



“Regulation 14” Public Consultation 2021

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So What's it all about?

- ❑ This presentation explains what neighbourhood plans are and why they are important
- ❑ It talks about the 4-year journey that has led the Southam team to this point
- ❑ You can see a summary of what's in the current draft of the plan
- ❑ It explains the whole Neighbourhood Plan process and where we are in that process
- ❑ You can find out how you can affect what goes into the final plan

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- ❑ A Neighbourhood Plan is a statement by the community within a defined boundary as to their wishes for land use, the built and the natural environments in their area.
- ❑ A “made” Neighbourhood Plan is a legal document and carries weight with the Local Planning Authority in informing local planning decisions and infrastructure projects
- ❑ A Neighbourhood Plan gains its power from the fact that the community has voted for it in a special referendum and therefore it reflects a democratic view
- ❑ Communities with “made” neighbourhood plans get to control more of the money levied on new developments (rather than it going to District or Borough councils)

What can a Neighbourhood Plan do?

- ❑ A Neighbourhood Plan *can*:
 - designate sites for specific types of development
 - define specific protected areas (within reason)
 - specify some aspects of design for new developments
 - outline a vision for the future of the area covered by the plan

- ❑ There are limits on what a Neighbourhood Plan can do and each plan must be assessed by an independent expert to ensure that it is within the regulations.

- ❑ A Neighbourhood Plan *must*:
 - comply with higher level planning documents: the National Planning Policy Framework and local authority’s plan (for Stratford DC it’s the “Core Strategy”).
 - show evidence to support each policy in the plan
 - be worded positively: say what is permitted or supported not what is banned
 - Confine itself to topics related to local land use (e.g. not “more bobbies on the beat”)

Regulation 14 Public Consultation

- ❑ As part of the process, a complete draft of the Plan must go through a well-publicised public consultation lasting at least 6 weeks
 - Public within the plan area must be allowed to read and make comments on the document
 - Neighbouring parishes, statutory bodies and key interested parties should also get the opportunity to comment
 - Usually the consultation would include drop-in sessions where the team behind the plan can be available to answer questions
 - Since Covid, the government has allowed these consultations to be entirely online and postal

- ❑ Following the consultation, the authoring team is bound to show that all the comments have been assessed and decisions taken on what further action to take for each

- ❑ Depending on the severity of the resulting changes, another public consultation may be needed

Where did our Neighbourhood Plan come from?

- ❑ Sponsored by the Town Council, a working party consisting of councillors and residents was set up in 2016
- ❑ Lots of consulting, reading, discussion and looking at other examples
- ❑ Town survey (late 2015) plus stalls gathering opinions at local events and a full Housing Need Survey
- ❑ Brainstorming of topic areas the plan should cover
 - Formed sub-teams to investigate each topic and compile a draft vision statements
- ❑ Walk-in consultation in 2017 to validate vision statements
- ❑ Brainstorming, discussions & research to come up with draft set of objectives arising from vision statements
- ❑ Engaged a consultant to survey candidate green spaces and views we wanted to protect
 - Consultation at the 2018 Mayday market where the green spaces were ranked in importance
- ❑ Yet more discussions, research and consultation to arrive at a set of policies arising from the objectives
- ❑ Walk-in consultation in late 2018 on the draft policies
- ❑ Modification of policies based on discussions and advice from the District Council planning department
- ❑ Full draft plan endorsed by Town Council and screened by a consultancy for Strategic Environmental impact

What's in our Neighbourhood Plan?

- ❑ Please read the plan itself to comment in this consultation – *don't rely on just these slides!*
- ❑ The Plan starts with a description of Southam and includes little of its history
- ❑ There is a vision statement about what Southam should be like in the future
- ❑ There are eleven objectives in the plan designed to help bring about the vision
- ❑ Where possible, Policies set out specific planning requirements in order to meet each objective
 - **The Policies are the legal heart of a Neighbourhood Plan**
- ❑ There are some aspirational projects at the end of the plan that are not part of the policies.

Southam Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement

Southam will be a desirable place to live, being a sustainable rural community where people feel happy to live and work safely with plentiful opportunities for sport and recreation. The environment, community services, economic growth, cultural development and infrastructure of the neighbourhood will be protected and enhanced for future generations.

- **Housing**

Further growth in Southam will be fair to people of all ages and abilities with respect to access to community, infrastructure and retail amenities. The built environment will reflect and enhance the qualities of Southam.

- **Environment**

All residents will have non-motor access to preserved and protected green spaces, landscape views and dark skies.

- **Infrastructure**

Visiting the town centre will be a safe and pleasant experience with ready access for those with or without motor transport. Places for healthcare, education and employment will keep pace with growing and evolving population needs.

- **Community**

Visitors will be attracted to the town to add to the already strong community spirit and maintain a vibrant retail centre.

Conserve and develop local green spaces

- ❑ There are fifteen specific green spaces in **Policy 01** that we want to either preserve or enhance
 - This means we discourage development in these places because these places are important to our quality of life
- ❑ There are four views iconic to Southam specified in **Policy 02** that we want to preserve
 - This means that we don't want developments on whatever land that will spoil or obscure these views
- ❑ In **Policy 03** we express a preference for developments to be on “brown field” sites rather than Green Field
 - In other words, we prefer to build where there have already been buildings

Reflect and enhance Southam qualities

- ❑ We reinforce in **Policy 04** our support of, and commitment to, the conservation area already designated in the centre
 - Historic England has already labelled Southam’s conservation area as being under threat
 - We don’t have to worry about listed buildings as these are already individually protected

Enhance the public realm

- In **Policy 05**, we emphasise the need to build crime prevention into the design of new developments

Meet the housing need

- ❑ Recognising the demand for new housing, we mandate in **Policy 06** that the local need for single story dwellings (e.g. bungalows), evidenced by the Housing Needs Survey, is prioritised.
- ❑ There is also a proven need for sites where people can design and/or build their own houses and this is brought out in **Policy 07**

Refine the housing mix

- ❑ Some types of house are more profitable for developers than others. The District Council specifies a mix of housing types to ensure all needs are met across the district but **Policy 07** defines a slightly different mix that we want to see in Southam, based on our specific needs.

Reduce carbon and resource demand

- ❑ **Policy 09** declares our wish that development is environmentally sustainable and should include newer, greener technology for energy and heating as well as using eco-friendly materials and techniques.
- ❑ Although Southam often has too much water, there is increasing demand for fresh water, often used simply to flush toilets. **Policy 10** expresses our requirement that developments should reuse rainwater wherever possible, maybe reusing what goes into flood drainage.
- ❑ Electric vehicles are rocketing in popularity and **Policy 11** is there to make sure that new builds have sufficient capacity to charge multiple cars and allow the complex loads placed on the electricity grid to be manage
- ❑ **Policy 12** says that we don't want developments to contribute unnecessary light pollution on buildings and pathways other than as needed for safety.

Safe walking and cycling

- ❑ Southam has perceptibly fewer regular cyclists than other towns in the area, especially to and from the schools. **Policy 03** is there to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to provide cycle and pedestrian friendly routes in the town. This measure is also designed to limit on-street parking.

Manage parking and traffic

- ❑ Cars have been getting bigger over the years but roads are not getting any wider. This leads to much parking on paths to avoid impeding traffic, especially around Southam's residential streets. At the same time, using valuable land for parking instead of houses is not popular with developers. **Policy 14** slightly increases the requirement to allocate parking spaces in new builds over that specified by the District Council.

Manage flood risk

- We all know parts of Southam flood and are doing so more often. **Policy 15** is there to ensure that flood prevention is uppermost in developers' minds, both at the site in question and impact on other sites.
- Specifically for water courses, **Policy 16** increases the margin between the river edge and any development so that there is less chance of obstructing the flow in times of high water volumes and there is also plenty of space for river maintenance.

Encourage a vibrant commercial centre

- ❑ As a way of helping to preserve a busy, attractive and useful town centre, **Policy 17** expresses our support for any development that increases the number of people out and about in the centre. At the same time, it discourages converting retail units into housing as this diminishes the usefulness and attraction of the town and will accelerate a decline in footfall.

Conserve Southam's heritage

- This is an objective that we share although there are no specific land use policies that we could think of to support it. Even so, we thought it important to include in our plan.

How to have your say

- ❑ We want you to read the plan itself and submit your comments. No comments will be read by the plan team until the consultation is closed. It is important to comment on the plan document itself **NOT** this slide presentation!
- ❑ To enter your comments, go to the web site southamreg14.org and scroll down to the green 'Send your comments.' area
 - *Fill in the form, including your full address*
 - *Add your comment (please include the relevant Policy numbers for reference)*
 - *When you submit a comment, the form will reset and allow you to make another one*
- ❑ ALL comments will be considered and assessed
- ❑ Thank you for your participation

What Happens Next?

- The Neighbourhood Plan team will assess the comments and record its decision on each one. It will then update the plan document according to its decisions
- If the changes are significant (adding, subtracting or materially changing any Policies) then the new draft would go through Town Council approval
- Depending on the changes, a repeat of this consultation may be needed
- Once this is done, it will go to an independent expert examiner who will give a set of recommended technical changes and refer to a number of statutory bodies for comment
- Another round of edits and discussions will result in a version that the examiner accepts
- The plan then goes to a referendum of residents in the town
- Finally, if it passes referendum the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted by the District Council
- THERE IS A RISK THAT THIS PROCESS, ALREADY DELAYED BY COVID, WILL BE FURTHER DELAYED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION