

FAQs on Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) and the Emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP)

Q1: Can a new Neighbourhood Development Plan come forward before the emerging Local Plan?

Answer: It is important Neighbourhood Development Plan groups work closely with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that there aren't any conflicts between NDP policies and Local Plan policies. Section 38 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires conflict to have been resolved in favour of the policy contained in the last document that has become part of the statutory Development Plan.

The South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) is currently progressing towards Preferred Options (Regulation 18 consultation) (expected January 2025). The Timetable for the SWLP is set out here:

[South Warwickshire Local Plan](#)

Accordingly, whilst preparing a NDP can technically be done within the regulations before or during preparation of the emerging Local Plan, preparing a new NDP currently (i.e. Regulation 18 stage in the SWLP process) would risk the NDP becoming out of date soon after it is adopted or updated. It is likely that it would become superseded by the strategic policies and allocations in the SWLP. For this reason, we do not recommend that new NDPs are substantially progressed at this stage of the Local Plan making process, at least until the SWLP Regulation 19 Submission stage (expected 2026). This is so NDPs can be prepared in general conformity with the advanced stage of the SWLP policies.

We also recognise lot of work goes into plan preparation, they require significant resource, and can take a long time from inception to adoption. We therefore remain generally supportive of scoping and information collation exercises, and NDP area boundary designation processes, while the SWLP progresses. For information on this process, please see: [Neighbourhood Planning - Locality Neighbourhood Development Planning](#)

Q2: Will a Neighbourhood Development Plan need to be updated once the South Warwickshire Local Plan has been adopted?

Answer: There is no statutory requirement to update the NDPs after a certain time unlike the Local Plan that must be reviewed every five years. However, where policies in the NDP are considered to be out of date / inconsistent with the South Warwickshire Local Plan once adopted, the NDP policies would not be accorded significant weight in decision making on planning applications. In that situation the NDP policies would need to be reviewed to ensure consistency with the adopted Local Plan as the most recent policies will take precedence. This would not necessarily mean that the whole of the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be considered out of date, just the specific policies that are superseded by Local Plan policies.

Q3: What advice is there for NDP Groups who want to review their existing Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Answer:

There are different types of NDP review:

1. Minor (non-material) modifications: These do not materially affect the policies in the plan. They might include correcting errors and do not require examination or a referendum.
2. Material modifications that do not change the nature of the plan: These require examination but not a referendum.

3. Material modifications that change the nature of the plan: These require both examination and a referendum.

Reviews of existing NDPs generally less onerous and quicker than preparing a new NDP. Nonetheless, unless the NDP review involves only minor (non-material) modifications, like the advice at FAQ no.1 for preparing a new NDP, we would advise waiting until the SWLP is at a more advanced stage (i.e. at least the Regulation 19 Submission version, estimated 2026) before groups progress NDP reviews. Reviews of NDPs involving material modifications at an earlier SWLP stages may mean the NDP would need to be reviewed again at a later date, noting the strategic policies of the emerging SWLP be amended during the plan-making process.

As per the advice of at FAQ no.1 for preparing a new NDP, we recognise that NDP reviews can take considerable resource and time, and hence remain generally supportive of current scoping and information collation exercises.

The Timetable for the SWLP is set out here: [South Warwickshire Local Plan](#)

Q4: How will the proposed NPPF reforms affect proposals for Neighbourhood Development Plans?

The Government is proposing to revise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and consulted on the changes in September 2024. Amongst other aspects, they are proposing to revise the methodology for assessing housing needs, which will affect the South Warwickshire and the emerging SWLP. Until the final outcomes of the proposed national planning policy reforms are known, the risk of NDPs being prepared now being quickly out-of-date is heightened, as the emerging SWLP will need to respond and align with any revised NPPF.

More information on the proposed NPPF reforms can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

Q5: Where can I obtain more guidance about preparing and reviewing Neighbourhood Development Plans?

There is lots of guidance available for NDPs online. Some useful weblinks are listed below:

[Home - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[How to create a Neighbourhood Plan: Your step by step roadmap guide - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

[How to implement, monitor, and review your made neighbourhood plan - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

Information on design codes/guides - some useful weblinks include:

[Neighbourhood Planning Design Coding Guidance - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

[English Rural | Revolutionising Rural Housing: The Launch of a Groundbreaking Design Guide](#)