

Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan

Information Statement and Information for Voters for Referendum on 4 May 2017

On 4th May 2017, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood development plan for your area. This note explains more about the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. In this note you can find out about:

- The referendum and how you can take part
- The neighbourhood area
- The neighbourhood plan
- The development plan (of which neighbourhood plans are part)

Introduction

A referendum on the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan will be held on Thursday 4 May 2017. The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

The question to be asked in the referendum is:

“Do you want Swale Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Faversham Creek to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

The neighbourhood area is shown on the map at the end of this note, as is the referendum area. The referendum area is the whole of the Faversham Town Council, which is also the Faversham division of Kent County Council. There will also be Kent County Council elections taking place on the same day.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan once adopted will then become part of Swale’s Development Plan. If more people vote ‘yes’ than ‘no’, then planning applications will be decided using the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan for the local area.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. A community can prepare a neighbourhood plan. This plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area.

Neighbourhood planning is a part of the planning system. It gives local communities the option to create statutory plans for managing future development in their area.

For some time communities have had the power to produce local community planning documents which have had some weight in the planning process and this remains the case. However, neighbourhood planning is different because it sits alongside Swale's Local Plan and has full status as part of the statutory development plan.

Neighbourhood planning offers communities the option to produce three slightly different spatial planning tools. Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders, and Community Right to Build Orders. Collectively these are often referred to as 'neighbourhood plans' or as 'neighbourhood planning'. All of these must be compatible with national and local planning policies and are subject to a consultation process, an independent examination and a local referendum. If the local community votes in favour, then the plan is adopted by the Local Planning Authority.

Neighbourhood planning is not compulsory, communities need to volunteer to get involved.

What is a neighbourhood area?

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

- Town or parish councils; or
- A neighbourhood forum (a group of at least 21 people in areas without town or parish councils)

In Faversham the boundary of the neighbourhood area was requested by Faversham Town Council and agreed by Swale Borough Council.

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by town or parish councils, or neighbourhood forums. In this case, the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by Faversham Town 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 across the entire local authority area. Within Swale, the local planning authority is Swale Borough Council.

Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum area if you live in the town of Faversham and:

- You are registered to vote in local government elections; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on Thursday 4 May 2017.

If you are not already registered to vote, the deadline for registering is Thursday 13 April 2017. You can check if you are registered by calling our helpline 01795 417316.

If you need to register, you can register at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or call our helpline 01795 417316; you will need your national insurance number to hand.

Referendum Expenses

The Referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the referendum is £3238.39. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is 14,854.

Specified Documents

The relevant regulations state that we must make the following documents available:

- Referendum version of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan
- Report of the independent examiner
- Summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner
- Statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions (Decision statement)
- Statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum (included within the 'Information Statement and Information for Voters' document)

These documents are available on-line at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

Copies of documents can also be viewed at:

- Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT between 9am and 5pm weekdays
- Faversham District Office, Alexander Centre, Preston Street, Faversham, ME13 8NY
- Faversham Town Council, Alexander Centre, Preston Street, Faversham, ME13 8NY
- Faversham Library, Newton Road, Faversham, ME13 8DY between 9am-6pm Monday – Friday and 9am-5pm Saturdays

How to find out more:

Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available at:

<http://www.swale.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

You can find specific documents on the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan at:
<http://www.swale.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

For queries about neighbourhood planning in general, please contact Planning Policy on: 01795 417023

For more information about voting and the arrangements for this referendum, please contact our Helpline on 01795 417 316 or email: elections@swale.gov.uk