

Leiston Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

Information for voters

Town and Country Planning, England | The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012
The Neighbourhood Planning (Prescribed Dates) Regulations 2012

About this Booklet

On **9th February 2017** there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood development plan for your area. This booklet explains more about the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. In the booklet you can find out about:

- The referendum and how you can take part
- Referendum expenses
- The neighbourhood area
- The neighbourhood plan; and
- The development plan (of which neighbourhood plans are a part).

The Referendum

Referendum on the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan

A referendum asks you to vote 'yes' or 'no' to a question. For the referendum on the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan you will receive a ballot paper with this question:

Do you want Suffolk Coastal District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Leiston to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

This question is specified in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 of The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

Who can vote in the referendum?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the Leiston parish area (see map) and:

- You are registered to vote in the local council elections; and
- You are 18 years or over on 9th February 2017.

You have to be registered to vote by 24th January 2017 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling 01394 444422

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

Ways of Voting

There are three ways of voting:

1. In person on 9th February at your local polling station:

It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do. In Leiston, the polling stations are:

Leiston Community Centre, King Georges Avenue, Leiston IP16 4JX

The Long Shop Museum, Main Street, Leiston IP16 4ES

The polling stations will be open from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm

You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this referendum. If you do not receive your polling card you can contact 01394 444422

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:

Electoral Services
Suffolk Coastal District Council
East Suffolk House
Riduna Park
Station Road
Melton
Woodbridge
IP12 1RT

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 by 9th February 2017.

You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement up to 5pm on 9th February 2017 from the Electoral Services Team at Suffolk Coastal District Council, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT.

2. By proxy:

If you have 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 someone 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 Electoral Registration Officer, Suffolk Coastal District Council, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT to arrive by 5pm on 1st February 2017.

When you apply for a proxy vote, you must say why you cannot vote in person. Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.

Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from the Electoral Services Team on 01394 444422 at Suffolk Coastal District Council, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT.

How do I vote in the referendum?

You vote 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.

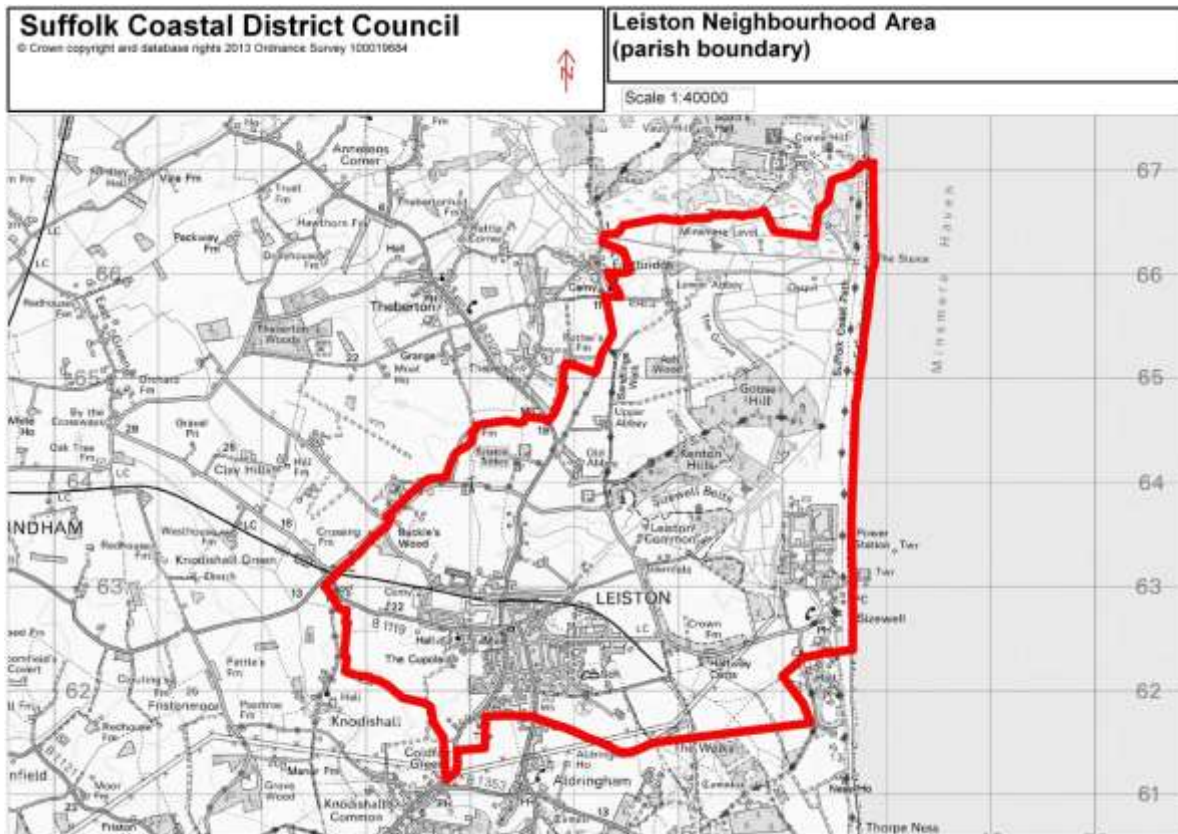
Referendum result

If more people vote 'yes' than 'no' in the referendum, then Suffolk Coastal District Council will use the Leiston Neighbourhood Development Plan to help it decide planning applications in Leiston. To complete the successful neighbourhood plan process and to give the neighbourhood plan its full statutory weight, Suffolk Coastal District Council would formally adopt the neighbourhood plan having reference to the positive vote at referendum. Once "made" the neighbourhood plan will become part of the development plan (see section 'What is a Development Plan?').

If more people vote 'no' than 'yes' then planning applications will be decided without using the neighbourhood development plan as part of the development plan for Leiston.

The Referendum Area

The referendum area is the same as the neighbourhood plan area, which was designated by Suffolk Coastal District Council on 29th October 2013.



Referendum expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body during the period of the referendum, for referendum purposes.

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to this referendum is £2,605.79. The number of persons entitled to vote in the referendum by which the limit to expenses has been set is 4,132.

The Leiston Neighbourhood Plan

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning is a tool which enables local communities to 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. The plan can be comprehensive or limited in terms of the issues covered.

A neighbourhood plan has to complete a number of formal stages including public consultation and independent examination before it can proceed to referendum.

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012, a copy of the Leiston neighbourhood plan is provided as one of the specified documents which must be made available in relation to the referendum. (See later section on specified documents)

What is a neighbourhood area?

A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas. Where there is a Parish Council, the neighbourhood area would generally be expected to cover the parish area. The boundaries of a neighbourhood area are put forward by

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

In Leiston, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was determined by Suffolk Coastal District Council on 29th October 2013 and is identical to the parish area of Leiston (see map above). The referendum area is identical to the neighbourhood plan area.

Who can prepare a neighbourhood plan?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by town or parish councils, or neighbourhood forums. In the case of Leiston, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Leiston Town Council.

What is a Development Plan?

In England, the planning system is plan led. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan is a set of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land across the entire local planning authority area. Within Suffolk Coastal District, the local planning authority is Suffolk Coastal District Council, for most planning matters. Suffolk County Council is the relevant local planning authority for matters relating to minerals or waste. Most planning applications are therefore submitted to and decided by Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Specified Documents

The specified documents are set out in paragraph 4 of The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012. They comprise:

- The draft Leiston Neighbourhood Development Plan (referendum version)
- The report of the independent examiner
- A summary of representations submitted to the independent examiner
- A statement by Suffolk Coastal District Council that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and conventions (Decision Statement);
- A statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum (Information for voters).

Each of these specified documents is available for viewing via the Council's website:

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-areas/leiston-neighbourhood-area/>

They are also available for inspection at:

Suffolk Coastal District Council (during normal office hours)

East Suffolk House
Riduna Park
Station Road
Melton
Woodbridge
IP12 1RT

If you have any queries with regard to the neighbourhood plan please contact Hilary Hanslip on 01394 444761 or email hilary.hanslip@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

For any queries regarding the referendum process/ voter registration please contact Karen Last on 01394 444715 or email Karen.last@eastsuffolk.gov.uk