

FUNDING BOOST TO HELP COMMUNITIES PLAN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Funding to help communities in urban and deprived areas plan their local neighbourhoods will almost double, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced (Monday 10 August).

From today, Government grants to individual neighbourhood planning groups in both urban and deprived areas will increase to £18,000. This follows funding increasing from £9,000 to £10,000 in May to help with the effects of coronavirus.

The funding boost will strengthen the voice of local communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas in England.

The Government also announced it is providing these groups with access to additional technical expertise free of charge, such as for assessing their area's housing needs, or developing masterplans.

Today's changes follow last week's launch of Planning for the Future – the Government's overhaul of the outdated planning system to deliver the high-quality, sustainable homes communities need.

At the heart of the proposed reforms are measures to ensure local communities are consulted from the very beginning of the planning process. By harnessing the latest technology through online maps and data, the whole system will be made more accessible.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

The Government is overhauling the country's outdated planning system to deliver the high-quality sustainable homes the country needs.

Under the new system local communities will be in the driving seat deciding what is built and where. I want to ensure all communities have a strong voice in this process which is why I am doubling the funding available in some of the most deprived parts of the country to help residents in these areas shape the future of their neighbourhoods.

Cllr Sue Baxter, Chairman, National Association of Local Councils said:

England's local (parish & town) councils are at the forefront of neighbourhood planning and make up the vast majority of the 2,600 places using this important tool in the planning system to shape development and housing in their areas.

This additional grant funding for disadvantaged communities is particularly welcome and will provide a vital extra boost to help hundreds of areas prepare a plan.

NALC would encourage local councils in those areas to use this additional funding to get started on neighbourhood planning to help build back better communities.

Communities with an adopted neighbourhood plan in unparished areas are able to fast track the process to set up a local council so they can also benefit from local leadership and support the wider benefits and ambitions of neighbourhood planning.

Tony Burton, Convener of Neighbourhood Planners. London said:

With the planning system undergoing major reform it has never been more important that communities take advantage of their right to plan their neighbourhood.

We welcome the new and additional support to neighbourhood forums across London and other urban areas.

This will help put local communities on the front foot in planning the future of their areas.

- Neighbourhood planning groups are local people who shape planning decisions in their area – such as the location of new homes, shops, offices and green spaces – through the production of neighbourhood plans.
- Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals. A neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the local plan prepared by the local planning authority, as the starting point for planning decisions.
- Neighbourhood planning groups who wish to seek funding and technical support can do so by applying through Locality's website: neighbourhoodplanning.org
- The criteria for falling in to an 'urban' area is being non-parished; the criteria for falling in to a 'deprived' area is being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England in accordance with the Index of Multiple Deprivation; and therefore areas that are either non-parished, amongst the 20% most deprived areas, or both non-parished and amongst the 20% most deprived areas, would be eligible for the additional grant and technical support.