



Peasmarsh Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2028 Strategic Environmental Assessment Adoption Statement

1 May 2024

1. Introduction

1.1. Rother District Council made the [Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Plan](#) (PNP) part of the Development Plan at Full Council on 22 April 2024 following a favourable outcome at Referendum.

1.2. This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 Regulation 16 (1)¹, which requires a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail:

- a) How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- b) How the environmental report has been taken into account;
- c) How opinions expressed through public consultation have been taken into account;
- d) The reasons for choosing this plan or programme as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- e) The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

2. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan

2.1. The [Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#) for the PNP sets out the baseline information about the Parish of Peasmarsh as the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Plan identifies the environmental issues affecting the plan area.

2.2. Additionally, the PNP SEA has been informed through detailed Evidence Base Documents which identify key plans, policies, and guidance, which have influenced the content of the Neighbourhood Plan. The issues identified informed the setting of environmental objectives, which the objectives for the PNP were assessed against. These objectives have helped ensure that the most sustainable location options were identified. The identification of environmental issues also helped shape the policy requirements for each site that is allocated or identified in the Peasmarsh Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/regulation/16/made>

3. How the Environmental Report has been taken into account

3.1. The SEA has contributed to the development of the Peasmarsh Parish Neighbourhood Plan in that it provides a distinct assessment, specifically against environmental objectives, independent of the plan objectives, of the site options for possible allocation, and of the policies which make up the Plan itself.

3.2. In 2022, Peasmarsh Council prepared the SEA alongside the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA process began with a request for a Screening Opinion, which the Town Council sent to Rother District Council. Upon receiving advice from the Statutory Consultees, Rother District Council confirmed on 23 November 2022 that the Neighbourhood Plan would need a SEA. Aecom Ltd prepared the assessment on behalf of the Parish Council. It was consulted upon at both Regulation 14 and 16 stages of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations². Statutory Environmental Bodies and other key consultees were invited to make representations.

3.3. The baseline for the SEA was also informed by the Sustainability Appraisal of Rother District Council's Core Strategy, with those environmental objectives of greatest relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan selected.

3.4 A SEA Environmental Report was submitted with the PNP. A draft version of this report was consulted on at Reg14 alongside the draft PNP, and amendments made in the light of comments received. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required for the Plan due to its potential impact on the High Weald AONB and the number of natural and historic assets within the Parish. The SEA Report has considered options for policy issues such as the development boundary and site allocations and assessed the impact of the PNP policies. It concludes that 'the overall impacts on the environment are largely positive, there will be no worsening of existing issues connected with the environment and for a significant number will result in positive impacts to the environment from the adoption and implementation of all the policies contained within the plan.' SEA and HRA are the main environmental requirements in EU law and Directives that neighbourhood plans need to comply with, and it is considered that the PNP has complied with the Basic Conditions with regard to being compatible with EU obligations.

4. How opinions expressed through public consultation have been addressed

4.1. Key Environmental Bodies: The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001 requires that authorities referred to in Article 6(3)³ shall be consulted when deciding upon the scope and the level of detail in the SEA. In England, the key bodies are: Environment Agency; Historic England; and Natural England.

These bodies were all consulted by Rother District Council when screening/scoping the Neighbourhood Plan prior to Regulation 14. They were also consulted during respective public consultations throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process.

4.2. Public Participation: 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

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/regulation/14/made>

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

accompanying Environmental Report, before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure.

4.3. The SEA was consulted upon alongside the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Plan for 6 weeks at the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 stage (31 October – 12 December 2022), and for a further eight weeks alongside the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Submission Consultation (17 February to 31 March 2023). Responses to comments made to the SEA are included within the Consultation Statement. Changes were made to the draft SEA in response to the consultation.

5. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as ‘made’, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with

5.1. Paragraph 12(2b) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁴ requires environmental reports to examine reasonable alternatives for the plan or programme while taking account of the objectives and the scope of the plan or programme. This statement is required to set out the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as ‘made’ in light of other reasonable alternatives.

5.2. At both stages of the neighbourhood planning process, policies were assessed against alternatives such as not allocating sites or allocating other sites.

5.3. In respect of the SEA the Examiner concluded that *“I am satisfied that the assessment has followed the required methodology, including an assessment of alternative sites and a sustainability assessment of the policies within the plan.”*

5.4. The final PNP has been ‘made’ in line with the recommendations of the Examiner which stated as follows: *“I can confirm that my overall conclusions are that the Plan, if amended in line with my recommendations, meets all the statutory requirements including the basic conditions test once the screening of the plan under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations has been carried out by Rother District Council, and that it will then be appropriate, if successful at referendum, that the Plan, as amended, be made.”* He also recommended that the referendum area be Peasmarsh Parish.

5.5 The HRA screening was carried out by RDC in January 2024, with the conclusion that the proposed neighbourhood plan would have no adverse effect on any Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs (‘candidate SACs’, ‘possible SACs’, ‘potential SPAs’) or a Ramsar wetland.

6. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme

6.1. The SEA process does not finish with the publication of the document. Under Regulation 17 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004⁴, the PNP will be subject to on-going monitoring. This will be carried out jointly by

⁴ [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Peasmarsh Parish Council and Rother District Council. The latter will monitor the continuing suitability of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, including in terms of significant environmental effects, through its Local Plan Monitoring Report.

7. Further Information

7.1. Peasmarsh Parish Neighbourhood Plan, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and related documents can be viewed online at: [Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council](#).