



Ashington Neighbourhood Development Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Post Adoption Statement Nov 2021

The Ashington Neighbourhood Development Plan (ANP) was ‘made’ on the 23 June 2021 and now forms part of the Development Plan for the determination of planning applications in the Ashington Parish.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16) (3) and (4), which require a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail:

1. *‘How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme?’*
2. *How the environmental report has been taken into account?*
3. *How opinions expressed in response to*
 - a. *The invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)d;*
 - b. *Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4);**Have been taken into account*
4. *How the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;*
5. *The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted – in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with;*
6. *The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.’*

This statement addresses each of these points in turn:

1. How have environmental (sustainability) considerations been integrated into the Made Neighbourhood Development Plan?

The Draft Scoping Report was published in May 2018 and provided a collection of baseline data for the Parish. The document sought to establish the key sustainability challenges facing the Parish of an economic, environmental and social nature. The Strategic

Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Ashington Parish Neighbourhood Plan sets out the baseline information about Ashington as the Neighbourhood Plan Area. As required by the regulations, SEA has been developed as an iterative process and has informed decision making at every stage of developing the ANP. Additionally, the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan SEA has been informed through detailed Evidence Base Documents which identify key plans, policies, and guidance, which in turn, have influenced the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan. The issues identified informed the setting of environmental objectives, which the emerging policies in the plan were assessed against. These objectives have helped ensure that the most sustainable options were identified.

| Sustainability theme | Objectives | Assessment/monitoring indicators | Sustainability theme | Objectives | Assessment/monitoring indicators |
|----------------------|--|--|----------------------|---|---|
| 1/Env | To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Ashington in terms of its geology, landform, soils, biodiversity, water systems and climate | Change in area of ancient woodland/SNCI sites within the parish (hectares) Change in area of County Wildlife Sites within the parish (hectares) Change in area of ancient woodland in parish (hectares) Change in area of priority habitats within the parish (hectares – informed by data from Sussex Biological Records Office) Change in area/grade of agricultural land classification (ALC) land lost (hectares) Number of properties/floorspace of developments in flood zone 1 (properties/ floorspace). | 5/Env | To protect the identity and local distinctiveness of Ashington by conserving and enhancing the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings | Quality of mobile phone service and coverage (area in hectares with mobile phone signal). Number of listed buildings demolished or redeveloped number of buildings/ structures). Loss of archaeological remains (number of remains). Number of trees with TPOs removed (number of trees with TPO). |
| 2/Env | To protect the landscape setting of Ashington village through use of land with a low landscape impact and by focusing development on previously developed land | Number of planning applications/area granted in locations with low landscape capacity (hectares). Number of planning applications/area granted in locations that would affect historic landscape character (hectares). Development on previously developed land (hectares). | 6/Soc | To ensure that the community has a high quality and healthy lifestyle. | Census figures on change in long term illness and general health (Census data). Number/area of green spaces within walking distance of homes (hectares within 10-minute walk of residential properties). Levels of use of formal green spaces within the parish (number of visitors per year). Number of formal recreation facilities within walking distance of homes (number). Number of homes experiencing unacceptable levels of noise (number of properties where noise levels breaching legal maximum). |
| 3/Soc | To ensure that housing addresses the needs of the existing community of Ashington before addressing wider needs | Mix of housing built by dwelling size (number of dwellings). Number of people with a local connection on the Housing Register that are newly housed (number of persons). Number of affordable homes completed (number of dwellings). | 7/Soc | To ensure the provision of a range of community facilities that provide for the needs of the community | Number of community facilities within the parish (number). |
| 4/Econ | To maximise the potential of existing employment/employers and support the need for new employment opportunities. | Number of existing businesses retained (number of VAT registered businesses). Number of new businesses in the parish (number of VAT registered businesses). Number of local start-ups (number of VAT registered businesses). Number of new jobs likely to be created (number of jobs). Number of businesses and dwellings (for home workers) with access to superfast broadband (number of properties). | 8/Soc | To improve safe and sustainable movement around the parish and to the village centre by a range of modes | Levels of traffic at key junctions in the village (number of vehicles per hour at peak periods). Distance of new footpaths/cyclepaths (kilometres). Speed data from police (number of vehicles caught speeding). Accident data from police (number of slight or severe accidents; number of slight or severe casualties). Number of safe crossing points serving the key village services (number). Number of safe crossing points of A24 (number). |

Sustainability Assessment Framework for ANP

2. How has the SEA Report been taken into account through the preparation of the Made Neighbourhood Development Plan?

The production of the Sustainability Appraisal Report incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Ashington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2031 has been an iterative process, carried out concurrently with the development of the Ashington Neighbourhood Development Plan. The SA/SEA process began with the production of the SA Scoping Report (Jan 2018).

The SEA process contributed to the development of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan by providing an assessment of all reasonable policy and potential site options. In this assessment, the SA Framework was used to compare each policy option alongside reasonable alternatives, and the option of having no Neighbourhood Plan at all. The

significant effects of the options were identified and those which had the most potentially negative impacts were not recommended for inclusion within the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan. The outcome of this assessment is documented within Section 5 Assessment in the final SA/SEA Report.

For certain policies, potential negative impacts on the environment were identified; however, it was possible to overcome these impacts through the employment of appropriate mitigation. An example of this would be the revision made to Policy ANP11. This policy aimed to deliver a significant proportion of the 225 homes identified in the plan as a comprehensive proposal on one site. Following consultation with Historic England (HE) it was revealed some parts of the site was identified as potential sensitive to archeological remains and warranted further investigation. Following further consultation with HE, revisions to the policy was made whereby the area impacted by the presence of potential archaeological remains would be designated as public open space and no development would be implemented there preserving the opportunity for further investigation in the future.

The SA/SEA Report demonstrates how sustainability considerations have been taken into account and provides an audit trail and formal statement on the consideration and assessment of all policy options.

3. How have opinions expressed in response to the following matters been taken into account in the production of the 'Made' Neighbourhood Development Plan?

- a. Consultation was undertaken with members of the public and statutory consultees during the Scoping Report, Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) draft-submission consultation and Regulation 16 submission-draft consultation;
- b. Amendments made by the Parish Council in response to public comments made on the documents are recorded and published through the Consultation Statement and made available during the Reg 16 consultation. The examination of the plan and the modifications proposed by the Examiner have been accepted and incorporated into the plan.

4. How the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) (cross-boundary consultations with neighbouring Parishes/ Districts) have been taken into account;

Key Environmental Bodies

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires that the authorities referred to

in article 6(3) shall be consulted when deciding upon the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA/SEA (Environmental) Report. In England the statutory consultees are the Environment Agency, English Heritage (now known as Historic England) and Natural England. The Statutory Consultees, together with any locally significant partners were consulted on the SA Scoping Report in March 2016 for a period of 5 weeks. There was no feedback received from Environment Agency. Feedback received from Natural England stated that the document appeared to deal reasonably with the natural environment, indicating that the plan would likely lead to protection and enhancement of designated and otherwise important landscapes. Feedback received back from the Historic England Historic England advised of a negative impact on potential archaeological remains in the ground and this was subsequently confirmed from a geophysical assessment undertaken by the site promoter. It followed, the land at Church Farm House was amalgamated with the land west of Ashington School into a single site allocation. As part of this, part of the allocation the land at Church Farm House was allocated only as public open space, with no built development to be designated on it. The reason was that there is a high likelihood that built development would impact on the archaeological remains associated with the presence of a Roman Villa which extends into the western part of the site. An assessment of the amended site allocation can be found in the submission version of the Plan.

Public Consultation

The SA/SEA of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan was consulted upon along the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan for six weeks at the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 stage, on 22 June 2019 – 17 August 2019 and then for a further eight weeks alongside the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Publicity Period, on 17 June 2020 – 12 August 2020. Over eighty representations were received and passed over to the Examiner. Examination was undertaken by independent Examiner David Hogger and his report was received on the 9 March 2021.

Neighbouring Authorities

All neighbouring authorities was consulted on the initial scope of the SA/SEA and the Regulation 14 and 16 Consultations.

No comments were received from neighbouring parishes specifically on the SA/SEA or Environmental objectives.

5. What were the reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted – in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with?

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes 2004 (12) (2) requires environmental reports to examine reasonable alternatives for the plan or programme whilst taking into account the objectives and scope of the plan or programme. This statement is required to set out the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as ‘made’ in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

The final assessment in the SEA demonstrates that the policies in the ANP make a positive contribution towards the achievement of sustainable development. They are expected to have a number of positive effects. Mitigation has been applied where negative effects are present and all are considered capable of being mitigated in full. There was only one significant detrimental effect – in respect of the impact on archaeological remains of built development on the Church Farm House site – which has been mitigated by this land only being allocated as public open space. 20. This gives confidence that the policies in the Plan will contribute to sustainable development.

6. What measures are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme?

The SEA process does not finish with the publication of the document. Under Regulation 17 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004, the ANP will be subject to on-going monitoring. This will be carried out by jointly Ashington Parish Council and Rother District Council. The latter will monitor the continuing suitability of the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies, including in terms of significant environmental effects, through its Local Plan Monitoring Report.

The policies associated with the site allocations in the ANP will be monitored by the Parish Council through its assessment of the planning applications for the allocated sites. The Parish Council will expect the conditions associated with granting of planning permission by HDC to fully reflect those policies.