

BENSON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFERENDUM

THURSDAY 28 JUNE 2018

INFORMATION STATEMENT

&

INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

Information Statement

A Referendum relating to the adoption of the Benson Neighbourhood Development Plan will be held for an extended Referendum Area on Thursday 28 June 2018.

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

The question asked at the Referendum will be:

Do you want South Oxfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Benson 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 Oxfordshire District Council will use the Benson Neighbourhood Development Plan to help it to decide planning applications within Benson.

The Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, will then become part of the Development Plan used by the Local Planning Authority (South Oxfordshire 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 Development 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 through planning policies relating to the development and use of land.

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

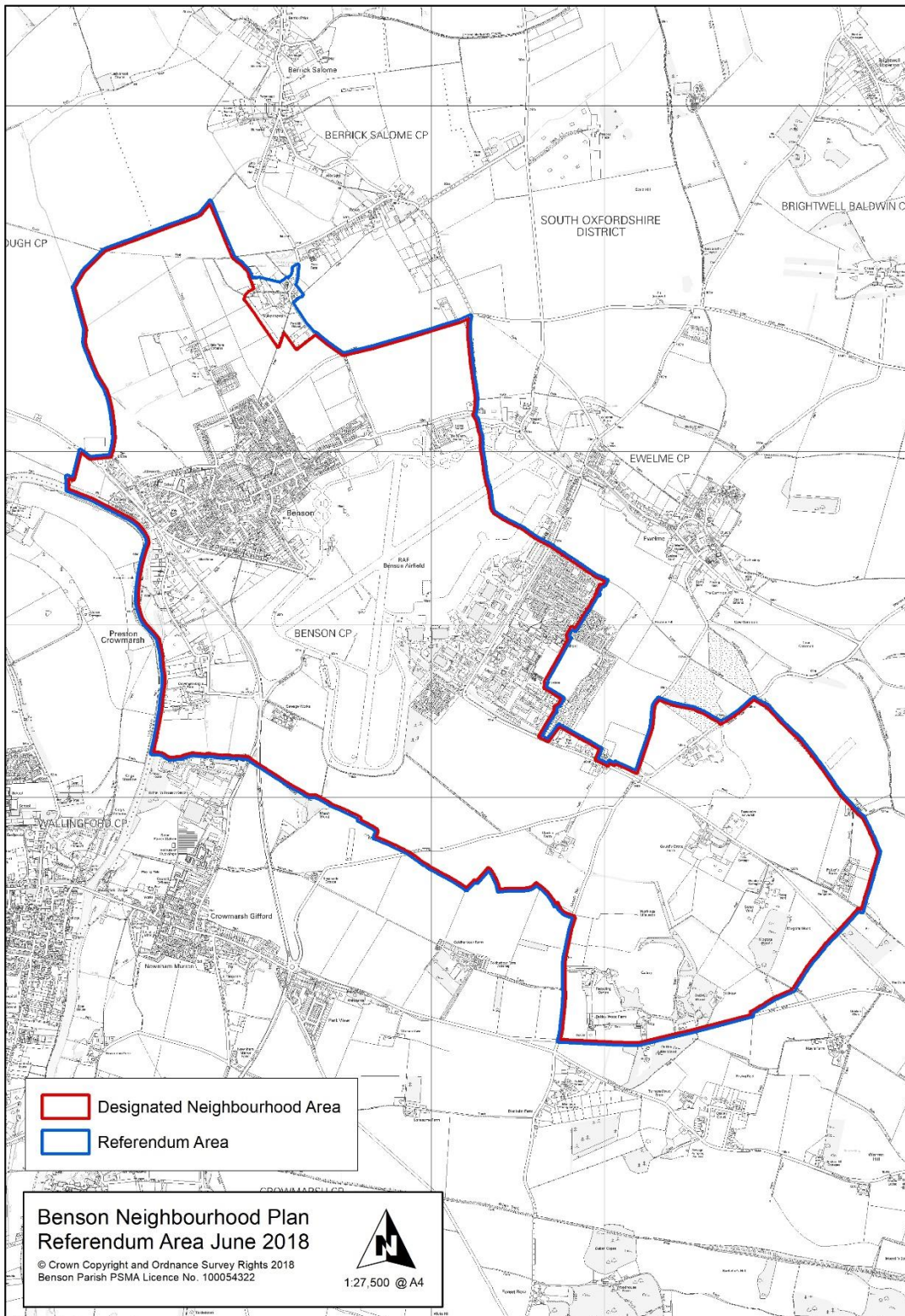
What is a Development Plan?

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 across the entire local authority area.

Benson Neighbourhood Area

The Referendum area is identified in the map below. The referendum area includes some properties in Rokemarsh that fall outside of the designated neighbourhood plan area. The Examiner concluded that some residents of Rokemarsh would be impacted by the allocation of BEN3/4 and that it is therefore appropriate to extend the referendum area to include specific properties in Rokemarsh.



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 Benson Neighbourhood Development plan is £2545.60. The number of people entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which this limit has been calculated is 3113.

Specified documents

The following specified documents can be inspected on the Council's website at <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/benson-neighbourhood-p> and at the following addresses, at the following times:

Reception South Oxfordshire District Council 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB	Mon to Thurs 8.30am to 5.00pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm
Benson Library Castle Square Benson Oxfordshire OX10 6SD	Monday 2pm - 6pm Tuesday 9am - 12.30pm 2 - 5pm Wednesday Closed Thursday 2pm - 7pm Friday 9am - 12.30pm 2pm - 5pm Saturday 9.30am - 12.30pm Sunday Closed
Parish Council offices The Parish Hall Sunnyside Benson OX10 6LZ	Mon – Fri 9.30-12.30

The specified documents are:

- Benson Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Summary of the representations submitted to the Independent Examiner
- Statement that the draft plan meets the basic conditions (decision statement)
- Independent Examiner's Report (appendix 3 of 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; and

- You are 18 years of age or over on Thursday 28 June 2018

If you are not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 01235 422528.

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 **Tuesday 12 June 2018**. If you do not have access to the internet, please call our helpline on 01235 422528.

How to vote

There are three ways of voting:

- In person on Thursday 28 June 2018 at your local polling station.
- Receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this Referendum.
- Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm.

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 13 June 2018 at the address below.
- Postal votes can be sent overseas, but think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote by 28 June 2018.
- You should receive your postal vote approximately 10 days before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement up to 5.00pm on 28 June 2018 by contacting our helpline 01235 422528.

By proxy

- If you have a proxy vote already, you 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 20 June 2018 at the address below.
- Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from South Oxfordshire Council's website at: www.southoxon.gov.uk/elections or you can call our helpline on 01235 422528 or email elections@southoxon.gov.uk to request an application form.

How to find out more

- Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available at www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans
- For queries about planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk
- You can find specific documents on Benson's Neighbourhood Development Plan at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/benson-neighbourhood-p>

- For more information about voting and the arrangements for this Referendum, please contact our Helpline on 01235 422528 or email: elections@southandvale.gov.uk

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Electoral Services

South Oxfordshire District Council

135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB