

# Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan Decision Statement (Reg 18(2)1)

1 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

## Summary

1. Following an independent examination undertaken by way of written representations, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) now confirms that the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan (SHBNDP) will proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum.
2. This decision statement is available on the SHBNDP page of the [TWBC website](#) and will be displayed either at the Town Hall or The Amelia. A copy will also be sent to Southborough Town Council for display within the town.

## Background

3. In June 2023, TWBC formally designated the area shown at **Appendix 1** as the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Area.
4. Following the submission of the SHBNDP to TWBC, the plan was publicised, and representations were invited. The publicity period ran from 11 June to 25 July 2025.
5. TWBC appointed an independent examiner, Mr Andrew Ashcroft MRTPI to examine whether the SHBNDP met the basic conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and whether the SHBNDP should proceed to a referendum.
6. The Examiner's Final Report dated 07 January 2026 recommended a number of modifications so that the SHBNDP is able to comply with the 'basic conditions' and other relevant statutory provisions and that the submission plan if modified can be put to referendum.
7. The Examiner's Final Report considers the NDP will bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. The NDP has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan. Furthermore, the NDP includes policies to safeguard the built, natural and historic environment, and seeks to encourage the vibrancy of Southborough town centre and neighbourhood centres. All sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation. The independent examiner also recommends that the referendum area should be that of the neighbourhood area i.e., Southborough Parish.

## Recommendations, Decisions and Reasons

8. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Regulation 18 requires the local planning authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of an examiner made in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4a to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as applied by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
9. Having considered the recommendations made in the Examiner's Final Report, and the reasons for them, TWBC in conjunction with Southborough Town Council (the Qualifying Body) has agreed to accept the modifications made to the draft plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in response to the examiner's recommendations/ modifications.
10. To meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 a referendum which poses the question, *'Do you want Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to use the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Area?'* will be held in the area formally designated as the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Area, that is Southborough Parish, to ensure the community has the final say on whether the neighbourhood plan comes into force or not.
11. The date on which the referendum will take place is Thursday 18 June 2026.

**27 March 2026**

