

The Localism Act and Neighbourhood Plans

Sarah Sapsford

**RCCE Development Manager
Community Engagement**



"We're giving local people more power over what happens in their neighbourhood – so communities can come together...and take control over the look and feel of new developments in their area"

*David Cameron, The Sun
(October 2010)*



“For far too long local people have had too little say over (the) planning system....We need to change things so there is more people-planning and less politician-planning, so there is more direct democracy and less bureaucracy in the system. These reforms will become the building blocks of the Big Society.”

Eric Pickles (November 2010)

Existing Community Led Plans

- **Parish and Town Plans** – assesses current and future issues: results in an action plan
- **Village and Town Design Statements** – assesses character: results in design guidance
- Cannot create policy, but can be used as evidence base for informing or supporting policy

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- New type of Community Led Plan
- Assesses land use and infrastructure
- Can propose more development, but not less
- Sets out local policy on the development and use of land
- Subject to statutory requirements, independent examination and a referendum

Neighbourhood Plan

The contents

- Planning objectives
- Policies:
 - against which planning applications can be judged
 - Site specific policies
- Key neighbourhood projects and infrastructure priorities

Statutory Requirements for a Neighbourhood Plan

- Approval of the 'area' and 'body'
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Statutory Consultation
- Independent Examination
- Referendum
- General conformity with local authority development plan

Comparison of the different types of CLP

- Neighbourhood Plans - focus on land use, future development, results in **policy**
- Parish Plans – focus on services, results in **action plan**
- Design Statements – focus on character, results in **design guidelines**

Current Situation

- 126 'frontrunners' nationally
- 3 frontrunners in Essex so far
- Support being developed and offered by various organisations; Locality, Planning Aid, CPRE, NALC/EALC, local authorities, RCCE
- RCCE working on guidance for communities in Essex with EPOA, CPRE, EALC and Planning Aid

Localism Act

New 'Community Rights'

- Right to Build
- Community Right to Buy - Assets of Community Value
- Right to Challenge



Rural Community Council of Essex
Threshelfords Business Park
Inworth Road
Feering, Essex, CO5 9SE

Tel 01376 574330

Fax 01376 573524

Email enquiries@essexrcc.org.uk

www.essexrcc.org.uk