

## **Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan - Referendum 2015**

### **General information about the town and country planning system and neighbourhood planning**

#### **What is the planning system?**

The planning system manages the use and development of land and buildings with the aim of creating better places to live and work. Without a planning system in place, development would be uncontrolled and could take place anywhere, without consideration of the impact on the environment and local people.

Planning aims to strike a sustainable balance between the provision of housing, jobs, retail and transport and protecting the natural and historic environment. The planning system has two main parts; producing plans for how an area will grow as a guide for future development and planning decisions. The second is managing potential development activity through planning applications and planning permission, using local plans as basis to make decisions. Planning decisions are usually the responsibility of the local authority.

#### **National Planning policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)**

The government's national planning policy framework is the first point of reference for local authorities to produce their plans, for neighbourhood plans and planning decisions. It sets out the core principles to be followed including economic, social and environmental aspects and a presumption towards sustainable development followed by more detailed national policies.

#### **Local Plans**

Local Plans are prepared by Local Authorities for their area and set out the strategic priorities and planning policies in the area over 15 years, to deliver key development including the homes and jobs needed, the provision of retail, community facilities, leisure and commercial development and infrastructure for transport, waste and utilities. Policies relating to mitigating climate change and adaption and conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment are also included. The Local Plan sets out opportunities for development in the area and what will be permitted and where, providing a basis for planning decisions on planning applications.

**The Birmingham Development Plan** will soon become the Local Plan for Birmingham and is currently going through the independent examination stage, before it is adopted by the City Council. It will then replace the Birmingham Unitary Development which is the current development plan and is largely in parts out of date.

## **Neighbourhood Planning**

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new level of local planning which allows either an existing parish/town council or residents and businesses to form a Neighbourhood Planning Forum to produce a plan for their area. This gives the power to local communities to prepare their own neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) can be either resident led or business led or led by parish/town councils. Neighbourhood Planning Forums must contain at least 21 local members that represent the character of the area and be formally designated by the Council.

Neighbourhood Development Plans set out general planning policies for development and land use in a neighbourhood as well as identifying potential development opportunities and appropriate uses. They must comply with the 'basic conditions' (as set out in Schedule 4B to the Town & Country planning Act 1990) which include policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. They must also be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

The Neighbourhood Development Planning Forum must consult with the local community and statutory consultees for at least 6 weeks before the draft plan is submitted to the Council to check, before it is sent to an independent examiner.

## **Local Referendum**

If the Neighbourhood Development Plan is approved by the examiner, the local authority then organises a local referendum so that the local community within the area can vote 'yes' or 'no' on the plan.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Forum and is currently at the referendum stage. The local referendum will be held on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015.**

If the neighbourhood plan is voted for, the City Council is under legal duty to adopt the Plan and proposals. The Neighbourhood Development Plan will then become part of the statutory development plan and can be used to determine planning applications within the area.

**Further detail on neighbourhood planning and the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan can be found at:-**

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-planning>