



Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan Review

Paper 6: Suggested Timeline & Consultancy Support

Introduction

The review of the Neighbourhood Plan, which was adopted in Jan. 2016, is necessary because RCC is reviewing the Local Plan and recent changes in Neighbourhood Planning legislation and advice. To remain effective and maintain influence on planning decisions, the Neighbourhood Plan must be kept up to date. In this instance, the review will new housing site allocations and it must be comprehensive. Noting recent guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#updating-neighbourhood-plan>), the review is likely to be viewed as being “...significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan...” and the full requirements around Submission, Examination and Referendum will apply. A timeline (activities, dates and key influences, is set out below. Recommendations on drafting and consultancy support follow.

Timeline

Stage	Task	Dates	Key Influences
1	<i>Scoping (Completed includes some evidence)</i>	<i>Mar. to Nov. 2018</i>	<i>RCC Local Plan, NP Guidance & Revised NPPF.</i>
2	Formal decision to review and notify RCC. Apply for NP Grant and technical assistance	December 2018	NP Guidance
3	“Launch” (residents, business, landowners, developer and external consultees.	Jan. to March 2019	Good Practice. Need to confirm issues/approach.
4	Confirm evidence: e.g. stats., local housing need, emp. & housing requirement (RCC)	Jan. to April 2019	NP Guidance NPPF
5	Prepare full draft version of Revised Neighbourhood Plan	May to Aug. 2019	Reflect/complement the (Submission Draft) LP.
6	Confirm any requirements for a Strategic Environment Assessment (Assessment	Aug. 2019	NP Guidance
7	Undertake (6-week) Regulation 14 Consultation on the Draft Plan	Sept./Oct. 2019	Anticipate Submission of the new Local Plan.
8	Consider consultation Responses and amend Draft Plan. Prepare Submission documents	Nov. to Dec 2019	Explain how responses are taken into account.
9	Submit to RCC, (Regulation 16 Consultation) and liaison on Examination arrangements	Jan./Feb. 2020	NP has some legal weight & influence on LP Inquiry
10	Examination and receipt of Examiners report	March 2020	NP Guidance & legislation.
11	RCC liaise with UTC on amendments to create final NP and arrange referendum	April 2020	NP Guidance, NPPF and legislation.
12	Referendum and “Making” of the new Neighbourhood Plan	May/June 2020	Anticipate adoption of new LP by Mid 2020

Abbreviations and notes

1 - LP (Local Plan), NP (Neighbourhood Plan), NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework – July 2018), RCC (Rutland County Council) and UTC (Uppingham Town Council).

2 - RCC will shortly publish a new timeline for the LP review, taking account of St Georges, alternative strategic sites and revised government guidance (October 2018) on housing calculations.

3 - It will be wise review progress regularly/consider contingencies; **NPs and LPs are often delayed!**

Recommended approach to drafting and the use of external support.

In the earlier work, the importance of the revision of the NPPF and anticipated guidance on preparing Neighbourhood Plans was emphasized. These are now in place and particular attention is drawn to:-

- The key test for a NP remains that it must satisfy the Basic Conditions.
- NPPF (Para. 29) - NPs should not promote less development than in Strategic Policies. (Para. 65)... within this, strategic policies should set housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas.
- NP Guidance that “...*Proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken...evidence explain the intention/rationale of the policies in a Draft Plan...*”
- Government/Locality Guidance on “How to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment”
- Government/Locality Guidance on “How to Assess and Allocate Sites for Development.”

It is helpful to recall the uncertainty created through the Judicial Review of the existing Neighbourhood Plan. Efforts should be made by the Town Council, the NP Steering Group and County Council to ensure that due process is followed and fully explained such that future problems are avoided. Stakeholders on from all sides, ranging from residents to developers will keep a close eye on the process and are likely to challenge anything that deviates from legislative requirements and good practice. It is important that the views and opinions of residents and local business are used as part of the justification for policies in the revised Plan, but the “Evidence Base” must include relevant statistics and the results of bespoke surveys.

The extent to which the existing Neighbourhood Plan reflects local knowledge and opinion is impressive, but it is not always easy for readers and users of that document to find the other factual material that lies behind policies. In addition, the wording of policies themselves must be as robust as possible, based on experience and good practice from others, if they are pass through Independent Examination successfully and go on to exert the maximum degree of influence on future planning decisions in Uppingham. Based on the above, the table shows when external support is likely to bring maximum benefit.

Stage of Neighbourhood Plan	Support - Option 1	Support - Option 2
Evidence: Audit & Update	Completed/In progress	N/A
Policy Context	In progress	N/A
Local Housing Needs Assessment	In progress	N/A
Call for sites (If necessary)	NPG - Technical support from Locality	N/A
Housing Sites Assessment	NPG - Technical support from Locality	N/A
Identify/write Planning Policies (and justifications) for Draft Plan	Use a consultant for this work.	Consultant “Health Check” of work done by others.
Liaise with RCC on SEA Screening and SA (if needed)	Use a consultant for this work.	Steering group/ Town Council to liaise with RCC
Review comments on the Draft Plan (from all interested parties)	Use a consultant for this work.	Consultant “Health Check” of work done by others.
Submission Documents - Basic Conditions Statement - Consultation Statement. - Determination Statement	Use a consultant for this work.	Consultant “Health Check” of work done by others.
Consideration of and responses to RCC on the Examiners Report	Town Council and Steering Group to liaise with RCC	If necessary, seek guidance from a consultant.

Abbreviations - NP (Neighbourhood Plan), NPG (Neighbourhood Plan Grant), RCC (Rutland County Council), SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment). SA (Sustainability Appraisal)