



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Two funds to support the uptake of Neighbourhood Planning

Prospectus

Fund 1: Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot

Fund 2: Bidding Fund for Local Planning Authorities in Under-represented Areas

Contents

3 – Introduction

3 – Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot

6 – Bidding Fund

8 – Timetable

9 – Annexes

Two funds to support the uptake of Neighbourhood Planning

Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot and Bidding Fund for Local Planning Authorities in Underrepresented Areas

Introduction

Neighbourhood planning was introduced in 2011 through the Localism Act. Neighbourhood planning allows local residents and businesses to have their own planning policies in a Neighbourhood Plan that reflect their priorities, deliver tangible local benefits and have real weight in planning decisions. A Neighbourhood Development Order can give permission for certain types of development without the need for a subsequent planning application. Neighbourhood planning is making an important contribution to delivering housing and setting design and investment priorities.

Over 1,000 communities have now progressed through the stages of neighbourhood planning and have a 'made' Plan or Order in place, and more than 2,740 communities have started the process. However, there is a lack of take up of neighbourhood planning in urban and deprived areas and overall, there are declining numbers of new groups being established.

Local authorities play a crucial role in neighbourhood planning, from designating areas, to advising or assisting on plan preparation, through to holding referendums and 'making' and using a neighbourhood plan in planning decisions.

In the recent 'Planning For The Future' White Paper, we set out our ambition to retain neighbourhood planning as an important means of community input, and indeed further support communities through improving use of the digital tools available.

We also set out our desire to spread neighbourhood planning into more towns and cities, so through this prospectus are establishing two funds to support this. One fund will allow local authority led pilots to test a lighter touch approach to neighbourhood planning, while the other will provide direct financial support to local authorities to support neighbourhood planning in under-represented areas.

Fund 1: Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot

INTRODUCTION

We want to pilot an additional tool for communities who wish to participate in neighbourhood planning activity and influence the future of their area, but may not have the capacity to undertake a full Neighbourhood Plan. We are looking for around 10 Local Planning Authorities to work in partnership with their communities to help establish and explore the idea of a simpler kind of neighbourhood planning that works alongside or as a precursor to a full Neighbourhood Plan.

PURPOSE OF THE FUNDING

The aim of this pilot is to test whether a simpler form of neighbourhood planning could empower more communities to play a direct role in shaping their neighbourhoods, particularly those in urban and deprived areas.

We think the key difference between a simpler plan and a full Neighbourhood Plan would be its scope and weight. For example, we think a simpler approach won't allocate land or include development management policies as part of the Development Plan. However, it would instead allow communities to set their place-making and infrastructure priorities which could influence the Local Plan or wider service delivery, and potentially it could be given material weight in planning decisions. Also, this simpler plan could act as precursor to a full Neighbourhood Plan by setting the neighbourhood priorities.

We anticipate that through this pilot, groups would produce a short document listing what the community wishes to achieve, alongside delivery proposals detailing how these priorities could be achieved (for example, by outlining in principle how projects might be funded or through agreeing objectives for the Local Plan). We have already seen a number of Neighbourhood Plans include such priorities and are keen to explore the approach further.

We would expect LPAs and the groups that are supported through the pilot programme to be actively exploring the following questions:

- What might a process for preparing a simpler and quicker Neighbourhood Plan look like?
- How could we ensure the process is worthwhile for communities and has genuine impact?
- What role would the Local Planning Authority need to play, and would it need to agree the plan?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach for different types of communities?
- Could a simpler neighbourhood plan encourage communities to then produce a full Neighbourhood Plan or be used to support the Local Plan?
- How well could a simpler Neighbourhood Plan enable better engagement and address barriers – particularly barriers around volunteer capacity, and ensuring diverse engagement?
- How can simpler plans support placemaking initiatives and infrastructure investment?

We would expect Local Planning Authorities taking part in this pilot to provide reports addressing the above points in order to inform our wider planning reform work.

THE SUPPORT OFFER

A funding pot of £330k is being made available in the 2021-22 financial year targeted to 10 Local Planning Authorities to enable them to work collaboratively with MHCLG and three or more groups within their area. Under the simpler neighbourhood planning pilot, we will provide grants of up to £30k to successful authorities under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Funding is for 2021-2022 only. We envisage that grants will be provided to a mixture of local planning authority areas.

As a starting point, proposals should set out how they will test the issues listed in the bullet points above. This list is not prescriptive or exhaustive and local planning authorities should

feel free to propose other relevant issues. We will expect quarterly reports providing feedback on progress in the pilots, with the first provided in October 2021.

HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Proposals are invited from all Local Planning Authorities in England.

Application Form

To apply you should submit:

- An outline of your proposal
- A response to the questions
- Contact information

Please submit your application here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EGg0v32c3kOociSi7zmVqC0TKnYDWydHnz8-jsZ1waJUOE85VjdWUjLSDRDU04yWkhWS1pNT0lQUy4u>

The deadline for applications will be 11.59pm on 31st May 2021. Each application form on Microsoft Forms will outline exactly what information LPAs will be required to provide as evidence to meet the assessment criteria set out below. A list of the questions on each application form, and word limits for individual questions, can be found in Annex A, to assist you in preparing your responses, but all applications must be submitted via Microsoft Forms.

Outline of your Proposal

Within the proposal outline you should be as specific as possible on what you plan to do if funded, why and how. The proposal should set out how you will achieve the purpose of the funding, as set out above, and you should also note what barriers you would hope to overcome through your actions. You may wish to recognise any flexibility required in your proposals to adapt to changing Covid-19 restrictions. The application form limits your response(s) to 4000 characters (approximately 500 words).

Assessment Criteria

We will use the information you provide in your proposal and responses to the questions to assess your bid against 3 criteria. A score will be given for each criteria based on your responses to the questions as well as your proposal, and LPAs receiving the highest scores will be considered for funding. The assessment criteria shall be:

1. Innovation

- Evidence that the funding will result in innovative approaches to neighbourhood planning.

2. Alignment to Government Priorities

- Evidence that the funding will help LPAs meet wider government objectives for example homebuilding, design, climate change, community empowerment, and levelling up.

3. Inclusion

- Evidence that the LPA is tangibly encouraging diversity and inclusion. In particular that this funding will provide insight into how to increase participation of underrepresented and hard to reach groups in neighbourhood planning.

Fund 2: Bidding Fund for Local Planning Authorities in Under-represented Areas

INTRODUCTION

We are looking for proposals from 40 to 50 Local Planning Authorities in under-represented areas who are interested in increasing the uptake of neighbourhood planning.

PURPOSE OF THE FUNDING

Research by the University of Reading identified low uptake of neighbourhood planning in particular in urban and deprived areas. Only 5% of completed Neighbourhood Plans are in urban areas and just 6.7% of neighbourhood planning areas in the most deprived parts of the country – limiting the opportunity for these areas to feel the benefits of neighbourhood planning. There are a number of barriers but in particular, urban communities can struggle to get the administrative support they require, in the absence of a parish council which takes on the Neighbourhood Plan in most rural areas. In more deprived areas there may be less capacity for people to participate. This funding would seek to mitigate some of these barriers.

This new bidding fund offers direct support to LPAs in under-represented areas to help increase neighbourhood planning. LPAs who are successful in their bids will be able to support the formation of a number of active groups in their areas, by, for example, funding officers to promote neighbourhood planning activity, provide neighbourhood planning support within the LPA, or independent project management support for neighbourhood planning groups.

THE SUPPORT OFFER

A funding pot of £2.1m will be made available in the 2021-22 financial year targeted to those LPAs where there has historically been a relatively low uptake in neighbourhood planning (under-represented areas), but where there is an ambition for neighbourhood planning to play a more significant role in coming years. Eligible areas are local planning authorities in England who have a lower than average number of neighbourhood planning areas per population member, and are at least partially unparished, or are among the 20% of most deprived according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Data from the IMD can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>. A full list of LPAs eligible to apply for the £2.1m bidding fund can be found in Annex B of this prospectus.

We will provide grants of between £40k-£50k to successful authorities, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Funding is for 2021-2022 only.

We are interested in proposals from Local Planning Authorities on how you would proactively facilitate the formation of active neighbourhood forums in urban and deprived areas, support

plan progress. As a starting point, proposals could cover how you would promote interest in neighbourhood planning and provide extra support through this funding, as well as how many communities you would hope to reach, and how hard to reach groups could be engaged. This list is not prescriptive or exhaustive and Local Planning Authorities should feel free to propose other relevant issues.

We would expect authorities to report on their progress by the end of October 2021 and to report on their results by the end of March 2022.

HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Application Form

To apply you should submit:

- An outline of your proposal (along with high-level breakdown of the costs for each element)
- A response to the questions
- Contact information

Please submit your application here:

<https://forms.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EGg0v32c3kOociSi7zmVqC0TKnYDWydHnz8-jsZ1waJUMkZBMFA0NU1BWFk4UkiWWMjNjNU82UDdHOS4u>

Outline of your Proposal

Within the proposal you should be as specific as possible on what you plan to do if funded, why and how. Please provide specific information outlining how any money awarded would be spent (including a breakdown of costs for each element) and how this would support the formation of neighbourhood planning groups and neighbourhood planning activity in historically underrepresented areas and communities. You should also note what barriers you would hope to overcome through your actions. You may wish to recognise any flexibility required in your proposals to adapt to changing Covid-19 restrictions.

The application form limits your response(s) to 4000 characters (approximately 500 words).

Assessment Criteria

We will assess your proposal against 3 criteria. A score will be given for each criteria based on your responses to the questions as well as your proposal, and LPAs receiving the highest scores will be considered for funding. The assessment criteria shall be:

1. Engagement

- Evidence that the funding will help engage a diverse range of communities and could grow existing community interest in neighbourhood planning.

2. Alignment to Government Priorities

- Evidence that the LPA has the capacity and ambition to maximise the funding being applied for (for example, if the LPA will be offering any match funding), and that the LPA can use this funding to progress wider government objectives, e.g.

homebuilding, design, climate change, community empowerment, and levelling up.

3. Inclusion

- Evidence that the LPA is tangibly encouraging diversity and inclusion. In particular that this funding might catalyse increased participation of underrepresented groups in planning.

In assessing bids, extra weighting will be given to LPA's in the 20% most deprived areas within the country according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Award

We will aim to ensure that as a whole, the successful proposals will increase the uptake of neighbourhood planning in under-represented areas. We will also aim to ensure there is a sufficient regional spread of successful bidders.

MHCLG reserves the right to accept proposals in part or in full.

Timetable

Prospectus launched	24th April 2021
Deadline for proposals	11:59pm on 31st May 2021
Assessment of proposals received	June 2021
Announcement of successful authorities	July 2021
Allocation of grants	July 2021
Completion date of work	31st March 2022

Please send any queries to LocalPlans@communities.gov.uk

Annex A – Questions on application forms

Please note that LPAs should provide all requested details for each question.

Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot:

1. What is the name of the Local Planning Authority you are making this application on behalf of? **(Provide name only)**
2. Please provide your contact details **(including name, email, and phone number)**
3. Please provide an outline of your proposal. **(4000-character limit)**

You should include details of:

- *What you plan to do should you receive funding, and how this aligns with the purpose of the funding*
- *What barriers to participation in neighbourhood planning you would hope to overcome through your actions*

4. What innovative proposals would you use this funding to test? **(4000-character limit)**

You might want to include details of:

- *How your proposals test different engagement methods*
- *How your proposals test setting collaborative approaches, including in partnership with community organisations*
- *How proposals test varying ways in setting placemaking and spending priorities*
- *How proposals will work out new ways in overcoming barriers to neighbourhood planning*
- *How proposals seek to influence other local planning processes and plans in to ensuring impact for the community*
- *How proposals will ensure that the contents of plans are driven by innovative approaches put forward by communities*
- *How proposals outline a creative approach to engagement with statutory bodies*

5. Will your proposal help progress wider government objectives or provide wider benefits? **(4000-character limit)**

You might want to include details of:

- *How your proposal aligns to levelling up*
- *How your proposal will contribute to housebuilding*
- *How your proposal furthers community empowerment*
- *How your proposal links to design*
- *How your proposal relates to climate change*

6. Would this funding help support engagement across a diverse range of communities? **(4000-character limit)**

You might want to include details of:

- *Whether funding could support greater diversity within the LPA*
- *The types of different communities the funding might be targeted towards*
- *Would groups who have not previously been involved in neighbourhood planning be engaged with through this funding, and how?*

For the following details please provide an estimate of:

- *How many groups would likely benefit from this pilot if funding was to be given to your Local Planning Authority?*
- *Of the groups you will work with how many will be in unparished areas?*
- *How many people or volunteer hours would likely contribute to this pilot*

£2.1m Bidding Fund:

1. What is the name of the Local Planning Authority you are making this application on behalf of? **(Provide name only)**
2. Please provide your contact details **(including name, email, and phone number)**
3. Have you confirmed the Local Planning Authority you are applying on the behalf of is eligible to apply for this funding? (A list of all eligible areas is presented in Annex B of the prospectus for this fund) **(Multiple choice answer)**
4. Does the Local Planning Authority you are applying on behalf of fall in the top 20% of most deprived areas according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)? Data from the IMD can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>. **(Multiple choice answer)**
5. Please provide an outline of your proposal. **(4000-character limit)**

You should include details of:

- *What you plan to do should you receive funding, and how this aligns with the purpose of the funding*
- *What barriers to participation in neighbourhood planning you would hope to overcome through your actions*
- *A high-level breakdown of the costs for each element*

6. Can you provide evidence that this funding will help engage communities? **(4000-character limit)**

You might want to include details of:

- *How this funding could grow existing community interest in neighbourhood planning, such as members of the community wishing to form groups but not having the resource to do so, as well as engaging with existing community organisations*
- *How this funding could help engage a diverse range of communities*
- *Evidence of political buy in for increasing levels of neighbourhood planning from the council (e.g. agreement to provide match funding) and/or support from the local MP*
- *An outline of resources currently allocated to neighbourhood planning by the council, and a plan for how additional funding would be used*
- *Any proposal for collaborative approaches with other LPAs*
- *How this funding would help the LPA overcome specific barriers to neighbourhood planning*
- *How this funding will support capacity building for a wider range of neighbourhood planning groups*

7. Will your proposal help progress wider government objectives or provide wider benefits? **(4000-character limit)**

You might want to include details of:

- *How your proposal aligns to levelling up*

- *How your proposal will contribute to housebuilding*
- *How your proposal furthers community empowerment*
- *How your proposal links to design*
- *How your proposal relates to climate change*

8. Would this funding help support engagement across a diverse range of communities?
(4000-character limit)

You might want to include details of:

- *Whether funding could support greater diversity within the LPA*
- *Evidence how the funding would be used to engage with a wider range of diverse communities*
- *Which communities the funding might be targeted toward*

Annex B - List of LPAs Eligible to Make a Bid to the £2.1m Fund

*LPAs eligible to receive extra weighting due to deprivation are noted with a **

Local Planning Authority
Ashfield District Council*
Barking & Dagenham Borough Council*
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council*
Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council*
Basildon Council
Birmingham City Council*
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council*
Blackpool Borough Council*
Bolton*
Boston Borough Council
Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole
Bradford City Council*
Brighton and Hove City Council
Bristol City Council
Bromley Borough Council
Broxbourne Borough Council
Burnley Borough Council*
Bury District Council
Cambridge City Council
Canterbury City Council
Carlisle City Council
Castle Point District Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
Chorley Council
City of Lincoln Council
City of London
Copeland Borough Council
Coventry City Council
Crawley Borough Council
Croydon Borough Council
Dacorum Borough Council
Dartford Borough Council
Derby City Council
Dudley
Eastbourne
Eastleigh Borough Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Epsom and Ewell
Erewash Borough Council
Exeter City Council

Fareham Borough Council
Gateshead Council*
Gloucester City Council
Gosport
Gravesham Borough Council
Halton Borough Council*
Harlow
Harrow
Hartlepool Borough Council*
Hastings Borough Council*
Havant Borough Council
Havering
Hertsmere Borough Council
Hull City Council*
Hyndburn Borough Council*
Ipswich
Kingston upon Thames
Kirklees
Knowsley*
Leicester City Council*
Liverpool City Council*
London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Bexley
London Borough of Brent*
London Borough of Ealing
London Borough of Enfield*
London Borough of Greenwich*
London Borough of Hackney*
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
London Borough of Haringey*
London Borough of Hillingdon
London Borough of Hounslow
London Borough of Islington*
London Borough of Lambeth*
London Borough of Lewisham*
London Borough of Southwark*
London Borough of Sutton
London Borough of Tower Hamlets*
London Borough of Waltham Forest*
Luton*
Manchester City Council*
Mansfield District Council*
Medway
Merton Borough Council
Middlesbrough Borough Council*

Newcastle Upon Tyne City Council
Newham*
North East Lincolnshire
North Tyneside Council
Norwich City Council*
Nottingham City Council*
Nuneaton
Oadby & Wigston
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council*
Oxford City Council
Plymouth City Council
Portsmouth City Council*
Preston City Council*
Reading
Redbridge
Redcar and Cleveland District Council*
Redditch Borough Council
Reigate & Banstead District Council
Richmond, London Borough of
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council*
Rossendale
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council*
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
Runnymede Borough Council
Rushmoor
Salford*
Sandwell*
Scarborough Borough Council
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Sheffield City Council
Slough
South Derbyshire District Council
South Gloucestershire District Council
South Ribble Borough Council
South Tyneside Council*
Southampton City Council*
Southend-on-sea
Spelthorne
St Helens District Council*
Stafford Borough Council
Stevenage
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council*
Sunderland City Metropolitan Borough Council*

In Strict Confidence

Swale Borough Council
Tameside*
Tamworth Borough Council
Tendring District Council*
Thurrock Council
Torbay Council*
Trafford Council
Wakefield County Council*
Walsall*
Wandsworth Council
Warrington Borough Council
Watford
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
West Lancashire District Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Winchester City Council
Wirral Borough Council
Wolverhampton City Council*
Worcester
Worthing
Wyre Council (Lancs)