

The role of evidence in Neighbourhood Planning

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Dr Rebecca Driver
Director, Analytically Driven Ltd

Overview

- Evidence requirements for Neighbourhood Plans
- How to tackle surveys
- Strategic Environmental Assessments
- Other resources

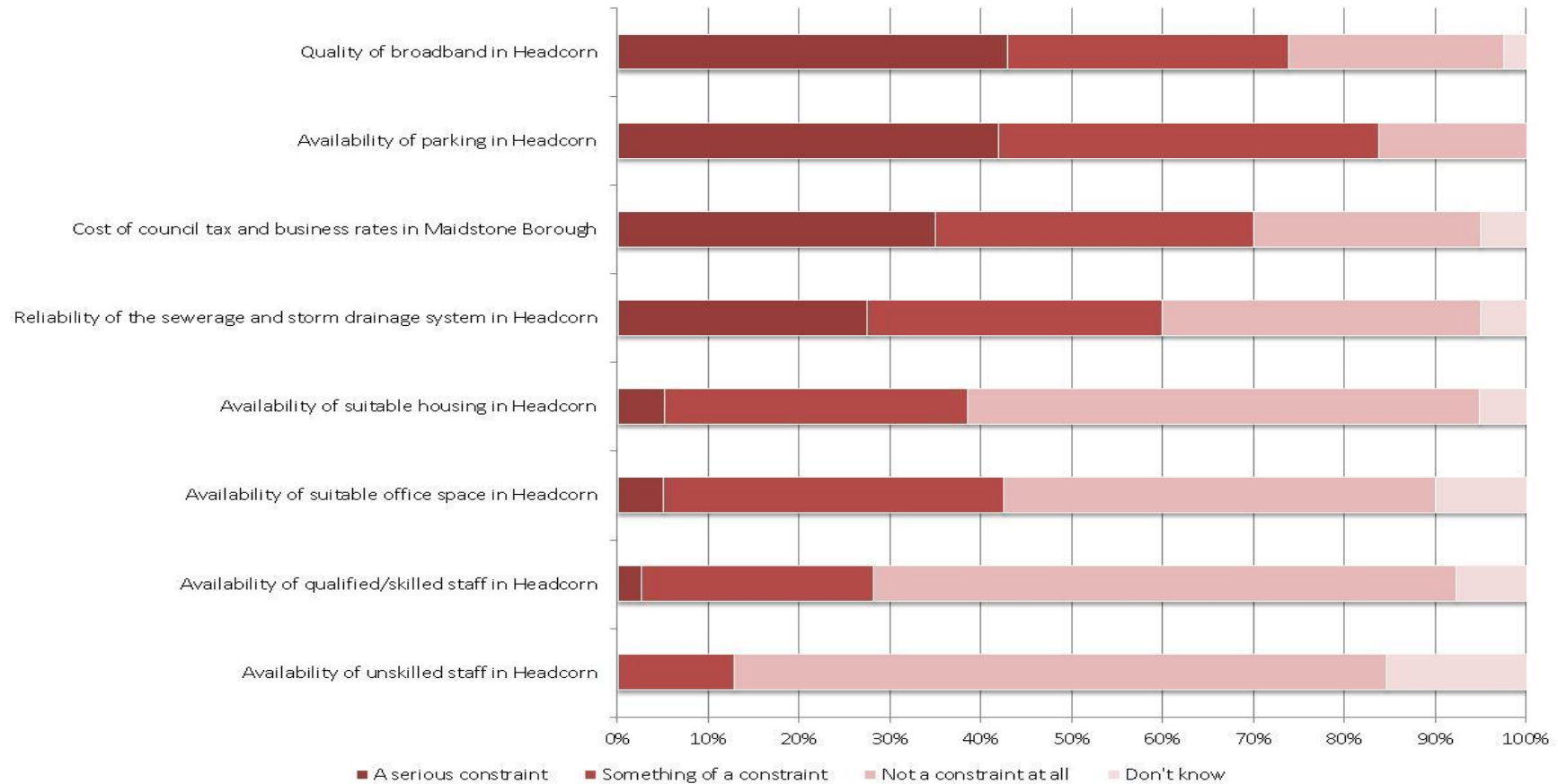
Evidence requirements for Neighbourhood Plans

- No set evidence requirements for Neighbourhood Plans.
- However, you need to be able to justify your policy choices (especially if controversial). This includes the shared vision.
- Surveys can play a helpful role.

Why do surveys?

- Can help establish a shared vision
- Can provide detail on housing need
- Can reveal infrastructure constraints
- Can provide information on important community assets
- Can help you understand the needs of harder to reach groups

What are the key constraints facing Headcorn's businesses (Top 4 and Bottom 4)?



How to tackle surveys – the practicalities

- Who do you want to survey? Residents or households? Businesses? Estate agents?
- How do you want to survey them? Paper copy, on-line, both? *(For Headcorn 91.5% of 14-65 year olds chose on-line, but only 22.5% of over 75s).*
- How will you publicise it?
- How will you deal with data protection?
- How will you test your survey?
- How much personal data do you need?

How to tackle surveys – approach to questions

- Start positive
- Ask important questions early on
- Keep questions neutral
- Provide reference points
- Get people to make tough choices
- Use open-ended questions sparingly

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- Neighbourhood Plans do not need to do a Sustainability Appraisal, but may need to do a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Need to be screened for this throughout the plan-making process
- Failure to comply with SEA requirements could mean failure at examination, or legal challenge

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- An SEA is most likely to be required where a Neighbourhood Plan:
 - Allocates sites;
 - Covers sensitive environmental or heritage assets; or
 - Contains policies with potential environmental impacts not covered by the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- Aim is to demonstrate have considered environmental issues throughout the plan-making process
- Need to demonstrate have considered reasonable alternatives and assessed their impacts (positive and negative) compared to chosen option
- Where a formal SEA is needed, will need to produce an Environmental Report and consult on it when consult on Neighbourhood Plan

For more information see:

- Planning Aid case study on tackling surveys:
<http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/case-studies/view/314>
- Guidance on SEAs for Neighbourhood Plans:
<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans/>

Other sources of evidence:

- Office for National Statistics, including Census
- Google maps
- Magic maps (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>)
- Local Authority:
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
 - Sustainability Appraisal

Neighbourhood Plans give communities:

- The power to develop a shared vision; and
- A powerful set of tools for local people to ensure they get the right types of development for their community.
- Achieving this requires good evidence.

Good Luck!