

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan

Northumberland County Council

**Referendum Information Statement
(Including Information for Voters)**

**Statement Published:
Referendum Date:**

**Friday 5 May 2017
Thursday 15 June 2017**

About this booklet

On **Thursday 15 June 2017**, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area. This booklet explains more about the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. In this booklet you can find out about:

- The referendum and how you can take part;
- The planning system in England and the development plan;
- Neighbourhood plans;
- The neighbourhood area;
- The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan

A referendum asks you to vote 'yes' or 'no' to a question.

For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper with this question:

"Do you want Northumberland County Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Alnwick and Denwick to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

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 people vote 'Yes' than 'No' in this referendum, then Northumberland County Council will use the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Parishes of Alnwick and Denwick.

If more people vote 'No' than 'Yes', then planning applications will continue to be decided without using the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. Instead planning applications would be decided using policies in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) and Alnwick LDF Core Strategy (2007) which would remain as part of the development plan for the local area.

What is the Development Plan?

In England, decisions on planning applications are made by local planning authorities. Those decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan is a set of documents that contain policies for the development and use of land in a local planning authority area.

Northumberland County Council is the local planning authority for Northumberland with the exception of areas covered by the Northumberland National Park.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning powers were introduced in the Localism Act in 2011. Their aim is to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. Local communities prepare neighbourhood plans which are created to show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area. When a neighbourhood plan passes a local referendum it will become part of the development plan for that neighbourhood area and must be used to help in making decisions on planning applications in that area.

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

Where town or parish councils exist they are the only organisations that can start the work of preparing a neighbourhood plan. Where there is no town or parish council a neighbourhood forum can be created to prepare a neighbourhood plan. Civil parishes exist across the whole of Northumberland so neighbourhood forums could not be created for the purposes of neighbourhood planning.

In this case, Alnwick Town Council led the preparation of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan and was supported by Denwick Parish Council.

What is a neighbourhood area?

Neighbourhood areas are areas defined for the purpose of neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood plans can only be created in formally designated neighbourhood areas. A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas.

The boundaries of a neighbourhood area are proposed by town or parish councils. This is done by formal application to the County Council who will make the decision about designating a neighbourhood area.

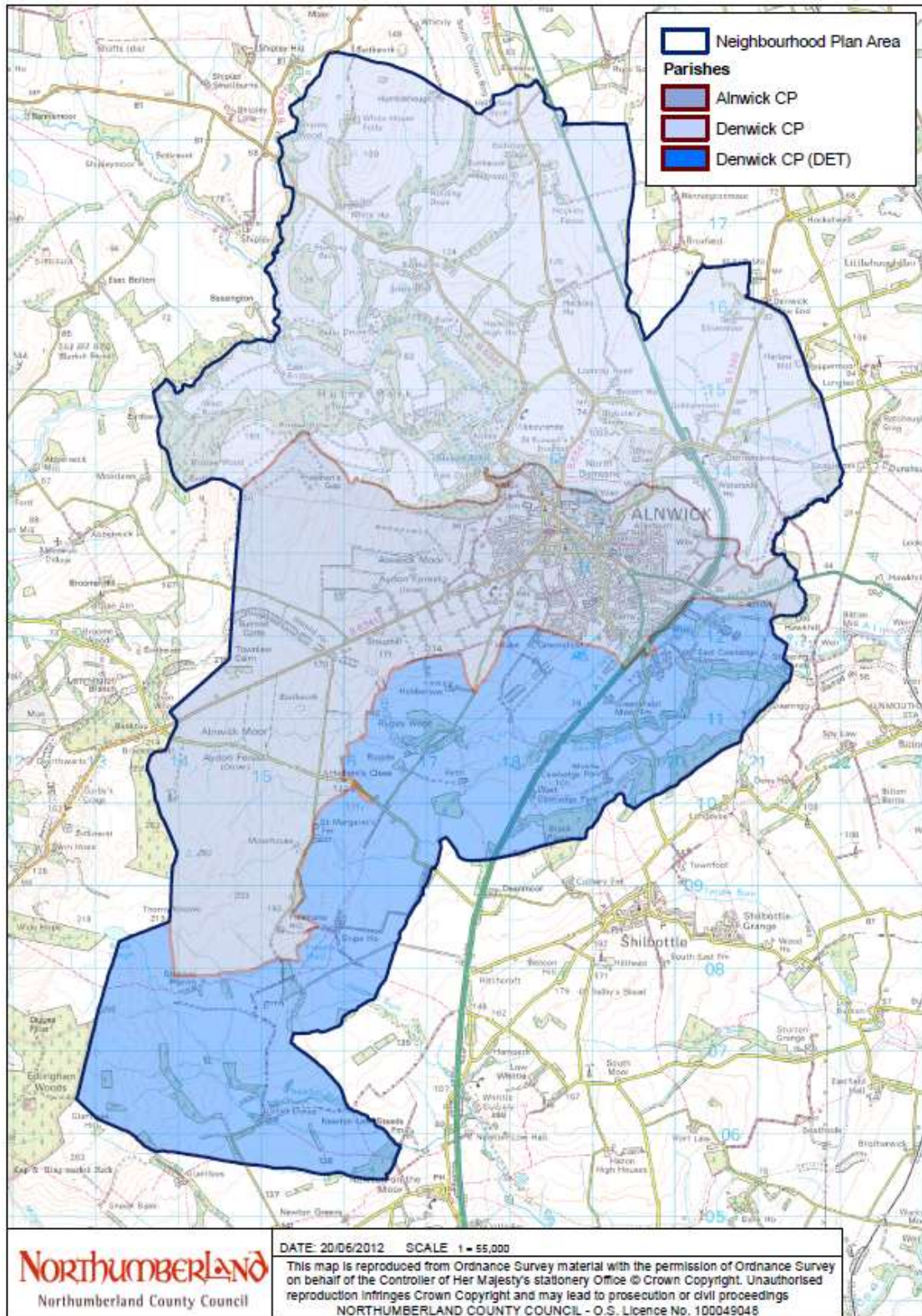
Neighbourhood areas will normally follow parish boundaries or groups of parishes.

In Alnwick, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was approved by Northumberland County Council in April 2013 and is identical to the civil parish areas of Alnwick and Denwick (including Denwick Detached).

Neighbourhood Planning in Alnwick and Denwick

The Referendum area is identified on the map below. The area comprises the

whole of the civil parishes of Alnwick and Denwick. The Referendum area is identical to the designated Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Area.



Referendum expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body organising a campaign during the period of the referendum for referendum purposes. There is a limit

to the amount that campaigners can spend on their advertising for the referendum. This is set out in The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

The Referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the Alnwick and Denwick Referendum is calculated using the following formula:
 $£2,362 + (0.059 \times N)$ where N is the number of entries in the relevant register.

The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is 6,658 (as at 29 April 2017).

The referendum expenses limit for campaign organisers is **£2754.82**

Specified documents to be published before Referendum

The County Council is required to make available a number of documents relevant to holding the Referendum. These are called the ***Specified Documents***. A copy of the specified documents, all of which are identified below, may be inspected at:

- **Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF**, between the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday; and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday;
- **Alnwick Library, Green Batt, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1TU**, between the hours of 9am to 6pm on Mondays, 9am to 5:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12pm-7pm Friday and 9:30am to 12:30pm on Saturdays.

The specified documents are the:

- Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan: Referendum Plan;
- Report of the independent examiner (18 December 2015);
- Summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- Statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions (*The Basic Conditions Decision Statement*); and a
- Statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum (*Referendum Information Statement including Information for Voters*)

All the above documents can also be viewed on Northumberland County Council's website at:
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Neighbourhood.aspx>

Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the Parishes of Alnwick and Denwick and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on **15 June 2017**.

You have to be registered to vote by **30 May 2017** to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling our Helpline on 01670 624811.

The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

Ways of voting?

There are three ways of voting:

In person on Thursday 15 June 2017:

- At your local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do;
- the polling stations are at:
 - o Alnwick Willowburn Sports Centre
 - o Alnwick North Community Centre
 - o Alnwick Lindisfarne Sports Centre
 - o Denwick Village Hall
- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this referendum. If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 01670 624811, or email us on elections@northumberland.gov.uk to find out where your polling station is.
- Polling stations are open from **7am to 10pm**

By post:

- If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this
- To vote by post, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive **by 5pm on 31 May 2017** at this address:

Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF
- Postal votes can be sent overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote **by 15 June 2017**;
- You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement **up to 5pm on 15 June 2016** by contacting our Helpline on 01670 624811.

By proxy:

- If you have a proxy vote already you will receive a poll card confirming this;
- If you can't get to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody you trust to vote on your behalf;
- To vote by proxy, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive **by 5pm on 31 May 2017** at this address:

Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

- When you apply for a proxy vote, you must say why you cannot vote in person;
- Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.

Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from our Helpline on 01670 624811 or by emailing elections@northumberland.gov.uk. You can also download forms from Northumberland County Council's website.

Postal vote application details can be found here:

<http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register-to-vote/postal-vote-application>

Proxy vote application details can be found here:

<http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register-to-vote/apply-to-vote-by-proxy>

Am I registered to vote?

If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 01670 624811.

If you are not registered to vote, you will need to complete a voter registration form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 09 February 2016 at this address:

Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Registration forms can also be provided by contacting our Helpline on 01670 624811 or by emailing elections@northumberland.gov.uk. You can also register online at: <http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register-to-vote>

How to find out more:

Further general information on neighbourhood planning, including documents relating to the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, can be found on the County Council's website at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Neighbourhood.aspx>

For queries about planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact Northumberland County Council's Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Team on 01670 623619.

For more information about voting and the arrangements for this referendum, please contact our Helpline on 01670 624811 or elections@northumberland.gov.uk