



The qualifying body is the organisation which can take forward a neighbourhood development plan (NDP) in a given area. In Cornwall, this will almost always be the town or parish council. This guide note seeks to answer some questions relating to the qualifying body.

Who is the qualifying body?

Where there is a town or parish council, they will always be the qualifying body that will take forward an NDP. Most town and parish councils opt to set up steering group with representatives from the town or parish council and the wider community to drive the delivery of the NDP (see guide note on 'Constitution and structure for a neighbourhood planning steering group').

In order to start formally working on the NDP, the qualifying body must write to Cornwall Council requesting the designation of the neighbourhood area. The following must be submitted in the area application:

- a map identifying the proposed neighbourhood area (usually following the town or parish boundary).
- a statement explaining why the area is appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area
- a statement explaining that the body making the area application (the parish or town council or prospective neighbourhood forum) is capable of being a qualifying body.

There is more detail on this in the guide note 'Defining the boundary'.

Can a parish meeting be a qualifying body?

No - in areas where there is a parish meeting, a neighbourhood forum would need to be set up to take forward an NDP. Alternatively the parish meeting could opt to cluster (work together) with surrounding town or parish councils to develop an NDP covering all of the parishes represented.

What is clustering?

Clustering is where two or more town or parish councils join together to write one NDP to cover the parishes involved. The respective town or parish councils would all need to write to Cornwall Council to formally designate the neighbourhood area covering all of their parishes. For more information, see the guide note on 'Clustering'.



What is a neighbourhood forum?

In areas that don't have a town or parish council, it is up to the local community to decide which organisation should produce the neighbourhood plan. This could be an existing community group or local people forming a new group. In both cases they will need to be formally designated and must:

- Have at least 21 members
- Reflect the diversity and character of the area and have taken reasonable steps to secure membership from residents, business and local elected members across the neighbourhood area.
- Be established for the wellbeing of the neighbourhood area
- Be open to new members
- Have a written constitution

Where can I get more information about setting up a neighbourhood forum?

If you live in an area that does not have a town or parish council, organisations such as Locality and Planning Aid should be able to provide you with further information about setting up a neighbourhood forum. You can also contact your community link officer at Cornwall Council for advice and support.