

Neighbourhood Planning support: Leeds City Council area

Background

Leeds is notable, probably nationally, in the level of interest in Neighbourhood Planning emanating from its communities: parished or non-parished, affluent or deprived, urban or rural, Front Runners or non-Front Runners. This constituency demonstrates varying levels of deprivation, resource, understanding and progress and presents an enormous challenge to the resources and support capacity of the local planning authority.

Ian Mackay, Team Leader Local Plans East, Leeds City Council commented that “Along with the four pilot areas there are likely to be a further 20+ designations and the support to date from Planning Aid England has been invaluable in not only assisting local communities but also in developing positive working relations where officers and PAE staff and volunteers have worked in effective partnership. This support has been particularly welcome as the Council’s neighbourhood planning ambitions match those of PAE, which are to offer support to pilot areas, deprived areas as well as other areas in need of advice. It is a credit to this partnership so far that no area in Leeds has suffered from lack of advice and support.”

How did Planning Aid England help?

Support within Leeds has grown organically, commencing with the two Front Runners (Holbeck and Kippax) that requested support. Support has also been provided to Aireborough and is now extending to Rothwell. The support packages agreed are bespoke to each area. The subsequent aim has been to establish teams of PAE volunteers for each Neighbourhood Plan to take on various aspects of support work.

It is early days in the preparation of the Kippax Neighbourhood Plan but a level of support has been agreed between Kippax Parish Council, PAE and the city council that will ensure that this ex-mining settlement can deliver on its aspiration for a neighbourhood plan that meets the needs of local people. Support for Rothwell (an area with pockets of 20% worst deprivation) has to date involved a briefing meeting with three local councillors and the staffing of an initial awareness-raising event at the local Xmas Fayre – resulting in well over 50 people expressing interest in Neighbourhood Planning involvement.

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