

'Q&A' for SWF NDP Referendum

A 'yes' vote is a vote for 'your SWF, your Plan'

Voting 'yes' at the Referendum will be a vote in favour of a Plan which has been developed over the last five years and which reflects community ideas and concerns. This includes:

- Improvements to the attractiveness of the town centre, the retail offer, mix of uses and public spaces.
- Improved access to green space and quality of this.
- Improving walking and cycling conditions around town for people of all ages and abilities.
- Influencing the design of new development such that it reflects the local style and character.
- Strengthening the identity of SWF as the 'riverside town'.

A 'yes' vote will mean that policies in the Plan can start to be used, so that any future changes deliver on these ambitions. Alongside this, any funding received by the Town Council through new development can be targeted towards improvements to the quality of our streets and spaces, green spaces and community infrastructure. The Plan identifies a range of potential opportunities that we could influence. This will be kept under review with you.

Voting 'no' will not put a stop to development north of Burnham Road

Land to the north of Burnham Road is allocated as a 'strategic' growth site in the Chelmsford Local Plan. A masterplan for the area has also been approved by the City Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan must conform with the strategic objectives and policies in the Local Plan. Growth and development will take place here irrespective of whether a Neighbourhood Plan is in place or not.

The Neighbourhood Plan instead focuses on those matters of concern and importance that it can influence, such as the role and function of the town centre, the greening of the environment and design quality of new development. Voting 'no' will not stop future development, but it will stop our ability to 'plan for better' across the rest of the town.

Voting 'no' will not deliver a new by-pass for the town

Neither the Local Plan, nor the approved masterplan for the growth area, make provision for a by-pass. The Town Council recognises this is important to many people across SWF and made representations to the examination of the Local Plan addressing this. However, the case was not accepted by the Inspector.

As a strategic piece of infrastructure, the Neighbourhood Plan is unable to impose the requirement for a by-pass on the new development area. The future of Burnham Road and the impact of traffic from new growth here and across the Dengie Peninsula will need testing further through the planning application process. The applicants will need to clearly

demonstrate that transport impacts have been mitigated. Representations can be made through the normal planning application process in respect of traffic matters. It is through responses to the planning application that the case for a by-pass can be made.

A 'no' vote will not deliver a by-pass. But, it would though mean that other policies and aspirations established in the Plan, and which were supported through consultation, will not be delivered. These include ideas to support and strengthen the town centre and the quality of our green spaces - matters which have been recognised by the community as important to the future of South Woodham Ferrers.

Why doesn't the Neighbourhood Plan propose improvements to the A132?

It is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to address the traffic impacts of the proposed development, and it does not have the power to allocate land or find money for road improvements from development that has already been allocated.

The land has been allocated for development by Chelmsford City Council's Local Plan which was adopted in May 2020. Impacts of this development and new growth in the Maldon district were fully considered as part of the allocation, and the developer will be expected to contribute to improvements to the A132 between the Town and the Rettendon Turnpike. The proposed crossings on Burnham Road are necessary so that residents can safely access the rest of the Town on foot or by bicycle, helping to reduce the use of private cars for local journeys such as to the railway station or secondary school.

What are Community Infrastructure Levy payments?

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a payment from each new house towards providing services needed to support new development, such as schools, healthcare and transport. In addition, part of the payment will be given to the Town Council to help pay for local projects.

Having a Neighbourhood Plan in place means that the Town will benefit from a much larger contribution from the new development than if it does not have a plan. The Town Council has worked very hard to produce a Plan for the whole Town, and as well as planning policies it contains projects that the Town Council could bring forward to benefit the whole town if the funding becomes available. Without a Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council would receive 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy payments, but this is capped by Government. With a Neighbourhood Plan in place the Town Council would receive 25% of payments, with no upper limit

What is the benefit of a 'yes' vote for me?

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to help improve quality of life and the environment for the community as a whole, and to identify how future change might bring benefits to the town, through delivery of new infrastructure and greenery, for example.

The Neighbourhood Plan has sought to be pragmatic. Development will happen in the future, whether there is a Neighbourhood Plan or not. But, through the Neighbourhood Plan, we are seeking to grab the benefits of that to influence change for the better.

So, if you are interested in:

- enhancing and protecting the quality of public open green space in South Woodham Ferrers, and access to these, for the enjoyment of all, bringing new greenery into the town;
- enhancing the quality of the public realm in the town centre, supported by a wider mix of activities, including new shops, restaurants and community activities, making for a lively and welcoming place;
- making it easier, more attractive and convenient for all people of all ages to be able to move around the town, particularly by foot, by bike and by public transport;
- setting design criteria that promotes the highest quality of development in and around South Woodham Ferrers; or
- setting priorities for spending any funds received from new development;

then you should vote 'yes' for the Plan.

This is the first document of its kind to have been prepared for SWF. It has been drawn up over a period of five years and is a result of extensive consultation and engagement. It is 'your Plan'.