



AirS Community Led Planning Service Offer – October 2023

AirS has a long track record of supporting rural communities to plan for the future, helping local councils and other community-based organisations identify issues and opportunities and to respond to changing needs. Through our work on 168 Parish Plans and 45 Neighbourhood Plans, our practical support has enabled communities to plan to become vibrant living and working places, using collaborative processes to build strong and sustainable communities.

Our approach, in all planning processes, is to maximise community engagement, exploring innovative ways to encourage wider participation. We do this by identifying assets of all types, and using a strength-based approach to ensure all participants feel heard and valued. At its heart, community led planning revolves around a process of engagement and prioritisation, enabling a whole community vision to be developed and implemented.

Community led planning can be both formal and informal and can encompass a wide range of issues. As the priorities of communities' shift, so must the range of planning pathways and we are seeing increasing interest in plans around climate action, biodiversity, green space management and energy sustainability.

Our experience over recent times is that there is a desire within communities to address local concerns alongside the big issues of the day, including how to tackle the nature and climate crises for instance. A Parish Priority Statement is an opportunity to explore what these priorities are and a useful platform for future plan making. Community led planning encompasses a range of options for communities to consider, depending on their needs and aspirations. The following summarises these:

Parish Plans (or Village Action Plan)– cover a multitude of local issues and concerns which are explored via comprehensive community engagement. They incorporate an action plan and can be used to support policies in a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) should this be required.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) - relate to land use, spatial planning and development and follow a rigorous process before being adopted as part of the Local Plan framework. They offer the opportunity for communities to allocate sites for development, protect and manage green spaces and set out design criteria (e.g.: a Village Design Statement).

Neighbourhood Priority Statements (NPS) or Parish Priority Statements (PPS) can be seen as a mini NDP or Parish Plan, or as a gateway to establish the right way forward. It is a new tool for local plan making, introduced via the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill. While it is a simpler and quicker process, it is also wider ranging, encouraging communities to think more broadly about its vision and priorities. Once produced it can then be used to inform a wider community led planning process, local action planning or a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

What Next?

AirS offer a free consultation session to discuss your needs and interests. If you would like to arrange this, please contact us at: community-ledplanningteam@ruralsussex.org.uk