

Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan for Totnes – Thursday 16 November 2023

INFORMATION STATEMENT & INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

A Referendum relating to the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan will be held on Thursday 16 November 2023.

This information sheet explains more about the Referendum that will be taking place.

The question to be asked at the Referendum will be:

"Do you want South Hams District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Totnes to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

You vote by putting a cross (X) in the 'Yes' or 'No' box on the ballot paper.

If more people vote 'yes' than 'no' in the Referendum, then South Hams District Council will use the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan to help it to decide planning applications within Totnes.

The Neighbourhood Plan once adopted will then become part of the Development Plan used by the Local Planning Authority (South Hams District Council).

If more people vote 'no' than 'yes', in this Referendum or there is a tied vote, then planning applications will continue to be decided without reference to the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan for the local area.

The Referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures similar to those used at local government elections.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 to give local communities more control in the planning of their neighbourhoods. It introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their local area. It enables communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need.

What is a neighbourhood area?

A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas. The boundaries of a neighbourhood area are put forward by:

- Town or parish councils, or
- A neighbourhood forum (in areas without a town or parish council)

What is a Development Plan?

In England, planning applications are determined by local planning authorities in accordance with the development plan. A development plan is a set of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land for a given area.

Totnes Neighbourhood Area

The Referendum area is the area which has been designated as the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan area. The map can be viewed in the neighbourhood plan document. <https://www.neighbourhoodplanning.swdevon.gov.uk/totnes>

Referendum campaign costs

An individual or body can incur costs during the period of the Referendum for the purposes of campaigning in association with the Referendum.

The Referendum expenses limit that will apply to the Totnes Neighbourhood Area is £2678.48. The number of people entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which this limit has been calculated is 5364.

Specified documents

The following specified documents can be viewed on South Hams District Council's website :- <https://www.neighbourhoodplanning.swdevon.gov.uk/totnes>

For any questions please contact Graham Swiss, Senior Strategic Planning Officer on 01803 861290 or e-mail neighbourhoodplan@swdevon.gov.uk

The plan is also available for inspection as follows:

- Totnes Town Council, The Guildhall Offices, 5 Ramparts Walk, Totnes, TQ9 5QH by appointment. Phone: Town Clerk on 01803 862147 or email reception@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk who will arrange for the Neighbourhood Plan to be viewed.

The specified documents are:

- Totnes Neighbourhood Plan
- Report of the Independent Examiner
- Summary of the representations submitted to the Independent Examiner
- A statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions (Decision Statement)
- Information Statement and Information for Voters (this document)

Who can vote?

A person is entitled to vote if at the time of the Referendum, they meet the eligibility criteria to vote in a local election for the area and if they live in the Referendum area. The eligibility criteria are:

You are registered to vote in local government elections on 31 October 2023; and

- You are 18 years of age or over on 16 November 2023
- If you are not registered, you won't be able to vote. **You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 01803 861434**

If you are not registered to vote, you can go online to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote with your national insurance number by midnight on 31 October 2023. If you do not have access to the internet please call our helpline on 01803 861434 during office hours making sure that you allow sufficient time to complete and return an application form by 31 October 2023.

How to vote

There are three ways of voting:

In person

- On Thursday 16 November 2023 at your local polling station.
- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this Referendum. Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm.
- Applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or an Anonymous Elector's Document valid for this referendum, must reach the Electoral Registration Officer at Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NE by 5pm on Wednesday 8 November 2023 and can be completed online at www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate or by completing a form available from the council offices.

By post

- If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this.

If you want 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 Wednesday 1 November 2023 at the address below. Application forms are available here

<https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/postal-voting>

or you can call our helpline on 01803 861434 or email SH-Postalvoting@swdevon.gov.uk to request an application form.

- Your postal vote will be sent out approximately 10 days before polling day.

- Postal votes can be sent overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote to be received by 16 November 2023.
- If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement up to 5.00pm on 16 November 2023 by contacting our helpline 01803 861434.

By proxy

- If you have a proxy vote already, your proxy 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 that you trust to vote on your behalf.

If you want to vote by proxy, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the address below to arrive by 5.00pm on Wednesday 8 November 2023.

Application forms are available here <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/voting-by-proxy>

- or you can call our helpline on 01803 861434 or email SH-Proxyvoting@swdevon.gov.uk to request an application form.

How to find out more

Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available at:

<https://www.neighbourhoodplanning.swdevon.gov.uk/totnes>

For queries about planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact the Neighbourhood Planning Team on 01803 861290 or e-mail neighbourhoodplan@swdevon.gov.uk

You can find specific documents on the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan at

<https://www.neighbourhoodplanning.swdevon.gov.uk/totnes>

For more information about voting and the arrangements for this Referendum, please contact our Helpline on 01803 861434 or email:

elections@southhams.gov.uk

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