



Mutford Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

Information for voters

Town and Country Planning, England | The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

About this Booklet

On **17th October 2019** there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood development plan for your area. This booklet explains more about the referendum and how you can take part in it.

The booklet has information about:

- Referendum expenses;
- The neighbourhood area;
- The neighbourhood plan; and,
- The development plan (of which neighbourhood plans are a part).

The Referendum

A Neighbourhood Planning Referendum will be held for the Mutford Neighbourhood Plan on **17th October 2019**.

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

Do you want East Suffolk Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Mutford 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 Mutford parish area (see map page 4) and:

- You are registered to vote in the local council elections; and
- You are 18 years or over on 17th October 2019.

You have to be registered to vote by 1st October 2019 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling Electoral Services on 01502 523320.

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 17th October 2019 at your local polling station at:

Mutford & Rushmere Village Hall
Mill Road
Mutford
Beccles
NR34 7UR

The polling station will be open from 7:00am to 10:00pm. 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 confirming your polling station for this referendum. If you do not receive your poll card, contact 01502 523320.

2. By post:

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

If you want to vote by post, and do not currently, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Services Team. Completed application forms must be received by 5pm on 2nd October 2019.

We can send postal votes overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote by 17th October 2019.

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 17th October 2019 from the Electoral Services Team.

3. 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 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 Services Team. Completed application forms must be received by 5pm on 9th October 2019.

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.

Electoral Services Team Contact Details

Electoral Services
East Suffolk Council
2 Canning Road
Lowestoft
NR33 0EQ

01502 523320
elections@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

How do I vote in the referendum?

You vote by putting a cross (X) in the 'yes' or 'no' box on your ballot paper. Only put a cross in **one** box or your vote will not be counted.

Referendum result

Positive: If more people vote 'Yes' than 'No' in the referendum, then East Suffolk Council will use the Mutford Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in Mutford neighbourhood area in the future.

At that point, the neighbourhood plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area (see section 'What is a Development Plan?') and thereby the starting point for the determination of relevant planning applications.

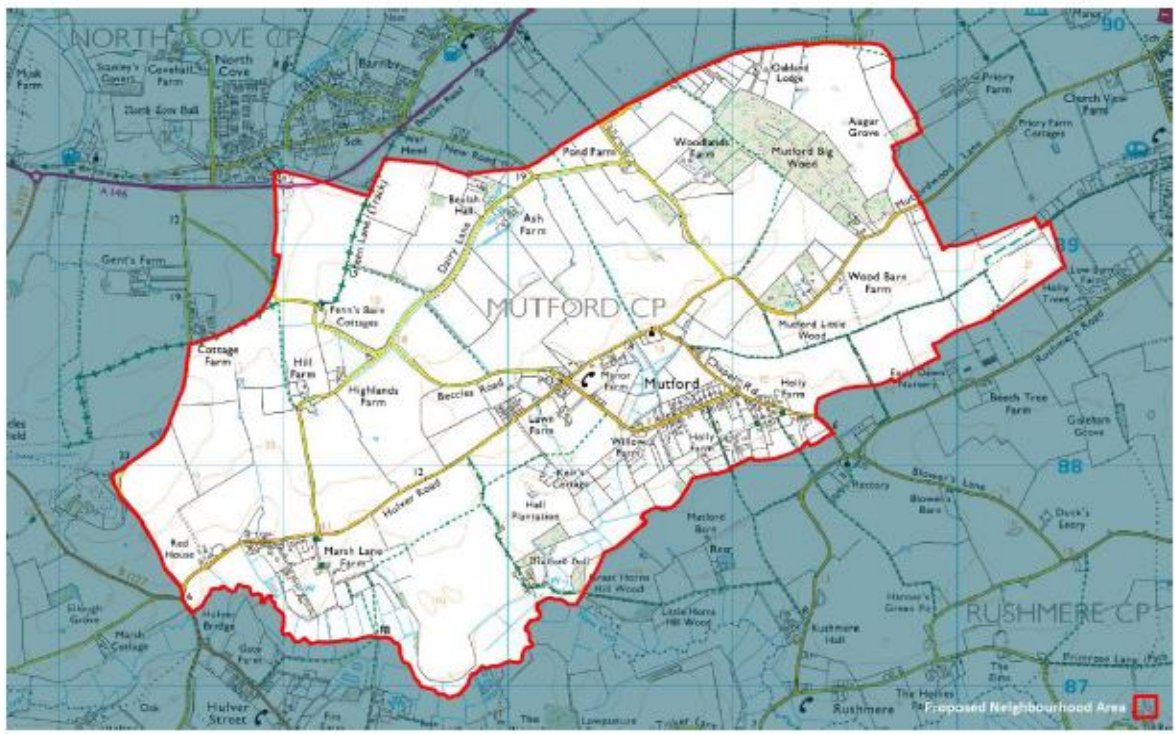
To complete the neighbourhood plan process and to give the neighbourhood plan its full legal weight, East Suffolk Council would then need to formally “make” the neighbourhood plan. This would normally occur within 8 weeks of the referendum date.

Negative: 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 Mutford.

The Referendum Area

The referendum area is the same as the neighbourhood plan area, which was designated by (former) Waveney District Council on 14th September 2016.

Map of the Mutford Neighbourhood Area



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 £2,385.84. The number of persons entitled to vote in the referendum is 404.

The Mutford 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 Mutford 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 a single street or large urban or rural areas. Where there is a Parish Council, the neighbourhood area would normally follow the parish administrative boundary. 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 Mutford, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was determined by (former) Waveney District Council on 14th September 2016 and is identical to the administrative parish area of Mutford (see map above). The agreed 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 Mutford, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Mutford Parish Council (the Qualifying Body).

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 East Suffolk, the local planning authority is East Suffolk 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 East Suffolk Council.

Specified Documents

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

- The draft Mutford Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 (Referendum Version) and Additional Photographic Evidence and Maps;
- The report of the independent examiner;
- A summary of representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- A statement by East Suffolk Council that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and Convention rights (Decision Statement);
- A statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum (this Information for voters); and,
- A statement containing basic information about the referendum (Information Statement).

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

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-the-area/mutford-neighbourhood-plan/>

They are also available for inspection at:

Customer Services,
East Suffolk Council
Marina
Lowestoft
NR32 1HH
(during office hours Monday to Friday)

Beccles Library
Blyburgate
Beccles
NR34 9TB

If you have any queries with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan please contact Dickon Povey on 01502 523043 or email dickon.povey@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

For any queries regarding the referendum process/ voter registration please contact Tim Willis on 01502 523253 or email tim.willis@eastsoffolk.gov.uk