

NOTE: **This Briefing Note has been written in advance of the publication of the Localism Bill** and is based on the RTPI's best understanding of what the new system to be contained in the Bill will look like – but this may be wrong! On this basis, the new local planning system will be as follows:

- There will be statutory local plans and Neighbourhood Plans.
- Designated bodies such as Town and Parish Councils and neighbourhood forums will be allowed to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.
- Where there are no parish or town councils, the local authority will adjudicate on the boundary of the plan that a neighbourhood forum wants to prepare.
- It is recognised that not all areas will want to do a Neighbourhood Plan and, therefore, there will not be a statutory duty to prepare one – but there will be a right to do so (a 'right to plan').
- A local plan authority will have a duty to provide support to neighbourhoods undertaking planning.
- It is assumed that those preparing a plan – or the local planning authority - will be required to consult on it but this is not yet certain.
- Neighbourhood Plans will undergo an independent examination. This will be more of a paper exercise checking whether the Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity, or aligns, with:
  - The strategic content of the local plan
  - The National Planning Framework or other national guidance;
  - The presumption in favour of sustainable development;
  - European Directives;
  - National and international designations (e.g Ramsar sites);
  - Neighbouring neighbourhood plans.
- Subject to passing the independent examination, the plan will be put to a local referendum and will be 'approved' if more than 50 per cent of those voting do vote for it.
- If the referendum is positive, then the local authority will have to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The local plan will take on a strategic role and will contain e.g. housing numbers, strategic infrastructure etc. The Neighbourhood Plan will have to accommodate these strategic proposals – and can accommodate more if they want to (but not less e.g. housing than is specified in the local plan).
- The Neighbourhood Plan may designate areas where 'Neighbourhood Development Orders' will apply – areas where certain types of development will no longer require planning permission or where different planning rules will apply.
- Neighbourhoods will also, apparently, be enabled to grant outline permission for complex schemes – possible only where sites are allocated in sufficient detail in a Neighbourhood Plan. Further details on this are awaited.