



Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

## Information for Voters

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

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### About this Booklet

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 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 Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023.

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

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

- You are registered to vote in the local council elections; and
- You are 18 years or over on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023.

You have to be registered to vote by 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling East Suffolk Council 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 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 at your local polling station at the following locations:

United Reform Church Hall  
Quay Street  
Halesworth  
IP19 8EX

And

The Rifle Hall  
London Road  
Halesworth  
IP19 8LW

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 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

If you have not received your postal vote by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 call 01502 523320. You can ask for a replacement postal vote before 5pm on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 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 25th January 2023.**

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  
Riverside  
4 Canning Road  
Lowestoft  
NR33 0EQ  
01502 523320  
elections@eastssuffolk.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 Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan to help them decide planning applications in Halesworth -neighbourhood area in the future.

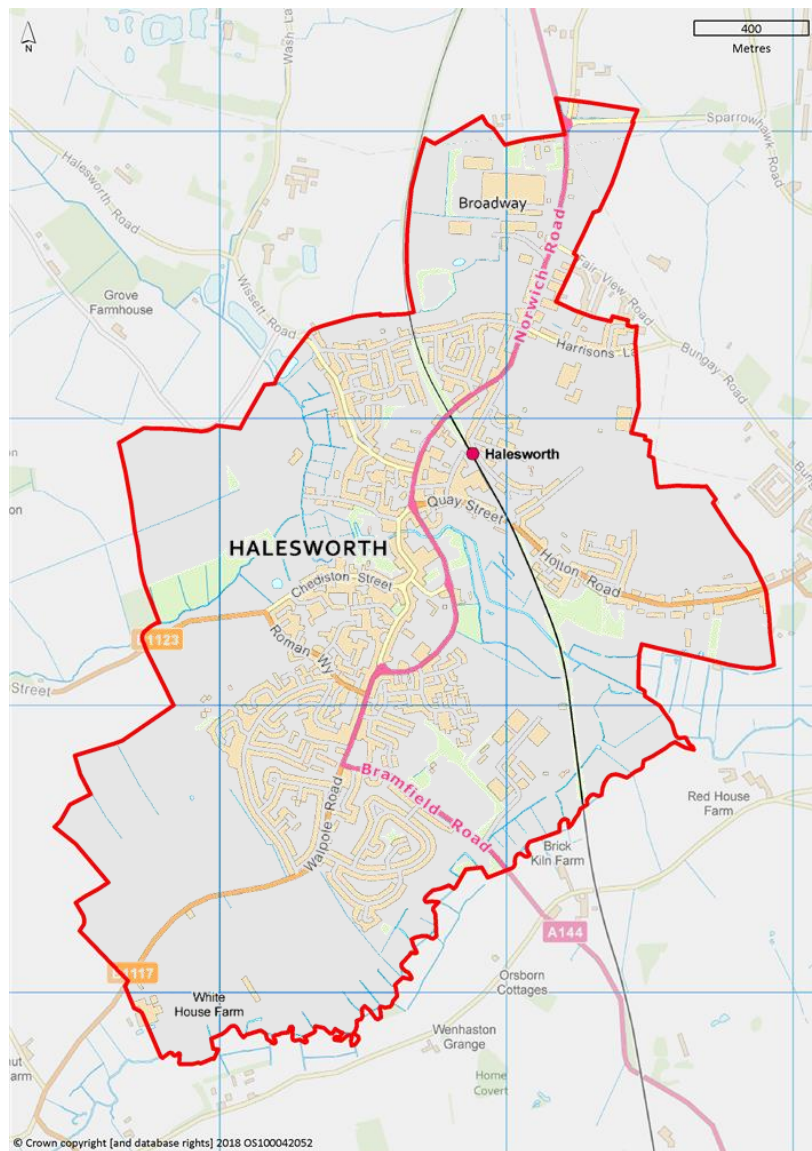
At that point, the neighbourhood plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area (see section 'What is a Development Plan?') and thereby the starting point for the determination of relevant planning applications.

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’, or the numbers of ‘No’ and ‘Yes’ votes are equal, then planning applications will be decided without using the neighbourhood development plan as part of the development plan for Halesworth.

### The Referendum Area

The referendum area is the same as the neighbourhood plan area, which was designated by the (former) Waveney District Council on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018.



### 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 £2,607.60. The number of persons entitled to vote in the referendum is 4,044.

## **The Halesworth 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 (as amended), a copy of the Halesworth 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 or Town Council, the neighbourhood area will often follow the parish/town 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 Halesworth, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was determined by the (former) Waveney District Council on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 and comprises the whole of the parish of Halesworth (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 Halesworth, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Halesworth Parish Council (the Qualifying Body).

### **What is a Development Plan**

In England, the planning system is plan led. Planning law requires that applications for 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.

The local planning authority is East Suffolk Council. The adopted Local Plan for the East Suffolk area is the Waveney Local Plan (March 2019). Suffolk County Council is the relevant local planning authority for matters relating to minerals or waste.

### **Specified Documents**

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

- Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036 (Referendum Version, February 2023);
- Comments Summary: A summary of representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- East Suffolk Council Decision Statement: A statement by East Suffolk Council that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and Convention rights;
- Information for Voters (this document) which is a statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum; and,
- Information Statement: A statement containing basic information about the referendum

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-the-area/halesworth-neighbourhood-area/>

The Specified Documents are also available to view at:

Halesworth Library  
Bridge Street  
Halesworth  
IP19 8AD

Or

Customer Services  
Marina Centre  
Marina,  
Lowestoft,  
NR32 1HH (during opening hours).

Should you have any difficulties in accessing copies of the document you can contact us on 01394 444557 or email [planningpolicy@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) and we will aim to assist you.

If you have any queries with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan, please contact Dickon Povey on (01502) 523043 or email [dickon.povey@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:dickon.povey@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

For any queries regarding the referendum process/voter registration please contact Electoral Services on 01502 523251 or email [elections@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:elections@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)