

Henfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL INCORPORATING STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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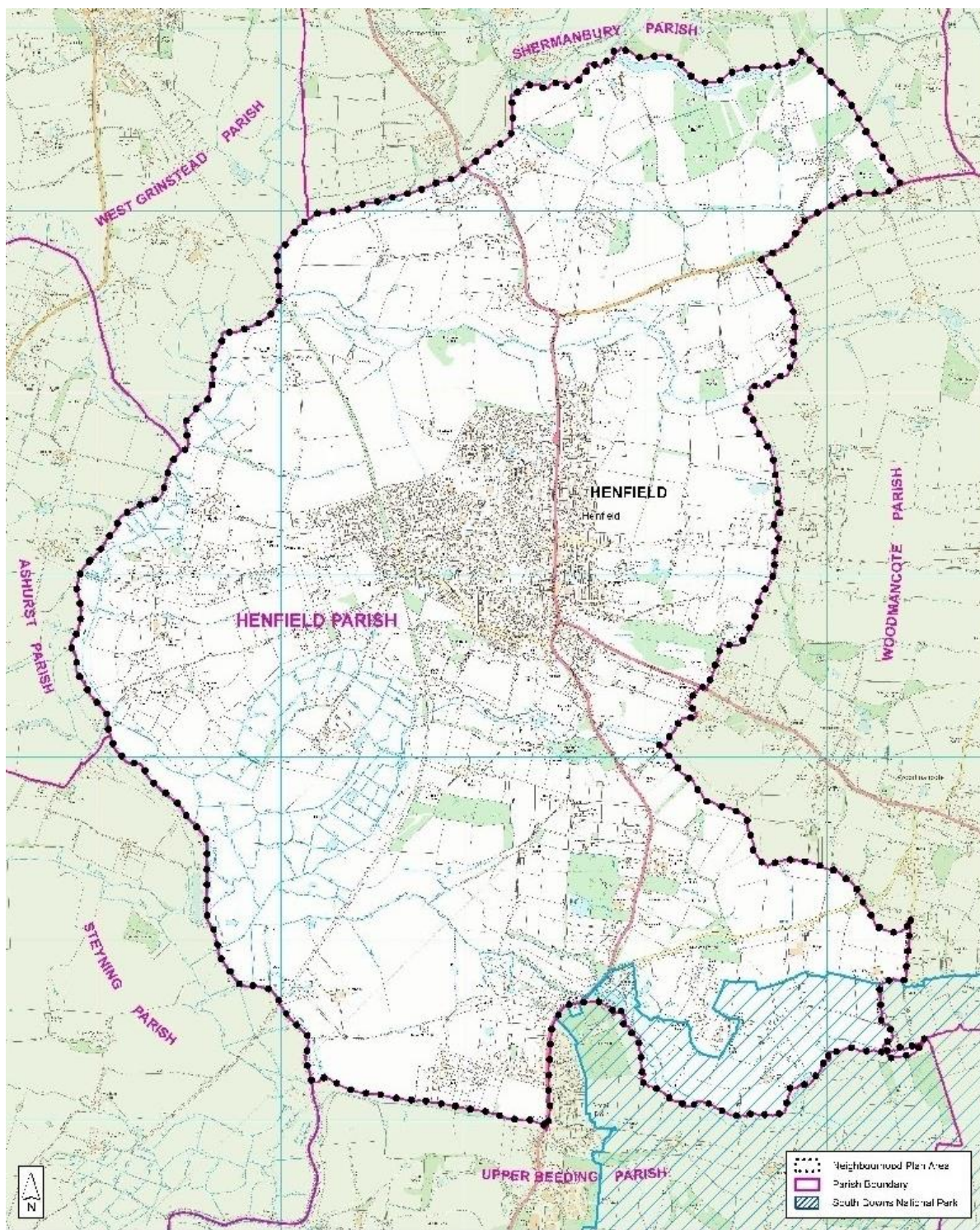
What is a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Appraisal?

- 1.1 Under both European Law and UK law there is a requirement to carry out a 'Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)' of all Neighbourhood Plans produced. As such, Henfield Parish Council have a legal obligation to carry out such an assessment of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (HNP). The purpose of an SEA is to methodically identify any possible environmental impacts likely to arise from the Plan and any reasonable alternative, which have been considered as the plan has been prepared.
- 1.2 Since Henfield Parish Council wish to ensure that the HNP will deliver sustainable development they have also decided to incorporate a 'Sustainability Appraisal' into the SEA. An SA is a different but similar process to the SEA. An SA seeks to predict and assess the economic, environmental and social effects which will arise from the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan. Since they are both important tools in assessing a development plan, it is seen as best practice in the UK to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of a development plan as part of the same process and therefore these are often combined to avoid duplication. This is the approach that Henfield Parish Council have taken and we therefore refer to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal as the SA/SEA.

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan area for Henfield is shown on the plan overleaf.

Figure 1 Henfield Parish Plan Area



Horsham District Council
 Parks de, Chert Way, Horsham
 West Sussex RH12 1R1
 Barbara Childs, Director of Planning

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Application to the Horsham District Council and to the South Downs
 National Park Authority under The Neighbourhood Planning
 (General) Regulations 2012 Regulation 5.

Reference No: H1N-1	Date: 31/03/2016	Scale: 1:20,000
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Sustainability Objectives

- 1.4 The Henfield Neighbourhood Plan is assessed against 12 sustainability objectives, which relate to economic, social and environmental issues facing the parish. Assessing the proposed plan (and alternative plan options) against these objectives has enabled the Parish Council to understand the likely economic, social and environmental impacts of the plan. The sustainability objectives are set out below.

No.	Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic
1.	Ensure that future development strikes the correct balance between economic, social and environmental priorities that is supported by, and brings together, the local community.	✓	✓	✓
2.	To support a sustainable local economy that meets the needs of the people living and working within the parish.		✓	✓
3.	To sustain Henfield as a village hub, enhancing the range of services, facilities and public transport links available to everyone.	✓	✓	✓
4.	To provide an appropriate amount of housing, as agreed with Horsham District Council, to meet the needs of the parish and the wider district.		✓	
5.	To ensure new housing is appropriate for the needs of parish residents.		✓	
6.	To ensure new developments have appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities in place, or where these can realistically be provided; and to encourage the appropriate re-use of brownfield sites in sustainable locations	✓	✓	
7.	To protect, enhance and, where appropriate, secure the provision of additional accessible community services, facilities, open spaces and infrastructure to meet the needs of the current and future population.		✓	
8.	To safeguard and enhance the character and built heritage within the parish.	✓	✓	
9.	To ensure that development avoids negative impacts on the countryside	✓	✓	
10.	To safeguard and enhance the environmental quality of the parish, and its surrounding area and minimise the impact on environmental quality including air, soil, and water quality.	✓		
11.	To reduce the risk of fluvial and surface water flooding within the parish and further downstream.	✓		
12.	To protect biodiversity, and green infrastructure with particular reference to designated areas and identified priority habitats within and near the plan area.	✓		

Methodology

- 1.5 Henfield Parish Council prepared a Scoping Report and ran a consultation on it in order to gather comments/views from statutory bodies on the proposed approach and objectives that were to be considered through this process. The Scoping Report consultation was carried out in early 2018. The responses received were taken into consideration when developing the final SA/SEA approach and subsequent policies within the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.6 An agreed methodology for assessment is set out detail in the SA/SEA. A 'traffic light' assessment method was used to identify impacts against each of the 12 objectives as shown:

+	Greater positive impact on the sustainability objective
?+	Possible positive or slight positive impact on the sustainability objective
/	No impact or neutral impact on the sustainability objective
?	Unknown impact
?-	Possible negative or slight negative impact on the sustainability objective
-	Greater negative impact on the sustainability objective

- 1.7 Since meeting the identified housing need was a key issue for the HNP, the first stage of the assessment involved an assessment against each sustainability objective, for each possible identified housing site. In all 23 individual sites were assessed this way. The results of this stage of the assessment were reported back to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, who considered the impacts on the Sustainability Objectives of each individual site in deciding whether to proceed with each site to the next stage.
- 1.8 The next stage of the SA/SEA assessment involved considering the combined impacts of allocating various sites. As part of this stage, six possible options for site allocations were considered. Each option was assessed again against the 12 sustainability objectives. The results of this stage of the SA/SEA process were reported back to the steering group to inform the final allocation decisions for the HNP. The guidance is clear that Neighbourhood Plans do not need to select the most sustainable option, if mitigation measures can be used to improve a reasonable alternative. It is only necessary that reasonable alternatives, are selected and justified. NPPG guidance states regarding SA/SEA:

'This process is an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have. By doing so, it can help make sure that the proposals in the plan are the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives. It can be used to test the evidence underpinning the plan and help to demonstrate how the tests of soundness have been met. Sustainability appraisal should be applied as an iterative process informing the development of the Local Plan.'

- 1.9 In the final stage of the SA/SEA, the final proposed policies, mitigation measures and allocations were assessed in combination. All 12 proposed policies were assessed against the 12 sustainability objectives. The results of each of these assessments are provided in the full SA/SEA.

Conclusion of the SA/SEA into the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.10 The SA/SEA undertaken into the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan finds that the final proposed allocations, mitigation measures and policies put forward in the Neighbourhood Plan, are not anticipated to have any negative impacts. Indeed, when assessed against the 12 sustainability objectives, each policy was assessed as being likely to have a combined positive impact on the sustainability objectives overall.

Next Steps

- 1.11 The HNP will be submitted to an independent Inspector who will decide whether the process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has met all legal requirements. If the Inspector finds that the plan has done this, it will be proposed for adoption by Henfield Parish Council. A referendum will then be conducted seeking the approval of local people. If more than 50% of voters support the plan in the referendum, it will be adopted.
- 1.12 If you have any queries, please email the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or contact them by post using the contact details below:
- Email: henfieldnp@gmail.com
 - Post: Neighbourhood Plan, Parish Clerk, Henfield Parish Council, The Henfield Hall, Coopers Way, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9DB