

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

Sustainability Report

Draft to accompany the Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Consultation Version of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

Non-technical summary

June 2019

Introduction

1. The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) is a Development Plan Document that if approved at referendum will become a key planning document for the local area up until 2031. The Plan provides a strategic vision and objectives for development in the Neighbourhood Plan area and sets out a clear policy framework for the delivery of new development. The strategic vision, objectives and policies have been formulated in accordance with existing higher level policy, notably the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Horsham Development Planning Framework 2015 (HDPF).
2. The ANP has been subject to wide ranging stakeholder engagements which has shaped and formed the key planning issues and policies.
3. The Sustainability Report (SR) includes the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which is an EC Directive that requires all strategic documents to ensure they are in accordance with the aims of sustainable development. The SR (incorporating the requirements of the SEA), has been undertaken in accordance with Directive 2001/42/EC, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
4. The SR provides an appraisal tool to ensure that the principles of sustainable development, which comprises of economic, environmental and social issues, are positively achieved by the ANP. The SR is a 'live' document that has been continually updated as work on the ANP has progressed. The document seeks to assess all policies against other options to ensure that the most sustainable policy positions are taken forward.

Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal

5. 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.
6. The document was subject to a consultation process with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA) and Historic England (HA).
7. The Scoping Report assessed and collated all relevant plans, documents and programmes which might have an impact on the formation of policy and provide an understanding of the key sustainability issues faced by the Parish. The document included an overview of the Parish and then environmental, social and economic characteristics. Information was collected on the following topic areas:
 - Nature conservation and biodiversity;
 - Landscape;
 - Air and Climate;
 - Water;
 - Soil and Geology;
 - Heritage;
 - Social and economic indicators;

- Roads and transport;
 - Infrastructure; and
 - Economic characteristics.
8. As a result of this appraisal, a series of sustainability issues were identified. This sought to identify the challenges facing the Parish and then assess them if no neighbourhood plan was delivered. A SWOT analysis was also used to review issues facing the Parish. This showed that sustainability issues would be better addressed through the production of a neighbourhood plan.
 9. Once the sustainability issues had been clearly identified, the Scoping Report sought to establish a Sustainability Framework. The Sustainability Framework comprised of a number of objectives, with relevant indicators, which could be used to assess the identified sustainability issues.
 10. The consultation responses to the Scoping Report were incorporated into the Draft SR. Separately the Scoping Report was updated to reflect the comments made and subsequently issued along with the Draft ANP at Regulation 14 Consultation Stage.

Draft Sustainability Report

11. The Draft SR was completed in tandem with the Draft ANP, prior to Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Consultation. The following stages were undertaken for the SR:
 - Appraisal of SEA methodology;
 - Summary of the baseline information and any updates following the production of the Scoping Report;
 - Assessment of Sustainability Framework - objectives and indicators;
 - Appraisal of ANP policy options against the Sustainability Framework; and
 - Assessment of all ANP policies against other policy options.
12. The Draft SR appraised all the draft policies of the ANP, to ensure that the most sustainable options were being pursued. Each draft policy was assessed against the strategic objectives and then compared with other potential policy positions. Each policy was then assessed as being: significantly positive, positive, possible positive, neutral, possible negative, negative and significant negative.
13. A summary of the assessment of ANP policies against other policy options is shown in Appendix 1.
14. The Draft SR assessed different scales of growth against the levels planned for in the ANP. This demonstrated that the reasonable alternative options would have fewer positive impacts and greater negative impacts than the strategy adopted.
15. The Draft SR separately appraised all of the sites put forward for allocation in the ANP. The results of the site assessment process were that, of the 14 sites, a total of 3 sites were considered appropriate for development and were allocated in the ANP.
16. A summary of the assessment of the options in respect of different scales of growth is shown in Appendix 2.

17. The aim was to ensure that the most sustainable option was being pursued and if it were not, then the policy should be corrected to ensure compliance with the aims of sustainable development. Where conflicts were identified between draft policies and strategic objectives, these were discussed.

Overall conclusion

18. The assessment in the Draft SR 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 but none of these are expected to be significant.
19. There are a small number of potential negative effects in individual criterion in a limited number of policies. However, none of these negative effects are significant and all are considered capable of being mitigated in full.
20. This gives confidence that the policies in the Plan will contribute to sustainable development.

Next steps

21. Following the consultation on the ANP and SR at Regulation 14 Consultation Stage, consultee comments will need to be appraised as part of the development of the policies. As a result of this feedback, it may be necessary to amend the ANP, informed by review of the SR. Subject to the outcome of this process, the ANP and SR will be able to proceed to Submission Stage (Regulation 16).

Appendix 1 Summary of assessment of the contribution that the ANP makes to sustainable development

Sustainability objective Policy	1/Env - preserve and enhance natural beauty	2/Env - protect the landscape setting	3/Soc – ensure that housing addresses the need	4/Econ – maximise potential and existing employment	5/Env – protect the identity through conserving heritage	6/Soc – ensure the community has a healthy lifestyle	7/Soc – provide range of community facilities	8/Soc – improve safety and sustainability of movement
ASH1: Overall spatial strategy for Ashington	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	+
ASH2: Increasing walking in Ashington	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	++
ASH3: Parking Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
ASH4: Local Heritage Assets	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0
ASH5: Landscaping and Countryside Access	++	+	0	0	0	+	0	+
ASH6: Noise Impacts	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
ASH7: Addressing Local Flooding	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ASH8: Ashington Community Cluster	0	0	0	+	0	++	++	+
ASH9: Small-Scale and 'move-on' employment development	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	+
ASH10: Chanctonbury Nursery	-	0	++	0	0	+	+	+
ASH11: Land West of Ashington School	-	-	++	+	0	+	+	+
ASH12: Land at Church Farm House	+	-	++	0	+	+	0	+

Appendix 2 Summary of impact assessment of planning for different levels of housing

Sustainability objective	1/Env - preserve and enhance natural beauty	2/Env - protect the landscape setting	3/Soc – ensure that housing addresses the need	4/Econ – maximise potential and existing employment	5/Env – protect the identity through conserving heritage	6/Soc – ensure the community has a healthy lifestyle	7/Soc – provide range of community facilities	8/Soc – improve safety and sustainability of movement
Meet housing need in full through site allocations	-	-	++	0	0	0	+	0
Allocate sites that do not meet full housing needs	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
Allocate sites well in excess of full housing requirement	--	--	++	0	0	0	+	-

Key for Appendix 1 and 2

++	The policy is likely to contribute significantly towards the sustainability objective
+	The policy is likely to contribute positively towards the sustainability objective, although not significantly
0	The policy is considered to have no significant positive or negative effect
-	The policy is likely to detract from the achievement of the sustainability objective, although not significantly
--	The policy is likely to detract significantly from the achievement of the sustainability objective
?	The policy has an uncertain relationship to the sustainability objective. Alternatively, insufficient information may be available to enable an assessment to be made.