

## **Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan – Information Statement**

### **1. About this statement**

A referendum on The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan will be held on 03/07/25. This statement provides information on the referendum that is taking place, and the neighbourhood plan it relates to.

### **2. Referendum on the The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Development 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 Braintree District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Earls Colne to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?**

### **3. What is a neighbourhood area?**

The neighbourhood area for Earls Colne is identified on the map which is included at the end of this information statement. The boundary of the neighbourhood area was approved by Braintree District Council on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

The referendum area is identical to the area which has been designated as the The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Area. The independent examiner also recommended that the Plan proceed to a referendum based on the Earls Colne, 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 date 03/07/25.

- 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.

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

You will be issued with a ballot paper at the polling station, and you can 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 people vote “yes) in the referendum, then Braintree District Council will “make” The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan. If the Neighbourhood Plan is “made” it will help determine planning applications in The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Area. It will also form part of the statutory development plan for Braintree District.

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.

They are;

- The referendum version of the The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- An independent examiner's report on The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Development 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 Plan can proceed to referendum.
- A statement that sets out general information in respect of town and county planning, which includes neighbourhood planning.

All of the documents are available to view on the Council's website at;

[www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

## **7. Referendum Expenses**

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body during the period of the referendum for referendum purposes.

The referendum expenses limit that will apply (as at 03/02/25) in relation to this referendum is £2362 plus £0.059 per registered elector. The number of people entitled to vote in the referendum is 3224.

Expense means the expenses incurred by or on behalf of any individual or body during the referendum period in relation to:

- Advertising of any nature
- Unsolicited material addressed to voters
- Information about the referendum, information about the question, arguments for and against
- Market research or canvassing
- Provision of any property, services, or facilities in connection with press conferences or dealings with the media
- Transport (By any means) of persons to anywhere with a view to obtaining publicity in connection with a referendum campaign
- Rallies and other events, including public meetings

Expenses also include any notional expenses, where property, services or facilities are provided free of charge or at a discount.

Campaigning groups are encouraged to register with and submit a statement of expenses to the Counting Officer via Electoral Services, Braintree District Council, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9HB.

It is an offence for a campaign organiser to exceed the referendum expenses limits and if found guilty would be liable to a fine of up to £5000 and/or imprisonment of up to 12 months.

## **8 How to find out more**

Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available on the Council's website at [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

For queries regarding planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact the Planning Policy Team on (01376) 552525 or via e-mail [planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk)

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