



Winsford Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

About this leaflet

On Thursday 23 October 2014 there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area, **The Winsford Neighbourhood Plan**. This leaflet explains more about the Planning System, Neighbourhood Planning and how you can take part in the referendum.

The Planning System

The planning system helps decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, improving people's quality of life, and protecting the natural environment. Most new buildings, major changes to existing buildings or major changes to the local environment need planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

Cheshire West and Chester Council is responsible for deciding whether most forms of development should go ahead within the borough. Decisions are based on **national planning policy guidance**, and the local **Development Plan**.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework provides guidance to local councils in drawing up local plans and on making decisions on planning applications.

The Development Plan

A development plan is a set of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land across the local authority area. It can include Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

Local Plans

The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan is at an advanced stage of production and will, when adopted provide the planning policy framework for the Borough.

Neighbourhood Plans

What are they?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act. It aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work by showing how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area.

Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet certain “Basic Conditions” by having regard to national planning policy, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, being in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area (ie the Local Plan) and being compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements. They should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

Who makes them?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by town or parish councils or neighbourhood forums and there is a statutory process that must be followed to make a plan.

How are they made?

The plan must be prepared through a process of consultation with local residents and businesses before an independent examiner reviews the plan and checks whether it meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements. The examiner then reports whether any modifications should be made to the plan and whether it should proceed to the next stage in the process which is the referendum stage.

The referendum will consider whether the local planning authority should use the neighbourhood plan to help it decide planning applications in the area concerned. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area are entitled to vote in the referendum.

What status do they have?

If more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan the local planning authority must make it part of the statutory development plan for the area to be used in determining decisions on planning applications.

Additional information in relation to neighbourhood planning is available on the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

The Winsford Neighbourhood Plan

The Winsford Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by Winsford Town Council working with The Weaver Valley Partnership, Cheshire West and Chester Council and assisted by consultants. It has been produced in accordance with the statutory requirements and following a recent independent examination has, subject to minor modifications, been recommended to proceed to referendum.

The Referendum

The referendum will take place on **Thursday 23 October 2014**.

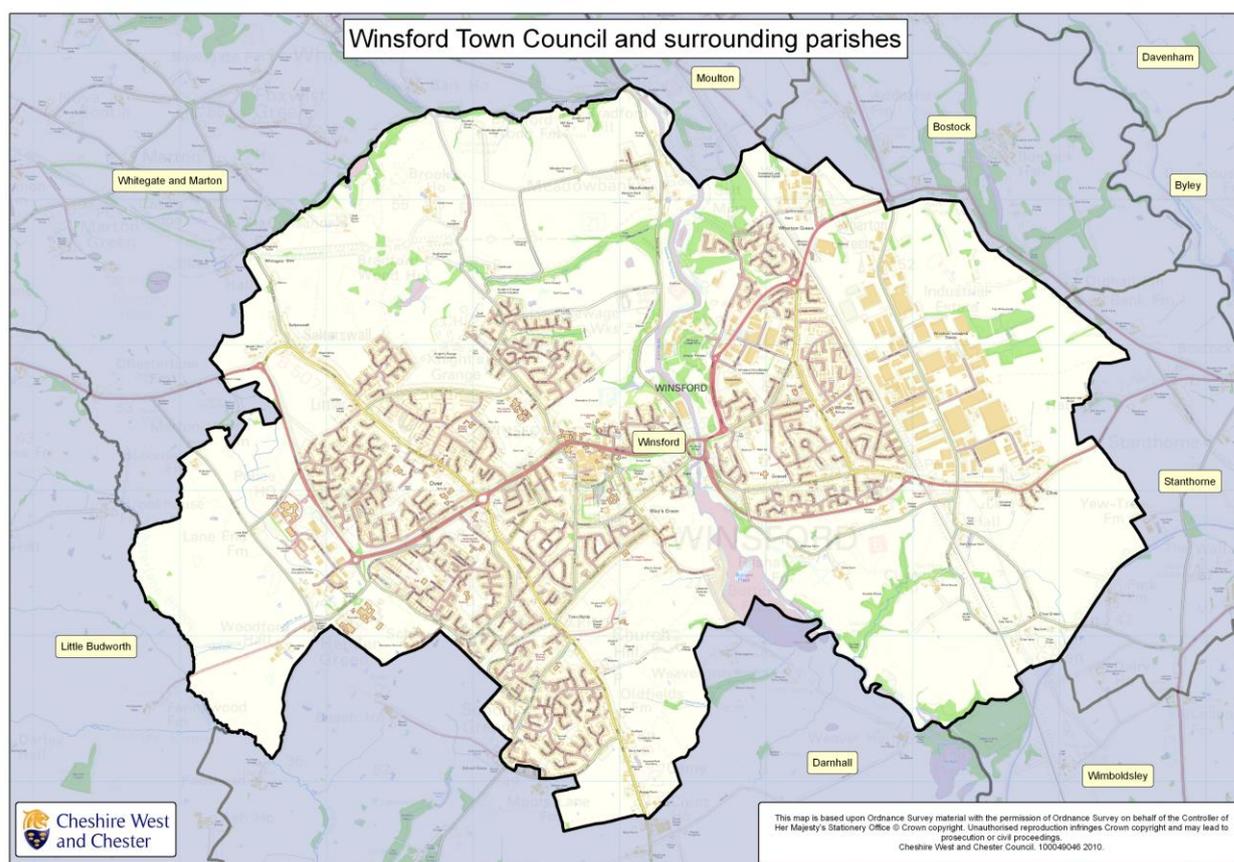
A referendum asks you to vote “yes” or “no” to a question. For this referendum the question you will be asked is

“Do you want Cheshire West and Chester Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for the Winsford Area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

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.

The Referendum Area

The referendum area is identified on the map below and is identical to the area which has been designated as the Winsford Neighbourhood Plan area.



Who can vote in the Referendum?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the parish of Winsford and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections, and
- You are 18 years of age or over on 23 October 2014.

You have to be registered to vote by Wednesday 8 October 2014 in order to vote in the referendum.

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

Am I registered to vote?

You can check if you are registered to vote by calling 01244 977084 .

If you are not on the electoral register, you will need to go online to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote and complete an online application form.

Remember..... If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote.

Ways of voting... There are three ways of voting:

In person on : Thursday 23 October 2014

Most people vote in person at their 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 telling you where your polling station is.
- Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm.
- ***If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact Democratic Services on 01244 977084 to find out where your polling station is.***

By post:

- To vote by post, fill in an application form and send it to Democratic Services, Floor 5, HQ Building, 58 Nicholas Street, Chester CH1 2NP to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 8 October 2014.
- Ballot papers can be sent overseas, but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your ballot papers by Thursday 23 October 2014.
- You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can get a replacement up to 5pm on Thursday 23 October 2014.

By proxy:

If you can't go 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. Proxy vote application forms are available from Democratic Services on 01244 977084.

Specified documents

The following specified documents are available to help you to decide how to vote::

- The Winsford Neighbourhood Plan;
- The report of the independent examiner;
- A summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- A statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and complies with the relevant legislation;
- An information statement about the referendum;
- This note for information.

A copy of the specified documents may be viewed as follows:

On Line:

at Cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk or by following this link:

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/policies_and_performance/council_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/neighbourhood_planning/winsford_neighbourhood_plan.aspx

Or: On computer screens in the One Stop Shop areas of Council Offices between 8.30am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday at:

- The Forum Office, Chester, CH1 2HS;
- Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford, CW7 1AH; or
- 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE

In Person:

Between 8.30am and 5.00pm at the following Council offices:

- The Forum Office, Chester, CH1 2HS;
- Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford, CW7 1AH;
- 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE

and at:

- Winsford Library during normal opening hours
- Wharton Library during normal opening hours

How to find out more

- Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available on the following websites www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning and http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/policies_and_performance/council_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/neighbourhood_planning.aspx
- For queries relating to the neighbourhood plan please contact neighbourhoodplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk or ring 01244 973201