

Neighbourhood Development Orders: What are they and why should we bother?

Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) came in at the same time as neighbourhood plans. But, whilst there are now 700-plus made neighbourhood plans, to date, very few NDOs have been made or even started.

What is an NDO?

An NDO is an order that grants planning permission, either site specific or across a neighbourhood area. So, whilst a neighbourhood plan is a planning policy document that planning officers use when making their decision about granting planning permission - an NDO is the granting of planning permission.

Not all planning permission is granted through NDOs. In fact, the vast majority of planning permission will be granted through the traditional planning application route.

What sorts of permissions does an NDO grant?

There are broadly two ways of using an NDO:

Non-site specific (often neighbourhood area wide)

Non-site specific NDOs, for example, in historic areas, a neighbourhood development order could grant planning permission so that missing historical features such as front boundary walls could be reinstated, or could allow things like improvements to shop fronts or extensions to houses or other buildings. It could also grant planning permission to change the upper floors of shops to flats. This could be for the whole of, or just for a part of, the neighbourhood area.

Why bother?

Having an NDO in place would mean it would not be necessary to apply for planning permission for this type of work each time, as the NDO grants this permission for the wider area it applies to;

Site specific

Site specific NDOs can grant planning permission (from outline to full) for development to come forward on a given site. This could be for a range of development types, including community facilities as well as housing.

Groups may use NDOs to grant planning permission for housing on sites that have been allocated for housing in a neighbourhood plan. However, a neighbourhood plan is not required and groups can still bring forward an NDO in an area without a neighbourhood plan.

Once the NDO is made, there would be no need to apply to the local planning authority for planning permission if it is for the type of development set out in the order.

Why bother?

The main benefit of using an NDO on specific sites is that it can be easier and quicker for the kind of development it describes to go ahead in the future. This is because it gives the developer greater certainty.

It also ensures that the development that comes forward on the site is what the community want to see, as this can all be detailed in the NDO. This means that development really does reflect local needs.

For example, the Broughton NDO has specified that the houses coming forward on the site should be 1-2 bedrooms in recognition of the fact that Broughton is not delivering a full spectrum of housing size and there was an evidenced need for smaller properties.

What's the relationship between NDOs and neighbourhood plans?

Like neighbourhood plans, NDOs require a qualifying body (parish/town council or forum in unparished areas) to make them and a designated neighbourhood area for them to be made in. Because these are the same requirements as a neighbourhood plan it may make sense to produce an NDO at the same time as a neighbourhood plan.

An NDO can be produced where there is not a neighbourhood plan, but you will still be required to designate a neighbourhood area and the NDO would still need to be led by a qualifying body and go through all the statutory stages that a neighbourhood plan does.

Should all planning permission be granted through NDO?

No, most planning permission will still be granted the traditional way. However, if there are specific community objectives you have in mind, or if you believe a site may be difficult to develop through traditional means then an NDO may be the tool to help you bring forward that development.

What's the difference between an NDO and a Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO)?

A Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO) is a type of NDO which can be made by community organisations, so they are not restricted to town/parish council or neighbourhood forums. They can be used for granting permission for small scale development with specific community benefits on a single site or sites across a neighbourhood area. Read more about CRtBOs [here](#).

How do I find out more about Locality's NDO support?

Locality offer a range of support to groups preparing NDOs and for a one year pilot there is additional support for groups using an NDO to bring forward affordable housing for sale. You can find out more [here](#).

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