

WEST HOATHLY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Sustainability Report: Non-Technical Summary



What is Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Appraisal?

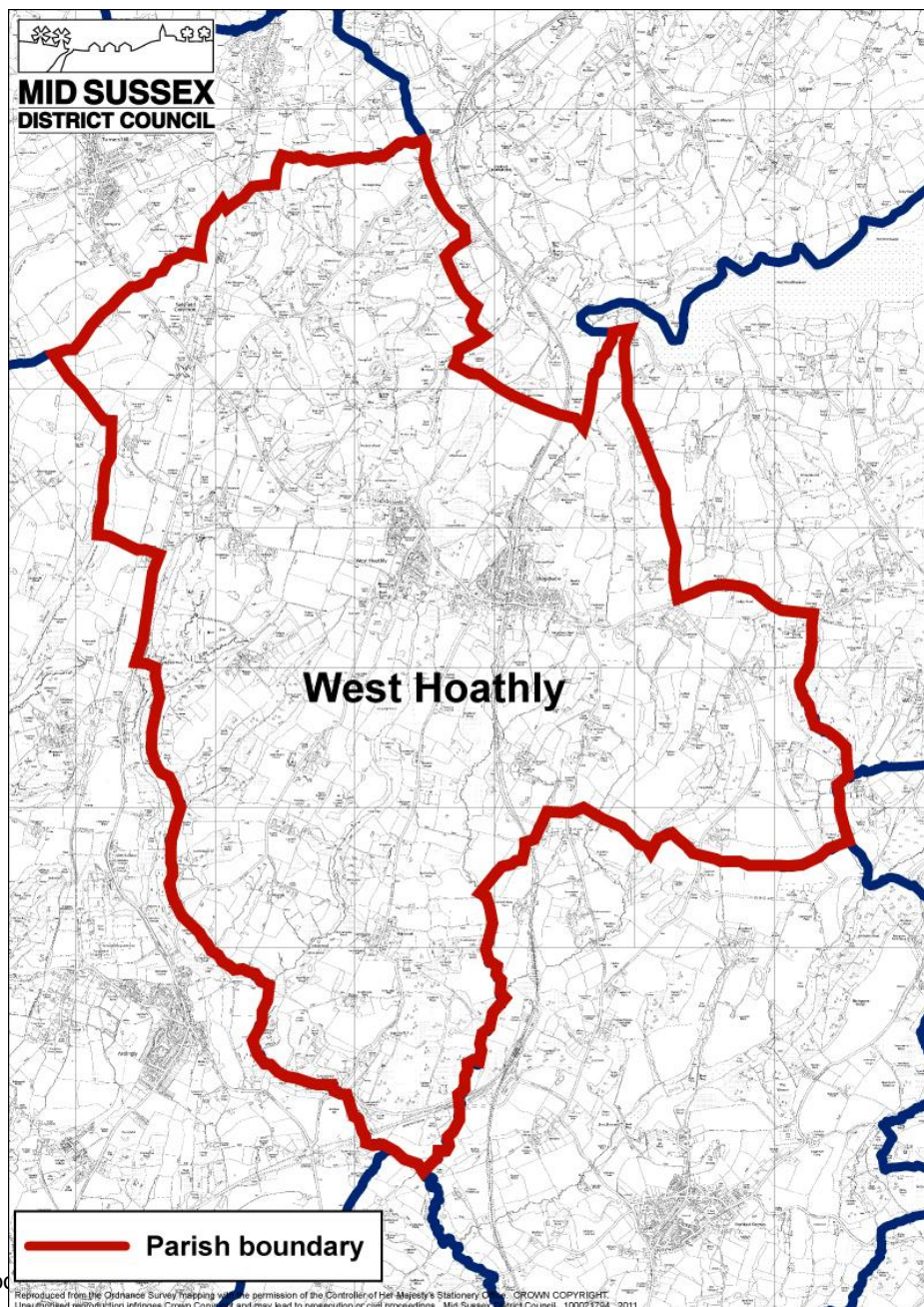
We are required by European Law to undertake what is known as a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan. An SEA is a process for identifying the environmental impacts likely to arise from the Plan.

To help ensure that the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan will promote sustainable development, it is best practice in the UK to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). An SA is a process that aims to predict and then assess the economic, environmental and social effects likely to arise from the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.

As both the SA and the SEA aim to predict and assess the impacts of plans, they are usually combined to avoid duplication.

Neighbourhood Plan Area

This Neighbourhood Plan is for West Hoathly Parish. The SA addresses the area within the Parish boundary that the Plan affects.



Sustainability Objectives

Sustainability Objectives have been chosen to represent the economic, environmental and social issues facing the Parish – enabling the assessment to show whether policies would result in balanced, ‘sustainable’ development, or would favour one of these three themes over another.

There are 16 Sustainability Objectives for West Hoathly Parish Neighbourhood Plan:

- 1. To maintain and enhance the countryside and open spaces of West Hoathly parish in terms of its whilst ensuring any changes benefit the community as a whole.**
- 2. To retain the distinctiveness of villages and small settlements and the gaps between them whilst encouraging some organic growth which addresses deficit dwelling stock (young families, older people) and complements their surroundings.**
- 3. To encourage pride in settlement maintenance and appearance.**
- 4. To conserve and enhance the architectural and landscape heritage of conservation areas and individual historic buildings with any changes conforming to locally agreed detailed design guide.**
- 5. To ensure a supply of homes consistent with the parish identified housing needs and to meet the local social objectives of homes suitable for younger families and older people.**
- 6. To ensure all NEW homes are built to high standards of design, construction and resource efficiency, and homes in countryside and conservation areas are of outstanding design.**
- 7. To increase resource efficiency of buildings, and the proportion of energy use from renewable sources in the parish.**
- 8. To have an efficient, quick and co-ordinated public transport service that meets the needs of residents and visitors – in particular -**
 - secondary school children to get to and from school
 - commuters to link with major travel hubs
 - other social, domestic and pleasure purposes
 - people visiting the parish
- 9. To substantially reduce the impact on residents’ lives of the volume, speed and weight of traffic within the parish.**
- 10. To make the parish an attractive place for businesses providing essential retail and service offerings for the local community and retain a variety of hospitality businesses for local and tourist use.**
- 11. To ensure outstanding quality pre-school and primary education opportunities are available within the parish supported by the necessary extended childcare requirements to meet current social patterns.**
- 12. To sustain and enhance the diverse selection of clubs/societies/sports/worship for all age groups and make the parish an attractive venue for small touring offerings.**
- 13. Facilitate employment opportunities in the parish (local businesses, working from home, self employment).**
- 14. To improve access to health services especially for children and older people.**
- 15. To promote community responsibility for parishioners own, others’ and community assets**
- 16. To encourage the sense of community and engagement in local topics and the inclusion and support of vulnerable groups.**

Methodology

A Scoping Report was prepared in July 2012 containing a summary of what we already know about West Hoathly. Feedback from the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage was received and as a result modifications were made.

Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Plan Policies and allocated sites was carried out in mid 2014. After consultation on the Draft West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan and Draft Sustainability Report the policies were revised. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Submission West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan policies and allocated sites are included in Sections 6 and 8 respectively of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Each policy or identified site was appraised against each Sustainability Objective and scored according to its impact on the Objective: significantly negative; negative; neutral; positive; significantly positive, or whether the impact is not known. The Neighbourhood Plan contains the outcome of this assessment.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

Mid Sussex District Council has undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to test whether the Mid Sussex District Plan, in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of Ashdown Forest. The HRA identified a 7km 'zone of influence' within which new housing developments must counter its effect by putting in place measures which reduce visitor pressure. The West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan area is wholly within the 7km zone of influence, and therefore new residential development proposed in the Plan must have due regard to the Habitats Regulations.

Sustainability Framework

The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan were compared against the Sustainability Objectives and this showed that the Plan does not conflict with the aims of Sustainable Development. Some issues are not covered by the Plan, such as climate change, flooding, and waste disposal as these are outside the scope or influence of the Parish. Policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, and adopted policies at County and District level will ensure development fulfils all West Hoathly Parish's Sustainability Objectives.

Recommendations of Sustainability Appraisal of the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan

The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that implementation of the Plan policies will result in no net negative impact on the sustainability objectives of the Parish. The implementation of the Plan will contribute to the objectives of sustainable development within the Parish.

It is recommended that to avoid negative impacts, development applications should be considered in the light of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan as a whole; taking into consideration the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and the District Plan in place at the time, where issues are not covered directly by policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies assessed against each Sustainability Objective

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE	WHP POLICY																			OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY
	1. LANDSCAPE	2. LANES	3. RECREATIONAL SPACES	4. RIGHTS OF WAY	5. VISUALISATIONS	6. NEW HOMES PARKING	7. PROTECTION OF PARKING	8. HGV	9. CIL OR PLANNING OBLIGATIONS	10. BLUEBELL RAILWAY	11. INFILL HOUSING	12. HOUSING MIX	13. SITE FOR NEW HOMES	14. EXTENSIONS	15. CONSERVATION AREAS	16. SANGS	17. HOATHLY HILL	18. EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES	19. HOME WORKING	
1 Env: COUNTRYSIDE	++	+	+		+								-		-		+			+
2 Env: VILLAGE IDENTITY			+							+					+		+			+
3 Soc: SETTLEMENT PRIDE															+					+
4 Env: HERITAGE		+			+										+					+
5 Soc: HOMES SUPPLY											+	++	++	+						+
6 Env: NEW HOME DESIGN	+				+															+
7 Env: ENERGY EFFICIENCY																				
8 Soc: PUBLIC TRANSPORT										+										+
9 Env: TRAFFIC ISSUES						+	+	+	++				-							+
10 Econ: BUSINESSES										+	+		+						+	+
11 Soc: EDUCATION											+	+	++							+
12 Soc: COMMUNITY ACTIVITY	+		+	+												+				+
13 Econ: EMPLOYMENT																		+	+	+
14 Soc: HEALTH																				
15 Soc: SECURITY																				
16 Soc: ENGAGEMENT													+							+
OVERALL POLICY IMPACT	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	

Notes on key Policy Impact

Policies with Strongly Positive Impact on Sustainability

Policy 1: Landscape v Sustainability Objective 1: Countryside

The landscape character of the High Weald AONB is the key defining aspect of the parish. This policy is seen as making a major contribution to conserving the parish's sense of place.

Policy 9: Community Infrastructure Levy / Planning Obligations v Sustainability Objective 9: Traffic Issues

By focusing any available funding from new homes allocated in the Plan, the impact of additional traffic and the serious sustainability problems with the existing through traffic in the parish can be mitigated.

Policies 12: Housing Mix & 13: Sites for New Homes v Sustainability Objective 5: Homes Supply

Without positive policy action normal "organic" growth and dominant market forces will not satisfy the supply of the types of homes needed to ensure there is a community population mix that will sustain local facilities. These policies together will make a significant impact on addressing the need.

Policies 12: Housing Mix & 13: Sites for New Homes v Sustainability Objective 11: Education.

By redressing the balance in the types of homes available there will be a much greater opportunity for families with children to live within the parish thereby helping to provide pupils for the pre-schools and primary school.

Policies with negative impact on Sustainability

Policy 8: HGVs. V Sustainability Objective 13: Employment

A more critical appraisal of HGV traffic associated with new employment opportunities could act as a discouragement / inhibitor to new jobs being created.

Policy 13: Sites for New Homes v Sustainability Objective 1: Countryside

Being wholly within the High Weald AONB and with extremely limited "infill" building opportunities almost inevitably any site for new homes will have some impact on the countryside. The site assessment process has sought to minimise this specific impact whilst ensuring the optimal balance of sustainability effects.

Policy 13: Sites for New Homes v Sustainability Objective 9: Traffic

Additional homes will bring extra traffic although the majority of current load in the parish is not locally generated. The incremental effect on the total volume is therefore low.

Policy 15: Conservation Areas v Sustainability Objective 1: Countryside

Policy 15 may give some additional encouragement to infill developments within the Conservation Areas (CA) of the parish. Since in several parts the CA boundary adjoins the countryside area, there are potentially some minor impacts on the countryside.

Monitoring and Review

Development within West Hoathly will be monitored, and if development is shown to be falling short of the Sustainability Objectives set, some policies may be amended or new policies created to mitigate any negative effects. The Sustainability Report contains Sustainability Indicators to measure the success of the Sustainability Objectives.

Next Steps

The Submission West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan will be examined by an independent inspector who will decide whether the process of producing the Plan has met legal requirements. If the Plan passes the examination, it will be proposed for adoption by West Hoathly Parish. The Plan will be adopted if more than 50% of people voting in a referendum vote for the Plan.

If you have any questions you can contact the Neighbourhood Plan team:

- By email to: clerk@westhoathly.gov.uk
- By post or by hand to: The Parish Office North Lane West Hoathly West Sussex RH19 4QG