Northumberland
County Council

Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum Information Statement (Including Information for Voters)

Statement Published: **5 November 2019**
Referendum Date: **Thursday 30 January 2020**

About the Referendum

On 30 January 2020, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area. This statement explains more about the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. This statement provides information about:

- The referendum and how you can take part;
- The planning system in England and the development plan;
- Neighbourhood plans;
- The neighbourhood area;
- The Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan

A referendum asks you to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a question.

For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper with this question:

"Do you want Northumberland County Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Cramlington to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

How do I vote in the referendum?

You vote by putting a cross (X) in the ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ box on your ballot paper.

You should put a cross in only **one** box or your vote will not be counted.

If more people vote ‘Yes’ than ‘No’ in this referendum, then Northumberland County Council will use the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Parish of Cramlington.

If more people vote ‘No’ than ‘Yes’, then planning applications will continue to be decided without using the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan. Instead planning applications would be decided using policies in the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999) and the Blyth Valley LDF Core Strategy (2007), and the Blyth Valley LDF Development Control Policies (2007) which would remain as part of the development plan for the local area.

What is the Development Plan?

In England, decisions on planning applications are made by local planning authorities. Those decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan is a set of documents that contain policies for the development and use of land in a local planning authority area. Northumberland County Council is the local planning authority for Northumberland with the exception of areas covered by the Northumberland National Park.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning powers were introduced in the Localism Act in 2011. Their aim is to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. Local communities prepare neighbourhood plans which are created to show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area. When a neighbourhood plan passes a local referendum it will become part of the development plan for that neighbourhood area and must be used to help in making decisions on planning applications in that area.

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

Where town or parish councils exist they are the only organisations that can start the work of preparing a neighbourhood plan. Where there is no town or parish council a neighbourhood forum can be created to prepare a neighbourhood plan. Civil parishes exist across the whole of Northumberland so neighbourhood forums could not be created for the purposes of neighbourhood planning.

In this case, the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Cramlington Town Council.

What is a neighbourhood area?

Neighbourhood areas are areas defined for the purpose of neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood plans can only be created in formally designated neighbourhood areas. A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas.

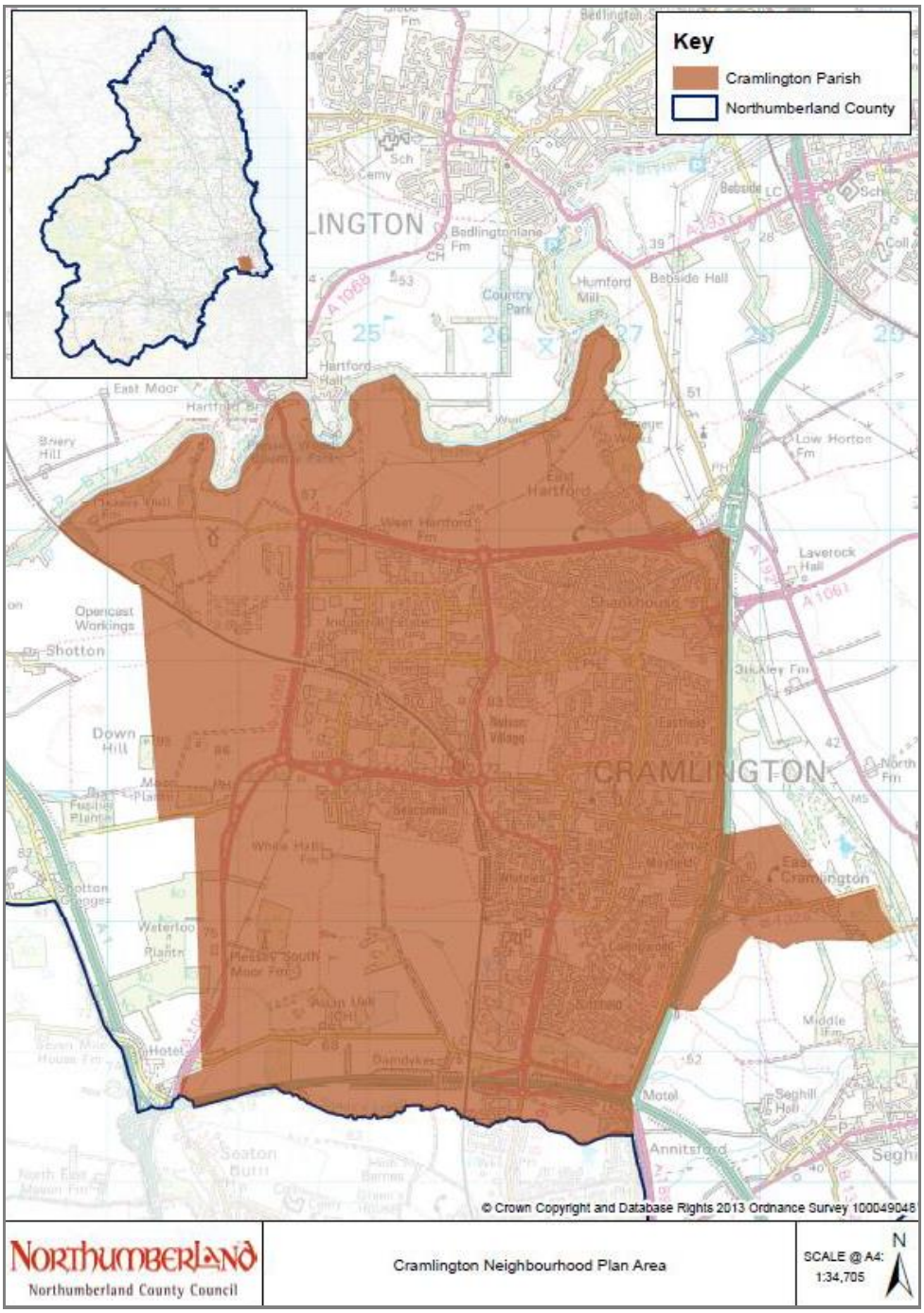
The boundaries of a neighbourhood area are proposed by town or parish councils. This is done by formal application to the County Council who will make the decision about designating a neighbourhood area.

Neighbourhood areas will normally follow parish boundaries or groups of parishes.

The boundary of the Cramlington Neighbourhood Area was approved by Northumberland County Council in February 2014 and is identical to the civil parish area of Cramlington.

Neighbourhood Planning in Cramlington

The Referendum area is identified on the map in this Information Statement. The area comprises the whole of the civil parish of Cramlington. The Referendum area is identical to the area designated as the Cramlington Neighbourhood Area.



Referendum expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body organising a campaign during the period of the referendum for referendum purposes. There is a limit to the amount that campaigners can spend on their advertising for the referendum.

The Referendum expenses limit[1] that will apply in relation to the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan Referendum is **£3,671.56** to each campaign organiser. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is 22,196 (as at 1 February 2019)

Specified documents to be published before Referendum

The County Council is required to make available a number of documents relevant to holding the Referendum. These are called the ***Specified Documents***. A copy of the specified documents, all of which are identified below, may be inspected at:

- **Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF**, between the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday; and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday.

The specified documents are:

- Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan: Referendum Version;
- Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan: Referendum Version Policies Map;
- Report of the independent examiner (16 September 2019);
- Summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- Statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions *(The Basic Conditions Decision Statement)*; and a
- Statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum *(Referendum Information Statement including Information for Voters)*

All the above documents can also be viewed on Northumberland County Council's website at:
www.northumberland.gov.uk/ourplan

[1] As set out in Regulation 6 of The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012

Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the Parish of Cramlington and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on **30 January 2020.**

You have to be registered to vote by **14 January 2020** to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling our Helpline on 01670 624811.

The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

Ways of voting

There are three ways of voting:

In person on Thursday 30 January 2020:

- At your local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do.

- the polling stations are at:
    - Cramlington Mayfield Community Centre
    - Cramlington Church of Nazareen
    - Cramlington Shanklea Primary School
    - Cramlington Eastlea Primary School
    - Cramlington Northburn Sports and Community Centre
    - Cramlington Salvation Army
    - Cramlington St Pauls RC Church
    - Cramlington East Harftord Community Centre
    - Cramlington Nelson Village Welfare Community Centre
    - Cramlington Beaconhill Community Centre

- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this referendum. If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 01670 624811, or email us on elections@northumberland.gov.uk to find out the location of your polling station.

- Polling stations are open from **7am to 10pm.**

By post:

- If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this.

- To vote by post, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive **by 5pm on 15 January 2020** at this address:

  Northumberland County Council
  County Hall
  Morpeth
  Northumberland
  NE61 2EF

- Postal votes can be sent overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote.

- You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement **up to 5pm on 30 January 2020** by contacting our Helpline on 01670 624811.

By proxy:

- If you have a proxy vote already you will receive a poll card confirming this.

- If you can't get to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody you trust to vote on your behalf.

- To vote by proxy, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive **by 5pm on 22 January 2020** at this address:

  Northumberland County Council
  County Hall
  Morpeth
  Northumberland
  NE61 2EF

- When you apply for a proxy vote, you must say why you cannot vote in person.

- 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.

Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from our Helpline on 01670 624811 or by emailing elections@northumberland.gov.uk You can also download forms from Northumberland County Council's website.

Postal vote application details can be found here:
http://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/register-to-vote/postal-vote-application

Proxy vote application details can be found here:
http://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/register-to-vote/apply-to-vote-by-proxy

Am I registered to vote?

If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 01670 624811.

If you are not registered to vote, you will need to submit an application to register. You can do this online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Alternatively, you can contact Electoral Services on the helpline number above to apply by telephone or to be sent with a paper application form.

However you choose to submit your application, you will need your National Insurance Number.

How to find out more

Further general information on neighbourhood planning, including documents relating to the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan, can be found on the County Council's website at: http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/ourplan

For queries about planning issues and neighbourhood planning in general, please contact Northumberland County Council's Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Team on 01670 623 619.

For more information about voting and the arrangements for this referendum, please contact our Helpline on 01670 624811 or elections@northumberland.gov.uk