Castor Neighbourhood Plan

Your Village Referendum

Thursday 2 November 2017

This booklet contains information to help you understand and take part in the forthcoming referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan for the village. Your participation in this is vital to the future of our village.

www.castorailsworthnps.com

This information leaflet has been prepared by Castor and Ailsworth Neighbourhood Planning Group.
A village referendum is being held on Thursday November 2.

This marks the penultimate step in a process started almost three years ago with a public meeting at Castor School. A steering group and a team of volunteers came together to take the views of that meeting forward on behalf of both Ailsworth and Castor, with the full support of the Parish Councils, to whom they were accountable.

You may well have taken part in one or more of the two surveys and three formal consultations since then that have helped shape the Castor Neighbourhood Plan and the various policies it puts forward to guide the development of our village over the next two decades.

The referendum is your chance to help set the direction of development for land use within the parish. The Castor Neighbourhood Plan has been produced and developed by people in the village.

There have of course been many consultations with all the parties who have an interest in our village – within and beyond – and inevitably it represents a broad consensus view that also has to conform to a number of statutory legal requirements.

But in that very real sense, it is ‘our’ plan.
What does it involve?

The referendum is a formal vote administered by Electoral Services at Peterborough City Council (PCC) in exactly the same way as local council elections. This reflects the importance of the underlying decision and the need for it to reflect the views of our community.

You vote 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. The question you will be asked to vote on in the referendum will be:

Do you want Peterborough City Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Castor to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

The referendum area and the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is the parish of Castor as shown below:
Who can vote in the referendum?

You can vote in the referendum if you live in the Castor parish area and you are registered to vote in local council elections. You have to be registered to vote in the referendum.

If you are on the electoral register you will receive a polling card as for local elections. You can register your vote in the following ways.

You can vote in person at your local polling station in the usual way. If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this. If you want to vote by post, you will need to complete an application form as soon as possible and send it to the Electoral Services Team at Peterborough City Council.

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 that you trust to vote on your behalf. If you want to vote by proxy, you will again need to complete and send in an application form.

For more information on all the above, consult the PCC Electoral Services website https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/elections/.
Why does the referendum matter?

If the village votes ‘yes’ to the Castor Neighbourhood Plan

If more people vote ‘yes’ than ‘no’ in this referendum, then PCC will use the Castor Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the parish of Castor. To complete the successful neighbourhood plan process and to give the Neighbourhood Plan its full statutory weight, PCC would formally adopt the Neighbourhood Plan having reference to the positive vote at referendum. Once “made” the neighbourhood plan will become part of the context for PCC’s own Local Plan.

Remember - this referendum is NOT about the Peterborough Local Plan

As you know, PCC is about to consult on its own draft local plan which may contain proposals for development north of the bypass. You will have a separate opportunity to express your view on that plan before it goes to final decision. It will not however be the subject of a referendum – the decision sits with our city councillors.

The Castor Neighbourhood Plan, if it were to be adopted, should influence, but will not be able to override, that council decision.

If the village votes ‘no’ to the Castor Neighbourhood Plan

If more people vote ‘no’ than ‘yes’, then planning applications in the parish will be decided without using the Castor Neighbourhood Plan as part of the process.
What does the Castor Neighbourhood Plan say?

The Neighbourhood Plan has been refined and clarified following the consultation earlier this year, but its broad intentions remain unchanged.

It has since been scrutinised by an independent examiner and all the various points put forward by interested parties during the final consultation considered by the examiner. The examiner has agreed that the Plan is entirely suitable to be put to a referendum and made only minor changes of wording to it to clarify its intentions even more.

It has been developed to exactly complement the Ailsworth Neighbourhood Plan which will be the subject of a village referendum in Ailsworth on the same day.

The plan covers four policy areas:

**HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT – A VITAL PLACE TO LIVE**

The policies lay down important criteria which all building development must meet, including reinforcing local distinctiveness; adopting design guidance from two existing (non-statutory) sources; protecting views of St Kyneburgha’s Church; encouraging better environmental practices; avoiding flood risk; mitigating the effects of increased traffic; maximising the use of public transport, walking and cycling; ensuring adequate car-parking; and enabling high-speed broadband connections.

The plan also aims to manage “steady growth” in housing numbers over the Plan period of around 10%.
LAND USE - AN ANCIENT AND FRAGILE LANDSCAPE

The policies here aim to conserve the natural environment, especially the Hanglands and related sites important for wildlife, protect existing designated open spaces and protect our rich historic environment.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC – A THRIVING VILLAGE

The policy aims to encourage the establishment or expansion of retail and other community uses, of a scale and character that is compatible with the wider vision for the village; offers support to planning applications for home working, subject to conditions; and supports the development of land adjacent to or within the village envelope for a doctor’s surgery or other primary health-care facility.

RECREATION AND VISITORS – A SPACE FOR PETERBOROUGH TO BREATHE

These policies encourage appropriate rural recreation and sporting facilities, and also require new housing schemes to show how access to recreation space is to be achieved. They require new housing to make proper provision for footpaths and cycle access, and to protect existing rights of way and improve links to leisure assets in the surrounding area, including encouragement in principle to proposals for promoting visitor access to Nene Park.
Want to find out more?

If you want to know more detail about the Castor Neighbourhood Plan and the background to the referendum, this is how you can find out.

WEBSITE

The Neighbourhood Plan website (www.castorandailsworthnps.com) contains a range of information about the plan, how it has been developed, and the evidence which underpins its proposed policies.

You will also relevant documents on the PCC website at: https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/planning-and-development/planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/#Neighbourhood_consultation

TO VIEW PRINTED COPIES OF THE PLAN

Printed copies of the final referendum version of the Castor Neighbourhood Plan will also be available to view at the Coffee House, 107A Peterborough Road, Ailsworth, and at PCC, Bayard Place, Broadway, Peterborough PE1 1FZ.

This affects you - please use your vote!

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