



GENERAL STATEMENT ABOUT THE PLANNING SYSTEM AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Introduction

On Thursday 5th November 2015 there will be a referendum for residents on the Duston Neighbourhood Plan. This Statement explains more about the referendum taking place and how you can take part. It also gives you information about the Town and Country Planning System.

The Referendum

The referendum will ask you to vote yes or no to a question. For this referendum, you will receive a ballot paper with this question:

Do you want Northampton Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Duston Parish to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

The referendum area is shown on a map in the Information Statement for the Duston Neighbourhood Plan.

How do I vote in the referendum?

You show your choice 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 residents vote in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, it will be adopted. If it is rejected, the Plan will not be adopted. If adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan.

The Town and Country Planning System

The planning system in the UK manages the use and development of land and buildings.

The planning system has two main parts to it:

- Plan making – setting out a plan for how an area will develop over time as a guide to future development.
- Managing development – when development is agreed through planning permission.

Northampton Borough Council is responsible for deciding the majority of development proposals within its administrative area.

Decisions on planning applications are based on national planning policy guidance, the Local Plan (including the Joint Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents) and any relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27th March 2012. The framework gives guidance to local councils in drawing up local plans and on making decisions on planning applications. It includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Local Plans

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.

The adopted plan for Northampton consists of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) and the Northampton Central Area Action Plan, together with saved policies from the Northampton Local Plan. The policies set out in these plans will be used for decision making purposes (along with national planning guidance and any relevant neighbourhood plans).

Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 to give members of the community a more “hands on” role in the planning of their neighbourhoods.

Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Forums (community groups that are designated to take forward neighbourhood planning in areas without parishes) can now use neighbourhood planning powers to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land through the preparation of a neighbourhood plan (sometimes referred to legally as ‘neighbourhood development plans’). The plan must be prepared through a process of consultation with local residents before an independent Examiner reviews the plan.

The legislation, however, sets out that neighbourhood plans have to meet a number of ‘Basic Conditions’ to ensure they are legally compliant and take account of wider policy considerations.

The Basic Conditions are that the Plan must:

- Have regard to national planning policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State (e.g. National Planning Policy Framework);
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area;
- Be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements

An examiner will need to be satisfied that a neighbourhood development plan meets these conditions before it can be voted on in a local referendum. This is to make sure that referendums only take place when proposals are workable and of a decent quality.

If more than half of those voting in a referendum have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the local planning authority must make it part of the statutory development plan and use it when making decisions on planning applications in the Plan Area.

The Duston Neighbourhood Plan

The Duston Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which is made up of Duston Parish Council members and people from the local community. The Neighbourhood Plan contains a vision of how Duston will be by 2029, some objectives and a set of policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced in accordance with the statutory requirements and following extensive public consultation with residents and key stakeholders over a number of years and a recent independent examination. The Plan has, subject to minor modifications been recommended to proceed to referendum.

Where can I see a copy of the Duston neighbourhood Plan

A copy of the Duston Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documentation is available to view at the following locations:

Location	Opening Times
Northampton One Stop Shop, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE	09:00 – 17:00 (9am - 5pm) Monday - Friday
Duston Library, Pendle Road, Northampton NN5 6DT	Monday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Tuesday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Wednesday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Thursday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Friday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Saturday: 10:00am - 2:00pm Sunday: 1:00pm - 4:00pm
Northampton Central Library, Abington Street, Northampton NN1 2BA	Monday: 10:00am - 6:00pm Tuesday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Wednesday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Thursday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Friday: 9:00am - 6:00pm Saturday: 9:00am - 5:00pm Sunday: 11:00am - 4:00pm
Duston Parish Council, Duston Community Centre, Pendle Road, Duston, Northampton NN5 6DT	9.30am – 12.30pm Monday to Friday

The Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documentation is also available to view online at:

<http://www.northampton.gov.uk/dustonreferendum2015>

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