



**Strategic  
Environmental  
Assessment (SEA)  
of the Selsey  
Neighbourhood  
Development Plan**

Environmental Report  
Update

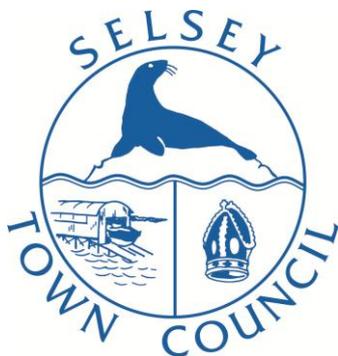
Non-technical Summary

March 2015

United  
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Prepared for:



Revision schedule					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	March 2015	Non-technical Summary of the Environmental Report Update published alongside the Submitted Plan	Chris Eves Assistant Consultant	Mark Fessey, Principal Consultant	Steve Smith, Technical Director

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## INTRODUCTION

URS is commissioned to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Selsey Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

The NDP, once adopted, will present planning policy and guidance for the neighbourhood area. Alongside the Chichester New Local Plan 2014 - 2029 (once adopted) it will provide a framework for determining planning applications.

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SEA is a process, and the most important step in the process involves publishing a report – known as the Environmental Report – for consultation alongside the Draft Plan.

This is the **non-technical summary** of the Environmental Report Update being published for alongside the ‘Submitted’ Selsey NDP. The Submitted NDP is essentially a near final version.

This summary should be read alongside the main Environmental Report Update document.

### [Structure of the Environmental Report Update / this non-technical summary](#)

The Environmental Report Update (and this non-technical summary) sets out to answer four questions:

1. What’s the scope of the SEA?
2. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
3. What are the assessment findings at this current stage?
4. What are the next steps?

## WHAT’S THE SCOPE OF THE SEA?

The first step in the SEA process involves establishing the ‘scope’, i.e. those issues and objectives which should be a focus of the SEA, and those which should not.

Scoping firstly involved identifying a series of broad ‘topics’. The decision was taken that the topics should reflect socio-economic considerations in addition to environmental considerations.

The following questions were then answered for each topic:

- What’s the sustainability ‘context’?
  - Answering this question primarily involves reviewing Government’s National Planning Policy Framework; however, it is also important to ‘cast the net wider’.
- What’s the sustainability ‘baseline’?
  - Answering this question involves reviewing available data to establish an understanding of the current and likely future state of the environment / socio-economy locally.

The following is a brief summary of some of the sustainability baseline characteristics described within the Environmental Report Update. It is important to emphasise that the following list is not comprehensive.

### Environmental baseline

- Selsey sits between two internationally important areas for nature conservation - Pagham Harbour to the east. and the Medmerry Realignment (an area of managed coastal retreat, where the sea wall has been deliberately breached in order to enable development of inter-tidal habitat) to the west. Pagham Harbour is managed as a nature reserve, and there are similar plans for the Medmerry Realignment.
- The landscape of the Manhood Peninsula and its southern headland of Selsey Bill can be described as “one of the last, and largest, relatively undeveloped stretches of coastline between Newhaven and Southampton”.
- Found within Selsey are 69 Grade II Listed Buildings as well as numerous locally ‘iconic’ buildings. The Selsey Conservation Area encompasses the historic High Street, with the highest concentration of listed buildings, including the parish church, to the north. To the south is more mixed development.
- Selsey is naturally affected by flooding specially when there are high tides and stormy seas, and significant areas are at risk. The area is heavily defended against flooding, with various schemes in place including the country’s first managed realignment on the open coast at Medmerry.
- Selsey is surrounded by Grades 1 to 3 agricultural land.

### Socio-economic baseline

- Selsey generally has a lower proportion of ages between 0-60 than national and regional averages but has a substantially higher proportion of people aged 60-90 and over. The biggest differences are in the 30-44 year olds age group where Selsey has a third less adults in this age group than the regional and national average; and the 65 to 74 year old age group where Selsey has almost twice the proportion of the South East and England averages. 24.5% of Selsey residents have been classified as suffering from long-term health problems or disability . This is considerably more than the Chichester (17.5%), South-East (15.7%) and England (17.6%) averages.
- Rates of full-time employment are far lower in Selsey (30.8%) and Chichester (33.4%) compared to the South East (39.1%) and England (37%). However, part-time employment rates are higher in Selsey and Chichester than the South East and England.
- Selsey has a high proportion of its residents working in skilled trade occupations, caring and leisure services occupations and elementary occupations. Accordingly, associate professional and technical occupations, and professional occupations are significantly lower in Selsey compared to the county, regional and national averages. Tourism and caring are significant sectors for the local economy.
- Residents of Selsey are relatively dependent on the car for access to employment opportunities; which reflects Selsey’s peripheral location. There is a good bus service between Selsey and Chichester.

### The SEA ‘framework’

Subsequent to the context / baseline review it was possible to identify a concise list of key sustainability objectives that should be a particular focus of SEA, i.e. should be drawn-on as a methodological ‘framework’ when undertaking assessment work.

At this point (in March 2014), a Scoping Report was published for consultation. Subsequent to the consultation, the scope / SEA framework was finalised and assessment work was able to commence.

The SEA framework is presented below.

## The SEA Framework

Topic	Sustainability objectives established in-light of context/baseline review
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation</li> <li>• Enhance biodiversity opportunities and create new habitat</li> <li>• Protect and enhance ecological integrity at Chichester / Langstone Harbours and Pagham Harbour</li> <li>• Deliver multi-functional Green Infrastructure</li> </ul>
Climate change mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make efficient use of energy</li> <li>• Maximise the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources</li> <li>• Encourage sustainable design and construction</li> </ul>
Community and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure access to local shopping, community, and leisure facilities and access to and enhancement of open space including children's play space</li> <li>• Encourage the retention and development of key services and facilities</li> <li>• Improve health and reduce inequalities, including through promoting healthy living through e.g. provision of walking, cycling and recreation facilities; and securing health infrastructure</li> <li>• Increase the net supply of housing, including housing for people, particularly families, on low to moderate incomes; and affordable housing</li> <li>• Contribute to an improvement of air quality</li> </ul>
Economy and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote access to employment opportunities for local people</li> <li>• Encourage the retention and growth of existing, locally based industries and businesses</li> <li>• Accommodate new and expanding businesses</li> <li>• Encourage investment in the local economy and promote opportunities for employment</li> <li>• Promote high-skilled economic activity</li> <li>• Enhance tourism, in particular 'green tourism' related to Pagham Harbour and Medmerry</li> <li>• Address skills and qualifications deficiencies, including by supporting provision of education facilities and supporting those in need of year-round (i.e. not seasonal) employment.</li> </ul>
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote high quality urban design which protects and enhances the historic environment, and ensure enhancement of the public realm, taking into consideration the characteristics of the existing townscape and strategic views</li> <li>• Ensure protection and enhancement of conservation areas, listed buildings and other areas of intrinsic and historical value including archaeological sites. Also consider the setting of assets.</li> <li>• Implement the Conservation Area Appraisal recommendations</li> </ul>
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the best and most versatile land from development</li> <li>• Encourage recycling and the efficient use of resources</li> </ul>
Landscape / townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure protection of traditional urban forms</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance landscape in Selsey</li> <li>• Contribute to meeting objectives of the South Coast Plain Character Area</li> </ul>
Sustainable transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce reliance on private transport, promote sustainable travel and enhance permeable access</li> <li>• Encourage development that enables walking, cycling and/or the use of public transport</li> <li>• Encourage provision of infrastructure for walking, cycling and/or the provision of public transport</li> </ul>
Water / flood risk / climate change adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect water resources</li> <li>• Reduce the risk of coastal, fluvial surface water and groundwater flooding</li> <li>• Promote SUDS and the restoration natural function to river and coastal systems</li> <li>• Ensure that Selsey adapts to the effects of climate change</li> </ul>

**WHAT HAS PLAN-MAKING / SEA INVOLVED UP TO THIS POINT?**

It is a legislative requirement that the Environmental Report includes an explanation of how/why the preferred (i.e. draft plan) approach was selected/developed in-light of earlier assessment of 'reasonable alternatives'. As such, an interim stage of SEA (i.e. a stage prior to assessment of the draft plan) must involve assessment of reasonable alternatives.

For the Selsey NDP, the interim stage of SEA focused on the assessment of **alternative spatial strategies**.

In order to 'tell the story' of alternatives consideration, the following three questions are answered in turn:

- What are the reasons for selecting alternative spatial strategies dealt with?
- What are the assessment findings in relation to the alternative spatial strategies?
- What are the reasons for selecting the preferred approach (in-light of the assessment)?

*What are the reasons for selecting alternative spatial strategies dealt with?*

The figure below shows the four greenfield site options in Selsey that are 'in the mix'. The subsequent table then identifies five alternative spatial strategies, i.e. alternative approaches to developing the site options.

*The four site options*



*Alternative spatial strategies*

Spatial Strategy Option	Site options				Total
	Park Farm (Middle / Rush Field)	Drift Field	Thawscroft	Ellis Square	
Option 1	50	100	-	-	150
Option 2	100	100	-	-	200
Option 3	100	100	-	50	250
Option 4	100	100	100	-	300
Option 5	100	100	100	50	350
Option 6	150	100	100	-	350
Option 7	150	100	100	50	400
Option 8	200	100	100	-	400

Each of the site options is associated with its own set of issues and 'back-story', and this is explained in the main body of the Environmental Report, with a view to demonstrating why these are the only four site options that 'reasonably' need to feed into alternatives appraisal, and why the alternatives listed in the table (i.e. options 1 – 8) are the 'reasonable' alternatives. For example, the report explains that there is no reasonable need to test a spatial strategy option that would involve delivering fewer than 150 new homes, given that this is roughly the quota set by the Chichester Local Plan, and delivering fewer homes would conflict with local objectives around improving local infrastructure and supporting local businesses.

#### What are the assessment findings in relation to the alternative spatial strategies?

Summary assessment findings are presented in the table below. For each of the options, the assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability topics / objectives identified through scoping as a methodological framework. **Red** text / shading is used to indicate significant negative effects, whilst **green** text / shading is used to indicate significant positive effects. In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict likely significant effects, but it is possible to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a **rank of preference**.

## Assessment of the alternative spatial strategies (summary)

- (1) 150 homes (50 @ Park Farm and 100 @ Drift Field)
- (2) 200 homes (100 @ Park Farm and 100 @ Drift Field)
- (3) 250 homes(100 @ Park Farm, 100 @ Drift Field and 50 @ Ellis Square )
- (4) 300 homes(100 @ Park Farm, 100 @ Drift Field and 100 @ Thawscroft)
- (5) 350 homes(100 @ Park Farm; 100 @ Drift Field, 100 @ Thawscroft and 50 @ Ellis Square)
- (6) 350 homes(150 @ Park Farm; 100 @ Drift Field and 100 @ Thawscroft)
- (7) 400 homes(150 @ Park Farm; 100 @ Drift Field, 100 @ Thawscroft and 50 @ Ellis Square)
- (8) 400 homes(200 @ Park Farm; 100 @ Drift Field and 100 @ Thawscroft)

Topic	Rank of preference							
	Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3	Opt 4	Opt 5	Opt 6	Opt 7	Opt 8
Air quality and noise	★ 1	2	3	4	5	5	6	6
Biodiversity	★ 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Climate change mitigation (non-transport)	3	3	3	3	2	2	★ 1	★ 1
Community and wellbeing	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Economy	6	5	5	3	4	2	3	★ 1
Heritage	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Housing	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	★ 1
Landscape/ townscape	★ 1	2	2	2	2	★ 1	★ 1	★ 1
Transport	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Water, flood risk and other climate change adaptation issues	★ 1	2	3	4	5	5	6	6

**Summary**

As is often the case, the higher growth options are shown to perform well in terms of socio-economic objectives, but to have drawbacks in terms of the achievement of environmental objectives. However, the picture for Selsey is not entirely black and white.

Focusing firstly on socioeconomic considerations, a high growth strategy would help to address housing needs, secure investment in community infrastructure and also go some way towards securing employment in the town. Significant positive effects are predicted for Options 6 – 8 in terms of the Housing objective, given that these are higher growth options that would involve a relatively large development at the Park Farm site that, it is assumed, would involve delivery of a good housing mix. In terms of the Economy objective, significant positive effects are not predicted, but it is possible to conclude that Options 6 and 8 performs best on the basis that a supermarket would be delivered on the Park Farm site and Ellis Square would be retained as an employment location. In terms of the Community and wellbeing objective, uncertain effects are predicted. Development will bring much needed investment in community infrastructure; however, it is likely to be the case that worsened traffic congestion (a key issue) is to a large extent unavoidable.

In terms of environmental considerations, a headline conclusion is the suggestion that a higher growth strategy (under Options 6 – 8) could lead to significant negative effects in terms of the Biodiversity objective.

Topic	Rank of preference							
	Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3	Opt 4	Opt 5	Opt 6	Opt 7	Opt 8
The Manhood Peninsula is obviously important in terms of biodiversity along a broader stretch of coastline / at a sub-regional scale, and so it is suggested that loss of habitat will lead to impacts. <u>Flood risk</u> is the other important consideration, particularly given that a higher growth strategy might well involve development of the Thawscroft site, which is currently understood to be within a flood risk zone. In terms of <u>Landscape</u> , it is suggested that it is not possible to simply conclude that development will lead to negative effects, as there is the potential for high quality design to benefit the overall character of the town; however, this conclusion is uncertain. Finally, in terms of <u>Climate change mitigation</u> objectives it is recognised that A) high growth at Selsey will mean more people living in an isolated location where car dependency is largely unavoidable; and B) a higher growth strategy could lead to some benefits around standards of sustainable design and construction, but it is unlikely that even an approach that involves high growth at Park Farm and Drift Field (which are adjacent sites) would lead to incorporation of community scale renewable / low carbon energy infrastructure.								

#### What are the reasons for selecting the preferred approach (in-light of the assessment)?

The Town Council drew on the alternatives assessment findings when finalising the Draft (Pre-submission) Plan document, and then subsequently provided text to explain their reasons for selecting / developing the Draft Plan in-light of the assessment. Subsequently, the Council chose to modify the preferred approach slightly, in that the Thawscroft site was removed as an allocation.

The following is text, provided by the Town Council, to explain why the current preferred approach is justified (i.e. 'most sustainable') in-light of alternatives assessment findings.

*“Given that Park Farm and an enlarged Park Farm/Rush Field, Drift Field are:*

- *all outside the existing Settlement Policy Area*
- *all greenfield sites*
- *all have a degree of flood risk*
- *all have likely impacts on the environment and nearby designated (or likely to be designated) sites of interest*

*there are similar arguments for and against each site option, and the decision on a preferred approach is finely balanced.*

*In order to deliver our allocation we will have to develop on at least one greenfield site and therefore the decision regarding preference has to be based on: the range of additional benefits delivered by each site; and any existent or expected planning permissions that may supersede the Neighbourhood plan process.*

*Using this rationale, a hybrid of options 1 & 2 that delivers in excess of the Local Plan target across two sites (Park Farm and Drift Field), with a mixed use scheme at Park Farm, offers the best overall option for the following reasons:*

1. *It more than delivers our allocation within 5 years*
2. *It envelopes extant permission for 50 houses at Park Farm*
3. *It uses land in order of flood risk with the lowest risk land being used first*
4. *It has wider socio economic benefits*
5. *It concentrates the delivery of our allocation to the north, rather than spreading the effect to the north and west (assuming Thawscroft does not happen).”*

## WHAT ARE THE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS AT THIS CURRENT STAGE?

Part 3 of the Environmental Report Update presents an assessment of the Submitted Draft Plan. The assessment is presented under the ten 'Topic' headings that were used as the basis for scoping, and draws explicitly on the key sustainability objectives identified for each topic. Summary assessment findings are presented below.

### Biodiversity

The expansion of the settlement boundary to accommodate the growth of Selsey will result in a loss of open countryside and hence will have some impact on biodiversity. Site specific policy does seek to mitigate effects to some extent, but net biodiversity gains seem unlikely. Area-wide policy does not include a major focus on biodiversity, but the effect of the plan will be to enhance the ability of residents and visitors to access, enjoy and 'connect with' the high quality natural environment surrounding Selsey. On balance, **effects are uncertain**.

### Climate change mitigation (non-transport related)

An ambitious growth strategy for the town leads to opportunities to take an ambitious approach to sustainable design and construction, and possibly the incorporation of community scale renewable / low carbon energy infrastructure. The plan is set to realise these opportunities to some extent, although there would appear to be the potential to go further. **Significant effects are unlikely**.

### Community and wellbeing

The intention of the plan is to set Selsey on course for a sustainable future, whereby the community is well balanced in terms of demographics and there is good potential for working age residents to find employment within the town. There are some risks involved – e.g. traffic congestion – but on balance it is likely that the plan will result in **significant positive effects**.

### Economy and employment

An ambitious growth strategy should help to enhance the economic role of the town, and ensure that it is sustainable in the long term. A targeted approach is set to be followed that includes a focus on employment land (e.g. at Ellis square), the town centre, tourism, education/skills, and jobs at a new supermarket (many of which will be lower skilled). From an economic perspective, it is unfortunate that a scheme at Thawscroft cannot be allocated through this plan. Overall, **significant positive effects** are predicted in the knowledge that with no intervention the economic role of the town could decline over time.

### Heritage

Policies are in place to ensure that negative effects are avoided, and that a proactive approach is taken to heritage conservation. Supporting the vitality of the town centre should have positive implications for historic character, although there may be some tensions. It is also notable that efforts are made to facilitate understanding of Selsey's heritage, and the natural history of surrounding landscapes. On balance, **significant effects are unlikely**, but there is some potential for positive effects.

### Land and other natural resources

Greenfield development is largely unavoidable; however, it is the case that the plan reflects an ambitious growth strategy that results in greater loss of greenfield land. As such, **significant negative effects** are predicted. Another consideration relates to waste management. It is understood that opportunities exist to facilitate delivery of a waste management facility at Selsey that would reduce reliance on facilities in Chichester and in-turn reduce the need to transport waste and encourage better management (e.g. sorting) of waste streams. The Draft Plan does not set policy, but does state that: *"It will remain a priority of the Town Council as part of this plan to continue to lobby West Sussex County Council, Chichester District Council and the contracted service provider (currently Viridor) for the provision of a permanent waste recycling site in the town. The preferred site for the development of such a facility remains around Ellis Square due to its commercial nature."*

### Landscape and townscape

Loss of greenfield land on the edge of the town could obviously lead to significant landscape effects; however, it is not clear that this will be the case given the understanding that exists around the relative sensitivity of the sites in question. It should also be the case that development in-line with the policies set out in the plan can lead to enhancements to townscape, and possibly also landscape. **Effects are uncertain.**

### Sustainable transport

The town of Selsey is largely reliant on private transport as can be seen from Design Policy DES01, which makes provision for two parking spaces per dwelling. Growth of the town in accordance with the NDP will mean more residents living in this relatively isolated location; however, plan policies are in place to mitigate car dependency. There is a focus on walking and cycling links; and support for the town centre / employment, which will have some bearing on walking/cycling. **Effects are uncertain.**

### Water, flood risk and other climate change adaptation issues

An ambitious growth strategy gives rise to a need to take a targeted approach to flood risk management in Selsey. It is apparent that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and flood risk focused design measures are set to be implemented. **Effects are uncertain.** It is recommended that the plan go further by making explicit links to any wider strategies / initiatives for flood risk management along the coast-line.

### SEA conclusions at this current stage

An ambitious growth strategy, with growth targeted at the two key development sites and change implemented in-line with the proposed development management policies, should lead to significant positive effects in terms of community/wellbeing and economy/employment related objectives. Additional benefits in terms of some socio-economic objectives would be realised were the Thawscroft site also to be allocated; however, it is recognised that the decision not to allocate is broadly appropriate (given the need to take a precautionary approach in relation to flood risk). The plan performs well in terms of most environmental objectives, although in some instances the plan might ideally 'go further'. The loss of greenfield agricultural land is obviously a concern; but it seems that the spatial strategy is such that effects will be minimised, and development management policy will similarly help. It is noted that numerous SEA recommendations made in relation to earlier drafts of the plan (most of which related to the stringency of environmental protection/enhancement policy) have been actioned and are now reflected in the Draft Plan.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Subsequent to publication by the local authority, **Regulation 17** of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations requires that the authority submits (to the person appointed to carry out the Examination) the Proposed Plan and a copy of any representations which have been received.

**Regulations 18 and 19** then require that, subsequent to the Examination, the Local Authority publishes the Examiner's Report and a Decision Statement. The Decision Statement sets out whether or not the Local Authority is prepared to 'make' (i.e. adopt) the plan. If the Local Authority is prepared to make the plan, then a referendum can be held.

**Regulation 20** states what the Local Authority must do when the plan is 'made' (i.e. adopted). The SEA Statement must be published alongside the adopted Plan. The SEA Statement must present: information on the decision (i.e. must answer the question: What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?); and measures decided concerning monitoring.

### Monitoring

At the current stage – i.e. in the Environmental Report - there is a need to present 'a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring'. In light of the assessment findings presented in Part 3 of this report, it is suggested that monitoring might focus on green infrastructure, and in particular its role in terms of mitigating the negative effects of growth on biodiversity and flood risk.