

Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Voting Information for Referendum
on
7th March 2019**



Introduction

A referendum will be held in Lewes on Thursday, 7th March 2019 asking eligible voters whether the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan should be used by the South Downs National Park Authority to decide planning applications.

South Downs National Park Authority is required to produce “a statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum”. This document has been produced to meet this requirement.

This document provides:

- Information about the planning system
- Information about the referendum
- Information stating where more details relating to the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan can be found.

Information about the planning system

As is made clear in legislation, most development requires consent, known as planning permission, to go ahead. This is usually done by submitting a planning application to a local planning authority, which decides whether to approve or refuse a planning application. Local planning authorities use planning policies, whether they are produced at a national, local or neighbourhood level, to make such decisions.

Lewes is located wholly within the South Downs National Park. Therefore the South Downs National Park Authority is the local planning authority for Lewes and decides planning applications in that area.

National Policy

National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, commonly referred to as the NPPF, as well as other related documents. The NPPF sets out policy on a range of different topic areas to aid in the determination of planning applications and ensure that development contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

The NPPF sets out policy to local planning authorities regarding the production of Local Plans and makes clear that local policies should be consistent with the NPPF. It also contains relevant policy and advice to local communities that undertake neighbourhood planning.

Local Policy

Local planning authorities produce Local Plans to introduce policies to guide development within their area. For Lewes, the current Local Plan is the Local Plan Part I (the Joint Core Strategy), adopted 11 May 2016 by Lewes District Council and 23 June 2016 by the South Downs National Park Authority¹. The policies within the Local Plan Part I are consistent with the NPPF and are currently used to determine planning applications. The emerging South Downs Local Plan, once adopted, will replace the Local Plan Part I (the Joint Core Strategy) as the Local Plan for Lewes.

The South Downs Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in April 2018. The Planning Inspector conducted the examination including public hearings on

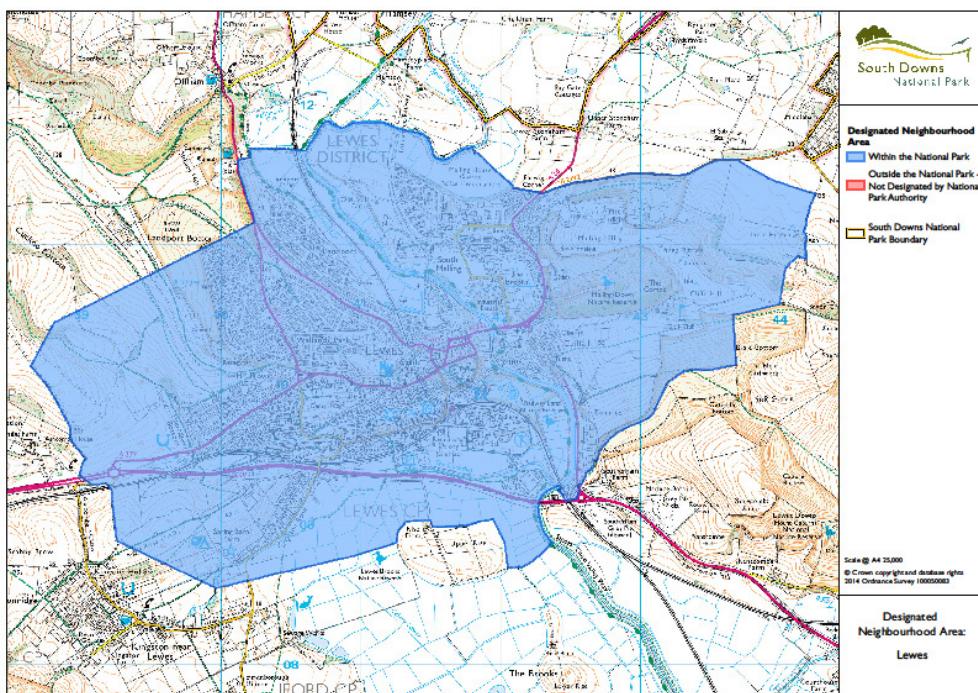
¹Further information about the Local Plan Part 1 (Joint Core Strategy) can be found via this link: <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/planning-policy/lewes-core-strategy-local-plan-part-1/>

²Further information about the emerging South Downs Local Plan can be found here: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/national-park-local-plan/>

the South Downs Local Plan in November and December 2018. The Planning Inspector has since indicated that consultation on modifications to the South Downs Local Plan will be appropriate in late January/early February 2019. South Downs National Park Authority will therefore be conducting the consultation starting at that time and lasting for eight weeks. It is anticipated the South Downs Local Plan will be adopted in summer 2019.

Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act and subsequent Neighbourhood Planning Regulations allow communities to guide and shape development in their locality by undertaking neighbourhood planning. The most common neighbourhood planning tool is the neighbourhood development plan, usually known as a neighbourhood plan. A neighbourhood plan contains specific policies relating to land use and development within a particular area, usually a parish, which has been designated as a neighbourhood area. Lewes has been designated as a neighbourhood area. This is shown in the map below.



A neighbourhood plan follows a statutory process that ensures that members of the local community, as well as relevant organisations, have the opportunity to influence the development of the plan. The plan is then subject to an Examination whereby an Independent Examiner reviews the neighbourhood plan and associated material against statutory requirements known as basic conditions and then writes a report (which may include modifications) recommending whether it should proceed to a referendum.

The local planning authority then decides whether to accept the Examiner's recommendations and whether to put the neighbourhood plan to a referendum.

Lewes Town Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Development Plan that has been through the relevant statutory processes and subject to an Examination by an Independent Examiner and, with modifications, has been recommended to proceed to referendum. South Downs National Park Authority have published a Decision Statement that accepts the Examiner's recommended modifications and agrees the neighbourhood plan can proceed to referendum.

Information about the referendum

The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections. The referendum asks eligible voters the following question:

'Do you want the South Downs National Park Authority to use the neighbourhood development plan for the Parish of Lewes to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

Voters will be asked to mark a cross (X) in either the 'Yes' or 'No' box on a ballot paper to indicate their preference. Should more than half of those voting at the referendum vote in favour of the neighbourhood plan, then South Downs National Park Authority will ensure the neighbourhood plan is 'made' at the earliest opportunity and use it to determine planning applications.

Voter Eligibility

Lewes is both the neighbourhood area and the referendum area and has been mapped on page 3 of this document. You can vote in the referendum if you live in Lewes and:

- you are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- you are 18 years of age or over on Thursday, 7th March 2019

You have to be registered to vote by 19th February 2019 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling our Helpline on 01273 471600.

Ways of Voting

There are three ways of voting. This can be done:

In person on 7th March 2019:

- At your local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do.
- In Lewes, the polling stations are:

Polling Station Number	Name	Address
1	Corn Exchange- Fisher Street entrance	Lewes Town Hall, High Street, Lewes BN7 2QS
2	Cliffe Hall	Cliffe High Street, Lewes, BN7 2AN
3	Malling Community Centre	Spences Lane, Lewes, BN7 2HQ
4	Lewes Youth Centre	Landport Road, Lewes, BN7 2SU
5	St Mary's Social Centre	Christie Road, Lewes, BN7 1PL
6	Christ Church Hall	Prince Edwards Road, Lewes, BN7 1BH
7	Southover Grange- High Street entrance	Southover High Street, Lewes, BN7 1TP

- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this referendum.
- The polling station is open from 7am to 10pm.
- If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 01273 471600 or email us on electoral@lewes-eastbourne.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 20 February 2019 to Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB.
- 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 Thursday, 7th March 2019.
- 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, 7th March 2019 by contacting our Helpline on 01273 471600.

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 that 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 27th February 2019 at Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB.
- 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 01273 471600 or by emailing electoral@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk.

Voter Registration

If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 01273 471600.

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 Tuesday 19th February 2019 at Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB.

Registration forms are available from our Helpline on 01273 471600 or by emailing electoral@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk. You can also register to vote at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Additional Information

The relevant regulations state that we must make available the following specified documents:

- The referendum version of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan
- The independent examiner's report on the draft Lewes Neighbourhood Plan
- A summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner
- A statement setting out that the District Council believes that the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions (included within the document known as the Decision Statement)
- A statement setting out general information as to town and country planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum (included within the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan: Voting Information for Referendum on 7th March 2019 Document)

These documents have been made available online at <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-development-plans/lewes-neighbourhood-plan/>. This webpage also

contains additional information about the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan as well as links to related documents.

Copies of the documents can also be viewed at:

- Lewes Town Council offices, Town Hall, High Street, Lewes, BN7 2QS. The offices are open Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4pm.
- South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH. The offices are open Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm.