



Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

Information for Voters

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

About this Booklet

On 15th May 2025 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 Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan on 15th May 2025.

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

Do you want East Suffolk Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Westerfield 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 Westerfield 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 15th May 2025.

You have to be registered to vote by 28th April 2025 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 15th May 2025 at your local polling station at the following locations:

Westerfield Village Hall

Church Lane

Westerfield

IP6 9BE

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.

All electors will be required to show photographic identification to vote at polling stations. Accepted forms of voter ID include UK passports and UK photo driving licences. If you do not have any acceptable photo ID, you can apply for free voter ID.

A full list of acceptable photo ID and how to apply for free Voter ID can be found here:
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/elections/voter-photo-id/>

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 29th April 2025.

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 from 9th May until 5pm on Thursday 15th May from the Electoral Services Team by calling 01502 523320.

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 7th May 2025

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
East Suffolk House
Station Road
Melton
IP12 1RT
01502 523320
elections@eastsuffolk.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 Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan to help them decide planning applications in Westerfield neighbourhood area in the future.

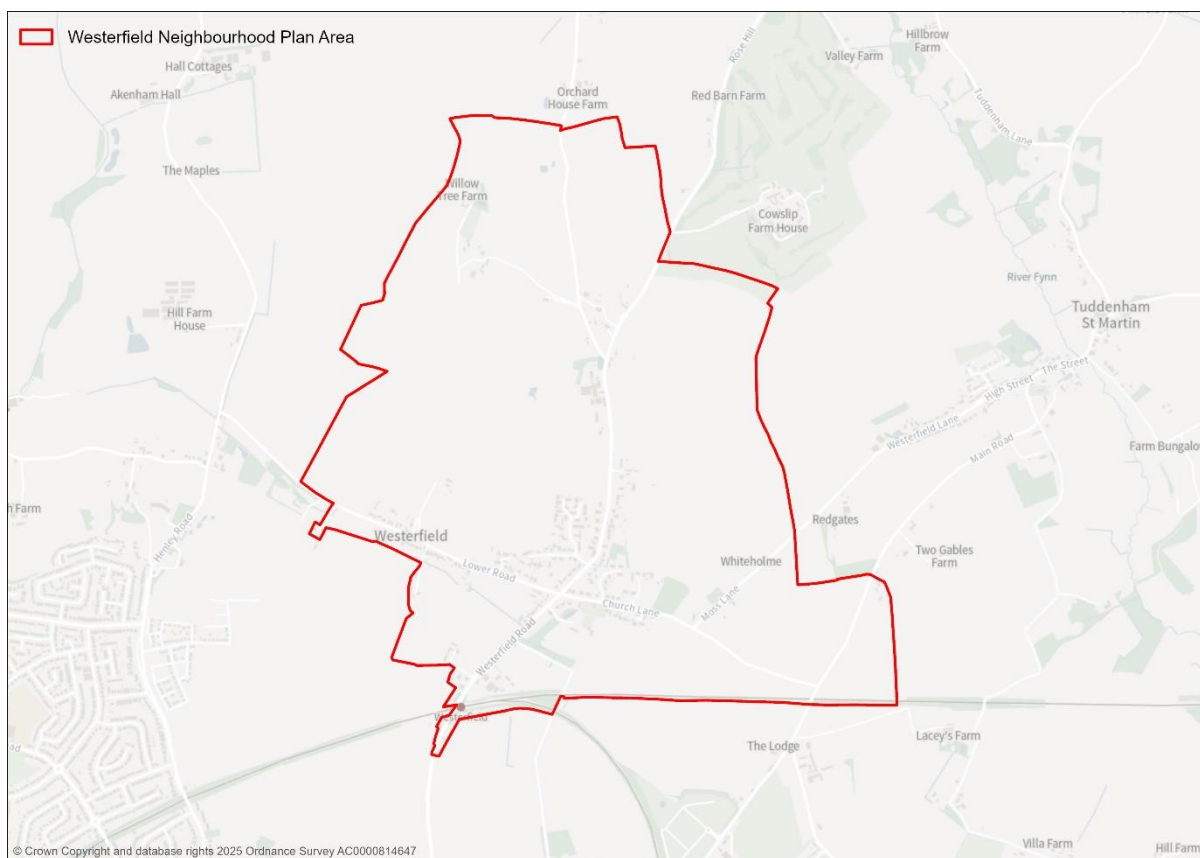
At that point, the neighbourhood plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area (see section 'What is a Development Plan?') and thereby the starting point for the determination of relevant planning applications.

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 Westerfield.

The Referendum Area

The referendum area is the same as the neighbourhood plan area, which was designated by East Suffolk Council on 27th September 2021.



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 £2,387.02. The number of persons on the relevant register (1 February 2025) used to calculate this limit is 424.

The Westerfield 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 Westerfield 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 Westerfield, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was determined by East Suffolk Council on 27th September 2021 and comprises the whole of the parish of Westerfield (see map above).

Who can prepare a neighbourhood plan?

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

The local planning authority is East Suffolk Council. The adopted Local Plan is the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (September 2020). 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:

- Westerfield Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version);
- 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
- Examiner's Report: Sets out the findings of the independent examination of the neighbourhood plan.
- Design Guidance and Codes

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

The Specified Documents are also available to view at:

Kesgrave Library
Kays Close
Kesgrave
IP5 2HL

Or

East Suffolk Council Customer Service Centre
Woodbridge Library
New Street
Woodbridge
IP12 1TD

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

If you have any queries with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan, please contact Ian Johns on (01502) 523065 or email ian.johns@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