

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Purpose the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to Stow and the Swells?

The Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document that sits alongside the National Planning Policy Framework and Cotswold District Council Local Plan. It is about identifying developments and land use that are needed to address social and economic issues that are identified through evidence gathering and community engagement.

It is a Plan by the Community for the Community

2. What is the Purpose of the consultation?

For Stow the purpose of the consultation is to:

- draw attention to the 'demographic crisis' and other issues threatening the long-term sustainability of Stow;
- provide information and evidence about the issues, their impact and possible solutions;
- record the community's views and priorities regarding the issues and possible solutions through the household questionnaire;
- draw to the attention of the community the ten sites in Stow and one in the Swells that might be used for development, and the site assessments undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and volunteer residents;
- record the community's priorities and preferences in relation to the possible development sites;
- create a community led brief for the Neighbourhood Plan.

For the Swells the purpose of the consultation is to ask questions about affordable housing and off street parking, to consider the possible site in the Swells parish and to answer the questions primarily aimed at Stow residents, which may of course also affect Swells residents too.

3. What are the issues that the Plan needs to address?

- The populations of Stow and the Swells are getting increasingly elderly;
- For Stow this has been made far worse by the building of care and retirement villages;
- More and more smaller properties, which might once have been homes to young people and families, are now used as holiday lets or second homes;
- House prices are very high in relation to average incomes;
- Employment in the local economy – e.g. agriculture, retail, care, hospitality – is generally low paid;
- Potential land prices are high;
- Sport and leisure facilities for young people are somewhat outdated.

4. What Impact is this having?

- Young people and families cannot afford to buy homes;
- The intake of children from Stow at the local nursery and primary schools is reducing;
- **Once the two developments for the elderly are occupied, the proportion of the population in Stow that is elderly will be more than twice the national average;**
- Some employers are finding it difficult or impossible to recruit employees from within the local community;
- Recruiting further afield brings in more cars and makes parking even more difficult;.
- At times there are no on-street parking spaces available within easy walking distance of the Market Square, affecting the ability of businesses to attract customers;
- Some sport and leisure clubs struggle to attract young members and helpers.

5. What are the possible solutions?

- **If we do nothing the population will continue to age and the impact will continue to get worse;**
- Above all, we need to attract more young people and families to Stow by providing good quality, genuinely affordable housing;
- To support them we need better employment opportunities, better community facilities and a comprehensive Plan to resolve car parking problems;
- What this means is that we need some new developments - BUT they must be the right developments in the right place so we need to decide what requirements we would like to be put on any new developments and where they should be sited, in order to meet our needs;
- Today you can comment on potential development sites. In the household questionnaire you can say what our priorities should be.

6. What happens next?

The next steps are:

- Completion of community consultation and production of report ;
- Preparation of Community led draft Neighbourhood Plan brief;
- Identification of land use priorities using the results of community engagement and site assessment reports;
- Commissioning of discussions with landowners, with support from Cotswold District Council;
- Review of evidence and development of policies by area - housing, employment, parking, museum, sport, leisure and community facilities with planned site allocations.

These four stages are iterative and it is impossible to put a timeline on them as we are dependent on other people.

Once the policies on development and land use are clear, an updated brief will be developed for the appointed consultancy to write the draft plan, followed by:

- Consideration of draft Plan by Stow on the Wold Town Council, Swells Parish Council, Cotswold District Council and agreement of any amendments;
- Check Basic Conditions are met (consistent with Cotswold District Council Local Plan);
- Approval of draft plan by Stow on the Wold Town Council, Swells Parish Council, & Cotswold District Council;
- Regulation 14 consultation with the community, business, Cotswold Conservation Board and other stakeholders = 6 weeks;
- Agreement of any amendments from consultation period;
- Formal submission of Plan to Cotswold District Council - after this Cotswold District Council is in control of the Plan;
- Cotswold District Council will publicise the Plan under Reg 16 and arrange for independent examination;
- Following examination, the Plan will be modified as necessary;
- Final Plan submitted via Cotswold District Council for referendum by the Stow on the Wold and Swells communities.

A majority yes vote is needed for the Neighbourhood Plan to be implemented and become part of the statutory development Plan for the area.

Then we begin to implement the Plan!!