

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan

**Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic
Environmental Assessment)**

Non-Technical Summary



June 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) 2014-2031 has been prepared by Hassocks Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 1.2. It sets out the Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Parish up to 2031 along with the policies and aims to deliver it's Vision. It also includes three housing allocations contributing to the housing need of the Parish.
- 1.3. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a systematic process to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which a Plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 1.4. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) involves the evaluation of the environmental impact of a Plan or programme. It is a requirement, as set out in the European Directive 2001/42/EC.
- 1.5. Government guidance (in a Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM 2005)) suggests incorporating the SEA process into the SA and consider economic and social effects alongside the environmental effects considered through the SEA. This approach has been followed. For simplification, this report is referred to as a Sustainability Appraisal, although it incorporates the SEA.

2. SCOPING REPORT

- 2.1. The Scoping Report of the SA collated baseline data on broad areas of economic, social and environmental issues. It considered the implications of other plans and documents and set out a series of Sustainability Objectives. The Scoping Report also set out the proposed methodology for undertaking the SA.
- 2.2. The Scoping Report and baseline data was subject to public consultation with statutory bodies (English Heritage, Natural England, the Environment Agency) in February 2015 for a five week period.

3. PRE SUBMISSION SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 3.1. The Pre Submission SA was consulted on alongside the Pre Submission HNP for a 6 week period from 05 January 2016 until 16 February 2016.
- 3.2. The purpose of this consultation was to assess whether the HNP may have effects on a range of sustainability topics and consider alternatives and mitigation to reduce any negative impact.
- 3.3. The Pre Submission SA set out;
 - An appraisal of the SA(inc SEA) methodology
 - A summary of the baseline information, identification of the plans, policies and programmes that have an impact on the HNP (with updates) and a summary of the challenges for the future of the Parish.
 - The Sustainability Framework; objectives and indicators
 - An appraisal of policy options

- Next steps

- 3.4. The SA included an update on baseline data relating to the Mid Sussex District Plan. Since consultation on the Scoping Report in February 2015, the District Plan and the accompanying SA was subject to Pre Submission consultation in June 2015.
- 3.5. The District Council published a further consultation on “Focussed Amendments” to the Pre Submission Draft District Plan in November 2015. As part of this, the Council reviewed it’s strategy on housing provision and set out a revised housing provision figure of 13,600 homes to be delivered through strategic allocations in Burgess Hill, Pease Pottage and through Neighbourhood Plans and a Site Allocations Document.
- 3.6. In response to feedback received from English Heritage, additional information has been added to the baseline information that has informed the preparation of the HNP and the accompanying SA.
- 3.7. Having reviewed feedback from the Environment Agency no amendments to the baseline data and/or Objectives and Indicators were considered necessary.
- 3.8. No response was received from Natural England.
- 3.9. The Strategic Objectives of the HNP were assessed against the Sustainability Objectives. This demonstrated that most of the Strategic Objectives of the HNP and the Sustainability Objectives are compatible or have a neutral impact which indicated that the HNP was being prepared positively.
- 3.10. The Sustainability Objectives were also assessed against themselves to test their mutual compatibility. This demonstrated that most Sustainability Objectives are either compatible or have a neutral impact.
- 3.11. The Pre Submission SA appraised the draft policies of the HNP to assess the impact on the Sustainability Objectives. This appraisal was undertaken to ensure that the policies selected and taken forward in the Pre Submission Plan are the most sustainable, given reasonable alternatives.

4. SUBMISSION SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 4.1. In response to consultation on the Pre Submission HNP and accompanying SA, circa 210 responses were received. Of those consulted, 3 provided comments on the SA. These comments were considered and no amendments were deemed necessary to the SA.
- 4.2. As a result of the overall feedback received, a number of amendments were made to the HNP to strengthen and clarify policies although no substantive changes have been made to the Policies or Aims. Amendments primarily focussed on the Gap Policies and site allocation policies.
- 4.3. In response to feedback received from South Downs National Park Authority amendments have been made to both Policy 1 and Policy 2 to conserve and where possible enhance tranquility.
- 4.4. In response to the concerns raised in relation to the allocation of Land to the north of Clayton Mills and Mackie Avenue, the Policy has been updated to facilitate a significant landscape buffer and compensatory open space beyond the northern edge of the development site boundary. Minor amendments have been made to Policy 14: Hassocks Golf Course to clarify the gifting of the legal

title of the Golf Course. Policy 16: National Tyre Centre, has also been updated to reflect the advice received from the Environment Agency.

- 4.5. The Submission HNP and accompanying documents including the SA were finalised in June 2016.