



Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan  
Durham County Council  
Referendum Information Statement  
(Including Information for Voters)

Referendum Date: 29 June 2017

## About this booklet

On Thursday 29 June 2017, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area. The referendum will be conducted in accordance with the 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; and
- The Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan.

## 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 Durham County Council to use the Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Whorlton and Westwood Parish 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 Durham County Council will use the Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Whorlton Village Neighbourhood plan Area within the Parish of Whorlton and Westwick.

If more people vote 'No' than 'Yes', then planning applications will continue to be decided without using the Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan. Instead planning applications would be decided using saved policies in the Teesdale Local Local Plan (2002) which would remain as part of the development plan for the local area.

## **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, Whorlton and Westwick Parish Council led the preparation of the Whorlton Village 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.

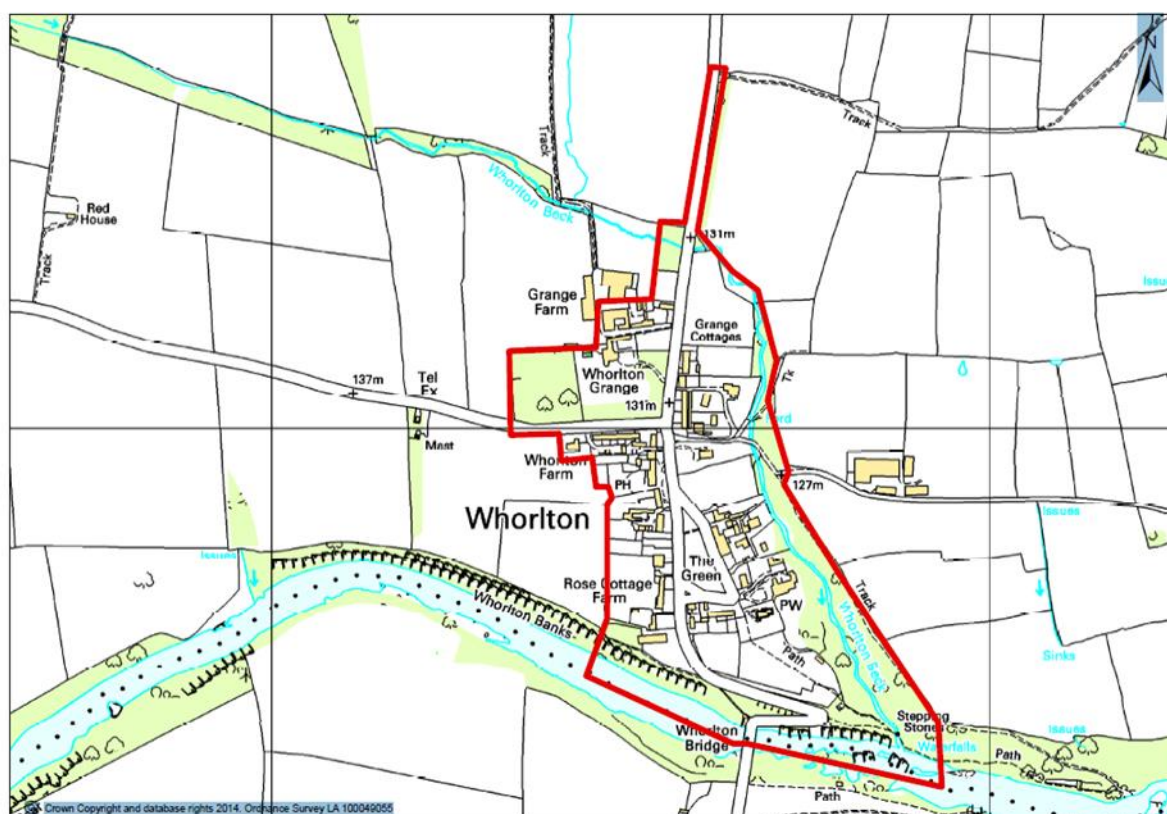
The boundaries of a neighbourhood area are proposed by town or parish councils. This is done by formal application to the County Council who will make the decision about designating a neighbourhood area.

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

In Whorlton, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was approved by Durham County Council on 10 August 2014 and is identical to the Conservation Area of the Village within the Teesdale Local Plan.

## Neighbourhood Planning in Whorlton & Westwick Parish

The Referendum area is identified on the map in this Information Statement. The neighbourhood area comprises the whole of the Conservation Area as found in the Teesdale Local Plan (2002). The Referendum area however is identical to the area covered by Whorlton and Westwick Parish Council.



## 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 Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan Referendum is £2371.62 to each campaign organiser. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is 163 (as at 1/5/2017).

### **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:

**Whorlton Village Parish Hall, between the hours of 10am to 1pm Monday, 5pm to 7pm Tuesday 13th Jun, 7am to 10pm on Thursday 8th June and 9am to 12pm other Thursdays.**

**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;**

**Barnard Castle Library, between the hours of 10am to 7pm Monday, 10am to 7pm Tuesday, 10am to 6pm Wednesday, 10am to 5pm Friday and 9:30 to 12:30pm on Saturday.**

The specified documents are the following:

- Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan: Referendum Plan;
- Report of the independent examiner (**March 2017**);
- Summary of the representations submitted 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 including 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 Parish of Whorlton and Westwick and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on 29 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 are not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our **Helpline on 0300026121**.

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 **13 June 2017** at this address:

Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UQ

Registration forms can also be provided by contacting our **Helpline on 03000 261212** or by emailing [electoralservices@durham.gov.uk](mailto: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 29 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](mailto: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 5UQ

- 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;
- 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 21 June 2017 at this address:

Durham County Council

County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UQ

- 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.

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

Further general information on neighbourhood planning, including documents relating to the Whorlton Village 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 263422** 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**