

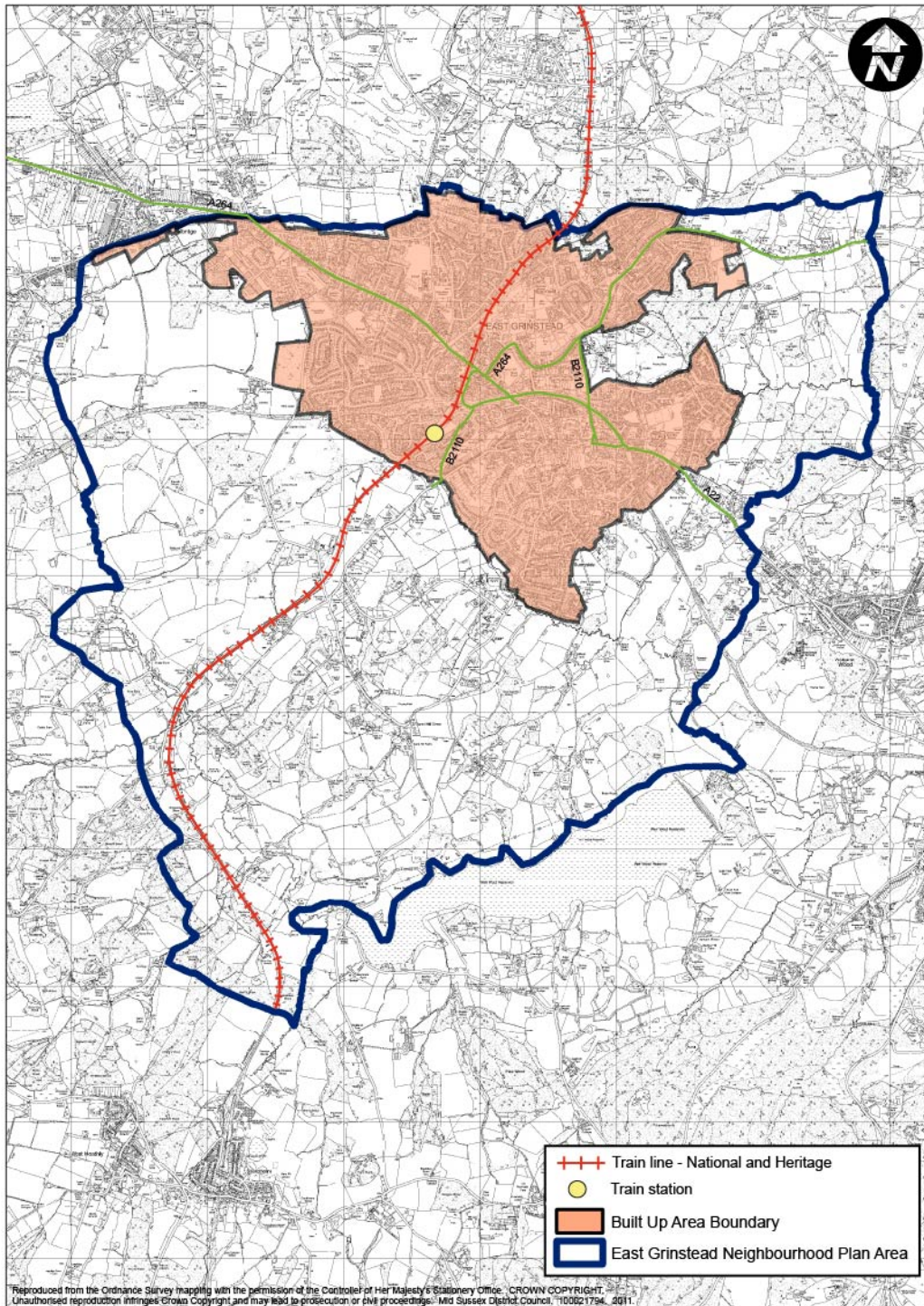
## **EAST GRINSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **Sustainability Report: Non-Technical Summary**

**November 2015**

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 East Grinstead Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The whole of the parish area has been designated a Neighbourhood Area for this purpose by Mid Sussex District Council, the Local Planning Authority covering East Grinstead.



- 1.1 A Sustainability Appraisal, as defined by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, aims to predict and assess the social, environmental and economic effects that are likely to arise from the adoption of plans or programmes, in order to ensure that the strategies, policies and plans within these contribute to and promote sustainable development. Although not a requirement of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, an Appraisal provides a means of demonstrating the Plan will promote sustainable development.
- 1.2 A Strategic Environmental Assessment, as defined by European Directive 2001/42, aims to predict and assess the environmental effects that are likely to arise from plans, policies and strategies. It is a process for assessing and mitigating the negative environmental impacts of specific plans and programmes. In which case, Neighbourhood Plans may be required to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 1.3 A Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion was published by Mid Sussex District Council in May 2013 and required all Plans in its area that intended to allocate land for housing or employment use to undertake an Strategic Environmental Assessment. As such the Sustainability Appraisal also deals with this part of the legislative requirement. This report refers to a Sustainability Appraisal, and this also means the Strategic Environmental Assessment. It therefore aims to predict the effects of the policies and proposals of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.

## **2.0 The Sustainability Appraisal Report**

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for how East Grinstead and its surrounding area will evolve. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period from 2015 to 2031. It is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the District Plan and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal provides a view of the likely implications on sustainable development of different options for policy areas in the Plan as well as the overall Plan strategy articulated through its objectives. The appraisal process has been iterative and has occurred and been updated throughout the different stages of the Plan preparation process. The findings of this work have been taken into consideration in determining the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and are documented within the Sustainability Report.
- 2.3 The Sustainability Appraisal process included a scoping exercise, which was consulted upon between 9th December 2013 and 20th January 2014. This process enabled the initial sustainability objectives to be refined. In turn, this has enabled the most sustainable policy approaches to be identified for inclusion within the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan.

## **3.0 Sustainability Objectives**

- 3.1 The Sustainability Objectives represent the economic, environmental and social issues facing the area. The objectives enable the assessment to show whether

policies would result in a more sustainable form of development or whether it meets some of the sustainability objectives and not others.

3.2 There are 11 Sustainability Objectives identified for the Neighbourhood Plan and these are:

- 1) *To protect the nationally important AONB landscape and the rural setting of East Grinstead and to maintain the areas of countryside restraint between the town and other nearby settlements.*
- 2) *To ensure that those in need of local housing have the opportunity to live within the town in a, sustainably constructed and affordable home of the appropriate type.*
- 3) *To ensure that amenities for local residents including health, education, shopping, community and leisure facilities are maintained and improved.*
- 4) *To ensure that future development complements and integrates with the unique character of the town, including the town centre and conservation areas.*
- 5) *To minimise impact on climate change due to CO2 and other emissions from transport, domestic and industrial sources.*
- 6) *To protect, enhance and make accessible for enjoyment, the high quality and sensitive green spaces and thereby to minimise the impact of new development on the sensitive habitat of Ashdown Forest.*
- 7) *To reduce the need to travel by car for local journeys, reduce road congestion, and improve and promote travel by cycle, on foot and by public transport.*
- 8) *To promote opportunities for employment within East Grinstead including the development of sustainable tourism.*
- 9) *To improve levels of accessibility and permeability to and within the town centre by providing safe, direct and attractive routes that encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport.*
- 10) *To create opportunities for new retail and associated parking within the town centre that improves the quality and offer of the shopping experience.*
- 11) *To provide a greater mix of uses and residential accommodation, including affordable housing, within the town centre to increase and diversify its resident, visitor and workplace populations and to give family-orientated evening vitality.*

## 4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 Following the consultation period on the Scoping Report 9 responses were received and this helped formulate and refine the 11 testing objectives.
- 4.2 Each policy or identified site has been appraised against each Sustainability Objective and scored according to its impact on the Objective with a traffic light system:

		Sustainability Objectives										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	1	++	0	+	0	0	+	0	-	+	0	-
	2	++	-	0	+	+	++	+	0	0	0	-
	3	0	0	0	0	++	0	++	+	++	-	0
	4	++	++	-	+	-	++	-	-	0	-	+
	5	-	0	+	0	0	-	0	++	0	++	+
	6	++	-	0	0	0	++	+	-	0	-	0

- 4.3 ++ = significantly positive affect  
 + = positive impact  
 0 = neutral impact  
 - = negative impact  
 - = significantly negative impact

## 5.0 Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 5.1 Mid Sussex District Council has undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to test whether the Mid Sussex District Plan, in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of Ashdown Forest. The HRA identified a 7km 'zone of influence' within which new housing developments must counter its effect by putting in place measures which reduce visitor pressure. East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan area is mainly within the 7km zone of influence, and therefore new residential development proposed in the Plan must have due regard to the Habitats Regulations. Mid Sussex District Council carried out a further screening exercise in September 2015 summarising the position and concluding that the policy and plan did not result in a likely significant effect on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC from the majority of policies but some did require Habitats Assessment.

## 6.0 Sustainability Assessment

- 6.1 The objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan were compared against the Sustainability Objectives and this showed that whilst there are some conflicts with the aims of Sustainable Development overall the Plan was sustainable. The sustainability assessment reviewed the allocations and site-specific policies and overall the proposed uses, which included housing and employment, together with mixed-use opportunities, were founded on sensible sustainability objectives. The sustainability appraisal has also

been extended to pick up comments lodged by consultees about alternative development sites around East Grinstead. These have also been assessed as part of the iterative process. Some issues are not covered by the Plan, and examples include climate change, flooding, and waste disposal which are either County or District policy matters. Policies derived from the National Planning Policy Framework, and existing adopted policies will ensure that there is no gap in the policy criteria covering other Sustainability issues.

## **7.0 Recommendations of Sustainability Appraisal**

- 7.1 The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that implementation of the Plan policies will not have an overly negative impact on the sustainability objectives of the Plan area. The implementation of the Plan will contribute to the objectives of sustainable development having regard to the local constraints.

## **8.0 Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1 Development within the Plan area will be monitored regularly by both Mid Sussex and East Grinstead Town Council. If, for whatever reason, development is shown to be falling short of the Sustainability Objectives set, it may be necessary to consider how the Plan could be changed in the future.

## **9.0 Next Steps**

- 9.1 The Submission East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector who will assess whether the Plan meets various legal tests. If the Plan passes the examination, it will be proposed for adoption by East Grinstead Town Council and actual adoption will take place only when more than 50% of people voting in a referendum vote in favour of the Plan.