

Stowey Sutton Neighbourhood Plan

Community Engagement 15th May 2014

Draft Policies

V2 02/06/2014

What is the Neighbourhood Plan?

The Stowey Sutton Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for local residents to influence what happens in the parish over the next ten years. Neighbourhood plans will also form part of the B&NES Core Strategy and should reflect the views of the community, but must also be in general conformity with the policies contained within the B&NES Core Strategy.

Having a Neighbourhood Plan for Stowey Sutton will mean that we, as a community, can set out a shared vision including planning policies for the development and use of land within the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan should reflect how we see living and working in the community over the next ten years. This should include current things that we wish to preserve as well as anticipating the changing and future needs of the community.

What happens next?

The Neighbourhood Plan team have prepared an initial draft of the plan's policies, & we are now consulting community views on the proposals before the final version is completed, so that we can ensure the plan truly reflects the community's needs.

It's your plan help us to get it right!

Draft Housing and Development Policies

SSHD P1 Housing Boundary

The HDB for Bishop Sutton should be redefined to strictly follow the existing HDB but with the addition of the strict boundary of the two already approved housing developments of Cappards and Oak Park both of which total 76 houses.

Reason: The number of new houses has already exceeded the 'around 50' allocated to the Parish as an RA1 village within the B&NES emerging core strategy for the period to 2028. A total of 76 new houses will be built within the two developments plus 6 housing infill developments. Further large scale developments in addition to the two referred to will severely place strain on the essential Parish infrastructure as identified further in this document.

SSHD P2 Green Belt & Conservation Areas

Infill housing within the HDB will be supported as this is likely to be small scale development and will be of an individual character in keeping with the Character Assessment, the exception to such development will be if it is deemed to compromise the Green Belt, AONB or other conservation areas within the Parish.

Reason: NPPF at para 79 states – “The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts.....the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”. Furthermore, at paragraph 87 the Framework states “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”

In respect of AONB the NPPF at para 115 states “Great weight

should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations..."

The Character Assessment identifies areas of SSI within the Parish. The NPPF at para 118 makes reference to "development of land within or outside a SSI (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted"

Furthermore in the Panning Hearing of C Banks v B&NES (decision date 25th Feb 14) the Planning Inspector upheld the decision of the Council to refuse application of 2 and or 3 houses on AONB on land at the south of Bishop Sutton for the following reasons:

"Both proposals would fail to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB contrary to guidance in the Framework which says that great weight should be given to this objective. (Paragraph 115)" The Inspector further noted that "The rich farmland landscape in the vicinity of Chew Valley Lake is an integral part of AONB and its gentler form is identified as adding a further dimension to the quality of the landscape. (Ref AONB Management Plan 2009-14 and paragraph 3.1.2 Draft Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.

The Inspector further found that such development on AONB to be in conflict with Local Policies NE1 and NE2.

SSHD P3 Future Development

Any further housing should reflect the character, varied materials and varied build design as identified through the Character Assessment and should be limited to infill within the amended HDB and should accord with the Parish Council

housing policy. (*Insert date and Appendix Number*) Any development outside the HDB and within the Green Belt should be limited to the exceptions as listed in the NPPF at paragraph 89 and 90.

Reason: New development of 76 homes exceeds the target for 2028 (in the emerging Core Strategy) and equates to 14% of the village of Bishop Sutton this strongly suggests that the village has reached and exceeded it's 'critical mass' and the infrastructure cannot support additional housing beyond infill. A survey of the Parish has identified a future potential supply of future housing build sites within the HDB.

SSHD P4 Housing Size

In considering infill development priority should be given to the creation of small low cost (affordable) open market and social housing to meet the identified local need. The immediate demand for affordable housing through Housing Associations has been met by their inclusion in the two recently approved developments which whilst meeting the local demand also make a significant contribution to the wider need across B&NES.

Reason: New development of 76 homes exceeds the target for 2028 (in the emerging Core Strategy) and equates to 14% of the village of Bishop Sutton this strongly suggests that the village has reached and exceeded it's 'critical mass' and the infrastructure cannot support additional housing beyond infill. A survey of the Parish has identified a future potential supply of future housing build sites within the HDB.

SSHD P5 Sustainability

All planning applications must consider the sustainability of each proposal and the impact on local infrastructure such as surface water drainage, electricity supply, sewage capacity, parking, telephone and broadband and also the impact on social infrastructure to include schools, pre-school and recreation provision.

Reason: The information collated from organisations, schools etc. evidence concerns in respect of inadequate or oversubscribed local and social infrastructure.

Draft Business & Employment Policies

SSBE P1 Business Location

Where existing business buildings or units are advertised for sale, in conjunction with Housing and Development Policies a priority should be to support further business enterprises making use of the building in preference to conversion to housing.

Reason: to ensure economic sustainability of the Parish through avoiding a reduction in business premises and to maintain local employment opportunities.

SSBE P2 Business Type

The Neighbourhood Plan, through the questionnaire, has identified some types of business which would be welcomed and therefore sustainable within the Parish, the Neighbourhood Plan will provide the information to encourage and support such new business enterprises BUT lack of faster Broadband is likely to inhibit.

Reason: to encourage an appropriate mix of business leading to a more sustainable Parish which will also improve and enhance facilities available to residents and provide employment opportunities.

SSBE P3 Business Location

The Neighbourhood Plan, through the questionnaire, has identified a need to ensure that development of light business & office units makes use of appropriate land which does not compromise the Greenbelt, AONB or Housing Development Boundary.



Reason: The Parish has experienced a reduction in small businesses during recent years which has reduced local employment opportunities, led to greater care use and impacted on economic sustainability. The likely bar to achieving this is the lack of Broadband speed.

SSBE P4

The Neighbourhood Plan through the questionnaire has identified a need to support and encourage home working for individuals and small groups.

Reason: The Parish has experienced a reduction in small businesses during recent years which has reduced local employment opportunities, home working will help to prevent the parish becoming a dormitory, encouraging a better work life balance for residents.

SSBE P5

There is an urgent need for a faster Broadband speed through fibre optic networks to slow the movement out of the Parish of existing small businesses and to encourage new business to re-locate or set up within the Parish.

Reason: this will bring long term sustainability through the provision of employment opportunities as well as enabling working from home to support business enterprises. Businesses once established will be able to compete openly on a national basis.

Draft Road & Transport Policies

SSRT P1

Availability of public transport for purposes of commuting to work outside of the parish and for general use to be improved. Specifically, a viable link to services facilitating commuting to local urban centres to be developed.

Reason: Current bus services are limited both in terms of number of journeys and the times of those journeys, making commuting to Bristol, Bath and other likely places of employment impractical if not impossible. For instance, the current timetable for buses to Bristol from Bishop Sutton shows one departure suitable for commuting to work (assuming normal office hours), departing as it does at 07.15 and arriving at 08.17. Only weekly services are available to centres such as Bath, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton or Weston-Super-Mare so commuting by public transport is not possible.

SSRT P2

Access to local retail facilities to be improved by the provision of additional parking spaces, particularly in the area of the junction of the A368 and Sutton Hill where a local retail store, a hairdresser and a pub/restaurant are located.

Reason: From the community consultation survey, 72% of respondents stated the need to facilitate and make safer the use of the above retail facilities by residents of the parish. Further, the alternative being journeys by private transport to facilities further afield, it is crucial to the general reduction of the carbon footprint of the area that use of these facilities be encouraged. It is also essential to accommodate the additional 'user traffic' for the above facilities likely to derive from current housing developments

and to encourage the development of other, similar businesses for the same reasons.

SSRT P3

To improve existing footpaths and to provide safer and more extensive footpaths throughout the village and parish, including safe and pedestrian friendly access to:

- The Herriotts Mill area which contains a farm shop, restaurant and children's leisure area
- Stowey village, site of a Church and an extensive farming & retail outlet
- Chew Valley Lake area, providing extensive leisure facilities, a tea rooms and a farmers market.

Reason: Current footpaths are inadequate and even unsafe in places. Considerable improvement as well as development of new access paths is essential to improve safety and to provide access for the general population as a whole but particularly for wheelchair or mobility scooter users.

SSRT P4

To provide safe road crossing facilities at relevant points throughout the village and parish. This is essential given the likely increase in both vehicular and pedestrian traffic arising from the newer housing developments. Specifically, pedestrian crossings to be provided for the following areas: Junction of A368 and Sutton Hill, Junction of A368 and Bonhill Road, by the School entrance(s), by the Parish Hall.

Reason: Despite being on the busy A368, the village is very poorly served for safe pedestrian crossing opportunities. This is to be remedied for both safety reasons and for the more general purpose of facilitating use of village facilities rather than undertaking journeys to other centres.

SSRT P5

To provide safe and accessible walking and cycling facilities for leisure purposes (See also RTP003 above ref Chew Valley Lake). Ultimately, the leisure opportunities offered by Chew Valley Lake to be optimised by the provision of an 'all round' cycle/footpath.

Reason: The parish is at the heart of an AONB and lies on the bank of one of the AONB's best features; Chew Valley Lake. However, the lake area is not accessible from Bishop Sutton or Stowey villages other than by road. Footpath and cycle path access is essential to reduce the need for car journeys to this local facility, to provide safer use of this leisure area for both pedestrians and cyclists and to increase the overall appeal of the parish as a tourist destination.

Draft Community & Recreation Policies

SSCR P1 Broadband

The community supports developments to improve broadband speed across the parish through community investment

Reason: Average broadband speeds currently achieved within the parish are seen as a barrier to social communication and economic development.

SSCR P2 Public Transport

The community supports an improvement to the public transport network, developing a service connecting the parish to other Chew Valley villages & primary public transport routes.

Reason: The current services available do not provide a practical level of opportunities for social community activities or access for shopping & other personal journeys, better public transport links will permit a reduction in private car use, leading to reduced carbon emissions.

SSCR P3 Parking & Safe Crossing

Improve parking and safe crossing facilities on the A368 in Bishop Sutton

Reason: The lack of safe parking & pedestrian crossing facilities at the primary school & retail area of Bishop Sutton on the A368 are seen as potentially dangerous, particularly for users of wheelchairs, pushchairs and people walking in groups & the elderly.

SSCR P4 Recreational Facilities

Promote greater use of the recreation ground and play areas within the parish, improving facilities to meet the needs of users of all age groups, including access to toilet facilities at the recreation ground when the village hall is closed.

Reason: Several community groups have identified inadequacies in the current recreational facilities in the parish, causing many residents to travel to other facilities outside the village.

A group of residents is already working towards improvements to some of the play facilities for younger children, whilst another group have identified the problem with the lack of toilet facilities when the village hall is not available.

SSCT P5 Allotments

Provision of allotments for community use.

Reason: To encourage recreational activities and provide a healthy & sustainable food supply, together with developing a better understanding of the food chain in younger residents.

**Please Send Your
Comments on these Draft
Policies To;**

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