



Basingstoke  
and Deane



# **Bramley Neighbourhood Plan 2011- 2029**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental  
Report: Adoption Statement**

**March 2017**

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## 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 Regulations<sup>1</sup>. The final step in the process involves preparing a 'statement' at the time a Neighbourhood Plan is made. SEA Environmental Report 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 Bramley Neighbourhood Plan (Bramley NP) sets out the planning policy framework for Bramley Parish over the period 2011- 2029. The Bramley NP 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 Parish / Bramley neighbourhood area which follows the Parish boundaries. Policies relate to a range of topics, including housing, community facilities, the built environment, natural environment, transport and employment.
- 2.2 The Vision for the Bramley NP is as follows:
- 'In 2029 Bramley will be an attractive village with a strong historic character, an unspoiled rural setting, excellent and conveniently located community facilities, a range of high quality homes fulfilling local needs, safe and convenient access to transport services and green spaces, and good opportunities for locally based employment.'*
- 2.3 Following extensive work and community involvement on the Bramley NP by the Bramley Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) from March 2013, Bramley Parish Council (BPC) submitted the Bramley NP (2011-2029) and supporting documents to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) in June 2016.
- 2.4 BDBC subsequently published the Bramley NP for formal public consultation between 18 July to 5 September 2016 (Regulation 16) and all representations received were forwarded to an Independent Examiner who

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<sup>1</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

was appointed by the Council, with the agreement of BPC, to examine the Plan.

- 2.5 In October 2016, the Examiner provided her Report to BDBC and BPC which concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the Bramley NP meets the basic conditions and other statutory requirements. The Examiner also recommended that, subject to the modifications proposed, the Bramley NP should proceed to a referendum.
- 2.6 Following a positive outcome at the referendum, the Bramley NP was 'made' on 30 March 2017.
- 2.7 The stages of the Neighbourhood Plan and SEA are discussed below.

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

- 3.1 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely environmental effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse environmental effects and maximising the positives. SEA is not an automatic requirement for neighbourhood plans. Rather, SEA is a requirement where an initial 'screening' assessment identifies the potential for the Bramley NP to result in significant environmental effects.
- 3.2 In parallel with the development of the Bramley NP, a SEA process has been undertaken as required by the SEA Regulations. BPC commissioned consultants (AECOM) to undertake the SEA of the Bramley NP. The SEA was integral to and has informed the plan making process at each stage.

### **4. How the SEA has been taken into account**

#### Consultation on the Scope for the SEA

- 4.1 In October 2014 BDBC determined that the Bramley NP required a SEA. The three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) were consulted on the SEA Screening for a five week period between December 2014 and February 2015. Consultation responses were received from all three statutory bodies.
- 4.2 A SEA Environmental Scoping Report for the Bramley NP, which presented the proposed scope of the SEA, was prepared by AECOM and provided to the three statutory bodies for comment between March and April 2015. Comments were received from all three statutory consultees.

#### Regulation 14 Consultation

- 4.3 Between March and May 2015 the SEA consultant appraised the final Regulation 14 consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The findings of the appraisal were subsequently presented in the SEA Environmental

Report accompanying the Regulation 14 version of the Bramley NP as part of the consultation between June and August 2015.

#### Submission version of the Bramley NP

- 4.4 Following Regulation 14 consultation on the Bramley NP, the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan were updated to take into account responses received during the seven week period of consultation.
- 4.5 An SEA of the revised version of the Bramley NP was then undertaken. A SEA Environmental Report Update (June 2016) was subsequently prepared to accompany the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of this SEA Report was to:
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the current Bramley NP and alternatives; and
  - Provide an opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process.
- 4.6 The SEA Environmental Report Update sets out to answer four board questions:
1. What is the scope of the SEA? i.e what are the issues/objectives that should be a focus of SEA?
  2. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point? – i.e preparation of the draft plan was informed by one earlier plan making/ SEA iteration. Further ‘reasonable alternatives’ were also assessed.
  3. What are the SEA findings at this stage? – i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
  4. What happens next (including monitoring)?

#### Independent Examination and Referendum

- 4.7 Following the Submission of the Bramley NP to BDBC, the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA Environmental Report underwent Regulation 16 consultation from July to September 2016.
- 4.8 Independent Examination was subsequently undertaken, with the Examiner’s Report presented in October 2016. Subject to a number of modifications being made, the Independent Examiner recommended that the Bramley NP would meet the Basic Conditions and did not breach and was otherwise compatible with EU obligations and with Convention Rights.
- 4.9 The recommended modifications to the Bramley NP were evaluated in relation to the findings of the SEA Environmental Report accompanying the submission version of the Bramley NP. 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.

4.10 The updated Bramley NP was subject to a referendum on 9 February 2017, organised by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. To the question “Do you want Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Bramley to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”, 95% of votes cast said yes.

4.11 Reflecting the favourable outcome of the referendum, the Bramley NP was subsequently ‘made’ on 30 March 2017.

## **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 SEA process were taken into account. None of the statutory bodies raised any concerns with the SEA or its conclusions.

5.2 Representations received on the SEA consultation and the Parish Council’s response, where appropriate, have been provided on the parish council website for public viewing.

## **6. The reasons for choosing the made Neighbourhood Plan**

6.1 The SEA Environmental Report Update has considered reasonable alternatives and a clear audit trail has been provided of the preferred options taken forward within the Bramley NP. The assessment presented highlights that the Bramley NP performs well in terms of many sustainability issues/objectives, with significant positive effects identified as likely in terms of: historic environment and landscape and population and communities. No significant negative effects are predicted.

6.2 A number of alternative approaches were considered in the SEA Environmental Report in relation to the scale and form of new housing development to be taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan with reference to Policy SS5 (Neighbourhood Planning) of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011-2029) which specifies that sites/ opportunities for at least 200 homes should be identified in and around the defined Settlement Policy Boundary of Bramley over the Plan period.

6.3 Policies in the Local Plan have also been subject to a SA (inc. SEA) and they best achieve the dimensions of sustainable development in comparison to the reasonable alternative options. The SA (inc. SEA) of the Local Plan and SEA of the Bramley NP ensured that the refinement of policies did not themselves give rise to significant effects, and appropriate mitigation measures were integrated to ensure the policies chosen were the most sustainable.

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

- 7.1 The Bramley NP will be subject to an on-going programme of monitoring as part of the Councils' 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 Bramley NP. 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 Bramley 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 BPC are able to appropriately address these effects and monitor the potential for unforeseen adverse impacts.

## **8. Further information**

- 8.1 The Bramley NP and SEA Adoption Statement can be viewed on the council's website at <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/BramleyNP>.
- 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 Chineham Library during their normal opening times.