

Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan
Durham County Council
Referendum Information Statement
(Including Information for Voters)

Referendum Date: 22 June 2017

About this booklet

On Thursday 22 June 2017, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area. The referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures similar to those used at local government elections. 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 referendum and how you can take part;
- The planning system in England and the development plan
- Neighbourhood plans;
- The neighbourhood area;
- The Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan

A referendum asks you to vote 'yes' or 'no' to a question.

The question on the ballot paper will be:

"Do you want Durham County Council to use the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Great Aycliffe neighbourhood area?"

If more people vote 'Yes' than 'No' in this referendum, then Durham County Council will use the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Parish of Great Aycliffe Town Council.

If more people vote 'No' than 'Yes', then planning applications will continue to be decided without using the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan.

What is the Development Plan?

In England, decisions on planning applications are made by local planning authorities. Those decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan is a set of documents that contain policies for the development and use of land in a local planning authority area. Durham County Council is the local planning authority for the County Durham.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning powers were introduced in the Localism Act in 2011. Their aim is to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. Local communities prepare neighbourhood plans which are created to show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area. When a neighbourhood plan passes a local referendum it will become part of the development plan for that neighbourhood area and must be used to help in making decisions on planning applications in that area.

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

Where town or parish councils exist they are the only organisations that can start the work of preparing a neighbourhood plan. Where there is no town or parish council a neighbourhood forum can be created to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

In this case, Great Aycliffe Town Council led the preparation of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan.

What is a neighbourhood area?

Neighbourhood areas are areas defined for the purpose of neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood plans can only be created in formally designated neighbourhood areas. A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas.

The boundaries of a neighbourhood area are proposed by town or parish councils. This is done by formal application to the County Council who will make the decision about designating a neighbourhood area.

Neighbourhood areas will normally follow parish boundaries or groups of parishes.

In Newton Aycliffe, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was approved by Durham County Council in February 2013 and is identical to the Great Aycliffe Town Council parish area.

Neighbourhood Planning in Great Aycliffe

The Referendum Area is identified on the map in this Information Statement. The area comprises the whole of the Great Aycliffe Town Council parish area. The Referendum Area is identical to the area designated as the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Area.



Referendum expenses

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

There is a limit to the amount that campaigners can spend on their advertising for the referendum.

The Referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the Great Aycliffe Referendum is **£3522.24** to each campaign organiser. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is **19665** (as at **1 May 2017**).

Specified documents to be published before Referendum

The County Council is required to make available a number of documents relevant to holding the Referendum. These are called the Specified Documents. A copy of the specified documents, all of which are identified below, may be inspected at:

- **Durham County Council**, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UQ, **between the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday; and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday;**
- **Newton Aycliffe Library**, located at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre, Beveridge Way Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 4EH, **between the hours of 10am to 6pm Monday, 10am to 7pm Tuesday, 10am to 7pm Thursday, 10am to 5pm Friday and 9:30 to 12:30pm on Saturday;**
- **Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre**, Burn Lane, Newton Aycliffe DL5 4HT, **between the hours of 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday;**
- **Oakleaf Sports Centre**, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6QZ, **between the hours of 9.30am to 9.30pm throughout the week;**
- **Great Aycliffe Town Council**, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6QF, **between the hours of 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Wednesday, 8.45am to 5.00pm Thursday, and 8.30am to 3.45m on Friday;**
- **Pioneering Care Partnership**, Pioneering Care Centre, Carers Way, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 4SF, **between the hours of 8.30 to 9pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 6pm and 9am to 2pm on Saturday;**

- **Woodham Community Centre**, St Elizabeth's Close, Woodham, Co. Durham. DL5 4UE. **The Centre is open most hours throughout the week, although times do vary.**
- **Xcel Centre**, Long Tens Way, Aycliffe Business Park, County Durham DL5 6AP, **between the hours of 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday; and,**
- **The Work Place**, Heighington Lane, Aycliffe Business Park, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham, DL5 6AH, **between the hours of 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.**

The specified documents are the following:

- Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan (version for referendum);
- Report of the Independent Examination;
- Summary of the representations sent to the independent examiner;
- Summary of Durham County Council representations sent to the examiner
- Statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions (The Basic Conditions Decision Statement);
and a
- Statement that sets out general information about the planning system and neighbourhood plans.

All the above documents can also be viewed on Durham County Council's website at:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3284/Shaping-your-neighbourhood---Neighbourhood-Development-Plans-and-Orders>

Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the Great Aycliffe Town Council parish area and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on 22 June 2017.

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

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 03000 261212**.

If you are not registered to vote, you will need to complete a voter registration form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by **6 June 2017** at this address:

Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

Registration forms can also be provided by contacting our **Helpline on 03000 261212** or by emailing **electoralservices@durham.gov.uk**. You can also register online at: <http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register-to-vote>

Ways of voting?

There are three ways of voting:

In person on Thursday 22 June 2017:

- 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. If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 03000 261212, or email us at

electoralservices@durham.gov.uk to find out where your polling station is.

- Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm

By post:

- If you have a postal vote for local elections already, you will receive a poll card confirming this
- If you don't have a postal vote and would like 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 7 June 2017 at this address:

Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

- 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 22 June 2017 by contacting our Helpline on 03000 261212.

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 you trust to vote on your behalf;
- If you don't have a proxy vote and would like to appoint a proxy you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm on 14 June 2017 at this address:

Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

- 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 registered to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.

How to find out more:

Further general information on neighbourhood planning, including documents relating to the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan, can be found on the County Council's website at:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3284/Shaping-your-neighbourhood---Neighbourhood-Development-Plans-and-Orders>

For queries about planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact Durham County Council's **Spatial Policy Team** at **03000 263967** or **spatialpolicy@durham.gov.uk**

For more information about voting and the arrangements for this referendum, please contact our **Helpline** on **03000 261212** or **electoralservices@durham.gov.uk**