

St Hilary Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan – The Referendum Result and What it Means:

On 3rd September 2024 Cornwall Council held a referendum on the Plan. The result was that 76.16% of the votes cast were in favour and 23.84% against. The turnout was 25.036%. The Plan now becomes part of the Cornwall Development Plan for St Hilary Parish and Gears Lane and will be a key planning policy document for that area to be used alongside the policies in the Cornwall Local Plan and national policy.

The NDP has been developed over a long period of time by a steering group open to anyone wishing to join. It has conducted a series of public consultation events including questionnaire surveys, public meetings and a week-long exhibition in St Hilary Church. All of this helped in developing policy and attracting strong support. The plan was assessed by an external examiner for the adequacy of its consultation and the necessary full conformity with the Cornwall Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Now that the St Hilary NDP has been successful at referendum, it is important to understand that the purpose of a neighbourhood plan is to introduce more certainty in the local planning process by providing greater detail on what planning applications would be more likely to be supported and those more likely to be refused. St Hilary NDP's policies cover: protection of the landscape, natural and built environment and heritage; climate change and adaptation; housing; local facilities and services; design; the local economy. A fundamental underlying principle of planning policy is that development should be sustainable in terms of economic, social and environmental factors so that in meeting the needs of the current generation this should not be at the expense of future generations. The plan's policies can also only address issues relating to the use and allocation of land.

If you want to support or oppose a local planning application, the NDP will help provide the arguments you need to convince the planning officers and, where appropriate, the Planning Committee of Cornwall Council or the planning inspector on appeal. In practice, we often see people making comments on an application that may seem important and relevant to them and be legitimate concerns but will likely carry little weight with Cornwall Council or an inspector.

Of course, although the policies in our NDP carry full planning weight on local applications for development, there may well be other “material considerations” either supporting or opposing the plan’s policies. These could include matters such as a government-led policy to increase the generation of renewable energy or to deal with a national housing crisis or a local employment need. As such the planning officers, committee and inspector have to assess and balance the relative weights of the conflicting arguments and policies before reaching a decision. So, the final decision can be a matter of very fine judgment between a complex of conflicting arguments.

You can see the St Hilary Neighbourhood Development Plan and its supporting documents here: [PA24/00001/NDP | St Hilary Neighbourhood Development Plan | St Hilary Cornwall](#)