



# Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan

## 2024 – 2039



# Consultation Statement

*February 2024*

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## 0. Glossary

HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
NPA	Neighbourhood Plan Area (designated 22/07/2019)
NPWG	Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
SNP	Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan
SPC	Sarratt Parish Council
TRDC	Three Rivers District Council

# 1. Purpose

This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Section 15(2). Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain, specifically:

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

## 2. Engagement Strategy

Engagement with the local community started at the genesis of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan (SNP).

The idea to develop a neighbourhood plan arose out of the publication of the 2018 Parish Plan, commissioned by Sarratt Parish Council (SPC), that identified a number of areas in the community where there were strong views, including housing. However, the Parish Council were keen that this was not perceived as solely a Parish Council initiative but wanted to engage with the broadest possible set of stakeholders in the community.

The Parish Council wanted the initiative to be *community-led* and resolved in late 2018 to set up a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG), with representation from the whole community and with an independent chair. An advert for volunteers was placed in the parish newsletter (*Spotlight*) in February 2019 and a working group of six parishioners was established in March 2019 with Terms of Reference set by the Parish Council. The first meeting was held in public session in Sarratt Village Hall in April 2019 – a practice which the working group maintained throughout its work except for a period during Covid-19 lockdown periods when public meetings were banned.

The initial meetings established a plan process, with 8 distinct stages, and a strategy to engage in consultation with the local community. The aims of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) engagement strategy were to:

- (a) Involve as many people and stakeholders in the community as possible in order to obtain their views about their community's future development;
- (b) Help inform the development of the neighbourhood plan's objectives;
- (c) Encourage awareness and engagement in the process by using a wide variety of communication and consultation methods;
- (d) Ensure the process was transparent, accessible and progress was regularly communicated via the local parish newsletter, our webpage and local posters.
- (e) Build an evidence base and local support for the neighbourhood plan policies.

The focus of the engagement strategy in the early stages of the plan process was to obtain local views, building on the 2018 Parish Plan survey which was

provided to every household in the parish (and hence Neighbourhood Plan Area), particularly to help inform the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives.

This included engaging with a cross-section of parish stakeholders, including local businesses, voluntary and community organisations and attendance at the Sarratt Freshers Fair (a bi-annual community event) in order to solicit individuals' views.

Later in the plan process, engagement oriented around formal consultations, including two Regulation 14 and a Regulation 16 consultation, where responses from the local community, TRDC and statutory consultees were received.

### 3. Consultation timelines

Feb 2019	Advert for volunteers to join Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
Mar 2019	<i>Neighbourhood Plan Working Group established</i>
Apr 2019	<i>Initial meeting of Neighbourhood Plan Working Group</i>
Jun – Jul 2019	Consultation meetings with local businesses & community groups
22 Jul 2019	<i>TRDC formally designated the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Area</i>
Nov 2019	Informal public consultation – stand at Sarratt “Freshers Fair”
Mar 2020 – Mar 2021	<i>Covid-19 lockdowns prevented in-person public consultations</i>
Aug 2021	8-page (A5) leaflet delivered to every household in the Neighbourhood Plan Area (see Appendix i), outlining draft plan policies, inviting residents to attend public consultations on 6 or 11 Sep 2021 or to submit their comments back directly.
Sep 6 2021	Weekday pre-submission public consultation in Sarratt Village Hall
Sep 11 2021	Weekend pre-submission public consultation in Sarratt Village Hall
Sep 13 2020 – Oct 31 2021	Regulation 14 consultation including public and statutory bodies
May 2022	<i>NPWG adopts changes to proposed policies resulting from Regulation 14 consultation feedback.</i>
Aug 15 2022 – Sep 25 2022	2 <sup>nd</sup> Regulation 14 consultation including public & statutory bodies
Jun 27 2023 – Aug 8 2023	TRDC Regulation 16 consultation
Aug 31 2023	<i>Notification that external examination of SNP commenced.</i>
Sep 15 2023	External examination of SNP paused.
Nov 2023	<i>Death of Chairman of Neighbourhood Planning Working Group</i>
Dec 2023	<i>Establishment of Sarratt Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee</i>
Feb 2024	<i>Sub-committee provides responses to external examiner’s queries.</i>

Mar-Apr 2024 2<sup>nd</sup> TRDC Regulation 16 consultation (TBC)

Apr 2024 External examination of SNP resumes (TBC)

May 2024 SNP Referendum (TBC)



## 4. Communication channels

In accordance with the engagement strategy's aim to involve and include as many people and stakeholders in the community as possible, a range of communication channels were deployed during the various consultations. It is of particular note that the NPWG felt that considering the diverse mix of residents – including many older generation who may not be as online savvy - to be as inclusive as possible, it was important that both online and in-person events and feedback mechanisms should be provided.

Channels deployed included:

- All Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meetings held in public at Sarratt Village Hall (except during Covid-19 lockdown) and advertised locally.
- Posters to advertise NPWG meetings, consultation events or requesting feedback put up on Parish Council noticeboard, village shop noticeboard, and at the bus stop, including requests for nominations of key views etc.
- NPWG meeting updates and notices published regularly in the local newsletter (*Spotlight*) delivered to every household monthly.
- Leaflet drop to every household (800+ properties) informing of proposed policies and inviting to public consultation events (Sep 2021).
- Two face-to-face public consultation events at Sarratt Village Hall (Sep 2021) – one week day, one weekend - where large print policies were displayed and one-to-one discussions held.
- Attendance (stall) at Sarratt Freshers fair (Nov 2021) to raise awareness and answer questions from the general public.
- Formal written letters to statutory consultation bodies.

- Dedicated website ([sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org](http://sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org)) set up to provide access to latest documentation, including consultations, and feedback comments.
- TRDC website for Regulation 16 consultation.
- Mechanisms to capture feedback setup, during consultations, including a dedicated email address and ability to send by post to the parish council, or drop off in a dedicated feedback box at the local village shop.
- Individual meetings with key stakeholders, including local businesses and community & voluntary organisations to solicit their views.
- Regular updates to the Parish Council at their public meetings and hence further updates both minuted and published in summary form in their monthly report in *Spotlight*.
- Additionally, all NPWG members were available throughout the period to answer questions directly from community members. (Given this is a small rural parish of c.2,200 residents where people tend to know each other and meet at local organisations' events or whilst carrying out work in the community (e.g. voluntary work in the village shop), it was an important albeit informal part of the consultation process).

## 5. Consultation Process

In the early stages of the plan process, the focus was on raising awareness and engagement with key stakeholders. Individual meetings were held with local businesses and community & voluntary organisations to solicit their views. The groups approached were from a cross-section of the community including local businesses (e.g. pubs), religious organisations (e.g. Holy Cross church) and voluntary groups (e.g. Wildlife Volunteers, Sarratt Care, Sarratt Local History Society).

The questions asked were:

- a. What do you value about Sarratt?
- b. What would you want to protect?
- c. What would you want to improve?
- d. What do you need in order to be sustainable over the next 15 - 20 years?
- e. What are your key objectives for the next 5 years?

The outputs from this exercise were collated, together with the results from the 2018 Parish Plan survey, which was sent to every household in the parish (Neighbourhood Plan Area) with a response rate of 26%, to construct a set of objectives for the plan, centred around three themes: Economic; Social; Environmental.

The draft objectives were informally floated at a stand at the Sarratt Freshers Fair and the verbal feedback used to further refine the objectives and inform the emerging draft policies.

Once the draft policies had been formulated, together with further input from Bell Cornwell (appointed as consultants to the NPWG) and AECOM, engaged to deliver a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and Design Codes, an informal public consultation was arranged and publicised.

To facilitate this pre-submission consultation and to ensure that people attended best informed and having had time to consider the proposed policies, an 8-page (A5) leaflet was delivered to every household in the Neighbourhood Plan Area (800+ properties), outlining the draft plan policies and/or to submit their comments directly.

The public consultation was held in the village hall on two days – one weekday, one weekend – where the policies were printed on display boards and NPWG members were available for informal discussions. Feedback was collected in written form on the days and could also be submitted afterwards online, email or hard copy via the dedicated drop-box in the village shop or Parish Council office. ALL feedback was submitted into the Regulation 14 consultation.

For clarity, the Plan was available to view in Sarratt Village Hall on the two days of public consultation, online ([sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org](http://sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org)), had been delivered in summary form by leaflet to every household in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, plus there were hard copy versions available to view in the Parish Council office.

The formal Regulation 14 consultation also included notifying in writing all appropriate statutory bodies (see Appendix ii) and the subsequent review of the feedback received and the NPWG discussions on how to adapt the draft

policies as a result were held in open public sessions at the regular NPWG meetings.

Subsequent to the changes adopted from the first Regulation 14 consultation, TRDC provided further feedback in November 2021 (see Appendix iv).

Following a number of discussions the Plan was amended to reflect that feedback and reissued in August 2022. As such, it was agreed with TRDC that a second Regulation 14 consultation was appropriate. However, since the changes primarily affected mainly technical aspects raised by TRDC and was not judged to materially impact the views of the public previously consulted, this was conducted online-only on our dedicated website, again with additional local publicity (posters etc).

This 2<sup>nd</sup> Regulation 14 consultation did elicit some responses, notably from HCC on footpaths and bridleways, and after a few minor changes to reflect the feedback received, the Plan was reissued and was followed shortly thereafter by TRDC's Regulation 16 consultation.

## 6. Consultation Outcomes

The feedback from the first (2021) Regulation 14 consultation, including the two in-person events, is summarised as follows:

- 58 people attended across the two public consultation days.
- 56 comments were received in total, including written responses from statutory consultees, of which 40 were specific to individual draft policies.
- 3 explicitly supportive comments on the draft neighbourhood plan, including: *“I think this is a splendid plan ... It is also good to have involved the local community and to be taking comments seriously.”*
- No feedback received objecting to the plan or any individual policies.
- Majority of comments received were on renewable energy, green infrastructure and environmental assets as well as housing mix.
- 12 draft policies were amended as a direct result of the public consultation.

The breakdown of comments received by policy was:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • Development sites                       | 2  |
| • Design Principles                       | 1  |
| • Historic Character                      | 0  |
| • Housing Mix                             | 10 |
| • Environmental Assets                    | 5  |
| • Footpaths and Bridleways                | 3  |
| • Community Facilities                    | 3  |
| • Car Parking                             | 3  |
| • Local Green Spaces                      | 1  |
| • Renewable Energy & Green Infrastructure | 12 |
| • New Settlements                         | 0  |

In response to this feedback, this resulted in a significant beefing up of the Renewable Energy & Green Infrastructure policies, particularly in light of the underweight of such policies in the existing Local Development Framework

(2011). The full list of anonymised comments received, together with resultant changes to proposed policies is shown in Appendix iii.

The outcomes resulting from TRDC's post-Reg 14 comments are summarised in Appendix iv and a number of changes to the Plan were made to reflect that feedback.

The feedback from the subsequent second (2022) Regulation 14 consultation, was as expected more limited, having previously addressed received public comments, with 12 responses received. These were mostly from statutory consultees (7) mainly with generic replies, plus 5 local residents (4 supportive, 1 relating to crime prevention), and one on behalf of a property developer currently appealing a planning application in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The comments and response to each can be seen in Appendix v. Feedback from HCC on public rights of way was accepted and adopted and the Plan reissued ahead of TRDC's Regulation 16 consultation and external examination.

# Appendix i

Copy of leaflet distributed to every household prior to 2021 Reg 14 consultation (attached).



## Appendix ii

List of statutory consultation bodies written to for both 2021 & 2022

Regulation 14 consultations:

- 1) Buckinghamshire Council
- 2) Watford Borough Council
- 3) Dacorum Borough Council
- 4) Kings Langley Parish Council
- 5) Chipperfield Parish Council
- 6) Flaunden Parish Council
- 7) Chenies Parish Council
- 8) Latimer & Ley Hill Parish Council
- 9) Croxley Green Parish Council
- 10) Chorleywood Parish Council
- 11) Abbots Langley Parish Council
- 12) Coal Authority
- 13) Natural England
- 14) The Homes and Community Agency
- 15) Environment Agency
- 16) Historic England
- 17) The Office of Rail and Road
- 18) Network Rail
- 19) Highways England
- 20) National Traffic Operations Centre
- 21) Marine Management Organisation
- 22) Mobile Operators Association
- 23) British Telecom

- 24) Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group
- 25) National Grid
- 26) Cadent Gas
- 27) British Gas
- 28) EDS Energy
- 29) Arqiva
- 30) Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd
- 31) O2 (UK) Ltd
- 32) EE
- 33) Affinity Water
- 34) Savills UK Ltd on behalf of Thames Water Utilities Ltd
- 35) Mind Hertfordshire Network
- 36) Age UK Hertfordshire
- 37) East of England Ambulance Service
- 38) Hertfordshire Constabulary
- 39) Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue
- 40) Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- 41) Sport England
- 42) Thrive Homes
- 43) Three Rivers Chamber of Trade & Commerce
- 44) Watford and Three Rivers Trust

## Appendix iii

Full list anonymised comments received from the first Regulation 14 consultation (2021), together with resultant changes to proposed policies (attached).

# Appendix iv

Full list of comments received from the second Regulation 14 consultation (2022), together with responses and resultant changes to proposed policies (attached).