



Northumberland
County Council

Cresswell
Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum Information Statement
(Including Information for Voters)

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Referendum Date: **Thursday 6 March 2025**

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan](#)
3. [How do I vote in the referendum?](#)
4. [What is a Neighbourhood Plan?](#)
5. [What is the Development Plan?](#)
6. [Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?](#)
7. [The Neighbourhood Area](#)
8. [Can I vote?](#)
9. [Ways of voting](#)
10. [Voter Identification](#)
11. [Am I registered to vote?](#)
12. [Referendum expenses](#)
13. [Specified documents to be published before Referendum](#)
14. [How to find out more](#)

1. Introduction

On **Thursday 6 March 2025**, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area. This statement explains more about the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. This statement provides information about:

- The referendum and how you can take part;
- The planning system in England;
- Neighbourhood plans;
- The Neighbourhood Area.

2. 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 Cresswell Parish to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

3. How do I vote in the referendum?

You vote by putting a cross (X) in the 'Yes' or 'No' box on your ballot paper.

You should 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 Neighbourhood Plan to help decide planning applications in the Parish of Cresswell.

If more people vote 'No' than 'Yes', then planning applications will continue to be decided without using the Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan. Instead, planning applications would be decided using policies in the Northumberland Local Plan.

4. What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood planning powers were introduced in the Localism Act in 2011. They enable local communities to play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. Local communities prepare neighbourhood plans which show how they want land to be used and developed in their area. When a neighbourhood plan passes a local referendum, it will become part of the

development plan and must be used to help in making decisions on planning applications in that area.

5. 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. The 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 where the Northumberland National Park Authority is the local planning authority.

In Northumberland the Development Plan comprises the Northumberland Local Plan (adopted 2022) and any made Neighbourhood Plans.

6. 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.

In this case, the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Cresswell Parish Council with the support of local people.

7. The Neighbourhood Area

Neighbourhood plans can only be created in formally designated neighbourhood areas. In Cresswell, the Neighbourhood Area follows the Parish boundary.

The Referendum area is identical to the area designated as the Cresswell Neighbourhood Area and is shown on the map below.

Cresswell Neighbourhood Area

Cresswell Parish Boundary



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8. Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the Parish of Cresswell and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on **Thursday 6 March 2025**.

You have to be registered to vote by **Tuesday 18 February 2025** to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling our Helpline on 01670 624844.

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

9. Ways of voting

There are three ways of voting.

In person on Thursday 6 March 2025:

- 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 station is at:
Cresswell Village Hall
Cresswell
Northumberland
NE61 5LD
- The polling station is open from **7am to 10pm**.
- You will receive a poll card for this referendum. If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 01670 624844, or email us on elections@northumberland.gov.uk

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 Wednesday 19 February 2025** 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.
- 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 Thursday 6 March 2025** by contacting our Helpline on 01670 624844.

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 **up to 5pm on Wednesday 26 February 2025** 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 624844 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:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post>

Proxy vote application details can be found here:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/how-vote-proxy>

10. Voter Identification

You must bring photographic identification to vote. You will not be able to vote unless you show photographic identification to the polling station staff.

A full list of accepted photographic identification is set out below:

- A passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country;
- A driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or an EEA state
- A biometric immigration document
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
- A Blue Badge
- A national identity card issued by an EEA state
- An Older Person's Bus Pass
- A Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- An Oyster 60+ Card
- A Freedom Pass
- A Scottish National Entitlement Card issued in Scotland
- A 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- A Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- A Senior SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A War Disablement SmartPass or War Disabled SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A 60+ SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A Half Fare SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- An Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland
- A Voter Authority Certificate or a temporary Voter Authority Certificate.

If you do not possess any of the above forms of photographic identification, you can apply to the Electoral Registration Officer for a free Voter Authority Certificate. Completed applications must reach us before **5pm on Wednesday 26 February 2025**.

A full list of accepted photographic identification is set out on your Polling Card. Alternatively, please contact our Helpline on 01670 624844, or email us on elections@northumberland.gov.uk for further information on identification requirements.

11. 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 624844.

If you are not registered to vote, you will need to submit an application to register. You can do this online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Alternatively, you can contact Electoral Services on the helpline number above to apply by telephone or to be sent with a paper application form.

However you choose to submit your application, you will need your National Insurance Number.

12. 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.

The Referendum expenses limit¹ that will apply in relation to the Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan Referendum is **£2372.15** to each campaign organiser. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is **172** (as at January 2025).

13. Specified documents to be published before Referendum

The County Council makes available a number of documents that are relevant to the referendum. These are called the ***Specified Documents*** and comprise:

- Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version);
- Report of the independent examiner (published 10 October 2024);
- Summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- Statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions (*The Regulation 18 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*)

¹ As set out in Regulation 6 of The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

These documents are available on the County Council's neighbourhood planning website:
<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning.aspx>

Where people entitled to vote are unable to access these documents online printed copies can be made available on request. Please call on 0345 600 6400 or email neighbourhoodplanning@northumberland.gov.uk

Cresswell Parish Council may make alternative arrangements for providing access to the specified documents. Anyone wishing to discuss those arrangements should contact the Clerk, Mr Malcolm Burn, by telephone on 07446 940 355 or by email at cresswellparishcouncil@gmail.com

14. How to find out more

Further information on neighbourhood planning, including documents relating to the Cresswell Neighbourhood Plan, can be found on the County Council's website at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning.aspx>

For queries about neighbourhood planning in general, please contact Northumberland County Council's Neighbourhood Planning Team by email: neighbourhoodplanning@northumberland.gov.uk

For more information about voting and the arrangements for this referendum, please contact our Helpline on 01670 624844 or email elections@northumberland.gov.uk

This document was produced by:

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