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# Information Statement

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This information statement is about the referendum to be held on the  
Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan

## About town and country planning

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In England, planning applications are determined by local planning authorities such as Dorset Council. Planning decisions are made in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan sets out the planning policies for the development and use of land.

The [adopted Local Plan for West Dorset](#) is therefore the starting point for considering planning applications at the current time. The [national planning policy framework](#) must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Our [Local Development Scheme](#) contains information on development plan documents that are being prepared.

## About neighbourhood planning and the Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan

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Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. In parished areas such as the Upper Marshwood Vale which encompasses the four parishes of Marshwood, Stoke Abbott, Pilsdon and Bettiscombe, the Parish Council is responsible for preparing a neighbourhood plan. The plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area. If a plan is made following a successful referendum, it becomes part of the development plan for that area.

Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan group applied to designate the four parishes of Marshwood, Bettiscombe, Pilsdon and Stoke Abbott as one neighbourhood plan area. The area designation was approved by the, then West Dorset District Council in August 2015.

In July 2019 Upper Marshwood Vale submitted the draft neighbourhood plan and supporting material to Dorset Council. Dorset Council were satisfied that the documents submitted met the requirements of Regulation 15 of the 'Regulations'. Upper Marshwood were notified of the Councils conclusion and informed that the plan could proceed to examination. The submitted documents were made available for consultation for 8 weeks due to part of the consultation period falling over the summer holidays. This meant the consultation was held from 19 August 2019 until 14 October 2019.

Mr Andrew Mead was appointed as an Independent Examiner for the Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan, and in December 2019 he produced his report confirming that he was satisfied that the plan meets the basic conditions and recommended that it should, subject to some changes, proceed to referendum.

Dorset Council and Upper Marshwood Vale considered each of the recommendations and modifications contained in the examiner's report and agreed the amendments in an Executive Decision Statement 20 December 2019. Dorset Council issued its decision which was in agreement with the examiner's findings, and that the plan as modified should proceed to referendum.

## What the referendum is deciding

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The question which will be asked in the referendum is:

“Do you want Dorset Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Upper Marshwood Vale to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

The referendum asks you to vote yes or no to this question.

## When and where the referendum will be held

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The referendum will be held on **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020**.

## What is the area covered by the referendum?

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The referendum will therefore be held over the neighbourhood plan area as marked on the policies map on page 19 of the Referendum draft of the Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan.

## Who is entitled to vote?

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You are entitled to vote in the referendum if you live in the referendum area, you are on the electoral register to vote in local council elections and you are 18 years of age or over on 13 February 2020.

You have to be registered to vote by Tuesday, 28 January 2020 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by telephoning 01305 838299 during normal office hours.

## How can people vote?

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

You can vote in person at the polling stations, the locations of these are; Bettiscombe Village Hall and P.C.C Stoke Abbott Village Hall. We will issue polling cards to voters on 09 January 2020. The polling station will be open from 7am to 10pm on 13 February 2020.

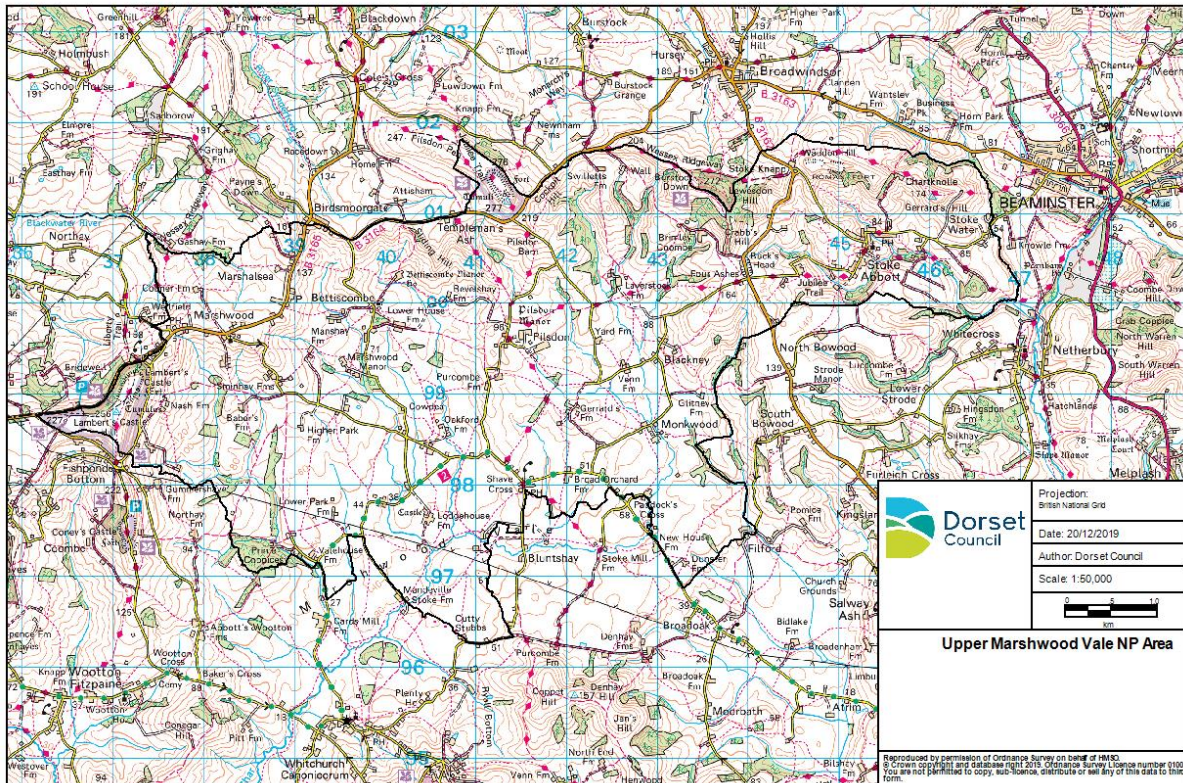
To vote by post or proxy in this referendum, you will need to have filled in an application form and sent it to the Electoral Registration Officer. Postal and proxy vote application forms are available online from the elections website <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/councillors-committees-elections/elections-and-voting/ways-you-can-vote.aspx> or by contacting the council.

Applications to vote by post must be received by no later than 5pm on Wednesday, 29 January 2020. To vote by proxy, application forms should be received by no later than 5pm

on Wednesday, 5 February 2020. However in certain circumstances emergency proxy vote applications can be received up until 5pm on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020. 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.

Ballot papers for people who vote by post will be posted from 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020, and will need to be returned by 10pm on the day of the poll.

## Map of the referendum area



## Referendum expenses

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the referendum is £2,362 plus £0.059 per registered elector. (The electorate in January 2020 was 524. Broken down into Bettiscombe: 49, Marshwood: 256, Pilsdon: 30 and Stoke Abbott: 189).

## What information is there available about the neighbourhood plan?

A copy of the specified documents, that is the documents listed below, may be inspected at the following council offices:

- **Dorset Council offices**, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester DT1 1UZ which is open 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays.
- **Beaminster Town Council**, Council Offices, 8 Fleet St, Beaminster DT8 3EF

The specified documents are:

- A **summary of representations** submitted to the examiner
- The **examiner's report**
- The **Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan** (as proposed)
- The **Decision statement**, which includes a statement by the local planning authority that the plan as proposed meets the basic conditions
- This **Information statement**, which includes general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum

All of the above documents can be viewed on the council's website:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/upper-marshwood-vale-neighbourhood-plan>