



Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

General Information Statement on Town and Country Planning

1. The Planning System

- 1.1 The planning system manages the use and development of land and buildings with the aim of creating sustainable places to live and work. Without a planning system in place, development would not be controlled and could take place anywhere, with considerable impact on people and the environment. Potential development activity is managed through planning applications, using development plans as a basis to make decisions.
- 1.2 The planning system has two parts which are usually the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority:
- Plan-making - setting out proposals for development and policies to guide development over a period of time.
 - Development management – where planning decisions are made through the assessment of planning applications.
- 1.3 For development that requires planning permission, Bromsgrove District Council is responsible for determining planning applications. Decisions on planning applications in Alvechurch Parish are currently made in accordance with the statutory development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If 'made' (adopted), the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2030 will become part of the statutory development plan and be used in decision making on planning applications within the parish boundary.

2. National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The framework gives guidance to local planning authorities in drawing up development plans and on making decisions on planning applications.
- 2.2 The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sets out core planning principles to be followed which include environmental,

social and economic aspects. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) supports the NPPF and provides further guidance on planning issues such as neighbourhood planning.

3. Local Development Plans

- 3.1 Local development plans are prepared by local planning authorities and set out the strategic priorities and planning policies for the local authority area. The policies in a local plan set out to deliver key development including homes and employment land, the provision of retail, leisure and community facilities, protection of the natural and historic environment, and the provision of supporting infrastructure. Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in line with s.20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the NPPF.
- 3.2 The current Local Development Plan for the District is the adopted (in January 2017) Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030. Further information on the adopted District Plan can be found here <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/policy-and-strategy/planning-policies/local-development-plan/the-bromsgrove-district-plan-2011-30.aspx>

4. Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced under the 2011 Localism Act. It provides an opportunity for local communities to shape future development in their local area.
- 4.2 Neighbourhood plans have to be produced by a 'qualifying body' for a designated neighbourhood area. In the case of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan, the qualifying body is Alvechurch Parish Council, with the neighbourhood area being the entire Parish of Alvechurch.
- 4.3 Neighbourhood plans have to meet a number of basic conditions in order to proceed to a referendum stage. An independent examiner was appointed to check that the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions which are set out below:
- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
 - Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; and

- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

5. Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

- 5.1 The Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of a pre-submission consultation stage ('Regulation 14' consultation) led by the Parish Council and a local planning authority led representation period ('Regulation 16' consultation).
- 5.2 An independent examiner (Mr Robert Yuille) was appointed to examine the neighbourhood plan, and provided his report to the District Council and Parish Council on 7th November 2018. The report recommended that, subject to a series of modifications proposed, the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum based on the designated neighbourhood area. The District Council accepted all the modifications proposed, and the reasons for these, and were subsequently satisfied that the neighbourhood plan met the basic conditions and all other legislative requirements.
- 5.3 The Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan referendum will therefore be held on **Thursday 10 January 2019** with further details set out in the published Information Statement at <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/alvechurchnp>
- 5.4 The neighbourhood plan needs to gain a 'Yes' vote from the majority of voters (more than 50%) in the referendum, to enable Bromsgrove District Council to formally 'make' the neighbourhood plan.
- 5.5 If the neighbourhood plan is made then it will become part of the statutory development plan for Bromsgrove District and will be used in the determination of planning applications in Alvechurch Parish. If more people vote 'No' than 'Yes', then the neighbourhood plan will not be made and will not become part of the development plan for the area.
- 5.6 Further information on neighbourhood planning is available from the Government at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>