

REFERENDUM

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR KNOWLE, DORRIDGE AND BENTLEY HEATH

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR VOTERS & GENERAL INFORMATION STATEMENT ON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

On Thursday 14th March 2019 a referendum will take place on the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The NDP has been produced by the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum as the 'Qualifying Body' entitled to produce such a plan.

Referendum Question

You will be invited to vote yes or no to the following question:

'Do you want Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

Who is eligible to Vote?

You are eligible to vote if you satisfy all of the following:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections
- The address at which you are registered to vote in a local council election, as shown in the register of electors, is in the referendum area (see attached map), provided you are entitled to be registered at the address.
- You are 18 years of age or over on the day of the referendum

To vote in the referendum you must be registered to vote by Tuesday 26th February 2019. If you are already on the register of electors then you don't need to re-register. You can enquire if you are registered to vote by calling **0121 704 6042**.

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

How to Vote

Put a cross (X) in the box next to the answer of your choice on your ballot paper. Vote once only. Do not mark the ballot paper in any other way, or your vote may not be counted.

In this referendum, if more people vote yes than no, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council will 'make' the Neighbourhood Development Plan and it will become part of the Development Plan for Solihull, used by the Council in determining planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. See below for ways to vote.

Referendum expenses

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

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in regard to this referendum is £2,362 plus £0.059 per local government elector entitled to vote. The number of persons entitled to vote in this referendum will be determined by Wednesday 6th March 2019. For more information, please contact the Electoral Services Team.

Specified Documents

There are a number of documents that may help you to make your decision on whether to vote yes or no. These are referred to in the regulations as 'specified documents'.

The specified documents are as follows:

- The Referendum version of the Neighbourhood Plan Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (i.e. as modified to accord with the recommendations of the Independent Examiner and where relevant, additional modifications / amendments by the Local Planning Authority)
- Report of the Independent Examiner
- Summary of consultation responses that were submitted to the Independent Examiner.
- Decision statement by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council that the NDP meets 'basic conditions' (as explained below)
- This general information statement for voters and on neighbourhood plans.

Basic Conditions

To proceed to referendum a neighbourhood plan must meet all of the following conditions:

- Has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Has special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.
- Has special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area.
- The plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the adopted Development Plan for Solihull.
- The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, or is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations (including the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC).

- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with. The prescribed condition is that the making of the Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

Further information

You can find the specific documents on the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan via the following link:

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/resident/planning/appealsenforcement/planmaking/neighbourhoodplanning>

The specified documents can also be inspected at Knowle Library, Chester House, 1667-1669 High Street, Knowle, B93 0LL.

The opening times are -

Monday, Tuesday and Friday 10.00am to 5.00pm

Wednesday - Closed

Thursday 10.00am to 6.00pm

Saturday 10.00am to 1.00pm & 1.00pm to 3.00pm

The documents are also available for inspection at The Council House, Manor Square, Solihull, B91 3QB. The opening times are 9am – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am – 4.30pm on Friday.

For any further information about voting and arrangements for the referendum contact the following: The Counting Officer, Elections Office, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. Email electoralservices@solihull.gov.uk telephone 0121 704 6042.

General Background Note on Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. It enables Parish/Town Council's and local communities to prepare a neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) which can shape development and growth in their local area. The body that undertakes to prepare a NDP is known as the 'Qualifying Body' which in this case is the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum. If adopted the NDP will become part of the adopted borough wide development plan and will be used to assist Solihull Council in making decisions on planning applications.

A NDP is intended to be community led and should contain policies to guide the future use and development of land within the defined 'Neighbourhood Area'. The NDP must meet specified 'basic conditions' as described earlier in this information statement, including that it must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and be in general

conformity with policies of the adopted Solihull Local Plan that was adopted in December 2013.

Neighbourhood Area

The Neighbourhood Area is the geographic area that the NDP relates to. It can relate to single streets or large urban or rural areas. The boundary is put forward by the Qualifying Body when applying to the council for formal designation of a neighbourhood area. In this case the area is defined in the attached plan.

Referendum Area

The referendum area, as attached, is identical to the area designated as the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area.

Adopted Local Plan

Planning applications are determined by the Local planning Authority in accordance with the development plan. This comprises a suite of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land across the whole of the local authority area. The current development plan is the Solihull Local Plan that was adopted in December 2013. A NDP that achieves more yes votes than no votes in the referendum is then adopted ('made'), by the Council as part of the adopted local plan.

WAYS TO VOTE

There are 3 ways to vote:

1) In person at your local polling station on the day of the referendum.

- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station
- If you do not receive a poll card by 25th February you can contact the Council's helpline 0121 704 6042 or email electoralservices@solihull.gov.uk to find out where your polling station is
- Polling stations are open from **7.00am to 10.00pm on Thursday 14th March 2019**

2) By Post:

- If you have an existing postal vote arrangement set up for normal elections then you will receive a letter confirming this.
- If you want to vote by post you will need to complete an application form and send it to Solihull MBC, Electoral Services, Council House, Manor Square, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3QB. If you require help completing the form please phone 0121 704 6042.

- The deadline for new applications to vote by post for this referendum is **5pm on Wednesday 27th February 2019.**
- You should receive your postal vote about a week or so prior to polling day. If it does not arrive in time, you can request a replacement up to 5pm on Thursday 14th March by contacting 0121 704 6042.

3) By proxy

- 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 by allowing someone you trust to vote on your behalf.
- To vote by proxy you need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by **5pm on Wednesday 6th March 2019** at Solihull MBC, Electoral Services, Council House, Manor Square, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3QB
- When you apply for a proxy vote you must say why you cannot vote in person
- Anyone can be your proxy provided they are eligible to vote and willing to vote on your behalf.
- Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from our helpline 0121 704 6042 or online - <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/About-the-Council/Voting/registertovote>.

Am I registered to vote?

Unless you are registered you will not be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our helpline or by emailing electoralservices@solihull.gov.uk. You can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. The last date you can register for the referendum is Tuesday 26th February 2019. If you are unable to register online call our helpline number on 0121 704 6042. You will need to provide your date of birth and national insurance number when you register.