

Stutton Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037

Stutton Parish Council



SHAPING THE FUTURE

This is an important opportunity to shape the future of the village.

We would very much welcome your feedback on this document before it is submitted to Babergh District Council. The plan will then go to an Independent Examiner before being put to a Referendum of all those on the electoral roll in the village.

This consultation period runs for six weeks from

8 November - 20 December 2021

and is open to residents, businesses, landowners and other relevant stakeholders.

Ways to give your feedback

by email

thebigconversation@outlook.com

on the village website

www.stuttonvillage.net

feedback boxes

in the Community Shop, Kings Head, Looking Good and Community Hall

Your feedback makes the Plan stronger



FOREWORD

Darren Cooper, Chair of Stutton Parish Council

I am delighted to commend this Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Development Plan to you which has been developed on behalf of the Parish Council by a Working Group of Stutton residents.

A Neighbourhood Plan is the best way for local people to be involved in shaping the future of planning and development for our village. It carries significant legal weight and requires developers looking to build in the village to comply with our spatial strategy, building design, and landscape policies. It means that District Council planners will vet proposed developments against our policies in the Neighbourhood Plan before deciding whether to recommend building permission approval.

This plan sets out what you have said you value, what you wish to see protected and improved, and how you would like to see development of land move forward over the next 15 years. The opinions and feedback you gave are the mandate for the Plan.

By having an approved Neighbourhood Plan the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from future developments will increase from 15% to 25%. This money will help fund projects brought forward in Stutton's Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan.

I commend the Plan to you and urge you to continue to get involved by contributing your views and comments. The higher the level of engagement with the Plan by the village, the greater its credibility and the greater our ability to ensure developers adhere to its requirements.



SUMMARY

This Plan is driven by the clear vision for the village articulated by local residents. It seeks to ensure that Stutton remains a vibrant, cohesive community supporting high levels of wellbeing for all of us.

Our village is undergoing a period of change. There are currently 65 new homes under construction, recently completed or which have planning permission - a 16% increase over the existing number of homes. This plan seeks to limit the construction of additional homes in keeping with its designation in the emerging Joint Local Plan as a hinterland village, and to maintain Stutton's rural identity.

However, during the latter part of the plan period, which runs to 2037, there may be a need for some small-scale sustainable growth through the provision of affordable homes, if a clear housing need has been identified. No specific site has been earmarked. Any new homes or additions to existing homes must conform to the Design Guide that accompanies this plan and mitigate any adverse impact on the surrounding environment.

The plan recognises the high quality of the local landscape that abuts and surrounds the village which includes regionally important landscape and recreational facilities. Future development must be controlled where it abuts the settlement boundary, and the Plan includes a series of policies to protect and enhance our beautiful environment.

Stutton has a school, community shop, community hall and other facilities that support its residents at different stages of their lives. The plan's policies are designed to protect these vital community assets.

Whilst the focus of this plan is to put forward a series of specific planning policies, consultation has identified some important community concerns. These are addressed by the inclusion of a series of Community Actions.

PLAN STRUCTURE



The Documents

- The Neighbourhood Plan
- The Big Conversation - consultation report
- Design Guide
- Landscape Study: character and sensitivity
- Key Views Assessment

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2011 The Localism Act gave Parish Councils the power to prepare statutory Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), referred to as Neighbourhood Plans from this point onwards, to help guide development in their local areas.
- 1.2 A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document taking its authority from the people who live in the parish to which it relates. Once a Plan has been adopted, it will be used within the process of determining planning applications in that parish.
- 1.3 There are certain requirements a Neighbourhood Plan must meet to succeed at examination. These are explained in Chapter 2.

In 2018, a Working Group of village residents was convened to develop a Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Parish Council. The Neighbourhood Plan area was formally designated by Babergh District Council on 12 October 2018. The formal application from the Parish Council can be found on the district council's website under Neighbourhood Planning in Stutton.

- 1.4 A Housing Needs Survey was carried out as a vital piece of evidence and the Plan has also been shaped by work carried out by independent consultants who have produced a Design Guide, a Parish Landscape Study, a Key Views Assessment and a Site Assessment.
- 1.5 The overarching aim has been to create a Plan which reflects the needs and priorities of the parish community, within the national, county and district policies that apply; and set out a positive and sustainable future for the parish.



CONSULTATION - THE BIG CONVERSATION



- 1.6 The Working Group organised a wide-ranging consultation process, the details of which together with the results are set out in the accompanying Consultation Statement.
- 1.7 The 'Big Conversation' was an open consultation process, with the aim of creating depth and breadth, rather than using surveys to gather tick box responses. We wanted to reach as many people as possible, acknowledging different levels of interest within the village.

Events

- 1.8 There have been **17 opportunities to get involved**, including:
- consultation events at the Community Hall
 - a business breakfast
 - 5 tea-party style focus groups around the village
 - regular newsletters delivered to every house
 - drop-ins at the village shop
 - working group meetings open to the public.
 - villagers were also able to comment via email to the Working Group and on the village website.
- 1.9 This has been an iterative process - themes and ideas which emerged over the course of the consultation, were shared, and developed further in future events.
- 1.10 If participants wanted structure for their comments, we provided these headings:
- Housing
 - Environment
 - Getting Around
 - Working and Shopping
 - Community
 - Leisure and Recreation
 - Sustainable Stutton

- 1.11 In September 2019, the Working Party organised a Drop-In event at the Community Hall to present a range of potential policies for a Neighbourhood Plan, based on the consultation to date.

Engagement

- 1.12 Between April 2018 and September 2019 there were 397 attendances at consultation events. An estimated 96 people (24%) attended more than one event, therefore, 301 people were involved (277 aged over 16 and 24 children).

- 1.13 The Big Conversation, therefore, **represents the views of just under 40% of the people aged over 16** in the village (based on 2011 consensus numbers)

Feedback

- 1.14 There were **745 comments recorded in total** - 672 from adults and 73 from children. In open structures, people chose what they wanted to say about any aspect of life in the village. We analysed these into seven main themes, 20 sub themes, (illuminating the headlines) and 79 micro themes which present the real nitty gritty. These can be viewed in full in the accompanying document - 'The Big Conversation'.

1.15 Main Themes

Infrastructure (roads, traffic, public transport, footpaths etc.)
 Housing and Development
 Community and Village Facilities
 Ecological Sustainability
 Natural Environment
 Business and Work
 Neighbourhood Plan

1.16 Sub Themes

The Sub Themes give insight into what is important to people. The top three themes are:

- issues around roads and traffic
- small and affordable housing as the way forward
- development of community activity.

1.17 Feedback about Development

Of the 129 comments about new development (from over 16s):

- 43.4% identified affordable or small houses as the future for the village
- 0% identified large houses
- 28.6 % made suggestions about sites and groupings for new development
- 28% made suggestions about design
- there were 15 negative comments about new development.

1.18 This means 88.4% of the comments were accepting of some level of new development in the village as long as it was small houses and/or affordable; and 11.6% suggested new development will have a negative effect

1.19 Neighbourhood Plans are principally concerned with land use and planning matters. The Big Conversation was always designed to look more widely at life in the village and, consequently, it highlighted many areas outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan but sitting squarely alongside it. These have resulted in Community Actions for the Parish Council to take forward together with the local community. They are set out in Appendix 1.



NEXT STEPS

- 1.20 This document is a Pre-Submission Plan offered for comment and feedback from residents, businesses, landowners, and relevant stakeholders.
- 1.21 At the end of this final consultation process, the Working Party will review all comments and re-draft the Plan accordingly. The revised Plan will be submitted to Babergh District Council, who will then publish the Plan for a further period of consultation and appoint an independent examiner.
- 1.22 Subject to a successful examination, the plan will then be put to a referendum of all those on the electoral roll in Stutton.
- 1.23 If the majority of those voting are in favour, the Stutton Neighbourhood Plan will provide the basis, alongside national policy and the Joint Local Plan, for the determination of planning applications made in the parish.

Acknowledgements

- 1.24 We are very grateful for the work done by Suffolk Community Action who carried out a Housing Needs Survey of Stutton; Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, landscape architect, who carried out a Landscape Appraisal; Alejandro de Miguel, senior urban designer from AECOM who worked with us on the Design Guide; Shane Scollard, Senior Planner from AECOM who carried out a Site Options Assessment; and Tony Fox who provided some of the maps used in this document. We are also extremely grateful to planning consultant Rachel Hogger who assisted us in the later stages of the Plan.



2 REQUIREMENTS OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 2.1 There are certain requirements, referred to as basic conditions which all Neighbourhood Plans will be tested against at examination: The planning policies in the plan will need to:
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area;
 - contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be appropriate having regard to national policy and guidance (e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework 2021); and
 - be in accordance with environmental and human rights legislation.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.2 The NPPF 2021 sets out three objectives in order to achieve sustainable development:
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built, and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.



Local Planning Policy

- 2.3 At the time of preparing this draft, the development plan applicable to Stutton parish consists of the saved policies of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No 2 (LP) adopted in June 2006 and the Babergh Core Strategy (CS) 2011 – 2031 adopted in February 2014. In addition, the Minerals Core Strategy and the Waste Core Strategy produced by Suffolk County Council also form part of the development plan.

Emerging Joint Local Plan

- 2.4 Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council are working together to deliver a new Joint Local Plan (JLP) which will cover the period up to 2037. Once adopted, it will replace all other policies across the two Districts. The JLP is currently at examination stage and is expected to be adopted before the Stutton NP journey is complete.
- 2.5 The JLP is relevant in so far as it sets out a clear direction of growth to 2037 and beyond. It provides the most up-to-date assessment of housing need. Our Plan has been prepared with due regard to the adopted Local Plan whilst remaining appropriate to the policies in the emerging JLP.
- 2.6 Both the adopted Core Strategy and the JLP set out a hierarchy of settlements based upon their size and the facilities available to their respective communities. Larger or “core” villages will frequently provide larger shops, a post office and a doctor’s surgery which are used by neighbouring smaller or “hinterland” villages. Stutton is a hinterland village, with Holbrook providing core facilities.
- 2.7 Policy SP03 (Settlement Hierarchy) of the JLP sets out that development which would lead to visual or physical coalescence of settlements will not be supported. This policy does not identify hinterland villages as a focus for development, but identifies the settlement boundaries of each village wherein the principle of development is established, subject to the other policies in the JLP.
- 2.8 The Core Strategy outlines that “everywhere beyond the built-up areas...defined by settlement boundaries, is treated as open countryside.” Recognising this distinction is important, as it helps small villages like Stutton maintain their distinctiveness and rural feel which is treasured by its residents and visitors.
- 2.9 It goes on to say that [in the countryside] “development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances subject to a proven justifiable need” and that “The amount of housing growth and employment land to be accommodated in Core and Hinterland Villages will depend on their individual capacity to accommodate growth, the scale and character, role and function of the settlement and the views of the local community” (para 2.2.3.4).

3 VISION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Vision

- 3.1 The Stutton Neighbourhood Plan has a clear vision which was developed through the 'Big Conversation', our consultation strategy carried out over many months (see Consultation Statement). This was designed to bring residents of all ages together to discuss what makes Stutton the village and the community it already is, to describe their hopes for Stutton's future, and to develop plans that will help bring this about.
- 3.2 Our agreed vision is that:
- Stutton should remain a vibrant, cohesive community supporting high levels of wellbeing for its residents.
 - As the village grows and society changes, the character of the village should be maintained, whilst permitting small-scale sustainable growth in line with the needs and wishes of the community.
 - The beautiful countryside and landscapes will be retained and enhanced and continue to be a source of great pleasure for the community.
 - Together, we will ensure that the infrastructure of the village supports all residents at different stages of their lives.
- 3.3 Our Neighbourhood Plan is based upon this vision. It captures and sets out the principles and policies developed by our community for the sustainable development of Stutton from 2022 to 2037.
- 3.4 Much will change in the world during this period, and we want to be part of that change in positive ways - connected, involved, resilient and forward thinking.

Our Responsibilities

3.5 Our Plan creates a balance between protecting what is here and welcoming the new. At the core we share a responsibility to:

- Protect and enhance this outstandingly beautiful landscape, and the flora and fauna we share it with, for the long-term benefit of all. Stutton is nestled between the Stour Estuary and Alton Water reservoir. Large parts of the village lie within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the estuary is afforded national, European, and international protection for its birdlife.
- Support a diverse, thriving, and sustainable rural community so that people of all ages, all incomes and backgrounds, and many interests can live and, increasingly, work here. Achieving this means maintaining, enhancing, and developing the support mechanisms and community activity that make this a thriving, sustainable community.
- Share this place and this community in ways that enhance rather than destroy its unique qualities, retaining the features that make it unique and enjoyable - the peace and tranquility, the open spaces, the village atmosphere - so that the people who live here, and the people who visit, will be able to enjoy what it offers well into the future.

3.6 Appendix A sets out the Objectives which flow from this vision and how these relate to our Policies and Community Actions.



View south from the B1080, on entry to Stutton from Holbrook

4 OUR VILLAGE PAST AND PRESENT

Stutton today

- 4.1 Stutton is a small village in a rural setting with a total of 409 houses as at 2019.
- 4.2 Designated as a hinterland village, there are currently 65 new homes either completed, under construction, or with planning permission. This 16% increase in households means we will welcome approximately 150-175 new people to the village over the next two years or so.
- 4.3 In addition, the village has many visitors seeking its rural attractions like Alton Water (for cycling, walking, sailing and water sports), the estuary and beautiful rural walks. People come to the village for the primary school, two pubs, a hairdresser, local garage servicing, and our volunteer-run community shop. It is home to over 40 small businesses and their visitors.
- 4.4 Stutton hosts the annual Great Eastern Wild Swim and other significant events at Alton Water. Since the 2009 Village Plan was written, Alton Water has expanded. It now has a campsite, crazy golf, highland cattle, and an increase in watersports. Paid-for-parking at all its car parks commenced in April 2020. All of this brings opportunities, life - and traffic.
- 4.5 People increasingly move through the village on their way to a range of events, places, and facilities and, twice a day, to several local schools.

Environmental Designations

- 4.6 The village has a rich vein of protected sites that surround or form part of it. Much of the village lies within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB - the land to the south of the B1080 together with a recent extension now including Samford Valley on the west side of the village. The AONB Unit have produced several planning guidance documents which have provided useful reference in recent planning applications in Stutton and should be fully considered for further development proposals.
- 4.7 The Stour Estuary is a Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Alton Water – one of three wildlife sites within the parish boundary - is the largest county wildlife site in Suffolk.

- 4.8 Such a high level of environmental and landscape protection means that the need for genuinely sustainable development of the right scale, character and sensitivity is of the utmost importance. Stutton residents are clear that the landscape and natural environment must be protected and enhanced.

Our History

- 4.9 Stutton (the name derives from Old English stut or Old Scandinavian stutr meaning 'farmstead or village infested by gnats' or 'where bullocks are kept') is listed in the Domesday Survey of 1086 with a population of 36, several manors, half a church, a mill, three salthouses and two beehives. There is evidence of earlier settlement along the shore of the Stour around Holbrook and Stutton in the form of flint tools (dating from 4000 to 3000BC) and the remains of an Anglo-Saxon fish trap. For thousands of years the river has been a crucial resource and means of transport (as the remains of wharves along the Stutton foreshore bear witness).
- 4.10 St Peter's church (the present church was built during the 15th Century) sits a little way east of the main part of the village, overlooking Holbrook Bay on the river. The village used to be centred around this area (called Stutton Green) but nearly all the old houses are reputed to have been deliberately burnt down after an outbreak of plague. The main part of the village then became established inland along what are now Manningtree Road and Lower Street – the King's Head public house and a number of houses were built in that area during the 16th Century.
- 4.11 The village has 29 buildings listed by Historic England (see Chapter 9), built between the 15th and 19th centuries, including the Kings Head pub. Among more modest village houses are also a number of large country houses on the southern edge of the village, including Stutton Hall, Crepping Hall, Crowe Hall and Stutton House, all enjoying impressive views over the Stour estuary. The first Stutton Hall was owned by Roger de Pavely in 1265, and there was mention of Creping (now spelt Crepping) Hall in 1275, and Crowe Hall in 1303. The oldest existing parts of all these houses date back to the 16th or 17th Centuries. The landscape around them, on the south side of the village, has been a variable mix of agriculture and parkland over the centuries. Stutton House, close to the church, was rebuilt as a rectory in 1750. All these large houses were extensively altered and enlarged during the 19th and 20th Centuries. In the early 20th Century Little Hall, which sits between Stutton Hall and Crepping Hall, was built by the Fison family (James Oliver Fison had bought Stutton Hall and its estate in 1887).

- 4.12 Early in the 19th Century a friendly society was formed (in 1803). In 1835 the first primary school was built at the western end of what is now Holbrook Road - that building is now a private house known as 'The Old Mission Hall'. A new school was built next door in 1897 (unfortunately this burnt down in 1964 after which the current CEVC primary school replaced it on the same site). White's directory of 1844 describes a picturesque village with a population of 492. A Wesleyan Chapel was erected in 1840 on Manningtree Road and almshouses built in 1863 on Bentley Lane in memory of Rev George Baker – these are still maintained by the trust as small affordable homes for local people. Commercial wharves were built on the Stour (below Crowe Hall and Markwells Farm) during the 19th century to service hay, grain and fertilizer trades. At the end of the century an unsuccessful attempt was made to find workable coal deposits at Stutton.
- 4.13 In 1900 the village was still a small disparate settlement dominated by agriculture and the large houses, but the 20th Century brought numerous changes, some related to the wars. During the First World War (in 1917) an airfield was created on the field north of Holbrook Road as an emergency landing strip which lasted for a couple of years. In the Second World War a searchlight site was installed on part of that field (where Larksfield Road is now).
- 4.14 A wooden village hall ('Victory Hall') was built in the 1920s on Manningtree Road: this was replaced in 1977 by the larger Community Hall, built on land just behind.
- 4.15 The number of houses increased as new developments were built: in the late 1930s Lewis Lane was created on what had been farmland, most of the houses being built after the 2nd World War. Piecemeal development of the top end of Alton Hall Lane started in the inter-war years, including four council houses. During the 1950s Stutton Close, an estate of more than 30 dwellings, was built by the local Council and the Larksfield Road development was started; Cattsfield was built in the 1960s. Housing development along Holbrook Road also started in the 1950s and continued spasmodically through the 1960s. Despite these developments, the village has retained a gap in built settlement on Manningtree Road between Bentley Lane and Crepping Hall Drive with long open views across fields, helping to retain the rural feel of the village.



4.16 One major development that has had a significant impact on the village since the 1970s is Alton Water reservoir. A number of houses were lost when the valley was flooded, including Alton Hall. Alton Watermill was dismantled and rebuilt in the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket where it can still be seen. Apart from its primary role as a reservoir, Alton Water is a leisure business as a 'Water Park' with sailing, cafes, bike hire and, lately, a campsite. It also provides a substantial public amenity with footpaths, picnic areas, wildlife reserves and hides, attracting thousands of visitors annually.

4.17 At the beginning of the 21st Century Oak House, a purpose-built 38 flat supported housing complex on Bentley Lane, was opened (2004). Wheelwrights Close, a new development of five houses including one affordable, was built on Holbrook Road in 2008. More housing is currently being built, increasing the number of households by more than 16% over the next two/three years.

4.18 Shops in the village have come and gone – during the 1940s/50s there were five or six shops round the village and a garage/petrol station. That number had dropped to one village shop with a Post Office by the end of the 20th Century and, by 2005, even that had closed so the nearest shop was in Holbrook. This was remedied in 2008 by the opening of the Community Shop (run entirely by volunteers) next to the Community Hall and this has gone from strength to strength, firstly in a second-hand portacabin and, since 2018, in a bespoke building which includes a small café area with outside seating and a garden.



5 SPATIAL STRATEGY

Objective

- 5.1 **To control development that is commensurate with Stutton's designation as a hinterland village and protect the valued rural landscape that abuts the settlement boundary**

Background

- 5.2 Stutton is a small rural village of just over 400 dwellings and, as mentioned above, has been classified by Babergh District Council as a hinterland village. Current planning permissions for new housing totals 65 which will increase the number of homes in the village by 16%. This approved development includes affordable housing units which would be suitable for single people and young families (see Appendix 2). Whilst this will assist with achieving a more sustainable and balanced community, it is of strategic importance to the Neighbourhood Plan that the number and location of any new housing does not fundamentally damage the character of the village.

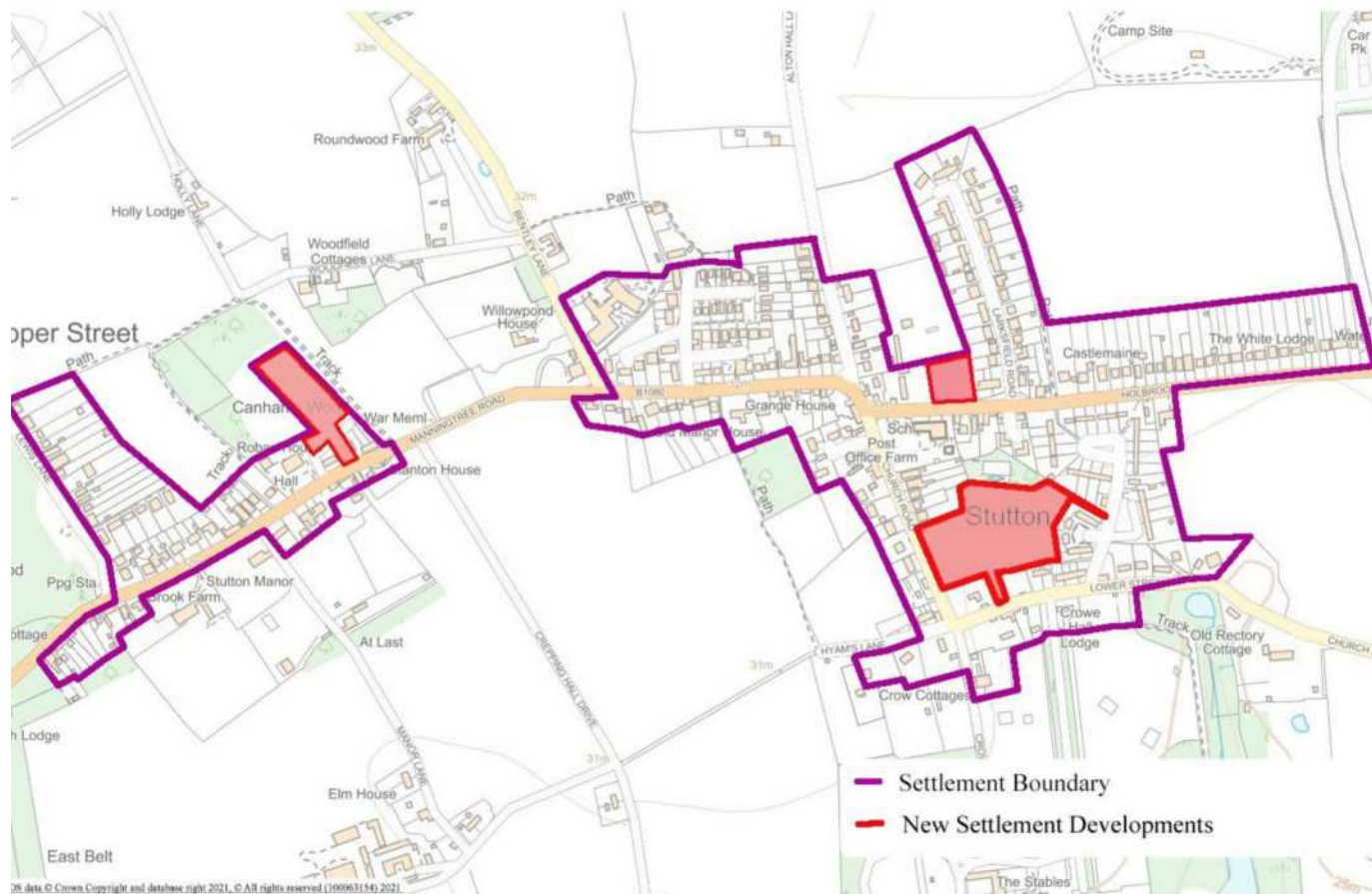
Policy SN1 - Spatial Strategy

- 5.3 **The Neighbourhood Plan area will only accommodate development commensurate with Stutton's designation as a hinterland village in the adopted Babergh Core Strategy and emerging Joint Local Plan, and to meet housing needs evidenced by Housing Needs Surveys. The focus for new development will be within the Settlement Boundaries as defined in the JLP and shown on Map 2.**
- 5.4 **Development outside the Settlement Boundary will be restricted to small scale rural exception housing on the edge of the settlement, where such schemes accord with Policy SN4 of this Plan, and those activities that are essential for the operation of existing businesses, agriculture, equestrian, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, or other exceptional uses, where:**

it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal;
it cannot be satisfactorily located within the Settlement Boundary.

5.5 See also Community Action 1 Working with developers.

Map 2 Stutton Settlement Boundary



Context and evidence

- 5.6 In the submitted JLP the minimum housing requirement has been set at 65 homes (to be delivered 2018 to 2037). The number specified equates to the outstanding planning permissions (OPPs) granted as of 1st April 2018. These dwellings are within the Settlement Boundary as proposed in the draft Local Plan and Appendix 2 gives the details of the planning permissions granted. The JLP comments that if outstanding planning permissions granted as of 1st April 2018 expire during the lifetime of the Plan, then the corresponding offset number of dwellings will need to be identified within the same Neighbourhood Plan area to meet the total homes requirement. However, the majority of sites are already either under construction or have planned start dates.
- 5.7 Of the planned 65 dwellings, 22 are for affordable rent or shared ownership (34%). The developments in the pipeline reflect the housing needs identified in the Housing Needs Survey carried out for this Neighbourhood Plan and all the affordable homes will have been delivered within the first four years covered by the Plan. Nevertheless, the Working Group was mindful of the fact that the housing target of 65 homes as specified in the draft Joint Local Plan is a minimum requirement. Such an interpretation is also reflected in the NPPF.
- 5.8 Moreover, the Housing Needs Survey report recognised that it only measured housing need for the five year period from 2019. The Parish Council has committed to carrying out further Housing Needs Surveys during the life of the Neighbourhood Plan to inform any future development proposals (Community Action 3).
- 5.9 In the light of this, housing consultants AECOM were commissioned to carry out an assessment to determine the suitability of sites for potential future housing development. Six sites were identified for consideration. These were sites promoted by landowners through the Neighbourhood Plan and through the Local Plan's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. Of these six, only two were identified as potentially suitable for allocation, subject to specific local need for housing being demonstrated, the sites being identified as available, and landscape issues being addressed in line with Local Plan policy. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group spent almost a year developing proposals for potential development, working with a consultant from AECOM, landowners, the District Council and the Parish Council. Despite this considerable engagement, we were not able to overcome the significant obstacles to site viability and, consequently, this Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any sites for development.
- 5.10 In addition, Policy SP04 in the JLP specifies that Neighbourhood Plans would only be justified in exceeding the minimum allocations "should the unique characteristics and planning context of the designated area enable so". Stutton is a hinterland village with most of it lying within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. Developments currently under construction or with planning permission will increase the size of the village by 16% and will meet the housing need identified in the recent Housing Needs Survey. We have, therefore, concluded that we cannot currently justify allocations in addition to those developments already in the pipeline.



Stutton Residents' Views

During the Big Conversation, villagers expressed their wish to preserve the character of this small village within its beautiful landscape setting.

Keep local villages separate- no urban sprawl.

Don't want any developments past entrance to Alton Water.

Want to preserve village identity i.e., green spaces between villages.





65 new homes currently under construction or about to begin.
34 new houses - Church Road

6 HOUSING

Objectives

- 6.1 **To provide affordable housing in the future (both to rent and to buy) - suitable for single people, young families, and older people wishing to downsize.**
- 6.2 **To maintain and enhance Stutton's rural identity, ensuring new development reflects local character and avoids or mitigates environmental impact.**
- 6.3 **To provide appropriate housing of good design, suitable for people's changing needs over their lifetimes, which respects the rural character and village settlement boundaries, which is served by adequate infrastructure, and which incorporates measures that reduce environmental impact.**

Background

- 6.4 At the time of the 2011 Census the parish of Stutton had a resident population of 812 and 407 dwellings, of which 392 were occupied full time. Council tax records in 2019 show 409 dwellings.
- 6.5 Detached homes totalled 227 in number which, at 55.6% of the housing stock, is higher than Babergh (41.6%) and more than twice the national average.
- 6.6 The percentage of people aged over 65 in 2011 was 32.4% compared to 16.4% nationally. Some, but not all, of this higher-than-average percentage of older people is accounted for by Oak House, an extra care housing scheme, which has a mix of 38 one- and two-bedroom flats.
- 6.7 The proportion of children in Stutton aged 15 and under was lower (13.5%) than both Babergh (19.6%) and England (18.9%). Stutton's mean age (50.7) is significantly higher than that for Babergh (43.1) and for England (39.3).
- 6.8 With a lower proportion of younger people, it is likely that this imbalance, if it were to increase, could threaten the future sustainability of the community. The number of local children may challenge the viability of the village's primary school while an ageing population places extra and different demands on local health, education, transport and potentially housing.

- 6.9 'Stutton has a greater proportion of one person households (37%) than both Babergh (28%) and England generally (30%). One in four of these households are aged 65 and over, which is significantly higher than that for Babergh and England.
- 6.10 The majority of households are owner occupiers (69%), a figure that is slightly lower than Babergh but higher than the England total. 17% are socially rented households (mainly council) which is higher than for Babergh in general but matches the percentage of social housing nationally
- 6.11 Stutton has a stable population with three quarters of residents having lived in the village for 10 years or more according to the 2019 Housing Needs Survey.
- 6.12 A local Housing Needs Survey was carried out by Community Action Suffolk during 2019. A 40% response rate was achieved, and the results have been used to inform our development of policies. Detailed findings from the survey are mentioned below but, in general, the main housing need is for two or three-bedroom dwellings and for affordable housing. The majority of those expressing a housing need were single people or young couples (some with children) wishing to remain within the village. There were also a number of older households expressing a wish to downsize either now or in the future, some of whom had or anticipated experiencing mobility and/or health problems. The Survey also identified a housing need amongst some people with a connection to the village and who wished to return.

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

Policy SN2 Housing mix

- 6.13 **Within Stutton new development must favour smaller dwellings reflecting the need for two- and three-bedroom homes to rent or buy. It should aim to meet the established need amongst single people, couples, and young families and for single storey homes suitable for older people wishing to downsize. Any proposed alternative housing mix must be justified by 1) an up-to-date assessment of existing needs applicable to Stutton; or 2) the site-specific context.**

Policy SN3 Affordable housing

- 6.14 **A minimum of 35% of any new development of ten houses or more must be affordable housing, as defined by the NPPF, except within the AONB where a threshold of five houses or more will apply. Such housing must be designed to be indistinguishable from market housing and distributed throughout a site.**

Policy SN4 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

6.15 **Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, including entry level homes for purchase (as defined by paragraph 72 of the NPPF) on rural exception sites outside the Settlement Boundary where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing:**

- **remains affordable in perpetuity;**
- **is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the village at open-market prices;**
- **is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection, as defined by Gateway to Homechoice, Babergh's choice based lettings scheme. Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages; and**
- **conforms to the design principles set out in the design guide.**

6.16

These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

6.17

To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policies for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing.

6.18

Any planning application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed needs assessment and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.

6.19

In exceptional circumstances, up to 35% of market homes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated:

a) that no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and

b) the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing.

6.20

Where sites for affordable housing outside the settlement boundary are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.

6.21

See also:

Community Action 2: Registering housing need

Community Action 3: Updating Housing Needs Survey

Community Action 4: Community Land Trust



Canham's Community Wood

Context and evidence

Housing mix

- 6.22 The Neighbourhood Plan conforms to JLP Policy SP01 which states that: "Across the plan area the mix, type and size of the new housing development will be expected to reflect established needs in the most relevant district needs assessment, or any local housing needs surveys where relevant".
- 6.23 There are a disproportionately high number of older single households in Stutton and a disproportionately lower number of young single and young family households. Such an imbalance threatens the sustainability of our community in terms of the future viability of the school and the demands made on not only formal services but also informal community support and activities. The Housing Needs Survey carried out in 2019 found that 60% of those in housing need indicated they wanted two-bedroom properties, followed by 25% who wanted three-bedroom properties. A questionnaire survey of parents whose children attend Stutton Primary School found that three households who currently live outside the parish indicated they wished to move into Stutton, all of whom indicated that they required two- or three-bedroom properties. Stutton's current housing stock has an over-representation of larger properties compared to the national average.
- 6.24 There was also an expressed housing need amongst a smaller group of older households wishing to downsize to a 2 or 3 bedroom bungalow. Stutton has a relatively large proportion of bungalows amongst its housing stock (44%), but this can be depleted when younger families move into such properties and convert them to a two-storey dwelling.

Affordable Housing

- 6.25 JLP Policy SP02 specifies that "a contribution of 35% of affordable housing will be required on site of ten or more dwellings or 0.5ha or more". The threshold of 5 houses for any development within the AONB refers to NPPF 2021 para 64 which says policies may set a threshold of five houses or fewer in designated rural areas. More than half the village lies within the AONB and there is more potential for future development on small-scale and in-fill sites than on sites which could accommodate 10 or more dwellings.
- 6.26 There is certainly a need for affordable housing in our village. Thirty-three households were identified as being in housing need in 2019, with 13 responding that members of their household were living with them because they are unable to find or afford suitable accommodation. The most common reason preventing a move was an inability to afford the cost of a mortgage, closely followed by an inability to afford the cost of a deposit. More than one in four people responding to the Housing Needs Survey had savings of less than £5000.
- 6.27 Sixteen people had moved out of the parish in the last five years because they had been unable to afford accommodation locally, the majority being between the ages of 25-44. ONS data for 2021 indicate that house prices generally within Babergh are running at 10.52 times average local wages.
- 6.28 The Housing Needs Survey recorded that 'Gateway to HomeChoice' (Babergh's social housing register) had 12 applicants registered who have a local connection to Stutton, half of whom were over 55. Gateway to HomeChoice will continue to be an important indicator of housing demand through the life of this Neighbourhood Plan.

6.29 In terms of both housing mix and affordable housing, we have concluded that:

- the main housing need amongst those wishing to remain in, or move to, Stutton is for two- or three-bedroom dwellings;
- there is a clear need for affordable housing, both for rent and to buy;
- some of the expressed housing need amongst older people for downsizing to single storey dwellings is likely to be met from the existing housing stock together with the Church Road and Manningtree Road developments. Nevertheless, it will be important that the supply of single storey dwellings is maintained within the village.

6.30 Hinterland villages such as Stutton are required to contribute 9% of the additional new housing development between 2018 and 2037(JLP, page 41). Recent and planned housing developments will increase Stutton's 409 households by 16% in the next two to three years and is sufficient to meet the need identified in the recent Housing Needs Survey.

6.31 However, the Survey results are valid only in the short term and we recognise the need to undertake further housing needs studies in the plan period to provide further and updated evidence for housing need. We would expect that further development of the type that would contribute to Stutton's sustainability could be justified in the later stages of this Plan but this will depend on the results of future housing needs surveys.





Stutton Residents' Views

During the Big Conversation many people recognised that there is likely to be further development, but felt that this should respond to local housing needs. Such development would only be justified after a period of time had elapsed to allow the village community to respond to the forthcoming significant increase in its population as a result of development already in the pipeline.

Small homes for elderly to rent

Need housing suitable for older people to downsize to.

*No big houses - small family houses which will support local school.
The village needs young families at its heart - and we know how hard it is for young families to afford to live here.*

More affordable homes.

Genuinely affordable under stamp duty threshold

Starter homes for the young.



Policy SN5 Accessible and adaptable homes

- 6.32 **Any new housing development of 10 or more dwellings must meet the M4(2) standards for accessible and adaptable homes for a minimum of 50% of its dwellings. In addition, proposals which seek to provide a higher percentage of such dwellings will be looked upon favourably (as long as other policies in this Plan are followed). This will also apply to smaller developments which build to M4(2) standards.**
- 6.33 This policy is consistent with JLP LP06, which specifies the 50% requirement and also with LP26 which states "Where relevant and necessary ensure design and amenity accommodates for the ageing population in accordance with M4(2) standards". The policy, however, encourages developers to go further than that set out in the JLP, given the population characteristics of Stutton. This is consistent with NPPF paragraph 130 f), footnote 49 which states "Planning policies for housing should make use of the Government's optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing, where this would address an identified need for such properties".
- 6.34 The accessible and adaptable M4(2) standard is particularly relevant for a village such as Stutton with its disproportionate number of older households. The standard is intended to ensure that new homes are suitable to meet the changing needs of people over their lifetimes. It is similar to the Lifetime Homes Standard which has been recommended by a number of key organisations since the early 1990s and is incorporated into the Building for Life standard. Such housing is suitable for households with young children, and for people of all ages with varying levels of mobility. It is of benefit not only to those living in such houses but also has been shown to reduce the demands on health and social care services. The July 2019 version of the Joint Local Plan states that "... dwellings built to adapt to and accommodate the needs of the occupier over their lifetime can facilitate choice, help meet the needs of an ageing population and improve quality of life.." and "The local plan seeks new dwellings to be designed to meet these needs using the Lifetime Homes Standard or other similar design standards as appropriate".
- 6.35 The Joint Local Plan recognises that the older population is predicted to rise, and "it is also expected a growing number of households will include one or more persons with a disability and more households with people living with long-term health conditions". A home which meets the Part M4(2) standard provides basic accessibility and the potential to be adaptable to meet increasing needs, thereby reducing pressures on scarce specialist housing and expensive adaptations.

Policy SN6 – Achieving good design in Stutton

6.36 **A design-led approach should be taken for all proposals. Development proposals will be expected to achieve high quality design and contribute positively to Stutton as a place. In achieving this, applicants should be guided by the design principles set out in the Stutton Design Guide and demonstrate how their proposal satisfies the design requirements through the completion of the Stutton Design Checklist provided in Appendix 3 to this document.**

6.37 **In addition, proposals will be expected to:**

- **Contribute to the village's local distinctiveness, built form and scale through the use of appropriate design and materials;**
- **Be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment, and detailed design which respects the area's character, appearance and its setting;**
- **Not adversely affect the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated; and/or residential amenity.**

6.38 **Context and evidence**

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states "good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities." LP26 of the JLP requires all developments to "demonstrate that they conform with the design principles in any design documents endorsed by the LPA, Neighbourhood Plans and/or village design statements. Development which fails to maintain and improve the quality and character of the area will not be supported".

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group commissioned a Design Guide, carried out by consultants AECOM. This included a parish wide Site Analysis in terms of mobility and access; environment and landscape; heritage, and character assessment. It identified 12 character areas in Stutton. A character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place. The features identified in this assessment were then used to inform the Design Guide. Importantly any development taking place shall relate to and take into account the specific elements that make up the character area in which it is located. For full details see the Design Guide.



Cattsfied. Design Guide Character Area 6

Stutton Design Guidelines and Codes

- 6.40 The Design Guide demonstrates how future developments can create high quality places in a way which responds to and enhances the character and landscape of the parish rather than building poorly designed anonymous housing estates with replicated property designs. It will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in Stutton, especially on potential sites that might come forward in the future. The Guide aims to aid the design of new developments, redevelopment schemes of existing houses, influence house extensions in general and guide householders in overall design issues in Stutton.
- 6.41 The Guide details specific design codes applicable to:
- Street design (main access streets, residential streets, edge street lanes, car parking solutions, wayfinding, street lighting and street planting)
 - Built form (overlook the public space, turn corners, maintain a consistent building line, protect gaps and views, establish a consistent property boundary, roof profile, facades and fenestration, services and utilities, use vernacular details, design flexible homes, ground appearance, boundary treatments, housing typologies, housing extensions)
 - Environment and landscape design guidance (insulate buildings, low carbon development, roof solar panels, green roofs and walls, storage, wildlife, SuDs, green networks, new woodlands, playgrounds)
 - Heritage assets and their setting design guidance (identify heritage assets and the effect on their setting, assess the role of settings in the significance of heritage assets, assess the effects of the development on the significance of the heritage asset and its appreciation, maximise enhancement or minimise harm on the heritage asset, make and document the decision and monitor outcomes).
- 6.42 The Design Guide recommends that new development proposals should include evidence that they have considered and applied the following general design principles. In particular development proposals should demonstrate how designs:
- Harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement pattern and land use.
 - Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent long-distance views.
 - Reinforce or enhance the established character of streets and other spaces.
 - Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity.
 - Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality.
 - Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness.
 - Retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built form features into the development.
 - Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.
 - Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details.
 - Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features.
 - Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other; to provide a safe, attractive, and cohesive environment.
 - Make enough provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours.
 - Sensitively integrate energy efficient technologies within the scheme at the start of the design process.



Stutton Residents' Views

The need to prevent damage to the beautiful rural setting of our village was high on villagers' concerns expressed during the Big Conversation, as was the awareness that - as a small village - there is a limit to which we can sustain any significant growth. There was concern that previous developments were not of high-quality design and had not contributed positively to the existing sense of place.

Keep us a distinct village.

Don't want to morph into Holbrook.

We need to look after our green spaces and river. And protect water drainage.

We must consider the eco-system - and as we grow, not destroy the delicate balance. Trees are so important.

All development should take account of roads, schools, doctors and other facilities and parking.

Fully recognise the need for additional housing. However, too much expansion creates larger pressure on local infrastructure: country lanes, schools, doctors – difficult enough to get appointments as it is. Expansion must at the same time come as broadening the local infrastructure.



Policy SN7 Renewable energy in developments

- 6.43 **Proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation and on-site renewable technologies will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings.**
- 6.44 **Proposals should:**
- **be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency through the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials, which are energy efficient in their manufacturing, transport, and building processes;**
 - **maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings;**
 - **incorporate other renewable energy systems such as ground or air sourced heat pumps, avoiding fossil fuel-based heating systems;**
 - **provide energy storage facilities.**

Context and evidence

- 6.45 Both the NPPF (paras 154-155) and the JLP (LP25) support planning policies which contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The Committee on Climate Change has concluded that "We will not meet our targets for emissions reduction without near complete decarbonisation of the housing stock" (UK Housing: Fit for the Future?).
- 6.46 The Stutton Design Guide includes guidance on insulating buildings, delivering low carbon development and designing roof solar panels as an integral part of a development. Please see Design Code EN.01 Insulate buildings, EN.02, Low carbon development and EN.03 Roof solar panels.



Suffolk Climate Change Award 2014

Stutton Residents' Views

Stutton's residents strongly support measures to reduce carbon emissions and some have been early adopters of solar panels and heat pumps. Stutton Community Hall and Stutton Community Shop entered into a partnership whereby solar panels on the Hall provided free electricity to the Shop.

These efforts were recognised with an award by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership in 2014.

Renewable energy continues to be something which local people support.

Eco friendly building and energy conservation e.g., Solar panels

How can we encourage more solar panels?

More eco-friendly technology e.g., Solar panels

Policy SN8 Sustainable drainage

- 6.47 **Proposals for all new developments will be required to submit schemes, appropriate to the scale of the proposal, detailing how on-site drainage will be managed so as not to cause or exacerbate surface water and fluvial flooding elsewhere.**
- 6.48 **Examples include rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling, and run-off and water management such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) or other natural drainage systems where easily accessible maintenance can be achieved. All schemes shall include an allowance for climate change, in accordance with most up to date Environment Agency advice.**

Context and evidence

- 6.49 The Anglian Water area is classified as experiencing "serious water stress" by the UK government and the JLP has responded by requiring higher water efficiency measures in new buildings (LP25). The NPPF states that the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is key to effective and sustainable water management while Suffolk County Council advises that Neighbourhood Plans should encourage efficient water and waste management systems as well as sustainable drainage systems.
- 6.50 Some parts of Stutton (such as Manningtree Road and Lower Street) have experienced problems with the drainage of surface water in recent years, and this is likely to increase with predicted higher rainfall. It will be important that any future housing developments do not add to these problems. The Stutton Design Guide includes guidance on SuDs. Please see EN.07. SuDs. development.



B1080 - west of Bentley Lane



Stutton Residents' Views

Problems with existing drainage were one of the issues raised by a number of villagers during the Big Conversation.

Drains are a major problem for some people. costs more to insure, intermittent 'backing up'. What are the implications if new properties are built in the village? Can anything be specified which would influence future planning applications?

Specify that new housing developments should have....water butts, systems for reusing water, water storage.



7 LANDSCAPE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

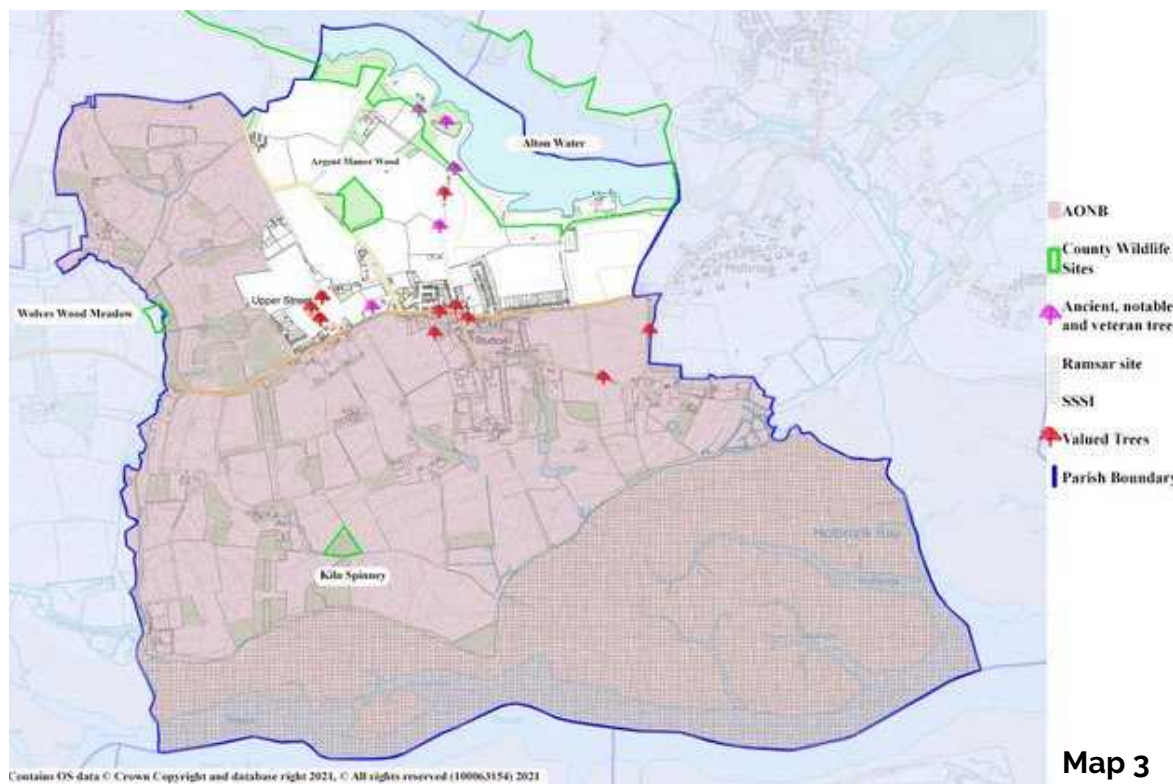
Objectives

- 7.1 **To preserve the character of Stutton and ensure the landscape and natural environment is enhanced.**
- 7.2 **To protect, improve the connection of, and promote the creation of green spaces in and around the village.**
- 7.3 **To integrate appropriate biodiversity features and minimise light pollution in new developments.**

Background

- 7.4 Stutton has a rich natural environment that is recognised through a suite of designations from international to local level. The Stour Estuary which bounds the south of the village, is part of the Stour and Orwell estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The estuary is of outstanding importance for wintering birds and is in the top 1% of sites in the UK. Several watercourses flow into the estuary, providing a valuable freshwater resource for waterbirds.
- 7.5 There are four County Wildlife Sites within the parish, including Alton Water which is the largest in Suffolk. Map 3 also recognises priority habitats, priority species and ancient/veteran or notable trees in the village.
- 7.6 The countryside around the village is that of a typical East Anglian arable landscape, with just a small amount of seasonal grazing by cattle and sheep. Recent changes in farming practices are noticeable with new irrigation enabling cash crops such as onions and carrots and cover-crops and stubbles promoting soil health. The fields are surrounded by established hedgerows of varying quality, small woodlands, shelter belts and individual trees. Two of the woodlands are County Wildlife Sites – Argent Manor Wood (an ancient woodland) and Kiln Spinney.

- 7.7 Both from within and on the outskirts of Stutton, distant views of the wider, open landscape, including those across to Essex can be experienced. The tranquility offered by Stutton Ness is juxtaposed with distant views of the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich to the east.
- 7.8 In landscape terms, the land to the south of Holbrook Road/Manningtree Road (the B1080) lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. In July 2020, the AONB was extended to the west of the village down to the Samford Valley. The protection and enhancement of AONBs is given great weight in national planning policy which is advanced by a landscape management plan and planning policy guidance produced by the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Unit.
- 7.9 Public consultations in developing this Plan have demonstrated that residents put great value in all aspects of this special environment, and strong policies are required that will ensure these areas and features are protected and enhanced for residents and visitors alike to enjoy into the future.



'Valued trees' were identified by village residents during the Big Conversation. 'Ancient, Veteran and Notable' were identified by Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

Map 3 Landscape Designations and features



Valued Tree at the end of Alton Hall Lane


Policy SNg Stutton Landscape and Settlement Character

- 7.10 All development proposals shall be sensitive to the distinctive landscape and settlement character in Stutton, as described in the Parish Landscape Study
- 7.11 This means, to be supported, development proposals:
- must respect and not adversely impact the key views identified on Policy Map SNgA
 - should protect or enhance the landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place, as described in the Stutton Landscape Study and summarised in the supporting text to this policy.
 - carefully consider boundaries of any new development especially where they interface with the countryside, to ensure they restore or create an appropriate rural edge. Particular care should be taken with development proposals impacting on the sensitive settlement edges as shown on Policy Map SNgB.
 - maintain the general open character of the landscape gap between the main village and Stutton Green indicated on Policy Map SNgB and protect the character of the rural gap between Upper Street and the main village.
 - protect or enhance the rural character at key village gateway points shown on Policy Map SNgB.
- 7.12 Wherever possible, proposals will be sought which both improve the integrity of the landscape including at settlement edge locations. Examples of such opportunities include:
- proposals which enhance the village entrance point on Holbrook Road, for example tree planting where this would define and enhance the gateway and help assimilate new residential development.
 - utilising opportunities, where they arise, to improve the setting of heritage assets along Lower Street.
- 7.13 Where potential impacts on Stutton's landscape and settlement character are identified, applicants will be expected to demonstrate accordance with this policy through the provision of an assessment of landscape and visual impacts (proportionate to the scheme proposed) and drawing, in this process, on guidance and recommendations in the Stutton Landscape Study. For any schemes proposed in the AONB, Policy SN13 also applies.

Policy Map SN9A Key Views



List of Important Views:

-  Point views
-  Representative view - series number of similar views available
- View 1: Crepping Hall Drive footpath - southwards
- View 2: Church Field Road - looking west
- View 3: Lewis Lane - westwards
- View 4: Alton Hall Lane - north and southwards
- View 5: Footpath north of Holbrook Rd - looking northeast
- View 6: Stutton Church - view east towards Bay
- View 7: Shoreline views
- View 8: Stutton Hall driveway - looking south
- View 9: Alton Water - looking southeast

Policy Map SN9B Landscape Sensitivities



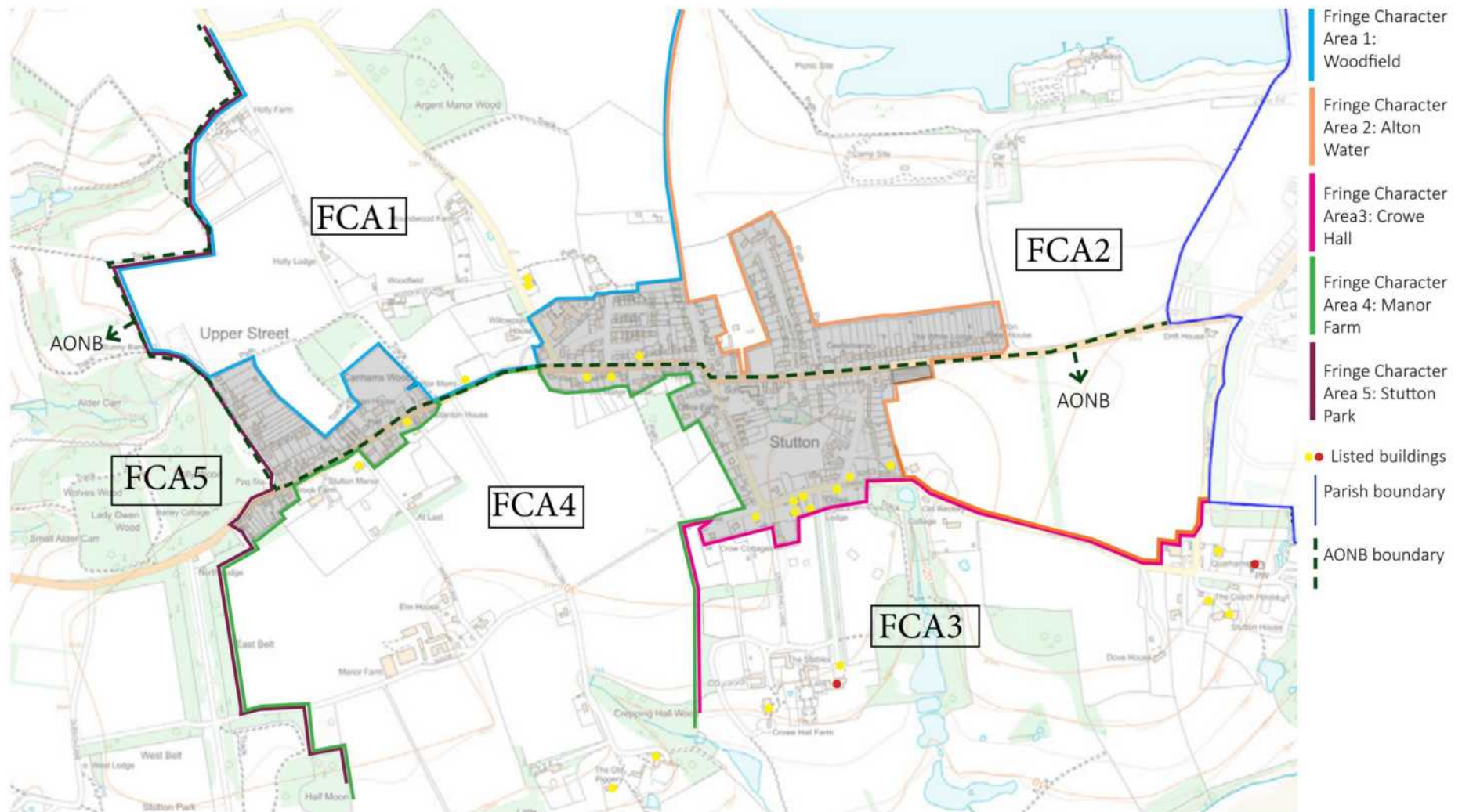
Village Gateways: 1. Stutton Hall 2. Bentley Lane 3. Holbrook Road 4. Lower Street

↗ Landscape Gaps - - - AONB Boundary ~ Visually sensitive edge — Notable heritage curtilage

Context and evidence

- 7.14 Suffolk County Council published its Landscape Character Assessment in 2008 (updated in 2011). This describes 31 landscape character types in Suffolk county, four of which are found in Stutton parish. These are:
- plateau estate farmlands
 - rolling valley farmlands
 - ancient estate farmlands
 - rolling estate farmlands.
- 7.15 A parish-wide landscape study was undertaken in 2021 by landscape architect. Lucy Batchelor-Wylam. This study describes the landscape character parish wide. It focuses on the character of the rural fringes of Stutton and includes an assessment of important views.
- Stutton Character Areas**
- 7.16 The Stutton Landscape Study focuses on the character of the rural fringes of Stutton. These all fall within the single character type – 'plateau estate farmlands' as defined in the Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment. The Stutton Landscape Study divides the rural fringes of Stutton into five fringe character areas. These are shown in Map 4.
- 7.17 Each of these fringe character areas is described in terms of:
- Wider character context and location
 - Elevation/topography/position in the landscape
 - Landcover and land use
 - Interface between settlement and rural edges
 - Aspects of value and heritage
 - Visual and perceptual experience
 - Management issues and opportunities.
- 7.18 The landscape study explores and defines the sensitivity of each fringe character area. Sensitivity is described in terms of landscape value on the one hand and visual sensitivity on the other. A key intention of the document is to assist in providing an understanding of the different parts of the village fringe and whether there is any potential capacity, in landscape terms, for development. The Landscape Character Study provides the following summary descriptions for each of these areas:

Map 4 Stutton Fringe Character Areas



FCA1: Fringe Character Area 1: Woodfield – A summary

- 7.19 "A belt of the village fringe that shows variety and best retains its historic character. Small scale fields and small woodlands interface with the farmland to the north. Hints of ancient organic landscape patterns endure despite the creation of the farmland estates in the 18th century.
- 7.20 The simple grid-like network of roads, lanes, and footpaths is distinctive and also adds to the area's recreational/amenity value. The adjoining village edges are modern and display a linear settlement pattern. Outlying scattered dwellings and farms are also found on the lanes. Vegetation has strong impact in this flat landscape and skylines are wooded, fringing open farmland. The Almshouses are a distinctive gateway feature on Bentley lane."

Recommendations for change management:

- 7.21 The Landscape Study recommends that change management in this character area should account for:
- "The rural gap between the two village clusters is under pressure. Any further development here must carefully consider how to maintain the rural feel. There may be opportunities for small or medium developments in locations which are contained and visually less sensitive"
 - "Patterns such as small or medium-scale meadow boundaries or historic hedge lines must be conserved. Detailed work at a site level would be needed to assess potential impacts of any such proposal"
 - "Any development should be attached to the existing village edges. The farmland is more open and visually sensitive and has limited capacity to accommodate development."
 - "Any new development in this area must seek to integrate within substantial boundary hedges and trees. New boundary planting should use only native species"
 - "Vernacular materials (brick, clay tiles, render) are most appropriate although visual prominence can be reduced with use of timber on both elevations and roofs. Brick can be less prominent than render".
 - "The separated nature of outlying cottages should be maintained".
 - "Protection of the many mature oak trees that are so distinctive here".



FCA2: Fringe Character Area 2: Alton Water – A summary

- 7.22 "Plateau and valley edge landscape made up predominantly of large open fields growing high value crops. Woodland is generally absent but present in adjoining areas and fringes views along the horizon. Views can be open and long. The northern edges of the parish have seen considerable disruption with the creation of Alton Water which dominates views to the north and provides a key local leisure resource. Settlement edges are generally modern, straight and stark. The RHS tower is a key local waypoint feature and landmark. Old narrow vegetated lanes are points of particular value as is a more modern but distinctive coniferous tree belt in the southern half of the area."

Recommendations for change management

- 7.23 The Landscape Study recommends that change management in this character area should account for:
- "This flat and open landscape is visually sensitive and has limited capacity to accommodate development without change being noticeable from the wider landscape. Vertical elements could be seen from a very wide area."
 - "Development is generally less appropriate in the AONB..."
 - "The village edges are well defined and straight. There are few opportunities to 'mesh with any indentations – therefore development is likely to constitute intakes into countryside and be harder to assimilate'."
 - "Any new development in this area must integrate its edges, where they abut the countryside, with substantial boundary hedges and trees. Overall the linearity and geometry of the landscape can be reflected in new planting."
 - "New planting should be native species. Lines of pines, and parkland species as well as native species can be used to enhance the estate feel".
 - "Further intensification of visitor and tourist facilities or accommodation at Alton Water could have visual impacts as well as impact the prevailing tranquillity. Direct and indirect impacts should be considered carefully. Appropriately designed belts of vegetation must be used to assimilate and screen views from the village edges".
 - "Encourage ongoing communication between the parish and Anglian water on the future of Alton Water"



FCA3: Fringe Character Area 3: Crowe Hall - A Summary

- 7.24 "This character is dominated by the extensive private designed parkland of historic Crowe Hall and its related estate buildings and enclosures. The extensive grasslands with scattered trees, copses and linear tree features contribute greatly to the AONB landscape. Its interface with the village brings its distinctiveness and a strong sense of the historic landscape. Public access is not possible so perceptions are limited to the treed skylines seen to either side and this area presents views of large area of undeveloped wooded rural landscape."

Recommendations for change management

- 7.25 The Landscape Study recommends that change management in this character area should account for:
- "Development is generally less appropriate in the AONB."
 - "Policy might allow for small scale exceptional innovative design in places where assimilation can be demonstrated. However, there is little opportunity for development into undeveloped land along the village edge".
 - "The private ownership of Crowe Hall parkland and its high heritage significance means development is not likely to be a dominant issue in this character area."
 - "Development west of the village edge beyond the Old Rectory is not appropriate. It would cause a departure from the more nucleated form of this part of the village and be hard to assimilate."
 - "Interpretation boards for visitors could potentially tell the story of Stutton's great houses and gardens even if views of them aren't possible."
 - "Future opportunities may arise to enhance the character of Lower Road where its heritage character is weakest."
 - "Any new development in this area must seek to integrate within substantial boundary hedges and trees. New boundary planting should only use native species".
 - "Vernacular materials (brick, clay tiles, render) are most appropriate although visual prominence can be reduced with use of timber on both elevations and roofs"



"FCA4: Fringe Character Area 4: Manor Farm – A Summary

- 7.26 "This landscape fringe is an ordered grid of fairly flat land with rectilinear fields divided by tracks and drives. It is high value estate farmland. Some small meadows backing the settlement provide a soft edge to the village. The area is contained and fringed by trees because it is flanked by mature wooded boundaries of parkland to both east and west. The area is important for amenity and offers numerous access opportunities. The holly avenue along Crepping Hall Drive is a distinctive feature and communicates the estate feel of the landscape."

Recommendations for change management:

- 7.27 The Landscape Study recommends that change management in this character area should account for:
- "Development is generally less appropriate in the AONB. NPPF and Local Plan Policy requires any development to avoid harm to the special character and scenic qualities of AONB landscapes. However small scale, affordable, exceptional or innovative design, can be supported in places where a successful and sympathetic response to landscape and setting can be demonstrated."
 - "The undeveloped gap between the main village and Upper Street should be conserved given the visual amenity it offers. Development to link the two clusters, or erode the gap, is not appropriate."
 - "There may be opportunities for single plot or very small development to 'mesh' successfully, e.g. where the village edge has indentations, but patterns such as small-scale meadow boundaries or historic hedge lines must be conserved. Detailed work at a site level would need to assess potential impacts of any such proposal".
 - "Any development should be attached to the existing village edges. The farmland is more open and visually sensitive and has limited capacity to accommodate development."
 - "Any new development in this area must seek to integrate within substantial boundary hedges and trees. New boundary planting should only use native species. Linear forms are appropriate in line with the estate character of the adjacent farmland."
 - "Vernacular materials (brick, clay tiles, render) are most appropriate although visual prominence can be reduced with use of timber on both elevations and roof. Large windows likely to spill light into adjacent dark landscapes should be avoided."



FCA5: Fringe Character Area5: Stutton Park. A Summary

- 7.28 "Land is flat along the village edge then falls towards the west into the tributary of Samford valley, and south towards the estuary. This character is very scenic and is dominated by the parkland setting of Stutton Hall and its wooded estate. South of the main road the character is more formal and geometric, north of the main road it is more organic in form and rural in character as woodland and farmland interact. Apart from the estate buildings settlement is absent. It is an important part of the footpath network, linking walkers down to the estuary from the west side of the village and offers a series of experiences and views finally culminating in the estuary itself and views across the water to Mistley."

7.29 **Recommendations for change management:**

The Landscape Study recommends that change management in this character area should account for:

- "Development is generally not appropriate in the AONB. Policy is in place to require development to provide protection of its special character."
- "There is little opportunity for development along this village edge which is mostly woodland. The private ownership of Stutton Hall parkland and high heritage significance means development is not likely to be an issue in this character area."
- "The western limits are well defined by Stutton Hall. Development west of the existing village edge is not appropriate."
- "Interpretation boards for visitors could potentially tell the story of Stutton's great houses and gardens even if views of them aren't possible."





Stutton is a small village in a rural setting

Village Gateway Points

- 7.30 The key village gateway points are shown on Policy Map SN9B.
- 7.31 **Village Gateway Western 1: Stutton Hall.** Under category "Interface between settlements and rural edges" the Landscape study reports that an attractive red brick lodge building sits at the entrance gates to Stutton Hall and together, the lodge and the views down the tree lined drive, also provide a form of gateway feature to the village. The hall is set more than 750 m south of the road and only glimpses of its Tudor chimneys are visible. It appears as a prestigious arrival point to Stutton.
- 7.32 **Village Gateway Western 2: Bentley Lane.** This has a strong rural character. The Almshouses and the large oak tree on the corner form an attractive arrival point.
- 7.33 **Village Gateway Eastern 3: Holbrook Road.** Under category "Interface between settlements and rural edges" the Landscape study finds that the eastern arrival point to the village, on Holbrook Road, is abruptly marked by the drive to Alton Water and ribbon development and is indistinct. Under management objectives, the Landscape Study recommends that ways are explored to enhance the village entrance point on Holbrook Road for example through tree planting to define and enhance the gateway and help assimilate new residential development
- 7.34 **Village Gateway Eastern 4: Lower Street.** Here "The Old Rectory", an imposing detached house set back from the road, marks the village edge.



Views Assessment

- 7.35 In June 2021, landscape architect Lucy Batchelor-Wylam prepared a views assessment of Stutton. The consultant worked together with the Neighbourhood Plan group, who had in turn given opportunities for village residents to nominate important views. From fourteen views initially selected the number was reduced to nine after the working group reviewed the views against the following factors:
- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views – including complexity, appreciation of topography, depth of field, naturalness, and arrangement of natural and vegetative features
 - Number of people likely to be experiencing it – i.e. value relating to shared experience. The more people that experience a viewpoint, the higher the value attributed.
 - Presence of a landmark feature, perhaps with skyline presence, aiding orientation in the landscape or along a route.
 - View contributes to the setting of a heritage asset.
 - Other locally distinctive points of interest or cultural associations that particularly define the character of Stutton.
 - Views that are indicative of a special 'sense of place' which reflect its intrinsic character and important characteristics.
- 7.36 It should be noted that the defined views are not the only views with special qualities in the parish. There are many other views that contribute to local distinctiveness and rural character and it should not be inferred that other views in the parish have little value. The defined views are held in high public regard and demonstrate particular qualities or features. Each view, together with supporting text, is fully explained in the Key Views Assessment and the views are as indicated on Policy Map SNgA



The Views

- 7.37 Please see the 2021 views assessment for more detailed descriptions
- 7.38 **View 1: Crepping Hall Drive footpath – southwards.** This is from one point and is through the designated AONB landscape. It is rural and scenic. The view is southward down the Crepping Hall driveway (a very well used footpath) from the main road giving a wide angle view from the south-east to the south-west.
- 7.39 **View 2: Church Field Road.** Historic narrow lane offers views (through the designated AONB landscape) towards the village edge en route from Stutton Green. It is particularly rural, tranquil and quiet. Intermittent glimpses of the estuary are possible to the south – this is highly valued as its one of the only places where public glimpses of the river are achievable from the village edges.
- 7.40 **View 3: Lewis Lane: View westward** (over land now designated as AONB) through farmland from footpath along Lewis Lane.
- 7.41 **View 4: Alton Hall Lane.** View southward from Alton Hall Lane – a quiet, historic, tree-lined lane, also known locally as 'Watery Lane'. The views comprise the lane itself and the tranquil farmland setting on either side.
- 7.42 **View 5: Footpath north of Holbrook Road.** View eastwards across farmland from the village edge towards Alton Water to the north and the clocktower of the Royal Hospital School to the east.
- 7.43 **View 6: Stutton Church** – view east. View over the meadows of the Grade II listed Markwells Farm towards Holbrook Bay. Please see the 2021 views assessment for a more detailed description.
- 7.44 **View 7: Estuary Views.** A representative shoreline view – from Stutton Ness to the northeast. Views comprise a mosaic of rich visual textures – open water, mud at low tide, shingle and sand beaches, wooded cliffs, rich vegetation communities. Please see the 2021 views assessment for a more detailed description.
- 7.45 **View 8: Stutton Hall Drive.** View from the main road adjacent to the gatehouse.
- 7.46 **View 9: Alton Water.** A view from the footpath along the reservoir edge southeast to the sailing centre. A block of woodland occupies the centre of the view behind the top of the dam, and a water tower and the RHS clocktower break the skyline and provides orientation.



View 1: Crepping Hall Drive



View 2: Church Field Road



View 3: Lewis Lane



View 4: Alton Hall Lane



View 5: Footpath north of Holbrook Road



View 6: Markwells Farm towards the bay



View 7: Estuary Views.



View 8: Stutton Hall drive



View 9: Alton Water

Reproduced with permission from Stutton Landscape Study

Policy SN10 – Enhancing the natural environment

- 7.47 **Any new development proposal must meet the following requirements:**
- **take measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on existing biodiversity assets and be assessed by an appropriately qualified ecologist. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable measures will be required to mitigate any adverse impacts. Where mitigation is not possible, full compensatory provision should be made in accordance with the Mitigation Hierarchy;**
 - **provide a measurable net gain for biodiversity;**
 - **appropriately contribute to the creation of biodiversity features through the use of landscaping, building and construction features and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and including features such as bird boxes and hedgehog runs.**
- 7.48 See also:
Community Action 5: Working together to encourage best environmental actions
Community Action 6: Protecting valued trees.

Context and Evidence

- 7.49 Throughout the Big Conversation many people remarked on their appreciation of open spaces, the estuary, woodlands, wildlife and countryside location. As well as the biodiversity benefit of trees and hedgerows, their value as carbon stores, flood alleviation, providers of shade and pure natural aesthetic should be recognised.
- 7.50 On the river, the 'Stutton Mill roost' is one of the most important resting areas for waterbirds on the estuary, whilst the mudflats off Stutton Ness provide important feeding grounds. Alton Water supports 0.5% of the national population of nightingales and is the most important site in the county for breeding Common Terns. It also supports important populations of small mammals, including the legally-protected dormouse. Within the village, the only remaining colony of swifts persists in Stutton Close. Their fortunes have been bolstered by families willingly erecting nest-boxes on their houses to provide extra nest sites. Developments being brought forward are also integrating 'swift-bricks' in to new-builds.
- 7.51 Stutton is a hotspot for Stag Beetles, which are listed as a 'priority species' and are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Regular recording of Stutton's natural history has identified a suite of other Species of Principal Importance which local authorities and utility companies such as Anglian Water have a duty to conserve in accordance with Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006. These are listed in Appendix 4.



Fringe Character Area - Manor Farm

- 7.52 It is important that green spaces in the village are protected to maintain the village character and continue to provide an environmental benefit for all. New developments should include high-quality open space to provide room for people, recreation, landscaping, and wildlife and to improve the quality of the environment.
- 7.53 The Accessible Natural Greenspaces Standard (ANGSt) devised by Natural England recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural green space of at least two hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5-minute walk) from home. This is particularly important where substantial new growth is planned.
- 7.54 The Neighbourhood Plan fully endorses the aims of the JLP whereby it:
- aims to future proof all development from the impact of climate change by supporting the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate;
 - seeks to ensure sustainable development can be achieved, whilst supporting the objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including a low carbon economy.
- 7.55 The Stutton Design Guide acknowledges these themes proposing the inclusion of tree planting, landscaping, SuDs and features such as bird boxes in new developments with the aim of increasing bio diversity. It also promotes low carbon housing initiatives.
- 7.56 Consultation has indicated concerns around climate change and the need to act. The government awards grant aid to landowners/farmers under Environmental Stewardship programmes and has also set a target of trebling tree planting rates in England to 7,000ha each year by May 2024 as part of its new England Trees Action Plan. We believe that there is the potential to promote volunteer action to complement and assist landowners' environmental initiatives. Our Community Actions seek to support and encourage such action.
- 7.57 In addition to putting forward objectives to protect and maintain the parish landscape the Stutton Landscape Study advocates that opportunities should be taken to plant trees and hedgerows that can enhance the landscape without adversely affecting its local distinctive field patterns and character.
- 7.58 Tree and hedgerow planting objectives include:
- Increase woodland cover and develop well managed woodlands.
 - Encourage landowners to improve hedgerows by filling gaps and reinstating lost hedges. managed at appropriate height for biodiversity.
 - Plant diverse range of native species in edge, under-storey and canopy layers. Manage to increase biodiversity. Seek advice from ecologists and arboriculturists.
 - Look to provide linked woodland areas with public access to enable movement and connect paths.
 - Promote structural landscaping to assimilate new built form and screen any unsightly structures or car parking etc. Tree planting can also be used to help address nighttime light pollution.
 - Use trees to enhance the entrance routes into the village, to improve the attractiveness and demarcate boundaries (both roads and footpaths).



Stutton Residents' Views

Concern for the environment and the need to protect and enhance our beautiful countryside was raised by many people during the Big Conversation.

We must consider the eco-system - and as we grow, not destroy the delicate balance. Trees are so important.

We don't want to lose any trees.

We need to look after our green spaces and river. And protect water drainage.

Keep hedges and trees.

Identify the trees we want to keep so that we can act quickly if they are threatened.

Specify that new housing developments should have eg. hedgehog runs, swift boxes, water butts, systems for reusing water, water storage.

The surrounding fields give sense of space and peace.





Stour Estuary shoreline

Policy SN11 – Mitigating the impact of development on the Stour & Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA)

- 7.59 **All residential developments within the zones of influence of European sites will be required to make a financial contribution towards mitigation measures, as detailed in the Suffolk RAMS, to avoid adverse in-combination recreational disturbance effects on European sites.**

Context and Evidence

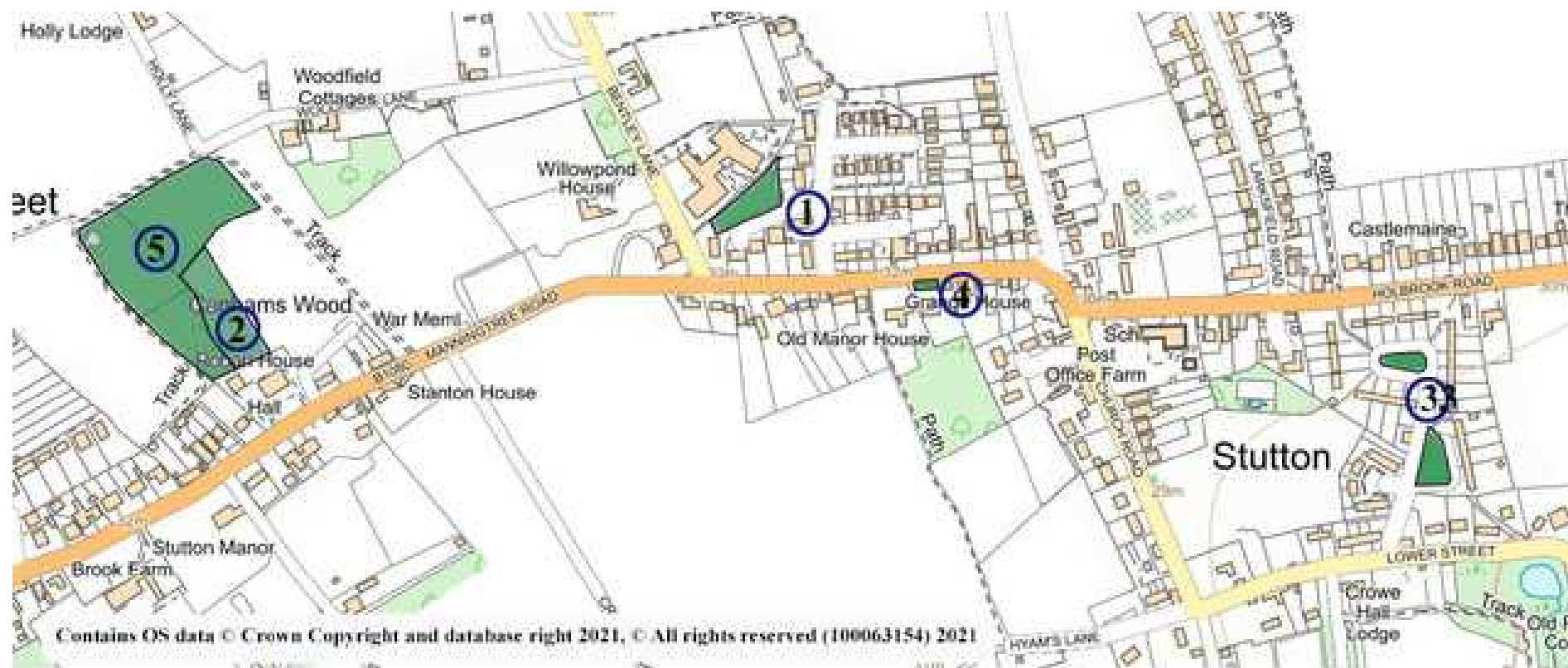
- 7.60 Stutton is located within the 13 kilometre “Zone of Influence” (Zol) of the Stour and Orwell Special Protection Area (SPA). Unless mitigated against, Natural England consider that additional residential development within the 13 kilometre “Zone of Influence” could have a detrimental impact on the designations due to an increase in residential trips that would adversely affect the important populations of wintering birds.
- 7.61 The Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Suffolk RAMS) is a key consideration in the context of the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) for development proposals. The Suffolk RAMS seeks to mitigate the recreational impacts as a result of new development within the Zol.

Protecting Local Green Space

POLICY SN12 – Protecting and enhancing Local Green Spaces

- 7.62 **The following sites as shown on Policy Map SN12 are designated as Local Green Spaces:**
- Allotments – Catts Close
 - Village playing field (behind the Community Hall)
 - Green space in Stutton Close
 - Village green opposite the King’s Head
 - Canham’s Wood and adjoining new woodland.
- 7.63 **Development on these sites will not be acceptable other than in very special circumstances in line with national policy.**

Policy Map SN12 Local Green Spaces



1. Allotments 2. Village playing field 3. Stutton Close green space 4. Village green opposite the King's Head 5. Canhams Wood and adjoining new woodland

Context and Evidence

- 7.64 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), neighbourhood plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the local community. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF says that Local Green Spaces should only be designated:
- "Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
 - Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife;
- and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."
- 7.65 The listed green spaces conform to these criteria (see Appendix 5).
- 7.66 Half of the playing field behind the community shop and hall was recently lost to a development proposal. The remaining half is currently recognised in the draft Local Plan as a designated green space and has now been transferred into the ownership of the Parish Council. This valued open space lies at a focus of our community infrastructure where it adjoins the Community Hall, the Community Shop and the community wood which includes Canhams Wood, and which is managed by Stutton Grows, a community woodland group. Also, within the fabric of the village are the allotments off Catts Close.
- 7.67 The green space in Stutton Close provides recreation for residents in the Close and acts as a conduit connecting residents via a public footpath from Lower Street to the school and other village facilities. The village green opposite the King's Head Provides seating for locals and walkers and is the site for the village sign.

Policy SN13 – Conserving and enhancing the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- 7.68 **Development proposals in the AONB or within the setting of the AONB will be expected to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. All development proposals will be expected to be compatible with the management objectives set out in the most up to date Management Plan for the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.**
- 7.69 **Apart from change of use applications, very minor development and householder proposals, proposals will be expected to be accompanied by a proportionate landscape assessment that provides full justification for the proposal in landscape and visual sensitivity terms and shows how the area's special landscape qualities will be conserved and where possible enhanced.**

- 7.70 **Where impacts are identified, the landscape assessment will demonstrate how these will be mitigated. Applicants will be expected to draw on up to date available guidance relating to appropriate colour palette and protecting dark skies in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. Any proposal that is not capable of mitigating the impacts of development will not be permitted.**

Context and Evidence

- 7.71 The purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. The NPPF seeks to protect national landscape designations from major development: "The scale and extent of development within [designated areas] should be limited...When considering applications for development within [designated areas], permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest " (paras 176-177).
- 7.72 The Stutton Landscape Character Study assesses landscape character in Stutton parish including the areas which fall within the AONB.
- 7.73 Information on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB is available to view at <https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/> . From here the following documents can be accessed:
- The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2018 to 2023 – this sets out a series of objectives for managing the AONB.
 - The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development
- 7.74 A character assessment of the National Character Area in which the AONB sits is provided by Natural England at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-the-east-of-england> (see National Character Area 82 Suffolk Coast and Heaths).
- 7.75 Light pollution is a serious emerging issue in protected landscapes, and the areas immediately adjacent to them, and has important implications for the planning and design of development. Poor lighting can detract from the architectural appearance of a building and may produce glare which can conceal rather than reveal. Inefficient lighting can be a waste of energy, thus a waste of money and resources.
- 7.76 The British Astronomical Association's Campaign for Dark Skies states that councils and organisations should use 'the right amount of light and only where needed, to help stargazers. Also of relevance, is the Joint Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Council Landscape Guidance (August 2015) which requires any development to consider and mitigate its impact on the dark skies character of the countryside.



8 LEISURE AND TOURISM

Objectives

- 8.1 **To support leisure and tourism activities which respect the character of the area.**
- 8.2 **To support leisure and tourism activities which do not adversely impact on residential or other uses.**

Background

- 8.3 The main area for leisure and tourism facilities lies to the north-east of the village at Alton Water. It has recently developed new outdoor play facilities, open-water recreation, a campsite, and crazy golf as well as hosting significant events such as the Great East Swim. It is a major regional leisure facility that attracts many visitors to pursue walking, watersports, crazy golf, cycling and more.

Policy SN14 Visitor and tourist development

8.4

Developments that provide facilities or services for the visitor or tourist will be supported provided that they:

- **demonstrate that they would conserve and enhance the landscape, heritage, character and appearance of the area;**
- **would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network and would provide adequate parking provision;**
- **be of a scale and design that is sensitive to the character of the landscape and heritage of the area; and**
- **would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on nearby residential or other uses.**

8.5

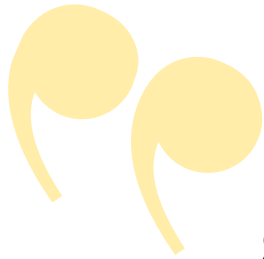
See also:
Community Action 7: Working together with Anglian Water.

Context and Evidence

- 8.6 NPPF para 84 supports 'sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.' It is important that people from outside the locality can enjoy the peaceful and nature-rich environment of this area for their own well-being and to help the economic health of the locality.
- 8.7 However, tourism and leisure development can have a significant adverse impact on the landscape and on residents, and indeed spoil the landscape and nature people want to enjoy. Guidance notes in the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment for 'Plateau Estate Farmland' and 'Ancient Estate Farmland' (which make up much of Stutton's landscape character) state that 'effective design and mitigation measures will be vital' to minimize adverse visual impact from leisure developments, and 'the impact on the character of the landscape both directly and indirectly may be highly significant'. The Stutton Landscape Character Study states that "further intensification of visitor and tourist facilities or accommodation at Alton Water could have visual impacts as well as impact the prevailing tranquillity. Direct and indirect impacts should be considered carefully. Appropriately designed belts of vegetation must be used to assimilate and screen views from the village edges."
- 8.8 In public consultations, increased traffic volumes and speeds through the village generated the largest number of concerns from residents, as well as inconsiderate parking. Leisure development is likely to exacerbate these issues: as an example, the recent development of Alton Water campsite has added significantly to volumes and size of vehicles during summer months. We are aware that actions, which may not require planning approval such as changes to car parking charges and controlled access to Alton Water off Holbrook Road can have adverse impact on local residents and the environment, with uncontrolled car parking on residential streets, on verges and field entrances. There is also concern from residents that the visual impact of the campsite has insufficient mitigation through hedge or tree planting and unacceptable light spill from the shower block (even when the site is closed) adversely affects the character of the night landscape (see Landscape Study – Fringe Character Area 2 – Management Objectives).



There are many visitors to Stutton



Stutton Residents' Views

We need to keep a careful eye as Alton Water develops. It's a good camping facility, but will there be more? As it grows it seems as if the wildlife is reducing. We need to keep an eye on this. It's a fine balance - a great facility for people to enjoy, but not losing wildlife.

Dog walkers using Alton Hall Lane as car park. Access should be stopped as dangerous for people walking.

There's light flooding out of the Alton Water campsite shower block (particularly the open sink facility) through the night and, absurdly, even when the site is closed during winter. They don't seem to use movement sensors or good downlighting to reduce light spill, and there isn't the planting to mask this light pollution.



9 HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Objectives

- 9.1 **To conserve heritage assets for the enjoyment of the public, visually or otherwise**
- 9.2 **To encourage the sense of cultural community within the village through clubs and groups for activities such as gardening, sports, and the arts**
- 9.3 **To promote the existing spirit of artistic and creative activity, and of service to the community**

Background

- 9.4 Stutton has 30 buildings and monuments listed by Historic England as Grade II or II* throughout the village, many of which date from before the 15th Century (Map X). Several of these buildings are substantial houses south of the main part of the village and around Stutton Green overlooking the River Stour; but the majority are more modest houses within the village, predominantly around Lower Street and Manningtree Road.
- 9.5 Culturally the village has a strong tradition of community service and community events, as well as a number of active groups and clubs, covering sports, art, drama and horticulture. There is also an eclectic mix of creative and artistic residents, many involved in village events.
- 9.6 Traditionally a rural village with a strong agricultural background, the countryside and its scenic routes and views – with the added bonus of Alton Water – is still central in terms of leisure and recreation for villagers and lies at the heart of what many hold dear. Despite being a linear village running more than a mile east to west, there is a strong sense of community. The desire to improve the quality of life in the village is evidenced by community organisations such as the Stutton Support Network, Stutton Community Association, Stutton Grows (managing the community woodland), and the Community Speedwatch group.



Policy SN15 Preserving and enhancing heritage assets and the character of the village

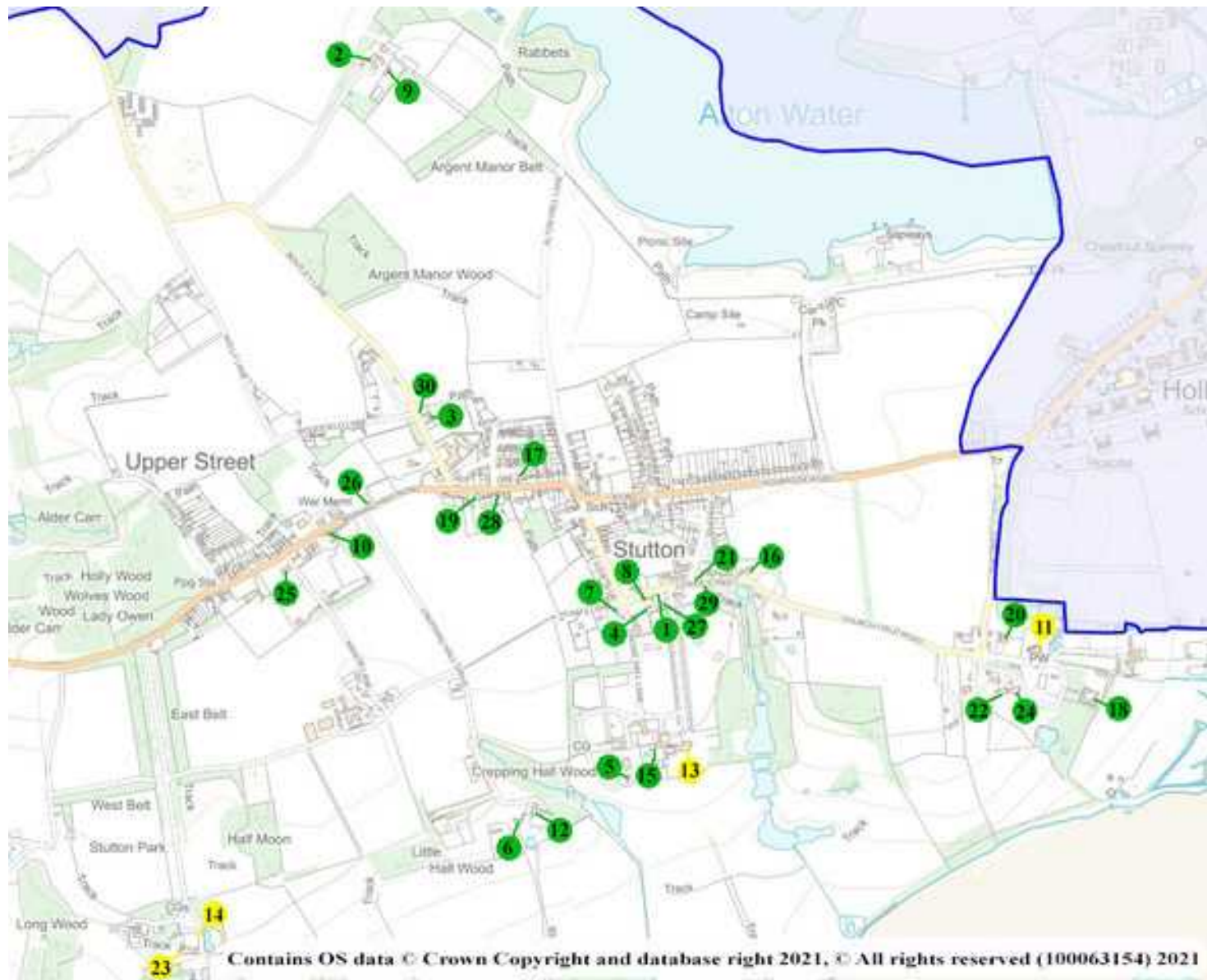
- 9.7 The designated heritage assets in the parish shown on Policy Map SN15 and listed in Appendix 6 will be conserved and where possible enhanced. Proposals which impact on heritage assets will take into account their significance and the setting of those heritage assets including, as applicable, the surrounding landscape and identified views on Policy Map SN9A.

Policy SN16 Non-designated heritage assets

- 9.8 Development affecting the non-designated heritage assets in the area, listed in Appendix 7, should conserve those assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 9.9 See also:
Community Action 8 Maintaining and promoting community activities.
Community Action 9 Supporting entrepreneurial and creative activities.



Policy Map SN15 Designated Heritage Assests



Context and Evidence

- 9.10 Policy SN15 and the Design Guide, draw on the guidance issued by Historic England, The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning. Note 3 (Second Edition, 2017). They are also consistent with Part 16 of the NPPF: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 9.11 Four of Stutton's five Fringe Character Areas identified in the Landscape Study contain heritage assets. The landscape settings of most of these assets contribute significantly to their value and to the character of the village, and it will be important to preserve and where possible enhance them.
- 9.12 As well as the designated heritage assets, Stutton benefits from a number of buildings that have heritage value but are not designated. These are the subject of Policy SN16 and have been identified by residents and the Working Group. The Policy is consistent with NPPF 2021 paragraph 203. Babergh District Council has not developed criteria for identifying non-designated heritage assets so we have instead used those suggested by neighbouring Suffolk Coastal District Council. Appendix 7 lists the assets and the reasons they have been included.
- 9.13 There is a strong tradition of entrepreneurial and artistic and creative activity in Stutton, and also of service to the community (see also section 11). Many residents come together for community events and celebration. The neighbourliness and strong sense of community make a major contribution to people's well-being.





Stutton Residents' Views

Village residents value their heritage assets and their setting within the rural landscape.

*Vision for Stutton in 20 years time - that it retains its heritage.
We love the old buildings in Stutton.*

Any new houses must be in scale and style with existing buildings.

There are so many organisations in Stutton – something for everybody to feel part of!

It is a lovely place to bring up children.

Friendliness and friendship really important.

A sociable, caring community: a real 'community' village.



10 GETTING AROUND

Objectives

- 10.1 **To reduce and mitigate the adverse effect of traffic on pedestrians, those with mobility issues, cyclists and equestrians through the village.**
- 10.2 **To ensure Stutton offers a safe environment for people and vehicles to move around.**
- 10.3 **To ensure that new development does not exacerbate but aims to mitigate current problems with traffic, parking and road safety.**

Background

- 10.4 The B1080 is the main linear route through Stutton, linking it to Holbrook and Ipswich in one direction and Brantham and Manningtree in the other. Two other significant roads are Bentley Lane and Church Road. In recent years there has been an increase in traffic which is of concern to residents. Stutton is moderately well served by public footpaths but these are not always accessible to all. Further detail on both these issues is provided below.
- 10.5 The 92 bus connects Stutton to Manningtree and Ipswich, providing a fairly regular service until around 5.30pm but with a restricted timetable on Saturdays, leaving the village with no public transport in the early morning, evenings and on Sundays. This can cause major problems for those commuting to college or to work. There is no public transport between the villages on the Shotley Peninsula. Public transport is important for all age groups, either commuting to work, school or college, for leisure activities or for shopping or accessing medical and dental services.
- 10.6 Rail access to both Norwich and London is satisfactory, served by Manningtree Station which is 4.6 miles from the Village.

Policy SN17. Reducing the impact of increased road traffic generated by development

- 10.7 **Developments must identify the realistic level of traffic they are likely to generate, including assessing the potential impact on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking, and congestion within the parish. They must include measures to mitigate any such impact. Development that would give rise to unacceptable highway dangers will not be permitted.**

Policy SN18 Pedestrian access within the village

- 10.8 **New developments must take every opportunity to link and enhance existing networks and provide new pedestrian and bridleway networks where appropriate. Particular attention should be paid to enabling pedestrian access to local services and community facilities.**

Policy SN19 Non-motorised rights of way

- 10.9 **Rights of Way, shown on Policy Map SN19, will be protected and opportunities to enhance and improve connections for people with mobility difficulties, cyclists and equestrians will be supported.**
- 10.10 See also:
Community Action 10: Traffic calming and road safety
Community Action 11: Pavements and roadways
Community Action 12: Greenway
Community Action 13: Quiet Lanes.

Policy Map SN19 - Rights of Way



Context and Evidence

- 10.11 The NPPF states that "Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places" which "enable and support healthy lifestyles.... for example, through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure....and layouts that encourage walking and cycling" (para 92).
- 10.12 Over the years, there has been a marked increase in traffic of all sorts, including heavy commercial vehicles, particularly on the B1080 through the village. It is a route used extensively by cars, heavy commercial vehicles, coaches, buses, and minibuses taking pupils to and from the Holbrook Primary School, Holbrook Academy, Ipswich High School and the Royal Hospital School. Traffic counts taken in February and August 2019 found more than 2,500 vehicles passing through the village each day.
- 10.13 Developments currently under construction or in the pipeline in Stutton and neighbouring villages will add significantly to the traffic within and through the village. The development of Alton Water as a leisure water park, with a new camp site, is also increasing traffic, particularly in the Spring and Summer holidays.
- 10.14 Pedestrian access through the village is currently very difficult. This is especially so for wheelchair users, those with young children and buggies, and for elderly or not so confident walkers. Heavy traffic passes close to narrow pavements and pavements are discontinued at certain points throughout the village, making it necessary to cross and recross the road, particularly when approaching the Community Shop and Hall. The inadequate width of pavements is exacerbated by overgrown hedges, 'ponding' after heavy rainfall, and cars parking on pavements.
- 10.15 A number of traffic safety hotspots have been identified in the village, drawing on evidence from local residents, previous accidents and the local Speedwatch team. These are indicated on Map 5.



Map 5 - Danger Spots

- 10.16 We have witnessed a growth in recreational cycling, with groups and individuals passing through our village attracted by the rural landscape and relatively quieter roads. Cycle hire is available at Alton Water as is an off-road cycle track which skirts the perimeter of Alton Water Reservoir.
- 10.17 While there are many footpaths within the village these are often unsuitable for anyone pushing a buggy or using a mobility scooter or wheelchair. In wet weather they quickly become muddy and slippery making it a challenge for all. The Greenway proposed in Community Action 12 and detailed in the Design Guide will remedy this.
- 10.18 Accessibility and ease of movement are essential, not only to the economic and social life of the village, but also to the integration of its community. Consultation responses indicated that these issues are a major concern for village residents.



Stutton Residents' Views

Traffic speed and the increasing size and volume of traffic passing through the village are of significant concern to residents and formed the largest group of responses received across the public consultations. Both children and adults said that they don't feel safe on narrow pavements in the village with traffic brushing past them

The roads are quite narrow – and there is parking on the road which can be difficult.

There's too much speeding.

The fast cars and narrow footpaths make it feel a bit unsafe.

They hurtle down the lane; it's used by pedestrians, children, Bike Active, and people are forced into the verges.

You have to keep crossing the road to move from one end of the village to the other. The pavement is sometimes too narrow and sometimes doesn't exist at all.





Residents of Oak House negotiating the lack of adequate pavements through the village

11 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND BUSINESSES

Objectives

- 11.1 **To sustain and grow a vibrant community life in the village across a range of interests, ages and needs.**
- 11.2 **To sustain and enhance existing facilities, organisations, and activities.**
- 11.3 **To make the village a good place to start and run a small business or work from home, in keeping with the agricultural and rural surroundings.**

Background

- 11.4 A key element of our vision for Stutton is that it should remain a vibrant, cohesive community supporting high levels of wellbeing for its residents. The village's school and adjoining nursery Stutton Young Explorers, church, two public houses, the community shop, the community hall and sheltered housing with care are just some of the elements that underpin and sustain our rural community life. Such facilities enable people to come together and in doing so provide opportunities for social interaction along with meeting spiritual and cultural needs. These facilities often serve people from outside our village. For example, the two public houses are important local businesses and help to bring visitors to the area.
- 11.5 Agriculture is still the industry most visible around the village, but most employment now is in other sectors and outside Stutton. The village is currently home to more than 40 businesses of various sizes, including home-based work, small businesses, and community enterprises, in industries such as leisure, pubs, soft toy manufacture, soft furnishings, pottery, decorating, construction, car and cycle repair and musical instrument repair. A substantial number of businesses operate from three small estates of business units, all farm derived, but many others are run from residences. Increasing numbers of village residents employed elsewhere now spend part of their week working from home.

- 11.6 The Community Shop and Cafe is an entirely volunteer-run enterprise involving more than 50 local residents. It provides not only an essential basic service but is also part of a vital community hub. The nearby Village Playing Field and adjoining Community Woodland is regularly used by walkers, children having a kick-around, a picnic spot, school activities and more. The location lying behind the Community Hall and Community Shop increases its value and utility to the community.
- 11.7 The many local rights of way provide access to our varied landscape that includes the Stour shore, agricultural land, woodland and to Alton Water (see section 7).
- 11.8 As a hinterland village, residents must rely on neighbouring villages and towns for key facilities such as a doctor's surgery, dentist and other important services. Thus, accessing facilities beyond the village boundary is a key challenge, particularly for older people and for those who do not have access to a car.

Policy SN20 Protecting Community Facilities

- 11.9 **There will be a presumption in favour of the protection of existing community facilities, as listed below and shown on Policy Map SN20. Where permission is required, the change of use of local community facilities, as listed below, to a non community-related use, will only be permitted where the following can be demonstrated:**

- **The proposal includes alternative provision, on a site within the locality of equivalent or enhanced facilities. Such sites should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking; or**
- **satisfactory evidence is produced (including active marketing locally and in the wider area) that, over a minimum period of 12 months, it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a demand for the facility.**

In addition, it must be demonstrated that the building land is not needed for any alternative health, education or community-type use.

The facilities are listed as follows:

- **Stutton CEVCP Primary School**
- **Stutton Young Explorers (pre-school provider)**
- **Two public houses – The Kings Head and the Gardeners Arms**
- **Stutton Community Hall**
- **Stutton Community Shop**
- **St Peters Church**
- **Village Playing Field to the rear of the Community Hall and the adjoining**

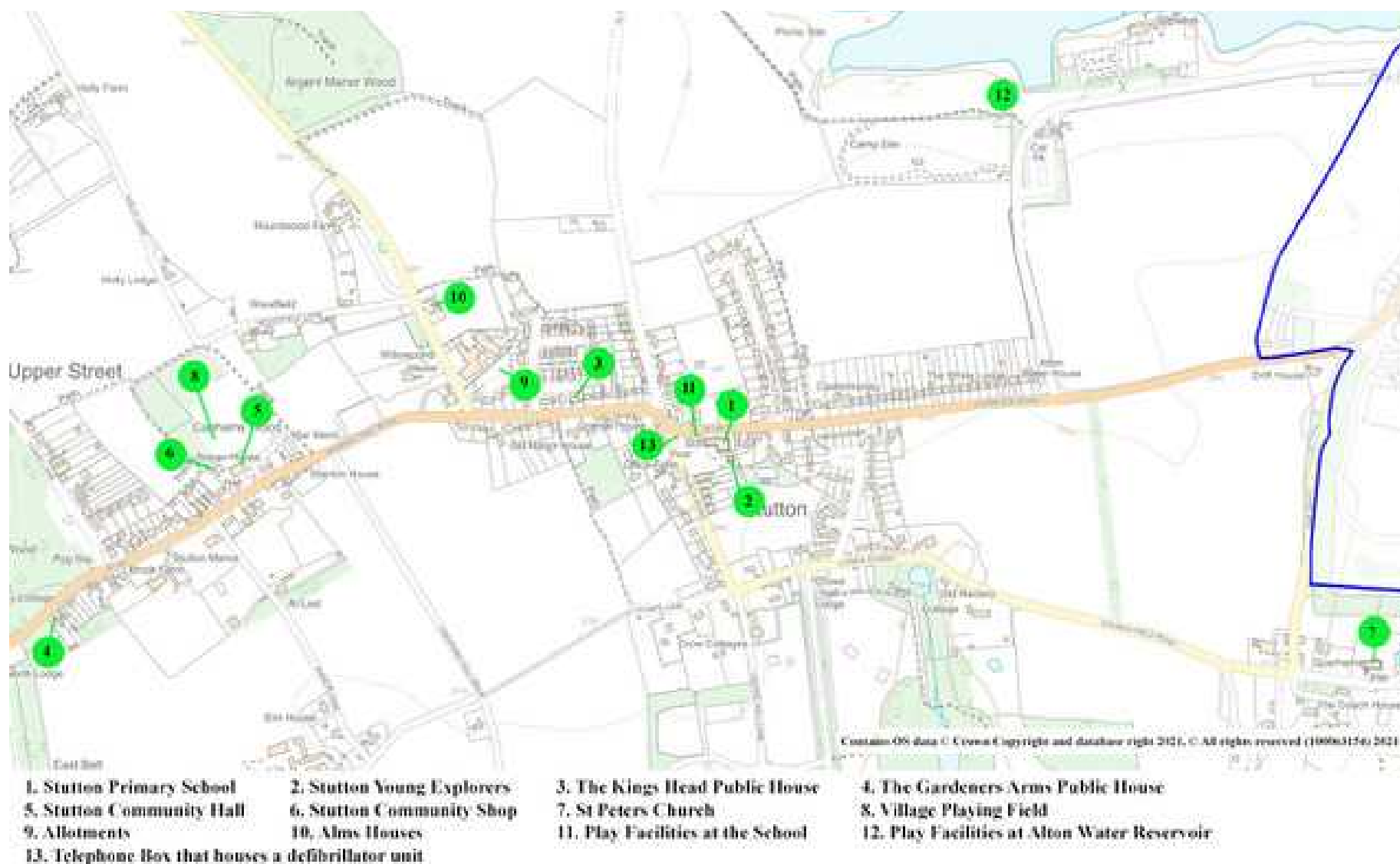
- **Community Wood**
- **Allotments in Catts Close**
- **Alms Houses on Bentley Lane**
- **Play Facilities at the school and at Alton Water Reservoir**
- **Telephone Box that houses a defibrillator uni**

Proposals that would enhance the appearance, improve access and accessibility for all users to these facilities will be supported when they are in accordance with other development plan policies and the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.



Protected Community Facilities

Policy Map SN20 Community Facilities



Policy SN21 New Community Facilities

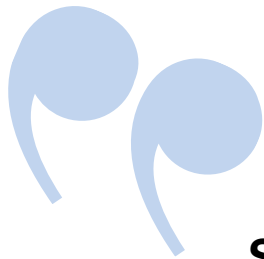
- 11.110 **Where a proposal makes provision for new community facilities it will be looked upon favourably, providing it is in keeping with the rural nature of the village, and is in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan as a whole.**
- 11.11 See also:
Community Action 14: Improving provision and access to community facilities.
Community Action 15: Working together to address the climate emergency

Context and Evidence

- 11.12 The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and which enable and support healthy lifestyles. It requires us to guard against the loss of valued facilities and services and to enable their future development and modernisation.
- 11.13 An underlying theme within this Neighbourhood Plan is securing the ongoing sustainability of the village and, in turn, promoting the well-being of our residents. The proposed Community Actions, which include protecting and enhancing the numerous village facilities and our valued rural environment, are examples of this. We also acknowledge the national drive to secure a zero carbon future and address the challenge of climate change. This places a duty on all communities to act locally to contribute to the national goal. In Stutton we have seen the planting of a community wood and having established a local green initiative, a number of residents secured better insulation to their homes and installed solar panels.
- 11.14 In the Big Conversation, community and village facilities were the third most commented upon area after infrastructure (roads and traffic) and housing issues. People talked about Stutton's positive community spirit, its valued facilities, and activities. Several suggestions were put forward to improve provision, for example widening the range of activities that take place at the Community Hall and making physical changes to the building to improve its thermal efficiency, appearance, and internal layout. The Parish Council, Stutton Community Association, Stutton Community Shop and Stutton Support Network are some of the local organisations whose goals are to serve the local community and to whom Community Actions will fall. It is expected that identifying community actions and moving them forward is an ongoing process throughout the life of the Neighbourhood Plan.



Community Shop and Village Hall



Stutton Residents' Views

It's the nicest place I know with convivial, active and caring community.

Friendly welcoming village with lots of social activities for whole community to enjoy.

Inclusive school, great asset to a village community

Community Shop - Can't be improved upon. A big asset to the village.

The Hall and the Shop are now the centre of the village.

How can we make this village even better?

Not enough for young people to do and reason to stay in village.

The Hall could be more attractive and inviting. Current layout could be improved so could be used for more things.

How can we encourage more solar panels?

Could we go plastic-free as a vilage?



Policy SN22 New and expanding businesses

- 11.15 **Applications for planning permission for new business services or units will be considered favourably provided they:**
- **do not lead to unacceptable increases of traffic in the village**
 - **will not have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours**
 - **provide adequate off-road parking in accordance with adopted County Council standards**
 - **do not have an unacceptable impact on the AONB, local green spaces, designated or non-designated heritage assets, or sites of biodiversity or geo-diversity importance.**

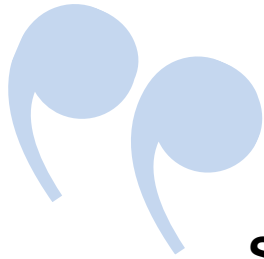
Policy SN23 Existing business premises

- 11.16 **Where permission is required, no loss of existing business premises through change of use will be permitted (including shops), except where at least one of the following circumstances can be demonstrated:**
- **the site has been marketed for the same planning use for a period of at least one year with no viable offers received**
 - **the change of use will result in the creation of other facilities of community value**
 - **the change of use will result in the creation of employment on the site.**
- 11.17 See also:
Community Action 16: Directory of businesses and sole traders
Community Action 17: Supporting businesses and sole traders

Context and Evidence

- 11.18 NPPF para 84d) states that planning policies and decisions should enable “the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”
- 11.19 The proposed Local Plan recognises in Local Policy LP12 the importance of micro and small businesses within the rural economy and the Strategic Policy SP05 says that existing employment sites “will generally be expected to continue to provide for local employment over the plan period.”
- 11.20 The Big Conversation consultation showed that residents broadly recognise the advantages of encouraging small businesses within the village: they provide employment opportunities and could reduce the level of commuting. Some enterprises, notably the Community Shop and the pubs, are among the most valued assets within the village.





Stutton Residents' Views

Consultation responses from villagers make it clear that economic vitality is seen as crucial to a sustainable and vibrant future for Stutton, and the development of small and micro-businesses would be broadly welcomed.

We need more emphasis on a vibrant village economy.

Anything that supports more people to be able to work in the village as well as live here would be good.

Better facilities and support here will help to prevent Stutton becoming a commuter/satellite village for Ipswich.

Can we encourage better conditions for people to work in the village - work units, spaces, hub facilities - to support a way of living that doesn't involve so much commuting.

A Business hub would be great - the shop is being used a lot by people who want to do some work. Can the hall extend this facility in some way?



