



## **FERNHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFERENDUM**

# **INFORMATION FOR VOTERS**

## **About this booklet**

On 2 March 2016, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood development plan for your area. This booklet explains more about the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. In this booklet you can find out about:

- The Planning System
- The Development Plan [of which neighbourhood development plans are part]
- The neighbourhood development plan
- The neighbourhood area
- The referendum and how you can take part

## **The Planning System**

The planning system manages the use and development of land and buildings. It exists to ensure that development is in the public interest and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. This means ensuring that meeting the needs of the present do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It also means protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment while allowing growth that balances supporting the economy and community needs for homes, jobs, transport and infrastructure.

The planning system has two main parts:

- Plan making – setting out proposals for development and policies to guide development over time.
- Managing development – where development is agreed through the granting of planning permission.

Not all forms of development require planning permission as some building operations, depending on their scale and type, are covered by permitted development rights. For development that requires planning permission the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is responsible for deciding whether the development should go ahead. Decisions on planning applications in the Fernhurst area are based on the National Planning Policy Framework, the Development Plan for the SDNPA and any other material considerations which affect the decision. Decisions on planning applications in the National Park will also take into consideration the National Park Authority's two purposes and duty specified in the Environment Act 1995:

**PURPOSE 1:** To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.

**PURPOSE 2:** To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

**DUTY:** To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

The DEFRA Circular on English National Parks and the Broads (2010) provides guidance to national park authorities on how to achieve their purposes and duty.

## **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The framework gives guidance to local planning authorities in drawing up development plans and on making decisions on planning applications. The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in national parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty along with the Broads and the Areas of Outstanding National beauty (AONB). The NPPF is available as an on-line resource, together with associated planning practice guidance, at <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

### **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 set of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land across the entire local authority area. The South Downs National Park Authority must prepare a local plan which sets planning policies within the local planning authority area. Local plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. They must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework. Decisions must be made in accordance with the local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The local Development Plan for the Fernhurst area currently comprises the 'saved' policies of the Chichester District Local (1999), the 'saved' policies of the West Sussex Minerals Local Plan (2003), and the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (2014). These documents can be accessed via the following links:

- Chichester District Local Plan 1999 ('saved' policies)  
<http://www.chichester.gov.uk/localplan1999>
- West Sussex Minerals Local Plan 2003 ('saved' policies)  
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/environment-planning-and-waste-plans-and-policies/minerals-and-waste-policy/minerals-local-plan-2003/>
- West Sussex Waste Local Plan 2014  
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/environment-planning-and-waste-plans-and-policies/minerals-and-waste-policy/waste-local-plan/>

Once adopted, the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan will also be part of the local Development Plan.

### **What is Neighbourhood Planning?**

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 to give local communities more control in the planning of their neighbourhoods. It introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their local area. It enables communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need through planning policies relating to the development and use of land.

### **Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan?**

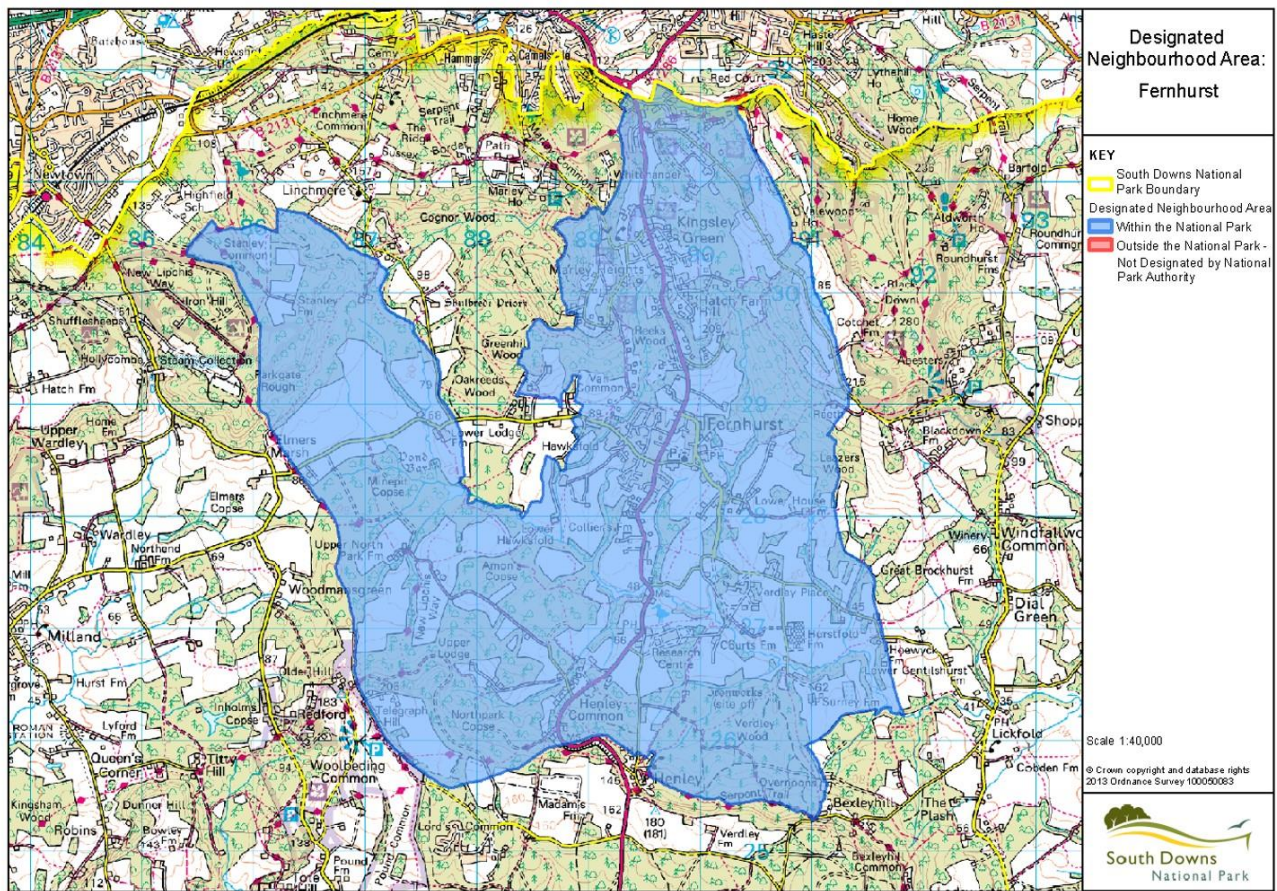
Neighbourhood development plans are prepared by town or parish councils, or neighbourhood forums. In this case, the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan was prepared by Fernhurst Parish Council, with the support of a steering group formed of local councillors, residents and representatives from local organisations and businesses. Members of the steering group have prepared the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan on a voluntary basis.

### **What is a neighbourhood area?**

A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas. The boundaries of a neighbourhood area are put forward by:

- Town or parish councils
- A neighbourhood forum (a group of at least 21 people in areas without town or parish councils)

In Fernhurst the boundary of the neighbourhood area is identified on the map below and is identical to the parish area of Fernhurst.



## Neighbourhood Planning in Fernhurst

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Fernhurst has been prepared by Fernhurst Parish Council, containing a series of planning policies which will guide development in Fernhurst up to the year 2028. The Fernhurst NDP includes housing and employment land allocations, as well policies on design, local green space and protecting important views amongst other topics. The Fernhurst NDP can be viewed at:

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/fernhurstNDP](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/fernhurstNDP)

## Referendum on the Neighbourhood Development 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 the South Downs National Park Authority to use the neighbourhood development plan for Fernhurst 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 the South Downs National Park Authority will adopt the Neighbourhood Development Plan and use it to help decide planning applications in Fernhurst.

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

## Referendum expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body during the period of the referendum for the purposes of campaigning in association with the referendum. The Referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the Referendum is £2486.96. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which that limit has been calculated is 2118.

## Specified documents

A copy of the specified documents, that is the documents listed below, may be inspected at:

- Fernhurst Village Hall, Glebe Rd, Fernhurst, Haslemere GU27 3EH
- South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH

The specified documents are:

- The draft Fernhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan, as modified;
- The report of the independent examiner into the draft Fernhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- A summary and copies of the written representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- A Decision Statement of South Downs National Park Authority's satisfaction that the draft Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions specified by statute and complies with the provision made by or under Section 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- A statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum (information for voters)

All the above documents can be viewed on the South Downs National Park Authority website at

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/fernhurstNDP](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/fernhurstNDP)

## Can I vote?

A person is entitled to vote if at the time of the referendum, they meet the eligibility criteria to vote in a local election for the area and if they live in the referendum area. Everyone on Chichester District Council's electoral register (at the date of the vote) within the referendum area is entitled to vote. The eligibility criteria to vote are:

- you are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- you are 18 years of age or over on 2 March 2016

You have to be registered to vote by 15 February 2016 to vote in the referendum. The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

## How to vote

There are three ways of voting:

### In person on 2 March 2016

- At your local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do
- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this referendum
- Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm

### 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 16 February 2016 at this address:

Chichester District Council  
East Pallant House  
Chichester  
PO19 1TY

- 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 2 March 2016
- You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement up to 5pm on 2 March 2016 by contacting our Helpline on 01243 521010

### **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
- If you want 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 23 February 2016 at this address:

Chichester District Council  
 East Pallant House  
 Chichester  
 PO19 1TY

- 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 01243 521010 or by emailing [elections@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:elections@chichester.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 01243 521010.

If you are not registered to vote, you can go online to [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) with your national insurance by Midnight 15 February 2016. If you do not have access to the internet please call our helpline on 01243 521010.

### **How to find out more:**

- Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available at: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>
- For queries about planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact South Downs National Park Authority's Neighbourhood Planning Team on [neighbourhood@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhood@southdowns.gov.uk)
- You can find specific documents on the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan at <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/FernhurstNDP>
- For more information about voting and the arrangements for this referendum, please contact our Helpline on 01243 521010 or email: [elections@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:elections@chichester.gov.uk)