(Ad)Ventures in Neighbourhood Planning

Local Implementation of a New Planning Regime

Final Report

April 2013

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CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the case for research on neighbourhood planning, introduces this new planning regime, discusses the research interests and outlines the structure of the report.

1.1 THE CASE FOR RESEARCH AND THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Localism Act 2011 ushered in a number of new rights for local communities. Of interest here, the Act provided communities in England with the right to initiate a process that can result in the production of a local land use strategy, termed a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), or a development order, a tool which automatically grants planning permission for the classes of development it specifies, termed a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO), for a 'neighbourhood area'. Within the report, the process of producing either an NDP or NDO is referred to as 'neighbourhood planning' while the term 'neighbourhood plan' (NP) is used to refer to either type of document, unless otherwise stated. If the NP gains 50% of the vote in a local referendum, it must be adopted by the local planning authority and becomes part of the statutory development plan. It will then guide future change and development within an area.

Neighbourhood planning in numbers

The following facts and figures, assembled in early March 2013, provide context on, and indicate progress in, neighbourhood planning:

- 240 Front Runner communities have been selected by Government to pilot neighbourhood planning
- 110 additional communities have been designated as neighbourhood areas for the purposes of neighbourhood planning (DCLG, 2013a)
- 1 neighbourhood plan has been adopted by a local planning authority becoming part of the statutory development plan (the Upper Eden Plan in Cumbria adopted in April 2013)
- 22 communities have published NPs for consultation (DCLG, 2013b)
- £50 million is to be invested by Government to March 2014 to support local planning authorities in neighbourhood planning (DCLG, 2012a)
- £20,000 to £86,000 is the estimated cost of producing an NDP (DCLG, 2012b)
- £24,800 to £86,300 is the estimated cost of producing an NDO (DCLG, 2012b)
- 2 to 3 years is the average estimated time needed to complete an NDP
- 35 to 55 officer days is the estimated local authority staff time needed for the production and adoption of an NDP (Leeds City Council, 2012a)

This contextualising information suggests that many individuals, in a relatively large number of communities, are and will be spending a prolonged period of time, and potentially large sums of money, on neighbourhood planning. Consequently, it seems valuable and important to begin to explore and evaluate this new planning regime. However, largely because it is so new, little empirical research on the regime, and how it is being implemented within local communities, is available. In the absence of such research, there can be a reliance on speculation and anecdote. The purpose of this study is to begin to address this information gap. In so doing, it is hoped the findings will prove interesting, and be of use, to a range of audiences including local communities, local planning authorities, civil servants, developers, academics and any other stakeholders with a general interest in neighbourhood planning.

1.2 INTRODUCING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

The Localism Act 2011, through amendments to existing Planning Acts, and the accompanying Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (the Regulations), provide the overarching legislative framework for neighbourhood planning. The Act created the opportunity for 'qualifying bodies', these being town and parish councils and, where these bodies are absent, neighbourhood forums, to construct an NP for a 'neighbourhood area' (as discussed in 1.1). NPs must meet certain basic conditions. They must correspond to national planning policy, reflect the tenets of local strategic planning policy and comply with EU regulations and obligations, and human rights requirements. Importantly, they cannot be a bar to development, as the Government's impact assessment on the introduction of binding NPs makes clear:

> *"Moreover, in order to guarantee that neighbourhood planning cannot lead to a lower rate of growth, a neighbourhood plan will only be able to advocate an equal or greater quantity of growth in housing or economic development than is established in the* [local authority's] *development plan*" (DCLG, 2011a: 10)

Local planning authorities are responsible for designating areas as neighbourhood areas, and for designating organisations as neighbourhood forums. The Act requires that organisations wishing to be designated as neighbourhood forums meet certain criteria. For example, they must have a written constitution and they must comprise 21 members. Forums are encouraged to include, within their membership, residents of the proposed neighbourhood area, individuals who work within the proposed area and elected representatives for the area e.g. district councillors. Relative to the required and encouraged nature of neighbourhood forums, parish and town councils can be smaller and less diverse, principally comprising residents of the parish, as candidate eligibility rules shape who can become a parish or town councillor (see The Electoral Commission, [n.d]).

The Act and Regulations provide guidance on how local planning authorities should publicise applications for neighbourhood area designations and neighbourhood forum designations, and on the content of these applications. They also outline the procedure for making NPs and prescribe, to some extent, the content of NPs. They identify, for instance, certain 'excluded development' which, it is argued, is "more appropriately planned at a higher spatial scale than a neighbourhood" (DCLG, 2011a: 11). As discussed in the Government's Impact Assessment on neighbourhood planning, excluded development includes (DCLG, 2011a: 11):

- Development which would breach thresholds for EU Directives
- Nationally significant infrastructure projects
- Minerals and most waste development
- Large scale housing and economic development
  The term 'large scale' is left unspecified. However, elsewhere in the Impact Assessment, 'small-scale' housing schemes are identified as comprising 5 to 10 houses, while 'smaller housing developments' are identified as schemes of 10 to 15 houses.

The existence of these 'excluded developments', combined with the need for general conformity with national and local strategic planning policy, which is generally understood as the statutory development plan, places various restrictions on the scope and content of NPs. The statutory development plan can, for instance, contain a raft of policies on issues like the strategic location of development, density, design, affordable housing, retail provision and sustainability, plus, it can contain detailed site specific policies (see Chapter 3). Consequently, the opportunity for neighbourhood planning to set the agenda on a number of land use and development matters may be rather limited. Some such matters may already have been resolved at national and/or local planning authority level. Relevant here, Ministers and Government have been keen to emphasise that neighbourhood planning will create opportunities for communities to determine a number of land use issues. It has been suggested that they will be able to, "come together and agree, this is what we want out area to look like, here is where we want the new homes to go and how we want them designed" (Clark, 2010a). Specifically in regards to housing, it has been claimed that "a neighbourhood plan would be able to identify the specific site or broad location" of development, and "specify the form, size, type and design of new housing" (DCLG, 2011a).

The status of neighbourhood plans in planning decisions

Once a qualifying body has produced an NP for a neighbourhood area, it is reviewed by an independent examiner to judge whether it meets the previously mentioned basic conditions. Assuming it does, it is put to a local referendum and, if it receives 50% of the vote, the local planning authority must adopt it and it becomes part of the statutory development plan.

A local planning authority's statutory development plan is comprised of Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The concept of DPDs was introduced by the previous government through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Under this Act, local planning authorities were required to produce a Core Strategy DPD, which sets out an overarching spatial vision for a community, a Site Allocations DPD, which allocates sites for development and protection, and a Proposals Map. Optional DPDs included Area Action Plans, which cover specific areas within a community, and DPDs that focus on particular issues such as development management. Under the coalition Government, national planning policy has been revised and reduced with a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012. This document (re)introduced the term Local Plan to refer to the statutory development plan. Consequently, adopted NPs will sit alongside DPDs as part of the Local Plan. As the Planning Acts require planning applications to be decided in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, NPs, as part of the development plan, will play an important role in planning decisions. Indeed, the NPPF reports:

> *"Where a planning application conflicts with a neighbourhood plan that has been brought into force, planning permission should not normally be granted"* (DCLG, 2012c: 46)

In places with adopted NPs, the volume of policy will increase as a new NP element will be added to any existing / proposed DPDs. In such instances, applicants will need to navigate through Local Plans comprising multiple parts (the DPD and NP elements). Interestingly, since 2010/11, Government has been seeking to 'simplify' the planning system and has associated reducing the volume of policy with the process of simplification. Indeed, the previous Planning Minister (Greg Clark MP) recently commented:

> *"Our approach was to drop the targets, scrap the strategies and simplify the system. The result was the National Planning Policy Framework, which replaced 1,300 pages of central guidance with a framework document of just 52 pages" (*Cark, 2013)

Neighbourhood planning and local planning authorities

Neighbourhood planning places a number of new duties on local planning authorities. These duties provide these organisations with a central and powerful role in the new regime. Under neighbourhood planning, local planning authorities are required to:

- Designate neighbourhood areas
  They judge the suitability of proposed areas and can reject and/or revise proposed areas
- Designate neighbourhood forums
  They judge the suitability of proposed forums, and, if multiple applications come forward in the same area, they decide between these applications
- Check compliance with the legal conditions governing neighbourhood planning
- Organise and fund the independent examination of a proposed NP
- Organise and fund the local referendum on a proposed NP
- Support communities pursuing neighbourhood planning
  They have a duty to provide advice and assistance to qualifying bodies in developing NPs, however, aside from this not including the provision of financial assistance, the Act and Regulations fail to specify what, exactly, the duty might entail. There is scope then for local planning authorities to develop their own interpretations of this duty.
- Adopt proposed NPs which achieve 50% of the vote in a local referendum

Certain existing duties performed by local planning authorities have a direct bearing on neighbourhood planning. In addressing these duties, the importance of these organisations in this new regime is further confirmed. Of significance, local planning authorities are required to prepare the local strategic planning policy to which NPs must conform. Plus, in preparing this policy, they must assemble adequate, relevant and up to date evidence and qualifying bodies are encouraged to refer to this when preparing their NPs. Noticeably, the estimated cost of preparing NPs (see 1.1) fails to account for the costs invested by local planning authorities in assembling this evidence base. Without access to this evidence, the costs of preparing NPs, depending on their scope and content, could be substantially higher than the lower cost estimate Government identifies in its impact assessments on NPs. This may be an issue where there is a noticeable delay between production of the evidence base by a local planning authority (to support its development plan preparation) and production of an NP by a qualifying body. If the evidence base is not thought sufficiently 'up to date' to support the NP, the qualifying body may need to commission new studies or undertake additional evidence gathering activities. (Chapter 5 further reflects on the role and power of local planning authorities in neighbourhood planning.)

1.3 PROGRESS IN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

It is 12 months since the Regulations came into force and just over a year since the Localism Act received Royal Assent. Over this time, there have been developments in the funding and support available for neighbourhood planning, while, within communities, there have been changes in the level of interest and progress in NPs.

In April 2011, Government appointed four 'support providers' to deliver training and assistance to communities pursuing neighbourhood planning and distributed between them £3.2 million (Geoghegan, 2012). These support providers were: the National Association of Local Councils in partnership with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE); Planning Aid; The Prince's Foundation and Locality. Funds for the organisations were delivered through 'Supporting Communities and Neighbourhoods in Planning'. In the second incarnation of this scheme, launched in April/May 2013, Supporting Communities and Neighbourhoods in Planning 2013-2015, a single body, Locality, in partnership with the Royal Town Planning Institute / Planning Aid, Community Development Foundation, Urban Vision Enterprise, Eden Project and URS, will provide advice and support to communities and administer a small grants programme (DCLG, 2013c). Communities will be able to apply for a grant of up to £7,000 to cover costs incurred in preparing an NP. Over the two year period of the scheme, Government is providing funding of £9.5 million (DCLG, 2013c).

Overall, Government has announced it will commit £50 million to March 2014 to support local authorities in neighbourhood planning (DCLG, 2012a). Some resources are being channelled through a £10 million fund, launched in August 2012, which allows local planning authorities to apply for grants of up to £30,000 per neighbourhood planning scheme to support qualifying bodies in their planning activities, and to pay towards the costs of the independent examination and local referendum (DCLG, 2012d).

The volume of communities pursuing neighbourhood planning continues to grow. Where at first there were only 17 Front Runners, there are now around 240 such communities (DCLG, 2012b). The DCLG (2013a) estimates that over a hundred additional communities have, as of early 2013, been designated as neighbourhood areas.

At the time of writing, one neighbourhood plan had progressed to the point of being adopted by a local planning authority – the Upper Eden Plan in Cumbria. This plan covers 17 sparsely populated, rural parishes in East Cumbria. In December 2012, it became the first NP to be successfully examined under the Localism Act. Following a small number of relatively minor changes, the examiner recommended that the plan be put to a local referendum. This referendum was held in March 2013 and all those who lived within the plan's boundaries, and were eligible to vote in local government elections, were able to vote. They voted yes or no to the question: 'do you want Eden District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for the Upper Eden Area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?' (Eden District Council, 2013a). Turnout was around 34% and 90% voted yes (Eden District Council, 2013b).

The plan, a 28 page document, prepared by a planning consultant and containing 7 narrow policies, was developed by the Upper Eden Community Plan Group, a coalition of 17 parish councils led by Brough Parish Council (Vice Chair Brough Parish Council, 2012). It covers the period 2012 to 2025 and takes a strategic approach presenting policies that apply across the plan area. These policies focus on providing affordable housing in rural areas, providing housing on farms (so that farmers and rural businesses can address their housing needs), and providing housing that addresses the needs of older people. It comments on housing numbers, density, location and dwelling type.

The plan presents a general annualised upper limit on development within each parish. Across all 17 parishes, this equates to 40.07 dwellings per annum (Woof, 2012: 23). It is argued that this policy is needed to prevent over development and the development of large schemes, while also ensuring that no parish is excluded from development; the plan is concerned that all parishes should be able to meet their "legitimate housing needs" (a phrase left undefined) (Woof, 2012: 23). It seems, then, a relatively pro-development plan.

Interestingly, the policies on housing development include a 'local occupancy condition'. This condition requires that the completed housing be occupied by people who live, work or have a strong connection to the area, or have an essential need to live close to existing residents, or have the written support of the relevant parish council or meeting (Woof, 2012). The examiner felt this condition was appropriate and in line with local policies.

For the examiner, the most substantial recommended change concerned a policy on housing for older people. The examiner was not convinced by the draft plan's argument that affordable housing for older people should be prioritised in certain locations at the risk of forfeiting general affordable housing (Glester, 2012). The examiner revised the wording of the draft policy to identify general affordable housing as the priority across the plan area.

Importantly, in reflecting on the wider lessons that the Upper Eden Plan might provide on the practical implementation of neighbourhood planning, the examiner commented:

> "*I do not believe that precedents will be set for other local neighbourhood plans given the nature of the Upper Eden Valley that renders its needs quite apart from most other areas. It would be for other areas to argue their cases on their merits and their local circumstances*" (Gelster, 2012: [n.d])

Besides the Upper Eden Plan, many other NPs are progressing through the required stages of neighbourhood planning and so, in the future, a growing population of documents may well be available for analysis providing insight into the products of grassroots planning (DCLG, 2013a). Interestingly, in reviewing some of these emerging documents, Robson (2013) commented that they "do not appear to be the pro-development, economic boosting initiatives that were initially hoped for".

1.4 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: CLAIMS, AMBITIONS AND PREDICTIONS

Neighbourhood planning has been presented as part of the Government's decentralisation and localism agenda. This agenda argues that it is intrinsically right and advantageous to devolve power to communities across various public services. Manifestations of this agenda can be seen in initiatives like the Community Right to Bid[1], the Community Right to Challenge[2] and Free Schools[3]. Chapter 5 explores how / if neighbourhood planning is devolving power to local communities.

Government has made various claims for neighbourhood planning setting out a number of ambitions and predictions for the new regime. Analysis of the speeches by the current and previous Planning

[1] Community organisations can nominate land and buildings to be listed by the local authority as assets of community value. When these come to be sold, a moratorium on their sale can be invoked creating an opportunity for the community organisation to bid to buy them.
[2] Voluntary and community groups can challenge to take over the delivery of local authority services.
[3] Community and voluntary groups, and certain other organisations, can set up independent, state funded schools (Department for Education, 2011).

Ministers (Appendix A for speeches), combined with an analysis of the Government's two impact assessments on neighbourhood planning (in 2011 on the Localism Bill and 2012 on the Localism Act), highlights the following claims, ambitions and predictions:

Neighbourhood planning...

- Is completely new
- Devolves power to communities in a way the planning system has not previously done and empowers communities to take more control of planning decisions
- Will engender a new pro-growth attitude as communities gain a greater say in development decisions - the result will be higher levels of house building and economic development
- Will widen and increase participation in planning
- Will tackle the adversarial nature of planning
- Will result in cost savings to applicants, local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate through, in particular, reduced planning appeals and fewer planning applications
- Will produce better quality development that is more in line with people's wishes and provide greater certainty for applicants

A set of instrumental arguments are thus being marshalled to promote (and perhaps legitimise) neighbourhood planning. While the use of instrumental arguments to support community participation in planning is nothing new, one of the arguments, which has been repeated often in Ministerial speeches, that neighbourhood planning will deliver a new pro-growth attitude, does seem new. The previous government, for instance, identified a five point case for participation by assembling a series of instrumental arguments. However, nowhere was there mention of participation facilitating a pro-growth attitude. Instead, the following arguments were made:

- Involvement leads to outcomes that better reflect the views and aspirations and meet the needs of the wider community in all its diversity.
- Public involvement is valuable as a key element of a vibrant, open and participatory democracy.
- Involvement improves the quality and efficiency of decisions by drawing on local knowledge and minimising unnecessary and costly conflict.
- Involvement educates all participants about the needs of communities, the business sector and how local government works.
- Involvement helps promote social cohesion by making real connections with communities and offering them a tangible stake in decision making (ODPM, 2004: 4).

Chapter 5 seeks to evaluate neighbourhood planning by assessing it against the claims, predictions and ambitions that Government and Ministers have made for it.

1.5 RESEARCH INTERESTS

The general interest in simply *learning more* about neighbourhood planning suggested that an exploratory study, framed by no particular expectations or theoretical assumptions, was an appropriate approach to adopt (Babbie, 2010: 92). A number of broad research interests orientated the study at the outset (items 1 to 4 below); however, these did not rigorously structure the research and, indeed, as the study progressed, additional interests emerged (items 5 to 8):

1. Who is participating in neighbourhood planning (people and communities)
2. Why are these people and communities participating
3. What type of issues do these communities wish to tackle within their NPs
4. How are communities finding the process of developing NPs
5. What support, advice and training is available to communities

6. The geography of neighbourhood planning
7. The role of networks in neighbourhood planning
8. How inclusive is neighbourhood planning

To address these research interests, a case study approach, operating at two levels of analysis, was adopted. One level of analysis looked at neighbourhood planning across a city, (Leeds in West Yorkshire), and a second focused down to look at neighbourhood planning within three communities located within that city. Chapter 3 introduces the case study city and the case study communities.

To help position neighbourhood planning in a wider historical context, there was an interest in reflecting on the evolving role of community participation in planning while also considering the similarities between neighbourhood planning and alternative, contemporary forms of community-led planning. Chapter 2 addresses these concerns.

1.6 REPORT STRUCTURE

The report is divided into 6 chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced neighbourhood planning and presented the case for research. It also discussed the claims, ambitions and predictions that Government and Ministers have made for neighbourhood planning. Chapter 2 reflects on the evolving role of community participation in planning and explores the similarities between neighbourhood planning and a number of alternative contemporary forms of community-led planning. Chapter 3 discusses the methods and methodology and introduces the case study city and case study communities. Chapter 4 presents the main empirical findings of the study organising discussion around a number of key themes. Chapter 5 evaluates neighbourhood planning by assessing it against the various claims, predictions and ambitions discussed in Chapter 1. Finally, Chapter 6 presents a set of overarching conclusions and identifies a number of recommendations for improving current practice.

2. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING: IN THEORY AND (CURRENT) PRACTICE

This chapter seeks to position neighbourhood planning in a wider historical context by reflecting on the evolving role of community participation in planning, and exploring the similarities between this new regime and a number of alternative contemporary forms of community-led (and community participation in) planning.

2.1 EVOLVING PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

The role of public participation in planning has altered over time (Damer and Hague, 1971). Commenting on Western societies, Lane (2005) suggests that the type of planning model practised by a government shapes the type of participation offered and, as these planning models evolve, so too does the approach to participation. In the interwar and post-war years, to cope with rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and post-war rebuilding, the dominant planning model focused on the generation of "fixed end state plans" where ends were identified by the planner and the "art and science of planning" was the pursuit of these ends (Lane, 2005: 288). This 'blueprint planning' model provided no obvious scope for public participation (Lane, 2005). It was highly normative and focused on rational models that emphasised the pre-eminent role of the planner and the application of 'logic' and the scientific method (Lane, 2005: 297).

For Hudson et al. (1979) and Hall (1983), increased ownership and use of the car in the late 1950s and early 1960s created changes in urban geography which confronted planners with problems at a previously unmatched scale. This problem of scale prompted planners to consider things from a 'systems' point of view and a new systems or synoptic planning model emerged (Lane, 2005). This model came to dominate planning throughout the 1960s (Lane, 2005). It was within this period that the first calls for public participation in planning emerged. Indeed, commenting on the UK, Damer and Hague (1971: 217) report that "full and official sanction" for the term public participation was not provided until the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act which required local authorities to involve the public in the preparation of local plans. This Act was influenced by comments on the state of public participation contained in the Planning Advisory Group's report, The Future of Development Plans (published in 1965), and the 1967 Town and Country Planning White Paper (Rodgers, Blunden and Curry, 1985). To support the Act, the Skeffington Committee on Public Participation in Planning, presenting findings in the Skeffington Report in 1969, was tasked with considering "the best methods, including publicity, of securing the participation of the public at the formative stages in the making of development plans for their area" (Damer and Hague (1971: 217). For Lane (2005: 290), the Act prompted local planning authorities to begin public consultation, a form of participation which became part of a "systematic process, led by a professional planner, in the development of goals and objectives".

Consultation still remains a dominant approach in planning as governments continue to present communities with draft policies and proposals for comment (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2001; Tewdwr-Jones and Thomas, 1998). Parts of the literature criticise consultation arguing that it is a tokenistic form of involvement where there is no certainty the public's canvassed views will be acted upon (Arnstein, 1969; Bickerstaff and Walker, 2001). Arnstein (1969) is perhaps the most famous critic of consultation. She developed the concept of a 'ladder of citizen participation' which identified and ranked eight types of participation according to the extent to which they invest decision making power in citizens. Each type of participation was assigned a rung on the ladder with the degree of citizen control increasing as the ladder is scaled. Consultation is positioned in the middle of this ladder alongside 'informing' and 'placation'. All three methods are thought able to provide citizens with a voice in decision making but there is no guarantee this voice will be acted upon (Brookfield et al., 2013). Informing entails informing citizens of their rights, options and responsibilities, typically in a one-way flow of information that affords no opportunity for citizens' views to be recognised. Placation provides citizens with some power to shape outcomes but traditional powerholders retain ultimate control, an example being scenarios where citizens are enabled to develop a land-use plan but power-holders retain the right to determine its legitimacy or feasibility (Arnstein, 1969; Brookfield et al., 2013). For completeness, to mention the lowest and highest rungs of the ladder, rungs one and two (manipulation and therapy), are considered examples of non-participation as citizens are simply provided with information on, or 'educated' about, a planning matter, while, at the top rungs, (six to

eight - partnership, delegated power and citizen power), citizens gain increasing levels of decision-making authority and managerial control (Arnstein, 1969).

The late 1960s saw the development of a range of alternative models of planning as criticisms of the "rational comprehensive paradigm" present in past models emerged (Lane, 2005: 297). New approaches such as transactive, advocacy, Marxist, bargaining, communicative and collaborative planning were developed (Lane, 2005). Lane (2005) argues that, common to all these approaches, is recognition of the political dimensions of planning, belief in the value of participation and a rejection of the notion of a single public interest. Collectively, these views orientate these models to identify public participation as being both necessary and valuable. The communicative and collaborative approaches have attracted much attention in recent years, with Carr (2012) suggesting that collaborative planning is the new planning paradigm. The 1980s and 1990s saw increasing interest in these concepts within the planning theory literature, with some commentators discussing a 'communicative turn' in planning (Tewdwr-Jones and Thomas, 1998). For Tewdwr-Jones and Thomas (1998: 127), this is "the notion that general aspects of planning can be conceived as a process of communicating (or failing to communicate) within and between frames of reference and discourses". Within these communicative and collaborative approaches, information exchange and communication between different stakeholders is prized (Carr, 2012).

Carpenter and Brownill (2008) suggest that interest in collaborative and communicative planning is associated with an interest in participatory, as opposed to representative, democracy. In representative democracy, elected representatives have a mandate to act in citizens' interests. This results in an approach to participation which requires only minimal public engagement (Carpenter and Brownill, 2008). However, in participatory democracy, huge importance is attached to collaborative deliberation between stakeholders and citizens. Such deliberation is thought to create opportunities for new information to be shared and revealed, and for citizens to develop trust in public institutions (Carpenter and Brownill, 2008). Under the previous Labour Government, some commentators argued that there was a shift in emphasis from representative to participatory democracy, with some identifying the planning reforms introduced by that government as part of a move from the former to the latter (Carpenter and Brownill, 2008). Bringing discussion up to date, the Conservative Party's pre-election planning policy document 'Open Source Planning' (2010) identified the process of plan making as being "ideally suited to the use of collaborative democracy" and reported that a Conservative government would mandate that all local planning authorities use collaborative democratic methods to draw up their plans (Conservative Party, 2010: 8). Further, this document directly associated collaborative democracy with collaborative planning stating: "we will create a new system of collaborative planning by: giving local people the power to engage in genuine local planning through collaborative democracy" (Conservative Party, 2010: 3). Neighbourhood planning would appear to be the coalition Government's attempt at implementing a kind of collaborative planning, however, and perhaps interestingly, Government and Ministers have not used this term when discussing this new regime. Further, as discussed in Chapter 5, there are debates to be had about how far NPs are the product of collaboration and deliberation within communities and between stakeholders, and how far they are directed and shaped by Government and local planning authorities through national and local strategic policy.

Underpinning the collaborative and communicative approaches to planning is the "premise of equality of access to participation" (Carpenter and Brownill, 2008: 234), a premise which has been criticised for failing to recognise the entrenched differences and inequalities between places, people and groups (Carr, 2012). For Albrechts (2003: 234), moves towards more direct forms of democracy, where the focus is on debate, public involvement and accountability can create a danger that democratic public involvement becomes increasingly dependent on knowledge and on the skills of the more highly educated. Studies have repeatedly found that participation (and volunteering), including participation in planning, is indeed associated with higher educational qualifications, along with age, tenure and length of residence (Mohan, 2012; Dear, 1992, Siranni, 2007), with studies in America also identifying links between participation and ethnicity (Carr, 2012, Siranni, 2007). Further, some studies have identified links between affluence and participation / voluntary activity (e.g. Middleton et al., 2000; Clifford, 2012). Tewdwr-Jones and Thomas (1998: 129) argue that those who participate in planning "tend to be representative of the more powerful interests in society" and this "only serves to reinforce existing power structures" with those who lack familiarity with the planning system being placed at a direct disadvantage. For Carr (2012: 423), when these more powerful interests participate

in planning, they manipulate and “stage manage” the decision making process, predetermining outputs. He suggests urban elites, typically affluent, educated professionals, understand how to ‘play’ the planning system as they work to “enact policy through ostensibly participatory planning processes so as to cloak unilateral policy decisions in the clothing of democracy” (Carr, 2012: 430).

Putting to one side debates about the inclusiveness of public participation in planning, participation has been associated with a number of benefits. It has been suggested that it improves the quality of decisions, as it can bring to light information potentially missed by technical experts, and that it can enhance the legitimacy of decisions and aid their subsequent implementation (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2001; Brody, Godshalk and Burby, 2003). Further, it has been claimed that participation can generate support and ownership and reduce uncertainty around plans and projects (Batheram et al., 2005) and allow the views and interests of marginalised groups to be addressed, potentially facilitating more equitable plans (Campbell and Marshall, 2000; Brody, Godshalk and Burby, 2003). Some have suggested that participation can support the generation of new knowledge and understandings, as stakeholders collaborate and exchange ideas, while others have claimed that it can build social capital, create strong and enduring plans and reduce the potential for conflict between actors (Brody, Godshalk and Burby, 2003). Of course, the approach taken to participation will influence the benefits derived from participation. Arnstein (1969), for instance, is highly critical of approaches that are primarily concerned with informing and ‘educating’ citizens, identifying these as forms of ‘non-participation’. If one adopts this view, one might assume that such approaches would provide little opportunity for the benefits discussed here to be realised.

2.2 CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

When neighbourhood planning was introduced in 2011, there already existed, and continue to exist, a suite of tools available to communities to shape and influence future development. Indeed, the RTPI (2011: 1) published an information note in the year of the Localism Act to “show how neighbourhood planning [could] be undertaken within the *existing* planning system” (emphasis added). This section presents a number of these existing tools and concludes by commenting on their similarities to neighbourhood planning.

Non-statutory tools

These ‘tools’ are not governed by the Planning Acts and so their content is not prescribed by planning law (RTPI, 2011). The RTPI (2011) suggests, then, that they can be more expansive in scope. They can be a material consideration in planning decisions and can sometimes be developed into statutory tools, such as Supplementary Planning Documents, and thus become part of the local policy framework which guides planning decisions within an area.

Parish / Town Plans

These documents tend to be led by local communities, though technical advice and consultants can be brought in. They can cover a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues and they tend to set out a vision for an area (Localism Network, [n.d], RTPI, 2010). The Localism Network ([n.d]) estimates that around 4,500 parish plans have been produced in recent years, mainly by rural communities.

Design Statements and Design Guides

These can be produced in urban and rural communities and focus on providing a detailed analysis and description of the distinctive characteristics of an area (Localism Network, [n.d]). They often include commentary on the area’s history, making links between the evolution of the area and features of the local built and natural environment. They include design guidelines identifying preferred approaches to new development and development at existing structures (e.g. extensions). As with parish plans, they can be led by communities with professional advice, from consultants and/or the local planning authority, brought in. The Localism Network, [n.d]) estimates that around 600 design statements have been produced to date, mostly for villages and small towns.

Local Landscape Character Assessment

These assessments tend to be community led and involve local residents identifying and assessing the form, nature and significance of their local landscape. They can comment on things like topography, tree cover, views, land use etc. They usually have only an informal status in planning decisions (Localism Network [n.d]).

Statutory tools

These tools are governed by the Planning Acts with their content prescribed, to an extent, by planning law.

Supplementary Planning Documents

These documents are often used by local planning authorities to add additional detail to DPDs. However, community-led planning documents, often taking the form of a design guide / statement, can be developed and adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) - although local planning authorities are under no obligation to develop these documents as SPDs. Importantly, SPDs are not able to allocate sites for development and they do not require public examination or an environmental assessment (RTPI, 2011). If adopted, the SPD becomes part of the local policy framework but it does not become part of an area's statutory development plan.

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans

These documents, which can be adopted as SPDs, define the character of a Conservation Area and include proposals for the area's management and enhancement. They are developed by local planning authorities with varying degrees of public participation. For example, selecting one at random for an area within the case study city, The Bardsey-cum-Rigton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2009), public involvement entailed a four week consultation period on the draft plan. During this period, the consultation was advertised and there was an exhibition and discussion opportunity at the village hall. Plus, there was direct mailing to all properties affected by proposed boundary changes to the Conservation Area and to all identified stakeholders and interested parties. There was access via the local planning authority's website to the draft plan, where comment forms were available, and access to a hard copy of the plan and comment forms at facilities within the village (Leeds City Council, 2009).

Local Development Orders

Local planning authorities have the power to issue Local Development Orders (LDOs) which identify classes of development permitted within a specified area without the need to apply for planning permission (RTPI, 2011). LDOs have been available to local planning authorities since 2004 but, so far, very few have been created - just four had been adopted by July 2011 (Planning Advisory Service, 2011). LDOs do not require a referendum to be adopted, but their preparation requires a certain amount of public consultation. It is possible for communities to work in partnership with a local planning authority to produce an LDO. Cornwall Council set up a pilot project to develop an LDO in conjunction with a local town council (Planning Advisory Service, 2010). The result was the Carnon Downs LDO which came into force in June 2011 (Cornwall Council, 2012a). A second LDO project is underway with Cornwall Council this time working in conjunction with Penzance Town Council. Interestingly, the original intention was to develop an NDO, however, it was reported that on reflection, an LDO "would be more cost effective, but also much quicker" and so an LDO (rather than an NDO) is now being pursued (Cornwall Council, 2012b).

Similarities and differences: neighbourhood planning and its contemporaries

There are a number of similarities and differences between neighbourhood planning and the various statutory and non-statutory tools discussed above. Beginning with the differences, neighbourhood planning has the potential to produce documents that can become part of the statutory development plan. Even the statutory tools, discussed here, do not provide this opportunity. Further, where an NP

gains 50% of the vote in a local referendum, the local planning authority must adopt it. Local planning authorities are under no similar obligation to adopt other community planning documents as statutory policy. For example, they are not required to adopt design guides as SPDs. A final key difference relates to this referendum process. To adopt an SPD or LDO, or even to adopt a DPD, there is no requirement to hold a referendum. Neighbourhood planning therefore introduces a new required process for incorporating policy into the planning framework. Chapter 5 comments further on the various 'new' aspects of neighbourhood planning.

In terms of similarities, the community-led nature of neighbourhood planning is evident in the various non-statutory tools presented above. Communities can initiate and progress, at their own volition, parish plans, town plans, design guides, design statements and local landscape character assessments. Relative to these exercises, the scope for neighbourhood planning to be community directed appears, in fact, to be somewhat constrained. As discussed in Chapter 1, communities must apply to the local planning authority to be designated as qualifying bodies in order to produce an NP, and they must apply for the places they wish to plan for to be designated as neighbourhood areas. On occasion, local planning authorities can reject or recommend alternative neighbourhood boundaries and so the area covered by an NP can be noticeably shaped by the local planning authority. There can be conflict when communities and local planning authorities disagree on a neighbourhood area's boundaries. Recently, a neighbourhood forum launched a legal challenge, in the form of a Judicial Review, following a dispute over the local planning authority's decision to alter the boundaries of the forum's proposed neighbourhood area (Wycombe District Council, 2013). The need for NPs to conform to national and local policy also constrains the extent to which these documents are community directed. However, this issue highlights a further point of similarity between neighbourhood planning and various past and current approaches to community participation in planning. To explain, approaches are often criticised on the grounds that key planning decisions are taken 'outside' the community by technical experts and/or higher decision making bodies (North, 2003; O'Malley, 2004). With NPs needing to conform to national policy and the statutory development plan (Chapter 1), and with these documents containing a host of issue-based and site specific policies (see Chapter 3), in neighbourhood planning many key decisions on land use and development are taken 'outside' the community at national and/or local planning authority level. A final notable similarity concerns the rules governing the content of NPs. As statutory policy, the content of NPs is prescribed to some extent by planning law in the same way that the content of SPDs and LDOs (and indeed DPDs) is prescribed. NPs are not, for instance, able to allocate sites for certain excluded development while, going further, SPDs are simply not able to allocate sites.

3. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods and methodology employed within the research and introduces the case study city and the three case study communities. In introducing the case study city, discussion focuses on the local socioeconomic and planning context, with the national planning context also mentioned. For the three case study communities, attention rests on their socioeconomic and spatial characteristics.

3.1 QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Case study research entails detailed contextual analysis of a relatively small number of conditions or events and their relationships. Stake suggests that cases can be simple or complex but a case is always one amongst others and each case should be considered as a single entity (Silverman, 2010). For Punch (1998) the aim of case study research is to develop as full an understanding as possible of the case. Relevant to this study, some commentators identify case study research as being especially suited to exploratory research (Silverman, 2010). A defining feature of the case study approach is the use of multiple sources and multiple data gathering techniques with a wealth of information collected to provide a detailed understanding of the case in question. Typically, data tends to be qualitative, though quantitative data can also be collected.

The research employed a case study approach operating at two levels of analysis. One level of analysis looked at neighbourhood planning across a city, Leeds in West Yorkshire, and a second focused down to look at the implementation of neighbourhood planning in three communities within that city - Communities A, B and C. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 present the cases and the rationale behind their selection.

A range of data sources and data gathering techniques were employed in the research:

Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Leeds and the case study communities (approx. 14 in total). These stakeholders included: local authority officers, planning consultants, elected members, representatives from the Government appointed support providers, individuals participating in neighbourhood planning in the three case study communities and community group members in areas debating the merits of neighbourhood planning. Appendix B presents the broad talking points used in these interviews.

Non-participant observation of neighbourhood planning meetings, training sessions, consultation events and information sessions held within the three communities and across Leeds. Primarily, this entailed non-participant observation of neighbourhood planning meetings held within the three case study communities where residents met to discuss and progress work on their NPs. Detailed field notes were compiled and then analysed.

Documentary analysis of community produced planning literature. This included analysis of questionnaires, project plans, information leaflets, websites, newsletters, meeting minutes and meeting agendas produced by the three case study communities. There was also some additional analysis of literature produced by other communities in Leeds pursuing NPs.

Small scale survey of the ‘core’ participants in the three case study communities, these being the individuals who regularly attended neighbourhood planning meetings and accounted for most of the NP work completed within each community. The survey explored the characteristics of the core participants. As one might understand involvement in the construction of an NP as a form of civic participation or volunteering, the literature on the determinants of participation and volunteering influenced the survey design (see Chapter 2). Appendix C presents the survey.

An analysis of socioeconomic data from the 2011 Census. From this data, descriptive statistics were compiled to provide information on the characteristics of the communities pursuing NPs in Leeds. Data was collected for the communities at Output Area (OA) and Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level from the website Neighbourhood Statistics, an online data resource provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS, [n.d]a). OAs and LSOAs are geographic units created for the output of

census estimates. OAs are the lowest geographical level at which census estimates are provided (ONS, [n.d]b).

The research focused on the implementation of neighbourhood planning within Leeds between October 2012 and March 2013. It provides a snapshot then of how a city, and several communities within that city, engaged with this new regime over a 6 month period.

3.2 THE CASE STUDY CITY

The Leeds Metropolitan District recorded a population of just over 750,000 in the 2011 Census (ONS, 2012a). It is the second largest metropolitan district in England and is one of the country's eight core cities, these being the eight largest city economies outside London. The population is concentrated in the main urban area, but there are also a number of free standing settlements including market towns and smaller villages, some of which have expanded to become commuter settlements, and many of which are civil parishes (Land Use Consultants, 1994).

Neighbourhood planning has been enthusiastically adopted by a number of communities in Leeds. Government appointed support providers, including Planning Aid and the CPRE, have provided training to some of these communities, while the City Council has developed and implemented a number of measures in response to the new duties placed on local planning authorities by neighbourhood planning. By focusing on Leeds, then, there is the opportunity to explore how neighbourhood planning is unfolding within a series of communities, how Government appointed support providers are assisting these communities and how a local planning authority is responding to this new 'grassroots' planning regime. Appendix D provides a demographic and socioeconomic profile of Leeds.

Local planning issues

Two thirds of Leeds is designated green belt (Land Use Consultants, 1994), however, to accommodate the scale of housing and economic growth identified as being necessary within the city's emerging Core Strategy, a selective review of the green belt is proposed (Leeds City Council, 2012b). Spatial Policy 10 Green Belt, in the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Changes document, published in December 2012 for consultation, reports that the review will consider green belt release around the main urban area, several major settlements and a series of specified smaller settlements.

Over the last 9 years, approximately 2,800 dwellings have been built, on average, each year within Leeds (Leeds City Council, 2012c). The annual completion rate peaked in 2008/09 at around 3,800 dwellings but dropped back to less than 1,700 in 2010/11 (Leeds City Council, 2012c: 33). The Core Strategy notes the impact of the recession on development rates and comments that "it is clear that house building in Leeds needs to significantly increase" (Leeds City Council, 2012b: 6).

To address housing demand and need, the emerging Core Strategy identifies a net housing requirement of 70,000 new homes across the district between 2012 and 2028 (Leeds City Council, 2012b). It is anticipated that a proportion of this requirement will be delivered on small and unidentified sites and so the Core Strategy intends to identify 66,000 units (gross), 62,000 (net), for housing delivery over the lifetime of the plan (Leeds City Council, 2012d: 34). The intention is to direct the majority of this housing towards the main urban area and existing settlements, with brownfield sites favoured over greenfield sites. For the first 5 years of the plan, the target is for 65% of housing to be delivered on previously developed land, however, in subsequent years, the target drops to 55%, as it is reported, "more greenfield land...will be needed to sustain the housing supply" (Leeds City Council, 2012b: 39).

Leeds is divided into 11 Housing Market Characteristic Areas. These are thought to represent functional housing market areas and they take into account "topographical and settlement spatial definitions" (Re'new, 2012: 4). The proposed 66,000 units will be distributed across these 11 areas with each accepting a different number and proportion of units. The Core Strategy Publication Draft February 2012 reports, for instance, that the City Centre Housing Market Characteristic Area will accommodate 15.5% of the total housing requirement (Leeds City Council, 2012d). Work is progressing on the 2012 update of the Leeds Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

(SHLAA) - a technical exercise that assesses the amount of land which could be made available for housing development. This exercise will help to identify, specifically, where in the Housing Market Characteristic Areas housing allocations will be located.

As in many towns and cities, in Leeds housing need is an issue with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2011) identifying an annual need of 1,158 affordable housing units (Leeds City Council, 2012b: 42). To help address this need, Policy H5 Affordable Housing, in the emerging Core Strategy, reports that affordable housing will be sought at all new residential developments either onsite, off site or as a financial contribution. For developments of between 10 and 15 dwellings, onsite affordable housing will normally be sought.

The emerging Core Strategy identifies a requirement for approximately 706,000 sq. meters of office floorspace and 490 hectares of general employment land for uses such as industrial and distribution/warehousing over the plan period (Leeds City Council, 2012d). The intention is to direct the majority of office space towards the city centre and certain town centres. For general industrial and warehousing, development will be supported in existing locations while new allocations will be identified in accessible locations in the main urban area, at major settlements, smaller settlements, regeneration areas and urban extensions.

Besides setting out employment land and housing requirements, the Core Strategy includes policies on design, conservation, retail provision, the provision and protection of green infrastructure, carbon dioxide emissions at new buildings, sustainable design and construction, renewable energy and flood risk.

A Site Allocations DPD is currently being prepared. The 2012 update of the SHLAA (mentioned earlier) will feed into this document. The document will set out housing, employment, retail and greenspace allocations across the district. It is anticipated that a public consultation on 'Issues and Options' will take place in Spring 2013 with the document submitted for independent examination in 2014. For the Core Strategy, currently the expectation is that it will be submitted for independent examination in late 2013.

In addition to the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD, Leeds is preparing the Aire Valley Area Action Plan (AAP). Together, these three documents will form the city's statutory development plan. The AAP covers part of the Lower Aire Valley, encompassing the area between Leeds city centre and the M1, taking in parts of the city centre, Hunslet and Richmond Hill, and is concerned with encouraging housing and employment development, by promoting the area as an Urban Eco Settlement (Leeds City Council, [n.d]a). This is defined as a settlement that provides higher standards of energy efficiency and design (Leeds City Council, 2011).

Leeds has adopted, or is developing, around 17 SPDs covering a range of subjects including design, community safety, tall buildings, biodiversity and affordable housing (Leeds City Council, [n.d]b). These documents will be material considerations in planning decisions.

Until the Core Strategy, Site Allocations DPD and Aire Valley AAP are adopted, the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review (2006) remains the statutory development plan for the district. This document contains strategic policies on land use and development. It includes policies on issues like housing, employment land, transport, green space, leisure, tourism and retail provision, while it also includes site specific policies.

Community Infrastructure Levy

Leeds City Council is currently preparing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule was published for consultation in March 2013 with the intention being to have the CIL in place by April 2014. The CIL, which is optional for local planning authorities, is a new levy introduced by the Government which can be applied to new development. The levy is intended to support development by funding infrastructure. When selecting CIL rates, local planning authorities must ensure that the rates are high enough to make a good contribution towards infrastructure provision but not high enough to make development unviable (Leeds City Council, 2013a)

In Leeds, the CIL will be charged per square metre on most new development based on use and location. At the time of writing, no decisions had been made on the detailed arrangements of how and where to spend the CIL funds (Leeds City Council, 2013a).

The draft charging schedule identifies different rates for different uses and for different areas within the city. Evidence of different levels of economic viability provides the basis upon which local planning authorities can develop differential CIL rates. The highest rate, £248 per square meter, is proposed for large, out-of-city-centre retail developments of 500 square meters and over (Leeds City Council, 2013b). Residential development anywhere in the city will be subject to the levy but different rates apply in different areas with four 'charging zones' proposed. In the 'City Centre' and the 'Inner Area' Zones, the proposed levy is £5 per square meter, while in the 'Outer Northern Zone' the proposed levy rises to £90 per square meter (Leeds City Council, 2013b).

Relevant to neighbourhood planning, Government has announced that areas with an adopted NP are entitled to 25% of the CIL funds raised on local development. Where the qualifying body is a parish or town council, 25% of the CIL funds are paid to this organisation. Where the qualifying body is a neighbourhood forum, the 25% is retained by the local planning authority and it is meant to consult with the local community to determine spending priorities. Areas without NPs can only claim 15% of the CIL funds.

National Planning Issues

Local policy, which includes any neighbourhood plans, sits beneath and must reflect national planning policy. Until recently, it also needed to reflect the content of regional planning policy, occurring in the guise of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). However, Government is in the process of abolishing this layer of policy. Relevant to Leeds, in February 2013, the Yorkshire and Humber RSS was partially revoked, with policies on the Green Belt around the City of York being the only items retained.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the NPPF (2012) discusses Government's planning policies for England. It includes policies on preparing development plans and deciding planning applications. It features policies that relate to a raft of issues including economic development, town centres, the rural economy, transport, housing, design, the natural environment (including the Green Belt), the historic environment and the use of minerals.

For Government, at the "heart" of the NPPF, running through it like a "golden thread", is the presumption in favour of sustainable development (DCLG, 2012c: 4). For plan making this means that local planning authorities should positively seek to meet the "objectively assessed" development needs of their area, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to "rapid change" (DCLG, 2012c: 4). For the determination of planning applications, it means approving applications that "accord with the development plan without delay" and, in instances where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless there are liable to be significant adverse impacts, or policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted (DCLG, 2012c: 4).

The presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to NPs. This means that communities developing NPs should:

- Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in a local planning authority's Local Plan, including policies for housing and economic development
- Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan
- Identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable developments that are consistent with their neighbourhood plan to proceed (DCLG, 2012c: pp 4-5)

When it was published, in March 2012, local planning authorities were given 12 months to resolve any conflicts that might exist between their Local Plans and the NPPF. After the 12 month period, the NPPF required decision-takers, when determining planning applications, to give "due weight" to relevant policies in existing Local Plans "according to their degree of consistency" with the NPPF

stating that “the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given” (DCLG, 2012c: 48). The NPPF also comments that “decision takers may give weight to emerging plans” according to “the stage of preparation of the emerging plan... the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies...[and]... the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in [the] Framework” (DCLG, 2012c: 48). In Leeds, the UDP was prepared pre-NPPF while the Core Strategy, Site Allocations DPD and Aire Valley AAP, which are being prepared in light of the NPPF, are yet to be adopted. Compared to a local planning authority with an adopted Local Plan that was prepared to reflect all tenets of the NPPF, the role of the NPPF in planning decisions in Leeds may well be greater.

3.3 THE CASE STUDY COMMUNITIES

Across Leeds, the first cohort of communities to gain neighbourhood area status were relatively affluent civil parishes in rural and semi-rural settings. Across England, the DCLG (2012b) reports that most of the Front Runner communities are rural, civil parishes. Of the case study communities, Communities B and C can be identified as small, affluent, rural civil parishes. Community A is a contrast of sorts as it is a larger and more deprived area, although it too is a civil parish in a semi-rural setting. It was thought interesting to explore how neighbourhood planning is being implemented within what might be considered ‘typical’ communities, in the context of neighbourhood planning, i.e. Communities B and C, and a somewhat ‘a-typical’ community, i.e. Community A. It was also thought that by including this set of communities, there would be opportunities to extrapolate findings to a wider variety of areas.

The three communities are each pursuing NDPs rather than NDOs. As each is a civil parish, the qualifying body in all three is the local parish council. However, in each community, a separate NP Group, associated with the parish council, but featuring local residents in addition to parish councillors, is taking the lead on plan preparation. Chapter 4 says more about who is leading the plan in each community.

The three communities are all located outside the main urban area of Leeds in, as mentioned before, rural or semi-rural settings. They differ in size with Community A featuring a total resident population of around 10,000, Community B almost 700 and Community C approximately 2,000, at the time of the 2011 Census. Relative to Community A, Communities B and C feature a slightly older population with a larger proportion of residents holding higher educational qualifications and a larger proportion located in Classes 1 and 2 of the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification system (Class 1 being higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations and Class 2 being lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations). Across all areas, the vast majority of residents are homeowners although, relative to Community A, the proportions are larger in Communities B and C.

The majority of dwellings in Communities B and C are detached houses with almost 80% of dwellings in Community B being detached properties. Many houses in Community B are substantial dwellings set in large plots whereas in Communities A and C there is a greater mix of properties including detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, cottages and bungalows. All three communities feature very small proportions of flats, proportions far below the national and citywide averages.

A large part of Community B, and part of Community C, are designated Conservation Areas and both have recently adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans in place. All three communities are bordered in part by open countryside / open fields. Community A, as a larger community, features a number of services and facilities such as a small high street, a supermarket, pubs, schools, cafes, hot food take-aways, a leisure centre and a public library. Community C features a small number of facilities such as a pub, primary school, public library, community centre and shop, while Community B is almost entirely residential with very few facilities.

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IN PRACTICE

This chapter presents the study's main empirical findings. Discussion is orientated around a number of key themes which emerged during the course of the research. These themes include: the geography of neighbourhood planning; support, advice and training; the scale and nature of participation in communities; resources and networks; interests and concerns, and challenges and rewards in neighbourhood planning (i.e. the experience of neighbourhood planning). Attention generally focuses on the experiences of the three case study communities, though the first section considers neighbourhood planning across Leeds.

4.1 THE GEOGRAPHY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

At the beginning of March 2013, across Leeds, 13 communities had been designated as neighbourhood areas and a further four were applying to be designated as neighbourhood areas (Appendix E identifies these communities). Various other communities are in the process of developing applications to be designated as neighbourhood areas or have expressed a general interest in neighbourhood planning. This chapter, though, focuses on just those 17 communities which have taken the crucial step of being designated, or applying to be designated, as neighbourhood areas.

Noticeable, are the many similarities between the 17 communities. All bar one is a civil parish with a functioning parish or town council. Consequently, the qualifying body in 16 of the communities is an existing local government body. All communities are located outside the main urban area, with many having a rural or semi-rural setting. Virtually all are located in the Outer Northern Zone of Leeds, as defined for the purposes of the proposed CIL charging scheme (see Chapter 3). This zone, relative to the three other zones which cover Leeds, attracts the highest proposed levy on residential development. Consequently, if the NPs proposed in these communities are adopted, the relevant parish and town councils will have access to a quarter of any 'high', in a district wide context, CIL funds raised through housing development.

Most of the communities are relatively small, with nine having a population of less than 2,000, although three feature much larger populations of between 10,000 and 19,000. Government's two impact assessments on neighbourhood planning had assumed that neighbourhood areas would, on average, equate to the size of an electoral ward, although there was an appreciation that in practice areas would differ in size (DCLG, 2011a). The Office of National Statistics (ONS) reports that, on average, an electoral ward features a population of 5,500 persons (ONS, [n.d]c). Consequently, within Leeds, it appears that neighbourhood planning is being taken forward in areas that are noticeably smaller and, on a few occasions, noticeably larger than the estimate used to judge the potential impacts of NPs. Perhaps this raises questions about the relative robustness of some of the assumptions underpinning these impact assessments.

Looking at the demographics of the areas, again there are many similarities between the communities. Interestingly, each exhibits traits often associated with volunteering and participation. Neighbourhood planning could be seen as a type of civic participation or volunteering. It has often been found, and reported, as noted in Chapter 2, that education (higher qualifications), tenure (homeownership) and age (being older), are associated with these activities, while some studies have linked affluence to participation and/or the presence of voluntary groups.

The 17 areas all feature above national average proportions of homeowners. Across all areas, on average 80% of households are homeowners with the proportion ranging from a low of 70% to a high of just over 90%. Across Leeds, the proportion was 59% in the 2011 Census, and across England and Wales, it was 64%.

The 17 areas all feature relatively large proportions of older adults, identified here as adults aged 60 and over. In fact, in seven of the communities, around a third of the population are aged 60 and over. Across Leeds, the proportion of residents in this age group totalled 20% in the 2011 Census, and across England and Wales it was 22%.

All bar one of the 17 areas feature an above average proportion of residents with higher educational qualifications. Across 16 of the areas, the proportion of residents with a Level 4 or above qualification, which includes degrees and higher degrees, ranges from a low of 28% to a high of 50%. Across Leeds, and also across England and Wales, approximately 27% of adults have a Level 4 or above qualification.

All 17 areas can be described as less deprived communities, although one is rather deprived in parts. Some of the areas are, in fact, really rather affluent. For example, in 13 of the areas, at least 40% of the dwelling stock falls into the top four council tax bands (Bands E, F, G and H), while in six areas, 50% or more of residents are located in Classes 1 and 2 of the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification system (see 3.3 for details of these Classes).

It seems, then, that the kind of areas developing NPs are the kind of areas which are often the site of voluntary and community group activity and they host populations which exhibit traits often associated with volunteering and participation.

Interestingly, the majority of the 17 areas have past experience of community planning. 16 have produced parish plans, design guides or design statements, and/or have participated in the preparation of a local Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Consequently, it seems NPs are being taken forward in areas which have some familiarity with the planning system and community-led planning.

There seems to be no indication of developers supporting any of the 17 areas in neighbourhood planning. Government's first impact assessment on NPs mentioned the potential for developers to approach communities "with an offer of financial support to promote a neighbourhood plan which explicitly identifies a specific development proposal of the kind that the developer would wish to take forward" (DCLG, 2011a: 10).

It seems all 17 areas are pursuing NDPs rather than NDOs, with Leeds City Council commenting that, across the city, interest has been greatest in the former type of document (Leeds City Council, 2012a: 178). Some of the cost savings that Government has associated with neighbourhood planning derive from the reduced need to produce planning applications for certain types of development in areas with NDOs. Government's impact assessments on neighbourhood planning assumed that 10% of NPs would be NDOs (DCLG, 2012b: 2). The experience to date in Leeds perhaps suggests this 10% estimate will prove optimistic.

4.2 ADVICE, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Communities in Leeds are supported in neighbourhood planning by the local planning authority and by government appointed support providers. The CPRE and Planning Aid have both provided advice and training to a number of areas.

Leeds City Council has taken a proactive approach to respond to the new rights and duties created through neighbourhood planning. It has been a topic of discussion in various council meetings including Executive Board meetings. Four areas were put forward for the Government's Front Runners scheme (Chapter 1), with officers reporting that participation represented a useful learning exercise (Crabtree and Harwood, 2011). A steering group, comprising representatives from various council departments, has been created to ensure the Council meets its legal requirements around neighbourhood planning. A neighbourhood planning team has been created within the planning department with officers providing direct support to communities through meetings, visits, phone calls, emails etc. The Chief Planning Officer has stated that "additional resources [have] been made available to fund temporary staff to work on neighbourhood plans" (Garlick, 2012). The neighbourhood planning team has advised on proposed neighbourhood area boundaries and, in two cases, has recommended, or is recommending, alternative boundaries to those originally proposed by the qualifying body. In these instances, there are issues around, variously, including strategic housing development sites in a neighbourhood area, the presence of 'natural' barriers bisecting a proposed area (e.g. major roads), and the potential for residents of a neighbouring settlement to be included in the NP referendum - which may introduce the 'risk' that individuals not involved in preparing the plan could vote against it. Interestingly, and perhaps uniquely, the neighbourhood planning team has been

required to work in partnership with an adjoining local planning authority to designate a neighbourhood area that extends across administrative boundaries.

A draft guidance note on neighbourhood planning was published by the Council's neighbourhood planning team in June 2012. The note provides detailed information on what neighbourhood planning is and the processes involved in producing NPs. At times, though, it uses specialist terminology and refers to tasks and activities which may prove unfamiliar to the general reader. This perhaps reduces its accessibility. For example, it mentions that the NP "must satisfy the examiner that equality issues have been considered from the start" and advises communities to develop an 'implementation plan' for their NP (Leeds City Council, 2012). Though never mentioned in the neighbourhood planning meetings at the three case study communities, members of the NP Groups in Communities C and B were aware of this guidance. Importantly, the guidance presents the City Council's interpretation of the new 'duty to support' (mentioned in the Localism Act – see Chapter 1). Under this duty, the Council will (Leeds City Council, 2012: [n.d]):

- Enhance existing working relationships with town and parish councils and build new relationships with neighbourhood forums
- Meet local communities interested in neighbourhood planning at an early stage, setting out the general and area specific level of support that can be provided
- Assist local communities to prepare a plan that will be fit for independent examination. This will include advising on planning issues and ensuring that other issues are 'joined up'
- Attend briefings and meetings (subject to officer availability)
- Provide advice and mediate as required
- Advise on consultation and engagement
- Provide advice on how neighbourhood planning can support regeneration, service delivery and other matters

In addition, the guidance reports that the City Council will support all communities with specific requests for technical assistance by providing copies of:

- Area and site plans
- Technical reports/extracts
- Technical information held on sites
- Any other technical information that is in the public domain

A neighbourhood planning launch event was organised by Leeds City Council in conjunction with Planning Aid in October 2012. Around 90 delegates attended including many representatives from communities developing or considering NPs, plus individuals from agencies that work with and in communities. This event raised awareness of neighbourhood planning through a number of presentations from officers, elected members and representatives from DCLG and Planning Aid. Plus, it featured workshop activities, facilitated by members of Planning Aid, where delegates could explore, through discussion, some of the challenges involved in developing NPs. Perhaps revealing the concerns of the event organisers, the issues addressed in the workshops included: consultation and engagement with the wider community, the third sector, engaging with the business sector, how to set up a neighbourhood forum, CIL, place making and achieving sustainable housing growth. A question and answer session held at the end of the event highlighted the range of issues that were of interest to delegates. Questions touched on the status of NPs in decision making, the support available to communities, funding, the definition of sustainability, potential tensions arising from the need for allocated sites in NPs to be both sustainable and viable, the potential for NPs to address social issues and how to engage all parts of the community, including business, in neighbourhood planning.

Prompting Leeds City Council's proactive approach seems to be the perception that, without a defined 'offer', certain communities, with the ability to quickly take up the opportunities provided through neighbourhood planning, will 'capture' the council's resources, resulting in less support being available for other communities. This issue was identified as a key risk in a report to the Council's Executive Board in November 2011:

> *"If we do not develop an overall approach and 'offer' to respond to neighbourhood planning council resources may become focused on supporting and advising the outer more affluent areas of the city that have, or are able to, bring in resources and expertise in their local area. This may leave other areas behind and make them more vulnerable to developers and consultants who may not have their best interests at heart"* (Crabtree and Harwood, 2011: Para. 4.6.2)

Case study Communities B and C have been supported in neighbourhood planning by a council officer who operates specifically in their area. Both claim this officer has been extremely helpful in raising awareness of neighbourhood planning and providing advice and support on the neighbourhood planning process. Community B also mentioned the support and advice provided by a local ward councillor. Additionally, Communities B and C meet, periodically, with a number of other communities in Outer Leeds pursuing NPs to share experiences. These meetings are organised by a local ward councillor and the aforementioned officer. For Community A, support primarily derives from the Council's neighbourhood planning team and, more recently, Planning Aid.

Community A, similar to some communities in Leeds but differing from Communities B and C, has requested and received training on neighbourhood planning. To date, it has received a number of training sessions from Planning Aid looking at issues like the community's 'fitness' to neighbourhood plan, the neighbourhood planning experiences of other communities, the basics of project management and key steps in preparing an NP. Training sessions were relaxed and informal and featured a combination of presentations and workshop activities facilitated by Planning Aid representatives. There were many opportunities for individuals to raise questions. Revealing the concerns of Community A, questions touched on the independent examination process, the referendum, funding, the timescales associated with developing NPs and the role of the local planning authority.

Besides seeking training and support, for Community A there seems to be an interest in seeking and taking *direction* in neighbourhood planning, an interest which seems less evident (though still present) in Communities B and C. Though these latter communities were in frequent contact with council officers, they seemed more confident in their understanding of neighbourhood planning and in their ability to take actions to quickly progress their plans. Indeed, discussed later, Communities B and C have progressed far further in neighbourhood planning than Community A. An interesting example of Community A's willingness to take direction occurred when it assessed local SHLAA sites to support the council's ongoing SHLAA exercise (Chapter 3 describes this exercise). The community reported that, where sites had been flagged as unsuitable for development, they had been advised by officers to identify alternative development sites and they appear to have adopted this approach. Communities B and C also undertook initial assessments of local SHLAA sites. However, where sites were flagged as being unsuitable for development, and many were, it seems these communities did not choose to identify any alternative potential development sites.

The three communities have received, often from officers, various information notes and leaflets etc. on neighbourhood planning. Community A held a large selection of neighbourhood planning literature from various sources and items were occasionally handed out at neighbourhood planning meetings. However, these materials were rarely discussed within the meetings and so it is unclear how, and even if, they were being used. In Community C, an NP Group Member spoke about being "bombarded" with information and simply not having the time to read all that was provided. However, other members in Community C spoke about actively researching neighbourhood planning, and associated issues, through the internet. These members spoke about using the internet to track the progress of neighbourhood planning in other communities, explore funding opportunities and identify guidance on designing community questionnaires.

A number of communities in Leeds have been approached by consultants offering to develop an NP for a fee. In some communities, certain individuals have objected to this and have been keen to steer these consultants away. Other communities, though, have hired consultants to undertake specific activities. In Community B, consultants were commissioned to complete a traffic survey while Community A is interested in hiring consultants to analyse questionnaire data, once a community questionnaire has been developed and distributed. In Community C, all activities have, so far, been completed by members of the NP Group. It was thought consultants might only be needed to review and finalise the plan. Discussed in more detail later, the NP Groups in Communities C and B featured a host of individuals with the skills and experience necessary to develop websites, design questionnaires, analyse questionnaire findings, produce professional presentations and readily comprehend policy, legislative requirements, planning issues and the development process. Consequently, these communities seemed able to undertake many activities 'in-house' and so, bar something highly technical like a traffic survey, the need to employ external consultants may well be reduced.

4.3 SCALE AND NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITIES

In each case study community, a dedicated NP Group, associated with the local parish council, is leading on the NP. Within this group, a core set of individuals account for the majority of work undertaken. In Community B, a distinct drafting committee comprising eight members takes the lead on the NP with work and decisions ratified by a larger NP steering group where membership is open to anyone within the community. Attendance at monthly steering group meetings is sizable, varying from between 30 to 45 people. In Community A, there is a core committee of eight individuals which meets infrequently. Work on the NP occurs in monthly public meetings where members of this core committee sit alongside anyone who chooses to attend and decisions are taken collectively. Four or five of the most regular attendees initiate work on discrete tasks, often working independently, and then present preliminary outputs to the wider group in the monthly public meetings. This wider group then discusses the outputs and suggests ways to develop them further, sometimes going away to reflect and then report back suggestions at subsequent meetings. Community C has a large NP steering group of 21 members. There are monthly steering group meetings and these are open to the public. During the period of the study, however, in only one meeting was a member of the public present. Attendance at the steering group meetings ranges from 6 to 16 people, though most of the work seems to be undertaken by six or seven individuals.

Community A spoke about declining levels of participation mentioning that initial public meetings had attracted around 20 people but, since then, attendance had dropped to 8 or 9 people. Community C was also concerned about levels of participation. Perhaps, though, the meeting schedule adopted by the communities affected participation rates. NP meetings in all three communities were typically held on weekday evenings, beginning at 7.30 pm or 8.30 pm and lasting for about an hour. People who work late or in the evenings, or have caring duties, or the very old may struggle to attend such meetings. In Community A, to try and encourage participation, the meeting venue was changed from a community room to a social club. However, this change of venue did not seem to alter participation rates.

Members of Communities A and C spoke about work 'falling' on a small number of people and felt this proved draining and taxing on these individuals. In Community A, it was mentioned that the plan stalled for a period because the individuals who drove it forward had various other commitments to attend to at that time. In three communities considering the merits of NPs, members of community groups identified the potential for a small number of people to become responsible for the majority of the work as a 'problem' which undermines the appeal of NPs. There were concerns about finding sufficient people with the time, energy and commitment to take on the tasks associated with neighbourhood planning.

Focusing on the individuals taking forward neighbourhood planning in the three case study communities, many display characteristics associated with volunteering and participation. A short survey was distributed to the members of the drafting committee in Community B, and the attendees at a monthly NP meeting in Communities A and C. A total of 23 responses were collected across the three communities (Appendix C for the survey). Findings revealed that all participants were homeowners and the majority were older adults with 70% aged 59 and over. As discussed earlier, and

in Chapter 2, age and tenure have been associated with participation and volunteering. Interestingly, however, 9% of participants were aged between 26 and 36 and 13% were aged between 37 and 47. These younger participants were all located in Community C. Almost 75% of participants were established residents having lived in the local area for 11 years or more. Some studies have found that length of residence is associated with participation and volunteering with established residents being more likely to participate (Mohan, 2012; Scott et al., 2007; Short et al., 1986). Interestingly again, 17% of respondents were relatively short term residents having lived in the local area for less than five years. Again, these participants were mainly located in Community C. Perhaps surprisingly, the majority of participants (70%) were male. Some studies have suggested that women are more likely to participate and volunteer than men (Mohan, 2012). Other interesting findings were that the majority of respondents (65%) participated in other voluntary or community group activities, and the majority (74%) had some past planning experience such as commenting on a planning application or contributing to the preparation of a parish plan. The majority of people who are leading on neighbourhood planning in the three communities are, then, familiar with volunteering / participation, and with the planning system.

The three case study communities are keen to encourage wider participation in their neighbourhood planning activities and, to this end, have made and continue to make various attempts to raise awareness about, and communicate information on, their work. Across the three communities there is, variously, use of websites, social media, adverts in the local media, direct contact with particular stakeholders (such as local landowners and schools), leaflet drops, public meetings and information events. Community A, in fact, has an information point in the local library. At neighbourhood planning meetings in Community C, it was often commented that the independent examiner will be particularly interested in the efforts made by the group to engage with all parts of the community. This perception helped prompt a brainstorming session in one meeting where the group explored methods to encourage participation and engagement. All communities upload meeting minutes and agendas to a community or parish council website. The website of Community B also provides a host of additional information such as the outputs from evidence gathering activities. The availability of this information perhaps supports a kind of passive participation where members of the wider community can learn about the progress of their area's NP without actually attending meetings. However, it is unclear how extensively each community's website or webpages are used. In Community C, where this issue was discussed, members commented on poor use of the website.

Communities B and C have developed and distributed a questionnaire to engage the wider community in their planning activities. Both intend to use the findings as the basis for their NP. To supplement the questionnaire, Community C held an open day where members of the community could meet members of the steering group and discuss neighbourhood planning. Community A also intends to employ a questionnaire and is currently developing one. Communities B and C gained a high response rate for their questionnaires, 52% for Community B and around 47% for Community C. In terms of the demographics of these respondents, it seems many were older adults. In Community B, for instance, 50% of respondents were aged 55 or over. The group noted that this placed their survey findings in a 'particular context'. Community B also produced a separate young persons' survey for the under 18s and distributed this alongside their main survey. Around 26 young people completed the survey. In Community C, there was some concern about the age profile of survey respondents. The group was keen to include young people in the NP but there was some uncertainty about techniques for engaging with this demographic.

Communities B and C have developed provisional or draft project plans which plot tasks and milestones for the completion of their NPs. Following the innovative questionnaire stage, these project plans propose a rather traditional approach for engaging with the wider community. Both intend to develop draft policy proposals and then present these to the wider community for comment and review. It seems, then, that consultation, an almost institutionalised approach to public engagement in plan-making (Chapter 2), will feature in the neighbourhood planning activities of these communities.

4.4 RESOURCES AND NETWORKS

Networks can be defined as the “relational links through which people can obtain access to material resources, knowledge and power” (Hillier, 2000: 35). For Hillier (2000: 35), a “major factor” leading to inequalities between individuals, and their capacity to shape policy outcomes, may lie in “the socioeconomic and political richness of the networks to which they have access”.

Focusing on the case study communities, relative to Community A, Communities B and C appear to have access to ‘rich’ networks which are aiding their neighbourhood planning activities. The NP Groups in both these communities contain many skilled professionals and retired professionals in fields such as property, law, business, project management, health and IT. Individuals have been able to employ their skills and knowledge to deliver high quality outputs such as a detailed questionnaire and a thorough analysis of it. In Community B, a number of individuals with property and law backgrounds have been important in ensuring the group meets the legal requirements of neighbourhood planning. At steering group meetings, the individuals with a property background have been able to explain complex planning terms and concepts helping to build knowledge across the group. Community A contains some professionals, with backgrounds in business and education, but they seem fewer in number than in Communities B and C. It is perhaps interesting that within Community A, these professionals volunteer to take ownership of some of the more ‘technical’ tasks such as drafting a project plan and designing a questionnaire.

Each case study community is connected to a parish council. This has provided access to an existing website and parish newsletter to promote the NP, a clerk for administrative tasks, and, significantly, an existing organisational structure that could be readily designated as a qualifying body. A planning consultant interviewed for the study reported that the process of establishing a neighbourhood forum in areas without parish and town councils can be lengthy owing to the need to sign up 21 members. Determining the nature of the relationship between the NP Group and the parish council has been an issue in Community C. There were debates about whether it should be established as a formal sub-committee. In Community A, the work of the NP Group appears on the agenda of all parish council meetings to clearly demonstrate links between the group and the council. In Community B, a formal letter was received by the group from the parish council instructing it to develop the NP on its behalf. Access to a parish council also potentially provides access to the parish precept. Communities B and C have been provided with an element of funding from their parish councils. In Community C, the parish council paid for the community questionnaire. In Community B, links to local businesses meant that the community questionnaire was printed free of charge. In Community B, the parish council has provided funding to cover the running costs of the NP Group, such as the cost of stationary and room hire. In Community A, it is unclear if the parish council has committed funds to the NP. Members of the NP Group spoke, for instance, about printing out materials at their own expense.

As discussed earlier, Communities B and C have access to a council officer who focuses on their area and who has been instrumental in providing support on neighbourhood planning. They also attend meetings with other communities in Outer Leeds developing NPs to share experiences. Community B also has connections to a local ward councillor who has been important in flagging up certain planning issues. Communities B and C appear then to benefit from a wider support network than Community A which has, to date, been principally supported by the Council’s neighbourhood planning team, though it is now developing links to Planning Aid.

Communities B and C are affluent areas with many residents employed in traditionally high paying occupations (Chapter 3). If funds are needed to support the preparation of the NP, these communities will, then, be able to turn to a potentially wealthy populous. Indeed, a member of the NP Group in Community B noted, “we won’t be short of money; this is a very wealthy community”. To date, Community B has raised around £3,000 through a small number of local fundraising events and it has received some funding from a local amenity society.

4.5 INTERESTS AND CONCERNS

An analysis of the subjects discussed within the NP meetings held within each case study community points to the type of issues and concerns that occupy and motive each area's NP Group. In all communities, meetings cover a wide range of issues. For Communities A and C, discussion can sometimes wander away from the meeting agenda and incorporate subjects not always related to neighbourhood planning. The progress each community has made on their NP influences the issues discussed. Community B, for example, having undertaken a number of activities, has discussed survey findings, traffic survey findings and findings from meetings with local landowners. In Community A, being at a much earlier stage, meetings have covered the design and content of a community questionnaire and the potential content of a project plan. However, certain topics are discussed in all three communities. First, meetings will often involve one or two individuals reporting back on discussions held with local authority planning officers. There is some anxiety within the communities about 'getting things right'. There are concerns about making unintentional mistakes that may lead to an examiner rejecting their plan. There is a reliance on the local planning authority to provide the guidance and support necessary to ensure this outcome is avoided. Consequently, all communities discuss with officers their completed and proposed activities. The officers' views are then discussed within the NP meetings. Second, meetings often touch upon the issue of participation. There may be discussions about raising awareness, the response to a questionnaire and how to engage with particular segments of the community such as business interests or young people. Lastly, the local planning authority's ongoing SHLAA exercise is invariably mentioned in every NP meeting whether or not it is on the meeting agenda.

Communities B and C identified awareness of the SHLAA exercise, and knowledge of SHLAA sites within their immediate vicinity, as *the* galvanising factor in bringing residents together and creating a platform for the development of an NP. These communities were concerned about the potential scale and proximity of future house building if local SHLAA sites were to be included in the Council's Site Allocations DPD. Awareness of the SHLAA exercise prompted public meetings and, within these, a mandate to develop an NP emerged. These communities saw neighbourhood planning as an opportunity to influence the Site Allocations DPD (the City Council shares this view). Ward councillors and parish councillors appear to have been instrumental in raising awareness of the SHLAA exercise in the two communities. The model Davis (1991) presents for the genesis of a residents' group seems to have explanatory power for describing the process by which NP Groups emerged within these two communities. Davis (1991) argued that, for a residents' group to emerge, residents must first become aware of their interests in relation to their home and area, they must then realise that other residents in a similar situation share these interests, and, finally, they must actively organise into a group to pursue and/or defend these shared interests.

In Community A, it was only after work began on the NP that group members became aware of the Council's SHLAA exercise with officers encouraging them to undertake an assessment of local SHLAA sites. However, since becoming aware of the exercise, Community A makes frequent reference to SHLAA sites within NP meetings. The NP Group is concerned about the location of certain SHLAA sites. There is a worry that the development of these sites might lead to the community merging with its neighbours. Beyond the case study communities, concerns about housing development, and development more generally, seem to be present across a number of the 17 communities pursuing NPs in Leeds. One community's NP website comments that "non production of a Plan renders a community completely open to rife development without any effective cognisance of the community's concerns". In another, the application to be designated as a neighbourhood area states that the parish council "believes that it needs to act quickly to ensure the protection of the rural areas surrounding the historic centre of the village". However, while concerned about development, communities all seem to appreciate that NPs cannot be a block to all development - this issue was raised in meetings in all three case study communities.

In Communities B and C, analysing the community questionnaires designed by the NP Groups perhaps provides insights into the concerns and interests of group members. Picking out points of interest, neither featured questions on employment and economic development. Both included questions on education. In Community C, there seemed to be a focus on educational services for younger children with respondents asked to rate the adequacy of provision of 12 types of service where five were services for young children (e.g. nurseries, play groups etc.). In Community B, there

was an interest in the mode of transport children use to attend school with this issue raised in the adult and young persons' surveys. Community C's questionnaire made various references to the area's rural setting. In questions about features of the parish that people liked and felt were important, a number of the items respondents were asked to rate related to the countryside, open space and the rural environment. In both communities, the questionnaires included dedicated sections on housing. Both asked whether there was a need for additional housing with a range of housing options identified – e.g. period properties, Eco-homes, family houses. For both communities, attention focused on the views and behaviours of current residents, for example, Community B's questionnaire stated: "It is important to understand the potential housing requirements of current residents" (original emphasis). This narrow focus on the needs and interests of current residents perhaps raises questions about the potential for NPs to address the evolving needs of an area and to respond to change, such as that brought about by inward or out migration. Of note here, Community B's questionnaire explored the probability of respondents selling their home in the next 15 years. Around 65% of respondents claimed that they were possibly or likely to do so.

As the above discussion has alluded to, the questionnaires in Communities B and C explored a range of issues including housing, education, transport, local services, local facilities, highways and traffic, open space and the built environment. This range of interests perhaps suggests that the NPs produced by these communities will have rather expansive concerns.

4.6 ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

Across Leeds, communities are progressing in neighbourhood planning at noticeably different speeds. While some, such as Community B, are almost at the point of drafting certain aspects of their NP, others are only just at the stage of identifying a suitable neighbourhood area and/or assembling a neighbourhood forum. An early start does not mean that communities are further ahead in their NP activities. An inner city community selected as a Front Runner in early 2012 has yet to make an application to be designated as a neighbourhood area and is still in the process of developing a neighbourhood forum. In some communities, boundary issues have delayed progress as qualifying bodies continue to negotiate with the City Council over the extent of proposed neighbourhood areas (see 4.2).

The Regulations require that communities applying to be designated as neighbourhood areas provide a statement explaining why the area is considered appropriate. Across communities in Leeds, there is much variation in the depth and breadth of explanations provided. One parish council simply suggested that the whole parish be designated "so that no area of the parish is left out" while a town council suggested that the whole township needed to be designated because:

> "*Historically, and currently, it remains an identifiable unit; the separateness of the area has been, and is, consistent over time; the boundaries of the Township are clearly defined and the boundaries do not cross any electoral boundaries*"

The only neighbourhood forum to have applied for a neighbourhood area designation offered a relatively short justification for the proposed area. The application states that the "starting point" was an area covered by an existing design guide and then two additional areas were added. It was felt that these additional areas formed "important first impressions" of the community and therefore it was "appropriate" to "incorporate them into the neighbourhood plan" (Adel Neighbourhood Forum, 2012).

Across the case study communities, though all held initial public meetings at around the same time (March / April 2012), and all were designated neighbourhood areas in September 2012, they have progressed at quite different speeds. All have undertaken various awareness raising activities (see 4.3) with Communities B and C also moving forward with formal consultation exercises. Both have developed and distributed a community survey, Community B has analysed its findings and Community C is starting this process. Both communities have also held meetings with local stakeholders like schools and landowners. Community A is beginning to hold these stakeholder meetings. All three have undertaken initial assessments of local SHLAA sites and provided their findings to the local planning authority. Community B has commissioned, and received findings from, a traffic survey. All continue to organise regular NP meetings. Community A is developing a project plan to guide tasks on the NP and Community C is considering a draft plan produced by a group

member. Communities B and C, in particular, recognise that their NP must reflect the tenets of local strategic policy and are aware that Leeds has yet to adopt a Core Strategy while work continues on a Site Allocations DPD. In Leeds, it would seem that progress in neighbourhood planning is dependent to some extent on the City Council's timeline for adopting these documents. Communities B and C seem particularly aware of this.

In spite of the lack of an up to date strategic planning context, one community in Leeds, the village of Walton, has developed and published a draft NP (in April 2012). Much of this plan is concerned with identifying areas to protect from development, such as areas of Local Green Space, and suggesting areas, services and facilities which are in need of 'improvement'. For example, there is support for improving connectivity within the village partly by upgrading and providing new footpaths. In terms of development, the plan identifies two potential development sites, both for housing, and comments that they may be suitable for a maximum of 17 dwellings. The plan reports that due to the "likely significant development of affordable homes" on a SHLAA site near to the settlement, though located within a neighbouring parish, "the homes developed in Walton would not include affordable homes" (Walton Parish Council, 2012: 24).

4.7 THE EXPERIENCE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Across Leeds, for local communities, the local planning authority, support providers and other stakeholders, neighbourhood planning has been a learning experience, which at times has been rewarding and at times challenging.

Planning officers spoke about the challenges of developing a new way of working, where communities take the lead in plan-making and officers provide support and advice. It was claimed that some communities still seemed to want the local planning authority to undertake activities on their behalf. More positively, officers felt that the experience of neighbourhood planning could build and strengthen relationships between the council and local communities.

As discussed throughout this section, gaining and maintaining high levels of participation, and engaging all parts of the community in plan making, were ongoing challenges in the case study communities. Engaging with business interests, landowners and young people seemed to be particular issues. Communities were concerned about being able to demonstrate to the independent examiner that they had made efforts to encourage and widen participation. Specifically for neighbourhood forums, securing participation from 21 members is seen to be challenging with an inner city community in Leeds, selected as a Front Runner in early 2012, still working to establish a forum.

All communities struggled with understanding the regulations and requirements around neighbourhood planning, and sometimes planning more generally, and relied heavily on the local planning authority to explain unfamiliar issues and processes. Certain officers reported that it was sometimes difficult to provide this guidance owing to the phased release from Government of rules and regulations. There seemed to be a palpable anxiety amongst communities about inadvertently making mistakes, due to a misunderstanding or a lack of knowledge, which could lead to their plans being rejected by the independent examiner. Community C seemed particularly worried about this prospect, with most meetings making some reference to the potential ways in which an examiner might take issue with a plan. All communities seemed to seek assurances and reassurances from the local planning authority that what they were doing and proposing was 'correct'.

For Community A, assessing local SHLAA sites at first proved challenging. The local planning authority had provided a site assessment form which requested a large amount of information on the site being studied. The NP Group was unsure how to use this form and where to access some of the information it requested. For example, if the site was agricultural land, the form asked for details on the 'quality' of this land. The NP Group turned to the local planning authority for support. Officers visited the community and assisted members of the NP Group in an example site assessment and showed them how to complete the form. A guidance note was subsequently produced by officers to support other communities in their site assessment activities. The group subsequently completed assessments on all local SHLAA sites. Other challenges in Community A included setting up a bank account for the NP Group and finding out about the experiences of other communities pursuing NPs.

The NP Group wanted to set up a community group bank account but was unsure which banks provided this facility. This created some delay in actually opening an account. Unlike Communities B and C, Community A did not meet with other communities pursuing NPs to share experiences. A member of Community A thought this was disappointing believing it would be extremely valuable to exchange ideas and experiences with other areas.

In Community C, the task of analysing data from the various open ended questions included in their community survey proved perplexing. At several meetings, members discussed how they might analyse this data and there was obvious uncertainty about what might constitute a suitable approach. In Community A, worries about the potential difficulties of analysing open ended and multiple choice questions steered the NP Group away from including such questions in their community survey (which is under development).

In both Communities B and C, NP Group members seemed to find the experience of conducting the community questionnaire interesting and rewarding. Members enjoyed finding out the views of their wider community. In Community B, the results of the questionnaire were already prompting action. A key finding had been that residents wanted more opportunities for social interaction and, as a result, social events were being organised. A member of Community B's NP Group claimed that the process of developing an NP, by engaging with residents and others, was helping to "gel" the community together.

Negative perceptions about the potential experience of developing NPs, and concerns about the content and status of these documents, were, in some communities, serving to dampen interest in neighbourhood planning. Community group members in three areas currently debating the merits of neighbourhood planning expressed concerns about the potential for NPs to be overlooked in planning decisions, worries about the time, cost and effort involved in producing NPs, and uncertainty about the type of policies that might be expected or possible within these documents. One group member reported that the taxing experience of producing a neighbourhood design statement, and the limited status it was perceived to have in planning decisions, diluted the appeal of neighbourhood planning. Two group members were acutely aware of the evolving legislative environment and queried if changes in planning legislation would diminish the role and/or scope of NPs. These individuals were aware of proposals to extend permitted development rights for householders. They felt this would mean that an NP would be unable to deal with the type of development that can become an issue within their neighbourhoods. An elected member, interviewed for the study, also raised this potential change in legislation as an issue for neighbourhood planning. Finally, the community group members were concerned about the pro-growth focus of NPs and wondered if this would preclude the type of polices they might wish to create.

5. EVALUATING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

This chapter uses the claims, predications and ambitions, set out in Chapter 1, which Government and Ministers have made for neighbourhood planning as a set of criteria against which to evaluate neighbourhood planning. It draws on, and refers back to, discussion contained in the previous four chapters to explore how far neighbourhood planning, as it is being implemented within local communities, appears to be satisfying these 'measures'. However, whether these items *should* form the evaluation criteria for neighbourhood planning is a point of debate. In Arnstein's (1969) work, approaches to participation are evaluated, and ranked, according to the extent to which they transfer decision making authority to citizens (Chapter 2). Alternatively, those favouring a collaborative or communicative approach to planning would be interested in the opportunities neighbourhood planning affords for discussion and deliberation between multiple stakeholders (Chapter 2).

Analysis of the speeches given by the current and previous Planning Ministers (Appendix A for speeches), combined with an analysis of the Government's two impact assessments on neighbourhood planning (2011 and 2012), reveals the following claims, ambitions and predictions for the new regime:

5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IS COMPLETELY NEW

Ministers have presented neighbourhood planning as part of a radical "reboot" of the planning system where "fundamental wholesale change", underpinned by "a rethinking of how planning operates", is occurring (Clark, 2010a). Indeed, former Planning Minister Greg Clark (2010a) commented, "with neighbourhood planning, we are defining a new basic building block of planning". However, as discussed in Chapter 2, there are various similarities between neighbourhood planning and alternative contemporary approaches to community participation in planning. For example, the community-led nature of neighbourhood planning is evident in tools like parish plans, design guides and design statements. There are, though, many aspects of neighbourhood planning which are new. It has introduced a new type of statutory policy - the NDP. It has gifted new planning powers to town and parish councils providing them with the opportunity to create a document which could become part of the statutory development plan. It has created a new type of plan making body, the neighbourhood forum, and it has placed new duties on local planning authorities, duties which bring with them a new set of resource requirements (e.g. authorities must now fund local referendums on NPs). It has introduced a new process for adopting planning policy, the local referendum, and, finally, it has introduced a new justification for community participation in planning – that it will promote growth (Chapter 1). Overall, it would seem that while there are certainly many aspects of neighbourhood planning which appear new, there are also certain aspects which appear familiar.

5.2 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING TRULY DEVOLVES POWER TO COMMUNITIES

Government and Ministers have claimed that neighbourhood planning a) devolves power to local communities in a way the planning system has not previously done, and b) empowers communities to take greater control of planning decisions than ever before. For the previous Planning Minister, neighbourhood planning places "an unprecedented level of influence and power at a very local level" and "offers a scope of self-determination unheard of until now" (Clark, 2010b). This Minister has spoken about Government creating a new "localist moment, the greatest opportunity for decentralisation in decades" (Clark, 2010c). He has compared this to the 'centralising' approach of the last administration arguing, "we want to move away from a system with significant elements of imposition from above, to one with participation and involvement at its heart – not just warm words, or a commitment in principle, but real opportunities for people to have a say" (Clark, 2010b). The discussion in Chapters 1 to 3 suggests, however, that within neighbourhood planning communities are constrained in various ways.

There are various restrictions on the potential content of NPs. There are certain 'excluded developments' which they cannot include while they must conform to national and local strategic policy. Local planning authorities have a powerful role in neighbourhood planning, producing the policy and evidence NPs reflect and use, designating organisations as qualifying bodies, judging the appropriateness of proposed neighbourhood areas and holding the specialist knowledge and

expertise that communities rely upon to understand and implement neighbourhood planning. The independent examiner also has a powerful role, assessing draft NPs against the basic conditions that such documents must meet and proffering judgment on their 'acceptability' (Chapter 1). Under neighbourhood planning, communities are, then, provided with an opportunity to develop a land use plan or development order, but Government, local planning authorities and the independent examiner determine the issues and areas these instruments can legitimately cover, and the acceptability of the final proposals (though it is recognised that the independent examiner's recommendations are non-binding). Given this, there is perhaps something of the placation strategy, as defined by Arnstein (1969), about neighbourhood planning (see Chapter 3).

5.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING WILL PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT

Government and Ministers have argued that communities do not object to development per se, they object to development being imposed upon them. By devolving power to local communities, and empowering areas to make local land use decisions, it is claimed a new, more positive attitude to development will emerge, with higher levels of house building and economic development supported:

> "*When people know that they will get proper support to cope with the demands of new development; when they have a proper say over what new homes will look like; and when they can influence where those homes go, they have reasons to say 'yes' to growth*" (Clark, 2010a)

A Government impact assessment on NPs reported that "one of the principle objectives of neighbourhood planning is to increase the rate of growth of housing and economic development in England" (DCLG, 2011a: 10). This impact assessment assumed that, in areas with NPs, an additional one to two housing units will be developed each year (DCLG, 2011a).

The first adopted NP, the Upper Eden Plan in Cumbria, was narrowly focused on housing development, identifying targets across a large number of settlements within the plan area (Chapter 1). Overall, it seemed a relatively pro-growth plan. In Leeds, communities pursuing NPs recognise that they cannot be a bar to development, but concerns about housing development are evident. In two of the three case study communities, worries about the potential scale and location of future housing development were considered *the* galvanising factor in bringing residents together and creating a platform for the development of an NP.

It is premature to draw conclusions about how successful neighbourhood planning is at encouraging higher levels of development. So far, only one NP has been adopted (and that was only in April 2013). Future research could usefully analyse the content of a sample of adopted NPs to explore the approaches taken to housing and economic growth. Indeed, as part of a post implementation review of neighbourhood planning, the DCLG is interested in exploring if NPs contain proposals for housing and economic development "at a greater scale than contained in the local development plan" (DCLG, 2012b: 22).

5.4 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING WILL WIDEN AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

The previous Planning Minister reported that "neighbourhood planning is perfectly conceived to encourage greater involvement and from a wider range of people" (Clark, 2011). Clark (2010b) takes issue with arguments against community planning which are based on equality concerns. These arguments, he claims, ask, "are you in effect, empowering those who are already powerful – giving the well organised an opportunity to channel unwanted development towards places where the less well organised live?" (Clark, 2010b). For Clark (2010b), this 'threat' is mitigated by the requirement for NPs to conform to local strategic planning policy, while he suggests that, given the power to make decisions, people will say yes to development and so they will be less concerned with trying to direct development away from their area. Further, Clark (2010b) suggests "the provision of advice and support should enable those who want to, to draw up their neighbourhood plan, no matter where they live". However, the Government's impact assessment on NPs reported that low income areas are "less likely to be sufficiently well resourced to pay for a neighbourhood plan" (DCLG, 2011a: 22). It also mentions that certain specified groups, by virtue of their "unique characteristics", will be "less able to instigate or engage with the development of a neighbourhood plan" (DCLG, 2011a: 22). Plus, it

comments that disabilities “may undermine the ability to attend consultation events or take part in consultation exercises” and, where English is not the first language, “difficulties may be encountered in engaging effectively with the neighbourhood plan process” (DCLG, 2011a: 22).

Across Leeds, the 17 communities which are, or have applied to be, neighbourhood areas exhibit demographic traits frequently associated with participation and volunteering, while 16 of the 17 areas have past experience of developing, or participating in the preparation of, locally tailored planning documents. A survey of the core participants developing NPs in three case study communities found that those who were most involved in the exercise also exhibited traits typically associated with participation and volunteering, while a majority had some experience of engaging in the planning system. It seems, then, that within Leeds, familiar faces and familiar places are pursuing NPs (Chapter 4). Officers report, though, that interest in neighbourhood planning is now beginning to emerge in a wide range of areas with a number of urban and suburban communities working on neighbourhood area applications. However, the most recent set of applications, as of mid-April 2013, continue in the trend, discussed in Chapter 4, of being relatively affluent civil parishes.

The three case study communities were concerned with increasing and widening participation, but both tasks proved challenging. For the community questionnaires distributed in Communities B and C, respondents tended to be older adults while engaging with young people proved difficult. Community A spoke about declining participation rates and Communities A and C reported that the majority of NP work fell on a small number of individuals. In each of the three communities, fewer than ten individuals undertook most of the work.

5.5 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING WILL ADDRESS THE ADVERSARIAL NATURE OF PLANNING

Government and Ministers have suggested that by removing impositions from above, and devolving power to local communities, neighbourhood planning will help address the perceived adversarial nature of planning. The previous Planning Minister spoke about “moving from conflict to collaboration” (Clark, 2010c) suggesting that “an excess of central command and prescription” under the previous administration had resulted in “antagonism and heat in the system, which seems to have risen inexorably over recent years” (Clark, 2011b). It was claimed planning should move from being a system that is “principally a means for arbitrating disputes” to a “positive process, where people come together and agree a vision for the future of the place where they live” (Clark, 2011c).

It is difficult for this study to draw conclusions on the potential for NPs to reduce conflict. Within the case study city, most communities are still only in the early or evidence gathering phases of neighbourhood planning. It is too early to say, then, how easy it might be for these communities to come together and agree a shared vision. Also, only when an NP is adopted will there be an opportunity to study if planning applications are reflecting the plan’s tenets and, if they are, whether these applications are attracting objections. Government suggests that because a community has developed and approved the NP, if applications reflect the NP the proposed development should be in accordance with the community’s wishes and so objections should be reduced. It is possible, though, that the potential for future conflict may be woven into the very process of preparing an NP. In NPs, the narrow focus on the current needs of a community’s current residents (Chapter 4) might produce plans which are insufficiently flexible to respond to new needs arising from changes in lifestyles, demographics or migration which might occur over the lifetime of the plan. Where plans are unable to respond to changing needs, there is perhaps potential for conflict.

5.6 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING WILL LEAD TO COST SAVINGS

Government’s impact assessments on neighbourhood planning have suggested that it will deliver a number of cost savings to applicants, local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate. Some of these savings will arise from fewer appeals and from applicants avoiding the need, in some cases, to produce planning applications in areas with adopted NDOs (DCLG, 2011a, DCLG, 2012b). It is assumed the average annual savings to applicants of reduced planning applications will be £17 million (DCLG, 2012b). This assumes 10% of NPs will be NDOs (DCLG, 2012b). It is assumed the average annual savings to applicants, planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate of fewer appeals will be £3.1 million (DCLG, 2012b). It is too early to draw firm conclusions on the potential for neighbourhood planning to deliver cost savings. Relevant to such conclusions, though, is the finding

that across Leeds, many more communities seem to be pursuing NDPs than NDOs. If the experience of Leeds is replicated elsewhere, fewer than the predicted 10% of adopted NPs might be NDOs. This may have an impact on the potential cost savings of neighbourhood planning.

5.7 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING WILL PRODUCE BETTER QUALITY DEVELOPMENT AND GREATER CERTAINTY FOR APPLICANTS

Government and Ministers have argued that greater community participation in planning could lead to better quality development that is more in line with people's wishes and local needs (DCLG, 2011a). Further, it has been suggested that such participation will deliver greater certainty for developers. It is premature to draw conclusions on these issues. Of note, though, given the various constraints on the potential content of NPs, see 5.2, the extent to which completed NPs truly reflect a community's wishes may be open to debate. Consequently, one might question how far development which reflects an NP actually reflects a community's wishes.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a set of overarching conclusions and proposes a small number of recommendations. Some recommendations are concerned with identifying future areas of research and others with improving current practice.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

It is 12 months since the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations came into force and just over a year since the Localism Act received Royal Assent. Over this time, there have been developments in the funding and support available for neighbourhood planning, while, within communities, there have been changes in the level of interest and progress in NPs. The number of Front Runner communities piloting neighbourhood planning has risen from 17 to around 240, new funding packages have been launched by Government and the first neighbourhood plan has been adopted in Cumbria.

Within Leeds, at the beginning of March 2013, 13 communities had been designated as neighbourhood areas and a further four had applied to be neighbourhood areas. Many other communities have expressed an interest in neighbourhood planning and/or are actively working on neighbourhood area applications. Local authority planners predict that if current levels of interest persist, large parts of the city may eventually be covered by NPs.

To date, interest in neighbourhood planning within Leeds, and within the national Front Runners scheme, has been concentrated amongst parish and town councils. In Leeds, 16 of the 17 communities that have applied for, or have gained, neighbourhood area status, are civil parishes with functioning parish and town councils. Most are small, affluent communities with nine featuring a population of fewer than 2,000. All are located outside the main urban area, often in rural or semi-rural settings. Interestingly, most demonstrate demographic traits frequently associated with participation and volunteering. Involvement in the construction of an NP could be considered a form of civic participation or volunteering. 16 of the 17 areas have past experience of developing, or participating in the preparation of, locally tailored planning documents. A survey of the core participants developing NPs in three case study communities found that those who are most involved in the exercise exhibit traits typically associated with participation and volunteering, while a majority have past experience of participating in the planning system. It seems then, that within Leeds, familiar faces and familiar places are pursuing neighbourhood planning.

The experience of neighbourhood planning within three case study communities suggests there is significant reliance on the local planning authority to provide guidance on the new regime, the majority of neighbourhood planning work tends to fall on a small number of individuals and engaging all parts of the community in the NP can be challenging. Worries about the scale and location of future development are present in each community and can actually be *the* galvanising factor, bringing people together and providing the platform for the creation of an NP. Communities are progressing at different speeds in their NP activities, even when they began at a similar time. Access to rich socioeconomic and political networks seems to aid neighbourhood planning. For example, the presence of skilled professionals and retired professionals within a community can support the delivery of tasks while relationships with other communities pursuing NPs, officers and ward councillors can provide advice and support. Further, and of particular note, connections with a parish council affords access to existing opportunities to promote the NP (e.g. a parish council website or newsletter), a clerk for administrative duties, a potential funding source (the precept) and, perhaps most importantly, an established organisation which can readily be identified as a qualifying body.

Within Leeds, the local planning authority has adopted a proactive approach to neighbourhood planning, developing and implementing a number of measures. For example, a neighbourhood planning team has been created within the planning department, a draft guidance note on the new regime has been issued and there has been an official interpretation of the new ‘duty to support’. Influencing the Council’s approach seems to be a perception that, without a defined ‘offer’, certain communities, with the ability to quickly access the opportunities provided through neighbourhood planning, will capture the council’s resources, resulting in less support being available for other communities.

Evaluating neighbourhood planning against the claims, predications and ambitions that Government and Ministers have made for the regime suggests that in many instances it is premature to draw conclusions, while for others, performance seems mixed or even rather poor (Chapter 5). Whether these various claims, ambitions and predictions *should,* however, form the evaluation criteria for neighbourhood planning is a point of debate. In Arnstein's (1969) work, approaches to participation are evaluated, and ranked, solely according to the extent to which they transfer decision making authority to citizens (Chapter 2).

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude the report, a small number of recommendations are proposed. Some are concerned with identifying future areas of research and some with improving current practice.

1. Future research should explore the content of NPs to determine if they are encouraging higher levels of house building and economic development than set out within a local planning authority's statutory development plan.

2. Future research should explore participation in neighbourhood planning looking at both the geography of neighbourhood planning and participation within neighbourhood forums and NP Groups established within civil parishes. Whether it is being taken forward primarily by familiar places and familiar faces, or whether it is encouraging participation from a wider range of people, should be a key interest.

3. Future research should explore the cost savings and resource implications of neighbourhood planning. Research should collate data on the proportion of NPs which are NDOs to see if the Government's assumptions on take up rates are accurate. Research should explore the level and nature of officer support and any other assistance that local planning authorities, and other stakeholders, are providing to communities. Plus, research should investigate the resource implications associated with organising the local referendum and independent examination.

4. A widely recommended, regularly updated accurate information point on neighbourhood planning should be established. This could be an existing website. This information point could reduce the risk of communities retrieving inaccurate information, feeling overwhelmed by the scale of information available or being uncertain about where to turn for information. Detailed guidance on consultation and engagement techniques and requirements, particularly techniques for engaging with young people and business interests, could be developed and provided. This could include 'success' stories from local communities and exemplar questionnaires, focus group exercises etc.

5. Government appointed support providers and/or local planning authorities, working in conjunction with local communities, should explore opportunities to create neighbourhood planning networks in local areas so that places pursuing NPs, and operating within the same local strategic planning framework, can share experiences and knowledge. Communities could interact online and/or through periodic meetings. The resource implications of developing such networks would need to be explored.

Appendix A
Speeches by the current and the previous Planning Ministers

Below are the Ministerial speeches from which the claims, ambitions and predictions for neighbourhood planning discussed in Chapters 1 and 5 were extracted:

Boles, N. (2013) Housing for the Next Generation, Policy Exchange, 10.01.13

Clark, G. (2012) Ministerial Statement to the House of Commons on the NPPF, 27.03.12

Clark, G. (2011) Pro-localism and Pro-development, Adam Smith Institute, 02.02.11

Clark, G. (2011) Sustainable Development through Local Empowerment, CPRE, 10.02.11

Clark, G. (2011) A New Settlement for Planning, RTPI, 14.06.11

Clark, G. (2011) The Opportunity of Neighbourhood Planning, The Planning Officers Society, 24.01.11

Clark, G (2010) Better Planning: From Principle to Practice, Localis, 18.11.10

Clark, G. (2010) Community Led Development, RTPI Annual Planning Convention, 29.06.10

Clark, G. (2010) The Central Importance of Localism, Local Government Association Conference, 08.07.10

Clark, G. (2010) Turning the Tide of Centralism, Policy Exchange, 27.07.10

Clark, G. (2010) Open Source Planning in Action, Localis, 18.11.10

Clark, G. (2010) Community Engagement and the Planning System, TCPA, 30.11.2010

Appendix B
Interview talking points

The following broad talking points steered conversation in the various semi-structured interviews completed within the study:

Local authority officers

Level of interest in neighbourhood planning
Location of interest in neighbourhood planning
Nature of the places expressing an interest in neighbourhood planning
Neighbourhood area boundaries
Inclusiveness of neighbourhood planning
Activities and progress within communities
The Council's role in neighbourhood planning
Resource implications for the Council

Elected members

The Council's perspective on neighbourhood planning
The Council's role in neighbourhood planning
Issues and challenges in neighbourhood planning
Resource implications for the Council
Scale and nature of interest in neighbourhood planning

Planning consultants

Perspective on neighbourhood planning
Experience with neighbourhood planning – communities supported, support provided etc.
Scale and nature of interest in neighbourhood planning
Issues and challenges in neighbourhood planning
Activities and progress within communities
Cost of NPs and time needed to complete them

NP Group members in the three case study communities

Date started on the NP
Why an NP was started
Organisational structure delivering the NP
Number of people involved in the NP
Skills, occupation etc. of the people involved
NP budget / resources
Activities taken to date and activities planned
Issues and challenges
Potential concerns of the NP
Support / training received
Past planning experience within the community – e.g. production of a parish plan / design guide

Community group members in areas debating the merits of neighbourhood planning

Role / interests of the community group
Past planning experience within the community – e.g. production of a parish plan / design guide
Perspective on neighbourhood planning

Appendix C
Case study community questionnaire

1. Prior to working on your area's neighbourhood plan, have you been involved in any other planning issues or activities? (*Such as commenting on a planning application, helping to prepare a parish plan or neighbourhood design guide, responding to a Council consultation on planning policy)*	
Yes	
No	
If yes, please provide a brief description:	
I prefer not to answer this question	

2. Besides being the member of a group that is developing a neighbourhood plan, do you take part in any other voluntary and/or community groups or activities?	
Yes	
No	
If yes, please provide a brief description:	
I prefer not to answer this question	

3. How long have you lived in the local area?	
Less than 5 years	
Between 5 and 10 years	
Between 11 and 20 years	
More than 20 years	
I prefer not to answer this question	

4. Thinking about your current home, would you describe yourself as a:	
Tenant	
Homeowner / owner-occupier	
Other (please describe)	
I prefer not to answer this question	

5. Please can you indicate your age	
16 – 25	
26 – 36	
37 – 47	
48 – 58	
59 – 64	
65 or over	
I prefer not to answer this question	

6. How would you describe your gender?	
Male	
Female	
I prefer not to answer this question	

Appendix D
Case study city - Socioeconomic and demographic profile

Item	Measure	Leeds	England & Wales
All Usual Residents	Persons	751,485	56,075,912
Age 0-15	Persons	18%	19%
Age 16-19	Persons	6%	5%
Age 20-29	Persons	18%	14%
Age 30 to 44	Persons	21%	21%
Age 45 to 59	Persons	18%	19%
Age 60 to 64	Persons	5%	6%
Age 65 and over	Persons	15%	16%
1. Higher Managerial, Admin. & Professional Occupations	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	10%	10%
2. Lower Managerial, Admin. & Professional Occupations	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	19%	21%
3. Intermediate Occupations	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	13%	13%
4. Small Employers and Own Account Workers	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	7%	9%
5. Lower Supervisory and Technical Occupations	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	6%	7%
6. Semi-Routine Occupations	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	13%	14%
7. Routine Occupations	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	11%	11%
8. Never Worked and Long-Term Unemployed	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	6%	6%
L15 Full-Time Students	Persons 16 - 74 Classified for NS-SeC	13%	9%
No Qualifications	Persons aged 16 - 74	23%	23%
Highest Qualification; Level 1 Qualifications	Persons aged 16 - 74	13%	13%
Highest Qualification; Level 2 Qualifications	Persons aged 16 - 74	14%	15%
Highest Qualification; Level 3 Qualifications	Persons aged 16 - 74	15%	12%
Highest Qualification; Level 4 Qualifications and Above	Persons aged 16 - 74	27%	27%
Highest Qualification; Apprenticeship	Persons aged 16 - 74	4%	4%
Highest Qualification; Other Qualifications	Persons aged 16 - 74	5%	6%
Detached	Household Spaces	15%	23%
Semi-Detached	Household Spaces	37%	31%
Terraced	Household Spaces	27%	25%
Flat, Maisonette or Apartment	Household Spaces	22%	22%
Council Tax Band A	Dwellings	40%	24%
Council Tax Band B	Dwellings	21%	20%
Council Tax Band C	Dwellings	19%	22%

Council Tax Band D	Dwellings	9%	15%
Council Tax Band E	Dwellings	6%	10%
Council Tax Band F	Dwellings	3%	5%
Council Tax Band G	Dwellings	2%	4%
Council Tax Band H	Dwellings	0%	1%
Owned	Households	59%	64%
Social rented	Households	22%	18%
Private rented	Households	18%	17%
Living Rent Free	Households	2%	1%

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics (2011 Census data and Council Tax data)

Notes

Figures have been rounded and so may not equal 100%

NS-SeC – National Statistics Socioeconomic Classification

Level 1 Qualification: 1-4 O Levels/CSE/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic/Essential Skill

Level 2 Qualification: 5+ O Level (Passes)/CSEs (Grade 1)/GCSEs (Grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A Level/ 2-3 AS Levels/VCEs, Intermediate/Higher Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma 13 Apprenticeship.

Level 3 Qualification: 2+ A Levels/VCEs, 4+ AS Levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advance Diploma, NVQ Level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma.

Level 4 Qualification: Degree (BA, BSc), Higher Degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Professional Qualifications (Teaching, Nursing, Accountancy).

Appendix E
Designated and proposed neighbourhood areas in the case study city

At the beginning of March 2013, the following areas in Leeds had been designated as neighbourhood areas or were applying to be designated as neighbourhood areas:

Designated Areas

1. Bardsey - qualifying body Bardsey Cum Rigton Parish Council
2. Boston Spa – qualifying body Boston Spa Parish Council
3. Bramham - qualifying body Bramham Parish Council
4. Clifford – qualifying body Clifford Parish Council
5. Horsforth – qualifying body Horsforth Parish Council
6. Kippax – qualifying body Kippax Parish Council
7. Linton– qualifying body Collingham with Linton Parish Council (neighbourhood area just covers the settlement of Linton)
8. Scarcroft – qualifying body Scarcroft Parish Council
9. Shadwell – qualifying body Shadwell Parish Council
10. Thorner – qualifying body Thorner Parish Council
11. Thorp Arch – qualifying body Thorp Arch Parish Council
12. Walton – qualifying body Walton Parish Council
13. Wetherby – qualifying body Wetherby Town Council

Communities applying to be neighbourhood areas

1. Aberford – application made by Aberford Parish Council
2. Adel – application made by Adel Neighbourhood Forum
3. Otley – application made by Otley Town Council
4. Barwick in Elmet & Scoles– application made by Barwick in Elmet & Scoles Parish Council

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