BUILDING
A BETTER FUTURE

Community New Development Officers

November 2026



Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Community New Development Officers Topic Paper

Any queries about the report should be sent to:
Email policy.design@havant.gov.uk
Telephone 023 9244 6539
Address: Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Way
Havant
PO9 2AX

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to provide background justification to the inclusion of Policy 60: Community New Development Officers within the Building a Better Future Plan.

1.2 The following sections will provide an outline of the national planning policy background, explain the role of the Community New Development Officers within the context of Havant, and demonstrate how the policy would be implemented.

2. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) does not directly reference Community New Development Officers but sets out overarching objectives for a sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

2.2 The social objective focuses on creating “strong, vibrant and healthy communities” and supporting “communities’ health, social and cultural well-being”. This in turn relies on the premise that opportunities for social cohesion and protection of residential amenities should be maximised.

2.3 The relevant sections include:

Paragraph 96:

Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other (…).

b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion (…).

Paragraph 98:

To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:
b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

Paragraph 131:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

Paragraph 135:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 (withdrawn Local Plan)

2.4 The withdrawn Local Plan 2036 included a policy securing a contribution towards the Community New Development Officers. Despite little weight of the emerging policy, the Council was successful in securing this contribution from recent housing development schemes. Contributions have been already collected from numerous planning permissions including but not limited to:

APP/18/00450 - Land at Forty Acres Farm, Havant Road, Havant - Erection of 320 dwellings (including a 30% provision of affordable homes), 66 bed care home, provision of public open space, habitat mitigation zone, allotments, closure of existing access and creation of 2 new access points and associated infrastructure following demolition of existing buildings (approved 17.1.2020).

APP/19/00427 - Land at Lower Road - Development of 50 new dwellings together with access, landscaping and open space (Approved 13.07.2021).

APP/20/01093 - Land at Sinah Lane, Hayling Island - Erection of 195No. dwellings, associated open space, pumping station, sub-station and formation of new vehicular access off Sinah Lane. Change of use of land from agricultural to a Wader and Brent Geese Refuge Area (Resubmission of APP/18/00724).

APP/21/01071 - Land south of, Lower Road, and west of Old Manor Farm, Havant - Outline planning application for up to 43 dwellings, with access from Lower Road and associated landscaping, open space and allotments, and all other matters reserved. (Approved 16.05.23).

2.5. Since the Council has been successfully implementing this scheme for approximately 5 years, it is possible to report on the positive outcomes of the scheme (Appendix A).

3. Background

3.1 The Community New Development Officer role acts as a central communication point for new developments in the area. By liaising with HBC departments, the developer, residents and relevant stakeholders, the officer problem solves a range of issues quickly and effectively. Where possible, the role looks to be preventative, dealing with issues before they reach other internal teams. Crucial to this is not only the officer's understanding of 106 obligations and triggers, but their presence on site, which allows them to see first-hand any potential issues and receive information directly from the site team.

3.2 Due to the on-site and public facing nature of the role, the officer is able to de-escalate and diffuse situations by undertaking informal conversations with site team and residents. This can have a hugely positive affect on the quality of life of existing neighbouring residents, particularly when issues do not full under the scope of being an enforceable matter. The role is also an opportunity to seek the maximum from the developer in terms of social responsibility for the wider community, in addition to the reduction of harm in the public eye. For example the role is able to pre-empt contentious issues such as the commence of work by communicating the information in good time to residents. In doing so ultimately, the role can reduce anxiety and tension within the community by keeping residents updated with upcoming activity and keeping them well informed.

3.3 In a more formal manner, Developer Liaison meetings organised by the officer provide a clear communication channel between the developer, councillors and resident representatives. These meetings are therefore fundamental for establishing and maintaining a successful development for both the existing residents and new residents, as well as establishing the importance of the council within the local area. Key stakeholders for the role include internal departments (including borough and county councillors) and external agencies such as the Environment Agency, RSPB, Portsmouth Water, crematorium etc. If possible, it is best practice to begin to establish these relationships before the development has commenced for optimum impact.

3.4 The role is able to enhance and enrich the lived experience for residents via signposting to appropriate organisations or supporting residents to set up new resident associations. The role is very much seen as a trusted, valued source of knowledge. It facilitates the day-to-day conversation between the community, the development and the council. It provides an opportunity for the community to be heard and affords them agency in a process that often denies them a voice or power. Often, there is much frustration that residents cannot change the decision of the build process, however, this role - and the channels of communication it facilitates – provides a crucial opportunity to make the build process smoother and even get

some small wins during the process. Examples of small wins for enhancing environments which would not have happened if the role did not exist include:

- Location of generator moved
- Additional planting
- Additional bowsers
- Additional boundary treatment
- Existing trees not removed at residents request
- Changes to management plan
- Banksman for site traffic
- Noticeboard
- Site visits for residents
- Additional hoarding
- Meeting with drainage engineer
- Improved parking
- Influence in CEMP
- Historic lane kept in landscaping

3.5 Exit questionnaires are sent to members of the Developer Liaison at the end of the development to gain feedback to influence anything that could be done differently in the future. Without the presence of this role, this opportunity to generate new knowledge regarding the development would not exist as the relationships built are uniquely created in affiliation to the role.

3.6 All involved in the development appreciate the central point of contact for ease of information sharing and value the importance of the role. Appendix 1 includes testimonials of residents recently engaged in the construction of residential developments, where a service of a Community Worker was provided.

4. Local Plan Policy

4.1 The supporting text to the Policy clarifies why the Policy is needed as follows:

New development will only be successful if it integrates well with the Borough's existing communities. Substantial urban extensions will usually by their nature constitute a sub-area of the existing community, with new residents often physically separated to a degree from the existing community, particularly where there is a new access onto the main highway network. As such, developments of 40 dwellings (gross) or more will be expected to contribute towards a network of Community New Developments Officers, although some schemes smaller than this may by their nature require this measure as well. This could for example be due to a sensitive use such as a school being in proximity to the new development.

These officers take the lead on community development and resident involvement by ensuring that residents (new and existing) integrate into the wider community, to build community cohesion and promote neighbourhood identity. They will work with partners and

residents to create clear channels of communication and maximise opportunities that improve the wellbeing of the community.

4.2 From this, the main policy text reads:

Developments for 40 (gross) or more dwellings will be required to contribute towards a network of Community New Development Officers, to help residents in the development to integrate into the wider community, build community cohesion and promote neighbourhood identity.

Major developments smaller than 40 (gross) may need to provide a contribution depending on the nature of the scheme.

4.3 The supporting text further clarifies that financial contributions towards the provision of New Development Officers will be secured through a legal agreement. The Officers will be employed and coordinated by the Council, which will enable the Council to deploy the resource flexibly, ensuring that an Officer is in place from the start of the process, manage periods of absence and ensure that smaller developments, which do not in and of themselves require a dedicated officer, can be covered.

4.4 In terms of the trigger for the provision, namely the threshold of 40 or more dwellings, it is considered that this represents a scale of development where a Community New Development Officer will be required.

4.5 The Policy maintains the opportunity to seek such provision for smaller schemes, where there might be more sensitive uses/users affected by construction works, such as a school. Such requirement, together with the scale of financial contribution, would normally be determined at a pre-application stage.

5. Consultation and viability

5.1 During the Reg 18 and Reg 19 Local Plan Consultation, third party concerns have been raised over this policy requirement affecting viability of schemes, in particular the smaller ones.

5.2 The policies in the Local Plan have been a subject of an independent viability assessment. A range of development scenarios have been tested, including residential and commercial development on previously developed land, greenfield sites and the mixture of the two. The viability study has shown that the policies in the Local Plan would not in themselves make development unviable. It is recognised that, in some instances, schemes will face viability challenges regardless of planning policy requirements, for example flatted developments on previously developed land or town centre regeneration. However, in respect of the requirement to provide a

contribution towards the provision of New Development Officers, this would not affect development finance to such extent as to make it unviable.

Appendix 1: End of Development Survey Testimonies

Respondent 1

1. Please specify your interest in the community liaison meeting. i.e. Developer, Resident, Councillor etc.

I have been an active existing resident, who was heavily involved in fighting planning permission for the Pebble Walk Site due to the issues regarding the site. Since planning permission I aimed, with others, to ensure the Developer kept to the many Conditions and also made HBC aware of any problems existing residents, living adjacent to the Pebble Walk site, observed or suffered with. My aim has also been to ensure the new residents are made aware and understand the complexity and regulations regarding their new home and estate so they do not suffer from any changes or short cuts that the Developer may make..

2. Do you feel the addition of a Community New Development Officer made an impact on the development for existing residents, if so how?

Yes I fully supported this addition and Katie Bone has been able to establish robust communication between existing residents, the Developer and HBC Officers, holding them all to account. In my opinion she has carried out her role extremly well. It is important to have the right person for this role including one who will not give up, has integrity and will listen to all sides and investigate concerns. In addition that person should endeavour not be put off by the key board warriors if they over step the mark!

3. Do you feel the liaison meetings improved communication and allowed all parties to discuss site matters?

Yes, especially as we have shared a spread sheet as a Strategic planner with HBC, highlighting all issues and summarising actions and continuing problems if they remain. We have also had the opportunity to set items for the agenda and make comment on minutes if they have not caught the meaning and main points of discussion.

4. In a future development is there anything you feel could be done differently or in addition? I think we have all learnt and are still learning from the experience of Pebble Walk liaison committee.
5. Any other feedback of the process It was the major issues within and stemming from the pre-planning permission stage which certainly left much to be desired and which needs procedural change and rigorous monitoring by existing residents.

Respondent 2

1. Please specify your interest in the community liaison meeting. i.e. Developer, Resident, Councillor etc.

Resident

2. Do you feel the addition of a Community New Development Officer made an impact on the development for existing residents, if so how?

Yes, the Community New Development Officer kept the developer accountable, ensured that all residents' questions were answered and interfaced to various departments in HBC and HCC. Also acted as a pacifying influence in a sometimes heated environment

3. Do you feel the liaison meetings improved communication and allowed all parties to discuss site matters?

Yes, the meetings facilitated much improved communication between the developer and the residents. This resulted in reduced tension and better information sharing and distribution

4. Is there anything now the development is complete that you feel the Community Team could support?

Phase 2 of the development has been approved, so we would like to re-instate this liaison meeting when appropriate

5. If any other developments in your area require a liaison meeting, would you like to be considered as part of the panel?

Yes, I would be pleased to represent the community again

6. In a future development is there anything you feel could be done differently or in addition?

No

7. Any other feedback of the process

Respondent 3

1. Please specify your interest in the community liaison meeting. i.e. Developer, Resident, Councillor etc.

Resident.

2. Do you feel the addition of a Community New Development Officer made an impact on the development for existing residents, if so how?

Yes. She was very diligent and chaired the meetings fairly and extremely well.

3. Do you feel the liaison meetings improved communication and allowed all parties to discuss site matters?

Yes.

4. Is there anything now the development is complete that you feel the Community Team could support?

Yes. Some details such as tree planting remain unresolved and should be finalised before the developers leave the site..

5. If any other developments in your area require a liaison meeting, would you like to be considered as part of the panel?

No!

6. In a future development is there anything you feel could be done differently or in addition?

I think the developer should be represented by a PR director with appropriate communication skills and not by a Construction Director who has only one interest and that is completing the development on time within budget. There has been very little concern with regard to the impact on local residents. It is one thing to complete a process within the law but another to develop a good bed side manner whilst doing so.

7. Any other feedback of the process.

This developer prides itself as being a cut above other larger national institutions but I personally feel it remains an arrogant bully.