

New Housing Communities Conference

November 2017

The conference gathered representatives from parishes where new housing developments will bring new communities together.

Speakers shared good practice and their experiences in engaging with proposed developments and new residents.

This Newsletter aims to share more widely the tips and topics from the day.



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Aims of the DPMG

The Group brings together senior clergy and officers to co-ordinate planning for major housing developments across the diocese.

It monitors information from local authorities and other public sources about housing developments, including their likely size and timescale.

It makes recommendations to diocesan bodies about the strategy for mission in each development, in conjunction with the local churches.

It flags up related issues of housing, provision of schools and worship spaces and funding needs.

The distinctive contribution of church

- has a vision for mission
- drives the development of decent communities
- holds the history and tells the story of the place
- challenges the vision of planners and local authorities
- brings Christian values and ethos to the vision
- challenges loneliness of a community of strangers
- provides focal point for gathering, forums and facilities
- contributes to neighbourhood plan
- church as service provider, project, festival promoter, neighbour and guest

Top tips for the planning phase

Find out what is planned:

- Keep an eye on the development of your area's Local Plan
- Ask to meet the planning officer responsible for a particular development
- Make contact with the developer as early as possible

Network with:

- Other churches
- Parish Council
- Local organisations
- Parish/Neighbourhood Plan group
- Action Group

Create a space:

- host meetings
- create a space where different views can be heard. Listening is important.

Create a “Statement of Significance” for your community

- what is important, that you want to celebrate and not lose?

Create a “Statement of Needs”

- what should be included as part of the new development?
 - Facilities
 - Infrastructure
 - Open green space
 - Decent homes

Decide if you are neutral or distinctive

Offer to speak for x000 residents (i.e. as a coalition of churches and other community groups)

Liaise with diocesan officers over specific issues and needs

Be positive and offer suggestions

Consider how to support residents in opposition to the plans

Pray!



New housing at Silsoe

Glossary of Terms

- **Section 106:** Sometimes referred to as planning obligations. Made between local authority and developer and enforceable by law. Require a developer to do or not to do certain things, or even to pay money for others to carry out certain things.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy:** This is a new system of [funding infrastructure](#) through planning charges that the Council can ask developers to pay for most new building projects.
- **Strategic Infrastructure Tariff:** A 2017 government review recommended provision for combined authorities to agree a low-level tariff to be imposed across the combined authorities' area, restricted for use on a small number of major projects and enabling SIT funding as a mechanism for raising additional finance.

Top tips for building community with new residents

Be clear about what you are doing and why

Work with partners where possible – other Anglican churches, other local churches, schools...

Use social media e.g. local Facebook groups, forums

See where new residents meet and go there

Offer a map! –be the repository of local knowledge

Add information to estate agents' welcome packs – or make your own

Start traditions and build on events – create a story for the new community

Offer hospitality – but also be ready to receive it

Identify your gifts and callings

Be visible – hold events outside.....



Baptism service in the early days of Cambourne in the Diocese of Ely

Resources

Barker, Tony. *The Church and New Communities* (2015)

A short [guide](#) to how the church can respond to new housing developments

St Albans Diocesan New Housing Forum

Coming soon on the diocesan website – an online forum for discussions, news and updates

What is the [role](#) of a local plan?

[Government guidance on Neighbourhood planning](#)

How to [benefit](#) from Section 106 agreements

Section 106 [obligations](#)

[Churches Together in England – new housing areas](#) Tips, resources and news from the network

From the [Diocese of Lichfield](#) – planning for mission and action ideas

Church Mission Society – report and resources from a [Conference](#): Pioneering on estates and new housing developments (2017)

[Funding for Mission in new housing and other development areas](#) A 2016 study by the Church of England's Church Growth Research Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

How can we ensure school development is part of the plan?

There is a presumption in Government policy that the Free School route will be used to open a new school. It is still possible for a local authority to open a VA maintained school, but there are huge hurdles to get over.

Local authorities (LAs) have differing policies. In Hertfordshire, if new housing is planned adjacent to an existing church school, the LA will consider an application to move/extend the existing school.

Where the Free School route is used, there is a tight 6-week timetable for the submission of bids to run the new school and a requirement that preliminary work has already been put in place, especially on community engagement. **This work will need to be done with a parish well in advance of any bid to operate a school in a new housing area.**

What is the role of a Local Plan?

Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design. They are also a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals. More details [here](#).

What is a Neighbourhood Plan and why should we be involved?

Neighbourhood planning is a relatively new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work. The Town or Parish Council, or a group of residents, can apply to the local authority to do Neighbourhood Planning. They will then be able to:

- choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built (without blocking new housing if it is needed)
- have their say on what those new buildings and the infrastructure should look like

It's essential to get involved in a Neighbourhood Plan if one is being developed. Your local authority should have a list of local places that have adopted Neighbourhood Planning, or which have applied to do so.



Delegates at work in the newly built St Andrew's C of E VC Lower School East in Biggleswade

News

East Herts District Plan Main Modifications [Consultation](#) runs until 29th March

Major [overhaul](#) to the National Planning Policy Framework announced – this will strengthen local planning

Going Deeper into God • Transforming Communities • Making New Disciples

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