



Wigan♥
Council

General Information Statement on the planning system (including Neighbourhood Planning) and the Referendum.

About this leaflet

On Thursday 30 January 2025 there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area, the **Abram Neighbourhood Plan**. This leaflet contains information about the planning system and neighbourhood planning. It also explains how you can take part in the referendum.

The Planning System

The planning system helps decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, providing new homes and protecting the natural environment. Most new buildings, major changes to existing buildings or major changes to the local environment need planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

Wigan Council is responsible for deciding whether most forms of development should go ahead within the borough. Decisions are based on national planning policy and the development plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) provides guidance to local councils in drawing up Local Plans and on making decisions on planning applications.

The Development Plan

A development plan is a set of documents that include policies for the development and use of land across the local authority area. The Development Plan for Wigan Borough currently consists of:

- [Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy \(2013\)](#)
- [Saved policies in the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan \(2006\)](#)
- [Places for Everyone Plan \(2024\)](#)
- [Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan \(2013\)](#)
- [Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan \(2012\)](#)

The Abram Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the borough's Development Plan if it achieves over a 50% 'Yes' vote at Referendum.

Neighbourhood Plans

What are they?

Their purpose is to give local communities greater influence on future development in their local area by establishing a set of policies which will be used in making decisions on planning applications.

Neighbourhood plans are required by law to meet certain “Basic Conditions”. They must take account of national planning policy and the Local Plan. They must contribute to achieving sustainable development and be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements. Importantly, they should not be used to prevent development which is allowed for in the Local Plan.

Who makes them?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by town or parish councils or specially established neighbourhood forums. There is a set process that must be followed to make a plan. The Abram Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Abram Communities Together.

How are they made?

The plan must be prepared through a process of consultation with local residents and businesses. An independent examiner then reviews the plan and checks whether it meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements. The examiner reports on whether any changes should be made to the plan and whether it should proceed to the referendum stage.

At the referendum, local residents can vote on whether the neighbourhood plan should be used to help decide planning applications in the area. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area are entitled to vote in the referendum.

What status do Neighbourhood Plans have?

If more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the local planning authority must make it part of the development plan for the area. This means that the plan will be used as a basis for making decisions on planning applications.

Additional information in relation to neighbourhood planning is available on the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

The Abram Neighbourhood Plan

The Abram Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by Abram Communities Together, who were designated by Wigan Council as a Neighbourhood Forum in 2015. Preparation of the plan has followed the legal requirements and it has recently

been subject to an independent examination. The examiner produced a report on the plan which concluded that, with some minor changes, the plan meets the necessary basic conditions. Wigan Council has agreed with the examiner's conclusions. The plan can now proceed to referendum.

The Referendum

The referendum will take place on **Thursday 30 January 2025**.

A referendum asks you to vote "yes" or "no" to a question. For this referendum the question you will be asked is:

"Do you want Wigan Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for the Abram area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

You show your choice by putting a cross (X) in the 'Yes' or 'No' box on your ballot paper. Put a cross in only **one** box or your vote will not be counted.

More detailed information on the Referendum is available in the Referendum Information Statement.

Further information

The following documents are available to help you to decide how to vote:

- The Abram Neighbourhood Plan;
- The report of the independent examiner;
- A summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- A statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and complies with the relevant legislation;
- This note for information.

You can view these documents online at www.wigan.gov.uk/abramplan or in hard copy at the following locations during opening hours:

- Platt Bridge Library, Platt Bridge Community First, Rivington Avenue, Platt Bridge, Wigan WN2 5NG
- Wigan Library, Life Centre, The Wiend, Wigan WN1 1NH