



Consultation Response
Neighbourhood Planning Bill Technical Consultation – September 2016
Department of Communities and Local Government
14th October 2016
Planning Committee Response

- Local parish and town councils play an important role in communities especially in neighbourhood planning. It is local councils that are at the heart of and driving forward the neighbourhood planning revolution and making it such a success story, with around 90% of the 2000 communities developing a neighbourhood plan being led by England's most local level of democracy.
- Significantly local councils are helping communities shake off their NIMBY criticism by increasingly supporting development and growth with evidence showing they are allocating around 10% more for housing than in Local Plans. Neighbourhood planning is also helping to strengthen local democracy as the process is leading to more people standing for election to their local council.
- Bewdley Town Council welcomes the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, which will build on measures in the Housing and Planning Act to give more weight to plans earlier in the process, make it easier to modify plans and neighbourhood areas and require planning authorities to publish the support they will provide.
- However there are still a number of areas in which the proposals could be improved to give communities more rights within the planning process, improve financial benefits from development and further strengthen local democracy.
- Bewdley Town Council shares NALC's desire to see the Bill amended to provide:
 - a share of New Homes Bonus for local councils with an adopted neighbourhood plan to ensure the community benefits financially from housing growth to invest in locally determined priorities and alleviate pressure on the parish precept;
 - emerging plans with proper weight in the planning system;
 - a continuation of support for neighbourhood planning for the life of the Parliament, including a commitment to provide funding and support for every local council wanting to develop a neighbourhood plan;
 - a requirement for all planning authorities to have Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) regimes in place by end of 2017;
 - the share of CiL for local councils with an adopted neighbourhood plan to increase from 25% to 35% to provide an additional incentive for communities and increase the number of plans in place and allow local councils to invest in local infrastructure and services;
 - new powers for local councils and communities in the planning system including the introduction of a statutory 'right to be consulted' and 'right to be heard'.

Nick Farress
Town Clerk
14th October 2016