

# Rye Neighbourhood Plan

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

### Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

<b>Version</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Date Prepared</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
<b>V1</b>	Initial draft version	RNPSG April 2014	<b>ATBK</b>
<b>V2</b>	Second Draft	RNPSG Jan 2015	<b>ATBK</b>
<b>V3</b>	Third Draft	RNPSG Nov 2015	<b>ATBK</b>
<b>V4</b>	Forth Draft	March 2017	<b>CT</b>

## 1.0 Introduction to the Rye Neighbourhood Plan

1.1 Rye Civil Parish was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by Rother District Council on 4 November 2013. The Neighbourhood Area covers the whole of Rye Parish administrative area. This was the first formal step in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and using the powers provided by the Localism Act 2011. Rye Town Council has been recognised by Rother District Council as the ‘qualifying body’ under this legislation to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the community of Rye. Rye Town Council has appointed a Steering Group of Councillors and selected citizens to steer the work.

1.2 The Rye Neighbourhood Plan, once completed, would be made part of the statutory development plan for the area, which must be taken into account when determining applications for planning permission. The development plan for the area also includes the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2014) and will include the Rother Development and Site Allocations Local Plan once it is adopted.

## 2.0 What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment?

2.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) looks at the likely impact of any plan which may have significant environmental effects. It provides the mechanism for considering and communicating the likely environmental impacts of the draft plan, and its alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse impacts and maximising the positives. The requirement for a SEA is set out in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC which has been adopted into UK law as the ‘Environmental Assessment of Plans or Programmes Regulations 2004’.

## 3.0 Appraisal Methodology

3.1 There are three formal stages for a SEA:

- A screening opinion to establish whether a SEA is required;
- A scoping report setting out how it is intended to carry out the SEA; and
- An environmental report which tests the reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan policies against agreed environmental objectives.

3.2 The Steering Group on behalf of Rye Town Council, sought a screening opinion from Rother District Council, which concluded that SEA is required for the Rye Neighbourhood Plan.

3.3 The Scoping Report set out the context and objectives, established the baseline information and explained the scope of the SEA. This was the subject of a statutory 5-week consultation with the following organisations:

- Natural England
- Historic England

- Environment Agency
- East Sussex County Council
- Rother District Council

3.4 The consultation period for the Scoping Report finished on 30th March 2017. The comments and responses received to this consultation fed into the Environmental Report of the SEA. The Environmental Report includes all the information in the Scoping Report, as amended following consultee comments, and in addition sets out the Appraisal of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan Policy Options and their reasonable alternatives and the proposals for monitoring the environmental impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.5 The Environmental Report includes the following sections:

- An **Introduction** to the Rye Neighbourhood Plan and SEA;
- **Other Plans and Programmes** that will influence the Neighbourhood Plan;
- **Context and Baseline Information** that will need to be taken into account by the Neighbourhood Plan and the SEA;
- **Environmental Issues** that will need to be recognised and/or addressed;
- The **Appraisal Framework** that will be used to assess the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The **Appraisal of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan** (summarised in the main report and detailed in an Appendix);
- **Monitoring Proposals**; and
- **Next Steps**.

#### 4.0 Environmental Objectives

4.1 The following environmental objectives have been taken from the Sustainability Appraisal of the Rother District Core Strategy (which incorporated Strategic Environmental Assessment). Objectives 1-8 related to social and economic impacts, so only the environmental objectives 9-16 have been used for the SEA of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan. These are:

- a) Improve efficiency in land use and encourage the prudent use of natural resources;
- b) Reduce road congestion and pollution levels and ensure air quality continues to improve by increasing travel choice and reducing car usage;
- c) Reduce emissions of Greenhouse gases;
- d) Minimise the risk of flooding and resulting detriment to people and property;
- e) Maintain, improve and manage water resources in a sustainable way.
- f) Conserve and enhance biodiversity by protecting both designated and non-designated but locally important species and habitats;
- g) Protect and enhance the high quality natural and built environment including landscape and townscape character and particularly the protection of the High Weald AONB; and

h) Reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste.

4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan policies and their reasonable alternatives were considered against the above SEA objectives with reference to the baseline information to determine the potential environmental effects. The possible outcomes used were;

- ++ significant positive effect,
- + partial positive effect,
- ? uncertain effect,
- partial negative effect,
- significant negative effect,
- n/a not applicable

## 5.0 Appraisal of Neighbourhood Plan Options

5.1 The vision for the Rye Neighbourhood Plan is ‘a thriving town for the 21st Century’ and the strategic objective is:

**“to plan a strategic and coherent development of Rye with the aim of improving the economic and social well-being of the community, considering in particular its role as a market town, a centre for tourism, leisure and culture; its enterprise and its commercial and fishing port, all in the context of its historic maritime character, which should be conserved and its vulnerability to flooding”.**

There are also 11 detailed Neighbourhood Plan objectives to meet this vision. These have been appraised against the environmental objectives of this Strategic Environmental Assessment to identify any potential environmental impacts.

5.2 This appraisal demonstrates that most of the Neighbourhood Plan objectives have either neutral or positive environmental potential impacts. The only exceptions to this are Plan objective i) Allocate development land across Rye to meet Core Strategy target for dwellings for Rye (policies H1-H12) and Plan objective iv) Encourage enterprise for employment and business vitality (policies B1-B3). These Plan objectives have uncertain environmental impacts because they depend on the sites chosen, the type and quality of the development proposed and any mitigation required.

5.3 To establish these potential environmental impacts each of the sites allocated and the alternatives considered have themselves been appraised against the environmental objectives in this Strategic Environmental Assessment. The non-site specific (criteria based) policies have also been appraised, in most cases against the alternative option of not having a policy for that subject area. However, where there is a realistic alternative to the policy that has also been appraised.

- 5.4 The appraisal demonstrates that the sites and policy options included in the Rye Neighbourhood Plan have either avoided significant environmental impacts or can mitigate adverse impacts and maximise the positives.