

Information Statement

This information statement is about the referendum to be held on the
Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan

About town and country planning

In England, planning applications are determined by local planning authorities such as West Dorset District 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.

West Dorset District Council is working with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council to prepare a replacement Local Plan that contains policies for both authority areas. This [emerging Local Plan](#) can be given weight as a material planning consideration as it progresses closer to adoption. Our [Local Development Scheme](#) contains information on development plan documents that are being prepared.

About neighbourhood planning and the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan

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 Cerne Valley, 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.

Cerne Valley Parish Council agreed to be one of the front runners for neighbourhood planning in 2011. After much research, and having listened to the various issues and suggestions made through various consultation events, a draft plan was produced for consultation in May 2013. The plan was then revised in response to the consultation and submitted to West Dorset District Council in December 2013. Deborah McCann was appointed as an Independent Examiner for the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan, and in August 2014 she produced her [report](#) confirming that she was satisfied that the plan meets the basic conditions and recommended that it should be modified and proceed to referendum.

West Dorset District Council considered the report in September and 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

The question which will be asked in the referendum is:

“Do you want West Dorset District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Cerne Valley 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

The referendum will be held on **Thursday 11 December** 2014.

What is the area covered by the referendum?

The referendum area and the area covered by the neighbourhood plan are the parishes of Cerne Abbas, Godmanstone, Nether Cerne and Uperne, which form the Cerne Valley group.

Who is entitled to vote?

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 11 December 2014.

You have to be registered to vote by 25 November 2014 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?

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 station – which is at Cerne Abbas Village Hall, Kettle Bridge Lane, DT2 7GY. We will issue poll cards to voters towards the end of November. The polling station will be open from 7am to 10pm on 11 December 2014.

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.dorsetforyou.com/404855> or by contacting the district council.

Applications to vote by post must be received by 5pm on Wednesday 26 November 2014. To vote by proxy, application forms should be received by 5pm on Wednesday 3 December 2014. However in certain circumstances emergency proxy vote applications can be received up until 5pm on the 11 December. 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 during the first week in December, and will need to be returned by 10pm on the day of the poll, 11 December 2014.

Map of the referendum area



Referendum expenses

The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the referendum is £2,362 plus £0.59 per registered elector (in October 2014 this was 840 people).

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:

- **West Dorset District 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
- **Sherborne Town Council offices**, The Manor House, Newland, Sherborne DT9 3JL which is open 10am to 4pm from Monday to Thursday and 10am to 1pm on Fridays.

The specified documents are:

- A **summary of representations** submitted to the examiner
- The **examiner's report**
- The **Cerne Valley 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.dorsetforyou.com/neighbourhoodplanning/west/weymouth>.

The Parish Council also intend to ensure copies of these documents are available locally, and hope to place copies to be viewed at the following locations:

- **Cerne Abbas Village Hall** (opening hours vary dependent on hall bookings)
- **Godmanstone Village Hall** (opening hours vary dependent on hall bookings)
- **St Mary's Church**, Abbey Street, Cerne Abbas (open every day during daylight hours)
- **Green Valley Farm Shop and Café**, Longmeadow Farm, Godmanstone (open Tuesday - Friday 9.30 - 5.30pm and Saturdays 9.30 – 4pm)

If you are a Cerne Valley resident and would like to see the documents but are unable to visit these locations (or the documents are not there) please phone Ian Humphreys on 01300 342110 and he will try to help.