

## Guidance for Neighbourhood Planning within Wiltshire: Integrating High Quality Design Briefing Note No. 23-10

**Service :** Natural and Historic Environment  
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### Summary of the project

To ensure that Wiltshire's communities have early access to user-friendly, locally relevant, guidance on how to produce and integrate local design guidance into their draft Neighbourhood Plan or a Village Design Statement.

### The reason for this project

'Guidance for Neighbourhood Planning within Wiltshire: Integrating High Quality Design' (the "guide") has been produced to assist community groups to explore and consider all aspects of design as they begin to produce their own design policies and/or design guidance usually through a Neighbourhood Plan. It is not a supplementary planning document (SPD) but will sit below the Wiltshire Design Guide (WDG) as unadopted local guidance.

The guide will assist local communities (in particular those in Neighbourhood Planning Groups (NPGs)) to identify what is special about their area and to write their own guidance to help plan for change, with a particular regard to design outcomes. It will also assist them to consider creative options for wide and inclusive community engagement.

At present, the first opportunity for council design officers to support communities in this process is at the Regulation 14 stage, when they have already produced a draft Neighbourhood Plan. Due to the amount of time already invested by this point, a community's vision may already be 'fixed' and it can effectively be 'too late' to substantially influence their design policies and/or guidance. It is hoped that by making the information in this guide publicly available on Wiltshire's Neighbourhood Planning webpage and where needed as a hard copy, local residents can access and use it as they commence their projects and before they present a draft NP to the Local Planning Authority.

The draft Wiltshire Design Guide (which is currently in the process of being signed off for Statutory Public Consultation in the Summer) includes reference to this guide and explains how the two are intended to sit together.

### Process and consultation

This project commenced in parallel to the production of the draft Wiltshire Design Guide, both of which have been produced in partnership with LDA design consultancy.

A stakeholder workshop event took place in April 2022, with approximately 12 representatives from different sized NPGs. Participants were invited to share their experience to date, to help understand how they have approached the topic of design, using policies or guidance.

We learned that particular concerns were;

- getting and sustaining community engagement;
- the challenge of producing guidance without professional assistance;
- recognising that achieving high quality design means thinking of the bigger picture over the next 15-20 years, and
- how to do character assessments in the largest settlements.

Based on this feedback, we produced a graphic guide aimed primarily at Neighbourhood Planning Groups which focuses on;

- setting out the context for local design guidance;
- being visionary;
- developing skills to understand the built environment; and
- providing toolkits for engaging inclusively with residents.

The draft, Guidance for Neighbourhood Planning within Wiltshire: Integrating High Quality Design, was then shared with four of the NPGs who had attended the workshop and their further feedback was incorporated. A draft of the guide was also shared with other internal colleagues in Landscape, Spatial/Neighbourhood Planning and Sustainable Transport.

## Conclusion

A final version of the guide has now been completed and is publicly available on the Wiltshire Council website, here: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood-what>

[Home](#) > [Planning and building control](#) > [Neighbourhood planning](#)

## What is Neighbourhood planning?

[Neighbourhood planning](#) gives communities more control over the future of their area by giving local people the chance to have their say on what happens where they live.










The proposals are founded on the principles of localism, which means more involvement by planning authorities, local people, businesses, house builders and developers rather than central government. The neighbourhood planning process has to be led by the town or parish council.

The reforms are outlined in the [Localism Act 2011](#), which seeks to:

- reduce the volume, complexity and number of applications the current system generates
- Make sure developments are more beneficial to the community, for example new homes are matched by jobs and investment

**Overview** +

**Planning guidance** +

-  [Parish and town council guide \(PDF\) \[350KB\]](#) 
-  [SEA Guidance note \(PDF\) \[524KB\]](#) 
-  [SEA Guide \(PDF\) \[506KB\]](#) 
-  [Guidance for Neighbourhood Planning within Wiltshire - Integrating High Quality Design \(PDF\) \[20MB\]](#)  

**Approaches to Neighbourhood Planning** +

Hard copies have been produced and sent to libraries across the county, and a number will be stored within the council to be sent to communities upon request.

**End**

Appendix 1 - *Guidance for Neighbourhood Planning within Wiltshire: Integrating High Quality Design*