

## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- A Neighbourhood Plan is a community led plan that sets out the vision and policies for the future development of a local area. A “made” plan, is one which has met all the basic plan conditions and has satisfied the voting conditions - see below. It will then be accepted by the local planning authority as being “made” and form part of the development plan and must be used in making decisions on future local Pickmere planning applications.
- In areas with a Parish Council, the Parish Council is called the ‘qualifying body’ and is officially in charge of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. However, Pickmere Parish Council and the delegated Steering Group believe that given that Neighbourhood Plans are based on evidence from the community, it is absolutely vital that the local community is involved in providing that evidence and plan to involve the community wherever possible.
- There are grants available from Central Government which the Parish Council has applied for, to help to cover the costs of preparing the Plan and Pickmere Parish Council has also set aside some money itself, from the unexpected windfall Covid relief grants and the Community Infrastructure Levy payments it has received from local developments to help prepare the plan. Any Central Government grant unspent at the end of their funding period (which for us is the end of this March 2022) must however, be returned and reapplied for, if still needed and if the funds are still available in the next funding period.
- The community of Pickmere will have the final say as to whether the plan is approved, everyone on the electoral roll will be eligible to vote in a referendum as to whether the plan should be ‘made’. If more than 50% of the people who vote, vote ‘yes’ then Cheshire East officially ‘make’ the Plan and use it to make planning decisions as above.
- The Neighbourhood Plan policies can be distinct to Pickmere, but must be in general conformity with Local and National Planning Policies, such as a policy on applications for building in the Green Belt or on Housing Design.
- There are no rules as to how many policies a Neighbourhood Plan should have – they could have one policy or they could have lots. For a village in the Green Belt such as Pickmere, where new development is generally restricted, it is anticipated that there will be a smaller number of policies, focussing on issues important to the local community.
- A Neighbourhood Plan can cover all sorts of things, such as design, employment, the environment, heritage, community facilities and infrastructure. The policies must be **land use** based though – they will be used by planning officers at Cheshire East Council to assist in the determination of planning applications. They can’t cover issues that aren’t land use based and which a planning officer wouldn’t consider such as speed limits, potholes, specific parking issues and litter. The Neighbourhood Plan could however, include details of parking requirements for future planning applications for example for new houses, to make sure that each house or development includes sufficient parking spaces per property or that any future businesses consider enough parking spaces to suit the needs of the business, subject to this being consistent with Cheshire East's Local Plan policies.

In Cheshire East, there are now 36 ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plans. A further 24 are underway.

There are Government statutory processes that govern the production of a Neighbourhood Plan and Cheshire East is the body that supervises those processes and for example, ensures that the basic conditions to “make” a neighbourhood plan have been met at all relevant stages.

## What are the stages in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan?

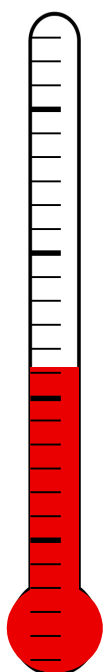
- A Neighbourhood Plan has five main stages
  - The Neighbourhood Area must be designated (this has been done)
  - The Neighbourhood Plan must be prepared (this is where we are now)
  - The Neighbourhood Plan is examined by an independent examiner

- The official referendum is held
- The Neighbourhood Plan is officially 'Made' by Cheshire East Council.


- By far the longest stage is preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, and there are various consultation periods that must be undertaken. Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is a fairly lengthy process, and can take at least two years or more. It is quite hard to definitively state specific dates as to when each stage of the Neighbourhood Plan will be completed, as a lot depends on what comments are received, and what topics are covered.
- A steering group has been set up to help prepare the Neighbourhood Plan made up of Parish Councillors and residents.
- Various surveys will be undertaken and consultation events will be held to hear the views of residents and provide updates on how the plan is progressing.
- Following those surveys, a vision and objectives document will be drawn up and shared with the community. This will give a clearer idea of what is important to the local community and which policy topics should therefore be covered in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- As a result, specific reports may be commissioned to help provide evidence for the policies, such as a wildlife report or a character study.
- All policies must be robustly justified as they need to satisfy an independent examination as described above and organised by Cheshire East. Cheshire East also offers technical advice and support to the Steering Group and Parish Council as a whole.
- When the plan has been drafted, the Parish Council will hold a six week consultation to ask for opinions on the plan. All comments will be carefully considered and the plan must be amended accordingly.
- The Parish Council will then officially submit the amended plan to Cheshire East Council, along with a 'consultation statement', which explains how the plan has been consulted upon. The consultation statement must provide details of who was consulted, how they were consulted, what they said and how the plan was amended accordingly. Additionally a 'basic conditions statement' must be submitted, showing how the policies conform to local and national policies and how they contribute to sustainable development.
- Cheshire East Council then run a further six week consultation asking for comments on the plan. These comments are passed on to an independently appointed examiner who then examines the plan and who decides whether the plan can proceed to a referendum. The Examiner may make some further changes to the plan.
- Cheshire East Council organise and hold the final referendum.

The time-o-metre highlights the various stages, where Pickmere are in the process, and the next steps that need to be taken.

#### PICKMERE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (Time-o-meter March 2022)



- Cheshire East Council officially 'Make' the Plan
- Referendum
- Modify Plan if necessary
- Publication of Examiner's report (Reg 18)
- Cheshire East Council Submit Plan for Independent Examination
- Pickmere Parish Council submit plan to Cheshire East Council (Regs 15 & 16), who publicise it for another six week consultation period
- Consider the representations and amend the Plan as necessary
- Formal six week consultation Phase (Reg 14)
- Further consultation events, and the draft plan prepared, including policies and justification
- Drafting of vision and objectives
- Consultation Events to highlight the responses to the survey ((March 19<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>)
- Analysis of the initial survey (underway) ✓
- Survey distributed to all residents in Pickmere ✓
- Preparation of survey ✓
- Apply for grant funding ✓

Neighbourhood Plan Area designated by Cheshire East 

For further information please visit [www.pickmereparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.pickmereparishcouncil.gov.uk) or contact the Parish Clerk on 01565 734618 or by email to [clerk@pickmereparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@pickmereparishcouncil.gov.uk).

Thanks for taking the time to read this flyer regards Pickmere Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group