

Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Post Adoption Statement
May 2021

Introduction

Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative environmental effects and maximising positive effects.

SEA involves a series of procedural steps which are designed to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations. The final step in the process involves preparing a 'statement' at the time a neighbourhood plan is 'made'. This SEA Post Adoption Statement addresses this under Part 4 of the SEA Regulations.

The SEA Adoption Statement includes information on:

- how environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Plan
- how the SA/SEA has been taken into account
- how the results of public consultation have been taken into account
- the reasons for choosing the made Plan, in light of the other reasonable alternatives, and
- how any significant sustainability/environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be monitored.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan

Bredfield Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, applied for Bredfield Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area under The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Area was designated by (the former) Suffolk Coastal District Council on 12th August 2015.

The Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan was published by Bredfield Parish Council for pre-submission consultation (Regulation 14) between 20th July 2018 and 31st August 2018. Following the submission of the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan (submission version) to East Suffolk Council the Plan was publicised and comments invited over a six week period which closed on 21st August 2019.

East Suffolk Council, with the agreement of Bredfield Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner to review the Plan and to consider whether it met the Basic Conditions required by legislation and whether it should proceed to Referendum. The Examiner's Report (received 14th July 2020) concluded that, subject to modifications identified in the Report, the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions.

The referendum for the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan took place on Thursday 6 May 2021. Following a successful referendum result, the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' (adopted) by East Suffolk Council on 26th May 2021. From this date the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the determination of planning applications in the neighbourhood plan area.

How environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Plan?

Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan has been conducted in such a way that it meets the requirements of the EU Strategic Environment Assessment Directives (including through EU exit legislation) and UK Government guidance on SEA.

As required by the regulations, SEA has been developed as an iterative process and has informed decision making at every stage of developing the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan.

The first stage of SEA was the production of an SEA screening opinion determination. This was carried out by the former Suffolk Coastal District at the request of the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The SEA Screening Opinion Determination (dated October 2017) concluded that the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan was likely to have significant effects on the environment and that SEA was required. Subsequently, SEA was undertaken by AECOM on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group. This work consisted of:

- A Scoping Report dated 12th March 2018.
- Environmental Report dated March 2019.

In response to the queries raised by the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan Examiner, an addendum to the Environmental Report (January 2020) was produced by AECOM on behalf of the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

All reports relating the SEA of the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan can be found at:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-the-area/bredfield-neighbourhood-area/>

How the SA/SEA has been taken into account

Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the Scoping Report (March 2018) identified a range of sustainability issues that should be a focus of the SEA for the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan. From this, an SEA framework was developed. The SEA Framework provides a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects of the plan on the baseline. The SEA Framework was presented under the following seven themes:

- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Landscape and historic environment
- Land, soil and water resources
- Population and community
- Health and wellbeing
- Transportation

The reasonable alternative site options and spatial strategy alternatives were then appraised against the SEA framework. The conclusions of this, were used to inform the consideration of the alternative options for the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan.

In light of the findings of the spatial strategy options appraisal, the sites proposed for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan were Site 534 (Land South of Tudor Cottage), Site 694 (The Forge) and the employment site at Land west of The Forge.

How the results of public consultation have been taken into account

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, Historic England and Natural England. Article 6(2) of 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 Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England were consulted on the SEA Screening Opinion and SEA Scoping Report and they were also consulted during respective public consultations throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process. A summary of representations to the Scoping Report consultation, along with how they have been considered, is presented in Appendix I of the Environmental report.

The Environmental Report (March 2019) was consulted upon for six weeks alongside the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Publicity Period which closed on 21st August 2019. In response to the queries raised by the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan Examiner, an addendum to the SEA report (January 2020) was produced, this was also subject to a further six week consultation from 7th February to 20th March 2020.

A report, summarising the consultation undertaken on the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan was published alongside the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The reasons for choosing the made Plan, in light of the other reasonable alternatives

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.

The SEA of the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan considered reasonable alternatives as detailed in the Environmental Report (March 2019, updated January 2020). Three spatial strategy options were considered as reasonable alternatives for delivering Bredfield's housing need:

- Option 1: Site 534, Site 694 and the employment site at Land west of The Forge, delivering up to 20 dwellings and new employment land (preferred option).
- Option 2: Site 534 and Site 784, delivering up to 22 dwellings (retain existing employment land).
- Option 3: Site 367 and Site 784, delivering up to 24 dwellings (retain existing employment land and provide alternative to Site 534).

The appraisal of these options is fully set out in the Environmental Report. The conclusion of the appraisal led to the allocation of Site 534 (Land South of Tudor Cottage), Site 694 (The Forge) and the proposed employment site at Land west of The Forge. These three site options were identified from the pool of 'Issues and Options' sites which the 2018 AECOM site assessment found to be potentially suitable for development, subject to mitigation of identified issues. Individually, the preferred residential sites performed most strongly in the SEA site assessment and performed most strongly overall in combination with each other

when tested against the reasonable alternatives. On this basis, a spatial strategy option similar to Option 1 was selected as the preferred approach.

The policies within the submission Neighbourhood Plan were cumulatively assessed under seven headings of the SEA Framework. The whole plan appraisal found that the plan was likely to lead to positive effects in relation to five SEA themes: 'Biodiversity'; 'Landscape and Historic Environment'; 'Population and Community'; 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Transportation'. Neutral effects are anticipated in relation to the 'Climate Change' SEA theme. Negative effects are anticipated in relation to the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme. As detailed in the Environmental Report (March 2019, updated January 2020), when read as a whole, the Neighbourhood Plan is anticipated to result in broadly positive effects in relation to the SEA framework.

How any significant sustainability/environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be monitored.

Under Regulation 17 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes, the Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to on-going monitoring. This will be carried out by jointly East Suffolk Council and Bredfield Parish Council. The former will monitor the continuing suitability of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, including in terms of significant environmental effects, through its Authority Monitoring Report.