

Consultation Statement

This consultation statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) in respect of Stoke Poges Parish Councils Neighbourhood Plan 2023 – 2033. The legal basis of this Statement is provided by Section 15 (2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which requires that a consultation statement should:

- Contain details of the persons and bodies that were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.
- Explain how they were consulted.
- Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted.
- Describe how those issues and concerns have been considered and where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation

Stoke Poges Parish Council (SPPC) has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) for the area designated by the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council.

Timeline of events

The timeline of events below demonstrates the evolution of SPNP as well as ongoing communications and feedback have been undertaken through regular updates via Stoke Poges News (SPN) on a quarterly basis, which is hand delivered to every household in the village as well as a face to face meeting inviting members of the public. The Steering Group have given face to face updates to Parish Councillors at monthly meetings which have been minuted, all minutes are published on the Parish Councils website.

2020

- The Parish Council decided to begin the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan in November 2020 and resolved to set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group consisting of Parish Councillors and members of the public, some invitees declined the invitation. December 2020 had presentation and agreed to go ahead once quote received.
- The Steering Group arranged a meeting with O'Neill Homer to see how they could assist.
- The Steering Group reported back the Parish Council who agreed to use O'Neill Homer as its designated consultants.
- Steering Group roles were agreed as well as working as two sub groups, one to work on policies and one to work on historic buildings as Stoke Poges has a rich mixture of history and important buildings. Work then began.
- Working with the Parish Clerk SPPC applied for grants available via Localities in order to mitigate costs to the parish precept.
- In December 2020 SPPC submits an application to designate a Neighbourhood Area to Buckinghamshire Council.

2021

- January BC agree a Neighbourhood Area for the parish of Stoke Poges.
- Information uploaded to the Parish Council website
- Articles written in The Stoke Poges News quarterly between Spring 2021 - 2024
- Presentations by O'Neill Homer to Stoke Poges Parish Councillors

2023

- The Steering Group continues to meet and prepare policies for the SPNP including zoom meetings with representatives from Sefton Business Park
- November a draft of SPNP is discussed between BC officers and O'Neill Homer
- August a pre-Submission Plan sent to all Stoke Poges Councillors.
- September a pre Submission plan agreed by Stoke Poges Parish Council
- October Regulation 14 entered into
- Correspondence with officers from Buckinghamshire Council to on 27 October 2023

Objectives of Stoke Poges Neighbourhood Plan

1. In November 2020 the Parish Council agreed to develop a Neighbourhood Plan as a way of positively engaging with planning bodies and developers and based on evidence that most developments tend to be larger executive houses. There is a need to balance the demographic by ensuring a balanced mix of housing in order to attract young people, families and allowing for older residents to down size. The aim is to ensure that Stoke Poges remains a vibrant village which sets it apart from nearby urbanisations. The PC also wanted more detail on the types of design coming forward so that the character of the village not be further eroded with large mono lithic types of design with vast hardstanding, piers and brick walls, creating gated developments which is not in keeping with a semi rural village.
2. In creating a plan the PC set up a Steering Group made up of Parish Councillors and local residents, a broad discussion about important policies was undertaken. It was decided to include:
 - Protecting and enhancing local green spaces.
 - Maintaining and enhancing the character of our areas with design coding.
 - Positively supporting community facilities.
 - Ensuring high quality development comes forward so it is designed in keeping with its surroundings.
 - That new development would be of smaller stock housing to ensure a mixed demographic can thrive.
 - Identifying a local network of paths and access routes to encourage walking as an option.
 - Preserving our dark skies in order to protect local wildlife and the semi rural nature of village life
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Pre-Submission Consultation Process

- The Pre-Submission Plan was published as per the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Regulation 14 (a)
- Statutory we notified in writing and directed to the website: <https://www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan>
- It was publicised on the four notice boards in the village and via social media. The plan was published on the Parish Council website and hard copies were made available in the Parish Office. See Appendix A
- The consultation period lasted for 6 weeks, 12th September - 6 October 2023.
- Residents attended the drop-in event held in a meeting room at the Village Centre on 21 October 2023

- Throughout the consultation period of September and October November 2023 responses were received via the drop in meeting and via email.

Pre-Submission Consultation Feedback

The Pre-Submission Plan consultation generated comments from not only from members of the public but statutory bodies such as: BC, Thames Water, Historic England Dacorum Borough Council, Natural England, St Giles Church, Wexham Parish Council, Farnham Royal Parish Council and Sefton Business Park. The Steering Group assessed all responses by liaising with O'Neill Homer to ensure that all answers were technically correct. Queries were answered in writing and by having two zoom meetings with Sefton Business Park in November 2023. See Appendix B. It was noted that comments received did not challenge the fundamental principles of the Plan.

Recommendations were discussed between O'Neill Homer and the Steering Group at a meeting in November 2023 which resulted in some amendments. The Steering Group reviewed all recommendations in December 2023 and the following modifications were made:

- A more in depth explanation of the differences between Green Belt land and non Green Belt Land and how the plan distinguishes between them.
- Produced a glossary of terms to help with planning jargon.
- Made an amendment to Policy SP1: Design Code, Stoke Poges Sites, Thames House, by reducing the height of suggested development from 4 stories to 3 in line with planning permission already granted for this site.
- Gave more detail about small Local Green Spaces and a definition of their importance.
- Adjusted numbering of paragraphs for consistency.



Stoke Poges Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood planning is a way for communities to have a say in the future of the places where they live and work. It gives us the power to produce a plan with legal weight that directs development in our local area. It will help to identify where we want new development to be located and have a say on what development should look like. This document will seek to set out planning policies for Stoke Poges and protect local green spaces, encourage better spaces and bring forward housing that genuinely meets local needs.

The work undertaken to gather information to form the basis of this plan has been taking place since 2020. The plan responds to feedback from residents concerning planning matters, lack of suitable housing and preserving our surrounding green spaces, while planning for the future.

Timeline:

11th September:

The Parish Council will need to agree the final draft

12th September - 24th October 2023.

Consultation period called Regulation 14 open to residents

Your opinion is important.

How to let us know what you think:

Email:

theclerk@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

In writing:

The Clerk

The Parish office

The Village Centre

Rogers Lane

Stoke Poges SL2 4LP

There will be a hard copy available to read at the Parish Office.

Please call: **01753 644803** to arrange a convenient time.

Once the draft has been amended and or agreed it is examined by an external examiner. The next stage will be a village referendum. These dates will follow.

STOKE POGES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 ANALYSIS: STATUTORY BODIES

1. Introduction

1.1 This note summarises the representations made by the statutory bodies and landowners on the Pre-Submission version of the Stoke Poges Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) during its recent 'Regulation 14' consultation period. It concludes by recommending main modifications to the SPNP so that it may be submitted to the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council (BC), to arrange for its examination and referendum. This remains subject to the same analysis being undertaken for representations made by the local community.

2. Representations

2.1 Representations have been received from:

- a. Buckinghamshire Council
- b. Thames Water
- c. Historic England
- d. Rapleys (on behalf of Nuveen Real Estate)
- e. South Oxfordshire District Council
- f. Natural England
- g. Wexham Parish Council
- h. Stoke Poges Church (St Giles' and St Andrews's)
- i. Dacorum Borough Council

2.2 Other statutory bodies were consulted but none have made representations. The representations from Historic England (c.), South Oxfordshire District Council (e.), Natural England (f.), and Dacorum Borough Council (i.) raised no specific issues on the SPNP and directed the Parish Council to its standard advice for neighbourhood plans.

3. Analysis

3.1 This note focuses only on suggested modifications of greater substance as all those of minor consequence, including wording changes, can be addressed in finalising the document.

General Comments

3.2 Thames Water (b.) has requested that an additional policy be added to the SPNP which includes a specific reference to the key issue of water efficiency and consumption, the provision of wastewater/sewerage and water supply infrastructure. It is not considered appropriate to make additional policy provisions at such a late stage in the process. In any case, the provisions of Core Policy 6: Local Infrastructure Needs in the adopted development plan requires new development to provide for the necessary infrastructure needs arising from the proposal. Its provisions can be clarified with the updated information provided by Thames Water. **It is therefore recommended that paragraph 3.7 of the SPNP is updated as follows:**

3.7 There are also a number of development management policies that cover a wide range of matters affecting the parish, including its Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic

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Park, SSSIs and Ancient Woodland (see Plan I). This includes the provisions of Core Policy 6 on the requirements of new development. To that end water utility companies have confirmed that for development in Stoke Poges Parish, developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. As the area is defined as water stressed, it should also be noted that BC use planning conditions with regards to water efficiency and consumption for new residential development to secure a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day using the 'Fittings Approach' in Table 2.2 of Part G of the Building Regulations.

3.3 The Stoke Poges Church (St Giles' and St Andrews') (h.) provide some practical comments on document presentation and publication and largely support the heritage and local access network proposals of the plan, calling for additional proposals to be considered to improve access to St Giles' and other landmarks in that part of the parish. The way in which the village of Stoke Poges has historically developed has meant that access to St Giles' and other landmarks in that part of the parish has always been a challenge. The SPNP therefore recognises, in its Policy SP11: Local Access Network and accompanying Appendices F & G, that there is a need to improve the route to this part of the parish. The Parish Council also recognises that public transport is limited across the parish and that the maintenance of pavements are not currently being carried out at all. The SPNP therefore addresses the matter in a way that it can as a land use and development document through Policy SP11 and the Parish Council will continue to lobby Bucks Council on improving public transport and pavement maintenance services. **It is therefore recommended that the following text is added to paragraph 6.5 in the SPNP as part of the bullet point list of non-planning matters being taken forward separately:**

- *Continued lobbying for improved public transport services and reinstatement of pavement maintenance.*

3.4 It should be noted that the Buckinghamshire (Bucks) Council (a.) response appears to be a collection of officer views with no position on the overall strategy of the SPNP made clear. Bucks Council has not responded to request in paragraph 3.10 of the SPNP. **It is recommended that Bucks Council is invited to respond to the specific request.**

Policy SP1: Design Code – Stoke Poges Site and SP2: Design Code – Wexham Street Site

3.5 As set out in paragraph 3.1 comments from Bucks Council on these policies will be accommodated in finalising the submission documents.

Policy SP3: Sefton Park

3.6 Bucks Council makes a number of comments in relation to the site and it would appear to do so on the basis that the policy is allocating the site. This indicates a misunderstanding of the purpose of the policy. Rapleys (d.) representing the owners of the site confirm support for the policy and requests that the policy wording is amended. Overall, the suggested amendments made by Rapleys provide flexibility to a future scheme whilst retaining the overall policy intent. Some of the proposed amendments require further clarification. **In the interest of clarity, it is therefore recommended that a meeting is scheduled with Rapleys to agree final policy wording.**

Policy SP4: Housing Mix & Tenure

3.7 Bucks Council raise concerns regarding viability and the policy provisions, but it appears to stem from an interpretation that the policy is setting a higher affordable housing contribution which is not the case. **In the interests of clarity it is recommended that the policy and supporting text is amended as follows:**

Proposals for residential development will be expected to contribute to the objective of creating a mixed and balanced community. To achieve this objective, new residential development should seek to include in their housing mix a majority of 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom dwellings; a tenure suitable for those looking to rent or own their first home, downsizers, and specialist housing for older people. The starting point for the existing level of affordable housing provisions sought on qualifying developments should be 50% affordable homes for rent and 50% affordable homes for sale.

5.18 The tenure split of 50/50, recommended by the Stoke Poges HNA, refines the Affordable Housing SPD tenure split of two thirds social or affordable rent. This indicative mix is chiefly a response to the expectation that the delivery of Affordable Housing will be lower than the needs identified here. In this context, the HNA recognises that ‘First Homes’ (an affordable homes for sale product discounted in perpetuity by a minimum of 30%) is not affordable in the neighbourhood area, even at a 50% minimum discount. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore supports other affordable home ownership routes. For the avoidance of doubt the policy does not change the overall level of affordable housing provision sought on qualifying developments set out in the Affordable Housing SPD.

Policy SP5: Passivhaus Buildings

3.8 Buck Council raises operational issues with the policy in relation to zero carbon building and incentivising the Passivhaus standard. The use of planning conditions to require matters to be addressed, and a condition to be discharged, after the construction or occupancy of buildings is not unusual. In any case, Bucks Council already operates the requirements of the policy in other parts of Buckinghamshire. The additional requirement of the policy operating in Stoke Poges Parish ought therefore not be a cumbersome or expensive process.

Policy SP6: Design Code – Parish Wide

3.9 Bucks Council make a number of recommendations for amendments to the Stoke Poges Design Code. **It is recommended that the comments are accommodated.**

Policy SP8: Rural Resilience and SP9: Green Infrastructure

3.10 As set out in paragraph 3.1 comments from Bucks Council on these policies will be accommodated in finalising the submission documents.

Policy SP10: Local Green Spaces

3.11 Bucks Council note that it was unclear how to access the supporting evidence for this proposed policy. **It is therefore recommended that the evidence showing how each of the proposed Local Green Spaces meet the tests for designation set out in national policy is placed in the supporting text of Policy SP10 or as an appendix to the SPNP.**

Policy SP11: Local Access Network

3.12 Wexham Parish Council (g.) has supported the policy's aim in improving connections to surrounding services and facilities, specifically footpaths through Rowley Lane to Black Park. Bucks Council raises concerns about the wording used in the policy but does not offer any alternatives. **It is recommended that Bucks Council is invited to respond to the specific request.**

Policy SP12: Dark Skies

3.13 Bucks Council raises contradicting concerns about the wording used in the policy but does not offer any alternatives. **It is recommended that Bucks Council is invited to respond to the specific request.**

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

4.1 The representations suggest that further clarification and detail is required. However, it is considered that only minor modifications will be necessary to improve the clarity and application of policy wording. Once the modifications from this report, and any modifications resulting from further clarification and detail sought, has been made, **it is recommended that the SPNP can proceed to the Regulation 15 submission stage without further consultations.**