



**Northumberland**  
County Council

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

**Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan  
Regulation 16 Adoption Statement**

**Published January 2024**

## 1. Introduction

1.1. The Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) was made (brought into force) on 15 December 2023. It now forms part of the development plan for Northumberland and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in Newbiggin-by-the-Sea 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 Newbiggin-by-the-Sea 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 Newbiggin-by-the-Sea 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 Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan

Date	Description
January 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.
February 2022	Scoping Report published and consulted upon.

May 2022	The SEA Environmental Report is published. This was consulted upon as part of the Regulation 14 Consultation between June – August 2022.
January 2023	A revised SEA Environmental Report 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	Protect, maintain, restore and enhance biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.
Climatic Factors (adaptation)	Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Newbiggin Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change.
Historic environment	Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider built environment.
Landscape	Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.
Water	Protect and enhance water quality.
Population and housing	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupiers throughout their lives.

2.3 A full SEA Environmental Report (May 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 Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan was published in June 2023. 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 housing growth.

3.4 The process involved consideration of the strategic context ('top down' factors), alongside understanding of site availability and suitability. Two housing growth scenarios were identified as reasonable: scenario 1 envisaged an uplift of 18-34% on the housing requirement figure for the Parish; scenario 2 envisaged an uplift of 810-109%. Scenario 2 presented significant positives for population and housing but it also had a significant negative with respect to biodiversity due to the larger scale of growth proposed and the location of the bulk of this growth in close proximity to designated biodiversity sites along the coast. The preferred approach was to go forward with scenario 1, which had significant positives for population and housing and no significant negatives. The Site Selection Assessment details the appraisal of possible sites and the reasons for the sites selected.

#### *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. Notably, there were no policies which were expected to result in significant negative impacts. 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	Protect, maintain, restore and enhance biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.	Overall, mixed effects are considered likely; the proposed housing site allocations are likely to lead to increased recreational pressure on the coastal biodiversity designations (Northumberland Shore SSSI/ Ramsar and SPA) leading to moderately negative effects. On the other hand, Policy N3 has the potential for minor positive effects as it serves to protect areas of green/ open space which are beneficial to biodiversity.
Climatic Factors (adaptation)	Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Newbiggin Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change.	Overall, the avoidance of placing development in areas of high flood risk, alongside measures to increase climate resilience through the protection, enhancement and provision of green open space are considered to have minor long-term positive effects on climate change adaptation.
Historic environment	Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider built environment.	Overall, the potential for minor positive effects is recognised, namely through the policies seeking to preserve the character and settings of the historic environment including the Conservation Area and the designation of LGS
Landscape	Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.	Overall, mixed effects are envisaged; the level of proposed development, through the Plan and the location of Sites H1 and H2 will substantially alter the existing landscape at the southern gateway to Newbiggin, leading to moderate negative effects. On the other hand, moderate positive effects are anticipated through policies promoting well designed development that takes into account the character of the built environment and offering protection to the Conservation Area and key views.

SEA Themes	SEA Objectives	Summary of Effects
Water	Protect and enhance water quality.	Overall, given the protection offered to water quality at strategic level through the Northumberland Local Plan and the limited scale of development proposed in the Plan, neutral effects are predicted.
Population and housing	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupiers throughout their lives.	Overall, significant long-term positive effects are anticipated as a result of the growth strategy, which will meet a significant portion of Newbiggin's' housing needs, thus securing housing delivery and potentially delivering more choice and flexibility in the local housing market. The provision of affordable housing is also likely to help younger residents to remain in the area ensuring the long-term sustainability of Newbiggin's community.

#### 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 early 2022 with the statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England).

4.3 A draft SEA Environmental Report (May 2022) was published for consultation. Comments were received on the Environmental Report from Historic 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 2023. 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 final SEA Environmental Report (January 2023) 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 Newbiggin-by-the-Sea 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 Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Report, January 2023.

[06-Newbiggin-by-the-Sea-SEA-Environmental-Report.pdf \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](#)

Report to the Northumberland County Council on the Independent Examination of the submission draft Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan, June 2023.

[Microsoft Word - Newbiggin by the Sea Examiner's Report.docx \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](#)

The Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement, January 2023.

[Consultation-statementFINAL-Redacted.pdf \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](#)

The Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan, December 2023.

[Newbiggin-NP-Made-Version.pdf \(northumberland.gov.uk\)](#)