



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Guidance note

A guide to Regulations 5 - 7: Neighbourhood Area Designation – March 2025

Introduction

The first step for parish/town councils or neighbourhood forums¹ wishing to prepare a neighbourhood plan is to submit their proposed neighbourhood area to the local planning authority (LPA) for designation. The process of designating the area is a joint responsibility of the LPA and the Parish/Town Council/Forum applying.

First, the Parish Council must apply formally to the LPA in writing, via email or letter to the Head of Planning, stating that they wish to designate an area as a neighbourhood area for the purposes of producing a neighbourhood plan.

A neighbourhood area can cover any area, although usually neighbourhood areas follow parish boundaries, but can also include joint parishes, certain settlements within a parish or another area that is applicable to the aims of the plan or that is particularly relevant for local planning context. It should be noted, there can be only one neighbourhood area for each neighbourhood plan and only one neighbourhood plan for each neighbourhood area.

It is important this process is completed correctly and with appropriate evidence, as this will be the boundary for the neighbourhood plan throughout the process (unless the Qualifying Body applies for a change in area).

Application to designate

The application needs to be submitted in writing (via email or letter) to the Head of Planning, and include the following:

- A map identifying the proposed neighbourhood area, with the area defined by a red boundary line. This map needs to be as detailed as possible, preferably with an

¹ The process for designating a neighbourhood forum area is different to the standard process and the LPA are happy to provide advice on this as and when needed.

Ordinance Survey base map. Others may be considered as long as the boundary is clearly defined;

- A statement explaining why the proposed area is appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area, and;
- A statement explaining that the body making the application meets the criteria of being a qualifying body²

Publicity requirements

If the proposed boundary follows the parish boundary there are less strict publicity requirements. The LPA should publicise the application on their website whilst the democratic sign-off process is undertaken (see below), so the community can view the application, before issuing the decision.

There are additional publicity requirements if the boundary applied for does not follow an already established parish boundary. The application must be published on the LPA website (and hard copies available at an appropriate location) for six weeks, inviting comments from the community/general public. Once the consultation concludes, if there are no adverse comments, the area designation application can proceed.

The NPPG states: "*The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 prescribe time limits for the determination of a neighbourhood area application. Except where a local planning authority is required to designate the whole of a parish, applications must be determined within 13 weeks of first being publicised, or 20 weeks where the application relates to more than one local planning authority area*".

Democratic Process & designation

Section 8.2 of the HBBC Constitution³ states that the Head of Planning has delegated authority to agree the first three stages of a neighbourhood development plan in consultation with the Planning Policy Member Working Group and the relevant executive member. This includes the designation of the neighbourhood area.

Once the Head of Planning has agreed to the designation, the Planning Policy team will publish on the website the designated area map, the designation statement from the

² Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning

³ https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/100004/my_council/535/constitution_of_hinckley_and_bosworth_borough_council

Qualifying Body, and a letter confirming the date of designation and summary of the process followed.

Summary

As a summary, the process for designation is as follows:

- Qualifying Body applies for area designation (usually a whole Parish area, but other circumstances may apply, see above);
- At this point the Planning Policy team will determine a lead officer for the plan;
- The LPA will publish the application and associated documents on the HBBC website;
- The lead officer will contact the Head of Planning, Executive Member for Planning, and Member Working Group to get agreement to proceed with the designation at the end of the publicity period;
- The LPA will update the website to state when and where a neighbourhood area has been designated for the purposes of neighbourhood planning;
- The LPA will then inform the Qualifying Body in writing that the area has been designated (including date of designation);
- The Qualifying Body can then proceed with the plan making process.

Further resources & links

Resource	Link
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Regulation 5	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/regulation/5/made
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Regulation 6	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/regulation/6/made
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Regulation 7	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/regulation/7/made

NPPG Neighbourhood Planning – Designating a Neighbourhood Area	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#designating-a-neighbourhood-area
Locality – Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap Guide	https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/create-neighbourhood-plan-step-by-step-roadmap-guide/
Locality – How to establish a neighbourhood planning forum	https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/establish-neighbourhood-planning-forum/