

Neighbourhood Plan Referendum
Guidance notes on rules around publicity and expenses

Restrictions on Publicity

There are specific restrictions regarding the publication of materials during the referendum period. This period runs from the date the information statement is published to the date of the referendum ("the referendum period"). These restrictions are set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 and apply to the publication of materials which:

- provides general information about the referendum;
- deals with any of the issues raised by the question to be asked at the referendum; or
- puts any arguments for or against a particular answer to that question.

This requirement excludes information which is required to be published in accordance with the 2012 Regulations. In accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity these restrictions apply to the District Council and the parish/town council.

For further information please see the Local Government Association's guide on publicity during the pre-election period which is available to view online: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period>.

Referendum Expenses

The 2012 Regulations also impose restrictions on how much campaigners can spend in the conduct of any campaign either in support or opposition to the referendum question. A campaigner is an individual or a body who, or on whose behalf, referendum expenses are incurred (this includes expenses which are treated as incurred, e.g., notional) in connection with a referendum campaign.

Referendum expenses include:

- advertising of any nature;
- unsolicited material addressed to voters;
- information about the referendum, information about the question and arguments for and against the referendum question;
- market research or canvassing;
- provision of any property, services or facilities in connection with press conferences or dealings with the media;
- transport (by any means) of persons to anywhere with a view to obtaining publicity in connection with a referendum campaign
- rallies and other events, including public meetings.
- any notional expenses (for instance where property services or facilities are provided free of charge or at a discount).

The maximum amount of expenses which can be incurred for each referendum is calculated in accordance with the 2012 Regulations and is published in the relevant referendum information statement on the District Council's website. It is an offence for a campaign organiser to exceed the referendum expenses limit.

Campaigning groups are encouraged to register with and submit a statement of expenses to the Counting Officer at the District Council. If you wish to do this please contact elecrag@hambleton.gov.uk.

This guide has been produced to highlight the rules regarding publicity and referendum expenses but it is not a substitute for the relevant legislation and code of practice as identified above. If you would like further detailed information please consult the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 and the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.