

Neighbourhood Planning support: Northampton Borough Council

Background

Planning Aid England (PAE) has been supporting Northampton Borough Council's Neighbourhood Planning groups in a number of different ways, both through providing training through their "Are you fit" packages to Parish Councils and more advanced forums and specialised, tailored support to the community of Spring Boroughs.

How did Planning Aid England help?

In Spring Boroughs, PAE has been providing intensive support (up to one day per week) to try to move the process forward. In Spring Boroughs, PAE has supported the ward members, community workers and members of the community, guided them through the planning system and helped record their consultation exercises. This intensive support was built on a specialist "Are you fit for Neighbourhood Planning?" product, which was adapted to suit the literacy levels in the area and used pictures and more interactive discussion sessions.

For the groups in the West Northamptonshire area, PAE held an "Are you fit? Neighbourhood Plan Preparation" session. The host authority received positive feedback on the relevance and clarity of the sessions. The two parish councils of Duston and Wootton and East Hunsbury have asked that the training be repeated for more of their working group and are using the tools to help plan their projects and community engagement exercises more thoroughly.

What difference did PAE's support make?

A staff member from Northampton Borough Council said "Planning Aid England and its team of volunteers have been indispensable. PAE's impartiality and positive approach has been essential. Until October 2012, I was the only Officer dealing with Neighbourhood Planning for the council, without PAE's assistance, I would not have been able to provide the support to the communities and provide them all with the specialised training they require."



“ Having PAE deliver the training has also helped to build relationships with the Parish Councils and ensure that communities fully understand what Neighbourhood Planning can (and can't) do.

PAE have been willing to listen to us as a Local Authority and understand any concerns that we may have with particular projects and adapt training to the local area - this is not an easy task when in the most recent training event we invited over 14 different groups from across West Northamptonshire! As importantly, they listen to the Local Community and feed this back to us so that we, as the Local Planning Authority, can update our offer, manage our assistance and provide the help and support which presents best value to the whole of the Borough.”

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Planning Aid England provides free and independent advice on neighbourhood planning. Call: 0203 206 1880 or Email: info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

