

## **Factsheet 2:**

### **Basic conditions**

Neighbourhood plans need to meet the following basic conditions (legal requirements) which the independent examiner will assess the plan against:

- appropriateness having regard to national policy
- contribution to the achievement of sustainable development
- whether the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the local area (i.e. adopted Camden Local Plan)
- compatibility with human rights requirements
- compatibility with EU obligations (these relate to Strategic Environmental Assessment and protection of habitats – see Factsheet 3).

Further background to these basic conditions is provided below. The Council will be happy to review draft plans and provide guidance where necessary. There are now many examples of successful neighbourhood plans that have been found to meet the basic conditions at examination, in LB Camden and elsewhere.

#### **Regard to National Policy**

A neighbourhood plan must have regard to the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) and associated guidance.

National Planning Practice Guidance states that a neighbourhood plan “must not constrain the delivery of important national policy objectives”.

The National Planning Policy Framework is the main document setting out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

#### **Contribution to the achievement of sustainable development**

All plan-making should help contribute to sustainable development. Sustainable development encompasses three main elements – environmental, economic and social.

You will need to demonstrate how your neighbourhood plan contributes to improvements to these, or, if there are likely potential adverse effects as a result of the plan, there are measures in place that will reduce or offset these effects.

Some neighbourhood groups have demonstrated this through a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) while other groups have used evidence provided in their Local Authority’s SA and translated it to a local level in connection with the neighbourhood plan objectives and policies.

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A neighbourhood plan may require a [strategic environmental assessment](#): this may be the case, for example, where a plan allocates sites for development.

Forums are strongly encouraged to seek early advice from the Council on the need for a strategic environment assessment for their plan. Prior to consultation on the initial draft Plan (the Regulation 14 stage), the Council will provide the neighbourhood forum with a 'screening opinion' setting out its view on whether a full strategic environmental assessment is required. For further information, please see Factsheet 3.

### **Conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan of the local area**

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) paragraph 20 sets out the strategic matters about which are expected to be addressed through policies in local plans or spatial development strategies. The Council can advise forums on what policies in the development plan it considers to be strategic policies.

The NPPF also states that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans, and shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.

### **Compatibility with EU and human rights regulations**

Neighbourhood Plans must not breach and must be compatible with EU and human rights obligations, including the [Strategic Environment Assessment](#) (SEA) Directive. As stated above, neighbourhood plans should be screened at an early stage to ascertain whether they are likely to trigger significant environmental effects and thus whether an SEA needs to be carried out. The Council will undertake this screening assessment, consulting relevant national bodies in coming to its screening opinion. If it is concluded that strategic environmental assessment is required, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with the relevant SEA regulations.

An SEA will likely be needed for neighbourhood plans allocating sites (that is, setting out the circumstances in which a building or piece of land can be developed, normally via land use principles or development criteria).

Neighbourhood plan areas that are in close proximity of, or may lead to adverse effects on, a wildlife site that has been designated under the EU Habitats Directive, may have to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). This will ensure that they meet the requirements of the Directive and help to meet the basic condition to be in line with EU regulations. In London, the following sites are recognised under the EU Habitats Directive: Epping Forest; Lee Valley; Richmond Park; and Wimbledon Common. To date, no neighbourhood plans in Camden have triggered a requirement for a full HRA assessment.

**This factsheet should be read in conjunction with “A Guide to Preparing Neighbourhood Plans in Camden”, April 2026.**