

Neighbourhood plans

A neighbourhood plan can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a defined area. The plan might specify where new homes and offices should be built and what they should look like. It sets a vision for the future and can be detailed or general, depending on what local people want. Neighbourhood plans can only include proposals for an equal (or greater) amount of growth than is set out in the local authority's development plan. They must also accord to national planning policy. Once a neighbourhood plan is made it will become part of the development plan for that area. This means a neighbourhood development plan will become a statutory plan and be used in making decisions on planning applications.

Neighbourhood development orders (NDO)

An NDO directly grants planning permission for certain kinds of developments within a neighbourhood area. This could be full planning permission or outline planning permission. Applications can have conditions attached, be site-specific or grant more generalised development rights across a neighbourhood area.

Selecting the right approach for your town, parish or community

Local communities do not have to undertake neighbourhood planning. There are alternative approaches available and we can provide help and advice on these too. Some of the questions to consider are:

- Are you a rural parish and do the issues within your parish solely relate to the appearance or design of buildings?
If yes, consider if a Village Design Statement would suffice to inform the design of new development in your area. This would be a material consideration which the council must take into account when determining planning applications, but not have the weight of a neighbourhood plan.
- Have you identified issues that include the use of land and buildings? If no, consider if a parish or community area plan would suffice. A parish/community plan can identify local needs and local views within the community. They can potentially inform the council's policies, decisions and actions as well as those of other public service providers. However, they do not have formal status and cannot override local plan policy. If yes:
- Would you like more detailed policies for your area than those already within the Swindon Borough Local Plan?
If no, Development within your parish/community area will be

considered against the Swindon Borough Local Plan and national policy. If yes:

- Would you like to create policies specific to one site or type of development? If yes, a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) may be appropriate. If no, a Neighbourhood Plan would be the appropriate route.

Swindon Borough neighbourhood planning protocol

Certain procedures and requirements need to be followed when undertaking neighbourhood planning. We have a duty to assist and support local communities in the Borough. Further information can be found in [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012 website](#). Swindon Borough has produced a Neighbourhood Planning Protocol to provide guidance on how the Council will work with Neighbourhood Planning bodies undertaking Neighbourhood Planning.