Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan Information Statement

This statement has been prepared to meet regulation 4(3)(a) and 4(3)(b) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
About this Leaflet

On 8 December 2016 residents in Shinfield Parish will have the opportunity to vote in a referendum on the published proposal for their neighbourhood plan – The Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan.

This document provides general information about the planning system and neighbourhood plans and also explains the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it.

General information about the planning system and neighbourhood plans

The Planning System

The planning system in the UK manages the use and development of land and buildings. The aim of the system is to save what is best of our heritage and improve the infrastructure upon which we depend. It is how we as a society strike a balance between allowing development of land and buildings to support economic development, and provide the things we need (like homes, jobs, shops and transport), and improving and conserving public spaces, heritage, amenities and the environment, and help to tackle climate change.

The planning system has two main parts to it:

- Plan making – setting out a plan for how an area will develop over time as a guide to future development.

- Managing development – when development is agreed through planning permission.

Wokingham Borough Council is responsible for deciding whether a development – anything from an extension on a house to a new shopping centre – should go ahead within Wokingham Borough. Planning involves making decisions about the future of our cities, towns and countryside and considering the sustainable needs of future communities.

Decisions on planning applications are based on national planning policy guidance, the Local Plan (including the Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery document and Supplementary Planning Documents) and any relevant neighbourhood plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27 March 2012. The framework gives guidance to local councils in drawing up local plans and on making decisions on planning applications. It includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

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Local Plans

Wokingham Borough Council must prepare a Local Plan which sets planning policies within the local authority area. Local plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. They must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Plan for Wokingham Borough is the adopted Core Strategy (adopted January 2010) and the Wokingham Borough Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted February 2014). The policies set out in these plans will be used for decision making purposes (along with national planning guidance and any relevant neighbourhood plans). Additional information about the Local Plan for Wokingham is available on the following website: http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/how-planning-policy-works/

What are Neighbourhood Plans?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011. It aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning areas in which they live and work by showing how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area.

Who Writes a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by Town or Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Forums. The Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Shinfield Parish Council. There is a statutory process that must be followed to make a plan.

How are they Made?

The plan must be prepared through a process of consultation before an independent examiner reviews the plan and checks whether any modifications should be made to the plan and whether it should progress to the next stage in the process which is the referendum stage.

The key stages in producing a neighbourhood plan are:

1) Designating a neighbourhood area
2) Preparing a draft neighbourhood plan
3) Pre-submission publicity & consultation
4) Submission of a neighbourhood plan to the local planning authority
5) Independent examination
6) Referendum
7) Bringing the neighbourhood plan into force

‘Basic conditions’

October 2016
Neighbourhood plans must meet certain “Basic Conditions” as set out in the legislation, which are that it must:

- Be appropriate to make the plan, having regard to national policies and advice;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan; and
- Not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, European Union and European Convention on Human Rights obligations.

The Neighbourhood Plan was then independently examined. The Independent Examiner confirmed that the Plan met the basic conditions subject to some minor modifications.

Shinfield Parish Council and Wokingham Borough Council have modified the Plan in accordance with the Examiner’s recommendations and it is now ready to be taken to referendum.

Wokingham Borough Council considered that the plan document accorded with the neighbourhood planning regulations, and that it was in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Development Plan as per Paragraph 8 (1) (a) (2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Localism Act 2011).

Additional information in relation to neighbourhood planning is available on the following website: http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/

What Does the Referendum Result Mean?

If more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the local planning authority (Wokingham Borough Council) must make it part of the statutory development plan for the area to be used in determining decisions on planning applications.

Who is Responsible for Organising the Referendum?

The Counting Officer at Wokingham Borough Council is responsible for the conduct of the referendum. The Counting Officer has the same role as the Returning Officer, who is responsible for the conduct of elections held within Wokingham Borough.

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

Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan

October 2016
A referendum asks you to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on a specific question. For this referendum you will receive a Ballot Paper with this question:

“Do you want Wokingham Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Shinfield Parish to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

Who Can Vote in the Referendum?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Area and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections (British, European or Commonwealth Citizens)
- You will be 18 years of age or older on the 8 December 2016.

In order to vote in the referendum you must be registered to vote by 22 November 2016.

How Can I Vote

There are three ways of voting, you may vote in person, by post or by proxy.

In Person:

At your local Polling Station on Thursday 8 December 2016. This will be displayed on the Poll Card that will be sent to you.

Polling Stations will be open between 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM.

By Post:

If you already have a Postal Vote you will receive a Postal Poll card confirming this and Postal Vote Pack with your Ballot Paper.

If you do not have a Postal Vote but, would like to vote by post in the referendum please complete a Postal Vote Application form. A copy of which can be found on our website.

Once completed either scan a copy to electoralservices@wokingham.gov.uk or deliver it to:

Electoral Services, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, PO Box 151, Wokingham, RG40 1WH.

If you are not able to access the form online please contact us and we will arrange for a form to be posted to you.

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Please note: The deadline for us to receive your Postal Vote application is 5:00 PM on Wednesday 23 November 2016.

By Proxy:

If you already have a Proxy Vote you will receive a Poll Card confirming this in the weeks leading up to the referendum.

If you are unable to vote at your Polling Station and do not wish to vote by post you may be eligible to vote by Proxy. This means appointing somebody to vote on your behalf at your Polling Station.

Details on applying to vote by Proxy can be found here at: www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-by-proxy

Please note: The deadline for us to receive your Postal Vote application is 5:00 PM on Wednesday 30 November 2016.

After this date you can still apply for an Emergency Proxy Vote if your circumstances meet certain criteria.

How to Mark Your Ballot Paper?

You show your choice by putting a cross (X) in the box next to your choice on the Ballot Paper. Put a cross in only ONE box and do not mark your Ballot Paper in any other way. If the Counting Officer is not able to clearly understand what your intention was your vote will not be counted.

Referendum Expenses

Individuals or Groups may campaign to promote a particular outcome of the referendum.

Spending on the campaigns is restricted by an expenses limit, which campaigners and campaign groups must not exceed.

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the referendum and the numbers of persons entitled to vote has been calculated as the following:

The expenses limit as of the publication of this notice is:

Expenses limit: £2,898.72 (as at 27/10/2016)

Persons Entitled to Vote: 9097 (as at 27/10/16)

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How to Find Out More

- Further general information on neighbourhood planning can be found on [www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning](http://www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning)


Key Reference Documents

The following documents (known as ‘Specified Documents’ under Regulation 4(3)(b) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended)) are available for inspection:

- The Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan (incorporating modifications)
- The Independent Examiner’s Report
- A Summary of any representations submitted to the Independent Examiner.
- Post Examination Decision Statement (setting out that the local planning authority is satisfied the draft plan meets those basic conditions and complies with the provision made by or under sections 38A and 38B of the 2004 Act).
- General information on the Planning System and Neighbourhood Planning (included in this information statement).


Hard copies of these documents can also be inspected at:

**Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1WP**

between the 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM (Monday to Friday)

**Wokingham Library, Denmark St, Wokingham RG40 2BB**

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**Shinfield Parish Council, Shinfield Parish Hall, School Green, Shinfield, RG2 9EH**
(Tel: 0118 988 8220)

October 2016
Map of the Neighbourhood Area