

Full Council Report 01/06/2026

**Full Council
1 June 2026**

PART I

**Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan: Result of Referendum
(DoF)**

1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is following a positive referendum result, to enable Full Council to 'make' the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan (ALNDP) part of the Development Plan for Three Rivers District Council in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. In this context 'make' refers to adopting the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That:

- Full Council acknowledges the results of the referendum where 82.7% voted YES to the question 'Do you want Three Rivers District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Abbots Langley to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'
- Full Council make the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan in accordance with Section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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3 Details

3.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011. New powers allowed qualifying bodies (Parish, Community or Town Councils) to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). NDPs allow communities to set planning policies for their area.

3.2 Once adopted, NDPs become part of the development plan for the district and they must be considered when planning decisions are made, along with the Local Plan and national planning policy.

3.3 NDPs must be examined by a suitably qualified independent person, appointed by the council and agreed by the qualifying body (Parish/Community Council). Neighbourhood plans must also pass a referendum of local voters by a simple majority. If a plan passes referendum, the council must 'make' (adopt) it, unless it breaches EU¹ obligations or human rights legislation.

3.4 The ALNDP has been produced by Abbots Langley Parish Council in conjunction with the local community. The Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing but provides policies which are to be considered in the determination

¹ Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

of planning applications for development within the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Area.

- 3.5 In March 2026, via the urgent decision process, Members resolved to agree that modifications to the ALNDP be made in accordance with the Examiner’s Report and that the modified Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan (Appendix 1) proceed to referendum.
- 3.6 The ALNDP referendum took place on 7 May 2026. Voters were asked ‘Do you want Three Rivers District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Abbots Langley to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?’ Voters were given the opportunity to vote ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.
- 3.7 The results were as follows:

	Votes Recorded	Percentage
Number of votes cast as Yes	5155	82.7%
Number of votes cast as No	1076	17.3%

- 3.8 The electorate was 15,853, total votes cast was 6,231. The turnout was 41.7%.
- 3.9 The Declaration of Result can be found at Appendix 2.
- 3.10 As seen above the percentage of “yes” votes was above 50%.
- 3.11 In terms of next steps, the legislation² and regulations³ require that were more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote ‘yes’, then the council is required to ‘make’ the Plan within 8 weeks. The ALNDP would then form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. In this context ‘make’ refers to adopting the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 3.12 The Plan has been screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Screening Opinion was that SEA is not required. Officers are satisfied that the making of the ALNDP does not breach any EU obligations or the European Convention on Human Rights, as enacted in the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 3.13 Officers recommend that the ALNDP should therefore be ‘made’.
- 3.14 It must be noted that given more than half of those who voted in the referendum have voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, significant weight can be given to the plan in Decision Making, even before it is officially ‘made’ by Full Council.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The ALNDP has been independently examined and has been found to meet the Basic Conditions. The ALNDP has been endorsed by the community at referendum and otherwise complies with all the legal requirements of Plan production. It is considered that the ALNDP meets European legislation and is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998. The council has therefore no option but to comply

² Section 34A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

³ Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

with the legislation and proceed the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan to be 'made'.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are within the council's agreed policy and budgets.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Producing an NDP allows Parish and Town Councils to increase the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds they receive from developments within their area from 15% to 25%.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Not choosing to 'make' the plan could leave the council vulnerable to legal challenge.

8 Environmental Implications

- 8.1 Part of the role of the Independent Examiner is to consider whether the neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with retained European Union obligations⁴. The Examiner was satisfied that the neighbourhood plan meets this requirement.

9 Communications and Website Implications

- 9.1 All the documents relating to the referendum of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan are available on the council's website.

10 Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre Implications

- 10.1 None specific.

11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 11.1 The council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

- 11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Planning Policy and Conservation service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

⁴ Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
If the council decides not to proceed the ALNDP to be 'made' it may result in a legal challenge	Legal costs	Agree to 'make' the NDP	Tolerate	6

11.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
		Impact -----> Unacceptable		

Impact Score
4 (Catastrophic)
3 (Critical)
2 (Significant)
1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score
4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
3 (Likely (21-79%))
2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
1 (Remote (≤5%))

11.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

Background Papers

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011)

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Planning Practice Guidance

Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan and supporting documents

Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan Independent Examiner's Report

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Development Plan (Referendum Version)

Appendix 2: Declaration of Result

