

# Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031

## Consultation Statement

Published by Storrington & Sullington and  
Washington Parish Councils to comply  
with requirement of Section 15 (2), Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning  
(General) Regulations 2012

January 2018



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## Membership of the Steering Group (September 2013 to November 2017)

<b>Chair</b>	Anna Worthington-Leese	Storrington & Sullington Parish Council
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Lesley Britt	Washington Parish Council
<b>Members</b>	Christine Beglan	Washington Parish Council
	Glenn Donnelly	Storrington & Sullington Parish Council (Resigned Nov 2014)
	Patrick Heeley	Washington Parish Council
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	David Horwood	Washington Parish Council
	Richard Jerman	Storrington & Sullington Parish Council
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	Lisa Wheatley	Storrington & Sullington Parish Council

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared for Storrington & Sullington Parish Council (S&SPC) and Washington Parish Council (WPC). It is in support of the preparation of the Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (SSWNP).
- 1.2 This Consultation Statement provides details of the stakeholder engagement that has taken place as part of the preparation of the SSWNP, the main issues that have emerged through the process and how they have been addressed. It describes how preparation of the SSWNP accords with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 1.3 This Consultation Statement sets out a summary of the legislative background (section 2); The Plan preparation process (section 3); the principles and process of community and stakeholder engagement followed in the preparation of the SSWNP (section 4); a chronology of the consultation processes (section 5); a summary of the main issues raised during these consultations and how these have shaped the Pre-submissions SSWNP Regulation 14 (July 2017) (section 6); how the SSWNP and SA have been prepared (section 7) and a summary of the main issues raised through the Regulation 14 consultation exercises and how these have been addressed in the Submission version Regulation 16 SSWNP (November 2017) (sections 8 & 9). A conclusion is provided at section 10.
- 1.4 This Consultation Statement demonstrates the level of public engagement undertaken at every stage of the process and how stakeholder consultation has been key to and positively shaped the SSWNP and its preparation.
- 1.5 This Consultation Statement differs from some others in its content, as the SSWNP Submission Plan (July 2015) was subject to independent examination and in March 2016 the Report of Examination concluded that the Plan should not proceed to referendum.
- 1.6 Since the publication of the Examiner's Report and Decision Statement, the SSWNP Steering Group has been working with the support of Horsham District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority to address the concerns raised and to produce the SSWNP Submission Plan (January 2018).
- 1.7 There should be a clear distinction between the pre-examination version of the SSWNP and the SSWNP Submission Plan (January 2018) Where this Consultation Statement refers to the content of the SSWNP, it references the post examination version of the SSWNP and supporting documents which demonstrate how the Examiner's comments and findings have been used to inform the SSWNP Submission Plan (January 2018).
- 1.8 To aid the reader, a timeline of the process to produce the Neighbourhood Plan has been produced and this can be found at appendix 1.

## 2. Legislative Background

- 2.1 The requirement for a Consultation Statement to accompany the Submission Version (Regulation 16) SSWNP November 2017 is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Regulation 15(1) states that *“Where a qualifying body submits a plan proposal to the local planning authority, it must include...” amongst other things 15(1) (b) “a consultation statement”.*

Regulation 15(2) states that a consultation statement means a document which:

- (a) *“Contains details of the people and bodies consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan;*
  - (b) *explains how they were consulted;*
  - (c) *summarises the main issues and concerns raised by those consulted; and*
  - (d) *describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and where relevant addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan”*
- 2.2 The appendices to this Consultation Statement include summaries of the consultation exercises undertaken as part of the preparation of the SSWNP, undertaken in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Planning Regulations 2012. This states that:

*“Before submitting a plan proposal to the local planning authority, a qualifying body must*

- (a) *Publicise, in a manner that is likely to bring to the attention of people who live, work or carry on a business in the neighbourhood area”*

## 3. The Plan preparation process

- 3.1 The process was initiated by Storrington & Sullington Parish Council (SSPC) on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013 when it resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. As the village of Storrington acts as a hub providing infrastructure and services to neighbouring parishes, invitations to take part in a cluster plan were extended to a number of adjoining Parish Councils; Washington Parish Council (WPC) resolved to join SSPC to produce a joint Neighbourhood Plan on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013.
- 3.2 On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013, the Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (SSWNP) Steering Group was formed, comprising four Members from each Parish Council and four volunteer residents of the Parishes (two chosen by each Parish Council). Terms of reference for the Steering Group were established at this meeting. Action in Rural Sussex were appointed as consultants to advise on the preparation of the SSWNP and an Agreement for the Provision of Services was signed by both parties on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2013.
- 3.3 In September 2013, an application was made to Horsham District Council (HDC) for designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and formal approval was received on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The Steering Group applied for grants from Locality and from Horsham District Council in November 2013 and funding was granted in December 2013.

- 3.4 The Steering Group held regular meetings throughout the process to plan for and review the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. These meetings were advertised and open to the public with the minutes published on the Parish Councils' websites ([www.storrington-pc.gov.uk](http://www.storrington-pc.gov.uk) & [www.washingtonparish.org.uk](http://www.washingtonparish.org.uk)).

## 4. Community /Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1 A public meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 to introduce the Neighbourhood Plan Process and recruit volunteers to be involved in the process. This meeting was attended by approximately 120 members of the public and 50 people were recruited to the following Focus Groups:
- Community Facilities
  - Economy & Business
  - Environment, Heritage and Local Knowledge
  - Planning and Infrastructure
  - Traffic and Transport
- 4.2 The Focus Groups met regularly and undertook a number of activities to assist with the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. These activities included:
- Collecting Base-line data for inclusion in the State of the Parish Report (para 3.5).
  - Taking part in consultations with parishioners to obtain their views of what they valued and wished to retain, how much development might be appropriate and where it should go.
  - Contributing sets of questions based on each Focus Group Subject for inclusion in the parish wide Community Surveys (para 5.1).
  - Taking part in public events and “open day” displays
  - Compiling a list of National, Local and influential stakeholders and attending a Planning Policy Workshop
  - Contributing to lists of Local Green Spaces for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan
  - Suggesting projects for inclusion on the Community Infrastructure Priority List
  - Providing information to keep members of the community aware of the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan and any emerging issues.
  - Attending events to review and comment upon the pre-submission documents prior to the Regulation 14 Public Consultation periods.
- 4.3 In addition to the regular Steering Group and Focus Group meetings, the SSWNP process has sought to hold a number of extensively publicised stakeholder engagement exercises. Public and stakeholder consultation and information exercises were held in November 2013, April 2014, June 2014, July 2014, January 2015, May 2015, July 2016, May 2017 and August 2017.
- 4.4 These engagement events were advertised using a variety of media. A dedicated page for the Neighbourhood Plan was set up on each Parish Council's website containing dates, agendas and minutes of meetings along with latest news about the process to complete the Plan. Each month S&SPC published an article in the Sussex Local magazine (delivered to each home in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Posters and banners were displayed around the villages to advertise public meetings and community engagement events and details were also publicised in the West Sussex County Times.

## 5. The Consultation Process

### CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMUNITY.

- 5.1 Three surveys were carried out as part of the process to produce the SSWNP: A Community Survey, a Housing Needs Survey (within Washington Parish) and a survey amongst local businesses. The questions for the Community Survey were based on those provided by the Focus Groups and designed to elicit what parishioners valued and sought to preserve in the parishes and what changes they would like to see made. The findings of these surveys enabled the Steering Group to create the Vision, Objectives and Policies contained in the SSWNP.
- 5.2 The results from all of the surveys undertaken were also used to prepare State of the Parish Reports which were completed in July 2014.

### CONSULTATION REGARDING PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES.

- 5.3 During early stakeholder engagement, local residents highlighted a number of areas in the parishes which were considered valuable and these were assessed having regard to the guidance contained in paragraphs 76 – 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.4 The SSWNP Steering Group considered the allocation of Local Green Spaces only after resolutions had been made regarding housing need and the identification of sites to meet this need.

### CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS.

- 5.5 Based on suggestions put forward by Steering Group and Focus Group members and AirS, a list of national, local and influential stakeholders was compiled and letters were sent to them in February 2014 inviting them to take part in the process. A Planning Policy workshop facilitated by AirS was held in July 2014. Attendees included utility organisations, School Governors, Medical Practitioners, local companies, landowners, neighbouring Parish Councillors, County and District Councillors.
- 5.6 Following a request for a screening opinion, Horsham District Council advised that it required the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. In September 2014 the SSWNP Steering Group consulted the following statutory consultees on the proposed scope of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment to accompany the SSWNP:
- Horsham District Council
  - West Sussex County Council
  - South Downs National Park Authority
  - Environment Agency
  - English Heritage
  - Natural England
  - Southern Water
- Storrington & Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan

## **CONSULTATION WITH LANDOWNERS.**

- 5.7 A call for sites was made to landowners or their agents in August 2014 by means of notices on notice boards throughout the villages and on the Parish Councils' websites. The call for sites was also advertised in the West Sussex County Times newspaper and letters were sent to all local estate agents. The SHLAA was also used to identify potential sites for consideration for potential development within the SSWNP.
- 5.8 A total of 41 sites had been put forward for consideration and each of these were assessed using local knowledge and scoring criteria devised by the Steering Group. This process resulted in a short list of 9 sites which were presented at a public meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015. These proposed sites were also put on display in the Parish Hall, Library and local leisure centre for the duration of the first pre-submission public consultation (regulation 14). (3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015)

## **6. Preparing the Pre-Submission Plan and Sustainability Appraisal**

- 6.1 Feedback from all of the consultations was collated, analysed and evaluated by the SSWNP in collaboration with AirS and the results were used to form the policies and objectives contained in the SSWNP Pre-Submission Plan.

### **PROTECTION OF HERITAGE ASSETS AND THE CONSERVATION AREA.**

- 6.2 The Neighbourhood Plan area is rich in heritage assets and includes a Conservation Area and many Listed Buildings. Much of the area lies within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and strategic views into and out of the National Park are of key importance. Policies 8 and 9 of the most recent SSWNP Submission Plan (Jan 2018) address these factors.
- 6.3 Feedback from the consultations also highlighted the importance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to the local character of the area and policies 14 and 15 of the SSWNP Submission Plan address this.

### **DELIVERY OF APPROPRIATELY SIZED, AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING.**

- 6.4 As part of the preparation of the SSWNP a detailed assessment was undertaken for the parish of Washington (a Housing Needs Survey for the parish of Storrington and Sullington was undertaken in 2012 and was used to inform the SSWNP).\*

*\* A detailed Housing Alignment Study was undertaken by HDC as part of the post examination work and is referenced later in this document.*



## **PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

- 6.5 Feedback from the surveys and consultations highlighted the need to support local business and provide employment opportunities to encourage young families to the Neighbourhood Plan area. Policies 3-7 of the SSWNP relate to these matters.

## **7. Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultations.**

- 7.1 The Regulation 14 Pre-submission SSWNP and accompanying SA were published for consultation between 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in accordance with Regulation 14(a) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations.
- 7.2 The consultation was publicised using a variety of methods including Parish Council websites, posters and banners being displayed around the villages, articles in local magazines and the West Sussex County Times newspaper. Information about the location of where the documents could be inspected and how to respond was also made available.
- 7.3 A total of 185 responses were received from members of the public along with submissions from statutory consultees and landowners' representatives.
- 7.4 As a result of the Steering Group's recommendations for amendments to the SSWNP, the group was advised that a further public consultation would be required. The revised Regulation 14 Pre-submission SSWNP and supporting documents were published for a second consultation between 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015. In addition to the publicity described in 7.2, a flyer was delivered to every home in the Neighbourhood Plan area in an attempt to reach the widest audience.
- 7.5 A total of 389 responses were received from members of the public along with submissions from statutory consultees and landowners' representatives.

### **MAIN ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REGULATION 14 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS.**

- 7.6 A large portion of the representations made were objections to the inclusion of one particular site proposed for development. As a result of the submissions from HDC and the SDNPA a number of conditions were attached to the Policy regarding this particular site.
- 7.7 A significant number of people registered their objection to the proposition of an access road being built in a field within the South Downs National Park and as an end result the SSWNP Submission Plan (January 2018) contains a policy to protect the countryside.
- 7.8 The Steering Group met to consider the comments made and a number of minor modifications were made to the SSWNP.

- 7.9 With the agreement of the SSWNP Steering Group, HDC arranged for a Health Check of the revised SSWNP to be undertaken by NPIERS. The Health Check report and supplemental report contained a number of suggestions and recommendations which were supported by HDC and implemented by the Steering Group.
- 7.10 The revisions to the SSWNP Submission Plan and supporting documents were approved by the Steering Group at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 with the recommendation that the Parish Councils resolve that they should be submitted to HDC. These resolutions were made by S&SPC on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and by WPC on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015.

## **8. Examination**

- 8.1 The SSWNP was presented to an independent Examiner in January 2016 and regrettably he reached the conclusion that the Plan did not meet the basic conditions and should therefore not proceed to referendum.

## **9. Post – Examination**

- 9.1 The Examiner concluded that the site selection process was not based on sufficiently robust evidence and recommended that this process should be reworked using a more in-depth method of assessment. He raised a number of concerns about several policies and questioned the evidence base for some of the areas designated as Local Green Spaces.
- 9.2 Following publication of the Examiner's Report, the SSWNP Steering Group and representatives from HDC met to discuss the way forward. It was agreed that HDC would provide valuable expertise and support to the Steering Group to address the issues identified in the Examiner's Report.
- 9.3 It was agreed that a robust assessment would be carried out on each of the 41 sites submitted for potential development and the Steering Group obtained the assistance of the SDNPA to carry out a detailed review of all of the Local Green Spaces. The Steering Group would carry out work to address the other issues identified in the Examiner's Report.
- 9.4 Both Storrington and Sullington Parish Council and Washington Parish Council have undertaken a Housing Needs Alignment Study (April 2017) to assess whether the evidence base documents underpinning the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to housing needs conforms to the strategic policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). Specifically, this study seeks to align the evidence base work undertaken by the District Council in preparation of its HDPF, particularly in terms of the assessment of Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAN) in the district, with the evidence base documents commissioned by the parishes in support of their Neighbourhood Plan.

- 9.5 Members of the public have been kept informed of progress through the Parish Council's websites and monthly updates in the Sussex Local magazine delivered to all homes within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Updates on the SSWNP is also a regular agenda item for Parish Council meetings.

## **10 Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation (2016)**

- 10.1 The new Pre-submission SSWNP and supporting documents were published for Consultation between 6th July and 17th August 2016 in accordance with Regulation 14(a) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 10.2 The consultation was publicised using a variety of methods including Parish Council websites, posters and banners being displayed around the villages, articles in local magazines and the West Sussex County Times newspaper. Information about the location of where the documents could be inspected and how to respond was made available.
- 10.2 A total of 105 responses were received from members of the public along with submissions from statutory consultees and landowners' representatives (appendices 2, 3 & 4)
- 10.3 The SSWNP Steering Group met with HDC representatives to review the comments received from this latest consultation and it became clear that further work would be required before the SSWNP could progress to the Regulation 16 Statutory Consultation stage.

## **11 Health Check**

- 11.1 With the agreement of the Steering Group HDC engaged the services of an independent professional experienced in Neighbourhood Plan examinations to review the SSWNP Pre-submission Plan and provide an opinion on the strength of the evidence base to support the Plan.
- 11.2 In May 2017, the Steering Group was presented with the Health Check Report (Appendix 5) which, whilst broadly endorsing the SSWNP Plan and supporting documents, made recommendations that might strengthen its chances of meeting the basic conditions and passing an Independent Examination. The Steering Group agreed to these recommendations and in an effort to ensure that the process to produce the SSWNP was as transparent and robust as possible it was agreed that the documents should be subjected to one further public consultation.

## **12 Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation (2017)**

- 12.1 The Pre-submission SSWNP (July 2017) and supporting documents were published for consultation between 10th July and 4th September in accordance with regulation 14(a) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

- 12.2 A total of 105 responses were received from members of the public along with submissions from statutory consultees and landowners' representatives and the schedule of responses can be found in Appendices 6, 7 & 8).
- 12.3 The SSWNP Steering Group met on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 to review the comments received from this latest consultation and agree any amendments to the Pre-submission Plan. The Group reconvened again on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 to review the SSWNP Submission Plan and supporting documents and approved them for submission to Horsham District Council for the Regulation 16 consultation

## **13 Summary**

- 13.1 The SSWNP Submission Plan and supporting documents have been revised to take into account, where applicable, representations made by the community, statutory consultees and landowners' representatives during the periods of public consultation. The Regulation 14 Schedules of Comments sets out modifications that have been made. The SSWNP Submission Plan and supporting documents were presented to Storrington & Sullington Parish Council and Washington Parish Council on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018 respectively and the documents were approved for submission to Horsham District Council.
- 13.2 This Consultation Statement has been produced to document the consultation and engagement process undertaken. It is considered to comply fully with Part 5 Section 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

## 14 Appendices

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Storrington & Sullington Neighbourhood Plan – Timeline
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Regulation 14 Public Consultation – Public response schedule (Jul – Aug 2016)
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Regulation 14 Public Consultation – Statutory response schedule (Jul – Aug 2016)
<b>Appendix 4</b>	Regulation 14 Public Consultation – Developer responses (Jul – Aug 2016)
<b>Appendix 5</b>	SSWNP Independent Health Check Report (May 2017)
<b>Appendix 6</b>	Regulation 14 Public Consultation – Public response schedule (Jul – Sep 2017) & Steering Group Comments
<b>Appendix 7</b>	Regulation 14 Public Consultation – Statutory response schedule (Jul – Sep 2017) & Steering Group Comments
<b>Appendix 8</b>	Regulation 14 Public Consultation – Developer responses (Jul – Sep 2017)

**End**