



**Submitted Plan to South Somerset
District Council & for Examination
East Coker Parish Council
Regulation 15 - Consultation Statement**

April 2018

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Appendix 1

Summary of Comments Made by the Public during the Consultation process and how these are reflected in Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Schedule of Consultation documents referred to and on ECNP Website

- 1 CS1 2013 Parish Community Consultation Survey Form**
- 2 CS2 2013 Parish Newsletter about Plan**
- 3 CS3 2013 Survey Results Summary**
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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Paragraph 15 (2) which defines a “consultation statement” as *a document which:*

- a) contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;*
- (b) explains how they were consulted;*
- (c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and*
- (d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.*

1.2 The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared under the auspices of the 2011 Localism Act that gave Parish Councils and other relevant bodies the ability to prepare a statutory Neighbourhood Plan to help guide development in their local areas. These powers give local people the opportunity to shape new development, as planning applications are determined in accordance with national planning policy and the local development plan and any other material planning considerations. Once finally ‘made’ the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan will form part of this planning policy framework.

1.3 This Statement provides details of the way in which the plan has been prepared and the different consultation methods that have been used to ensure that not only local people, but also a wide range of statutory and other bodies have had the opportunity to have their input into the Plan. The aim has been to ensure that as broad a range of people as possible have been able to have input, with a view to developing a consensus on the way forward for East Coker in the future

1.4 This Consultation Statement clearly demonstrates that there has been extensive community engagement which has informed the content of the Plan, together with the national and local planning context provided by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Adopted South Somerset Local Plan which achieved this status whilst the Neighbourhood Plan was under preparation. Consideration

has also been given to the fact that South Somerset DC has started the review of the Local Plan, together with and the publication of their Housing and Employment Land Availability document and Strategic Housing Market Assessment in late 2016.

- 1.5 From the outset, the Parish Council and Plan Group were keen to ensure that the Plan reflected the views of the local community, as evidenced through feedback from questionnaires, surveys, and consultation events.
- 1.6 The preparation leading to the publication of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan has therefore included a considerable consultation effort throughout the process that was driven by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, that was established by the Parish Council at the outset of the process, but and which has had a variety of members over the time that the plan has been in preparation. The Group has reported regularly back to the full East Coker Parish Council, to ensure that all local Councillors have been well informed about the plan's progress and issues.
- 1.7 Engagement has also been undertaken with planning officers from South Somerset District Council's Planning Department who have provided comments at various stages of the Plan's preparation and assisted with provision of Ordnance Survey Maps required for the Neighbourhood Plan, for which the group is most appreciative.
- 1.8 From the beginning it was identified that active and effective consultation would be critical in producing a Plan which should ultimately win the support of the residents of the Parish.

2.0 THE PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

2.1 The following posters were displayed at the Public Exhibition and Consultation Events held in October 2015 and March 2016 to help illustrate the process to the public.

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.

Plan Process

Work has progressed on writing of the plan and preparation of the policies to be included in the plan and other technical information and this has been discussed with South Somerset Planning Department who have offered advice. Consultation via the 'Drop-in' sessions in March 2016 & 2017 provided further opportunities for seeking local peoples' views on the content of the plan, related to various different land uses.

Finalisation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan

This includes a written statement, a consultation statement and a proposal map. It policies for:

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

Regulation 14 Pre-submission consultation

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

Next Steps

Following this, changes to the Plan have been made and the Plan is to be subject to an independent 'Health Check' to ensure it meets the required regulations. After any further changes, it will be submitted to the District Council who will arrange for the Neighbourhood Plan to have a further consultation period and then 'Examined' by an independent planning inspector, who will assess whether or not it meets all the necessary requirements and regulations. The Inspector may propose modifications to the Plan.

Modifications

If these are required, then they will be made before the Plan proceeds to Referendum.

Referendum

Once the Plan has been examined and approved by the District Council, 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.

Summary Timeline of Consultation - Included in Neighbourhood Plan

Community Engagement Key Themes & Issues

3.4 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 policies set out in the Plan. The community engagement exercises held in October 2015 and March 2016 were considered to be particularly successful in engaging with the local community and securing local opinions.

3.5 A Consultation Statement will show how the community has been kept well informed about progress on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and how residents, employees and the owners/managers of businesses in the Parish have been involved in the Plan process and its preparation through surveys, questionnaires and exhibition/open days. Communication has also been undertaken through articles in the Parish Newsletter which goes free into every household and business in the Parish, and an updated page on the Parish Council's NP Website.

Extensive consultation has therefore been the foundation for the development of the Plan and this has included the following events and activities:

Designation and Awareness Raising

13 January 2013 - Parish Council makes application for Neighbourhood Plan Designation.

10 September 2013 - SSDC approval of Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area.

26 October 2013 - East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Launch Day.

Consulting on what really matters to the community - Issue gathering

October 2013 to January 2014 - Parish Survey distributed, collected and analysed.

2013 and 2014 - Fact finding, Research and Evidence Base gathering.

February 2014 - NP Preliminary Survey Report finalised.

26 May 2014 - Evidence Base Report finalised.

Feedback to the community and consensus building - verification of vision and objectives

July 2014 - Village Fete feedback to Parishioners.

July to October 2014 - Work up Draft Vision and Objectives.

November/December 2014 - Consult on Draft Vision and Objectives.

June/July 2015 - Review SSDC response to policy intents.

July 2015 - Conservation Areas - preliminary work passed to Parish Council.

August 2015 - Engage new consultants - review progress and previous work. Framework and timetable for future development of the plan agreed.

September 2015 - Prepare up-date questionnaire and plan: 'Your Parish Your Plan' Open Day.

16 October 2015 - 'Your Parish Your Plan' Open Day with Neighbourhood Plan Group and advisers on hand to explain the Plan and answer questions.

January 2016 - Update of Neighbourhood Plan included in Parish Newsletter.

March 2016 - Further exhibition informal 'Drop In' consultation event in Village Hall on Draft Plan and Policies, with Plan Group members and advisers on hand to explain the Plan and answer questions.

May 2016 - Further engagement with East Coker School & Update. Survey of Local Community Groups.

June 2016 - Presentation and plan review with Parish Council.

December 2016 - Approval by ECPC November 2016 followed by consultation period.

See Section 12 for a detailed future time-line.

2.2 This extensive consultation process is explained in more detail in Section 3 below. In addition, there was the opportunity for the public to submit views at any time on the Neighbourhood Plan website

<http://www.eastcokerparish.com/neighbourhood-plan/>

2.3 As noted in the table above the Parish Council decided in January 2013 to prepare the Plan and this was agreed by South Somerset District Council in September 2013. The area of the Plan encompasses the whole parish as shown on the Plan below and which illustrates the close proximity and relationship with Yeovil; the largest town in South Somerset.



2.4 The Parish Council established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and this has involved a range of local people with the composition of the group changing over time and currently is chaired by one of the Parish Councillors. The Group has met regularly over the past 4 years and has over this time involved those living and working within the Parish, who had an interest in the project and who brought a degree of expertise. In addition various consultants have been employed over a period of time to assist the Group with different tasks with this being funded partly through 'Locality' Grants, for which the Group and Council were very appreciative.



- 2.5 East Coker Parish Council and some residents were heavily involved in the South Somerset Local Plan Inquiry due to the proposal for a major growth area at Keyford, on the southern fringe of Yeovil but within East Coker Parish and some local people therefore have a good understanding of the planning system and have developed a high degree of expertise in population and housing estimates, the land supply issue and related matters.

3 Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

- 3.1 To elaborate on the list of events highlighted in the table above, the following provides a summary of the work undertaken and actions implemented. The Parish Council's website; <http://www.eastcokerparish.com/neighbourhood-plan/> also contains more detailed information about the progress of the Plan, together with the documents referred to below, that are cross referenced via **live weblink in this document**. The relevant contents of the website have been used as the basis for explaining below, the detailed consultation process that was undertaken which also provide useful and essential weblinks to the surveys, results of consultation and further detailed information.
- 3.2 The use of weblinks is a technique to make those reading this document, including the Independent Examiner, aware of these documents, rather than appending them individually or providing the information in printing form. Further reference is therefore made to these links below, as appropriate, in the chronological order in which the work was undertaken from September 2013 through to the consideration of Regulation 14 comments and the Group's response to them in June/July 2017. This was followed by an independent 'Health Check' which was arranged through Locality, with the report being received in November 2017.
- 3.3 ***To access the Document CS 1 et al, press Control and Click on the link***

September 2013

In September 2013, SSDC approved the designation of East Coker as a Neighbourhood Plan area.

October 2013 – January 2014

The first Parish Survey was prepared, distributed to every household in the Parish, collected and analysed. The survey form is available as **Document CS1** ...Articles for the Parish News were also published at this time and an example is

Document CS2

2013 – 2014 March 2014

Further research, fact finding, discussion and evidence/information gathering was undertaken by the Group.

February 2014

The Preliminary Results of the survey were finalised with a summary of the results available as **Document CS3**

The results of this survey work and views expressed by local people identified some key issues and influenced the preparation of the plan. These were:

- The need for affordable and shared equity housing for local people
- The importance and value of the high quality of the local environment and countryside;
- Support for local facilities and services
- Traffic and highway issues and concerns
- The support for conservation areas
- The need for sympathetic design in the rural development
- The importance of grade I land and agricultural land and the importance of agriculture to the Parish
- The need to preserve the many Historic buildings and their surroundings.

The outcome of this early consultation exercise subsequently influenced the themes, vision, objectives and policies that were subsequently developed for the Plan.

May 2014

The Evidence Base Report was published in May 2014, having been prepared by one of the

consultants appointed by the Group. This is provided as **Document CS4** and highlighted the need for additional work to be undertaken, which was advice followed by the Plan Steering Group.

July 2014

The Neighbourhood Plan group had a stall at the 2014 Summer Village Fete, which was used as a good opportunity to provide feedback on the survey work to that date and emerging ideas and issues. This also included discussion about the proposed Keyford Development and the Local Plan which was going through its statutory process at the time and which caused much debate generally in East Coker Parish.

July – October 2014

Work progressed gradually on the development of ideas for Draft Vision and Objectives for the Plan, drawing upon survey work, discussion with local people and advice from the early consultants.

June - July 2015

During this period, informal consultation was undertaken with South Somerset Planning Department on a document called 'Policy Intents'. This is provided as **Document CS5** with comments from SSDC also in **CS5**. These comments were carefully considered and the plan progressed, having regard to the advice given.

August 2015

At this time, the composition of the Plan Steering Group changed as the original group had committed a significant amount of time in progressing the Plan to this point and considered that others should make their contribution towards what became apparent was a very significant piece of work. As a result other members of the Parish Council became involved, as well as a number of other interested local people.

At this time, new planning consultants were also employed to help take the Group through the Plan preparation process in more detail than hitherto, with a view to making progress on the Plan. This resulted in the preparation of a new framework and timetable for the future development of the Plan, [although perhaps inevitably this timetable has slipped!] This is included as **Document CS6** and was agreed by the Parish Council.

September 2015

Given the time lapse since the first detailed survey and questionnaire, it was decided to prepare and circulate a second, shorter, summary questionnaire to see whether local opinions had changed. This is provided as **Document CS7A** and **CS7B**. Preparations were also made for a major consultation event entitled....

'Your Parish – Your Plan' that was an all-day public engagement and consultation event held in the village Hall on Saturday 15 October 2015.

A series of attractive posters featuring local people were prepared to publicise this event, as illustrated.



October 2015

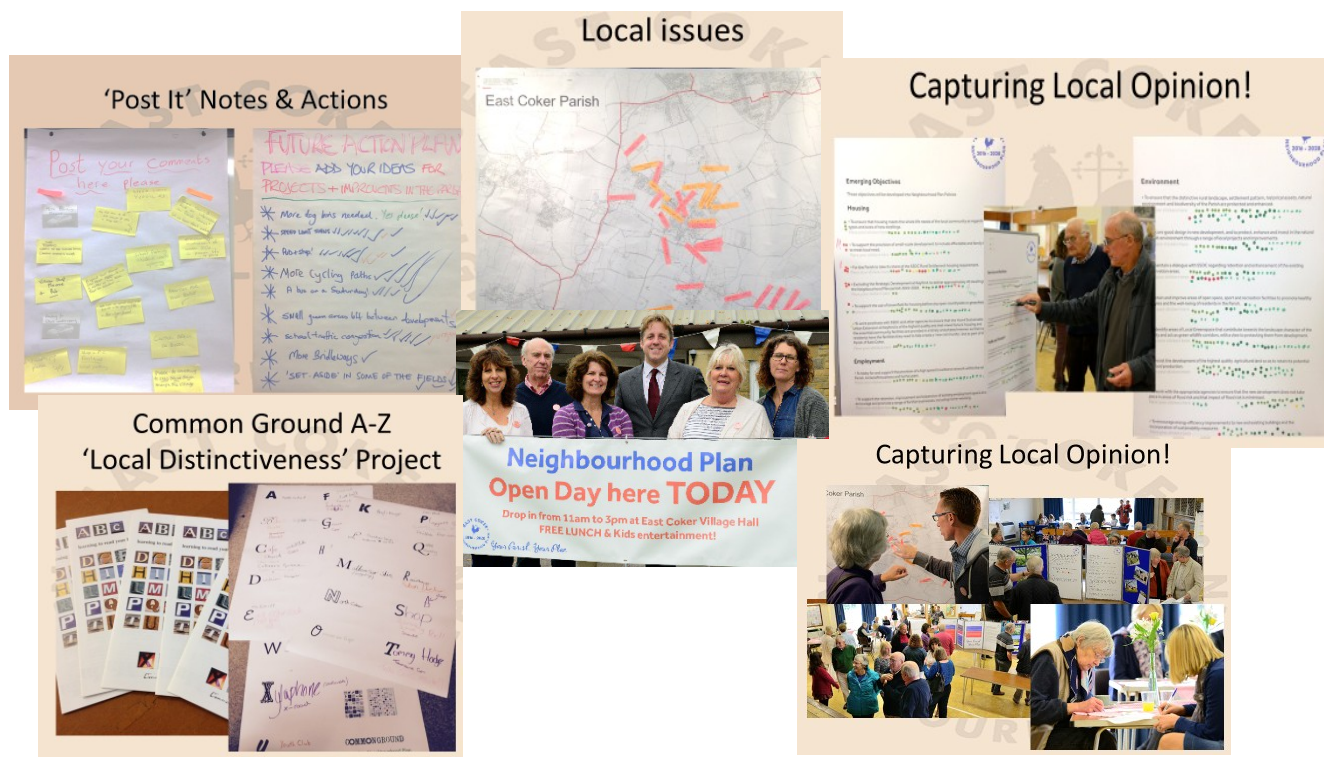
The exhibition was duly held on 15 October and was very well attended.

Displays and other material included:

- Members of the Group and Consultants on hand to explain the emerging plan and policies
- A wide range of information boards
- The 2015 Questionnaire/Survey Results Summary
- Vision & Objectives to comment upon
- Update on Keyford Plans
- Post-It Note board for ideas
- Suggested '*Issues, Actions and Improvements* Board
- Map for attendees to identify where they lived
- Rolling presentation of old photographs of the Parish
- A Neighbourhood Plan Logo and Stickers to foster local 'ownership' of the Plan
- Childrens Activities & entertainment
- Generous Free lunches for All!



The consultation event was also attended by local District Councillors and the local MP, thereby helping to ensure the widest possible understanding of the direction that the Plan was taking. A presentation that summarises and illustrates the event is provided as **Document CS8** with some examples set out below:



Some of Results and Feedback from the event which helped influence the Plan included the following:

- Over 150 local people attended from throughout the Parish, including some who had never engaged with the Plan before
- Many stayed for a long time & met new local people & neighbours for the first time
- Very positive feedback was received about the event in the following days and weeks
- The Summary of Responses from comments made at the events on notes and boards is as follows:

Vision & Objectives	% Support %
Overall Vision	100
Housing	
Whole Life Housing Needs	96
Local Housing Needs	76
Take share SSDC Rural Housing	26
Excluding Keyford 40 dwellings in plan period	64
Brownfield as priority over greenfield	97
Work with SSDC on Keyford	95
Employment	
Broadband Improvement	97
Support Business Expansion	84
Environment	
Protection of Assets	97
Good design	100
Dialogue with SSDC re Conservation Areas	86
Improve Sports & Recreation	100
Greenspace & Wildlife Corridors	100
Agricultural land	97
Work with Agencies on Flood Risk	96
Energy Efficiency	89
Services	
Maintain & Enhance	100
Promote Retail	97
Support Health Provision	68
Transport & Highways	
Engage with Somerset CC	100
Footpaths	96
School issues	96
Improve Public Transport	100

This event and the response received gave the Plan Group the confidence to continue with

their work of the Plan on the basis that, whilst there total unanimity cannot be expected, there was broad consensus of support for the Vision and Objectives and other issues that had been raised and discussed. A copy of the summary of the questionnaire results is included as **Document CS9**

This included reference to the following:

- Housing Jobs & leisure were key issues
- Retail opportunities were poor
- Social Facilities were well used
- There was a strong community
- A good environment
- Car travel was dominant
- 20% people work from home
- 90% supported small scale affordable housing schemes.

During **October 2015** a separate **Business Questionnaire**/survey was undertaken of the main local businesses based in the Parish, notably those at the Halves Lane industrial site. This did not include people who work independently from home. A copy of the questionnaire and summary of the results are included as **Document CS10**

Thirty eight questionnaires were sent out and this generated a 55% response rate. Out of the businesses that replied:

- 152 people are employed, of which 52% are full time
- 44% are part time and 4% are apprentices/trainees
- 37% provide formal training for their employees
- 47% were interested in offering opportunities to young people in the area, through apprenticeship and formal training schemes.

Places of residence of employees were;

- 28% in East Coker; 23% in surrounding villages; 26% in Yeovil and 10% elsewhere, which demonstrates a relatively localised workforce.
- Over 63% of the business owned their premises, whilst 37% were leasehold and 16% were home based.
- Local business is was relatively locally generated with East Coker at 21 %; within 5 miles 16%; Yeovil, 20% and elsewhere 27% and don't knows 16%.

The overall conclusion of the survey is that East Coker has a sound and stable business community that is generally content with its current situation; premises etc. If the development proceeds, additional employment land is planned at the Keyford site as part of a mixed use development within the Parish. This would provide further opportunities for economic growth, in order to create jobs and prosperity, reduce the need for people to travel to work greater distances by car, and could provide opportunities for the expansion and growth of local enterprises.

A formal request was made to South Somerset DC for a Screening Opinion, to establish whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment was required for the Plan. Following consultation with the statutory agencies in accordance with the SEA Regulations; Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency, the District Council advised that an SEA was *not* required. This confirmed a previous opinion and was received in April 2016, with a copy of the determination included as **Document CS11**. Work progressed on the preparation and writing of the Plan and its policies with input from both members of the local steering group and consultants.

An update on progress of the Plan was issued in the **January Parish Newsletter** that is circulated to all householders in the Parish and a further update in April 2016. These are shown as **Document CS12** and as an example, the **January Newsletter** stated as follows:

EAST COKER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE JANUARY 2016

Work has progressed over the past months on the continuation of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan Group has taken account of views expressed by the local community, through resident and business questionnaires and as a result of the very successful consultation event that was held in the East Coker Hall on 10 October 2015, when over 150 local people attended and provided an excellent input into the Plan's development.

The Group is also engaging with the District and County Councils, as well as other agencies such as Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.

Work has progressed on the writing of policies, based on the vision and objectives that were outlined at the October event and which received good public support. These deal with all the subject matters addressed in the Plan, such as housing, employment and business, community facilities, the built and natural environment and transport and infrastructure. The policies in the Plan have generally to conform to both the National Planning Policy Framework and the South Somerset Local Plan.

A schedule of projects and actions is also being drawn up to go with the Plan, based on ideas put forward by the community.

Before the Plan is submitted to South Somerset District Council and then published for formal public consultation, the Group believe it is important that the community is consulted again on the working draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, with a view to ensuring that there is a broad a consensus of support for the plan and its policies.

*There will therefore be another more informal Community Consultation event on **Saturday 19 March, 11.00am – 2.00pm in the Dampier Room, at the East Coker Hall**, when copies of the Draft Plan, the policies and other information will be displayed and the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Group will be on hand to answer questions.*

In due course, the Plan has to be 'Examined' by an independent Planning Inspector and also subject to a local Referendum when over 50% of those voting have to support the Plan, for it to be finally adopted or 'Made'. This does all take time, but the Plan will then be used by both the Parish and District Councils to help determine planning applications within the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan will then be part of the overall 'Development Plan' for the area.

***So please make a note of the next consultation event in your diary now!
East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Group, January 2016***

February 2016

In February 2016 a meeting was helped with South Somerset Planners to discuss and receive feedback on an early draft of the Plan. Helpful comments were made about the plan being more 'East Coker focused' and also the importance of tying in proposed actions and projects within the plan document where subject matters were discussed, as these could be delivered through Section 106 or CIL contributions and it was important for the District Council to know what the local priorities were.

March 2016

The further Neighbourhood Plan 'Drop-In' consultation event was held at the Village Hall on a Saturday 19 March 2016, [as advertised in the Newsletter in January] when the Draft Plan and its policies were displayed with further exhibition boards. Members of the Group and consultants were on hand to explain the plan and to answer questions. Over 70 people attended this event and again there was a positive atmosphere at the event, with support and appreciation for the work that the Steering Work was carrying out on the Plan, being expressed by many people. A note about the consultation process together with some photographs from this event are included as Document **CS13, with further details of the exhibition as Document CS13A.**

It has to be appreciated that many local people had concerns about the scale of development at the Keyford site, especially early on in the South Somerset Local Plan process when initially, 2500 houses were planned. By March 2016, it was recognised that the scale of development has reduced to 800 dwellings as a result of the Local Plan Inquiry, which some local people had played an active part in.

By this time, the outline planning application for Keyford had been submitted and therefore there was recognition that the scheme was to proceed and that effectively the Neighbourhood Plan would recognise and acknowledge this, but would not address detailed issues of the

Keyford development as this was progressing separately through the planning application process. This is not to suggest that all were content with the development, but given its inclusion in the adopted local plan, the aim locally was to ensure that it progressed in a comprehensive manner, with all the required infrastructure being provided as an integrated and properly phased part of the development.

Representations were made to SSDC and concerns expressed about the application, its process and the environmental statement, separate from the Neighbourhood Plan process.

For the most part therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan focused on the issues and the more modest scale of development that was envisaged in accordance with SSDC Local Plan Policy SS2, which affected the rest of the Parish. As a result of the March event, the Plan was continued, with the aim of ensuring that local issues and views were reflected in the Plan's text and policies.

May 2016

In addition a further consultation exercise was undertaken with a wide range of local community groups to ensure that as up to date response to local issues and requirements was obtained. The survey form is included as **Document CS14**. This concluded that there was little change in view since the previous consultation some years earlier.

June 2016

Following numerous alterations to the Plan, it was considered in Draft by the Parish Council in June 2016. Whilst there was still some outstanding work to be completed, the Council supported the Plan, with much discussion about the scale of housing growth that might be accommodated within the Parish during the Plan period. Consideration was given to comparing the rate of growth planned for the District as a whole and the scale that might be appropriate for the East Coker in its role as providing for a proportion of the overall development planned for 'Rural Settlements' in South Somerset as a whole, [in addition to the proposed Keyford site]. There were a number of members of the public in attendance to hear this debate.

July – November 2016

Work continued by the Group with consultant support on fine tuning the plan, its policies and completing the Proposals Map, as well as the Desk-Top Publishing, to ensure that the Plan was presented in an attractive and professional manner. The graphics work was undertaken by a local West Coker company, whose principals live in East Coker.

November 2016

Further informal officer level consultation was undertaken with the Planning Department of South Somerset DC. Some initial comments were provided, which are included as

Document CS15

A response was sent to SSDC confirming that some of the proposed changes would be accommodated at this stage, whilst others would await further review and more detailed comments from SSDC, following the Regulation 14 Consultation stage. The Group's response is provided as **Document CS16**. This was the approach adopted as the Steering group were very keen to present the Draft Plan to the local community, given the time taken to date to prepare the Plan to date. It has to be appreciated that the Steering Group was limited in numbers and that members have significant work, business and family commitments.

December 2016

The final of the Draft East Coker Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the full Parish Council at its meeting on 7 December 2016, together with a report setting out the comments from SSDC, as well as other proposed alterations and additions. The Draft Plan was unanimously approved for Regulation 14 Consultation, with the formal Minute of the Meeting included as

Document CS17

January – March 2017

Regulation 14 Consultation 23 January - 20 March 2017

In January 2017 a further newsletter updating local people on the Neighbourhood Plan, was published in the Parish Magazine [which is distributed free to all households in the parish] and this is included as **Document CS18**. This explained and promoted the forthcoming Regulation 14 Consultation on the Plan, including the March event, which was to take place from the end of January to the middle of March; with the dates finally be agreed as 23 January to 20 March 2017. The statutory 6 week consultation period was extended to 8 weeks to allow for any post-Christmas/New Year delays by statutory consultees. This newsletter also included the comments form for people to complete.

A copy of the **Schedule of Statutory Consultees** is included as **Document CS19**, whilst the consultation letter sent to Statutory Consultees as well as the posters advertising the consultation on the plan are included as **Document CS20**.

The main organisations such as the District and County Councils, and local Councillors were also sent hard copies, but others were sent an email with a cross link to the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan website, where the documents were available.

Hard copies of the Plan were also placed 'on deposit' for the local community to consult, at the Village Hall, the Helyar Arms, the Church, the Village Café and Foresters Arms, with strict instructions that these copies were not to be taken away. Posters were displayed at key locations in the Parish to publicise the availability of the Plan; Parish Council notice boards, other key locations, village café, bus stops etc. and a large banner was erected at one of the most prominent locations in the village, advertising the consultation event on **Saturday 6 March 2017** in the Village Hall, which was well within the consultation period, thereby providing an opportunity for people to submit comments by the deadline on 20 March. Photographs of some of the posters and the banner promoting the consultation on the Plan are included as **Document CS21**. Great effort was therefore made to ensure that publicity about the Regulation 14 Consultation was distributed widely throughout the Parish.

March 2017 Consultation Event

Photographs illustrating the 11 March 2017 consultation event are included as **Document CS22**. At the March event posters were displayed that summarised '***What People Had Said***' throughout the various consultation exercises over the preparation of the plan period, with an explanation of how the Plan had responded by including Policies to address the issues raised. This is included as **Document CS23**, which helps demonstrate that the Plan has had regard to public opinion throughout its progress. The public was also invited to submit further comments at the March event, with advice of the procedure provided where necessary. Also at the March event, recent newspaper articles about the SSDC Housing and Employment Land Availability Report were available and this provoked considerable discussion, as it referred to possibility of further development sites within East Coker. This document was only a pre-cursor to work on the Local Plan Review and the publication of an Issues paper which eventually took place in October 2017 as a first stage of the Plan Review. As the March event was held during Regulation 14 consultation period, it provided an opportunity for the local community to refresh its understanding of the plan and to help formulate any responses they wished to make to the Regulation 14 draft, as an important part of the consultation process. During the consultation period, downloads of the documents were available on the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan website.

Responses to Regulation 14 Consultation April

– July 2017

Over 100 comments were received on the Plan from statutory consultees and the public and were considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Group at a series of meetings.

As a result the summary of the comments, together with the Neighbourhood Plan Group's response was set out in a matrix form, together with Appendix A which addresses strategic housing issues and includes a detailed Housing Technical Paper, as well as Appendix B which addresses other policies in the Plan and proposed changes to reflect comments made, notably by SSDC. The matrix is **as Document CS24**, whilst Appendices A & B are included as **Documents 25 & 26** respectively

In the light of the representations received, amendments have been made to the Plan to reflect the changes agreed by the Plan Group and these are indicated on the schedule and in the Appendices, as well as of course in the revised plan.

The East Coker Parish Council Minutes following Regulation 14 Consultation are included as **Document CS27** whilst the notes of a meeting held with South Somerset DC Planning officers in July are included as **Document CS28**. Finally this Consultation Statement, **Document CS29** can be seen in full on the website as well.

During this April – July period progress was also made on the preparation and completion the required **Basic Conditions Report** and the final version is also included as a separate document on the Neighbourhood Plan website, together with the latest version of the Plan.

Following the approval of the revised Neighbourhood Plan by the Parish Council in July 2017 and the Plan has been subject to a NPIERS 'Healthcheck' prior to submission to South Somerset DC under Regulation 15 after December 2017.

4 Plan Preparation & Consultation Summary

4.1 In summary therefore, the preparation of the **East Coker Neighbourhood Plan** and its consultation has included the following:

- A review of other plans and relevant documents,
- Survey work and circulation questionnaires to every household in the Parish
- Numerous local consultation events/exhibitions to publicise the progress

of the Plan and seek local opinions in a positive and proactive manner

- Regular Newsletters via the Parish News
- Regular meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
- Engagement with South Somerset District Council planners
- Liaison and engagement with Somerset County Council Officers in view of its role as Highway Authority.
- The Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan was subject to public and statutory consultation between 23 January and 12 March; an 8 week period.
- Posters advertising this were placed around the Parish and advertised in the Parish News and on the Plan's website, as well as large banner put in in the village.
- A key local public consultation event in March 2017 during the Regulation 14 Consultation period, in the village hall when the draft plan for consultation was presented and enabled yet another opportunity for local people to express views, ask questions of the Neighborhood Plan Group and consultants and importantly, to submit comments on and discuss the Final Draft Plan.
- A summary of how the public's comments have been reflected and integrated into the policies in the Plan, is included as **Appendix 1** to this document.
- The Regulation 15 version of the Neighbourhood Plan which takes into account the representations received on the Pre-Submission Plan and has been amended as considered necessary or appropriate, and has been subject to the NPIERS 'Health Check' review, prior to submission to the District Council. The health check only recommended a number of minor alterations to the Plan and this has been undertaken as well as an update of this Consultation Statement.

- 4.2 Following the submission to the District Council in accordance with Regulation 15, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a further 6 week period of consultation organised by South Somerset District Council, who will then arrange the independent Examination of the Plan. Any recommendations made by the Examiner will be considered by South Somerset DC in consultation with East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Parish Council. The Plan will then be amended accordingly, before being considered by the local community by way of a Local Referendum. Provided it is supported by over 50% of those who vote, the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan will be 'Made' and so adopted by South

Somerset District Council, as planning policy for East Coker Parish and will become part of the statutory Development Plan.

- 4.3 Therefore, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Guidance and Regulations, it is considered that the following requirement has been met and that this is reflected in this Consultation Statement, as well as in the Plan itself, which refers regularly to the views of the local community and its influence on the plan's policies:

...“A qualifying body should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its neighbourhood plan and ensure that the wider community:

- Is kept fully informed of what is being proposed*
- Is able to make their views known throughout the process*
- Has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging neighbourhood plan*
- Is made aware of how their views have informed the draft neighbourhood plan.”*

- 4.4 It is firmly believed that the above has been achieved and that the submitted plan accurately represents the views and aspirations of the local community in respect of the future planning of the Parish, the protection of its heritage assets and the implementation of further improvements and projects.

The Healthcheck Examiner provided the following **Summary of Recommendations**:

“It is apparent that much hard work has been devoted to the production of the draft East Coker Neighbourhood Development Plan (“the draft ECNDP”). In the opinion of the Examiner [Edward Cousins, Barrister] conducting this Health Check, subject to recommended modifications and amendments, the draft ECNDP is sufficiently robust in its content. It complies with the prescribed conditions of the 2012 Regulations; and it fulfils the requirements of the Basic Conditions.

In summary, the draft ECNDP has been positively prepared; it is justified; it is effective; and it is internally coherent and consistent. The purpose and structure of the report is therefore supportable. It is not in breach of any of the relevant legislative considerations.”

A number of relatively minor changes were recommended to the Plan and these were made. A copy of the Health Check Report is available as **Document CS30**.

Sandra Snelling: Chair, East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Group

Bridget Sugg: Chair, East Coker Parish Council & Member of NP Group

April 2018

**Submitted Plan for
Examination**

East Coker Parish Council

**Regulation 15
Draft Consultation Statement
Appendix**

Appendix 1 Summary of Comments Made by the Public during Consultation and How these are reflected in Neighbourhood Plan Policies

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Draft East Coker Neighbourhood Plan</i> <i>During consultation events and in responses to Questionnaires.....</i> <i>.....You told us in...</i>	<i>What we have done.../What the Plan</i> <i>includes to address these issues</i>
Vision & Objectives	2015: 100% supported the Vision; 90% Supported the Objectives	Vision & Objectives incorporated within the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan
Employment and Business	2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45% In favour of new employment sites: many felt Halves Lane was unattractive and in need of repair and revitalisation, new modern buildings wanted but on a limited scale • 52% Not enough employment opportunities • 55% Wanted more business space and jobs created 2015: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% said provision for jobs was average 36% said it was poor • 84% supported the retention, improvement and expansion of employment 	Policy ECEM 1 Retention of local employment at Halves Lane Policy ECEM 2: Business development Policy ECEM 3: Promotion of Diverse Businesses Policy ECEM 4: Conversion of Rural buildings for business

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Draft East Coker Neighbourhood Plan</i> <i>During consultation events and in responses to Questionnaires.....</i> <i>.....You told us in...</i>	<i>What we have done.../What the Plan includes to address these issues</i>
Traffic Transport & Infrastructure	<p>2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78% considered children did not have a safe route to school • Just under 50% said there are adequate safe & cycling & walking routes (pavements, footpaths), whilst over 50% said routes are not adequate • Just under 60% had a driveway or access to other space to be able to park their car off the highway. Only around 5% of car owners reported that they regularly parked their car on the highway • 97% of car owners are satisfied with their current parking arrangements • 85% had broadband and 48% satisfied with speed. <p>2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options suggested by the community that would be supported to ease congestion included more use of village hall car park with footpath through to school and traffic calming • 45% satisfied with broadband and mobile phone coverage • 97% high speed broad ban provision. • 96% wanted to work with agencies re flood risk and new development • 89% supported energy efficiency and sustainability 	<p>Policy ECT 1: Walking, Cycle Routes & Bridleways as part of New Development</p> <p>Policy ECT 2: Highway safety, notably Tellis Cross to village centre route</p> <p>Policy ECT 3: Car Parking in New Development</p>
Community Services and Facilities	<p>2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56% were happy with the facilities on offer • 56% said 'no' to the need for existing facilities to be improved • 90% said the village shop was important and would like the services extended to include a range of facilities <i>[but shop since closed]</i> 	

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Draft East Coker Neighbourhood Plan</i> <i>During consultation events and in responses to Questionnaires.....</i> <i>.....You told us in...</i>	<i>What we have done.../What the Plan</i> <i>includes to address these issues</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% supported the suggested idea for a community run project such as a tea room • 54% said they would consider accessing healthcare closer to home • Children and young people 2013: • 66% said they played outside of the Parish because of better, more interesting facilities • 33% said they take part in sporting activities at the recreation grounds (Longfurlong, West Coker, Hardington and Mudford). • 56% said they are involved in clubs in the Parish. • Amongst all ages, the most “favourite things” about the parish of East Coker included friends; peaceful, caring community; nice walks and countryside; wildlife; church; cricket; stopping at Vicky’s shop for a chat; and school; plus it felt safe. • Dislikes included: unsafe roads; dog mess; litter, lack of pavements; the hills; too few young people; or, for quite a few, nothing! <p>2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44% said leisure opportunities were good, followed by 40% saying they were average • 46% said shopping opportunities were poor and inadequate • 34%....focusing on the need for a shop/post office or community shop • 97% wanted to promote retail provision • 100% Wanted to maintain and improve open, sport and recreational facilities • 68% supported provision of health centre at Keyford and other health services in Parish • 100% wanted improved and enhanced public transport 	<p>Policy ECCF 1: Local Sporting, Leisure & Recreational facilities</p> <p>Policy ECCF 2: Protection of Community Assets</p> <p>Health issues referred to in the Plan.</p> <p>Mentioned in the Plan but no ability to secure improvements</p>
Housing	<p>2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of respondents said they know somebody that has been unable to live in 	

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Draft East Coker Neighbourhood Plan</i> <i>During consultation events and in responses to Questionnaires.....</i> <i>.....You told us in...</i>	<i>What we have done.../What the Plan includes to address these issues</i>
	<p>the Parish because of high house prices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority considered future developments should be aimed at young families (nearly 30%) and first time buyers (20%). • Nearly 30% considered housing development should be less than 5 homes per year, 35% less than 10 and 22% less than 20 per year. • Only around 10% of the local population were prepared to countenance up to 50 or more new dwellings per year being constructed in the parish. <p>2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% said provision of housing was average • 89% said they would support small scale affordable housing schemes • 75% would support the provision of small scale development to meet local need • 96% wanted to ensure housing meets whole life needs • 97% support use of brownfield sites over open countryside • 26% want the Parish to take share of SSDC rural housing requirement • 63% wanted approx. 40 dwellings over the plan period (excluding Keyford) 	<p>Policy ECH 1 - Housing Provision</p> <p>Policy ECH2 - General Housing Considerations</p> <p>Policy ECH3 Provision of Amenity Space</p> <p>Policy ECH 4: Affordable & Social Housing</p> <p>Policy ECH5: Conversion of Rural Buildings</p>
The Built & Natural Environment	<p>2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98% said that one of the reasons they live or work in East Coker is because it is rural • 90% felt there were aspects of the Parish under threat, notably the rural nature being under threat from the proposed urban expansion due to SSDC's housing strategy and the consequent congestion of roads. • 71% said that development is acceptable on brown field land • 85% are aware of the parish ranger scheme and 98% are happy to finance the post from council tax 	<p>Policy ECCN 1: Listed Buildings</p> <p>Policy ECCN 2: Design in the Conservation Areas</p> <p>Policy ECCN 3: General Design</p> <p>Policy ECCN 4: General Landscape Character</p>

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Draft East Coker Neighbourhood Plan</i> <i>During consultation events and in responses to Questionnaires.....</i> <i>.....You told us in...</i>	<i>What we have done.../What the Plan</i> <i>includes to address these issues</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked 'what makes ECP special?' 28% thought it was the countryside, 26% the setting, 20% the buildings and 18% the architecture 65% of respondents were happy with the present conservation area, but others wanted to enlarge it No single attribute was cited as being most characteristic of East Coker but thatched roofs, hamstone house walls & mullion windows all scored over 10% and led the suggestions. When asked if there are specific buildings that typify the area the general response was hamstone with thatch 95% said that it was important to keep grade 1 agricultural land for food production <p>2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% wanted to protect local green spaces and wildlife corridors 100% wanted to secure good design in new development 97% wanted to maintain highest agricultural land 	<p>Policy ECCN 5: Heritage Assets & reference to conservation areas in section 10.6</p> <p>Policy ECCN 8: High Quality Agricultural Land</p> <p>Policy ECCN 9: Wildlife Habitats</p> <p>Policy ECCN 6 Local Greenspace</p> <p>Policy ECCN 7 Views & Vistas within the Parish and Local Landscape</p>

.....end.....

