

Statement of General Information as to Town and Country Planning (including Neighbourhood Planning) and the Referendum

Referendum

A referendum on whether to adopt the Stone Neighbourhood Plan will be held for residents of the Stone Neighbourhood Area on **26 May 2022**.

The question that will be asked at the referendum is:

Do you want Dartford Borough Council to use the Stone Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Stone neighbourhood area?

The referendum will ask you to vote 'yes' or 'no' to this question.

If a majority of the votes received are in favour, the Stone Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for Dartford Borough (see below) and help the Council and other planning decision makers to make decisions on planning applications in the Stone Neighbourhood Area.

The Planning System

The UK has a plan-led system of town and country planning. Local authorities (borough, district and unitary councils) and other decision makers, such as planning inspectors, make planning decisions based on policies in the local Development Plan, national policy, and other material considerations. The Development Plan is the starting point for determining any planning application, so the planning policies within the plan help to decide how much and what type of development happens, what it looks like and where it goes. Dartford Borough's Development Plan comprises:

- the Core Strategy 2011;
- the Development Policies Plan 2017;
- waste and minerals plans produced by Kent County Council; and
- any neighbourhood plans that have been made following a successful referendum

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood plans are produced in consultation with local communities by parish or town councils or, in areas without a parish, by forums of residents and businesses. When a neighbourhood plan passes a local referendum, it becomes part of the statutory Development Plan and its policies must be used to help determine planning applications within the designated neighbourhood area. Therefore, neighbourhood plans allow communities considerable influence over development in their own areas.

Stone Neighbourhood Plan

The Stone Neighbourhood Plan was produced by Stone Parish Council in consultation with Stone parish residents and other stakeholders. It sets planning policies for the Stone Neighbourhood Area (see below).

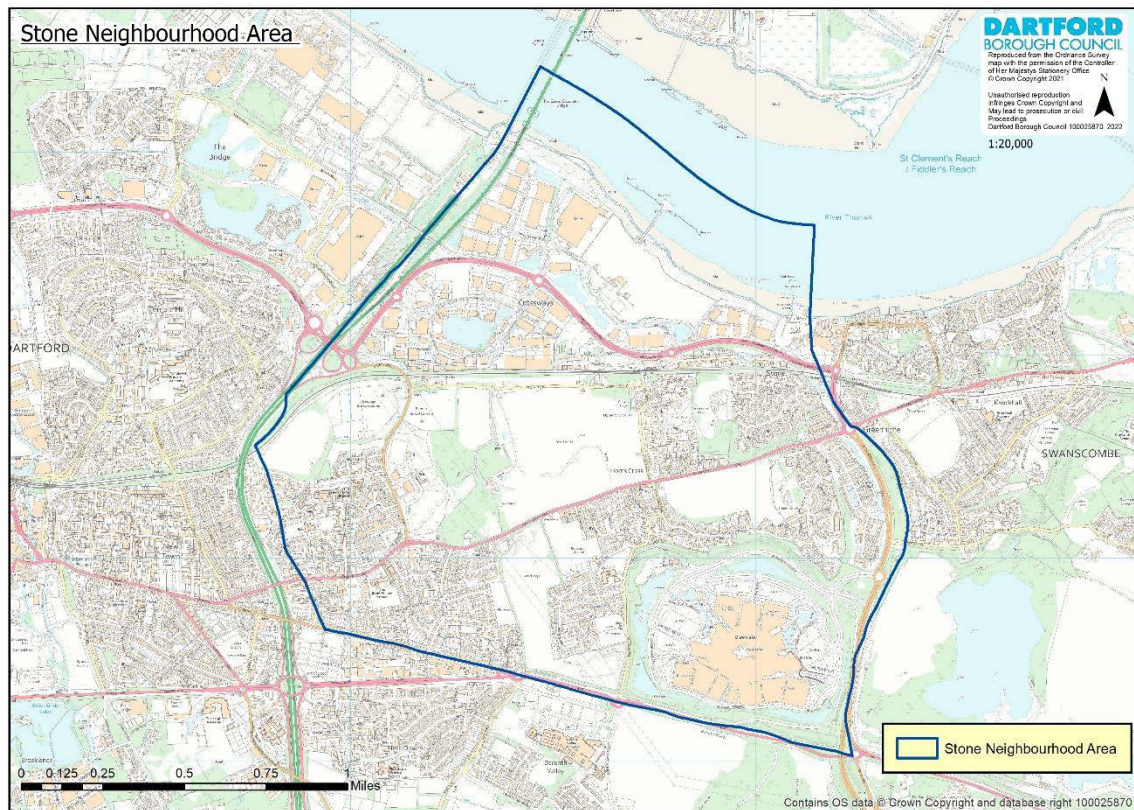
The Parish Council held a consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan before submitting it to Dartford Borough Council. The Borough Council then held a further consultation, before sending the Plan and the representations received to an independent examiner to examine the Plan.

The examiner recommended a number of modifications to the Plan to ensure that it complies with the basic conditions and other legislative requirements before proceeding to a referendum. The Borough Council decided to accept the examiner's modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan and to submit the modified Plan for a referendum in the designated Stone Neighbourhood Area. The referendum version of the Plan is the final version of the Plan, and includes these modifications.

Stone Neighbourhood Area

The covered by the Stone Neighbourhood Plan relates to the Stone Neighbourhood Area that was designated in 2016. This area is coterminous with the boundaries for Stone Parish at that time. It should be noted that the Parish boundaries were amended in 2019 but the Neighbourhood Area remains the same as designated in 2016.

The Stone Neighbourhood Area is shown in the map below.



How to view the Neighbourhood Plan and other documents

The Plan and other specified documents, as listed below, can be viewed online at www.dartford.gov.uk/stone-neighbourhood-plan. Paper copies of these documents are available to view at the following locations:

- Dartford Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent DA1 1DR
- Stone Pavilion, Hayes Road, Greenhithe, Kent DA9 9DS

The specified documents are:

- The Stone Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version)
- The report made by the examiner on the Stone Neighbourhood Plan

- Summary of representations received during the Council's consultation, which were submitted to the examiner
- The Council's Basic Conditions and Compliance statement
- A statement setting out general information as to town and country planning and the referendum (this document)
- The Information Statement which gives further details about the referendum