

General information about Town and Country Planning including Neighborhood Planning and the Referendum.

Woodford Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.

About this leaflet On Thursday 12th September 2019 there will be a referendum on the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. This leaflet contains information about the planning system and neighbourhood planning. It also explains how you can take part in the referendum.

The Planning System

The planning system helps decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, providing new homes and protecting the natural environment. Most new buildings, major changes to existing buildings or major changes to the local environment need planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council is responsible for deciding whether most forms of development should go ahead within the Borough. Decisions are based on national planning policy and the local development plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework¹ provides guidance to local councils in drawing up Local Plans and on making decisions on planning applications.

The Local Development Plan

A development plan is a set of documents that include policies for the development, protection and use of land across the local authority area. In Stockport, these provide the planning policy framework for the Woodford area, together with policies from the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plans. The Local Plan includes strategic and nonstrategic policies for new housing, employment, environmental protection and other forms of development

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

Neighbourhood Plans

What are they? They provide a powerful set of tools for local communities to influence future development in their local area by establishing a set of policies to be used in making decisions on planning applications.

Neighbourhood plans² are required by law to meet certain “Basic Conditions”. They must take account of national planning policy and the Local Plan. They must contribute to achieving sustainable development and be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements. Importantly, they should not be used to prevent development that is allowed for in the Local Plan.

Who makes them? Neighbourhood plans are prepared by the local community via Neighbourhood Forums and there is a set process that must be followed to make a plan.

How are they made? The plan must be prepared through the gathering of baseline information and evidence, identifying and assessing policy / development options and undergoing consultation with local residents and businesses. An independent examiner then reviews the plan and checks whether it meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements. The examiner reports on whether any changes should be made to the plan and whether it should proceed to the referendum stage.

At the referendum, local residents can vote on whether the neighbourhood plan should be used to help decide planning applications in the area. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area are entitled to vote in the referendum.

What status do Neighbourhood Plans have? If more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the Local Planning Authority must make it part of the development plan for the area. This means that the plan will be used as a basis for making decisions on planning applications.

Additional information in relation to neighbourhood planning is available on the following central government website: www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2

² www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#what-is-neighbourhood-planning

The Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

The Woodford Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum³. Preparation of the plan has followed the legal requirements and it has recently been subject to an Independent examination. The Examiner produced a report on the plan which concluded that, with some alterations, the plan meets the necessary tests. Stockport Council and the Woodford Forum have agreed with the Examiner's conclusions. The plan can now proceed to referendum.

The Referendum

The referendum will take place on Thursday 12th September 2019.

A referendum asks you to vote "yes" or "no" to a question. For this referendum the question, you will be asked is:

"Do you want Stockport Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for the Woodford Area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

You show your choice 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.

More detailed information on the Referendum is available in the Referendum Information Statement.

Further information

The following documents are available to help you to decide how to vote:

- **The Woodford Neighbourhood Plan;**
- **The report of the independent examiner**
- **A summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;**
- **A statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and complies with the relevant legislation; (EC to sign)**
- **This note for information.**

Documents can be viewed Online: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/woodford>

Bramhall Library: Bramhall Lane South, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 2DU

³ <http://woodfordnf.co.uk/>