



Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

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## A Guide to Locality's Technical Support Packages - April 2023

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### Introduction

Lots of neighbourhood plan groups face complex issues when preparing their plans. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Site Assessment work
- Allocating sites for development
- Design Codes
- Severe constraints, such as the natural or historic environment, highways infrastructure, local services etc.

Groups facing issues such as these can apply for one of Locality's Technical Support Packages.

### How is the technical support delivered?

Technical support is facilitated by Locality, and delivered by AECOM (or one of Locality's other delivery partners such as NPIERs, Urban Vision Enterprise, Intelligent Plans & Examinations etc).

The consultants employed on behalf of Locality are all highly skilled professionals, and have wide experience in supporting the preparation of neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders.

The consultants will agree with you a clearly defined brief and schedule of the works to be carried out, and how the work will be delivered, usually in a written report format.

Technical support is awarded as a work package, not a financial grant, and is **in addition** to the usual grant support groups receive. It has no relation to how much grant a group receive.

It is delivered free of charge to groups who qualify (see below).

### How can a technical support package help us?

Technical support is designed to provide:

- Data and evidence
- Advice and professional judgement
- Information on how to decide and articulate policy priorities
- Information on how to engage confidently with stakeholders such as:
  - Developers
  - The LPA and County Council (if applicable)
  - Local businesses and services
  - Residents

Ultimately, it's important to take advantage of these technical support packages, as this will help you deliver a plan that will stand up to scrutiny and challenge.

## **How does a group qualify for a package?**

A neighbourhood plan group qualify for Technical Support in any of the following circumstances:

- Allocating sites for housing in your neighbourhood plan
- Proposing to include design codes in your neighbourhood plan
- Preparing a neighbourhood development order (NDO)
- An undesignated forum needing help to get designated
- Designated neighbourhood forums
- Groups based in areas which have a high level of deprivation (where 30% or more of the neighbourhood area or population is in the 20% most deprived areas in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation)

If a neighbourhood planning area meets one or more of the eligibility criteria above, subject to DLUHC sign off, one of the packages listed later in this guide may be made available to you.

The application for technical support must be made by the Qualifying Body (i.e. the Town or Parish Council) or Neighbourhood Forum. The named applicant should be a representative of the Qualifying Body leading the plan and must not be a consultant or other person associated with the plan preparation.

## **What packages are available?**

See Appendix 1 for all available packages (N.B. available at the time of writing, April 2023).

## **More information on support packages**

More information on Locality's technical support packages can be found on Locality's website, or in Locality's ['Guidance Note for Grant and Technical Support'](#)

### Setting up a Neighbourhood Planning Group (for unparished areas only)

- For potential neighbourhood forums to build a broad membership of people, get information on how to organise the group in practical and functional terms, and how best to structure a forum to become a successful Qualifying Body

### Housing Needs Assessment

- Provides vital evidence to help understand expected demand for housing over the plan period
- Can include information on the required affordable housing, housing for older people, specialist housing etc.

### Site Options and Assessment

- This technical support package will provide advice to groups who are intending to assess potential housing or employment sites for allocation in their neighbourhood plan
- Will provide an appropriate and robust methodology for assessing sites

### Site Viability

- Many groups want to bring forward development via allocations, but to ensure these proposals are successful and deliverable, they must be viable
- This package will help you to understand the viability of the proposed development scheme, something that is notoriously complex in the development industry

### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- Where a group has been informed by the LPA that they require an EIA Screening opinion, the group can use this package for clear advice on whether an EIA is required (where a development is promoted via the NDO consenting route)

### Evidence Base and Policy Development (EBPD)

- Aims to help groups with their most ambitious and challenging aspirations, both for the evidence base behind the plan, and/or in the policies themselves.
- This will also ensure the wording of policies is justified and deliverable, meets the basic conditions, and capable of standing up to scrutiny at examination.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- Where a LPA have determined that a full SEA is required (as a result of the SEA Screening process) this package will provide the evidence to interrogate environmental considerations
- The package will also recommend how to incorporate the SEA outcomes into the plan itself

## Master Planning

- The master planning package provides a high-level spatial plan for part of your neighbourhood area, setting out how you would like to see development or regeneration come forward
- It may also assist with any design principals you would like to see on a certain site, such as active travel, highways design, landscaping, green infrastructure, play facilities etc.

## Design, including Design Codes

- In this package, urban design professionals will work with groups to produce a bespoke urban design guide or codes for a potential development site, and/or for any speculative development that may come forward in the neighbourhood area post the neighbourhood plan being made

## Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- This package provides information on how to navigate a key regulatory process by providing the LPA with the evidence required to draw a final conclusion regarding the effects the plan may have on internationally important wildlife sites.

## Plan Health Check Review

- This package is a relatively simple one, however can be really helpful for **any** neighbourhood plan
- The health check looks into whether a draft plan meets the basic conditions and provides impartial advice on potential amendments in order to meet the basic conditions. This would be undertaken prior to submission to the LPA at Regulation 15.

## Facilitation for neighbourhood forums or groups in deprived areas

- Plans in deprived areas often face unique challenges, This package has been designed to make the process as smooth and efficient for those groups as possible.
- This can include (but is not limited to): establishing good governance arrangements, support with engaging consultants, developing a diverse group membership, building good financial management etc.