



## **TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

### **Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan Referendum – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 General Information for voters**

#### About this document

On 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 there will be referendums for residents and businesses in Altrincham on the Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Neighbourhood Plan (ATCNBP).

This document explains more about the referendums that are going to take place and how you can take part. It also gives you information about the Town and Country Planning system.

#### The Referendums

Both the residents' and businesses' referendums on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 will ask you to vote yes or no to a question. For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper with this question:

“Do you want Trafford Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Altrincham to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

#### How do I vote in the referendum?

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. If both referendums come out in favour of the Neighbourhood Business Plan it will be adopted. If both reject the Plan it won't be adopted. Where the two outcomes conflict with each other the decision about whether or not to adopt the Neighbourhood Business Plan will rest with Trafford Council. If adopted, the Business Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan.

#### The Town and Country Planning System

The planning system helps to decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, improving people's quality of life, and protecting the natural and historic 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.

Trafford Council, as the Local Planning Authority, is responsible for deciding whether most forms of development should go ahead within the borough. Decisions are based on national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) as well as on the local Development Plan.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be taken into account by communities when preparing neighbourhood plans and by local planning authorities when preparing local plans and making decisions on planning applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and this has to be reflected in plans, both at a district level and a neighbourhood level. The NPPF is accompanied by guidance – the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which expands on the NPPF policies and helps in their interpretation and application.

### Local Plans

Trafford Council must prepare a local plan which sets planning policies within the local authority area. Local plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. They must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Plan for Trafford includes the Core Strategy (Adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012), The GM Joint Waste Plan (April 2012), the GM Joint Minerals Plan (April 2013) and the remaining "saved" Revised Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies and proposals. The UDP is gradually being replaced; however until such time that the UDP policies are fully replaced the relevant policies will still be used to determine planning applications.

Trafford Council consulted on a full draft of the Trafford Local Plan: Land Allocations Plan from 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The Land Allocations Plan sets out detailed proposals including development sites and areas for protection against development. It should be noted that currently work has halted on the LAP pending the production of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF).

### Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

The GMSF will be the overarching framework within which the ten local planning authorities of Greater Manchester identify and manage the supply of land for jobs and new homes in Greater Manchester. The Plan will identify the level and type of growth which should be planned for over a 20 year period. In October 2016 consultation was carried out on the Draft GMSF.

### Neighbourhood Plans

#### What are they?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act in 2011. It aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work by showing how a community wants land to be used and developed in its area. Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet certain "Basic Conditions" by having regard to national planning policy, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, being in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area (i.e. the Trafford Core Strategy) and being compatible

with EU obligations and human rights requirements. They should not promote less development than is set out in the Development Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

#### What is a Business Neighbourhood Plan?

Business Neighbourhood Plans are Neighbourhood Plans for areas that are primarily commercial to make sure that the business community in those areas is fully represented and involved in the plan-making process.

An important difference between business neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood plans is that there are two referendums for a Business Neighbourhood Plan – a referendum of residents (as is the case for a Neighbourhood Plan) and an additional referendum of businesses.

#### Who prepares Neighbourhood Plans?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by town or parish councils or neighbourhood forums and there is a statutory process that must be followed to make a plan. Where there is a Town or Parish Council, they still take the responsibility for preparing a Business Neighbourhood Plan but it is expected that the business community should be well-represented and closely engaged in preparing the plan.

#### How are Neighbourhood Plans made?

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

The referendum asks those voting whether they want the Neighbourhood Plan to be used by the Local Planning Authority to help it decide planning applications in the area covered by the Plan. For a business neighbourhood plan, all residents and businesses registered to vote within the referendum area are entitled to vote in the referendum. For residents to be able to vote they need to be included on the electoral roll. For businesses, a separate business register has to be prepared by the local authority (i.e. Trafford Council) especially for the referendum. In order to be able to be included on the business register, a business has to be a non-domestic rate payer within the referendum area.

#### What status do Neighbourhood Plans have?

If more than half of those voting in a referendum have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan the local planning authority must make it part of the statutory development plan and use it when making decisions on planning applications in the Plan area.

In the case of a Business Neighbourhood Plan, if a majority of those who have voted in one of the referendums vote in support of making the Plan and the majority of those who vote in the other referendum do not support the making of the Plan, it is the local planning authority (i.e. Trafford Council) that must decide whether the Plan should be brought into force.

### The Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan

The Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan has been produced by the Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Forum which was formally designated by Trafford Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014 as the qualifying body in order to prepare the plan. It has been produced in accordance with the statutory requirements and following a recent independent examination has, subject to minor modifications, been recommended to proceed to referendum.

Additional information in relation to neighbourhood planning is available via the following link:

<http://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/local-development-framework/neighbourhood-planning.aspx>

A copy of the Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan is available to view on computer screens at Altrincham Library and is also available to view online at:

<http://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/local-development-framework/altrincham-neighbourhood-business-plan.aspx>