

## **General information on Town and Country Planning, including neighbourhood planning to ensure voters have sufficient knowledge to make an informed decision.**

### **The Planning System**

The planning system helps decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, improving people's quality of life, 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.

The City of Doncaster Council is responsible for deciding whether most forms of development should go ahead in the borough. Decisions are based on national planning policy and the local development plan.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in December 2023. The framework provides guidance to local councils in drawing up local plans and neighbourhood plans and on making decisions on planning applications.

### **The Development Plan**

A development plan is a set of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land across the local authority area.

After an independent examination by a Planning Inspector, the Doncaster Local Plan was adopted following a resolution of Full Council on 23 September 2021. The Local Plan forms part of the statutory development plan for the Borough and informs decisions on planning applications.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

#### **What are they?**

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced under the Localism Act to give local communities greater influence on future development in their area.

Neighbourhood plans are required by law to meet certain "Basic Conditions". They must have regard to national planning policy and must generally conform with the strategic policies in 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.

#### **Who makes them?**

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by town or parish councils or specially established neighbourhood forums. 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 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 modifications 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' (adopt) it part of the statutory 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>

### **Stainforth Neighbourhood Plan**

Stainforth Town Council have produced the Stainforth Neighbourhood Plan.

In June 2024, the City of Doncaster Council received the examiner's report on the Stainforth Neighbourhood Plan. The report concludes that subject to the recommended modifications the Plan should proceed to referendum.

The Stainforth Neighbourhood Plan Referendum will take place on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

The referendum asks for a "yes" or "no" vote to the following question;

**"Do you want the City of Doncaster Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Stainforth to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"**

The proposed neighbourhood plan needs to gain the approval of a majority of voters of the Stainforth Neighbourhood Plan boundary to come into force. If proposals pass the referendum, the local planning authority is under a legal duty to bring them into force.

The neighbourhood plan then becomes part of the Development Plan. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.