

Cheshire West & Chester Council

# Neighbourhood *Planning*



## Utkinton and Cotebrook Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

### About this leaflet

On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area, the **Utkinton and Cotebrook Neighbourhood Plan**. This leaflet contains information about the planning system and neighbourhood planning. It also explains how you can take part in the referendum.

### The Planning System

The planning system helps decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, providing new homes and protecting the natural environment. Most new buildings, major changes to existing buildings or major changes to the local environment need planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

Cheshire West and Chester Council is responsible for deciding whether most forms of development should go ahead within the borough. Decisions are based on **national planning policy** and the **development plan**.

### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework provides guidance to local councils in drawing up Local Plans and on making decisions on planning applications.

### The Development Plan

A development plan is a set of documents that include policies for the development and use of land across the local authority area. It includes Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

### Local Plans

The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies and Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies provides the planning policy framework for the Utkinton and Cotebrook area. The Local Plan includes requirements for new housing, employment and other forms of development up to 2030.

## Neighbourhood Plans

### What are they?

Their purpose is to give local communities greater influence on future development in their local area by establishing a set of policies which will be used in making decisions on planning applications.

Neighbourhood plans are required by law to meet certain “Basic Conditions”. They must take account of national planning policy and the Local Plan. They must contribute to achieving sustainable development and be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements. Importantly, they should not be used to prevent development which is allowed for in the Local Plan.

### Who makes them?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by town or parish councils or specially established neighbourhood forums. There is a set process that must be followed to make a plan.

### How are they made?

The plan must be prepared through a process of consultation with local residents and businesses. An independent examiner then reviews the plan and checks whether it meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements. The examiner reports on whether any changes should be made to the plan and whether it should proceed to the referendum stage.

At the referendum, local residents can vote on whether the neighbourhood plan should be used to help decide planning applications in the area. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area are entitled to vote in the referendum.

### What status do Neighbourhood Plans have?

If more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the local planning authority must make it part of the development plan for the area. This means that the plan will be used as a basis for making decisions on planning applications.

Additional information in relation to neighbourhood planning is available on the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

## The Utkinton and Cotebrook Neighbourhood Plan

The Utkinton and Cotebrook Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by a Neighbourhood Plan Steering group on behalf of Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish

Council. Preparation of the plan has followed the legal requirements and it has recently been subject to an independent examination. The examiner produced a report on the plan which concluded that, with some minor changes, the plan meets the necessary tests. Cheshire West and Chester Council has agreed with the examiner's conclusions. The plan can now proceed to referendum.

## The Referendum

The referendum will take place on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021**.

A referendum asks you to vote "yes" or "no" to a question. For this referendum the question you will be asked is:

**“Do you want Cheshire West and Chester Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for the Utkinton and Cotebrook area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”**

You show your choice 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.

**More detailed information on the Referendum is available in the Referendum Information Statement.**

## Further information

The following documents are available to help you to decide how to vote:

- The Utkinton and Cotebrook Neighbourhood Plan;
- The report of the independent examiner;
- A summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- A statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and complies with the relevant legislation;
- This note for information.

The specified documents listed above can be viewed via the following link:

[www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning)

The documents can also be viewed online at the following Council offices, however due to COVID-19 restrictions, an appointment must be made in advance by contacting: [emma.lawrence@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:emma.lawrence@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) 01244 977265

- HQ, 58, Nicholas Street, Chester, CH1 2NP;
- Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford, CW7 1AH;
- Civic Way, 4, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE

## How to find out more

- Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available on the following websites <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2> and [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning)
- For queries relating to the neighbourhood plan or if you are having difficulties viewing the documents online, please contact [neighbourhoodplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) or ring 01244 973887.

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