

**Stone Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement by
Dartford Borough Council
Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General)
Regulations 2012**

22 July 2022

1. Summary

- 1.1 Following a favourable referendum result, notice is given that Dartford Borough Council (the Council), at its Cabinet meeting on 21 July 2022, made the Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2035, meaning that the Neighbourhood Plan comes into force with immediate effect. It forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and, as such, is a key policy document in the determination of planning applications for development in the Stone Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.2 The made Stone Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed on the Council's website at: <https://www.dartford.gov.uk/stone-neighbourhood-plan>.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Stone Neighbourhood Plan (the Neighbourhood Plan) relates to the Neighbourhood Area that was designated by Dartford Borough Council on 14 October 2016. This area was coterminous with the boundaries for Stone Parish at that time and is entirely within the Local Planning Authority area. It should be noted that the Parish boundaries were amended on 1 April 2019 but the Neighbourhood Area remains the same as designated on 14 October 2016. Stone Parish Council is the designated qualifying body for the Plan.
- 2.2 Stone Parish Council undertook pre-submission consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with Regulation 14 between 21 February 2019 and 5 April 2019. Following significant changes to the Neighbourhood Plan and concerns raised by the Council about the first consultation not fully meeting statutory requirements, the Parish Council carried out a further pre-submission consultation under Regulation 14 between 9 March 2020 and 27 April 2020.
- 2.3 Stone Parish Council submitted the Neighbourhood Plan to the Council, along with supporting documents, on 1 April 2021. The Council published the Neighbourhood Plan for a six week period on 14 May 2021, and representations were invited in accordance with Regulation 16. The consultation ended on 25 June 2021.

3. Independent Examination

- 3.1 With the agreement of Stone Parish Council, the Council appointed an independent Examiner, Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) MRTPI FHEA FRSA AoU, to examine whether the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Act, and whether the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum.
- 3.2 Given the publication of a revised National Planning Policy Framework in July 2021, the Examiner requested that the Council carry out a further focussed consultation on the implications of this on the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council carried out the consultation from 2 September 2021 to 16 September 2021.

- 3.3 The Examiner decided to deal with the Neighbourhood Plan via written representations and made a site visit to the Neighbourhood Area on 24 November 2021.
- 3.4 The Examiner's Report was received on 13 January 2022. The Examiner's Report concluded that, subject to making the modifications recommended by the Examiner, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation and should proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum. The Examiner also recommended that the referendum area should be based on the designated Stone Neighbourhood Area which comprises the previous boundaries of the Stone Parish area.

4. Dartford Borough Council's Decision and Reasons

- 4.1 With the incorporation of the Examiner's modifications, the Council agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions and other requirements and could be put forward for a local referendum of electors in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This was held on 26 May 2022. It posed the question "Do you want Dartford Borough Council to use the Stone Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?" The outcome was that 720 electors voted yes and 85 electors voted no. This means that 89% of voters were in favour of the Stone Neighbourhood Plan. The overall turnout was 8.7%.
- 4.2 Paragraph 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that the Council must make the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the Plan, unless (under paragraph 38A(6)) this would breach or would otherwise be incompatible with an EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
- 4.3 The Council has assessed the Neighbourhood Plan, including its preparation, and conclude that it does not breach or would otherwise be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
- 4.4 In line with the outcome of the referendum, at its Cabinet meeting on 21 July 2022, the Council resolved:
- That the Stone Neighbourhood Plan be made, and form a part of the Development Plan for Dartford Borough
 - That the Borough Council determines planning applications in the Stone Neighbourhood Area in accordance with the Stone Neighbourhood Plan and other parts of the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.