



Referendum on the Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Development Plan Information for Voters

On Thursday, 25 February 2016, there will be a referendum on a neighbourhood development plan for Old Market Quarter. This booklet explains more about the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. In this booklet you can find out about:

- The referendum and how you can take part
- The neighbourhood plan
- The development plan (of which neighbourhood plans are part)

Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan

A referendum asks you to vote 'YES' or 'NO' to a question. The question which will be asked in the Referendum is:

“Do you want Bristol City Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Old Market Quarter to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

How do I vote in the referendum?

You vote by putting a (X) in the 'YES' or 'NO' box on your ballot paper. Put a cross (X) in only **one** box or your vote will not be counted.

If more people vote 'yes' than 'no' in this referendum, then Bristol City Council will use the Neighbourhood Development Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Old Market Quarter.

If more people vote 'no' than 'yes', then planning applications will be decided without using the Neighbourhood Development Plan as part of the Development Plan for the local area.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work.

A community can prepare a neighbourhood plan. This plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area.

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood plans are prepared by the community, led by town or parish councils, or neighbourhood planning forums. In this case, the Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Development Plan was prepared by the Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

Why do we need Neighbourhood Plans and other Development Plans?

Most new buildings, major changes to existing buildings or major changes to the local environment (including building work, engineering work and mining work) need consent - known as planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

Planning involves making decisions about the future of our towns, villages and countryside and considering the future sustainable needs of communities. Decisions on planning applications are based on national planning policy guidance, any local plans and any relevant neighbourhood plan. Together local plans and neighbourhood plans make up what is known collectively as the development plan.

The local planning authority is responsible for deciding whether a development in its area - anything from an extension on a house to a new shopping centre - should go ahead, using national planning policy and the development plan policies for guidance. Within Bristol, the local planning authority is Bristol City Council.

If the Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Development Plan passes the referendum vote then it will become part of the development plan for Bristol. It will then be used by Bristol City Council, along with other development plan documents including the Bristol Local Plan, for making decisions on planning applications within Old Market Quarter.

Neighbourhood Planning in Old Market

The Referendum area is identified on the enclosed map. The Referendum area is identical to the area which has been designated as the Old Market Neighbourhood Development Plan area.

Who is the Planning Authority?

Bristol City Council is the lead authority for Neighbourhood Planning matters in the area, including Neighbourhood Planning Referendums.

Referendum expenses

Expenses can be incurred by an individual or body during the period of the Referendum for referendum purposes.

The Referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the Referendum is £2,535.51. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum, by reference to which the expenses limit is calculated is 2,941.

The Referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

Specified documents

A copy of the specified documents, as listed below, may be inspected online at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>, or paper copies are available at:

Brunel House, St. George's Road, Bristol, BS1 5UY (Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm)

The specified documents are:

- The draft Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Development Plan (version for referendum);
- The independent examiner's report;
- A summary of representations submitted to the examiner;
- Bristol City Council decision statement on compliance with basic conditions and legal requirements; and
- A statement setting out general information on town and country planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum.

Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if you live within the area shown on the attached map and:

- You are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- You are 18 years of age or over on 25 February 2016.

You have to be registered to vote by Tuesday, 9 February to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling our Helpline on 0117 922 3400.

The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

Ways of voting

There are three ways of voting:

In person at your polling station:

- It is easy and a member of staff will always help you if you are not sure what to do.
- The polling station is The Salvation Army Hall, Hassell Drive, BS2 0AN. You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station.
- If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 0117 922 3400 or email us on electoral.services@bristol.gov.uk to find out where your polling station is.
- Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm.

By post:

- If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this.
- If you wish to vote by post and do not yet have a postal vote you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 10 February 2016 to:

Electoral Services (B Bond)
Bristol City Council
PO Box 3176
Bristol BS3 9FS

- Postal votes can be sent overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote by 25 February 2016.
- You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement up to 5pm on 25 February 2016 by contacting our Helpline on 0117 922 3400.

By proxy:

- If you can't get to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post, you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody that you trust to vote on your behalf.
- To vote by proxy, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 17 February 2016 to:

Electoral Services (B Bond)
Bristol City Council
PO Box 3176
Bristol BS3 9FS

- When you apply for a proxy vote, you must say why you cannot vote in person.
- Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.
- Postal and proxy application forms are available from our Helpline on 0117 922 3400 or by emailing electoral.services@bristol.gov.uk. You can also download application forms from Bristol City Council's website at: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34696/IER%20Postal%20Vote%20Application%20-%20New%20Xpress.pdf/39439c09-3e9a-4e60-956b-a917ec712f1b>

Am I registered to vote?

If you are not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 0117 922 3400.

If you are not registered to vote, you will need to apply by Tuesday 9 February 2016. You can apply on line at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Alternatively you will need to complete a voter registration form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by Tuesday 9 February at:

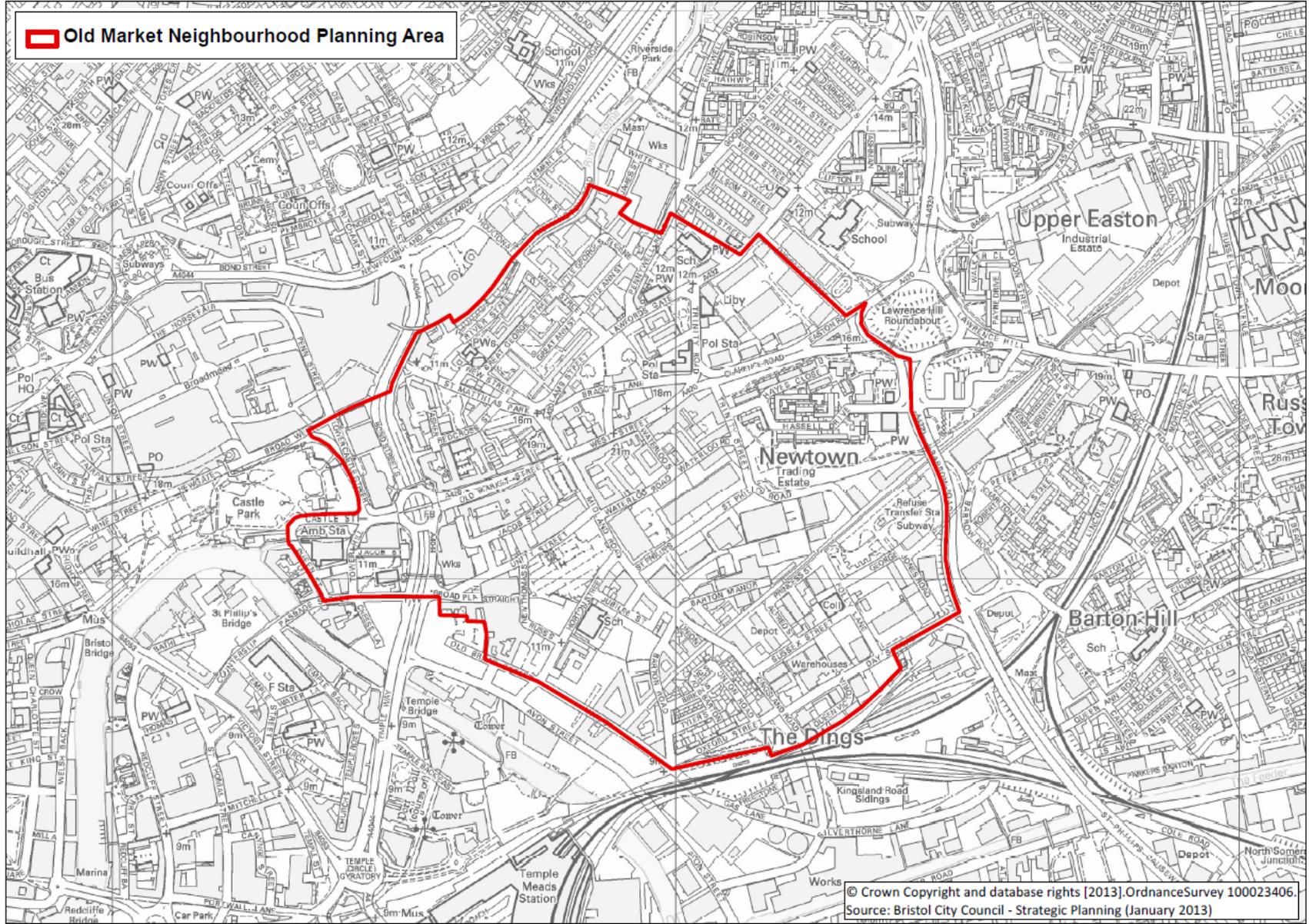
Electoral Services (B Bond)
Bristol City Council
PO Box 3176
Bristol BS3 9FS

Registration forms are available from our Helpline on 0117 922 3400 or by emailing electoral.services@bristol.gov.uk and on line at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voter-registration-forms-paper-versions>

For further information:

Planning questions, such as What is the referendum for? What would it mean for me?	Strategic City Planning Tel: 0117 903 6725 blp@bristol.gov.uk
Election questions, such as How do I vote? When do I hear the result?	Electoral Services Tel: 0117 922 3400 electoral.services@bristol.gov.uk

 Old Market Neighbourhood Planning Area



© Crown Copyright and database rights [2013]. Ordnance Survey 100023406.
Source: Bristol City Council - Strategic Planning (January 2013)