

## Examples of Neighbourhood Plans

### Thame

Thame NP was adopted 18/7/13 (process started in 2011) and is now undergoing a review. It's initial plan was award winning and included the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Award for Planning Excellence 2013, the RTPI South East Planning Award 2013 and a Commendation from the Association of Market Towns.

There is information both on the District website (which is a little clearer) [southoxon.gov.uk/thame-neighbourhood-plan/](http://southoxon.gov.uk/thame-neighbourhood-plan/) and [thametowncouncil.gov.uk/](http://thametowncouncil.gov.uk/)

#### What's in the Plan?

The original plan provides a vision for the future of the town and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision. These policies accord with higher level planning policy, as required by the Localism Act. It looks at a wide range of issues, including:

- how new retail should support the town centre
- whether a new community facility is needed and where it should go
- how walking and cycling around the town should be improved
- how the Cattle Market site should be developed
- what open space new housing should contribute to the town
- encouraging Thame to become a 'greener' town.

While the first **Thame Neighbourhood Plan** mostly focused on guiding development for new parts of the town, TNP2 also encourages positive change within established areas. It will work to keep parking spaces in the Town Centre, propose a site for a budget supermarket, along with a new community centre, wellbeing facilities, and more.

The **Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP2)** includes provisions for Thame's future housing and employment needs, new open spaces, walking and cycling routes, the future of the Cattle Market and Town Centre parking, and environmental initiatives.

**Consultation and Process of the first plan** is quoted as :

**Open events** at the Town Hall, attended by more than 800 local residents. These identified issues and opportunities which were then analysed by independent planning **consultants**.

**Volunteers** joined **Working groups** on Housing, Working & Shopping, Getting Around, Leisure & Well-being, and Environment & Sustainability. **Smaller meetings** were held with **stakeholders**, residents' associations and interest groups such as the Cattle Market Action Group, Stones Close Allotment Society, Thame 4 Business, schools, medical providers, sports clubs and many more. All of the outcomes were **evaluated** by the **consultants** in developing a **draft plan for further consultation**.

Recognising that housing site allocations were the primary concern of most people, a 'Preferred Options Report' was delivered to every home in Thame in 2012. This **asked for residents' input on the proposals**, before **further open events** were held to listen to people's views.

The full Draft Plan was published in August 2012 for a further six-week consultation period ending in early October. Hundreds of responses helped to strengthen aspects of the Plan. There

was general agreement that the Draft Plan reflected the wishes of the community and, with some amendments, could move to the next stage.

The referendum which took place on 2 May 2013 was successful, achieving a turnout of 38.9%. Over 76% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan.

Below is a good diagram of their process for their review of original plan.



## Halesworth

Halesworth started their NP in 2017 but had Covid in the middle, they still met on zoom and that's when they wrote their policies. Their referendum was in February 2023. 21.7% of the electorate that turned out to vote (higher than both Beccles and Bungay). Just over 84% voted yes to the Plan.

There is some information on [halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk/neighbourhood+plan](https://halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk/neighbourhood+plan)

They used a consultant, Chris Bowden at **Navigus Planning** from Manningtree in Essex. His email is [chris@navigusplanning.co.uk](mailto:chris@navigusplanning.co.uk). Chris was impressed by the process they used, and commented to them on being unique because of the amount of public consultation.

They benefited from a very driven and dynamic chair of the group, Joyce Moseley, who wasn't a Councillor at the time. She is now their Mayor and I have her email address [cllr.joycemoseley@halesworthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.joycemoseley@halesworthtowncouncil.gov.uk) in case we would like further information. The group only had 1 Councillor involved. To set it up they put out a call for people who may be interested. Initially they had people who wanted to stop planned developments attend, so they had to explain that the NP is for future proofing and did not have the ability to change planning, so half left. They got a core group of 6. A member of public originally did notes then didn't want to be involved, so Deputy Town Clerk then attended, there wasn't a lot of admin to begin with but towards the end there was.

The way they got community engagement was via a lot of promotion. They used an empty shop in town to talk to residents, they had lots of public meetings to get to everybody involved. However, even then, they did receive a lot of negative comments on Facebook, about the NP being done behind closed doors.

The Consultant did a Connectivity report which spoke about the railway connecting to the town, this surprisingly also created a lot of negative comments on Facebook.

Advice is that you do need an eye for detail. Their Consultant had experience of drafting policies. It does take a while to narrow down what you want to focus on. What's important to people.

At an initial meeting they had 85 people attend, they asked them what they liked in Halesworth and what they wanted to enhance. They tried to keep it positive all the time. They also piggy backed from an East Suffolk sports day, where children were offered free pizza to get views. They had a washing line, one with stars on and the other with pants on and the children were invited to write on there what was good and bad about the town. They sent out questionnaires for the Primary Schools to ask parents to complete but only got 2 questionnaires back. Members of the group then went into schools to speak to individual classes and got masses of ideas back.

They are impressed with East Suffolk Planning dept, as for every planning application now, District do look at the NP. They have had occasions where they have missed something and ESC have pointed to their NP.

The referendum had a good turnout, because of advertisement, need a good advertisement budget. They had banners around the town, articles in the local press, signs on lampposts, and election type posters in people's front gardens so no one could miss it.

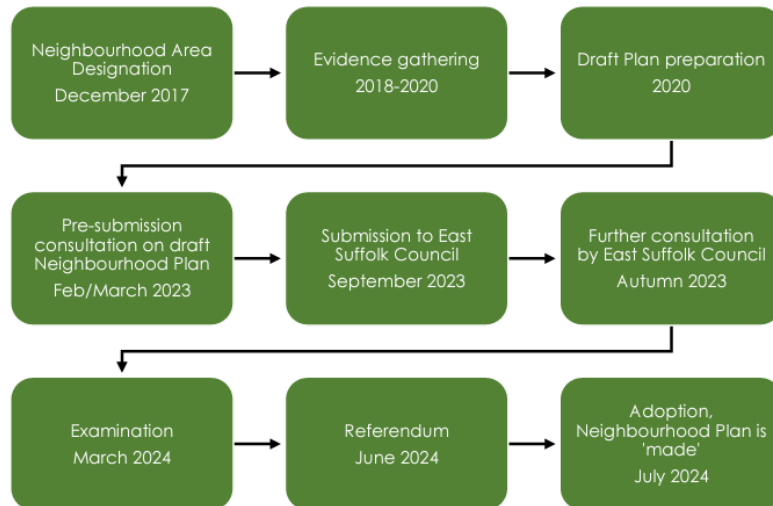
Consultant took them through the process, he could answer as an expert.

Need a dynamic chair. To come up with these ideas. To drive it.

## Easton

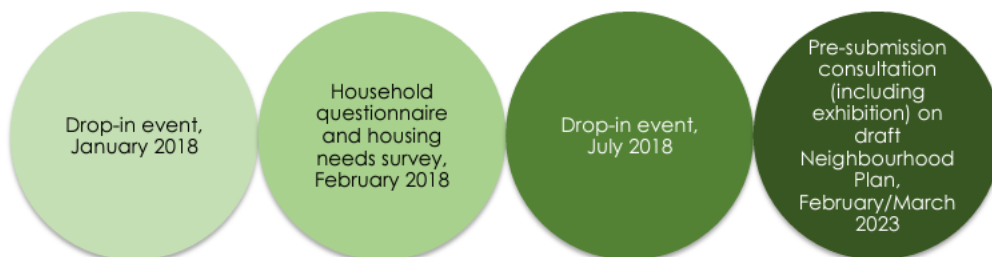
There was an extraordinarily high turnout at Easton of 45% and 91% voted for the Neighbourhood Plan. It was started at the end of 2017 and completed June 2024. The NP can be found [here](#).

Timeline of the plan:



A Steering Group was formed to operate within its own terms of reference. **Places4People Planning Consultancy** was appointed to lead and guide the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group up to creating the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. **Rachel Leggett Associates Consultancy** was appointed to lead and support the Steering Group to take their work completing the Draft Neighbourhood plan through the Reg.14 public consultation and following this to take the Draft Neighbourhood Plan with any amendments resulting from the consultation through to Submission to ESC. ESC then conducted another consultation and arranged for Examination and the Referendum to determine adoption of the Easton NP. Chair contact details [sue.e.piggott@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.e.piggott@btinternet.com) – 01728 746622

### Evidence gathering: public engagement



Despite the terrible weather, the drop-in event in January 2018 received almost a third of the village who were welcomed with a hot cuppa and cake. Almost 100 people attended the event.

Second drop-in event, July 2018 was held with a Prosecco, Canapes and Cake theme in July 2018 when the results of the household questionnaire were displayed alongside an interactive display illustrating the history of Easton and an Archaeological Exhibition and presentation by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services.

The submission draft Neighbourhood Plan, was consulted on for six weeks (from 4th February to 20th March 2023).

## Kesgrave

The Kesgrave NP found [here](#) was started in 2017 and its 'yes' vote at referendum happened on 6th May 2021, the plan was formally 'made' by East Suffolk Council on 26 May 2021. A modification to correct an error in the NP was made on 22 June 2021. See [here](#) for details of corrections. The modification was the locations of three Non Designated Heritage Assets that were incorrectly shown on the Policies Map.

Note: Under Section 61M(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as applied by Section 38C(2)(c) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) East Suffolk Council may make modifications to a neighbourhood plan, that they have made at any time, where this is for the purpose of correcting errors. The consent of the Qualifying Body (Town Council) is required.

A Community Engagement day took place on 20 October 2018. Posters advertised the event around the town and it was publicized in their In Touch magazine and was on the front cover. It was a sunny and warm day which helped in attracting residents. Leaflets were handed out to passers by who were residents and asked to put green dots (in favour) or red dots (not in favour) on the poster sized objectives. Attendees were also invited to put a blue dot on a map to say which area of the town they lived in, which was useful.



Three community engagement events were held in July 2018 and these were followed up in October that year by an opinion questionnaire issued to every household. Around 800 replies were received. The results were analysed and documented in March 2019. A further 58 young people filled in surveys at the Funday in June 2019. A period of pre-submission public consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 took place from 8 July to 2 September 2019.

Chris from Navigus Planning was the consultant used – but apparently he is no longer working. Their working group was made up 50% Councillors/50% public.

One of the key things to understand is that evidence is needed of it to be the opinion of residents, in order for it to be included in the NP, so this needs to be born in mind when deciding on questions to ask residents.

Rod Gibson would be happy to come and talk to Councillors about the process.

## Playford

The Playford NP can be found [here](#)

The first of the consultations on the draft NP was carried out between 18th March and 5th May 2023. Residents and businesses in the parish received an explanatory leaflet identifying how to view and comment on the Plan. A range of Statutory bodies were also consulted and a drop-in event was held at the Village Hall on 18 March.

All comments received at the “pre-submission” consultation were considered and reviewed and any necessary amendments to the Plan were made. The Plan, together with supporting documents was then submitted to East Suffolk Council.

The “Submission” consultation on draft Plan by East Suffolk Council was held between 10 November 2023 and 19 January 2024.

The Referendum took place on 13th June 2024. The question asked at the Referendum was: Do you want East Suffolk Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Playford to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?” 57 people voted ‘yes’ and 15 people voted ‘no’. The Referendum outcome was therefore positive. The turnout was 40%.

The consultancy that was used was a gentleman called Ian Poole from **Places4People Planning Consultancy**.