



Northumberland
County Council

**The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes
Regulations 2004**

**Eglingham Neighbourhood Plan
Regulation 16 Adoption Statement**

Published September 2024

1. Introduction

1.1. The Eglingham Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) was made (brought into force) on 6 August 2024. It now forms part of the development plan for Northumberland and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in Eglingham Parish. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies in the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.2. Preparation of the Plan included consultation with the statutory consultation bodies, stakeholders and the local community. In parallel with the preparation of the Plan, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was undertaken. SEA is a process by which the Plan and its policies, and any reasonable alternative approaches to achieve the objectives of the Plan, were appraised against a set of environmental objectives. The purpose of SEA is to help ensure that potential significant adverse environmental effects are identified and then avoided or mitigated; and to consider opportunities for improving expected outcomes from implementing the Plan.

1.3. SEA is undertaken as a series of stages in line with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations). Once a plan that has been subject to SEA is brought into force Regulation 16 of the SEA Regulations require the local authority that brings the plan into force to publish an 'adoption statement'.

This document is the Regulation 16 Adoption Statement for the Eglingham Neighbourhood Plan for the purposes of the SEA Regulations.

1.4. In accordance with the SEA Regulations this adoption statement includes the following prescribed information:

- an overview of the process that has been undertaken;
- how environmental considerations have informed the development of the Plan, including consideration of reasonable alternatives;
- how the results of any consultations have been taken into account; and
- the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan.

1.5 The Eglington Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA Environmental Report, and this statement are available on the County Council's website through this link: [Northumberland County Council - Neighbourhood Plans](#)

A hard copy of these documents can be inspected by prior appointment by contacting the Neighbourhood Planning Team at:

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2. Overview of the process

2.1 SEA was completed over a series of stages in parallel with the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The key stages are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 – Key Stages in the SEA Process for the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan

| Date | Description |
|----------------|---|
| September 2021 | A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening was carried out on an early draft of the Plan which determined that appropriate assessment was necessary because the Plan would be likely to have significant effects on European sites. This conclusion automatically triggered the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). AECOM were appointed to undertake the SEA. |
| December 2021 | Scoping Report published and consulted upon. |

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|---------------|---|
| December 2022 | The SEA Environmental Report is published. This was consulted upon as part of the Regulation 14 Consultation between April and June 2023. |
| October 2023 | A revised SEA Environmental Report (Addendum) is published to take into account feedback from consultation bodies and changes made to the Plan. |

2.2. The SEA stage informed the creation of an SEA Framework, which comprised a list of objectives under six environmental themes, against which the Plan and its policies were assessed throughout its preparation. This SEA Framework is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Environmental Themes and Objectives for the SEA of the Plan

| SEA Themes | SEA Objectives |
|------------------------|---|
| Biodiversity | To protect, maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area. |
| Climate change | Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Eglingham Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change. |
| Historic environment | Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of the historic environment and the wider built environment. |
| Landscape | Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes. |
| Population and housing | Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupants throughout their lives. |

2.3 A full SEA Environmental Report (December 2022) was prepared and published alongside the pre-submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan. This provided a comprehensive assessment of the draft Plan including consideration of reasonable alternatives to the policies proposed in the Plan. The findings helped to inform a review of the Plan. This aligns with the purpose of SEA which must be seen as a continuous process applied throughout the period of plan preparation.

3. How SEA has informed the development of the Plan

3.1 SEA has been undertaken as an iterative process to ensure that environmental considerations have guided the neighbourhood plan-making process. Policies have been developed having regard to objectives established in the SEA Framework and the need to deliver, through planning policies, the plan's objectives. Together, these seek to place environmental considerations at the heart of decision-making.

3.2 The process for preparing a neighbourhood plan requires an independent examination of the draft plan. This requires an independent person to consider and make recommendations on whether the plan meets a range of legal and policy requirements. That examination concludes with the publication of a report by the independent person appointed to examine the plan. The Examiner's Report for the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan was published in April 2024. Paragraph 45 of that Report confirms the examiner's conclusions that the relevant statutory requirements in respect of SEA were satisfied through the plan-making process.

Reasonable Alternatives

3.3 Reasonable alternatives were considered in relation to local green spaces (LGS):

- Option 1 – Given the importance of the sites identified in ENP (policy 4), to the local community, these should be designated as LGS to protect them from future encroachment.
- Option 2 – Not to allocate areas of LGS as the majority of these areas would be offered a degree of protection through the NLP and ENP policies seeking to protect the landscape and the natural environment.

3.4 Each option was assessed against the SEA Framework. The assessment showed a predominantly positive picture but Option 1 was the best-performing, scoring more positively for all 5 SEA topics. Its one potential negative effect could be to reduce the flexibility of sites for housing but it was determined that as there is no requirement to provide land for additional housing in the Parish before the end of the proposed plan period (April 2036), whilst allowing for windfall development, this would be consistent with strategic planning policy and the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy Appraisals

3.5 The Plan policies were appraised against the SEA Framework at various stages to help inform the final policies in the made version of the Plan. The appraisal commentary for each sustainability theme does not necessarily discuss every single Plan policy, only those where notable effects are predicted. The results of the policy appraisal are summarised in Table 3 below. Moderate positive effects were anticipated in relation to biodiversity, climate change, historic environment and landscape. In relation to population and housing minor positives were identified. SEA findings helped give assurance that the Plan would contribute positively toward meeting environmental objectives.

Table 3 – Summary of Policy Appraisal by Environmental Objectives

| SEA Themes | SEA Objectives | Summary of Effects |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Biodiversity | To protect, maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area. | Overall, moderate positive effects are considered likely through implementation of policies seeking to protect water quality within the River Tweed SAC and the safeguarding of areas of green space through the LGS designation helping to reduce habitat fragmentation. |
| Climate change | Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Area to the effects of climate change. | The measures to increase climate resilience through designating areas of LGS and promoting the protection of the Parish's landscapes, gardens, fields and allotments are considered to have moderate positive effects on climate change adaptation. |
| Historic environment | Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of the historic environment and the wider built environment. | Overall, the potential for moderate positive effects is recognised, namely through policies requiring new development to be in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and policies seeking to protect important areas of landscape that form an intrinsic part of the historic character and heritage of the Parish. |
| Landscape | Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes. | Together, the ENP policies ought to safeguard areas of high landscape value and protect the landscape surrounding the built areas, as well as the important spaces that run through the Parish. Consequently, moderately positive effects are predicted overall. |
| Population and housing | Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupants throughout their lives. | Overall, mixed effects are predicted minor positive effects are anticipated as a result of policies promoting well-designed development and safeguarding valued landscapes and green space. However, minor negative effects are possible with regards to housing provision as two of the LGS allocated, are potentially suitable for housing, and this limits flexibility of use in the future. |

4. How the Results of Consultations have been taken into account

4.1 As illustrated in Table 1, the Plan and corresponding SEA have been subject to consultation.

4.2 An SEA Scoping Report was published for consultation in late 2021 with the statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England).

4.3 A draft SEA Environmental Report (December 2022) was published for consultation. Comments were received on the Environmental Report from Natural England.

4.4 The final SEA Environmental Report was submitted to Northumberland County Council along with the final draft version of the Plan in January 2024. These documents were subsequently publicised by the County Council for a period of not less than 6 weeks in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). All representations made in response to that publicity were considered by the Examiner during the independent examination of the Plan.

4.5 In addition to the statutory consultation stages, the Parish Council also engaged with the local community and stakeholders at a number of informal consultation events throughout the preparation of the Plan. This community engagement provided a further opportunity for the Town Council to consider local environmental considerations. Further information is available in the Consultation Statement.

5. Monitoring Measures

5.1 The SEA Regulations require that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan should be monitored.

5.2 The SEA Environmental Report highlighted the range of significant positive effects that could arise as a result of the implementation of the Plan, with no identified significant negative effects.

5.3 Whilst the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan does not set out a framework to monitor the effects of implementation of the policies in the Plan, the County Council will provide, periodically, relevant information and updates through the annual Authority Monitoring Report process.

6. Sources

6.1 The following documents have informed this Adoption Statement:

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

[The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Report, January 2023.

[06-Eglington-SEA-Environmental-Report.pdf \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](https://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

Report to the Northumberland County Council on the Independent Examination of the submission draft Eglington Neighbourhood Plan, April 2024.

[Eglington-Examiners-report.pdf \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](https://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

The Eglington Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement, January 2024.

[2-Consultation-Statement-Eglington-NP.pdf \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](https://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

The Eglington Neighbourhood Plan, August 2024.

[Combined-Made-Plan_1.pdf \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](https://www.northumberland.gov.uk)