

Neighbourhood Planning Parish Council Update Newsletter 10

December 2014

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Neighbourhood Areas within Herefordshire

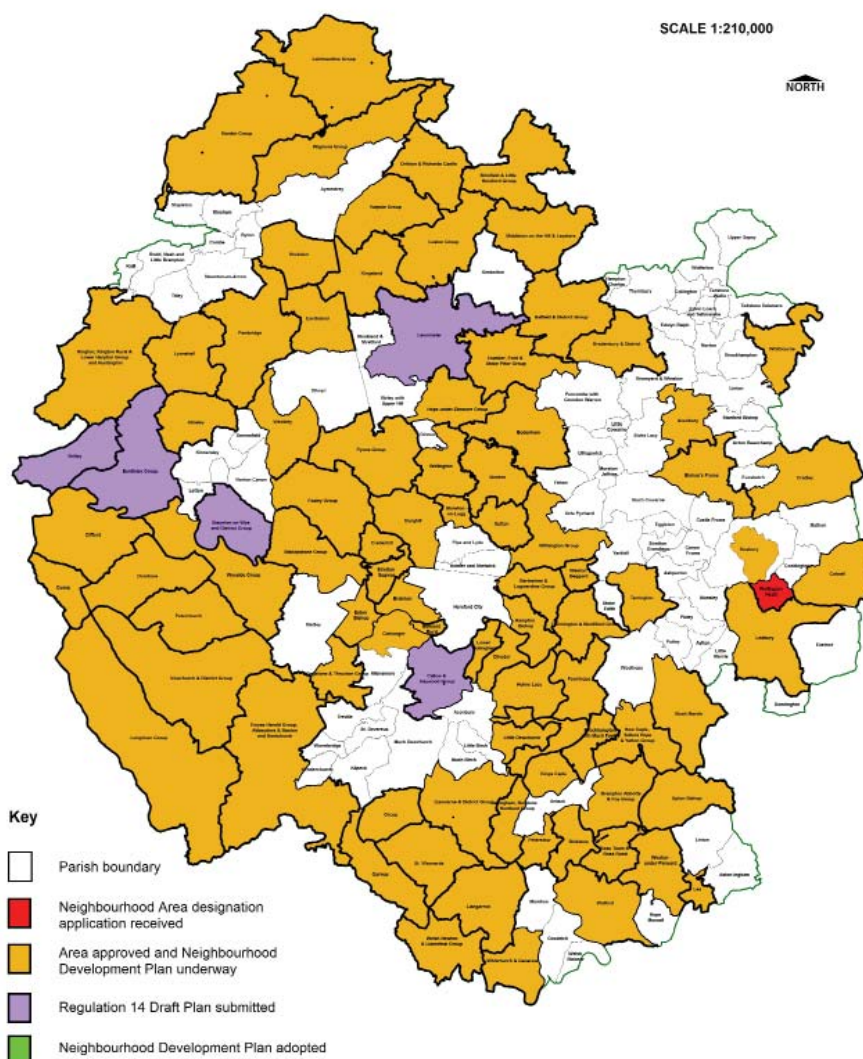
Since our last newsletter in September, some milestones have been reached by a number of parishes.

At the time of writing, there are five parishes who have reached their draft plan Regulation 14 stage; Eardisley Group, Staunton on Wye Group, Callow and Haywood Group, Brilley and Leominster. More are expected by early next year. The team would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication which has been shown by parish councils and steering groups to reach this key stage.

Neighbourhood Areas are continuing to be designated with additional applications being received each month. There are nearly 90 Neighbourhood Areas in the county which equates to around 10% of those nationally.

Steve Quatermain the Chief Planning for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) recently addressed a national conference highlighting the importance of neighbourhood planning to the government, saying that ministers believe it “should be the bedrock of the future planning system” and urged communities to get involved.

Neighbourhood Plans in Herefordshire



Progress Questionnaire

In order to plan resources for 2015/16, we sent out a short questionnaire via your parish clerks to ascertain your predicated timescale for reaching Reg 14 (draft), Reg 16 (submission) and examination.

We would be grateful if these could be completed and returned by the 9 January.

Material weight of Neighbourhood Plans in decision making and at planning committee

We are aware of recent discussions in planning committee and in the local press from parish councils regard the weight that can be attributed to your emerging neighbourhood plans when determining planning applications. Once adopted, neighbourhood plans will form part of the statutory development plan for Herefordshire. However, the content of emerging plans cannot be used as material consideration until the plan has completed the six week consultation stage at Regulation 16 (submission publicity period).

At this stage material consideration and weight can be determined by using the consultation statement submitted with the draft Regulation 16 neighbourhood plan, as this should reveal the quality and effectiveness of the consultation that has informed the plan proposals. Also any representations submitted to the local planning authority by the close of the six week period will give an indication of unresolved issues/objections.

This position has been determined by the National Planning Policy Framework, Ministerial statements and recent case law, therefore there would be a risk of legal challenge to decisions if neighbourhood plan were given greater weight prior to this stage.

Pre-election period

Elections will be taking place on the 7 May 2015, with this regard the pre-election period (often referred to as Purdah) will start on 2 April 2015. During this period preceding elections and the potential for many parish council elections to be taking place, no examination will be held between 2 April and 7 May. Please ensure that any production timetables for your neighbourhood plans take this into consideration.

Next steps to 'made'/adoption

As you begin to move towards adoption here are a few points to remember:

- Allow enough time for all comments received during Reg14 consultations to be fully considered and documented within the consultation statement
- Allow enough time for a revised SEA and HRA to be undertaken if any amendments to your plan have been made.

Next steps to 'made'/adoption continued...

- Ensure that all the requirements highlighted within checklist NDP2 have been met prior to submission of your plan. Checklist NDP2 is available on our webpages.
- Ensure that the parish council have signed off your final submission version as they are the legal body on submission not the steering group.
- The examination could take a number of weeks to arrange following the end of the Reg16 consultation depending on the availability of examiners.
- There will be a 60 day period between the announcement of the referendum date and it taking place.

Please ensure that your predicated timetables take account of these timeframes and requirements. A future information session is being planned to outline and assist parish council in the next steps following Regulation 14. See section on 'Future training sessions' below.

Core Strategy update

The Core Strategy is at the examination stage and was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 23 September 2014. The Examination in Public (EiP) will take place from 10 February 2015 and is anticipated to last three weeks. Updated information can be found on the website at: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/localplan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Just a reminder that Regulation 14 draft plans should be received with an accompanying SEA and HRA. The assessments should be undertaken in an iterative way and demonstrate how your plan has been informed by the results of these assessments. In order to be fully comply with the Environmental Regulations, it is important that options and alternatives are also assessed as well as your draft Reg14 policies and proposal. Therefore when requesting assessments, we will require a copy of the plan and any options and alternatives considered. Please ensure that you allow enough time prior to your anticipated Reg14 consultation for the final assessments and Environmental Report to be produced and agreed.

Future training sessions

Following the success of previous training, we are planning two additional sessions in the New Year.

- **Next steps – Regulation 14 to Adoption**

Many parishes are now beginning to reach the regulated part of producing a neighbourhood plan. Therefore this session will inform groups about the process and requirements following consultation on your draft plan.

- **Biological records and Neighbourhood Planning**

Have you ever wondered how to find out further information concerning environmental data in your parish? This session will introduce the work of the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre and the information available to support your neighbourhood plans.

Dates and booking form will follow shortly.

Grants and funding

DCLG has made available a new bridging grant pot to cover further expenditure needed from Nov 2014-March 2015.

Bridging grants are available to parish councils who have not previously received a grant or who have received less than the maximum £7000 in grant during 2013-15. Any previous grants must have been fully spent before applying for a bridging grant.

Bridging grants are subject to the normal eligibility criteria and spending rules for neighbourhood planning grant, and groups will need to demonstrate that grant requested can be spent by the end of March 2015.

Further details can be obtained from <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>
An announcement regarding 2015/16 funding is expected early in the New Year.

Staffing updates

As many of you may be aware, Gemma Webster is now on maternity leave and Karla Johnson has joined the team. The parishes and groups which Gemma has been supporting have been reallocated to other officers within the Neighbourhood Planning team and those parishes affected by a change in support officer will be contacted directly.

Contact Details

If you are interested in producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, please contact the team:

 neighbourhoodplanning@herefordshire.gov.uk

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