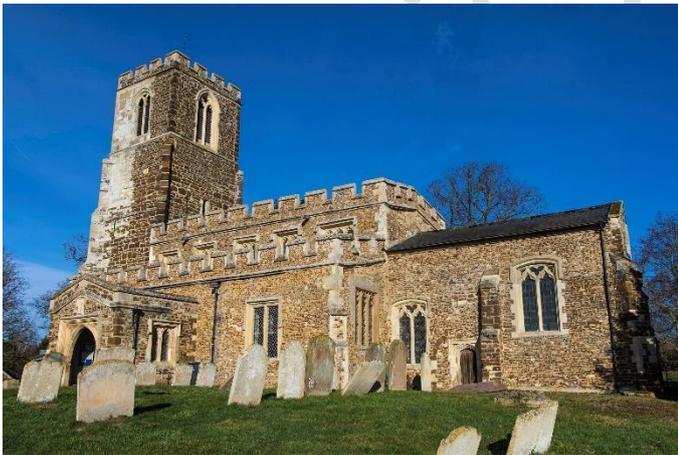


Sutton Neighbourhood Plan



Consultation Report



January 2021
Submission Version

 info@suttonneighbourhoodplan.uk

 [www.suttonneighbourhoodplan.uk](https://www.facebook.com/suttonneighbourhoodplan)

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Submission Version

1. Purpose and Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the communication and consultation steps that were undertaken while developing the Sutton Neighbourhood plan.

Submission Version

2. Consultation Method and Steps

- 2.1. As a result of concern about the scale of developments in neighbouring parishes, as well as the preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan, there was a view that the needs of Sutton parish could be overlooked in the overall development plans.
- 2.2. There was an initial discussion in June 2018. This resulted in there being an open meeting arranged in the village hall to see if there was sufficient support for this in the parish. Leaflets were hand delivered to every house in the parish inviting the residents to attend this meeting.
- 2.3. This took place on the 21st June 2018 and it was clear there were both concerns as to the future of the village and support to take the matter forward.
- 2.4. The village holds a flower festival each year. In 2018 this was held on the 30th June and 1st July. There was a stall about the possibility of a Neighbourhood Plan at that event. This was to get further feedback from residents and also visitors to the village. A mini-questionnaire was used to obtain the views as well as discussions with the visitors to the stall. This demonstrated the strength of feeling in the parish to having a plan to deal with the future development of the parish



- 2.5. As a result of this the Parish Council was asked on the 9th July 2018 to formally approve the making of a neighbourhood plan. A neighbourhood plan area was designated which is the parish boundary.
- 2.6. A steering committee was set up including both residents and parish councillors. This has met most months since then to progress the plan.
- 2.7. The members of the committee are as follows:
 - Darren Brooker Resident in village since 2006
 - Mike Kingdon Resident in village since 1976
 - Briony Giddings Resident in village since 2005

- Libby Gardner Resident in village since 1979
- Stefan Senger Resident in village since 2002
- Helen Kapur Resident in village since 2010
- Chris Brown Resident in village since 1994

- 2.8. It was agreed initially that the steering committee meetings would be at the village hall so that all sections of the community could be involved. It has on occasions been at one of the members home and during the coronavirus crisis met by use of online Zoom meetings.
- 2.9. From the start of the process the Steering Committee has worked with, and been guided by, Central Bedfordshire Council. The Committee is particularly grateful for the assistance and support of Tom Price, Neighbourhood Involvement Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council, throughout the entire plan making process.
- 2.10. Throughout the process consideration was given to Human Rights and EU obligations, as well as working with, and tracking the progress of, the emerging local plan.
- 2.11. Specific efforts were made to include sections of the community who may not normally partake in such activities.
- 2.12. It was important that all the various sections of the community had an opportunity to be involved in the process. It was recognised that there are businesses in the parish that employ people and that those needed to have the opportunity of being consulted. In addition, many of the children attending the local school do not live in the parish. This was taken into account when any leaflets and questionnaires were sent out.
- 2.13. The independent school is run by the Plymouth Brethren who do not mix outside their own community. Additional emails were sent to make sure that they were able to be involved in the consultation.
- 2.14. There was an invitation to all villages to attend a brain-storming meeting on the 18th August 2018. This was delivered by hand to all the houses and businesses in the parish. Many of the ideas for the current neighbourhood plan came from that meeting.



- 2.15. The parish council meets bi-monthly and the steering committee has provided a report and update to those meetings.
- 2.16. It was agreed that a website and facebook page would be set up to provide up to date information on progress and notification of upcoming events. These were set up at the end of 2018 and have been used successfully. The website can be found at www.suttonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk The facebook page which is public can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/suttonneighbourhoodplan/> The facebook site has the same news articles as the website and in addition details of events were published on the facebook site.
- 2.17. As it was recognised that not all the residents have access to the internet leaflets were sent to each house in the parish to keep everyone up to date with developments.
- 2.18. It was felt that there were in particular heritage features in the village that are not well known to the residents so a 'walk and talk' event was arranged for the 27th December 2018 to point out key points of interest and heritage features in the village. These points of interest and heritage features would also be included in the general questionnaire.



- 2.19. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) were commissioned in January 2019 to carry out a housing needs survey to identify the housing needs of local people over the next 10 years. This was delivered by post to every household in the parish and to the local businesses. A redacted (to protect confidentiality) version of the final report from BRCC was published on the web site. The conclusions of the Housing Needs Survey were used to formulate the relevant policies within the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.20. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) were commissioned to prepare a Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan during February/March 2019. There were two community workshops. At the first workshop (4 February 2019), a map pack summarising all of the information currently known about the parish's GI assets was presented; and consultees were asked to use this information to identify aspirations for enhancing and adding to the existing local GI. At the second workshop (26 March 2019), these aspirations were reviewed, added to and prioritised. Between the two workshops a drop-in session for the whole community was held (2 March 2019), to increase the level and range of input into the plan. Attendance at the 3 consultation activities totalled 69.



- 2.21. Subsequently a Green Infrastructure plan was approved by the Parish Council on 11th November 2019. This then influenced the direction of the relevant parts of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.22. Also started in February 2019 a general questionnaire was hand delivered to all residents within the parish (including older children where possible), as well as the two schools, allotment holders and local businesses. The questionnaire was also made available online and advertised on both our Facebook page and our website.
- 2.23. Details of all landowners in the parish were obtained and a further copy of the general questionnaire was sent to those who had not already had received a copy. This was sent out in June 2019. Responses were received from 126 people and 2 landowners. This was an excellent response.

- 2.24. Also, in June 2019 at the Flower festival there was a manned stall where maps were displayed. This is an annual event that is always well supported by the residents of the Parish and also attracts many visitors to the village. The maps that were displayed provided details of the landscape, historical information and the green infrastructure plans. There was a further opportunity to ask questions and to view maps of the various village features. This was an excellent opportunity to discuss the progress of the neighbourhood plan and to discover further information about Sutton
- 2.25. At the Flower festival 2019 there was also a visitors questionnaire to allow additional people to express their views.



- 2.26. The results of the General, Visitors and Business Questionnaires were analysed carefully. The responses to the questions and the comments made were directly used to inform the aims and policies within the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan. In particular the responses were used to generate a number of tables and diagrams that were used to reflect how the parishioners wanted to see the parish develop and resulted in the preparation of the final vision statement, draft objectives/aims and focus areas for the policies.
- 2.27. A Consultation event was held in Sutton Village Hall in November 2019. The purpose of the event was to: update people on progress; share the completed green infrastructure plan, share the results of the questionnaires and to consult on the draft aims/objectives which had been formulated based upon the evidence gathered to date.



- 2.28. The draft aims/objectives were very well supported with 100% of the people who responded to the questionnaire and of those who attended the event either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the draft aims/objectives. A few improvements were suggested which resulted in some minor changes to the text of the final set of aims/objectives which were subsequently approved by the Steering Committee.

- 2.29. At this event there was a wide range of information about the draft neighbourhood plan and the green infrastructure plan. Most importantly many of the members of the steering committee were present to answer questions, discuss progress and accept further views and comments.
- 2.30. Leaflets were sent out for each meeting/event and to update at various stages throughout. Information was also put on the noticeboard in the village hall.



- 2.31. Sutton and the surrounding area provide a rich habitat for flora and fauna. The groundsman at the John O’Gaunt golf club has kept a record of his sightings for several years.
- 2.32. Since February 2020 Residents have been asked to record sightings of mammals, reptiles, birds and insects. This information is collected each month and collated by a member of the steering committee. It is intended that this survey will continue over the summer. There has been a good response to this and has helped to involve more people in the plan.
- 2.33. The initial draft of the neighbourhood plan was completed in March 2020 and approved by the Parish Council on the 10th May 2020
- 2.34. The draft was sent to CBC for consideration as to whether a Strategic Environmental assessment was required and the response from them also included responses from Historic England, Natural England and the Environmental Agency.
- 2.35. There was some disruption in the progress of the Neighbourhood plan due to the coronavirus. This time was used constructively to add more results from the wildlife surveys and also to refine the initial draft of the plan. The Steering Committee decided to take advantage of a Locality / Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) technical support package ‘Evidence Base and Policy Development’ (EBPD). Dave Chetwyn MRPTI, IHBC, FInstLM, FRSA of Urban Vision Enterprises CIC was engaged to carry out this work which resulted in considerable refinement of the policy wording and some refinement of the supporting documents.
- 2.36. The above resulted in several amendments and enhancements to the wording of the Plan. This, therefore, needed to be formally approved again by the Parish Council before commencing Regulation 14 consultation. This was done on the 12th August 2020.

Regulation 14 Consultation

- 2.37. The Regulation 14 consultation dates in relation to the draft neighbourhood plan were: Monday 24th August 2020 to Monday 19th October 2020 (8 weeks). Responses to be received no later than 2359 hours on Monday 19th October 2020.
- 2.38. A subscription was taken out for Smart Survey to cover the period of the consultation on the draft neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.39. The draft neighbourhood plan was publicised to everyone who lives, works or runs a business in the area, plus CBC, the list of statutory consultees, adjacent town/parish councils and local authorities, landowners, local businesses, local organisations and everyone who has previously been involved. The publicity included details of the proposed plan, where and when it can be viewed, how to make comments and by what date.
- 2.40. The documents consulted upon as part of the Regulation 14 consultation were:
- Draft Sutton Neighbourhood Plan v2.0
 - Sutton Design Codes (dated 11th May 2020)
 - Sutton Parish Green Infrastructure Plan (dated 8th November 2019)
 - Background Evidence Report – Part 1 (Introduction and General Information) v1.0
 - Background Evidence Report – Part 2 (Natural Environment) v1.0
 - Background Evidence Report – Part 3 (Developed Environment) v1.0
 - Consultation Report v1.0
- 2.41. On the 12th August 2020 letters were sent to the registered landowners of the proposed Local Green Spaces to notify them that their land was being affected.
- 2.42. On the 19th/20th August 2020 letters were sent to potentially affected landowners to notify them that their land may be affected by policies contained within the Draft Plan.
- 2.43. On 20th August 2020 the website was updated to make the 'Regulation 14 mini-site' live, this included all of the documents being consulted upon, a link to the online survey, a copy of the paper feedback form, all the plans/maps and details of how to respond. News articles and an open consultation banner were added to the website home page.
- 2.44. On 24th August 2020 notification letters/emails were sent to all statutory consultees and those parties who had previously registered an interest.
- 2.45. On 24th August 2020 the consultation was advertised on Facebook, parish and other noticeboards, feedback forms were delivered to every house/business in Sutton. Cllr Adam Zerny also advertised it on his Facebook page and in his next newsletter.
- 2.46. On 24th August 2020 emails were sent or courtesy letters dropped through the doors of the other landowners (and the agents of those who have provided agents details) who may be impacted by our other policies.

- 2.47. The first two drop-in sessions were on the 30th August 2020 from 2pm to 8pm and on the 31st August 2020 from 10 am to 6pm. There were a total of 19 visitors across these two sessions (excluding the four people hosting the sessions).
- 2.48. There was a further drop-in session on the 11th October 2020 from 12noon until 4pm. There were 3 visitors to this final drop-in session (excluding the three people hosting the session).



- 2.49. As a result of the consultation on the Draft Sutton Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents 27 online surveys, 8 paper surveys, 1 emailed survey and 8 written responses (total 44 responses) were received.
- 2.50. The feedback received was put into a schedule which enabled all the responses to be considered. The Steering Committee then carefully considered all of the responses, both individually and collectively, and made appropriate amendments to the Plan and supporting documents accordingly. In relation to drainage, further advice was obtained from the Principal Drainage Engineer at Central Bedfordshire Council, prior to deciding upon the changes. The most significant changes were as follows:

- Removal of the lower school playing field from the local green spaces.
- Taking into account the fact that a local green space does not mean that there is public access.
- Changed the buffer along the watercourses to 9m.

- Changed the boundaries of the important green gaps so that they better aligned with features on the ground.
 - In relation to the village hall removed the reference to the entrance and use by other users other than users of the village hall.
 - The policy regarding the Bear Garden was amended to become less restrictive, to allow alternative uses but to still preserve the feature.
- 2.51. The wildlife survey came to an end in September and the final report was provided on the 15th November 2020. The Background Evidence Report – Part 2 (The Natural Environment) was updated to reflect the latest information.
- 2.52. On the 17th November 2020 the Green Infrastructure Plan was updated as a result of the responses received to the Regulation 14 consultation.
- 2.53. The neighbourhood plan document and background evidence reports were updated, as a result of the Regulation 14 feedback, in November/December 2020.
- 2.54. During December 2020, following the processing of the Regulation 14 responses and subsequent updates to the Plan, the Steering Committee commissioned Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd through a Locality / Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) technical support package, to carry out a Plan Health Check. This resulted in a number of minor changes to the Plan, the Consultation Report and the Basic Conditions Statement; these are documented, along with the Regulation 14 amendments, in Appendix CR29.

General

- 2.55. A range of different media, as noted above, has been used to inform the residents of Sutton parish about the progress of the neighbourhood plan process and to seek their views about the right development for the parish. At all times information has been presented neutrally with a view to assisting parishioners to reach their own opinion.
- 2.56. Members of the Steering committee have used their best efforts to stay abreast of current developments in neighbourhood plans. Whilst the Steering Committee have undertaken the majority of the work on the neighbourhood plan themselves, they have been well supported and assisted throughout the process by the Neighbourhood Involvement Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council. Since January 2020 the Steering Committee has also been assisted by the advice and guidance of a professional planning expert and neighbourhood plan consultant.

3. Appendices

Appendix	Document Name	Date
CR1	Sutton Flower Festival Mini-Questionnaire	29/06/2018
CR2	Sutton Flower Festival Mini-Questionnaire Results	July 2018
CR3	Kick Off and Brainstorming Session Presentation	16/08/2018
CR4	Kick Off and Brainstorming Session Outcome	August 2018
CR5	Leaflets & Noticeboard Posters	Various
CR6	Steering Committee Minutes	Various
CR7	Parish Council Meeting Updates	Various
CR8	Housing Needs Survey Letter	6/1/2019
CR9	Housing Needs Survey	3/1/2019
CR10	Housing Needs Survey Results [Redacted]	28/4/2019
CR11	General Questionnaire	11/02/2019
CR12	General Questionnaire Results and Analysis	19/11/2019
CR13	Visitors Questionnaire	16/05/2019
CR14	Visitors Questionnaire Results and Analysis	10/08/2019
CR15	Update and Draft Objectives Consultation Presentation	19/11/2019
CR16	Draft Objectives Consultation Form	19/11/2019
CR17	Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination Letter	2/4/2020
CR18	Strategic Environmental Assessment Report	April 2020
CR19	List of wildlife from John O'Gaunt Golf Club	18/5/2020
CR20	Wildlife survey reports	
CR21	Regulation 14 - Engagement Strategy	30/07/2020
CR22	Regulation 14 - Letters to proposed Local Green Space landowners	12/08/2020
CR23	Regulation 14 - Letter to landowners affected by the draft plan	19/08/2020
CR24	Regulation 14 - List of consultees	24/08/2020
CR25	Regulation 14 - Letter sent to consultees	24/08/2020
CR26	Regulation 14 - Paper feedback form	24/08/2020
CR27	Regulation 14 - Online feedback form	24/08/2020
CR28	Regulation 14 - Feedback results and analysis	2/11/2020
CR29	Regulation 14 - Schedule of feedback, resulting actions and changes (including Plan Health Check)	31/12/2020
CR30	Sutton Neighbourhood Plan Website	Various
CR31	Sutton Neighbourhood Plan Facebook Page	3/12/2020