

## **Neighbourhood Planning Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is a Neighbourhood Forum?**

In Redbridge, neighbourhood planning will be taken forward by a 'Neighbourhood Forum'. A Neighbourhood Forum can be established by anybody, organisation or group of individuals, and must meet the following conditions:

- a. the aim of the Neighbourhood Forum must be to improve and promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the defined Neighbourhood Area;
- b. the membership of the Neighbourhood Forum should be open to those in the defined Neighbourhood Area –
  - who live there
  - who work there
  - who are elected members for that area.
- c. the Neighbourhood Forum should have a minimum of 21 individual members who –
  - live in the Neighbourhood Area
  - work in the area
  - are elected members for that area.
- d. the Neighbourhood Forum must have a written constitution.

A proposed Neighbourhood Forum must submit an application to the local planning authority (LPA). If the LPA is satisfied that the above conditions have been met, it will then designate the body/organisation as a Neighbourhood Forum.

(For full details on the regulations please see Town and Country Planning, England The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (Part 3); and Town And Country Planning Act 1990 Section 61F(5)).

### **2. What is a Neighbourhood Area?**

A neighbourhood forum will designate a 'Neighbourhood Area' which will be the focus for the proposed neighbourhood development plan or neighbourhood development order. This area can cross boundaries between two or more local authorities, but it cannot overlap another neighbourhood area.

The NF must submit to the LPA a map showing the boundary of the proposed area, and a statement setting out why it is considered that this area is appropriate to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

The LPA will then decide whether the proposed Neighbourhood Area is valid based on the application submitted.

### **3. What is involved in setting up a Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area?**

**Step 1:** Local community group to (a) submit an application for proposed Neighbourhood Forum to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for approval and recognition, and, (b) submit an application for a proposed Neighbourhood Area to the LPA for approval and designation.

**Step 2:** The LPA will then publicise the designations requests and invite representations from people who live, work or conduct business in the area to which the applications relate.

**Step 3:** The LPA will assess and approve/reject the proposed NA and/or NF, based on the conditions set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulation 2012 (Parts 2&3).

### **4. What is a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)?**

Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) can be used by neighbourhood forums to grant planning permission, without the need to submit a planning application to the local authority, for specific types of development in their neighbourhood areas.

This could be a particular development or a particular class of development. A neighbourhood forum can choose to use a NDO on its own, or can link it to a NDP for that area.

### **5. What is involved in establishing a NDO?**

**Step 1:** The Neighbourhood Forum will submit the NDO to the Council who will make sure that it has been properly consulted on and whether the proposed development would require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Step 2:** The NDO will then be assessed by an independent examiner to ensure it is in line with national, regional and local planning policies.

**Step 3:** If approved by the examiner, the Order will be subject to a local referendum. If over 50% of votes are in favour of the NDO it will be adopted and will come into force.

### **6. What are the exceptions for NDOs?**

There are a number of types of development which are excluded from NDOs. These include Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, and developments which would require an Environmental Impact Assessment. (For full details on 'excluded development' please see Section 61(K), Schedule 9 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

### **7. What are Community Right to Build Orders (CRBOs)?**

Community Right to Build Orders (CRBO) are a type of NDO which can be produced by any local community group, not just a Neighbourhood Forum.

At least half of the community group must live in the neighbourhood area to be eligible to develop a CRBO, and the aim of the group must be to improve and enhance the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area. Development resulting from a CRBO will be small scale, and will not be agreed by the LPA if it requires an Environmental Impact Assessment or is on a European designated site.

The process for adopting a CRBO will be the same as a NDO.

### **8. What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)?**

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a type of local plan which will be produced by neighbourhood forums to address their specific local planning issues. These plans will form part of the local planning framework and will be used to make planning decisions in the specific neighbourhood plan area. A NDP should be in line with national and local planning policies and should support and guide development rather than discourage it.

### **9. What issues can a NDP cover?**

It is up to the Neighbourhood Forum to decide what issues and policies will be included in their plan. These could include housing, town centre, open space or recreation policies. A Neighbourhood Plan should be in line with, and should not repeat national, regional and local policy.

### **10. How does a NDP fit into the local planning system?**

When adopted, a NDP will form part of Redbridge's suite of local planning documents and will be used when considering planning applications in that neighbourhood plan area.

### **11. What is involved in preparing a NDP?**

**Step 1:** The Neighbourhood Forum will develop the proposed NDP to pre-submission stage, and will consult on the proposals with the wider community and other key stakeholders.

**Step 2:** The final Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying material will be submitted to the LPA.

**Step 3:** The LPA will then publicise the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and invite representations from the people who live, work or conduct business in the area to which the application relates.

**Step 4:** The NDP will be assessed by an independent examiner using the relevant soundness tests.

**Step 5:** The LPA will use the examiner's report to assess the NDP and approve or reject the proposal. This decision will then be publicised to stakeholders and all relevant information will be made available.

**Step 6:** A referendum on the proposed Plan will be held and all of those registered to vote in the Neighbourhood Area will be entitled to vote. A majority of votes (i.e. over 50%) in favour of the proposal is needed for the Neighbourhood Plan to be accepted.

**Step 7:** If there is a majority vote in favour of the NDP, the LPA will then adopt the plan and publish all relevant information.

## **12. What is the role of the Local Planning Authority?**

Redbridge Council has a number of statutory duties in relation to neighbourhood planning. These are:

- publicise applications for, and agree, neighbourhood forums;
- publicise, and agree, proposed neighbourhood area boundaries;
- publicise draft neighbourhood plans;
- organise and pay for a referendum;
- organise and pay for an independent examination; and
- adopt and bring neighbourhood plans into force.

In addition, Redbridge also has a statutory duty to provide technical advice and support. This duty is not specifically defined and could include requests for support on a range of things, which may include advice on compliance with Local Plan policy, mapping and drafting, evidence base information and even legal advice. Redbridge will continue to produce development plans which will set the strategic context within which neighbourhood plans will sit.

## **13. Things to consider when starting a Neighbourhood Plan**

- What is the purpose of your Neighbourhood Plan? What do you want it to achieve?
- Is there a more effective planning tool you could use?
- What area is your plan going to cover? And why this area?
- Who will be part of the Neighbourhood Forum?
- How will you make sure the Neighbourhood Forum is representative of the local community?
- How will you engage with the wider community while preparing your plan?
- How will you build consensus with the community?
- Are there other groups nearby with similar objectives? Have you contacted them?
- Are there other local or national plans or proposals which impact on the neighbourhood area?
- How will neighbouring areas be affected by your plan?
- What sort of skills, knowledge and resources will be required to prepare the plan?
- How long will the plan take to prepare?

#### **14. Who do I contact if I want to set up a Neighbourhood Forum?**

For further information about setting up a Neighbourhood Forum or starting a Neighbourhood Plan, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 020 8708 2072 or [dpd@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:dpd@redbridge.gov.uk) or via post Redbridge Town Hall, 128-142 Ilford High Road, IG1 1DD