

Design advice for communities

Who provides advice and support?

For information on support and assistance that the architecture centres can provide see: <http://www.architecturecentre.net>

In addition to the on-going work of the architecture centres, communities are getting a supportive boost to help make their neighbourhood vision a reality through a new scheme offering free access to expert advice and guidance, Planning Minister Greg Clark announced in April 2011.

New powers being introduced in the Localism Bill will give local people a real voice to shape development in their area through a neighbourhood plan, from determining the locations of shops, offices and schools to setting the standards of design for new housing.

To ensure communities have the right support and advice to meet their own aspirations, Mr Clark has announced four organisations with renowned expertise in planning who will share a £3.2m fund to provide assistance to local groups developing neighbourhood plans.

Communities can choose to take up free advice and guidance depending on their needs through The Prince's Foundation, Locality, The Royal Town Planning Institute, and the National Association of Local Councils in partnership with the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Each organisation will use its expertise, skills and track record advising on development to empower communities to reach the full potential of their neighbourhood plan from start to finish, from understanding the planning process and finding local solutions through to developing clear documents and building community support. This will include free impartial advice, practical workshops with local authorities and community groups, tailored on-line resources, networking tools and telephone advice lines.

Examples of work to support communities through the planning process include:

The Granville New Homes Resident Steering Group received training and support from the Building Community Consortium, which is led by Locality, during a £1bn regeneration project in South Kilburn, London. The award winning development delivered 130 new homes, a small park and a purpose built youth centre for the community.

The Prince's Foundation helped the community at Camp Hill, a former mining community in North Warwickshire, bring together the local council, developers and partners to develop a master plan which delivered a number of physical and social improvements for the town.

The Prince's Foundation (<http://www.princes-foundation.org/>)

The Foundation has a long history of successful projects based on the principles of community engagement. It believes that development can be both positive and enjoy popular support if it is the result of an engaging discussion with the local community and based around the local identity.

The services offered by Prince's Foundation through the grant will ensure they offer case specific solutions to communities based on live workshops with community groups and local authorities.

Locality

The Building Community Consortium will be led by Locality in partnership with Glass House Community Led Design (<http://www.theglasshouse.org.uk/>), the Eden Project (<http://www.edenproject.com/>) and communityplanning.net. The consortium will provide unparalleled knowledge, reach, skills and expertise in supporting disadvantaged and marginalised communities to engage with the built environment and the planning systems. It will provide support and networking to community groups through online resources and other networking tools, practical workshops and seminars, and tailored advice via a telephone advice line and other packages of support. The consortiums knowledge, skills and expertise can be found across a network of more than 1000 community-based organisations.

The Royal Town Planning Institute (<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/>)

The Royal Town Planning Institute will make the planning process more accessible and empower individuals, neighbourhoods and communities, especially those who are economically and socially disadvantaged, to become involved in shaping where they work, live and play.

It will provide free, independent, impartial, professional planning advice to people who do not have the means to pay professional fees. It will also provide support and training to local communities to influence and contribute to planning strategy, policy, and decision making at all levels, helping them to bring forward community planning initiatives. The service will promote and deliver good practice in community engagement be delivered through an extensive network of Planning Aid England and Planning Aid for London volunteers.

National Association of Local Councils in partnership with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/> and <http://www.cpre.org.uk/>)

The advice and assistance offered by the NALC/CPRE partnership will draw on the strength and experience of its network of county branches and parish councils to enable local communities to better understand the planning system and share best practice.

As well as providing basic information about the planning system via a national website, a phone line and targeted publications, the grant will fund a programme of local events which will help inform local communities and parish councillors about how to influence local plans. The aim will empower local people and encouraging communities to take a more active and influential role in making plans for their areas.

Further reading, useful links and websites:

The Neighbourhood Planning Website

www.neighbourhoodplanning.info

Neighbourhood Planning LinkedIn Group

<http://lnkd.in/aVatYm>

Colin Buchanan Neighbourhood Planning

www.colinbuchanan.com/neighbourhood-planning

Urban Forum

www.urbanforum.org.uk/

ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)

www.acre.org.uk/

The Young Foundation

www.youngfoundation.org

The Young Foundation Community Action Toolkit

www.youngfoundation.org/community-action-tool-kit

CLG – Neighbourhood Plan Vanguard Information

www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/neighbourhoodplanningvanguards/

CLG – Supporting Communities Fund

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/neighbourhoodsprospectus

CLG - Localism Bill: Neighbourhood plans and community right to build - Impact Assessment

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localismneighbourhoodplans

CLG – Localism Plain English Guide

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localismplainenglishguide

Scottish Community Development Centre

<http://www.scdc.org.uk/>