

Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum on Thursday 9th March 2017

Introduction

A referendum will be held in the Parish of Pluckley on Thursday 9th March 2017 asking eligible voters whether the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan should be used by Ashford Borough Council as a material consideration in planning decisions.

The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 require the local planning authority to produce “a statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum”. This document has been produced to meet this requirement.

This document provides:

- Information about the planning system
- Information about the purpose of the referendum and any next steps
- Information stating where more details relating to the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan can be found

The Town and Country Planning System

The planning system helps to decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, delivering places for people to live, improving people’s quality of life, and protecting the natural and historic 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.

Ashford Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, is responsible for objective decision making on whether most forms of development should go ahead within the borough. Decisions are based on national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as well as on the Local Plan and supporting Supplementary Planning Documents.

How does a Neighbourhood Plan fit into this system?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act (2011) in order to give communities a greater say in the planning system in their neighbourhoods. It enabled communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need through planning policies relating to development and the use of land. The Neighbourhood Plan must, however, promote some levels of development within its area, and cannot promote less development than set out in the Council’s Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

What are the next stages?

Following production of and consultation on the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan, it was submitted to an independent Inspector. The Inspector’s report, recommended that subject to certain modifications the plan should proceed to a referendum.

Registered electors in the neighbourhood area will be entitled to vote in the referendum. This will be conducted following similar procedures to those used at local government elections. Further information on the conduct of the Referendum, including deadlines for registration, postal and proxy votes can be found online at www.ashford.gov.uk/elections.

If more than 50 percent of people voting in the referendum support the plan, the local planning authority must bring it into force. The local planning authority is required to “make” (adopt) the plan within eight weeks of a successful outcome of a referendum. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the statutory development plan and be used in determining planning applications within the neighbourhood area.

For more information on Neighbourhood Planning, please visit <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans>