

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

working parties and steering group were invited.

Area Designation and Raising Awareness

A steering group was formed to discuss the creation and scope of the Neighbourhood Plan process. During 2012 and 2013 parish councillors and steering group members attended several village events informing residents of the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan.

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

Consultation and Evidence Gathering

An initial high level survey was carried out by the Parish Council in September 2012 to identify the broad areas of interest and concern within the parish, copies of the survey were distributed to every household by parish councillors, the results were analysed and used to designate the broad areas of responsibility for each of the working parties in the second community led phase of the project.

In February 2014 drop-in events were held for two key stakeholder groups, local businesses and employers and local land owners. These groups were identified by the research of the relevant working parties and letters of invitation were sent to each person by the parish council.

Leaflets describing the Neighbourhood Plan process, key aims and objectives were distributed throughout the winter of 2013/14 to community groups as well as via the local school. Regular reports were presented to the parish council and updates circulated in the parish councils monthly electronic newsletter.

In February 2014 a detailed housing needs survey was distributed to every household in the parish by members of the Neighbourhood Plan team, with the results collected by reply paid envelopes included with each survey. The results were analysed by Worcester Research. Almost 40% of homes responded to the survey. Copies of this survey were also made available in neighbouring parishes via leaflet stands in the village shops, to ensure that the wider community needs were included when considering the survey responses.

In March 2014 a second survey was distributed to every household within the parish by members of the Neighbourhood Plan team and volunteers. This survey covered more general topics, such as Roads and Transport, Business and Employment and Community and Recreation, the responses were again collected by reply paid envelopes included with the survey forms, with a response of almost 30%.

The responses to these two surveys were analysed, collated and used by the working parties in the development of the initial draft policy document, which also incorporated reference to key national and local statistics and policy

documents. The steering group produced a Sustainability Appraisal, Scoping report and Equality impact analysis, which contains a broad range of statistics and information that helped to identify issues for the Parish. This information is provided in separate supporting documents.

Consultation on initial draft and the steps to the final plan

During May 2014 two further drop-in sessions were held to present the initial draft policies and consult the community on their views, the feedback received was very positive. The steering group also consulted both the parish and B&NES council on the initial draft and the combined feedback from the drop in events, parish and B&NES council's was fed back to the working parties and a second draft of the policies was produced.

This draft was validated, checked for robustness and compliance with the Core Strategy by B&NES in September 2014, before being distributed to every household in the parish in November 2014 for formal consultation, when feedback was invited, both at public engagement events held within the plan area, by email and by written submission, the full Neighbourhood Plan was made available for inspection at Chew Valley Caravan Park and members of the steering group were available to visit people in their own homes by appointment.

The Neighbourhood Plan Vision

As detailed in the Stowey Sutton Parish Council policies and Stowey Sutton Character Assessment (2013) the community wants Stowey Sutton to continue to thrive as vibrant and distinctive village's, to continue to respect and reflect the views of its community, to evolve and expand whilst retaining their unique and distinctive character, and to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations of residents.

Structure of the Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out:

- The Vision and Objectives for the future of Stowey Sutton
- The Neighbourhood Plan Strategy – Sustainable Development for the Whole Community – setting out the broader aims of the Plan's approach.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Policies – Providing the local policy framework for managing new development so that it contributes to the vision, aims and strategy for the District.

Objectives

- Delivery of a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Stowey Sutton
- Sensitive development which protects and enriches the landscape and built environment