

Foreword

The Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level.

In March 2014, Stowey Sutton Parish Council was successful with its application to become a Neighbourhood Planning area.

The Stowey Sutton Neighbourhood Plan reflects community-wide comments, observations and concerns about its future, bringing them together with census information, strategic and statistical evidence into a “living promise” that mirrors the community’s overwhelming desire to make Stowey Sutton an even better place to live and work, both now and for future generations.

The Plan has been produced by a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group including Parish Council members and community volunteers. Once the Plan has been completed, following a favourable local referendum, the Stowey Sutton Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) development plan and will sit alongside the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan.

This Neighbourhood Plan includes policies for deciding where development should take place and the type and quality of that development, together with policies influencing social and community growth.

Stowey Sutton Parish

The Stowey Sutton neighbourhood plan encompasses the civil parish of Stowey Sutton, which comprises of the villages of Bishop Sutton and Stowey, together with the surrounding rural landscape.



Figure 1: Map of Stowey Sutton Parish & Neighbourhood Plan Area Boundary

The Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The following suite of policies has been developed to manage the future development of Stowey Sutton in order to achieve the vision, objectives and strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan.

To reflect the results of the consultation events undertaken during the Plan's preparation and evidence of local issues and characteristics, the policies are separated into several themes – Housing and Development, Roads and Transport, Business and Employment and Community and Recreation.

To aid interpretation for decision makers and applicants, each policy is accompanied by supporting text setting out the context for the theme, the local community's views on that subject and the evidence, plans and strategies that offer support and evidence for its approach. All policies have been framed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and the B&NES Core Strategy.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document, a number of issues falling outside of the planning system's remit were identified by the local community during consultation events. Alongside its core policies the Plan therefore includes a number of aspirations to encourage interventions by wider stakeholders. These are included within each topic where relevant, as Action Policies.

Introduction and Background

The area of our Neighbourhood Plan encompasses the civil parish of Stowey Sutton, which comprises of the villages of Bishop Sutton and Stowey, together with the surrounding rural landscape.

Bishop Sutton (grid reference ST587597) is a small village within the Chew Valley in Bath and North East Somerset. It lies south of Chew Valley Lake and north of the Mendip Hills, approximately ten miles south of Bristol on the A368, Weston-super-Mare to Bath road.

Historically the main industry in the village was a coal mine owned by J. Lovell and Sons from 1835 to 1929, which was part of the Somerset coalfield. There was also a large flour mill, part of which was converted for residential use.

History of Bishop Sutton

Lying within the Chew Valley Bishop Sutton was originally predominately an agricultural community, prior to the development of coal mining in the 18th century.

The Pensford coal basin lies in the northern area of the Somerset coalfield around Bishop Sutton, Pensford, Stanton Drew, Farmborough and Hunstrete. The date for the first pits around Bishop Sutton are uncertain but there was at least one before 1719. By 1824 a collection of four bell pits were identified

in field tithe No 1409, and four shaft pits in field tithe No 1428, but they were no longer working. The Old Pit (ST587597), which was also known as Sutton Top Pit or Upper Sutton Pit, was dug before 1799 and owned by Lieutenant Henry Fisher, who sold it in 1821 to Robert Blinman Dowling and several seams of coal were identified and exploited. After Dowling's death the Old Pit was sold to Mr. T.T. Hawkes in 1852, but he defaulted on the payments and it was sold in 1853 to William Rees-Mogg (an ancestor of Jacob Rees-Mogg, the well-known conservative MP) and his associates.

History of Stowey

There is some evidence of a possible wooden enclosure from the Iron Age known as Stowey Castle. There is also some evidence of an ochre crushing mill used for making pigment for marking sheep.

The early Lords of the Manor were the Fitz Richard family. In the early 17th century it was held by the Jones family, who held it until 1840 when it was sold to Sir Edward Strachey.

Local Governance

Bishop Sutton, along with Stowey, are within the area of Stowey Sutton Parish Council, which has responsibility for local issues.

The parish is part of the Chew Valley South Ward and falls within the unitary authority of Bath and North East

Somerset which was created in 1996, as established by the Local Government Act 1992. It provides a single tier of local government with responsibility for almost all local government functions within its area including local planning and building control, local roads, council housing, environmental health, markets and fairs, refuse collection, recycling, cemeteries, crematoria, leisure services, parks, and tourism.

The parish is represented in the House of Commons as part of North East Somerset. It elects one Member of Parliament (MP) by the first past the post system of election. It is also part of the South West England constituency of the European Parliament which elects seven MEPs using the d'Hondt method of party-list proportional representation.

How the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared

The Stowey Sutton Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by residents and members of Stowey Sutton Parish Council working as part of a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group with support from Bath and North East Somerset Council.

All policies are based on robust evidence and community consultation. A wide range of evidence bases were used including census materials, surveys, and widespread community consultation, including delivering draft policy

consultation leaflets to every home within the plan area twice during the plans preparation, ensuring the widest possible awareness across all age and social groups. The full evidence base is listed in appendix P

The process has involved a number of key steps:

Initial Work

Stowey Sutton Parish Council were at the forefront of parishes considering development of a Neighbourhood Plan, with the creation in February 2012 of a parish council working party to investigate and enable the structures needed to prepare a plan, throughout 2012 the parish council working party met, ultimately distributing a high level survey to all homes within the parish in September 2012.

This high level survey was designed to identify areas of interest and concern within the community and was used in deciding the areas of responsibility for the working parties in the second, community led phase of the Neighbourhood Plan.

In December 2013 Stowey Sutton was formally designated as a Neighbourhood Planning area.

A launch meeting for this phase was held in November 2013, where the plan process and broad objectives were discussed with the community and applications for members of the various