

Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan – Information Statement

1. About this statement

A referendum on the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan will be held on 3rd February 2022. This statement provides information on the referendum that is taking place, and the neighbourhood plan it relates to.

2. Referendum on the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan

A referendum asks you to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a question. For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper which asks the following question:

Do you want Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Benenden to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

3. What is a neighbourhood area?

The neighbourhood area for Benenden is identified on the map which is included at the end of this information statement.

The referendum area is identical to the area which has been designated as the Benenden Neighbourhood Area.

The Neighbourhood Area is Benenden parish, plus seven addresses identified by the examiner, located adjacent to the Benenden Hospital site at East End and falling within Biddenden Parish (Ashford Borough Council).

4. Am I entitled to vote in the Referendum?

A person is entitled to vote in the referendum if on the 18th January 2022:

- he or she is entitled to vote in a local government election in the referendum area; and
- his or her qualifying address for the election is in the referendum area. A person’s qualifying address is, in relation to a person registered in the register of electors, the address in respect of which he or she is entitled to be registered.

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

5. How do I vote in the Referendum?

You vote 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.

If more than 50% of individuals vote 'yes' in the referendum, then Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will 'make' the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan. If the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' it will help determine planning applications in the Benenden Neighbourhood Area. It will also form part of the statutory development plan for Tunbridge Wells borough.

If more people vote 'no' than 'yes' then the Neighbourhood Plan will not be made part of the statutory development plan for the local area.

6. What are the referendum documents and where can you view them?

There are a number of documents that are available to view as part of the referendum. These are listed below and available to view online on the council's website at:

<https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans>

- The referendum version of the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- The independent examiner's report on the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- A summary of representations submitted to the Borough Council following the Regulation 17A consultation on the Plan.
- A Decision Statement from the Local Planning Authority which confirms the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and other legislative requirements. It also confirms that the neighbourhood plan can proceed to referendum.
- A statement that sets out general information in respect of town and country planning, which includes neighbourhood planning.

A hard copy of all of the above documents and this Information Statement can be inspected at:

Benenden Parish Council
Community Office
Benenden Village Hall
Benenden
TN17 4DE

7. Referendum Expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body during the period of the referendum for referendum purposes.

The referendum expenses limit that will apply (as at 22nd December 2021) in relation to this referendum is £2,449.32. The number of persons entitled to vote in the referendum is 1,480.

8. How to find out more

Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available on the council's website at:

<https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans>

For queries regarding planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01892 554056.

Email: planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

9. Neighbourhood Plan Area

