**Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan Referendum**

**The Information Statement**

This statement has been prepared to meet Regulation 4(3)(a) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

February 2022

1. **About this statement**

A referendum on the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan will be held on Thursday 5th May 2022.

This statement provides information on the referendum that is taking place, and the neighbourhood plan it relates to.

**2. Referendum on the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan**

A referendum asks you to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a question. For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper which asks the following question:

**“Do you want Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Wickersley to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”**

**3. What is the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan and neighbourhood area?**

Neighbourhood plans are planning documents, created by local people, which guide and shape development in a particular area. They form part of the Local Plan and are used when determining planning applications.

A neighbourhood plan must be prepared for a defined area known as the ‘neighbourhood area’. The neighbourhood area for Wickersley is identified on the map which is included at the end of this information statement. The boundary of the neighbourhood area was approved by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council on 11 December 2017 and covers the parish of Wickersley.

The Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Wickersley Parish Council.

In the Decision Statement published on 22 February 2022, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council confirmed it was satisfied that, subject to modifications specified in the Examiner’s report being made, the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan meets the legal requirements and basic conditions which neighbourhood plans must meet, and has been recommended to proceed to referendum.

The referendum area is identical to the area which has been designated as the Wickersley Neighbourhood Area. The independent examiner also recommended that the Plan proceed to a referendum based on the Wickersley Neighbourhood Area, as approved by the Council.

**4. Am I entitled to vote in the Referendum?**

A person is entitled to vote in the referendum if on the 5 May 2022:

* he or she is entitled to vote in a local government election in the referendum area; and
* his or her qualifying address for the election is in the referendum area. A person’s qualifying address is, in relation to a person registered in the register of electors, the address in respect of which he or she is entitled to be registered.

The referendum will be conducted based in accordance with procedures similar to those used at local government elections.

In order to vote in the referendum you must be registered to vote by midnight on Thursday 14 April 2022. Electors who are currently on the register at a qualifying address do not need to make a new registration application in order to vote at this poll.

**5. How do I vote in the Referendum?**

**In Person**

At your local Polling Station on 5 May 2022. This will be displayed on the Poll Card that will be sent to you. The Polling Station will be open between 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM.

**By Post**

If you already have a Postal Vote you will receive a Postal Poll card confirming this and your Ballot Paper will be sent to you around Tuesday 19 April 2022.

**By Proxy**

Voting by proxy means that you can appoint someone else to vote on your behalf, either by post or at your polling station. This person is called your proxy.

If you already have a permanent Proxy Vote you will receive a Poll Card confirming this in the weeks leading up to the referendum.

**Applications for postal or proxy votes**

If you would like to vote by post in the referendum, completed application forms must be received by the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Tuesday 19 April 2022.

If you wish to vote by proxy in this referendum, completed application forms must be received by the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Tuesday 26 April 2022.

To find out more information about postal and proxy voting and how to request an application form, visit [www.rotherham.gov.uk/elections](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/elections)

Completed application forms can be scanned and emailed to [electoral.services@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.services@rotherham.gov.uk), or sent to:

Electoral Services, Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham S60 1AE

**How to Mark Your Ballot Paper**

You will vote by putting a cross (X) in the ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ box on your ballot paper. You will only be allowed to put a cross in one box or your vote will not be counted.

If more than 50% of individuals vote ‘yes’ in the referendum, then Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council will ‘make’ the Wickersley Neighbourhood Development Plan. If the Neighbourhood Plan is ‘made’ it will help determine planning applications in the Wickersley Neighbourhood Area. It will also form part of the statutory development plan for Rotherham.

If more people vote ‘no’ than ‘yes’ then the Neighbourhood Plan will not be made part of the statutory development plan for the local area.

**6. What are the referendum documents and where can you view them?**

There are a number of documents that are available to view as part of the referendum. These are listed below:

* The referendum version of the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan including a separate appendix document;
* The Wickersley Design Code
* The independent examiner’s report on the Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan;
* A summary of representations submitted to the independent examiner following consultation on the Plan;
* A Decision Statement from the Local Planning Authority which confirms the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and other legislative requirements. It also confirms that the neighbourhood plan can proceed to referendum;
* A statement that sets out general information in respect of town and country planning, which includes neighbourhood planning.

All of the documents can be viewed online on the Council’s website at:

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning-development/wickersley-neighbourhood-plan-examination/1>

A hard copy of all of the above documents and this Information Statement can be inspected at the following locations (during opening hours):

* Wickersley Library and Neighbourhood Hub, 286 Bawtry Road, Wickersley, Rotherham, S66 1JJ
* Riverside Library, Main Street, Rotherham, S60 1AE

**7. Referendum Expenses**

Individuals or Groups may campaign to promote a particular outcome of the referendum. Spending on the campaigns is restricted by an expenses limit, which campaigners and campaign groups must not exceed.

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the referendum and the numbers of persons entitled to vote has been calculated as the following:

Expenses Limit: £2,726.92

Persons Entitled to Vote (as at 1 March 2022): 6,185 persons

**8. How to find out more**

Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available on the council’s website at: <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning-development/neighbourhood-planning/1>

For queries regarding planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01709 823869 or by email at [planning.policy@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@rotherham.gov.uk).

**Referendum Area**

