

# Walton Neighbourhood Plan

## Statement of General Information

### Town and Country Planning

**Planning System** - Since 1947 the planning system has been about public interest. It recognises that decisions on development affect people and they should have a right to participate and be heard in decisions that affect them.

At the highest level of the planning system are the European directives and laws which directly influence national planning legislation such as the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Localism Act 2011.

This in turn influences national planning policy which changed on 27 March 2012 when the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published.

Local Plans drawn up by local councils should be consistent with this national policy guidance. Decisions on planning applications should be made in accordance with national planning policy guidance, the Local Plan and any relevant neighbourhood plan.

**Local Development Scheme** - This is a public statement setting out details of which local development documents will be produced, in what order and when. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the starting point for local communities to find out what local planning policies relate to their area.

**Local Development Documents** - There are three types of local development document:

- 1. Statement of community involvement** - This explains how the local authority will engage with the public in preparing its documents and determining planning applications.
- 2. Development plan documents** - Development plan documents are statutory documents and form part of the development plan.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a suite of development plan documents (DPDs) and supplementary planning documents (SPDs) linked to an overarching Core Strategy. Local Plans include documents adopted as part of the LDF.

Prior to the publication of the NPPF, Wakefield's LDF comprised of four documents:

- *Core Strategy* (adopted April 2009) - includes strategies, policies and proposals for investment, development and use of land in the district to 2026.

- *Development Policies* (adopted April 2009) - sets out policies which are used, in conjunction with the strategic policies in the Core Strategy, when determining planning applications to manage and guide specific types of development in different locations to deliver sustainable communities.
- *Central Wakefield Area Action Plan* - (adopted June 2009) sets out the specific policies and proposals to help guide and shape the future growth of central Wakefield.
- *Waste* (adopted December 2009) - sets out strategic waste policies as part of a long term strategy to effectively plan for the future management of all waste generated in Wakefield.

Since the publication of the NPPF in March 2012 the Council has adopted a further document:

- *Site Specific Policies Local Plan* (adopted September 2012) - identifies and describes the Council's development policies for the district and the Policies Map shows all the development sites necessary to meet the needs identified in the Core Strategy.

Adoption of the LDF and Local Plan documents have superseded most of the policies of the Council's former development plan, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). To ensure comprehensive planning policy coverage remains in place some of the policies have been 'saved'. The saved parts of the UDP remain in force and will be used in determining planning applications until replaced.

Two documents are currently being prepared which will, when adopted, also form part of the development plan and replace the saved policies:

- *Retail and Town Centre Local Plan*
- *Leisure, Recreation and Open Space Local Plan*

Alongside the Local Plan the Council is also working up a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which although not formally part of the Local Plan will be used to help provide the infrastructure necessary to support the delivery of the Plan.

**3. Supplementary planning documents** - These elaborate on policies and proposals in the development plan documents. To date there is one adopted:

- *Street Design Guide* (adopted January 2012) covers the design of the 'highway' in its broadest sense, namely the public space between private dwellings or plots that facilitates all public activity.

Further information about the planning system and the documents mentioned may be found on the Council's website at: <http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/residents/planning/policy>

## Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new tier to the planning system - neighbourhood planning. This was to allow local people to be involved in shaping the future of the areas in which they live and work and give them greater involvement and ownership of the plans and policies that affect their area.

Neighbourhood planning is not led by Wakefield Council, but by either a town or parish council or a designated neighbourhood forum. The Council's role is to advise, manage and support the process.

Neighbourhood plans should enable and promote development and might specify, for example, what green spaces should be protected, where new shops, offices or homes should go and what they should look like. Neighbourhood plans cannot be used to restrict development and cannot promote less development than set out in our existing development plan. There can only be one neighbourhood plan for each neighbourhood area.

Once adopted the neighbourhood plan will be part of the development plan. The determination of any planning application must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. An adopted neighbourhood plan will be one of the documents which will be taken into account in the consideration of applications for planning permissions which are made within the area of the neighbourhood plan. The neighbourhood plan only applies within the specific area for which it has been proposed and made.

If a policy in a neighbourhood plan conflicts with any other statement or information in the development plan itself then that conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy. Therefore, the neighbourhood plan is a very significant document of the development plan which must be considered when determining planning applications.

There is a statutory process which must be followed for the making of a neighbourhood plan. The first stage is for the Council to designate the neighbourhood area, which is the area that the plan will cover.

Community involvement is a very important part of the plan preparation. At various stages of preparing a plan there are opportunities for people (not just local) to make comments on what is proposed for inclusion in the plan.

When the plan has been prepared it is submitted to an independent examiner who checks that the plan meets the basic standards which are set out in statute. The examiner prepares a report on the examination of the plan and may recommend changes to be made to the plan.

The Council must then consider the examiner's report and decide, having regard to the statutory criteria, whether to accept any changes which the examiner has proposed.

The examiner may also recommend that the plan proceeds to a referendum.

The referendum is held by the relevant council, which for the Wakefield District is Wakefield Council as it has the responsibility for the conduct of elections/referendums.

Further information about neighbourhood planning may be found on the Council's website at: <http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/residents/planning/policy>

## Referendum

Those eligible to vote in a referendum will be asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' to a specific question.

For the Walton Neighbourhood Plan referendum voters will receive a ballot paper asking:

***“Do you want Wakefield Metropolitan District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Walton Neighbourhood Area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”***

Voters will show their choice by putting a cross (X) in either the 'Yes' or 'No' box on their ballot paper. But a cross must be put in only **one** box or the vote will not be counted.

If more people vote 'yes' than 'no' in the referendum, then Wakefield Council will use the neighbourhood plan to help it decide planning applications as part of the development plan

Further information about the referendum and how to register to vote may be found on the Council's website at: <http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/about-the-council/elections>

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