



Basingstoke
and Deane

Burghclere Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2029

**Strategic Environmental Assessment:
Adoption Statement**

May 2021

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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 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 Burghclere Neighbourhood Plan (BURNP) sets out the planning policy framework for Burghclere Parish over the period 2011- 2029. The BURNP 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/Burghclere 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 BURNP are as follows:

Housing:

- *To help meet housing needs by supporting the delivery of new housing in accordance with B&DBC Policy SS5. (Policies B1& 2)*
- *To help meet the need for smaller homes by securing a more appropriate mix of housing in new developments (Policy B4)*
- *To ensure any new housing is built on sites and at densities that would not harm the prevailing character of the area in which it is set or the amenity of nearby properties. (Policies B5, 6, 8, 9, 13)*

Design, Heritage and Landscape

- *To ensure all new development respects the particular character of the area in which it takes place in terms of design, layout, materials and sustainability. (Policies B3, 5 & 6)*
- *To protect and enhance the parish's heritage, including the North*

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Wessex Downs AONB, listed buildings and other locally important buildings and structures across the parish. (Policies B5, 7 & 8)

Environment

- *To protect and enhance the most valued open spaces for the use of the community within and adjacent to the settlement policy boundary.*

(Policy B11)

- *To maintain and improve biodiversity and the quality of the natural environment. (Policy B10)*

Business & Tourism

- *To support the local economy and encourage opportunities for smaller businesses to grow and develop in appropriate locations across the parish including the potential for a rural business hub and working from home. (Policy B2)*

- *To support and encourage tourist attractions without detriment to the amenity of the village and parish. (Policy B13)*

Parking

- *To ensure appropriate parking provision is made within any new development and that better parking is provided within Burghclere village.*

(Policy B14)

- 2.3 Following extensive work and community involvement on the BURNP by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Burghclere Parish Council (BPC) submitted the BURNP (2011-2029) and supporting documents to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) in November 2019.
- 2.4 BDBC subsequently published the BURNP for formal public consultation for seven weeks from 6 December 2019 (Regulation 16) and all representations received were forwarded to an independent examiner who was appointed by the Council, with the agreement of BPC, to examine the Plan.
- 2.5 In March 2020, the Examiner provided her Report to BDBC and BPC which concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the BURNP meets the basic conditions and other statutory requirements. The Examiner also recommended that, subject to the modifications proposed, the BURNP should proceed to a referendum.
- 2.6 Following a positive outcome at the referendum, the BURNP was 'made' on 27 May 2021.
- 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 BURNP. BPC 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 November 2018, BDBC determined that the BURNP required an SEA. This was informed by the views of the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England).
- 4.2 An SEA Scoping Report for the BURNP (which presented the proposed scope of the SEA), was provided to the three statutory bodies for comment. Comments were received from all 3 of the consultation bodies. The SEA report reflects these comments.

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 2018.
- 4.4 This culminated in the first Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation which was held from 17 September 2019 until 29 October 2019, which 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 Burghclere NP

- 4.3 Following Regulation 14 consultation on the BURNP, the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan were revised to take into account the responses received.

- 4.5 An SEA of the revised version of the BURNP was then undertaken and a submission version of the SEA Report (November 2019) 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 BURNP 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 Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the BURNP 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 BURNP has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the BURNP;
- The likely significant effects of the BURNP in environmental terms;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the BURNP; and
- The next steps for the BURNP and accompanying SEA process.

Independent Examination and Referendum

- 4.7 Following the submission of the BURNP to BDBC, the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA Environmental Report underwent Regulation 16 consultation from 6 December 2019 to 24 January 2020.
- 4.8 Independent examination was subsequently undertaken from February 2020. On 18 February 2020 the examiner advised both Burghclere Parish Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council of three significant recommended modifications to the Burghclere Neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with guidance to examiners in the 'NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners' the examiner sought additional comments over a two-week period on the three proposed modifications to the Plan. The option to comment on the proposed modifications closed in March 2020. The examiner's report was then received in March 2020. Subject to a number of modifications being made, the independent examiner recommended that the BURNP 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 BURNP were evaluated in relation to the findings of the SEA Environmental Report accompanying the submission version of the BURNP. 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 Ordinarily the referendum would be held within 56 days of the decision to proceed to referendum. However, due to the situation relating to COVID-19 at the time, a moratorium on election events, including Neighbourhood Plan referendums, was in place. As a result, the referendum on the plan had to be postponed until 6 May 2021, in line with the Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. The updated BURNP was subject to a local referendum on 6 May 2021, organised by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. To the question 'Do you want Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Burghclere to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?' 82% of votes cast said yes.

4.11 Reflecting the favourable outcome of the referendum, the Burghclere NP was subsequently 'made' on 27 May 2021.

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 BURNP. 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 Burghclere. There would also be some other positive environmental effects (in relation to climate change, land, soil and water resources, and transport), though due to the scale of the likely positive effects, it is considered that these would not be at a level which could be regarded as significant in the context of the SEA process.

6.2 A number of alternative approaches were considered in the SEA 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).

6.3 The development management policies in the Plan have also been incorporated into the SEA report. The SEA explains how the policies help to facilitate environmental enhancements.

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

7.1 The BURNP 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 BURNP. 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 Burghclere 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 BURPC are able to appropriately address these effects and monitor the potential for unforeseen adverse impacts.

8. Further information

- 8.1 The BURNP and SEA Adoption Statement can be viewed on the council's website at <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/BURNP>.
- 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. Please be aware these may be subject to change depending on any implications as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.