



SSJ Neighbourhood Plan

Basic Conditions Statement

July 2016

1. Introduction

This Basic Conditions Statement has been written to support the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan (NPlan). Its intention is to demonstrate that the NPlan has been produced observing:

- All legal aspects of the neighbourhood plan making process;
- All relevant national and local level planning policies;
- An appropriate level of guidance at all stages of plan making; and
- Best practice in inclusive and transparent consultation and engagement.

Crucially, this statement shows how the Plan conforms to the Basic Conditions, as identified in paragraph 8 of schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA, 1990) and that it is legal in every other respect.

The structure of this statement is as follows:

- Background to the Plan: providing a broad overview of the reasons for the Plan and noting some features of its production;
- Statement of legal conformity: assuring that the submission draft Plan and supporting documentation comprise the appropriate information to be considered compliant with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and that the Plan has been prepared in conformity with provisions of the TCPA 1990;
- Assessment against the Basic Conditions: demonstrating that compliance with the Basic Conditions has been central to the Plan making process.

An Equality Impact Assessment is appended to this statement. In line with the Equality Act 2010 it provides an assessment of draft Plan policies for their likely impact upon groups or individuals named under the 'protected characteristics', and as such it tests for any discrimination (accidental or otherwise).

2. Background to the Plan

The Parish Council decided to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan (NPlan) in 2013. The underlying reason for doing so was to benefit from the opportunity provided by the Localism Act 2011, by translating the wishes of their community into policies. In particular,

this meant seeking to steer future development, so that it both respects the character of the area and meets the aspirations of residents.

The plan making process was led by Sherborne St John Parish Council and its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, with support from officers at Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council and from independent consultants, who provided technical advice on process and content. A group of Parish Councillors and other volunteers from the Parish researched and wrote the Plan.

Decisions about this Plan have been informed throughout by consultation and engagement with local residents and interests. This included an initial stage to understand the priorities of local people and to decide upon Plan objectives. It included further consultation to test local views about potential housing development sites. Most important, a consultation draft of the Plan was formally consulted upon in line with regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). All of this activity and its outcomes are set out in some detail in the Consultation Statement.

A significant evidence base was produced to explore issues objectively and then to support the proposed Plan objectives and policies. This comprises a mix of reviewing published reports and material by third parties, contacting third parties for further information, analysing Census and other data sources about the local area and conducting a questionnaire survey of local residents. All of this material is written up, with a summary in the Baseline Report – Evidence Paper and further underpinned by supporting documents.

Early consultation and evidence lead to agreement around a vision statement and, flowing from that, four Plan objectives. These in turn led to the four proposed Plan policies. The vision and objectives can be read in chapter 4 of the Plan, whilst the policies and their rationale can be read in chapter 5 of the Plan.

Throughout much of the plan making process Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council was progressing work on a new and up-to-date Local Plan for 2011 to 2029. During that time it had both some saved policies from an earlier (and expired) Local Plan and emerging policies for its new Local Plan. In order to comply with National Planning Practice Guidance paragraph 009 Sherborne St John paid close attention to both the emerging Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, not least with regard to assessing housing need.

However, it should be noted that the new Local Plan passed its Examination in Public on 6th April 2016 and, with some modifications, was adopted by the Borough Council on 26th May 2016. All saved policies from the previous plan were replaced or dropped at this point. This Basic Conditions Statement therefore focuses on conformity with the up-to-date Local Plan for 2011 to 2029.

3. Statement of legal conformity

Aside from the Plan's conformity with the Basic Conditions tests, it is important that the plan making process has observed all of the requirements included in primary and secondary legislation which guide the production of NPlans. The table below sets out the Plan's conformity with relevant sections and schedules of the TCPA 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The checklist used here is based upon Planning Advisory Service guidance, which was issued to advise local planning authorities about the legal requirements of NPlans.

Act, section, schedule or regulation	Test	Comments	Whether legally compliant
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B, paragraph 5	Is the proposal in question a repeat proposal? Has the local planning authority refused a previous similar proposal under paragraph 12 or Section 61E or has it failed at referendum?	No, on both counts. This is the first NPlan prepared by Sherborne St John Parish Council.	Yes
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B, paragraph 6(2)(a) and Section 61F	Is the body which submitted the Plan a 'qualifying body' as defined for the purpose of neighbourhood plan making?	Yes. As clarified under Section 61F, a parish council can act as a qualifying body for neighbourhood planning purposes. This plan has been prepared and is submitted by Sherborne St John Parish Council.	Yes
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B, paragraph 6(2)(b) and Section 61F	Does the plan proposal comply with the other relevant provisions made under Section 61F relating to a neighbourhood area designation?	Yes. The entirety of the Sherborne St John civil parish area was designated on 22 nd March 2013 as the neighbourhood area by Basingstoke & Dean Borough Council, after a six week period of consultation. A map of the neighbourhood area can be found at Appendix B of this statement.	Yes

Act, section, schedule or regulation	Test	Comments	Whether legally compliant
<p>TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B, paragraphs 1 and 6(2)(c); and NP (General) Regulations 2012, Regulation 15</p>	<p>Has the qualifying body submitted the following in a satisfactory form to its local planning authority:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A map or statement identifying the area to which the plan relates; 2. A consultation statement (which contains details of those consulted, how they were consulted, summarises the main issues and concerns raised and how these have been considered, and where relevant how they are addressed in the proposed NPlan; 3. The proposed NPlan; 4. A statement explaining how the NPlan meets the basic conditions; and 5. Either an environmental statement or a statement confirming why no SEA is required in support of the NPlan. 	<p>Yes. All of these documents have been submitted as a single package to Basingstoke & Dean Borough Council. Additionally, the evidence base documents prepared in support of the Plan are being made available to officers and can be publicised.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Act, section, schedule or regulation	Test	Comments	Whether legally compliant
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B, paragraphs 4 and 6(2)(d); and NP (General) Regulations 2012, Regulations 14 and 15(2)(a)	Has the qualifying body complied with the requirements regarding the scope of pre-submission consultation?	Yes. The Plan was made available for consultation for a period of six weeks between 1 st April and 16 th May 2016, inviting representations from all groups detailed under Regulation 14 of the NPlan (General) Regulations 2012. This was done through advertising the Plan within the Parish Council area, as described in the accompanying Consultation Statement. A copy of the Plan was also sent to the local planning authority and to relevant statutory bodies for comment, with their feedback fully considered in order to create the submission version of the Plan.	Yes
TCPA 1990 Schedule 4B, paragraph 6(3) and Section 61J (and see also PCPA 2004 Section 38B(1)(b))	Does the Plan seek to grant or support planning permission for any development categorised as 'excluded development' under Section 61K of the TCPA 1990?	No it does not.	Yes
PCPA 2004, Section 38A(2)	Does the Plan meet the definition of 'neighbourhood development plan' in that it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land within the neighbourhood area?	Yes it does.	Yes

Act, section, schedule or regulation	Test	Comments	Whether legally compliant
PCPA 2004, Section 38B(1)(a)	Does the 'neighbourhood development plan' specify the time period for which it is to have effect?	Yes. The period is clearly stated in the Plan as 2011 to 2029.	Yes
PCPA 2004, Section 38B(1)(c)	Does the 'neighbourhood development plan' relate to more than one neighbourhood area?	No it does not.	Yes

It is concluded from the table above that the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan has accurately observed the required procedures and exclusions, and that it is therefore legal in every respect.

4. Assessment against the Basic Conditions

The principal purpose of this statement is to demonstrate how the Plan complies with the Basic Conditions tests.

The Basic Conditions that apply to NPlans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are set out in paragraph 8 of schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990). Those which are specifically relevant to NPlans, as clarified by paragraph 065 of the National Planning Practice Guidance are as follows:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the plan;
- The making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- The making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations;
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal in the plan. For clarity, further conditions have been prescribed relating to the assessment of a plan's impact on European Habitats.

This section assesses the proposed policies in the submission draft Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan against the tests listed above. There is no prescribed approach for how this assessment should take place. In this statement each of the proposed (four) policies in the Plan is considered in turn for its regard to national policy, in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and its conformity with policies in the Local Plan. The

rationale for this approach is that Plan policies will ensure the continued delivery of national and local policies provided that: a) they do not conflict with them; and b) they generally support their intent.

Following this, there is comment on how the Plan making process has observed the National Planning Practice Guidance. Finally, the Plan is considered as a whole in terms of whether it contributes to sustainable development and is compatible with EU obligations (including those relating to the protection of habitats).

Assessment against national policy and guidance, and strategic local policy

To ensure compliance with both of these Basic Conditions the Plan has been produced with careful consideration of the following:

- Strategic policies in the Basingstoke and Dean Local Plan 2011 – 2029 (as adopted);
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and
- The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

It is recognised that NPlans should take account of the entire NPPF. However, for ease of reference this section flags specific NPPF paragraphs that are of particular relevance to Sherborne St John policies. The tables also note key elements of the evidence base which support each of the Plan policies.

It should be acknowledged that helpful support has been received from officers at Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council throughout the production of this Plan and their informal advice was sought on an early draft of the document. Their assistance and guidance has undoubtedly helped to bring the document to submission.

Policy	SSJ1 Delivering a mix of housing to meet local needs
Relevant NPPF paragraphs or sections	50: Deliver a wide choice of quality homes for mixed communities (size, type, tenure, etc) reflecting local demand. 17 (third bullet): Seek to objectively identify and meet housing [and other] needs.
NPPF conformity	Policy SSJ1 seeks to ensure that a range of housing provision – in terms of house sizes – is maintained within the area, to reflect the assessed local needs. It expects all residential development, including any windfall development or redevelopment sites (other than single properties), to include smaller dwellings of two or three bedrooms. This is intended to help address particular (locally identified) needs of first time buyers and older households wishing to downsize.
Relevant Local Plan policies	CN3: Housing mix for market housing

Local Plan conformity	SSJ1 supports Local Plan (LP) CN3 – especially indent ‘a’ of that policy – by seeking to maintain a mix of dwelling sizes in order to address the particular local requirements of the NP area. The prime policy need which was identified by the SSJ Housing Needs Survey was that for smaller dwellings.
Evidence base	SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Review Community Action Hampshire SSJ Housing Needs Survey SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Residents Questionnaire Results Review of demographic data and SSJ Population Predictions

Policy	SSJ2 Avoidance of coalescence with Basingstoke town
Relevant NPPF paragraphs or sections	17 (fifth bullet): Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and support thriving rural communities within it. 73: Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation.
NPPF conformity	SSJ2 seeks to maintain the basic pattern of countryside and rural community, by retaining the separate identity of Sherborne St John as a village within a countryside setting. SSJ2 would also help to retain a highly accessible area of countryside which includes footpaths.
Relevant Local Plan policies	EM2 Strategic gaps
Local Plan conformity	This Neighbourhood Plan policy is based upon strong local support for maintaining the open character of the area of countryside which gives a separate physical and visual identity to the village. SSJ2 is considered to be in conformity with LP EM2, which is a Strategic Gaps policy and which refers to the gap between Sherborne St John and Basingstoke (amongst others). As the newer of the two policies, SSJ2 may take precedence when the Neighbourhood Plan is made.
Evidence base	SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Residents Questionnaire Results SSJ Village Design Statement (2004) BDBC Landscape Capacity Studies (2008 and 2010)

Policy	SSJ3 The rural character of the Parish
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Relevant NPPF paragraphs or sections	<p>17 (fifth bullet): Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and support thriving rural communities within it.</p> <p>58: Support quality development which incorporates and sustains green and open spaces.</p> <p>73: Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation.</p> <p>74: Protect existing open spaces and recreational land.</p> <p>109: Minimise impacts on biodiversity and establish coherent ecological networks</p> <p>114: Plan positively for the protection and management of green infrastructure and biodiversity networks.</p> <p>117: Identify and map components of the local ecological networks, such as wildlife corridors.</p> <p>125: Limit the impact of light pollution on public amenity, dark landscapes and nature conservation.</p>
NPPF conformity	<p>SSJ3 seeks to retain and, where possible, enhance open spaces in the village that provide an important social function e.g. for recreation use and for local events. It also seeks to protect open spaces in the village that form part of the network of green habitats and which are important for wildlife. In this regard, it refers to the Wildlife Map Project being undertaken in Sherborne St John. SSJ3 seeks to minimise noise or light pollution impacts on green habitats arising from new development. It supports development which respects local features which define the rural character.</p>
Relevant Local Plan policies	EM5 Green infrastructure
Local Plan conformity	<p>SSJ3 is considered to conform with LP policy EM5, which deals with the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure. It seeks to conserve the rural character and natural assets of Sherborne St John village, including its important open spaces, the network of green habitats and important views from/towards the village, as well as mitigating any development impacts on the surrounding countryside.</p>
Evidence base	<p>SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Residents Questionnaire Results</p> <p>SSJ Village Design Statement (2004)</p> <p>BDBC Landscape Capacity Studies (2008 and 2010)</p> <p>Sherborne St John Wildlife Map Project, interim output</p> <p>SSJ Parish Map</p> <p>SSJ Local Green Space Policy Assessment</p>

Policy	SSJ4 Residential development – land at Cranes Park, Sherborne St John
Relevant NPPF paragraphs or sections	16: Neighbourhood planning should support strategic development needs, such as for housing.

	<p>28: Promote retention of local services and community facilities in villages.</p> <p>47: Provide a supply of developable sites to meet evidence-based housing needs.</p> <p>50: Deliver a wide choice of quality homes for mixed communities (size, type, tenure, etc) reflecting local demand.</p> <p>55: Promoting sustainable development to maintain the vitality of rural communities.</p> <p>58: Set out the quality of development expected, responding to local character and history.</p> <p>70: Plan positively for the provision of community facilities, integrating their location with housing.</p> <p>126: Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.</p> <p>128 and 129: Scheme applicants should describe heritage assets and evidence about them should be considered when determining planning applications.</p> <p>132: Consider the significance of heritage assets or development within their setting.</p>
NPPF conformity	<p>The housing allocation site under SSJ4 provides for local (parish) housing needs and includes a relevant contribution to the wider borough's housing needs. It is a deliverable site with the developer engaged through the neighbourhood plan process.</p> <p>This site is allocated to deliver a range of dwelling sizes, in line with policy SSJ1, reflecting assessed local needs, including those of first time buyers and older people wishing to downsize.</p> <p>SSJ4 includes the development of a building suitable as a new village shop, which meets an identified local need and retains in important community facility, given the recent loss of such a facility.</p> <p>The policy sets out how development of the site must preserve the setting of the nearby Conservation Area, through careful site design, use of materials and vegetation screening. It expects development proposals to be informed by a heritage assessment of the site and its setting.</p>
Relevant Local Plan policies	<p>SS1 Scale and distribution of new housing</p> <p>SS4 Ensuring a supply of deliverable sites</p> <p>SS5 Neighbourhood planning</p> <p>SS6 New housing in the countryside</p> <p>CN3 Housing mix for market housing</p> <p>CN7 Essential facilities and services</p> <p>EM2 Strategic gaps</p> <p>EM10 Delivering high quality environment</p> <p>EM11 The historic environment</p>
Local Plan conformity	<p>SSJ4 principally conforms with LP policy SS5, which expects Neighbourhood Plans to identify sites or opportunities for at least 10 new dwellings in settlements</p>

	<p>such as Sherborne St John. This site allocation is for between 12 and 18 dwellings.</p> <p>LP policy SS1 similarly supports Neighbourhood Plans contributing to meeting the borough's housing need.</p> <p>SSJ4 conforms with LP policy SS6, which permits small development sites for housing in the countryside, where they have been allocated through made Neighbourhood Plans.</p> <p>It contributes, too, to LP policy SS4 which seeks a supply of deliverable sites for housing development. Throughout the latter stages of the plan making process there has been close engagement with the site promoter/developer, not least to ensure its deliverability.</p> <p>SSJ4 supports LP CN3 which permits development that provides for a mix of market housing, with a range of house type and size to address local requirements. SSJ4, through reference to policy SSJ1, sets out expectations for the range of dwelling sizes on the allocation site, in order to meet locally assessed need.</p> <p>LP CN3 also expects dwelling numbers on development sites to be appropriate, given site size and factors such as the density of existing, nearby housing (as does LP EM10). The SSJ4 allocation for between 12 and 18 dwellings gives a density that is well below the average for new development and is considered appropriate for the location, especially since it expects at least half the dwellings to be smaller (with two or three bedrooms, suitable for young people joining the housing market and older people downsizing). This seeks to strike a balance between matching the character of the village, meeting local needs and the efficient use of land.</p> <p>By providing for a facility for a village shop SSJ4 conforms with LP CN7, which supports development that improves essential facilities and services, and thereby improves the vitality and viability of communities. CN7 expressly seeks to improve services that are set out in Neighbourhood Plans.</p> <p>The SSJ4 allocation site is technically within a Strategic Gap referred to under LP EM2 (see BDBC policy maps), being right at its northernmost extent. However, that LP policy specifically permits development which is proposed through a Neighbourhood Plan. Moreover, it is noted that allocation site does not sit in open countryside and is not physically located between Sherborne St John village and Basingstoke town. As such, it is considered that its development will not compromise the gap or cause any coalescence of these settlements. With the agreement of BDBC, the village settlement boundary is being amended</p>
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	<p>to include this allocation site and is shown as such on the map that accompanies policy SSJ4 in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>SSJ4 conforms with LP EM11, by paying particular regard to the nearby Conservation Area and other heritage assets. It requires development to preserve the setting of the Conservation Area by retaining and enhancing screening vegetation along relevant boundaries, by drawing bulkier buildings away from the site boundary and by requiring the use of quality design and materials that are in keeping. SSJ4 further requires that development scheme proposals for the site should be informed by a heritage assessment of the site and its setting.</p>
Evidence base	<p>SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Review Community Action Hampshire SSJ Housing Needs Survey SSJ Neighbourhood Plan Residents Questionnaire Results Review of demographic data and SSJ Population Predictions SSJ Call for Sites (update) SSJ Site Identification, Appraisal and Selection Process, including the site appraisal proforma Conservation Area Appraisal and Map (2003) Sigma heritage assessment report</p>

As well as the NPPF, the production of this Plan has paid close regard to guidance and especially the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Although the NPPG does not carry the same statutory weight, in terms of required conformity, it nevertheless presents a helpful synopsis of best practice and further explains how statutory requirements should be dealt with.

Close attention has been paid to paragraph 040 which expects plans with policies relevant to housing supply to take account of latest and up-to-date evidence. Site allocation policy SSJ4 seeks to deliver sufficient new housing to:

- Meet in full the expectations of Local Plan policy SS5, which is derived from the Borough Council's (now independently assessed) evidence base; and
- Address the housing needs that were identified through the evidence base produced for this NDP.

Moreover, this NDP does not seek to introduce a cap on development e.g. on windfall sites.

Other NPPG paragraphs which have been particularly noted during the plan making process include:

- 022 which covers local planning authority support for and involvement in the NDP process;
- 040 which explains the need for proportionate evidence to support NDP policies;
- 042 which confirms that development sites can be appraised and allocated in NDPs;

- 047 to 051 which explain the correct procedures for draft NDP consultation; and
- 073 which confirms that NDPs (like other plans) should meet the core principle of helping to achieve sustainable development.

Contributing to the achievement of sustainable development

The preceding section set out how the Plan has sought to ensure conformity with the NPPF and Local Plan. This matters because the NPPF has achieving sustainable development as its core principle, whilst the Local Plan has been subject to a comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal which was tested at examination and found to be sound. The Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been developed within the context of close attention paid to two tiers of policies which set the framework for sustainable development.

It was determined that no statutory Strategic Environmental Assessment was required to support this Plan (see below for details). Nonetheless, the proposed Plan policies were subjected to a non-statutory and light touch Sustainability Assessment during the Plan’s production. This was based around the framework used by the Borough Council for its Local Plan. The results of this assessment can be found within the ‘Baseline Report – Evidence Paper’, which summarises the evidence supporting this Plan. Furthermore, those results demonstrated the positive contribution that the Plan policies should make towards achieving sustainable development.

That Sustainability Assessment can be read alongside the following overview of the Plan’s contribution to sustainable development, which looks in turn at economic, social and environmental considerations.

NPPF sustainability objective and synopsis:
<u>Economic sustainability</u> The Plan should contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.
Relevant Plan policies:
SSJ1 Delivering a mix of housing to meet local needs SSJ4 Residential development – land at Cranes Park, Sherborne St John
Commentary:
Whilst the Plan does not contain any specific economic policies, its policies do have an employment dimension. It is recognised that employment opportunities within the parish are fairly limited, though major employment centres are nearby (most obviously at Basingstoke). The Plan (SSJ4) seeks the delivery of a new village shop within the allocated housing development site. It is hoped that this will create one or two local job opportunities. The development site is close to the A340 Aldermaston Road, which has an (albeit limited) bus

service to Basingstoke. The Parish Council would like to see that service improved, though that aim is beyond the scope of Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Policies SSJ1 and SSJ4 seek to retain and create (respectively) smaller dwellings within Sherborne St John, which are likely to be suited to younger people and families. It is very important for the local labour market that this demographic is retained in the area and there is a reasonable balance across the different age groups.

NPPF sustainability objective and synopsis:

Social sustainability

The Plan should support a strong, vibrant and healthy community, by: providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; by creating a high quality built environment; promoting accessible local services which reflect the community's local needs; and by supporting health, social and cultural well-being.

Relevant Plan policies:

SSJ1 Delivering a mix of housing to meet local needs
SSJ4 Residential development – land at Cranes Park, Sherborne St John

Commentary:

There is a strong focus within the Plan on delivering housing that will meet local needs over the plan period. The Plan allocates a deliverable development site (SSJ4) to increase the supply of housing and it seek to ensure a mix of housing sizes in line with the evidence base on housing needs. Affordable housing will also need to be provided on this site, in line with Local Plan policy CN1. The sustainability credentials of the site have been carefully considered through the site selection process.

The Plan also seeks (SSJ1) to ensure that the existing housing stock maintains an appropriate mix, to meet the needs of different groups, and in particular that smaller dwellings more suited to young people and families are not lost through redevelopment or extensions.

The Plan supports (SSJ4) the provision of a village shop, in line with local residents' wishes. Retaining such a facility locally is seen as important to the life of the village. The policy provides for the possibility of a new shop within the allocated housing development site, as a recognised developer contribution.

NPPF sustainability objective and synopsis:

Environmental sustainability

The Plan should contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Relevant Plan policies:

SSJ2 Avoidance of coalescence with Basingstoke town
SSJ3 The rural character of the Parish
SSJ4 Residential development – land at Cranes Park, Sherborne St John

Commentary:

The Plan (SSJ3) places emphasis upon retaining the rural character and natural assets of the parish. This includes the retention of important open space within the village, preserving the network of green habitats from development impacts, retaining important views out of/towards the village and mitigating for any impacts on the surrounding countryside. Development will be expected to take account of results from a Sherborne St John Wildlife Map Project, which is providing further evidence of biodiversity.

Through policy SSJ2 the Plan seeks to ensure that any new development will not compromise, and where possible enhances, the distinct area of open countryside which separates the village of Sherborne St John from the town of Basingstoke.

The policy which allocates a housing development site (SSJ4) requires the developer to preserve the setting of the nearby Conservation Area through its use of design, materials and screening. It also expects the development scheme for the site to be informed by a heritage assessment of the site and its setting.

In summary, it is believed that the proposed Plan policies will contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the area, and that collectively they should bring about benefits for current and future generations.

Compatibility with EU obligations

Full consideration has been given as to whether the Plan should be subject to either a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required by the Environmental Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (EAPP), or an Appropriate Assessment, as required by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012.

Appropriate Assessment: the requirement for screening for an Appropriate Assessment was ruled out at an early stage of plan making, since the designated neighbourhood area does not contain and is not within close proximity to a European site.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: a full draft of the Plan was screened for SEA by Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council, at which point the statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) were formally consulted for their views. None of those statutory bodies saw reason to ask for a SEA and the screening assessment by the Borough Council concluded that SEA was not required. This statutory determination is in line with the requirements of the EAPP.

A copy of the SEA determination letter from Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council, dated January 2016, with their statement of reasons, is submitted alongside this statement. It contains the views of the three relevant statutory bodies.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

NPlans fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. This legislation seeks to ensure that no groups or individuals are disadvantaged as a result of decisions being made which fail to take account of their requirements: that policies and decision making do not discriminate either accidentally or deliberately. Appendix A to this statement is an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the proposed Plan, which examines each of its policies in turn.

That exercise concluded that no changes were required to policies in the submission draft of the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan. The policies, as drafted, were likely to be either neutral or positive in terms of their impact on the 'protected characteristics'. No negative impacts were identified by this EqIA and no mitigation measures were therefore seen as necessary or proposed.

*Sherborne St John Parish Council
Hampshire
July 2016*

Appendix A: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) transposed into English, Welsh and Scottish law the various European Equal Treatment Directives. It also brought several earlier pieces of domestic legislation under a single Act, harmonising the level of protection that is afforded to all characteristics by new policies and programmes.

Everybody is protected by the Act. Essentially it seeks to ensure that no group or individual are disadvantaged as a result of decisions being made that fail to take account of the requirements of all groups. The Act names several 'protected characteristics' that could either accidentally or deliberately be discriminated against during the course of decision making or policy processes. Those protected characteristics are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation; and
- Gender reassignment.

EqIA and Neighbourhood Development Plans

It could be argued that it is unlikely the type of policy, guiding the development of land, that will be included in a document such as a Neighbourhood Development Plan, will give rise to significant impact (either negative or positive) on a group with a protected characteristic. However, the possibility exists and there is a requirement to screen the presumed outcomes of policies in this regard.

It is relevant to note that the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted following significant community consultation which employed a wide variety of means to ensure that all members of the community were able to contribute. Those means are set out in some detail in the Consultation Statement which accompanies the Plan. The four policies within the Plan are set at a high level and focus on delivering development and land use outcomes on behalf of the whole community, whilst recognising the need for certain types of development to address specific deficiencies in provision within the parish e.g. small dwellings.

Assessing the Plan policies

This EqIA has been produced to assess the implications of policies included in the Regulation 14 or consultation draft of the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan. It has

been produced taking account of guidance on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website (www.equalityhumanrights.com). This is the final opportunity for Sherborne St John Parish Council to amend any policy that may be assessed as having an undesirable impact on equality, prior to submission of the Plan to Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council.

The following matrix assesses each of the policies in the Plan for its likely impact on the protected characteristics set out above. This enables *positive*, *neutral* or *negative* impacts to be identified. Where a positive or neutral impact is identified, no change will be made to the policy. If a negative impact is identified, then it is assigned a grading of: *high impact*, meaning that mitigation is unlikely to overcome the issue; or *medium impact*, meaning that future or existing mitigation could overcome the issue; or *low impact*, meaning that the negative issue is considered insignificant.

The results of this assessment will inform any final changes made to the Plan prior to its submission. Alternatively the results could inform any changes to the Plan that are recommended at a later stage by the independent examiner.

Policy SSJ1: Delivering a mix of housing to meet local needs					
Protected characteristic:	Positive	Neutral	Neg L	Neg M	Neg H
Age	X				
Disability		X			
Marriage or civil partnership	X				
Pregnancy and maternity		X			
Race		X			
Religion and belief		X			
Sex		X			
Sexual orientation		X			
Gender reassignment		X			
Commentary:	The policy is designed to ensure a mix of housing that meets the needs of the local population, in particular by encouraging the retention or delivery of smaller dwellings. This could be particularly beneficial for younger adults (first time buyers) and older people (wishing to downsize). The policy is otherwise considered to be neutral across the protected characteristics.				
Mitigation:	None is required.				

Policy SSJ2: Avoidance of coalescence with Basingstoke town					
Protected characteristic:	Positive	Neutral	Neg L	Neg M	Neg H
Age		X			
Disability		X			
Marriage or civil partnership		X			
Pregnancy and maternity		X			
Race		X			

Religion and belief		X			
Sex		X			
Sexual orientation		X			
Gender reassignment		X			
Commentary:	The policy is designed to guide the location of new development, so it does not compromise the physical separation (by open countryside) of Sherborne St John village and Basingstoke town. There is widespread local support to retain the village as a distinct community. This is considered to be neutral across the protected characteristics.				
Mitigation:	None is required.				

Policy SSJ3: The rural character of the Parish					
Protected characteristic:	Positive	Neutral	Neg L	Neg M	Neg H
Age		X			
Disability		X			
Marriage or civil partnership		X			
Pregnancy and maternity		X			
Race		X			
Religion and belief		X			
Sex		X			
Sexual orientation		X			
Gender reassignment		X			
Commentary:	This policy is designed to guide new development, so as to preserve and enhance natural assets within the parish, such as important open spaces and the network of wildlife habitats. Those natural assets are a resource for the whole community. Again this policy is considered to be neutral across the protected characteristics.				
Mitigation:	None is required.				

Policy SSJ4: Residential development – land at Cranes Park, Sherborne St John					
Protected characteristic:	Positive	Neutral	Neg L	Neg M	Neg H
Age	X				
Disability		X			
Marriage or civil partnership	X				
Pregnancy and maternity	X				
Race		X			
Religion and belief		X			
Sex		X			
Sexual orientation		X			

Gender reassignment		X			
Commentary:	<p>This policy allocates a site for the development of approximately 18 dwellings, as well as delivering space for a community shop. This will meet the assessed housing needs of the locality, including provision of smaller dwellings and affordable homes. This should be particularly beneficial to young adults and downsizing older residents. The policy is otherwise considered to be neutral across the protected characteristics. It is noted that it would be helpful if the shop had disabled access, which is a matter that ought to be considered at the planning application stage.</p> <p>[Note added to this EqIA subsequently: the number of dwellings was amended to 'between 12 and 18' following Borough Council comments received during the Regulation 14 consultation.]</p>				
Mitigation:	None is required, at this stage.				

Conclusion

The overall conclusion is that no changes are required to policies in the Submission Draft of the Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan. The policies, as drafted, are likely to be either neutral or positive in terms of their impact on the protected characteristics. No negative impacts have been identified by this Equality Impact Assessment and no mitigation measures are therefore being proposed.

A profile of the population of the area can be found over the page.

EqIA date: 19th April 2016

Population profile, 2011 Census statistics

Statistics for the Parish area are problematic, so the following are statistics for the Ward of Sherborne St John, which it should be noted covers a larger area.

Total ward population was 2,206 (100%)

Sex:

Male	1,100	(50%)
Female	1,106	(50%)

Age structure:

Aged 0 to 17	453	(21%)
Aged 18 to 24	91	(4%)
Aged 25 to 44	468	(21%)
Aged 45 to 64	734	(33%)
Aged 65 to 84	403	(18%)
Aged 85+	57	(3%)

Ethnicity:

White British	2,093	(95%)
White other	63	(3%)
Asian/Asian British	22	(1%)
Mixed/multiple ethnicity	19	(1%)
Other (including Black/ Black British)	9	(>1%)

Marital status (aged 16 or over): 1798

Married	1,116	(62%)
Single	365	(20%)
Separated or divorced	181	(10%)
Widowed/surviving partner	134	(7%)
Civil Partnership	2	(>1%)

Health for day-to-day activities:

Not limited by health	1,854	(84%)
Activities limited a little	206	(9%)
Activities limited a lot	146	(7%)

Appendix B: Map of the designated neighbourhood area

