

Alcester

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Referendum

**INFORMATION FOR VOTERS AND
GENERAL INFORMATION ON
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

About this booklet

On 6th May 2021, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood development plan (usually known as the Neighbourhood Plan) for your area. The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by Alcester Town Council as the 'Qualifying Body'. In this booklet you can find out about:

- The referendum and how you can take part;
- Where to find help in making your decision; and
- General information on Neighbourhood Plans and how they fit in to the 'Development Plan' for the whole of Stratford-on-Avon District

Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan

A referendum asks you to vote 'yes' or 'no' to a question. For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper with this question:

"Do you want Stratford-on-Avon District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Alcester to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

How do I vote in the referendum?

You vote by putting a cross (X) in the 'Yes' or 'No' box on your ballot paper. Put a cross in only **one** box or your vote will not be counted.

If more people vote 'yes' than 'no' in this referendum, then Stratford-on-Avon District Council will use the Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area of Alcester. The Neighbourhood Plan will then become part of the Development Plan for the District (see below).

If more people vote 'no' than 'yes', then planning applications will be decided without using the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan for the local area.

Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections;
- The address at which you are registered to vote in a local council election, as shown in the register of electors, is in the Referendum Area (see map below) assuming that you are entitled to be registered at this address; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on 6th May 2021

You have to be registered to vote by Monday 19th April 2021 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling on telephone number 01789 260208.

The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

Ways of Voting?

There are three ways of voting:

1. In person on 6th May 2021:

- At your local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do
- In Alcester, the polling stations are:
 - Alcester Methodist Church, Priory Road Alcester, B49 5DX
 - Alcester Guide and Scout Centre, 28 Moorfield Road, Alcester, B49 5DA
 - Eric Payne Community Centre, St Faiths Road, Alcester, B49 6AG
- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this referendum
- If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 01789 260208 or email us on elections@stratford-dc.gov.uk to find out where your polling station is.
- The Polling Station will be open from 7am to 10pm

2. By post:

- If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this
- If you want to vote by post, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm on Tuesday 20th April 2021 at this address:

Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Elizabeth House
Church Street
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 6HX

- Postal votes can be sent overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote by 10pm on Thursday 6th May 2021.
- You should receive your postal vote about ten days before polling day. If it doesn't arrive by Friday 30th April 2021, you can ask for a replacement up to 5pm on Thursday 6th May 2021 by contacting our Helpline on 01789 260208.

3. By proxy:

- If you have a proxy vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this
- If you can't get to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post, you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody that you trust to vote on your behalf
- To vote by proxy, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm on Tuesday 27th April 2021 at this address:

Stratford-on Avon District Council
Elizabeth House
Church Street
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 6HX

- When you apply for a proxy vote, you must say why you cannot vote in person
- Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.
- Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from our Helpline on 01789 260208 or by emailing elections@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Am I registered to vote?

If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 01789 260208 or emailing elections@stratford-dc.gov.uk

If you are not registered to vote, you can register by going online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote The last date you can register for this referendum is Monday 19th April 2021. If you are unable to register yourself online, please call the Helpline on 01789 260208 and a member of staff will be able to do this for you. You will need to provide your date of birth and national insurance number when you register.

Referendum expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body during the period of the referendum for referendum purposes only.

The Referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to this Referendum is £2646.32. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is 4819.

Specified documents

You are reading one of a number of documents (the Regulations call them 'specified documents') that will help you make a decision on how to vote. A copy of these specified documents may be inspected at:

- Stratford-on-Avon District Council Offices at Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HX. Normal opening hours are Monday – Wednesday 8.45am to 5.15pm and Thursday – Friday 8.45am to 5.00pm. **Please note: due to Covid restrictions Elizabeth House is currently closed. However, there will be copies available to view on an appointment only basis by phoning 01789 260334.**
- Stratford-upon-Avon Library, 12 Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6PZ. Opening hours – Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and Saturday 10am to 3pm. **Please note, due to Covid restrictions the library is operating a click and collect service and in order to view the documents please telephone the library first on 0300 555 8171**

- Alcester Library and Information Centre, Globe House, Priory Road, Alcester B49 5DZ. Opening hours – Monday 9.30am to 5.00pm, Wednesday to Friday 9.30 am to 5.00pm, Saturday 10am to 1pm. **Please note, due to Covid restrictions the library is operating a click and collect service and in order to view the documents please telephone the library first on 0300 555 8171.**

If you have difficulty accessing any of the documentation please call the Planning Policy team at Stratford on Avon District Council on 01789 260334 who will be able to assist.

The 'specified documents' are:

- The Referendum version of the Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- Report of the Independent Examiner;
- Summary of Submission Consultation Responses submitted to the Independent Examiner;
- Decision Statement by Stratford-on-Avon District Council that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the 'basic conditions' (see below). This also lists the all the Examiner's modifications to the Plan, whether or not the Council agrees with them and why they need to be made; and
- This *Information for Voters and General Information on Neighbourhood Plans* document

All the above documents can be viewed on Stratford on Avon District Council's website at www.stratford.gov.uk/alcesternp

The 'Basic Conditions'

The Neighbourhood Plan must meet all the following conditions if it is to be considered for referendum:

- Has regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State;
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within the development plan for the area;
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, or otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations (including the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC);
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010)

How to find out more:

- You can find the specific documents on the Alcester Neighbourhood Plan at www.stratford.gov.uk/alcesternp
- For more information about voting and the arrangements for this referendum, please contact our helpline on 01789 260208 or elections@stratford-dc.gov.uk

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work.

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by Town or Parish Councils (or Neighbourhood Forums in locations where a Town or Parish Council does not exist) and are known as the 'Qualifying Body'.

The 'Qualifying Body' is responsible for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and the Plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area. In this case the Qualifying Body is Alcester Town Council.

What is a Neighbourhood area?

A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas. The boundary of a neighbourhood area is put forward by the Qualifying Body when applying for the designation of a neighbourhood area. In this instance, the neighbourhood area is commensurate with the Parish boundary of Alcester.

What is a Development Plan?

In England, planning applications are determined by Local Planning Authorities in accordance with the Development Plan. A Development Plan is a suite of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land across the entire Local Authority area. In Stratford-on-Avon District, the Development Plan currently consists of the Core Strategy (adopted July 2016) and the Minerals and Waste Local Plans produced by Warwickshire County Council.

All Neighbourhood Plans that pass the referendum are then 'made' (adopted) by the District Council and they will then also become part of the District's Development Plan.

Neighbourhood Planning in Alcester

The Referendum area is identified on the map below as the Parish area of Alcester and is identical to the area designated as the Alcester neighbourhood area.

For queries about Neighbourhood Planning in general, please contact Louisa Slator, Policy Planner, at louisa.slator@stratford-dc.gov.uk or telephone 01789 260334.

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