

Isle of Wight Council

Bembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan Adoption Environmental Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following a positive result in the referendum held on 24 July 2014, the Isle of Wight Council 'made' the Bembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (Bembridge NDP) part of the Isle of Wight Council's Development Plan on 28 July 2014.
- 1.2 In accordance with Regulations 16 (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 this statement has been produced, which sets out:
 - How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Bembridge NDP;
 - How the environmental report has been taken into account;
 - How consultation responses have been taken into account;
 - The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as 'made', in the light of the other reasonable alternatives; and
 - The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

2. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Bembridge NDP

- 2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report¹ for the Bembridge NDP sets out the baseline information about the Parish of Bembridge as the Neighbourhood Plan Area. It identifies the environmental and sustainability issues affecting the plan area, both now and in the future.
- 2.2 In addition to the baseline information, the SA Report identifies the key plans, policies and guidance that have influenced the content of the Bembridge NDP. This has enabled sustainability issues affecting the Neighbourhood Plan Area to be identified.
- 2.3 This has included environmental issues. The issues that were identified informed the sustainability objectives, against which the options for the Bembridge NDP were assessed. By having a number of objectives that reflected current environmental issues ensured that the most sustainable options were generally the most beneficial/least detrimental in environmental, economic and social terms. The identification of environmental issues, as well as economic and social issues, also helped shape the policy requirements of the Bembridge NDP.
- 2.4 A Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report into the Bembridge NDP was also undertaken, in accordance with the Habitat Regulations, to demonstrate that the policies in the plan do not harm European designated sites for nature conservation.

3. How the Environmental Report (Sustainability Report) has been taken into account

- 3.1 The SA has contributed to the development of the Bembridge NDP by providing an assessment of the policy site options considered as well as the emerging policies of the plan. The SA demonstrates how sustainability considerations have been taken into account and

¹ incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment

provides an audit trail and formal statement on the consideration and assessment of all policy options.

- 3.2 The SA was prepared by the qualifying body (Bembridge Parish Council) alongside the Bembridge NDP. It was reflected within and supported the draft Bembridge NDP that was subjected to public consultation both at the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Pre Submission Stage and the Regulation 16 Publicity Period conducted by the Isle of Wight Council as the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.3 A Scoping Report was undertaken, which involved identifying the current baseline situation for Bembridge parish, along with the sustainability issues and objectives that were linked to a number of indicators. Statutory environmental bodies along with a number of other consultees were invited to comment on this document.
- 3.4 The comments received on the Scoping Report helped create a final set of sustainability objectives, which were used to test a number of options as well as the policies that were identified at both the Pre Submission Regulation 14 stage and the Submission Publicity Period at Regulation 16 stage.
- 3.6 The draft policies included within the Pre Submission Regulation 14 and the Publicity Period at Regulation 16 stage were analysed against the sustainability objectives. This involved assessing the impacts in the short, medium and long-term as well as any cumulative, secondary and synergistic impacts.
- 3.7 The SA concluded that the implementation of the Bembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan will result in no negative impact on local sustainability objectives within Bembridge Parish. It also determined that implementing the plan would result in appropriate sustainable development in Bembridge, thereby contributing and conforming to the Island Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

4. How consultation responses have been taken into account

- 4.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires that the authorities referred to in article 6(3) shall be consulted when deciding upon the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report. In England the key bodies are the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England. Opinions were sought at both the scoping stage of the SA and at the submission stage of the proposed Bembridge NDP.
- 4.2 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive also requires the public to have an early and effective opportunity within appropriate timeframes to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme, and the accompanying Environmental Report, before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure. This was done at the Regulation 14 and 16² stages of the proposed Bembridge NDP, and information relating to this is set out in Bembridge Parish Council's submitted Consultation Statement.
- 4.3 The Sustainability Appraisal and policies within the Bembridge NDP were amended to take into account representations received.

5. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as 'made', in the light of the other reasonable alternatives

² Of the The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

- 5.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes 2004 (12) (2) requires environmental reports to examine reasonable alternatives for the plan or programme whilst taking into account the objectives and scope of the plan or programme. This statement is required to set out the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as 'made' in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with.
- 5.2 The Bembridge NDP has been 'made' by the Isle of Wight Council, following a decision by the council's Executive and taking into account the recommendations of a suitably qualified Independent Examiner. No new evidence has been brought to the attention of the Isle of Wight Council since the Examination took place to bring into question those recommendations.
- 5.3 During the neighbourhood planning process three separate consultations were held. The first was that of the Sustainability Scoping Report to consider the baseline data and sustainability objectives. The second consultation included the proposed Bembridge NDP with its policies, and thirdly was the formal regulation 16 consultation. Subsequently changes and modifications were incorporated take into account representations received.
- 5.4 The changes proposed to the Bembridge NDP were then considered through the SA process and it concluded that implementation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies will result in no negative impact on the localised sustainability objectives of Bembridge Parish. The overall effect of the implementation of the plan will contribute to the objectives of low level sustainable development in Bembridge.

6. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme

- 6.1 The effect of the Bembridge NDP will need to be monitored using the Sustainability Objectives identified contained in the Bembridge NDP SA. Information published by the Isle of Wight Council in its Monitoring Reports, along with information collected by Bembridge Parish Council will assist the Parish Council monitor their plan. The results of this monitoring will then be considered and inform any review of the Bembridge NDP. This will also ensure that any unforeseen effects, which have not been identified in the SA/SEA Report, can be acted upon in a timely manner.