

General Information Document on Town and Country Planning, including Neighbourhood Planning

1. The Planning System

- 1.1 The planning system manages the use and development of land and buildings with the aim of creating sustainable places to live and work. Without a planning system in place development would not be controlled and could take place anywhere, with considerable impact on people and the environment. Potential development activity is managed through planning applications, using local plans as a basis to make decisions.
- 1.2 The planning system has two parts, which are usually the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority:
 - Plan making - setting out proposals for development and policies to guide development over a period of time.
 - Development management – where planning decisions are made through the assessment of planning applications.
- 1.3 Not all forms of development require planning permission as some proposed development, depending on the scale and type, is covered by permitted development rights.
- 1.4 The current Local Plan for the parish is covered by two planning authorities. For development that requires planning permission, New Forest District Council and the National Park Authority are responsible for deciding whether the development should go ahead in their respective plan areas.
- 1.6 Decisions on planning applications in the parish of Ringwood are therefore currently based on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the adopted New Forest District Local Plan Part 1 Planning Strategy (2020) and Part 2 Sites and Development Management (2014), the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (2019), and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013. If 'made' (adopted) the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan will also become part of the Development Plan for each planning authority and be used in decision making on planning applications within the parish.

2. National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The framework gives guidance to local planning authorities in drawing up development plans and on making decisions on planning applications. The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sets out core planning principles to be followed which include environmental, social and economic aspects. National Planning Practice Guidance

(NPPG) supports the NPPF and provides further guidance on planning issues such as neighbourhood planning.

3. Local Plans

- 3.1 Local Plans are prepared by Local Planning Authorities and set out the strategic priorities and planning policies for the local authority area. The policies in a Local Plan set out to deliver key development including homes and jobs required, the provision of retail and community facilities and infrastructure. Policies relating to managing climate change, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment are also included. Local plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in line with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the NPPF.
- 3.2 Further information on the adopted Plans can be found at <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/developmentplan>, and <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/>.

4. Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced under the 2011 Localism Act. It provides an opportunity for local communities to shape future development in their local area.
- 4.2 In parished areas, neighbourhood plans can be produced by parish councils which are referred to as the 'Qualifying Body'. In this case, the Qualifying Body is Ringwood Parish Council.
- 4.3 Neighbourhood plans must meet a number of basic conditions in order to proceed to referendum stage. An independent examiner is appointed to check that a plan meets the basic conditions which are set out below:
- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area.
 - Be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights obligations.

5. What is a Neighbourhood Plan Area?

- 5.1 A neighbourhood plan must apply to a specific designated area which can range from single streets or large rural or urban areas.
- 5.2 The boundary of the neighbourhood area for the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the District Council and National Park Authority in February 2021 and follows the parish boundary. The two authorities agreed with the Examiner's recommendation to proceed to a referendum based on the Ringwood Neighbourhood Area as approved by the two planning authorities.

6. Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of two formal public consultation stages and was submitted to the District Council and National Park Authority in autumn 2023. An independent examiner (Mr David Hogger) considered the Neighbourhood Plan in winter 2023 and provided his report to the two authorities in February 2024. His report recommended that, subject to his proposed modifications, the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum based on the Ringwood Neighbourhood Area as approved by the council. The district council and National Park Authority accepted and agreed all the modifications proposed and were subsequently satisfied that the neighbourhood plan met the basic conditions and all other legislative requirements. The two authorities have confirmed that the neighbourhood plan can proceed to referendum.
- 6.2 The Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan referendum will be held on **Thursday 4 July 2024 from 7am to 10pm.**
- 6.3 The proposed Neighbourhood Plan needs to gain the approval of the majority of voters (more than 50%) in the local community for the Local Planning Authorities to 'make' the neighbourhood plan.
- 6.4 If the Neighbourhood Plan is made then it will become part of the Development Plan for New Forest district and the National Park Authority and will be used in the determination of planning applications in Ringwood parish. If more people vote 'no' than 'yes', then the Neighbourhood Plan will not become part of the Development Plan for the local area.
- 6.5 Additional information on neighbourhood planning is available on the following website – www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning.