultation started in March 2014 and the plan was adopted at a referendum in May 2018.

The current Clerk had very little involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan process as she is fairly new to the Council. However, the clerk did confirm that the Council engaged Michael Wellock from [Kirkwells](http://kirkwells.co.uk/) Planning Consultancy. All of the consultancy fees were covered by [Locality Grants](https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/) so there was no financial cost to the Council at all. She also said she thought it was a worthwhile process in ensuring that residents have say in the future development of the parish as well as ensuring that CIL money is spent on the local infrastructure to directly benefit residents.

**Other Local Councils – Ilkley**

The clerk at Ilkley is also reasonably new to the role and couldn’t offer in depth information. Their Plan was started in 2017 and is currently on Bradford’s website open to consultation – this will be the second of 2 public consultations and it will then go to the independent examiner and then to referendum so it will be another year or 2 before it is adopted.

**Other Local Councils – Steeton**

The process was started in 2015 and the plan was adopted at referendum in 2021, the process was delayed by covid so would have been nearer to 4 years normally. I spoke to Dave Mullen, chair of Steeton with Eastburn Council, who was involved with the process. They received £15,000 in grants from Locality, the whole cost was around £20,000 so the excess of £5,000 was paid by the 2 councils who produced the plan jointly (Steeton and Silsden). They also employed Michael from Kirkwells as a consultant. Dave also mentioned Andrew Towlerton as a possible consultant.

Steeton and Silsden made the decision not to include sites for housing in their plan. This seems to be common in Plans produced by our neighbouring councils. This makes the process quicker and cheaper. The issue of housing sites is then left with the Bradford Local Plan (which BTC has already commented on). It is still possible to include policies on style and affordability of housing in the Neighbourhood Plan though.

**External Agencies available to help with the process**

**Bradford Council**

The contact at Bradford Council who supports the production of Neighbourhood Plans is Iain Cunningham - [Iain.Cunningham@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:Iain.Cunningham@bradford.gov.uk). Bradford Council receive money from Central Government to provide support to local councils and Steeton Council found this to be very helpful. It also means local councils do not have to fund the Independent Examiner stage just prior to referendum as this is covered by Central Government.

**Locality**

Locality provide grants and technical help. The basic grant of £10,000 is available to all councils who prepare a Plan. An extra amount up to an additional £8,000 is also available in certain circumstances - one of the qualifying circumstances is if sites for housing are considered.

**Planning Consultants**

Most parish councils employ a planning consultant to help with drafting the Plan as it is a fairly technical document and needs to satisfy the requirements of the Independent Examiner in order to proceed. The planning committee have set up a meeting on Friday 23rd July with Kirkwells, who are the most commonly employed consultants in this area, to discuss how the process may work and the costs involved.