

REPORT ON THE FIRST HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE



OCTOBER 2016

SID VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

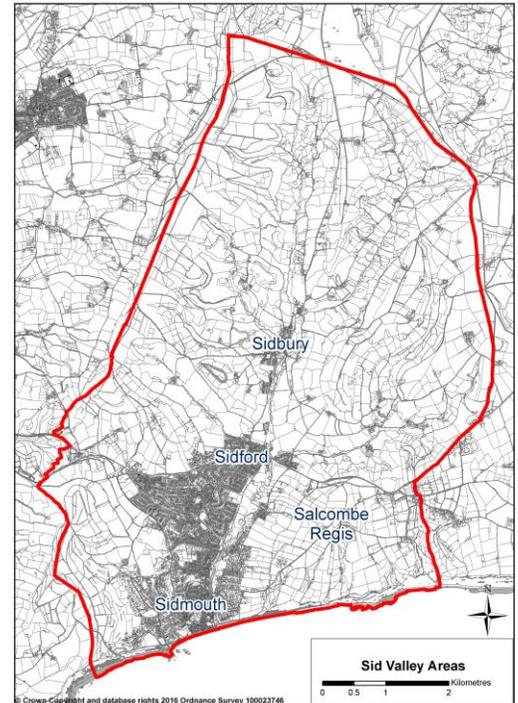
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SID VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

The Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Boundary area agreed by the planning authority East Devon District Council includes the Sidmouth Town Council Wards of Salcombe Regis, Sidbury, Sidford, and Sidmouth.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information provided by the questionnaire respondents alongside the administration, collation, analysis, comment and contributions that have gone into producing this report are gratefully acknowledged and are referenced below;

Sidmouth Town Council Chairman of the Council Jeff Turner and Councillors.

The Town Clerk Chris Holland

Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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1 FOREWORD

This report captures and reflects the views of more than a thousand residents who completed the first Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire during June and July 2016. The object of this first questionnaire was to try to understand the concerns and views of people who live in the Sid Valley, so that we can build on them in our subsequent work. By publishing the findings, we are seeking to share the results with the residents of the Sid Valley.

The messages contained in the report are loud and clear. People choose to live and work in this area because of the uniqueness of the town and surrounding area, the beauty of the natural environment including the countryside and coastline, the heritage and architecture, the peaceful way of life, the strong sense of community and the local shops.

But there are equally important messages about concerns that residents share – problems with traffic and congestion, unease about local planning decisions, a perceived lack of affordable housing for local people and a population that is not balanced in terms of age and diversity.

All of the data that has been gathered will be used to inform subsequent surveys and research being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It is important now that through further and wider consultation, we are careful to capture the views of the whole community. This report can only reflect the views of those who responded. Our role is to continue to gather views and different perspectives and to review wider evidence of need to be able to develop policies which reflect evidence rather than opinion.

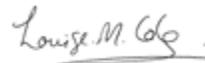
The initial findings help us to understand what other information we need to find out and how it can be translated into planning policies which will support and positively shape developments and improvements in the Sid Valley. We hope this report helps everyone to better understand what happens next and why a Neighbourhood Plan is so important to the current and future residents of the Sid Valley.

On behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, we would like to thank all those who took part in this public consultation, either by agreeing to act as a collection point for completed surveys or by giving their time to share their views with us.

We warmly invite you to get involved in making the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan by sharing your views. Whether or not you missed the first questionnaire, there will be another more detailed opportunity to have your say in a second household questionnaire in 2017. Other opportunities exist through our Business and Special Interest Groups Survey and our Young People's Survey which is being co-produced with an advisory group made up of young people from all the Sid Valley schools. Our aim is to include everyone's views and we need your help to make that happen.



Deirdre Hounsom, Chair



Cllr. Louise Cole, Deputy Chair
Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2016, the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group carried out our first public consultation to get the Neighbourhood Plan process underway. This was through our First Household Questionnaire where our aim was to obtain the views of residents in order to understand community opinion in terms of current likes and dislikes and the vision for the community over the next 15 years. We also asked about the topics that people are most interested in, some of which feature in the East Devon Local Plan¹.

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was distributed both in hard copy and online, and after publicity through the local press, roadshow events, attendance at local events and by providing a presence in Sidmouth's market place, 7000 copies were distributed to homes in the Sid Valley. It excited considerable public interest, providing a useful opportunity to build awareness about the process and about what a Neighbourhood Plan can do and why it is different than other consultations.

We learnt from this experience that not all households received their copy of the questionnaire, which is why the next household questionnaire will be distributed by post rather than leaflet distributors.

The results help us understand the views and opinions of local residents – what they like about living in the Sid Valley, what makes them less happy, and what their vision is for the area for the next 15 years. It's a snapshot of opinion from over 1100 residents and the specific themes that have been identified through our analysis of this questionnaire will mostly transfer into the Neighbourhood Plan itself as planning policies. This will happen following further consultation and through analysis of other evidence that exists. All of the policies must relate to land use and any of the themes that do not become a policy may be included as a Community Action or project to be implemented.

The findings from this initial consultation give us an overview of what people value about the Sid Valley and an insight into the development challenges that the Sid Valley area faces now and in the future. Importantly it starts to build our understanding of what matters most to residents and how we may seek to balance our approach to development to meet current and future needs.

The views we have so far collected and analysed have enabled us to draw out seven key themes to address. The themes are **Built Environment, Natural Environment, Housing, Economic Resilience, Community and Culture, Transport** and **Eastern Town Regeneration**.



¹ <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1772841/local-plan-final-adopted-plan-2016.pdf>
Report on the First Household Questionnaire
October 2016

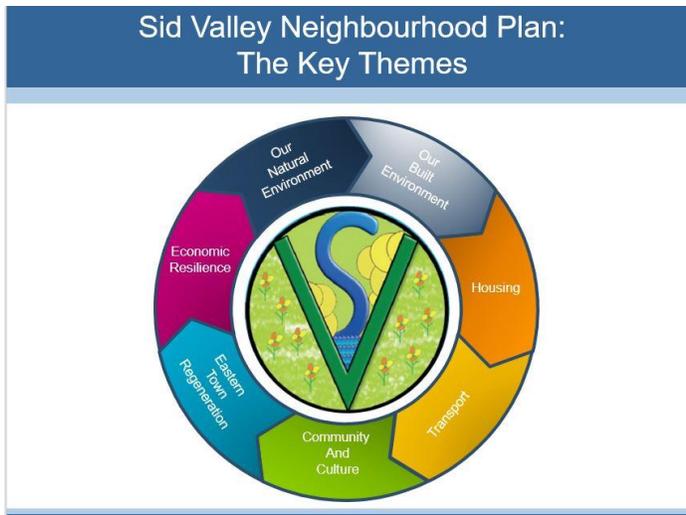


Figure 1 Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Key Themes

Later in the report in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 we provide an overview of what each of these themes cover and a summary analysis of what emerged as important in our first consultation.

It is clear from the range of themes that there is a strong sense of the whole picture of the Sid Valley and of the connections between themes which requires a joined up approach rather than planning solutions in isolation from each other. Whilst people may weight issues differently according to how important they are to them personally the responses often demonstrated the care, concern and foresight people have in thinking about what will make the Sid Valley a vibrant destination to live, work and play.

The sense of identity as a special and unique coastal location was strongly expressed and illustrated by the fact that 60% of respondents have lived in the Sid Valley for less than 16 years. The majority of people who responded were over 65 and retired. These two factors together tells us clearly that people have made a life choice to retire to the Sid Valley. People told us they valued its appeal both as an attractive and tranquil place to be and its sense of community illustrated through having so many activities, a low crime rate and a sense of friendliness.

This high regard for the natural environment and for Sidmouth as an unspoilt regency town was balanced however with the desire and vision for 21st century living which addresses the needs of and retains younger people in the area. The emphasis on culture and tourism that benefits residents and supports them through attracting visitors was again seen through the high number of positive comments about the environment including the beach and sea and concerns about sensitive development of them.



The dislikes that people shared are perhaps known anecdotally and are about transport and infrastructure and whether they are adequately managed and maintained to meet changing and increasing needs, were echoed throughout the responses. The challenge to address these issues as far as possible in the Neighbourhood Plan and by the agencies responsible for them is significant. Gathering the evidence that will help to address them is critically important.

Identifying that people perceive that these issues are not being addressed or that they sometimes feel unheard, provides a positive opportunity to build community cohesion through improved consultation and partnership working with other statutory agencies, achieved through a robustly evidenced Neighbourhood Plan.

On the journey to develop our Neighbourhood Plan it is important to ensure that it is supported by evidence, is realistic and helpful in order to meet future needs and aspirations. Managing expectations will ensure the process we follow is inclusive, balanced and of high quality. It will support the whole community to achieve its potential and will help and be part of the picture to deliver a positive future that responds to new and changing times and needs, as well as taking care of existing ones.

The balancing act this requires must neither put us off or be underestimated.

Finally, the limitations of what we have learnt so far is recognised and places a great sense of direction and responsibility on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for our next steps (Section 6). This analysis help to create clarity on the need to ensure wider and more in-depth opportunities to drill down from these initial findings to inform what will become our Neighbourhood Plan.



3 BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCALISM AND COMMUNITIES

Neighbourhood planning for communities was introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans become part of the statutory process and the policies contained within them are then used in the determination of planning applications. It must be stressed that the policies produced cannot block development that is already part of the Local Plan. What they can do is shape where that development will go and what it will look like. Having a Neighbourhood Plan in place which is based on community consultation and evidence will help us to influence the type and nature of what is already in the Local Plan. Additionally, it will ensure that any further development is acceptable to the people of the Sid Valley, is appropriate and meets their needs and aspirations.

3.2 A STATUTORY PROCESS

The Neighbourhood Planning process has a structure guided by the Department for Communities and Local Government which includes some compulsory steps which are managed by the local planning authority – in our case East Devon District Council. We are now in the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan for the Sid Valley. When we have done this, the Local Planning Authority, in our case East Devon District Council, will organise both the independent examination of the plan and the community referendum that will be held to decide if the plan is brought into force.

The referendum is an important step, allowing those that live in the neighbourhood area to decide whether or not the Neighbourhood Plan comes into effect. When the time comes for the referendum the question that Sid Valley residents will be asked is;

Do you want East Devon District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for the Sid Valley to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

3.3 SID VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Since its formation in March 2016 the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been busy preparing and working with the wider community, canvassing their views and starting to gather the evidence that it will use to form the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan. We are recording and monitoring the quality of our consultation process to ensure continuous improvements and fairness and transparency, which will part of the inspection process. Recognising that consultation is time-consuming and expensive we are proactively working to ensure an effective process which acknowledges and addresses gaps.

The Steering Group is made up of local residents, including three Sidmouth town councillors, and is chaired by Deirdre Housom. The group receives modest funding for its activities from central and local government and

apart from some limited administrative support from Sidmouth Town Council, all the work done by the group is on a voluntary basis.

The first task for the group was to understand the current position as far as the views of local residents was concerned, and to do that they designed and produced a questionnaire which in June was distributed throughout the Sid Valley and was also available online. The results of that initial piece of research are contained in this report.

Further opportunities to build on this research are planned for the coming months and as mentioned include an online survey of Business and Special Interest Groups which was launched on 18th September 2016 and will run until 31st October 2016, focus groups, a young person’s questionnaire and a second household survey.

If you would like to become more involved with the Neighbourhood Plan or you have any queries whatsoever, please contact the group at neighbourhood@sidmouth.gov.uk. You can also follow our progress on the Sidmouth Town Council Website, on Twitter @sidvalleyplan and Facebook: Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan.

Following the steps in the process currently looks like this for the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan (though is subject to variations as necessary);

Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan – High-Level Overview

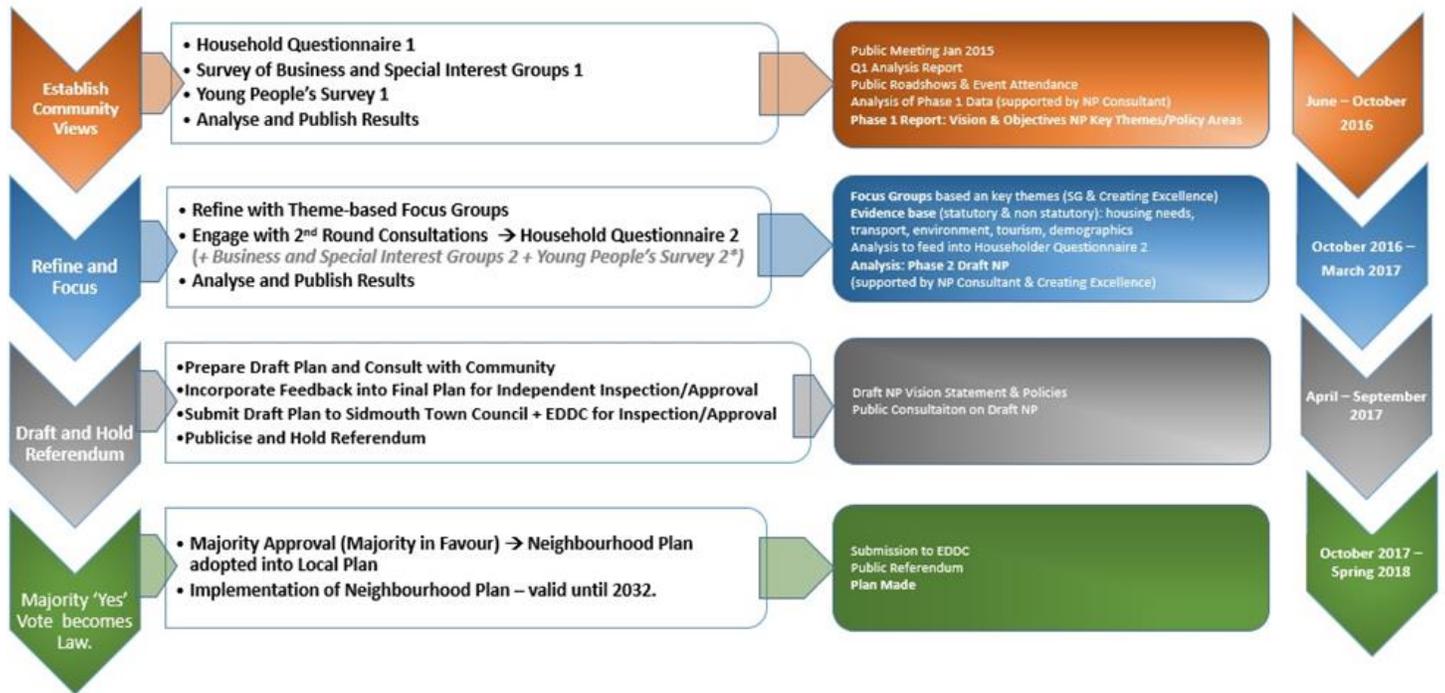


Figure 2 Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Overview

4 HOW THE SURVEY WAS CARRIED OUT

4.1 DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

- Paper questionnaires were delivered to around 6000 homes in the Sid Valley.
- Spare forms were available at the collection points and at roadshows held in each of the four area locations and at events and locations chosen to give access throughout the Sid Valley. (Appendix 2).
- An online version of the survey was available on the Sidmouth Town Council website and the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page.

4.2 RETURN OF COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES

- Residents were able to drop off the completed questionnaires at 14 locations in Sidmouth, Sidford, Sidbury and Salcombe Regis or hand in at Neighbourhood Plan roadshows and events (Appendix 2).
- The questionnaires were collected by members of the Steering Group on a weekly basis.
- The online version was completed and saved online.
- Confidentiality was paramount for both paper and electronic questionnaires and access to the data was restricted to members of the Steering Group and in the case of online questionnaires, the Chair, Deputy Chair and administrator.

4.3 PROCESS – PAPER QUESTIONNAIRES

- The administrator was responsible for registering every completed questionnaire and logging the basic data contained in section 1 of the form; - e.g. postcode, gender, age, employment status etc.
- Much of the information in the remaining sections, was in a narrative form as required by the format of the questionnaire.
- This was analysed by a sub group of the Steering Group. With narrative style responses it is impossible to capture exactly what a respondent has said. However, common themes became evident as analysis progressed, and using a worksheet, a count was kept of the number of times the theme or response was mentioned. These worksheets were collated by the administrator and the totals of responses were recorded in an Excel database. There were also comments made that were not shared by other respondents. Those cases were recorded as described above and are shown as unique to one respondent in the detailed analysis.

4.4 PROCESS - SURVEY MONKEY (ONLINE DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS TOOL)

- Respondents completed an online questionnaire version using Survey Monkey identical to the paper version.
- Text was automatically analysed by Survey Monkey into groups of commonly used phrases or words which the administrator recorded against the most appropriate themes already identified from paper questionnaires. Unique comments were dealt with in the same way as paper returns.

4.5 RECORDS RETENTION

- Paper questionnaires and worksheets are securely stored at Sidmouth Town Council offices.
- Online data is securely held by Survey Monkey.

5.1 SECTION 1 - INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

This section presents an overview of the results and our analysis. For the complete results data please see Annex 3.

Questions 1 to 17 were designed to understand the background of respondents.

5.1.2 GENDER PROFILE

The gender of respondents was 45% Male and 55% Female which mirrors the UK 2011 census data.

5.1.3 POPULATION AND AGE PROFILE

Over 700 questionnaires were returned representing 1108 responses but only 1106 identified their age range.

Using the latest census figures from 2011 the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan area has an adult population of 11563. This gives a response rate from eligible adult residents of c.10%.

The same census source gives the number of households as 6613. We received 712 paper and electronic completed surveys which represents a household completion rate of c.11%

Because of its popularity as a retirement destination Sidmouth has an elderly population profile. But even taking this into account it's clear that the 18-24 and 25-40 age groups were significantly underrepresented and the 65-74 age group was significantly overrepresented, in terms of the number of responses received. 58% of our survey respondents were between the ages of 65 and 75+ and only 7% from the 18 to 40 years age bracket. (See census data table in Appendix 3).

We know therefore that there are significant gaps in our understanding of community views because of the age profiles of those who responded. We are working hard to close those gaps through our Business and Special Interest Groups and Young People's survey, focus groups and through the forthcoming second household questionnaire.

5.1.4 RESPONDENTS WITH CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME

Only 18% said there were children under 25 years living in the household. We are mindful that this could be a factor influencing key areas of interest in the subsequent questionnaires and a reminder that gaining wider perspectives is critical to our process to ensure that our Neighbourhood Plan is a reflection of the community as a whole.

5.1.5 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE SID VALLEY

27% have lived in the Sid Valley from 0 to 5 years with only a slightly higher number 29%, having lived in the Sid Valley for 21+ years. Another way of looking at this is that 60% have lived in the area for 0-15 years and 40% between 15 and 21+ years. Within this group a third more respondents have been here for less than 15 years. Population trends in the Sid Valley and how they compare nationally will be interesting to have regard for in our Neighbourhood Plan to ensure planning policies both reflect and encourage the population growth that will support the community.

5.1.6 EMPLOYMENT

We asked whether or not respondents were working or retired and if working whether within or outside of the Sid Valley area. Given the age profile again it is unsurprising that 65% of those who responded are retired. Of the 33% working half work in the Neighbourhood Plan area and half outside of it, commuting to other areas. This highlights the need for us to find out more about visitors and residents and the working and non-working age needs that exists to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan policies will support a balanced community fit for the future.

5.2 SECTION 2 - YOUR VIEWS

Section 2 of the questionnaire focused on people's likes, dislikes and aspirations for the future in relation to the Sid Valley. These were purposefully open and broad to ensure that our consultation start point was not leading other than to reflect what is already in the Local Plan. Our intention was to give an opportunity for people to tell us what they thought about the whole locality of the Sid Valley, without making assumptions on the likely areas of interest and concern. These questions mostly asked for narrative answers, which were recorded using a word and theme tally system as described on page 10. The full response data is provided in Appendix 3.

5.2.1 QUESTION 18

“What do you like most about the Sid Valley?”

Of those who responded the top (most often repeated) 15 responses in order of highest number of times mentioned were:

1. Natural beauty, the natural environment, the valley, the Byes, the hills, walking, rural location, wildlife, unspoilt, AONB
2. Sea, seafront, beach, Jacob's Ladder, the cliffs, the esplanade, sea views, coastal path, Jurassic Coast
3. Local shops, local produce, local business, shopping, local traders, the High Street, few national chains
4. Community life, sense of community, community spirit, neighbours, feeling of belonging, good quality of life, friendly, courteous, vibrant, lifestyle

5. Gardens, floral displays, open spaces in town, Sidmouth in Bloom
6. Local transport, the Hopper bus, easy access to other towns
7. Heritage, architecture, buildings. Unspoilt, full of character, unique
8. Walking, hiking - opportunities, routes, ease of access
9. Peace & quiet, tranquility, individuality, clean air, relaxing
10. Clubs & societies – activities, things to do
11. Sporting facilities – bowls, tennis, croquet, rugby, football, Leisure Centre, swimming pool etc.
12. Cinema and theatre
13. Low crime rate, feeling of security, no/low fear
14. Local services - medical and care: medical centre, hospital, doctors, dentists,
15. Events: Folk Week, The Regatta, Sea Fest, Walking Festival, Science Week, Literary Festival etc.

5.2.2 QUESTION 19

“What do you most dislike about the Sid Valley?”

Of those who responded the top (most often repeated) 15 responses to the question in order of highest number of times mentioned were:

1. Traffic – cars, speeding, congestion, pollution, narrow footpaths. Lack of pedestrian crossings. HGVs in town centre
2. EDDC – planning, local plan, the Knowle development, Sidford development, concern about industrial site. Lack of consultation. Not democratic/representative
3. Housing – prices inflated by wealthy retirees, insufficient affordable housing for young people, 2nd homes, holiday rentals
4. Elderly residents – too much emphasis on their needs, too much housing development for the elderly. Imbalance of ages
5. Local services – other: recycling, refuse collection, recycling centre, grass cutting, verges, hedges, street cleaning
6. Roads & paths - state of, potholes. Inadequate for size of population
7. Seagulls - management, behaviour, nuisance, mess
8. Shops – not affordable for young, too many chains, loss of local shops, no farmers market, too many charity shops
9. Local services - medical and care: medical centre, hospital, doctors, dentists, MIU, closure of Sidford surgery, concern about future of Blackmore surgery, no A&E
10. Beach management, cliff & beach erosion, rock groynes etc. Lack of urgency, no visible plans/leadership. Lack of action on climate change
11. Dogs - dogs in Byes, dogs on beach, dog mess, inconsiderate owners
12. Urbanisation - green spaces built on, AONB & natural landscape destroyed
13. Port Royal – needs development. Slow progress

14. Parking - lack of
15. Employment – insufficient opportunities for young people

5.2.3 QUESTION 20

“How would you like the Sid Valley (Salcombe Regis, Sidbury, Sidford, Sidmouth) to be described in 15 years’ time?”

Of those who responded the top (most often repeated) 15 responses to the question in order of highest number of times mentioned were:

1. Beautiful/peaceful/tranquil/unspoiled/secluded place with countryside/AONB/wildlife protected for residents and tourists. Not overcrowded. Happy, tolerant, caring, friendly and safe place to visit and live. Gentle pace of life.
2. Unspoilt Regency town for 21 century living. Timelessness. Charm. Well kept, unique, jewel in Jurassic crown.
3. Diverse population - young and old, with needs catered for everyone. All welcome, inclusive, balanced community, multi-cultural
4. Vibrant/exciting/sophisticated/ safe & tolerant place for residents and tourists. Full of character. Modern in outlook, forward looking
5. Sensitive, controlled development, well thought out, researched, consulted on and innovative. Use of brownfield for development - not on AONB
6. Housing – affordable, not all second homes, retirement homes, holiday rentals. Double council tax charged on 2nd homes
7. Shops – affordable, quality, more unique than chains, less charity shops, local traders
8. Tourist destination - with opportunities for relaxation, culture, all types of food & drink and activities. Centre of excellence. Coastal attraction
9. Thriving, vibrant, local economy, local employment
10. Employment – more work & opportunities for young people. Not just based on tourism or services for elderly residents.
11. Unchanged, same size as today, retaining “olde” world charm. Small population. Gentle pace of life
12. Coastline and beaches - managed. Protected from high tides and flooding. Clean, healthy
13. Port Royal & The Ham – developed to make it an attractive, sophisticated, useful place. Marina/harbour. Alma Bridge reinstated/protected.
14. Pedestrianised town centre, traffic calmed, improved parking and road system. Reasonable parking charges. Clean air, free from pollution. Restricted access to HGVs
15. AONB - maintained and protected

5.2.4 QUESTION 21

This question included a list of 15 topics of interest which relate to areas covered by the Local Plan to gauge what is most important to the community.

Priority areas of interest in order of highest number of times mentioned were:

1. Environment/protection of the countryside
2. Transport (parking, traffic management, walking, cycling, driving)
3. Health & care facilities
4. Leisure (allotments, parks, playing fields, green spaces, leisure facilities)
5. Community assets & facilities
6. Heritage assets and conservation
7. Facilities & services for young people
8. Infrastructure (communications, water, sewage, power)
9. Facilities & care for the retired
10. Shopping
11. Employment
12. Housing
13. Tourism
14. Schools & childcare
15. Renewable energy

5.3 ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

5.3.1 SEVEN THEMES

From the collation of the data we were able to define seven key themes which help us to analyse respondent's responses and identify areas for further research and consultations in order to develop our Neighbourhood Plan policies and Community Action priorities.

The seven themes in the table below highlight the topics of importance and concern within a holding title that helps to capture what the theme is broadly about. We have also provided a brief narrative summary analysis which is informed by results from questionnaire 1 and gives initial shape to the themes reflecting community views so far. Given that many of the questions required narrative answers we have included a few summarised quotes to bring the analysis alive whilst recognising that individually they simply help to spotlight some of the range of views that were shared in this process.

| 1. Built Environment | |
|--|--|
| * Sustainable development | * Brownfield sites |
| * Historic streets and heritage buildings | * Energy efficiency |
| * Built-up area boundaries | * Renewable energy |
| * Public places and townscape assets | |
| * Design and local distinctiveness | |
| 2. Natural Environment | |
| * World Heritage coastline and AONB landscape | * Pollution |
| * Coastal protection (beach management and flood prevention) | * Litter and vandalism |
| * Ecological (bio) diversity | * Climate change |
| 3. Housing | |
| * Local housing needs | * Infrastructure (utilities) |
| * Affordable housing | * Waste recycling |
| * Windfall development | * Second homes |
| * Residential conversions | |
| 4. Economic Resilience | |
| * New employment land | * Tourism |
| * Higher wage economy | * Agriculture |
| * Retail | * Creative industries and upskilling |
| 5. Community and Culture | |
| * Health and well-being | * Leisure facilities and recreation spaces |
| * Balanced community | * Safe town and crime prevention |
| * Culture and entertainment | * Young people |
| 6. Transport | |
| * Road safety | * Traffic congestion |
| * Pedestrian access to town spaces | * Parking |
| * Footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways | * Public transport |
| 7. Eastern Town Regeneration | |

5.4 NARRATIVE SUMMARY ANALYSIS.

5.4.1 THEME 1: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Residents reflected on the peace and quiet, the lack of amusement arcades and the individuality and heritage of the town reflected in its buildings. But there was also concern that these assets require protection and care in order to preserve them for future generations.
- This was a theme picked up in the question about respondents' vision for 15 years' time where significant numbers talked about the need to protect the Sid Valley from uncontrolled development, preserving AONB land, and retaining the uniqueness of Sidmouth, while accepting that in order to do this, it needs to plan well, and be forward looking and consultative.
- In response to the question about what residents most disliked, the concerns about the built environment were about new development encroaching on AONB land and second homes/investment properties for holiday rentals that had the perceived effect of pricing out local people.

“Unspoiled, beautiful seaside location with characterful local shops and excellent facilities for all ages.” *Resident's comment*

5.4.2 THEME 2: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Unsurprisingly given the location, respondents overwhelmingly (c.20%) praised and commented on the natural beauty of the valley and the coastline, the opportunities to walk, cycle and relax in beautiful, peaceful surroundings while enjoying spectacular views. Particular praise was given to the formal gardens in the town and the work of Sidmouth in Bloom.
- Equally unsurprisingly their hope for the future in 15 years' time was that these natural elements would remain unspoiled, maintained and protected.
- This theme was reflected in Q21 where 10% of respondents indicated that ensuring that the environment and countryside was preserved and protected was a priority. Linked to this was a concern about encroachment on AONB land by future development.
- Given the enthusiasm for the natural environment, there was little that respondents disliked. There was some concern raised about flooding and a perceived lack of action about climate change – presumably in relation to cliff and beach erosion. Additionally, residents talked about flooding which they believe was caused by over-development, poor drains and lack of infrastructure or maintenance.

“Protection of our environment should underlie all decision-making. Control of traffic and facilities for cycling will help this, as will imaginative promotion of renewable energy. Providing facilities for both young and old will help keep our community vibrant.”
Resident's comment

5.4.3 THEME 3: HOUSING

- As a popular retirement location, the Sid Valley attracts many new residents each year, many of whom are affluent and able to pay premium prices for their homes. As a result, property prices are significantly higher than the national average. In addition, people buying second homes in the area for personal use or to rent out as holiday rental accommodation, add to the problem, raising prices and making them less affordable for local, and particularly younger, residents.
- Lack of affordable housing, especially for younger people, was raised by significant numbers of people throughout the questionnaire and a perception that younger people are forced to move away from the Sid Valley and Sidmouth as the lower wages available in the area are insufficient to cover higher than average rents and property prices.
- But concern was also expressed about planning, development and encroachment on AONB land, together with issues about EDDC's role in planning decisions, general unhappiness about aspects of the Local Plan and a perception that infrastructure, (communications, water, sewerage, power and flooding protection) may not exist to support new house building.

“There needs to be some encouragement to young people to buy/stay in Sidmouth, possibly from affordable homes. A lot of smaller or affordable homes are snapped up by second homes or investment purchases & therefore little chance is left for them.” *Resident's comment*

5.4.4 THEME 4: ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

- It was clear from responses that a significant percentage of residents recognise the importance of economic resilience to the general health and appeal of the town to tourists and residents alike. A key factor in this is the number of independent shops selling high quality locally sourced products to customers.
- This theme carried through to residents' vision 15 year vision for the future, with 9.2% identifying that retaining an independent shopping experience and ensuring that the town isn't dominated by chain stores, charity shops and coffee shops was important to them.
- In addition, in the vision question, respondents hoped for greater employment opportunities for local people and a thriving local economy with all sectors of the community catered for.

“A vibrant community needs investment of money and people's time and energy. Keep investing in kids and health as well as a unique town.” *Resident's comment*

- The question of what respondents most disliked, revealed concerns (9.5% of responses) about the role of EDDC in planning, the Local Plan, a perceived lack of consultation in respect of the redevelopment of the Knowle and the Sidford employment site.
- Other major concerns were too much emphasis being placed on the needs of elderly people, too many coffee shops, and a lack of affordable shops for younger, less well-off residents and concerns about the future of medical services in the town and Sid Valley generally.
- Mentioned by only a handful of people but recognised by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as a significant issue for the future, was the important role that hotels in Sidmouth, particularly those on the esplanade, play in attracting tourists, keeping the town alive throughout the year and preventing the decline experienced by other seaside towns when hotels become apartments.
- Encouraging a resilient economy therefore and developing a vision of what it wants to promote itself as, is seen as essential in helping Sidmouth and the Sid Valley maintain its image as a healthy, vibrant, quintessentially English tourist destination and a highly desirable place to live.

5.4.5 THEME 5: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

- This question teased out the public’s clear appreciation of the many activities, the sense of like-minded community, and the opportunities to do things in the Sid Valley. Bearing in mind that a majority of residents have retired here, this is not surprising as it reflects that people have made a positive choice to come to the Sid Valley.
- “Character is difficult to define, but once it’s lost it can’t be replaced.” *Resident’s comment*
- Significant dislikes included the “nuisance” aspects of certain issues, such as dogs and seagulls. But there was also an awareness of the lack of facilities for young people, and the lack of overt police presence.
 - Relatively few people commented on the betterment they would like to see in 15 years’ time; continued medical care facilities though did feature the most in the replies.
 - Again, both the topics of facilities for the elderly, and facilities and schooling for children and young people featured highly in responses that people thought important. Leisure facilities also featured highly.
 - Question 22 asked for additional comments on the Topics in Question 21, this produced a similar range of issues, with concentration on improved facilities for the elderly, but also a high number registering that there was clear need for improved facilities for young people. The recognition of the importance of developing the Sid Valley as an engaging place for all generations, challenges the sometimes held assumption that the Sid Valley is a place predominantly for people to retire to.

5.4.6 THEME 6: TRANSPORT

- Local transport facilities and services was not generally liked; positive responses were low both in number and percentage.
- The lack of reasonably priced parking, inadequate footways, poor state of road pavements, poor facilities for cycling, bad traffic management and the dangerous interface between footway users and, traffic were all significant dislikes.
- The vision for transport in the valley across the next 15 to 20 years can be summarised as;-a pedestrian town centre, improved parking and road system, reasonable parking charges, a pollution free environment, few HGV's, and better cycling facilities. It must be recognised that many of these are incompatible with the natural geography and layout of the town, and although some improvements might be achieved, it is important to carefully manage expectations about these concerns. Transport issues it should be noted are responsibilities of Devon County Council and East Devon District Council, therefore working with these agencies to influence change that is realistic and possible is required.

“Large vehicles in the town, through Sidford and Sidbury” (dislike) *Resident's comment*

5.4.7 THEME 7: EASTERN TOWN REGENERATION

- There was not a large response from respondents; less than 5% from all questions where the topic was mentioned. The high percentage of positive comments about the sea front, beach, Jurassic Coast, sea views and coastal path however are significant given the interconnectedness of the Eastern Town area with these issues.
- The consensus of views expressed were that the area should be sensitively developed and the beach protected and managed well.

“A quintessential English town of charm & character that is forward thinking in its planning & development encompassing the whole community.” *Resident's comment*

6 NEXT STEPS

6.1 ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is continuously working to raise awareness about the Neighbourhood Plan and why it is important, providing many opportunities for residents to get involved and share their views. The biggest challenge is communication and finding ways to let people know - the more the community itself can talk about it, the more chance we have of reaching everyone.

When our consultation and community engagement process is complete and all responses have been analysed, a Neighbourhood Plan will be written which will be reviewed for approval by an independent inspector. Once passed it will go to a public referendum and if there is a majority vote in favour it will then become a statutory planning document. In the meantime there has been a lot of interest in the information and views we have obtained. With the views of the community so far gathered being of interest to different groups in the area helping them to understand what makes our community tick.

6.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY VOICE

The next steps are to continue the consultation process via the Business and Special Interest Groups Survey which will close on October 31st 2016 and the Young People's survey due in November 2016.

The Steering Group is focused on our current objectives to:

- develop appropriate questions for our consultations
- understand how best to develop the policies through more in-depth consultation
- design and facilitate targeted workshops and focus groups

We are also focusing our planning on communicating and engaging with people, especially with those who were underrepresented in the first survey i.e. the 18 to 40 year olds.

We are increasing our reach through better and increased use of our twitter and Facebook platforms and making sure that everything we do including the process we use and the standards we apply, are recorded and available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan page of the Sidmouth Town Council website.

There is much to do and we are always interested to hear from people who may have time and skills that they can use to support this process. Please do contact us if that means you.

More information about Neighbourhood Planning can be found on the Neighbourhood Plan page of Sidmouth Town Council website at <http://www.sidmouth.gov.uk/index.php/neighbourhood-plan>

You can follow our progress or contact us via the following:



Search: "Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan"



@sidvalleyplan



neighbourhood@sidmouth.gov.uk

Or write to us at Sidmouth Town Council, Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth, EX10 9BB

7 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 FIRST HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

Attached as a separate document.

APPENDIX 2 DISTRIBUTION AND COLLECTION POINTS

Salcombe Regis:

1. St Mary & St Peter's Church, Salcombe Regis, EX10 0JH

Sidbury:

1. Dreads of Sidbury 27 Fore St, Sidbury, EX10 0SD

Sidford:

1. The Blue Ball Inn Sidford, EX10 9QL
2. Spar Church St, EX10 9RL

Sidmouth:

1. Post Office, High Street 132 High St, Sidmouth, EX10 8EE
2. Post Office, Woolbrook 12 Woolbrook Rd, Sidmouth, EX10 9UU
3. Swimming Pool Ham Lane, Sidmouth, EX10 8XR
4. Sidmouth Leisure Centre, Primley Rd, Sidmouth, EX10 9LH
5. Co-operative Store 78 High St, Sidmouth, EX10 8EQ
6. Winchesters Greengrocers 2 High St, Sidmouth, EX10 8EL
7. Swan Inn 37 York St, Sidmouth, EX10 8BY
8. Anchor Inn Old Fore St, Sidmouth, EX10 8LS
9. Waitrose, Stowford Rise, Sidmouth, EX10 9GA
10. Sidmouth Town Council, Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth, EX10 9BB

Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Roadshow Events

Wednesday 8th June, St Teresa's Hall, 4:15 pm—8 pm

Tuesday 14th June, Stowford Rise Community Centre, 4pm—8pm

Monday 20th June, Sidford Social Hall, 5pm-8pm

Wednesday 22nd June, Sidbury Village Hall, 3pm-8pm

Tuesday 5th July, St Francis Hall, Woolbrook Road, 4pm-8pm

Thursday 7th July, Salcombe Regis Church, 4pm-7pm

APPENDIX 3 COMPLETE SURVEY RESULTS DATA

Attached as a separate document.