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PRESS RELEASE

Burnham-on-Crouch Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum

Thursday, July 20th 2017

On behalf of Councillor Ron Pratt, Chairman NDP Steering Group

And Councillor Bob Calver, Town Mayor

Quotes:

Ron Pratt : 'This Neighbourhood Plan is Burnham's once in a generation opportunity to positively shape its character for the better as the town evolves over the next few decades - I urge everyone in the town who cares about Burnham to please support the Steering Group's hard work and vote YES on July 20th '

Bob Calver: 'Like me, please can every resident vote YES in the Referendum. The Plan is designed to try to meet the needs of all Burnham's present and future residents and most importantly to ensure that we have the right infrastructure in place to make all of this change work'

Background FAQs:

Why is there a referendum and why does the Town Council unanimously recommend that all Burnham residents vote in it?

On Thursday July 20th, a referendum on the Burnham-on-Crouch Neighbourhood Plan is taking place when residents have the opportunity to decide if the policies in the plan should be used by Maldon District Council (the Local Planning Authority) to help it decide planning applications in our town.

Burnham Town Council is the body responsible for preparing the plan. A democratically elected steering group started work on it initially with professional support from Allies and Morrison urban planning specialists to ensure we started off in the right direction.

What is a neighbourhood plan and why do we have to vote about it?

The Government introduced neighbourhood plans in 2012 so that local communities could play a direct part in shaping the future of their towns and villages.

The plan is a real opportunity for the community to take control of their own future as opposed to speculators and land promoters.

Preparing the plan has involved the community on many occasions at several different stages.

The referendum is the final decider and if more than 50 per cent of those turning out, vote to support the plan, it must be adopted by Maldon District council and used in planning decisions.

What advantages will it bring to Burnham?

Since the coalition government introduced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, our local community's influence on planning decisions has been much reduced because MDC didn't have an approved Local Development Plan (LDP) in place, Burnham didn't have an approved Neighbourhood Plan and it took MDC a time to be able to prove it had a 5 year development land supply in place as required under law.

The neighbourhood plan process is the opportunity for residents to put in place policies that will shape how Burnham develops and changes in the years up to 2029. By law it has to be in general conformity with the LDP, but obviously contains a lot of very local content and policies to supplement the LDP.

Based on input from local people, we have prepared a very comprehensive plan that covers a lot of ground.

Some of the detailed policies in the plan, for example, on heritage, design and the environment give specific policy guidance to ensure development that takes place is right for Burnham particularly for controversial local issues like green spaces, affordable homes, the riverside and conservation area.

What powers will the plan convey?

Most importantly, once 'made' the plan has real teeth. It will form an integral part of the development plan for the district if it passes the referendum stage.

This means that it will be used as the basis for making decisions on planning applications in the area, not just by the district council, but by planning inspectors considering appeals in the town.

Planning proposals must be in accordance with the plan otherwise they should not be approved. As we have taken the opportunity to identify and allocate land in the plan for housing and business development sufficient for the community's needs up to 2029, we should be in a strong position to resist other development proposals unless there are very special reasons why more development should be accepted.

Have other communities also got neighbourhood plans?

Yes, they have, approximately 300 right across the country, but Burnham is so far the only parish within Maldon District to reach the referendum stage.

It seems to have taken a long while to produce the Plan

Yes, it has taken time. Part of the reason for this is the comprehensive nature of the plan – some neighbourhood plans have been much more restricted in what they have tried to achieve and therefore have been quicker to prepare, we have also unfortunately received poor professional advice at key points.

Another aspect is that to save ratepayers expense, the plan has been largely prepared by volunteers working in their own time, not by paid professionals.

The plan contains a number of Community Action Proposals, which are not part of the vote. Can you explain what these are?

Neighbourhood plans are quite closely controlled by regulation and can only deal with matters relating to the development and use of land.

We asked the local community back at the start, which issues they felt were important to the town and many of the replies related to matters which we knew the plan could not directly influence. The town council, however, did not want to be seen to simply ignore these and so, for those things where the plan cannot directly mandate, we have prepared a number of Community Action Proposals.

These sit alongside the policies of the Plan and in many respects will help to achieve the plan's vision and aims. Whilst they sit within the main body of the Plan they are shown in orange shading. This distinguishes them from the main land use policies that are in green shading.

Will Town Council members be voting?

Every member of the Town Council certainly will be voting. We and the steering group didn't spend such a significant amount of time on the plan to not turn out at the decisive stage.

We will be urging all our friends and contacts to vote and urge everyone eligible to vote to do so on July 20th, even if they don't feel it is important for themselves – do it for the future of our home community.

Voting Arrangements

Residents over 18, registered to vote in local council elections and who also live in the parish of Burnham on Crouch are able to vote in this referendum.

Our two usual two polling stations will be in operation for the referendum – Burnham Council Chamber, Chapel Road and Ormiston Academy, Southminster Road. **NB: Voters living in Burnham North Ward will also have the opportunity to vote for a new Town Councillor to fill the current North Ward vacancy**

The ballot paper contains a single question – *“Do you want Maldon District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Burnham-on-Crouch to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”*

How can residents see the plan that the council is recommending they should vote for?

- *The 102 page plan itself and full background details can be viewed/downloaded via <https://burnhamneighbourhoodplan.org>.*
- *Hard copies of all of this material can be viewed at Burnham Town Council, Chapel Road and Burnham Library, Station Rd*

Burnham Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group urge residents to please vote YES to the referendum question on July 20th 2017.

Have YOUR say in the
Burnham-on-Crouch
Neighbourhood
Development Plan
REFERENDUM

VOTE YES



on Thursday 20th July 2017

See <https://burnhamneighbourhoodplan.org> or
view @ BTC Office/Burnham Library