

Sutton Neighbourhood Plan



Regulation 14 Consultation – Engagement Strategy

1. Background

Sutton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee had envisaged and planned to commence Regulation 14 consultation on the Draft Sutton Neighbourhood Plan around Easter 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic (a global health emergency), meant it may not have been possible for the consultation to be conducted in the manner to which the Steering Committee felt necessary, this was complicated by the industry advice on conducting consultations during the pandemic being unclear. The Steering Committee therefore decided to postpone the consultation until conditions improved and advice was clearer.

In the meantime, the Steering Committee took advantage of the Locality technical support package 'Evidence Base and Policy Development' (EBPD) to refine the draft plan further.

2. General Approach

The Draft Sutton Neighbourhood Plan has been updated in light of the EBPD work and will very soon be ready again for Regulation 14 consultation.

The consultation will follow the [Gunning Principles](#).

The government advice and restrictions relating to coronavirus mean that consultation can now take place in line with the [Gunning Principles](#), the Central Bedfordshire Council Further Guidance dated 8th July 2020, and the requirements of the Steering Committee.

The coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing situation and the Steering Committee are mindful that the situation could change and restrictions could again change. This Engagement Strategy will endeavour to use face-to-face drop-in sessions (with suitable precautions) if this can safely be done and a suitable venue found, but additional arrangements and efforts will be made:

- (a) in case the restrictions change, meaning that face-to-face drop-in sessions can no longer proceed;
- (b) to reach potential consultees who may continue to be shielding or who do not feel comfortable attending a face-to-face session;
- (c) in case no available, safe and suitable venue can be found for drop-in sessions.

This proposed engagement strategy does not rely on face-to-face or drop-in sessions to achieve an effective and meaningful consultation and is written in the full knowledge that they may not be possible, or might have to be cancelled at short notice. The intent is to have them as an additional, optional extra, if they can take place.

3. Timescales

Subject to the formal approval of the Draft Sutton Neighbourhood Plan by Sutton Parish Council, it is proposed that Regulation 14 consultation will commence in the last week of August 2020. The consultation will be extended from the required 6 weeks to 8 weeks to allow additional time for the consultation and to provide additional opportunities for non-face-to-face consultation methods to be used (e.g. email, telephone calls, providing paper copies of documents, video-conferencing, etc.)

It is therefore anticipated the consultation will run approximately:

- from *[Monday 24th August 2020]* for eight weeks,
- to *[Monday 19th October 2020]*

4. Methodology

- a. The consultation materials will be made available online on the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan website (www.suttonneighbourhoodplan.uk), for which a dedicated webpage will be setup. The webpage will allow the downloading of the various documents, reports and maps. It will identify how consultees can respond to the consultation; this will include:
 - i. by completing an online survey;
 - ii. by email;
 - iii. by completing a paper survey;
 - iv. by letter to a postal address;
 - v. by telephone or video conference (if the above methods are not practical for the consultee).
- b. The following documents, as a minimum, will be available on the www.suttonneighbourhoodplan.uk website during the consultation:
 - i. The Draft Sutton Neighbourhood Plan
 - ii. The Sutton Green Infrastructure Plan;
 - iii. The Sutton Design Codes;
 - iv. The Background Evidence Document (Parts I, II and III);
 - v. The Consultation Report;
 - vi. The policy maps;
 - vii. A response/survey form.
- c. Before commencement of public consultation, the parish council will write (by email where practically possible) to all the know landowners (or their agents) whose land

might be affected by the policies in the Sutton Draft Neighbourhood Plan to draw their attention to the Draft Plan and consultation. Reasonable efforts will be made to find the details of these landowners or their agents, but we cannot guarantee that we will reach them all. A contact telephone number and email address will be provided so that reasonable tailored, specific arrangements can be made if any of the consultees has difficulty accessing the materials online.

- d. Statutory Consultees will be written to (by email where practically possible) drawing attention to the consultation, directing them to the online materials and providing them details on how to respond. A contact telephone number and email address will be provided so that reasonable, tailored and/or specific arrangements can be made if any of the consultees has difficulty accessing the materials online.
- e. The consultation will be advertised online on the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page, the Sutton Village Facebook group and on the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan website.
- f. Leaflets drawing attention to the consultation, including the web site details, will be hand delivered to every residential dwellings and business premises within the parish. These leaflets will contain a physical address and email address that people can use to write to, along with a telephone number, where anyone who may have difficulty accessing the online information can request assistance, such as a paper copy being printed and delivered to them.
- g. Posters drawing attention to the consultation, including the web site details, an email address and a telephone number, will be put up within the parish, including at local venues (subject to permission being granted by the respective venues):
 - i. The three parish noticeboards;
 - ii. Sutton Village Hall;
 - iii. The John O’Gaunt Inn entrance noticeboard (if the premises have re-opened);
 - iv. John O’Gaunt Golf Club;
 - v. Bedfordshire Growers Farm Shop and Café;
 - vi. All Saints Church;
 - vii. Sutton Lower School (at the beginning of Autumn Term);
 - viii. OneSchool Global Biggleswade Campus (at the beginning of Autumn Term);
 - ix. The local horse-riding school and stables.
- h. We will ask our two CBC ward councillors, Cllr. Tracey Wye and Cllr. Adam Zerny, to advertise the consultation on their Facebook page and in their newsletter.

- i. We will accept comments by online survey form, paper survey form, email, letter and, if none of the above are practical for the consultee, then we will accept comments by telephone and/or video conference.

5. Drop-In Sessions

Previous Sutton Neighbourhood Plan workshops and consultation events have taken place in Sutton Village Hall. However, the venue is not fully open at present due to the coronavirus restrictions. We are therefore preparing to conduct the consultation without drop-in sessions.

However, if we are able to secure a safe and suitable venue (preferably Sutton Village Hall) and the government and local guidance allows us to hold drop-in sessions, then we propose to hold at least one drop-in session near the start of the consultation and, possibly, another towards the end of the consultation period.

Documented risk-assessments will be carried out prior to holding any face-to-face drop-in sessions. Measures to reduce the manage the risk may include:

- adhering to any guidance issued by the venue;
- use multiple entrances to the premises to provide a separate entry and exit, e.g. in the Village Hall use the side doors of the main hall, one as entry and one as exit, with the display set-up in a U shape and having a one-way system in operation;
- we will provide hand sanitizer, disposable face masks and disposable gloves at the entrance and hand sanitizer and a bin at the exit;
- we will request that all attendees wear face coverings, and use disposable gloves if they are going to touch any materials, such as maps or reference documents;
- we will restrict the number of visitors allowed in the premises at any time to maintain 2m social distancing between households;
- we will allow plenty of time for any drop-in sessions so as to reduce the chance of queuing and endeavour to ensure all who want to attend can do so; if we find that we do have to turn people away (due to social distancing rules) then we will try to arrange additional sessions or make specific appointments;
- we will restrict the number of steering committee members in the premises to the bare minimum we need to run the event (likely to be 3 or 4 people from up to 3 households);
- any discussion / Q&A will be done over a double set of tables and ensuring that a 2m social distance is maintained;
- subject to the weather, we will leave as many doors and windows open as is practical to provide good ventilation;
- if possible, any toilets/facilities will only be used by the steering committee members who will take appropriate precautions (we might designate one set of toilets for each household rather than use as ladies/gents if this is acceptable to both the venue and participating steering committee members).

6. Alternative Arrangements

If we are unable to hold any drop-in sessions, or if we receive requests from consultees who, for reasons of health or concern about coronavirus, would prefer not to attend a drop-in session, then we may arrange an online presentation and Q&A session, or make other specific arrangements as agreed with the consultees.

7. Flexibility

The coronavirus pandemic is ongoing and restrictions may well change during the period of this consultation. It is also possible that we will get ideas and feedback from consultees on other measures that we can take to ensure we meaningfully reach as wide an audience as possible (and as is relevant), the Steering Committee will therefore review the consultation progress at regular intervals through the consultation period, and may introduce, with appropriate controls, changes or additions to the steps outlined in this document. This might be to extend the consultation period, the use of online presentations, or to implement (in whole or in part) ideas from consultees.

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