



Marden Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

Frequently Asked Questions – February 2020

What is the status of the Marden Neighbourhood Plan?

Previous updates about the Marden Neighbourhood Plan were given in the ‘FAQs’ issued by the parish council in May and November 2019, available at:

www.mardenkentpc.gov.uk/community/marden-parishcouncil-13394/mpcs-faqs/.

Since then, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) has announced that a referendum will be held on **Thursday 27th February 2020** about whether the finalised Marden Neighbourhood Plan should be adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Why is a referendum being held?

Planning law requires a referendum to be held before a neighbourhood plan can be formally adopted by the local planning authority (i.e. MBC in Marden’s case).

Why is it important to vote in the referendum?

All residents are encouraged to support the finalised Marden Neighbourhood Plan at the referendum as that is the most powerful way to get the Marden voice heard when MBC takes planning decisions.

All the key documents are available at: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/community/marden-parish-council-13394/draft-np-documents/.

Does the Marden Neighbourhood Plan allocate any land for future housing development?

No.

What about MBC’s ‘Call for Sites’

The Marden Neighbourhood Plan cannot pre-judge any decisions that MBC may make following the Call for Sites exercise, but a vote for the neighbourhood plan in the referendum DOES NOT mean accepting development north of the railway (or anywhere else).

Instead, having an adopted neighbourhood plan would mean a greater level of parish influence IN THE EVENT that any new development proposals come forward (whether through the Call for Sites process or otherwise).

It is understood that MBC will be providing more details about the Call for Sites assessment and this is expected later in the year. However, this does not affect the neighbourhood plan referendum.

However, once adopted, the Marden Neighbourhood Plan can be referenced if you wish to respond to future MBC local plan consultations or individual planning applications.

Where and when will the referendum be held?

The Marden Neighbourhood Plan referendum will be held in the Memorial Hall between 7 am and 10 pm on the 27th of February, with similar arrangements as for other local and national votes.

Do I need an official poll card to vote?

MBC has already distributed official poll cards, so all registered voters in the parish should have received these by now. However, if it hasn’t arrived, or it becomes mislaid, you can still vote in the normal way (provided that you are a registered voter).

What is the parish council’s recommendation?

Many communities up and down the country now have neighbourhood plans in place because this is the most effective means of influencing local planning decisions.

Marden Parish Council has supported the work of the Marden Neighbourhood Plan steering group from the start and fully endorses the final document that has been produced by and for our community.

Please support the Marden Neighbourhood Plan in the referendum.