

Environmental Assessment Statement

Title:	Shobnall Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission Package
Project:	Shobnall Neighbourhood Plan
Purpose:	To set out how the Plan meets the requirement of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004
Date:	4th June 2017

Context

- 1.1. This statement is designed to set out how the Shobnall Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The regulations require any plan or policy to determine whether it is likely to have significant of environmental effects, and as necessary mitigate for or avoid, these effects.
- 1.2. Regulation 9(1) requires the responsible authority - in this case the Parish Council who have taken on the role of the Neighbourhood Forum, through a Steering Group, as described under regulation 8 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 - to determine whether or not the plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 1.3. On behalf of the Parish Council, the consultants prepared and consulted upon a screening and scoping opinion in regard of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4. Regulation 6 of the Environmental Assessments Regulations (2014), states that an environmental assessment needs to be carried out for a plan or programme if it is determined under regulation 9(1) that the plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 1.5. The East Staffordshire Local Plan has allocated sites on the periphery of Shobnall to provide a significant amount of housing over the plan period. The Steering Group decided not to specifically allocate sites for housing but instead prepared a set of key policy (PolicyHD4) setting out the broad locations for housing to come forward.

The Scoping Report

- 1.6. A screening and scoping report was issued in November 2015 and amended in March 2016 (following feedback from the statutory bodies). The finalised version is appended to this statement for completeness. The Screening / Scoping Report is based on the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The approach was discussed at length with the local planning Authority and their dedicated Sustainability Appraisal Officer.
- 1.7. It was determined by the Parish Council, in preparing the scoping report that the Plan should be subjected to with a detailed SEA having been undertaken specifically on Policy 11, which allocates broad locations for housing. Since this was the case, it was determined that the entire plan would also benefit from an integrated Sustainability Appraisal considering the social, environmental and economic impacts of the policies.
- 1.8. Feedback from statutory consultees an SEA / SA on this aspect of the Plan, policy HD4, was required and has been carried out. A few minor alterations were agreed with the statutory parties that were agreed as part of the March 2016 update. Full details are contained on page 17 of the SA / SEA report.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.9. The sustainability appraisal was undertaken during May and June 2017. A copy of the full SA / SEA is contained within the submission package alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. The framework for this document is based around guidance contained in National Planning Policy Guidance and the standard A-E process, stages A – E being dealt with at the Screening / Scoping stage in November 2015.
- 1.10. Each of the policies in the plan were assessed against a series of sustainability objectives. These sustainability objectives had been developed from those used in the preparation of the Local Plan Core Strategy in order to reinforce the links between the relevant plans and policies. Full details of these are contained on page 18 and 19 of the SA / SEA document.
- 1.11. A table of suggested possible options were then identified and where possible these have been incorporated into the final plan. The table of changes is shown on page 22 of the SA / SEA document.

1.12. The detailed assessment of policy HD4 and the options and alternatives is included in the SA / SEA document from page 22 onwards. The 9 options were designed to each meet, in some way, the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group and reflect differing strategies. All options were tested against the sustainability objectives - this appraisal matrix is available in a separate document however a summary can be found on page 22 of the SA/SEA document. In order to complete the assessment, the revised policy was written up and subjected to Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Conclusions

1.13. In reaching this determination, the following key issues have been considered:

- a. An SEA screening opinion based on the draft Neighbourhood Plan (prepared in accordance with regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan in most part would not have significant environmental effects however, policy HD4 would require full SEA;
- b. It is considered that other plans and policies at the national and Borough level, and those which are included within the remainder of the SNDP (specifically those pertaining to the protection of the historical environment), are sufficient in all regards to mitigate any possible residual negative environmental effects from the areas identified for residential development;
- c. Notwithstanding the requirement for an SEA on policy HD4, all other policies have been tested against sustainability objectives as part of the Sustainability Appraisal submitted with this Neighbourhood Plan.
- d. A thorough assessment of nine options has resulted in the delivery of a criteria based policy for Policy HD4 which is considered to meet the requirements set by Schedule 2 of the 2004 Regulations and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in line with the NPPF.

1.14. This statement is considered to satisfy the requirements of Regulation 9(3) and states the reasons for this determination.