

## **Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004)**

### **Regulation 16(4) Statement of Particulars**

#### **Chichester District Council Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Adoption Statement:**

#### **Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

##### **Introduction**

Chichester District Council agreed to make the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for Chichester District (excluding the area within the South Downs National Park) at the Council meeting held on 15 December 2015.

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

- a) How environmental (sustainability) considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- b) How the Environmental Report (SEA Report) has been taken into account;
- c) How opinions expressed in response to –
  - i. The invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d);
  - ii. Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4) have been taken into account;
- d) How the results of any consultation entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account
- e) The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- f) The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

This is in line with the Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014) Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 11-004-20140306 and this statement examines each of these points in turn.

#### **a. How environmental (sustainability) considerations have been integrated into the plan**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report for the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan sets out the baseline information about the Parish of Southbourne as the Neighbourhood Plan Area. It identifies the environmental and sustainability issues affecting the plan area, both now and in the future.

In addition to the baseline information, the SEA Report identifies the key plans, policies and guidance that have influenced the content of the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan. This has enabled sustainability issues affecting the Neighbourhood Plan Area to be identified. This has included environmental issues. The issues that were identified informed the sustainability objectives, against which the options for the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan were assessed. By having a number of objectives that reflected current environmental issues ensured that the most sustainable options were generally the most beneficial/least detrimental in environmental, economic and social terms. The identification of environmental issues, as well as economic and social issues, also helped shape the policy requirements for each site that has been allocated in the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **b. How the Environmental Report (SEA Report) has been taken into account**

The SEA has contributed to the development of the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan by providing an independent assessment of the policy site options considered as well as the policies put forward by Southbourne Parish Council. The SEA 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.

The SEA was prepared alongside the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan by Urban Edge Environmental Consulting. It was reflected within and supported the draft Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan that was subjected to public consultation both at the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Pre Submission Stage and the Regulation 16 Publicity Period conducted by Chichester District Council as the Local Planning Authority.

The SEA process began with the production of the Scoping Report. This involved identifying the current baseline situation for Southbourne, along with the sustainability issues and objectives that were linked to a number of indicators. The identification of environmental baseline information, issues and objectives was a key part of this document. The three Consultation Bodies (English Heritage (now Historic England), the Environment Agency and Natural England) were invited to comment on this document.

The comments received on the Scoping Report helped create a final set of sustainability objectives, which were used to test a number of options as well as the policies that were identified at both the Pre Submission Regulation 14 stage and the Submission Publicity Period at Regulation 16 stage.

The significant effects of the options and subsequent policies were analysed against the sustainability objectives. This enabled the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of each potential policy/allocation to be identified. Those options that had the most negative potential economic, social and environmental impacts were not recommended for inclusion within the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan. The opposite was the case for those options that were identified as having a number of potential positive impacts. Section 3 and 4 of the SEA Report details this information.

The draft policies included within the Pre Submission Regulation 14 and the Publicity Period at Regulation 16 stage were analysed against the sustainability objectives. This involved assessing the impacts in the short, medium and long-term as well as any cumulative, synergistic and indirect impacts.

Following the assessment of the effects of the policies, measures to limit and mitigate against environmental, social and economic impacts of the policy allocations were identified. These measures were generally in the form of either certain policy requirements or in the justification text for the residential proposals.

As a result of the SEA analysis, policies have been modified at various stages in their development to make them more sustainable. This has included introducing policy requirements to minimise environmental impacts of certain allocations and in a number of instances to ensure environmental improvements are incorporated into the proposed development.

**c) How opinions expressed in response to –**

- i. The invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d);**
- ii. Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4) have been taken into account;**

and

**d) How the results of any consultation entered into under regulation 14(4) 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 Environmental Report. In England the key bodies are the Environment Agency, English Heritage (now Historic England) and Natural England.

The Scoping Report was published for five weeks between 3 February and 10 March 2014. Responses were received from English Heritage (now Historic England), Environment Agency and Natural England. Following receipt of these responses the SEA information, including the baseline and policy and plan review, was updated and included in the Environmental Report.

Public Participation

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires the public to have an early and effective opportunity within appropriate timeframes to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme, and the accompanying Environmental Report, before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure.

The Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment was consulted upon along with the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood for six weeks at the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 stage and then for a further six weeks alongside the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Publicity Period.

The SEA and policies within the Neighbourhood Plan were amended to take into account representations received at the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 stage.

**e) The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted ('made'), in the light of the 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 Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been 'made' on the recommendations of a suitably qualified Independent Examiner. No new evidence has been brought to the attention of Chichester District Council since the Examination took place to bring into question those recommendations. During the Neighbourhood Planning process 3 separate consultations were held. The first was that of the SEA Scoping Report to consider the baseline data and sustainability objectives. The second consultation included the Neighbourhood Plan with its policies and site allocations which had been tested against reasonable alternatives: that development in the parish proceeds in accordance with the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan and other planning policies; and the 'do nothing' option where development in the parish proceeds without the guidance of a neighbourhood plan. Subsequently changes and modifications were incorporated taking into account representations received. The Neighbourhood Plan and SEA were then published for a further consultation prior to the Independent Examination.

**f) The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme**

Following the publication of the examiner's report, the SEA has been updated as necessary and is now published alongside the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan. Despite this, the SA/SEA process does not finish with the publication of this document. The effect of the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan will need to be monitored using the Sustainability Objectives identified in the Southbourne Parish SEA. Linked to the sustainability objectives are a number of indicators that, where feasible, will be included within Chichester District Council's Monitoring Reports and by Southbourne Parish Council. The results of this monitoring will then be considered and will be used to inform any review of the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan. This will also ensure that any unforeseen effects, which have not been identified in the SA/SEA Report, can be acted upon in a timely manner.