

## **Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Brief Review of Vision and Objectives**

This is a brief review of the Stonehouse Vision and Objectives. It has been done in the knowledge that the Vision and Objectives have been developed by the steering group from and have been subject to local consultation. Therefore, substantial changes are not recommended at this stage. However, objectives, in particular, should not be seen as “set in stone” while the plan is at its draft stage and a set of objectives do not need to be considered as “final” until a first draft plan is ready for consultation with the local community.

This review takes into account the comments made by the SDC link officer and provides a view in response to help guide the steering group with regard to any changes it considers may need to be made as a result of comments.

**Stuart Todd**

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**4<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

Vision / Objectives	SDC officer comments	Consultant comments
<p>Our Vision for Stonehouse</p> <p>Over the next 20 years the strong, friendly community of Stonehouse will continue to develop as a distinctive, thriving town set in beautiful countryside with excellent transport links and employment opportunities.</p>		
<p>Housing Development</p> <p>In order to retain strong family and community ties our goal is to provide a mix of housing types to support our future requirement and meet the needs of all ages, income and varied needs.</p> <p>In order to achieve this goal we will need to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing appropriate for older people and those with accessibility issues</li> <li>• Smaller units – catering for single people, single parents and those wishing to downsize</li> <li>• Housing that is less expensive to buy/rent and to run</li> <li>• Energy efficient buildings</li> </ul>	<p>This objective implies the NDP will allocate land to meet additional future needs (not envisaged in the local plan).</p> <p>It is important that you identify where and how this could be achieved (all bullets).</p>	<p>I agree with the SDC comment. The word “provide” implies that the neighbourhood plan will allocate housing sites. This is fine if that is your intention. Otherwise, the objective should be re-worded. You could simply replace the words “provide” with “support”.</p> <p>It is, particularly if you are indeed allocating housing sites, but you do not have to do this in my view in the objectives themselves, but in the detailed of the policies.</p>
<p>Getting around</p> <p>Our goal is an accessible Stonehouse where people can get around easily and conveniently by foot, mobility scooter, bicycle, public transport and private motorised transport, encouraging more sustainable travel and a consequent reduction in traffic congestion.</p> <p>In order to achieve this goal we will need to:</p>		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide safe and convenient routes for pedestrians (including for the less able bodied), wheelchairs, pushchairs and mobility scooters.</li>   <li>• Extend the network of safe and convenient cycle routes for all abilities.</li>   <li>• Support improved bus services</li>   <li>• Protect and improve the current railway station and support the re-opening of Bristol Road station.</li>   <li>• Ensure that the town centre is accessible by cycle and by foot from any new development.</li> </ul>	<p>This section implies the NDP will identify these routes and how they will be delivered.</p> <p>It is important that you identify where and how this could be achieved (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet).</p> <p>The NDP will have to set out how this can be achieved. This will likely require a careful coordinated approach which will involve bus service providers (3<sup>rd</sup> bullet).</p> <p>It is important that the NDP goes beyond simply stating its support for existing and proposed railway stations within the NDP area by setting out what its contribution is towards this aim (4<sup>th</sup> bullet).</p> <p>Please be careful when making generalisations. This requirement may be appropriate and proportional to some forms of development but it is unlikely that it could be reasonably applicable to all new development. (i.e. it would be reasonable to expect domestic extensions or the</p>	<p>The devil will be in the detail, but the comment made by SDC is valid. If you are wishing to identify such routes etc, the word “provide” is fine. If, however, you are not or are unable to through the neighbourhood plan, the focus should be on “support” or rephrasing the objective to say something like “help ensure that safe and convenient routes for...mobility scooters are provided.” It is not, after all, only down to the neighbourhood plan to make this happen.</p> <p>Again, you do not have to do this in the objective, but just be certain that you can achieve it through detail in your policies. If you would prefer to be less committed to the neighbourhood plan (and its responsible body, the Town Council) being responsible for delivery of the objective you could use words like “support the extension of...” instead of the committing and certain “Extend...”..</p> <p>The comment is correct, but this should be done through policies rather than changing the objective which is simply a statement of what you are going to do to meet the aim (or goal).</p> <p>Same comment applies in terms of the use of the word “ensure”. Be careful not to set yourselves up to fail if it is not something over which you have complete control to make it happen. I agree with the SDC comment. You could add “where feasible and practical” on to the end of</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve on-street parking in Stonehouse creating a safer environment for all road users.</li> <li>• Increase the number of conveniently placed cycle racks.</li> <li>• Improve the links between the town and the canal.</li> </ul>	<p>installation of solar panels to contribute to this aim) (ref “any new development”)</p> <p>The NDP should identify areas to be improved and how this could be achieved.</p> <p>The NDP should identify where and how.</p> <p>See “Please be careful...” comment above.</p>	<p>the objective.</p> <p>The SDC comment is correct but I think that what it is suggesting can be done through policy detail rather than elaborating the objective, which is about direction of travel than specifics.</p> <p>Again, the appropriate place for the where and how is in the policies.</p> <p>Same comment applies in terms of the use of the word “improve”. Be careful not to set yourselves up to fail if it is not something over which you have complete control to make it happen. You could say “support the improvement of...” or “seek to improve...”?</p> <p>I agree with the SDC comment which I think is about being more specific than making a generalisation, although I think it is fine for an objective – you can be more specific in the policies. You could add “where feasible and practical” on to the end of the objective.</p>
<p>Community, Facilities and Retail</p> <p>Our goal is to meet the recreational aspirations, the health and wellbeing and the practical needs of our community, whilst retaining the distinctive character of Stonehouse.</p> <p>In order to achieve this goal we will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to grow as a thriving and diverse town centre with independent traders and businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>The NDP should set out how it will contribute to this aim.</p>	<p>Agree with the SDC comment, but the plan itself and policies is the place to expand on the</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the range and improve the quality of meeting spaces and sporting facilities to meet the needs of all age groups.</li>   <li>• Increase the opportunities for formal and informal play and indoor and outdoor recreation within the town</li>   <li>• Retain and improve services that people rely on, for example: library, doctor, dentist, post office, banks, youth club, opticians</li> </ul>	<p>The NDP should identify areas to be improved and how this could be achieved.</p> <p>The NDP should identify areas to be improved and how this could be achieved.</p> <p>It is important that you identify these and set out how they could be improved</p>	<p>objective.</p> <p>With regard to the SDC comment, you could go as far as being specific in the plan or you could simply have a policy which supports development types which help to realise your objective. The only danger of not identifying specifics in the plan is that policies in the Local Plan may already be general enough to do the job of a policy which is not detailed relative to Stonehouse. You will need evidence to understand what the needs are if you are to be specific and identify facilities and areas in the plan.</p> <p>With regard to the SDC comment, you could go as far as being specific in the plan or you could simply have a policy which supports development types which help to realise your objective. The only danger of not identifying specifics in the plan is that policies in the Local Plan may already be general enough to do the job of a policy which is not detailed relative to Stonehouse. Also, you should have evidence to demonstrate why the indoor and outdoor facilities are important – for example evidence of use, demand and need including any surplus or deficit of provision. This is particularly important if you are to be specific about what is required and where.</p> <p>A good objective in general but probably not for a neighbourhood plan as currently worded. Your plan cannot do much about retaining and</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the night-time economy of Stonehouse to offer a range of social activities.</li> </ul>		<p>improving <i>services per se</i>, they are not a land-use matter – although you can introduce policies, for example, which would <i>help</i> to retain and improve services by protecting certain community buildings or assets. In addition, many services now are commercial or based on business decisions (even GPs nowadays) and there would be little a neighbourhood plan can do to force these providers to remain in a location if they are not viable / losing money. You could perhaps amend the objective to change the focus to “community facilities” rather than “services” by saying “Retain and improve community facilities that people rely on for essential services, for example...”.</p>
<p>Environment (Green Space and Recreation) Our goal is to protect and enhance access to green spaces both within the town and the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>In order to achieve this goal we will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise the visual impact of new development on views out of and views into the Stonehouse settlement.</li> <li>• Strengthen the links between the canal and Stonehouse town centre</li> <li>• Protect and enhance green spaces and support</li> </ul>	<p>Important public views and vistas should be identified. A Character Assessment should form part of your evidence base for policies seeking to conserve public views and vistas<sup>1</sup></p> <p>The NDP should identify areas to be improved and how this could be achieved. Please ensure you have land owners support (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> bullets).</p>	<p>Agree with the SDC officer comments. This will be important evidence in order to protect your valued views / Stonehouse character.</p> <p>Agree with SDC officer comment. You will, of course, need the evidence which identifies the areas to which you refer and</p>

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/planning/planning\\_strategy.asp#s=sectioncontent5&p=nbhood,designated,npcharacter](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/planning/planning_strategy.asp#s=sectioncontent5&p=nbhood,designated,npcharacter)

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<p>their recreational use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the heritage and wildlife assets of Stonehouse, allowing them to be appreciated by residents and visitors.</li> <li>• Move toward a greener Stonehouse.</li> </ul>		<p>demonstrates why they are valued / special. This will be elaborated on further in the review and shaping of draft policies.</p>
<p>Employment</p> <p>Our goal is to support employment opportunities and secure a prosperous economic future for Stonehouse.</p> <p>In order to achieve this goal we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, support and improve existing employment sites.</li> <li>• Improve the relationship and links between existing employment sites and the town centre.</li> <li>• Secure more high quality jobs accessible to Stonehouse residents.</li> <li>• Seek new employment sites that support small and medium-sized businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>The NDP should identify areas to be improved and how this could be achieved (all bullets).</p>	<p>Agree with SDC officer comment.</p> <p>As with some of the other objectives above, you may wish to be less committing with your wording if it is something over which you do not have sole control through the neighbourhood plan (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bullets).</p>