

Community Consultation Event

East Coker Village Hall

East Coker Neighbourhood Plan

19 March 2016



East Coker Neighbourhood Plan – Update March 2016

Neighbourhood Development Plans were first introduced by the 2011 Localism Act. It is part of the Government's approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about the scale and nature development takes place in their area. However, all Plans must have regard to higher level strategic planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and also be in general conformity with the recently adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2015.

The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) relates to the whole of the Parish of East Coker. It includes a wide range of topics, including housing, employment, community facilities, transport, and the built and natural environment. The Plan will run until 2018 to coincide with the end date of the Local Plan. However it will need to be reviewed before the end of the plan period.

The Plan has been prepared by local people with some external support, following extensive community consultation and engagement over a period of years and is now put forward as the completed plan for further public consultation and comments. In due course the Plan will also have to be examined by an independent inspector and be subject to a local referendum.

Both the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish Council very much look forward to receiving your views and believe that the plan represents a broad consensus of local opinion.

Bridget Sugg
Chair East Coker Parish Council

Sandra Snelling
Chair Neighbourhood Plan Group

March 2016

*“Now the light falls
Across the open field, leaving the deep lane
Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon,
..... TS Eliot, “East Coker”*

South Somerset Local Plan 2015

Like all Neighbourhood Plans, the East Coker Plan also has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the statutory Local Plan for its area. For East Coker, this is the statutory South Somerset Local Plan for the whole District which has been prepared by the South Somerset District Council and which sets out policies and proposals for the future development of the District until 2028. This Local Plan was formally adopted by the District Council in March 2015, following an extensive Examination by a Planning Inspector, in which East Coker Parish Council fully participated.

The Local Plan policies and proposals have therefore been used to help guide the preparation of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan and where appropriate, cross reference is made next to Neighbourhood Plan policies, to those that are relevant to the subject matter in the Local Plan, as well as the appropriate sections in National Planning Policy Framework. The Neighbourhood Plan includes and adds more local detail and policies than would not be appropriate for inclusion in the District-wide Local Plan, providing the necessary '*Local Distinctiveness*' for East Coker Parish.

The current text and policy that applies to East Coker is the South Somerset Local Plan is Policy SS2 Rural Settlements and is as follows:

POLICY SS2: DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS

Development in Rural Settlements (not Market Towns or Rural Centres) will be strictly controlled and limited to that which:

- Provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement; and/or
- Creates or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement; and/or
- Meets identified housing need, particularly for affordable housing.

Development will be permitted where it is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, provides for one or more of the types of development above, and increases the sustainability of a settlement in general.

Proposals should be consistent with relevant community led plans, and should generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation.

Proposals for housing development should only be permitted in Rural Settlements that have access to two or more key services listed at Paragraph 5.41.

It is apparent from the above policy that the Local Plan envisages that there should only be limited development within the rural settlements or villages within East Coker Parish. There is however a significant amount of strategic development taking place or planned within the Parish in view of allocations in the South Somerset Local Plan and/or sites which already have planning permission.

East Coker Neighbourhood Plan

So ... what is a Neighbourhood Plan?

It is a community-led plan to help guide future development, regeneration and conservation of an area.

It is about the use and development of land & contains proposals for new facilities, improvement and allocations of land for different types of development.

It can deal with housing, employment, transport, heritage and the natural environment. Once approved the Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help make decisions on future planning applications.

The Plan process

Parish Council decided to prepare the neighbourhood plan, and set up a steering group to develop the plan & ensure that it is 'community-led'.

Organisations and interests on the East Coker Group include:

- The Parish Council
- Environmental Interests
- Local business
- Local people who have engaged with the SSDC Local Plan process

Consultations are held with external stakeholders, e.g. Environment Agency Natural England etc.

Plan area

Decision on geographical area of the Plan ... in this case, East Coker Parish, so including both the settlements of East Coker and North Coker.

The Local Planning Authority

South Somerset District Council agreed to the plan being prepared for the designated area (East Coker Parish) after a consultation period and with whom there is a 'Memorandum of Understanding'.

Funding



Grants were obtained from a nationally funded programme operated by the Department of Communities & Local Government and distributed by an organisation called 'Locality'. The Parish Council has also levied a 'precept' to help fund work on the Plan.

Publicity

The proposal to prepare the Plan was publicised locally to ensure local people were aware that the Plan was to be prepared.

Consultation events have been held and the results analysed, the Vision & Objectives have been developed and with further consultation is planned as the plan progresses through its various stages

Surveys

Surveys of residents of the parish and local groups has been undertaken via questionnaires in 2013 and a further shorter update questionnaire was undertaken in October 2015. The results have been analysed and broadly accord with the 2013 survey.

Where the plan is now

Work has now been progressed on writing of the plan and preparation of the draft policies to be include in the plan and other technical information and this has been discussed with South Somerset Planning Department who have offered advice. The consultation via the 'Drop-in' session in March 2016 is a further opportunity for seeking local peoples' views on the content of the plan, related to various different land uses.

The next steps:

Finalisation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan

This will include a written statement, a consultation statement and a proposal map. it will include policies and policies for:

- Housing
- Employment
- Community Facilities
- The Natural & Built Environmental
- Design of new development
- And other matters.

Pre-submission consultation

Before the Plan is formally submitted to South Somerset District Council, a further 6 week statutory round of consultation with the local community and official organisations will take place, called 'Regulation 14' Consultation.

Examination

Following this and any changes, the Plan will be submitted to the District Council who will arrange for the Neighbourhood Plan to be 'Examined' by an independent planning inspector, who will assess whether or not it is 'sound' and meets all the necessary requirements and regulations. The Inspector may propose modifications to the Plan.

Modifications

If these are required, then they will also be subject to consultation.

Referendum

Once the Plan has been examined and found to be sound, with or without modifications, there will be a Referendum when all registered electors in the Parish will be eligible to vote on the Plan.

Provided more than 50% of those who vote, support the Plan, the Local Planning Authority will bring it into force.

Delivery

Once the Neighbourhood Plan is brought into legal force, together with the Local Plan, it will form part of the **Statutory Development Plan** for the Parish, along with the Local Plan.

Decisions on whether or not to grant planning permission in the Plan area will need to be in accordance with the Plan unless 'material planning considerations' indicate otherwise.

Proposals for improvements in the area included as an Action Plan, appended to the Neighbourhood Plan, will subject to funding, be implemented in the coming years, by a number of organisations.

Community Engagement & Survey Results

The Parish of East Coker has a strong community and has previously produced documents to influence the development of the area. The Neighbourhood Plan draws upon evidence gathered from a range of sources and it builds upon other community projects such as the Parish Plan of 2005.

These have helped inform and provide the rationale for the policies set out in the Plan. This level of community involvement has been a sound basis for the development of the Plan. Extensive consultation has been the foundation for the development of the Plan and this has included the following events and activities:

2013

1. 13 January 2013 - Parish Council makes application for Neighbourhood Plan Designation.
2. 10 September 2013 - SSDC approval of Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area.
3. 26 October 2013 - East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Launch Day.
4. October 2013 to January 2014 - Parish Survey distributed collect and analysed.

2014

5. 2013 and 2014 – Fact finding, Research and Evidence Base gathering.
6. February 2014 – NP Preliminary Survey Report finalised.
7. 26 May 2014 – Evidence Base Report finalised.
8. July 2014 – Village Fete feedback to Parishioners.
9. July to October 2014 – Work up Draft Vision and Objectives.
10. November/December 2014 - Consult on Draft Vision and Objectives.
11. November 2014 discuss with SSDC about Conservation Areas Appraisals as part of the NP.

2015

12. January 2015 – Work up draft policy intents
13. February 2015 draft policy intents sent to SSDC (Delayed SSDC response due to Local Plan).
14. June/July 2015 – Review SSDC response to policy intents.
15. July 2015 - Conservation Areas – preliminary work passed to Parish Council for consideration/action.
16. August 2015 engage new consultants – review progress and previous work. Framework and timetable for future development of the plan agreed
17. September 2015 – Prepare up-date questionnaire and plan: 'Your Parish Your Plan' Open Day.
18. 16 October 2015 – 'Your Parish Your Plan' Open Day
19. January 2016 - Update of Neighbourhood Plan included in Parish Newsletter
20. February/March 2016 – further informal consultation with SSDC Planning Department
21. 19 March 2016 - Further consultation 'Drop In' event in Village Hall on Draft Plan and Policies

Further consultation and deliberation will be undertaken including:

- A **6 week period of consultation** with the public and statutory organisations, before the Plan is formally submitted to South Somerset District Council
- The District Council will then advertise the Plan
- There will then be an **of the Plan** by an Independent Inspector
- Following this, there will be a local **Referendum** and if supported by over 50% of those who vote, it will be **Formally Adopted or Made**.



Policies

Policy EC1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within the National Planning Policy Framework will be viewed positively.

Where applications are contrary to the policies within the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan and/or the South Somerset Local Plan, a statement setting out the material planning considerations that outweigh those policies should be submitted with the application, identifying and quantifying the economic, social and environmental benefits that will be achieved as a result of the proposed development.

Developers and applicants should demonstrate how they have proactively engaged and consulted East Coker Parish Council and other community groups and/or residents directly affected by their proposal.

This policy allows for local economic, social and environmental aspirations of the community to be delivered by the development plan including the neighbourhood plan and also requires new development to be subject to effective community engagement, which has not always happened in the past.

Policy EC2 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Financial contributions paid direct to the local community as a result of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be held by East Coker Parish Council and used to deliver local priorities and projects, including those in the Neighbourhood Action Plan. Direct delivery by developers for off-site works will be supported where this accords with the Neighbourhood Action Plan or other requirements.

The Parish Council will use CIL money it receives to address community infrastructure needs based on priorities and projects identified by the community and listed within the neighbourhood plan and/or subsequently developed.



Built & Natural Environment

Objective

To support the retention and enhancement of the existing Conservation Areas

Policy BN1 Conservation Areas

New development will be supported within the Conservation Area provided that:

- It preserves and enhances the character and local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area.
- It is sympathetic to the site's context and to the characteristics which are special to the East & North Coker Conservation Areas.
- The materials used, scale and form are considered to be appropriate and sympathetic to the Conservation Area and its setting.

Objective

To protect and enhance heritage assets

Policy BN2 Listed Buildings

Proposals involving new development or changes to listed buildings will be assessed having regard to the impact on the heritage asset and its conservation value, but will be supported where it would improve, restore or maintain the fabric of a listed building. Development which would have a negative or harmful impact on a listed building, its curtilage or its setting will not be supported unless a clear justification is presented that there would be substantial public benefits which would outweigh the loss or harm to the building.

Objective

To secure good design in new development, and to protect, enhance and invest in the natural and built environment through a range of local projects and improvements

Policy BN3 General design

Layouts for new development should be designed to the highest possible standard, taking account of the characteristics of the Parish in relation to the nature and form of existing development and the provision of open areas and access to the surrounding countryside.

Dependent on the size and scale of individual sites, planning applications will be expected to:

- a) make sensitive use of natural landscape
- b) make provision for open green space, linked to the wider natural environment and accessible to the public
- c) provide highways and vehicular accesses that incorporate trees and landscaping and include car parking, footpaths, soft boundary treatments and sensitively designed and located gardens
- d) provide well-designed groups of houses, located in attractive, inclusive and secure spaces
- e) respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation
- f) maintain a 'human scale' in which individuals feel comfortable and secure
- i) create safe and accessible environments by incorporating "Secured by Design" principles

Examination

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Your Parish,
Your Plan

Community Services & Facilities

Objective

To provide and support the retention of a range of service and community facilities supporting sustainable growth

Policy ECCF1 Retail, café, leisure & pub

- Planning applications for the provision, conversion or extension of retail, cafe and uses, including public houses, which are designed to provide local facilities and improve commercial attractiveness, will be supported.
- Proposals that result in the loss of community facilities including pub, village hall, facilities (cafe) will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the continued existing use is unviable.
- The conversion of rural buildings to farm shops, which contribute to the rural economy, the development of a community operated shop within the Parish will be supported

Objective

To protect open space, sport and recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles and the well-being of residents in the Parish

Policy ECCF2 Local Sporting, Leisure & Recreational facilities

Proposals for the improvement of the sporting, social and recreational facilities or the Parish will be supported. Any proposals for built development that are on sites of these amenities but not associated with these uses and/or will result in the loss of facilities, will be resisted.

Local access to facilities will bring health, welfare and community benefits. Offering service and community facilities will support sustainable living and future growth



- j) enclose entrances to driveways carefully, taking account of the immediate context, avoiding garden walls that are too tall and defensive looking, or too small and suburban; hedge planting in non-thorn species is preferred
- k) consider the impact of cabling, satellite dishes, aerials, burglar alarms and security lighting

Character of East Coker varies as a result of evolution. Development should improve and enhance the character of the area.

Objective

To ensure that the distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern, historical assets, natural environment and biodiversity of the Parish are protected and enhanced

Policy BN4: General Landscape Character

Development proposals will be assessed with regard to their potential impact on recognised assets or features of historic value and the contribution they make to the character and culture of East Coker Parish.

Where appropriate, planning conditions will be imposed to mitigate impacts or require further investigation historic or archaeological value.

Schemes that will seriously adversely affect such assets will not be supported.

In particular, new development should, wherever possible:

- Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows.
- Where new trees are proposed, these should, wherever possible, be appropriate disease resistant native species.

Policy BN5 Local Greenspace

The Local Green Space defined on the Proposals Map provides a series of important greenspaces and links within the otherwise built up area of East Coker which provide important physical and visual links and/or are important landscape or open areas. Proposals for permanent built development within these areas will be resisted and the areas protected for their landscape, recreational and/or amenity value, as well as for benefits to wildlife.



Policy BN6 Wildlife Habitats

Development will be supported provided it would not cause direct or indirect harm to any site designated for its wildlife value and where it includes proposals to protect or restore any existing features, or create new features of wildlife habitat, particularly where these form linkages between habitats within or beyond the site.

The rich natural and cultural environment is an asset to East Coker and should be protected.

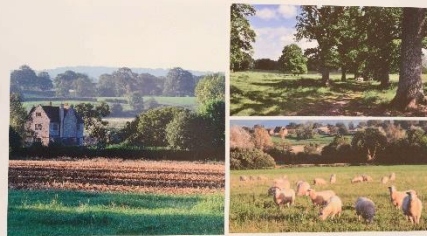
Objective

To resist the development of the highest quality agricultural land so as to retain its potential for food production

Policy BN7 High Quality Agricultural Land

Proposals for further development on areas of high quality Grade 1 agricultural land within East Coker will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that public benefits outweigh the importance of retaining such land for food production.

Grade 1 agricultural land and its potential for food production is recognized as an intrinsic element in supporting the sustainable growth of East Coker Parish.



Your Parish,
Your Plan

Do you belong to a
Youth Club?

If so, which one?

Sailing Sutter Bingham
Canoeing Club
Color players
Soccer Club
Reaching
Pole group
Bowling
Cubs
Scouts
Crickets Club (all ages)
W1 Royal British Legion
Wine Circle
Pine Orchard / Seaboard

Name _____ Group _____

Time to Share
BARNSTON
Keep it
Wind Circle

FUTURE ACTION PLAN

PLEASE ADD YOUR IDEAS FOR
PROJECTS + IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PARK

- * More dog bins needed. Yes please! ✓✓✓✓✓
- * SPEED LIMIT SIGNS ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- * Pub+shop! ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- * More Cycling Paths ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- * A bus on a Saturday! ✓✓✓✓✓
- * Small green areas b/t between developments ✓✓✓✓✓
- * school traffic congestion ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ urgent
- * More Bridleways ✓
- * 'SET-ASIDE' IN SOME OF THE FIELDS ✓✓✓✓✓

Proposed Local Greenspace in East Coker

Site & Location	Characteristics	Community benefits
Playing Fields at Longfurlong Lane	Important Open space within village for range of sporting activities	Health, well-being, physical activity benefits for both local community and those from wider area. Visually attractive large open area than opens into wider countryside
Junction Mill Close and Long Furlong Lane	Small but attractive area of open land with mature tree	Important focal point within this part of the village. Seen and passed by the whole community on regular basis
Land at Tellis Cross	Open space area providing visual setting for development and important informally supervised play area for local residents' children	Health, well-being, physical activity benefits for local community, especially children. Provides attractive setting and aspect for Tellis Cross houses
School Playing Field	Site contained by school and adjacent development	Essential area of open space for use by children in association with the school and valuable green space within this part of the built up area of the village
'The Paddock' & Adjacent open area in front of West Well House/Cottage	Wooded and planted open space area with easy public access, in historic part of village close to church, alms-houses and parkland	Extremely attractive and beautiful, open area, well used by public and visually well related to church, providing valuable setting for the church as well as the entrance to Coker Court

'Your Parish – Your Plan' - East Coker Neighbourhood Plan

The Next Steps & Estimated Timetable

Time Period	Tasks & Actions
2015	
October	Preparation for Consultation Event on 10 October. Review and Update of process, request for ideas for Project/Action Plan
	Analysis of Consultation results, preparation of summary report, identification of new/key issues for Plan
	Update/review meeting with SSDC Planning Department
November/ December	Development of Vision & Objectives into Draft Policies
	Start on preparation of Plan Text and Reasoned Justification for Policies, based on evidence gathered and community consultation
2016	
January	Publicise progress of Plan in Parish Newsletter
January/ February	Further liaison with SSDC Planning on emerging policies to ensure policies in general conformity with strategic policies in South Somerset Local Plan and that Plan has had regard to National Planning Policy Framework
February	Request final confirmation of decision on need for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan or not, from SSDC
February/ March	Refining of Plan text and policies and in light of SSDC comments
March	Further Community Consultation 'Drop In' event on 19 March in Dampier Room of Village Hall, Further opportunity for input in to Projects/Action Plan to be included as an Appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan

2016	
April /May	Amend and completion of Plan Text, Policies, Maps, Action Plan etc. Further check with SSDC
May- July	Formal 6 weeks Pre-Submission Consultation with public and statutory organisations; Environment Agency. Heritage England etc. Exhibition, Questionnaire
May- July	Prepare draft 'Basic Conditions' & Consultation Statements as required by Neighbourhood Plan Regulations
August	Analysis of formal consultation responses Amendments to Plan if required
September	Completion of 'Basic Conditions' & Consultation Statements
September/ October	Submission of Neighbourhood Plan to South Somerset DC with view to formal 'Examination' by Independent Inspector
Date to be determined	Modification to Plan if required by Inspector
Date to be determined	Local Parish Referendum, aiming for more than 50% support for the Plan from those who vote
Date to be determined	Completion and Adoption of Plan
	Implementation of Plan and used as a Material Planning Consideration to help in determining Planning Applications along with NPPF and South Somerset Local Plan

