

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

Sustainability Report

**To accompany the Submission Stage (Regulation 16)
Consultation Version of the Ashington
Neighbourhood Plan**

Non-technical summary

April 2020

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 Horsham District Council (HDC), 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. Following Regulation 14 Consultation, the ANP was amended.

Draft Sustainability Report

11. The Draft SR was completed in tandem with the Draft ANP, prior to Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Consultation and then again at following representations made at Regulation 14 Stage. 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 the established sustainability objectives at Regulation 14 is shown in Appendix 1 (Table 1A).
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. Following representations made at

Regulation 14 stage by Historic England, and subsequent geophysical assessment undertaken by the site promoter, the land at Church Farm House was amalgamated with the land west of Ashington School into a single site allocation. As part of this, the land at Church Farm House was allocated only as public open space, with no built development to be included 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 which is in the Regulation 16 version of the Plan is shown in Appendix 1 (Table 1B).

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. 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.

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

1A: Assessment of Regulation 14 (Pre-Submission) version of ANP

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	+

1B: Assessment of revised approach to ASH11 and ASH12 site allocations following representations made at Regulation 14 by Historic England*

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
Policy								
ASH11: Land west of Ashington School (amalgamated site with former ASH12 site)	-	-	++	+	+	++	++	+

* Assessment of policies ASH1-10 remain unchanged

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
Scenario								
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.