

Stage 5: Referendum

A referendum is required to gauge community support for the Neighbourhood Plan. The referendum is the final stage before your Neighbourhood Plan can be adopted.

Who can vote?

Everyone on the Council's electoral register (at the date of the vote) within the Neighbourhood Area is entitled to vote. They will receive a poll card informing them when and where to vote.

The referendum will usually take place within 60 days of your 'Decision Statement'. The Council's Democratic Services team will organise the referendum on your behalf and the Council will cover the costs. The referendum will be conducted in the same way the Council run local elections (e.g. residents will be able to vote by post or person). All referendums will be advertised no later than 28 working days before the poll is due to take place.

How will the referendum be advertised?

Information regarding a Neighbourhood Plan referendum will be made available on the Council's website, at the Council's Offices in Priory Road, Spalding and in local libraries at least 28 working days before the date of the referendum.

The following information will be displayed:

- A referendum will be held and on what date;
- The question for the referendum-'Do you want South Holland District Council to use the [*insert name of neighbourhood area*] Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?';
- A map of the referendum area;
- An additional map where the referendum area differs to the Neighbourhood Area;
- Statement of who is entitled to vote;
- The referendum expenses limit applicable and the number of people identified as entitled to vote on which the limit was calculated;
- That the referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures similar to those for local government elections;
- The address and times at which a copy of the published documents can be inspected;
- Specified documents, including the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the examiners report, a summary of representations submitted to the examiner, a statement that the Council is satisfied that the plan meets the Basic Conditions and general information on town and country planning (including Neighbourhood Planning, to ensure voters have sufficient knowledge to make an informed decision).

Tips to gain support for your referendum

The referendum is make or break for your Neighbourhood Plan. There are several steps you can take to make sure people turn up to vote and support your Plan:

- Ensure adequate publicity is given to your Neighbourhood Plan throughout the process
- Involve a wide range of local residents, businesses and organisations in each stage of your plan so they feel part of the process
- Ensure a full range of issues are covered in your plan
- Base decisions about your plan on robust evidence, consultation and feedback
- Ensure openness and transparency in all decision making
- Explain options for the plan at regular meetings.