



Basingstoke
and Deane

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2039

**Strategic Environmental Assessment:
Adoption Statement**

May 2023

Contents

1. This Statement	2
2. Introduction	2
3. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Neighbourhood Plan	4
4. How the SEA has been taken into account	4
5. How the results of public consultation have been taken into account	6
6. The reasons for choosing the made Neighbourhood Plan	6
7. How any significant environmental effects of implementing the Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored	6
8. Further information	7

1. This Statement

- 1.1 Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) involves a series of procedural steps which are designed to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations¹. The final step in the process involves preparing a 'statement' at the time a Neighbourhood Plan is 'made'. This SEA Adoption Statement addresses the requirement to prepare a post-adoption 'statement' under Part 4 of the SEA Regulations.
- 1.2 The SEA Environmental Report Adoption Statement includes information on:
- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Neighbourhood Plan
 - how the SEA has been taken into account
 - how the results of public consultation have been taken into account
 - the reasons for choosing the made Neighbourhood Plan, and
 - how any significant environmental effects of implementing the Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan (ESBGNP) sets out the planning policy framework for Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish over the period 2021-2039. The ESBGNP was prepared to be in general conformity with the adopted Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011-2029), and it sets out a vision, objectives and a range of policies for the neighbourhood area which follows the Parish boundaries. Policies relate to a range of topics, including housing, sustainability, environment and design.
- 2.2 The objectives for the ESBGNP are as follows:
- *Retain and enhance the rural character of the parish and its settlements (Policies ESBG 1/2/5/6/7/8/12/13/14/15/17);*
 - *Ensure the inherently limited sustainability of our small village settlements is not damaged by inappropriate development and is nurtured with improvements to community facilities and internet access (Policies ESBG 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/16);*
 - *Accommodate and encourage organic growth of the parish and the evolving needs of residents by encouraging the development of a modest number of extra homes that are affordable to buy and suited to different stages of individual and family life. (Policy ESBG 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/9/10/14/16);*
 - *Ensure the parish is fit for a low/zero-carbon future via:*

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

- *Adopting advanced standards for insulation, renewable power generation/heating and internet access for both new homes and significant alterations and extensions (Policies ESBG 5/6/10/16),*
 - *Enabling and encouraging widespread usage of zero emission vehicles by easy access to charging points (Policies ESBG 5/6/11/17);*
- *Enhance the environment, biodiversity, landscape, and access to the countryside and green spaces via clear policies and an alliance between parish residents and landowners. (Policies 2/5/12/13/14). Specifically address shortfall of accessible Green Space in Bishops Green (Policies 2/3/5/14);*
 - *Ensure our heritage assets, key views and the rural character of settlements are retained and enhanced by good stewardship and that design policies ensure new development and refurbishments are in keeping with existing housing character. (Policies ESBG 5/6/7/13/14/15)*
 - *Strengthen the community and reduce the need for travel outside the parish by development of employment opportunities and community facilities suited and scaled not only to our rural environment but also the needs/wishes of residents. (Policies 7/8/9/10/11);*
 - *Reduce concerns over road safety and help community health and wellbeing by improvements to road layout, parking and traffic management hardware and by actions to encourage more walking and cycling. (Policies ESBG 5/6/8/17)*
 - *Underpin delivery of the Vision and Objectives by establishing and progressing community-led programmes in Transport, Socio-Economic Development and Facilities/Services.*
- 2.3 Following extensive work and community involvement on the ESBGNP by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council (ESBGPC) submitted the ESBGNP (2021-2039) and supporting documents to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) in October 2022.
- 2.4 BDBC subsequently published the ESBGNP for formal public consultation for six weeks from 7 November through to 19 December 2022 (Regulation 16) and all representations received were forwarded to an independent examiner who was appointed by the Council, with the agreement of ESBGPC, to examine the Plan.
- 2.5 In February 2023, the Examiner provided her Report to BDBC and ESBGPC which concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the ESBGNP meets the basic conditions and other statutory requirements. The Examiner also recommended that, subject to the modifications proposed, the ESBGNP should proceed to referendum.
- 2.6 Following a positive outcome at the referendum, the ESBGNP was ‘made’ on 18 May 2023.

2.7 The stages of the Neighbourhood Plan and SEA processes are discussed below.

3. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 The SEA process has been undertaken in parallel with the development of the ESBGNP. ESBGPC commissioned consultants (AECOM) to undertake the preparation of the SEA, and this was integral to and has informed the plan making process at each stage.

3.2 SEA is used to assess neighbourhood plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the appraisal is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the neighbourhood planning area, and the quality of life of residents through the neighbourhood planning process.

3.3 SEA is not an automatic requirement for neighbourhood plans. Rather, SEA is a requirement where an initial 'screening' assessment identifies the potential for the Plan to result in significant environmental effects.

4. How the SEA has been taken into account

Consultation on the Scope for the SA (inc. SEA)

4.1 In February 2022, BDBC determined that the ESBGNP required an SEA. This was informed by the views of the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England). The ESBGNP was rescreened in October 2022 to take account the impact of residential development in the catchment of the River Test as part of the wider catchment of the Solent. The three statutory bodies were reconsulted, and the same conclusion was drawn that an SEA was required.

4.2 An SEA Scoping Report for the ESBGNP (which presented the scope of the SEA), was provided to the three statutory consultees for comments. The SEA report reflects the comments received from statutory consultees.

Regulation 14 Consultation

4.3 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Planning Group undertook a series of consultation events following the area designation in February 2021.

4.4 This culminated in the first Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation which was held from Thursday 25 August 2022 and concluded at 5pm on Friday 7 October 2022. The pre-submission consultation was accompanied by the SEA (as required by the SEA Regulations). The SEA assessed the likely significant effects associated with the policies which made up the Plan with consideration of reasonable alternatives.

Submission version of the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green NP

- 4.5 Following the Regulation 14 consultation on the ESBGNP, the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan were revised to take into account the responses received.
- 4.6 An SEA of the revised version of the ESBGNP was then undertaken and a submission version of the SEA Report (October 2022) was prepared to accompany the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of this Report was to:
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the current ESBGNP and alternatives; and
 - Provide an opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process.
- 4.7 The Report Contains:
- An outline of the contents of the ESBGNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
 - Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
 - The SEA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions against which the ESBGNP has been assessed;
 - The appraisal of alternative approaches for the ESBGNP;
 - The likely significant effects of the ESBGNP in environmental terms;
 - The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the ESBGNP; and
 - The next steps for the ESBGNP and accompanying SEA process.

Independent Examination and Referendum

- 4.8 Following the submission of the ESBGNP to BDBC, the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA Environmental Report underwent Regulation 16 consultation from Monday 7 November through to the 19 December 2022.
- 4.9 Independent examination was subsequently undertaken from January 2023 and the examiner's report was then received in February 2023. Subject to a number of modifications being made, the independent examiner recommended that the ESBGNP would meet the Basic Conditions and did not breach and was otherwise compatible with EU obligations and with Convention Rights.
- 4.10 The recommended modifications to the ESBGNP were evaluated in relation to the findings of the SEA Environmental Report accompanying the submission version of the ESBGNP. It was considered that the proposed modifications would not affect the overall SEA findings presented in the SEA Environmental Report and would not have significant environmental effects.

- 4.11 The ESBG was subject to a local referendum on 4 May 2023, organised by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. To the question ‘Do you want Basingstoke and Deane to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?’, 87% of votes cast said yes.
- 4.12 Reflecting a favourable outcome of the referendum, the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green NP was subsequently ‘made’ on 18 May 2023.

5. How the results of public consultation have been taken into account

- 5.1 Each version of the SEA has been subject to public consultation. Comments from the statutory bodies at all stages of the process were taken into account.

6. The reasons for choosing the made Neighbourhood Plan

- 6.1 The SEA has considered reasonable alternatives and a clear audit trail has been provided of the preferred options taken forward within the ESBGNP. The SEA highlights that the Plan is likely to lead to significant positive environmental effects, primarily in relation to improving the quality of life for the residents of Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish. There would be a range of positive environmental effects across the key sustainability issues as highlighted in the report.

7. How any significant environmental effects of implementing the Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored

- 7.1 The ESBGNP will be subject to an on-going programme of monitoring as part of the council’s Authority Monitoring Reports (AMR). This will demonstrate the on-going suitability of the Plan’s policies and enable any unforeseen effects arising from their implementation to be identified. Monitoring will also provide information as to whether the predicted effects of the SEA were accurate.
- 7.2 Monitoring plays an important role in assessing the actual effects of any plans, including the ESBGNP. This can feed into more accurate future predictions of effects and, can also help identify where changes need to be made to promote more sustainable development within the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Planning Area.
- 7.3 The SEA process has continually assessed and identified any predicted significant effects from the Plan with mitigation and/or enhancement measures being integrated at appropriate stages in the evolution of the Plan. This has ensured that BDBC and ESBGPC are able to appropriately address these effects and monitor the potential for unforeseen adverse impacts.

8. Further information

- 8.1 The ESBGNP and SEA Adoption Statement can be viewed on the council's website at <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/ESBGNP>.
- 8.2 Additionally, hard copies of the documents are available to view at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Offices between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm on Mondays to Thursdays and 8:30am and 4.30pm on Fridays. They can also be viewed at Basingstoke Discovery Centre and Newbury Library during their normal opening times.